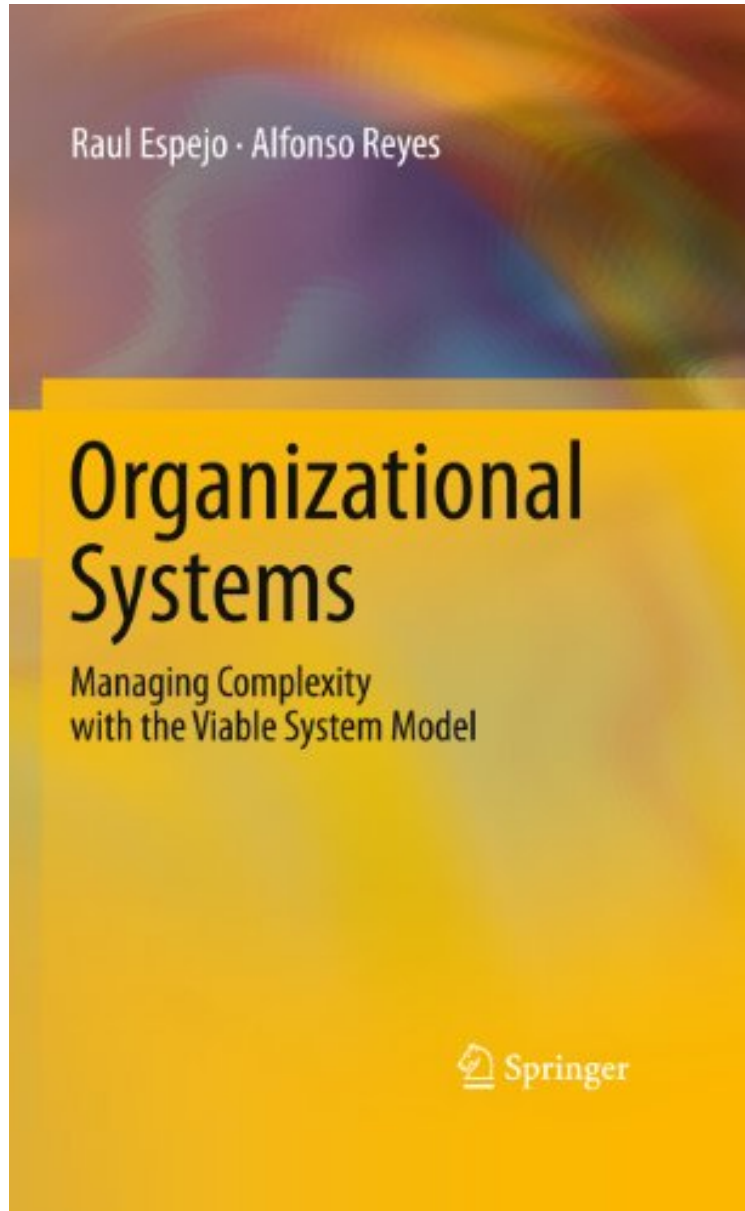


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# Organizational Systems

*Raul Espejo, Alfonso Reyes*  
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**Raul Espejo, Alfonso Reyes : Organizational Systems** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Organizational Systems:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Managing complexity in an increasingly turbulent environment By viable Espejo and Reyes clarify the application of cybernetic ideas to organizational design and to solving problems in organizations. They provide a foundational understanding of the dynamics of complex, self-organizing systems, and

