



Australian Government
Department of Defence
Defence Science and
Technology Organisation

The Accountability Dilemma in the Network Centric Era



Elizabeth Kohn, Alexander Kalloniatis, Irena Ali
DSTO, Joint Operations Division

Operationalizing
Agility

17th ICCRTS
Fairfax, VA, USA
June 19-21, 2012

DSTO

Why: Accountability and Defence Forces

Australia:

“The question is often asked: why aren’t Defence officials held to account when things go wrong? ... **diffuse and confused accountabilities within Defence make it difficult to know who to ultimately hold to account for anything.** The ‘system’ more often than not is viewed as the culprit.”

Mark Thomson, June 2011 – Issue 41, *ASPI Special Report*

United Kingdom:

The report also finds a **blurring of roles and accountability** between the “Capability” group ...and the Defence Equipment and Support “Delivery” organisation

Bernard Gray, Review of Acquisition for the Secretary of State (UK) for Defence, 2009

Canada:

At the end of the day, **establishing a single point of accountability will improve the process** and therefore benefit our men and women in the military. They deserve the best and we ought to be willing to deliver the best. This government came into power with the mantra of demanding increased accountability. Allowing billions of dollars to be spent without being able to hold someone accountable undermines this commitment. I look forward to the Prime Minister standing up and saying “make it happen”.

Alan Williams, former Assistant Deputy Minister, Canadian Department of National Defence, The Hill Times, 2010

Why: The Accountability Dilemma in C2 Theory

NCW Tenets 2 (shared SA) → 3 (self-synch);

Pigeau-McCann C2: Establishment of **Common Intent** to achieve Coordinated Action.

Who then is accountable?

- “Sharing” ‘diffuses’ accountability;
- The criterion for agility and mission success in dynamic, complex operations is *inconsistent* with ‘traditional’ Accountability.

The ‘Dilemma’

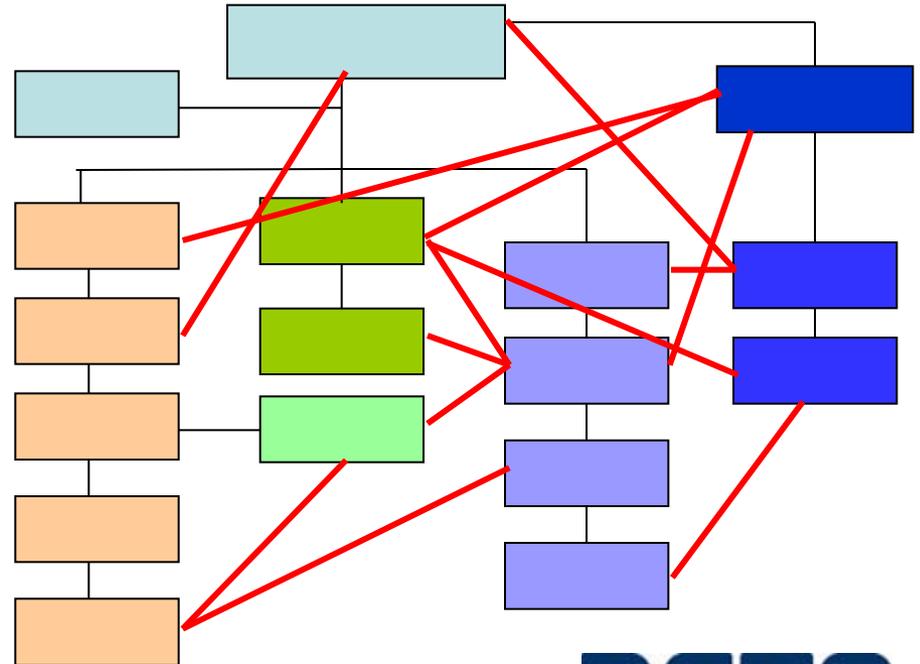
Organisations and complexity

Organisations are "...routinely viewed as dynamic systems of adaptation and evolution that contain multiple parts which interact with one another and the environment" (Morel and Ramanujam 1999: p278)

Military operational environment – VUCA (Paparone et al. 2008)

The 'problem of many hands' (Thompson, 1980)

- Multiple functionaries
- Multiple levels
- Multiple measures
- Multiple interactions



Formal and informal organisational structures during deployment – perceptions of a dilemma between agility and auditability

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)

They didn't want to go through the system because it would take time.

