COMMUNITY-ORIENTED CULTURE AND SIMPLE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Introduction

Interest in the simplicity of the organization is regarded as a part of a broader social movement referred to as ‘voluntary simplicity’ [18; 26]. The simple life is seen as a mean to personal fulfillment and more broadly, as a mean to social justice and ecological sustainability [18]. Simplicity appears here as the value of the business, as ‘the holy grail in an over-complicated, stressed and hassled world’ [25]. However, the quest for simplicity is, first and foremost, an act of opposition to the complexity of the world of organization and management. Researchers increasingly cite hard data on the effects of excessive complexity. In a study on the problem of organizational complexity, conducted by The Economist (Economist Intelligence Unit – EIU) in 2015, almost half of the 331 executives stated that their organizations are very or extremely complex – too complex to manage [21].

Furthermore, they emphasized that the excessive complexity has a significant impact on the organizational performance, is time-consuming (according to the EIU, consumes more than 45 minutes per day per manager), results in lower profits and productivity of the organization [21]. Collinson and Jay [5] examined the Fortune
Global 200 companies and showed that excessive ‘bad’ complexity led these organizations to reduced profits by an average of 10.2%. Excessive complexity also affects negatively general management, the relation between the employees, the level of customer service, corporate governance and product development [5; 21].

Specific management tools were developed over the years. They are a manifestation of the pursuit of simplicity of organization, especially with regard to simplification of their strategy (e.g. Eisenhardt and Sull [9]; Collinson and Jay [5]), products and services (e.g. Maeda [22]; Collinson and Jay [5]), structures (e.g. Drucker [8]; Welch and Welch [30]; Ashkenas [1]; Collinson and Jay [5]), processes (e.g. Maeda [22]; Ashkenas [1]; Collinson and Jay [5]) or even corporate culture (Osbert-Pociecha [26]). However, formulation of the comprehensive concept of simplifying the organization and management began only in the last decade. The most important papers on this subject are Ashkenas [1], Segall [27], Collinson and Jay [5]. However, these concepts require considerable clarification. Mainly because of the fact that in the case of strategic issues and operational or individual elements of the organization (e.g. strategy, organizational structure), formulated principles and recommendations are very general in nature. The subject of this article is a narrower problem – the problem of simplifying organizational structures, and in particular the role of organizational culture in the development of simple structural solutions.

Organizational structure emerges as one of the main sources of excessive complexity of the organization [5; 21] – as Král et al. [19] noticed: some models treat organizational structure as a central or an ultimate component of organizational design. On the one hand, it is increasingly emphasized that simple structural solutions support flexibility and adaptation of organizations operating in complex, dynamic and unpredictable conditions [1; 6; 8; 21; 30]. On the other, the existing structural solutions do not meet the criterion of simplicity. For example, in already cited EIU research, more than half of the managers perceived the structure of their organizations as very or extremely complex, and only 1% of them found the structure to be sufficiently simple [21]. The very concept of a simple structure is still ambiguously understood [16]. Therefore, the term will be introduced in the context of different, often conflicting views.

The main goal of the article is to draw attention to the potential need for including organizational culture influence during structural solutions simplification. The relation between organizational structure and culture was the subject of many conceptual and empirical studies [17], but they relate to the problem of simplifying the organization in a very limited extent [16; 21]. In this article, we present the results of empirical research defining the role of organizational culture in shaping simple structural solutions in the context of other structure-forming factors. These results have become a stimulus for discussion about organizational culture as an instrument of coordination because this problem is basically overlooked in the existing literature.
The article proposes the concept of a community-oriented culture as a key instrument of coordination in the process of simplification of the organizational structure and wider, the organization. It must be admitted that the concept of community-oriented culture is based on theories that go beyond the area of management science. It refers to the research in the area of evolution, psychology, sociology, political science and experimental economics (in reference to Benkler [3]) and morality (in reference to Haidt [11]).

