Towards a Polyphonic Approach to Change Management

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- Well, shall we go?
- Yes, let's go!
(They do not move).
—S. Beckett, *Waiting for Godot.*

Never despair. Allow a solution to bubble up unbidden.
—H. Michaux, *Face aux verrous.*

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Preface

The topic of change management in organizations is one of the most developed branches of the literature devoted to the life of organizations. Monographic analyses, accounts of experience, recipe books, scholarly treatises: The body of works is both diverse and abundant; the quality of these works, however, is very uneven. Built on a multitude of carefully analyzed real-life cases and a thorough knowledge of the findings of the social sciences in this field, this book is sure to occupy a prominent place in the literature for at least three reasons.

The first reason is its broad and multidimensional vision of organizational change. Organizational change is seen and understood in all its complexity as a primarily social process that can never be reduced to simple technical rearrangements. It involves and sets in motion multiple actor games. The unfolding of this change, always full of surprises and unforeseen feedback loops, invariably departs from the oversimplified sequential visions of rational planning. These themes are covered in the first chapters of the book. Reflecting on the differences in the nature, levels and temporality of the change processes that take place simultaneously in organizations opens our minds to the real complexity of precisely what needs to be understood and managed. The effort to categorize and order the different approaches that are commonly used to explain and interpret these processes (the planning, political, incremental, contingent and interpretive approaches) aims to match our conceptualizations of change to this complexity by showing that no single approach is capable of capturing the empirical reality. The third chapter logically draws conclusions from this necessary diversity of reasoning frameworks for the evaluation of the effects of change: The evaluations are also multiple, or rather multidimensional, just like the premises from which they are drawn. Let us emphasize in passing that the complexity in question is not the invention of the sociologist who seeks to complicate a simple reality at all costs. It is the complexity of the empirical phenomenon that obliges us to complicate the schemas of interpretation and evaluation. It should also be noted that all of these reflections, while they are naturally an essential preliminary to understanding the problems of change management in organizations, are enlightening well beyond organizations alone, because it is true that a good understanding of organizational change makes it possible to advance the understanding of social change in general. All things considered, and without wishing to reduce reality excessively, can (should) we not consider organizations as scaled-down models of society and therefore also as privileged observatories for inspiring reflection in the social sciences (sociology, management sciences) on the mechanisms and dynamics of social change? If we accept this perspective, those with the desire to master these processes and the ambition to manage them from start to finish by controlling their progress will find ample reasons for greater humility and realism.

The book is thus firmly anchored in a broad reading of change that links organizational transformations to more general dynamics of change. But, and here we have the second reason, François Pichault and his colleagues are not content to simply highlight the complexity of reality. Their book is also a true methodical discourse on how to accept this complexity without becoming paralyzed by it. To this end, they proceed in stages that lead us little by little from a descriptive perspective to a prescriptive vision, which nonetheless avoids being reductive. The first stage is the presentation, at the end of chapter 2, of the five forces model, in which they aim to integrate the contributions of the five approaches presented earlier. The second stage comes in chapter 4, in which the authors seek to specify the predictive capacities of the five forces model in order, as they put it, to counter the accusation of integral relativism. They then introduce two distinctions, the first being between two systems of influence that are characteristic of the internal context (centripetal and centrifugal, according to their degree of concentration of power) and the second between two styles of managing the change process: The panoptic style (in reference to Bentham's panopticon) and the polyphonic style (consisting of multiple voices). By comparing these four “variables,” they demonstrate the superiority of the polyphonic management style for the successful achievement of innovative change. The characteristics of this management style must then be examined in greater depth. This is the purpose of chapter five, which provides the third and final stage, and which takes the reader from the descriptive register to the prescriptive and normative register of a methodology of action. The basic principles of this chapter are drawn from the sociology of translation, which is similar, in many ways, to a methodology of mobilization, playing on the cognitive, relational and technical registers (instrumentation). Yet the tone is resolutely prescriptive: The reader is invited to take an interest in the polyphonic style. This style is highlighted, and the aim is to analyze and show the conditions for its implementation, as well as its associated difficulties and the requirements. The reader will find many useful reflections on the practice of a more “polyphonic” organizational change. In passing, and this is not a criticism, it should be added that through this emphasis on the polyphonic style, the authors also suggest an evaluation of the approaches presented in chapter 2. The rationalist approach to change planning is disqualified for obvious reasons, and the prize goes to a somewhat broader political approach that makes room for and places proper importance on actors’ games, which are themselves linked to the contexts in which they take place, to the different temporalities of the simultaneous changes unfolding in the organization, and naturally also to the very different interpretations that the actors concerned (nowadays we call them “stakeholders”) have of the processes that are underway and of the opportunities and constraints that these processes may entail for them.

