

# Understanding Organizational Agility: a *Work Design* Perspective

Clyde Holsapple  
Xun Li

Gatton College of Business & Economics  
University of Kentucky

Acknowledgement: This research is sponsored in part by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Networks and Information Integration, through its Command & Control Research Program and the Center for Edge Power at the Naval Postgraduate School.

# OUTLINE

---

- ❖ Motivation
- ❖ Theoretical Background & Conceptual Models
- ❖ Planned Studies
- ❖ Future Studies

# MOTIVATION

---

Why should we study agility?

# Prior Agility Studies

---

- ❖ *Definition Issue*: the concept of agility is ambiguous (Giachetti et al. 2003)
- ❖ *Boundary Issue*: intra-organization focus (Yusuf et al. 1999)
- ❖ *Process Issue* : static view on agility (Dove 2005)
- ❖ *Operationalization Issue*: few empirical model testing studies

# New Research Focus

---

- ❖ *Concept advances*: new conceptual models and Systematic hypothesis testing
- ❖ *A network view*: within and across organizations
- ❖ *A Process view* : dynamic and evolving

# Research Questions

---

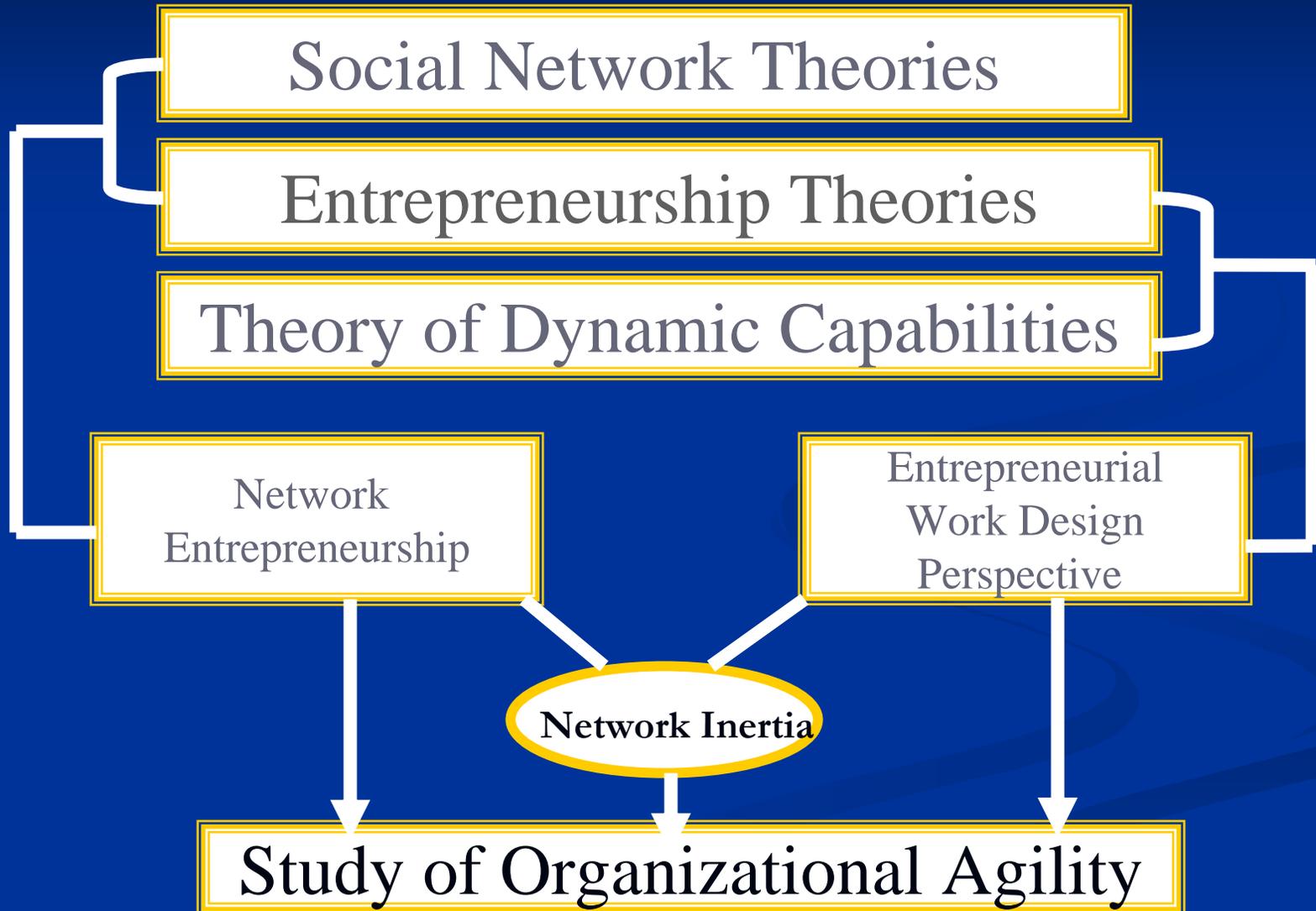
I. What is agility?

