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Preface

The presented papers form an important starting point for academic discussions and show us the diverse spectrum of interesting issues perceived from the perspective of organizational behaviours and organizational culture, enriched with examples of the interpretational possibilities offered by the psychoanalytic understanding of social phenomena. What merits special attention is the fact that half of the articles contributed to the collection present a systemic-psychodynamic approach, still relatively little known in Polish management. This approach is based on psychoanalytic theories and the concepts developed therein.

The exceptional nature of this collection consists in showing the diversity of perspectives regarding both the understanding and the empirical examination of the phenomena and processes which we observe in organizations. It contains six articles that describe from the cognitive-behavioural perspective phenomena as complex as whistleblowing (I. Świątek-Barylska, M. Opara: *Perception of whistleblowing by professionals-to-be. Results of the research*) and organizational creativity and ambidexterity in Polish enterprises (K. Bratnicka: *Creativity and performance. Testing ambidextrous hypotheses in Polish SME's context*). These two articles are based on extensive empirical studies and can form a very good groundwork for further research, and they have a great practical importance for managers, too.

The two subsequent papers present the issue of organizational culture described from the behavioural standpoint (J. van Cleeff, and P. van Nispen: *Organisations, Projects and Culture)* and

from the systemic-psychodynamic perspective (L.F. Stapley: *Exploring the Meaning of Work in the Context of Organizational Culture*). Although it might seem that everything has already been said about organizational culture, it is worthwhile to consider the thought expressed by L.F. Stapley that we focus on the identification of symptoms of culture rather than understanding what it really is.

Then, the last two papers reveal the world of organizations through reference to strictly psychoanalytic constructs, such as death drive, mourning and melancholia (S. Kahn: *Eros &Thanatos: A Psychoanalytic Examination of Death in the Context of Working Life*) and the concepts of organization-in-the-mind, narcissism, unconscious, introjective identification (X. Eloquin: *The Tyrant-in-the-mind: Influences on Worker behaviour in a Post-totalitarian Organisation*). These papers, based on psychoanalytic theories, reflect upon and illuminate some of the new contours and shapes, perhaps previously not fully seen or appreciated from others perspectives.

It is my hope that this collection of six papers will form a framework for noticing, exploring, and reflecting upon the forces and processes that exist beneath the surface of our interactions with other people and our changing world. I believe that the submitted publications constitute interesting reading on modern management from the perspective of psychoanalytic and "classic" approaches to management. I hope they will become the source of many inspiring discussions and academic polemics.

Adela Barabasz

Organizations, projects and culture

Organizacje, projekty i kultura

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Abstract

Purpose: to explore and demonstrate the effects of organizational culture on projects, in particular project culture and project management style. Methodology/approach: descriptive and explorative; through students' groups. Findings: the cultural relationship between organizations, their projects and the third parties involved (clients) has quite some impact and is more complicated than expected. Implications/limitations: need for more detailed and structured research, including operationalization of concepts. Originality/value: although some attention has been paid to the topic, more research is required to demonstrate the impact of culture on the realisation and effectiveness of internal and external projects.

Keywords: organization, organizational culture, projects, project culture, project management.

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu, który ma charakter koncepcyjny, jest wykazanie wpływu kultury organizacyjnej na sposób realizacji projektów, a w szczególności wpływ kultury organizacyjnej na kulturę projektu i styl zarządzania nim. W artykule opisano badania empiryczne, w których zastosowano jakościowe podejście badawcze. Na ich podstawie potwierdzono, iż kulturowe aspekty organizacji istotnie oddziałują na realizowane w niej projekty. Relacje te są nawet bardziej znaczące i skomplikowane, aniżeli wstępnie zakładano. Istnieje więc konieczność bardziej szczegółowych i skoncentrowanych badań, umożliwiających większą operacjonalizację kluczowych pojęć. Pozwolą one wykazać wpływ kultury na wdrażanie i efektywność projektów.

Słowa kluczowe: organizacja, kultura organizacyjna, projekty, kultura projektu, zarządzanie projektem.

Introduction

In 2015 a number of small groups of students at the Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences (RUAS) looked at the relations between organisational culture and projects within organisations (one organisation per group of students). Although common objectives and methodology had been defined beforehand, the results varied too much to draw any comprehensive conclusion. Nevertheless, the conceptual approach and the outcomes showed both theoretical and practical implications for further and fruitful research.

