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The Configurational Approach

The configurational approach displaced contingency theory as the domi-
nant perspective in the literature on change in the 1980s. This perspective
is characterized by its "holistic" view of organizations, which are conceived as
"composed of tightly interdependent and mutually supportive elements such
that the importance of each element can best be understood by making refer-
ence to the whole configuration" (Miller & Friesen, 1984, p. 1).

This perspective is developed in reaction to what Miller (1981) calls contin-
gency theory's "partist" approach, which implicitly views organizations as a set
of loosely coupled elements. Although it has its roots in contingency theory,
sharing with it a functionalist point of view and an emphasis on the notion of
"fit," the configurational approach is a significant break with the past. As dis-
cussed by Meyer, Tsui, and Hinings (1993), while contingency analysis adopts
an essentially reductionist mode of inquiry, configurational analysis is syn-
thetic: "Rather than trying to explain how order is designed into the parts of an
organization, configurational theorists try to explain how order emerges from
the interaction of those parts as a whole" (p. 1178).

According to configurational theorists, while in theory an infinite number
of possible combinations exists due to the number of relevant attributes, in
reality only a few coherent patterns are viable. At the end of his book on struc-
tures, Mintzberg (1979) asserts,

> How many configurations do we need to describe all organizational struc-
> tures? . . . With our nine parameters, that number would grow rather large. . . . But
> there is order in the world . . . a sense of union or harmony that grows out of the
> natural clustering of elements, whether they be stars, ants or the characteristics of
> organizations. (p. 300)

This new school of thought evolves in two directions. The first, reviving a long tradition in organization theory dating back to Weber (1947), is concerned with classifying organizations into types, both conceptually derived ideal types and empirically induced taxonomies. The second axis is the development of a model of organizational dynamics based on the idea of organizations as archetypes.

The first stream has given rise to a wide array of typologies. Different types of configurations are developed, among them Mintzberg's pioneering work on types of strategy-making process (Mintzberg, 1973) and types of structure (Mintzberg, 1979). Other well-known contributions include the strategic types of Miles and Snow (1978), Porter's competitive strategies (1980), and Miller and Friesen's archetypes of strategy formulation (1978). The relationship between change in the environment and change in generic strategies is also explored (Meyer, 1982; Zajac & Shortell, 1989).

However, it is the second stream, focusing on the dynamics of organizational transformation (Greenwood & Hinings, 1988; Miller & Friesen, 1984; Tushman & Romanelli, 1985), that is of most interest in this book. Clearly the two are related, "two sides of the same coin," as Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel (1998, p. 302) argue. It is because configuration theorists, like population ecologists, conceive organizations as gestalts (i.e., tightly coupled wholes) that they view change as rare and revolutionary: a process of destroying one configuration and replacing it with another. Relationships between elements can only be stretched to a certain extent before active resistance is provoked. Therefore, it is necessary to break down these links to permit new linkages to be formed and a new configuration to emerge. Influenced by Mintzberg's work, Miller (1982), with his colleague Friesen (Miller & Friesen, 1982, 1984), develops the implications of the configurational perspective for a theory of change.

Miller (1982) is one of the first to explicitly challenge the widely held assumption that structural change is, or should be, incremental and gradual. Miller takes issue on that matter, not only with contingency theorists, but also with policy and strategy researchers, such as Braybrooke and Lindblom (1963), Wildavsky (1968), Hedberg, Nystrom, and Starbuck (1976), and Quinn (1980), as well as other major organization theorists who depict organizations as loosely coupled systems (Aldrich, 1979; Weick, 1969).

