

Reproduction of Organizational Culture – What Does Organizational Culture Recreate?

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Abstract

The paper deals with the concept of reproduction in organizational culture. The first goal of our paper is the answer to the following question: how is the organizational culture reproduced? The fundamental question, which is rarely raised by professionals and scientists with practical experience engaged in common-sense discourse is: what does the ‘normative’ organizational culture reproduce? This is the second goal of our analyses of an organizational discourse. The concept of ‘**modern and pro-effective organizational culture**’ is used in this paper in the normative sense, since such culture, modern and effective, is referred to (sometimes implicitly) in scientific and consulting diagnoses and analyses. It is also a term compiled of other, conceptual terms such as: practical knowledge, utility, expertise, profitability, effectiveness, etc. The basic analytical concepts used in this paper are: habitus, interaction ritual, linguistic capital and the ‘field of discourse’.

Key words: Sociology of organization, discourse analysis, organizational culture, reproduction of culture, human resources management, interpretative sociology.

JEL Classifications: A14, Z1.

The Reproduction of Organizational Culture

The scope of analysis belongs to the **sociology of management** ‘which examines social determinants of the management process, the internal social dynamics of that process and the social consequences of task-group management’ (Konecki, Tobera, 2002, p. 1). One of the problems addressed by sociology of management is: ‘How is a particular way of management generated? Processes that are analyzed are: negotiation, persuasion, mediation, threat of violence, indoctrination, manipulation, various games and other interaction tactics leading to establishing relatively permanent ways of managing an organization. It is also important to analyze the language used by professionals as well as practical experts of management in the process of constituting the organizational order. Linguistic categories, taxonomies, create a discourse which defines and constitutes the organizational authority as well as understanding of agency and organizational participation’ (ibidem, pp. 1-2).

The scope of analysis belongs also to **qualitative sociology**: “Qualitative sociology is a perspective of description, understanding and sometimes explaining social phenomena by investigating and analyzing individual and group experiences and world outlooks plus human actions, using qualitative methods of research or qualitative analysis of qualitative and/or quantitative data. Qualitative sociology is not only associated with the usage of qualitative methods of research (group interviews, participant observations, field studies, etc.), as it is sometimes understood. It is a qualitative way of thinking about human experience, i.e. the way of “scientific intersubjective empathy” in getting the meaning of individual and group experience of so called external world. The effect of research and analysis could be a theoretical description or conceptualization and theoretical integration of concepts” (Konecki, 2005).

The term ‘reproduction of organizational culture’ applies whenever managers want to reproduce the characteristics of an existing organizational culture because it is coherent with their vision and strategy of business. Usually at the background of this vision and strategy is the basic business assumption, i.e.: efficiency in achieving goals usually operationalized as profit. The reproduction

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of culture will therefore be a reconstruction of values and norms as well as of basic assumptions and symbols that legitimate the above elements of organizational culture. Such reconstruction takes place in the process of inculcation of values, norms and basic assumptions in secondary socialization, though its initial stages may already be present in primary socialization.

However, the organizational culture may also undergo transformation or be created, so to speak, from scratch. Such cases also involve inculcation of values, norms and basic assumptions. Are we justified, in that case, to speak of reproduction of organizational culture? This is the subject of our analysis. Is the organizational culture a feature of one particular company or should we attempt to explain the general properties of reproduction of behaviour and personality patterns in the organizational cultures of contemporary companies of the late-modern era?

The organizational culture of contemporary companies in the late-modern period legitimates a social order in which particular concepts of professionalism, efficiency and modernity are translated into values, behavioral norms and personality patterns. Business consulting as well as scientific studies (especially in the broadly understood field of organization and management) provide enormous support for the legitimating practices by providing a language and ways of understanding of the so called 'modern management'. On the other hand, the function of training in human resources management is a basic practice of reproduction of a legitimate organizational culture.

On the sleeves of their books expert scientists and academic advisors emphasize practical bias to legitimate their expertise. Conversely, practitioners call on scientific authorities to stress the legitimacy of their own actions, which thereby gain sanction from the new Business Faith, i.e. from science and the academia¹. Expert systems, supported by science, help to overcome uncertainty and existential fears of today (Giddens, 2001, pp. 48, 196 and other), but they also structure the reality in a sociological sense. The managerial advisory and educational function, apart from its technical objective, is also an instrument of social control. We might also repeat after P. Bourdieu and J.C. Passeron (1990, pp. 74-76 and other; cf. also Kłoskowska 1990, pp. 17-20) that it takes on the form of symbolic violence. By analogy to the theories of the above mentioned authors, the mechanics of this violence pertains to the **authority of science used for educational and advisory purposes, the authority of modern culture and of the culture of effectiveness**. The notion of 'novelty' contained in various fixed phrases such as 'modern management of human resources', 'modern methods of employee motivation', 'new corporate culture', 'organizational culture in demand on the global market', 'as the scientific research shows...' is a tool of symbolic violence, because reasonable people, professionals in particular, will never agree to apply outdated (pre-modern) methods of human resources management, outdated ways of motivating, nor will they support an old corporate culture, which, on top of all, is ineffective, as the 'scientific research shows'. The social imperative becomes here a personal imperative of the individual (cf. Elias, 1980, pp. 380-381). The very concept of pro-effective culture is a strong social value implying the

¹ Academic institutions play an important role as 'seats of authority' and 'factories' of the descriptive language for the business and social reality. Of special importance are the MBA studies, which provide a standard for education of future managers commonly accepted in the western world of business. It has, therefore, a global character. The academia can be compared to the 'Court' which has developed ways of proper behaviour and a proper language (cf. Elias, 1980, pp. 150, 37). International research, such as Hofstede, shows that the preferred values in the sphere of work become uniform across frontiers. There is a universal preference for a smaller than actually perceived distance of power, the same goes for 'avoidance of uncertainty' and the preference for smaller degree of individualism or dimension of 'masculinity'. This paradigm of preferred values may have its source in the syllabuses of business schools. Students and managers are probably under influence from American management techniques (Van Oudenhoven, 2001: 102-103). There is, for instance, a correspondence between the values of 'Organizational Development' and the results of Van Oudenhoven research (ibidem: 102-103). OD is characterized by low power distance, low level of uncertainty avoidance and of individualism as well as masculinity. Similar results were obtained in the above mentioned research. The suggestion offered above is very meaningful, since it is possible that management techniques, being a vehicle for certain values, become instruments of reproduction of a 'legitimate' model of organizational culture. The process of economic and cultural globalization, often identified with 'americanization' may carry these values to distant parts of the world and copy them at the destinations, also through educational systems. This is not only a process of convergence/reproduction of management techniques but also of a desired organizational culture.

