

## MANAGING CONFLICTS WITHIN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN LOCAL PUBLIC STRUCTURES

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### **Abstract**

*This paper proposal is focusing on an interdisciplinary subject, correlating the field of social conflicts within the complexity of organizational culture inside the organizational space of local public agencies, considering their vision, structure and formalism. The main objective of the research is to find out if organizations' size as the number of the employees, on one hand and different types and dimensions of organizational culture, on the other have the capacity of influencing intra-organizational conflicts between the members of public local organizations. Social conflict will be analyzed from a holistic point of view, starting with its sources, types of manifestation and continuing with third-party intervention and conflict solving styles and methods. A short presentation of a theoretical background of conflicts, organization theory and behavior, but also of organizational culture will prepare the empirical analysis that will contain two different dimensions' analyses centered around a number of two hypotheses, containing two elements of any organization: its size, as a rational, visible element and the organizational culture, a rather complex, hidden and difficult to quantify irrational element. The analysis of the organizational culture concept will follow the model of the 6 dimensions of organizational culture proposed by the study of a group of researchers conducted by Geert Hofstede on 20 organizations in Holland and Denmark, about 20 years ago. The quantitative survey analysis reunites a number of more than 150 members of three local public organizations from the city of Cluj-Napoca, Romania.*

**Keywords:** organizational culture, size – as number of members, social conflict, local public agencies

### **Introduction**

Nowadays we live in a calculated, organized world, in which every individual has his or her own place and role in every stage of his or her life – in family, with friends, at school, at the workplace. And every of these stages are entities - some of them more organized, such as schools and work organizations, some others less organized, like family or the group of friends. The present study is interested especially in the workplace environment that needs as many rules as the complexity and dimension of the organization grows; rules concerning not only the functioning, structuring, hierarchical positions, strategies, duties, program and outputs, but also the relations between the members that are of great importance and have the capacity of influencing the organization as an entire. In this work environment, our research is focused especially upon the relationship two elements that every organization has – the size, as the number of the employees and the organizational culture – are able to establish with inter-personal conflict management, the former having the capacity of influencing the second; this is what we are trying to demonstrate in our study.

## **Theoretical framework**

The study of organizations began with “The Z Theories” of Ouchi in 1981 and “The Art of the Japanese Management” belonging to Pascale and Athos, in 1981, continuing with “Corporate Cultures” (Deal and Kennedy, 1982) and “In Search of Excellence” of Peters and Waterman, 1982 (Hofstede, 2001). The element of innovation brought by these studies is “behavior” as part of an organization, which is the one that makes the difference between successful organizations and all the others and consisting in organizations members’ set of values and principles that weren’t considered as having any importance or impact upon the organizations’ destiny before (Denison, 1990). In this way, organizations have been defined as a “system of activities or forces of several persons, consciously coordinated” (Chester Barnard, 1938, apud. D.S. Pugh et al., 1985, apud. Vlăsceanu, p. 68) or as „social units built to serve specific objectives” (Amitai Etzioni, 1964, apud. W.R., Scott 1998, apud. Vlăsceanu, p. 25). Schein and Mintzberg define organizations as those „collective and planned activities of people in order to accomplish common missions and goals” (E.H., Schein and Mintzberg, 1988, apud. Vlăsceanu, p. 2 and 15). Robbins has a similar view, considering organizations as being „social entities with identifiable limits, that work on the basis of accomplishing a common goal” (Robbins, 1998, p. 5) and Hofstede defines organizations as those „symbolic entities functioning accordingly to the implicit models in their members’ minds; these models being determined by the culture where they live” (Hofstede G. H., 2001, p. 374-375). In 2003, Kets de Vries compares organizations with icebergs, affirming that usually each organization has two parts: a visible, rational one (vision, mission, structure, strategies) and a hidden, irrational one (groups’ dynamics, feelings, interpersonal relationships and organizational culture) (Kets de Vries, 2003, p. 51).