At the time, most scholars view radical change as something to be avoided. Among the first to systematically study radical change are a group of Swedish scholars who focus on stagnating and declining organizations and their transformation (Hedberg, 1974; Normann, 1977).[1] They observe that organizations have a tendency to repeat the behaviors they have learned and to become imprisoned by the rules and procedures they have developed. Because of this tendency toward inertia, they resist change, do not adapt gradually to environmental evolution, and eventually require radical change.[2] They conclude from that empirical work that radical change occurs due to organizational sluggishness and is to

be avoided (Hedberg & Jönsson, 1977; Hedberg et al., 1976). In an article written with Starbuck, one of the first to discuss change in terms of metamorphosis, Hedberg and Nystrom (Hedberg et al., 1976) assert that organizations should be avoiding "drastic revolutions," arguing that "costs such as hostilities, demotivation, wasted energies, ill-founded rationalities, and foolish risks can be lowered by nurturing small disruptions and incremental reorientations—by substituting evolution for revolution" (pp. 60–61).

These scholars contend that organizations should avoid becoming inertial, proposing that managers should maintain a flexible, organic design that allows them to be responsive to environmental changes.

Noting that, for most authors, more responsive organic structures are to be preferred as a way to avoid the need for revolutionary change, Miller (1982) counters:

> Firms that are structured for a dynamic environment must, when their markets stabilize, face an adaptive task that is every bit as difficult as that which confronts mechanistic or bureaucratic firms whose environments are becoming more dynamic. No type of structure can remove the need for periodic restructuring. (p. 132)

From a configurational perspective, an organic structure, like a mechanistic or a bureaucratic one, is a gestalt and is just as inertial to fundamental change.

Furthermore, Miller (1982) contends that "functional aspects of resistance to change are generally ignored" (p. 132). Miller shares with population ecology theorists the view that organizational inertia can be positive. The large-scale empirical studies done by Miller and Friesen (1982, 1984) suggest that radical change, as opposed to incremental change, is associated with better performance. In their well-known book *Organizations: A Quantum View* (1984), they argue that radical or quantum change—that is to say, concerted and dramatic change (as opposed to a gradual piecemeal approach)—is not only necessary to break out of the inertia that is characteristic of a particular archetype, but also minimizes the risks of incoherence and reduces the costs incurred by moving from one archetype to another.

Building on the concept of configuration or, as they also label it, archetype, they distinguish two types of change periods: momentum and revolution (which they later call reversal). Momentum is defined as a long period of incremental adjustments that maintain or reinforce the existing configuration, while revolution is defined as a rare and short period of extensive reversal that gives rise to a new configuration.

This line of reasoning is pursued by Tushman and Romanelli (1985), who propose a "punctuated equilibrium" framework of organizational change. They elaborate on Miller and Friesen's main insights by articulating the dynamics characterizing periods of convergence (momentum) and revolution (reversal).

Drawing on a broad range of literature on organizational behavior, organization theory, and strategy, Tushman and Romanelli systematically discuss the determinants of change (i.e., the forces pushing toward convergence and those behind reorientation), as well as the process dynamics associated with both types of change.

Also building on the contribution of Miller and Friesen, but parting with their functionalist stance, Greenwood and Hinings (1988) propose the concept of organizational tracks to account for different patterns of movement between archetypes.

To better understand what is implied by this perspective on organizational change, the punctuated equilibrium model and the framework elaborated by Greenwood and Hinings (1988) are presented (see Table 3.1).

Momentum and Revolution: The Punctuated Equilibrium Model

As already mentioned, scholars taking a configurational approach adopt a holistic view of organizations, which are conceived as multidimensional constellations of elements forming a coherent pattern, generally attributed to the influence of a dominant coalition. But this holistic stance gives rise to different conceptions of organizational configurations.[3]

For example, Miller and Friesen's (1980) archetypes are clusters that are empirically derived by statistical analysis of relationships among structural and strategic variables from a large sample of organizations over long periods. In the same vein, these authors define quantum (i.e., radical) structural change as concerted and dramatic change, which they operationalize as a high correlation between changes in a significant number of variables (concerted) and a large proportion of extreme change scores (dramatic) in a short period of time (5 years) (Miller & Friesen, 1982). In another study (Miller & Friesen, 1984, chap. 10), they define quantum change as a reversal, that is, as "flips in the direction of change across a significantly large number of variables of strategy and structure" (1984, p. 251) within a short period of time. As will be discussed later, it is with data collected mostly about the nature (content, magnitude, direction, and scope) and sequencing of change that they test their momentum and revolution theory of change.

