

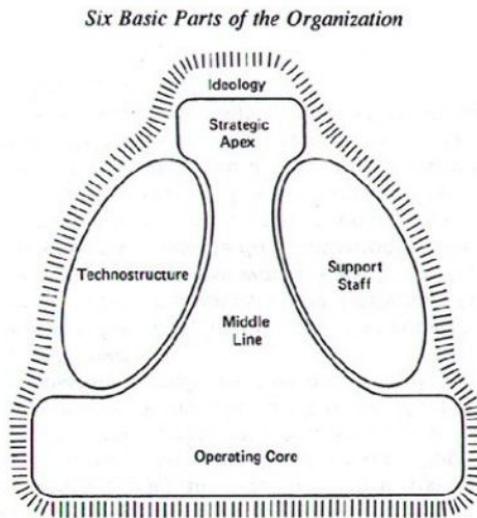
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE - INPUT

INTRODUCTION

One of the most prominent theories on organisational structuring is Henry Mintzberg's organisational configuration theory. This theory helps determining how institutions organise themselves based on their nature, coordinating mechanisms, and their goals. A good summary of his theory was made in his article: "Organisational Design: Fashion or Fit" ([link](#)). This section provides the main ideas of this theory.

MAIN IDEAS

After years of observation, management expert Henry Mintzberg offered a framework that describes 7 ways organisations structure themselves. Before we delve into the different types of organisations, it is relevant to note that these structures can consist of 6 different parts:



To explain the different elements it is interesting how Mintzberg explains the evolution process an organisation can undergo, it goes like this: "An organization begins with a person who has an idea. This person forms the *strategic apex*, or top management. He or she hires people to do the basic work of the organization, in what can be called the *operating core*. As the organization grows, it acquires intermediate managers between the chief executive and the workers. These managers form the *middle line*. The organization may also find that it needs two kinds of staff personnel. First are the analysts who design systems concerned with the formal planning and control of the work; they form the *technostructure*. Second is the *support staff*, providing indirect services to the rest of the organization—everything from the cafeteria and the mail room to the public relations department and the legal counsel."

Strategic Apex: Consists of the top management. They are in charge of the organisation, they oversee the whole system and make sure it relates in a correct manner with its environment. They set direction by designing the overall strategy, develop and interpret the mission of the organisation, coordinate the other parts of the structure, etc.

Operating Core: This part is in charge of carrying out the activity to deliver the outputs. It can consist of different types of individuals depending on the focus and goal of the organisation, for example, a university has as operating core teachers, a spirituality centre has spiritual directors, mining companies have miners, and hospitals have doctors

Middle Line: When organisations grow it becomes difficult for a group of small individuals to manage the large population in the operating core. This will require individuals who are able to translate the ideas and strategic priorities of the top management to the operating core and to supervise them.

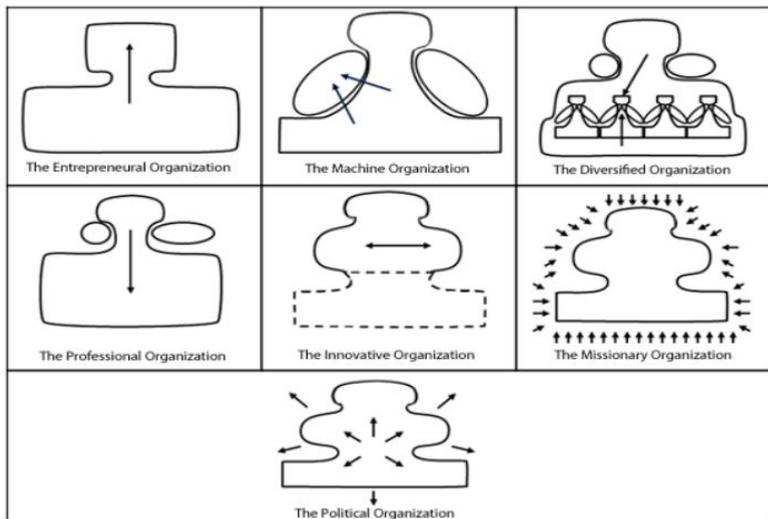
Technostructure: Individuals and teams working in functions such as human resources, training, finance, and planning.