1. Shaping structural solutions according to simplicity rule

The problem of shaping the organizational structure, understood as a set of rules bringing order to the behavior of organization members, is one of the fundamental issues of management sciences [16]. Therefore, it is not surprising that the classics have formulated the relevant rules, which can be divided into two groups:
- specifying how the individual structural characteristics should be shaped;
- specifying the desired characteristics of the structure as a whole.

The simplicity of the organizational structure is listed among the rules of the second group [1; 8; 30]. Typically, it advocates the creation of a flat, single-line solutions, in principle apart from the shape of other features, e.g. the degree of specialization and centralization. There are also not nearly enough efforts to simplify structure in the context of what is happening throughout the organization. This means that there is the need to clarify the principles of structure simplicity, even more, because of doubts about the characteristics of simple structural solutions.

1.1. Simple organizational structure

According to Mintzberg [24] and his, probably the most referenced in the literature, model of a simple structure, its main part is the strategic peak and the basic mechanism of coordination – direct management oversight. It is characterized by a flat, two-tier hierarchy, low degree of specialization, formalization and standardization activities, as well as a high degree of centralization.

Such a structural solution can be seen as restrictive, because within it, one person sets the rules of action, and the rest must submit to them. Therefore, the room for maneuver is small. It would be undoubtedly higher in the case of providing direct executors, who are called the operating core, with the decision-making powers and able to take coordinating actions, not by direct supervision, but through the mechanism of mutual accommodation. It is based on direct arrangements between members of the organization during operation.
The following question arises: whether such a structure, providing members with the decision-making and behavioral freedom, is not easier? Its validity results from the determination of the organizational structure. The simpler it is, the fewer rules there are in the organization. The number of rules, in turn, depends on the scope of freedom of behavior and decision-making of the organization members (the bigger the scope, the less rules). Moreover, it is augmented by e Cunha and Rego [6], who emphasize that the simplification of the structural solution requires limiting rules imposed from above so that organization members can be creative in the face of a complex and dynamic environment.

The answer to this question was formulated based on the idea of the classic fractal tree, resembling a single line, hierarchical structural solution. The calculations show that with the increase in the intensity of the direct management supervision, there is an increase of the structure complexity, although it is not a linear complexity [16; 13]. Thus, a simple structure is not a centralized but a decentralized solution, in which the superior enables the subordinates to self-manage their actions.

The simple structure works under certain conditions, i.e. in a dynamic, or even hostile environment and for small organizations. In other conditions, to paraphrase Einstein's words (‘everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler’), the structure should be as simple as possible, but not simpler. It means that:

- The organizational structure should be adequate to its context (characteristics of other elements of the organization and its environment). Full appropriateness is not possible since the characteristics of the context may create conflicting demands for the formation of the characteristics of the structure. Therefore, a particular context is accompanied by not one structural solution, but their limited set, i.e. the set limited by the context of structural solutions.
- The simplest solution should be chosen from the set of allowable structural solutions, i.e. the least mechanistic. Therefore, characterized by a least-developed hierarchy, the lowest degree of centralization, specialization, formalization and standardization of activities.

Compliance with this kind of simplicity principles in the organization of work fosters rational structural solution – tailored to a variety of internal and external circumstances through well-established cognitive activities. It contributes not only to the creation of structures devoid of unnecessary rules but also reduces the cost of managing the organization and its flexibility [16].