In Miller and Friesen (1984), the nature of the interrelatedness among the components of the configuration is not really specified (Greenwood & Hinings, 1988). Functional relationships among components, as well as aesthetic, perceptual, and cognitive considerations, are inferred to explain the existence of the archetypes derived by statistical manipulation (Miller, 1981). For example, in

Table 3.1   Configurational Approach

CONFIGURATIONAL APPROACH
General model of change: **CONVERGENCE – REORIENTATION**   Incremental change   Radical transformation
Focus: Defining radical change and understanding its dynamics

Antecedents: RATIONAL ADAPTATION – Strategic choice (Child, 1972)
                                              – Contingency theory (Pugh, Hickson,
                                                 Hinings, & Turner, 1971)
                                              – Life cycle (Starbuck, 1965)
                                              – Population ecology (Hannan &
                                                 Freeman, 1984)

	<u>Momentum and revolution—Functionalist view</u>
Organization:	System of tightly coupled structural elements; unitary view
Process of change:	Punctuated equilibrium as long periods of convergent change interrupted by short periods of abrupt divergent change
Authors:	Miller & Friesen (1984); Tushman & Romanelli (1985)
	<u>Design archetypes—Interpretive view</u>
Organization:	Clusters of structures, systems, and interpretive scheme; unitary view
Process of change:	Sequences of interpretive decoupling and recoupling following different tracks (e.g., inertia, linear, oscillating, aborted)
Authors:	Greenwood & Hinings (1988)

some studies, the environment is part of the configuration, and it is assumed to be a major force behind the existence and change of configurations. The limited number of such configurations leads Miller and Friesen (1980) to argue for a limited number of patterns of transition.

Tushman and Romanelli (1985), for their part, develop a theoretical model in which the concept of strategic orientation is critical to explaining organizational convergence. While Miller and Friesen's notion of archetype applies to

groups of organizations sharing similar characteristics, the concept of strategic orientation explains, from a single organization's point of view, how a coherent pattern emerges from a hierarchically organized set of activity domains, ranging from core values through strategy, distribution of power, structure, and controls. High performance is predicated on achieving consistencies among activity domains that support the strategic orientation and on adopting a strategic orientation that is coherent with environmental demands (Tushman & Romanelli, 1985). Reorientations are described as simultaneous and discontinuous shifts in strategy, distribution of power, structure, and control in a cascading effect, while the more radical form of reorientation, including discontinuities in core values, is termed a re-creation. These shifts, although they can be triggered by internal forces, are mostly assumed to occur due to external pressures. While a stable environment is a force for convergence through the constraining effect of industry structure, it can exert strong pressures for reorientation if changes in demand, technological, and institutional factors affecting product class evolution occur.

Extending Miller and Friesen's (1984) ideas on momentum and revolution, Tushman and Romanelli (1985) develop a two-phase model of evolution where long periods of momentum or convergence are punctuated by brief periods of revolution or reorientation. However, in contrast to Miller and Friesen (1980), the authors suggest that there are multiple paths in terms of the nature and direction of change, each organization following its own path (Romanelli & Tushman, 1994).

Despite these differences among the authors, the punctuated equilibrium model is characterized by its focus on various aspects of change in terms of its nature, that is, its content, direction, magnitude, and scope, as well as its dynamic, that is, its pace and duration. Is a change mainly structural, or does it affect the organization's strategy and values? Does a change maintain a tendency or is it a break with the past?—for example, an increase in centralization in an already centralized firm, as opposed to moving toward decentralization. Is the change a minor step or a dramatic jump?—for example, hiring an R&D specialist to develop new products, as opposed to merging with a firm recognized for its new product development competence. Is the change an isolated initiative or part of a program including numerous change projects?—for example, ordering an across-the-board 10% cut in costs, as opposed to adopting a turnaround strategy. These questions help researchers define what is being converged upon, that is, the archetype or strategic orientation.

