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### The control imperative

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## SIX

# The control imperative

The central proposition of this book is that the need to achieve and maintain control, and to secure conditions necessary for doing so is a crucial intervening factor in the motivation, implementation and outcome of reorganizations. We propose that the control imperative powers and shapes contemporary efforts in planned organizational change in the public and private sectors. Studying and understanding this, we claim, helps open the black box that links general changes in the environment of organizations to particular trajectories of organizational change. The studies presented in preceding chapters posit the notions that managers and implementers strive for control; that it is in their best interest to achieve and retain control; and that pursuing such goals has real implications for corporate strategy and public policy. We have explored different facets of the relation between control and change across different phases of the reorganization process, and on the way, we have gathered significant evidence.

In this concluding chapter, we first recapitulate on the available evidence and findings. Next, we discuss loose ends, and explore avenues for future studies. We conclude by pointing out implications for theory and practice.

TABLE 6.1 *Lessons and evidence*

		<i>Lessons</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
ANTECEDENTS		Managers' control positions are multidimensional	
	Ch. 1	Managers who see their control position endangered or diminished embark with higher likelihood on reorganizations	365 managers Private sector Netherlands
		Control affects the likelihood of reorganizations, even when accounting for ecological influences	
	Ch. 2	Different types of conflict correlate with different types of reorganization	238 managers Private sector Netherlands
IMPLEMENTATION	Ch. 3	Control is a precarious state for managers (implementers), and it depends on managing multiple strategies Variations in the ability to exert control can have unintended consequences for policy	10 managers 1 org. Public sector Mexico
	Ch. 4	Implementation of reorganizations does not require formal control and large resource endowments Legitimation of processes and bottom-up involvement of organizational members contribute to implementation	55 orgs. Public sector Mexico
AFTERMATH	Ch. 5	NPM reforms have created convergence among public and private organizations Changes influence the quality and quantity of control, esp. in public agencies	122 orgs. Public and private Netherlands

### *Evidence and lessons*

Our evidence suggests that control is indeed an intervening factor in the motives, implementation and aftermath of reorganizations, in the public and private sectors (Table 6.1). It also shows that the relation between control and change is composite, reciprocal and pervasive. First, the relation is composite because both control and change are complex, multifaceted phenomena. As we have seen, different aspects and qualities of control (or loss of control) have different effects on the probability and type of reorganization (Chapters 1 and 2). Second, control and change have a reciprocal relation. Control affects the possibilities of reorganizations—both as antecedent (Chapters 1 and 2) and throughout the implementation process (Chapters 3 and 4)—as much as reorganizations affect the nature and intensity of control (Chapters 3 and 5). Finally, our evidence shows that the relation between control and change can be found in one way or another in different organizations and across different sectors. Control is imperative for public and private managers to defend and maintain their position, and its pursuit has important consequences for strategy and policy.

### *Antecedents*

In the first chapter, we observed and asked why some managers resisted reorganization, whereas others seemed eager to embark on them. The central issue was to understand whether variations in managers' experience of control would help us understand the occurrence of reorganizations. We claimed that a gattopardism mechanism was at play: For managers who deemed their control positions (MCP) strong, the opportunity cost of initiating reorganization was high because embarking on change could potentially undermine the basis of a robust position. Conversely, managers who saw their position challenged or diminished had an incen-

tive to start and support reorganization—that is, the opportunity cost of reorganizing decreases to the extent that a managers' control position decreases as well.

