

# Communication post COVID-19: what is the 'next normal'?

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*with Stijn Pieters and  
Dr. Hugo Marynissen  
PM • Risk Crisis Change*



***Learning from a pandemic while preparing  
for global recession  
the political edition by Pieters & Marynissen***

The vital importance of crisis communications  
in how to cope with wicked problems through  
transdisciplinary collaboration.

***Just sit back and relax, it will be fun.***

Really.

### *Why crisis communications is important?*

#### POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS

- Putting forward problem
- Communicate position
- Persuade to adopt policy
  
- Attack/Defend policies

**Sense – analyse/categorize – respond**

**Probe – sense – respond**

#### CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

- Express emotional involvement
- Notice emotions of public
- Analyse and define uncertainty
- Take away uncertainty by:
  - Communicate unambiguous
  - Reluctance to simplify
  - Remain consistent (but agile)

**Act - Sense - Respond**

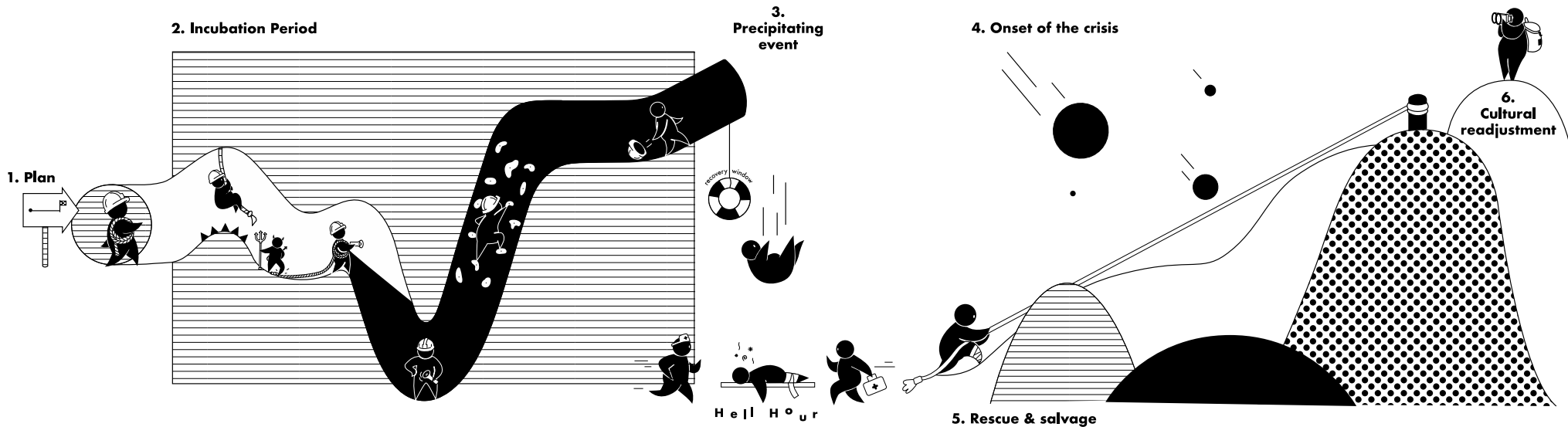


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### The crisis cycle



Turner, 1978  
Lauder &  
Pieters, 2019

### ***Why politicians loose their job over crisis communications?***

Window of recovery phase: repeating pattern + evocative +  
emo/ethics

thus: *Trust*

Crisis phase (Hell / Recovery): failing leadership expressed by  
partners

thus: *Trust*

Adjusting phase: not the right manager for the adjusted objectives

thus: *Trust*

## *Summary*

Do we live in an ordered world where exceptionally things become chaotic?

**(Option 1)**

**(OR)**

Do we live in a chaotic world where we manage to create a few oases of order?

**(Option 2)**

### *Politicians are ‘crisis managers’. What is that?*

Tame problems need a rational power.

A manager providing *the right process*.

Critical problems need a coercive power.