Organizational culture, as an important irrational component of organizations, as de Vries calls it, is sometimes confounded with organizational climate. Denison (1996), in his article “*What is the difference between organizational culture and organizational climate? A native's point of view on a decade of paradigm wars*” affirms that there is not a clear difference between the two terms, but one at a conceptual level that depends a lot on the chosen perspective of the researcher – epistemology, methodology, level of analysis, time orientation and discipline (Denison, 1996). Organizational culture is also confounded with the culture of a nation, but Hofstede makes the difference, stating that culture is about individual values and organizational culture is referring to daily practices in the workplace (Hofstede, 2001).

The issue of social conflicts, starting with its sources from the beginning of the ’60s raised the interest of authors like Pondy (1964), Littere (1966), Thomson (1967) and continuing with other authors such as Robey (1986), Morgan (1989) or more recently Fisher (2000), but also a few Romanian theorists interested in the interpersonal conflict (Bocoş, Gavra, & Marcu, 2008; Tălmăciu, 2010), continuing with developing a large diversity of conflict types (Fisher, 2000; Bogathy, 2002) and a spectrum of a few methods of conflict escalation (Deep & Sussman, 1996; Jordan, 2010) and completing the list with several styles of prevention, managing and conflict resolution (Morgan, 1989; Lulofs & Dudley, 2000; Deutsch & Coleman, 2000; Rahim, 2002; Bocoş, Gavra, & Marcu, 2008) was considered by the specialists of the field of organizational theory and behavior as serving as an element of the organizational culture or climate (Denison, 1996).

But, more recently researchers have started to consider social conflict as an independent variable in their studies, analyzing the relationship between the two concepts – conflict and organizational culture – and what impact could one have on the other, searching for answers to the question “how much influence could one variable have on the other one, in different contexts and what the impact and results would be?”.

One of these researchers is Kevin Avruch (2004) who correlated in one of his articles the concept of “culture” with the one of “conflict resolution”, making the statement that “many theorists of conflict resolution and many practitioners of international negotiations have agreed that culture matters” (Avruch, 2004). The connection that Avruch finds between the two concepts is that culture should be the first to be analyzed and known, in order to be able to solve conflict situations, the field of the researcher being international negotiations.

A second perspective that is getting closer to what this article is aiming, is the one belonging to Young (2000), who considers managing conflicts to be a way in maintaining or changing organizational culture, as well as other five elements: motivation, control, clients, strategy and authority influence. Similarly to Young’s point of view, Rahim (2002) connects conflict with organization efficiency and organizational learning. Despite traditional theories and researches in strategic approach of intra-organizational conflicts, in his article published in 2005, DeDreu argues that interventions in conflict situations are not only leading to organizational efficiency, but they also have the capacity of increasing employees’ satisfaction in the workplace (DeDreu & Beersma, 2005).

A few Spanish authors correlate intra-organizational conflicts with organizational culture in public, but also private organizations, analyzing the influence of a certain type of organizational culture upon different types of intra-organizational conflicts, relationship that has the potential of leading to organizational efficiency (Guerra, Martinez, Munduate, & Medina, 2005).

Another group of American researchers (Peterson & Co, 1995) relates role conflict with cultural diversity in the workplace, the study being conducted on managers belonging to 21 different nations and the four dimensions used in their survey by the authors were those belonging to Geert Hofstede on national cultural values – individualism/collectivism, masculinity, power distance and uncertainty avoidance. Another article focusing on Hofstede’s cultural dimensions published in 2005, presenting the results of a meta-analysis, is pointing out the relationship between the five styles of conflict resolution, as they are proposed by Blake and Mouton and Hofstede’s dimension individualism/collectivism (Holt & DeVore, 2005). A few years earlier, in 1998 a similar paper was published using the same styles of conflict resolution and their relationship with cultural values and were conducted on several private organizations in the USA and a few countries in Asia – China, Phillipines and India (Morris & Co, 1998).

