

Symbiotic Commitment and the Process of New Organizational Forms: Mechanism of Chaotic Behaviour and the Structural Formation in Organizations

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We define organizations as "groups of committed people gathered for achieving of a common goal, success and sustenance of which depends on the degree of commitments of the groups themselves". It is necessary to introduce our model of symbiotic commitment for studying total commitment of such organizations in a systemic way. Our model finds strong links among attitudinal/behavioural changes of strategic/operational (individual and group) levels actors, their goals, internal and external environments, and shows organisational dynamism through the patterns of interconnections of such components in a net of commitments. Placing strategic and operational levels as horizontally equal components and goals as vertically measured, chaotic behaviour and structural formation of organizations are explained here in the fluctuations between two extremes of present position and the attractor space with the help of total commitments. A vertical shift of the system according to the model is self-organizing of micro to macro level properties while horizontal shift is the effect of vicious cycles. Vertical shift is further explained in the model as achieving of goals through constructive properties while horizontal shift is described as emergence of destructive properties causing stagnancy of the system.

I. Introduction

As most of the present organizations in a highly dynamic market seem engaged in an endless search for solutions to the problems they encounter in daily activities, the need of the contribution of researchers in the field of organization seems to be increasing. The problems arising from various circumstances, such as rapid increase of innovative technology, fierce global competition, fluctuating customer expectations, and decreasing committed employees, seem extremely integrated to the extent that finding of solutions to one problem make organizations even

vulnerable to others. In such environment, the challenge of both the managers and researches may face is to find strategies that are capable of dealing problems as a whole in a systemic way. Taking it into consideration, present study involves in an attempt to find the kind of strategies that themselves become guidance to design new organizational forms appropriate to present dynamic environments.

Defining an organization as "a group of committed people gathered for achieving of a common goal which success and sustenance depend on the degree of commitments of the group itself", our study

suggests thinking employer-employees' commitment to the organization as a strategy and a systemic way in studying such complexities. Employer-employees' commitment, which we name as 'symbiotic commitment' (Samarakoon 2000, 2001), or the 'core' of organization, is a result of psychological links between organizational and employees' goals. Such Links are suggested here as most desirable relationship between employer-employees.

II. The Definition of Symbiotic Commitment, Its Arguments, The Model, and, Its Mechanism

1. The definition and the arguments of symbiotic commitment (SC)

Defining symbiotic commitment as "a state of transition patterns of attitudes, behavior, values, principles, strengths, emotions, learning, concern, drives and action of strategic, operational and individual level actors (subsystems) explained in a multiplex network of balancing and reinforcing loops that cause system's shift as a whole (horizontal and vertical) to a desired attractor (organizational and individual performance) in a self reinforced way", the arguments of the model of SC are explained as follows (Samarakoon 2000, 2001).

- Every organization as a living system has two positions; the present position (PP), and the attractor space or sustainable organizational performance

preferred to the system (AS/SOP).

- The motive of every organization is to achieve the preferred position for the system (AS/SOP).
- Quitting of the position PP as well as achieving of AS/SOP depend upon the degree of employer-employees' commitment.
- Employer-employees' commitment is the core of organization. The nature of commitment causes the dynamism of organization through horizontal or vertical shifting of the system as a whole in between PP and AS/SOP.
- Total commitment (Q) of the system is the sum of strategic (SL/employer, Q1) and operational levels (group and individuals) (OL/employee, Q2).
- Q1 and Q2 have short and long-term aspects, and employer-employees' long-term commitments can exist only in the form of SC.
- The system's shift as a whole from PP to AS/SOP is the indication of patterns or the formation of structures from informal (shadow) to formal.
- The role or the significance of SC can only be studied in the perspectives of systems thinking (Senge 1994).
- Since SC is a continuous variable, its state or the role in organizations has to be learned through the process of its origin, growth and sustenance.
- SC is the mixture of micro and macro level organizational properties, absorber of internal and external shocks, and

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the DNA of organizations that determines the behaviours of people and structure of the system as a whole.

2. The model of symbiotic commitment

Considering an organization as a living system embedded with a set of highly sensitive components/sub-systems that are capable of moving the system as a whole towards AS/SOP (preferred by the system) in a self-organizing manner, illustrations of the model of symbiotic commitment in Figure 1 shows the basis of such process.

The model in Figure 1 suggests organization as a living system with basic ingredients such as; strategic level (SL), operational level (group and individual level, OL), present position (PP), attractor space or sustainable organizational

performance (AS/SOP), effort/total commitment (Q) of SL (Q1) and OL (Q2), commitment slower (Q-1, Q-2), gap (Gp) and the delay (DL).