(Study Participant, 2001-2007)

I would use some sort of formal information process because the formal processes have checks and balances.

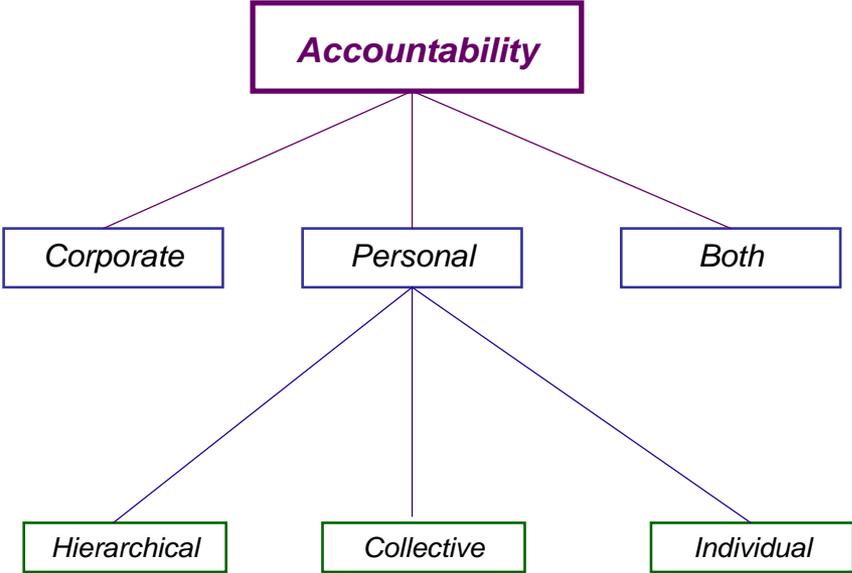
(Study Participant, 2001-2007)

Accountability From Literature

Figure 1
Types of Accountability Relationships

		Sources of Expectations and/or Control	
		<i>Internal</i>	<i>External</i>
Degree of Autonomy	<i>Low</i>	Hierarchical	Legal
	<i>High</i>	Professional	Political

Romzek
2000



Bovens (1998)