existence of an antinomy – anti-effective culture, which is illegitimate and, moreover, should be changed or overthrown by a cultural revolution. Antinomies generated by these concepts, and there are many more of that sort, underlie a paradigm of discourse which differentiates organizational cultures. Reproduction of organizational culture applies to the reconstruction of concepts by the rule of differentiation into dichotomies constituting axiological fields for specific actions. It is difficult to recognize the arbitrary cultural nature of the concept of the so called ‘organizational culture’ which is pro-effective, and ‘effectively uses the employees’ potential’ (cf. the title of a book by Cz. Sikorski, 2002, and in particular the subtitle: *The Organizational culture. Use your workforce effectively*). It will be hard to recognize the arbitrary social nature of these notions, and the arbitrary nature of the organizational culture bound to them if we use concepts related to humanization of work, such as ‘employee participation’, ‘group forms of labor management’ or concepts linked to the problems of intelligence in management, e.g. ‘intelligent style of management’, ‘intelligent companies’, ‘intelligent entrepreneurship’, etc. These concepts, as well as the category of ‘effectiveness’ also have the legitimizing power for various types of action (cf. Lyotard, 1997, pp. 126-127, 143, 146 and others). The conceptual antinomies of these terms have a pejorative sense, since they breed associations with lack of humanistic approach to management, and lack of respect for knowledge and the effectiveness derived from it. **Symbolic violence enters the organizational life imperceptibly**, and its agents (scientists, consultants, managers) pass on the structure of this discourse inconspicuously and often unconsciously. Moreover, all of that takes place ‘on demand’ from those who are objects to such violence.

Adoption of values of a culture, which we shall call here ‘modern and pro-effective organizational culture’¹, may start early, at the level of primary socialization, since patterns of professional success and the meaning of ‘consumer satisfaction’ can be acquired by a child relatively early (e.g. when he adopts them through observation of work in various institutions and listening to comments of his parents on the quality of service). Schools can reinforce these values, though we need to remember that not all schools are equal. There are exclusive schools, that imprint a particular habitus (Bourdieu, Passeron, 1990, pp. 90-94; and Bourdieu, Wacquant, 2001, p. 107) of ‘modern and pro-effective culture’ through pedagogic work, as well as through exemplification of values in the ways of functioning, structure and artifacts of the school, and through verbal emphasis on what is effective, modern and valuable for an organization. Hence the primary habitus, this inculcated mosaic of attitudes and behavioral or axiological disposition becomes a basis for differentiating the ability to acquire secondary habitus in a future job, from a ‘modern and pro-effective culture’. The process of acquiring the habitus is accompanied by ‘subjectivization of objectivity’. The habitus determines all purposeful action, however the purpose does not always have to be realized by the agent. The objectivity pertains to socio-organizational relations, that is, to our basic entanglement in social relations. Organizational participation and organizational careers may thus be determined already at the level of primary habitus acquisition.

The secondary habitus, related to our work institutions is mainly acquired in the course of post-elementary education, self-tuition, occupational self-training, and worker training. At this level, strong motivation to acquire the notional matrix of the ‘modern and pro-effective culture’ often allows ‘self-application’ of symbolic violence by the omnipresent and omnipotent organizational system of the late-modern society. The popularity of supplementary education and the concept of lifelong education along with the aspiration to obtain a diploma, preceded by an examination as a rite of passage are strong arguments in support of the theory of ‘self-subjection’ to symbolic violence by thousands of would-be graduates of a variety of schools. Newspaper special sections such as ‘Szkolenia’ (Supplementary Education) in *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Polish newspaper) are an extremely important means of communication of the organizational world with future employees.

¹ This term derives from popular views on the desired organizational culture in the contemporary world of organization and business. They can be found in numerous guides and Polish journals, e.g. ‘Personel i Zarządzanie’ *Personnel and Management*, ‘Zarządzanie Zasobami Ludzkimi’ *Human Resources Management*, and in newspaper inserts (e.g. ‘Praca’ *Work* in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, or in *Rzeczpospolita*) as well as in empirical research reports.

The columns show what is important in shaping a career. They list ads of different schools and organizations which provide supplementary education to apparently undereducated, knowledge-hungry, permanently trained workers or candidates for future workers. Individual strategies focusing on supplementary courses, based on a rational choice of the agent, who either seeks promotion or wants to avoid degradation of his knowledge or position, are determined by the organizational habitus of 'modern and pro-effective culture'. The negotiation, the creative search of one's social status is based on the interactional resource of the habitus. Supplementary education as well as the so called 'coaching' and 'mentoring'¹ facilitate full development of the habitus of a legitimate organizational culture. Hard work, company loyalty, identification with aims, worker satisfaction are concepts indicating possibilities of making an organizational career, or simply keeping a job. They are also necessary conditions of such career. Opposite concepts are excluded from the legitimate organizational discourse. It is not possible to be a dissatisfied and yet an effective worker. What emerges is mostly axiologically positive terms, with a semantic axis referring to effectiveness **characterized by growth**, in line with the predominant in the society **rule of majority**² (dominant in the late-contemporary society). 'More quality' in a product implies that it is better. For whom? Surely for the organization which is planning to expand, to increase sales or struggling to survive. Also for the consumer, because he makes his choices according to the same rule. The potential consumer's rational need of possession of a certain product is being minimized. The discourse usually imposes the need on him, and if such need is not present – the discourse generates it and precludes any reflection on its reality or purpose in relation to the full and actual life context of the individual/consumer.

The Ritual Habitus – Etiquette

Etiquette is another field in which habitus manifests itself. Through acquisition of certain manners we come into possession of a cultural capital, which is exchangeable, at least partly, for other forms of capital. Organizational culture, and, in particular, what we call 'professional behavior' comprises a defined and specific way of behaviour subject to aesthetic and moral judgment and hardly separable from mere technical skills (see Bourdieu, Passeron, 1990, pp. 179). The system of manners is more than a stylization of the organizational culture discussed here, it is not only what distinguishes it from other, common cultures, i.e. outdated and ineffective. It is a part of what we call professionalism, and applies not only to so called 'professional cultures'. Modern cultures are professional, if not for anything else, because they want to manage knowledge, which is at the basis of all professionalism.

