

## CONDITIONS OF CULTURAL CYCLE OF CONTINUATION AND ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE ON THE EXAMPLE OF NGOs

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**Purpose:** The authors will answer two research questions: (1) What endogenous parameters of the cultural cycle in a given non-governmental organization introducing social innovations ensure its systemic stability, i.e. group and organizational morphostasis? (2) What parameters of the cultural cycle in a given organisation bring about its systemic change, that is, group and organisational morphogenesis?

**Design/methodology/approach:** The research was based on assumptions of the morphogenetic theory of structure and agency, in particular types of reflexivity as a factor that conditioning social agency. They relate to the determination of endogenous conditions limiting the innovative activity of the surveyed nongovernmental organisations. Based on them and using the qualitative analysis of the data obtained during group interviews (FGI), a diagnosis of developmental limitations and barriers will be made.

**Findings:** Among the members of the nongovernmental organisations surveyed, the dominance of the components of communicative reflexivity over autonomous reflexivity was diagnosed. This key cultural condition, which constitutes its morphostatic nature, i.e. focus on maintaining the organisational status quo, has anti-innovation potential. Most of the organisations members of the surveyed focused on maintaining the contextual continuity of the group and organisations, that is, reluctance toward new collective entities of action in NGOs, who question the existing status quo, that is, structural and/or cultural continuity. Such a context petrifies the level of tensions and social distances, and limits the innovative potential.

**Originality/value:** The dominance of the components of communicative reflexivity over autonomous reflexivity is a key cultural condition that negatively shapes the functioning of Polish NGOs in the area of innovation.

**Keywords:** reflexivity, innovations, NGOs, cultural cycles, focus group interview.

**Category of the paper:** research paper.

## 1. Introduction

Analyses of cultural change processes in management sciences focus on the relationship between management and employees (Dziadkiewicz, Juchniewicz 2013; Lewandowski, 2021). A classic example of this type of change is the transition from autocratic to democratic management. The purpose of the change is to design an organisation based on continuous learning and the high performance of its members. This is only possible with fairly flat organisational structures and strong ties between employees and the organisation (Saran, Clark, Mendonca, 2019; Brillman, 2002). This statement represents the transformation of a hierarchical management model into a flat and flexible organisational model that fosters individual initiative, independence, and risk taking (Borja de Mozota, 2006).

When examining the continuation and change in an organization in the cultural aspect, attention should be paid to strategies that effectively hinder the introduction of change and innovation and the impact of the leader on the change process and colleagues (Grzybowska, 2021; Ingram, 2023; Flieger, 2020; Sienkiewicz-Małyjurek, 2020). Therefore, the issue of optimal leadership qualities in a given cultural context is addressed, which should, among other things, effectively motivate employees and effectively solve potential problems and conflicts (Gocąła, 2023; Bukłaha, Cabala, 2022; Baum, Haveman, 2020; Iansiti, Lakhani, 2020; Lazarević, Lukić, 2018). Today, we are dealing with a style of action called adaptive leadership, which has been described using a mnemonic tool, the "four A's" (Harvard Business Review, 2021): anticipation, which is an attempt to predict probable future trends and options; articulation, which consists of building a common understanding and gaining acceptance for the actions taken; adaptation, i.e. adopting in a way that ensures continuous learning and, if necessary, adapting responses; accountability, based on maximum transparency of decision-making processes and openness to change and providing feedback.

In the literature on the cultural determinants of organisational change, the attitudes of employees toward change (from opponents of change to pioneers) are also analysed. Depending on the type of change, they can take appropriate attitudes towards it: accepting, neutral, or non-accepting. In people who feel an indifferent or negative attitude to change (e.g. reactance theory), a slow process occurs in the process of implementing change, a cycle (e.g. a transtheoretical model of intentional change in human behavior) that aims to come to terms with change (Wybrańczyk, Szromek, 2018; Brzezinski, 2020; ADP Research Institute, 2020). Shaping attitudes of openness to change makes it easier to identify problems and increases flexibility (Bogdanienko, 2022). Change management is influenced by psychological factors (e.g., denial, resistance, experimentation, and commitment), which are one of the main sources of attitudes. They determine the reactions of employees to change. Of great importance are the strategies adopted by employees and circumstances that burden relationships, which effectively hinder the implementation of the desired process (including lack of

understanding of the meaning and purpose of change, communication of changes unexpectedly, and blaming for the past).

The authors have not found conceptualisations and operationalisations concerning the types of reflexivity that accompany the processes of continuation and change in organisations and culturally conditioned, resentment barriers to agency. Especially when the above-mentioned types of reflexivity and resentment conditions are barriers to the introduction of social innovations.

A special type of change is social innovation. In the scientific literature, one can find conceptualisations concerning the endogenous determinants of the development of social innovations (Murray, Caulier-Grice, Mulgan 2010; Westley, 2013; Wronka-Pośpiech, 2015; Berrett 2022). The most significant are: organisational culture, the potential of human capital, i.e., the educational aspirations and needs of the community along with ensuring the possibility of their continuous satisfaction by the education system, the potential of cultural and social capital, i.e., trust between partners in social life, the quality of the network of connections between them and the shared community of norms and values, or the quality of civil society institutions (e.g. NGOs) that create a microenvironment institutional innovation.

Unfortunately the vast majority of Poles are culturally excluded from co-creating the public sphere, they lack socialisation patterns of participation in nongovernmental organisations. At the same time, they do not recognise the requirements of democratic institutions and procedures necessary for deliberation in public life. Low resources for bridging social capital and a limited level of trust on the part of state institutions are persistently noted (Feliński, 2022). In the above sociocultural realities, the authors have defined the scope of the research issues. They will undertake to examine, by means of morphogenetic analysis (Archer, 2019) and the focus group interview method, endogenous determinants shaping causative and innovative capabilities in the state of morphostasis (contextual continuity) and morphogenesis (contextual discontinuity) of the subjects of activity from selected Silesian NGOs.

