



Coexistence or operational necessity: the role of formally structured organisation and informal networks during deployments

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Outline of Presentation

- Research data, questions and methods
- Study findings and their implications
- Complexity and sense making framework
- So what?

DSTO Interview Program: 2003-2007

Sample

- combat operations
 - Combat 1: 100 interviews stratified across ranks, Services, gender
 - Combat 2: 30 interviews stratified across ranks & gender
- humanitarian operation
 - 16 interviews stratified across ranks & gender

Interview Focus areas

- Pre-deployment preparation & training
- Duties whilst deployed
- Decision-making processes
- C2 arrangements
- Interdependence
- Information gathering
- Information sharing
- Communication flows
- Skills and competencies
- Lessons learned

Power of informal networks

- Crisis / emergency management
- 'Real work' in organisations happens despite formal structures
 - Innovation
 - Communication – connectors and information brokers
 - Knowledge creation and sharing
 - Collaboration
 - Speed and flexibility
- Immunological response & 'happiness' factor
- Unconscious reasons
 - Affiliation needs
 - Identity and self-esteem
 - 'Defence mechanism' (strength in numbers), group cohesion
- Conscious reasons
 - Need to know
 - Political manoeuvring

Informal structures and the military

- Lack of critical mass of research into informal networks in the military during operational circumstances;
 - *anecdotal evidence (Cause, Ritcher et al. 2005; Chin, Reynolds et al. 2007), and*
 - *some empirical evidence (Burnett, Henman et al. 2008; Talbot and O'Toole 2008)*
- Need to develop methodological approaches to study informal networks in military operations

“The importance of the ‘**networker**’ over the ‘network’ emerged, thus introducing concepts of ‘**Networker Centric Warfare**’ and the ‘**Networker at War**’ ”

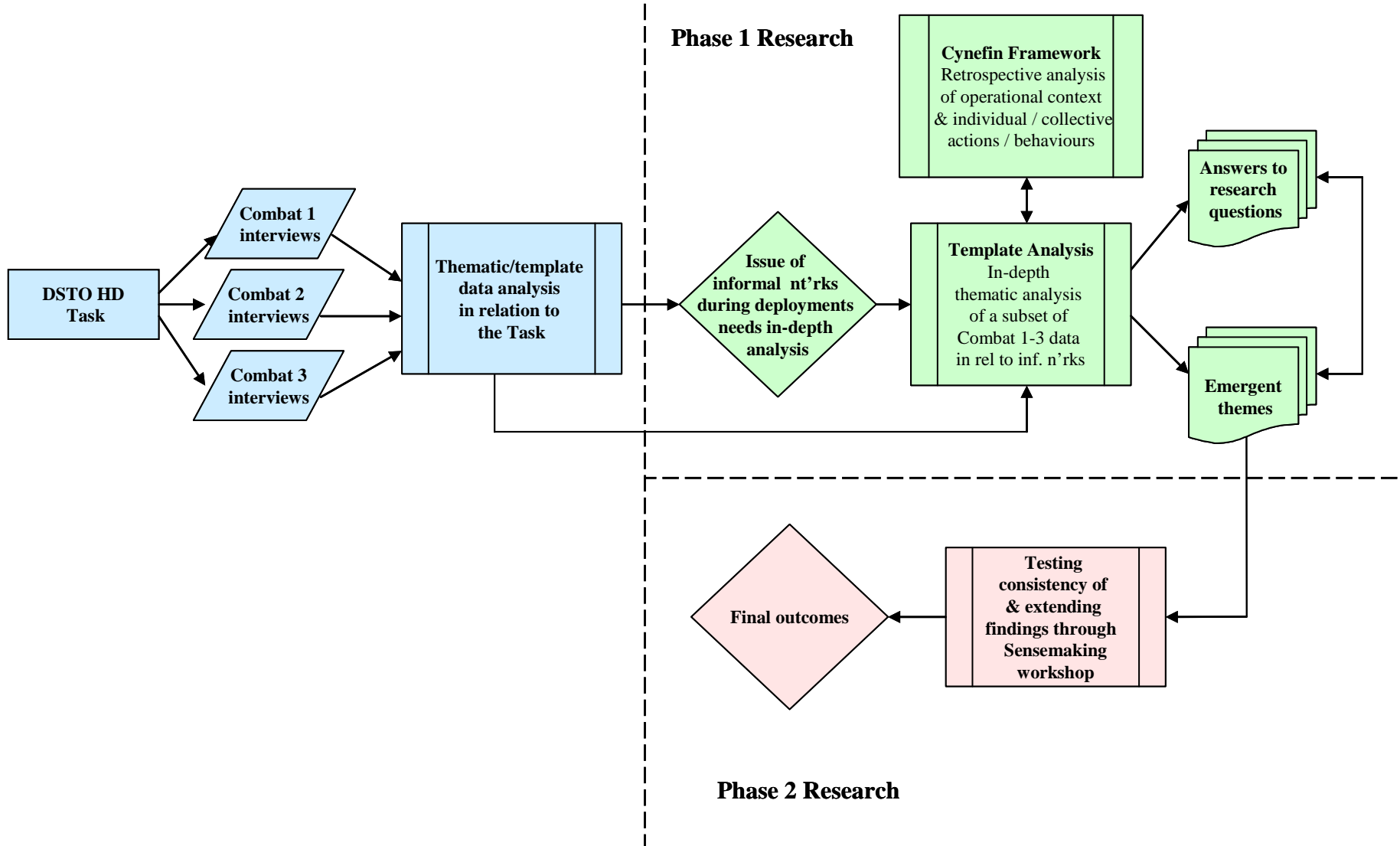
Lieutenant General David Hurley, Australia's Defence Capabilities Priorities, 2005