provide methodological support in how to use organizational cybernetics in 'real-world' terms with concrete examples. I encountered Stafford Beer's Viable System Model when planning a study of change in public schools in the late 80s. Then and since then there have been studies of school change, or 'school reform', which aim to support practitioners with knowledge about political, social, and cultural dynamics useful for effective management. Such studies understandably encountered school organizations as "organized anarchy," fluid, complex, and constantly changing. Methodologies to apply the knowledge for day-to-day work were limited. By way of contrast, studies of organizational production and quality outcomes have provided methods of production and the effective management of them, notably in the total quality management approach. However, the architects of total quality management are generally limited in methodologies to transform the dynamics of individuals, social structures, and culture required to adopt changes in work, management of work, and the relationships between workers and managers in order to follow quality management principles. Beer was first to apply cybernetics ideas to manage the complexity of an organizational system with the capacity to change and learn from experience. He developed the viable system model (VSM) to diagnose the faults in an existing organizational system. From experience with the use of the VSM in Chile, the authors learned that "producing effective relationships between stakeholders and organizational policy-makers was far more complex than building up communication networks and information systems," which they later validated by continued use of the VSM in various contexts. The VSM and thinking systemically are inherently abstract, yet readers familiar with the dilemmas of managing complex situations in their own situations, organizations, and environments can gain valuable perspectives from the VSM view of organizational viability and effectiveness. If nothing else the book provides a model for understanding intractability in governmental policy controversies, the struggle in specific industries to regain competitive position globally, and the particularly cumbersome activities of Government to confront new problems and discard old structures that impede its ability to do so, as in health care and public education. Familiarity with Edgar Schein's work on organizational culture and leadership is helpful in appreciating the complexities of organizational change and change in the leadership role in today's environment. Donald Schouml;n's case for businesses, government, and social institutions to become 'learning systems' provides a political - and now historical - overview in "Beyond the Stable State". In addition, Schouml;n and colleague Chris Argyris contributed the idea of 'theory-in-use', a key concept for managing complexity, from their publication of "Organizational Learning". 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars By Diego Molero Good content 1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Extraordinary book, the best in their subject By Daniel Llanos Little books are important issues for this century. It is a fundamental issue, approached from the systems perspective and the extraordinary contribution of cybernetician Stafford Beer.

Organizational Systems clarifies the application of cybernetic ideas, particularly those of Beer's Viable System Model, to organizational diagnosis and design. Readers learn to appreciate the relevance of seeing the systemic coherence of the world. The book argues that many of the problems we experience today are rooted in our practice of fragmenting that needs to be connected as a whole. It offers a method to study and design organizations and a methodology to deal with implementation problems. It is the outcome of many years of working experience with government offices as well as with all kinds of public and private enterprises. At a more detailed level this book offers an in depth discussion of variety engineering that is not available either in the primary or secondary literature.

From the Back Cover This book clarifies the application of cybernetic ideas, particularly those of Beer's Viable System Model, to organizational diagnosis and design. Readers learn to appreciate the relevance of seeing the systemic coherence of the world. The book argues that many of the problems we experience today are rooted in our practice of fragmenting that that needs to be connected as a whole. It offers a method to study and design organizations and a methodology to deal with implementation problems. It is the outcome of many years of working experience with government offices as well as with all kinds of public and private enterprises. At a more detailed level this book offers an in depth discussion of variety engineering that is not available either in the primary or secondary literature. About the Author Professor Raul Espejo is Director of Syncho Ltd. and the World Organization for Systems and Cybernetics. The main focus of his research is organisational cybernetics and has published extensively in books and journals; is the author of about 100 academic papers, co-author of two books and co-editor of three. In the 70's he was operations director of the CyberSyn project in Chile under the scientific direction of Professor Stafford Beer. In the mid seventies he was research scholar at the Manchester Business School and the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Luxemburg, Austria. He was senior lecturer at the University of Aston UK, from 1977 to 1995 and full professor at the University of Lincoln UK, from 1996 to 2002. He has been visiting professor at several universities worldwide. In 1985 he founded Syncho Ltd at the Aston Science Park, Birmingham, UK. Through this company he has worked with a wide range of organisations worldwide, including national and local governments and small and large enterprises, mainly in aspects of organisational transformation and learning, information and communications management, democratic processes and environmental responsibility. Alfonso Reyes is a physicist and a systems engineer from Los Andes University in Colombia. He has an MSc in Computer Science from the

University of Maryland (USA) and a PhD in Management Cybernetics from the University of Humber in England. He did also postdoctoral studies in organizational learning with Professor Raúl Espejo at the University of Lincoln in England. He has worked for the last twenty years in addressing organisational problems in the public sector especially in the administration of justice. He is a former adviser of the Ministry of Justice in Colombia. He has been an international consultant on management cybernetics for the Interamerican Development Bank and the Agency for International Development (USA). He was lecturer in the Department of Industrial Engineering at Los Andes University (Colombia) for several years before becoming President of the Universidad de Ibagué in Colombia in May 2009. He has published both in Spanish and English.