Chapter 8
Emerging Design:
The Warp Network

ABSTRACT

The organization of the twenty-first century requires plasticity; this must be understood as the existence in the here-and-now of ways to work that are defined to operate transversely in relation to strategic objectives. The minimum requirements are horizontal streaming and non-permanence. A relational structural foundation involves the generation and concatenation of three core networks: network reliability, availability, and decisional agility. The process of design and implementation of these networks is called Emergent Design (ED), which is discussed in this chapter.

INTRODUCTION

Given the current conditions attached to the speed at which changes occur globally, what we call organizational design has begun to misrepresent conditions of certainty and determinacy. This breakdown in organizational design has gone so far that traditional epistemologies can no longer explain how changing spreads across networks. Regarding this distinction, this chapter proposes a new theory to develop the process of organizational design from the conditions of indeterminacy and uncertainty.
In *Emerging Design*, viability becomes a relevant concept because it unveils the organization’s sustainment strategies. Coined by Beer 30 years ago, viability is defined as *the ability to maintain a separate existence* (Beer, 1979); that is to say, a living system is viable if it is able enough to adapt and survive in its environment. The above definition is generally not disputed, but one may well ask whether this ability is a result or an inherent condition. Depending on the answer, one might again ask what the consequences are for organizational design.

In *Emerging Design*, process variability will be decreased and controlled through achieving commitments (action schemes) among people to eliminate process waste, which finally generates costs. Nevertheless, if the commitment (action scheme) is not an inherent condition of system’s relational being, the initially constrained network will emerge from its relational history, neutralizing the constraints and returning to its culturally determined states. If we consider viability to be an inherent condition of the organization, then it arises from the entity-*entorno* relationship. For more detail about epistemological differences between *entorno*, surroundings, environment and media, see Malpartida and Lavanderos (2000), Lavanderos and Malpartida (2001), Lavanderos (2002). At this level of explanation, is important to highlight that the usage of the ‘surroundings’ concept is not equiparable to *entorno*, as the latter means “that which revolves around and remains” (Malpartida, 1991). By that, when we talk about an *entorno unit*, we speak of a relational unit in which the environs have a meaning only for it. Based on the above, viability as an inherent condition would be distributed in the network of relations that generates organization, so the design should be centered on understanding the configurations of relations that allow viability as a fundamental step. In this way, there would not be an “inside” or “outside” but a complex relations network reproduced on the base of its culture. This must be understood as the code producing process for bonding and belonging to the relational system.

In a relational unit, *Emerging Design* is a strategic process that achieves a coherent coupling between its relational configuration –attainability– and its material energy system –sustainability– so that it does not put its identity at risk. In this chapter we show how viability can be translated into designing or re-designing processes through the reconfiguration of possibilities of networks of relations.

**SOME FOOTPRINTS**

The consideration of organizational design based on universally applicable laws and common models for organizations has had a development repeated in the history of its definition, both from the contributions of psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, economics and organizational development, as well as engineering
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