Research Questions

- What gives rise to informal networks activity during deployments?
- Do informal networks contribute to mission goals during military operations?
- What factors need to be addressed in order to harness the strengths inherent to the formal organisation and that of informal networks during deployments?



Research Design



Findings Phase1 – Prevalence of informal networks activity

Functional area	Deployment		
	Combat 1 2001-2004	Combat 2 2005-2007	Humanitarian 2004-2005
Preparation for deployment	high	medium-low	high
Handovers (getting to know org culture, introduction to networks)	high	high	low
Access to information, information / communication flows	high	high	medium
Intelligence needs	high	medium	medium
Timelines and accuracy of information	high	high	low
Communication infrastructure / coalition compatible technology	high	medium-high	high
Resources / equipment	high	high	high
Logistics / supply chain	high	medium	high
Formal processes and procedures	high	medium	high
Operational / time imperative	high	high	high
C2 arrangements	high-medium	medium	low

Phase1 – Voices from the theatre of operations

The amount of information you get - you can sit down and get a beer with one of those guys who have actually been in it and had to do it, was just phenomenal

Study Participant, 2001-2007

In intelligence, informal networks are even more important than in just normal everyday military

Study Participant, 2001-2007

The rhetoric is that we are supporting operations, the reality is a different work ethic - a lot of manning of civilians and they don't understand the operational imperative

Study Participant, 2001-2007

I had a relationship with them and I could call them up or email them about issues and they would help me with certain things

(Study Participant, 2001-2007)

My observations were that every line of communication, every logistic support chain is flawed. Trying to get resupplied from Australia - it was a nightmare

(Study Participant, 2001-2007)

**AUS government /
Coalition**

**ADF Culture
/ Values**

**Org / systemic
factors**

**Immediate
factors**

Outcomes

Informal networks

AUS government / Coalition

AUS govt order to deploy troops

Budgetary constraints

Laws restricting access to coalition info

ADF Culture / Values

Mateship culture

Importance of operations

"Can do" culture

Command mindset

Org / systemic factors

Inefficient processes/procedures

Sluggish info flows

Sub-contracting to civilian org.

