



THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO

**DESIGNING  
ADAPTIVE  
ORGANIZATIONS**

Edited by **Charles C. Snow**  
and **Øystein D. Fjeldstad**



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# What is a Paradigm Shift?

A fundamental shift in the basic concepts and practices of a scientific discipline.

Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific  
Revolutions*

# Paradigm Shift in Organization Design

From a focus on the “organization” (noun) to the process of “organizing” (verb)

From: Specifying structures and complementary processes by which collective activities can be controlled and coordinated

To: Developing the means that enable goal-directed self-organizing (control and coordination performed by the actors themselves)

# Key Concepts of Adaptive Organizing

Actor-oriented organizing

Agility

Business ecosystems

Circular organizing

Feedforward and feedback

Design Thinking

Digital actors

# Key Concepts of Adaptive Organizing

Leadership of complex adaptive systems

Multi-actor collaboration

Platforms

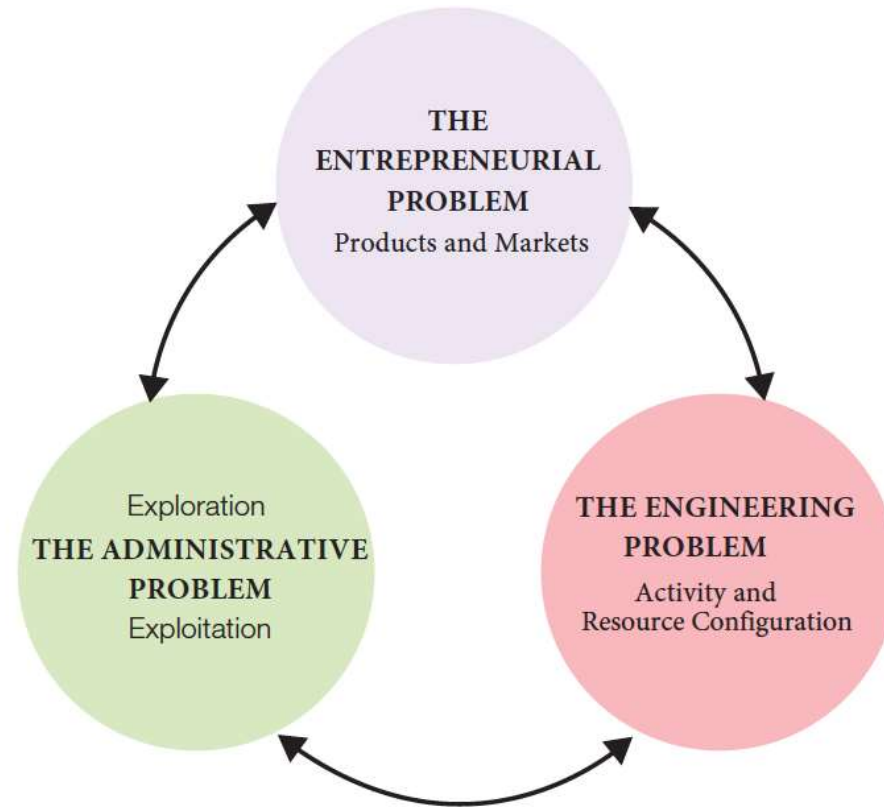
Representation of the task environment (e.g., digital twins)

Resource commons

Shared situation awareness

Stigmergy

# The Adaptive Cycle



Miles and Snow, 1978.  
Organizational, Strategy,  
Structure, Process. Stanford  
University Press

# Principles of Actor-Oriented Organizing

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## **Principle**

## **Definition**

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### **Self-Assembly**

Autonomous organizing of actors into teams using advertising and search protocols

### **Mutual Adjustment**

Continuous actor-determined changes made to achieve consistency among their respective actions

### **Algorithmic Information Processing**

Collaborating digital actors performing computationally extensive tasks

### **Complementary Hierarchical Control**

Resolving residual inconsistencies by hierarchical means