However, it creates another question: what determines the simplicity of the organizational structure? The purpose of this article is an attempt to answer it, in particular, to examine the role of organizational culture in simplifying the structural solution.
1.2. Factors shaping the simplicity of organizational structure

The empirical research (conducted on a sample of 100 companies operating in Poland) was based on following assumptions:

- Characteristics of the structure include the hierarchy, the degree of centralization, specialization, formalization and standardization. Their measurement is based on the findings of the Aston group.
- The structure is the simpler, the more it resembles a simple structural solution.
- The simplicity of the structure depends on 11 factors that have been identified by the model of the organization by Leavitt and the experience of the authors regarding the design of organizational structures. Detailed justification of the particular factors selection and their exhaustive characteristics are the subject of previous papers by Hopej-Kamińska et al. [15; 16]. The variables were measured using questions, which determined the level of their formation in the investigated objects. For example, the desire to simplify the management of the organization was analyzed by asking respondents to assess actual behavior in this regard, the use of IT – by asking respondents about the use of systems such as ERP, CRM or SAP in their organization.
- The organizational structure is simpler in the case of:
  - greater environment uncertainty (and vice versa, the more stable environment, the more complex the structural solution);
  - greater dependence of the organization on the environment (reduction of the dependence results in increased complexity of the structure);
  - smaller organization (the larger the organization, the more complex the structure);
  - less diversification of its business (increase in the degree of diversification leads to an increase in the complexity of the structure);
  - more open organizational culture (‘closing’ the culture is conducive to complicating structural solution);
  - more professional employees (the less professional, the more complex structure);
  - more distributed leadership (the more classic is the leadership, the more complicated is a structural solution);
  - higher determination of the leadership to simplify the organization (the smaller the determination, the more complex the structure);
  - less routine manufacturing technology (the more routine the technology, the more complex the structure);
  - a wider range of information technology use (the lower the range, the more complex the structural solutions);
  - a shorter period of organization’s functioning – the longer the period is, the more complex the structure [2; 14; 28; 29].
Community-Oriented Culture and Simple Organizational Structure

The research tool, used for the verification of above-mentioned hypothesis, involved a questionnaire addressed to companies separated according to the factors mentioned above. We tried to obtain answers from the top management – the study was anonymous [16].

In the first step of the research procedure, the correlation coefficients between the characteristics of the organizational structure and the structure-forming factors have been calculated. The results show that most of the theoretically determined factors correlate with dimensions of the organizational structure (instead of two: diversification level and organization's functioning period, which do not correlate with any structural dimension). The results show that none of the factors considered are significantly correlated with all the characteristics of a structural solution. In the next step of the research procedure, the regression analysis for specific structural characteristics (using the method of stepwise regression) has been carried out. It revealed that none structure-forming factors predict all dimensions of the structure, however, the statistically significant models are proposed for each characteristic.

Hierarch]:

Hierarchy (more precisely its shape) is explained in 49% (adjusted $R^2 = 0.488$) by 4 variables (factors): the size of employment (the strongest predictor, beta = 0.485; $p < 0.001$), income level (beta = 0.179; $p < 0.05$), the degree of diversification activities (beta = 0.166; $p < 0.05$) and the desire of the management to simplify the organization (beta = –0.28; $p < 0.01$). The proposed model was a good fit to the data: $F(4, 87) = 22.705; p < 0.001$. This means that the hierarchy is less extensive (simpler) when the organization is smaller (due to the number of its members and revenues), conducted activities are less diversified, and the desire to simplify the organization is stronger.

Correlation analysis between the structure-forming factors and hierarchy in structural solution revealed that there is indeed a correlation between hierarchy and culture in a cognitive dimension ($r = 0.298; p < 0.01$) and organic leadership ($r = 0.222; p < 0.05$). These factors are not proved to be significant in the regression model, which may result from their correlation with the desire to simplify organizations variable, which is an important predictor in the model. These correlations are moderately positive, and amount to, respectively, $r = 0.447$ and $r = 0.366$ ($p < 0.01$).

