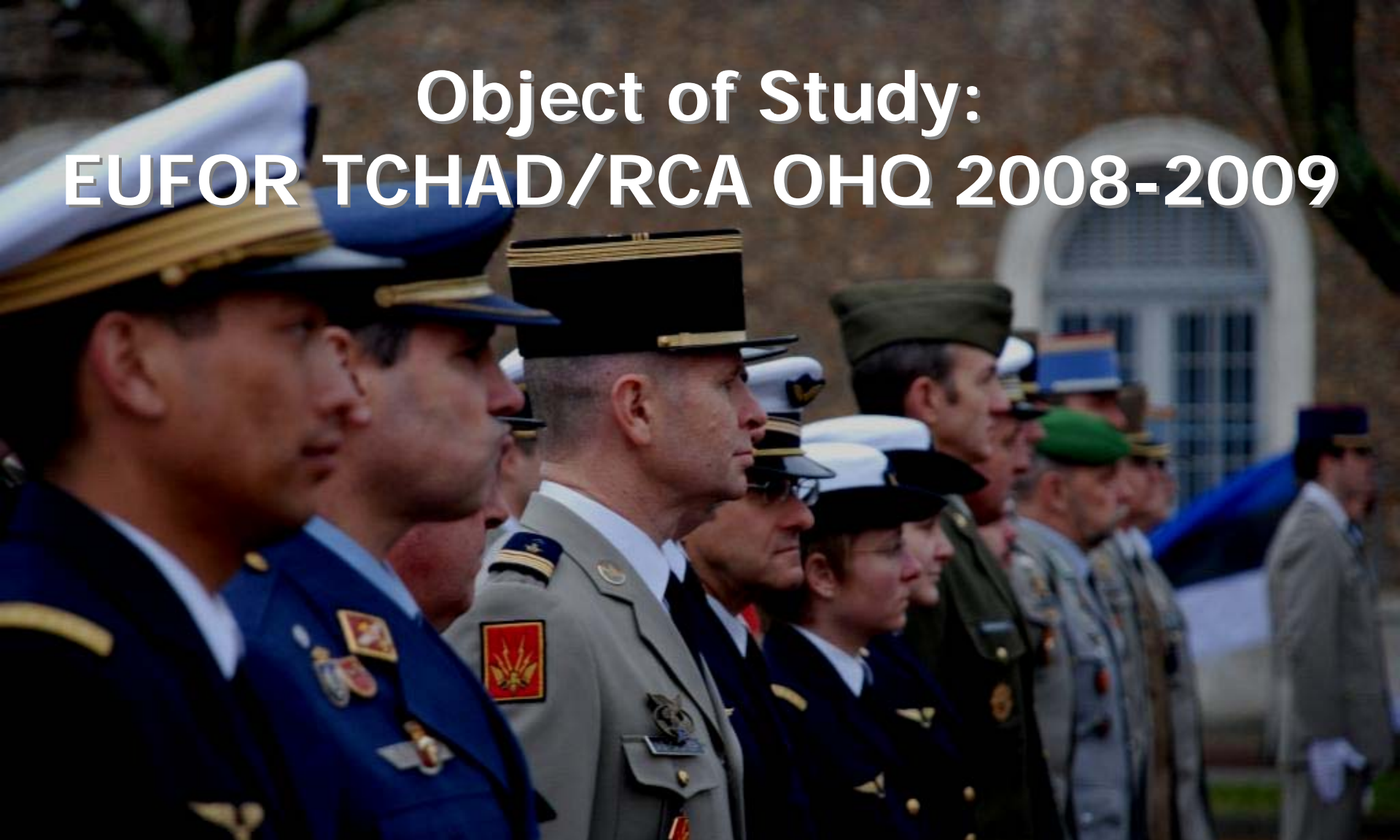


# **Interpersonal Trust in Multi-Organisational Endeavours: Temporary Frames through Social Networks**

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# Object of Study: EUFOR TCHAD/RCA OHQ 2008-2009



# Presentation Outline

- **Theory** – Trust & Frames
- **The Case** - Fort Montvalerien 2008-2009
- **Methodology and Results**
- **Proposed Model** – Trust & Temporary Frames
- **Discussion** – Strengths, Limitations & Implications

# Key Concepts 1 (3)

- *Multi-Organisational Temporary Endeavour* – a collaborative effort limited in time and space, with a specific hierarchy whose members are also associated with permanent organisations.
- *Endeavour Specific Hierarchy* – a formal set of personal roles and relations defined by normative and to all members available documents, specific to the endeavour.
- *Endeavour Specific Social Network* – the informal personal roles and relations that co-exist with, and within the frame of, an endeavour specific hierarchy.