II. What is organizational agility?

III. How does an organization achieve and sustain organizational agility?

# THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

---



# NEW CONCEPTUAL MODELS

---

- ❖ A unified view of agility
- ❖ A work design model of organizational agility
- ❖ A path model for agile work design
- ❖ A conceptual framework for agility-facilitating platform—Organizational agility

# A Unified View of Agility

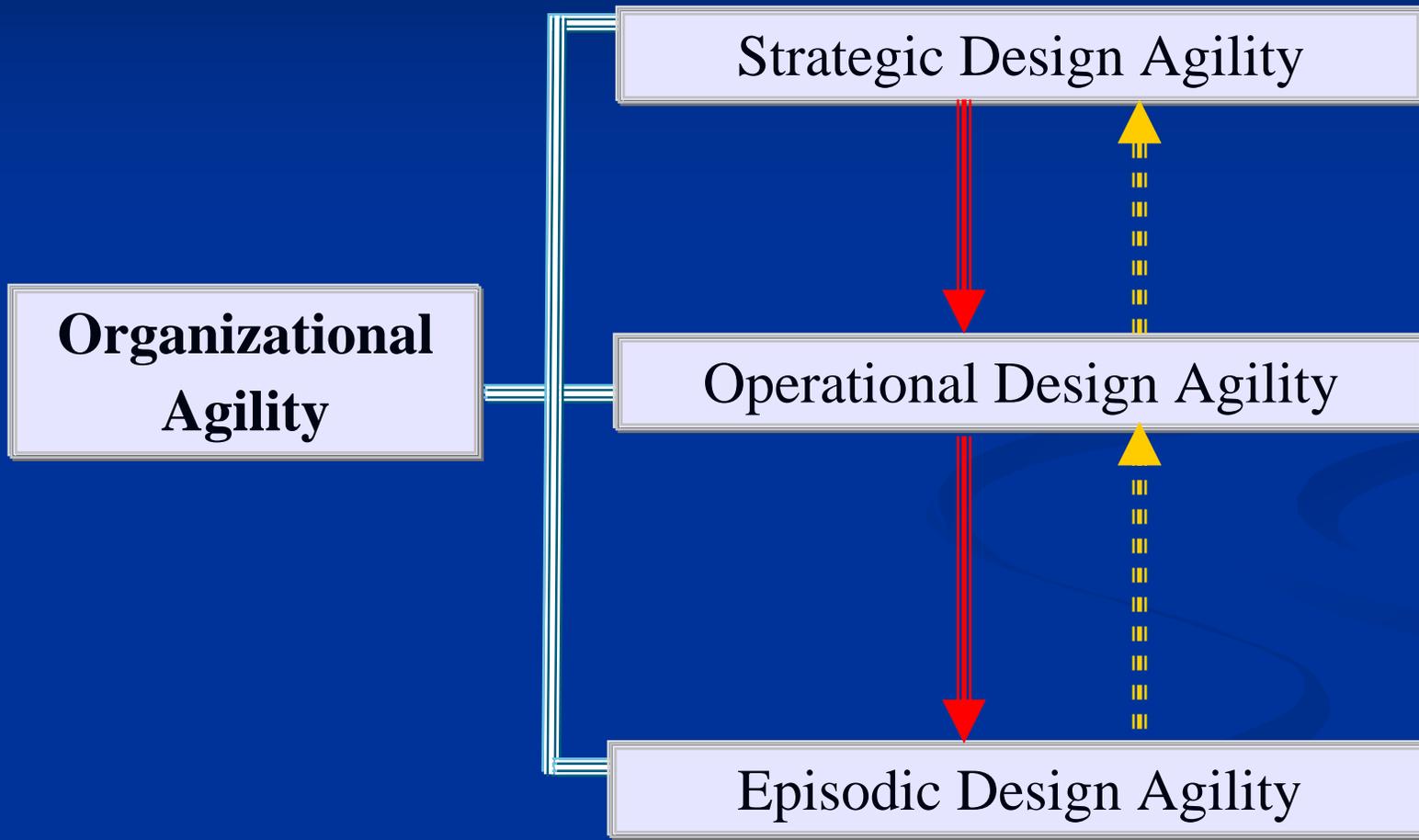
---

Agility is the result of integrating an alertness to changes (opportunities/challenges) – both internal and environmental – with a capability to use resources in responding (proactive/reactive) to such changes, all in a timely, flexible, affordable, relevant manner.

