

Perspectives and Distinctive Particularities of Collaborative Networks

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Abstract

Intra and extra organizational collaboration has become an important factor in increasing organizational competitiveness and regional ones. Technical and technological progress and the knowledge economy have led to the emergence of collaborative networks.

Collaborative networks provides an opportunity for organizations to gain access to strategic resources or complementary base and constantly adapt resources, capabilities and potential to become proactive and to be competitive in an environment (environment) dynamic and turbulent.

Complexity of collaboration between organizations within collaborative networks may vary and often depend on factors that have led to the emergence networks. Understanding the distinctive features specific perspectives and collaborative networks is the scientific approach of this paper.

Keywords: *collaborative networks, collaboration, competitive strategies, clusters, regional competitiveness, innovation.*

JEL classification: M10, M19, P13

Introduction

The shift to a new paradigm namely the information society to network society has a major impact on how people and organizations implicitly carries out its activities, communicate and share their knowledge through collaboration. The overall trend is for organizations to work by increasing electronic space and collaborative networks globally, especially to increase competitiveness through continuous access to information due to ubiquity of technology and information.

Effects of organizations in the network paradigm can be seen in all sections dimensional complexity increasing with integration in cyberspace. A paradox of organizational management specific new paradigm is that simplification and unification of standards and technologies for easy integration easier and collaborative networks have increased the complexity of interaction in this new space. It's also an important way in which many stakeholders are connected today

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in different actions for bringing together in market a higher added value, in the conditions of a larger concept of corporate social responsibility (Bibu, Năstase, Gligor, 2010).

In the literature there are many approaches and considerations that authors give various fields of science collaboration. In terms of dimensional and relational comparison is a permanent global dimension of collaboration by geographic dispersion, electronic interconnections and features on their collaborative networks in this context, and local dimension at most traditional or conventional regional organizations working together. Literature review granted ample space and the role that it has technology and technological progress in the emergence of connections between organizations, between management functions and business functions.

What's new virtualization trend are new types of organizational structures and new forms of organization, most often integrated into collaborative networks, or their more complex forms, virtual organizations, these new forms as a response to the complexity and business turbulence. This paper proposes a new approach to collaboration between organizations through collaborative networks, analyzing the main features of its perspectives and through managerial and strategic approach.

1. The emergence of collaborative networks through collaboration from an economic perspective

A first perspective of collaboration between organizations within collaborative networks is economic. The emergence of collaborative networks, from this perspective, there is a manifestation of the power they hold in business organization, transaction cost theory and resource theory.

Power theory has as main objective to study the ways in which an organization can improve or protect their competitive position in business.

Based on the competitive position they occupy an organization in a business district in choosing the most appropriate and sustainable strategies, cooperation can bring mutual benefit organizations to become more competitive. Hymer was one of the first authors who tried to apply theory to study market power strategies working together making a distinction between defensive and offensive (Hymer, 1972). Collaboration through coalition offensive is to develop competitive advantage of organizations and improving competitive position by reducing the market share of competitors or by increasing production costs and their distribution. Defensive coalitions are reflected in the cooperation between organizations have a weak competitive position and adopt various strategies to protect one side of business turbulence and on the other side of the threats posed by dominant organizations. A separate category of collaboration within collaborative networks, in terms of competitive position, is that emerging in the value chain. Through this collaboration, complementary activities related organizations that acquire value chain competitive advantage leading to improved competitive position.

In the context of current developments, we have to pay attention to the factors that could participate to the sustainable development. The current socio-economic analysis shows us that there is a higher need for cooperation and interaction within and without organizations (Cretu, 2012).

Cooperation within collaborative networks in terms of transaction cost theory is a common perspective in organizational practice. Transaction costs are those costs that arise or may arise due to agreements, contract specifications, management and monitoring of transactions taking place in markets such as costs incurred in negotiating, establishing contractual conditions, logistics and monitoring the conduct of the transaction. The theory of transaction costs includes choices available to organizations to internalize these costs in a single verticalized organizations with a hierarchical structure, or transactions through traditional mechanisms of markets. Oliver Williamson has identified five relevant factors that influence governance decisions to internalize transactions within an organization or their performance through market exchanges taking place: opportunistic behaviour, limited rationality, fewer partners, uncertainty, complexity and impact information (Click and Duening, 2005).