This article attempts to answer the following, as yet unverified research questions. (1) What endogenous parameters of the cultural cycle in a given non-governmental organization introducing social innovations ensure its systemic stability, i.e. group and organizational morphostasis? (2) What parameters of the cultural cycle in a given organisation bring about its systemic change, that is, group and organisational morphogenesis?

An attempt will be made to verify the research hypothesis that among the members of the studied NGOs, the processes of organisational morphostasis (continuation) are accompanied by the dominance of communicative reflexivity, while morphogenesis (change) is accompanied by the predominance of elements of autonomic reflexivity.

## 2. Literature review: Cultural Cycles and Group Resentment

In the research problems being investigated, the key conceptual category is culture and the related research area of resentful cultural context. The authors support a broad concept of culture, derived from the tradition of the anthropological school of Bronisław Malinowski (Malinowski, 1958). The aforementioned conceptualization assumes that the domain of the concept is social patterns, assessments, norms implied by actions and products as their indicators, but also such actions and objects that have value and meaning for a specific community, are the goal and expression of its attitudes (Kłoskowska, 1999). The above theoretical approach corresponds to the culturalist concept of Florian Znaniecki (Znaniecki, 1936) and the concept of culture as an integral part of the social system of Talcot Parsons (Parsons, 1937), in which one can also see the inseparable connection between the social and cultural spheres of human reality. Culture understood in this way is created by sets of norms and values, patterns and ideas, and social activities in which these axionormative sets are expressed. Antonina Kłoskowska also considers the coexistence of various categories of culture and social interactions as necessary, "culture is constituted by people, i.e. it is genetically, actually or potentially social" (Kłoskowska, 1981; 1999). A similar position is taken by Margaret Archer, whose works appear interdependent, although separate categories of culture and agency (2003, 2013, 2015).

Both society and culture are realised in social activities. Despite the community of ownership defined in this way, researchers of the aforementioned theoretical trend postulate the analytical separation of both categories at the methodological level, and implemented research directives. Archer particularly strongly emphasises the need to separate the level of culture and sociocultural interactions (Archer, 1996).

In the objectivist-realist perspective, cultural values (ideas) exist by themselves; just as in Karl Popper's epistemological assumption about the third world, they do not have to be connected to any external cognizers. This is also how Archer conceptualises this concept: "culture as a whole is defined as concerning all intelligibles, that is, everything that someone can understand – regardless of whether it is actually understood at a given moment (Archer, 2015). He supplements the definition of the concept with further features: (...) a cultural system exists objectively, and there are specific relations between its component parts (doctrines, theories, beliefs, individual propositions). These relations of contradiction and complementarity are independent of any claim to know them, believe them, agree with them, because this knowledge is independent of the cognizer, like an unread book (Archer, 2015).

Within the framework of emerging cultural properties, Archer distinguishes two main levels at which different axionormative systems confront or cooperate, for example, oppositional socioeconomic ideologies, patterns of active citizenship, and sociocultural interactions between entities involved in their framework, e.g., interest groups, social classes. There is a cultural

system that includes ideas that are in logical relations of contradiction (opposition) or complementarity. The relations between them do not require a knowing entity. There are also sociocultural interactions that concern, depending on the configuration of the elements of the cultural system, conflictual or ordered relations between individuals and interest groups. The aforementioned interactions between agents are causal in nature, because, as Archer claims: causal agreement, not a pure logical relation, is a property of people and the interactions that take place between them. Within their framework, individual and group entities refer to ideas originating from the cultural system to legitimise and realise their material and ideal interests.

Existing and independent of the scope of individual cognition, emergent cultural properties, like structural ones, condition, but do not determine social interactions. Emergent cultural properties (sets of key ideas) dominant in a given structural-cultural system condition social processes (Archer, 1996). Both levels are analytically and empirically distinct and can change independently of each other. They should be studied in this way. Archer's ontological assumptions regarding the difference between a cultural system, characterised by a certain degree of logical coherence, and sociocultural interaction, which are characterised by causal consistency, i.e., the degree of social homogeneity generated by the ideological influence of one set of people on another (Archer, 2015), constitute one of the basic assumptions of the morphogenetic theory of the analytical dualism of culture and agency. It allows for the analysis of the interactions between them in causal-diachronic order. The relations between the cultural system and the socio-cultural level shape three phases of the analytical cycle, situated in time, consisting of cultural conditioning, socio-cultural interaction, and cultural working through. The effect of the working phase is the reproduction (morphostasis) of the system or its transformation (morphogenesis).

A complete picture of a specific morphostatic or morphogenetic cycle must necessarily take into account not only cultural and structural conditions, but also the role of interactions between them and the participation of social agents in these processes. Archer postulates that for specific stages of social development and given structural and cultural contexts, analyses of the connections between morphostatic and morphogenetic cycles in the sphere of social interactions should be undertaken in diachronic order. He presents four basic scenarios of such connections (Archer, 1995; 2013).

The first scenario concerns societies of traditional organisations. It is characterised by a combination of structural and cultural morphostasis. The cultural system is dominated by an integrated set of ideas. However, in the area of structural properties, coherent, or at least noncontradictory in their interests, numerically limited, collective actors of action dominate, elites of power and culture. They are interested in continuing the existing social system.

The second and third scenarios are related to modernising societies. They will be particularly useful for research on Polish macro-, meso-, and microsocial morphostatic and morphogenetic cycles. The second scenario describes a situation where a permanent and historically shaped cultural morphostasis is undermined by processes of structural

morphogenesis. The number of collective actors striving to realise their interests in the sphere of structural properties is growing. However, their actions are limited by the dominant cultural order. Therefore, members of new material interest groups seek ideas and values that will legitimise their economic social position, thus gradually contributing to the processes of cultural morphogenesis.