# Key Concepts 2(3)

- *Interpretative framing* – the mental mechanisms in social interaction that help participants define how others' actions and words should be understood, make sense of a situation they find themselves in, to find and interpret specifics that, to them, seem central to understanding the situation, and to communicate this interpretation to others. (Bateson, [1954] 1972, in Oliver and Johnston, 2000, and Elliot, Kaufman, Gardner and Burgess, 2002).

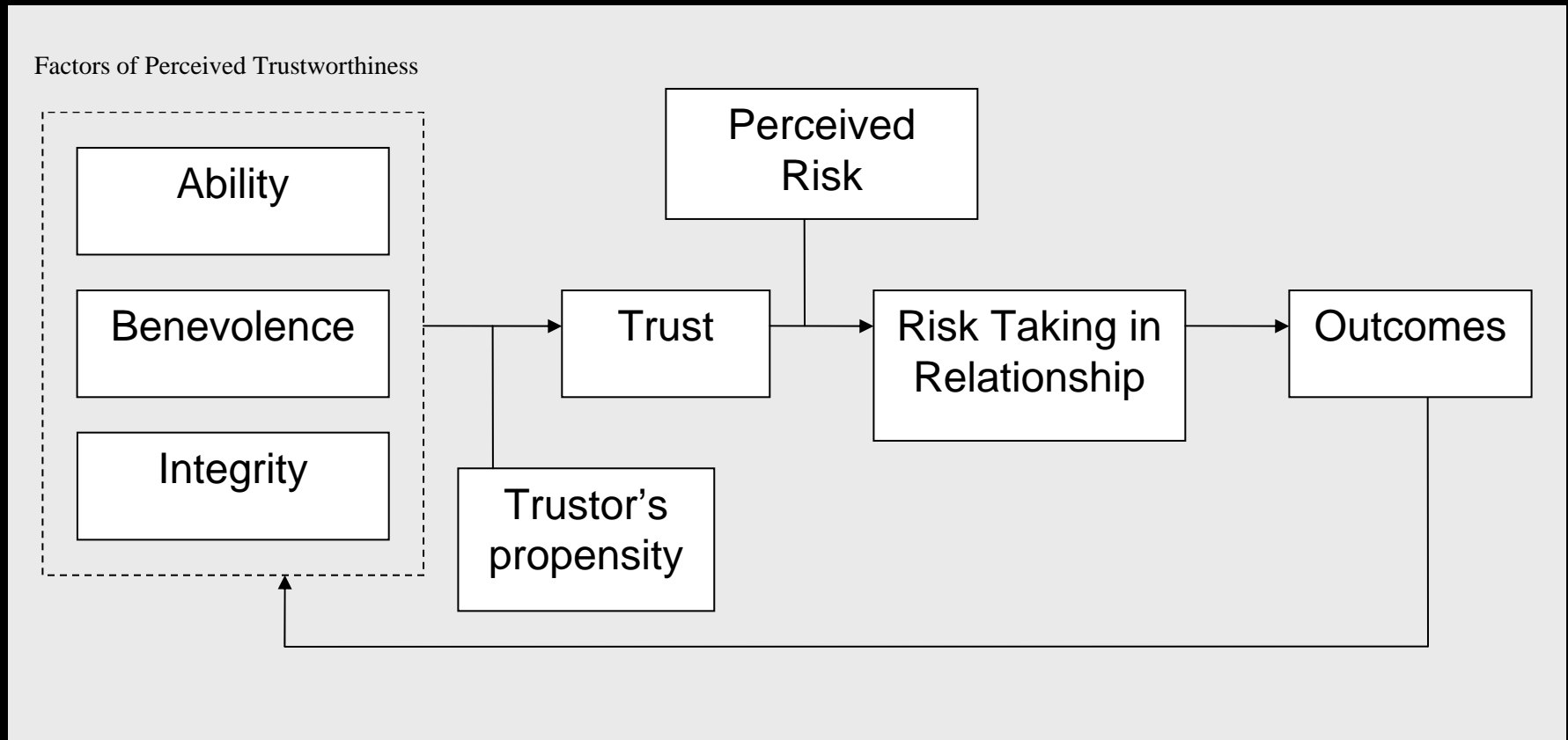
*“When one encounters a new situation (or makes substantial change in one's view of the present problem), one selects from memory a structure called a ‘frame’, This structure is a remembered framework to be adapted to fit reality by changing details as necessary”.* (Minsky, 1975, p. 211)