Statistical analyses indicated that higher MCP indeed correlated with lower incidence of change. This observation supports the underlying argument that change responds, at least partially, to managers' efforts to uphold their position and repel threats. Obviously this claim neglects many factors, such as incremental drivers of change (adjustments and improvisations that in themselves do not constitute purposeful reorganization, but that in the long run change organizational routines; Gersick and Hackman 1990; March 1981), as well as the incessant negotiation that occurs between management and employees, and between members of the management team (Buchanan and Badham 2004; Demers 2007, 180-5). The observation, however, is relevant because it shows that attending to the strength of the manager's control position can inform us about the likelihood of reorganization, even when controlling for the influence of powerful drivers of change external to the organization (increased market competition, changes in governmental legislation, and technological advancement). It also suggests that the relation between control and change is more complex than assumed in some popular textbooks (for a discussion on this, see Streatfield 2001). The evidence we gathered suggests that *managers do not necessarily embark on changes because they are "in control", but probably because they are not.*

Chapter 2 offered a somewhat different treatment of the issue of control as antecedent of reorganizations. We asked why some managers decided to embark on structural changes such as massive layoffs and downsizing (type E reorganization), whereas others chose reorganizations geared to improving organizational capacity, for example, through process reengineering or policy adjustment (type O reorganization). That is, we asked why one kind of reorganization was chosen over the other. The key to the answer is that the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the or-

ganizational structure hatch fundamentally different conflicts, with equally different consequences for management and organizations. Vertical conflicts reduce the efficiency of agency relations and increase the costs of securing compliance. Horizontal conflicts disrupt peer-to-peer processes and increase the costs of achieving coordination. We proposed that different conflicts were likely to elicit different managerial responses. Specifically, we suggested that reorganizations are a potential solution for conflict—and the loss of control that it entails. Type E reorganizations were arguably more effective at mitigating vertical conflicts, and conversely, type O reorganizations at horizontal ones.

An analysis of a sample of managers revealed that the likelihood of reorganizations increased in the presence of conflict. The sample also showed that the likelihood of observing different kinds of reorganization was associated, as expected, with different kinds of conflict: vertical conflict associates with a higher likelihood of type E reorganization, and horizontal conflict associates with a higher likelihood of type O reorganization. This suggests that managers facing different sorts of conflict may indeed react differently and, if they choose to implement reorganizations, they are likely to embark on qualitatively different trajectories of change. These correlations are further evidence in favor of the idea that the need to remain in control is a crucial antecedent of reorganizations. Chapter 2 suggests, in particular, that *qualitative variations in the kind of threats to control may affect the kind of reorganization* pursued by managers.

### *Implementation*

Chapters 3 and 4 take on the issue of how managers and implementers gain control over the implementation of reorganizations. Empirically, these chapters focus on the implementation of a massive HRM reorganization in several agencies of the national government of Mexico. In Chapter 3, we asked how implementers managed to enforce change, that is, how they attain and sus-

tain control in order to implement a reorganization. In the case of the SPC reform, we analyzed which strategies were devised to achieve this, and what were the resulting patterns of enforcement and control. We were particularly interested in how implementers managed to achieve coordination and compliance (see also, Chapters 1 and 2). Evidence shows that different types of strategies of control were adopted, repaired or adjusted to regain, maintain or increase legitimacy (cf. Scott 2008). To the extent that resources and political leverage were plentiful, control was sought through purely regulatory strategies. However, when these strategies proved ineffective (particularly evidenced by low levels of compliance), implementers were forced to devise alternatives. The case study shows that implementers of the SPC reform moved to an enforcement framework based on increased autonomy and flexibility and increased prominence of “soft” strategies (e.g., persuasive strategies). This transition resulted in a reduction of the cost of securing compliance, but it increased the cost of achieving coordination.

With regard to our overarching question, this pattern is interesting for at least two reasons. First, it shows again that control is multifaceted, and that securing some aspects of control (e.g., achieving compliance) does not preclude complications in others (e.g., coordination). It seems that *control is a precarious state for managers* and implementers: achieving control requires active management of multiple strategies for the attainment of multiple goals, which are not always mutually consistent or even feasible (see Folta 1998; Schmidt and Kipnis 1984; Streatfield, 2001). Second, *changes in the ability to attain control can have important, sometimes unintended, implications for policy and strategy*. As observed in the SPC case, the trade-off between compliance and coordination helps make sense of why the reform did not curb discretionary powers of agencies (OECD 2011), and instead provided opportunities for reform recipients to deviate from the original intent of the reform (Grindle 2012).