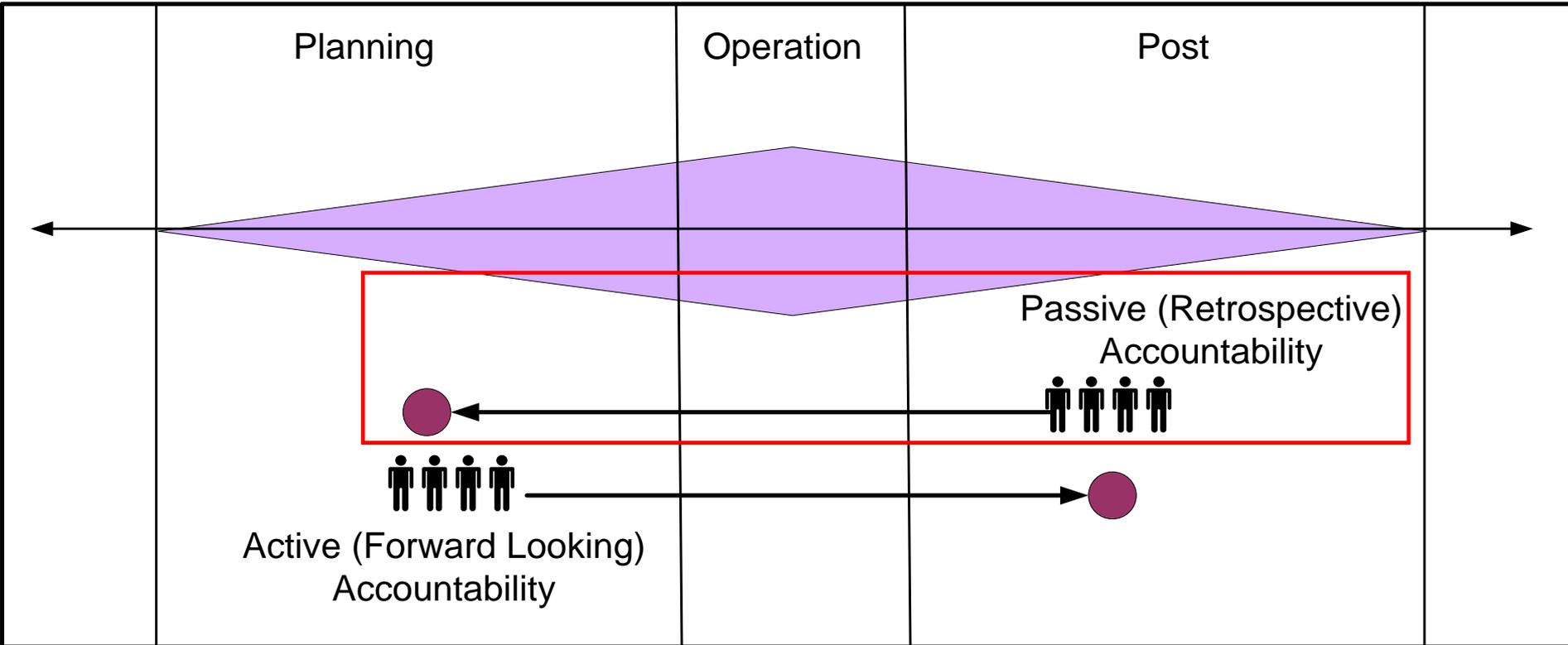
Responsibility

≠

Accountability

(Bovens, 1998; Mulgan 2000; Lindkvist and Llewellyn 2003).

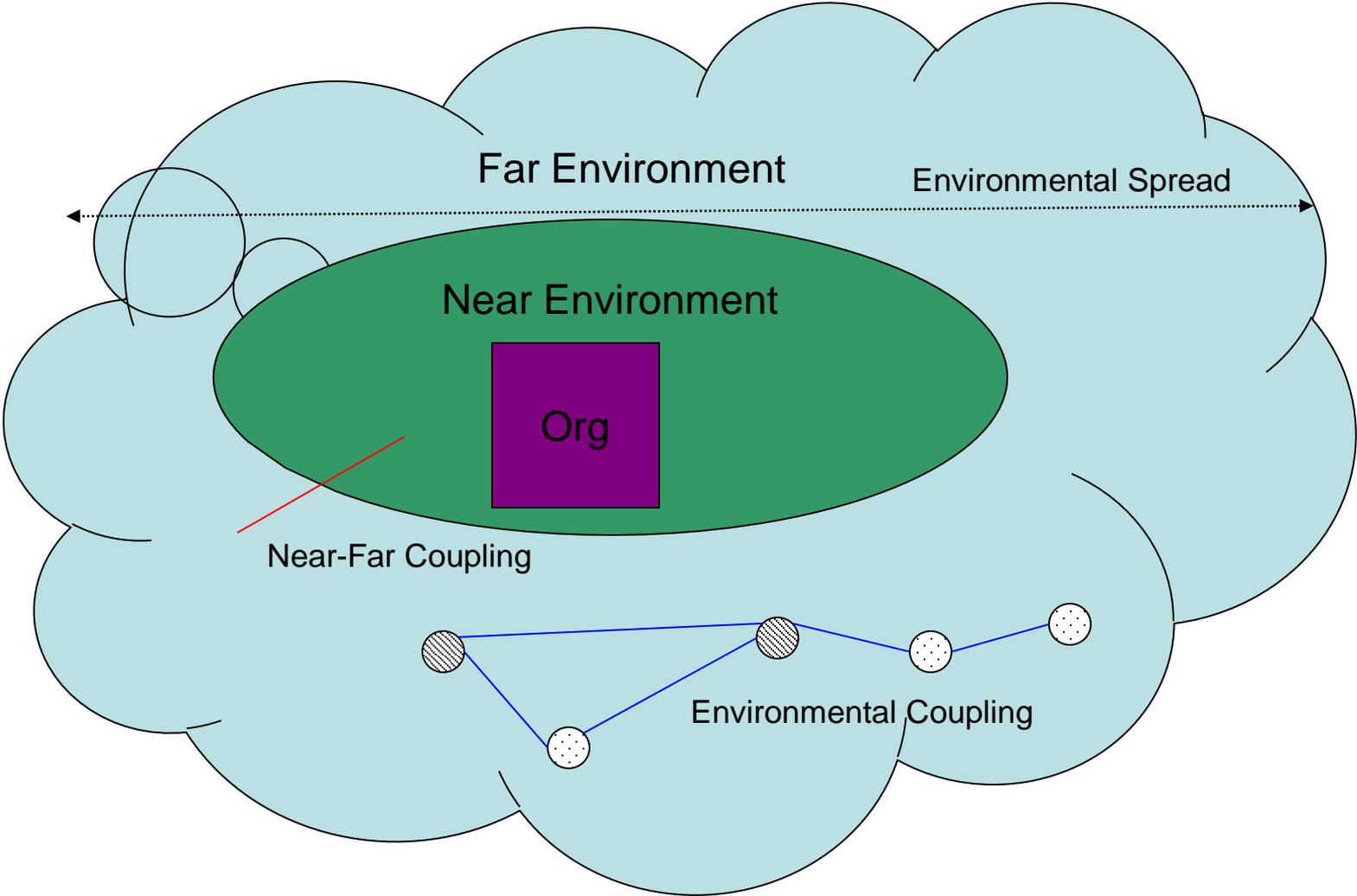
(Schlenker et al 1994; Mulgan 2000; Romzek and Ingraham 2000)