# Key Concepts 3(3)

- *Interpersonal Trust* – “the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to control or monitor the other party”

(Mayer, Davis and Schoorman, 1995, p. 712).

## Mayer, Davis & Shoorman, Model of Trust (1995, p. 715)



# EUFOR Tchad/RCA Operational Headquarters

AUSTRIA • BELGIUM • BULGARIA • CYPRUS • CZECH REPUBLIC • FINLAND • FRANCE • GERMANY • GREECE • HUNGARY • IRELAND • ITALY • LITHUANIA • NETHERLANDS • POLAND • PORTUGAL • ROMANIA • SLOVAKIA • SLOVENIA • SPAIN • SWEDEN • UNITED KINGDOM

- Strategic level temporary multinational military staff;
- Operational Nov 2007 to May 2009;
- 130 staff members from 25 nations;
- More than 510 individuals over 18 months;
- Field contributions reflected in staff representation;
- Working language English, 13% native speakers.



# Interpersonal Trust Longitudinal Case Study

## Aim

Collect data on how interpersonal trust develops between unfamiliar staff members in temporary multi-organisational endeavours.

## Objective

Investigate the following relationships:

*Perceived organizational legitimacy → Starting capital of interpersonal trust*

*Conflicting interpretative frames → Erosion of legitimacy/trust or modified frames*

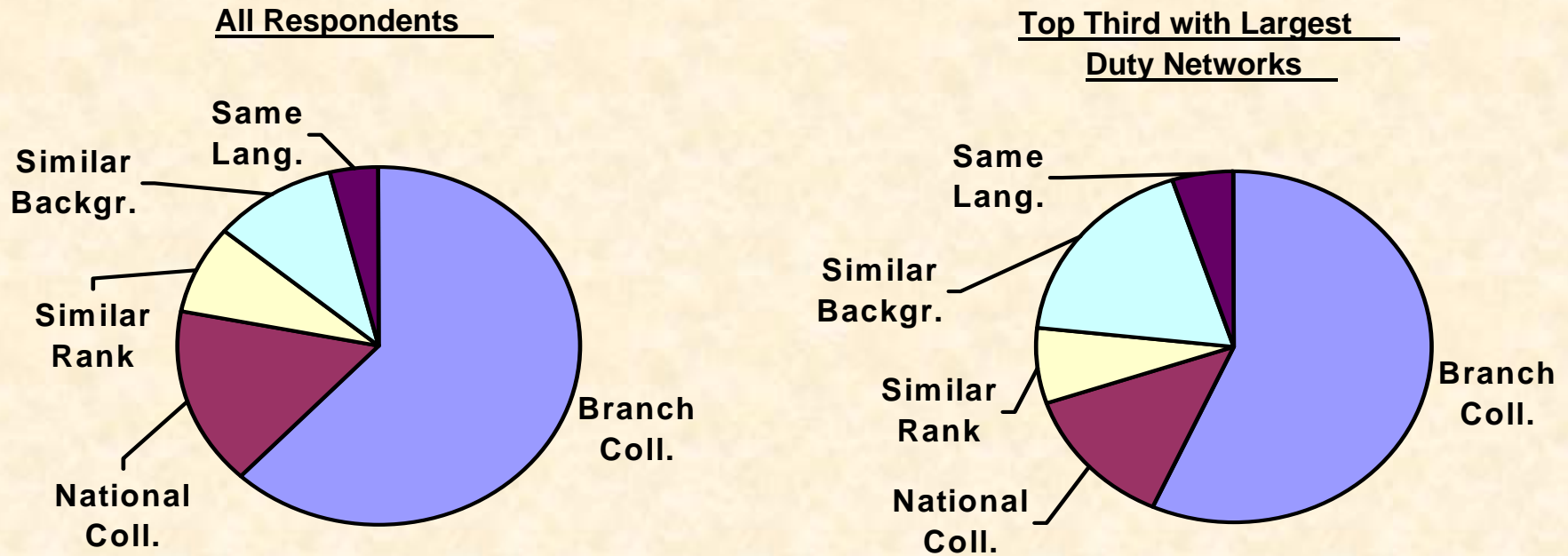
(Ekman and Uhr, 2008)

## Methodology

Triangulation of semi-structured interviews, questionnaire based surveys & participating observation.