Supporting Staff: Their outputs do not contribute directly to the core purposes of the organisation, but their activities contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of the strategic apex, middle line and operating core (source: ACCA).

Ideology: Consists on the shared values, mission/vision, and culture that should encompass the whole institution.

However, Mintzberg suggests that “a great many problems in organizational design stem from the assumption that organizations are all alike: mere collections of component parts to which elements of structure can be added and deleted at will, a sort of organizational bazaar.” He is right, it is not the same a religious organisation of a dozen individuals than a technological manufacturing company with more than 100.000 employees. Each of the previous elements will have more or less weight in different types of institutions. This way he differentiates the following seven types:

Figure 3: Types of Organizations



Source:
 Knowledge Solutions (2012).
 Compiled from Henry Mintzberg, 1989. Mintzberg on Management: Inside Our Strange World of Organizations. Simon and Schuster.

Each of these types of configurations has a key mean of coordination that suits best its characteristics and a part that normally receives more attention. The following table gives you a summary of these concepts

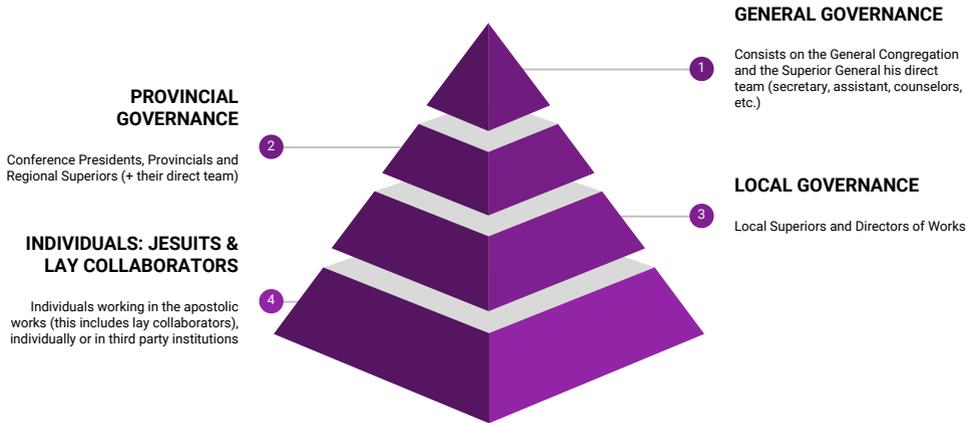
Configuration	Prime Coordination Mechanism	Key Part of Organisation	Type of Decentralization
Entrepreneurial Org.	Direct Supervision	Strategic Apex	Vertical & Horizontal Centralisation
Machine Org.	Standardisation of Work Processes	Technostructure	Limited Horizontal Decentralisation
Professional Org.	Standardisation of Skills	Operating Core	Horizontal Decentralisation
Diversified Org.	Standardisation of Outputs	Middle Line	Limited Vertical Decentralisation
Innovative Org.	Mutual Adjustment	Support Staff	Selected Decentralisation
Missionary Org.	Standardisation of Norms	Ideology	Decentralisation
Political Org.	None	None	Varies

The website ProvenModels provides these definitions of the previous coordinating mechanisms:

1. *Mutual adjustment*: Coordination of work is made possible by a process of informal communication between people conducting interdependent work.
2. *Direct supervision*: Coordination is achieved by one individual taking responsibility for the work of others.
3. *Standardisation of work processes*: Coordination is made possible by specifying the work content in rules or routines to be followed. Coordination occurs before the activity is undertaken. Mintzberg adopted Taylorism: procedures are usually specified by work-study analysis.
4. *Standardization of output*: Coordination is obtained by the communication and clarification of expected results. The individual actions required to obtain a goal are not prescribed. This goal setting method is closely related to Drucker's MBO
5. *Standardization of skills and knowledge*: Coordination is reached through specified and standardised training and education. People are trained to know what to expect of each other and coordinate in almost automatic fashion.
6. *Standardisation of norms*: Norms are standardized, socialization is used to establish common values and beliefs in order for people work toward common expectations. Mintzberg added this cultural based mechanism at a later stage.