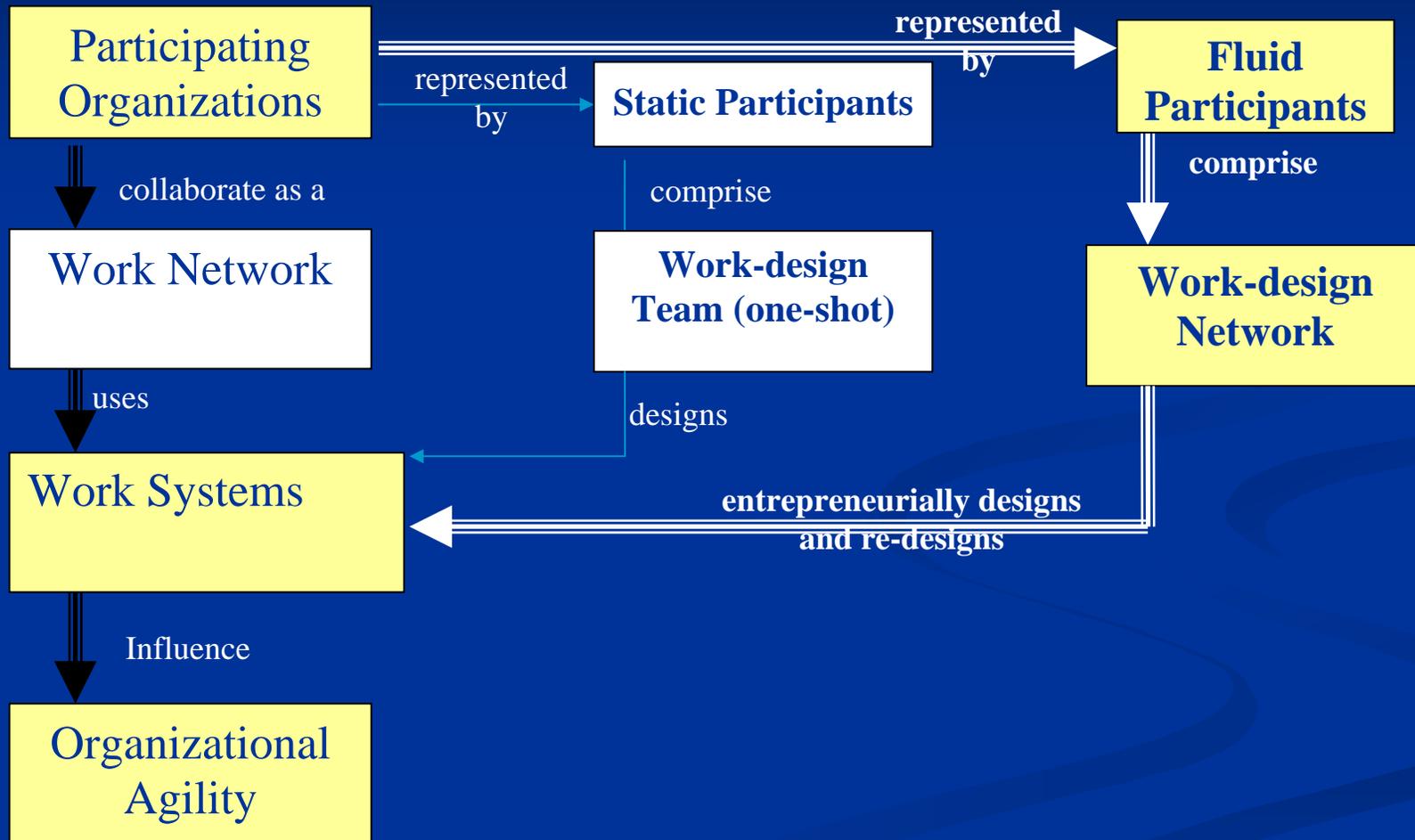
## Gauging Agility

- ❖ *Agility Degree:* gauged by timeliness and flexibility
- ❖ *Agility