Flawed logistics/supply chain

Lack of understanding of op imperative

C2 arrangements

Immediate factors

Resource poor

Intel / info needs

Insufficient pre-depl. info

No access to coalition info

Lack of IT infrastructure / coalition compatible infrastructure

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Outcomes

Widespread socialising/rel'ships bld

Self-organising

Individuals face dilemmas with disclosure/non-disclosure of info

Spontaneous/serendipitous informal n'rks

Targeted/Strategic/Goal oriented networking

By-passing chain of c'nd

'Hastily' formed n'rks

Impaired SA

Trust /rapport / loyalty

Tangible outcomes

Dormant & revived n'rks

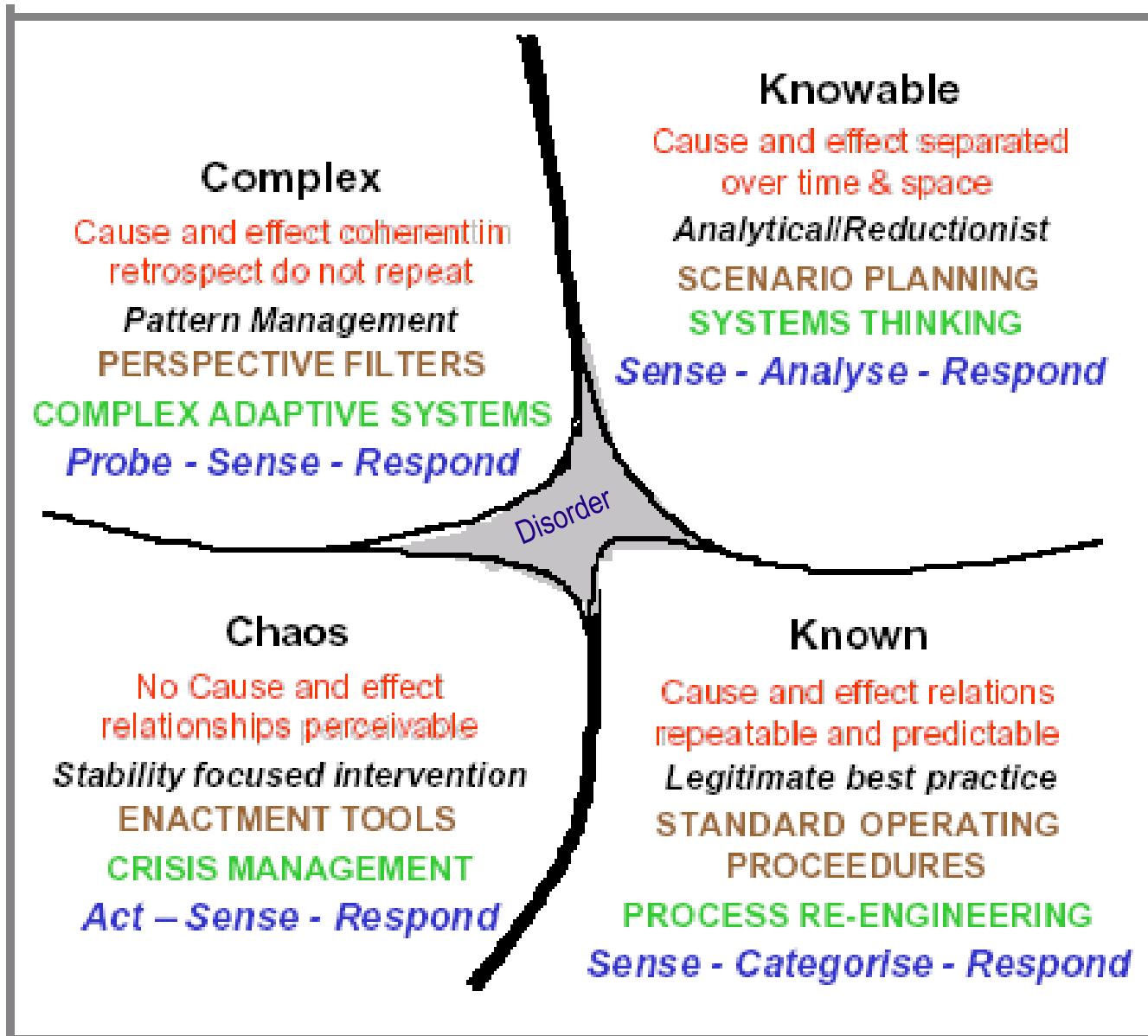
