

Preface

This book is the product of a workshop on *Modelling Organisational Behaviour and Social Agency*, hosted by Bournemouth University, January 27–28, 2014, and sponsored by the Society for the Study of Artificial Intelligence and the Simulation of Behavior (AISB). The event sought to examine the applications, structure, how-to, potentials, and philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of agent-based models (ABM) as they apply to organizational behavior and social agency. We had one day and a half of paper sessions, with social and networking activities. Participants came from seven countries, including the UK, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Lithuania, Canada, and Italy.

The workshop was extremely valuable and all who participated agreed that it delivered more than promised. We spent two interesting days sharing ideas, establishing fruitful research relationships, and learning a lot from each other. This was an attempt to see how ABM can be used to enhance social sciences and, in particular, the study of social agency and organizational behavior. The fruits of that workshop are now collected in this book. The discussions of the two days enabled true cross-disciplinary fertilization and inspired us to start and progress with the idea of this volume. We are extremely pleased that some of the spirit of those two days is now reflected into this book.

Both editors of this volume share a keen interest in computational and mathematical simulation models. Martin is more experienced in ABM and comes from a more sociological background, while Davide came in contact with ABM simulation in 2010 and conducts his work on organizational behavior. Besides ABM and despite (or because) we come from different disciplinary backgrounds, we found ourselves very much aligned on two points, at least. First, we are both interested in understanding distributed cognitive processes and believe that ABM provides a very powerful frame to study them. Second, we both agree that cross-disciplinary efforts are extremely important for the advancement of science, despite contemporary academia does not seem to value or encourage them.

A few words should be spent to describe the process we used to collect and edit this project. After the workshop, we invited participants to submit full papers based on their presentation. All presenters but two agreed to submit their work. We then

asked every author to review two chapters in a single-blind peer-review process. This means that reviewers knew who the authors of the two chapters were, but the authors did not know who reviewed their work. We collected reviewers' reports and had another round of reviews; for a few chapters a third round was necessary. As it usually happens when articles fall under an academic niche (such as ABM), we experienced a phenomenon of self-selection so that all chapters submitted were rigorous and up to a good academic standard. The review process improved them all and we are extremely happy with each and every contribution of this volume.

Of course, we could not have done this without the help of the many people who supported us. First and foremost, we wish to thank all the authors for their time, enduring support, and bright contributions. We were thrilled by the high standards of the chapters and especially of the reviews we received. Mutual respect increased reviewers' engagement to address common intellectual puzzles. Sometimes we do not see such detailed, clear, and intellectually challenging reviews from top journals! We really appreciated all of their dedication to this project; indeed, thank you very much. Among everyone, Stephen Cowley deserves a special thanks from us. He originally created the contact between the two of us and has been a true inspiration, constructive critic, and friend to both of us. We know this book could have not been done without you: Thanks a ton! We also wish to thank Yasemin Erden from AISB, who believed in our project and supported our workshop and the book project.

Nick Philipson and Nitza Jones-Sepulveda from Springer New York showed an incredible level of enthusiasm for our project since the very beginning. Their support, both professional and personal, remains unmatched compared to other publication experiences. It is so good to work with you that we wish we could only publish books! Seriously, you need to know that you do a great job. Thank you so very much.

Davide's wife Claudia also deserves a special mention in this book. Her patience, loving care, and understanding for a husband who works for too many weekends can only be reciprocated with Davide's endless love.

Finally, we have enjoyed working with each other very much and we hope to continue working on ABM and other related projects. We hope you will be pleased by what follows as much as we have enjoyed working together and with all the authors.

Have a pleasant read.

Slagelse, Denmark
Koblenz, Germany

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Agent-Based Simulation of Organizational Behavior

New Frontiers of Social Science Research

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