

THE IMPORTANCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN THE FUNCTIONING OF THE POLISH STATE FIRE SERVICE

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Abstract

The County Headquarters, as an organizational unit of the State Fire Service, similarly to other entities, operates in a turbulent environment. One of the special features that distinguish it from other nonprofit institutions is its prevailing culture. Organizational culture seems to be a determinant of the successful operation of the State Fire Service, which involves the realization its social purposes.

Keywords: *organizational culture, fire service*

1. Introduction

At different levels in the organization of social life, a large area is covered by organizations with purposes other than economic. These institutions are of interest, due to the fact that they need to operate in environments similarly turbulent to those, profit-making ones. In order to properly fulfill their goals, these organizations must utilize their full potential. Their organizational culture is an important part of this. One of the most interesting non-profit organizations, perhaps the most widely known and most trusted by the society in Poland, is the State Fire Service (Państwowa Straż Pożarna, PSP). This study is devoted to the issue of organizational culture and its role in the functioning of the PSP.²

Among a number of features that differentiate entities in the world around us, one of the most important at the level of organization is culture. An adjustment in the sphere of culture and environmental challenges becomes a very strong asset of an institution. Conversely, dysfunctional patterns of functioning very often impede the functioning of an organization, not infrequently contributing to its total disappearance. This phenomenon, elusive on the one hand, while on the other hand seeming to have a considerable impact

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2 The starting point for the development of this paper was to analyze the literature and relevant normative acts. The study area was one of the District Headquarters of the PSP. The key to the research performed was temporary joining the organization, which allowed for a series of participant observations, conversations, interviews and surveys (to determine the type of culture), and analysis of the available documentation.

on the practice of management, is worth taking a closer look. One of the most prominent scholars of organizational culture – Edgar Schein – described it as a pattern of basic assumptions developed by a group while learning how to cope with the problems of internal integration and external adaptation. These assumptions must be effective enough to be considered as valid ways of perceiving, thinking and feeling, that allow new members to learn them as valid (Schein, 1985, p. 6), and even desirable patterns of thinking and acting.

Literature possesses very rich different definitions and approaches to the topic of organizational culture. Discrepancies occur at the very level of terminology, and the methods of its perception³, interpretation⁴, elements and manifestations⁵, as well as ways and possibilities of researching it.⁶ Given all of the above elements related to the subject, one must not forget about one of the most important issues. From the point of view of theory, and especially the practical operation of the organization, it is not these issues, but simply the existence of organizational culture that seems to be a priority. These certainly important issues, however, should not obscure or distort the perception of organizational culture as one of the most important factors affecting both human resource management in organizations, and the effective management of the entire organization, which in turn determines its operation.

2. Cultural conditions

Organizational culture has many functions. It affects both the organization itself, and – more or less indirectly – the environment. However, one should not forget that it also is influenced by various factors, which determine both its original shape, affect it during its undisturbed existence, and even enforce changes within it. The most general specification of the determinants of the culture being presented points to internal and external factors, where the internal stimuli would be those which arise within the organization itself, and the external ones are derived from the wider environment and its culture.

Among the external factors, certainly not without reason, the most often cited one is the national culture of a given country.⁷ The economic situation, applicable legal regulations, and under these, the market environment of corporate activities also have an external character in relation to organizational culture. The State Fire Service like any organization operates in specific

³ See also (Stańczyk, 2008, p. 12-13).

⁴ See also (Sikorski, 2006, p. 2-3).

⁵ See also (Hofstede, 2007, p. 20; Stoner, Freeman, Gilbert, 2001, p. 189; Steinman & Schreyögg, 2001, p. 471; Nogalski & Foltyn, 1998, p. 108-110).

⁶ See also (Gableta, 2006, p. 162; Zbiegień-Maciąg, 2002, p. 43).

⁷ Due to the limited volume of this paper, a closer analysis of this factor shall be omitted. In general, the issue is discussed by various authors, including: (Glinka, 2007, p. 77; Robbins, 2004, p. 453-454; Sułkowski, 2002, p. 143-144; Szałkowski & Bukowska, 2005, p. 81).

social and market conditions, which is certainly not irrelevant to its culture. The influence of external factors is twofold as they determine a number of manifestations and cultural standards; therefore, one can talk about their immediate impact. On the other hand, by forming the individual characteristics of an organization's culture they determine it indirectly.

