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Towards a new model of governance to manage new technologies in organizations - Part 1: Introduction

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According to a recent report of the META Group Inc. (2006), requirements for digital interoperability between the public and private sectors will drive enterprise architecture over the next years, impacting 50% of the Fortune 500 companies and extending into the global domain.

Likewise, Global ICT Programmes bring together the government, the private sector and a plethora of international institutions situated across various boundaries, territories and organisational domains and are fully constitutive of the contemporary interest in the study of network forms of organisation and coordination. The emergence of Global ICT Programmes can be understood as the result of two distinct processes:

- a) the re-structuring of large conglomerates via the selective integration of operations across geographical boundaries, which leads to generally tighter (and riskier) production, distributions and value chains;
- b) the need of fast response, higher coordination and faster reconfiguration of an organization's tasks, processes and activities to cope with increasingly more frequent types of risk (such as natural catastrophes, terrorist attacks, pandemic outbreaks).

However, new technologies impact also on the costs of transition (or change and innovation) via the enabling of new opportunities for managing risks (Schiller, 2003; Ciborra & Navarra, 2005; Ciborra, 2006). Such a move typically expands the scope of an organisation's activities in space, for instance via outsourcing, joint ventures or alliances (or other hybrid forms of coordination between the public and the private sectors). However, few have stressed that new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) as understood in the context of the globalised risk society, affect also the dimension of time, carrying the ambition to increase the capacity to calculate, mitigate and control risk by synchronising sourcing strategy with architecture.

Typically, this occurs alongside the re-scaling and integration of informational resources, activities and infrastructure considered necessary in response to the riskier environment resulting from the globalisation of functions such as production and logistics, which shifts the responsibility for core activities outside the traditionally defined boundaries of the organisation. These programmes involve various dimensions, including the interconnection and reengineering of government and non-government institutions and their relationship with the private sector, constituting a new architecture seen in relation to:

• the creation of new, networked and distributed modes of organising mediated by technology and operating in the area of government, policy making, regulation and infrastructure development;

• the application of a 'toolbox' of policy instruments and guidelines to build such systems and identified with the general goal of promoting better (or good) governance;

• the presence of an expanded 'set' of institutional actors and/or characteristics operating across various contexts and domains, not least beyond conventional state boundaries.

In this article we argue that these structures are increasingly identified as the significant instrument for the expansion of liberal capitalism through innovation and new forms of decentred concentration and have become an integral component of the efforts to align formal and informal structures and transactions taking place to achieve (if not design) better or more appropriate institutions and governance arrangements (Williamson 2000) on a global scale.

The next part will discuss issues and perspectives on managing new technologies in organisations.

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