In Chapter 4, we looked into different implementation recipes—different combinations of organizational factors leading to compliant implementation (i.e., the extent to which observed changes in organizational rules and procedures comply with the goals and program of a reform). We identified three pathways to compliant implementation: a technocratic and two institutional variations (classical and interest-based). The technocratic pathway emphasizes setting up formal, centralized control structures over processes and decision-making, and committing resources to the implementation of organizational change. Institutional recipes focus instead on the interplay between formal and informal elements of organizational governance. Institutional pathways relax technocratic assumptions about formal (top-down) control and resource endowments, and focus rather on legitimation processes and bottom-up involvement of organizational members. The distinction is important because these pathways represent two fundamentally different theories of control over implementation.

Our empirical analysis examined whether institutional recipes would in fact represent functional equivalents of the technocratic pathway; that is, we evaluated their co-occurrence as recipes for compliant implementation. An FSQCA analysis showed that *setting up formal control structures and committing ample resources was not the only pathway leading to compliant implementation* (at least not for the studied reform). A number of observed configurations linked to compliant implementation included, instead, a combination of robust interpersonal trust and weak oppositional norms; thus, granting one of the core claims of institutional pathways. These results also echo recent claims in the management literature calling for greater attention to processes of normative support in organizations—that is, if and how normative beliefs help organizations reach their goals and create value (see, e.g., Birkinshaw, Foss and Lindenberg 2014; Foss and Lindenberg 2013; Lindenberg and Foss 2011).



## *Aftermath*

Chapter 3 provided insight into outcomes of reorganizations (e.g., on unintended consequences). In Chapter 5, we examined the effects of years of NPM-inspired reform. The goal was to assess whether efforts of planned organizational change in the public sector had brought governmental organizations closer to their private counterparts. In particular, we wondered whether post-reorganization conditions affected public organizations' propensity to implement further organizational change, in response to three major covariates of change: competition, (de)regulation and managerial autonomy.

Evidence shows showed some similarities regarding different covariates of change among sampled public and private organizations. For example, both groups react positively to competitive pressures. Yet, differences are noteworthy. First, public and private organizations react differently to variations in regulation. For private organizations, increments in the density of internal rules correlate with structural change; for public organizations, increments in external regulation are associated with higher likelihood of structural change. This suggests that change in sampled public organizations occurs despite high external regulatory pressures and perhaps because of them (cf. DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Second, we found a significant difference between public and private organizations for procedural change: sampled public organizations with administrative autonomy were more likely to implement procedural changes relative to private organizations. These results lend support to the idea that reorganizations may affect control once they have been implemented (on this, see also Chapter 1). For example, evidence suggests that by increasing public managers' administrative autonomy, NPM reforms created conditions for further adjustment in public agencies (i.e., higher likelihood of change). In other words, *control may be influenced by changes*: managers who traditionally had limited autonomy and control over procedures may see

their influence over strategic change increase after reorganization.

### *Loose ends and future research*

As evidenced above, control plays a relevant role in trajectories of reorganization both in the public and in the private sectors. Obviously, however, there is far more to reorganizations—and to organizational change and governance, for that matter (cf. Demers 2007; Wittek 2007). We do not wish to imply that reorganizations can be reduced to merely putative efforts to gain control. Such a conclusion would not only debase the valuable lessons summarized above, it would also conceal the complex interactions surrounding the relationship between change and control. Certainly, control is important; however, it is crucial to place the relation between control and change in perspective (Figure 6.1). To mention four important aspects, much depends on the characteristics of managers and implementers, the features of the organization, the delicate network of intra-organizational social relations, and the institutional context and the ecology of organizations. In this sense, the studies in this book answer some important questions, but leave others unanswered. Below, we present some possibilities for future research.