Our definition:

Accountability is the capacity for an organisational entity to answer, externally to itself for actions, successful or unsuccessful, undertaken in the past.

Representing the environment



Contingency Theory

Contingency Theory: forms of organisation is fit-for-purpose for its environment.

Burns & Stalker, 1961:
Mechanistic vs Organic Forms

Kalloniatis, Macleod, Kohn,
15th ICCRTS, 2010

Organisational Variable	Environmental Variable
Org Size	Environmental Spread
Skills Complexity	Environmental Complexity
Centralisation of Decision Making	Near-Far Coupling

↓
Mintzberg's (1979) 5 Types

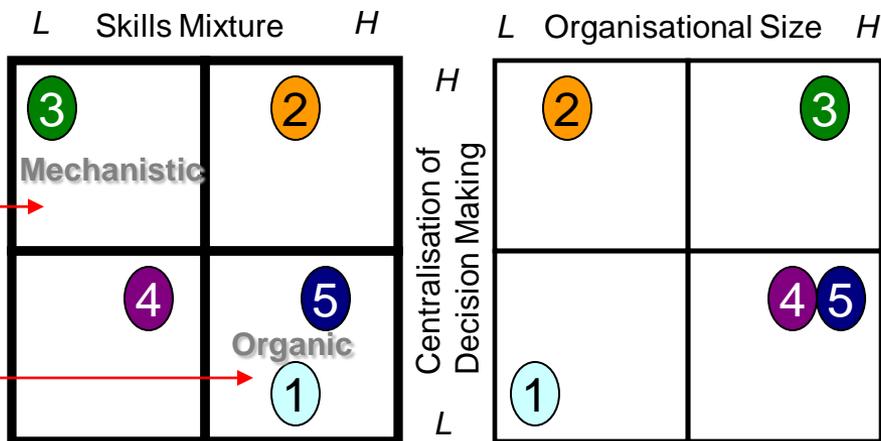
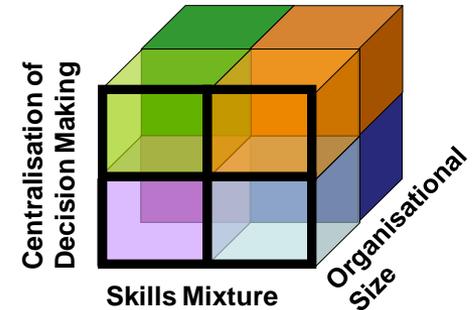
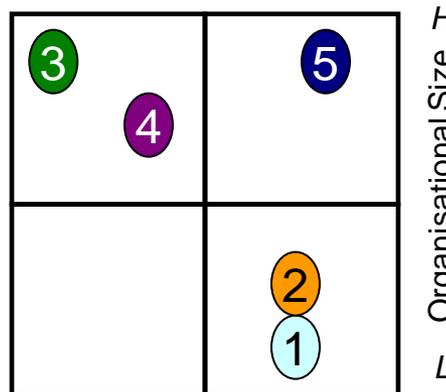
① Adhocracy

