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ORGANIZATIONAL PERSONALITY AS A METAPHOR FOR UNDERSTANDING ORGANIZATIONS

The author suggests viewing an organization through the prism of a concept which until now has been applied in describing the functioning of the individual. This concept is the personality of an organization. The theoretical foundation on which the idea of organizational personality is based is presented as well as its scope and specificity by referring to such notions as organizational culture and organizational identity. The chief goal is to demonstrate that, by applying the concept of personality, managers gain the possibility of running organizations more effectively. Approaching an organization using categories of personality should enable management to exploit the organization's social potential more fully, but most of all to competently and effectively cope with the diverse crises arising in the organization, particularly those connected with change as a category of especially difficult situations for the organization's members.

Keywords: organization, personality, culture

INTRODUCTION

The idea that an organization has a defined personality is based on the analogy between people and organizations. As with every analogy, this, too, has clear limitations. People are not only social, but also biological creatures, while organizations are of an exclusively social nature. Human life is limited in time, a biologically determined life cycle; this does not apply to organizations, which may "die a natural death" after fifteen years or "live" as strong and alert entities for two hundred years. Although in a certain sense organizations indeed divide, combine, grow, and shrink similarly to people, one cannot speak of divestment, acquisition, or expansion when referring to people, but they are natural terms related to organizations. The concept of "personality" therefore is used here in a metaphorical sense in discussing organizational personality. If the necessary caution and critical attitude are maintained, the analogy between the individual and an organization allows us to understand and discuss issues which would otherwise be passed over or difficult to identify. With the concept of personality as a metaphor, we can

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understand why organizations function as they do and, in particular, see explicitly why it is so difficult to implement the slightest changes within them. Another result would be that we acquire indicators of how we can maximize the organization's effectiveness.

Transferring concepts from one field of science to another has a long tradition. Knowledge about psychological phenomena and mechanisms may be useful in explaining processes at work in an organization. An organization, understood as a structured set of individuals connected in a particular way, can be an especially interesting object of research for a psychologist with clinical and psychotherapeutic experience. Identifying and understanding the emotional, automatic, and unconscious mechanisms which determine the functioning of individuals and an organization, viewed as a cohesive whole, appear interesting from both a theoretical and practical standpoint. This article suggests looking at an organization from the perspective of a concept which until now has been applied to describe the functioning of individuals. This concept is that of the personality of an organization, or simply organizational personality. The article presents the theoretical foundation on which the idea of organizational personality is based as well as its scope and specificity by referring to such notions as organizational culture and organizational identity. Approaching an organization using categories of personality should enable management to exploit the organization's social potential more fully, but most of all to cope competently and effectively with the diverse crises arising in the organization, particularly those connected with change.

The basic source of inspiration in developing the idea of organizational personality is the awareness of the difficulties which appear in an organization when the need for change arises. Observing these difficulties, one can conclude that the concept of organizational culture, though undoubtedly important, does not explain all the problems that arise under these circumstances. Knowledge of the phenomena which make up the culture of an organization allows a more or less detailed description of the problems, but it does not fully render the essence of these problems with which both management and the ranks of employees, in particular those who are directly affected by the changes, are forced to grapple. The idea of organizational personality presented here also provides the possibility of a new way of viewing the organization's development and the essence of specific organizational behaviours, giving insight into the issues with which managers are well acquainted in practice, but which they do not fully

understand despite their appeals to specific theories of organization or organizational culture.

The main goal is to point out the possibility of transplanting the psychodynamic understanding of the personality into the field of management theory, particularly its application in the area of organizational behaviour, with special regard for the phenomena of change as well as crises in organizations. The organizational model presented here can be called a psychological model or, more strictly, a personality model. It is based on the assumption that an organization, like people, has a personality, that is a set of features, attributes, and, most of all, mechanisms which distinguishes it from others and allows us to look upon the organization as unique and exceptional. Introducing the idea of organizational personality provides concepts which appeal to our knowledge of the functional mechanisms of personality, but also creates the possibility of identifying it adequately. In light of the challenges which confront managers who are trying to steer organizations effectively through crises, critical situations, and changes, introducing the concept of organizational personality should help them navigate this complex area of organizational functioning, even if they have no psychological background.

1. AN OUTLINE OF VIEWS ON PERSONALITY

To understand what a person is looking for in an organization, what he gains by creating an organizational community, a model of the functioning of the human psyche is necessary. Such models are offered by the various currents of psychology, including behavioural psychology, cognitive psychology, humanistic psychology, and also the psychoanalytic approach in its diverse variations. There is no unanimity among psychologists as to what the term "personality" means. Several decades ago, Gordon Allport (1968), author of one of the most well-known theories of personality, counted approximately fifty definitions of personality. While developing his own theory he emphasized the features which are characteristic, individual, and authentic in a person and which emerge in the structure and dynamics of behavior. Allport defined personality as a dynamic organization of psychophysical systems which are at the centre of the individual and which determine the specific methods of adaptation, and thus determine the person's characteristic behaviours and ways of thinking. According to Allport, the personality is governed by automatic motives which one cannot

reduce to biological or social stimuli. Another author, Nuttin (1968, p. 47) proposed one of the most general and shortest definitions, i.e. that the personality is the entirety of the psychic organization of the individual.