The RUAS offers four-year BA programmes. The first half of the fourth year is a major elective programme of 30 ECTS. Although the programme is offered by a specific BA programme, students from other programmes may subscribe as well. One of these programmes focuses on programme and project management (PPM). This PPM is divided in two equal parts. In the first part, students learn about the different forms of project management and they develop a project plan for an external organisation.

In the second part of the programme culture is discussed. In the academic year 2014-15 groups of students conducted research within organisations on the relation between organisational culture and its effects on projects in terms of culture and management style. Students proposed both the projects and the project teams. Overall their research explored the role of culture in organisations and projects.

This article first discusses the application of culture to projects (management, co-operation and relations with parent and target organisations) and then reports on the research conducted. It lists the project variables and the influence of culture on each of them. This may be used both in practice and further research.

1. Questions

Culture is becoming more and more an important topic in both the theory and practice of management in business (general observation from mass media, organisational theory and from discussions with businesses). The entrance of the culture concept in these domains was relatively late, while the concept of culture was studied long before in cultural anthropology and sociology [Nispen 2012]. The integration of the concept of culture in the management theories may be explained by several factors. One of them is the growth of business relations across borders (increasing globalisation) and the related cultural differences. This was the motivation for the research by for instance Hofstede [Hofstede et al. 2010], Trompenaars [Trompenaars, Hampden-Turner 1997] and Solomon and Schell [2009]. Other explanations have to do with the multicultural society, good labour conditions, growing interest in soft controls [Lycklama à Nijeholt 2014], ideas about positive management (e.g. the Third European Conference on Positive Management, Rotterdam 2015), change management, and last but not least by societal developments as the shift to the post-modern society (e.g. [Inglehart 1997]). Organisations reflect the external cultural patterns and add internally new subcultures (a mix originating from region, professional status, class and historical

developments of the organisation; see for instance [Schein 2000]). Research into culture and its impact has resulted in an ever increasing set of models and instruments that companies might use, especially in the case of organisational changes. At the same time the research branches out to specific topics, from culture and international relations [Ester, Nispen 2013] to culture and change, networking and projects.

The theories mostly discuss national and organisational cultures. Hofstede for instance mentions that national cultural differences reflect value patterns and that organisational cultures demonstrate differences in practices [Hofstede et al. 2010, p. 346]. The Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness Research (GLOBE) project makes the same observation. The next logical step is the application of the culture concept at the level of projects. This has been discussed in general terms in the triangle model [Nispen 2011], differentiating culture on the level of states, organisations, teams and ultimately the individual. However, research into the relations between national cultures and projects is just as valid (see for instance [Kuchta, Sukpen 2013].

Projects may be defined as small, relative independent and temporary social systems, inside and between other social systems, with the following characteristics (see for instance the International Project Management Association or IPMA).

- aimed at more or less clear and varying goals,
- that have to be attained within a certain time frame that is divided in phases, each phase solving certain sub sequential problems decreasing the degrees of freedom,
- with limited resources of different kind,
- with project members who might change,
- and controlled by one of more commissioning organisations.

The project management literature focuses on management, phases, transition from the one phase to the other, reporting, control and structures but not so much on culture (two known exceptions in Dutch literature to the latter point are [Wijnen, Renes , Storm 2001, p. 142] and further on [Bos, Harting (eds.) 2004, p. 287] and further on). At the same time, project management is looking for less structured approaches (agile) or widening the scope of projects (e.g. system engineering).

Although projects may have existed in all societies, the project concept has reached a high level of popularity in recent decades in both western and developing societies. Due to our complex, differentiated and innovating society and its organisations, a need for organisational forms has emerged that can operate in a controlled way beyond traditional, bureaucratic and inflexible structures. Projects have become a common concept and an increasing theoretical body of knowledge and related skills has accompanied this development. The number of project methods is growing. At the same time a certain project--inflation may be observed where all kind of activities are sometimes called projects (though they lack some of the features mentioned before).