Periods of momentum are characterized by convergent, small, and piecemeal changes. Such changes are adjustments that reinforce the existing configuration or strategic orientation. In a sense, during momentum, organizations change to remain the same; they do more of the same thing or do the same thing more

efficiently. They become more coherent, refining their strategic orientation. During periods of momentum, as the name suggests, organizations are highly inertial, changing at a very slow pace. In contrast, periods of reorientation imply divergent, large, and concerted changes. Such changes destroy the old configuration and aim to create a new strategic orientation. Here, organizations go in the opposite direction of where they were heading or do something totally different. In periods of reorientation, numerous changes occur at a very rapid pace.

In terms of dynamics, Miller and Friesen are limited to considering issues of timing and pacing (the sequencing of changes and the degree of simultaneity with which different changes occur). Their empirical studies don't allow them to elaborate further on the process associated with the passage from one archetype to another. Because they rely on measures of change in content variables over a period of time, they study radical change as an outcome in terms of co-occurrence and pacing. For their part, Tushman and Romanelli (1985), drawing on the literature, theorize about some aspects of the process associated with the different change periods. They argue that reorientation is a deliberate top-down process most often initiated by a new top management team. Momentum, on the other hand, is characterized by a stable executive team assisted by middle management responsible for implementing incremental adjustments that fine-tune the existing strategic orientation. But only a few empirical studies were done within the punctuated equilibrium framework (Romanelli & Tushman, 1994). And these rare studies (Romanelli & Tushman, 1994; Virany, Tushman, & Romanelli, 1992) don't analyze the processes of convergence and revolution within the organization. Like previous studies by Miller and Friesen (1984), they only measure the content, direction, and pacing of changes.

To sum up, the punctuated equilibrium model is a generic model of organizational evolution that shows some kinship with life-cycle theory. It specifies two distinct phases where change is described as a totally different phenomenon in terms of both its nature and process. In this model, the organization remains an instrument in the hands of managers who, through decisions about factors such as values, strategy, structure, and control, have powerful levers to adjust or transform the organization according to their objectives. It is a top-down view of change.

Miller and Friesen (1984) and Tushman and Romanelli (1985) adopt an objective approach and a predominantly functionalist explanation for the existence of configurations. Although they reframe the reflection on change, they remain in continuity with the dominant managerialist view of the previous period. As we will see in the next section, Greenwood and Hinings (1988), while retaining the holistic point of view characteristic of the configurational approach, develop a different conception of configuration that influences the framework they evolve for studying change.

Design Archetypes: From Punctuated Equilibrium to Theories of Stability and Change

Drawing on Giddens's (1976, 1984) and Bourdieu's (1977) ideas,[4] Greenwood, Hinings, and their colleagues (Greenwood & Hinings, 1988, 1993; Hinings & Greenwood, 1988; Ranson, Hinings, & Greenwood, 1980) challenge the dominant view of organizations as formal structural entities, constrained by internal and external pressures, articulated by, among others, the contingency and punctuated equilibrium theorists. According to these British authors, this view, which they label the "prescribed framework," must be completed by the "interaction perspective," which conceives organizations as emergent patterns resulting from collective meaning creation processes.

They define design archetypes as "clusters of prescribed and emergent structures and systems given order or coherence by an underpinning set of ideas, values and beliefs, i.e., an interpretive scheme" (Hinings, Greenwood, Ranson, & Walsh, 1988, p. 22). The interpretive scheme defines what is appropriate in terms of purpose and mission, organizing principles, and criteria used for evaluation; it is embodied in the set of structures and systems that constitute the organization's design. This conception of archetypes leads them to extend, and, to a certain extent, depart from the punctuated equilibrium model in two ways.