One could make a long list of examples of known and applied definitions. It is clear that each of them is connected with a specific way of viewing the personality as a result of the theoretical assumptions on which the given definition was based. In this regard, the concept of personality assumes different meanings depending on the theory which it represents. Many authors have pointed out that concepts of personality are by nature "hypothetical constructs", to which different features, attributes, dimensions, or meaning are ascribed (Oleś, 2003; Pervin, 2002; Hall, Lindzey, 1990; Tomaszewski, 1976). Caprara and Gennaro (in: Fedeli, 2003, p. 267) listed the following types of content ascribed to the concept of personality defined as:

- The entirety of the hierarchically organized description;
- The more or less diversified and structured organization of needs and possibilities;
- Lifestyle;
- That which is revealed in the individual's behaviour of the cultural reality to which he belongs;
- The subjectivity of the individual, his singularity and uniqueness.

The ambiguities in content and scope attributed to the term personality in psychology form the basis for the diversity of the theories and models appearing within the various schools of psychology. The approach to personality in this study is generally psychodynamic, as it explains the mechanisms governing human life most completely with regard to both individuals as well as groups. In addition, the psychodynamic concept takes the significance of conscious and unconscious processes into consideration as well as their influence on human behaviour.

2. THE THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE CONCEPT OF ORGANIZATIONAL PERSONALITY

The idea of organizational personality presented here is a proposal to utilize psychological knowledge about personality. The concept of "organizational personality" often appears in literature in the field of organization and management theory as equivalent to the concept of organizational culture (the similarities and differences between organizational culture and personality will be discussed in a later section).

However, studies have appeared in recent years in which “organizational personality” is applied in a way which significantly goes beyond its cultural sense. This is because it is employed in a psychological context in which personality means a kind of composite psychic apparatus fulfilling instrumental and integrational functions (Oleś, 2003; Pervin, 2002; Lindzey, Hall, 1990; Koziellecki, 1981). Examples are studies of such authors as Stapley (1996) and Natoli (2001). The pioneers, however, were Kets de Vries and Miller, the authors of “The Neurotic Organization. Diagnosing and Changing Counterproductive Style of Management” (1984) and many studies in which they described the model of a neurotic organization. This model is based on the assumption that the neurotic personality type of representatives of top management determines the manner of functioning of the whole organization, including its strategy, culture, structure, inter-group, and interpersonal relations. The result of transferring the features and attributes of the personalities of the leaders onto the way the organization functions is that individual pathology becomes organizational pathology. One would think that the connection between managers and the pathology of an organization is more apparent in small, centralized companies or in those which have a few leaders with the same type of personality. Kets de Vries maintained, however, that top management with a neurotic personality type is a factor which disturbs organizational functioning in large, decentralized companies as well. This occurs through its influence on the cultural sphere of the corporation, which becomes a kind of medium or transmitter between that which is individual and that which is common and present in the whole organization. On the basis of studies by the above authors, one can see that the stronger the personality of the leader, the greater the scope of the influence of his actions and ways of thinking on the organization (Kets de Vries, Miller, 1984; Kets de Vries, 1980).

Studies concerning the issues of emotions in organizations have an essential influence on the development of the concept of organizational personality, especially those of Fineman (2000), Gabriel (1998; 1991), Ashkanasy, Hartel, and Zerbe (2000), and many others. The dominating belief that organizations are rational, purposeful, ordered, and integrated entities was for a long time the reason for ignoring the fact that emotions existed in organizations. Fineman (1996) described this situation when writing about organizations as “emotionally anorexic” objects. The situation changed, however, and, as Gabriel (1998) vividly presented it, emotions have “moved into” organizations in recent years. The latest studies on the subject of leadership, identity, and organizational change indicate the

management of emotions as a key condition for the success of an organization (vide Styhre et al., 2002; Bierema, Berdish, 1999; Senge, 1998; Maurer, 1996), and the social constructionists also contributed studies to trend studies concerning organizational culture (Fineman, 1993; Trice, Beyer, 1993; Deal, Kennedy, 1982). Fineman (2000), Mumby and Putnam (1992), Van Maanen (1991), and others wondered how emotions form and appear in organizations and how to manage them appropriately, especially when they are of crucial importance in a specific position. The exploration of these issues shows that the thinking about management is beginning to shift from the sphere of observed behaviour to the area of the internal world of the employees.

One of the most often applied and popular models of the functioning of the human psyche is that offered by psychoanalysis. It is being used ever more boldly in attempts to understand the complex processes arising in organizations. This approach places particular attention on the complexity of the emotional relationships between the individuals and the organization; it allows a better understanding of both the relationships between the leader, endowed with attributes of power, and the organization, as well as the relationships between the separate individuals and the organizational community. Moreover, it offers the possibility of studying the emotions on both the individual level and that of the strength of the groups (Gabriel, Carr, 2002; Hinshelwood, Skogstad 2000; Diamond, 1993; Rutan, Stone, 1984; Foulkes, 1975; Bion, 1959). Thanks to the work of such authors as LeBon, Bion, McDougall, and Foulkes, who investigated the problems of group dynamic processes, we can better understand the behavior of the participants in an organization. These authors described the mechanisms of the functioning of a group, understood not as a collection of individuals, but as a new quality which emerges as a result of the interaction between its individual members.

