

## IN PROBLEMATIC SITUATIONS, “MANAGE CHANGE OR IT WILL MANAGE YOU”

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*“We live in a changing world. People grow, business conditions fluctuate, personal relationships develop, major industries come and go, population increases, water shortages worsen, and scientific discoveries increase. Our principal concerns arise from change – growth, decay, and fluctuation” (Jay Wright Forrester 1983, Foreword, p. IX).*

In this situation of fluctuation and accelerated change, more and more frequently occur often irreversible and damaging changes affecting the economy and society. Traditional processes are abandoned while other processes are added, spurred on by the new technologies, which change the way social units and economic organizations operate. Not only do the cultural bases of individuals, societies and organizations change, but the social and economic units also evolve through modification of their structures, processes and output, in the attempt to loosen the old restraints while setting new objectives and rewriting the programs for their achievement. Without going too far back into economic history, we can observe that social units and structures, organizations in particular, must deal with change in their environment. Business organizations, in particular, must operate in a more competitive context of heightened change and growing globalization.

Thus, in order to survive in a dynamic and changing world, social units and organizations must develop their ability to quickly understand change and react to unfavorable triggers, developing an intelligent behavior; that is, they must transform themselves into learning organizations by adapting or innovating their own structures and, above all, their own cultures. So, policy makers and managers in social systems and organizations today face a challenge: the environmental contexts in which social systems exist are changing at an accelerating rate towards increasing complexity.

*“Manage change or it will manage you” (Luedke, 2004).*

A change management process becomes physiological, for individuals, social groups, or organizations, and it represents the natural approach for dealing with change both at the individual and organizational levels for all types of organization. Apart from the general “method of the three steps” proposed by Kurt Lewin (Lewin 1947), different strategies have been presented to direct the fulfillment of these steps – the ADKAR model (Hiatt 2006), the McKinsey “7S” model (Waterman et al. 1980), Kotter’s model (Kottler 1996) as well as many others.

Our study, by embracing the *systems thinking approach* (Mella 2012) aims to propose a straightforward, and powerful model of change in organizations and social

groups in general, that Piero Mella named as the PSC Model (Processes, Structures, Culture) (Mella 2014). The model takes into account the three fundamental “wheels of change”, which act at different speeds but with a power of change inversely proportional to the speed itself.

1. the “wheel of change” in the *internal operational programs*, understood also as norms, regulations, instructions, etc.;

2. the “wheel of change” in the *structures* of systems that is, in the organization of the organs and individuals;

3. the “wheel of change” in the *culture*; that is, in the cognitive and behavioral models of the individuals or groups that participate in the social and organizational structure.

The three paths of change are interconnected, like wheels of an inexorable process of change as shown in the PSC Model in the following figure 4.

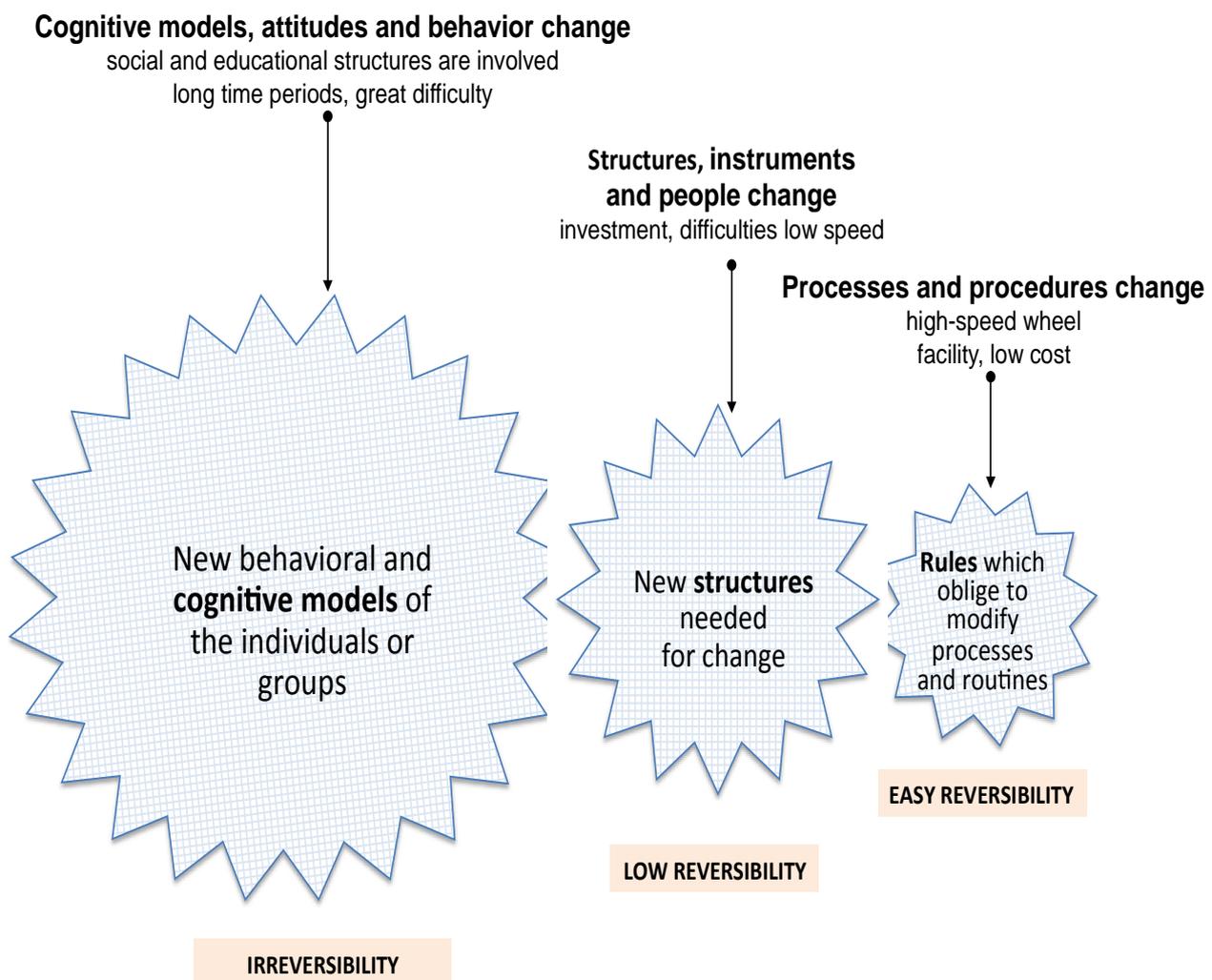


Figure 4.- The PSC model showing the wheels of change in social and economic systems