The model also claims system's continual shift between PP and AS/SOP as a result of the interactions or patterns of combinations of these components. Base on the above argument (organization as a living system is engaged in a continuous 'effort' of achieving the preferred position (AS/SOP)), model claims such 'effort' of the system as 'commitment' (Q) (total commitments of Q1 and Q2). Since Q is capable of filling the gaps (Gp) between PP and AS/SOP as well as SL and OL, this characteristic of commitment is used in our study as evidence of a linear relation between commitment and organizational performance.

As illustrated in Figure 1, the

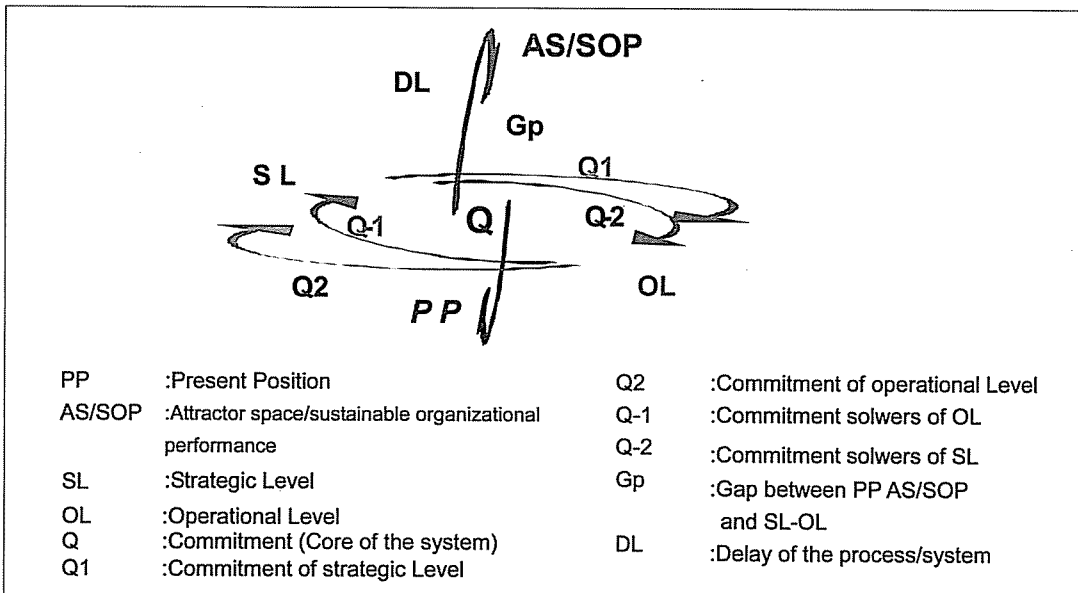


Figure 1- Commitment as the Core of the Organization

behaviour of the system or the combinations of basic components is explained in the model through horizontal or vertical placement of available components. Accordingly, SL and OL are placed horizontally equal level on the basis of their characteristics, such as separate needs, eagerness to need maximization, conflicts, and interdependency. PP and AS/SOP are placed vertically based on their characteristics, such as vertically measured performance (according to the model), time consumption of the process, and the need of a broad participation of SL-OL and other ingredients of the system. Q is placed in between SL and OL in order to show it as the core of the system that has the characteristics, such as shared goals, autonomy, self-organizing capability, and combined effort (SL-OL).

Q, which is the joint commitment of Q1 and Q2, is taken in the model as commitments to satisfy each other's needs. Accordingly, Q1 is shown as SL's commitment to satisfy OL's needs (satisfying of need hierarchy (SNH)) (Maslow, 1943), while Q2 is shown as OL's commitment to satisfy the needs of SL (contribution to organizational development (Od)). Since both (SL and OL) have different goals (SNH, Od), conflicting desires of achieving the maximum results, and maintaining of complex interdependency in achieving their goals, the commitments of both

(Q1 and Q2) are considered in the model of SC (Figure 1) together with negative commitments (Q-1 and Q-2). The loop of negative commitments is illustrated in Figure 1.

Since there are two forces of commitments (positive and negative) in the system, and work against each other's effort causing the total commitment (Q), such dynamism is explained in the system (model of SC) through horizontal or vertical shift of the system as a whole. Accordingly, the vertical shift of the system is specified in Figure 1 as a result of positive commitments of SL and OL (Q1, Q2) which reduces the gaps between horizontal (SL-OL) and vertical (PP-AS/SOP) result in performance. Horizontal shift is specified here as a result of negative commitments (Q-2, Q-1), which increases the gaps between horizontal as well as vertical result in stagnancy of the system. Negative commitments are considered as the total commitment slower of the system (TCS) which raises the pressure of system's settlement for lower (PSL) as well as the delay (DL) of the system's shift towards AS/SOP. Such process is discussed in the model of SC through the activities of balancing and reinforcing loops which make patterns in the system through combinations of components.