## OHQ Duty-Related Social Network - Category

*Q: Who in the OHQ do you have most contact with during working hours?*



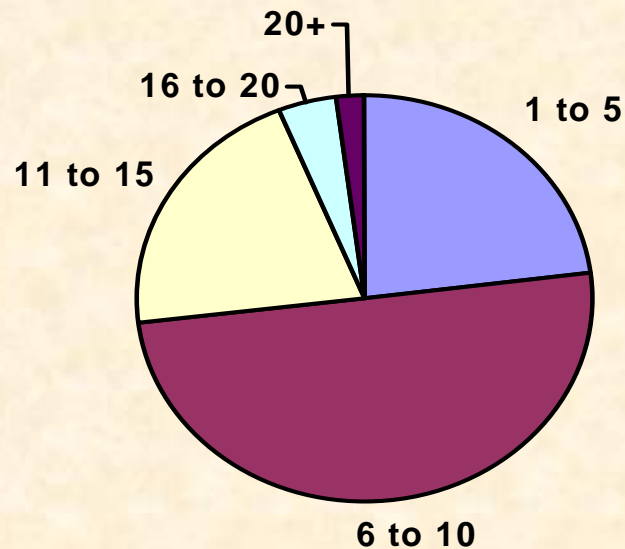
*"...yes, there is an informal unofficial network pushed by the Commander and yes, it goes against military culture, where you are to use the official channels, but it goes with the job..."*

(Senior NCO, Nation Green)

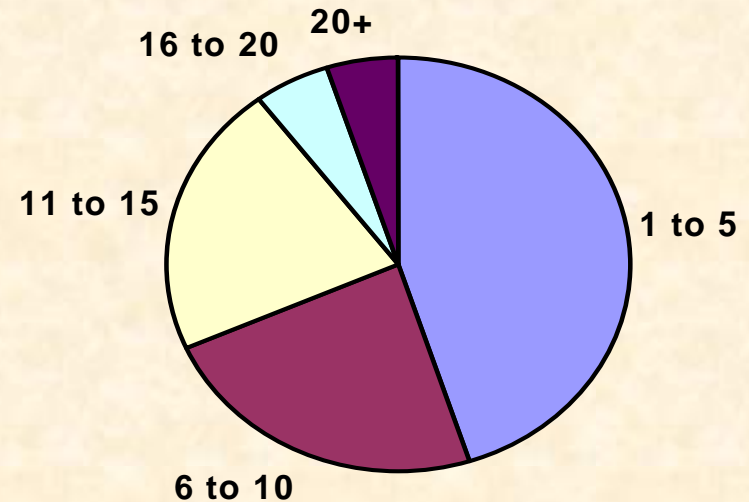
## OHQ Social Network - Size

*Q: I socialise regularly with the same... (number of colleagues)*

**Social Network Size: Less than 4 months in the staff**



**Social Network Size: More than 4 months in the staff**



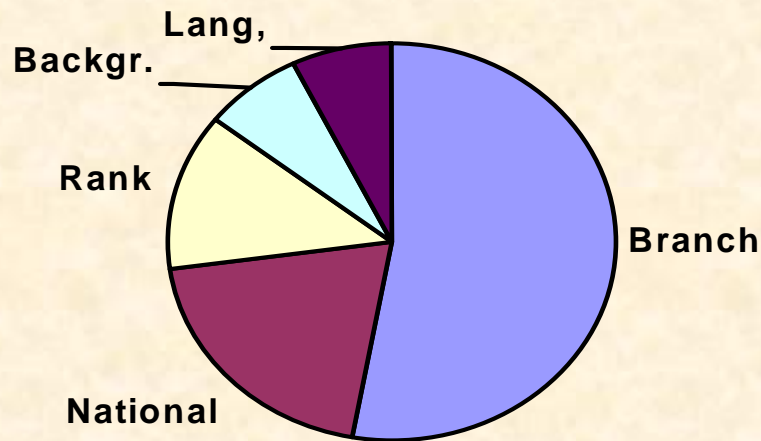
*“So, if you’d asked me before I came out here; who would I be ... socialising with on a daily basis, I would have said (Nation Green nationals), because we tend to hang out a lot together, that has been my experience in other missions, ...That is not the case here... Everybody tends to go for lunch or coffee breaks with the people they work with. That is a positive thing. I don’t know why it is different here from other mission areas or what has caused that... dynamic.”*