Degree of centralization

In the case of this characteristics, the proposed model was statistically significant: $F(4, 82) = 6.077; p < 0.001$, and the predictors were: the level of employment (beta = –0.300; $p < 0.01$), manufacturing technology (beta = –0.270; $p < 0.05$),
organizational culture in the cognitive dimension (beta = –0.263; p < 0.05) and the period of functioning of the organization (beta = 0.214; p < 0.05). Therefore, the more non-routine manufacturing technology, the larger the organization, the more open the organizational culture, and the younger the organization is, the lower the degree of centralization is (and hence, simpler structure). However, the degree of centralization is explained only by 19% of these factors (adjusted R² = 0.191). The model does not include two variables weakly, negatively correlated with the degree of centralization: organizational revenues and organic leadership.

Degree of specialization

Degree of specialization is explained in 65% (adjusted R² = 0.649) by the manufacturing technology (beta = –0.763; p < 0.001). Moreover, the proposed model proved to be well suited for the data: F(1, 84) = 158.04; p < 0.001. Thus, the more non-routine nature the used technology has, the simpler the structure in the dimension of specialization of activities is.

The degree of specialization is correlated with other factors, but they were not included in the regression model. It is due to the fact that the variable manufacturing technology is the most important factor correlated with the degree of specialization (r = 0.784; p < 0.01) and also significantly correlated with almost all (except income) factors correlated with the degree of specialization: moderately with the uncertainty of the environment (r = 0.463; p < 0.01), the degree of openness of organizational culture in the anthropological dimension (r = 0.352; p < 0.01), the organic leadership (r = 0.347; p < 0.01), the scope of IT use (r = 0.4; p < 0.01) and poorly with professionalism of employees (r = 0.27; p < 0.01).

Degree of formalization

Also for the formalization of activities, the model has proved to be statistically significant: F(3, 88) = 20.488; p < 0.001. The degree of formalization is explained in 39% (adjusted R² = 0.391) by three variables: employment size (beta = 0.479; p < 0.001), dependence of the organization on the environment (beta = 0.196; p < 0.01), and the desire to simplify the organization (beta = –0.187; p < 0.01). This means that the structure is simpler in the dimension of formalization of activities when there is a lower number of organizational members, smaller dependence on the environment and greater commitment of the management to simplify of the organization.

It should be noted that the variable organizational culture in the cognitive dimension was not included in this model. This is due to the fact that it correlates with the desire to simplify the organization (r = 0.447, p < 0.01), employment size (r = –0.269, p < 0.01), and also organic leadership (r = 0.352, p < 0.01). The models in which this
variable was one of the predictors of formalization were constructed, but they were worse regarding adjusted $R^2$ than the one presented in this article. Similarly, the correlation between the organic leadership, the desire to simplify the organization ($r = 0.366$, $p < 0.01$), and employment size ($r = -0.244$, $p < 0.01$) was not without significance for the construction of the model. Finally, the dependence on the environment correlated significantly with the uncertainty of the environment ($r = 0.221$, $p < 0.05$) and the desire to simplify the organization ($r = -0.228$, $p < 0.05$).

Degree of standardization

The last considered structural characteristics, i.e. standardization of activities, is explained in 20% (adjusted $R^2 = 0.203$). The proposed model is well suited to the data: $F(2, 90) = 12.694$; $p < 0.001$. It consists of two variables: manufacturing technology ($\beta = -0.408$; $p < 0.001$) and employment size ($\beta = 0.198$; $p < 0.05$). Therefore, the more non-routine the manufacturing technology is, and the lower the number of organization members is, the simpler the organizational structure due to the standardization activities is. It also correlates, to a small extent, with the functioning period of the organization. However, this variable did not enter the model. This is probably due to the fact that it correlates with the manufacturing technology ($r = -0.311$, $p < 0.01$).

The relations revealed by the studies are neither inevitable nor sure (they only substantiate the cause-effect relations). However, the studies indicate several factors that should be taken into account in the process of simplification of structural solutions. They are the size of the organization, the diversification of the business, manufacturing technology, the link between the organization and the environment, desire to simplify the organization, and, what should be underlined, the organizational culture.