3. Mechanism of the model of symbiotic commitment

Having a brief explanation of basic ingredients and their combinations in the model of SC (Figure 1), the detailed version of the model or the mechanism of interactions of elements of the system is illustrated in Figure 2. As shown in Figure 2 the model of SC is explained in two panels. The panel A is the base of SC or PP (all available components to the system) and panel B is the behaviour of the system illustrated through the ac-

tivities of reinforcing and balancing loops connected to the components of the system as a whole.

All available components to the system of the present position (PP) as illustrated in panel A are; Organizational Actions (OA), Strength (Str), Organizational Concern (OCn), Standard (St), Organizational Commitment Drivers (OCmD), Values (Vlu), Tolerance for Risks (ToR), Trust (Tru), Interdependency (ItDp), Emotions (Em), Learning (Lr), Employee Motivation

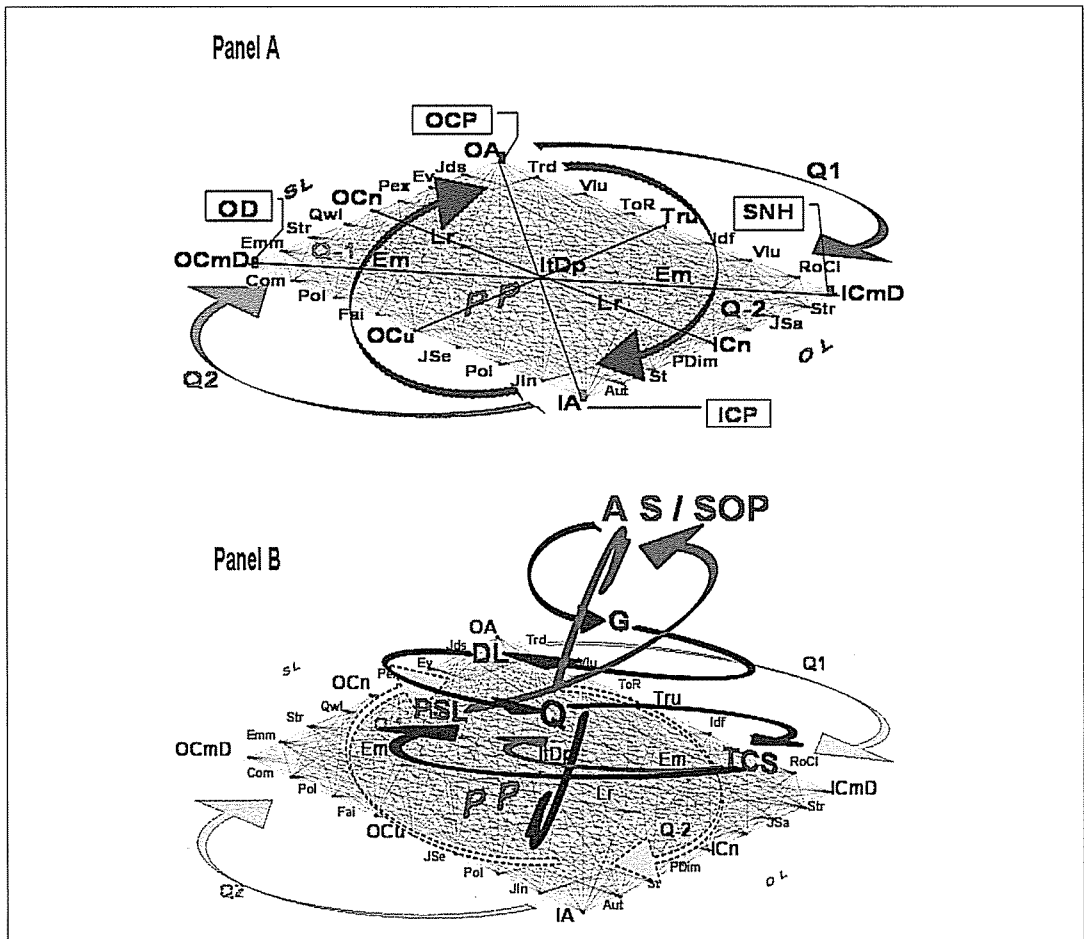


Figure 2 - Organization as a Living System that Constantly Shifts among PP and AS/SOP

