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# A Strategic Approach to Conflict from the Perspective of Organizational Culture in Public and Private Organizations

**PhD Thesis**

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## SUMMARY

The PhD thesis entitled „A Strategic Approach to Conflict from the Perspective of Organizational Culture in Public and Private Organizations" aims at analyzing the relationship between organizational culture and inter-individual conflicts, where the former is able to influence the whole process of managing the latter, and where the said process develops in a structured location such as an organization – be it private or public.

Both research, as well as theoretical, models included in expert literature (Romanian and foreign alike), have somewhat ignored the approach and analysis of the dual, interdisciplinary issue of organizational culture and social conflict management and resolution. Nor have there been attempts to analyze the impact of organizational culture on the phenomenon of inter-individual conflict resolution within the organization – which is the aim of the present thesis.

The idea to correlate the two concepts – that of organizational culture and that of intra-organizational social conflict –, the fact that the two are treated separately, as well as a global analysis of conflict and the implementation of a new, less known, model of organizational culture, bring something innovative to the current state of this field of research.

The approach of research studies to the relationship between the two concepts has so far been mainly based on the assumption that the former included the latter. A second approach connects this relationship to management or leadership styles, without taking into account that disputes between organization members can also be managed by someone other than formal, appointed leaders: by peers or specialists within or without the organizations, or by the conflicting parties themselves.

Besides the *interdisciplinary* approach that handles the two above mentioned phenomena separately, we have the *holistic vision and analysis of social conflict*, starting with the identification of possible sources of conflict, the dual perception of the nature of the consequences of conflict on the organization, continuing with the diversity of types, and shapes it can assume in the organizational environment – its intensity, its rate of recurrence, its escalation

– and ending with its forms of resolution, including the intervention of a third party, and the use of different styles of conflict management and resolution.

The new element introduced by this paper regarding organizational culture is the implementation and analysis of a model of organizational culture that has not yet been approached in other research studies in Romania or in expert literature abroad (probably for the reasons that we will mention in the contents of our paper). This model is the result of a research study conducted by Geert Hofstede in 20 organizations in The Netherlands and Denmark, within the Institute for Research on International Cooperation, with the collaboration of other specialists, among which one of the most prominent was Professor Bram Neuijen, of Groningen University, in The Netherlands. The findings and suggestions of the two promoters – Hofstede and Neuijen (of which I have had the luck to meet the latter, during my study visit in The Netherlands, while he was working for Groningen University) – of this model of organizational culture, built on six ambivalent dimensions, consolidated my confidence in this model and also helped me have a clearer and global view of the analysis of this model of organizational culture.

The goal of my PhD research is to find out to what extent a certain type of organizational culture can influence conflict management towards conflict resolution, within an organization.

There are six chapters to this paper. The first four deal with the theories and research in the field of organizational culture, as well as of social conflict – with an emphasis on the intra-organizational environment, as is shown in the table below; the last two chapters include a quantitative research and the analysis and interpretation of its data, as well as the conclusions.

*Chapter 1 – Conceptualization of the Notions of Organization, Organizational Culture, and Conflict* – includes the definition of our key-concepts. The first that is defined and explained is the one that frames the relationship between the other two - from a closed system and Ouchi's Z theories, to an open system; the various perspectives on this concept are also described, from points of view that have to with the host cultures that the people who devised the definitions are from. Hence, we are offering a few perspectives on different ways in which organizations in different states work – as theorized by Geert Hofstede, Henry Mintzberg, Montaigne, or Kets de Vries.

Out of all the definitions and perspectives on organizations, we are able to extract the main idea that such a system is composed of groups of individuals who share common values and visions; who work together to reach a common goal – which is the strategic objective of the organization; a closed system versus an open system; theory versus organizational behavior. Moreover, Taylor's definition of "the modern organization" describes the organization as "the universe of never-ending discussions which take place both simultaneously as well as consecutively, in both time and space" (Taylor apud Keyton, 2001, p. 4). A formal definition of organization is "a collection of individuals who work together through division of labor, in order to achieve a common goal" (Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 2002, p. 6). All of these definitions account for what their authors have symbolically named "the organization of the future".

Therefore, an organization is an open system that permanently interacts with its external environment – adapting to it, or even predicting its shifts; at the same time, it is made by individuals; it is a complex and dynamic whole, which operates on several levels – from individual to groups of individuals – with the purpose of increasing effectiveness and performance.