At the same time the types of projects are on the increase. Nowadays for instance projects are differentiated according to

fields of application, like construction and IT, each with its own methods and phases. Another distinction is between projects focussed on internal problems and objectives and external projects (see below). One may also differentiate between simple and huge projects in terms of the involvement and resources of organisations. Some organisations use the project model as a standard work model. These organisations can be qualified as multi-project organisations [Wijnen 1997, p. 9]. A scale may be constructed with at one end relative simple projects and at the other programme management, encompassing projects as 'building blocks' (a concept that borders on governmental policy).
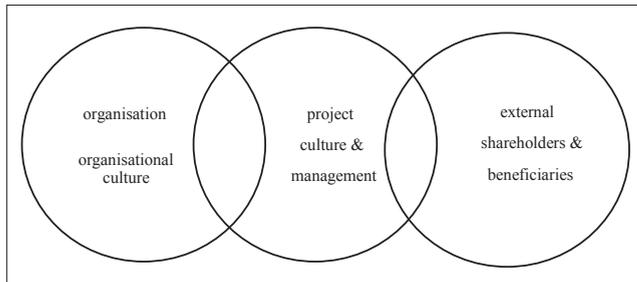

Figure 1. Conceptual model

Source: own study.

The present research had organisational culture as its starting point and looked into its effects on projects, in particular the culture of the project and its management style. The conceptual model in Figure 1 also suggests a distinction between internal and external projects. Internal projects aim at the better functioning of the organisation itself, while external projects are a specific form of satisfying customer needs (e.g. architects or software development). In this sense internal projects are the exception to the rule and external projects a standard operating procedure.

2. Culture, organizations and structure

Culture is perceived as a way of thinking, acting and feeling of a group of people at a certain time and place [Nispen 2011; Nispen 2014], Figure 2. Organisational culture then focuses on the group of people attached to or involved in a specific organisation (public, business or NGO). This has been researched in an American and a European context, resulting in open and specific approaches. An as yet unanswered question is whether American research may be applied in Europe in view of their different economic systems and the underlying value patterns. Another difference in opinion (mentioned above) is whether organisational culture is about values or practices.

Organisations and projects are perceived as social systems, implying aspects of structure and culture. As mentioned before, companies recognise the importance of culture more and more. At the same time, more and more business activities are organised in projects with increasing complexity and subjected to stricter norms and an increasing number of parties involved [Wijnen 1997]. These developments stress the need for good co-operation, depending on perceptions, values and norms, drawing it into the domain of culture.
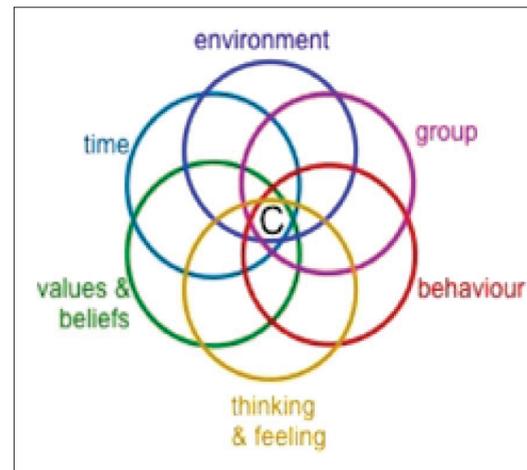

Figure 2. Flower of culture

Source: own study.

Structure and culture can be seen as aspects of social systems that have a complex interdependent relationship. Is the structure of an organisation developed according to the culture of the founding actors and developing, or does the structure shape a culture that enables people to fulfil their tasks? The least one can say is that both aspects must be involved in the analysis. Some models have a starting point in both approaches like the model of Handy that relates collaboration and power dispersion to four different forms of culture. In this way one may deduct the organisational culture from the structure. This approach is important when one cannot easily research culture as such.

In the literature, limited attention is paid to the different factors and parties at play in and around projects (and more to project management and methods). A project has for instance a mother organisation, but also creates its own internal organisation, has a target organisation or system (client) and other parties involved, each of them with its own culture and cultural aspects begging for alignment, in addition to external cultures such as national, regional and sectoral cultures. Bos et al. [Bos, Harting (eds.) 2004, p. 289] discern in this respect 'cultural domains: the domain of externally steering participants, the mother organisation(s), the domain of the users and the project team itself'.

The central question is what the theoretical, empirical and desirable relations are between the structural characteristics of projects and their cultures. The proposition is that projects will have some cultural nonconformity with the surrounding organisational context. This might be unexpected but is the consequence of being two different groups of people with partially different interests. However, an alignment (fit) is not per se a positive thing. If for instance an organisation wants to realise a major (internal) change, the project established to realise such change may well represent a culture that deviates from the organisation itself, enabling change (anti-fit). In such a situation, aligned cultures may well block the desired change but at the same time the cultural differences need to be reconciled.