Effectiveness:* gauged by degree, relevance, and affordability

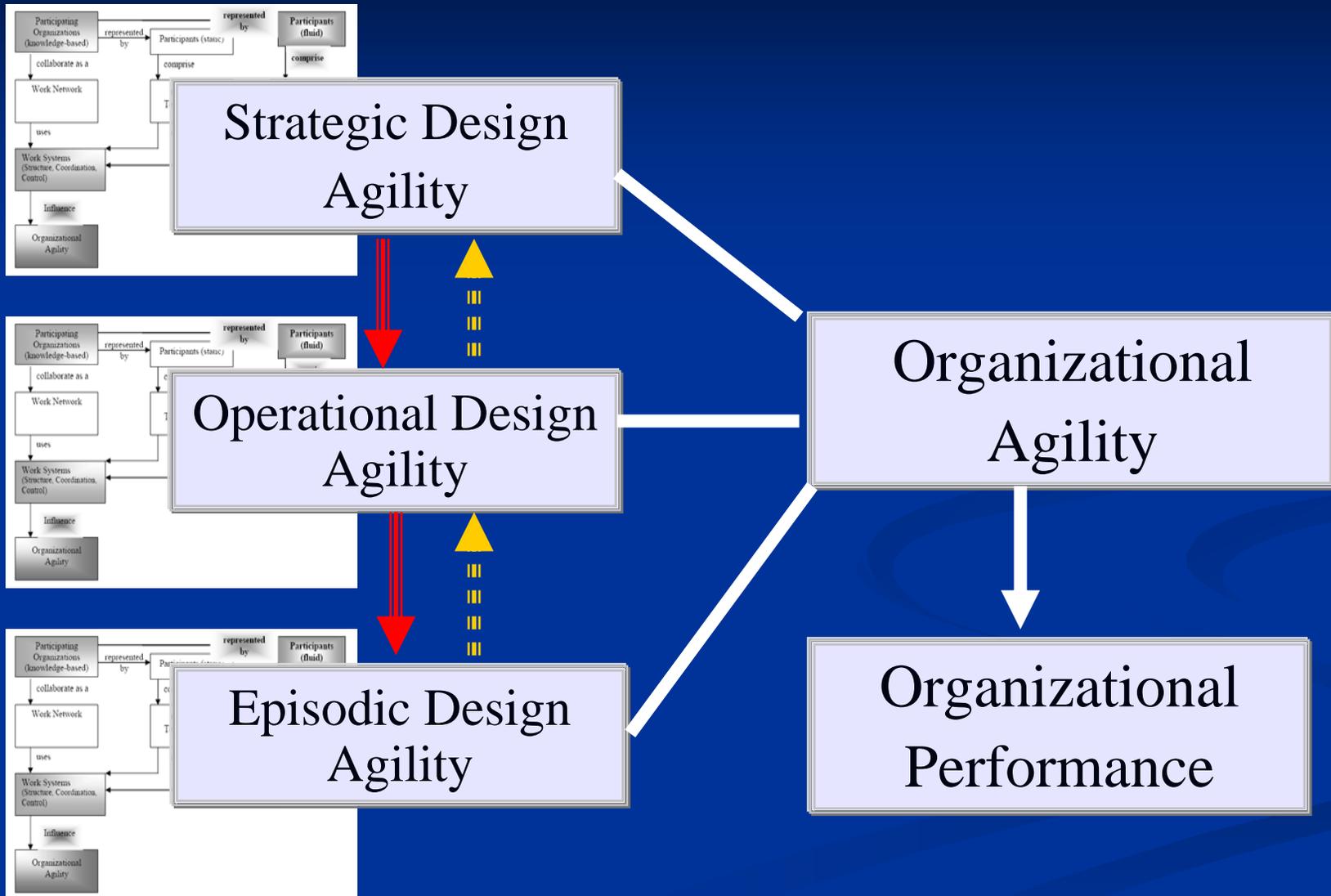
# A Work Design Model of Organizational Agility