There are also definitions created once the phrase "organizational culture" was coined – this phrase was initially defined by its components, but at present, it has reached such complexity, that it assumes several shapes in the same organizational space, such as dominant cultures, subcultures, and countercultures.

Among the authors who conceptualized the phrase "organizational culture", Hofstede is one of the most prominent. He says organizational cultures are holistic, influenced by history, tied to anthropologic concepts, socially constructed, delicate and relatively stable – wherefrom derives their resistance to change" (Hofstede G. H., 2001, p. 392-393).

Denison sees organizational culture as a set of behavior variables which includes "the values, beliefs, and core principles of an organization" (Denison, 1990, p. 2).

Yet other authors define organizational culture by reference to what they call "the nucleus of culture", as a system of ideas that includes norms, values, expectations, and wishes (Neuijen, 1992).

In a different perspective, organizational culture represents "the way things are done in an organization" (Deal & Kennedy, 1982, p. 9). Here, the emphasis falls on the behavior of individuals within an organization, and organizational culture is defined mainly through symbols and rituals (Neuijen, 1992).

The culture of an organization may take various forms. For instance, small organizations often have only one dominant culture, and a unified set of common actions, values, and beliefs. By contrast, most large organizations include several subcultures and even one or more countercultures (Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 2002).

We must remember that *subcultures* are groups of individuals which hold a unique set of dominant values and philosophies that are not incompatible with the dominant cultures of the organization. An interesting fact is that strong subcultures are often found in groups with high performance or with special tasks or projects within the organization (Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 2002).

*Countercultures* are opposed to subcultures, in that they include a set of values and philosophies which reject the dominant culture. A notorious case of counterculture is the return of Stephen Jobs at the head of Apple management as interim CEO; his return in fact started with a counterculture within Apple. In the following 18 months, there were several conflicts, as the supporters of former CEO – Gil Amelio, were struggling to keep their positions within the organization, but finally Jobs won the battle and so his subculture became the dominant culture of the organization (Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 2002, p. 45-46).

In organizational practices, states of conflict are employed as strategies to gain the best possible competitive advantage. Therefore, conflict must be seen as an element of organizational life, given by the difference in attitude, purpose, modus operandi, or management style.

The definitions of inter-individual or social conflict, given by expert literature, vary in the aspects they take into account, in their degree of precision and range of implementation; however, the present study is only concerned with the definition of conflict as an organizational phenomenon, with an emphasis on social conflict. Hence, we will not persist on too general a presentation, but rather go into the specifics of the social, and obviously, organizational space.

We defined social conflict starting from the traditional view that this concept has negative consequences, and ending with the modern times – where it is recognized to have a creativity generating potential that is necessary for organizational development.

According to Bogathy Zoltan, the definition of social (inter-individual) conflict that best resembles reality is given by Thomas (1976), who believes a "dyadic conflict" (as social conflict is often referred to) is „a process that includes the perceptions, feelings, behaviors and consequences of two sides (...). Conflict is a process that begins when one side perceives the frustration of the other, and becomes worried about it." (Bogathy, 2002, p. 19-20). Therefore, not only opposite interests and intentions, but also psychological activity – perceptions, feelings, and behavior – can amount to conflict. At the same time, Bogathy states that "we do not always need two parties that perceive a situation as a conflict, which can be solved by different actions; even if only one party attempts to solve the conflict, this becomes a realistic situation which is common in conflict resolution practices" (Bogathy, 2002, p. 19-20).

*Chapter 2 – Conflict within the Organization* – continues to explain the concept of conflict, but with a broader approach; it presents the various sources of conflict within the organizational environment, and the typologies they fit into.

Of all the types of sources of conflict, the ones that are most interesting to this paper and to our empirical study are those presented by Robey, namely interests, role difference, hierarchic relations, norming systems, shared resources, and power (Robey, 1986, p. 51-54). Morgan, similar to Robey, listed a few sources previously discussed by other authors, such as Pondy (1964), Littere (1966), and Thomson (1967), and added new ones, creating a new set of sources of conflict: lack of resources, difference in roles and tasks, hierarchical relationships between supervisor and subordinates, status differences, interdependence, and prioritization (Morgan, 1989, p. 196).

Types of conflict are mostly the same from one author to another, but every time new items are added, which complete the set of typologies of conflict. The main concern of this paper is any type of social conflict which can manifest between two or more members of an organization, be it a conflict between one individual and a group, or between groups.