The third of the scenarios discussed emphasises the role of the discrepancy between accelerated cultural morphogenesis and structural morphostasis. In this scenario, the growing differentiation of the cultural system is accompanied by the reproduction of power and material interests in the sphere of structure. However, the availability of alternative ideas weakens structural morphostasis over time. The process of moving away from the status quo is accompanied by the emergence of new collective actors orientated toward the realisation of their own ideological interests in the sphere of culture.

The fourth scenario describes interactions in a post-modern society. They are characterised by the occurrence of dynamic and uncoordinated morphogenesis processes, both structural and cultural. These processes are characterised by the rapid disappearance of socially passive primary agents of action, the growth of diverse and organised interest groups, i.e. collective agents of action, and also by the pluralism of competing ideas.

In order to determine the conditions of the course and effects of selected Polish cultural cycles, both morphostatic and morphogenetic, and to examine how the structural and cultural contexts of resentment existing in given time-space dimensions determine the course of the aforementioned oppositional cultural cycles, it is necessary to return to the full assumptions of the morphogenetic theory of structure, culture, and agency. At the same time, the analysis should be supplemented with elements of Max Scheler's concept of the necessary conditions for the formation of group resentments (1997; 2021). The morphogenetic causal analysis of the formation of the cultural context of resentment and the effects of group resentments should take into account the conditions of all the above-mentioned elements of social reality. Referring to the morphogenetic scheme of explanation allows for a diachronic analysis of the operation of specific mechanisms of resentment, both in the structural and cultural context and in the morphostatic and morphogenetic cycle.

The analysis should begin with a diagnosis of the basic structural and cultural characteristics of a given society or organisations. In order for a resentment structural context to exist in a given social, legal, and economic environment, all rights (citizen, labour, social) should be formally guaranteed. At the same time, however, social life, organisational or business practices often conflict with official legislation and adopted organisational regulations. It is equally important to diagnose the key emerging cultural conditions, i.e., the relationships between sets of norms and values, ideologies, patterns of attitudes, forms of social capital, and appropriate social practices. Conflicts of economic interests, social inequalities that create tensions in the structure and then inconsistencies in the cultural system, i.e., tensions between prevailing norms

and values, patterns of behaviour and ideologies and undertaken practices (interactions), as well as low socio-cultural integration, create resentful contexts for individual and group interactions.

What is the source of cultural tensions of resentment nature? They are created by opposing or complementary ideas, norms and values, political programmes, ideologies, organisational cultures constituting cultural power, which justify inequalities in access to power, wealth, and claims to prestige (respect). The cultural system, i.e. binding a more or less coherent set of values and ideas, in conditions of high sociocultural integration inspires the creation of legal regulations and norms that contribute to the elimination of structural and cultural tensions in groups and between groups or socioprofessional categories. On the other hand, in conditions of low sociocultural integration (non-uniformity of social practices), the binding cultural system perpetuates these tensions. The greater the difference between the guaranteed law, formal status of a group or organisation, and the existing balance of power in society, in organisations, the greater the potential for resentful tensions in them. They constitute a resentful cultural context that confirms structural conditions while legitimising relationships that elevate some entities and denigrate others.

Contexts of resentment, often created in long-term processes and having the characteristics of fossilised structural and cultural conditions, condition the agency of individual and group agents. Agents act emotionally and reflexively through the mechanism of internal conversation, at the interface of the structural and cultural context, and individually configured concerns (motivations), group, or organisational conditions of resentment. Depending on the type of reflexivity undertaken (communicative, autonomous, meta-reflexivity, broken reflexivity) by agents in a group or organisation and the sense of continuity or discontinuity of the contexts of action, agents exercise their agency differently in relation to structural and cultural conditions (Archer, 2003; 2007).

Entities undertake more or less active morphostatic actions, i.e. actions aimed at maintaining the existing socio-cultural order or morphogenetic actions aimed at changing it. In social actions aimed at maintaining the existing state of the socio-cultural system, the dominance of the communicative type of reflexivity helps. Morphogenetic actions, which have innovations features, are supported by the autonomous type of reflexivity, characterised by criticism of the environment that leads to action. In these actions, the type of meta-reflexivity, manifesting itself in a critical attitude towards oneself, the environment, leading to systemic change, is also helpful, to some extent.

### 3. Research methodology

The basic research method was morphogenetic analysis, diachronically understood. It is derived from the three-phase model: conditioning, interaction, and processing (Archer, 2015). It will provide an interpretive framework (data systematisation template) for analysing the emergence and persistence of specific barriers to agency identified through literature searches, observations, focus group interviews, and theoretical deduction. They are the result of often socially unconscious mechanisms of conditioning (e.g. jealousy and group resentments). The model will be the basis for analyses of identified agency barriers in selected Silesian nongovernmental organisations. It is, firstly, an extension of the author's previous ideas (Weryński, 2010, 2022; Weryński, Dolińska-Weryńska, 2021), secondly, it is based on the theory of structure and agency and the conceptualization of organisations in a state of morphostasis and morphogenesis (Archer, 2003, 2007, 2015).

Below, the elements of the author's analytical model will be presented, which explains the course of two scenarios of working through the structural and cultural context and the scopes of agency of the surveyed members of nongovernmental organisations: morphostatic (durability) and morphogenetic (changes).