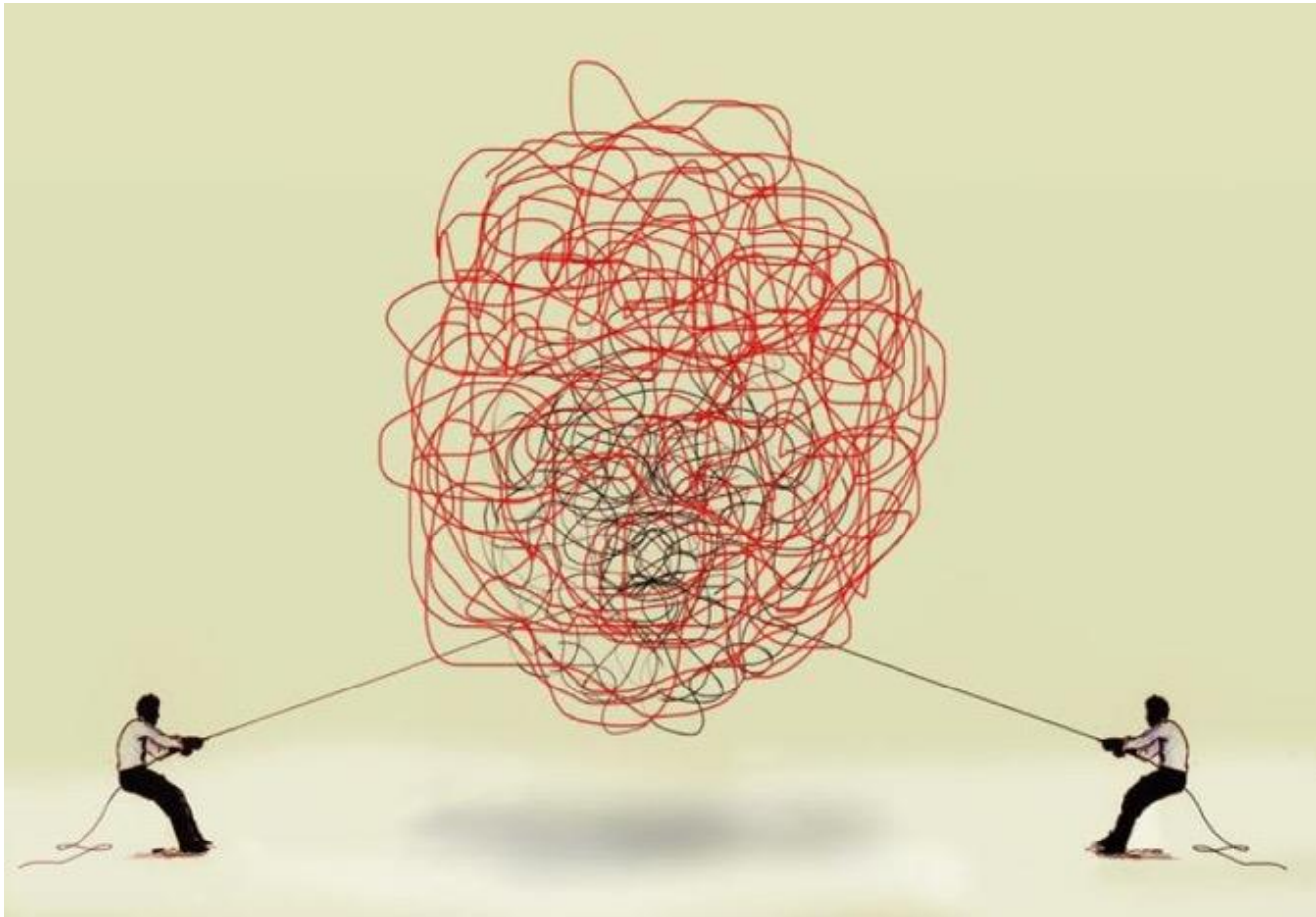
A commander providing *the answer*.

Wicked problems need an emotional power.

A leader asking  *ght question*.



*It's a wicked problem...*





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### YOUR PLAN.