The same chapter 2 presents the models of conflict evolution and escalation – from its simplest forms of pressure, to its most complex and difficult to contain. The analysis of conflict evolution and escalation shows that a conflict bursts once tension has gradually accumulated. We may distinguish several stages of conflict, such as the state of tension; the recognition, by the conflicting parties, of a state of conflict; an acceleration of the state of conflict – when tension accumulates but conflict does not burst; the progress of the conflict itself; and deflation of conflict (Deep & Sussman, 1996). The conflict escalation model includes nine conflict escalation phases, clustered in three categories, according to their outcome in terms of winning or losing. Hence, the first three phases will represent win-win situations for all parties involved; the following three are win-lose, and the last three lead to, according to Glasl, lose-lose outcomes (Jordan, 2010).

At the end of this chapter, several methods of conflict management and resolution are presented, with a distinction between "conflict resolution", a "more restricted concept, that describes only the approach that leads to the de-escalation of a conflict", and "conflict management", that has a broader meaning and refers to the "proper management of disagreements, misunderstandings and conflicts, in a way that exploits their positive potential" (Bocoş, Gavra, & Marcu, 2008, p. 15).

In 1964, Blake and Mouton (Rahim, 2002) were amongst the first researchers/theorists to come up with a classification of interpersonal conflict approach models (or styles, as found in the literature), based on two dimensions – *the self-interest propensity* (horizontal), and *the care for other people* (vertical), the combination of which resulted in 5 different styles: avoidance, accommodation, competition, compromise and collaboration.

***The 3rd chapter – Alternate Methods of Conflict Resolution – the Intervention of a Third Party*** is closely linked to the previous one, as it refers to the options, the role and the need of a third party intervention for conflict resolution within an organization. The widely used term for this, in literature, is ADR, "Alternative Dispute Resolution" – „Rezolvarea alternativă a disputelor", in Romanian, and it refers to the "third party" intervention. The concept gained in popularity in the 1980s, when civil conflicts (those not involving serious law breaking) were taken out of court rooms (Lewicki, Saunders, Minton, & Barry, 2003).

According to Tjsvold, Alternative Dispute Resolution – ADR – requires "the willing participation of the parties in seeking the assistance of a third, independent party, that has negotiation and conflict resolution skills and is capable, at the same time, in the parties' eyes, of being impartial" (Tjsvold, 1991, page 113).

The same authors, Lewicki și Tjsvold, have different classifications of ADR. Lewicki believes there are two categories of ADR – formal and informal, each category including their own set of practitioners: the formal practitioners are the workplace arbitrators, divorce mediators, community mediators and consultants; amongst the informal ones, the author cites the ombudsman, the ministers, social workers, teachers, managers, but also parents solving the disputes between their children, and the friends of the parties taking part in a conflict (Lewicki, Saunders, Minton, & Barry, 2003). Besides the ones mentioned by Lewicki, Tjsvold presents other ADR procedures, like the confidential hearing of the parties, the conciliation, the mini-trial, the neutral evaluation, the med-arb procedure (Tjsvold, 1991).

Of all the possible third-party interventions in conflict resolution mentioned by the two authors, this chapter focuses on *mediation* (types of mediation, mediation stages and strategies, the mediator's responsibilities) and *arbitration* – drawing a comparison between the two, and last, but not least, on the *manager*'s intervention in the conflicts between his employees, as a form of alternative dispute resolution method.

*Chapter 4 – Theoretical Approaches and Scope of Organizational Culture* – analyzes the concept of organizational culture from the perspective of theoretical models, and further compares it to and establishes the differences with, on one hand, the national, "host" culture, and, on the other, organizational climate – an excellent opportunity to review the models of national cultural dimensions. Some researchers believe that cultural systems are influenced by several factors, as history and founders of the organization, environment, the size of the organization, but also the vision, the purpose or the objectives of the respective organization (Stanciu & Ionescu, 2005) – all internal factors with great direct influence. Next, we will designate and analyze all those external and internal factors that have the potential of influencing the organizational culture.

National culture, one of the elements influencing organizational culture, includes the beliefs, values, norms, symbols, individual concepts, and ideas on organizations. As a matter of fact, organizational cultures often tend to reflect the national culture's pattern (Stanciu & Ionescu, 2005), thus having an impact on the organization's strategies; organizations' response/reaction to the environment factor is also deeply rooted in national culture. The latter provides a general framework that helps the leaders of the respective organization to interpret tendencies in their environment and consequently decide on the path to follow and on the appropriate response.