② Simple

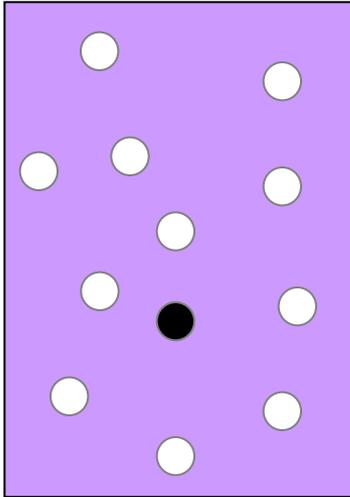
③ Machine

④ Professional

⑤ Divisional



Accountability Constructs 1



Positional Accountability
Accountability related to a position or a profession



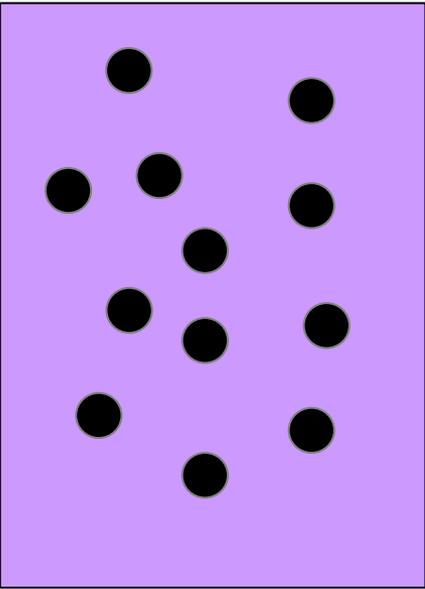
Corporate Accountability
Accountability related to an organisation as a whole entity that is not delineated to the individuals.

Legend
● Accountable Position
○ Non-Accountable Position

Agent's fitness to be held to account: based on Pettit (2007) see paper.

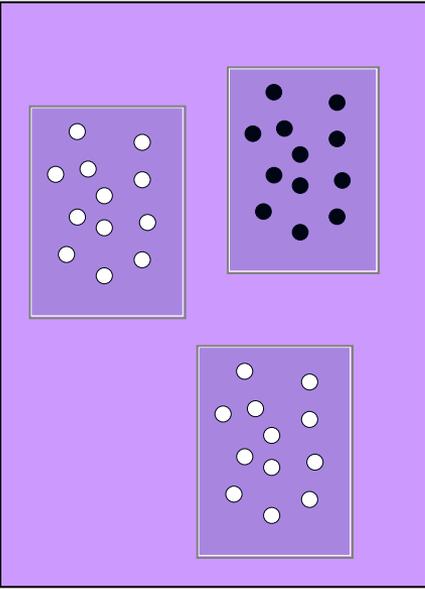
Agency: to consider the group as an agent in its own right, there needs to be “corporate” rules that set out how the group operates as a unified entity rather than a collection of individuals

Accountability Constructs 2



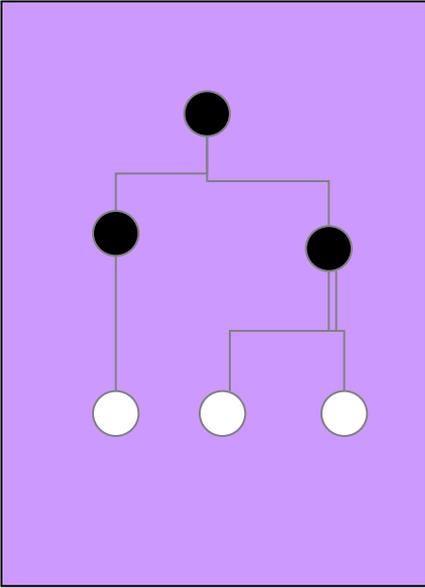
Corporate Collective

Accountability of all individuals within a collective for the behaviour of the whole



Team Collective

Accountability of individuals within a set of collectives that are not output or outcomes linked across different collectives



Hierarchical Collective

Top down accountability of individuals within a collective

Legend

- Accountable Position
- Non-Accountable Position

A Contingency Theory of Accountability needs 4D!