# An Entrepreneurial Path for Agile Work Design



# An Agility-Performance Model in Supply Network



# PLANNED STUDIES

---

❖ *Study 1:* Case Study

❖ *Study 2:* Industry Study

❖ *Study 3:* Survey Study

# Study 1: Case Study

---

- ❖ A Fortune Top-100 company
- ❖ Consumer goods sector
- ❖ Informant: Director of Supply Network Design

# Study 1: Summary of Informant's Key Points

Participating

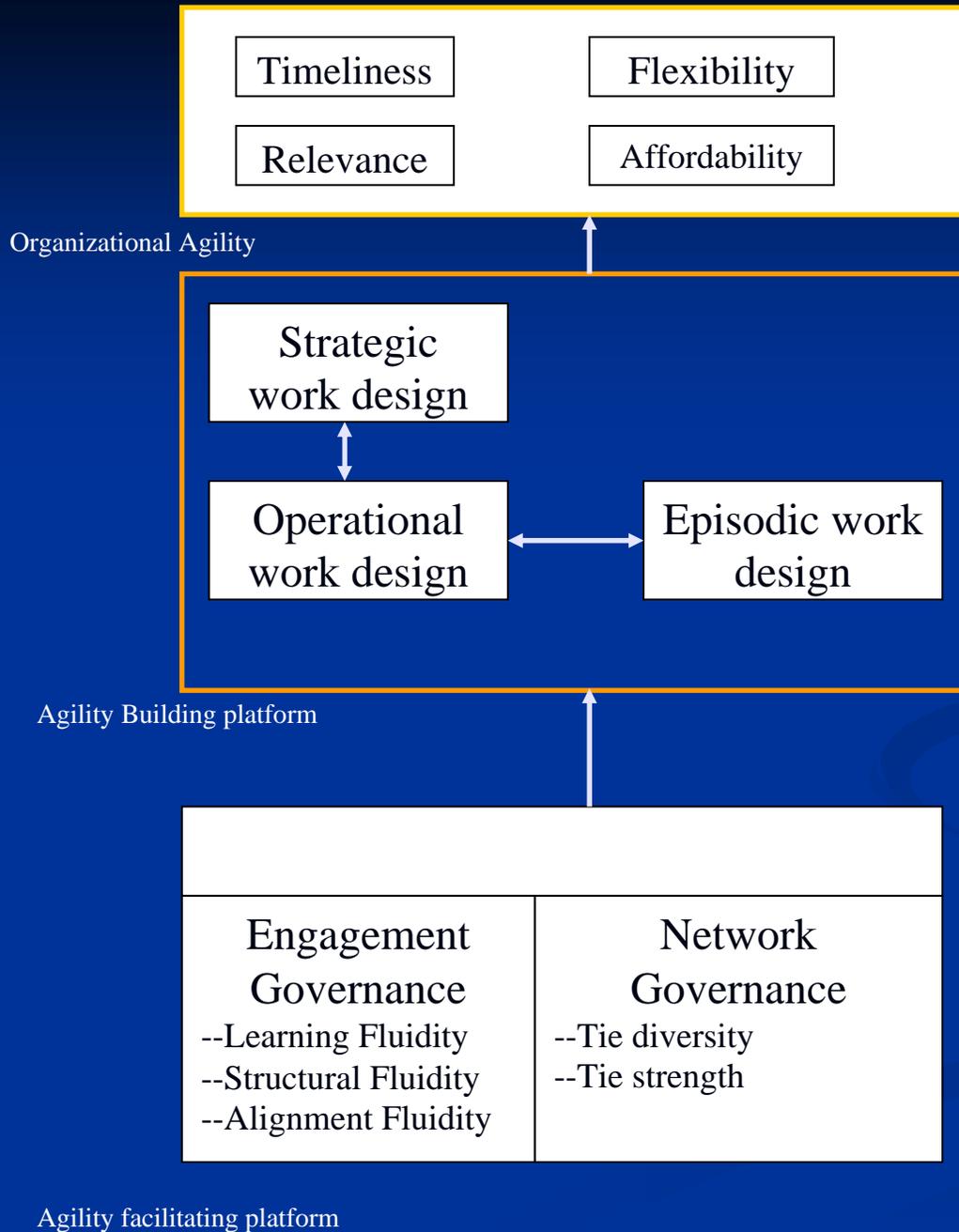
represented

by

Fluid

- ❖ Understanding organizational agility
- ❖ The role of work design in achieving organizational agility
- ❖ What are the traits of participants with whom you have collaborated in work design ?
- ❖ How to stay alert?
- ❖ What are the practices to cope with inertia ?

Supply Network  
Agility



Agility facilitating platform

