



Dissertation presented in order to obtain the degree of PhD in Political and Social Sciences

**ORGANIZING STRATEGIC DECISION:
DECISIONAL WORK IN NEW WAYS OF WORKING
PROJECTS**

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Abstract

Over the last decade, projects bearing the label of “*New Ways of Working*” have been developed and implemented in a series of third sector organizations. These projects are inspired by a management fashion that encourages companies to shift from a supposedly “old” way of working to a “new”, emphasizing the merits of “flexible” workspaces, of new information technologies, and of cultural and managerial reforms promoting, among others, employees’ autonomy, empowerment, and responsibility.

Existing research on *New Ways of Working* has mostly investigated the effects and the consequences of these new workspaces and work practices on employees, managers, and firms. Conversely, the thesis intends to question the ways in which *New Ways of Working* projects emerge and take shape in organizations, by conceptualizing *New Ways of Working* as projects of organizational change that involve the making of a strategic decision and a translation process of this decision, shaped by the work of rational and political actors. Through a processual and empirically-grounded perspective on the construction of *New Ways of Working* projects within organizations, the following research question is raised: how do *New Ways of Working* projects emerge and take shape in organizational contexts?

On the basis of four case studies, the thesis reveals that *New Ways of Working* projects consist of organizing, legitimizing, and black-boxing strategic decisions through a bargaining process involving coalitions of actors, spaces, and resources, confronted with indeterminacy and temporal tensions. The contributions of the thesis to the study of *New Ways of Working* projects include its conceptualization as organizational change projects involving decisional work and organizing strategic decisions, as well as in the utility of decisional work as an intermediary object to reveal the structuring dimensions of *New Ways of Working* projects.