INDICATORS OF INTEGRATED ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT IN INTERCULTURAL CONTEXTS AND THEIR RELEVANCE FOR MULTINATIONAL MISSIONS' ACCOMPLISHMENT

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Abstract:

The need for an integrated management of defense resources in the context of the Romanian troops present in international missions must be substantiated by identifying socio-cultural and socio-linguistic indicators on which the success of these missions can be measured and quantified. Thus, in order to determine which indicators are relevant to the intercultural environment in which troops must act, this article aims to address the implications of organizational identity from a socio-psychological and managerial perspective, on the integrative perspective of defense resources management and implicitly on cultural matters. On the other hand, in order to have the most appropriate approach to an integrated organizational management in an international context, we will take into account the socio-linguistic factors circumscribed to the concept „community of speech" which in turn can constitute relevant indicators of the degree of achievement of the international missions assigned to the Romanian troops.

In order to approach the concept of integrated defense resources management in terms of its indicators, I believe that what is first and foremost needed is an integrated perspective over organizational management. The underlying reasons for this are as follows. First of all, Romanian troops

participating in international missions come from a well- established organization, namely the Romanian military institution that, despite its unfolding transformation is grounded in tradition and core values. Second, taking part in international missions involves acknowledging and pledging allegiance to the core values upheld by international or transnational organizations such as NATO, UN, OSCE, EU or by temporary coalitions of the willing. Consequently, an identification of the socio- cultural indicators that play an important role in assessing the extent to which Romanian troops accomplish their missions abroad needs to start from an overview of the socio-psychological and management factors with a say in any kind of organization. Moreover, a correlation of these factors with socio- linguistic ones may help develop an integrated framework of analysis for the indicators needed in intercultural contexts.

Organizational identity from a socio-psychological perspective

From a sociological point of view, 'Organizations are bounded networks of people-distinguished as members from non-members-following coordinated procedures: doing things together in inter-related and institutionalized ways', as well as '(…) networks of identifications-individually and collectively- which influence strongly who does what within those procedures and how.' (Jenkins, 1996:139)

Thus, as far as procedures are concerned, they may be explicitly or implicitly, formally or informally transmitted to members and non-members through what is sociologically known as 'organizational knowledge' (Jenkins, 1996:139), namely organizational symbolic universes passed on to members through organizational socialization. As for what sociology understands through 'identifications' the latter, actually represent what organization theory recognizes as positions, offices, jobs, etc. Hence, the latter in their turn are also

part of and passed on to individuals through organizational knowledge, similarly with procedures.

Narrowing down the above definition, organizations are viewed as institutions where (Jenkins, 1996:136):

- Individuals identified as members pursue explicit objectives that serve to identify the organizations
- There are criteria to identify members from non-members
- Labor is divided into specialized tasks and functions allocated to individuals
- There is a clearly acknowledged framework of decision-making and task allocation

In conclusion, institutions are a staple of individual decision-making and behavior and thus become 'patterns of behavior in any particular context which have become established over time as "the way things are done"' (Jenkins, 1996: 127).

Moreover, from a sociological point of view, organizations at large, and more specifically institutions, have relevance only if positioned and investigated within a social context. Consequently, organizations are also viewed as 'open to and part of their social environments. Their boundaries may be permeable and osmotic; it isn't always easy to see where they are drawn.' (Jenkins, 1996:140)

In terms of their defining features, institutions [1] can be viewed as first of all the means through which individuals may identify themselves as members or non-members. Inherently, social patterns of differentiation appear in terms of inclusion, exclusion, hierarchy, stratification since organizations have to be

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[1] However, as blurred as the boundaries between the institutions and the social environment within which they function may be, organizations are visible for outsiders through artifacts, symbols or other means through which organizational identity asserts itself.

viewed not only as networks where there is a relationship of similarity among the members, but also an array of relationships based on difference.[2]

In conclusion, referring back to the patterns underlying individual identification with the institutions, there is one that has to be emphasized as an important feature of any institution, namely authority. Thus, as Jenkins (1996:140) points out again: 'Organizations-small or large- are institutionalized networks of hierarchical relationships of sub and super ordination of power and authority. Organizational collectivity is, in fact, the source of the legitimacy without which authority carries no weight.'