In his psychodynamic approach to groups, McDougall drew attention to the process which leads to intensification of the emotions in a group, called "emotional contagion" (de Board, 2003; Hatfield, Caccioppo, Rapson, 1994). This is one of the most important mechanisms operating in a group since it describes how emotions experienced by an individual disseminate through the whole organization. Understanding this phenomenon becomes particularly important when just considering individual reactions proves insufficient to influence a group affected by strong emotions effectively. Thanks to the knowledge of this mechanism, we acquire the opportunity of studying emotions both on the individual level, using knowledge about emotions and such defense mechanisms as denial, transference, projection,

and introjections, and on the level of group processes (Armstrong, 2005; Gabriel, 1998; Diamond, 1993; Simmons, 1981; Foulkes, 1975; Bion, 1959).

Adopting the psychodynamic approach means questioning the assumptions about the rationality of organizations, which certainly may arouse unease, as well as the resistance of scholars attached to the rational model of organizations. However, not only the psychoanalytical approach shows that the rationality of both the participants in the organization and the organization itself is superficial (Thompson, Fine, 1999). Studies on organizations in recent years, among others the experience of the researchers gathered at the Institute of Tavistock, have directed attention to diverse irrational elements and phenomena appearing in the lives of organizations, giving voice to that which was hitherto denied or suppressed. It is precisely with these irrational and also powerfully emotional behaviours that the members of any organization have the most difficulty, from top management to production staff.

In the psychoanalytic understanding of an individual's psyche, anxiety and defense mechanisms play an especially important role. Individual experiences, consciously and unconsciously, conflict with what he copes by developing a psychological system of defense mechanisms. The contribution of psychoanalysis and the analysis of group behaviour to the study of organizations consists of broadening the theory of organization and management with research into the unconscious dimensions of organizational life, revealing the hidden aspects of the relationships of individuals with groups, and highlighting the influence of the emotions, beliefs, and ideas of the members of the organization on their day to day functioning (cf. Durkin, 1981; Rutan, Stone, 1984; Hirschhorn, 1995).

The basic assumption of the psychoanalytic approach, which also applies to organizations, says that most behaviour which we perceive as rational is in fact determined by the action of powers and mechanisms which lie outside the conscious level of cognition. In this regard, to understand what is happening in an organization one must not only transcend this superficial rationality, but also alter it by drawing the hidden and denied motives, feelings, and desires to the level of awareness. To this end it is necessary to evoke the defense mechanisms of the organization's members. These mechanisms are formed within the context of the human personality and define the patterns of behaviour which one applies in life. From such a perspective, the personality may even be defined in the simplest way as an established and consolidated pattern of defense mechanisms applied through life which one can recognize by observing the individual's behaviour as well as by subjecting it to introspection. It is well known that the more anxiety a

person feels, the more likely it is that he will automatically apply behaviour patterns based on defense mechanisms (Freud, 2004). The more energy we expend on defense, the less remains for use to respond to real events, which, of course, makes dealing with current problems in a mature and constructive manner difficult. Because mechanisms of defense against anxiety are so important in the shaping of individual behaviour, they also influence the social life of an organization and become crucial factors in conceiving organizational personality.

Although it is the individual who feels anxiety and applies defense mechanisms, such mechanisms may nevertheless be ascribed to social systems. The extension of the psychoanalytical approach into the area of group, organizational, and institutional functioning, making use of the concept of anxiety and defense mechanisms related to them, had already begun in the 1950s. During that time, Jaques (1953) demonstrated that social systems can reinforce the individual in his psychological defense mechanisms against anxiety. The author's main idea was articulated in his belief that individuals unconsciously exploit social systems to support their defenses against anxiety. As a whole, a social system acts in a way which allows individuals to avoid anxiety and conflict, particularly those which result from the fundamental tasks carried out by the given institution. Lyth-Menzies (1988, 1989) showed that every individual cooperates to strengthen those facets of a social system which sustain rigid and primal (primitive) defense mechanisms. These unconscious defense mechanisms are reflected in shared, socially accepted defensive attitudes, which are most apparent in the approach to the work performed.

Another source of inspiration in the study of the concept of organizational personality is the general system theory. This theory provides a basis allowing the integration of different approaches and puts individual behaviour and the methods of group and organizational functioning in a new light. The system approach allows one to view an organization as a living, open system which is in contact with its surroundings; work is carried out within defined limits within which the necessary interaction takes place, thanks to which the organization is kept in a state of dynamic balance with the environment. The management staff is responsible for supervising the correct functioning of this process, and this supervision demands a huge investment of energy of the whole organization so that it can react appropriately to any sort of shift of force in its environment. Lack of this energy pushes an organization towards a closed system, which by definition is not in a position to function efficiently.

Anxiety appears when changes must be carried out in an organization, and this initiates defensive reactions in its members. In effect, energy is expended on internal struggles and evasion of the actual problems instead of on their resolution. This demonstrates not only the need to understand the sources and nature of the anxiety, the resistance to change, but also the necessity of undertaking effective actions to neutralize this resistance in the organization. It is thus apparent that it is here where system theory, research on emotions in organizations, and the psychodynamic view of personality meet. The beliefs, emotions, and defense mechanisms shared by members of an organization are the foundation on which the structure of the organizational personality is based.

