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It’s a **Mess!** Placing Disorganization on the Map

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Introducing Disorganisation

Disorder = Disorganisation = Mess
Current Definitions

“Disorderly accumulation of varied entities in hierarchically ordered complex human structures”

(Abrahamson, 2002)

Natural Disorganization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disorderly Accumulation</th>
<th>Varied Entities</th>
<th>Hierarchically Ordered</th>
<th>Complex Human Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unplanned and unintended aggregation</td>
<td>People, Relationships, Physical entities (tables, chairs, etc.), problems, solutions, opportunities</td>
<td>Organisations with defined chain of command where each level is responsible for a certain set of tasks</td>
<td>Organisations are complex human systems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Defining the Terms based on (Abrahamson, 2002; Abrahamson and Freedman, 2006)
Why?

Disorganisation

- Applies to every hierarchical level of the organisation
- Happens at every reference point of the organisation i.e. individual, team, departmental, organisational
- Like it or not, this is an unavoidable phenomenon
- Benefits of disorganization
• Merton (1968) and Crozier (1969) Theory of Blockage (Why Disorder is needed)
1980 – Present

- **The Logic** of Disorganisation (Warglien and Masuch, 1996)
- **Theory of Disorder** (Abrahamson, 2002)
  - Types of Disorders
    - To Organise Mess
    - Organise Mess
    - Discard Mess
- **Benefits** of Disorder (Abrhamson and Freedman, 2007)
  - Comparison with order
  - Cost benefit analysis idea
- **Garbage Can Buck** (Fioretti and Lomi, 2008)
  - ABM of the Garbage can **model** (March and Olsen 1972)
Research Gaps

• A theoretical **clarification** of the current definitions is needed
  • Characteristics
  • Causes
  • Consequences

• Are the proposed benefits real?
  • If true, can we optimise the “disorganisation” to achieve favourable outcomes for the organisation

• Measure disorganisation
  • Can we objectively measure the effects of “disorganisation in an organisation”? 
Conceptual Development

**Structural Disorganization**

Topology of the team
How the team is structured

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**Functional Disorganization**

Rules of Interaction
How the members of the team interact with each other and the environment
## Disorganization Snapshot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disorganization</th>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Observed Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unintentional</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Natural</strong></td>
<td>Random accumulation of physical and nonphysical entities over time</td>
<td>Unpredictable, inconsistent (accumulation frequency varies randomly), hard to manage, hard to re-organize</td>
<td>All effects are inconsistent and unpredictable and could lead to negative (confusion) as well as positive effects (innovative solutions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intentional</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structural</strong></td>
<td>Deliberate relaxation of hierarchy and rules of command. Organic communication.</td>
<td>Predictable, clear step by step proves of dismantling hierarchy and lines of command, easy to re-organize, manageable</td>
<td>Increased productivity, increased efficiency, increasing autonomy, higher levels of motivation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Functional</strong></td>
<td>Deliberate relaxation of rules imposed on individuals and teams when seeking resources</td>
<td>Predictable, rules can be relaxed and re-organized with relative ease, manageable</td>
<td>Increased productivity, increased efficiency, increasing autonomy, higher levels of motivation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thank You!

Q & A
Timeline of The Concept

- Discussed in 1971 by Cohen, March and Olsen
  - Garbage Can Model
  - Very well established theory
Benefits of Disorder

• Open to Innovation (Juxtaposing things)
  – Recombination and Mixture

• Involves more stakeholders in decision making

• Saves money in some situations (Cost v benefit)

• Rapid solution development

(Warglien and Masuch, 1996; Abrahamson, 2002; Abrahamson and Freedman, 2007)
Theoretical Basis for PhD

Rational
Natural
Open

Directly Attack This View

Disorganisation

Conceptual View (Scott 1981)

Compliments, but does not fully align itself to either
Back up Slides

- Real world example - **Oticon**

**Amagasaki Rail Crash, Japan 2005**

NTSB Found JR West’s increased formalisation was a key contributor (Chikudate, 2009)
The Model – Structural

Top Down

Decision Making

Reach

Collective
Empirical Study – WERS 2011

- Cross Sectional Data set from the British Work and Employee Relations Survey
  - Management Survey (Firm Level)
  - Financial Performance Survey (Firm Level)
  - 550 Organization

- I want to find out if increased autonomy (How) and employee work discretion (What) has a correlation with better organizational performance