### REALITY.





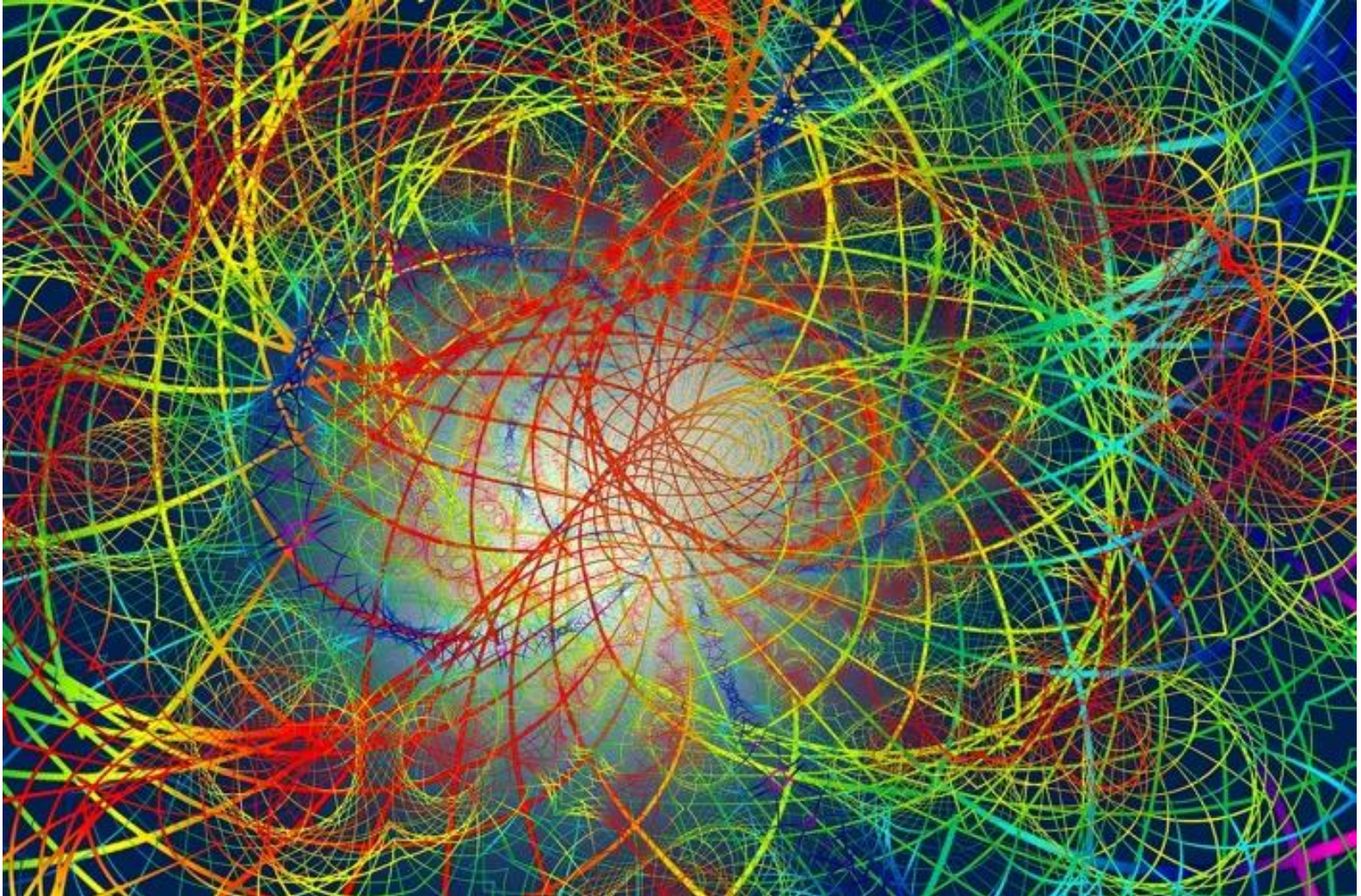


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