Troops safety

Ops efficiency

Impaired interoperability

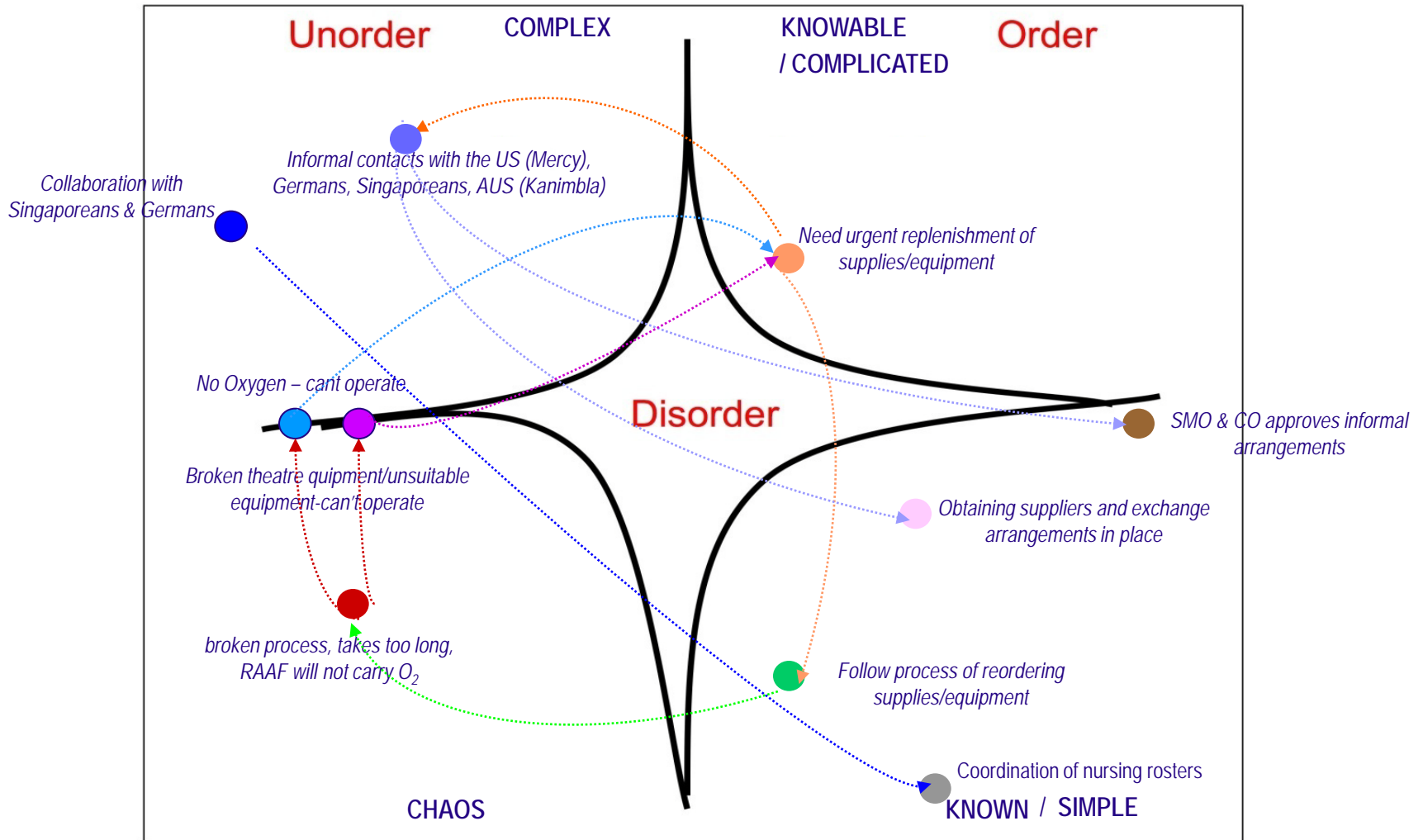
Complexity – Cynefin framework

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Example of analysis of a humanitarian operation using Cynefin framework



Phase1 – What needs addressing to harness the strengths of formal and informal structures

- Accountability (hierarchical, legal, political, professional)
- Responsibility / autonomy (ability to respond, ownership of endeavour)
- Structure of command and control (adaptability of organisational structures)

The chain of command was always used, but there was also a side channel used as well.

(Study Participant, 2001-2007)