The problems of manners and etiquette are referred to by E. Goffman (1959/1981, 1967, 1971, cf. Elias, 1980). Ritual is a variety of performance, with a more formalized dimension of etiquette, and a well organized aesthetic and verbal sphere. In a ritual the order of events is clearly defined and the roles and actions of all participants are precisely assigned.

¹ In short these terms can be defined as follows: *coaching* is a specialized system of patronage and tutoring of workers by appointed coaches, *mentoring* is a special consulting program including elements of patronage, preparing workers for their organizational career.

² This rule has its roots in the democratic principle of majority: 'An analysis of the principle of majority, inherently bound to democracy, shows what great harm to the deepest foundations of our civilization has been inflicted by dehumanization of thinking. In the eyes of a common man the rule of majority does not only stand objective reason, but is, in a way, more progressive, because people can best evaluate their own interest; it is believed that majority decisions concerning common affairs carry equal value as institutions of the so called supreme reason' (Horkheimer, 1987, pp. 267-268). '... The principle of majority in the form of common judgment about everything and everyone, which functions thanks to opinion polls and modern media, becomes a sovereign power – reason has to bow to it. It is a new god, but not in the sense voiced by heralds of great revolutions, a power that fights injustice, but in the sense of a power that fights anything that counteracts it. The more people's judgments are manipulated by various interests, the more often majority is called upon to arbitrate cultural life. It is expected to legitimate surrogates in all fields, including the products of folk art and literature aimed at deceiving the masses. The greater the scale on which scientific propaganda makes the public opinion a tool of dark forces, the more the public opinion pretends to be a surrogate of reason. This sham triumph of democratic progress consumes the spiritual substance that democracy used to feed on' (ibidem, pp. 271-272).

In every culture we have to keep certain 'manners' (etiquette or rituals). Maintaining the manners is prerequisite for participation in the maintenance of harmony and consensus. Pro-effective cultures are characterized by a sense of community and loyalty. Such concepts are extremely important for this kind of discourse. By means of dramatization of organizational interactions (ceremonial/code of manners) serves many functions:

- 1) it eliminates unexpected reactions which may surprise the partner in interaction,
- 2) it is a token of group membership,
- 3) it helps to anticipate the partners' behavior in interaction.

A rejection of the ritual shows lack of respect for the partner of interaction and usually causes embarrassment (Ramsey 1985, pp. 319; cf. Goffman, 1967, pp. 5, 97 and other; Simmel, 1975). Embarrassment can undermine trust in the interactional order, may be a sign of lack of professionalism and can disturb the order of organizational culture.

There is a form of interaction which resembles ritual, whose aim is to show and preserve certain social values. 'Face' can be such a value; it concerns all partners of interaction. **'Face' can be defined as a positive social value** claimed by an individual for himself by means of a definition of the situation, assuming that others perceive it identically. 'Face' is therefore an image of self, defined in terms of socially approved attributes (Goffman, 1967, p. 5). 'Face' can be a set of attributes characterizing a professional. In contemporary terms the concept might be called personal "image".

A participant in organizational culture keeps his face (image) when the line of behavior he adopts presents an image of his personal integrity supported by judgments and evidence provided by other participants of the interaction.

The individual may, however, 'lose his face' when the identity he presents is incompatible with the ways in which it is defined by others, when he fails to prepare an adequate identity for a given audience or when he becomes in some way ashamed (ibidem, p. 7).

There are many techniques the individual can use to protect face, or to recover it if it has been lost. They belong to a repertoire of everyday practices of interaction prescribed by etiquette and social conventions. By working on our 'manners' we simultaneously work on 'face'. Most often it is a cultural imperative, one we are not always aware of (cf. Redding, 1982). We assume that the imperative to work on 'face' – image – is a part of the habitus of the individual in contemporary modern organizational cultures.

Whenever participants of an interaction fail to prevent an event whose expression is incompatible with their assessment of social value, they will give the event an incidental value, in order to repair its effects (see Goffman, 1967, p. 19).

Goffman, referring to Durkheim, distinguishes between positive interactional rituals, which maintain ties and contacts between individuals (as well as social harmony) and negative interactional rituals, used to repair a threatened interactional consensus.

Abiding by etiquette, or cultivation of manners, serves the preservation of harmony and consensus also in modern organizational cultures. This holds in particular for those societies in which we observe and increasing interdependence between relations and social relations (cf. Mastenbroek, 2000). Etiquette performs the functions of restraining emotions and controlling expression. The skill of controlling expression of emotional states becomes increasingly important. In the situation of the increasing value of open communication and the growing spirit of co-operation which makes team work possible, the ability to combine openness and spontaneity with control over emotions becomes important, too. In organizations we have to do with a process of growing discipline as well as a process of 'informalization' of social relations. The informalized approach to workers does not eliminate, however, fully disciplined behaviour, regulated through ritual and etiquette (ibidem, cf. also Elias, 1996, pp. 49-77).

For our purpose, we shall analyze this problem on examples from a Polish handbook by Edward Pietkiewicz 'Etykieta menadzera' (*Manager's Etiquette*). The author claims that 'etiquette constitutes a sphere of culture, determines the external aspect of behaviour, and – generally speaking – refers to one's appearance or table manners. Instances of that are: priority rules, reliability, punctuality, discretion, greeting, salutation, addressing' (Pietkiewicz, 1998, p. 248). The author claims that 'etiquette is one of the factors that secure the existence and the development of a company' (ibidem, p. 8). His approach to etiquette is thus highly utilitarian, the goal being – effectiveness of action. On the introductory pages of his guide the author uses the term 'personal culture' as an equivalent of good manners. He believes it to be 'a result of hard work, a product of life-long acquisition'. It is a permanent personal feature and it determines one's behaviour regardless of time, place or circumstances (ibidem, pp. 15-16). Therefore he believes that culture can be acquired also in the process of secondary socialization. The durability of this feature suggests that it becomes an element of the habitus of the individual. A 'cultured man', in the author's view, pays attention to his appearance, i.e. hairstyle, hygiene, clothing. Another element of personal culture are 'social manners' such as the skill of greeting, introducing people, conversing, behaving at the table. The concept of 'personal culture' entails knowledge of various disciplines including literature, history, technology, architecture... Through participation in culture we become sensitive, we broaden our interests, we formulate our ideas in a clear and proper way' (ibidem, p. 16). The last sentence is significant. By participating in culture, a manager acquires communicative competence, his 'proper' language testifies of his possession of linguistic competence rooted in literature and so called 'high culture'. The manager reproduces the high culture which becomes an element of his work, and thus a part of his image. A 'cultured man' also abides by the norms and customs of the society, he shows kindness towards people wherever he goes, not only at his workplace. Keeping the code of behaviour, according to the author, does not make a man 'stiff'; on the contrary, it makes him more flexible and helps eliminate aggression at the place of work.

