

Ambiguity—from peers and leaders

February 2, 9.00-12.00

Prof. Bothner

Ambiguity is our main theme for session 2. We'll first consider the behavioral ramifications of status-ambiguity in competitive dyads of Formula 1 race-car drivers, testing hypothesis that structural equivalence in a competitive network causes conflict. The working paper testing this hypothesis also offers an opportunity to think through some of the main elements of an empirical management science publication. Second, as we discuss the topic of "annealing"—the process by which a sword-maker strengthens a sword, or the strategy by which a leader puts pressure on his or her team—we'll consider the strategic creation of ambiguity by a boss. Annealing occurs in business networks when a leader "starts a fire" under his or her subordinates, searching for new solutions and seeking to unfreeze and re-wire existing networks. This is a fascinating topic for management whose origins are in engineering and physics. To prepare for our session, please read:

- (1) "Strife from Structural Equivalence: Competitive Networks and Collisions in Formula One Racing," by Piezunka, Haynes, Lee, and Bothner [note: I will email quiz-questions after, and informed by, our class discussion on Feb. 2; your answers will be due Feb. 7 by 9:00 PM.]
- (2) The 9 A's slide (using this very simple summary, ask yourself: to what extent did Piezunka et al. act successfully on the 9 A's?)
- (3) "Annealing from Switching" from Harrison C. White's (2008) *Identity and Control*, Princeton University Press.
- (4) "Making and Managing Change: An Example from Motorola," from Robert G. Eccles and Nitin Nohria's (1992) *Beyond the Hype: Rediscovering the Essence of Management*, Harvard Business School Press.