You would always start with informal, but the formal would be always after...

(Study Participant, 2001-2007)

Phase2 – Requirements for effective formal / informal coexistence

- **Education (6*)**

Greater education and understanding of when and how to use such networks and how they can best complement formal networks

- **Doctrinal guidance (7)**

Acknowledgement that informal networks exist and doctrinal guidance on how best to approach informal networking

- **C2 Arrangements (10)**

Clear direction of left / right of arc; command understanding of informal networks

- **Organisational systemic issues (4)**

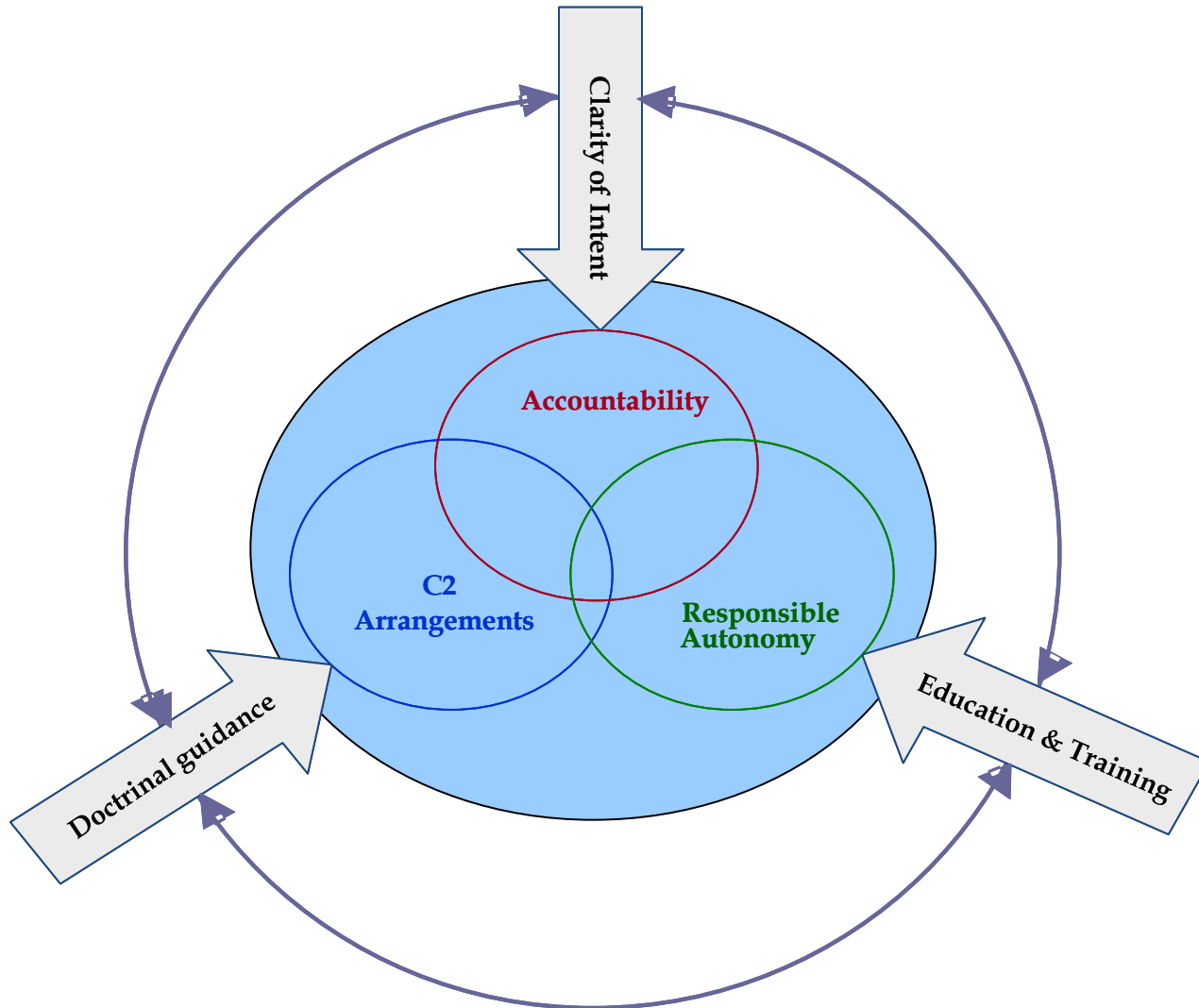
Culture of feedback to fix broken formal networks