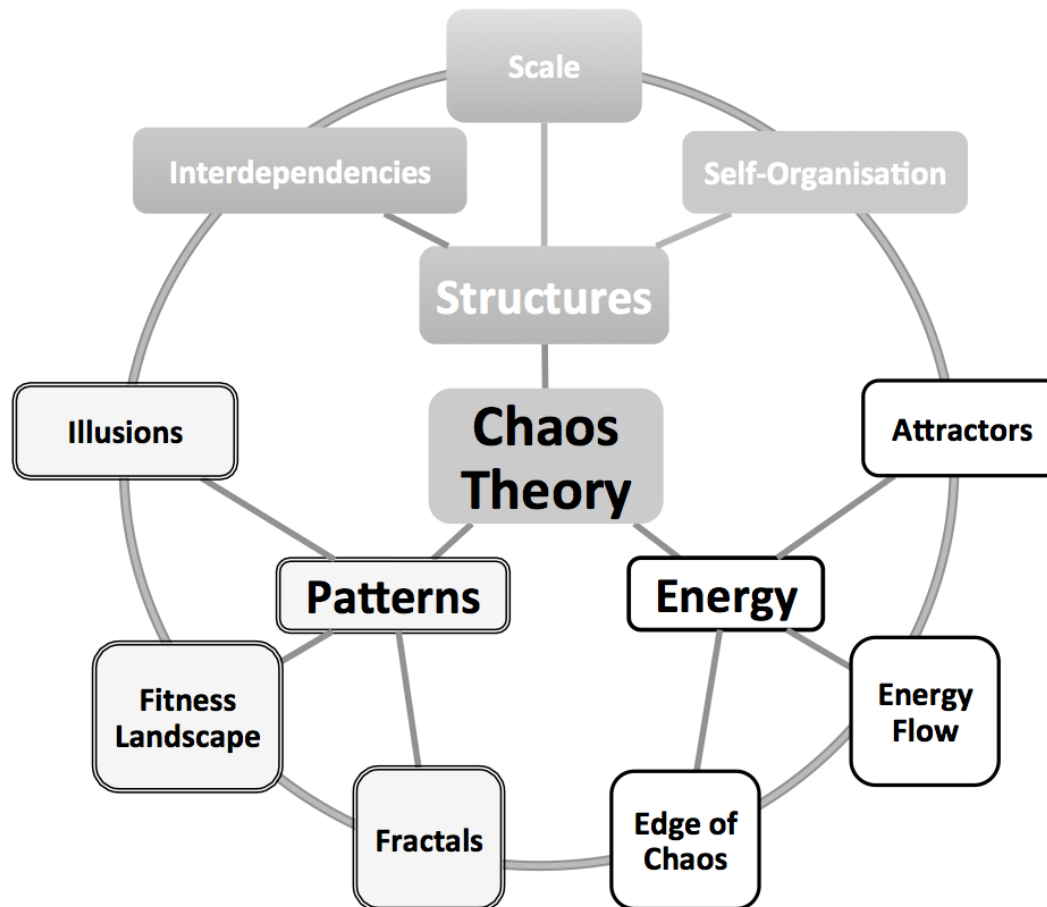
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*... in a chaotic univers*



