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# **Knowledge and ignorance in strategic management: An introductory survey**

**Multidisciplinary Insights into the Strategy and Change Interface**

**12<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

**AEST - Canberra, Sydney, Brisbane  
Internet Symposium**

THE 80<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT



A VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE



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**Multidisciplinary Insights into the Strategy and Change Interface**  
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### MAIN ISSUES

„Much remains to be learned about the strategy and change interface, especially how rationally (?) derived strategies, put into action through the development of programs, budgets and procedures (Wheelen & Hunger, 2008: 16) are balanced by what we know about people to bring about and reinforce change (Waddell, Cummings & Worley, 2011: 4)“.

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## **MAIN ISSUES**

**STUDYING THE INTERFACE BETWEEN STRATEGY AND CHANGE  
BRINGS ABOUT THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS**

**What are the objects and areas of the interface?**

**How to define the interface – proces, interactions?**

**There are partial answers in the works of the Caucus and book  
proposal**

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## **MAIN ISSUES**

### **PREPARATION OF CHAPTERS FOR THE BOOK**

**Strategy and Change from a Complex System Perspective**

**The Knowledge Conversion Process in an Open Complex System**



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## **MAIN ISSUES**

**STRATEGY, KNOWLEDGE AND COMPLEXITY**

**(A supporting collateral topic)**

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## **AIM OF THE PRESENTATION**

**IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEMS IN A PROFOUND ANALYSIS  
OF THE INTERFACES BETWEEN STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AND  
CHANGE**

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## STRATEGY, KNOWLEDGE AND COMPLEXITY

### STRATEGY AND KNOWLEDGE

**Important observation: Superficial studies of specificity of knowledge in strategic management**

**Main weakness – defining knowledge**



## STRATEGY, KNOWLEDGE AND COMPLEXITY

### STRATEGY AND KNOWLEDGE

**Insufficient awareness of specificity of knowledge:**

- **Knowledge as strategic resource – what does it mean beyond slogans?**
- **SECI (socialization, externalization, combination, internalization)**

## STRATEGY, KNOWLEDGE AND COMPLEXITY

### STRATEGY AND KNOWLEDGE

Two epistemological dimensions of knowledge:

- Epistemology of possession: i.e. knowledge as something that is possessed by the organization, and
- Epistemology of action/process: i.e. knowledge as a dynamic process

### QUESTION

The role of ignorance in strategic management

## STRATEGY, KNOWLEDGE AND COMPLEXITY

### STRATEGY AND COMPLEXITY

**Complexity studies: one of most important sources of theory of strategic management**

**Complex Adaptive Systems, adaptation, emergence, self-organization, edge of chaos**

**However:**

**When we say: it's complex, we admit that we are IGNORANT**

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**Complex = we are ignorant!**

**What is knowledge?**

**What we know?**

**We know that we do not know**

**We do not know that we do not know**

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**QUESTIONS FOR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT**

**Why we do not know that we do not know?**

**Challenges for „hard” computable complexity**

**Challenges for „soft” non-computable complexity (metaphors)**

**Main challenge: sociopolitical sources of ignorance – biases, secrecy, negligence, exclusion, incompetence, etc.**

## **EXAMPLES**

**„Chaos and edge of chaos” – metaphors based on a simplification**

**Chaos theory – randomly (purposively?) selected name for a class of equations**

**Ignorance – „hard” complexity - operationalization of parameters of models**

**Challenges for „soft” non-computable complexity (metaphors)**

**Ignorance – identification of correspondence between the source domain and target domain**

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## EXAMPLES

### Adaptation

A necessary more profound understanding

What is a „mechanism” of adaptation?

Mathematical models challenges for „hard” complexity – data, systems, interactions.

Metaphors - challenges for „soft” non-computable complexity (metaphors)

Ignorance – identification of correspondence between the source domain and target domain (organization vs. other Complex Adaptive Systems)

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## **CONCLUSIONS**

**This preliminary study illustrates a necessary depth of analysis of mathematical models and analogies and metaphors**

**Knowledge, ignorance (?) complexity must be included in the considerations**



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**Thank you for your attention!**

**See you next year in Philadelphia!**