In the case of the last factor – the organizational culture – the significant achievements of organizational and management science in describing the relation between organizational culture and organizational structure should be underlined. These studies are a basis for proposing a type of organizational culture conducive for the simplification of the organizational structure.

2. Organizational culture as a structure-forming factor

The relation between cultural norms/values and the organizational structure under study is not surprising. Some authors link culture and structure already while defining the organizational culture. Thus, culture is a network of internal structures and processes that shape and reinforce the perception of the organization by its participants. This network consists of seven overlapping areas: history and myths,
symbols, power structure, organizational structure, control systems, rituals and routines, organizational guiding principle (quoted author calls it a paradigm).

The detailed mechanism of mutual (bidirectional) interaction between culture and organizational structure is presented by Janićijević [17]. He underlines that organizational culture influences the structure during both its design and implementation. In the design phase, interpretative schemes of senior management are formed, who selects a particular type of organizational structure. In the design phase, culture creates a frame of reference on the structural solution and its ability to achieve the organizational goals (for example, if the organizational culture accepts the unequal distribution of power and concentration of decision-making powers at the top of the hierarchy, the managers will choose centralized organizational structure). However, in the implementation phase, the impact can be positive or negative, depending on the compatibility of the two components. Culture will legitimize the structure in case of high compliance – participants will receive the organization structure as a normal and desirable as it will facilitate the implementation of the objectives and tasks of the organization and support the activities of employees. In the case of compliance of culture and structure, cultural values will be strengthened through the process of institutionalization – the elements of organizational culture will be reflected in the structural solution. On the other hand, if the selected organizational structure is not compatible with the existing organizational culture, the employees will experience a cognitive dissonance. The structure will dictate behaviors contrary to the current procedure, which will force a change either of the structure or organizational culture, depending on the level of advancement and dissemination of culture. The high degree of dissemination will be associated with lack of acceptance of new structure (incomplete or modified implementation of the structure). Its low degree will cause the culture to adjust to the new structural solution (there will be a deinstitutionalization of culture). Therefore, the organizational structure institutionalizes (or deinstitutionalizes) organizational culture and organizational culture legitimizes (or delegitimizes) structure. McGuire et al. said it also has power to cultivate change initiatives [23].

The mechanisms described above will lead to the co-occurrence of certain types of culture and organizational structure [17]. Handy, was the first one, who has published a typology of cultures associated with the type of organizational structure [12]. He defined the culture of power corresponding to the structure characterized by a high degree of centralization and a low degree of formalization. On the other hand, bureaucratic organizational structure (high degree of hierarchy, specialization and formalization) will favor the formation of the culture of role. The third type of organizational culture is the culture of task which is typical for flexible structural solutions corresponding with adhocracy structure, defined by Mintzberg [24]. The fourth type of culture is the culture of person. In this organizational culture, the individual unit has a dominant position, relations between people are based on partnership and

Community-Oriented Culture and Simple Organizational Structure
independence, and the position of the employee depends on individual proficiency in the implementation of a specific task. The culture of person is common in a professional bureaucracy and refers to such professional groups as lawyers, architects, doctors and academic teachers.

Similar results were revealed by the team from the University of Szczecin. It was deduced that companies operating in Poland, with the participation of foreign capital, are characterized by decentralization and poorly outlined hierarchy, manifested by co-decision, cooperation, and reciprocity. National companies, in turn, organize their activities according to the concept which is based on the clearly marked hierarchy, clearly distinguished units, as well as a clearly defined range of tasks, powers, and responsibilities. The authors believe that the differences between structural solutions explain, to some extent, the differences between the cultural norms and values in studied objects [10].