### *PM's catalytic framework for chaos* *Ask the right questions*





*Focus on structure*

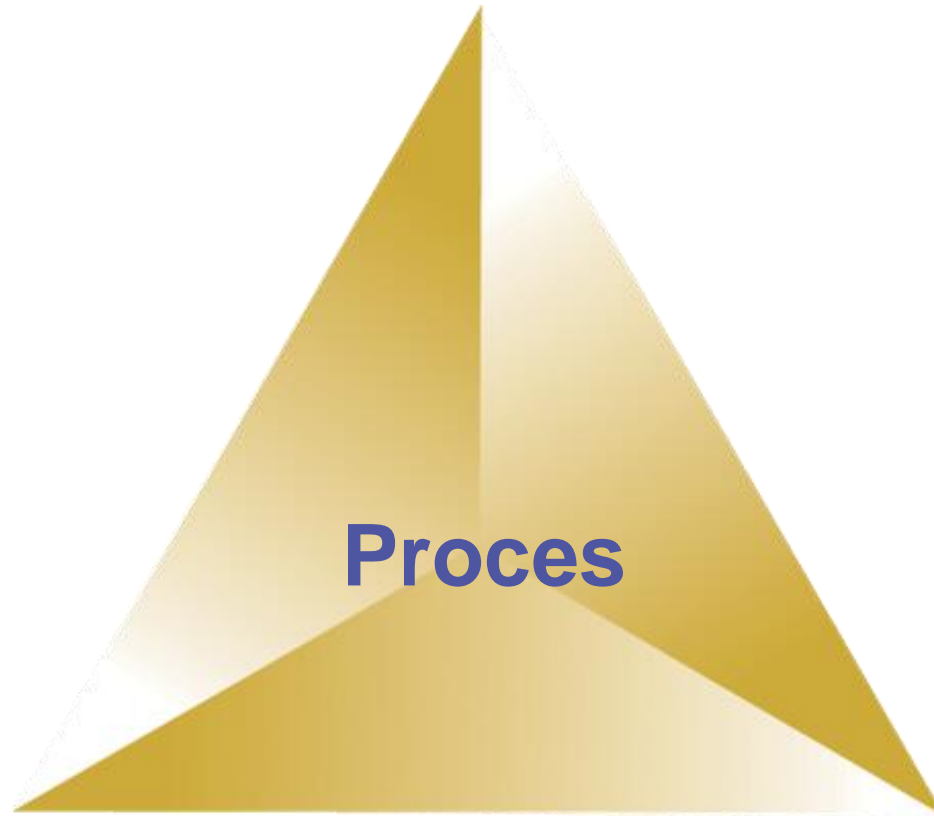
Governance



Operations

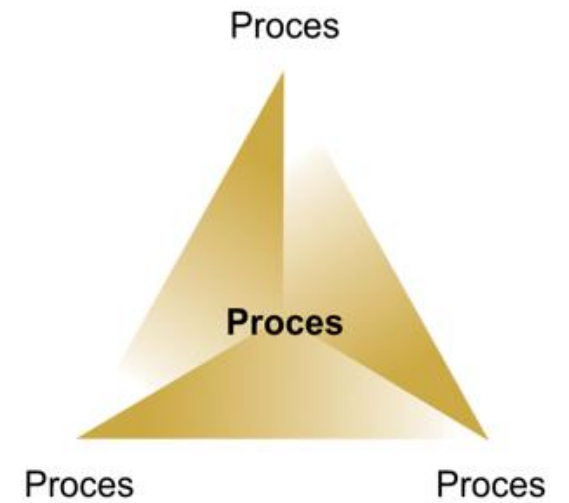
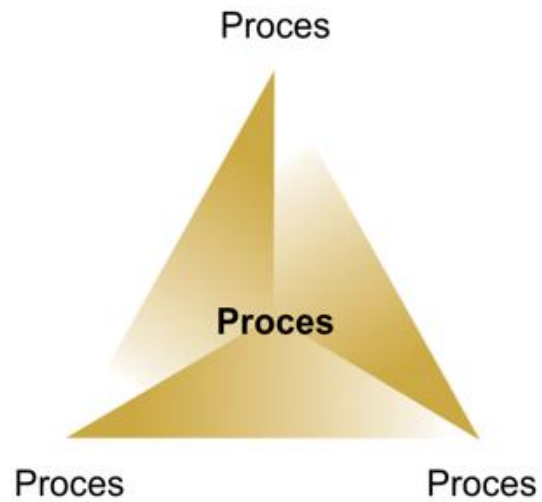
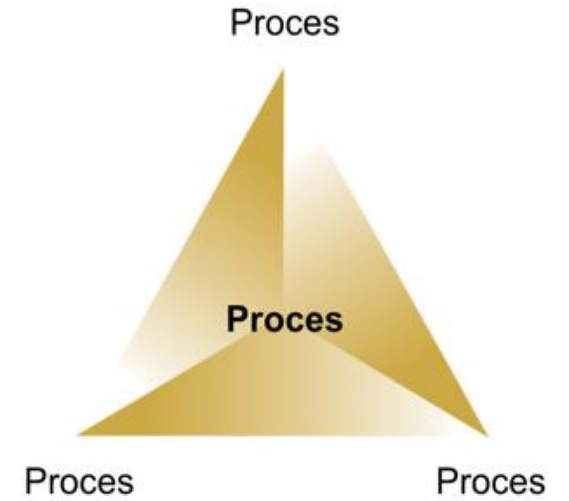
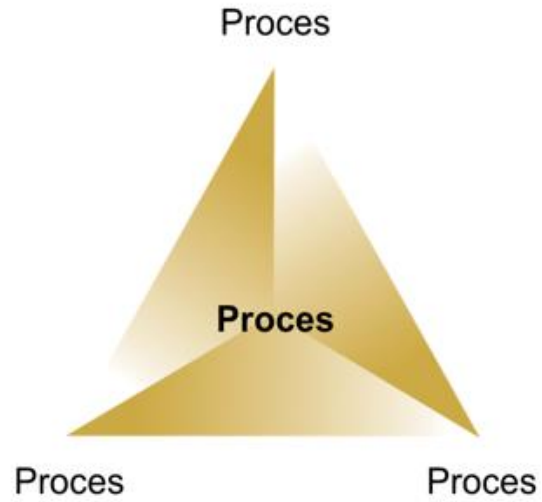
Communication