Organization theory and underlying indicators of organizational behavior at a macro- level

The current sub-chapter is to take a look at the underlying indicators of organizational behavior at a macro- level as suggested by Steers and Black (1994), Mullins (2006) and Miner (2002). Consequently, a brief overview of what organization theory views as defining for macro- organizational behavior is to be carried out in order to complete the picture on what indicators should be taken into account when assessing the involvement of Romanian troops in international missions.

As pointed out by the already mentioned authors, the defining variables of the macro dimension of organizational behavior are **organization design, organization processes** and **the relationship between an organization and its external environment.**

As far as **organization design** is concerned, Mullins (2006:384) underlines the fact that 'structure is the pattern of relationships among positions in the organization and among members of the organization.'

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[2] Related to the identity issue as a social construct, Connerton (1989:41-47) points out that the means through which this can be achieved are collective rituals bestowing upon the abstract concept of collective identity 'authenticity and experiential profundity'. As a result, institutions become 'sources and sites of identification' (Jenkins, 1996:133)

According to Drucker (1989:223), even though organizational structure does not yield performance by itself, it enables people to reach performance through the means highlighted by Child (1988:4): allocation of responsibilities, the grouping of functions, decision-making, co-ordination, control and reward. Thus, through the interplay of all these employee morale and job satisfaction are in the end at stake.

Consequently, the role of structure or organization design is to define the tasks and responsibilities, the work roles and relationships of the members of the organization, as well as the channels of communication. Moreover the objectives of structure are (Mullins, 2006: 383-385):

- The economic and efficient performance of an organization in terms of resources employment
- The monitoring of the activities carried out within the organization
- Groups' and individual members' accountability for the tasks undertaken
- Co-ordination of different parts of the organization and different areas of work
- Flexibility in order to answer to future challenges and demands
- Social satisfaction of organizational members.

As for the negative results of a deficient organizational structure, Child (1988) warns against some of these out of which two, of interest for the topic of this dissertation, are listed below:

- The low motivation and morale which my result from inappropriate decision-making on behalf of the managers, insufficient delegation of tasks, lack of clarity as to the job description and the assessment criteria, competing pressures from different parts of the organization.
- Conflict and lack of co-ordination resulting from conflicting goals, lack of clarity of objectives and priorities, inability to get people to work in teams.

In term of **organization processes** Steers and Black enumerate **leadership, communication, decision-making, power and politics,** as well as **conflict** as the ingredients with a major role in interpersonal and intergroup relations within the workplace and ultimately affecting organizational performance. In what follows, some of these variables are to be briefly described in order to gain an insight into the part they play within organizational communication patterns underlying organizational behavior.

Thus, as Mullins points out (2006: 305), **leadership**[3] is connected with motivation, interpersonal behavior and the process of communication. Moreover, good leadership involves delegation of responsibilities to employees, as well as empowerment to make decisions contributing to increased intrinsic motivation for organization members. In addition to that, teamwork and integration of individuals and group goals are also an important result of the workings of good leaders.

As far as the variable of **communication** is concerned, the latter is to be approached by taking a look at the variable of **conflict**, which is also subsumed to organizational processes describing organizational behavior.

Due to the aims underlying the literature review provided in this sub-chapter, I am going to take a look at the variable of conflict form the perspective of the sources leading to it. What is important to highlight before resorting again to Mullins' (2006:491) insight into the issue, is that only those sources which can be considered as indicators of organizational behavior at large will be listed.

Thus, the likely factors that in the end may lead to a communication breakdown and inherently to deficient organizational behavior are as follows:

- Limited resources which lead individual and groups fights over the share they need to carry out their work-related tasks

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[3] Even though there is a heated debate on the differences between leadership and management, the latter does not concern the article given the topic under investigation

- Departmentalization and specialization leading to differing goals and the creation of internal environments specific for each department.

- The nature of work activities. Thus if a person's task depends upon the work of the others, then conflict may emerge.

- Inequitable treatment which if perceived as such may motivate a person to act towards restoring equity either by influencing the inputs or outputs or by acting on others.