Thus, while the impact of organizational culture on the organizational structure does not raise major concerns, it remains unclear in which way culture affects structural solutions. The attempt to answer this question is based on the fact that literature pays little attention to culture as an instrument of coordination. Hofstede [13] was one of those who saw it. He said that organizations operating in different countries, depending on cultural preferences, comply with different types of structural solutions, distinguished by Mintzberg [24], characterized by certain instruments of coordination. This is, inter alia, because the organizational culture:

- offers a common language, which organization’s members can use to inform about the implementation of mutually intertwined activities;
- accumulates what is common, forming a mutual trust, undoubtedly facilitates the coordination of activities;
- gives a sense of stability, increasing the predictability of certain actions, and therefore the use of, e.g. coordination by standardizing the results – at least to some extent.

Not every organizational culture identically governs the behavior of organizational members, including the coordination activities. The study on the factors shaping the simplicity of the structure revealed that it is not dependent on the anthropological and social culture dimension. However, it seems to depend on the cognitive dimension (Table 1).

It means that:

- the simplicity of structural solution does not depend on the values of an open organizational culture, such as selfishness, rivalry, and self-realization.
- the simplicity of organizational structure seems to favor the coordination which is based on mutual exchange of information, mutual enrichment, pluralism or the use of techniques of trial and error. Coordination based on authoritarianism, distrust of workers and fear of failure is not preferred.
Community-Oriented Culture and Simple Organizational Structure

Table 1. Open and closed organizational culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational culture</th>
<th>Open</th>
<th>Closed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anthropological</td>
<td>Voluntarism: organization as an object shaping reality according to their own will (planning object)</td>
<td>Determinism: organization as an object sensitive to influences from outside (object of planning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Individualism: unit is under protection</td>
<td>Collectivism: collective is under protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Temporality: learning and knowledge discovery as a continuous process</td>
<td>Finality: realization of knowledge and indiscriminate implementation of the final ideas</td>
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Source: own study based on [4].

It seems that simplicity of the organizational structure can also be served by other values. Haidt [11], referring to ‘our bee nature’, stresses the importance of increasing social capital, especially:
- freedom, understood as the concern about whatever the organization members are feeling oppressed and trying to unite against the tyranny of their manager-in-chief;
- loyalty, i.e. the answer to the challenge of creating a cohesive coalition [11].

Because of that, people begin to see themselves as members of the team and not separate units, which is conducive to building mutual trust that allows the employees to do their job efficiently. For this to happen, according to Haidt, there is a need for:
- The increase of similarity rather than diversity in the organization: ‘to make a human hive, you want to make everyone feel like a family. So, don’t call attention to racial and ethnic differences; make them less relevant by ramping up similarity and celebrating the group’s shared values and common identity’ [11].
- Use of synchronization that shapes trust. Such activities have been carried out for many years in Toyota, where every day begins with a common, synchronized gymnastics for all employees.
- Organization of competition. However, not an individual but a team competition. It increases the kindness to own group rather than the reluctance to foreign groups [11].

Therefore, a new approach to organizational culture is proposed. There are three dimensions of organizational culture (due to the role it plays in coordinating activities):
- temporality / finality;
- freedom / authoritarianism;
- loyalty / contestation.

Thus, the basic types of culture may be a bottom-up and a top-down culture. The first is based on the dimensions of temporality, freedom and loyalty, and the second – finality, authoritarianism, and contestation.

In general, coordination by a top-down culture is used in the top-down management, which has its roots in the achievements of the classics of management science. Coordination by the bottom-up culture is in turn a part of the bottom-up
Community-Oriented Culture and Simple Organizational Structure

management used in the turbulent environment, which often happens as if the present one did not know in what direction to go. It should be emphasized that it is based on simple structural solutions, that give organizational members plenty of space. The bottom-up culture is a type of culture which favors the development of cooperation systems. It could be even defined as the culture of ‘bottom-up cooperation’ or ‘self-organization’. It is based on the assumption that people have a natural predisposition to cooperate. There is a direct reference to the latest experiments and discussion of the ‘gene of cooperation’ or ‘natural collaboration’ as the third pillar of evolution, next to mutation and natural selection [3]. According to Benkler [3], such an assumption would lead, among others, to the rejection of surveillance measures in motivating employees to incite them to engage and strengthen the sense of common purpose. In turn, the top-down culture is, in fact, a culture of ‘top-down coordination’. It is based on the assumption of selfish human nature (a reference to the work about Selfish Gene published by Dawkins in 1976 [7]) and hierarchical nature of human being (discussed by Leavitt [20]).