### **Empirical methodology**

The data analysis and results of the quantitative empirical research of the present study, based on the correlation between the two concepts – organizational culture and size, on one hand and social conflict, on the other one (in the organizational space) - developed within a number of three public organizations, at the local level of the city of Cluj-Napoca, Romania, using the social inquiry as methodology is aiming to check the validity of 2 predetermined hypotheses. The three public organizations – the City Hall of Cluj Napoca, The County Council and the University

Central Library - belong to the same geographical, demographical, and socio-cultural environment - national culture would have the same amount of influence over the values of the members and of course, of the respondents, 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 three public organizations 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 – from small to medium size to large organizations:

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

**Table 1. Organizations in Size**

As for the questionnaires, we have initially mentioned that the sample scheme would rely on quota, but because of the limits that were mostly due to the formality of the public agencies and the difficult access to their members, I have chosen a *convenience sampling*. Therefore, a total number of 171 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 split according to the three public institutions chosen by size, as follows:

<b>Local Public Organizations</b>		
Small Organizations	< 100 members	23
Medium Sized Organizations	between 101 – 200 members	66
Large Organizations	> 200 members	82
	<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>

**Table 2. Number of Respondents**

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 members of the three 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.

It is of a great importance to mention that the main idea of this study is no to find out where to place the members of one single organization, but mostly to know where each member of the total of 171, belonging to the three public organizations is placing himself/herself – what kind of organizational culture does he or she considers to be part of.

The two hypotheses of the present research are the following:

1. *The greater the number of employees of an organization is, conflict resolution will be used instead of conflict managing and the third party (The Alternative Dispute Resolution) will be replaced from solving conflicts between members.*
2. *In mostly right oriented organization cultures (as the table below shows), there could be identified a larger diversity of conflict sources, but with less opened conflict situations and more tensioned relationships; more often hierarchical conflicts which aren't usually solved by the idea of "drop a bit, in order to gain something":*

<b>Left</b>	<b>Right</b>
Open System	Closed System
External Focus (Pragmatic)	Internal Focus (Normative)
Professional	Local/Parochial
Process Orientation	Results Orientation
Orientation towards employees	Orientation towards work/duty
Low/Moderate Control	High internal control

**Table 3. Organization Culture Dimensions, after Hofstede model**

We won't insist in describing each of the six dimensions offered by Geert Hofstede and presented in the table above, but as the table shows the dimensions are constructed between two limits – the left one is describing organizations more relaxed and flexible, that give more importance to its employees and to the process of how things are to be done, that welcome new members integrating them easily and developing a decentralized system of ruling and control. On the other side – to the right, we can find organizations that are rather closed, with rigid rules and strict control, where new employees integrating system is a very difficult one, where importance is given to fulfilling duties and reaching the expected results.

By analyzing the first hypothesis, we could 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 on avoiding it altogether. From the five different styles of approaching conflict situations proposed by Blake and Mouton (Avoidance, Accommodation, Competition, Compromise and Collaboration) the style used in the win-win situations is Collaboration, this being the single one also used in managing conflicts; all the other four being used in the conflict resolution situations. So, for the respondents belonging to the three local public institutions the results show that the employees in the small organization identify the most used style as being the Collaboration, but as for the other two larger organizations, the most used styles in solving interpersonal conflicts are Avoidance and Accommodation as in the table below:

<b>Organization with &gt; 200 members</b>	<b>Avoidance</b> 3.3036	<b>Accommodation</b> 3.2560	<b>Compromise</b> 3.2202	<b>Collaboration</b> 3.2202	<b>Competition</b> 2.8452
<b>Organization with 100 - 200 members</b>	<b>Avoidance</b> 3.6168	<b>Collaboration</b> 3.5421	<b>Accommodation</b> 3.5047	<b>Collaboration</b> 3.0654	<b>Competition</b> 2.8785
<b>Organization with &lt; 100 members</b>	<b>Collaboration</b> 3.8780	<b>Collaboration</b> 3.7073	<b>Compromise</b> 3.5610	<b>Accommodation</b> 3.5610	<b>Competition</b> 2.7561

**Table 4. Hierarchy of styles of approaching conflicts, accordingly to the size of organizations**

Another conclusion based on the first hypothesis is the unanimous rejection of the competitive style by the majority members of the three public organizations, regardless of the number of members; therefore, we can say that such organizations promote team work more than individual work.