Etiquette is the rule at the workplace. One of its elements is observation of hierarchy, hence Simmel's concept of 'sociability' is redefined at the workplace and becomes '**hypersociability**', because the rules of real life, in this case social stratification, have obviously been included into it. 'Good manners require that we greet a woman prior to a man, a superior prior to a subordinate' (ibidem, p. 24, cf. pp. 67-68). We always greet the host first (by the rule of sociability), whereas we bid good-bye starting from the person in the lowest position and ending on the highest, such as the general director (by the rule of hypersociability). At get-togethers the sitting order at the table follows the social rank (hypersociability). Business cards should also inform us about the social status of their owners (hypersociability).

Being modern, as we can see in the context of etiquette, does not preclude respect for hierarchy; in fact, it legitimizes it. Hence, hierarchy is reproduced through etiquette in a double sense: firstly, by pointing to its rules and importance, secondly by making it clear that only the knowledge of etiquette can include some people in the hierarchy game (and, thereby the power game as well), and that it will exclude the ignorant ones.

Another important concept used by the author of the handbook is **the image** of the manager. The approach to the individual's identity is also very utilitarian here. The personal image becomes a 'wrapping' for a 'quality product'¹. 'The quality product is the manager's personality, his values, his approach to work, to his colleagues and other people. The wrapping is the clothing adequate to circumstances, the body language, the etiquette' (ibidem, p. 243). The argument which justifies the importance of image is of economic nature. The profitability of an image legitimates its usage. There is no reference to social hierarchy here, namely that one is supposed to behave or present

¹ The value of the individual's image in contemporary organizational culture is also emphasized by the publication of many guides/handbooks (Lewandowska-Tarasiuk, 1999; Sampson, 1996, pp. 56-76; Murdoch, 2000). It is also probable that drawing attention to 'making a good impression' or 'being able to gain a client's or a superior's favor' links the functioning of contemporary organizations with the role that the 'middle class', which professes such values, plays in these organizations, in the statistical sense as well as a point of reference for individual actions (see Domański, 1994).

himself in a proper way, because this is what the higher class do, or, maybe, what the elite of that class do (cf. Elias, 1980, pp.152, 154-155). Nonetheless, the economic motivation that justifies the importance of this concept stems from the social structure, the cultural tendency to integration which characterizes the stage of globalization of organizational cultures.

Image is composed of professionalism, speech, body language and etiquette. Personal culture projects an image which the manager 'sells' to his interaction partners, reproducing a type of organizational culture based on utilitarian values (selling the wrapping – image) and on the organizational hierarchy (respect for status in etiquette). E. Pietkiewicz supports his views concerning the propriety of nonverbal behaviour by calling upon sociological research (however he does not name the source). He writes: 'Sociological research shows: A handshake lasts from 2 to 5 seconds. It should not be longer than 9' (Pietkiewicz 1998, p. 246). Thus scientific authority enforces symbolic violence, which takes place also in the sphere nonverbal behaviour, uniquely acceptable and legitimate from the point of view of the manager's etiquette in modern, pro-effective organizational culture. Being the only legitimate culture, it is the only one the manager can adopt without generating cognitive dissonance.

The Linguistic Capital

What else does the organizational culture recreate? It reproduces basic social relations. Among them, the relation between those who have the power and the permanent executive role as well, as those who participate in the 'modern and pro-effective organizational culture', and those who have not been able to enter an organization with such culture, often rejected (excluded) in selection interviews. The class of managers and workers who possess the proper cultural code together with the rules of etiquette, a linguistic code¹ containing business expressions and technical incantations of different professions and the *lingua franca* of business – a mixture of the so called 'Business English' and, in our case, Polish, and the methods of self-presentation and assertive behaviour, will win the game of selection and organizational career². The linguistic capital is closely linked to the acquired etiquette and the ability to build one's image, as described in the previous section.

Assertive behaviour in the behavioral sphere consists (among other things) of the ability to use such expressions as: I am convinced..., I know..., I want..., I disagree, etc. They refer to psychological states which give the individual an appearance of a self-confident person, someone who trusts his abilities, who does not overreact, who can restrain his aggression and cope with it. These features are closely connected to the image that he projects (image for sale) and to the presentation of self as professional. Professionalism is, among other things, a skillfully created appearance of professionalism made up of such things as self-control and self-certainty³ (Sampson, 1996, pp. 58; cf. Mastenbroek, 2000, 2000a). A professional knows how to act in his field, believes in what he presents to his clients and his co-workers and is assertive. His interactions are free of aggression. He has the ability to cope with the natural proneness for aggressive behaviour. The ideology of 'assertiveness', rooted in psychological consulting, has American origins. It conveys a spirit of individualistic culture. The 'modern, pro-effective culture' reproduces certain legitimate pattern of

¹ '... - language is not just a means of communication. Apart from a more or less rich vocabulary, it provides a more or less complex system of categories, and does it in such way, that the ability to decode the complex logical and aesthetic structures and to use them depends, to a degree, on the complexity of the language passed on by the family' (Bourdieu, Passeron, 1990, p. 131). P. Bourdieu and J. Passeron are referring to acquisition of linguistic competence in primary socialization. But such acquisition also takes place on higher levels of education as well as during secondary socialization in formal organizations.

² My research on students of the Faculty of Economics and Sociology (conducted as part of a Research Seminar, 4th year of Sociology, UL, 2001-2002) shows that assertiveness positively correlates and is statistically relevant only with education of the father. It is therefore possible that promotion to certain organizational positions is determined by features of the family social status of the individual. The intervening variable would be 'assertiveness', however this kind of assumption requires further and more thorough study.