Hofstede (2001) emphasizes the fact that the two concepts – organizational culture and national culture – are distinct, an idea confirmed by two studies he had conducted: IBM (an analysis of national culture), and IRIC (a study of organizational culture). The major difference between the two concepts resides in the distribution of values, respectively practices, on different levels. Thus, as far as national culture is concerned, after the analysis of the data collected, the noticed differences belonged, for the most part, to the category of *values*; at organizational culture level, major differences are to be found in the set of *practices* (that contain symbols, heroes, and rituals).

Presented in the same chapter are the most important models and dimensions of the national, "host" culture. Thus, Hofstede's model is based on six cultural dimensions of values (individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, power distance index, uncertainty avoidance, long-term/short-term, indulgence/constraints), and is different Trompenaars's, Swartz's, GLOBE's and the modern and post-modern theories of Inglehart, which are also described in this fourth chapter.

The concepts of organizational culture and climate have started to interest researchers interested in the study of organizations at about the same time, thus they were often mingled. Denison tries to distinguish between the two concepts, presenting their evolution; in the 1980s, for example, organizational culture was clearly defined as "not organizational climate" – you "know what culture is only by understanding what it is not (Denison, 1996, p. 621); the one thing differentiating them was the different empirical research method: when culture was studied, qualitative approaches were used, whereas when climate was looked upon, quantitative instruments were preferred (Denison, 1996).

According to the researchers in Kennedy Group, culture can be analyzed from the perspective of 5 components, namely values, beliefs, myths, traditions, and norms, but which are difficult and almost impossible to be measured and identified, although they exist and are part of an organization; culture cannot be controlled by any leader and its future tendencies and outcomes cannot be foreseen (Kennedy Group).

On the other hand, the same group of researchers believes that climate is – as opposed to organizational culture – a label used to describe our working environment, which can be measured with a certain degree of (relative) precision. Organizational climate can be affected by various factors, such as leadership, structure, history, responsibility and standards of behavior, the communication process, vision and strategy, the organization's connections or relations, trust, loyalty, reward strategy, and also external environment.

Moreover, we will learn the different types and models of organizational cultures, offered by expert literature so far.

Deal and Kennedy identified four types of culture, by comparing two organizational dimensions, feedback and risk. The four resulting types of organizational culture are the "tough-guy macho culture", the "work-hard, play-hard culture" type, the "bet-the-company" culture, and the process culture.

Sandy Adirondack divides cultures in formal and informal, according to their degree of organizational formalism (Adirondack, 1999).

From the point of view of particularities and differences between national cultures, Trompenaars distinguishes between several types of cultures, namely "Family" culture, „Eiffel tower" culture, „Guided Missile" culture, and „Incubator" culture (Trompenaars, 1993, p. 76-80). According to the type of personnel working in an organization, authors like Hellriegel, Slocum, and Woodman divide organizational cultures into Baseball Team, Club, Academy, and Fortress culture (Abrudan, 2009, p. 19-23).

All these classifications represent merely a part of the types of cultures identified within organizations. Organizations display particularities that are common to more types of cultures, but, most of the time, one mainstream tendency can be identified.

We described only a few relevant models of organizational culture, among which, the one belonging to Daniel Denison is built upon four dimensions: mission, consistency, involvement, and adaptability. Each of these dimensions is built upon two axes: stability/flexibility, and internal/external focus (Denison, 1990).

Edward T. Hall (1966) conducted one of the most valuable studies regarding the effect of culture upon the business environment, and introduced the concept of organizational culture which depends on three factors, namely communication or context, time, and space (Schein, 1996).

In the cross-organizational study conducted by IRIC in the 20 organizations in The Netherlands and Denmark, unlike the IBM study, the 20 organizations and departments had employees who came from the same national cultures (10 from Denmark and 10 from The Netherlands); what is visible from the data analysis is that not the values, but the practices were different within each department or organization (Hofstede G., Neuijen, Ohayv, & Sanders, 1990, p. 286). Below are the six dimensions presented as opposite by the author:

| | |
|---|---|
| Open system | Closed system |
| External Focus | Internal Focus |
| Professional | Parochial |
| Process-Oriented | Result-Oriented |
| Employee-Oriented | Task/work-Oriented |
| Moderate Internal Control | Strong Internal Control |

**Table 1. The model of the six cultural dimensions forwarded by Geert Hofstede**

*Chapter 5 – Impact of Organizational Culture on Conflicts. Quantitative Research* – begins with a brief presentation of the current state of research regarding the relationship between the two aspects, as combined by both empirical as well as theoretical studies, in foreign expert literature, mostly.