Proces



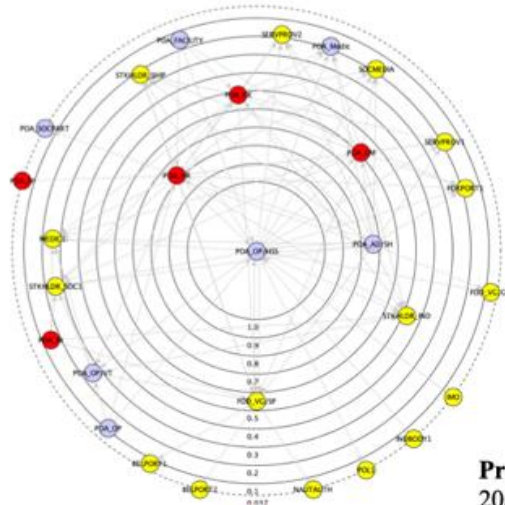
Proces

Proces

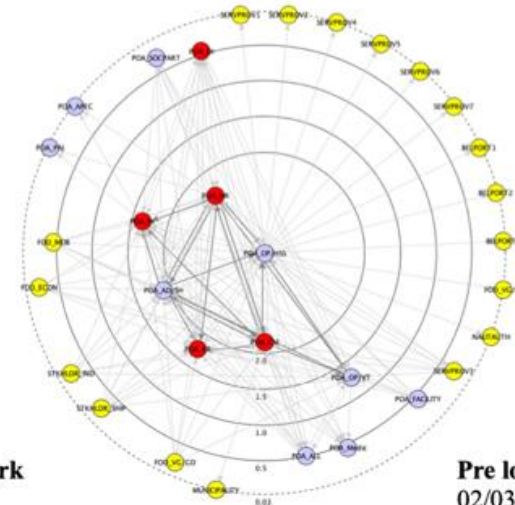




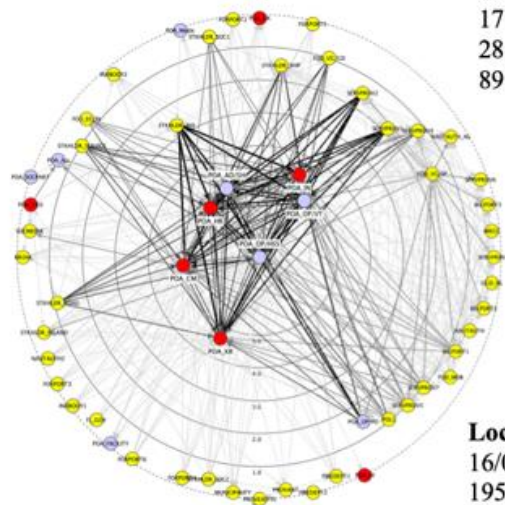
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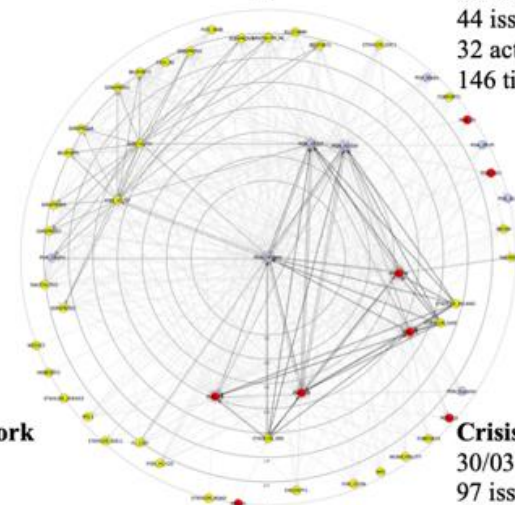
**Pre crisis network**  
 20/01-01/03  
 17 issues  
 28 actors  
 89 ties



**Pre lock down network**  
 02/03-15/03  
 44 issues  
 32 actors  
 146 ties



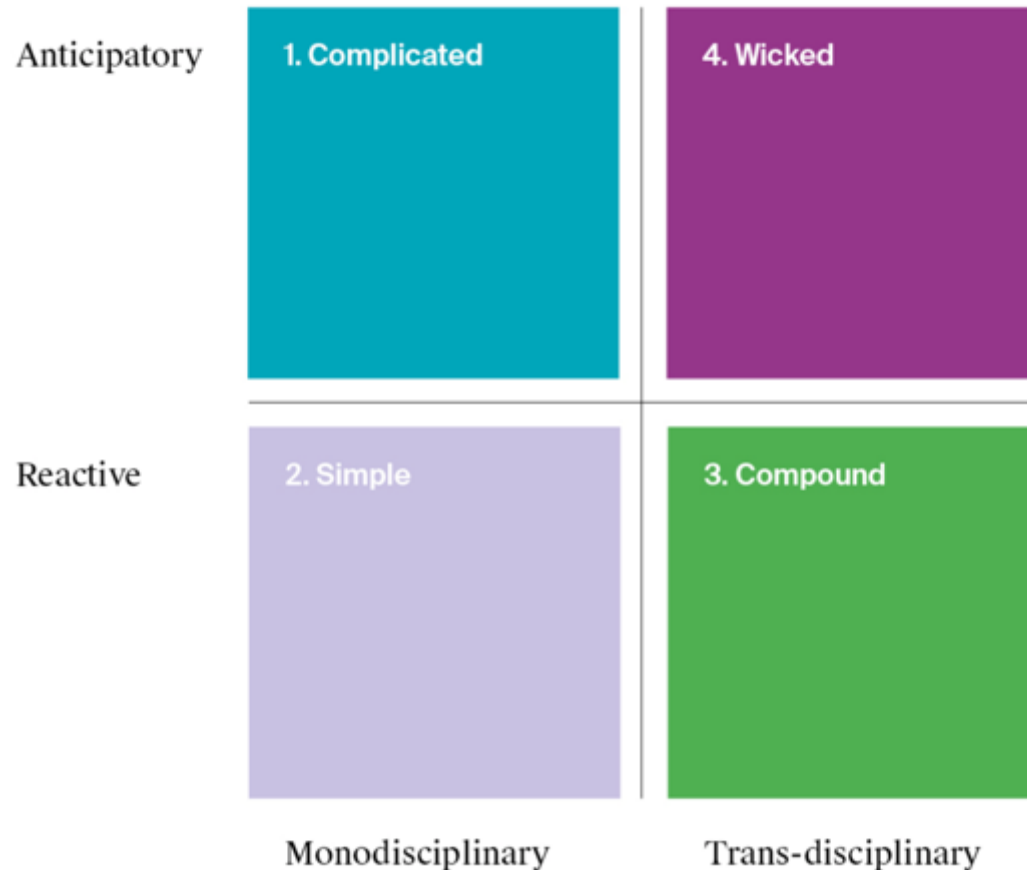
**Lock down network**  
 16/03-29/03  
 195 issues  
 57 actors  
 482 ties