Without a doubt, the most important external aspect shaping the culture in the PSP seems to be its regulations. The basic legislative act which deals with the State Fire Service is the Act of August 24, 1991. It specifies, in general, the most important issues related to the organization and functioning of the Service, which are optionally defined by more specific regulations of ministerial orders of the Minister of Interior and Administration. The said regulation declares the appointment of PSP, its core tasks and organization, as well as mentions the tasks of the District Commander, as well as its regulations and financing of its county headquarters. It generally defines rescue operations and the rights of firefighters during these activities. Finally, what seems to be essential for organizational culture, the Act deals with a range of issues related to the Service within its structure, by more or less generalized terms: the subjects, the oath, the relationship between the service and preparations for service, periodic evaluations, transfers, dismissals and suspensions of firefighters, performing tasks outside the country and the qualifications necessary to perform such duty; civil service corps and rank as well as the issue of awarding rank, the rights and duties of firefighters, honors, responsibilities and salaries, as well as uniforms (Act on the PSP, Dz.U.2009.12.68). The aforementioned regulations specify, for example: the framework and organization of the province and district (municipal) command (Ordinance of the Minister of Interior and Administration, Dz.U.2006.143.1037); service positions, maximum rank assigned to them, and additional eligibility requirements for specified positions (Ordinance of the Minister of Interior and Administration, Dz.U.2009.54.448); rendering service by firefighters (Ordinance of the MIA, Dz.U.2005.266.2246) is governed by specific organizational unit rules (Ordinance of the MIA, Dz.U.2000.93.1035), and determine positions in the organizational units of the PSP, where the recruited employees are treated as civil servants (Regulation of the Council of Ministers, Dz.U.1995.130.631), as well as clarify many issues concerning the analyzed subject.

Also the economic situation of the state is of great importance for organizational culture, or the overall economic situation, which seems to be a more important factor, due to globalization. While favorable conditions allow for flowering of various forms of organizational cultures, economic crises are becoming a real test of survival for many organizations. Turning to a more comprehensive treatment of the environment, according one of the authors it could be concluded that the less dynamic this treatment is, the more

necessary it is to invest in the development of a strong culture, which in turn translates into benefits for the institution. This does not mean, however, that in a turbulent environment one should resign from adjusting the culture to its requirements, as that is what enables quick decision-making and taking action. In fact, the more a culture is suited to the environment, the fewer difficulties employees will have to face in meeting requirements (Aniszewska, 2007, p. 42-44). Such explanations seem to confirm the effect the market environment has on the organizational culture and its importance.

Simultaneously with external factors that affect PSP's organizational culture, there are internal factors that can be divided into three subgroups: the type of organization, its features, and characteristics of human resources. The elements collectively referred to as "type of organization" seem to be in this case the nature of the business and industry and not simply of the ownership, and rather the nature of the way the major organizational units and technology used are financed. The analyzed institution falls into the category of nonprofit. The categories of developing economic profit are not among its characteristics. The essence of the State Fire Service includes very broadly defined activities related to the prevention of risk and, in the event of a crisis, executing rescue operations. Preventive activities are manifested in a number of activities aimed at eliminating or reducing risk to a minimum. They are based on monitoring and the enforcement of safety regulations regarding both people and the environment, as well as the continuous monitoring of the situation in this regard. Operating activities focus mainly on maintaining combat readiness. This is achieved through widely understood training, among which exercises occupy a special place. Rescue operations take place primarily during natural and other types of disasters, accidents, and other situations posing a threat to human life, health or property in which fires are a specific group.

The running costs of the State Fire Service are for the most part covered by state budget subsidies. Some of these costs may be borne by the municipality, district or provincial government and organizers of mass events (Act on the PSP, Dz.U.2009.12.68).