- **Handovers and LOs (3)**

Improved liaison methods - i.e. early embedding of LOs.

** Number of responses*

Summary - Reconciliation of top-down hierarchy with social networks



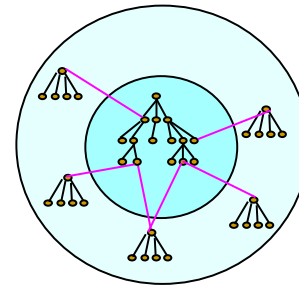
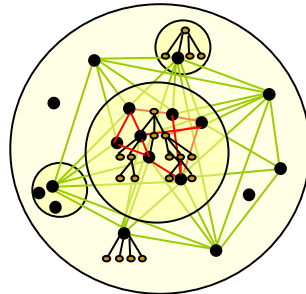
Summary - Organisational Architecture & External Environment

Complex

Complicated

Adaptability Focused

Customised / Network Architecture
 Mission Command / Commander Intent / Boundary setting
 Emergent leadership
 Informal/social networks
 Interaction & Professional Mastery
 Self organising
 Exploration / Collaboration



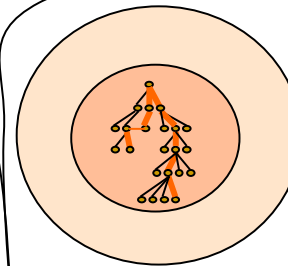
Modular or Heterarchical Architecture
 Mix of Mission Command and C2
 Professional Mastery (Professional/Logical)
 Cooperation

Improvised Action

Orchestrated Action

Need Agility with all Architectures and judgement to apply them usefully
 Innovation

Bureaucratic Structured
Traditional C2 Architecture
Coordination



Performance / Place / Cause-Effect Centric

Chaos

Stability Focused

Known

Conclusions...

- Widespread utility and reliance on informal networks during operations

- Complex and uncertain environment
 - Utilise benefits of formal & informal organisation → must understand their co-existence
 - Education → responsible autonomy
 - Doctrinal guidance → command and control arrangements
 - Commander's intent → accountability

 - Transform personnel management by providing responsible autonomy

 - Design architectures of participation to harness human capital

“...no formal organization will operate effectively without an accompanying informal organization” (*Simon, 1976, 148-149*)