³ Managers in higher positions, head-hunters, board members and other people responsible for finding people for particular jobs agree that there are a few image-spoilers: the clothing style, the clothing care, the habits and, finally, the well (or badly)-groomed appearance (Sampson, 1996, p. 64).

behaviour different from Polish or even European culture¹. The pattern of such behaviour reaches us through pedagogic instruction performed by the educational system, advisory systems of and occupational training, through 'self-improvement' handbooks and mass media (deRoche, 1998: 63-64). The ideology of assertiveness is deeply rooted in the teaching of what we shall call here 'Business Negotiations'. It is commonly believed that 'assertiveness' is one of the preconditions of successful negotiation (Dąbrowski, 1990). Moreover, it is believed that it can help to solve many existential problems and secure happiness for the individual. The feature of assertiveness is acquired in primary socialization. However, psychologists believe that it can be taught in special training sessions focused on self-improvement work. Nonetheless, in the practice of Polish companies we partly have to do with a reproduction of ancestral culture (mainly reproduction of non-assertiveness), and partly – in the recent years – with a reproduction of the normative business culture imported from USA.

It ought to be stressed that assertiveness does not exclude friendly behavior, flexibility or empathy. The increasing popularity of assertive, spontaneous, independent, though responsible, behaviour is accompanied by another trend in consulting and in the scientific description of organizational behaviour, a trend to increase control and discipline (Masterbroek, 2000, 2000a). Subjection of individuals to discipline is achieved through formal procedures, in order to exclude personal associations (maybe even personal dependence from people in power) in the process of increasing the behavioral discipline in a world orientated on effectiveness and results. Self-discipline and emotional self-restraint are also side effects of the secondary socialization that takes place in formal organizations. In order to stress the importance of this skill in various organizational processes, e.g. in negotiations, it has been introduced as a subject in many business schools, discussed in scientific and popularizing books and taught on specially organized courses (cf. *ibidem*). The ability to come to terms with this dichotomy of discipline-informality is a cultural skill of great importance in contemporary organizations.

Professional Press and the Media as Re-Producers of Key Concepts of Organizational Field Of Discourse

The reproduction of organizational culture described above takes place in a concept-game presented in professional journals and the media where it is quoted or referred to. The journals and the media create an organizational field of discourse that reproduces the universal and analytical organizational culture and popularizes it. They are an important element of socialization and self-reference for the discourse participants.

A look at the Polish press specializing in human resources management ('Personel i Zarządzanie' *Personnel and Management*, 'Zarządzanie Zasobami Ludzkimi' *Human Resources Management* as well as newspaper inserts such as 'Praca' *Work* or internet pages e.g. 'HRM Club') shows a clear **tendency to create a particular conceptual system**. The system is open to new concepts, increasingly market-oriented, because the so called 'consulting' trades in nothing else but 'concepts', or 'concept-play'. The permanent openness of the system results from the weariness of the public with particular word-plays, which, in time, may become banal and trite. The market demands novelty, and the consultancy journals and the consultants are a creative lot, capable of describing old phenomena and methods in new and unconventional ways, by creating new concepts and conceptual systems and creating new wrappings for old ideas. The journals also participate in the organization of contests, which popularize the 'pro-effective organizational culture', such as 'Leader in Human Resources Management', and they run columns for personnel directors (cf. the journal 'Zarządzanie Zasobami Ludzkimi' *Human Resources Management*, section *Leader's Forum*). This practice provides a forum for the reproduction of a particular model of organizational culture.

¹ According to the study by G. Hofstede (2000, p. 100) American culture is much more individualistic than the European one. The index of individualism in the USA (91 points, a scale maximum) is higher than the values for most of the European cultures (Italy 76pts.; France 71pts.; Ireland 70p.; Germany 67pts.).

The journals, as well as theoretical and research papers on human resources management and on organizational culture show the binary antinomies between certain concepts and participate in the creation of discourse (cf. Towney, 1998, pp. 191-192; Towney, 1994; also Foucault, 1998): pro-effective organizational culture – anti-effective culture, positive culture – negative culture, conservative culture – innovative culture, masculine culture – feminine culture, individualist culture – collectivist culture, exclusive culture – egalitarian culture, internally-controlled – externally-controlled, control – responsibility, the ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ models of human resources management etc. (cf. Zbiegień-Maciąg, 1999, pp. 52-76; Mastenbroek, 1996). One half of each antinomy is usually privileged by their authors. Typologies are often used for diagnosing culture without in-depth analysis of the object of diagnosis. **But the essence of organizational culture lies not in the superficial analysis, but in how deep it sifts into individuals, into agents and actions resulting from its character.** Human resources management is done through procedures of recruitment and selection, worker assessment, trainings, job evaluation, rankings, etc. The more detailed and better quantified these procedures are the more knowledge they provide on the individual/worker and on work groups. This knowledge yields new taxonomies and ascription of workers to certain types (e.g. according to types of personality, types of attitudes, types of key motivators, degrees of efficiency etc.) and helps diagnose their saturation with particular computable measures.

The workers, construed as ‘homonculuses’, become predictable in their behaviour. Human resources management helps to ‘probe deep’ into the conscience, carnality and behavioral contexts of the employees (cf. Townley, 1998, p. 195). The motives of behaviour, the involvement of the workers, gain transparency, and the knowledge about them becomes open and quantifiable, enabling effective management of workers (their predictability and hence controllability). The desire for ‘in-depth’ understanding of the workers is one of the main objectives of modern management, including HRM. It is often an implicit objective, which does not make it a taboo issue. It certainly is a realized objective (or even a realized value). The thoroughness of managerial actions gives it a total (holistic) character, particularly well visible in the so called ‘total quality management’ (TQM), where systematic measurement, process of standardization, benchmarking procedures and ranking have a dominant role (ibidem, p. 198). The above methods are used to discipline employees and marshal their behaviors *en bloc* (cf. Foucault, 1998, pp. 129-220). On the individual level ‘technologies of the self’ are applied. The individual is subjected to **examinations** e.g. in the process of selection or training, often in assessment centers, and participates in various **confessions** (surveys of employee satisfaction, personality studies, assessment interviews, self-evaluation; (cf. also Findlay, Newton, 1998; Szybisz, 2002). There, the individual discovers himself to himself, acquires knowledge of himself. This knowledge becomes available to significant others in the organization. The center of power does not disappear here, even though the power is dispersed in the many procedures applied to workers in the organizational space. The knowledge is generated mainly for the management, though, owing to micro-technologies, it is more dispersed, while its purpose is better concealed. The way of generating this knowledge is determined and justified by the authority of science or rather of a particular academic institution.