The relation between culture is discussed in quite some detail (e.g. [Nispen, Fazili 2006]) but is summarised in Figure 3, the

arrow indicating the change process. Point 1 in this figure refers to the need for change in the environment of the organisation and point 2 the recognition as such by the management of the organisation. The management normally jumps to point 4, interventions, neglecting point 3, the need to change culture (in terms of another way of thinking and acting) by convincing everybody involved in the need for change. Cultural change is a necessary condition for the success of intervention. Point 5 indicates the successful adaptation to the environment and the dotted line the permanent change capability. Just because change projects are quite standard, the inclusion of such a project would have been desirable.
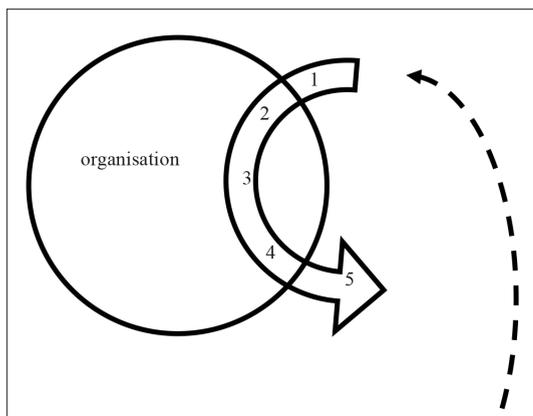

Figure 3. Change and culture

Source: own study.

One can imagine that the degree of cultural nonconformity is a function of the social heterogeneity and the deviation from standard practices, but the effects of this nonconformity can be mitigated by the social, political and cultural competences of the parties involved. This may be explained by the nature of the projects. Projects may be regarded as freedom zones inside organisations, created to attain goals that cannot be realized by the standard processes. Although structural and cultural limitations do exist, freedom zones implicate a certain openness and independency. However, people working in these zones must possess the capacities and skills to handle these unstructured situations to realise the desired goals. Given the above mentioned nonconformities, participants in projects need to have the cultural competence to create new common cultures. One may say that culture compensates for a certain lack of structure.

From this perspective the rapid rise of project methodologies is interesting. More 'classical and elaborated methods' exist next to new less structured methods like the agile methods (SCRUM for instance). Some of these methods are used in IT, a rather structured sector that sets 'automatically' controls to more unstructured activities.

For our present research we used the overview of project methods and related aspects presented by Moussault et al. [2011].

This overview shows that culture is not an explicit item. However, as mentioned before two of these methods refer to culture (see [Wijnen, Renes, Storm 2001; Bos, Harting (eds.) 2004]). However, culture is implicitly present in most aspects.

Table 1. Methods and aspects of project management

Methods	Aspects
• PM Box	Environment
• Working in projects	• Context management
• Atern (a flexible method)	• Context analysis
• Systems engineering	Behaviour
• Scrum	• Team
• New Product Development	• Leadership
• Prince2	Technical
• Creating through projects	• Communication
• Process management	• Risk
• A4 project management	• Measuring and monitoring
	• Planning
	• Target/result
	• Management

Source: own study based on [Moussault, Baardman, Brave 2011].

Next to using project methods to compensate for the lack of structure (like cultural capacities), each project method uses a different set of focal points. What does this tell us about the structural and cultural environment? From a cultural point of view two interpretations are possible. Firstly, the focal points reflect a structural and cultural weakness of the surrounding system. People are aware of this weakness and models reflect this awareness. The not mentioned focal points are already given in the system and do not need to be mentioned explicitly in the method. A second interpretation may be that a project method represents existing cultural views and the not mentioned focal points refer to blind spots. Project methods have in this view their cultural bias and weaknesses. The interpretation of the choice (implicit or not) for a specific project management method raises an additional question. Does the choice reflect a culture with blind spots or with an awareness of their own cultural system? In the latter case, is the choice a deliberate choice, serving specific ends? Another explanation for the choice may be the project maturity (certain routines and methods are already implicitly built in).

This theoretical approach forms the backdrop of the empirical research. One thing is to analyse structures and to think about the relationship between structure and culture in relation to projects, another is to approach reality by empirical study. In view of the present lack of literature and research of this subject, our research has an orientational objective and has a descriptive and explorative nature.