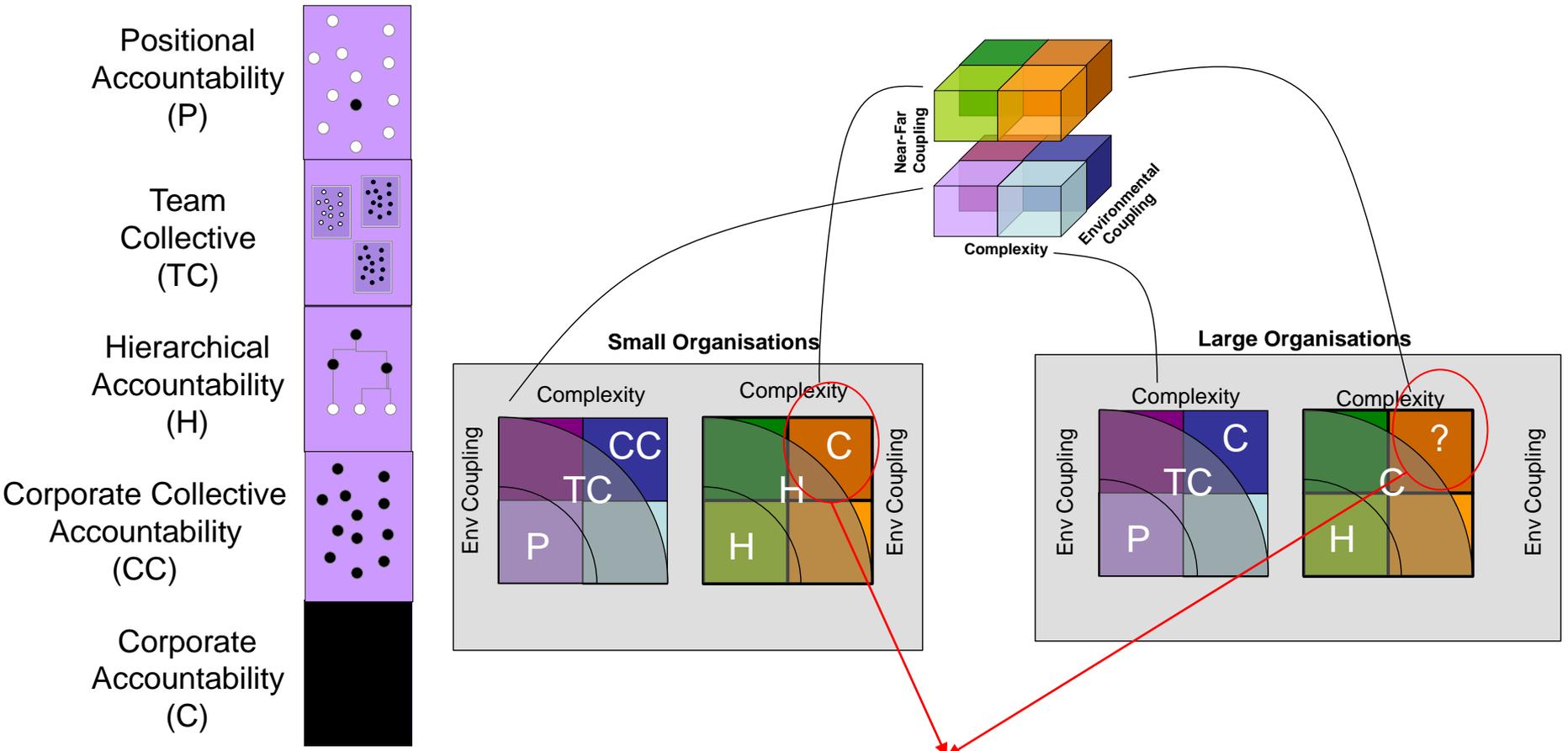
<u>Organisational Variable</u>	<u>Environmental Variable</u>
Org Size	Environmental Spread
Skills Complexity	Environmental Complexity
Centralisation of Decision Making	Near-Far Coupling
<i>Horizontal Coupling</i>	<i>Environmental Coupling</i>

Mintzberg 1979

Pugh et al. 1969;
Kalloniatis et al. 2010

Perrow 1984

Accountability and Contingency Theory



NCW and Hierarchical Accountability are incompatible!

Conclusions and Open Questions

NCW is incompatible with Individual and Hierarchical Accountability!

Can ICT help? Extensions using Organisational Types of Lars Groth (1999); see Kalloniatis et al 15th ICCRTS.

Validation: Experimentation is tricky but there is a method.

Is there a *default* Organisation Type that more readily enables multiple Accountability types for different contingencies, or for brief periods in the High⁴ regime?

Is it reasonable to expect 'unusual' Accountability types to be legitimate in the higher strategic environment?