The third reason why this book will occupy a special place in the literature on organizational change is the richness of its empirical foundations. The tone is set at the outset, with a stylized account of an organizational change process that the authors use repeatedly to illustrate a more conceptual point. Yet there are also a large number of other boxes that describe empirical situations encountered and help to give the analyses and conceptualizations of the book tangible form. Readers will find their own food for thought and can take their pick of the case studies. For my part, I took a particular interest in the detailed description of two of these cases of change.

My first favorite in this respect is the story of the difficulties of a process that, against the background of a vast structural change project, sought to radically transform the relationship between the agents of a large administration and the documentation they require for their work. This account is emblematic of the difficulties often caused by the lack of realism, or even the megalomania, of change projects that proceed from preconceived ideas rather than from an in-depth analysis of agents' practices. A sociological analysis of these practices makes it clear that the refusal to use documentation and the relationships formed around obtaining the information needed to perform the tasks are based on complex reasons that are anything but purely instrumental. Agents find information in these relationships, of course, but also support, protection, and possibly permission to “bend” the rules. In short, as things stand, if no other accompanying measures are taken, these relationships cannot be replaced by databases, even ones that are very up-to-date and easy to access.

My second favorite would probably be the detailed account of the highly polyphonic change process of a family allocation fund (FAF). This description presents another important fact. It clearly illustrates the project initiator's anguish in the face of the chaotic (the word is not too strong) turn that the process seems to take. On many occasions, the project initiator is described as expressing anguish over the events that come to pass, as if plagued by doubt about the merits of his approach. Nevertheless, he persists and continues to follow the line of conduct he had set for himself at the beginning by remaining attentive to the process, the twists and turns of which he constantly tries to decipher. It is clear that the polyphonic style of change is no walk in the park. It requires the unwavering commitment of the initiating group, which comes at the price of anxiety about the project's ultimate success, doubts about the ability to master the process thus launched and maintaining the involvement necessary to stay on the right track. The polyphonic style is a real challenge to management–this, for me, is the main message of this case. It requires close attention and personal involvement from those who adopt it, which is an essential condition for constant guidance. No question to delegate and offload such a process to any person in charge of the organizational transformation.

Such examples abound in the book. More than any theoretical statement, they illustrate the importance of a thorough knowledge of the contexts in which change arises, and for which the change is designed. Therefore, this book is also an appeal to change managers to exhibit humility, and this is perhaps its ultimate merit. In order to successfully and sustainably modify a system of actors, one must accept the idea that no one knows it all, that change cannot be locked into rigid patterns, and that its results cannot be predicted, but are observed in real time. There is no perfect solution apart from a thorough knowledge of the reality of the agents' practices, apart from respect for the complexity of their work and for their apprehension of these complexities. And the quality of the solution, even if it is guaranteed in principle, does not in itself guarantee its successful implementation. This requires the commitment and intelligence of the parties involved in order to find the right balance of innovation and accommodation, and to imagine the gateways that will bring about a transformation of what Philip Selznick has called the "operational system" of an organization. For it is true, as the authors of this book assert, that organizational change must be polyphonic if it is to take place at all.

