

Process Analysis: Getting Your Hands Dirty

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My process 'ontology'

- Strategizing and organizing is constituted through/within multiple streams of activity/processes (Jarzabkowski, 2005)
- Continuous unfolding/becoming (Pettigrew, 1992; Sztompka, 1991; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002).

Research Process

- Research Question/ Problem/ Interest
- Longitudinal data collection
- **Data analysis**
- Contribution
- Data presentation

(See also Van de Ven 2007, Engaged Scholarship)

*“No analysis strategy will produce theory without
an uncodifiable creative leap, however small”
(Langley, 1999: 691)*

Langley's sensemaking strategies

Strategy	Output	Type
Narrative	High A; Low S, G	Organizing strategies
Visual mapping	Mod A, S, G	
Alternate templates	Integrated = High A; Low S, G	Grounding strategies
Grounded theory	High A; Mod S; Low G	
Quantification	High S, G; Mod A	Replication strategies
Temporal bracketing	Mod S, G; Potentially High A	
Synthetic	High S; Mod A, G	

Current Process Study

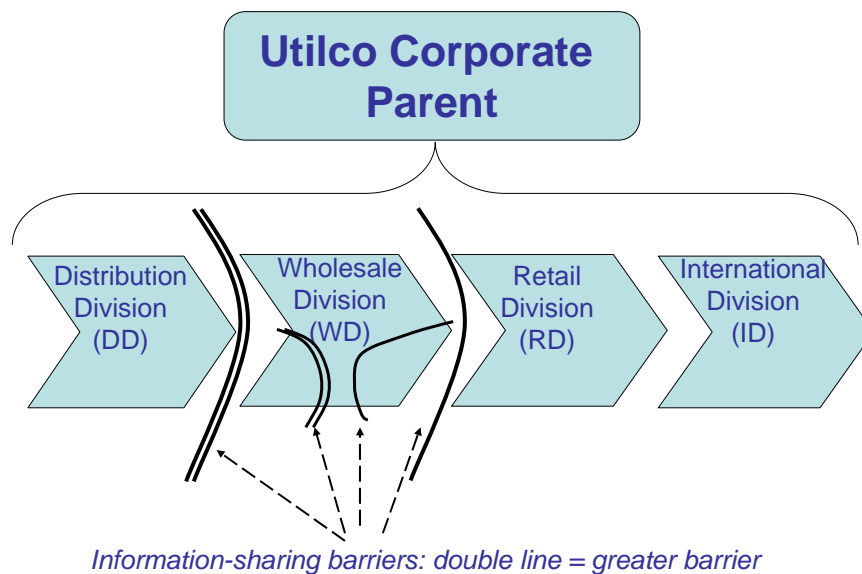


- Interested in how strategy is implemented within pluralistic contexts:
- Research interests/ Questions:
 - How language is involved in coping with pluralism
 - How structural context (administrative systems) is involved in coping with pluralism

Utilco – A Pluralistic Context

- Pluralistic tensions between need to satisfy regulatory objectives and free market objectives
- Regulatory requirement to meet over 200 legally-binding regulatory objectives or face legal action (e.g. broken up)
- Key requirement: Separate distribution division (DD)
- DD to supply all of UK industry (Utilco competitors & downstream businesses) on an equivalent basis
- Utilco loses the competitive advantage of a vertically-integrated supply chain

Key Protagonists



Data Collection

- Longitudinal, qualitative data over some 18 months. As at 11-05-07 we had:
 - 91 Interviews (2043 pages)
 - 198 Meetings (1096 pages)
 - 13 Fieldwork Sessions (13 days workplace shadowing; 168 pages)
 - 1000 Documents (10909 pages - of these 6720 are pages, 4129 are slides, 60 are spreadsheets)
 - Numerous emails – too numerous to count!
- **Decisions** re relevant data sources
- Data Management

