

UNSPOKEN BEST PRACTICES

RE-THINKING PROJECT MANAGEMENT FROM A 'SYSTEMS THINKING' PERSPECTIVE

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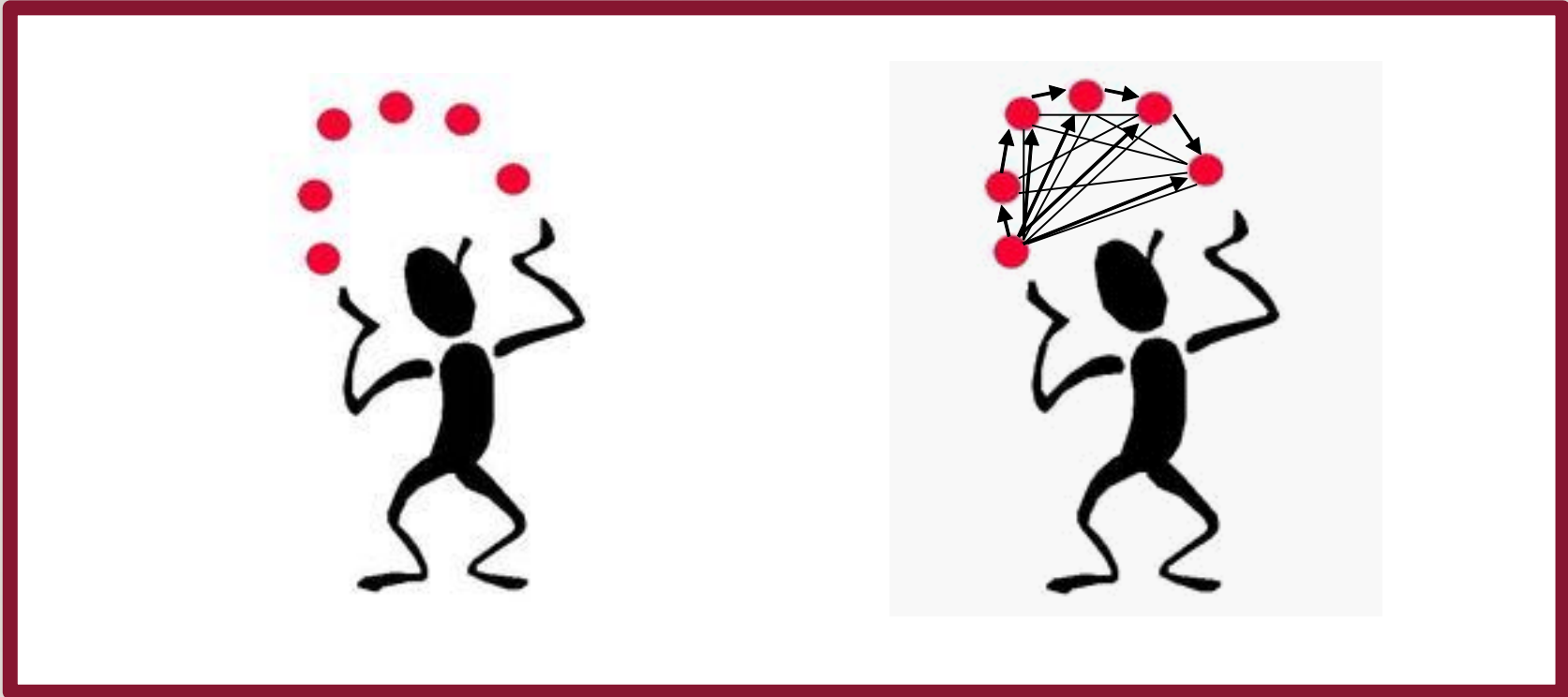
LET'S KICK THINGS OFF... WHO IS ARKEA?