From the popular point of view, the way in which an organization develops its structure and methods of activity is largely determined by the product and the applied technology, while from the psychological point of view an organization's culture, structure, and way of functioning are determined by the psychological needs of the members of the organization. According to the psychodynamic approach, structure, habits, but most of all relations with people are determined by ways of coping with anxiety (or other threatening emotions), since the life of every organization carries with it constant tension. It provides pleasure and many other positive emotions, but it is also the source of anxiety and other negative emotions. To understand fully what is happening in an organization, one must take into account the emotional aspect of its functioning, fraught with stress and ambivalence.

A point of reference which allows one to relate the social phenomena observed in an organization to a defined conceptual system may be the personality model. According to the view presented here, the concept of organizational personality is a hypothetical construct consisting of the following: Organizational personality is the totality of the mechanisms which integrate the psychological and social activity of the members of an organization under the conditions determined by its structure. The personalities of its leaders and the character of the key activity have a decisive influence on the formation of the organizational personality. A condition for the shaping of the organizational personality is the frequency and intensity of the relations between the members of the organization. With low frequency and intensity of relations, the organization remains a collection of loosely connected individuals. With higher intensity, a "new quality" emerges whose features are a result of the personality of the most influential (dominant) members. Personality is hence a dynamic instance which integrates an organization's functioning in the sphere of interpersonal and inter-group relations, regulating the behaviour of the separate individual

members in the organization's structure. This results from the interaction of the personalities of the members of the organization in connection with the kinds of tasks to complete. Organizational personality has a dynamic character; it characterizes the organization in a unique and unrepeatable way. The personality, as the organizing psychological apparatus, lends cohesion and continuity to the processes to which the individual is subjected when becoming a member of a group or organization.

The personality, understood as a psychological apparatus with the character of a superior body and which integrates the behavioural mechanisms of the people in an organization, cannot be submitted to direct observation. We can only draw conclusions about the personality based on observable, overt behaviour. The only basis for assuming the existence of personality as an entity enduring in time is the consistency and cohesion of the pattern of overt behaviour observed in essential areas of organizational functioning. Among these are the organization's attitude towards its internal and external environment, the method and content of its formulated strategy of action, the way of making decisions and communicating, and its attitude towards change. The essence of personality lies in the mechanisms which determine the ways in which the individual members of the organization cope with emotions. These depend on the members' personal predisposition, but at the same time, by being involved in the life of the organization, they are determined by the conditions prevailing in the organization, among which the personality of the leader has dominant significance.

3. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERSONALITY

The concept of organizational culture contains many diverse elements. Of its numerous definitions, that proposed by C. Kluckhohn and A. Kroemer is worthy of quoting: "Culture consists of patterns of thinking, feeling, and reacting acquired and transmitted chiefly through symbols, which are the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas, and especially their attached values. In many respects a culture resembles a personality. It is thus a unique social personality" (quoted in: Kostera, 1996, p. 75). Sikorski (1990), in turn, stated that if the most essential components of organizational culture are hidden deep within the consciousness and unconsciousness of the employees, then one should look for the key to

understanding the mechanisms governing the life of an organization and its members precisely in knowledge about human psychology. At the same time it seems that the range of function and content ascribed to culture is so vast that, in a way, everything in an organization is culture. This is undoubtedly one of the reasons for the creation of the numerous definitions with which authors attempt to illustrate the essence of this complex phenomenon, emphasizing elements which in their view deserve special attention.

From the viewpoint of the idea of organizational personality presented here, the work of G. Hofstede and that of E. Schein on organizational culture are worth mentioning. According to Hofstede (1984, p. 14), "Culture is the collective programming of the minds of people who live in a given environment. This programming is partly common to the various people, partly characteristic of the concrete person." Hofstede differentiated three main ways of programming: the universal, collective, and individual levels. The universal level of mental programming includes the needs for security, society, acknowledgement, and self-realization and is identical in all people. The collective level is common to social groups, e.g. nations, inhabitants of a given region, and representatives of specific professions, and the programming is passed on from one generation to the next, fostering identification with the group and assuring its cohesion. The individual level is characteristic of the individual and involves his personality; it is unique in that there are no two identical persons. This way of seeing organizational culture seems very close to the concept of personality in the sphere of each of the three levels of programming. This similarity is suggested all the more as the classification of organizational cultures he proposes refer to the dimensions applied in psychological concepts of personality (for example: individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity).

Schein's (1985) concept of organizational culture, representative of the cognitive approach, primarily emphasizes its internal or integrational function, in addition to its adaptational function. Schein also pointed out the multilayered character of culture, distinguishing its three levels: on the surface are artifacts, beneath there are values and behavioral norms, and at the deepest level are convictions and assumptions.

From the psychological perspective it is difficult not to agree with Lidia Zbiegień-Maciąg (1999), who considered the model of culture which Schein proposed reminiscent of the concept of personality formulated by Sigmund Freud. According to Schein, a company's culture is anchored in the level of basic assumptions, which are generally unconscious and permanent. They correspond to that level of personality which Freud defined as the id. This is

the most deeply hidden level of a personality and is also the key to understanding the remaining cultural levels. The second level of a company's culture are such observable phenomena as values which reflect goals, ideals, standards, and norms. This level of values is partially conscious and corresponds to Freud's ego, or self. The third level is the superego. This consists of the ethics, socialization, and shared meanings developed by people. Schein's model is simultaneously a model of culture as the product of a group. This is also why the work of psychoanalytical groups such as those of Bion and Foulkes, as well as the contributions of those studying group dynamics, also from a cognitive perspective, are so valuable and inspirational for the idea of organizational personality.