Erhard Friedberg, November 2020

INTRODUCTION

What factors drive organizational change? The literature suggests that change in organizations results from the implementation of broad strategic orientations (internationalization, diversification, merger/acquisition, etc.), from a change in internal structures and operating methods (digitalization, restructuring, "liberation," etc.) or from an adaptation to variations in the environment (market conditions, regulatory changes, expectations of new generations, etc.). Most often, these three poles interact closely. Strategic decisions are largely influenced by variations in the environment, and in turn initiate structural changes. They can also contribute to shaping both the external and internal context of the organization by modifying certain characteristics and/or components. The origin of change therefore tends to be multifaceted, consisting of a set of interrelated variables.

Demers (1999) asserts that research on organizational change has evolved significantly. The author distinguishes three main periods: The first, beginning after World War II, emphasizes the need for organizations to grow and adapt to environmental variations. He proposes typologies to associate strategies, organizational structures, and characteristics of the context. Adaptation is most often conceived as a gradual process, within a largely predictable framework. In the second period, triggered by the economic crisis in the 1970s, theories appeared in which change was seen as a discontinuous process, underscoring the brutal reconfigurations that some organizations undergo, ensuing from their executives' strategic actions. The third and final period considers change as inevitable: Change becomes everyone's business; it is no longer planned solely by a management team. Today, researchers focus on the organization's capacity to learn and to evolve constantly, and on the participation of each group of actors in organizational dynamics.

Evidently, the notion of change has gradually been diluted. Most current studies contend that modern organizations are permanently immersed in situations of change. They seem to overlook the fact that the life of a company is marked by swings between periods of change and periods of greater stability. According to them, the globalization of trade, the permanent digital transformation, the financial and health crises require organizations to adopt flexible operating modes in order to constantly adapt to fluctuations in their environment (Delavallée, 2020). Still in their view, taking an interest in change thus implies examining organizations where change has become a "routine" (Leifer, 1989; Luecke, 2003). Unless organizational routines have become a source of continuous change, given the permanent interrelation between their demonstrative (abstract references for action) and performative (actual behaviors of actors in situ) dimensions, thus creating opportunities for the adoption of new models of action (Feldman, 2000; Pentland et al., 2012). Similarly, some authors maintain that reflexivity allows actors to continuously evolve organizational routines (Dittrich et al., 2016), thus combining routines and change.

Discourses on the omnipresence of change seem to belie the notion of change management. Indeed, change management implies that there are "moments" in the flow of organizations' constant evolution during which the organization leaders direct their efforts toward achieving specific transformation objectives. It is useful to refer here to the philosophical concept of "moment," which, according to Hegel,[1] refers to a logical stage within a dialectical process. This process contains within itself the power to swing an idea around into its opposite. Accordingly, if the moment is a temporary fixation of a process in one of its phases, it nonetheless connotes the tensions that affect it in a permanent process of destructuring/restructuring. The moment must be understood as one of the stages of the dialectical analysis. From an analytical standpoint, moments of change are above all the manifestations of a managerial intention that punctuate the life of an organization, which may emanate from various actors. Yet it is unlikely that this intention will be realized as such: At the very moment of its utterance, it already contains the seeds of the tensions that it will inevitably create, which may —or may not— lead to its overcoming (Bodrožić & Adler, 2018). The identification of these moments allows the analyst to identify the multiple reactions likely to be linked thereto, regardless of whether they are immediately perceptible, and to give them meaning.

[1] Hegel, G.W.F. (2010), *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline*, *Part I: Science of Logic*, Klaus Brinkmann and Daniel O. Dahlstrom (eds., trans.), Cambridge (MA), Cambridge University Press.

The following case[2] illustrates the difference between a state of permanent agility, often presented as a managerial ideal in a world of perpetual change, and change itself, which consists of moving from one operating mode to another, from state A to state B.