THERE IS NO GREATER AGONY
THAN BEARING AN UNTOLD STORY
INSIDE YOU – *MAYA ANGELOU*

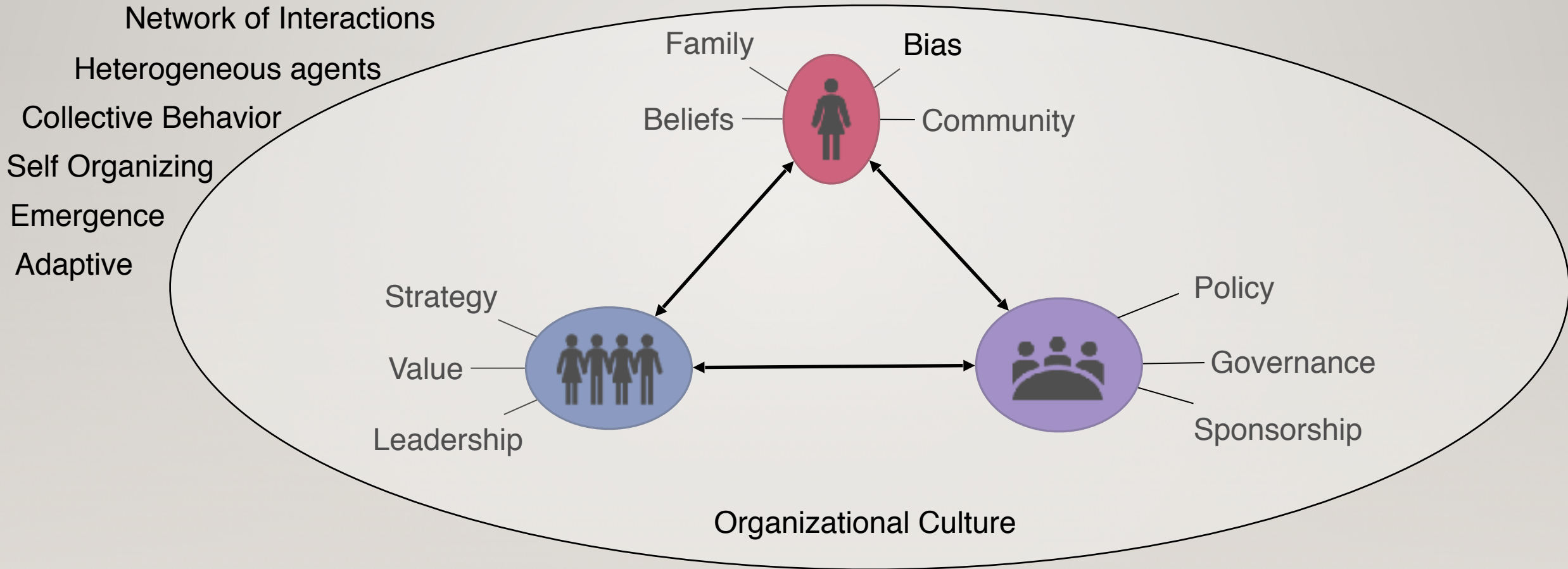
THANKS FOR THE OPPORTUNITY!




EXPLORING THE CONCEPT OF SYSTEMS THINKING




SYSTEMS THINKING




UNSPOKEN BEST PRACTICES

1. No one's really right and no one's really wrong
 2. Nothing is more than it is – Everything is relative
 3. You have to respect the culture in which you are operating
 4. Managing customer expectation and building relations – Power of 30 min meeting
 5. You are the unsung hero – Just serve, Leading in the shadows
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NO ONE'S REALLY RIGHT AND NO ONE'S REALLY WRONG

- **Scenario:** Executive leadership was looking to expand business to a new vendor. Business escalated an impediment to leadership to suggest the inability to expand due to known IT limitations that had been submitted to IT for resolution.
 - **Systems Principle:** Complementary law, any two perspectives of a system will reveal truth about the system which is neither entirely independent or compatible (Bohr, 1928).
 - **Complexity Element:** Heterogeneous agent, each agent whether individual or group differs in perspective or mission.
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NOTHING IS MORE THAN IT IS – EVERYTHING IS RELATIVE

- **Scenario:** Logistics team wanted to invest in new training system and the experimental/ R&D team was ramping up on an existing effort and needed to drive the next phase.
 - **System Principle:** Holism, holistic properties not manifested by any of its parts; parts have properties not manifested by its whole.
 - **Complexity Element:** Network of interactions, interdependencies are not always easy to quantify and assess for improved decision making.
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YOU HAVE TO RESPECT THE CULTURE IN WHICH YOU ARE OPERATING

- **Scenario:** I was operating in a strongly hierarchal culture. My scope of work was very defined. I was only to push my blue button on cue.
- **System Principle:** Homeostasis, property of an open system to regulate its internal environment so as to maintain a stable condition.
 - **Complexity Element:** Adaptive, culture is a collection of beliefs used to realize a mission or goal.

MANAGING CUSTOMER EXPECTATION AND BUILDING RELATIONS

- **Scenario:** Customer wanted to develop faster, so we transitioned from waterfall to agile mid stream. Power of 30 min meeting.
 - **System Principle:** Emergence, whole entities exhibit properties which are meaningful when attributed to the whole, not its parts.
 - **Complexity Element:** Emergence, accommodating the unknown.
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YOU ARE THE UNSUNG HERO – JUST SERVE, LEADING IN THE SHADOWS

- **Scenario:** Business partners are submitting requirements to the backlog to address known issues that would allow them to better serve the customer and IT is not delivering.
 - **System Principle:** Basins of stability, complex systems have basins of stability separated by thresholds of instability.
 - **Complexity Element:** Collective Behavior, providing feedback to shared behavior for ease in management
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CLOSING REMARKS

Best practices are the methods or techniques that has been generally accepted as superior to producing superior results. What unspoken best practices do you drive?

REFERENCE ARTICLES

- Directions for future research in project management: The main findings of a UK government-funded research network
 - [Link to pdf](#)
- Complex Project Management A Systems Thinking Approach
 - [Link to powerpoint](#)
- Adams, K. M., Hester, P. T., Bradley, J. M., Meyers, T. J., & Keating, C. B. (2014). Systems Theory: The Foundation for Understanding Systems. *Systems Engineering*.