For observers of organizational life it seems rather obvious that a cultural explanation of what takes place in organizations is insufficient in some cases. Although several concepts concerning various aspects of organizational culture have been formulated in recent years, the application of their conclusions in practice often does not bring the expected results, and theoreticians and practitioners agree that change in the culture of an organization is most difficult and time-consuming to carry out. When describing the issues connected with organizational culture, reference is usually made to its superficial appearance, without touching upon much more complicated matters which lie at the source of behaviour, above all avoiding the hidden, unconscious aspects. Even if they are mentioned, it is without an indication of the mechanisms which explain the observed behavior. However, without the possibility of understanding the relationship between that which is conscious and that which is unconscious, we are unable to explain fully what is happening in an organization. Psychological theory, in particular the concepts concerning human personality, deals with these issues. Among these, the psychodynamic approach mentioned above plays an important role.

In the literature we come across the term organizational personality applied as equivalent in meaning to organizational culture (cf. Sikorski, 1990, 2002; Morgan, 2001; Zbiegień-Maciąg, 1999; Robbins, 1988). A clear example is a definition given by Koch, who stated that organizational culture is "an organization's personality and character which have developed through generations of employees and which incline those working in the organization to behave in a defined manner without being aware that they are behaving precisely in this way" (Koch, 1997, p. 120). This undoubtedly interesting definition does not, however, indicate what that something is that inclines people to "behave in a defined manner without being aware that they are behaving precisely in this way". It seems, then, highly justified to

attempt to fill this gap. From the psychological perspective, it is exactly the personality which is the theoretical construct which describes the mechanisms which induce individuals, the members of the organization, to adopt behaviour patterns accepted in the given organization, in accordance with its norms.

In the understanding presented here, organizational personality is a concept different from that of organizational culture; it describes a different quality and it contains elements which go beyond organizational culture, since it reaches into the depths of organizational life. Because these two concepts are treated interchangeably in the literature of organization and management, the differences between them should be pointed out, i.e., those features which should be assigned to the area of an organization's culture and those which fall within the realm of the organization's personality. Although this task is not easy, it is a worthy challenge not only for research purposes, but also with regard to its practical application. The conscious and unconscious elements which make up the social plane of organizational function, that is culture, organizational behaviors, and personality, as well as the relations between these are illustrated in this diagram:

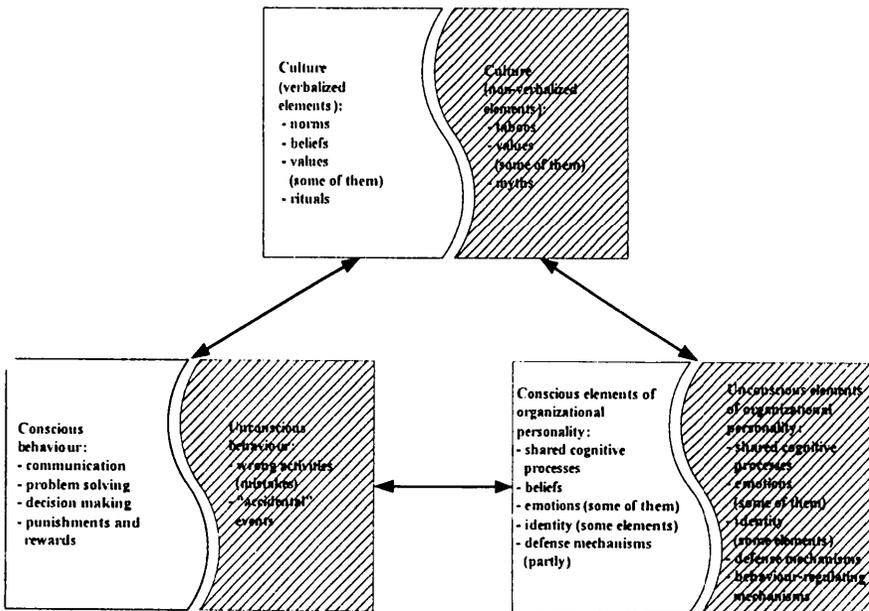


Figure 1. Relationships between culture, behaviour, and organizational personality

Source: author's own

There are many sources of difficulty in distinguishing organizational culture and organizational personality. An important source of difficulty in distinguishing culture and personality is that both are complex and multifaceted. A reflection of this is undoubtedly the difficulties which appear when we wish to establish clear boundaries and criteria distinguishing them. In their definitions of both culture and personality, authors see the uniqueness of the defined object as a characteristic trait. At the same time, there are numerous similarities between people and organizations, but no two organizations are exactly alike, just as no two persons are exactly alike. One of the dilemmas indicating the scale of the difficulty in distinguishing between culture and personality is contained in the question to what extent a person is determined by biology and to what extent by social environment, i.e., the age-old question about what shapes man, nature or nurture. In seeking an answer, one may point to extreme positions which emphasize the influence of only one of the factors, excluding the significance of the other. There are also many transitional concepts in which the significance of both factors is recognized and the importance of additional factors, such as the subject's own activity, are pointed out. However, if we assume that in human nature there is continual interaction of the influences of factors of completely diverse character, viz. that which is biological and innate combines with that which is social and acquired, and an individual's personality is a unique and exceptional effect of their interaction, one could look upon the concept "organizational personality" in a similar manner. At the same time we free it from the tendency to treat it as identical to organizational culture, although it is not the same as the inborn "biological" characteristics making up an individual's personality. Personality is not (only) culture; culture is not (only) personality. An organization possesses its culture as well as its personality, which are not the same thing. From such a perspective it should be possible to regard personality as a metaphor of the organization, in a manner similar to regarding culture as a metaphor for the organization.