Creaholic is a Swiss start-up, founded over 30 years ago by Elmar Mock: Innovation is its core business. Elmar was one of the developers of the Swatch watch. His discomfort with the way large multinational companies operate led him to found his own company. His personal story, his personality, his strength of conviction and his network of relationships strongly rooted in the local fabric have had a profound effect on the life of the company.

The added value that the company offers to its clients consists of a contribution of creativity in the broadest sense, whatever the nature of the projects developed. On the one hand, the company receives orders from clients to work on a specific project. This generally involves finding innovative solutions outside the client's field of expertise or responding to problems that internal R&D teams have not been able to solve. On the other hand, Creaholic develops many "incubation" projects, mainly with an ecological focus (energy saving, soft mobility, etc.). These projects are mostly initiated by employees, dictated by their interests and/or as a result of informal dialogue between them, based on a technology developed as part of an assigned project.

The prevailing opinion in the company is that teams perform best under time pressure. Workers cannot really anticipate the pace of a particular project, so working on many projects at once enables them to handle different timeframes. However, several projects might be accelerated at the same time, with the same people involved. This overload creates pressure, and requires the team to work more intensely and efficiently.

The main shareholders acknowledge that the company does not have a clear medium and long-term strategy. They use the terms agility and opportunism. The direction the company takes primarily hinges on the projects entrusted to it by its clients. "The lack of a strategy, of a clear guideline, is difficult for new entrants," one of the executives admits. Among the younger generation of workers, voices are calling for a better defined strategy. One of my employees is an Executive MBA graduate, a

[2] A more complete version of the case can be found in the work of Pichault and Picq (2013) and, in an anonymized form, in that of Crutzen et al. (2014).

very bright guy, who is pushing for a much more explicit strategy. He thinks that would be much more reassuring for employees. 'You, he says, 'the founders, it's kind of in your guts, you can live with it, but for someone who joins a team after 20 years (...), it would be a lot easier if you had a clearer medium- and long-term strategy.' I think we're actually in the process of mutation, of gestation, of transformation right now..." Like André, most shareholders have become well aware that transformations are necessary to sustain the company and ensure the involvement of the new generation. They see the use of reporting and creativity support tools as increasingly necessary to them to support the strategy pursued.

Although up to now, Creaholic has been characterized, like many start-ups, by an agile operating mode, where the strategy is defined as and when business opportunities arise, a major change process is being put in place, under pressure from new employees. This process is intended to structure the operating mode of the company and enable it to adopt a clearer strategic approach, while preserving the initial agility.

In the chapters that follow, we begin by clarifying our subject of interest. The first chapter presents a set of tools used in management sciences to *describe* changes, in terms of their nature, scale, temporality, etc. The chapter applies these tools within various case studies of change affecting organizations, strategy, technology, HRM, etc.[3]

In the second chapter, we attempt to *explain* these changes by drawing on different theoretical approaches (planning, contingent, political, incremental, and interpretive), that we combine in one analytical framework, from which we derive an integrated model called the "five forces" model. One case study will serve as an empirical illustration of these various approaches.

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[3] Except where otherwise stated, the case studies presented refer to research-intervention work carried out by the LENTIC research team. These studies generally lasted several months and combined interview techniques with dozens of key actors, participant observation and document analysis. Two other cases (MAAF Vie and CAF) are the result of research-intervention work by Jean-Luc Castro and Françoise Chevalier respectively. In writing the case studies, we ensured that enough time had elapsed since the research-intervention that engendered the cases to allow for some distance from the organization and the actors involved. We would like to thank France Bierbaum for her meticulous help with the final formatting of the text, and the whole LENTIC team, whose research-intervention activities contributed significantly to the empirical parts of the book.

The third chapter looks into how to *evaluate* a change process by exploring four contrasting case studies. We describe an attempt to individualize human resources management policy in a public administration; the adoption of a new cost leadership strategy in a media group; the launch of a social responsibility approach in an air freight company; and the merger of two higher education institutions. Based on these four cases, we design a multidimensional evaluation grid directly derived from the five forces model. This grid allows a novel evaluation of the success or failure of a change process.