In order to find out if there is a significant relationship between size of the organizations and the five styles of conflict management and resolution, we calculated ANOVA, with SPSS statistical program and the results show that there is a significant relationship with only two of the styles – Compromise and Collaboration, Sig value being less than 0.05, as in the table below:

**ANOVA**

	Summ Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Avoidance* Organization Size	6.683	2	3.341	2.674	.071
	391.051	313	1.249		
	397.734	315			
Compromise * Organization Size	10.045	2	5.022	5.039	.007
	311.939	313	.997		
	321.984	315			
Accommodation* Organization Size	5.591	2	2.796	2.250	.107
	388.839	313	1.242		
	394.430	315			
Competition* Organization Size	.444	2	.222	.169	.844
	410.958	313	1.313		
	411.402	315			
Collaboration* Organization Size	28.572	2	14.286	10.633	.000
	420.551	313	1.344		
	449.123	315			

**Table 5. Size of organizations & Styles of approaching conflicts**

As the data in the table below shows, we can see 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:

Size of Organization	Manager as Third party	Collaboration between parties	Mean on third-party intervention
Large organization > 200 employees	2.6131	2.9524	2.3944

<b>Organization with 100 – 200 employees</b>	3.1121	3.0654	2.5911
<b>Small organization with &lt; 100 employees</b>	3.0732	3.8780	2.6951
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.8418</b>	<b>3.1108</b>	<b>2.5602</b>

**Table 6. Third party intervention**

Jablin, one of the theorists of organizations, has been studying since 1987 the extent to which the dimension of an organization affects the communication and quality of that organization (McPhee & Poole, 2001). Whereas, in this 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 dispute resolution – ADR being mostly based on the process of communication in order to achieve a common goal).

The explanation for the preference of conflict management as well as the presence of a third party in conflict approach within the intra organizational environment refers also to a result of the general aim of the organizations we have monitored – employees from all three public institutions 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 three public organizations chosen for this study (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.

With the second hypothesis, the study’s aim is to demonstrate that not only does the size of public organizations have the ability to influence social conflict in the intra organizational environment, but also that organizational culture plays an important part in this. We have chosen the model proposed by Hofstede, in collaboration with Neuijen, Sanders, and Ohayv, a study conducted 20 years ago and analyzing the six dimensions of organizational culture.

In the analysis of the second hypothesis, using the statistical program SPSS, I have chosen to calculate the Means by each of the six dimensions of the organizational culture, as described in Table 3.

Calculating the Means on each of the three local public organizations and analyzing the first dimension as listed in Table 3 - Open vs Closed System, the results show that even if the formalism of a public institution with its formal long lasting recruiting system that define a rather closed system, having a well developed communication network in the organizations chosen for this study and the more attractive collective in opposition with salary satisfaction in public institutions, considered by the majority of the respondents show that all three public organizations in our study have an open system (demonstrated by the low scores of the Means in the table below):

		Mean
<b>Public organization</b>	Large organization > 200 employees	2.8232
	Medium organization 100 - 200 employees	2.8864
	Small organization < 100 employees	2.8804

**Table 7. Means on Open vs Closed System Dimension**

If we consider the results from Hofstede's IBM study on cultural values, reported on Romania's case on two of the dimensions – Masculinity vs Femininity and Individualism vs Collectivism, the results stating that this country has a rather collectivist and feminine culture than an individualistic and masculine one (the scores being approx. 30% on Individualism and 42% on Masculinity dimensions), we can also find a support for the results given above – and having three open organizational cultures.

In what concerns the second dimension – Normative vs Pragmatic, the scores of Means show that there is an equilibrium between the two sides of this dimension, meaning that the three public organizations try to combine the formal rules of functioning with responding to the specific needs of the citizens:

		Mean
<b>Public Organization</b>	Arge organization > 200 employees	3.1738
	Medium organization with 100 – 200 employees	3.4167
	Small organization < 100 employees	3.0761

**Table 8. Means on Pragmatic (External focus) vs Normative (internal Focus) Dimension**

This atypical orientation of public institutions could be easily supported by the direction brought by the New Public Management that is focusing mostly on organizational competition and service output (Hood, 1991).

