A selected bibliography of recent literature on 
Organization Structure & Design

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This list, like most useful ones, is incomplete. However, some of this incompleteness is intentional. We describe below the organization of the bibliography and the principles on which the list includes what it does.

1. This bibliography focuses on the literature on formal organization structures and design. The structure of an organization refers to the stable pattern of interactions between the individuals who compose it. The formal structure of an organization is explicitly mandated by those with authority. Organization design (noun) refers primarily to choices about the formal organization; organization design (verb) is the process of constructing such designs. The informal structure, in contrast, is emergent. This does not necessarily mean the two are orthogonal (except perhaps in the short run); the emergence of the informal organization is influenced by the formal organization, and the choice of formal organization may depend on the current informal organization. We have consciously focused on formal organization, with a few mentions of papers that have only recently begun exploring the relationships between formal and informal organization in any detail.

2. We restrict the list to papers from 1990 and beyond. This is not to ignore the extensive literature on organization structure and design prior to this period- but we adopted this cut-off to keep this list tractable. At the same time, we are comforted that it should be easy to access older literature through the citation trails in the papers we list below. We did not need to adopt a chronological cut-off for books because the list is obviously shorter.

3. Within complex organizations- organizations that comprise multiple specialized units- we discern three main three main levels of analysis, and have organized the literature around these. However, it should be noted that this is primarily for convenience; given the fractal nature of organizational structures, where the same pattern recurs at multiple levels of aggregation (or scales of magnification), the conceptual barriers between levels of analysis are fairly permeable, with the same analytical mechanisms often at work across levels.¹

- The macro-structure: the shape and attributes of the organization chart, the basis of the primary groupings of activities and changes to these over time through reorganizations.

¹ In a very abstract form, many of these analytical mechanisms can be described in the context of an interdependent dyad + an authoritative designer, with more complex and realistic structures built by recursion. See for instance “Interdependence and organization design: An epistemic approach” (http://ssrn.com/abstract=1394459).
• **Inter-unit relationships:** these can occur either horizontally (e.g. the coordination and incentive mechanisms used to integrate actions across units) or vertically (e.g. the extent of centralization or delegation of decision making). If we take the grouping of activities in the macro-structure to represent bundles of these lateral and vertical linking mechanisms, then the *conceptual* barriers between the first two levels of analysis is weaker.

• **Intra-unit attributes:** here the focus is primarily on properties such as the degree of formalization, centralization, span of control etc. within an organizational unit. However, since i) studies often compare intra-unit attributes across units (e.g. the extent of differentiation across units) and ii) because at a suitable level of magnification one can see intra-unit attributes in terms of inter-(sub)unit relationships, the *conceptual* distinction between this and the previous level of analysis is again not very crisp.

We list papers in each of these categories; note that the same paper may appear in multiple categories.

4. We have made no attempt to summarize the content of these literatures besides listing some important papers in each at this point (though an attempt to do this is underway). However, it may be useful to note that much of this work treats organizational structure at the three levels (macro, inter- and intra-) as the dependent variable, with parameters describing the organizational environment and/or the technology of production within the organization as the independent variables. The link between the independent and dependent variables is established either by a rational choice or a performance-based selection mechanism (e.g. the survivor principle).

5. Finally, please note that this bibliography is both selective and organic. We began it with a selective collection of papers and books we have found useful in *our* work; but we expect it to grow and evolve to become useful to others as well. Therefore, if you have any suggestions for papers that you think belong in these lists please email us at ppuranam@london.edu or mgoetting.phd2007@london.edu

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Macro-Structure

_Papers in this section pertain to the formal organizational structure at high levels of aggregation (eg. the org. chart) and cover the timing, nature and consequences of changes to the macro-structure._


Inter-Unit Relationships

Papers in this section deal with the mechanisms used to align incentives and coordinate action across specialized units within organizations—both within a firm as well as across firm boundaries. These include settings such as alliances, vertical relationships, post-merger integration as well traditional org. chart related issues.


Puranam & Goetting, 2009


Intra-Unit Attributes

In this section papers are primarily about the internal attributes of organizational unit, ad comparison across organization units on their internal attributes.


Books on Organization Design