In order to properly carry out its tasks, each organization uses a specific technology, which, in the case of the State Fire Service, is determined by its specificity. It is an area that has a significant impact on the shape of the culture of the institution, as, to a large extent, it determines the possibility and quality of its tasks. In the analyzed case, it consists mainly of fire and rescue vehicles, as well as firefighting equipment and technologies used to coordinate the operations of the organization as a whole.

Organizational structure also provides a framework for culture, determining the internal business environment, which largely dictates the possible ways of acting and applied procedures (Stańczyk, 2008, p 24). The

structure of the presented organization is defined in the document “Rules of the organization,” and its shape determines the level of hierarchization and formalization in the institution, that are both determinants of its culture. Also participation, defined as the acquisition by the executive staff of at least some of the functions, tasks and powers belonging to the managers (Piwowarczyk, 2006, p. 82 and 83), is a very important contribution to the culture of the organization.

Another important issue, referring to the previous one, is the personnel policy. The most common are two of its models: the sieve and human resources. The first contributes to the development of male cultures, and it is where it predominantly occurs: the stress is on the effects of implementation of tasks, competition and individualism. However, it is not conducive to a good working atmosphere and contributes to high turnovers. The second one supports cultures of community, agreement and collectivity. It ensures a good atmosphere and results at a stable, high level (Gielnicka & Aniszewska, 2007, p. 66-68). The Fire Service, using specific human resources, maintains a policy directed at the on the development of human capital. The HR policy implementation is mainly reflected in the hiring and firing of employees, shifting them within the organization, and skills improvement. The personnel policy is based on an overall plan ranking for all target positions that must be filled in order to ensure the optimal functioning of the organization. All kinds of manifestations of workforce administration are related to improving their qualifications, and thus their competences. They arise from the needs of the institution.

The above, external and internal, factors do not seem to be irrelevant to the culture of PSP. The focus of activity and the applicable law essentially determine the general shape of the institution, establish its tasks, as well as impose a framework of standards and their implementation. This, in turn, translates into the type of organization, conditioning its characteristics and the characteristics of its work potential. All these details are important from the point of view of organizational culture. Their effects, whether total or more individualized, more or less directly determine the organizational culture of the State Fire Service.

3. Elements of organizational culture in PSP

Located away from the core of culture, its outermost level, are artifacts. It sees that, as remnants of the core of culture, as the result of culturally conditioned activities scattered across its surface. Artifacts are artificial creations of the organization, visible, audible and tangible, being a consequence of the organization's norms and values. Not every artifact of organizational culture,

however, is a symbol thereof. A given artifact becomes a symbol only if its members associate a specific meaning to it and the symbol gets to be used to communicate different meanings to others. An artifact is a symbol, when it is used by people to create meaning (Galata, 2007, p. 168-170). It should also be noted that whether given symbols are actually a manifestation of organizational culture is determined by the attitude of employees towards them. If employees do not consciously accept certain symbols, but only use them, complying with formal orders, these symbols are not manifestations of culture. When employees accept certain symbols consciously and use them, these symbols become actual elements of organizational culture (Sikorski, 2006, p. 11). This understanding of symbols is still a matter for further consideration. In the case of the Fire Service, one can talk about a number of artifacts, which in a substantial part are symbols of its culture. The formation and maintenance of their life are, on the one hand, determined by many aforementioned factors, both external and internal, and the other hand, related to the continuing need for employees to organize their work so that it is the most convenient and gives them a sense of satisfaction. Generally, these cultural manifestations can be classified into three groups, as linguistic, physical and behavioral symbols.

In the first group, there shall be the particularly visible symbols of language, style of communication, heroes and myths, or stories. While in any unit of the PSP, one cannot help but notice the specific language spoken by its employees. On the one hand, the language is very simple, but characterized by a number of acronyms and abbreviations, which changes it into jargon often incomprehensible to the layman. The shortenings relate to many aspects of the PSP. They are used both to identify the organizational units and the equipment used. In addition to these abbreviations, also distinctive name, referring to the structures formed by firefighters equipped with emergency equipment are in use. The most basic team of two firefighters equipped with personal protective equipment is called a *rota* (troop). *Zastęp* (team) is a subunit equipped with an emergency vehicle, which usually consists of two troops, a driver and a commander. A *sekcja* (section) is a subunit of two teams (including a commander), a *pluton* (platoon) consists of three or four teams (two sections, including a commander), a *kompania* (company) is three platoons or four sections and a commander, while a *battalion* (battalion) is a unit consisting of three to five companies and a commander.