### *Managers*

Most of the decision-making processes and mechanisms studied in this book have managers as their focal actors. This primacy is warranted. After all, managers are members of the dominant coalition in the vast majority of organizations. They influence organizational outcomes through, for instance, strategy and sanctioning (Hambrick and Mason 1984; Mintzberg 1989; see also Chapter 3). As previous chapters show, managerial goals, such as control, have vital implications for corporate strategy

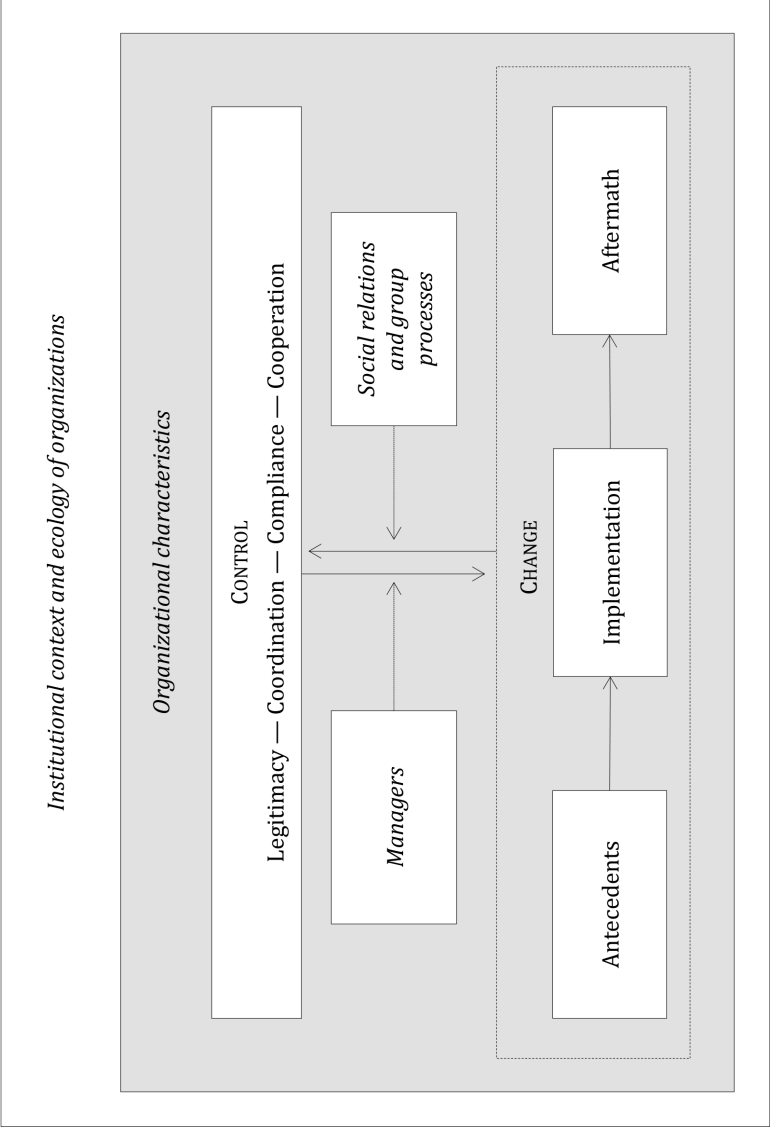


FIGURE 6.1 — Relation between control and change in perspective

(Chapter 1) and public policy (Chapter 3). Additional managerial characteristics (gender, educational background, personality), values and attitudes (innovativeness, traditionalism), and mannerisms (leadership type) may possibly interact in the relationship between control and change (Hambrick 2007; Meier and O'Toole 2006). This relates not only to individual differences in managers' proclivity to, say, favor the status quo (Hambrick, Geletkanycz and Fredrickson 2006); it also raises questions on how particular individuals manage to attain which facets of control, and what the implications are for strategy (Nadkarni and Barr 2008). In this regard, this book has already provided some hints as to what kind of managers are more or less likely to implement reorganizations (e.g., based on the quality of their control positions). Yet, other issues remain unanswered and are fruitful avenues for future research. For example, what are the individual characteristics of managers prone to implement reorganizations, in terms of educational background or attitudes to reorganizations? Are managers with an MBA compared to those without specialist managerial training more or less prone to detect "control problems" such as conflict and thus, to embark on reorganizations?