(Emm), Communication (Com), Principles and Policies (Pol), Fairness (Fai), Organizational Culture (OCu), Job involvement (JIn), Job Security (JSe), Participation in Decision Making (PDiM), Individual Actions (IA), Autonomy (Aut), Individual Concerns (ICn), Job Satisfaction (JSa), Individual Commitment Drivers (ICmD), Role Clarity (RoCl), Identification (Idf), Organizational Development (OD), Organizational Capacity (OCP), Individual Capacity (ICP), Satisfaction of Need Hierarchy (SNH), Performance Expectation (Pex), Quality of Work Life (Qwl), Job Design (Jds), Training and Development (Trd), Employee Voice (Ev), Effort/Commitment (Q) of SL (Q1) and OL (Q2), Commitment Slower (Q-1, Q-2) and the External Environment (EE) (Argyris, 1992; Kishida, 2006; Maslow, 1943; Schein, 1985; Senge, 1994).

As mentioned earlier, these components are horizontally or vertically arranged in the model and shown in a net (net of commitments/interactions) as every component of the system are influenced by others. Since there are two forces of commitments (positive/capability and negative/inability) work through the interactions of the net of commitments, the influence of these forces on systems shift (horizontal or vertical shift) and the mechanism of such process are explained in panel B (Figure 2) through the activities of reinforcing and balancing loops that connect above components.

According to the panels A and B of Figure 2, Q1 and Q2 are shown as contributors to Q as well as TCS. Consequently, the weaker commitments of SL and OL shows their inability to reduce the negative commitments embedded in their commitments, and such commitments contribute to TCS as well as PSL. Those interactions (TCS) are illustrated in panel B as the cause of widening gaps (Gp) between PP and AS/SOP as well as SL and OL influencing delay (DL), PSL and Q which ultimately stagnant the system. On the contrary, stronger commitments of Q1 and Q2 mean strong Q that reduces TCS as well as PSL. These interactions are illustrated in the panel B through increase of the values of components, such as satisfying of need hierarchy (Snh), organizational development (Od), individual capacity (Icp), and organizational capacity (Ocp).

As mentioned earlier, the behaviour of the two forces mentioned above (capability and inability of SL, OL) is explained through a net of commitments, which shows a shift of the net as a result of destructive or constructive emergent properties. Since such combinations of component in the net is illustrated through reinforcing and balancing loops, the loops that strengthen TCS are defined as vicious cycles, while the loops that strengthen Q are defined as virtuous cycles.

III. Destructive and Constructive Patterns of Commitment vs Old and New Organizational Forms

1. Destructive patterns of commitments vs old organizational forms

Since most organizations in present day conditions are struggling to maintain highly committed employees, their broader involvement, self-controlled behaviour, empowerment, trust, involvement culture, learning, etc, our model also deals with a totally similar situation by arguing how to inhibit the widening gaps of SL-OL as well as PP-AS/SOP. As widening gaps of SL-OL and PP-AS/SOP are the results of destructive properties built in the vicious cycles combinations connected to inabilities of SL-OL (to reduce negative commitments embedded in their commitments), basis of the layered structural formation in present organizations are argued in the model of SC due to same reasons explained in SC. As mentioned earlier complex situations can only be studied through the strategies that are capable of dealing with multiplex problems as a whole in a systemic way. Therefore, the model of SC presented in the study for such purposes suggests analyzing the situation as follows.

Shown in the panels A, B, C of Figure 3 is the mechanism of how organization as a system falls into a vicious cycle combinations of components

or destructive patterns of behaviour in the net of commitments. Enabling the discussion of the problems as a whole, the components in the panels available to the system are shown in a net formed between SL and OL according to their characteristics.

Based on the definition of organization given here as 'a group of people gathered for achieving of a common goal, success and sustenance of which depends on the degree of commitments of the group itself', panels of Figure 3 suggest accomplishing of organizational performance as dependent upon the commitments of SL and OL. The panels on this basis show the commitments of Q1 and Q2 in a loop connecting OA-IcmD (Q1) and IA-OcmD (Q2), also describing their interdependency in achieving goals (Od, Snh). Panels explain the commitment of SL (OA-IcmD) as accessing of capacity (Icp) in OL through satisfying the need hierarchies of OL (Snh), while the commitment of OL (IA-OcmD) is explained as source of satisfying organizational needs (Od) that improves organizational capacity (Ocp).