The chapter then goes to present the data analysis and results of the quantitative empirical research, based on the correlation between the two concepts developed within the six

organizations (three of which are private, and three, public local organizations in Cluj-Napoca), and which used social inquiry as methodology and aimed at checking the validity of the hypotheses put forward by the researchers. The reason for having all 6 organizations from the same geographical, demographical, and socio-cultural environment, was that national culture would have the same amount of influence over the values of the members and of course, of the interviewees, so that it may allow us to exclude from the start the idea that one of the main factors that influenced organizational culture was indeed national culture.

Each one of the two types of organizations – public and private – was chosen according to the number of members of the organization or department. Thus, it has made it possible, in the end, to have three different types of organizations or departments for each – from small to medium size to large organizations. Above, we have combined the terms of chosen organizations with "departments" because with two of the six organizations (one public, the other one private), we did not choose the entire organization, but only one department. The reasoning behind this choice consists of the fact that the chosen department is the one where members of the two organizations are more united, the others being spread in other locations. This makes them susceptible to the culture of the organizations they are working in (the culture of faculties). Such is the case of the "Lucian Blaga" Central University Library or the case of the other organization – the private one – SKY – where members that are not part of the department we have chosen as sample, work in the field and have flexible hours. They have brief contacts with the organization and its culture, compared to the rest of the members.

Coming back to the chosen types of organizations and their differences according to the field – public on one hand and private on the other – each of the two categories can be split, in its turn, in other 3 sub-categories, according to the number of members, following the below criteria:

| | |
|---|---|
| Small Organizations | < 100 members |
| Medium Size Organizations | between 101 – 200 members |
| Large Organizations | > 200 members |

**Table 2. Organizations in Size**

As for the questionnaires, we have initially mentioned that the sample scheme would rely on quota, but, because of the limits, which we will discuss later in more detail, we have chosen a *convenience sampling*. Because of the fact that we needed approvals from management or human resources department of some organizations, and that it took a long time for the approval of access in those organizations, we decided to distribute the questionnaires to the respondents. This is also why we opted for the convenience sampling.

Therefore, a total number of 316 completed questionnaires were collected (the number of available questioners was larger, as was that of completed questionnaires, but the incomplete questionnaires were not counted in the present study). Thus, the total number of completed questionnaires complete  split according to types of organizations– public and private – and according to the number of members, is presented in the below table, as follows:

| Organizations | | Public | Private |
|---|---|---|---|
| Small Organizations | < 100 members | 23 | 18 |
| Medium          Sized Organizations | between 101 – 200 members | 66 | 41 |
| Large Organizations | > 200 members | 82 | 86 |
| | **Total** | 171 | 145 |
| | **Total** | **316** |

**Table 3. Number of Respondents/ Type/ Size of Organization**

As for the methodology, the collection of information from members of the aforementioned organizations was based on a quantitative approach. We used sociological investigation. The instrument of analysis was the questionnaire, filled in by self-administration, the average time spent on filling it in, was between 5-10 minutes per questionnaire and it offered the respondents a safer, more anonymous and confidential environment for their answers.

The questionnaire has 3 parts: the first part, the questions part, is the factual one; the aim of this is to identify the respondents and get them acquainted with the sample. The other two parts are based on one hand on identifying the dimensions of the existing organizational cultures within the six analyzed organizations according to Geert Hofstede's model – the six bipolar dimensions;

on the other hand, the third aspect monitors the distinct approach of handling and resolving conflicts.

If we look at the results of the quantitative research on the four initial work hypotheses which we have established, we can safely reach the conclusion that most of them are validated. The first two hypotheses verify to what extent, the dimension – number of members, type of organization respectively – be it public or private will influence conflict management in the organizational environment.