The third organizational culture dimension Local vs Professional describes the diverse behavior of employees who could rather transfer their home behavior to the workplace (Local) or quite opposite, could separate the two types of behavior (Professional), trying to identify themselves with their work duties and not to their leader or group. In the research on the members of the three local public organizations in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, the tendency of the employees is rather a parochial one, as the Means scores show:

		Mean
<b>Public Organization</b>	Large organization > 200 employees	3.3811
	Medium organization with 100 - 200 employees	3.3939
	Small organization < 100 employees	3.2500

**Table 9. Means on Local (Parochial) vs Professional dimension**



The next dimension to be analyzed is the one referring to the Process orientation versus Results orientation. Even if the Means' scores show that there is equilibrium between both sides of the dimension, the tendency concerning the large organization is mostly expressing a results oriented organizational culture, where the other two smaller organizations have a rather process oriented culture. This difference could be explained by the diversity of the mission, vision and objectives of the three organizations, the smallest ones – the County Council and the University Central Library, these institutions being part of several long-term projects together with other organizations and institutions at national and international level given the fact that it would be normal to be more process oriented. On the other side, the City Hall of Cluj-Napoca is an institution that is closer to the population's needs and should give quick answers to the public requests:

		Mean
<b>Public Organization</b>	Large organization > 200 employees	<b>3.1037</b>
	Medium organization with 100 – 200 employees	<b>2.8523</b>
	Small organization < 100 employees	<b>2.9457</b>

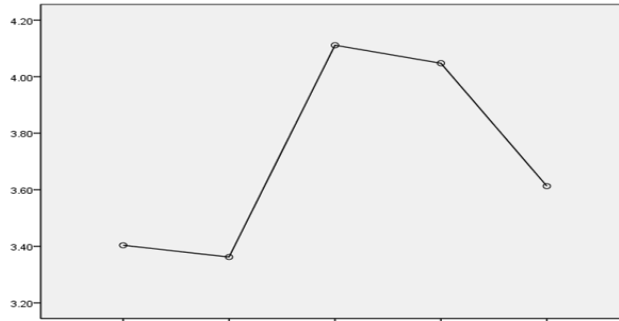
**Table 10. Means on Process vs Results Orientation dimension**

On the dimension Employees versus Work duties orientation, the majority respondents of the three local public organizations analyzed in our study tend to place their organization to offer a greater importance to work than to its members and this we can find as an explanation that this is due to the recently greater and greater importance that every organization is giving to its clients or citizens, a current that is easily observable in the private system rather than the public one:

		Mean
<b>Public Organization</b>	Large organization > 200 employees	<b>3.1372</b>
	Medium organization with 100 – 200 employees	<b>3.1212</b>
	Small organization < 100 employees	<b>3.3225</b>

**Table 11. Means on Employees vs Work Duties Orientation dimension**

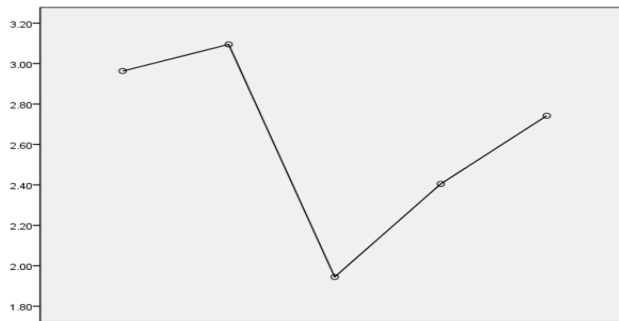
In order to check these results and to find a stronger explanation for the above Means scores, we correlated the answers expressing the *Vision* of the members regarding their future carriers and plans in or out the current organizations, with other two variables – *Stress level* and the *Concern about the others in the organization* and two figures resulted:



**Figure 1. Vision & Members' stress level**

From this figure, the conclusion that we could extract is that a great majority of the most stressed respondents wish to change their department or even the actual organization (see the highest levels of the line in the graph; the lowest expressing continuing in the same organization at the same department or wishing for advancing).