### *Social relations and group processes*

Another area of interest for future studies relates to the traits and processes spanning intra- and inter-organizational social relations in relation to reorganization and control. Mechanisms associated with normative beliefs (Chapters 3 and 4), trust (Chapter 4) and organizational conflict (Chapter 2) appear to be especially promising. Normative beliefs and "normative goal frames" (cf. Lindenberg and Foss 2011), and interpersonal trust (Nyhan 2000; 1999) play important roles in the governance of organizational change; in particular, they seem to facilitate compliance and sustainable cooperation. Norms and values affect implementation possibilities, and can also serve as vehicles of

enforcement. Intra-organizational trust is also likely to interact with managers' control positions (cf. Kramer 1999) and to expedite reorganization (cf. Nyhan 2000).

Our findings suggest that building internal support and mitigating resistance to change can be facilitated by bottom-up involvement of employees and recipients of change, as well as management of/adaptation to normative expectations (Chapters 3 and 4). Further, it is important to study additional causal connections between change and conflict. In Chapter 2, we saw how different types of conflict related to different strategies of change. It is interesting, for instance, to explore reciprocal effects between conflict and change: how conflicts trigger changes and how change itself hatches conflict. For example, attempting to solve horizontal conflicts with type E changes might in effect lead to vertical conflict (see above, p.51). In this regard, it seems, we have only glimpsed the tip of the iceberg, and clearly more research is required.

### *Organizational characteristics*

Characteristics of organizations and the sector in which they operate represent another potential source of variation and complex interaction effects. We refer to such features as rule density (number of formal rules and procedures), complexity (number of organizational subunits), or structure (e.g., M-form vs. U-form). Other characteristics include task (e.g., organizations that provide services vs. organizations that produce material goods), and sector and ownership differences (e.g., public vs. private). As we have seen, organizational characteristics are related to both control and change. For instance, managers' control positions correlate with organizational size and age, albeit effect sizes were very small (Chapter 1, p.35). Also, for both types of change studied in Chapter 5 (procedural and structural), larger organizations showed higher likelihood of reorganization than smaller ones. That these characteristics are related to such in-

ternal phenomena as control and planned change is not surprising. Previous theoretical and empirical work has already highlighted their relevance (see, e.g., Armenakis and Bedeian 1999; Baumol, Alan and Edward 2003; Damanpour 1991; Demers 2007). Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that particular variations can have significant effects on why and how management attempts to regain control and implement changes. As Chapter 4 pointed out (pp.121-2), for example, variations in task across public organizations of the Mexican national government seemed to connect to the prevalence of certain implementation pathways. We saw that organizations that operated under strong budgetary restrictions and provided a wide variety of direct public services succeeded in implementing the reorganization to the extent that formal control and ample resources were available. Compliant implementation through institutional recipes was successful, by contrast, in smaller organizations that provided a limited variety of public services.

The distinction between public and private organizations deserves special attention. We used data from public and private managers and organizations. There are good reasons for this design. For one thing, the mechanisms studied in this book are nuanced by institutional and organizational characteristics of private and public organizations. For example, Chapter 5 shows that in spite of similarities, the public and private establishments studied differ in some regards. Dutch public managers do not necessarily have as much discretion over organizational strategy as their private counterparts (Nutt and Backoff 1993; Maor 1999). Although NPM reforms might be changing this, in many cases, public managers continue to implement changes reactively, for instance, due to changes in legislation (see above, Chapter 5; also Chapter 3, p.69). This point is also important to understand the process of implementation studied in Chapter 3. Public managers and implementers often find themselves in a position in which they have to implement reorganizations that were conceived or designed exogenously—even if, as illustrated by the

Mexican case, they do not have adequate institutional or organizational means to enforce changes.