- Organization design which through communication channels, authority structure and group norms may lead to conflict

- Groups, whether formal or informal through the skills they pool, as well as through the norms they create

Concerning the **relationship between an organization and its external environment,** the issue is of great importance because any organization needs to be viewed as an 'open system' (Steers and Black, 1994: 323). Consequently, not only does any organization receive input from the external environment (e.g. employees, raw materials, investment), but it also gives back output to the environment (e.g. goods, services such as defense, etc.). Consequently, for an organization to have good communication with its environment and thus ensure its growth and survival it is necessary to be able to respond to the opportunities, challenges, risks and limitations posed by the external environment (Mullins, 2006:361). As a result, factors such as the political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, legal ones must all the time be taken into consideration in the relationship of continuous exchange established between an organization and its external environment.

Thus, as Mullins (2006:364) points out 'Organizations make contributions to the quality of life and to the well-being of the community' through the plethora of stakeholders[4] who have an interest or are affected by the goals, activities and

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[4] In organization theory, the concept of stakeholders refers to the individuals and groups sharing similar interests or being affected by the goals, activities and behaviour of organisations. (Mullins,2006: 367)

organizational behavior (as the latter was already explained from the three-fold perspective established at the beginning of this chapter).

In conclusion, even though organization theory does not state it explicitly, I believe that in the relationship organizations establish with external environment, the output they contribute to the latter consists not only of the materials or services they provide, but also of the way their image is communicated through all three dimensions of the concept of organizational behavior[5], but especially through individual and organizational behavior. Consequently, depending on how successful this communication with external environment is, the input the Romanian military organization gets in terms of the resources it needs to employ in its current activities in theatres of operations is determined and plays a major role in the positioning within an evolving environment.

Organizational identity in terms of speech communities

Another means of establishing the indicators to be employed in assessing the accomplishment of the missions on behalf of the Romanian troops as part of various international organizations consists in taking a socio- linguistic approach at the issue of organizational identity in general.

Thus, the paradigm proposed is that of the **speech community**. As a result, in order to identify the variables describing it a clarification of the concept is to be carried out in the following paragraphs without entering into too many details about the disagreements among socio-linguists in this respect.

In support of the idea of including a socio-linguistic framework in the analysis and interpretation of organizational identity, Wardaugh (2002:118) points out that group identity is marked by both linguistic characteristics, as well

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[5] See in this respect the definition of organisational behaviour provided in **Managementul integrat al apărării din perspectiva conceptului de comportament organizațional (Integrated defence management from the perspective of the concept of organisational behaviour);** Revista militară de management și educație, Nr. 3/2007; ISSN 1841-978X; pp. 11-14; 14-17

as by other features such as social, cultural, political, etc. Moreover, in alignment with the ideas expressed by sociologists concerning the possibility for one and the same individual to belong to various groups along a lifetime, the author (2002:121) draws attention to the fact that similarly, an individual may be part of different speech communities 'but on any particular occasion will identify with only one of them, the particular identification depending on what is especially important or contrastive in the circumstance' and as a consequence (2002:125) 'The variation we see in language must partly reflect a need that people have to be seen as the same as certain other people on some occasions and as different from them on other occasions'.

Thus, the inference that can be made starting from the above remarks is that the individuals within an organization identify with the organization in accordance with the general framework of organizational behavior. Moreover, they may use linguistic markers through which to highlight not only their belongingness to the organization as a whole, but also to the formal or informal groups within the organization proper. In this respect, Gumperz (1971: 114-128) draws attention to the possibility of categorizing occupational groups as speech communities as long as there are linguistic particularities that provide the latter specificity through the regular interplay between language use and social structure, in our case organizational structure. Moreover, in homogenous societies the linguistic marks delineating social differences are restricted to marginal varieties restricted to phonology, syntax, vocabulary indicating the social models of interaction within a linguistic community.