Like Tushman and Romanelli (1985), Greenwood, Hinings, and their colleagues view structures and systems as secondary to values and beliefs. However, while the former emphasize the role of top management in instilling the values and beliefs underpinning the strategic orientation, Greenwood and Hinings (1988), adopting a neo-institutionalist explanation, draw attention to the sectoral origins of interpretive schemes. In their view, organizations are embedded in an institutional setting that legitimates only a restricted number of design archetypes and, thus, interpretive schemes. In terms of change, they suggest that the existence of competing archetypes in a sector furnishes the alternative configuration toward which individual organizations might move. This conception of design archetypes leads the authors to distinguish between sectoral archetypes, which act as ideal types, and their more or less coherent embodiment in specific organizations.

Second, the emphasis these authors place on the emergent processes in organizations leads them to develop a more complex framework for organizational evolution: a theory of organizational tracks. They argue that the dynamic of power relations and the evolving pattern of commitments to existing and alternative interpretive schemes, as much as the alignment of internal and external contingencies, influence the pattern of evolution—that is, the particular track an organization will follow. Rather then seeing organizations following a generic cycle of momentum followed by revolution led by a visionary leader, they suggest that movement between archetypes can best be described as following different paths. These include, apart from the dominant track of inertia, a range of

possibilities of more or less successful (linear, oscillating, delayed, abortive, unresolved) attempts at reorientation, success being defined as achievement of archetypal coherence. According to them, the movement between archetypes should be conceived as sequences of interpretive decoupling and recoupling. Therefore, elements of different archetypes could coexist in organizations, leading to archetypal incoherence. Studies done since the 1990s by these authors (for example, Greenwood & Hinings, 1993; Greenwood, Hinings, & Brown, 1990) and others (Denis, Lamothe, & Langley, 1996; Pinnington & Morris, 2002), mostly in professional and public organizations, are framed within the archetype change model, but the empirical work on organizational tracks has remained scarce to date.

Other process researchers, such as Pettigrew (1985a) and Child and Smith (1987), can also be viewed as contributing to process theories of punctuated change, theories in which "stability and change are inextricably linked as an organization moves through time" (Hinings et al., 1988, p. 193). Their empirical work on the well-known British firms ICI (Pettigrew, 1985a) and Cadbury (Child & Smith, 1987) supports the idea of complex patterns of evolution. As well, Child and Smith's (1987) sector-specific approach[5] to the study of radical change has some commonalities with the idea of Greenwood and Hinings (1988) that archetypes are related to specific institutional settings. However, as these scholars study the intraorganizational dynamics in a single organization in its context over a long period of time, an effort to build cumulatively from these separate findings would be needed for the identification of different tracks of change.

To summarize, Greenwood, Hinings, and their colleagues contribute to the configurational perspective by elaborating a richer model of the dynamics of radical change. Their framework includes the possibility of failed attempts at change, while most of the literature focuses exclusively on successful attempts.[6] Also, by integrating the social construction point of view with the formal structural perspective on organizational change, they highlight the role of meaning creation processes and of politics in organizational change. In this sense, they are clearly in tune with new developments in organization theory (Reed, 1992) that bring to the forefront cognitive and cultural as well as political approaches to change that are presented in the next sections. Finally, although their focus on radical change places them firmly in the second period, their conception of organizations and of the dynamics of organizational evolution previews the third era with its emphasis on emergent change.

Discussion and Conclusion

As stated at the outset, the configurational approach to change developed as a challenge to the incremental conception of change shared by contingency theorists and most early organization and policy researchers. Not surprisingly, this point of view also draws its share of criticism.