In addition to the characteristic language, which the firefighters use in everyday life, what should be mentioned is the specific style and the way of communication, which operates in the conduct of rescue operations (and exercises). Communication allows the essential coordination of the fighting is done using special communication devices. In order to operate smoothly, it is dominated by various shortenings (also mentioned above) and the use of code

names. However, in the course of rescue operations, firefighters communicate with using non-verbal communication – certain gestures – apart from the shortenings. This is especially true when the work is done in the SCBAs, which prevent or significantly reduce the possibility of verbal communication.

Linguistic symbols, indicative of the organizational culture in the State Fire Service, are stories circulating among its employees. These stories concern different types of nonstandard or difficult operations. Anecdotes about the behavior of individuals, as well as a certain kind of myth, are met as well. One such myth explains a certain, now obsolete trait characterizing firemen of the past, namely, mustache.

Another group of cultural artifacts is physical symbols, which include: buildings, uniforms, badges, titles, seals and documents, as well as banners.

A very important part of the physical symbols, in the case of the institution in question, is the uniform. Here, the following variants are distinguished: the representative and duty attire, barracks clothing and Command and staff personnel uniforms, and personal protective equipment.

The next group of physical symbols is titles, i.e., status symbols. They are associated with the symbols constituted by the uniform. This is because the distinctions are worn on the uniform. In addition to titles, status symbols worn on uniforms are fire service college signs. Uniforms, distinctions, and the identification marks are legally reserved for firefighters (Act on the PSP, Dz.U.2009.12.68, Article 61.2). At the same time, in accordance with the law, compliance with the rules and discipline of clothing is the responsibility of the manager of the organizational unit (MIA Ordinance, Dz.U.2006.4.25, § 12). These conditions, together with a detailed statement of designs of these elements, cause the appearance of doubt as to the authenticity of their symbolic as manifestations of organizational culture. However, knowing the attitude of the PSP employees towards these symbols, these doubts are dispelled. Each firefighter has a lot of respect for all those physical artifacts. Looking at the uniforms, it is clear that the wear and tear of the individual elements as a result of normal use is inevitable, especially in the case of personal protective equipment. However, each firefighter, with great care, preserves all the details of the uniform, which contributes to the neatness of their appearance. After each operation, both hardware and clothing need to be cleaned, and sometimes repaired. These activities are performed on the fly, as needed (and often even ahead of them) and, of course, according to the available time and resources. Also, all the signs are placed on the uniform with great care, which further highlights the respect of officers towards these symbols.

An important symbol is the Merit badge for performance of duty in the field of Fire Protection (*Zasłużony dla ochrony przeciwpożarowej*). It is awarded either for exceptional dedication and courage in directing rescue operations, or

for the many years of dedicated service, or for activeness in terms of promoting the prevention of fires. The badge is in the shape of an equilateral cross. The arms of the cross are red. Between them is a shield with an oak wreath. A silver plated eagle with firefighting attributes: a helmet, two grapnels, two axes, and two water nozzles, is superimposed over the cross. On the reverse, an inscription is found: "TO SAVE LIVES AND PROTECT PROPERTY". The badge is suspended on a ribbon by means of a ring with a stylized laurel wreath. To the badge, a card confirming its award is attached. Detailed terms and conditions relating to the granting of the said badge are laid down in the relevant MIA Ordinance (Dz.U.2008.207.1305). This badge is of great value to firefighters, and a person awarded it is honored with the recognition and respect of his peers. In addition, there's always a heroic story connected with any such badge. One of the most important symbols of the PSP, and also an expression of its culture, is the banner. A banner is given to the organizational unit as a special award for service to the good of the Republic of Poland in the protection of life, health and property of citizens. The banner is made of red fabric (the front) and blue (the back side), trimmed around with a gold ribbon, and with a gold fringe on three sides. On the front side, there is an isosceles, white cross in the middle, in the middle of which there is the Polish national emblem placed on a circular disk. On this side, above the emblem, there is also an inscription "IN THE SERVICE", and below the emblem: "OF MY HOMELAND" is found. On the back side, an image of St. Florian surrounded by an inscription with the name of the organizational PSP unit is placed. The banner is crowned with a head, with a firefighter's helmet and two axes from which rises a flame of fire, embossed on both sides. The banner plays a role in various celebrations, national, professional, and religious.