Consequently, as Saville-Troike (1996:357)[6] points out, the choice made by individuals in terms of what social and communicative rules to employ becomes part of their strategy of communication. Taking this idea even further, I believe (which is to be checked through the investigation to follow in chapter

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[6] In Wardaugh (2002:124)

four) that the same choice is telling on the strategy of communication employed within their occupational group, and extending the framework, by organizational behavior. As a result, as Platt and Platt (1975:35)[7] underline the speech community a person is part of at a certain moment owns its 'speech repertoire' which could be considered a defining feature of that group or community.

Thus, starting form the above insights into the input the socio-linguistic framework of speech community contributes to the better understanding of the communicative practices within organizations, a definition of the concept from the perspective of various theorists is more than necessary. As a result, in what follows this project is to be undertaken with the purpose of identifying further characteristics of a speech community which could contribute to the establishment of the instruments of investigation.

In Labov's (1927b:120-121)[8] opinion, the hallmark of a speech community is provided not by marked agreement over using linguistic elements but by the participation of the members of a community in accordance with a set of shared norms, which 'may be observed in overt types of evaluative behavior, and by the uniformity of abstract patterns of variation which are invariant in respect to a particular levels of usage'. As the previous chapter already pointed out and as the following sub-chapter on organizational communication patterns is to underline, there are such abstract uniform patterns of variation within any organization, only that the precondition of identifying them overtly is not possible due to the indirect method of this dissertation of eliciting the information through questionnaires. However, it is worth remembering the invariance characteristic of these patterns when it comes to specific levels of usage because during the interpretation stage of the results of this research the above aspect is to be taken into account.

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[7] Idem, p. 128
[8] Ibidem, p.118

Drawing on Labov's definition of the speech community and in line with Wardaugh, Hudson (1980:28) draws attention to the fact that speech communities interact in a complex manner with one another and thus, a speech community may include parts of other speech communities in point of shared language varieties.

Spolsky (1998), in his turn, brings a valuable insight into the meanings and consequences of the presence of a speech community. Thus, according to him (1998: 27), a speech community is the place where 'patterned variations in selection from the available repertoire takes place', since as he points out people communicating with one another have the tendency to speak in a similar manner. The consequence of such a state of things is the development of what he calls (1998:30) 'powerful mechanisms for asserting and recognizing social difference' in the condition geographical or spatial isolation.

Ionescu- Ruxandoiu et al (1975:108) brings relevant information as to what variations are likely to be encountered in speech communities and about how they inform on the necessities of communication taking place in a certain moment or on the social relationships among speakers. Thus, according to them, the variations informing on the communication necessities are also called 'overlapped variations' because they refer to the differences in the types of activities carried out within the same group which impose a restricted usage of the specialized terms. On the other hand, the social relationship between the speakers indicative of social barriers is established through greetings or modes of address. Moreover, the same authors, remark that the smaller the scope of an individual's activities, the more homogenous the social group in which s/he interacts and as a consequence the more limited the range of verbal variations.

Starting from all the conceptual delineations made by the authors already quoted or paraphrased in this sub-chapter it becomes more than obvious that the indicators that can be employed in order to assess the extent to which Romanian troops succeed in accomplishing their missions in terms of socio- linguistics are

as follows: overlapped variations and „organizational knowledge" of them; linguistic marks delineating social differences through phonology, syntax, vocabulary indicating the social models of interaction within a linguistic community, as well as social belongingness; greetings and modes of address telling on organizational identity both in socio- psychological terms, and management terms as delineated in the previous sub- chapters.

Inferences for integrated defense resources management in intercultural contexts

Taking into account the information above, one must underline the necessity of unifying the indicators identified at the three levels of organizations in general, namely socio- psychological, managerial and socio- linguistic if the desideratum of integrated defense resources management is to be achieved. Moreover, in order to accomplish this, some inferences concerning the integrated defense resources management in intercultural contexts need to be further made.