The most common is a refutation of the essentially revolutionary nature of organizational change. One of the most vocal critics of the configurational school is Donaldson (1996a), a staunch advocate of the structural contingency school, who finds configurations to be "simplistic caricature" (p. 127). He argues that most real organizations don't fit neatly into these types; they almost always lie somewhere in the middle between types. And, if configurations don't exist, it follows that quantum change is a flawed concept. Donaldson maintains that "most organizations, most of the time, are changing incrementally" (p. 122). He disagrees with the idea that organizations that change incrementally hover between archetypes in a state of disequilibrium, contending that it leaves the management of the transition between archetypes to be accounted for. Donaldson (1996a) asks,

> How can the machine bureaucracy come into existence? How can an organization exist at all which is large in size if it has not been able to grow incrementally from the small, simple structure through medium size to large size? (p. 113)

On a less radical note, some authors argue that long periods of momentum followed by a quick revolution might not be the only trajectory followed by organizations. Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 314), for example, suggest that it might apply particularly well to one type of configuration, namely, large, established mass-production organizations, while innovative organizations would follow a more balanced pattern between stability and change. This line of reasoning is echoed by research on new organizational forms that suggests that punctuated equilibrium might not be an appropriate model for describing the evolution of organizations in hyperturbulent environments, which go through "continuous morphing" (Rindova & Kotha, 2001).

In fact, one of the main limits of the configurational approach to change is the lack of empirical research on the actual processes of convergence and transformation (Sastry, 1997). Most studies done within that perspective are based on archival data and official documents and identify what changes occurred and when, not how changes were realized. As Romanelli and Tushman state in a 1994 article, still very little research has been done within the punctuated equilibrium perspective on the underlying "patterns of influence among substantial changes over different domains for both revolutionary and non-revolutionary transformations" (p. 1160). For example, the announcement of a major reorganization can be the beginning of a period of radical change, as described by Biggart (1977) in the case of the U.S. Post Office or the officialization of a change that has long been under way, as in the story of the religious order told by Bartunek (1984). But both would be defined the same way in the type of analysis done by Miller and Friesen (1984) and Romanelli and Tushman (1994).

In fact, some in-depth case studies of strategic change processes, such as those by Burgelman (1983), Mintzberg and McHugh (1985), Quinn (1980), Pettigrew (1985a), and Johnson (1988), show more complex patterns of change. Local strategic initiatives leading to "nonrevolutionary" radical change are described in the first two of these, and long periods of experimentation and/or aborted attempts preceding a transformation in the last three. This process research gives credence to Pettigrew's warning: "Beware of the myth of the singular theory of social or organizational change" (p. 1).

Some of the preceding criticisms are partly avoided by Greenwood and Hinings (1988), who define an archetype in terms of the interpretive scheme from which strategy, structure, and systems emerge. From their point of view, what determines radical change is not so much the change in structural form but of the interpretive scheme underlying it. For example, a continuously morphing organization would not be changing radically if its interpretive scheme remained stable (i.e., "We are an innovative organization that changes all the time."). Hinings and Greenwood (1988) also propose a theory of tracks that allows for multiple possibilities of evolution, but very little empirical work has been done on the concept of tracks itself. In fact, this part of their theory, because it departs from the punctuated equilibrium model to extend into a theory of stability and change, blurs the boundaries between the configurational perspective and other more evolutionary perspectives on change. One of the main challenges of their quest is to reconcile the demands of contextualized process research with the essentially typological objective of configurational research.

Despite the limits mentioned, the configurational approach in its various forms continues to be influential, as reflected in the special issue of the *Academy of Management Journal* devoted to it (Meyer, Tsui, & Hinings, 1993). Since the 1990s, it has been applied to the study of radical organizational change in different sectors such as health (Denis et al., 1996; Meyer, Goes, & Brooks, 1990), architecture (Pinnington & Morris, 2002), municipal government (Greenwood & Hinings, 1993), and the cement industry (Keck & Tushman, 1993). Some authors have extended its use to the study of radical change at the industry level (Meyer et al., 1990). Finally, recently, Whittington and Pettigrew (2003) propose using Milgrom and Roberts's (1990) economic theory of complementarities, which provides the operational means for measuring the benefits of holistic configurations. Complementarities theory lends support to the configurational approach's thinking on change as a centralized, transformational process.