The second correlation, between the employees' vision regarding their future carriers and the concern about their colleagues show a great responsibility and concern of those employees who chose to stay in the same organization for the next 3 years, represented by the high level of the line in the graph below, whereas the lowest point represents the employees wishing for leaving the organization:



**Figure 2. Correlation between Vision & Concern about others**

The conclusion that we can extract is that in those stressful environments, where employees try to seek a way out, all they care about is the concern for themselves and how to make their way out possible; but in a pleasant environment, employees will spread a large amount of their concern on their colleagues and give importance to their interpersonal relations.

On the Low versus Strong Control dimension, even if the scores are not much greater than 3, they show that the tendency in the three local public organizations chosen for this research, is to have a rather strong internal control, governed by strict and very well established rules, although previously we could see that the influence of the New Public Management with its decentralization (World Bank Group) is already present at the local level of Romanian public institutions. The high necessity for formalism in public organizations is explained by Downs (1967) because of the lack of economical market in the public sector, in comparison with the private one; lack that will encourage public organizations to develop internal hierarchies, that will finally transform them into rigid entities. Two years later, a group of researchers got to the conclusion that the majority – central or local public structures have a great centralization to the top of their pyramids, sustained by a formal set of rules and laws (Pugh, Hickson, & Hinings, 1969).

		Mean
<b>Public Organization</b>	Large organization > 200 employees	<b>3.2409</b>
	Medium organization with 100 – 200 employees	<b>3.0114</b>
	Small organization < 100 employees	<b>3.1304</b>

**Table 12. Means on Low vs Strong Control dimension**

As a follow up to the results we have reached in the analysis of the six dimensions of Hofstede’s model of organizational culture and applied to the number of 171 members in three local public organizations in the city of Cluj-Napoca, Romania, we have created a map of six dimensions of the organizational culture and therefore have demonstrated that not just the size, as number of employees of an organization, has the potential of influencing conflict management in the organizational environment, as organizational culture does not have the same tendencies 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 Towards Employees and Tasks
<b>Public Organizations</b>	<b>Large</b>	Cluj-Napoca City Hall	RESULT	PRAGMATIC (balanced)	POWERFUL CONTROL (balanced)	LOCAL OPEN SYSTEM	WORK-ORIENTED
	<b>Medium</b>	County Council	PROCESS	PRAGMATIC (balanced)	POWERFUL CONTROL (balanced)	LOCAL OPEN SYSTEM	WORK-ORIENTED
	<b>Small</b>	University Central Library	PROCESS	PRAGMATIC	POWERFUL CONTROL (balanced)	LOCAL OPEN SYSTEM	WORK-ORIENTED

**Table 13. 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 is also focused on the tasks which need to be completed and do not interest the person the task are assigned to, but only the tasks themselves.

In the Associations between the values of righted organizational culture, on one hand and the diversity of sources, but also with the types of conflicts and styles of conflict approach and calculating the ANOVA, in order to check the significance of the relationship, results are quite balanced, but they show a tendency though towards a righted oriented organizational culture perceived by the 171 respondents in the three local public organizations in the city of Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Results also show a significant relationship between an organizational culture oriented rather to the right and a larger diversity of sources:

**ANOVA**

	Sum square	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Bad/lak of communication	114.253	22	5.193	4.164	.000
	365.418	293	1.247		
	479.671	315			
Unequal distribution of resources	132.469	22	6.021	5.872	.000
	300.467	293	1.025		
	432.937	315			
Interdependency	79.982	22	3.636	2.933	.000
	363.242	293	1.240		
	443.225	315			
Internal rules	58.794	22	2.672	3.923	.000
	199.624	293	.681		
	258.418	315			

**Table 14. Relationship between Organizational culture & Sources of interpersonal conflict**

The scores of Eta square > .14 (Pierce C, Block, & Aguinis, 2004) show that there is a powerful relation between a right oriented culture and all four types of interpersonal conflict sources:

	R	R square	Eta	Eta square
Bad/lak of communication	.359	.129	.488	.238
Unequal distribution of resources	-.400	.160	.553	.306
Interdependency	.066	.004	.425	.180
Internal rules	.103	.011	.477	.228