Since only the positive commitments of Q1 and Q2 cause organizational performance through reduction of the gaps of SL-OL and PP-AS/SOP, what shows in the panels A, B, C of Figure 3 is their (SL, OL) lack of long-term commitments (SC) or existing of strong short-term commitments that do not contribute to either sides in the long-term. Although

this kind of inability/negative commitments of both (Q-1, Q-2) can be explained in many ways using different mixture of components in the net of commitments, we simply explain such situations here through mindsets or attitudinal and behaviour changes of SL and OL (Figure 3). Mindsets are taken as a measure of the interactions of combinations in this study as mindsets of both (SL, OL) show a clear link with the

combinations of components attached to positive (Q1, Q2) and negative (Q-1, Q-2) commitments.

In order to show the links among mindsets, negative and positive commitments, components attached to the mindsets of both levels are shown in panel A of Figure 3 through Strength (Str), Policies (Pol), Emotions (Em), Learning (Lr), Performance Expectations (Pex), Values (Vlu) and Autonomy (Aut).

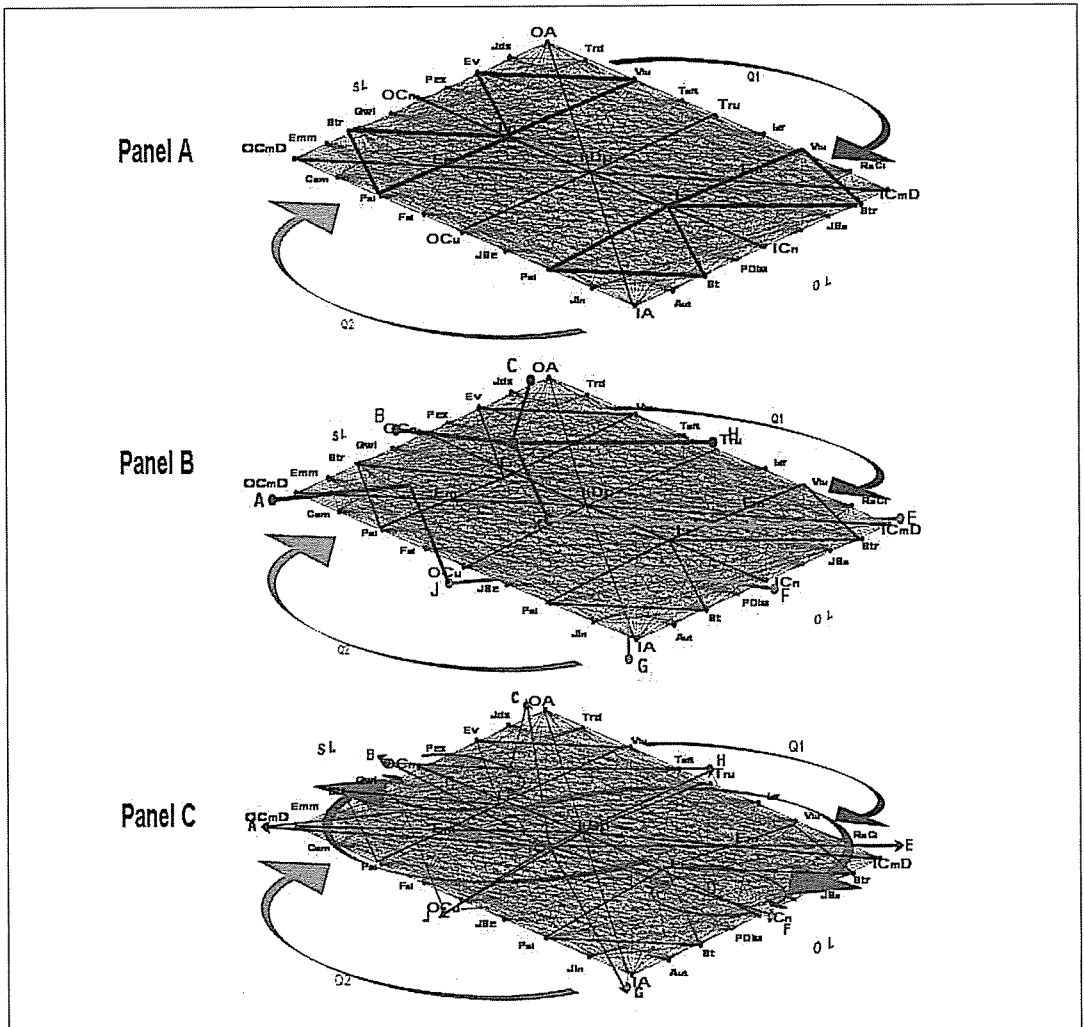


Figure 3 - Combinations of Components or Net of Commitments

Since these components are linked each other and influence the system as a whole, unfavourable mindset changes of either side according to SC cause negative commitments (Q-1, Q-2) of SL-OL and affect each other's commitments (Q1, Q2) again negatively. Combinations or the behaviour patterns of these components are claimed in the model of SC as causes of the gaps between SL and OL (OCn – ICn, OCmD – ICmD, IA-OA) which accelerates the vicious cycle effect of the system causing continuous emergence of destructive properties that eventually stop the system's vertical shifts.