(Major, Nation Green)

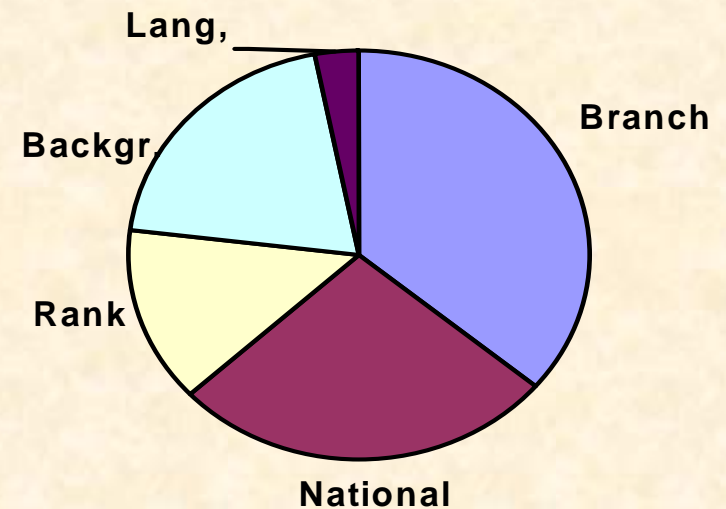
# Trusting Behaviour - Source for Advice

*Q: Who in the OHQ do you ask for advice on general issues (not branch specific)?*

Less than 4 months in the staff



More than 4 months in the staff

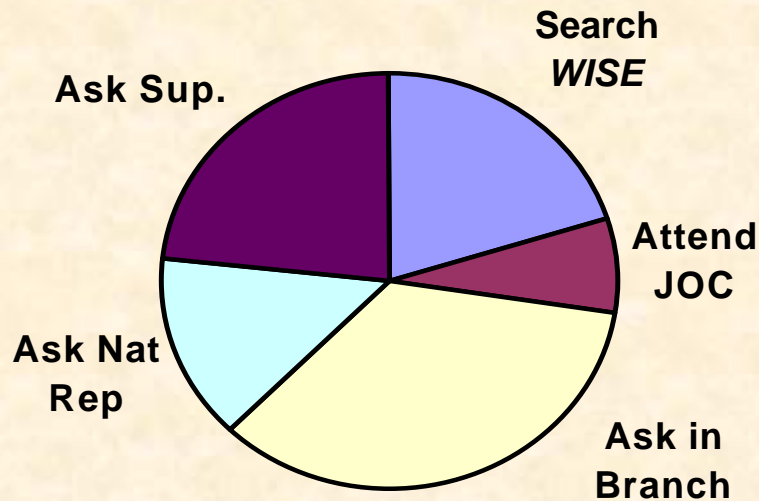


*“ I would not say mistrust but you would be sceptical about, about some of the information that you’d be getting... you know. That would go back to the national thing. ... People would come, I suppose, with... maybe certain national agendas, you know, and people would be suspicious of other people’s agendas.”*