3. The research

Theory: the cultural model used

To achieve comparable results in the research of the projects a common cultural typology was used, in particular the model of Dreimüller. The research by Dreimüller has been conducted in a European context and results in a typology with four organisational cultures [Dreimüller 2008a; Glińska-Neweś, van Nispen 2014]. Table 2 gives an overview.

Table 2. Organisational cultures types

Criteria	Task culture	Aim culture	Team culture	Process culture
Core	Activities	Results	Adaptation	Systems, rules and procedures
Approach	The method, the objective becomes clear while doing the job	Use people effectively	Work tuned to employee	Formalised realisation of objectives
Systems	Adapting rules and procedures	Rules and procedures depending on objective	Broad interpretation of rules and procedures	Optimizing rules and procedures
Mistakes	Allows making mistakes	Failures do not exist	Improved, not punished	Preventing structural mistakes
Staff	Curious, innovative	Obedient, carry out instructions	Not controlled	Controlled
Organisation	Initiative, freedom, egalitarian, informal	Logical whole on basis of power	Security and consensus	Impersonal, no individual freedom, controls, provides security
Communication	Open	One-way traffic	Negotiations	Set down responsibilities, measuring and documentation
Success	New products	Market share	Care for people	Routine
Management style	Innovator, mediator, taking risk	Producer and manager	Mentor and stimulator	Controller and coordinator
Key	Creativity, improvisation, future directed	Position, winning, effective	Teamwork, trust, loyalty, preventing conflicts, the human being	Process, ratio, plans
Examples	R&D departments, advertising agencies, investment companies	Police stations, marketing departments, operation theatres	Retail trade, group practices	Insurance companies, government
Danger	Pursuing a hobby	Compartmentalization	Anarchy	Bureaucracy

Source: own study based on [Dreimüller 2008b; Glińska-Neweś, van Nispen 2014, pp. 5-23].

Classification and delineation of the projects

The projects were delineated in the following way: context, characteristics of the parent organisation (sector, size).

- internal projects
- structure differs from parent organisation
- culture (may be different from parent organisation)
- staffing, co-operation and tasks
- objective: change, design, specific task
- external projects
- between two or more organisations and cultures
- nature: dominant, adaptive, changing

Approach

The research by students (teams of three students on average) was conducted within a common research framework, including a project framework (see above).

The research had an empirical part in the application of the Dreimüller model of organisational culture through questionnaires, in the observations of students and the discussion with students during and after the course. The culture of an organisation was defined accordingly but not also by the large-scale submission of questionnaires. With the outcome in hand, the culture of the mother organisation, the project culture and if applicable, the culture of a third involved party were determined. In this way the concurrence or deviation between the parent and project culture could be determined.

Results

The results of this research project suffer from insufficient research design and lack of focus and were of insufficient quality for statistical analysis. However, these shortcomings indicate insufficient knowledge and understanding and shows enough pitfalls and points of attention to assist further research in this field.

The survey shows the dominance of small organisations in mainly the technical and IT sector (Table 3). The latter may be the result of the study programmes of the participating students.

Table 3. Characteristics of 15 organisations

Size		Sector	
Large (>50 employees)	5	Technical	7
Medium	2	IT	4
Small (<50	8	Health	1
		Non-commercial services	1
		Commercial services	1
		Agriculture	1

Source: own study.

The projects were mostly internal, organisationally complex and with a varied nature (Table 4).

The relation between the culture of the parent organisation and that of the project is shown in Table 5. The totals may be

larger than the number of companies because cultures may be more or less equally divided between types. The cultures of the parent organisation and the project were more often than not aligned with one another (fit). The fit or anti-fit (as expected with reorganisation or change projects) was mostly positively evaluated by the students.

Table 4. Nature of projects

Internal/External		Complexity		Nature	
Internal	10	Simple	4	Facilitating	3
External	8	Complex	8	Reorganisation	0
				Product development	3
				Delivery of product	3
				Delivery service	2
				Other	1

Source: own study.

Table 4 regrettably does not indicate any project with a prime focus on reorganisation (or change management). As discussed above, such a project could be a nice indicator of these perceptions of fit and anti-fit.

Although we also looked at the culture of the customer in the case of external projects, the numbers were too small for any indication.