For another, as discussed in a recent treatise by Van der Mandele and Van Witteloostuijn (2013), embarking on change in the public and private sectors may constitute distinct processes. For example, with the exception of big corporations (e.g., banks, insurance companies, telecom), implementing a reorganization could entail higher risk of organizational failure in the private sector, relative to such governmental organizations as ministries and agencies because the former are “allowed to fail” whereas the latter are not. Failed experimentation with reorganization under competitive market conditions should be associated with greater risk of dismissal (on the difference between exploration and exploitation, see March 1991). In the public sector, and in particular for governmental organizations, such inbuilt risk is minimal or non-existent. This raises the question of whether public managers with comparable autonomy as their private counterparts embark with greater probability on experimental trajectories of change (see Chapter 5, p.152). Obviously, the answer to this depends on several conditions, including that private and public managers may not face the same incentives to embark on change to begin with, or that the regulatory framework of public and private organizations affects them differently (as we saw in Chapter 5). The point, however, is of great interest, not only because it suggests that the common view on the “rigidity” of public organizations may be partially unfounded, but also because it hints at the importance of Schumpeterian mechanisms of creative destruction in the public sector (see also, Acemoglu and Robinson 2012).

Further theoretical work and empirical studies are needed to explicate these associations, interactions and possibilities. In particular, additional data and analysis are needed to study control-related antecedents and implementation processes of planned organizational change across public and private organizations. It remains interesting, for instance, to compare imple-

mentation of major regulatory or policy change across sectors, or to compare (potential) sectorial differences in “managers’ degree of gattopardism” (cf. above, Chapter 1). As a case in point, Chapter 5 suggests that for Dutch public managers, embarking on reorganization might not be a threat, but rather a chance to improve and consolidate their power base.

### *Context and ecology of organizations*

The broader institutional and ecological context in which public and private organizations operate is also relevant. On the one hand, organizations interact with other organizations in their environment (Hannan and Freeman 1977). This ecology of organizations is characterized by particular dynamics that may be relevant to understand variations in the relationship between control and change. For example, we have seen in previous chapters that increased environmental competition, as well changes in technology or labor skills affect the likelihood of reorganization (Chapters 1, 2 and 5). We have also seen that for implementation processes of public sector reforms, resources and support provided by other organizations affect the structure of opportunities available to implementers (Chapter 3). Further, we think that greater attention to (intra-organizational) control mechanisms is likely to inform future studies aimed at understanding population-level differences in rates of inertia and change, and the limits to and likelihood of organizational adaptability. For instance, if particular forms of organization are more prone to (different types of) conflict (due to differences in niche or structure; Hannan and Freeman 1977), one could observe on average higher rates of reorganization or inertia across organizational types at the population level.

On the other hand, for future studies, interaction effects occurring at the institutional level are of particular interest. For example, to what extent do differences in the structure of the governmental sector (different minister-bureaucratic relations;



level of agencification, etc.) affect characteristics of control and the likelihood of reorganizations? Differences in labor legislation and markets, the influence of international fads and policies, and spillover effects and isomorphism across sectors and countries represent potential influences that could affect how managers perceive and exert control in organizations, as well as the possibilities and aftermath of contemporary reorganizations across sectors and countries (see, e.g., Frumkin and Galaskiewicz 2004; Zaheer 1995).

More fundamentally, how far the mechanisms and explanations offered in this book may be generalized beyond the Dutch and Mexican cases remains to be answered. As discussed above, these two countries presented us with an opportunity to extract valuable lessons and evidence. In principle, conclusions could be extended to similar cases. For instance, in the case of the SPC in Mexico, lessons and theoretical tools discussed in this book could be informative for similar processes in comparable countries such as Brazil or Chile. Observations on NPM reforms in the Netherlands could also be informative in other European countries that followed similar trajectories of reform (see, e.g., Hvidman and Andersen 2014). Similarly, concepts such as MCP, developed here against the background provided by Dutch managers and companies could be applied and translated into different settings, hopefully revealing informative similarities and differences across countries and cultures (cf. Lincoln and Kalberg 1990). In any case, the limited generalizability of our conclusions, particularly in relation to the characteristics of our empirical cases, should not be overlooked.