To conclude, one of the main contributions of the configurational perspective on change is to bring to the forefront the idea of radical change or transformation. Starting from the premise that organizations can be conceived as configurations or archetypes—constellations of tightly integrated elements—its proponents define radical change as a change of configuration. The differences in their conception of configuration should not be underestimated. For Miller

and Friesen (1984), a few generic archetypes can be distinguished across the whole population of organizations, while for Tushman and Romanelli (1985), each organization develops its own particular configuration or strategic orientation. Greenwood and Hinings (1988), for their part, suggest that a few design archetypes or templates exist in each institutionalized setting. In terms of the dynamics of change, they all agree that discontinuous change is difficult. But while Miller and Friesen (1984) and Tushman and Romanelli (1985) propose a punctuated equilibrium model to describe the overall dynamics, Greenwood and Hinings (1988) suggest a theory of multiple tracks in which punctuated equilibrium is only one possibility. In many ways, Greenwood and Hinings, because they extend the reflection on punctuated change to a theory of stability and change, provide a bridge between the second and the third periods of evolution of the field.

Finally, the configurational perspective explores the concept of radical change, in terms of both its content and dynamics. But, because it views change from above, it is still largely aprocessual and acontextual.

Notes

1. These Swedish scholars, although influenced by Anglo-Saxon literature, develop an original stream of research by integrating into their analysis concepts borrowed from various perspectives such as contingency and life-cycle theories, Selznick's institutionalism, cognitive theory, and OD. They belong to the strategy process research tradition discussed in the introduction.

2. As mentioned in the previous chapter, population ecologists (Hannan & Freeman, 1977, 1984) also see radical change as a result of organizational inertia. As well, they view the transition to a new organizational form as dangerous, leading more often to organizational mortality than to its transformation. However, as these researchers are interested in populations of organizations, they do not study individual organizations that attempt transformation. In contrast, these cases of radical change are particularly interesting to scholars who are interested in structural and strategic change and who typically adopt a managerial viewpoint.

3. As mentioned by Greenwood and Hinings (1988) as well as Meyer, Tsui, and Hinings (1993), the configurational approach can include the study of any number of dimensions that combine into overall patterns, whether they are at the individual (type of leader), organizational (structural, strategic, cultural), or environmental (turbulence, connectedness) level. In the study of organizational change, organizational configurations are most often analyzed separately from environmental dimensions.

4. Giddens and Bourdieu, one a British and the other a French sociologist, separately develop theories that argue that the traditional opposition between structure and agency (or determinism and voluntarism) is inaccurate and unproductive. They propose a new perspective that, while retaining the analytical differences between the structure and action perspectives, sees them as involved in a relationship that is both constitutive and constituting. Emergent patterns of interaction are both constrained by

and constitutive of structural frameworks. In other words, structural frameworks only exist because they are constantly produced and reproduced through interaction. Therefore, action is not prescribed by structural frameworks, although structures are used as resources in interaction and are both maintained and transformed through day-to-day action. Giddens's structuration theory, particularly, has become influential in the literature on change in the 1990s, as will be seen in Part III.

5. Pettigrew's (1985a) contextualist methodological framework for doing process research on strategic change will be presented in Chapter 6 at the same time as his political–cultural approach to organizational change. Contextualism emphasizes the importance of studying organizations over their history and taking into account the evolution of the inner and outer context, the content of strategy, and of their interaction in multilevel processes of decision making and change. While adhering to Pettigrew's contextualist vision, Child and Smith (1987) focus on the relevance of studying the sector in terms of objective dimensions, industry recipes (shared strategic frameworks), and networks in order to understand the processes of strategic change.

6. How many of the underperforming firms in large-scale studies, categorized as going through incremental changes, were in fact attempting reorientations but were incapable of realizing them? How much of a momentum period is made up, in fact, of failed attempts at undermining the old archetype?