The third group chief external manifestations of culture are behavioral symbols. Many of the behavioral artifacts are defined in a document called *Ceremoniał Pożarniczy*.⁸ However, the most interesting are those voluntarily maintained by firefighters and nurtured with great commitment. Among the behavioral artifacts that symbolize the organizational culture of the PSP and worthy of attention are ceremonies and rituals associated with: joining the service and leaving it, the oath, Fireman's Day celebrations, and changing positions in the Service, as well as the organization of conferences.

The next level of organizational culture is formed by the system of values that are expressed by means of standards. With a number of different definitions of value, one can conclude that these are certain beliefs or ideas about what is important and desirable in the behavior of people, both at the individual and a group level. A very important feature of value is the fact that it represents a desired state, irrespective of the facts, they say that it should be,

⁸ Ordinance of the Chief of the PSP of 27 June 2008 (*Ceremoniał Pożarniczy*, 2008).

as opposed to what actually is. Sometimes these are referred to as the moral or ethical code because they affect the choice of appropriate course of action from a variety of behaviors in a given situation. The existing set of values in an organization directly determines the applicable standards. Values are expressed and instantiated by the norms. Values determine what is considered important in the organization, and standards – which behaviors are expected in this context (Stańczyk, 2008, p. 30). Among the standards in force within the Service, some general rules can be mentioned that are applicable to all firefighters, and more detailed ones applying to specific officers. Due to the nature of the organization, a substantial majority of the existing standards is a formal written policy⁹ of organizational rules and regulations of work and service.

Each newly recruited employee, before starting work, accepts the regulations and agrees to respect them. This is confirmed by a written statement attached to personal records. Direct supervision of compliance with the standards contained in the rules of the exercise is formally maintained by the heads of organizational units. It should be noted, however, that both the standards contained in these regulations, and those not fully formalized are highly esteemed and respected by the staff. This is evidenced by the fact that discipline issues emerge only occasionally. These cases, rarely seen, are meticulously analyzed and recorded in their event. Compliance with the standards and principles stems from the understanding and acceptance of them by the Firefighters. Their formulation stems not only from the very regulations, but in the main part is dictated by years of experience and concern for the smooth functioning of the Service and the safety of its members. The standards result from the system of values of the Fire Service, as well as the values of the individuals who form it and perform their duties to protect life, health and property of both whole communities and other individuals. Especially noteworthy are the safety standards regarding firefighters themselves that replace audacity with sense, according to the value “*a good firefighter is a live firefighter!*” This value, in the service of the good of others, even at the risk of one’s own health and life, is of the highest importance.

The deeper layers of organizational culture are created by underlying assumptions. A basic cultural assumption is a philosophy that determines the worldview throughout the organization. It is a rule on matters essential to

⁹ This assertion seems to contradict the sometimes alleged unwritten nature of cultural norms. By far, however, it is not so, and these claims are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, too formal treatment of standards, manifested their strict formulation and imposition, leads to bureaucracy and rigidity in an organization, which is negative, and as such questionable, as far as those standards are actually components constituting organizational culture, and not simply formal rules of operation. However, it should be kept in mind that in many organizations, which are characterized by strong cultures, and therefore those in which standards are real, live components of culture, there are different types of documents that contain many of these standards. This involves the different wording of the mission, or strategy of the organization, or the ethical codes contained mainly in two documents:

human beings. They define the attitude of individuals and groups towards life and the world, and consequently, the whole organization (Sikorski, 2006, p 8). It is an almost entirely invisible element, and usually also an unconscious one. This makes it virtually impossible to completely accurately and comprehensively identify them and determine them. However, drawing on key questions identified in literature,¹⁰ and using collected materials and information, as well as drawing on a number of observations, an attempt will be made to determine them.

