**(V) How to apply the Viable System Model to get a fast design or diagnosis of an organization (Introduction-Part V)**

**Pathologies related to System 3\* (Are things done correctly, are behaviors not honest going on, are corruption practices early detected?)**

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July 2023

1. I continue sharing some ideas taken from the Organizational Cybernetics (OC) field, with particular emphasis on the Viable System Model (VSM) that I think may be useful to any decision-taker in any organization.

The content of the OC approach, the details for its implementation and use can be consulted in the book:

[Design and Diagnosis for Sustainable Organizations. The Viable System Method](https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-642-22318-1)

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2. In this **fifth general post,** I will continue commenting on some of the most frequent pathologies in organizations. As I mentioned in previous posts, this knowledge is helpful to design them, so they are created free of them (healthy), or for diagnosing an existing organization. Once identified a pathology we can try to eliminate it.

**In previous posts, I shared a short version of the first group of pathologies**

**(I. Structural Pathologies) and started to show some of the pathologies included in the second group: II. Functional Pathologies.**

3. In the presentation I made for the **Metaphorum Group in May 2022**, I did show **the three global maps** with the more frequent **organizational pathologies.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62mRBzRDxHI>

**Organizational Pathologies (5)**

**J. Perez Rios**

As I mentioned in previous posts, identifying a pathology is a prerequisite to prescribing any treatment for the diagnosed deficiency. With that aim, I prepared back in 2008 a taxonomy of "**Organizational pathologies**" that I am sharing. I classified the 26 ones I found widespread into three main families or groups.

The first group (I) includes pathologies related to organizations' structural design and how the organization copes with its total environmental complexity by creating the necessary sub-organizations. These I name Structural Pathologies.

The second group (II) includes pathologies related to the adequacy of the organizations (at all recursion levels) to the prescription made by the VSM about functional subsystems and their relations. These I call Functional Pathologies.

The third group (III) subsumes Information System and Communication Channel Pathologies.

**In a previous posts, I shared a short version of the first group of pathologies:**

**I. Structural Pathologies) and started to show some of the pathologies included in the second group: II. Functional Pathologies.**

**The denominations used, as are System 5, System 2, etc., are typically used in the Beer's Viable System Model (VSM).**

**II. Functional Pathologies (5)**

This group includes 17 pathologies related to each of the organizations that compose the entire organization. In each unit, one must check to see that all the essential functions (systems) necessary for the organization's viability exist and work adequately. This group includes the more frequent pathologies affecting each of the VSM functions (systems) and the whole organization (named as System 5, System 4, System 3, System 3\*, Homeostat 4-3, System 2, and System 1). In this post I will mention the one related to System 3\*.

The pathology most frequently associated with this system is that resulting from either its absence or its failure to function adequately. Let us make some observations related to its role:

\* The aim of System 3\*, as a support body for System 3, is to absorb enormous amounts of variety by mechanisms like accounting, financial, maintenance, or quality audits, opinion surveys, etc. System 3\*. In addition to complementing data reaching System 3 (either via System 2 or directly from System 1 components), it contributes to the behavioral alignment of the members of the operational units. Examples, such as speed controls for motorists through mobile radars or various surveys regarding the quality of certain services, show how useful and powerful they are.

\* The implications of the absence of System 3\* in an organisation are evident. The proliferation of inappropriate activities may appear, practices that are not aligned with the organization's different processes and operational norms, or even unethical behavior (relations with suppliers, workers, customers, etc.). The same can be said when certain elements corresponding to System 3\* exist but are not applied or do not function properly. Examples would include surveys held on the extent to which particular levels of documentation tasks are complied with (such as medical case histories), but which are either announced beforehand or permit those responsible for them to include "false" or "invented" information once they have been warned of their imminence.

*\* An equivalent of these System-3\* interventions may be medical "check-ups" carried out on people after a certain age. The goal is not "intervention for the sake of it" but rather one of prevention, warning of possible health problems which, due to their being detected in the early stages, may help resolve or even prevent them from appearing.*

**Pathologies related to System 3\*.**

System 3\* is vital in detecting and preventing inappropriate organizational activities or behaviors. Bad practices or corruption can appear in an organization when it does not exist or work properly.

This danger can affect any organization (company, public or private institutions, political parties, governments, etc.)

**PII11. Lack or Insufficient Development of System 3\***

The lack or insufficient development of a System 3 \* allows that undesirable behavior and/or activities go on in System 1.

For are detailed description of each pathology you may consult the book:

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*Functional Pathologies. Pathologies related to System 3\*.*