Thus, the first thing that needs to be enforced when taking an integrative view of management issues at an intercultural level is the role played by cultural issues, and more specifically by organizational culture as expressed through core values. In this respect, it is not only organizational cultural values acting as a link among members, but also the validity of these cultural values when contrasted with differing cultures, whether national or organizational. Consequently, if assessment missions' accomplishment needs to be conducted, an important indicator by which the evaluation is to be made is the congruence of the cultural values enforced both at a local level (i.e. within the Romanian armed forces as providers of defense and security services to their stakeholders) and at a regional and transnational level (i.e. within the alliances, coalitions or institutions with a role in guaranteeing fundamental rights, security and values). In the end, the argument supporting the identification of such an indicator is

provided by Martin ([1992](#)). According to him, the role of core values is to, alleviate anxiety, to control the uncontrollable, to bring predictability to the uncertain, and to clarify the ambiguous'. Consequently, by defining clear- cut values managers may aim high at controlling the outcomes of the activities undertaken by their organizations.

Thus, within the context of an integrated defense resources management in the case of the troops involved in theatres of operations, defining, upholding and assessing activities through a well- defined set of values involves three major aspects: the consistency of managerial behavior with a set of values, the operationalization of these values at all levels, in all locations and commitment to the values.

Integrated organizational management in intercultural contexts: conclusions

Romanian armed forces involved in international missions have had to tackle not only the challenges related to interoperability issues, but also intercultural aspects concerning various organizational cultures pertaining to the other armies involved in joint actions, as well as cultural differences of local populations where the troops were or have been deployed. Consequently, a renewed focus must be placed upon on a military strategy which should include an intercultural dimension of the human resource management, since the armed forces nowadays are more impactful at a global level, rather than at a national one. By such a renewed strategy the Romanian armed forces would reflect its global interests and involvement, and its aim should be that of identifying the combinations of global networking among militaries and between militaries and local populations on one hand, and local policies aimed at adapting the results of this networking at the level of the populations the Romanian armed forces need to deal with when part of international missions.

Thus, in order to come up and support such a renewed strategy, the training system at the national level should be improved in terms of intercultural awareness. Moreover, an International Management Training Group made up of people with relevant experience in theatres of operations should disseminate to all units that are to be deployed abroad the necessary information that can help them think and act globally, as part of the joint efforts, but work within the framework of different cultures. Thus, by making the necessary changes at a strategic level, the Romanian military organizational culture can evolve by refining and acknowledging as a core value the necessity and importance of intercultural management skills.

The inferences that can be made based on the information provide so far are as follows:

- Romanian armed forces' involvement requires managers and not only possessing intercultural management skills. These skills can be learnt, just like other behavioural science skills like leadership or team spirit, by including them within organizational core values.

- Romanian armed forces must n foster intercultural management expertise through education. As a consequence, assembling an International Management Training Group as part of this educational effort is an indicator by which mission accomplishment can be assessed.

- Members of the International Management Training Group should be the ones in charge with developing sensitivity to local cultures, and consequently formulate country-specific policies that reflect cultural issues. The policies in place should be considered another indicator for intercultural management.

- Combat units are differentiated by the need to take cognizance of local cultures, but they are integrated by a common set of values, orientation and global strategy that are decided at a national and international (i.e. NATO and coalitions) level.

- Cultures however are not static. This truism applies with equal force to ethnic cultures and cultures. Armed forces functioning in an intercultural context must be permeable enough to imbibe what is useful from ethnic cultures in order to carry out their missions. They must also be sensitive enough to assess trends and changes in ethnic cultures, since ethnic cultures of emerging economies are more susceptible to change than those of mature economies. Hence, the adaptability to ethnic cultures and the acknowledgment of the changes within such cultures are important indicators of a unit's capacity to accomplish its mission.

- Intercultural management within the armed forces deployed in various theatres of operations should be characterized by the fact that operational decision making has been delegated to them.

- Local talent who have internalized BMW values and then transferred these values to the local context manage these local divisions.

- First-hand exposure to local cultures should be the indicator by which to assess and select the members of the International Management Training Group. Thus, the group should include personnel from different countries, so that they have the opportunity of discussing and analysing issues of countries some of them may not have knowledge of. Moreover, in order to make worthwhile recommendations, the group should travel to the country in question for a short sojourn, to learn about it and then disseminate the information.

All this considered, the missions of Romanian armed forces in international endeavours can make an important step towards a higher degree of interoperability in terms of intercultural issues not only with the other co-working armed forces, but also with local populations involved in the conflicts that need to be checked.

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