Table 5. Culture of parent organisation and project

Culture parent		Culture project		Fit		Evaluation	
Process	4	Process	2	Alignment	8	No judgement	2
Task	5	Task	6	Different culture	5	Positive	8
Team	10	Team	6			Negative	1
Aim	1	Aim	1				

Source: own study.

Interesting are the following items:

- The cultures of the organisations differ from one another.
- The culture of the mother organisations and projects differ less than according to our theoretical views it might be expected. An explanation is perhaps that the model used cannot differentiate enough.
- Team culture as such scores high. It might be that the regional culture of the environment (Rotterdam, possibly even the Netherlands) is a determining factor.

Finally we looked at the project management style on the basis of the earlier mentioned overview (Table 6). Two project management styles showed to be hard to define (e.g. based on experience) and some other projects used more than one specific style.

Table 6. Project management style

Unknown	2
Prince2	7
Scrum	1
Working with projects	2
Other	3
Ad hoc	5

Source: own study.

The high score of Prince2 is remarkable. Another conclusion might be that a lot of organisations do not make a deliberate choice.

Conclusion

The relationship between structural and cultural elements of projects forms an interesting field of research. Just because projects are increasingly used as an organisational model and culture has to compensate for structure, more attention for cultural aspects might very fruitful.

As mentioned, this research did not adhere to strict criteria. To start with the research was not conducted for its own end but as a means for education (a major elective programme). The first part of this programme (resulting in the selection of companies used for the research) was a stepping stone with quite different intentions. Furthermore, the students did not participate for research reasons but for the objectives of the elective. This resulted in insufficient control of the suitability for research, the nature of the organisations and the nature of the projects in question. Furthermore, with hindsight, the research framework should have been more directive and specific with too much scope for interpretation as a result.

For this reason, a common students' project requires quite some attention to make it suitable for proper standardised research. Learning objectives are not easily aligned with the methodological requirements of research, in particular when research design limits the scope for creativity (e.g. exploring culture). This has also its effect on the processing of data when the students are no longer available for fine-tuning data.

The distinction between internal and external projects and the cultural consequences was underestimated at the beginning. Internal projects are supposed to be an activity with a limited scope in results, effort and duration and may well be deliberately opposed to the culture of the parent organisation. External projects are more a (standard) way of working in which the customer and its culture may well be involved. In such a situation the project culture is supposed to be an extension of the parent's culture.

In view of the range of variables of projects (internal, external, nature, complexity, sector, scope, number of people involved, management style, stakeholders, duration and more) and the effects of culture on each of these variables, a more comprehensive theoretical framework for classifying projects, their variables and the effects of culture is required, including the

ways and means to operationalize these variable to measure them properly. The first idea may be found in the annex.

These shortcomings notwithstanding, the present project indicates the need for further research on the relation between organisational culture, project culture and project management style. The effectiveness and efficiency of projects may well be enhanced accordingly, and the consequence may be that culture awareness and cultural capacities are important elements in project management.

Annex

Projects' variables; and the possible effect of culture on each of these variables

Cultural context: economic system, state, region, sector, organisation.
Culture type: e.g. Dreimüller, Hofstede Organisational Culture Model.

Nature of the project:

- internal – external,
- duration (from days to years),
- scope (small to large),
- complexity (simple to large),
- number of people involved,
- number of degrees of freedom,
- research required or not,
- sub-projects or not,
- on its own or part of a programme.

Project organisation:

- management: working through projects, creating through projects, Prince2, Scrum, indetermined,
- management on process or on content,
- organisation the same throughout the duration of the project or different per phase,
- internal: matrix, co-ordination, pure project structure,
- external: sounding board, programme, estafette,
- control: time, money, quality, risk, organisation, information,
- actors: parent, responsible department, project staff, end users, customers, advisers, suppliers, departments parent organisation, indirectly involved actors,
- degree of participation of these actors.

Scope / responsibility: one time off, DBFM (design, build, finance, maintain), System engineering.

Result of the project:

- product, service, change, other,
- content: technical, organisation, cultural.

Parent Organisation:

- organisational characteristics (Mintzberg): machine organisation, professional organisation, division organisation, missionary organisation, innovative organisation,
- parent and project: single versus multi-project organisation,

- sector: technical, socio-cultural, education, health, IT, other.

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