Morphostatic scenario:

- The distribution of structural, cultural, and causal forces contributes to organisational morphostasis when there is compliance of actors in terms of existing relationships between the structural context (group interests) and the cultural context (dominant ideas and values focused on the survival of a social group, nongovernmental organisations) or there is acceptance of tensions between structural and cultural contexts. This division blocks the development of new collective entities and changes in the continuity of organisational contexts.
- In the case of an organisation in a state of morphostasis, that is, the persistence of the basic interests and values of its members, the existing structural and cultural contexts limit the emergence of innovations (an indicator of the state of morphostasis are attitudes focused on maintaining the organisational status quo).
- Indication of the dominant type of reflexivity (Archer, 2007, 2010, 2012, 2014). The course and effects of potential innovative activities are also the result of the reflexivity of organisations members who make decisions in the context of an individual approach to their practical projects in relation to existing contexts.
- The morphostatic experience of contextual continuity is perpetuated by the dominance of the communicative type of reflexivity. An indicator of the existence of communicative reflexivity is that respondents emphasise the importance of structurally determined barriers more than the opportunities and possibilities of overcoming them by members of the organisations; lack of trust in the external environment, domination



of bonding elements of social capital, i.e., based on family, neighbourly and friendly ties (Coleman, 1988; Burt, 1997; Woolcock, 1998; Portes, 1998; Lin, 2001).

- Reconciling mutual relations between operating entities in the structural and cultural context blocks changes to the organisational status quo and innovation.

Morphogenetic scenario:

- The distribution of structural, cultural, and causal forces leads to organisational morphogenesis when conflict arises between the main actors regarding the distribution of structural and cultural resources and/or new collective actors emerge (new differences of interests, new ideas, and values) that challenge the existing structural context and culture of the organisations.
- In a state of contextual discontinuity, interpersonal tensions that arise in the past (emotional traumas and conflicts) activate new actors, thus facilitating organisational changes (positive function of conflict) and conditioning the course of innovation processes.
- The factor that dynamizes the organisational morphogenesis described above is a type of autonomous reflexivity that spreads in a state of context discontinuity. This manifests itself in an increasingly critical approach to individual aspects of organisational life. It develops at the expense of the previously dominant type of communicative reflexivity.
- In the morphogenetic scenario, in conditions of contextual discontinuity, associated with the predominance of autonomous reflexivity; surveyed organisation members (e.g. in the SWOT analysis) emphasise the opportunities and opportunities to overcome structurally determined barriers to a greater extent than the limitations and threats resulting from them; There are manifestations of bridging social capital among the members of the organisations, i.e., declarations of trust in colleagues, participation in the network of organisational connections, acceptance of the introduction of horizontal structures in management, declarations of openness and willingness to cooperate with the environment.

Mechanisms of resentment will be identified based on several interdisciplinary concepts explaining their origin. They will allow for the diagnosis of resentful (morphostatic) states in selected non-governmental organisations. We will talk about the following mechanisms that have been assigned specific interpretive indicators:

- a) transferred hatred (Scheler, 1997) - an indicator of morphostasis in the case of accepting the statement: the main tensions and conflicts in the organisations arise between the management staff and the rest of the members, a common language cannot be found,
- b) negative acceptance (Scheler, 1997), morphostasis index: although we are not in good relations with the current government, we have no choice but to somehow come to terms with it,

- c) double axiological consciousness (Scheler, 1997) - morphostasis index: One often says one thing to a superior, but also to a coworker, and thinks and does something else,
- d) bitter grapes (Scheler, 1997), morphostasis index: when ambitious goals cannot be achieved, it is better to set smaller ones and ignore the previous ones;
- e) escape from freedom (Fromm, 2011) - morphostasis indicator: during restructuring, crisis, conflicts in the organisation, it is better to give the initiative to others,
- f) normative overregulation (Skąpska, 1991) - morphostasis index: instructions, orders, regulations are necessary for the efficient functioning of the organisation, they protect against chaos,
- g) time perception disorders (Kemper, 1984) - morphostasis index: things were better under the previous management (president), and real development is already behind us,
- h) postcolonial effect (Thompson, 2002) - morphostasis index: we do not need foreign capital (e.g. German or Russian) or foreign orders in the company,
- i) social ostracism (Aristotle) - morphostasis index: no one likes tricksters who sometimes need to be shown their place, e.g. unnoticed, excluded from society and attractive offers of cooperation,
- j) individual and collective jealousy (Schoeck, 2012) - morphostasis index: If you failed to implement your own idea, there is no reason to help others to elevate themselves later.

The lack of indicators of resentmental mechanisms in the respondents' statements [from (a) to (j)] will allow for a more morphogenetic interpretation of intra-organisational relations. The model presented will be a reference point and a model for systematising data to analyse the emergence and duration of detailed identified resentment effects, which are the result of more or less hidden, often socially unconscious, mechanisms of determinants.

To examine structural continuity (distribution of group interests) and cultural continuity (determination of group norms and values, type of organisational culture), in addition to morphogenetic analysis, the interview method will be used, i.e., a more focused group interview with key members of the group of nongovernmental organisations and the analysis of SWOT questionnaires prepared by the respondents' management boards organisations. The Atlas.ti computer programme was used to analyse the collected empirical data, which allowed us to graphically present the frequency distributions of opinion categories appearing in FGI and the connections between them.

The selection of people for the research groups was purposeful. This means that obtaining fully representative statistically significant distributions of sociodemographic characteristics in the composition of individual focus groups was not as important as saturation with people with the most diverse and well-established attitudes, knowledge, judgments, and opinions on the scope of agency and innovative activities in the studied groups. Nongovernmental organisations, limitations in communication within the organisations, and building relationships with the environment. It was also assumed, in accordance with the principles of grounded theory, that the data collected in individual groups would be continuously compared with each

other to extract codes from the focus groups that organise and interpret the research material. Then more general categories were constructed (through grounding in similar cases) to show the connections between the categories (Konecki, Chomczyński, 2012; Hensel, Glinka, 2012).

