Unruly Complexity
Ecology, Interpretation, Engagement

Three readings:

1. sequence of case studies
2. autobiographical story
3. conceptual argument
What if everything is already *unruly complexity*?
What if everything is already 

unruly complexity?

= ?
What if everything is already

*unruly complexity*?

= *situations*

1. consisting of heterogeneous components
2. built up over time & subject to ongoing restructuring
3. embedded in wider dynamics
What if everything is already *unruly complexity*?

= situations

1. lack definite boundaries
2. what goes on “outside” continually restructures what is “inside”
3. diverse processes come together to produce change
Lagunas
deterioro ambiental
y tecnológico en el
campo semiproletarizado

EL COLEGIO DE MÉXICO
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population &amp; Labor</th>
<th>Agro-Ecology</th>
<th>Local Social &amp; Economic Institutions</th>
<th>&quot;External&quot; Situation &amp; Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collapse</td>
<td>Terracing</td>
<td>Repartimiento</td>
<td>Spanish invasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor scarcity</td>
<td>Coarse sowing</td>
<td>Rise of caciques: moral</td>
<td>Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour-saving practices: goats, plowing, wheat</td>
<td>Diversity management</td>
<td>&quot;Private&quot; economy</td>
<td>Revolution cheap urban &amp; land reforms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sustainable maize production</td>
<td>No regulation of goat</td>
<td>Land concentration</td>
<td>Liberalization industrial development</td>
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<td>Land less intensively cultivated or abandoned</td>
<td>Subsistence maize &amp; goats</td>
<td>Labor discipline</td>
<td>Independence</td>
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<td>Labor scarcity</td>
<td>Serious erosion</td>
<td>Moral</td>
<td>Spanish invasion</td>
</tr>
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Timeline: 1500 - 2000
heterogeneous components
built up over time
subject to ongoing restructuring
embedded in wider dynamics
lack definite boundaries
what goes on “outside” continually restructures
what is “inside”
diverse processes come together
What if everything is already unruly complexity?

1st Answer: Qualitative difference in analysis of causes & implications
Two islands

same land area & quality
same initial population & growth rate
(3% per year)
same technical capacity
Two islands

- 2% of people
- 70% of people
- 60%
1. simple well-bounded system

2. simple themes, opening things up

3. differentiated, locally particular accounts
1. simple well-bounded system

2. simple themes, opening things up

3. differentiated, locally particular accounts
What if everything is already unruly complexity?

1st Answer: Qualitative difference in analysis of causes & implications

Q2: ...for whom?
Ans. Q2: Researcher in dialogue between models & phenomena
Ans. Q2: Researcher in dialogue between models & phenomena

*but* this is embedded in dialogue
**Ans. Q2:** Researcher in dialogue between models & phenomena

*but* this is *embedded* in dialogue w/ diverse social agents to establish significant knowledge
Ans. Q2: Researcher in dialogue between models & phenomena. 

*but* this is *embedded* in dialogue w/ diverse social agents to establish significant knowledge & subject to *ongoing restructuring*.
practice of researchers

A. dialogue with the situation studied

B. social interactions to establish what counts as knowledge
practice of researchers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q3: Researcher’s role?</th>
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<tr>
<td>A. dialogue with the situation studied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. social interactions to establish what counts as knowledge</td>
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</table>
practice of researchers

A. dialogue with the situation studied

B. social interactions to establish what counts as knowledge

C. efforts to pursue social change in which they address self-consciously situatedness (B) as it relates to dialogue with the situation studied (A)
practice of researchers

1. simple well-bounded system
2. simple themes, opening things up
3. differentiated, locally particular accounts
practice of researchers

A. dialogue with the situation studied

B. social interactions to establish what counts as knowledge

C. efforts to pursue social change in which they address self-consciously situatedness (B) as it relates to dialogue with the situation studied (A)

C3 = ?

1. simple well-bounded system

2. simple themes, opening things up

3. differentiated, locally particular accounts
practice of researchers

A. dialogue with the situation studied

B. social interactions to establish what counts as knowledge

C. efforts to pursue social change in which they address self-consciously situatedness (B) as it relates to dialogue with the situation studied (A)

diverse set of researchers and other social agents

1. simple well-bounded system

2. Simple themes, opening things up

3. differentiated, locally particular accounts
practice of researchers

A. dialogue with the situation studied

B. social interactions to establish what counts as knowledge

C. efforts to pursue social change in which they address self-consciously situatedness (B) as it relates to dialogue with the situation studied (A)

coming/brought together

1. simple well-bounded system

2. simple themes, opening things up

3. differentiated, locally particular accounts
practice of researchers

A. dialogue with the situation studied

B. social interactions to establish what counts as knowledge

C. efforts to pursue social change in which they address self-consciously situatedness (B) as it relates to dialogue with the situation studied (A)

1. simple well-bounded system

2. Simple themes, opening things up

3. differentiated, locally particular accounts

acknowledging heterogeneity, ongoing restructuring, embeddedness

re: situations & situatedness
practice of researchers

1. simple well-bounded system
2. Simple themes, opening things up
3. differentiated, locally particular accounts

mobilizing simple themes about complexity of situations & situatedness

A. dialogue with the situation studied
B. social interactions to establish what counts as knowledge
C. efforts to pursue social change in which they address self-consciously situatedness (B) as it relates to dialogue with the situation studied (A)
practice of researchers

A. dialogue with the situation studied

B. social interactions to establish what counts as knowledge

C. efforts to pursue social change in which they address self-consciously situatedness (B) as it relates to dialogue with the situation studied (A)

interaction sustained until new complexity-addressing collaborations emerge

1. simple well-bounded system

2. Simple themes, opening things up

3. differentiated, locally particular accounts
C3=

“the challenge for researchers
of using their knowledge, themes, and other
awareness of
complex situations and situatedness
to contribute to a culture of participatory
restructuring
of the distributed conditions of knowledge-making and social change.”
C3=
“the challenge for researchers
of using their knowledge, themes, and other
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cannot be addressed alone,
nor primarily through our accounts
of the world
e.g., New England Workshop on Science & Social Change

www.stv.umb.edu/newssc.html