By analyzing the first hypothesis, we can assert that if the number of members within an organization is larger, then most of the conflict management styles will be based on resolution of conflict and even more so on avoiding it altogether, and the tendency of a third party to intervene in any given dispute between individuals within an organization will be inversely proportional to the tendency of attrition – when this rises, the involvement of a third party in other conflicts will go down.

Another conclusion based on the first hypothesis is the unanimous rejection of the competitive style by all six organizations, regardless of the number of members; therefore, we can say that such organizations promote team work more than individual work. The explanation for the preference of conflict management as well as the presence of a third party in conflict management within the intra organizational environment refers also to a result of the general aim of the organizations we have monitored – all six organizations consider team work highly important, and not results obtained individually and competitively. Each individual is a piece of the puzzle, without which the organization/department would not be able to function normally. That is why team work and team results are more appreciated than individual ones. Even the similar types of activities of the six organizations (based mainly on projects and programs) and also the structure of the offices (mostly open-space), all of these encourage a cooperating, relaxing atmosphere where human relations are extremely important for the entire mechanism to work as best as possible.

Jablin, one of the theorists of organizations, has been studying since 1987 extent to which the dimension of an organization affects the communication and quality of that organization (McPhee & Poole, 2001). Whereas, in our analysis, we have noticed that as we approach larger

organizations, the styles of intra organizational conflict management will be based on resolution of conflict by using avoidance and adjustment techniques, which means minimum effort of inter-relation between parties and obviously poor communication. Furthermore, the third party will be more and more absent in the conflict management process within the organizational environment, as the number of members rises (the alternative means of resolution of disputes – ARD being mostly based on the process of communication in order to achieve a common goal).

As to the second hypothesis – „*the sources, types and styles of conflict management/resolution differ according to the type of organization – public or private"*, which is practically based on two directions – public organizations and private organizations, comparable as well; this hypothesis was built on three dimensions: sources, types and styles of conflict management, therefore we have chosen a layered approach exemplified in the below table:

| Type of organization / Conflicts | Public Organizations | Private Organizations |
|---|---|---|
| **Sources of conflicts** | - internal rules;<br>- faulty communication (lack of communication);<br>- interdependence of same level departments<br>- uneven distribution of resources | - role conflicts;<br>- interdependence of same level departments |
| **Types of conflicts** | - dormant conflict;<br>- hierarchic conflict;<br>- group – group conflict | - manifest conflict;<br>- individual – individual conflict |
| **Styles of conflict management/resolution** | - compromise;<br>- avoidance | - collaboration;<br>- adaptability. |

**Table 4. Conflict Management According to Types of Organization**

In conclusion, in the case of this hypothesis, where we are interested if there are significant differences between public and private organizations on sources and types of conflicts identified in the intra organizational environment, and also on adopting differently to the styles of management or resolution of conflict from the analysis of the below explained data, we can say

that it is partially confirmed. There is a noticeable fact that within public organizations there is a larger diversity of identified sources of conflict than within private firms. The most widespread sources in the public environment are flawed communications or the lack of it, conflict of interest, uneven distribution of resources, but also the discrepancy between internal formal rules and informal relations. Within private organizations we can notice that a balance is kept, ant there is no tendency to a certain type of resources. As to the types of conflicts, the only difference is that in the public domain, tension is more spread than direct conflicts, which are mostly seen in private organizations. On the other hand, in both categories of organizations, conflicts between individuals are more often identified rather than conflicts between individuals and groups, and also just between groups; and hierarchical conflicts rarely occur. The collaboration style of conflict management is identified at private organization level, whereas public organizations prefer conflict management by avoidance.

We started with the interpretation of the first two hypotheses, where we found that the type, as well as the size of an organization (according to its number of members), have the potential to influence conflict management in an organizational environment. What we aim to prove with the next two hypotheses is that not only do these factors have the ability to influence social conflict in the intra organizational environment, but also that organizational culture plays a part in this. We have chosen the model proposed by Hofstede, Neuijen, Sanders, and Ohayv in their study, conducted within IRIC and described in the present thesis, in the approach of the theoretical models from chapter 4 of the thesis and disposed on the six dimensions of organizational culture.