Williamson completed in 1985 launched his own theory in 1975 considering that the theory of transaction costs should be paid greater attention to governance transactions. An interesting aspect is related to the blockage organizations that choose to trade assets through market mechanisms. In this context, collaboration between organizations eliminate these bottlenecks and appears as an opportunity for organizations that intend strategies focus on core competencies, thereby taking birth. Both at macro and microeconomic level, the knowledge based economy is becoming, first of all, a matter of management thinking and behaviour (Ursacescu, 2009).

The third perspective in terms of which we can analyze the emergence of collaborative networks is resource theory. In the knowledge economy, intangible resources such as information and knowledge have a critical role for organizations to become competitive. Resource theory is a particular approach to strategic organizational approach. This theory focuses primarily on intangible resources such as knowledge, know-how, capabilities and competencies. Collaborative network supporting organizations provide access to resources and, on the other hand, increase the capacity of shared resources to generate a higher complexity. Specific models of organizations address resource theory perspective resource availability and uniqueness.

In theory logic resources, assets, skills, knowledge and common skills that are available to a large number of organizations, there may be sources of competitive advantage. Only considered strategic resources which meet the essential condition to add value through rarity, and substituted inimitable can generate competitive advantages. Scarcity of resources, resulting in limited availability, restricted access and the costs involved in procuring them.

Capabilities and resources of the organizations go through a long process of evolution and adaptation according to the stages where they found their life curve. To become competitive and to protect their competitive position,

organizations need capabilities and potential that we can get establishing collaboration in collaborative networks. Each stage of the organizational life cycle is a unique combination of skills, capabilities and potentials available to organizations. Their adaptation to organizational needs is a prerequisite and a condition for gaining competitive advantage. A static approach to organizational capabilities will result in loss of benefits that make the organizational plan. Dynamic approach and potential capabilities available to organizations leads to a better flexibility and adaptation to business organizations.

The economic intelligence of the organizations will have to pay higher attention to the modern ways of interactions among people and organizations. The virtual teams prove to be very effective for achieving the network objectives and lowering the operational costs (Burlea, 2008).

Collaborative networks provide an opportunity for organizations to gain access to strategic resources or complementary base and constantly adapt resources, capabilities and potential to become proactive. In the context of a dynamic and turbulent business environment competitive advantage can be achieved through capacity building, skills possible inimitable other organizations and through networking organizations can attract additional resources. Collaboration becomes a tool available to organizations to attract resources to achieve strategic objectives.

2. The emergence of collaborative networks in terms of management and organizations theory

The emergence of collaborative networks and collaboration among them are closely related to theories of organization and evolution over time of the strategic behaviour of organizations. Perspectives as the strategic, game theory and the evolution of social networks in the context of organizational theories are perspectives that provide new dimensions of collaboration between organizations and emerging collaborative networks.

Cooperation within collaborative networks of strategic management perspective has several connotations. On the one hand allows us to distinguish features underlying motivation to work and generates emergence of collaborative networks. From the strategic perspective, identifying and selecting the most appropriate and compatible partners to achieve strategic objectives and systems integration to capitalize the organizational potential of the individual and collaborative joint, are objectives that lead to a variety of types of relationships.

From the perspective of strategic management, the emergence of collaborative networks is driven by the tendency to become competitive organizations through the use of the individual potential and common through alliances, joint ventures, organizational boundaries extend upstream and downstream by large enterprises and regional innovation systems specific regional innovation networks. Strategic management theory in terms of collaboration between organizations, focused mainly on the role of alliances in increasing competitiveness and development organizations. Contractor and Lorange, believes

that alliance formation is determined by a far wider range of options at their organizations. These can include risk reduction, achieving economies of scale, access to knowledge and information and working together to raise barriers to entry in the business sectors (Contractor and Lorange, 1988). To be competitive in a context of increasingly globalized organizations seek to collaborate to access outside their borders to skills, abilities and know-how and increase organizational visibility in an area near the regional or international level. Turbulence and dynamic business environment, the need for financial resources, technological progress and shortening product life cycle are other factors that generated the need for collaboration between organizations and the emergence of collaborative networks.

Specific theories of strategic management also highlight other reasons that lead to the formation of collaborative relationships between organizations and lead to the emergence of collaborative networks. Geringer identified two categories of criteria underlying the selection of partners for collaboration. The first category of criteria is a guideline based on finding solutions to existing problems: identifying sources of funding, access to distinctive and complementary skills in logistics facilities, technologies and marketing services.