Assuming that an organization is a product of a society, and thus also of its culture, the justification for introducing the term "organizational personality" is that personality speaks of how particular individuals, members of the organization, shape the new quality which is the organization understood as a whole, what mechanisms influence its functioning, stability, development, and possible change, and what lies at the basis of its uniqueness. If we assume that it is culture which joins the

members of an organization together, then personality speaks of how the diverse elements of the organization's social life, e.g., convictions, values, norms, and, most of all, emotions and defense mechanisms, are interconnected, in other words, by what means they influence each other and how this finds its expression in the observed behaviour of the members of the organization.

Most studies on organizational culture emphasize its cognitive aspects and, similarly to studies on organization, one can observe a tendency to marginalize the role of emotions. However, culture deals with areas which usually involve emotions. The essence of culture, i.e. what people believe, what they value, and what they expect and desire, is colored by emotions and people feel and express this appropriately using forms accepted by the given culture. From the perspective of an organization's personality, emotions are its essential element. The significance of culture in an organization's personality is very important, as organizational culture provides the means, models, and also methods of coping with stress and emotions. Emotions are indeed experienced by individuals, but they extend or flow beyond the individual into the group and ever larger spheres of the organization, at which time culture enters the arena, providing the coping patterns for such situations which have been developed and accepted by the organization.

As much as the cultural model of an organization shows the elements which together create organizational culture, it is the psychological model which shows personality as an instance, a theoretical construct, which confers a specific order to these elements. On the basis of the emotions and the mechanisms of coping with them, especially the intensive ones affecting many members of the organization, the personality decides how the particular elements, including those contained in the organization's culture, influence each other, i.e., what kind of relationship between them appears in the organization. This is because the personality is a set of mechanisms regulating the mutual relationships between these elements, the emotions and defense mechanisms which give each organization its unique and exceptional character.

Invoking the concept of culture undoubtedly allows one to describe what takes place in an organization, but it does not explain why things happen the way they do. It seems that it would be valuable not only to know what happens, but also understand why they happen as they do.

4. IDENTITY AND PERSONALITY

Statements of the type: "This organization is seeking its identity", "As a young company we are looking for our place on the market. We want to build an image of a company which is dynamic and open to its customers", and "Our employees have a strong sense of identification with the company", etc., surprise no-one today. As a rule, it is the representatives of the managerial staff of a company who formulate a company's mission and strategy, which answer such questions as "who are we?" and "how do we want to be?". They are construed as an expression of the activity and enterprise of the people leading the organization and demonstrate their knowledge of the game rules of the market. From here it is a short way to such concepts as the identity of an organization and company image. In the Dictionary of the Polish Language (1983), identity is defined succinctly as "being the same; explicitness." However, psychological knowledge is regarded as the basis for explaining the matter of identity in the psychological perspective on the issues presented in this article. In psychology, identity is regarded as a consequence of distinguishing the element of self in the personality structure (Erikson, 2004; Pervin, 2002; Freud, 1999; Jung, 1971). Without a developed feeling of the self, one cannot speak of an individual's identity.

The problem of identity is the problem of the essence of human existence. It is a consequence of the fact that every person seeks more or less consciously his place in personal, family, and professional life. The concept of identity is closely connected with the concept of the self. The sense and significance of such concepts as self, ego, and identity are far from explicit. Although that there is something which we intuitively call our "self" seems obvious, attempts to define and grasp the essence of "self" nonetheless meets with many difficulties. An even greater challenge appears to be defining what the "self" of an organization is. Can one speak of an organization's "self"? If so, how did it come to be? How did it form and on what does it depend? And, finally, how can we study it? Attempts to specify views on the nature of the human self were regarded as being important as well as difficult (Freud, 1999; Jung, 1971; James, 1948). Problems result not so much from the incomprehensibility of the concept, but rather from its ubiquity. People use it constantly on a daily basis. At the same time it is very difficult for psychologists to define its nature with the aid of an unambiguous definition. Studies which take the intercultural variability of self (cf. Markus, Kitayama, 1991) into account, as well as the evolutionary

approach (Sedikides, Skowronski, 1997), additionally complicate this problem.

Interest in the problem of the self reaches back to ancient Greece, when Aristotle introduced the distinction of that which is material and that which is immaterial in man. According to him, the immaterial, psychic element, or soul, is responsible for the functioning of the mind of every human being. Much later the soul began to be described by the term "self". The distinction between the material and immaterial became, among others, a subject of Descartes' considerations. The self, i.e. the thinking and knowing being, became recognized as the quintessence of human subjectivity. The nature of a human being's self-experiencing became the subject of inquiry of many successive generations of philosophers, such as George Berkeley, David Hume, James Mill, and John Stuart Mill. Subsequent philosophical studies contributed to the development of psychology as a science, including the work of the American psychologist William James who introduced the concept of the "self" in psychology in 1890, were fundamental in the issue of human identity.

