



THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Response from a Multi-disciplinary Perspective

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Additional considerations

Lindblom (1990, *Inquiry and Change*, p 162)

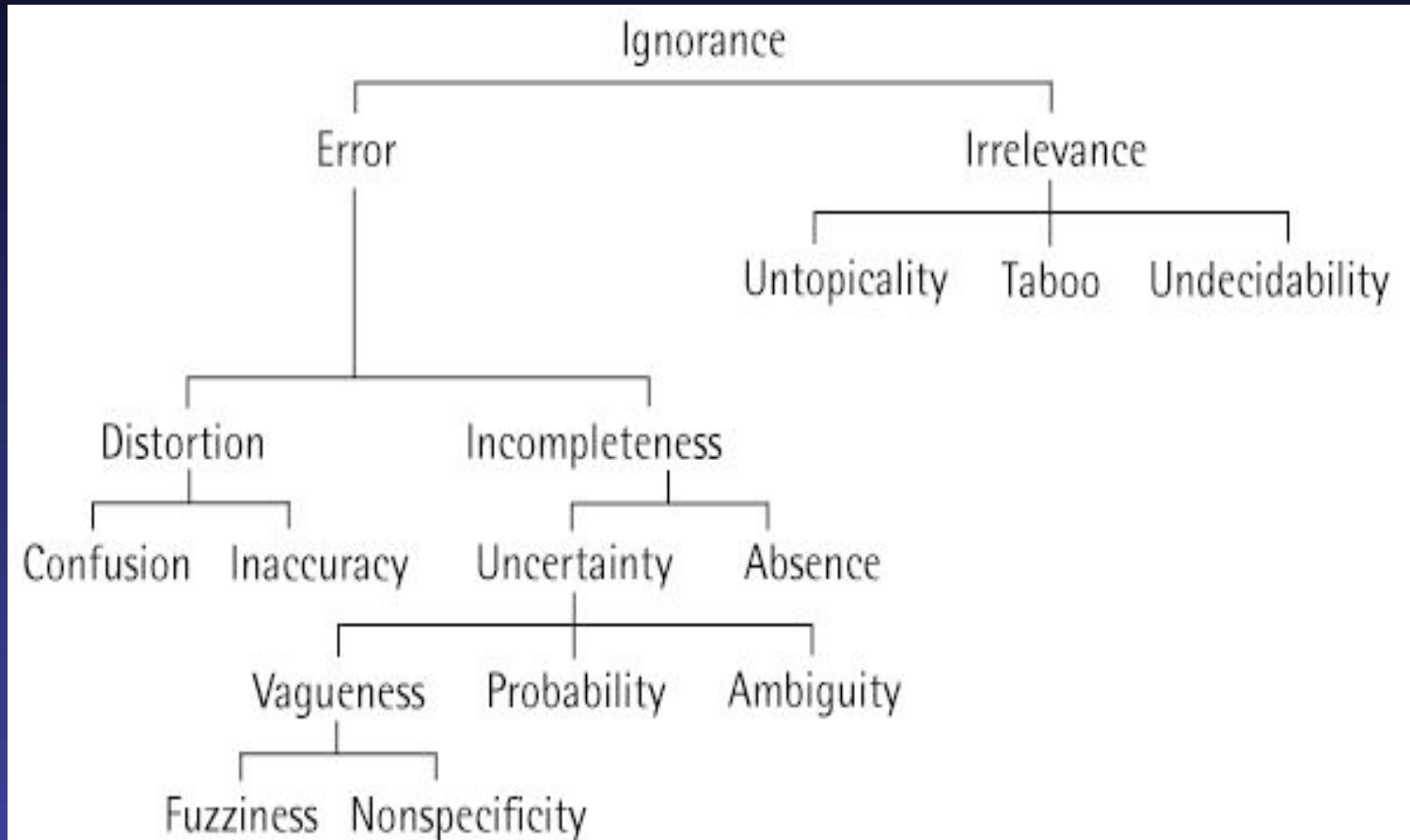
“Professional inquiry is a scarce resource ... never abundant enough to permit study of all important social phenomena and problems, even if the entire adult population became social scientists.”

Implications:

- Reallocation of resources and priorities
- Better understanding and management of unknowns (and different research vis-à-vis unknowns)

Ignorance and uncertainty

Typologies eg Smithson, 1989



Two broad categories:

1. **Related disciplines where there is productive interaction**
eg combine mathematics and biology
or Munro's physics + materials science + biology +
chemistry + applied maths +
2. **Broad range where inter-relationship is less clear, but
range of potentially useful perspectives**

- Risks of the topic
- **Risks of the collaboration**
 - The partners (ability work together)
 - Their approaches (epistemological match)
 - Their level of risk averseness and attitudes to risk
 - Appropriate recognition (reciprocity)
- **Risks of implementation**
 - Political context
 - Practice change

Would a new cross-cutting discipline which adds skills to cross-disciplinary collaborations make them less risk-averse?

Fresh thinking for intractable problems

Integrating disciplinary and practice (stakeholder) knowledge

Understanding and managing ignorance and uncertainty

Providing research support for decision making and practice change

Risks of the collaboration

<i>The partners</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Better skills for managing differences that get in the way of collaboration▪ Better skills for building trust and reciprocity
<i>Their approaches</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Better skills for figuring out which disciplines/practice areas have most to contribute▪ Better appreciation of integration methods

Risks of implementation

<i>Political context</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Better understanding of policy making and 'points' of intervention
<i>Practice change</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Better understanding of change processes, resistances and successful change strategies

Additional considerations ...2

- 1. Who should bear the risks of risky research? Focus on funding agencies. But should researchers also bear more risk and how can that be done?**
 - what can we learn from business?**
 - is the 'old' system of getting funding for done research and doing the risky stuff really so bad?**
- 2. Adding risky (innovative/edgy) pieces to projects/ programs**