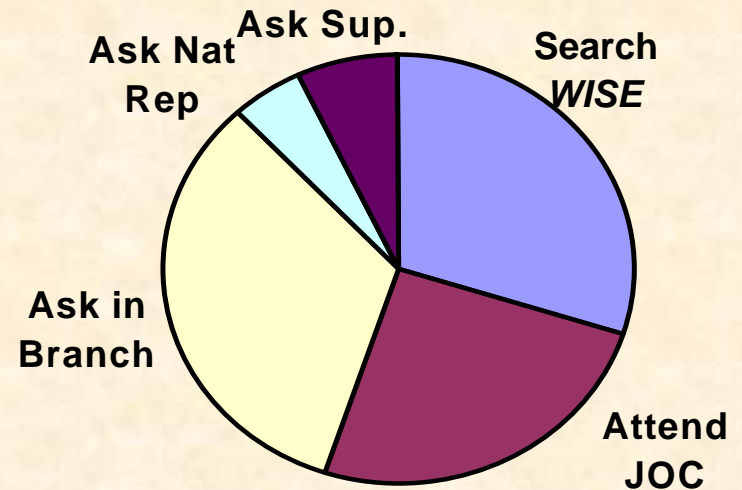
(Major, Nation A)

## Easiest Way to Quickly get Reliable Information Updates

Major Five



Other Twenty

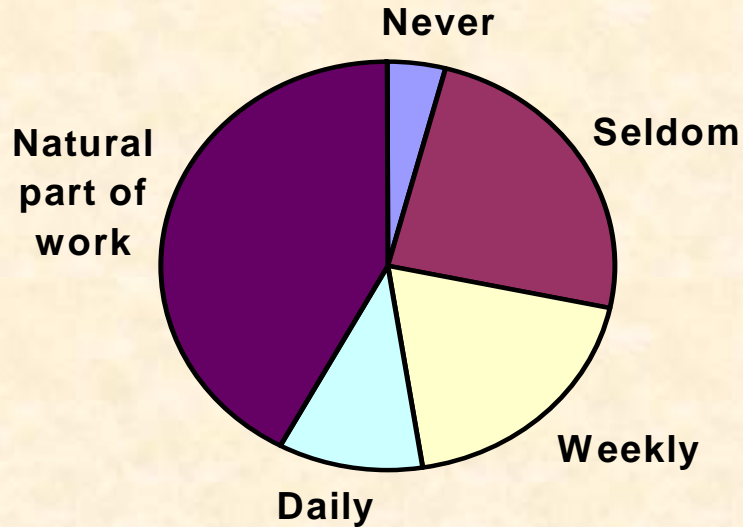


*“...and then it hit me, ok; this is how things get done here, this is how I get information through... I should have understood the multinationality better...but I was rather open when I came...”*  
(Colonel, Nation B)