The techniques of employee disciplining facilitate management of large collectives, in our case – organizations (see Foucault, 1998, pp. 213-214). Foucault adds, that all technological innovation in the production process, the division of work and the shaping of disciplining methods were closely interrelated (ibidem). Currently, we can regard HRM as one of very gentle and ‘humanitarian’ disciplinary methods.

Competence becomes a strongly social element of an individuality. It is composed of the ability to solve problems and to see them as **challenges**, rather than obstacles in action, to assume the role of **innovator**, to be **assertive** and to choose proper **clothing** (Townley, 1998, pp. 201-203). Image is also an element of professional competence. Therefore competence is an element of discourse which incorporates (or ‘dresses up’ as if to cover something under the clothing) the individual. She/he becomes fully included in the totality of organizational action, thanks to the knowledge

about it generated through taxonomies, computability (mathematical, quantitative methods of calculation and representation of reality)¹ and 'technologies of the self'. Technologies enter vertically down into the organization, thereby securing its horizontal, but also vertical coherence. The panopticon is realized through the procedures and in the procedures of human management (horizontal and vertical totality).

Consulting journals are supposed to advise their readers how to manage people. For instance, the first page of Issue 21 (2002) of Polish journal 'Personel i zarządzanie' *Personnel and Management* contains texts targeted at two audiences, or actually, at one split-audience. The audience is composed of personnel directors and specialists in personnel management, who are at the same time the readers and authors of texts, opinions and comments published in the journal. We can find autoreferential paragraphs with subtitles: **usefulness, profits, expertise etc.** The very title of the journal 'Personel i zarządzanie'² *Personnel and management* contains a hyphenated extension – '**practical knowledge**'. The stress put on the practical value of personnel management deserves attention. Perhaps the main addressee of this autoreferential narrative, one that has to be convinced to the practical value of the knowledge of human resource management is the author of the narrative (or authors of similar narratives). An example of the above-mentioned usefulness are pay reports, or, as some specialists say, peep-holes on competition. However, it is not the competition we look on here, but ourselves, our own company in comparison to others. The report is targeted at its authors, concrete companies, for whom job appreciation is a difficult task, a fact hardly surprising in the contemporary world in which work is subject to a huge web of conditions, also global, and where its value changes from day to day (cf. Baudrillard, 2001, p. 33)

Another article argues that construction of an organizational culture may take place in a rational way, and that the end result will be a competent, creative staff of people responsibly making their independent decisions for the benefit of the company (Wiesławska, no date). Note that the above characteristics, ascribed to personnel in an organizational culture (Leroy Merlin Polska SA company) are subordinated to the interest of the company. How to create a **competent, creative, responsible, independent and flexible staff**?³ At the foundation of personnel strategy there is a 'sharing philosophy' (sharing of knowledge, power, results), adopted by the whole company. At the basis of this philosophy is a conviction that 'man is the most important company asset'. The thinking about organizational culture is done in holistic categories, which is visible in the following quotation: 'it allows **every** (underline K.K.) worker to get involved in the life and the development of his company or shop more deeply, and thereby, to participate more fully in its success (Wiesławska 2002, p. 73). The organizational culture is characterized by 'totality', not only in the sense of ranging over all workers in the company, but also in the sense of power, accessible even to line workers (sharing of power). The concept of totality covers also some basic assumptions on human nature adopted at the early stages of designing the organizational culture. 'We, however, assume that every man (especially in his youth) by nature likes to take responsibility for his actions. When such responsibility is conferred on him, his involvement in work becomes deeper.

¹ Organizational culture can be measured by examining (quantifying) value dimensions (Łucwicz 2002). The quantification trend is currently very strong in sciences related to HRM, where the 'calculative' approach can help to measure the so called 'value of the human capital' (cf. Dobija, 2002; and Strużyna, Dyduch, 2002).

² Initially it was called 'Personnel' only. Lately the noun 'Management' has been added, which suggests that the journal provides practical knowledge, which may be useful in controlling employee behaviour or self-development of the workers.

³ One interesting linguistic phenomenon is reproduction of concepts such as: creativity, innovation, flexibility, high level of consumer satisfaction, efficiency, success, effectiveness, cooperation, open communication etc. The same language appears also in descriptions of other companies (cf. Szybisz, 2002, pp. 71-72; Garstecki, Wański, 2003). The terms are like 'mantra-words', whose absence would make a description or presentation of a company very difficult, because it is the only descriptive language for modern organizational cultures and a discursive instrument for their reproduction. Moreover, the values this language reflects are always used in a utilitarian context, e.g. the value of the clients' trust in the 'service-staff' is used to offer them new products.

Moreover, the internal behaviour control concerns the control of the language, i.e. the absence of certain phrases and words. For instance, in order to maintain the value of cooperation no 'whether' questions can be asked, because they evoke provocative and assaultive connotations. Their absence translates into a way of thinking and, consequently, into behaviour (ibidem). Linguistic control is a tool for restraining emotions in modern and pro-effective cultures.

This is only a seemingly naïve statement (ibidem, p. 75). According to the author, such independence was suppressed for dozens of years, and time has come now to undertake ‘pedagogic effort’¹ to bring it to the open and develop in people’. The author adopts an underlying universalistic assumption of human nature, that man is prone to development and independent action, but needs to be helped through socializing practices (courses, consulting). The introduction of organizational culture, i.e. translation of cultural assumptions to particular behaviour in the sphere of ‘sharing philosophy’ was accomplished at Leroy Merlin Co. through the following practices:

1. ‘Example from the top’ – namely, the rule of influence by authority (also pedagogical authority), in the person of a company president talking directly to his workers: ‘Why Balbina, this is within your responsibility, you have full autonomy of action, you don’t have to consult everything with me’ (Wisławska 2002, p. 76).

This transfer of information on employee autonomy shows how organizational culture is brought down to the level of ‘philosophy’ of action of the individual. The **totality (wholeness) of culture appears also in the vertical dimension, and goes down to the level of assumptions on human nature** (assumption of the so called ‘individual’s autonomy’).