The second group of criteria refers to organizational culture, size and structure, the degree of acceptance and openness, history of collaboration with other organizations, compatibility and mutual confidence level (Geringer, 1991). We might conclude that the emergence of forms of collaborative and network integration organizations depends to a large extent by the perception that they have potential partners about the importance of activities, tasks and processes carried out in common, especially their role in making strategic collaboration. Digital technologies and global information networks have made a real progress in information accumulation and exchange (Ciocoiu, 2011).

Successful cooperation within collaborative networks, regardless of the motivations underlying occupies collaboration business culture and organizational culture. Sharing of cultural meanings contribute to increasing mutual trust between partners in a relationship of collaboration. Some of the most important features of the cultural factors are: increasing flexibility and openness to constructive conduct and learning and mutual acceptance of cultural and organizational differences. Because heterogeneity of collaborative networks is extremely high due to the diversity of member organizations, aligning systems and management models or creating common interfaces to facilitate collaboration is crucial criteria that can ensure the success of collaboration.

Understanding contextual factors and develop a common vision of collaboration opportunity as opposed to competitive strategies, are important distinguishing features in the selection of partners for collaboration. This contingency approach is more complex than just dealt collaboration prospects of economic theories namely transaction cost savings. The key difference between just working purely economic reasons to the management, is that the latter highlights the organization and its connections with the components of the business environment.

One of the effects of the impact that technology has had in recent years both in society and in the organizational area has been the emergence of social networks. Relevance of social network theory forms collaborative study shows the role and influence of the social factors in their business. Social networks, for the purposes of collaboration, are relations between a variety of entities which can be individuals or organizations. This works on the basis of tacit and explicit agreements or contracts based on fixed or indefinite period. These agreements have a social rather than an administrative. Actions of individuals and organizations are largely influenced by the positioning of social networks. They could vary between social networks and social media. Social media is media designed specifically to facilitate electronic interaction between a wide ranges of entities. Social relations can generate the emergence of new networks between the same members, or attract new members as a result of the openness to the outside. Pre-existence previous social relations can determine the involvement of individuals and organizations in collaborative activities. Established empirically that the history of collaboration between organizations is an important determinant of flexibility and cooperation commitments they assume organizations (Gulati, 1995). Governing cultural valences formed by social contact networks influences a high degree cohesion and collaborative relationships fundamentals. A distinctive form collaborative relationships generated within social networks is the business ecosystems in key organizations act as leaders and integrators generating a complex value network.

A competitive system is based on the systems that generate innovation, adaptation to the market, competitive advantages, and foster the development of distinctive competencies (Dobrea, Găman, 2011). The study of collaboration between organizations in terms of social networks allows a better understanding of the strategies that they adopt them in a complex and dynamic environment. Collaborative networks that emerge from social interaction can be a valuable source of information and opportunities for their joint potential. However, it's very important the quality of human resources that are involved and the competencies that are developed by different types of interactions (Stefanescu, Konrad, 2011).

Cooperation within collaborative networks in terms of organizational theory perspectives and proposes the following features: analyzing specific structures and management processes in collaborative networks, networks or quasi-networks forms which may be incurred through collaboration, control, degree of autonomy and organizational learning through collaboration; distinctive potential individual training and development organizations but also of the common.

Prahalad and Doz put special emphasis on the role that it has intra and extra organizational communication to create a favorable climate and organizational culture to ensure adaptation of collaboration in contexts in which they arise. The logic of the two authors, communication is essential to avoid asymmetry where a body exercising dominance over the other and ensure information flow to achieve synergies (Prahalad and Doz, 1999). By providing information flows can eliminate speculative behavior in collaborative networks of organizations or exercise in logic resources theory.

Within collaborative networks, partners can manifest power in a negative manner by the tendency of managerial controls, technologies or secrecy. Collaboration partners' complementarities logic involves the assumption of joint responsibility over decisions and actions. To achieve individual and common goals through collaboration, organizations are forced to exercise control of information flow and communication. In practice collaborative networks is particularly difficult to define responsibilities and roles must assume organizations and interaction and performance monitoring from collaboration between organizations. Mutual trust is essential to be followed by all members of collaborative networks.