They are both the ends of the continuum of organizational cultures (Figure 1), and between which there is an infinite number of intermediate, more or less top-down or bottom-up types of culture.

Figure 1. Two extremes of community-oriented culture

![Figure 1. Two extremes of community-oriented culture](source)

Source: own study.

Appointed types of structures are considered as two extremes relating to the extent to which the organizational culture supports the community building. Therefore, it is assumed that one should speak of a new concept of organizational culture – the community-oriented culture.

3. The role of community-oriented culture in simplifying the structural solution

The typology of organizational culture presented above is the starting point for further empirical research. It is assumed that shaping the organizational structure (in line with its simplicity rule) may be based on several principles. These are:
First principle: continuous analysis of existing structural solution designed to assess its complexity. As established earlier, it is the greater, the more extensive the hierarchy and the greater the degree of centralization, specialization, formalization and standardization of activities are. Therefore, it can be assumed that a complex structure has a high level of defects of its attributes, e.g. the formation of barriers between hierarchical levels, making decisions in isolation from places where the problems are, physical and mental fatigue and forced labor inefficiency.

Second principle: the analysis of the suitability (aligning) of the organizational structure and its context (a set of structure-forming results), which may be based on the diagram shown in Figure 2. As it shows, the rating of perceived role in the existing structural solution has an impact on the behavior of organizational members. It should be noted that it is based on the provided function. Therefore, there are different components, and each of them constitutes an assessment of the acceptance, provided by the members of the organization (compared to others), of organizational behaviors arrangement (to limit their randomness and unpredictability, more precisely) due to the given structural characteristic. Therefore, the higher the acceptance, the easier the life within the structure. Thus, it is more suited to its context, i.e. more rational.

Development of bottom-up culture. It is not a simple nor a short process. On the contrary, it is extremely complex, and it never ends. Cultural norms and values do not arise at the order. The organization members must be convinced that change is necessary and must be motivated to try something new, even more than during other organizational transformations.

Making two kinds of changes in the organizational structure. One of them is carried out when the structure is overly complex and at the same time appropriate to its context, which allows for the use of a limited set of solutions, which differ in complexity (simplicity). The second kind of change lies in the fact that the simplification of the structure is a part of the simplification of the entire organization, which includes, for example, the reduction of the degree of business diversification, or the reduction of the organization’s size.
Community-Oriented Culture and Simple Organizational Structure

Figure 3. Workflow for simplifying the organizational structure

Organizational structure analysis

In the structure complex?

In the structure appropriate in the given context?

Can the structure be simpler?

Changes to match the organizational structure and factors shaping its simplicity

Is the strategy for simpler structure in place?

Selection of a simpler organizational structure

Organizational changes, including those connected to simplification of the structure

Shaping bottom-up organizational culture, Actions ensuring that the organizational complexity (including structure complexity) will not be revived.

Source: own study based on [16].
Potential confirmation of the community-oriented culture impact on the simplification of the organizational structure will entail the need to include organizational culture in the workflow for simplifying the organizational structure. A workflow diagram of the procedure of simplifying the organizational structure is illustrated in Figure 3. It concerns mainly organizations with complex structural solutions, and among other things, of a large size and highly diversified activities. However, it may also be used by the leadership of the organization, e.g. a medium-sized, of course taking into account the specifics of their own actions and prudent decisions regarding changes to simplify the structure.