Focus groups were held in 2022. They covered 48 Silesian NGOs. A total of 48 focus group interviews were conducted with representatives of each of the organisations surveyed separately. Purposive selection was applied to the research sample in such a way that in each focus group there were equal proportions of representatives of both the management board and the rank and file members. 192 people participated in the qualitative study of the FGI, including 96 leaders (presidents and board members of non-governmental organisations) and 96 members of non-governmental organisations. When selecting nongovernmental organisations for the research sample, an equal percentage of organisations from metropolitan (cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants), urban (from 30,000 to 100,000 inhabitants) and small-town and rural (less than 30,000 inhabitants) environments were taken into account. Respectively, rural environments and small town environments were represented by organisations from Poręba, Łazy, Wojkowice, Lubliniec and Mikołów, from medium-sized cities, organisations from Tarnowskie Góry, Mysłowice, Zawiercie, Piekary Śląskie, and as representatives of metropolitan environments, respondents came from Katowice, Sosnowiec, Gliwice, Bytom, Chorzów, Rybnik. Furthermore, the configuration of the research sample included a variable: the main area of activity of the organisations. Therefore, nongovernmental organisations were selected in equal proportions for the focus research, four organisations each from the six areas of activity most frequently represented among all Polish nongovernmental organisations, i.e., from the area of charity and health promotion activities, education and education, sports and recreation, religious organisations, and communities (incl. including parish), local governments (districts, housing estates, housing communities) and animal care (Feliksiak, 2022).

An additional criterion for selecting a given organisation for the research was its documented implementation of at least one social innovation in the last two years before the start of the research. Such innovation should be characterised by at least five of the nine parameters: cross-sectorality, openness and cooperation, presumption and coproduction, interdependence, creation of new social roles and relationships, bottom-up, more efficient use of means and resources, development of new resources and opportunities, use of ICT technologies and tools. A social innovation was granted the status of implemented when a given project underwent a final external evaluation, e.g., carried out by an intermediate body representing the European Union or national authorities, appointed to distribute funds for individual social programmes.

#### 4. A case study of the morphostatic cultural cycle in an organisations

The group of early medieval community reenactors has existed since 2015. A few years later, it obtained the formal status of a public benefit organisations. The organisations is headquartered in a 200,000-person city in Silesia with significant industrial and scientific potential. Currently, its area of activity covers all of Poland, and it also cooperates with similar nongovernmental organisations from neighbouring countries (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Germany). In the first years of the association's activity, the board and its active members focused on maintaining community ties among themselves, building integration among members and supporters of early medieval reconstructions. Their activities mainly came down to preparing and organising reconstructions of elements of old customs and knight tournaments, i.e., exclusive activities aimed at building ties that were more community-based than bridging and open to the social environment (inclusive). An internally integrated group of leaders was created, which then elected the association's board from among themselves. According to respondents, in this initial period, relations between members of the organisation and with entities from the social, business, and political environment were limited to a minimum. As the group of historical reconstruction enthusiasts grew in size and became more functionally diverse, there was a need to formalise and structurally diversify their activities. The association was established. One of the members of the association's board describes this period of the organisation's activity as follows.

*When we founded the association, we founded the group, there were a few of us, sometimes 10, and it was as if the communication in the team was completely different. We lived completely differently, so to speak. Because we had daily direct face-to-face contact, it was great. We talked, we spent a lot of time together, for ourselves. Now that there are more than 30 of us, well, we have to somehow formalise certain things, somehow arrange them, we create different kinds of subgroups, so that, for example, here are those who are interested in participating, here are those who are not interested. For example, here are the warriors, here are the craftsmen, and so on. It is as if the dynamics change, the integration of the group as a whole decreases.*

In the initial period of the organisation's formation, there were no collective entities questioning the existing status quo, i.e. the existence of contextual continuity (structural and/or cultural). During this period of organisation management by its founders, within the framework of statutory activities and in accordance with the adopted mission and strategy, board members declared a democratic (integrative) and participatory style of team management and consciously created horizontal organisational structures based on independent task groups of enthusiasts. However, the actual and practical style of team management was closer to the autocratic model, in which the board itself set the goals and tasks of the team leading to their implementation. It also divided into terms of setting goals between groups of members, volunteers,

and employees. The existing organisational culture was a reflection of the oligarchic management style (a group of warriors exercising power). It legitimised the relations of elevating those members who strictly and uncritically implemented the ideas and orders of the board and distancing themselves from independent and critical people (elements of the group ostracism mechanism were used). The democratic and participatory style of team management was maintained in official declarations, which in practice was expressed, for example, in the creation of façade advisory groups that did not have the authority to solve existing organisational problems. Over time, these declarations become increasingly contradictory with the actual method of management and motivation. This came down to implementing attitudes of lack of trust and attention to grassroots, innovative proposals. The existing contradictions between the declared and enforced style of management (power) and the related division of intraorganisational elements of prestige, implemented through equalisation, i.e. a system of hierarchising and promoting members, in subsequent years deepened inequalities and a sense of relative poverty among most members. This is how the current president of the NGO spoke about this issue:

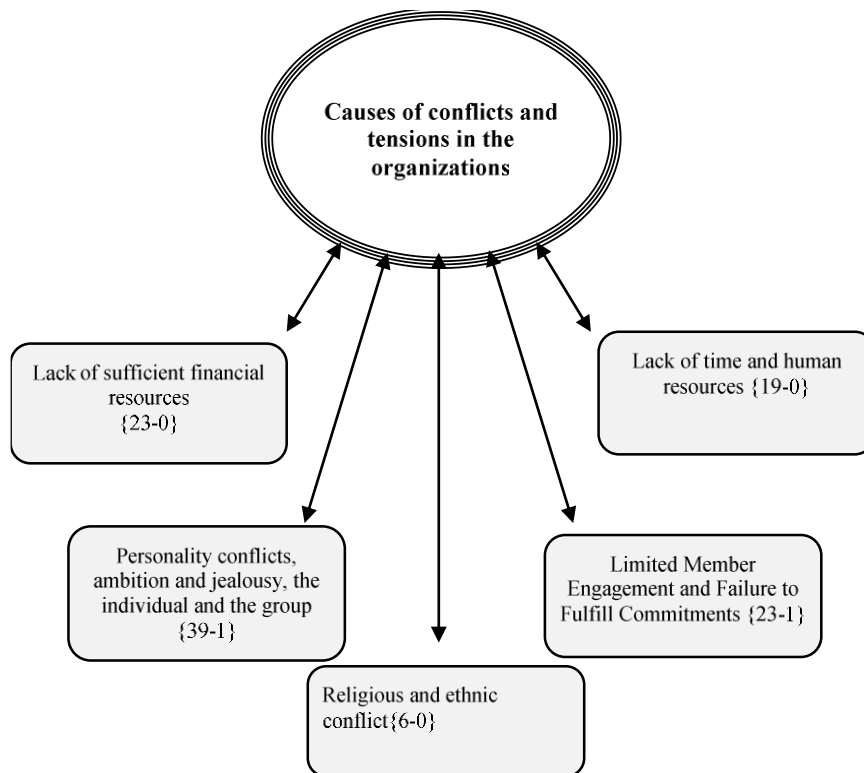
*We have a levelling system, you could call it that. It was developed under previous management. When someone joins the team, they are the lowest-ranking person, a quasislave, and then they are promoted when they successfully develop their character, so in this historical world they have to prove themselves, gain new skills, get involved, and then, if they could, wear better and better clothes and become a richer and more important person. And, for example, we wanted to change the system of even counting these points for people. So it took months of convincing, mainly warriors, because the latter got used to it and did not touch this system. And the latter took part in its creation and this system is definitely the best and there will be no better...*

The co-occurrence of the above-mentioned conditions exacerbated the mechanism of double axiological consciousness of members and employees, who were forced to "play" in building an open, partner team of innovators. In this way, they increased the potential for traumatic tensions among the members of the organisation. The team members subjected to the impact of this mechanism were forced to work through the conditions mentioned above emotionally and at a reflective level. Members representing organisational roles different from the roles of warriors did not directly address their reservations to the board regarding the injustice in the way of equalising and hierarchising members during the first four years of the association's operation. Instead of focussing on personal changes in people holding managerial positions, attitudes that were characterised by the traumatic mechanism of transferring hatred (reluctance) were adopted, focussing on ways of modifying internal regulations regarding the hierarchy of members.

The indicated manifestations of the morphostatic state of the studied organisations did not favour the undertaking of externally orientated innovative activities. Group resentments encapsulated in the above structural and cultural context petrified the existing social and organisational continuity. The dominance of the components of binding social capital was diagnosed among the management staff, especially in the dimension of trust in the internal task and the social circle. This potential maintained the existing contextual continuity of the group and organisation and the level of tensions and resentment distances. The stage of organisational stagnation burdened with resentment diagnosed above was also stabilised by the dominance of the communicative type of reflexivity among a significant part of the members and employees. That is, conformist towards the management staff, reluctant to change, maintaining the status quo.

The growing contextual discrepancy between the formally guaranteed position of entities and the observed balance of power in the organisation increased the potential for resentment tensions. The greater the inconsistency between the formally and normatively assigned position (equalisation) and the observed one that deprives the balance of power in the organisation, the greater the barriers of resentment to agency. The indicator of the existence of the phenomenon was the respondents' emphasis on the importance of personal conflicts and tensions, injustice in rewarding for activity or in access to status factors, the accumulation of negative group emotions, mainly individual and group jealousy, as a barrier to innovation.

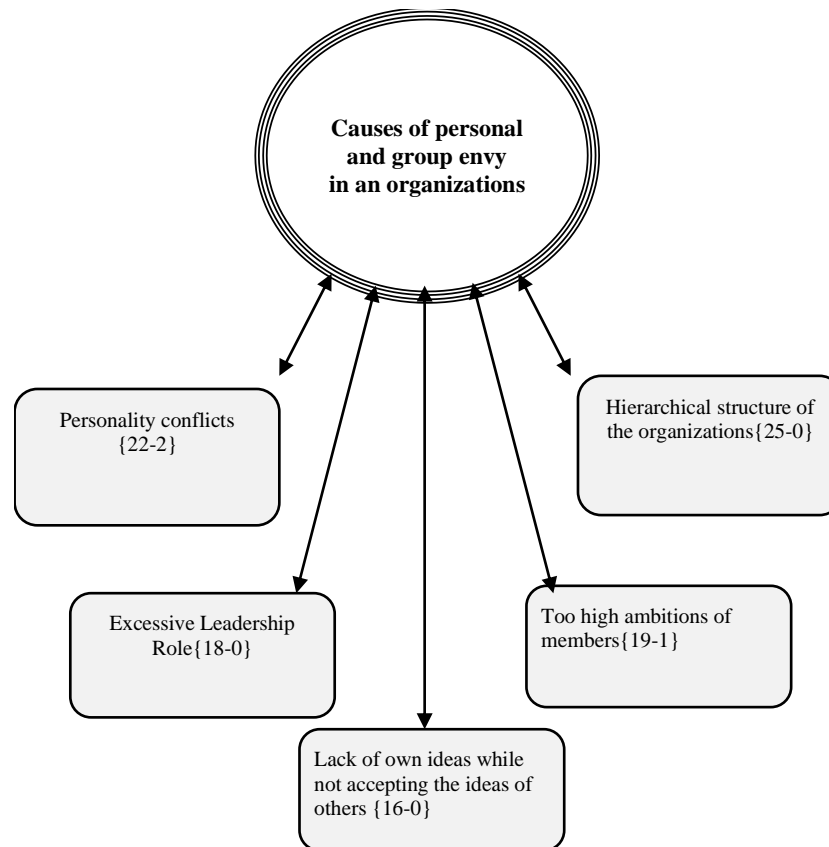
The observations of the members surveyed of the historical reenactors association on the causes of conflicts and tensions in their innovative activities correspond to the aggregated results of all the focus interviews conducted. The main categories of causes of conflicts that occur during the introduction of innovations indicated by the participants of the group interviews and the connections between them are presented in the following perception map, generated in the Atlas.ti programme (see: Fig. 1). This tool made it possible to generate codes and their families, presenting the main categories of responses from respondents obtained from group interviews. For example, the code that occurred most frequently in the analysis was the code called 'personality conflicts, ambitions, individual and group jealousy' 39-2 and consists of two elements: the first is the degree of grounding (39), that is, the number of connections of the code with quotations within the text document, the second (3) is coherence, that is, the connection of a given code with other codes. This code was included in the family of codes (CF): causes of conflicts and tensions in the organisations.