In light of these case studies, Chapter 4 invites the readers to consider change as a process to be *anticipated*, through more or less probable scenarios. The five forces model, applied to the case studies presented above, engenders several predictive hypotheses on the likely evolution of change processes, which notably foreground management style. Two categories will be contrasted: The panoptical style (seeing everything, controlling everything) and the polyphonic style (engaging several voices in dialogue).

The fifth and final chapter, which construes change as a process to be *managed*, shifts from the analytical register, predominant up to now, to the normative register, and proposes, based on the hypotheses formulated in the previous chapter, concrete courses of action shaped by the different theoretical approaches ensuing from the five forces model. Three new research-intervention cases will be presented. The first two will serve as a starting point for defining concrete courses of action connected to the polyphonic management style, and the third will show how an external stakeholder can adopt such a management style when facilitating a change process.

This book aims to provide a structured approach to change (describe, explain, evaluate, anticipate, manage) that will serve as a basis for teaching, research and management practices. The alternation between theory and case studies is intended to help readers grasp the complexity of the phenomenon, while making it accessible to all.

CHAPTER 1

DESCRIBING THE CHANGE PROCESS: OBJECTIVES, SCALE, AND TEMPORALITY

This chapter presents a set of tools that describe the change process, in terms of:
- *Purpose and objectives (does the change concern the firm's organization, culture, strategy, HRM policy, production technology, information system, etc.?)*
- *Scale (is the change strategic, managerial, or operational?)*
- *Temporality (how can we define the beginning of the process, its key stages, and its end?)*

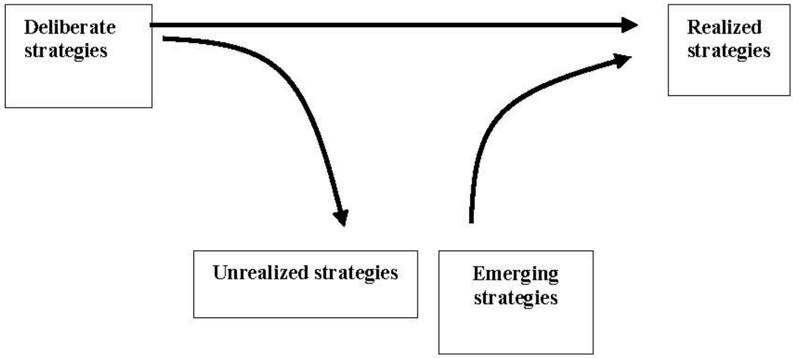
Has change become a given within contemporary organizations? Has change management become a synonym for management? Managers who speak of "change as routine" project an image of change that is no longer specific.

To answer these questions, we begin with a systematic *description* of the process involved, based on a few methodological and conceptual distinctions that will let us approach change as a specific phenomenon that deserves special attention.

1.1 What is being changed?

From the outset, we must clearly specify the phenomenon we are talking about. According to the famous distinction proposed by Mintzberg and Waters (1985), change can be intentional (or *deliberate*), in which case it can be programmed, sequenced over time, communicated, etc., or it can be built progressively as the organization evolves (in which case it is considered *emergent*). Nevertheless, change is manifested most often as an alternation between the transformative intentions of the top management team and the reactions those intentions inevitably generate among the actors concerned, to which new managerial intentions respond, and so on (see Figure 1-1). Change can thus be viewed as deliberate, emergent, or deliberately emergent (Havenvid et al., 2017).

Fig. 1-1. Deliberate and Emergent Change



Source: Mintzberg & Waters (1982)

The content or target of the change is the first area of differentiation: Is the goal to change the business strategy, organizational functioning, HRM policy, or information systems? These spheres are undoubtedly interlinked, but the nature of the change itself, or the point at which the process begins, must be clearly identified because it designates the actors' conceptions of the ongoing process. We must therefore capture these conceptions as precisely as possible.