As a follow up to the results and conclusions we have reached in the analysis of the six dimensions of Hofstede's model of organizational culture and applied to the six public and private organizations in Cluj-Napoca, we have created a map of dimensions of the organizational culture with the six dimensions, and therefore have demonstrated that not just the types and dimensions of organizations, have the potential of influencing conflict management in the organizational environment, as organizational culture does not have the same tendencies in all private or public organizations, nor in the same category as a dimension; the differences are therefore identified independently of these criteria:

| Dimension | | Organization | Orientation Towards Results and Process | Normative & Pragmatic | Moderate & Powerful Internal Control | Local & Professional | Open System & Closed System | Orientation Toward Employees and Tasks |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Public Organizations** | **Large** | Cluj-Napoca City Hall | RESULT | PRAGMATIC (balanced) | POWERFUL CONTROL (balanced) | LOCAL | OPEN SYSTEM | TASK-ORIENTED |
| | **Medium** | County Council | PROCESS | PRAGMATIC (balanced) | POWERFUL CONTROL (balanced) | LOCAL | OPEN SYSTEM | TASK-ORIENTED |
| | **Small** | UCL | PROCESS | **NORMATIVE (powerful)** | POWERFUL CONTROL (balanced) | LOCAL | OPEN SYSTEM | TASK-ORIENTED |
| **Private Organizations** | **Large** | TNT | RESULT | NORMATIVE (powerful) | POWERFUL CONTROL balanced | LOCAL (obvious) | OPEN SYSTEM | TASK-ORIENTED |
| | **Medium** | SKY | RESULT | PRAGMATIC (powerful) | POWERFUL CONTROL (balanced) | LOCAL (obvious) | OPEN SYSTEM | TASK-ORIENTED |
| | **Small** | ITH | PROCESS | PRAGMATIC (powerful) | MODERATE CONTROL | LOCAL (obvious) | OPEN SYSTEM (obvious) | **EMPLOYEE -ORIENTED** |

**Table 5. The Map of Dimensions of Organizational Culture**

If we are to think about a powerful internal control which is characteristic to a certain type of culture, we would immediately be brought to the fact that within an organization, this will be focused on managing and maintaining inter-individual conflicts under control within the organizational environment. In the present case, this control is oriented towards creating a system of formal rules which need to be followed by all the members and they will come against the relations between members, because the focus is on how they respect or don't respect internal rules, and not on management of relations between themselves and which can sometimes lead to conflicts. On the other hand, even if we have seen that the majority of the respondents of our study identify delegation as a part of their organizational cultures, this too is focused on the tasks which need to be completed and do not interest the person the task are assigned too, but only the tasks themselves.

There are several aspects of organizational culture that together can amount to a more conflict prone environment. For instance, an organizational culture that is perceived by its members as

being more focused on reaching targets and getting results, rather than on the process that leads to the desired results. Also, an organizational culture that is oriented rather on the way the tasks are fulfilled than on the needs of its members of a pleasant, stress free environment. To all this, add a culture that tends to centralize control over tasks and over the observance of internal rules, rather than giving that control to its members  and let them settle their own disputes, and we have a soil that is very fertile for the seeding of various sources of conflict (faulty communication, department and staff interdependence, shared limited resources, excessive internal rules that hinder a natural development of an informal internal system), which, if left unchecked, will rapidly escalate into more complex situations. But at the same time, having the ability to increase its intensity, by involving directly or indirectly other members as well, next to the parties already involved in the conflict, could generate new conflicts with an increasingly higher frequency.

At the same time, in regards to a normative culture, we will be able to ascertain that members will try to identify with the team they join, but if the team is characterized by a closed system, it will favor lack of transparency and discourage communication and it will be able to create an environment where conflicts are covered up, only letting out the tension between employees, and the relationship with the superior is based on verticality, creating dissatisfaction, which can often lead to conflict. Due to this atypical control on the phenomenon of social conflict in organizational environment, where conflicts are hidden, these will not reach a high level of intensity, and will manifest only at inter-individual level, not higher, inter-groups. Furthermore, a culture where there are few manifested conflicts, but not so few dormant ones, because direct confrontation between parties is not desired, will perceive conflict as having negative consequences for the organization (reason for which there are more dormant conflicts that manifested ones) and at the same time will discourage communication between parties in view of resolving those dissatisfactions, disputes, and where compromise will be plainly evident in such a type of organizational culture.

The last chapter – *Conclusions* – presents the results of our research, in correlation with the concepts and theoretical models presented in the first four chapters. It also presents the limits imposed by the chosen study and of course, the future directions proposed in view of developing our research at a higher level. This will allow testing our results and also choosing the directions for research proposed in the future, in order to develop the conclusions of the present thesis.

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