**Figure 1.** Perceptual map: Causes of conflicts and tensions in the organisations.

The key code: personality conflicts, ambitions, individual and group jealousy includes, for example, the following statements by members of the analysed nongovernmental organisation. According to the current president of the association, individual and group ambitions and jealousy related to the inability to hold management positions in nongovernmental organisations are expressed by those *who do not have the appropriate education, experience and social competences and aspire to hold them*. Another member of the current board adds that strong personalities and ambitions clash in the organisations, which block new activities. *"This is the specificity of historical groups, that there are personalities with very, very strong characters. A large part of these groups, even 100% of some, are warriors. These are people who are specifically directed to enter this military hierarchy.*

The observations of the board members on the causes of personal and group jealousy in the organisations presented above were included in the codified statements of all respondents obtained in the focus group interviews. They also correspond to them to a large extent (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Perceptual map: Causes of personal and group jealousy in an organisations.

The toxic interactions between the majority of the board and the remaining members, as well as the everyday organisational behaviour of the members of the analysed team, revealed the existence of tensions. They were an expression of the action of group aversion. They also produced certain effects. Several founding members of the organisation left the association. Destabilisation resulting from the limitation of the development possibilities of the group of oppositional nonwarriors serving key institutional, business, and organisational stakeholders, and their subsequent resignation from membership, affected the overall functioning of the NGO. What conditions led to organisational morphogenesis? The mechanisms and effects of aversion that emerged in interaction with structural and cultural contexts found expression in social actions and also conditioned the processes of innovation in the organisations. These processes took place at three levels: structural (power and status of individual entities), cultural (preferred norms and values expressed through attitudes) and through intraorganisational formal regulations, e.g. equalisation of systems, scopes of responsibility, methods of document circulation and formal (vertical) communication, introduction of privileges for some and limitation of the possibilities of action of other members.

The emergence of contextual structural and cultural discontinuity occurred when differences of interest emerged between the majority part of the board and the elite group of warrior reenactors supporting them, and the minority part of the board, representing the majority of the organisation's members, who played less prestigious roles of farmers, craftsmen,



and servants. The board members associated with the warrior group were focused on the exclusive self-fulfilment of group knightly passions, at the expense of building broader relations with the socioeconomic and institutional environment. The system of member levelling they created was to legitimise and maintain the original contextual continuity of the NGO. On the other hand, the much larger group of reenactors (nonwarriors) wanted more openness to the micro-, meso- and macro-environment, to different levels of schools, academic and sports clubs, and other NGOs. They also postulated changing the rules for building the member levelling system, which they considered unfair.

Among the minority part of the board and the vast majority of members not performing combat roles, an autonomous reflection has developed over time on whether the people holding power in the organisation, i.e. the president and the members of the board, are trustworthy and deserve the positions entrusted to them, as well as on how to get beyond the circle of elitism maintained by the current authorities of the association.

The change of the organisation's management was preceded by a broad action of the opposition group towards the board, which began cooperation with the social and institutional environment of the organisation and prepared a modification of the positioning system. The opposition group (the new collective subject of action) preferred more communal and egalitarian norms and values (aims). They were supported by elements of a new inclusive organisational culture, in opposition to the previous culture characterised (according to the assessments of the majority of the surveyed participants of the organisation) by the elevation of some members and the deprecation of others. In conversations with newly elected members of the board, after the change of the structural status quo of the organisation, manifestations of the dominance of elements of autonomous reflexivity, i.e., focused on change, were noticed over the previously mentioned communicative reflexivity, i.e., maintaining the status quo. The processes of morphogenesis also began to be strengthened by the growing potential for inclusive bridging capital among the new collective subjects of action in the organisation. This potential increased with subsequent successful projects in the social, business, and institutional environment of the organisation.

## **5. A Case Study of the Morphogenetic Cultural Cycle in an Organisations**

In the following, a case study of the emergence of situational logics and practices related to competing contradictions of ideas in the local cultural system and related intergroup interactions will be presented. Empirical illustrations of the course of the morphogenetic cycle of culture will be provided by participant observation data and results collected during a focus group interview with leaders and members of a senior NGO.

In a medium-sized city in Upper Silesia, it operates as a nongovernmental organisations, the University of the Third Age at the Higher School of Pedagogy; since its establishment in 2004 as an independent, ideologically neutral organisation, open to diverse ideas, new paradigms. Within its framework, for the first years, the idea of an open university was implemented through a pluralistic, consensual, and grassroots selection of lecture topics and lecturers. The programme strategy of the UTW Board resulted in high attendance at lectures, courses, and integration events. Then one of the Catholic orders took over the care of the UTW and the entire infrastructure after the WSP. Since then, according to the respondents, a lot has changed at the university. The interviewees claim that currently a representative of the university authorities decides on behalf of seniors about the selection of lecturers and topics of classes. The number of participants and members of the UTW began to systematically decrease. Social tensions on ideological and cultural grounds between the two groups of seniors grew, both on the UTW board and among members. Both groups were divided according to their attitude towards the religious institution that cared for them.