2. Trainings for workers, coached, among others, by the manager.

3. Transfer of information (meetings, congresses for managerial staff, intranet).

The initiative of individuals is achieved through development of independence by means of guiding questions. Actions should not be suggested directly. Workers ought to be led to construct the required actions on their own (cf. ‘inspiration strategy’ by Cz. Sikorski). The hierarchy of power, and power itself, takes the form of *maieutic method*; it is concealed in the procedure. It does not undergo self-liquidation, which we might expect at the first glance. On the contrary, it becomes omnipresent and reaches down through guiding questions, almost directly to the workers’ consciousness.

In the described company the adoption of organizational culture required disposing of negative attitudes. ‘On several occasions we had to reduce workers, who didn’t fit into this culture or couldn’t identify with our values. Currently our recruitment hits the mark a lot better. The main criterion for employment is whether they fit in with our organization’ (ibidem, p. 79). As we can see, reproduction is accomplished through application of ‘totalizing’ HRM practices. Power-knowledge can be isolated at the recruitment and selection stage and this is how deeply reaches the power of organizational culture reproduced in the practices of HRM. Candidates who are not prone to initiative and independent action stand no chance of finding their place in the all-embracing organizational culture concealed under the tag of ‘sharing philosophy’.

Another article describes how practices of building an organizational culture (reproducing a commonly adopted model) often begin (and the consulting model claims they always should) with a diagnosis of the workers’ attitudes and values. They are to make individual ‘confessions’ in questionnaires on ‘what they believe in’ (what values should be professed by employees), which then become the basis (by quantifying and summing up the individual confessions) of one global image of the organizational culture (Atlantis Company, cf. Katarzyna Rudzka-Kowalska, 2003). **The procedure of a survey**, in the research of needs as well as worker satisfaction, is an element of totalization of organizational culture. It reaches very deep into what is very personal, individual, carefully hidden. What is concealed has to be revealed, mathematically ‘quantified’, made public and available for the management. A ‘set of values’ is chartered in the company. **The ‘codifica-**

¹ It is best for the manager to use the didactic activities, or ‘instruments of cultural socialization’ with moderation and an ‘inspirational’ way (‘it wouldn’t hurt to remind’), in which there is an assumption that workers have certain needs. They are then made aware of a connection between these ‘assumed needs’ (!) and a particular behaviour and the possibility of satisfying those needs (already internalized and their own) (cf. Sikorski, 2002, pp. 138-139). The phenomenon of inspiration can take the form of suggestion (as opposed to giving orders): ‘The personnel department... points out some undesirable elements and suggests (!) ways of modifying them through programs promoting change, with particular emphasis on various forms of training and education’ (Szybisz, 2002, pp. 73).

tion of the value system' officially serves maintaining the company identity. In fact, the codification of values conceals the reproduction of 'modern and pro-effective' organizational culture (see Fig. 1). The process of reproduction of organizational culture is also an invisible reproduction of power in a way which paradoxically shows how it is created from beneath through application of procedures. Another concealed idea is that of **totality**, both horizontal, comprising cohesion and homogeneity of values in the entire organization that concerns **every worker**, and vertical, which probes deep into the agent, his mentality and carnality as well. The very idea of arbitrariness of normative organizational culture is also hidden, because the procedures through which it is instituted are granted scientific character and complement the scientifically proved pro-effectiveness of certain values, such as team work ('our trademark is a team-work'), or worker innovation. Reproduction refers to normative culture, but we have to bear in mind that in any particular organization it is created both contextually and 'specifically'.

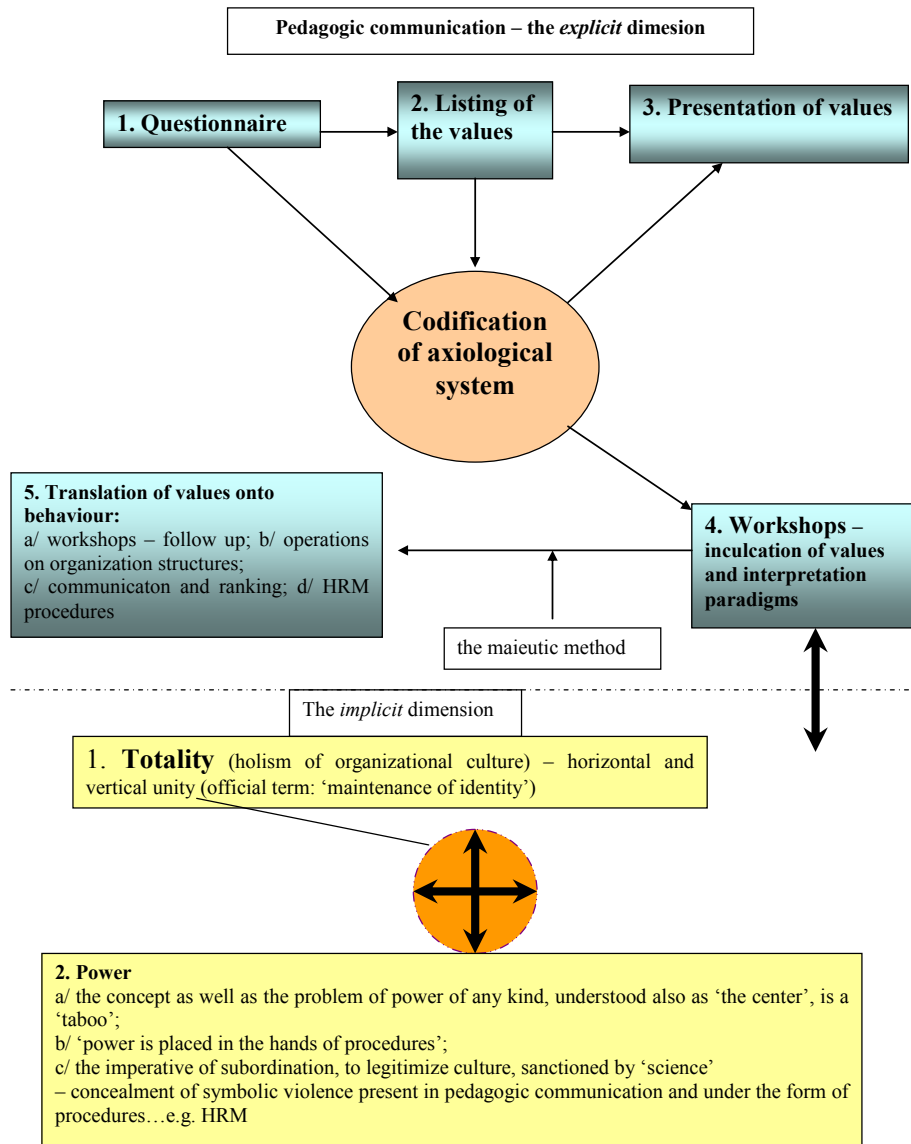


Fig. 1. Codification of the system of values as a process of organizational culture reproduction