IGNATIAN NOTE

In the configurations theory presented by H. Mintzberg, the Society of Jesus is clearly a “Mission Organisation” in which the ideology plays a key role and the standardization of norms is the key coordinating mechanism. But let’s see how this centenary organisation is structured, and what new things can it bring to organisational theory. First of all, here is a simplified figure that represents the structure:



There are two things that stand out, one is the clear hierarchy in the model. Ignatius was clear about the need for there to be authority and obedience through the structure if the mission was to be fulfilled. Secondly a “light” structure, there is not a big distance between the individual working in at the local level and the highest individual authority (the Superior General), actually every single Jesuit can communicate directly with the General if need be.

The Society of Jesus may be dispersed on mission, but it remains ‘one body’, with its members called to do everything possible to ‘strengthen and stabilize our union ... with special concern for each other’. It follows that Jesuit institutions cannot really attain the ends they seek unless they are ‘united with each other and with their head’ (Const. [655]).

General Governance:

- **General Congregation (GC):** It is a center of unity for the whole Society. The highest body in the Society, an assembly of the representatives from the whole community. It is an extraordinary event that takes place for the election of a new General [677] or 2) or for long-lasting important matters [680]. Until today there have been 36 GCs. “Each GC is a source of inspiration that guides the development of governance in changing circumstances and the care for the persons engaged in this mission in ways most appropriate to the times”. (GC36 D2) The impact of a GC must reach the whole SJ
- **Superior General:** The Jesuit elected amongst his equals by the General Congregation to guide the Society of Jesus during his term in office (normally until his death or until he can no longer fulfil his role). The Superior General is aided by his general counsellors, which can be general assistants (geographical experts) or secretaries (field experts) - “Father General should give the care of some sector of the life of the Society or of some geographical region, or even of both, to each of the general counsellors.” (GC32 D15.3B). Note: there are other key individuals that serve the General and the Society of Jesus that we do not explain but who play a key role (the Secretary of the Society is a clear example).

Province Governance:

- **Conference Presidents:** There are 6 Conferences of Major Superiors in the world and thus 6 Conference Presidents. They were established because “today many problems are global in nature and therefore require global solutions”, GC35 said, “we hold the conviction that today cooperation among Provinces and Regions to realize the apostolic mission of the Society is an undeniable necessity.”
- **Provincials and Regional Superiors:** The rapid growth of the Society made it clear that there needed to be a structure between the Superior General and individual Jesuits, thus the provinces (geographical structures) appeared. These were the first intermediate structures to appear and are led by the provincials. The provincial’s role is to integrate the *cura personalis* with the *cura apostolica* in view of fulfilling the mission of the province and its apostolic plans.

Local Governance:

- **Local Superiors:** His role is to focus the mission assigned to each by the major superior (provincial/regional superiors) and to promote the sense of apostolic solidarity of all the members of the community, even of those who may be engaged in very diversified activities (NC 403, 2).¹
- **Directors of Works:** The works of the Society include such institutions as parishes, social centers, pastoral centers, educational institutions at all levels, retreat houses and spirituality centers, networks such as the Jesuit Refugee Service, magazines, scholarly journals, means of mass communication, and chaplaincies. The directors of these works are the persons -- Jesuits, other religious or priests, or lay person responsible for the general administration of the works, together with the inspiration, apostolic orientation, and implementation of their mission. They are responsible, in collaboration with others, for discernment supporting the mission. They are accountable for this mission, through appropriate lines of authority, to the major superior.²

Individuals

- **Jesuits, other religious, and lay collaborators:** They are missioned to a work not only to serve in their particular fields of expertise, but also to share with others the corporate responsibility to animate the work with its proper Ignatian or Jesuit character.³

As the Society of Jesus is an “international and multicultural body” in a complex, “fragmented and divided world,” attention to these perspectives (discernment, collaboration and networking) helps to streamline governance and make it more flexible and apostolically effective. (GC36 D2.3)

EXPECTED LEARNINGS AND OUTCOMES

1. Getting in touch with Mintzberg model on organisational configurations
2. Learning about the different coordination mechanisms inside organisations
3. Connecting with the structure of the Society of Jesus

“Leaders must encourage their organizations to dance to forms of music yet to be heard.”

Warren Bennis