To this end, the numerous ideal-types that the management sciences have shaped over time, which allow one to give a precise form to the process of change, are useful. An example is the ideal-typical approach, put forth by Weber (1949) which consists of establishing "pure" conceptual tables based on elements of reality pushed to the extreme limit of their coherence, which then serve as a standard for the exploration of reality.

Below we illustrate, through well-documented typologies, some possible areas of change: business strategy, organizational functioning, human resources management, corporate culture, production technology, and information system architecture. It goes without saying that a change project rarely addresses only one of these areas. The challenge for the analyst will be to identify the areas potentially affected by the change and to clarify their interrelationships, along with their possible contradictions.

1.1.1. Strategic change

Contemporary organizations are constantly rethinking their strategic choices. They need to position themselves in a market that has become globalized, to highlight the competitive advantage of their products or services in light of new trends in demand, and to the arrival of competitors, technological innovations, and the occurrence of major crises (financial or, more recently, health). Changes in strategy also concern the public and non-market sectors, for example, the need to develop a new service offering or redefine a relationship with the end user. Of course, a change in strategy often has multiple consequences for other domains such as work organization, culture, and HRM policies (see below).

The management literature offers several typologies to characterize an organization's strategic options, the best known of which are undoubtedly those of Miles and Snow (1978) and Porter (1980). These authors contrast two main types of strategies:

- Differentiation, which aims to give the product extraordinary attractiveness by systematically innovating and/or cultivating its brand image and presentation (Miles & Snow's prospector strategy);
- Cost leadership, which seeks economies of scale and the minimization of all expenses in order to satisfy the client's requirements (Miles & Snow's defender strategy).

Consistent with Miller's (1986) conceptual work, we can consider that strategies that focus on adapting the quality of products and services to the diversity and specificity of market needs in order to increase customer satisfaction through continuous improvement of production processes and organizational flexibility fall into the first type. In contrast, numerical flexibility strategies exemplify the second type. These strategies are designed to cope with sudden variations in demand by resorting to temporary staff (term workers, fixed-term contracts) while avoiding a structural increase in wage costs.

Porter (1980) distinguishes a third type of strategy, called focus, or concentration, which consists in focusing organizational efforts on a particular market niche. This third strategy can be combined with the two generic strategies outlined above.

Many digital transformation initiatives in contemporary organizations can be seen as strategic reorientations (Sebastian et al., 2017). Two fundamental types of digital strategies can be distinguished: One (*customer engagement*) based on directly responding to customer needs (exemplifying cost leadership) and the other (*digitized solutions*) where all products and services are subject to an in-depth redefinition based on the possibility of using large volumes of data to anticipate customers' needs (exemplifying the differentiation strategy).

Change of strategy at Comptapro

Comptapro is a division of ProConsult, a Luxembourg-based consulting firm. It mainly provides accounting and financial services to banking and investment institutions. The Luxembourg job market is characterized by a severe labor shortage. This, combined with recurrent peaks of activity (especially at the end of each month), has led to work overloads or administrative delays at banks. One of ProConsult's directors, eager to quickly develop a profitable business, decided to exploit this "niche" by creating Comptapro. The company quickly became a huge success: Its workforce grew from 10 to 125 people in three years.

Comptapro offers accounting and administrative support services to companies in the Luxembourg financial sector. The company specializes in general or specific accounting, back-office, securities management, and reporting. Exceptionally, it also provides interim management services. This niche activity attracted a large clientele whose needs (and the evolution of those needs) are fairly predictable.

For most assignments, Comptapro employees are expected to apply the knowledge they acquired during their accounting training. Nevertheless, the task completion procedure is specified in detail in the contract between each client and the senior employee who oversees the mission. Paradoxically, while requiring advanced skill sets, most clients acknowledge that they mainly entrust Comptapro employees with assignments that they described as "administrative or repetitive." Many Comptapro employees mentioned that their initial training is little used during assignments.

