A large, intense fire with bright orange and yellow flames. In the bottom left corner, the silhouette of a fire truck is visible, suggesting the fire is being fought. The fire is the dominant visual element on the left side of the slide.

“Not like the others”: an enterprise vocational provider’s view of self and its relationship to others

Helen Keen-Dyer ^{1*}, Andrew Short ², Bobby Harreveld ¹,
Wendy Madsen ¹

¹ CQUniversity Australia

² Queensland Fire and Emergency Services



Background

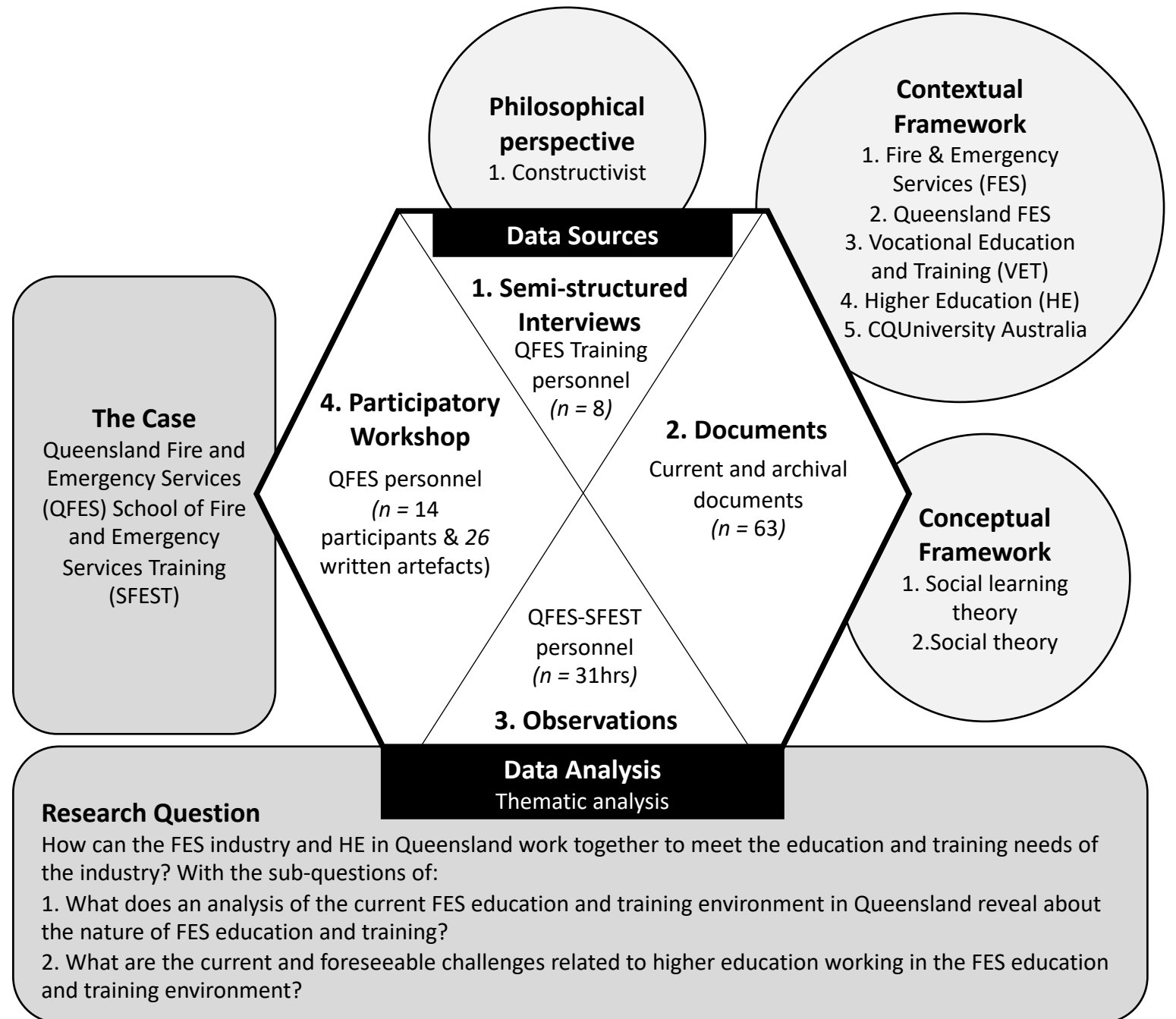
Fire and Emergency Services (FES) agencies and their personnel are operating in an increasingly complex environment.

The environment is often high-stakes and high-risk.