In terms of time, the organization seems to be focused on the future. This does not mean, however, that the present or the past does not matter. The past and tradition is respected, and the current situation and performed work come with great commitment. However, all these activities are pursued in the light of some more or less distant targets. This is reflected both in the administrative work, the management, and in a number of planning and forecasting activities, as well as in the active service of regular firefighters in their constant effort to maintain physical fitness and increase their skill level in order to better perform their tasks. The work is continuous; it is a sequence of regular events but also irregular events such as emergency fire and rescue operations.

In considering the approach to human nature, it is difficult not to be tempted to declare that the Service tacitly accepts the premise that everyone is inherently good and, as such, must be granted the necessary assistance. This is evident even in situations where the said assumption becomes clearly inconsistent with reality. Then people tend to move away from the evaluation of people, with a focus on solid execution of the task instead, which is reflected in the statement: *This is our duty*. Work, very specific to the profession of a firefighter, is rather considered as a necessary evil, but performed with great passion, commitment and dedication.

The nature of human activity, in the case of the members of the Service, is marked by both activity and harmony. It is essential that the rescue operation activities are predictable, although they are always accompanied by different conditions. The aim is to reduce uncertainty by means of certain human activities, customized to the configuration of environmental factors. This is due to the fact that in a difficult or awkward situation, each firefighter must be confident in the actions and behavior of their comrades.

The nature of human relationships is rather dominated by collectivism, which does not release them from a constant, personal self-development and attention to the high level of their competence. Despite various conflict situations that are an integral part of everyone's life, and which also appear in the presented institution, cooperation is far more important than competition.

¹⁰ See also (Galata, 2007, s. 166; Staficzky, 2008, P. 34).

The most respected source of power remain merit and competence. In its exercise, however, although conditioned by the hierarchical organizational structure, as far as it is possible, can deviate from the autocratic style. It should be noted, however, that the issues of liability, its dilution between a group of people is avoided, and it is always clear who is responsible for what.

The issues relating to the attitude towards unity to diversity ratio it can be stated that internally heterogeneous groups are considered as more efficient than homogeneous ones. Examples include the grouping of people with different personalities into teams so that they complement each other. However, the individuals in the group are expected to fit in rather than experiment. Creativity is valued as much as having a real effect in the form of better performance.

Identification and arrangements regarding various issues related to the culture of the State Fire Service allow one to consider it as functioning in a real, particular environment, a system. The system contains a set of formal rules, as well as unwritten standards, manifested by many symbols, which are derived from basic principles of the employee community, which allows both harmonious cooperation between them, and an important context for directing the organization.

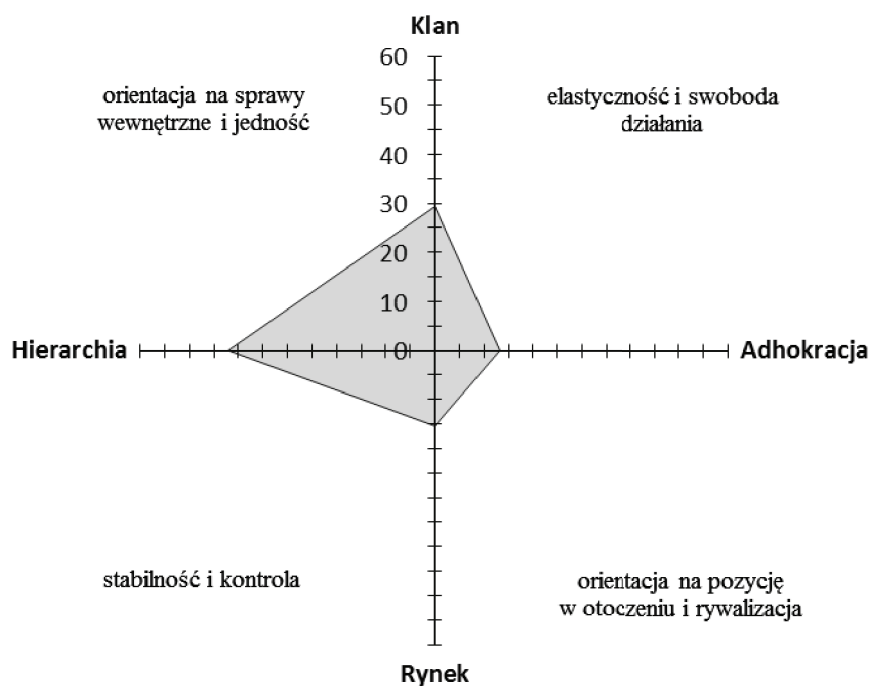
4. The type of organizational culture in PSP