Analysis Step 1

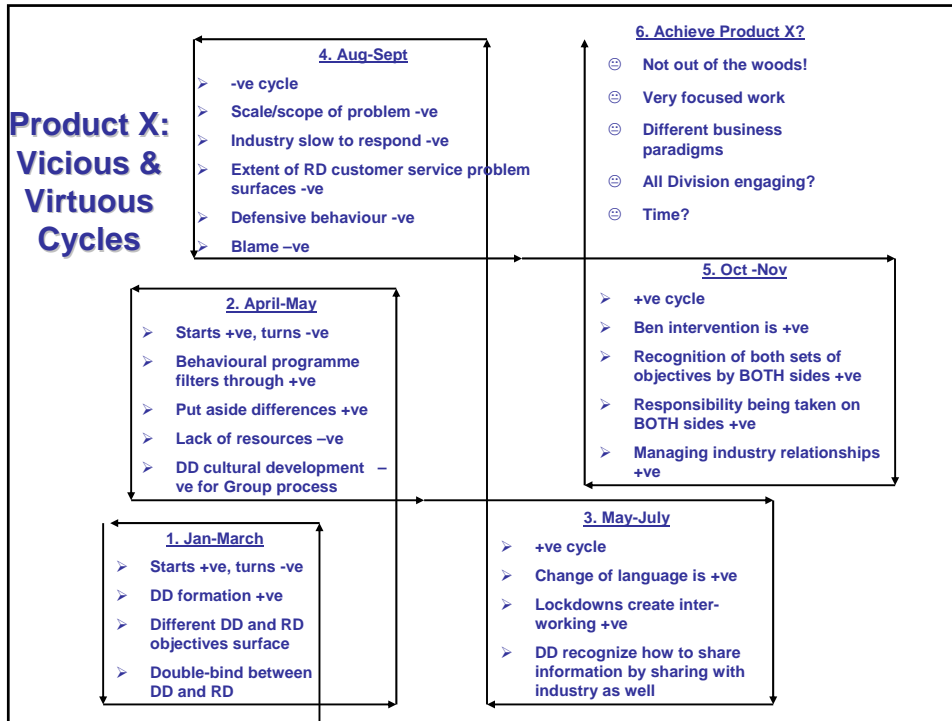
- June/July 2006: Write a case story
- **Decisions:**
 - Whose story?
 - Internal analysis of event with omniscient narrator
- Sensemaking strategy: Narrative
- Output: Case story from 5 perspectives:
 - Can be shared with research team
 - Basis for comparative analysis (each division a case?)
 - Begin considering possible theoretical explanations

Analysis Step 2

- July-Sept 2006
- Present sections of case story to different participants
 - Validation (Miles & Hubermann, 1994)
 - Trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)
- Develop initial coding trees (NVivo): **Decision**
 - 8 key regulatory activities
 - Different divisions
 - Synergy & dissonance
 - Indexing codes (time, data source, speaker, etc.)
- Sensemaking strategy: Grounded theory (sort of)
- Output: Data decomposed into units for further analysis

Analysis Step 3

- Sept/Oct 2006
- Iteration between data & theory
 - Experiment with double-bind theory
 - Analyze 1 activity using double-bind theory: **Decisions**
 - Which activity?
 - Phases occur in the data (qualitative difference)
 - Comparison is not divisions but regulatory activities?
- Develop presentation based on double-bind theory
- Sensemaking strategy: temporal bracketing & visual mapping (sort of!)
- Output: Process map of one key regulatory activity
 - Can be presented to others (has sufficient simplicity)
 - ‘Play’ with theory