Freud's theory of the ego has much in common with the concept of self, although it interested such researchers as Erich Fromm, Karen Horney, and Harry Sullivan significantly more. In psychoanalytical thought, however, it was largely representatives of the theory of relations with an object who studied the concept of self (cf. Kernberg, 1976; Kohut, 1977). They draw attention to the development of early representations of oneself, representations of other persons, and relations with them. They maintain that representations of the self are multidimensional; they may consist of a cohesive whole, but may also be isolated from each other, and even remain in conflict; they may be of partial character, or whole. Representations of the self, other persons, and the relationships with them form an organized system. A person tries to maintain cohesion and contact between the individual elements of this system. According to the theoreticians of object relationships, representations of the self are strongly saturated with emotions and involve desires and fears.

The theoretical and practical aspects of the problem of self were intensively developed by such authors as Carl Rogers and Erik Erikson. Earlier, however, behaviourism impeded progress in research on the self. An important step which accelerated the development of knowledge in this field was the borrowing of concepts and methodologies applied in cognitive psychology. The adaptation of the theory of patterns taken from cognitive psychology initiated the development of research on the so-called "auto-

schemata". Moreover, scientists turned their attention to the processes of group dynamics. One can observe a systematic development of theory and research devoted to the cognitive, affective, and social aspects of the self beginning in the 1970s. According to cognitive psychologists, patterns of the self present a cognitive structure containing generalizations on the theme of one's own person which result from past experience (Kozielecki, 1981; Tomaszewski, 1976; Łukaszewski, 1974). Psychoanalysts stress the importance of unconscious representations of the self, the weight of experiences from early childhood, and their dynamic mutual impact. Much attention is devoted to conflicts between the individual representations of the self. Social and cognitive psychologists are more interested in the conscious, but also unconscious, patterns of the self, the current representations of the self or memories from the past, as well as abilities to distinguish between various images of the self. In the light of both the psychodynamic and cognitive theories, identity is a crucial element in the structure of the personality.

One speaks of two forms of the self in psychology: perceiving the self and being aware of the self (Erikson, 2004; Tesser, Felson, Suls, 2004). Researchers of different orientation generally agree that the self is connected with self-control, a sense of one's own worth. The self also affects how a person views the world. This appears together with the development of the ability to distinguish oneself from environment, differentiate oneself and others, acquiring the ability of reflection and thinking about oneself. The self lends cohesion to our behavior, it is an expression of the integrality of the personality as a system of interconnected elements. The lack of a sense of internal integration is associated with internal conflict and tension. At the same time, the integrality of the personality makes it possible to predict human behaviour. This is important for both cognitive and emotional reasons.

Both social psychologists and sociologists, starting from individual identity, moved on to interest in the community and collective identity. Bokszański (2005) believes that the concept of identity based on sociology should be especially closely tied to collectives. For fear of anthropomorphizing the category of collective identity, however, some authors are against using this concept. An example is Olbromski's (2000, p. 16) position that "Social identity in itself does not exist. Identity is connected with consciousness, which is a human feature. While society is not a form of conscious organism superior to a person, it is the unity of non-identical 'social events'". Not everyone shares this position. Jenkins (1996) asks why

we have to question the existence of a collective identity since it is generally accepted that a collective is a plurality of individuals who perceive one another as sufficiently similar to speak of themselves as "we". Why not recognize the insights, convictions, and awareness of the similarity in content as collective identity which, moreover, fulfills an integrative function on the individuals of the group?

In both psychological and sociological literature, a distinction is drawn between personal and collective identity. Bikont (1988, p. 28) believes that personal identity is composed of its own individual characteristics, perceived as unique, while social identity is made up of characteristics which provide information about the individual's affiliation with different social groups and categories. Steinmann and Schreyogg (2001, p. 435), citing Schlenker's definition, understand identity in the way a person understands himself, how he understands and explains his essential traits, experiences, and expectations. Indeed, their view concerns the formation of personal, not collective, identity, but they emphasize that the sense of identity depends not only on the person himself, but also on the process of his social interactions.

In the discussion connected with the problems of organizational personality, which includes issues related to the concept of identity, theories of social identity (Tajfel, 1978, 1982) and of social categorization (Hogg, Terry, 2000; Turner, Oakes, 1986) are particularly important. It is believed that personal identity contains those aspects of the self which originate from the individual traits of the person, while social identity includes aspects of the self which are a consequence of membership in the group (Tajfel, 1978, 1982; Tajfel, Turner, 1979, 1986; Turner et al., 1987). Referring to Turner's concept of auto-categorization, Stephan and Stephan (2003) state that the process of arousing the collective self, known as depersonalization, is the basis of all group phenomena. Jarymowicz (1988) proposes that equating "I" and "we" be treated as an expression of one's depersonalization and that one should speak of social identity when separate representations of "I", "we", and "they" arise.