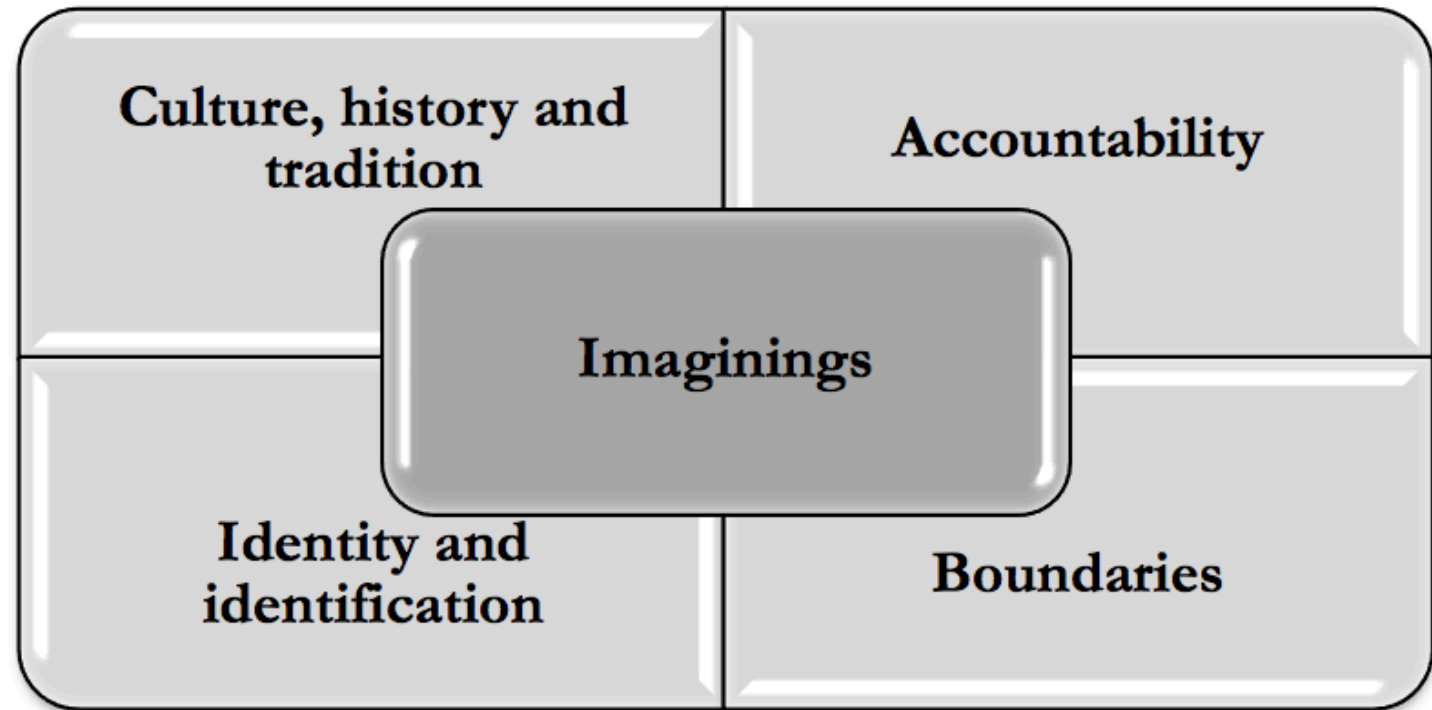
Modus operandi for dealing with this environment has been one of discipline, structure, uniformity and of leaving it to the experts.

The contemporary environment is, however, changing.

Research Project



Findings:
the five
themes



Background to findings

At an industry level, the notion of 'self', that is the FES self, is being challenged and reframed. So too, are many of the historical ways of being and doing, including education and training for the contemporary FES environment.

Individual State and Territories are responsible for the enactment of FES provision (and organisational management).

At an organisational level, history and tradition are deeply embedded.

Workforce capability is key to successfully delivering the shift in service delivery as well as having the ability to adapt to a dynamic environment (DA27).

In understanding the need to fundamentally transform to meet community expectations of our department, we need to also look at how we work together and with others (DA27).

It's the FES way (DA73)

The ability to take orders, accept discipline, follow directions and march is central to who we are (DA80).

** extracts from Data Artefacts (DA) are included in italics*

Findings: FES has a long and proud paramilitary heritage, and this heritage permeates all corners of the organisation

Paramilitary rituals and protocols permeate all aspects of education and training: being paramilitary means strictly adhering to 'the FES way', that is, the norms, rituals and protocols even in the enactment of education and training





Being a para-military organisation, Day 4 = marching practice and training for 2 hours ... which they need for graduation and for moving from one [training] station to the next in an orderly manner (DA78).

The asking of a question
(in the vernacular, a 'SO' is the training instructor):

[Hand raised high in the air using a sharp and quick movement]

SO, question if I may SO [spoken in a firm, loud voice]

Go ahead, recruit.

[question asked and answered]

SO, thank you SO [spoken in a firm, loud voice]
(DA76)

We have a strict system here at the academy.

Over there is recruit group Alpha, they're Red Company so they wear red badges and the recruit with the yellow arm band is the Duty Recruit for that group and then there's a Deputy Duty Recruit.

Recruits go to the Duty Recruit or Deputy Duty recruit for their particular company and the Duty Recruit comes to an instructor, who wears SO rank and then of course, back the other way.

SOs can go to any recruit, but the recruits must go to their Duty Recruit or Deputy Duty Recruit (DA73).



DUTY
RECRUIT
DEPUTY DUTY
RECRUIT

Findings

As a Registered Training Organisation:

Some degree of likeness with other RTOs

Importantly, there is a feeling of 'otherness' ("*the other type*").

It's important to remember, we, as in QFES are an enterprise RTO. Training exists to support the organisation. We are not like other training providers (DA75).

Its different in a private provider environment, rather than where you just go to an RTO and say I want to do a course, I want to do a Certificate II in Business. If you try and apply that thinking in an enterprise environment, that's where the challenges come. We just train people to be firemen, and then they just get a bit of paper as an outcome (DA2).

Findings

I guess it gets back to - we keep telling people who work here [the academy] that we only exist so that the people out on the trucks can do their job. And so that's what our total focus is - to equip them to do their job so that they can actually meet the Commissioner's requirements and the community expectations. (DA6)

Findings

While the particularities of the '*FES Way*' (and its enactment of being an ERTO) are interesting in their own right, they are all the more interesting when considering future directions in FES education and training.

The para-military based norms, rituals, protocols and highly codified ways give rise to significant points of discontinuity or discord.



Questions