**Table 1.** Company J's work design governance pattern for organizational agility

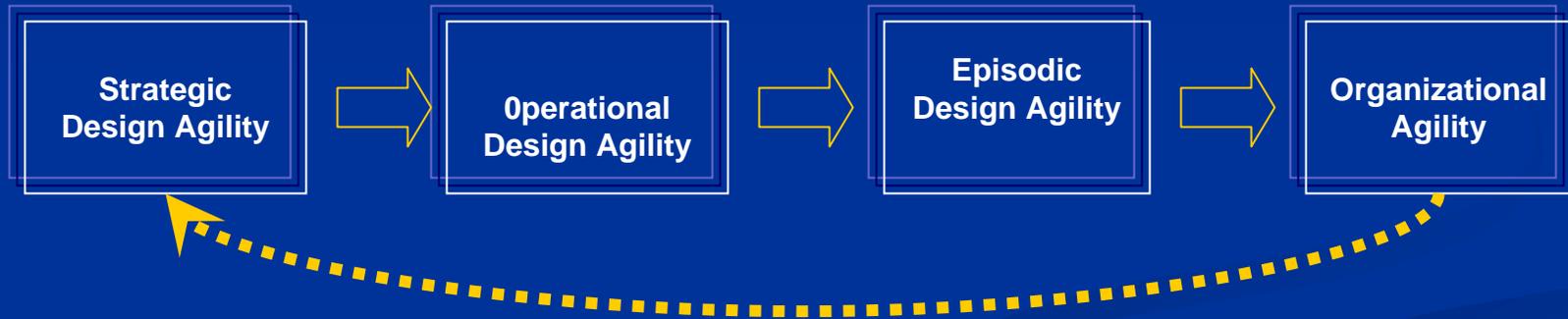
	Strategic Work Design			Operational Work Design			Episodic Work Design		
	PEG	NG	SDG	PEG	NG	SDG	PEG	NG	SDG
Proactive	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/S	N/S	N/S
Reactive									
Simultaneity of work design at three levels									Yes
Supply Chain Network Agility									High

(Note: PEG refers to participant engagement governance, NG is network governance, SDG is system dynamic governance)

# Managerial Implications

---

## Achieve Organizational Agility Through Work Design Agility



## Using Work Design as Powerful Tools to Achieve\Maintain Performance



# FUTURE STUDIES

---

- ❖ Continue Case Study
- ❖ Industry study
- ❖ Survey Study
- ❖ Simulation Study

**Questions or comments?**