The procedure of code-writing began with a questionnaire (a taxonomic confession, whose answers were subsequently typologized) administered to **managers** (!) with answers to the questions: 1. What in your opinion is the 'backbone of our company'? 2. What values are important in our company? 3. What values do we want to develop at Atlantis Poland? The questionnaires were dropped into special boxes made in the personnel-administrative department. This was followed by a brainstorming session which produced a document 'The Values of Atlantis Poland, Co. Ltd.'. A presentation of the document took place during a Christmas Eve celebration (Ritual presentation of basic values dignifies them, may even turn it into 'sacrum'). The code was then printed and made available for the workers and, at the reception desk, for guests and for prospective employees. Thus, the procedure of presentation of organizational culture through values activates a primary selection for employment. Organizational culture synchronizes the HRM procedures, which serve its reproduction.

In the described company a number of procedures are responsible for translation (totalization) of organizational culture to behaviors:

1. Workshops, (conventional name for worker trainings).
2. Inter-departmental task groups, in other words, operations on organizational structures.
3. A system of internal communication and rankings.
4. HRM procedures (system of recruitment, system of occupational adaptation and training).

The values of organizational culture are translated into behaviour during workshops. The workers answer guiding questions (the maieutic method) and reveal to themselves their basic expectations, ways of cooperation with other work-posts or departments. The questions are of 'positive character', nothing is suggested (especially nothing negative), at the most they 'inspire'. – What is it you do, that makes working with you such a pleasure? – What do you think is most desirable in your daily work. – What attitudes should be developed, protected, what should you thank each other for? Such questions suggest desirable values and, thereby, the answers. The basic values that flow from these questions are cooperation and trust.

On the other hand, the rankings mark out the best, that is the most conformist, workers. In all procedures the managers show to their employees that they are a part of a bigger organization and that the organization is a whole, and that what builds the trademark of an organization is the team (ibidem)¹. Totalization is achieved by a procedure which employs group dynamics.

Conclusion

Organizational culture in the normative sense (modern and pro-effective) is reproduced through symbolic violence. The mechanics of this violence pertains to the authority of science, including the academia, used for training and advisory purposes, as well as the authority of the modern culture and the culture of effectiveness – measured and processed statistically for persuasive purposes. Reproduction of concepts in the discourse of binary antinomies is an additional factor. The antinomies, which generate specific concepts, constitute a basic rule of the discourse which differentiates organizational cultures, and, in particular, their basic type, i.e. the modern, pro-effective culture. Pedagogic communication shows which parts of the antinomies are normatively accepted in an organizational culture.

On the other hand, the organizational culture itself reproduces basic social relations. These are, among others, the relations between beneficiaries of 'the modern and pro-effective organizational culture' and those who have not been able to enter organizations with such cultures, as well as between those who possess power in such organizations and those who are doomed to perform

¹ In the conception of organizational culture, apart from 'values concerning the workers' holism (horizontal) may also refer to 'values concerning the clients and stock holders', as e.g. in the company Polkomtel S.A.' (Szybisz, 2002, p. 70).

menial tasks and subordinated to others. The class of managers and workers who possess the required cultural code including the rules of etiquette, the linguistic code and means of presentation of own image in opposition to those excluded from modern organizations is one of the basic social relations reproduced by organizational culture.

The values of modern organizational culture can, however, be learned and acquired in the course of secondary socialization. What follows then is a sort of 'colonization' or imitation of behavioral pattern dominant in the 'modern and pro-effective organizational culture'. This means that modern organizational cultures are characterized, in the normative sense, by certain openness. To what extent it is applied in the organizational practice is a matter for future empirical research. It seems that the constant generation of new 'expert terms' and schemes of reality perception is a tool of 'repelling' this part of society, which aspires to entering the organizational culture. The accelerated emergence of 'new terms' is a consequence of the modern market mechanisms. The faster the aspiring class acquire the new behaviour patterns, the more visible becomes the mechanism of repelling them through generation of new terms, patterns of understanding the reality, and procedures – which again require time and effort to be acquired.

Creation and reproduction of organizational cultures is a process of totalization of organization and management. The term 'totalization' is not used in a pejorative or axiological sense. The concept is purely analytical, and reflects the essence of the contemporary organizational culture, reproduced through traditional organizational authority (expressed by hierarchy), and conceptual system and management procedures, in particular HRM. These elements constitute a field of discourse in which binary conceptual antinomies, HRM procedures, which are technologies of revealing knowledge identified with values, and power hidden behind these procedures and concepts, reproduce the organizational culture. Power comes down to the level of the agent and, from there, emerges to the surface of knowledge and, in this paradoxical manner, gets concealed. If everyone knows about it, then nobody does. It is taken for granted, and does not constitute a problem, because it is everywhere and nowhere, visible and invisible at the same time. In consequence it becomes indisputable. The field of discourse conceals the power and the totality of its 'execution' through the pro-effective organizational culture, which, at the same time, confers agency to individuals, and which allows 'effective use of workforce possibilities'. Symbolic violence appears, in a way, on demand from the workers, because the adoption of proper discourse and observance of its rules (behaviour in the course of HRM procedures, participation in ritual, adoption of proper language, body and dress codes) includes some individuals and allows them competent participation in contemporary late-modern organizations, but, simultaneously, excludes other individuals from the field of discourse and places them outside of the contemporary, legitimate organizational culture. The microtechnology of various HRM procedures which create and reproduce the common cultural model is effective on the 'implicit social level'; it serves the development of individuals and their power advancement, and obscures (or conceals) the full picture of reproduction of organizational culture. Power reproduces itself through our bodies and minds on our own demand, because of the needs we discover in ourselves, in accordance with which we should 'develop' and act. Openness and knowledge of self and of others are the first steps towards self-realization or cultural therapy of the individual. The power/knowledge reveals some things only to conceal what is essential.

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