### *Practical and theoretical implications*

Although, many aspects of the relation between control and change need to be put in perspective and more figures and data need to be gathered, our studies suggest that purposive efforts to

gain, retain and increase control do in fact affect the quantity and quality of reorganizations—and their implementation—and that in turn, reorganizations may transform how control is wielded and sustained in contemporary organizations (see also, Clegg 2009). Focusing on internal control issues and processes complements the (economic and contingency) literature on organizational change with its strong emphasis on external and technological drivers of change. As presented above, control effects seem strong enough to hold independently of external conditions. Hereunder we point at some possible implications of our study for theory, practice and methodology.

### *Multiple facets of control*

One of the core assumptions behind our studies is that control is a multifaceted phenomenon (also see Clegg 2009; Hales 1999, Otley, Broadbent and Berry 1995). We posit that it is fruitful to embrace rather than circumvent such multiple manifestations. In doing so, however, researchers risk crafting highly complex concepts and measurements. Our solution was to devise an overarching construct of control (managerial control position) based on a sociological theory of governance that emphasizes both structural facets of control (vertical vs. horizontal), as well as ex ante and ex post control outcomes (Chapter 1). The construct allows us to appraise four different facets of control (compliance, coordination, cooperation and legitimacy) that are informative separately (Chapters 2 and 3) and in combination (Chapter 1). The MCP construct captures the extent to which management in an organization is capable of reducing the gap between employees' capacity and what they actually end up doing, both within agency relations and peer-to-peer processes. Also, the construct allows us to measure overall control capacity across cases in a comparable way. Using the concept and its categories, we can comprehend and compare how managers view their grasp on

their organizations, across points in time and in different organizations and sectors.

### *Conflict management*

As for conflict management, qualitatively different conflicts may be related to different kinds of reorganization. This echoes the idea that trajectories of adjustment and change can arise from conflicts (cf. Katz and Flynn 2013) and may shed additional light on why some forms of reorganization are more or less common (frequency of reorganizations) and more or less effective—at least regarding conflict management. Although more research is clearly needed, it is interesting to observe that different types of reorganization may correlate with organizational characteristics, and not only with managers' values and preferences, or financial considerations. In this sense, our findings lend support to the idea that it might be unadvisable to pursue certain forms of reorganization in particular contexts (cf. Beer and Nohria 2000). For instance, companies that have a complex division of work may be more prone to horizontal conflicts and, therefore, type E reorganization may be less effective in mitigating conflict.

### *Public sector reform*

There are at least three general implications for public sector reform and NPM theory and practice. First, our investigations suggest that the effectiveness of traditional regulatory strategies of control and enforcement (e.g., creating new rules and formal procedures), on the one hand, may depend on the availability of resources and political leverage. On the other hand, findings suggest that implementation based solely on regulation and enforcement is likely to be ineffective and perhaps even counterproductive (see above, pp.92-3). Without additional measures directed at increasing cooperation or the quality of information

reaching regulators, change enforcement and implementation are likely to be ineffective.

Second, our study highlights the importance of “soft” control strategies (integrative and persuasive strategies; Chapter 3), as well as bottom-up legitimation and involvement of employees for enforcement and implementation of changes, particularly when resources are low (Chapter 4). However, these strategies are not without risk. In the Mexican SPC case, we saw that integrating demands into change initiatives increased compliance but also reduced coordination and had unintended consequences that worked against reformers’ intent. Nuances highlight the relevance of non-linear, normative aspects of enforcement and implementation of public sector reforms. They suggest that variables such as normative beliefs and the quality of interpersonal trust could play a more prominent role than the one granted by mainstream theories of implementation.

Third, our analysis of Dutch public and private organizations sheds light on some predictions of a NPM-informed perspective (Chapter 5). The absence of significant differences across studied organizations seems to confirm the underlying idea that patterns of reorganization in public organizations are indeed converging with those in private companies. However, analyses also showed that in spite of convergence, public organizations do remain different in some concrete aspects. In particular, granting greater autonomy to public managers might indeed create conditions for greater internal adaptability. Also, the role played by external regulation in triggering change remains different for public organizations.