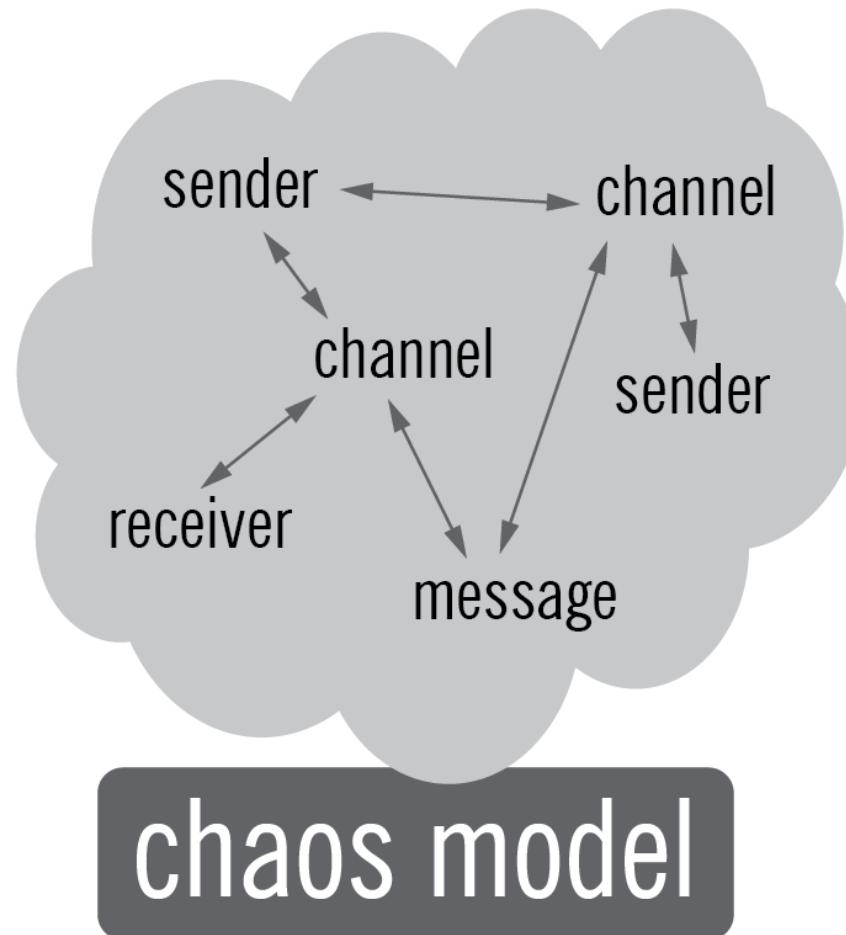
**Crisis network**  
 30/03-12/04  
 97 issues  
 53 actors  
 416 ties