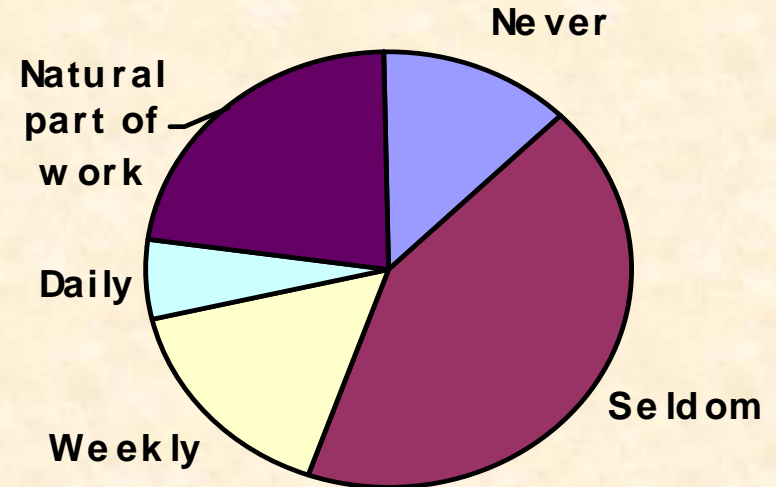


# Consideration of National Interests

Major Five



Other Twenty



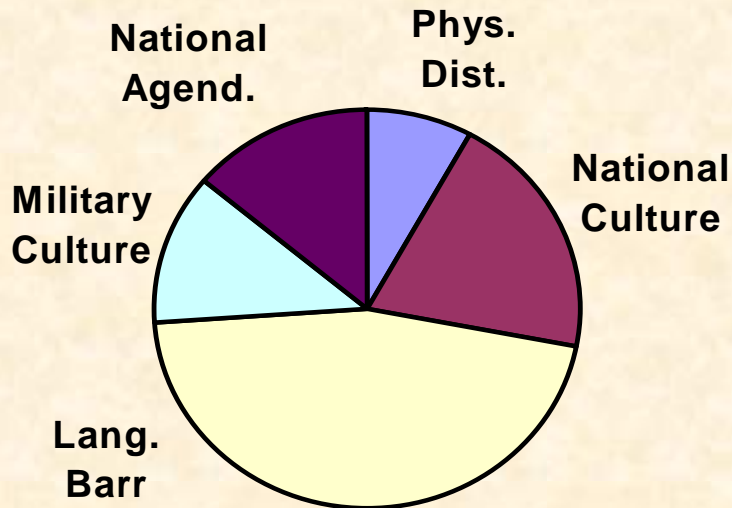
*“Yes well, every member state is coming here with his own political interest and, of course, there is a common interest in doing the mission but the way we want to do that and the feedback we intend to have personally, of for our country, or for our service, yes, this will be conflicting more or less... I don’t think that is has significant impact when you are at the tactical level. Here we are playing at the political level so, yes, the game is different... because, yes, I am a multinational but I am also (nationality Red) in the staff.”*

(Major. Nation Red)

# Sources of Working Difficulties

*Q: I find that most difficulties in working in the OHQ are created by...*

Less than 4 months in the staff



More than 4 months in the staff



*“...at a political or strategic headquarters where people are very distant, far removed from the actual theatre itself and therefore their motives can be very, very different and consequently their actions and reactions and interaction can differ quite significantly (from those in the field).”*

(Colonel, Nation Blue)

## Key Respondent Indications

Social duty related networks *grew* with time, even beyond 4 months of duty;

Social non-duty related networks *diminished* over time;

Staff members got information differently depending on the size of their national representation in the OHQ.

Staff members frequency of considering national interests related to the size of their national representation in the OHQ.

Interpersonal trust seemed to remain non-problematic to most staff members.

# THEORY PROPOSAL 1(2)

Staff members may maintain interpersonal trust across organisational borders by developing *temporary interpretative frames* in order to make sense of the unique aggregate of cultures in the OHQ. ....

*“For me it is possible to have good feelings to a person but still I am not confident about his real behaviour in relation to this task, so ... because I am aware that some people are under pressure of national commander or, what they think they should do.*  
(Civilian, Nation C)

*“I trust him, but... I understand... he (is) also working for his country. ... I didn't like it but I understand why he did it.”*  
(Major, Nation D)