As illustrated in the panels B and C of Figure 3, such behaviour patterns of components or the combination of vicious cycles of the system can be understood through some examples. According to the panels of Figure 3 the components such as attitude and behaviour, commitments, mindsets etc., are linked through the combination of balancing and reinforcing loops. Accordingly, the attitudinal and behavioural changes of SL-OL affect Q1 and Q2 and mindset changes of SL-OL affect both the commitments as well as attitudes. In Figure 3, it further shows commitments and attitudes and behaviours of both levels are connected to the components such as; organizational concern (OCn), organizational commitment drivers (OCmD), organizational actions (OA), individual commitment drivers (ICmD), individual concern (ICn),

individual actions (IA), and their mindsets are connected to Str, Pol, Em, Lr, Pex, Vlu and Aut. As all these components are linked and influenced each other, the affect of unfavourable changes in the components of mindsets of SL-OL can be indicated through application of values (which are shown with the alphabets from A to G in the panel B and C of Figure 3) to the components as follows; changes of OCmD as A, (1.9 - task management), OCn as B (assumptions of theory X), OA as C (hard approach), ICmD as E (dissatisfaction), ICn as F (self-centeredness), and IA as G (minimum effort). These unfavourable changes invoked by the components which give origin to continuous emergence of destructive properties are illustrated in the panels B and C such as; trust (Tru) as H (distrust), interdependency (ItDp) as K (fate control interdependency), organizational culture (OCu) as J (diverse fragmented culture), and learning (Lr) as D (single loop learning), causing horizontal move of the system (Argyris 1992, Gambetta 1988, Herzberg, 1966).

3. Constructive patterns of commitments vs new organizational forms

Corresponding to layered structural formation of present organizations with patterns of destructive properties in SC, panels A, B, C, D of Figure 4 shows that how constructive patterns in SC could be

shaped similar to the process of new organizational forms appropriate to present environments.

Since the model of SC shows the patterns of vicious and virtuous cycles as a result of the loops connecting OA-ICmD (Q1), IA-OcmD (Q2), OA-IA (Q-2) and IA-OA (Q-1), positive commitments or the capability of SL-OL to reduce the negative commitments (Q-1, Q-2) are considered in the study as cause of constructive behaviour of the net of commitments. As such commitments of SL-OL reduce the gaps between SL and OL (OCn-ICn, OCmD-ICmD, IA-OA and

ItDp) through constructive properties built in the combination of virtuous cycles, these interactions occur in the system as actions, concerns and commitment drivers of SL and OL become influenced by their mindsets.

As illustrated in panels A, B, C, D of Figure 4, the behaviour of virtuous cycles' combinations of the system can be understood through application of some examples. According to panel A of Figure 4, it shows a situation where systems could escape from a vicious cycle situation to a virtuous cycle situation through attitudinal and behavioural

