



**HAVE ICT INNOVATIONS TURNED THE
PRINCIPLE OF “ORGANIZATIONAL CHOICE”
INTO THE PRINCIPLE OF “INFINITE
FREEDOM”?**

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Starting point:

- Topic: concepts such as Network Centric Warfare (**NCW**) & Network Enabled Capabilities (**NEC**)
- ICT-innovations enable “**robustly connected** networks”
- This enables the development of very good **Situational Awareness**
- Eventually, this enables **self-organization** and creates a network of **swarming** units in which patterns **emerge**
- The idea is that such networks can meet the demands of a **super-turbulent** environment

A paradigm changing idea?

- Bousquet: Chaoplexic paradigm
- NCW & NEC suggest that **hierarchy** in organizations is made superfluous as a result of “robust networking”
- NCW & NEC suggest that the “archy enemy” of the Sociotechnical Approach can finally be defeated
- Organizational choice is unnecessary because there is infinite freedom
- No resign/ design theory is necessary anymore

Now, is that really convincing?

- Case: 107 ASBt, part of TFU in Afghanistan
 - TFU: Ad hoc collection of 49 units
 - 107 ASBt struggled to understand how other units operated, how that affected them, what other units were relevant in the first place, how conditions in Afghanistan affected their own UAV's, etc
 - Result: several significant safety incidents
- The TFU network was underdeveloped, and worked itself out during the mission as operators developed an understanding

Now, is that really convincing?

- So, not a super agile super system, but a leaky system which operators were desperate to keep afloat
- Struggle: **understanding interconnections** in ad hoc networks
- Not an issue of **information processing**, but of **understanding**
- Only when operators would be **perfect information processors**, without **bounded rationality** would chaotic ideas work

Where does this lead to?

- No doubt that ICT innovations have been groundbreaking and have changed our conceptions of what “an organization” is
- But they do not make hierarchy superfluous, so not “paradigm changing”
- The challenge for the Sociotechnical Approach: how to benefit from new technological possibilities against the background of “old ideas”?
- What new organizational choices are possible to create sociotechnical organizations while benefitting from the latest technological developments?