Hatch (2002) believes that organizational identity is the experiences and beliefs of the members regarding the organization as a whole. Organizational identity is focused on itself: the concept refers to how the members of the organization see themselves as an organization, whereas the organization's image is its likeness in the eyes of others. The image reflects those impressions which the organization evokes in people outside it (cf. Hatch, 2002; Dutton, Dukerich, Harquail, 1994). Image and identity are related in

the sense that the image an organization presents to its environment may affect how the environment sees the organization.

The team of authors from the Department of Enterprise Strategy and Policy of the HEC-IAS presented an interesting position in the matter of identity in their book "Company Management. Strategies, Structures, Decisions, Identity" (Strategor, 1999). The authors wrote: "The phrase 'collective identity' in relation to an enterprise does not mean unanimous beliefs." They believe that the concept "identity" should replace the term "organizational culture" used more often in the literature (*ibid.*, p. 503). They state that the term "culture" is passive and neutral, and thus more manipulative. Culture remains on the surface level of events, ideas, values, or beliefs and of that which is usually called "symbolic space" (ideologies, myths, rites, taboos, as well as behavioural norms which are expressions of them), while identity reaches the level of passion and fantasy. The question of identity is therefore a question about the ways these images and symbols appear. With knowledge of the company's identity, one can approach the problem of management by seeking answers to questions of how identity changes and whether it is possible to manage identity. In this view, the concept of identity is extended to the meaning which in psychology is applied to the concept of personality.

From the psychological perspective, when we speak of organizational identity, it seems natural to assume the existence of a personality of this organization, since the concept of identity appears within the context of personality: if there is an identity, then there is a personality, which is more or less integrated, more or less mature. When we speak of an organization's identity it means we accept the assumption of the existence of the phenomenon of personality, expressing the permanence, continuity, and distinctness of the specific collective which is the organization. If, therefore, a collective identity has been formed, then we have the right to speak of a personality of this collective, or of an organizational personality.

In summary, identity is a concept immanently related to the concept of personality, it is an essential element of it, containing defined patterns of knowledge about the broadly viewed category of the self. Recognizing the legitimacy of employing the category of collective identity, we thus have a base from which to take a further step and speak of organizational personality.

CONCLUSION

It is not difficult to imagine that button factories, software companies, and advertisement agencies function differently, just as universities, small-town hospitals, and civil engineering firms in large, dynamically developing urban areas do. We know that organizations vary in their size, structure, and goals, but also in something more intangible but sufficiently essential to prompt several authors to attempt an adequate definition capturing this "something". The scope of distinguishing features traditionally included in organizational culture, excluding the sphere of artifacts, is rather limited. Most organizations are in favour of the same values, apply the same very similar norms regulating principles of conduct, and present similar patterns of behaviour. What are, then, these essential factors responsible for the creation of something so hard to grasp but specific to every organization? In answer to this, the thesis was forwarded that it is personality, and applying this concept opens possibilities which should interest both theoreticians and management practitioners. According to this thesis, it is organizational personality which is responsible for the fact that its members feel and react in ways specific to the given organization.

The concept of organizational personality in itself is nothing new in the field of management studies. Authors who equate organizational culture with personality, identity with personality, or even culture with identity, appeal to the idea. The repeated notion of personality as a synonym for organizational culture or identity may demonstrate that neither culture nor identity sufficiently describes the meaning of that which we are trying to express. This induces us to look for a more satisfactory and adequate term. It seems that in the light of current knowledge we can appeal to the concept of personality with regard to organizations, imparting it with a meaning in accordance with the psychological concept of personality. Using the metaphor of personality with regard to an organization thus allows us to "see that which is unseen". Above all, it allows us to cope better with the phenomenon of change and with crises in organizations.

Organizational personality is an organized complex of processes which are psychological in character and typical of the organization. Its function consists of developing behaviours in accordance with the organization's goals, lowering the level of anxiety and/or aggression in accordance with the rules prevailing in the organization, and creating and transmitting a system of shared beliefs, judgements, evaluations, and ideas, coming from the area of organizational culture, in a manner subordinate to defense mechanisms. In

effect, in dealing with organizations of the same cultural type, we shall have different types of organizational personalities, and the source of this diversity is the defense mechanisms which predominate. It is the important leaders who have the greatest influence on the process of anchoring these mechanism in the organization, as it is the leaders' defense mechanisms which dominate the ways of expressing emotions, particularly those which are undesirable from the point of view of the fundamental principles of the organization. On the most general level one may assume that the task of organizational personality is to enable shaping behaviours which are beneficial to the organization in a given environment and under specific conditions of activity. This function would be exercised effectively if the behaviours which are beneficial to the organization absorb as little energy as possible, but provide the maximal chance of success.

If we would really like to understand the most crucial aspects of organizational behaviour, we must look more deeply for an explanation, beyond organizational culture. In this regard we need concepts which are useful for interpreting the conscious and unconscious behaviour of the participants in the life of an organization. We need methods and tools which make it easier to understand their feelings and defense mechanisms and also to predict behaviours in untypical or crisis situations. The theories of personality, regardless of the psychological current they represent, provide these and bring us closer to understanding the internal mechanisms governing the individuals, also when they are members of a collective. This makes it possible to understand both the conscious and unconscious processes and offers the possibility to explain phenomena arising in the sphere of culture and organizational behaviour, including change and crisis.

The question remains as to how to apply the idea of organizational personality described here. The complexity of the problem demands a research methodology whose results can be transferred to real-life situations in the field, and this will be the subject of further studies.

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