The complexity of collaboration between organizations within collaborative networks may vary and often depend on factors that have led to the networks emergence. Network concept can be understood as a manifestation of the complex degree of connectivity and communication between organizations. In this regard, collaborative networks are a manifestation of mutual interest, involvement and active participation of all partners and open communication. Collaboration between organizations within collaborative networks provides a larger and more complex manifestation of organizational potential. This new approach illustrates how organizations can provide strategic responses to turbulence, dynamics and uncertainty in the business environment.

A specific challenge in network management organizations is to develop a methodology for identifying and monitoring the effects they generate collaboration between organizations. Within collaborative networks can occur areas where collaboration to generate synergy effects triggered by higher than areas where there are weak links or relationships between organizations. Such asymmetry can be eliminated by promoting a culture of collaboration, learning and dissemination of information.

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3. The emergence of collaborative networks in terms of regional collaboration and economic clusters spatial development

Modern models of analysis of regional economic growth tend to emphasize the role of increasingly important that we have agglomeration economy and integration into the networks of collaboration in the economic development at regional, national or Euroregional even global. Study progress and prospect regional clustering can be done in three distinct perspectives, namely: analytical, technological and institutional (Karlsson, 2009).

The first argument supporting their role for the collaboration for urban and industrial areas as drivers of local and regional economic growth is analytical order. Addressing the three major differ authors in the field. Allen Scott and Michael Porter who have studied the phenomenon of economic clusters in early 1988 and 1990 were primarily observational approach and less focused on technical and technological aspect. Paul Krugman, Nobel Prize winner for economics has studied the phenomenon of regional development from a microeconomic perspective (Krugman, 1997). A common point of the three authors of studies is to analyze the clustering process in terms of economies of scale and the effects of increasing efficiency through regional cooperation. The three authors put particular emphasis on the role that it has regional economy, urban areas, industrial zones, clusters, knowledge and highly skilled workforce in the context of national and international economy.

The second aspect argues emergence of collaborative networks in terms of economic agglomerations is the relationship between regional development and regional contexts, national and European level in the new paradigm of the knowledge economy. Technological advances helped the organizations providing complex platforms through which you can create complex networks between organizations can coordinate activities in a large geographical area.

In recent decades, the impact on regional development institutional and organizational changes generated in the knowledge economy and the need for continuous innovation, are factors of great importance in studying the peculiarities of collaborative networks. National policies and convergence at various international programs can expand or restrict economic activity in a region.

Literature is very rich in terms of well-known names that authors assign them different forms and contexts in which organizations collaborate among them are: The evolution in time of emergence periods are grouped as follows: growth poles or poles of regional development (Perroux, 1950; Boudeville, 1966), business incubators (Chinitz, 1961, Duranton and Puga, 2001), model new industrial zones and clusters (Porter, 1990, Porter, 1998), innovative media model (Saxenian, 1994; Paniccia, 2002, Becattini, 2004), or collaborative networks (Camarinha-Matos and Afsharmanesh, 2004). Today we find these forms of cooperation under the same forms or more advanced forms such collaborative networks and regional innovation systems and clusters where large companies with a high potential for research - development of network nodes become.

Conclusions

In the current socio-economic context, collaboration underpins new business models and structures or forms that can take organizations. Typology to better understand the role and collaboration features we studied the collaboration of an economic, managerial and organizational. This classification served us a better identification of distinctive features and characteristics that have collaboration between organizations within collaborative networks.

Organizations will not be competitive if they act in an individual manner. Connections and collaboration with other organizations are conditions for competitiveness, information, knowledge and resource sharing at the network level.

Transition from autonomous to the systemic innovation in a regional context, from large enterprises to complex collaborative networks, represents a new paradigm shift to specific knowledge economy. Systemic innovation in this new context requires the development of collaborative relationships between entities with very different forms and objectives, but which serve as common to enterprises, companies, institutes, research centres, universities, government agencies or other organizations. Therefore this new form of specific innovative knowledge economy leads to the emergence of new forms of collaboration.

In our approach we identified the most important scientific perspectives and distinctive features of collaborative networks. Understanding the role that was played by transaction costs in economic theory emergence of collaborative forms is important as a first step of decentralization hierarchical structures and transition to working with business organizations. From the perspective of management and organizational theories of collaborative networks emerge as a necessity for organizations to achieve strategic objectives by exploiting common resources, skills, know-how, skills and potential.

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