Comptapro has an average turnover rate of 35% to 40% per year. Most of the departures were due to the integration of the employees within the client's organization, which offers more attractive salary conditions and real career opportunities. The situation is not perceived negatively by

Comptapro's current manager because the company earns a significant finder's fee that increases its profits considerably. The turnover could also be seen, the manager maintains, as an indicator of customer satisfaction.

However, the founder of Comptapro believes that the high employee turnover could be harmful in the medium and long term. Today, Comptapro is no longer the only company providing administrative and accounting support to the banking world: Other large consulting groups, having detected the same market opportunities, are also beginning to offer this type of service alongside their consulting business. The founder foresees a decline in business, the first effects of which are already manifesting. To outdo the competition, Comptapro needs a more highly skilled workforce who can carry out more complex assignments and provide more added value. The manager sees the situation quite differently: He believes the firm's "niche" business still has a bright future; the steady growth in the number of clients confirms that the company is meeting a real need.

The series of crises that affected the entire sector since the attacks on September 11, 2001 (the burst of the Internet bubble, financial crash, Covid crisis, etc.) brought events to a head. The Comptapro founder's vision ultimately prevailed. A drastic redundancy plan was negotiated, including the dismissal of one third of the staff. Consequently, the manager resigned and created a competing company, based on the economic model that he espoused, namely providing support for third parties. The company, taken over directly by the founder, then recruited only young academics and developed high value-added and profitable assignments. At the same time, the staff was reduced considerably, to around 70 people. In addition, a personalized skills management system was put in place, led by an HR manager. The turnover rate was thus reduced significantly, and the company is becoming more and more integrated into the general strategy of ProConsult, of which it has become a business unit.

Comptapro's initial strategy clearly aimed for numerical flexibility: It was intended to enable banking clients to manage peaks in activity without having to hire more staff. The high turnover that resulted from staff being poached by clients was not a major concern as the market was growing vigorously and Comptapro was benefiting from a niche effect. A few years later, the situation changed: Other competitors targeted the same market niche, making a change of strategic direction crucial. The Comptapro *founder then opted to pursue a strategy of differentiation by focusing on a quality service offering with high added value. However, the manager preferred to maintain the old strategy, which he still considered relevant. A change in the context led the founder to impose his own strategic vision. Note that such a change in strategy tends to affect human resources management. In this case, the new strategic orientation is apparently consistent with the adoption of an HRM policy centered on skills development.*

1.1.2. Organizational change

The change process can target another area: the modification of organizational functioning (the way people work, their degree of specialization, the hierarchical structure, the division into units, the centralization of decision-making, etc.). Such a change can obviously result from a change in strategy (see above) or in technology (see below). The change can also trigger changes in culture or HRM policy (see below), etc.

In order to characterize organizational change, we can thus draw on the classic distinction between mechanistic and organic structures, established by Burns and Stalker (1961). This work is groundbreaking: These two extreme forms are still the obligatory reference for management theorists who contrast the old and the new, the stable and the unstable, and the bureaucratic and the agile.[4]

Mintzberg (1979, 1983) proposed a more elaborate distinction between different organizational configurations. A synthesis of his typologies (Nizet & Pichault, 2001) distinguishes five key organizational structures:

- The entrepreneurial organization is young and small, with unskilled personnel. The prime coordination mechanism is direct supervision, which leads to centralization of power in the hands of strategic top management.
- The machine organization is one in which the operators' (core employees') work is strongly divided, both vertically and horizontally. Prime coordination mechanisms are formalized: At

[4] As mentioned in an article summarizing the main achievements of the sociology of organizations (Lammers, 1990), the various typologies of organizational structures presented in the literature tend to converge.

the worker level, this translates into standardization of processes or results; at the unit level, these mechanisms govern the planning of activities or performance control. Machine organizations tend to be old and large. System goals generally take precedence over mission goals. This configuration has two variants, depending on whether there is an owner with strong influence on the organization (an arrangement called an "instrument," which entails strong centralization of decision-making in the hands of the strategic top management and its analyst allies) or whether there is no such owner (this is called a "closed system," with greater decentralization of decision-making and more conflicts between rival clans).