### *The power of the network in a wicked problem*



### *Identify the needs and wants of the network*



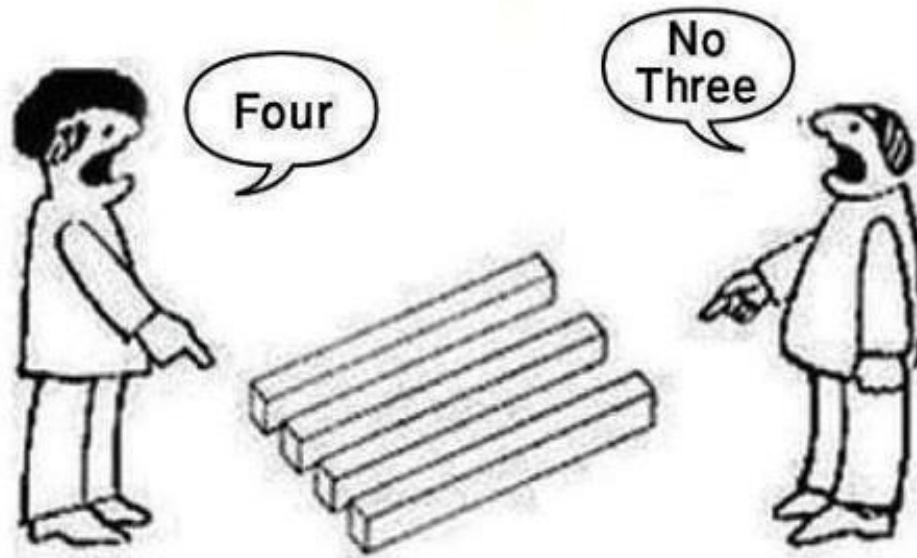


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Perception  
**inside**  
(crisis team)



Perception  
**outside**  
(those affected)

OUR CRISIS

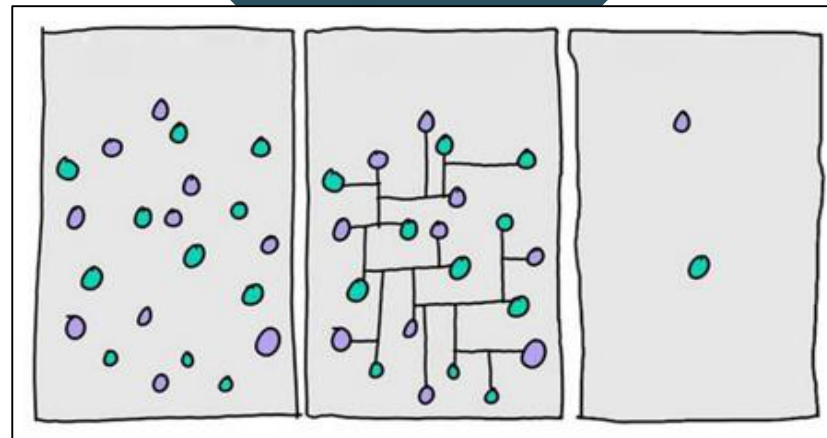
THE CRISIS

### *3 stages of perception analysis*

Collecting data

Analyzing Data

Preparing advice



### *How we identify patterns & structure in a vast amount of unstructured, raw data*

<b>IN</b> Identify	<b>Information</b> – Findings – Questions – Needs	<b>Behaviour</b> – Findings – Questions – Needs	<b>Sense making</b> – Findings – Needs	<b>Expectations</b> – Findings – Questions – Needs
	↓ Facts and figures ↓	↓ Actions required-encouraged-discouraged ↓	↓ Emotions ↓	↓ Further communication ↓
<b>OUT</b> Interact	<b>“We Know”</b>	<b>“We Do”</b>	<b>“We Care”</b>	<b>“We’ll Be Back”</b>

### Example: Students analysis NCCN



**Corona - Belgian youth** ☆ Personal Private Invite

**Information** ...

- We're almost at the peak of the epidemic
- What's the use of wearing mouth masks and gloves in a super market?
- Will we be able to graduate this year? What with our summer plans? Travel? Festivals?

+ Add another card

**Behaviour** ...

- FUTURE. Youth expect a lot from upcoming press conference
- NEWS CONSUMPTION - interest in news is dropping. Latest updates are not coming through. Habituation around mortality rates
- CREATIVITY - young people are being creative with measures, pushing the limits
- CIVIC CITIZENSHIP - Helping out others - urge others to follow up on measures

+ Add another card

**Sensemaking** ...

- 😞😞😞 - Measures are having a big impact on mental state: lockdownblues
- 😞👤 confidence in government and experts drops every day
- 😞 ECONOMY - Fear of not being able to find a job after graduating
- 😞👮 AVERSION / FEAR POLICE - Fines for misconduct are excessive, too much arbitrariness
- 😞 DISAPPOINTED - in communication about festivals: "what are we with a maybe"

+ Add another card



### *Key Take-Aways*

1. Crisis communications is about acting, sensing and responding meaning putting yourselves in a vulnerable position ready to earn **trust**.
2. Dealing with wicked problems in a chaotic universe working against you is about asking **the right questions** and governing your transdisciplinary **network** of networks.
3. To know your network you need data. By analysing this data you generate crisis intelligence. Decision makers need **more intelligence and less data**.

# Thank you for watching!

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