“Few things are so sought after and yet so little understood.” (Reason, 1997)
Safety ideals vs organisational needs

**Platonic Schizophrenia**

A pattern about mistaking the idea for the real thing ... and mistaking a thing for what you actually need.

- Klaus Marquardt
Popular assumptions about safety culture

- Culture can be categorised into types (e.g. Hudson Maturity Ladder)
- Culture is standardised across groups and organisations
- Culture can be assessed, measured and quantified
- Culture can be actively manipulated and changed
- Culture is directly linked to performance
Current status of safety culture

- There are more than 220 published safety culture assessment tools

- Key safety culture thought leaders are publically suggesting that we abandon the topic as it is so confused, corrupted and misunderstood

- Beyond ‘safety climate’ no viable alternative to safety culture has been suggested to understand collective sense-making about safety and patterns of behavior in organisations
From Safety Culture to Safety Logics

- **Culture**: a **causal** relationship between ‘belief’ and ‘behaviour’
  - We observe the behaviour and infer the collective safety beliefs
  - You change the beliefs to change the pattern of behaviour

- **Logics**: a **reciprocal** relationship between ‘sense-making’ and ‘behaviour’
  - We understand the collective sense-making to understand the behaviour
  - You change the context in which the pattern of behaviour is situated
How the safety logics approach helps

- Non-judgmental (Emic vs Etic approach)
- Observing and investigating what is there – asking ‘Why’ not ‘What’
- Targeting specific patterns of behaviour and sense-making
- Resolves the contradictions in the sense-making of different groups
Where to start …

- Read the current literature on: Safety Culture and Institutional Logics
- Critically review your current activities relating to culture
- Identify the patterns of behaviour that you are most curious about and then take specific action to understand the sense-making that is driving the observable behaviour.
Questions

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