### *Implementation “recipes”*

The role played by resources in bringing about change in the public sector should be reconsidered. This book suggests paying greater attention to recipes for implementation—in contrast to the prevalent interest in concrete ingredients, such as resources.

Organizational-level conditions affecting compliant implementation (resource endowments, formal control, normative beliefs, and implementers' interests) may be studied as complementary pieces of combinatorial mechanisms (pathways). That is, factors that may or may not contribute to the implementation of reorganizations, such as resource endowments, are important in relation to more complex "recipes". For instance, in the SPC case, this book showed that limited resources contributed to compliant implementation in several organizations, provided a constellation of interpersonal trust, weak oppositional norms and alignment of implementers' interests existed. In this sense, having limited resources may not be a recipe for disaster after all.

### *Methods and data collection*

Whereas most empirical investigations use very general information on organization-level characteristics (e.g., provided by Eurostat or similar data repositories), our study builds on custom-made surveys, as well as archival and in-depth interview data. Regarding methods, three aspects deserve mention. First, the SROS protocol improved over similar designs. In particular, it included two key refinements: (a) pre-selected key respondents were allowed to prepare before interviews took place, which increased their cooperation; (b) structured and automatized questionnaires especially designed for this study helped economize time (for both informants and researchers) and increased comparability across cases. With an overall response rate of about 25%, these improvements proved successful.

Second, ours is among few studies to compare a relatively large variety of ministries and agencies of an entire national government. Our data collection protocol (Chapter 4) improves on SROS surveys and applies an approach that may be called a MROS (Multiple Respondents Organizational Survey; see also, Enticott, Boyne and Walker 2009). We collected information from multiple informants per organization and complemented this with

independent, secondary data. This increases the amount of data and improves the quality of information.

Third, this book demonstrates the value of combining qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods for the study of organizational and management processes. This methodological heterodoxy gives researchers more flexibility, and importantly, it allows for a richer analysis of the available evidence.

### *The control imperative*

On July 11, 2013, Steven Ballmer, former CEO of Microsoft Corporation, sent a memo to employees announcing a major reorganization. In it, Ballmer claimed that changes would “enable [Microsoft] to innovate with greater speed, efficiency and capability in a fast changing world.” The company needed, “better execution from product conceptualization and innovation right through to marketing and sales [...] To advance our strategy and execute more quickly, more efficiently, and with greater excellence we need to transform how we organize, how we plan and how we work. [...] Better execution and innovation through strategy and goal and discipline.” Ballmer concluded in passing that Microsoft needed: “Lots of change. But in all of this, many key things remain the same.”<sup>1</sup>

It is not news, of course, that global economic, social and political changes are pushing companies and governments to become more effective, accountable and efficient; and that consequently, organizations are facing mounting pressures to reorganize their processes and structures. Yet, one wonders how this process works for organizations and managers. Why are reorganizations leading to tighter monitoring structures and novel

<sup>1</sup> Read the full memorandum at: [blogs.marketwatch.com/thetell/2013/07/11/microsoft-ceo-steve-ballmer-on-reorganization-full-memo](http://blogs.marketwatch.com/thetell/2013/07/11/microsoft-ceo-steve-ballmer-on-reorganization-full-memo) (accessed 15/08/2014).

supervision processes, when many believe that changes would bring about less intense control?

To answer these questions, we offer the thesis that in its multiple manifestations, control is a crucial factor to understand reorganizations in that it powers and shapes efforts in planned organizational change in public and private sectors. Ballmer's memo illustrates that idea. It shows that contemporary organizations and managers are coping with new conditions brought about by globalization. In doing so, actively (re)aligning employees' capabilities with organizational and managerial goals is paramount. Reorganizations go hand in hand with the basic problem of maintaining control. After all, some things need to change for others to remain the same.