# THEORY PROPOSAL 2(2)

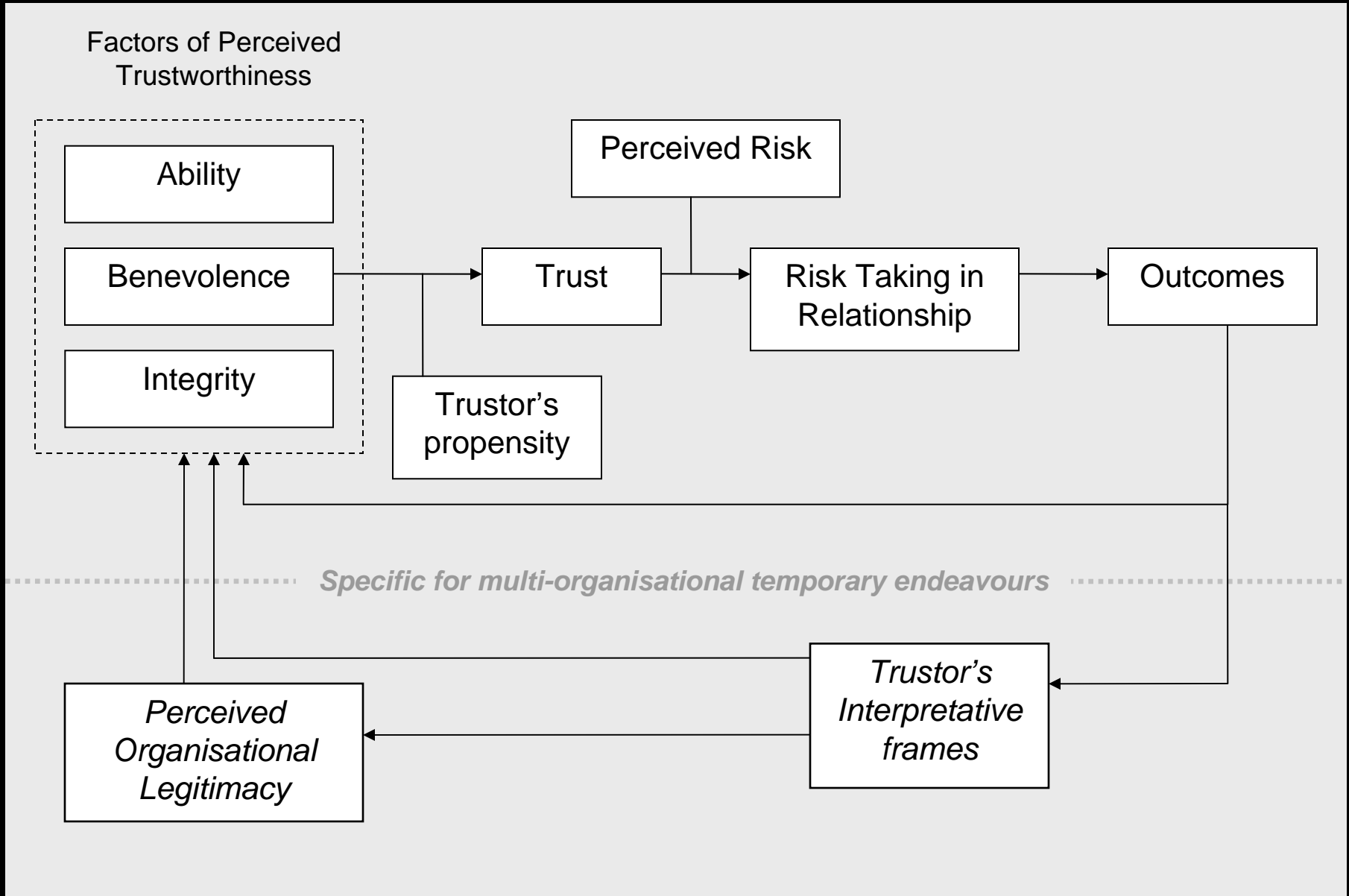
... Such temporary interpretative frames are created through processes involving the individual's endeavour specific social network.

*“... to try and understand others action where you don't, you interact with them...and if you need confirmation on a particular point clarification you discuss with others you make relationships whether it be in a formal manner or informal manner to.... try to understand an action or actions of the team, or indeed by yourself. (LtCol, nation E)*

*Having people you can talk to outside work, to sort of debrief yourself, discuss what happened during the day and get things out of your system, makes a great difference... to understand”*  
(LtCol, Nation B)



# Proposed Model building on Mayer, Davis & Shoorman Model of Trust (1995)



## Illustrating Case

- Branch A tasked Branch B to produce a plan that fell within B's area of expertise (transportation). A linked the task to a number of constraints.
- B produced a branch internal draft that B saw as "realistic", which did not meet the constraints.
- A was underhand informed, began monitoring B and demanded access to the draft. B refused.
- A and B conducted a number of meetings in which two diverging perspectives on B's role and responsibilities emerged.
- A's and B's perspectives became gradually less polarised and finally a version of the plan was agreed on.

	<i>Description of <b>own</b> perspective</i>	<i>Description of the <b>other's</b> perspective</i>
<i>Branch A</i>	"Execute Commander's directives" "Fulfil Commander's intent"	"Play it safe", "Pretend problems and later pretend to fix them in order to look good"
<i>Branch B</i>	"Suggest the best feasible option" "Provide expert opinions, tell the truth"	"Unrealistic", "Yes men", "Eager to please", "Asking for a dream factory"

# Discussion 1 (2)

## The Case Study

- *Main strengths* – rich case with multiple cultures and personal backgrounds, extensive inside observations, conclusions ”hot washed” with staff members.
- *Main limitations* – conclusions tentative due to data validity and reliability issues– inferred causalities, one case only, single observer, risk for personal bias, mainly qualitative data.

# Discussion 2(2)

## Results and Conclusions - Main Implications

- *Before* - "domestic" training needs to go beyond formal staff procedures and also prepare potential staff members for dealing with informal processes;
- *On arrival* – up-and-running endeavours would benefit from providing inexperienced staff members with some form of "mentorship" over organisational borders;
- *Recurring* – up-and-running endeavours should encourage open discussions on informal processes to promote frame alignment, likely to enhance staff efficiency .



# Questions