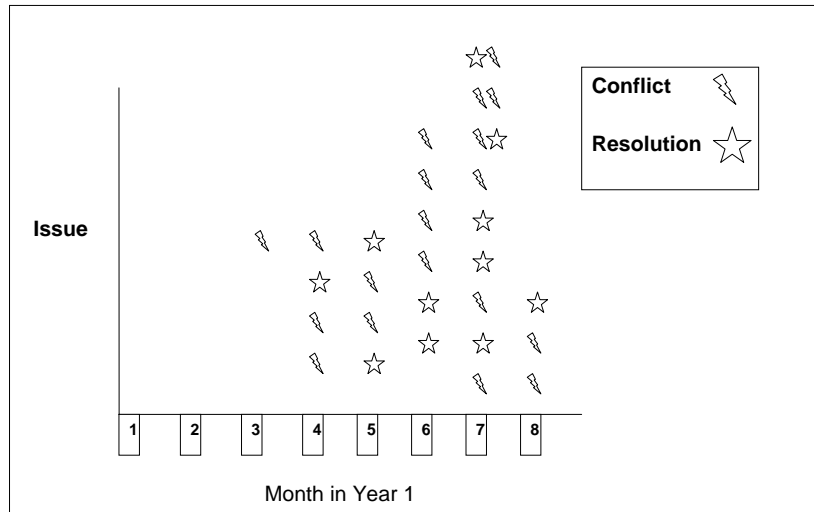
Analysis Step 4



- October 2006 – ongoing!
- Branch out into parallel analysis techniques: quantification & qualitative
- Sensemaking strategy: Quantification
- **Decision:** Rules to guide quantification of data
- Output: Data decomposed into event database (EDB) for statistical analysis
 - Graphic modes of representing data
 - Means of surfacing & analysing patterns in data
 - Supplement qualitative analysis
 - Simplicity, easy to share



One graphic representation



Analysis Step 5

- Jan-March 2007
- Reject double-bind theorizing – not pathological, continuous tension
- Conduct further analysis and write case strategy for Product X (contextualized)
- Sensemaking strategy: Narrative
- Output: Phased story of Product X
 - 5 phases, with empirical categories showing build up of conflict & tension. **Decision**
 - Adopt dialectic theorizing for analysis

Analysis Step 6

- March –May 2007
- Theoretical exploration. Locate dialectic theory in institutional pluralism
- Analyze process story using dialectic theorizing.
- Decision**
- Compare phases within story
- Output: Evolving process of constructing activity, through different approaches to dialectic
 - Contribution (initial, needs further exploration)
 - Can be shared: Paper



Approaches to institutional pluralism

1. Regulatory logic dominant	Compartmentalization: spatial into divisions but partial. Some denial: The regulatory logic is made dominant, and the CC is reluctant to assert the market logic if it confronts the regulatory logic	↓
2. Emerge incompatibility between logics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Compartmentalization: interdependent so logics cannot act in isolation ▪Denial: market logic cannot be suppressed, even relatively temporarily 	↓
3. Polarization of conflict between logics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Compartmentalization: Enable to exercise this interdependence between logics, leading to confrontation and stalemate ▪Conditions for Hegelian dialectic emerge as logics assume oppositions 	↓
4. Dialogue: Attempts at synthesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪In response to stalemate, attempts at synthesis are made, trying to make the two work together under an overarching Utilco objective ▪Highlights fundamental incompatibility of logics; no synthesis can be achieved 	↓
5. Sub-optimizing and mutual adjustment of logics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Balancing logics simultaneously by sub-optimizing both ▪Mutual adjustment between logics, enabling Utilco to operate on both logics on any given product at any moment in time ▪Both logics enabled in ongoing incompatibility and interdependence ▪No 'resolution' of logics is achieved 	↓

Analysis Step 7

- Current and ongoing
- Compare 3 other key regulatory activities to explore whether they conform to or deny the process pattern found
- Locate dialectic theorizing within organization design literature to see if it provides alternative or richer explanations of our findings compared with institutional pluralism literature
- Sensemaking strategy: alternate templates (sort of!)
- Output: Process theory of coping with pluralistic tensions in strategizing & organizing (Mod A, S; Lower G)

In conclusion

- A messy process of iterating between sensemaking strategies, raw data and literature
- Throughout the process, multiple decisions are made that guide the questions posed and the answers that can be found
- Single case is multiple 'cases within a case'
- The research process is a 'becoming' process itself: Never complete
- Caution! Remain open to other findings and explanations
- Be prepared to reject answers, no matter how neat
- Data has no innate truth
- Data speaks when it is spoken to