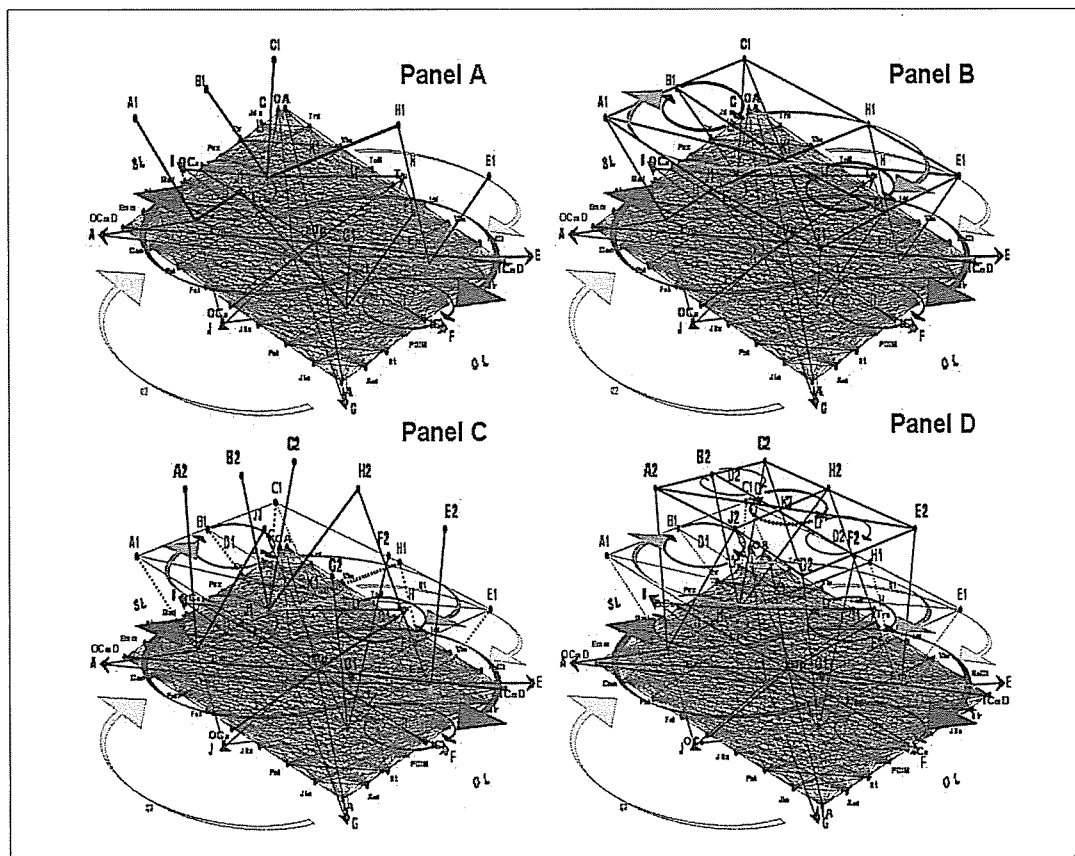


Figure 4 - Combination of Emergent Properties or Capability Infrastructure of the Organization

changes of SL and OL. Since the roots of commitments of SL-OL are the components such as; OCn, OCmD, OA, ICmD, ICn, and IA, and these components get the influence of the mindsets of both sides, positive changes of mindsets in either side as illustrated in panel A gets system as a whole out of the vicious cycles situation.

Such positive changes in the mindsets of SL-OL are shown in the panels through valuing the components; OCmD as A1 (5.5 managerial grid), OCn as B1 (assumptions of theory Y), OA as C1 (soft approach), ICmD as E1 (satisfaction of hygiene factors), ICn as F1 (shared goals), and IA as G1 (higher effort). These types of changes are illustrated in panels B, C, D as changes in the combinations of components or the reduction of negatively affect components of the net of commitments. Such changes are further explained in the model as; building blocks or attitudinal and behavioural changes which cause another sets of emergent properties in the system such as; Tru as H1 (calculative trust), ItDP as K1 (community relation interdependency) OCu as J1 (involvement culture), D1 (double loop learning), D2 (triple loops learning), B2 (theory Y assumptions), C2 (empowerment), E2 (satisfaction of motivator factors), F2 (autonomy), G2 (excessive effort), H2 (relational trust), J2 (diverse integrated culture and K2 (community relation

interdependency) (Argyris, 1992; Blake and Mouton, 1984; Herzberg, 1966; McGregor, 1966; Rousseau, 1998; Schein, 1985; Senge, 1994).

The effects of virtuous cycles are illustrated in the model through shifts of the system from PP to AS/SOP and further shown as formation of structures from informal to formal. Informal structure (shadow) is explained in the model of SC through a wider gap between SL-OL that shows the characteristics such as; distrust, high equivocality, dissatisfaction, self-centeredness, minimum effort, fate control interdependency, diverse fragmented culture, single loop learning etc., while emergent and formal structures are explained through emergent properties built in the net of commitments.

IV. The Mix of Emergent Properties, The Delay, and The Process of New Organizational Forms

Explaining the patterns of vicious and virtuous cycles separately in Figures 3 and 4, the combined effect of both cycles as a whole is illustrated in Figure 5 through the interactions of combinations such as; Q1 - Q2, (Q-1) - (Q1), (Q-2) - (Q1), (Q-1) - (Q-2), TCS-Q, Q-G, TCS-G, TCS-PSL, PSL-Q, PSL-G, and TCS-PSL-Q-DL. Since such combinations are a mixture of commitments of SL and OL, and show the characteristics such as; the

delay, constructive/destructive properties, capabilities and inabilities of the system as a whole, the effect of such forces is explained in the model through horizontal or vertical shift of the net of commitments which also show the complexity of the process of organizing (from PP to AS/SOP).