## Conclusion

The principle of simplicity (organizational structure should be as little mechanistic as possible in the limits of its context solutions), formulated in this article, seems to be important and perhaps even crucial in organizing activities. That is because simplicity is a kind of common denominator of other desirable characteristics of the structure, as the element of the organization, e.g. the flexibility or transparency. The conducted research shows that simplicity depends on several factors, including the organizational culture, which in the light of the considerations can be seen as another instrument of coordination – generally overlooked in the literature so far.

Based on new dimensions of organizational culture and proposed innovative culture typology, it can be assumed that the more community-oriented nature of the organizational culture is, the simpler the structural solution is. However, with the obvious assumption that the other factors are at the same level. Nonetheless, shaping a bottom-up culture is a very complex process, whose success depends on, among others, the determination of the organization’s management to simplify it. It seems that the importance of this factor in organizing activities will grow with increasing dynamics and complexity of the environment.

It should be noted that the research results, presented above, are not a closed set of analyses. Further directions of research can be identified. One of them are the analyses of credibility of a hypothesis concerning the relations between shaping of community-oriented culture and the simplicity of organizational structure. This should involve the development and empirical verification of situational factors model of organizational structure simplicity, where community oriented culture would be only one of the considered factors. This would be a significant closure for this research problem and would develop and implement practically oriented methods and techniques for simplifying structures.

However, considering the results of the research and deliberations, an in-depth understanding and structuring the concept of community-oriented culture as a vital
element in the development of systems based on cooperation rather than hierarchy or competition appears to be a particularly interesting and important research challenge. The correlation between organizational structure and culture, discussed in this article, at the same time allows one to assume that the change in the structure will be important in the development of community-oriented culture.

References


COMMUNITY-ORIENTED CULTURE AND SIMPLE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Abstract

Simplicity has been (and still is) in opposition to the increasingly complex world of organizations. The paper focuses on the problem of simple structure solutions and it aims to define the role of organizational culture in simplifying organizational structures. Simple structures are recognized as those facilitating flexibility and adaptability in the complex, dynamic and unpredictable environment. Since the Ashby's law, holding that complexity may be balanced by a different kind of complexity, is being questioned, the simplification of structures requires the development of specific mechanisms within the organization. The role of culture in shaping simple structural solutions is presented in the broader context of other factors (the results of empirical research are presented). Organizational culture stands as yet another instrument of coordination – so far generally overlooked in the literature. The concept of community-oriented culture as crucial for simplifying structures is developed.

KEY WORDS: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, SIMPLICITY, ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE, COMMUNITY-ORIENTED CULTURE

KULTURA WSPÓŁDZIAŁANIA I PROSTOTA STRUKTUR ORGANIZACYJNYCH

Streszczenie

Postulat prostoty stoi w opozycji do coraz bardziej złożonego świata współczesnych organizacji. Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie prostego rozwiązania strukturalnego oraz określenie roli kultury organizacyjnej w upraszczaniu struktur organizacyjnych. Proste struktury uznaje się za sprzyjające elastyczności i adaptacji w złożonym, dynamicznym i trudno przewidywalnym otoczeniu. Jako że kwestionowane jest tym samym sformułowane przez W.R. Ashby’ego i noszące jego imię prawo, które głosi, że każda różnorodność może być równoważona przez inną, upraszczanie struktur wymaga rozwijania specyficznych mechanizmów wewnątrz organizacji. W artykule przedstawiono rolę kultury w kształtowaniu prostych rozwiązań strukturalnych w kontekście szeregu innych czynników (przytoczono wyniki badań empirycznych). W ich świetle kultura organizacyjna jawi się jako istotny instrument
koordynacji działań dotąd słabo dostrzegany w literaturze przedmiotu. Sformułowano koncepcję kultury współdziałania jako kluczowej dla upraszczania struktur organizacyjnych.

**SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: STRUKTURA ORGANIZACYJNA, PROSTOTA, KULTURA ORGANIZACYJNA, KULTURA WSPÓŁDZIAŁANIA**