

## Chapter 6

# Concept and Types of Organizational Cultures of Hospitals

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### ABSTRACT

*This chapter sets out to analyze the problem of defining the concept of organizational culture as well as models and typologies used in reference materials. It presents various issues of organizational culture: paradigms of organizational culture, definitions of organizational culture, and two-dimensional typologies of organizational culture. The single-dimensional classifications present the following dichotomies: 1) weak culture – strong culture, 2) positive culture – negative culture, 3) pragmatic culture – bureaucratic culture, 4) introvert culture – extrovert culture, 5) conservative culture – innovative culture, 6) hierarchic culture – egalitarian culture, 7) individualist culture – collectivist culture. Furthermore, this chapter includes: multidimensional typologies of organizational culture, corporate identity – alternative approach to organizational culture and relations between culture, and structure, strategy, and organization setting. Moreover, based on the quality pilot study, it strives to explain peculiarity of this concept in relation to Polish hospitals. Results of pilot studies of organizational cultures of hospitals in Poland relate to four hospitals in Lodz Province.*

### INTRODUCTION

Organizational culture proved to be a difficult research issue, firstly due to ambiguity of the very term, but also because of the lack of effective tools which would allow

to look into given organizational cultures. The problem seems to intensify in the case of such organizations as hospitals, where organizational culture is also influenced by values and professional standards of doctors and medical staff. Nonetheless, organizational

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culture in hospitals constitutes a significant theoretical issue, mainly due to the fact that the problem has not been conceptualized yet, and, at the same time, is of pragmatic importance, as organizational culture often establishes social norms which may hamper organizational changes.

## **PARADIGMS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE**

The cultural movement in management is struggling with the basic epistemological problems relating to the ways of defining culture. There is no consensus among scholars as to the ways of understanding or paradigms of organizational culture. Indeed, this is an issue related to the ambiguity of cultural studies in general (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952). We can distinguish a number of paradigms of understanding culture, and, which follows, organizational culture. Looking for paradigms of thinking about culture in general, we must identify at least three orientations: functional-structuralist trend (closely related to NFS), interpretative-symbolic approach (identical with IS paradigm) and postmodernism (also called radical humanism) and poststructuralism (associated with the critical trend – CMS) (Sułkowski, 2005). In cultural studies the classical approach was functionalism, whose foundations were created in the first half of the twentieth century and led to structuralism. The development of hermeneutics, and humanistic sociology and cultural anthropology became the basis for the emergence of the symbolic-interpretative paradigm. In the eighties and nineties of the twentieth century due to critical philosophy and cultural anthropology, the role of poststructuralist and postmodernist orientation increased.

A similar distinction paradigms can be applied to organizational culture. M.J. Hatch proposes to distinguish four paradigms in the sciences of management: classical, modernist, interpretative-symbolic and postmodernist (Hatch, 2002). Current organizational culture did not function in classical approaches to management. Modernism puts an organizational culture in terms of functionalist and structuralist as one of the subsystems of organization and refers to the methodology of representative comparative studies. The need to control the organizational culture is suggested, leading to its instrumentation. Interpretative-symbolic approach describes it as a process of constructing and reading of social reality and symbolic organization of language in human activities in the group. Qualitative methodology is preferred, such as organizational ethnography. It is sceptical to assess the possibilities of instrumental development of organizational culture. Postmodernism emphasizes the defragmentation, cultural and epistemological relativism, textual and narrative approach. The sense of creating a methodology is neglected, and the flagship ‘anti-method’ ‘becomes a deconstruction (Hatch, 2002).

L. Smircich reviews the paradigms underlying the concept of binding the culture of the organization (Smircich, 1983b). He finds five common areas: (1) cross-cultural comparative studies, (2) internal corporate culture, (3) cognitive theory of organization, (4) organizational symbolism (5) unconscious and subconscious processes in the organization (Table 1).

Organizational culture can be interpreted as an independent variable (external) - due to the impact of the environment on the organization, the internal variable of the organization or a root metaphor (Thompson & Luthans,

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