As illustrated in Figure 5, the dark oscillated line from PP to AS/SOP shows the assumed combinations of symbiotic commitment in organization which shows the positions of the system as a whole at a given time.

Our long-term and subsequent aim is to see such structural positions in organizations through periodic and positional questionnaires given to organizations. As the model of SC suggest discussing the problems of present

organizations as a whole in a systemic way enabling new patterns appropriate to present environment, further discussion (through questionnaires) of such in the model of SC will be based on following assumptions.

1. The organizations with reasonable histories of low performance are in the position of PP (model of SC). We will investigate the process of such organizations through questionnaires aiming to find out the combinations of components in the net of commitments which may force system's stay as a whole in the position of PP.
2. The organizations with reasonable histories of increased performance are somewhere in between PP-AS/SOP. We are going to scrutinize

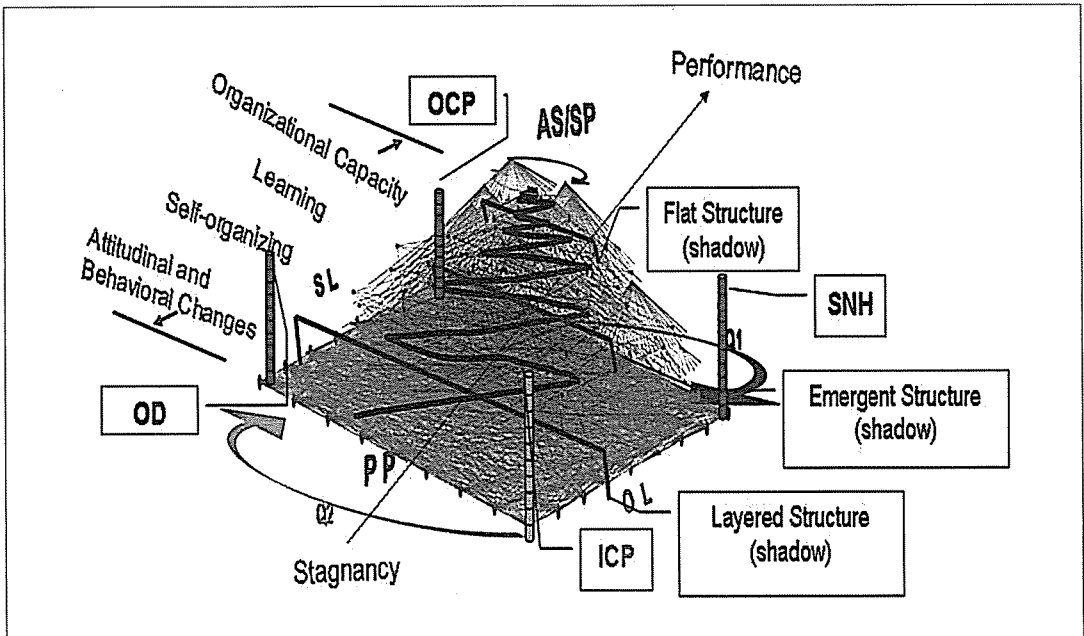


Figure 5 - Image of the Combinations of Components (Moves of the system from PP to AS/SOP)

the process of such organizations by way of the questionnaires aiming to find out the combinations of components in the net of commitments which cause emergent properties and their maintenance.

3. The organizations with reasonable histories of high performance are somewhere near AS/SOP. The process of such organizations has to be probed by questionnaires given to turn up their attitudes on commitment and the patterns of combinations of components in the net of commitments.
4. Learning process (D-D, D1-D1, and D2-D2 in SC) of organizations is a combined effort of SL-OL and it strongly linked with organizational/individual development and their performance.
5. Organization will shift from the position of PP as a result of commitments of SL-OL. Such commitments mean recognizing and maintaining basic sensitive components of the system (i.e., making internal environment). Such environment is the base for self-organizing which ingenerates emergent properties (constructive and destructive) that ultimately cause the dynamism of the system.

V. Conclusion

In our study the model of symbiotic commitment (SC) produces a new and systemic way of seeing and solving problems in a complexity. Since SC includes a wide range of organizational studies, it is believed that the basic structure of the model of SC presented in this paper provides new opportunities in studying commitment as well as the capability infrastructure of organizations. Although shift of the model of SC from PP to AS/SOP emphasizes the involvement of organizational learning, self-organizing and systems thinking, and introduces it as the process of new organizational forms appropriate to present complex environments, the challenge remains ahead in the study to find out such structures.

As proposed above, the remaining part of the study is going to be conducted through periodic and positional questionnaires given to all levels of organizations as to collect the needed data to empirically test the above hypotheses.

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