Another important issue when pointing out the conditions and identifying the elements of the organizational culture of State Fire Service shall be an attempt to determine its type. Both earlier observations, as well as research results, may prove helpful.

PSP is a public sector service institution, which to a large extent determines its characteristics. In addition, it operates in a particular environment where the single most important factor seems to be the legal system. It can be assumed that the provisions of the law, both external and forced by the rules of procedure, to a large extent determine the type of culture in the analyzed organization. Such assumptions are further enforced by observations of other cultural expressions, which can largely be formally standardized. However, in order not to rely only on the assumptions, in determining the type of culture one should follow the results of studies that were conducted for this purpose. This will allow the specification which culture profile dominates in the Service, based on the typology proposed by K. Cameron and R. Quinn (2003), which details the following types of culture: clan, adhocracy, market and hierarchy.

As a result of the information collected through the survey, an overall organizational culture profile of the PSP has been drawn, which is presented in Figure 1. As shown in the figure indicated, the most strongly accented

type of culture is hierarchy. The results, therefore, confirm the assumptions made. The Service is dominated by hierarchical functioning depending on the position, and regarding activities – procedures dominate. Firefighters in leadership positions, in order to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the institution, should be especially good coordinators and organizers. Importance is attached to working without interference, where observing a set of rules and standards is seen as helpful. An important issue is also the predictability of full employment and staffing.



Explanation of terms: klan-clan, hierarchia-hierarchy, adhokracja- adhocracy, rynek-market, orientacja na sprawy wewnętrzne i jedność- focus on internal affairs and unity, elastyczność i swoboda działania- flexibility and freedom of action, stabilność i kontrola-stability and control, orientacja na pozycję w otoczeniu i rywalizacja-a sense of position in terms of the environment and competition

Figure 1. PSP organizational culture profile

Source: Own study. Survey results, based on the tools proposed by Cameron & Quinn (2003).

This does not mean, however, that the institution in question is focused only on compliance with formal rules and hierarchical relationship. As shown in the figure, clan culture is very strongly emphasized as well. This is confirmed by the organizational reality, where the managers, in addition to coordinating and organizing work, often play the role of counselors or

teachers who are concerned about the development of their subordinates. Cooperation between firefighters is not just a formal record of the rules, but a practically applied way of performing tasks. Among the employees, also attention is drawn to high loyalty and respect for history and tradition. Smaller focus is on the market and adhocracy culture, as it is reflected in the daily life of the State Fire Service. It is difficult in this case to talk about a competitive attitude, whether throughout the organization or of individual employees, as these characteristics are far from being a part of this institution. However, the presence of market culture can be explained by both the ambitions of employees focused on carrying out their tasks better, as well as the overall attention to the high quality of work and reputation of the Service. At the same time, together with the high creativity of the firefighters which often determines the success of their work, the Service as an organization is not a particularly dynamic one, nor does it seem to be striving to become a leader in its field, which explains its low accenting of adhocracy culture.

The strongest influence in the organization is by the system of norms and the subsequent formal structure, which create a culture of hierarchy. Nevertheless, it can be noted that wherever specific legislation does not reach, the State Fire Service personnel organize themselves according the guidelines specific to the clan culture. At the same time, in the organizational culture of the institution, small but fairly positive influence of features specific to the market culture, and adhocracy, can be seen.

