

ORGANIZATIONAL FEATURES AND THEIR EFFECT IN THE RESPONSE PROCESS OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

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Research Problem

Existing emergency management coordination processes in Australia are often strained when emergency situations get complex.



The Context

This study is carried out under Bushfire CRC's Organizing for Effective Incident Management (OEIM) project which seeks to better understand how multi-agency emergency management coordination above the IMT level can be improved in order to reduce the consequences to the communities.

It focuses on the study of organizational response processes and organizational features that manage competing demands in complex emergency situations.

It is a component of OEIM project that aims to build a coordination typology to assist fire service agencies to examine the relationship between organizational systems, capabilities, processes and organizational features.

Research Questions

What organizational processes and organizational features come into play in complex emergency events?

How might these be utilized to develop an organizational typology that can be used by the industry to better organize for complex fire events?

This study integrates theoretical frameworks illustrated in Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 below to analyze organizational response processes.

Fig. 1 explains the response process in terms of **domains** (jurisdictions responsible for particular roles in the event), **tasks** (division of labor for the enactment of activities), **resources** (human capacities and technologies) and **activities** (conjoined actions of individuals and social units).

		Challenges / demands	
		Routine	Non - routine
Structures	Existing	I. Established Organizations - Coordination of domains and tasks are clearly discernible - Familiar activities and resources available	III. Extending Organizations - Coordination of domains and tasks are discernible - New activities and limited resources
	New	II. Expanding Organizations - Coordination of domains and tasks are not clear - Familiar activities and resources available	IV. Emergent Organizations - Coordination of domains and tasks are not clear - New activities and limited resources

Fig 1. Organizational response processes in disasters (adapted from Dynes, 1979; Boin & Paul't Hart, 2010).

To further analyze these organizational response processes, the framework of organizational features below is also utilized.

External Orientation	Adaptability	Mission
	Involvement	Consistency
	Change & Flexibility	Stability & Direction

Fig.2. Framework of organizational features (after Denison's model of organizational culture and performance, 1990, 2005)

Adaptability	Capacity to receive, interpret, and translate signals from its operational environment into internal behavioural changes; organizational learning.
Mission	Ability to define a meaningful direction that provides a sense of focus and a common vision.
Consistency	Provides integration, coordination and control
Involvement	Creates a sense of ownership and responsibility; results in greater commitment

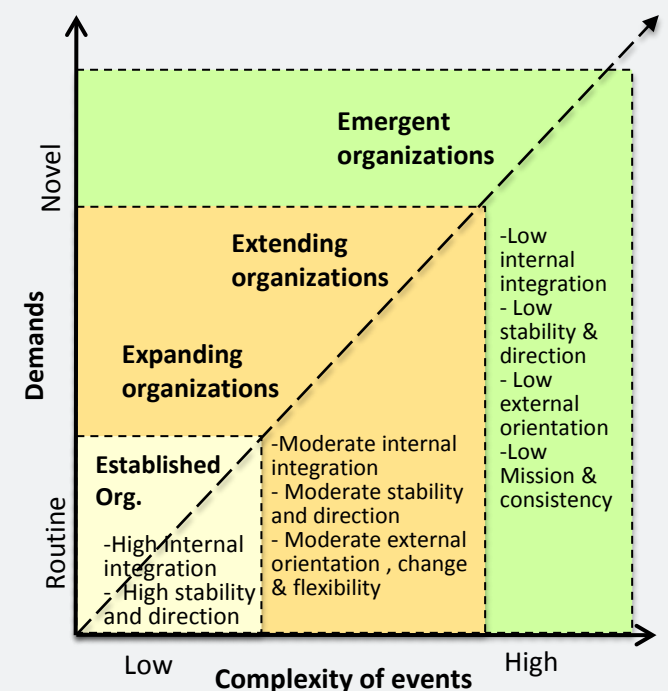


Fig 3: Integrated framework showing organizational features involved in the disaster response process (based on Dynes, 1979; Boin & Paul't Hart, 2010 & Denison, 1990, 2005)

The key challenge is to develop organizational processes that are at the same time adaptive, yet highly consistent, as well as having a high regard for involvement of stakeholders and a shared mission.

Method

Conceptual theoretical frameworks in Fig1, 2 & 3 are being used to analyze organizational response processes in related case studies of emergency events.

Outcomes and Expected Benefits

Overall, this study facilitates in building a framework for organizational typology.

Through the process of case study analysis and stakeholder assessment, the organizational typology will be developed as a tool for use in organizational response analysis and training / exercises, and to identify any changes needed.

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