- The missionary organization is characterized by the predominance of one or more missions. The prime coordination mechanism is the standardization of values. Actors who are loyal to these missions and values are able to exercise power, at least over managerial or operational decisions. Yet strategic decision-making remains fairly centralized.
- The professional organization comprises highly skilled, hyper-specialized operators (strong horizontal division), who coordinate their activities by standardizing their qualifications. They pursue specific goals and influence decision-making considerably in a stable environment.
- The adhocracy organization is also characterized by skilled operators. The prime coordination mechanism is linked to interpersonal relations: Mutual adjustment for operators, liaison positions, project groups, etc. at the unit level. The adhocracy organization is departmentalized according to products or markets. Strategic decisions remain centralized in the hands of the strategic top management, but hinge on managerial and operational decisions that are decentralized within teams made up of operators, line managers, analysts, and logistics support.

Table 1-1 Organizational configurations

	Entrepreneurial	**Machine**	**Missionary**	**Professional**	**Adhocracy**
Division of labor	*informal*	*strong vertical*	*undetermined*	*strong horizontal*	*low*
Coordination mechanisms	*direct supervision*	*standardization of processes/results*	*standardization of values*	*standardization of qualifications*	*mutual adjustment*
Inter-unit differentiation	*low*	*strong vertical*	*strong horizontal*	*strong horizontal*	*strong horizontal*
Inter-unit liaison	*non-existent*	*planning and control*	*socialization, mobilization*	*liaison officers, standing committees*	*project groups, matrix structure*
Concentration of power	*strategic apex (CEO)*	*analysts*	*strategic apex, analysts*	*qualified operators*	*qualified operators*
Centralization of the decision-making process	*strong*	*strong*	*intermediate*	*weak*	*weak for operative decisions*
Priority goals	*mission goals + survival*	*system goals*	*mission goals*	*varied conceptions of the mission*	*mission goals + efficiency*

(Mintzberg, 1979; 1983)

Many managerial teams today favor “agile” modes of work organization, characterized by initiative-taking and lateral cooperation between operators, in a climate of delegation and trust that typically departs from traditional hierarchical functioning. The apostles of the “liberated” enterprise (Getz & Carney, 2009), managerial innovation (Autissier et al., 2018), new ways of working (Kingma, 2019), and workplace innovation (Oeij et al., 2017) propose various ways of advancing contemporary companies. The organizational configurations distinguished above constitute effective analytical tools for decoding the prevailing normative discourses and measuring the effective scope of the renewal they claim to introduce in terms of organization. They also make it possible to identify the concrete evolution of practices and to judge the degree of rupture they introduce in relation to the usual operating modes.

Regarding other distinctions related to forms of governance and management control systems found in the literature, Ouchi (1980) proposed a classic typology, later revisited by Adler (2001), which contrasts “hierarchy,” “market,” and “clan” systems.

Table 1-2 Forms of governance and management control

Preferred system	Regulation principle	Purpose of the control	Control mechanism
Hierarchy	Authority	Behaviors and actions	Personal control or impersonal planning
Market	Competition	Results	Output control
Clan	Trust	Identity and values	Control of beliefs and skills (socialization)

Similarly, Williamson (1985, 1991) differentiates between: a) Traditional forms of organization (hierarchy), which integrate the different links in the value chain; b) refocusing on the core business with massive use of subcontractors (market); and c) collaboration with different partners in order to access complementary resources (network). The change project can thus consist in moving from the hierarchical mode, which is based on control by rules, to the market mode, which is based on price negotiation, or to the “network” mode, which is based on trust and reciprocity. In this