5. Conclusions

The success of any organization, regardless of how it shall be understood, in the main part is determined by its proper functioning. Despite the multitude of studies and finished models of its effective management, it is difficult to identify those that would fit all organizations. This is because each of them is different, and it could even be argued that no two are the same. This situation favors the development of soft management areas, among which organizational culture occupies the chief position, as it seems to be the best proof of the individuality of each institution. The discussed organizational culture is a specific way of thinking and acting by the members of the organization, constituent in its existence and determined by the wide configuration of factors that make up its uniqueness. Due to the fact that organizational culture is difficult to clearly and comprehensively define, the essence of this phenomenon is usually expressed by a number of features which characterize it. The culture of the PSP is made up of certain elements, which remain at the different levels of visibility and awareness. The most external manifestations are the artifacts that, because of the meanings attributed to them, create cultural

symbols classified into three groups as: physical, linguistic and behavioral. The next level, less visible, and sometimes even subconscious, is the standards and values. The values, as beliefs that indicate a desirable state of affairs, are original to the standards, which are the expression thereof, more specifically designing the nature of behaviors that are considered appropriate. At the deepest level there are the basic assumptions, or a philosophy, which usually subconsciously defines the organization's worldview. Both individual factors and the attitude of the employees to different cultural symbols determine the type of culture, which clearly outlines a culture of hierarchy, supported by clan culture. Such a profile of organizational culture seems to have a positive impact on the achievement of very specific tasks which the Fire Service needs to handle. Similarly, all forms and elements of that culture, even those not entirely explicit, which constitute the bonds connecting individuals achieving common goals, play an important role both for the management and the overall functioning of the organization.

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- Ordinance of the Minister of Interior and Administration of 13 November 2008 on the Award of Merit for Fire Protection” Badge (*w sprawie nadawania odznaki „Zasłużony dla ochrony przeciwpożarowej”*), Dz. U. (Journal of Laws), 2008, No. 207, item 1305.
- Ordinance of the Minister of Interior and Administration of 20 March 2009 on Positions in the Organizational Units of the PSP (*w sprawie stanowisk służbowych w jednostkach organizacyjnych PSP*), Dz. U. (Journal of Laws), 2009, No. 54, item 448.
- Ordinance of the Minister of Interior and Administration of 22 September 2000, on the Detailed Regulations for Equipping the Organizational Units of the State Fire Service (*w sprawie szczegółowych zasad wyposażenia jednostek organizacyjnych Państwowej Straży Pożarnej*), Dz. U. (Journal of Laws), 2000, No. 93, item 1035.
- Ordinance of the Minister of Interior and Administration of 26 July 2006, on the Framework of Organization of the Province and District (Municipality)

- Headquarters of the uniforms of the State Fire Service (*w sprawie ramowej organizacji komendy wojewódzkiej i powiatowej (miejskiej) Państwowej Straży Pożarnej*), Dz. U. (Journal of Laws), 2006, No. 143, item 1037.
- Ordinance of the Minister of Interior and Administration of 29 December 2005, on the Conduct of Service by the Firefighters of the State Fire Service (*w sprawie pełnienia służby przez strażaków Państwowej Straży Pożarnej*), Dz. U. (Journal of Laws), 2005, No. 266, item 2246.
- Ordinance of the Minister of Interior and Administration of 30 November 2005, on the Uniforms of the State Fire Service Firefighters (*w sprawie umundurowania strażaków Państwowej Straży Pożarnej*), Dz. U. (Journal of Laws), 2006, no. 4, item 25.
- The Act on the State Fire Service (*Ustawa o Państwowej Straży Pożarnej*) of 24 August 1991, Dz. U. (Journal of Laws), U. 2009, No. 12, item 68.
- Ordinance 9/Service Regulations /2008 of the State Chief Commander of the State Fire Service of 27 June 2008 Changing the Ordinance on the Framework of Regulations for Conducting Service in the Organizational Units of the State Fire Service and the Regulations of Fire Service Muster and Ceremony (*zmieniające zarządzenie w sprawie ramowego regulaminu służby w jednostkach organizacyjnych Państwowej Straży Pożarnej oraz regulaminu musztry i ceremoniału pożarniczego*), Dz. Urz. KG PSP (PSP State Chief Commander Office Journal) 2008, No. 1, item 9.