There was ideological rivalry, then intragroup interactions, integration and institutional efforts within two opposing senior communities: increased ideological cohesion, internal reorganisation of structures, increased effectiveness of practices of both communities in the city. Social actions undertaken led to the creation of two competing collective entities of action. Within each of the groups, the assumptions of the programmeme were clarified and effective ideological offensives were organised in marketing. The co-occurring oppositional sets of ideas in the city were subject to gradual changes, introducing pluralism into the local cultural system and its institutional manifestations. At the same time, supporters of each side of the ideological conflict tried to convince undecided entities of action, e.g., in the City Council and the Seniors' Council, which resulted in a decrease in social cohesion in the studied senior community.

What were the effects (including the effects of resentment) of the course of the local morphogenetic cycle of culture presented above? The new ownership situation of the partner university and UTW began to legitimise the relations of elevation of some members of the organisation and marginalisation of others. A dissonance emerged between the formally equal status of all participants in the organisation and the actual balance of power in the environment and the organisations, which resulted in increased tensions of resentment. The fact that the studied organisation and the environment remained in the state of existing structural and cultural contexts of resentment limited the emergence of innovations in the organisations and blocked participation in broader innovative ecosystems. Therefore, the respondents, who represented the majority of recent UTW members, decided to create a second UTW, secular and more pluralistic, open in terms of worldview. The competitive contradiction led to systemic changes.

Among those who had not yet left the organisations in the initial phase of the conflict, the mechanism of double axiological consciousness, double thinking, and valuation – official and private – was at work. As a result, autonomous subjects of action emotionally and

reflectively worked through their interactions in the context of resentment. Then they made decisions to migrate to a new environment, open to introduce social innovations. The mechanism of accepting change as a negation of the previous state was at work.

Within the local community, the cultural system legitimised the existing sociocultural context through the emergence of competing sets of ideas and opposing values. Diversity encouraged systemic innovation because it “unpredictably broadens cultural horizons; coherence stays at home to systematically embellish and colour the cultural environment” (Archer, 2015).

Competing contradictions (diversity) in the area of ideas and worldviews had socio-cultural effects in the form of specialisation within the senior groups studied, which over time took the form of sectoral groups, i.e., differentiating themselves in relation to the social environment more horizontally than polarisation. In other words, initially competing groups stopped defining themselves through mutual opposition, but as differences in relation to the entire environment. A feedback mechanism was in operation: Specialisation provoked and reinforced further differentiation of ideas and horizontal sociocultural differentiation within autonomous and increasingly active local senior environments.

## 6. Results

Based on the adopted theoretical assumptions and the results of the presented qualitative research (FGI), it was concluded that organisational morphostasis occurs when the following endogenous conditions coexist, limiting innovative activities among members of the studied NGOs. The agency of members is based to a greater extent on communicative reflexivity, which favours organisational and group persistence, than on autonomous reflexivity, open to change. There are no new collective entities of action in NGOs questioning the existing status quo, i.e., there is contextual continuity (structural and/or cultural). The tensions and group resentments resulting from the above contexts petrify the structural and cultural continuity of NGOs. At the same time, the predominance of components of binding social capital maintains the existing contextual continuity and a relatively permanent level of tensions and resentment distances.

On the other hand, organisational morphogenesis occurs when the following conditions stimulating the activities of the studied NGOs coexist. Agency of the organisation members is based to a greater extent on autonomous reflexivity, which is conducive to innovation, than on stabilising communicative reflexivity. New collective subjects of action are formed, or more precisely, new interests (structural conditions) and group values (cultural conditions), i.e. there is a structural and/or cultural discontinuity. Group tensions and resentments inscribed in the structural and cultural contexts of the organisation dynamize the course of the

organisational morphogenesis process. The predominance of components of social capital that bridge social capital facilitates breaking the existing status quo in the organisation, introducing innovations. In the cultural morphogenetic cycle, the cultural context facilitates breaking potential resentful structural contexts, through the existence of competing ideas and values and sociocultural interactions realising them. In this way, it facilitates systemic innovations.

## **7. Conclusions and Discussion**

The authors have not found operational approaches to the types of reflexivity that accompany the processes of duration and change in organisations, nor the cultural determinants of the formation of resentment barriers to agency. Therefore, it was assumed that the analysis of organisational activities burdened with group resentments, in accordance with the Archer directives on the relationship between structure, culture, and agency and Scheler's assumptions on the occurrence of resentful tensions, should include the coconditioning of structural and cultural factors and the possibility of agency in their context of the organisation's members. On their basis, an original research procedure was created to diagnose the potentials of resentful structural and cultural contexts and to explain the operation of their effects in a situation of contextual continuity or discontinuity. A comparison of the FGI results gives grounds for the conclusion that morphostatic attitudes and the type of communicative reflexivity dominate among the respondents. Similar results were obtained by the behavioural economics team of the Polish Economic Institute. Fear of change and risk taking has been found to be the main variable that disrupts innovation activities for most members of Polish business organisations (Hryniewicz, 2021).

The challenge for the future remains the identification of further mechanisms that burden the processes of group, organisational, and institutional innovation with resentment. This will only be possible with the use of a multidisciplinary approach to the search for the sources of tensions and social traumas. It also seems necessary to use theoretical triangulations that will broaden cognitive perspectives on such a difficult issue.

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