**Table 15. Association between Organizational culture & Interpersonal conflict sources**

The righted oriented organizational culture is characterized rather with more tensioned inter-personal conflicts than confronted ones and the last ones are mostly conflicts between employees and their superior. The scores of Sig. in the table below show a significant relationship between organizational culture and two types of intra-organizational conflicts – latent and hierarchical:

**ANOVA**

	Sum square	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Tensioned situations rather than confronted ones	113.860	27	4.217	4.036	.000
		288	1.045		
	414.797	315			
Hierarchical conflicts	138.112	27	5.115	5.118	.000
		288	.999		
	425.934	315			

**Table 16. Organizational culture & types of interpersonal conflicts**

And the table of Associations demonstrates a strong relationship (Eta square score > .14) between the two variables: culture & latent and hierarchical types of social conflict (Pierce C, Block, & Aguinis, 2004):

	R	R square	Eta	Eta square
Tensioned situations rather than confronted ones	-.170	.029	.524	.274
Hierarchical conflicts Q	-.462	.214	.569	.324

**Table 17. Association - Organizational culture & types of interpersonal conflicts**

There is also a significant relationship between a righted oriented organizational culture and the five styles of approaching inter-personal conflicts, except for the compromise style based on an exchange, in order both parties will achieve partly some of their goals, in the exchange for others, as the ANOVA table above shows:

**ANOVA**

	Sum Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Avoidance	129.695	27	4.804	5.161	.000
		288	.931		
	397.734	315			
Compromise	38.167	27	1.414	1.434	.080
		288	.985		
	321.984	315			
Accomodation	179.081	27	6.633	8.870	.000

		288	.748		
	394.430	315			
Competition	117.477	27	4.351	4.263	.000
		288	1.021		
	411.402	315			
Collaboration	139.868	27	5.180	5.578	.000
		288	.929		
	407.342	315			

**Table 18. Organizational culture & Styles of approaching inter-personal conflicts**

The value of ETA square also shows a lack of dependence between the organizational rightness orientation and the style of Compromise, resulting that members from organizational cultures more rigid prefer any of the accommodation, avoidance, competition or collaboration styles, but very rarely agree to compromising:

	R	R square	Eta	Eta square
Avoidance	.422	.178	.571	.326
Compromise	-.035	.001	.344	.119
Accomodation	.528	.279	.674	.454
Competition	-.254	.065	.534	.286
Collaboration	.526	.276	.586	.343

**Table 19. Association between Organizational culture and Conflict management styles**

## Results

Size – as the number of employees in an organization is important in dealing with conflicts, because as we could see in the previous section describing the empirical analysis, the larger the number of its members is, interpersonal communication is less and less present and conflict resolution will take the place of the conflict management and collaboration between the parties involved into a conflict. A similar situation is the one of using a third-party in solving conflicts – the more complex an organization becomes, having more and more departments and employees, bringing a third-party to intervene into a conflict situation is more and more rarely to happen.

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 and often getting to a superior level, creating new hierarchical conflicts. At the same time, in regards to an organizational culture, opened both to its outside environment's needs, but also to its internal integration - new employees being rapidly integrated in the three public organizations analyzed due to the well developed communication and interpersonal network, contrary to the formality of the recruiting system existing in Romanian local public institutions (Dodu, Tripon, 2000) – and an organizational culture rather parochial than professional, characterized by its members home behavior transferred to their workplace, well employees have place themselves in such an organizational culture will never prefer to trade in the conflict situations they get involved in, but chose to collaborate, avoid, accommodate or compete for their own interests.

### **Conclusions**

With the results given by the analysis above, we could affirm that not only the visible elements of an organization, such as the size – in number of employees, have the capacity to influence the approach of intra-organizational conflicts, but also a hidden and quite complex element as the organizational culture is. Even if we have chosen only two components (one rational and another irrational) to demonstrate this, the stress is upon the holistic approach of social conflicts, from its sources to its manifestation types and third-party intervention and concluding with its styles of solving it. And at all these levels, we could find the influence of the two elements of an organization – its dimension, as its members' number and its organizational culture with its complex shape given by the fluctuation between the two orientation limits of the six dimensions belonging to Geert Hofstede and chosen for the present study analysis.

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