Organisational Culture as Organisational Identity – Between the Public and the Private

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The author discusses the notion of organisational culture and relates it to the notion of organisational identity. Culture as a group identity involves elements of stability, homogeneity and integrity but this can be very much altered through post-modern understanding of relationships between localities and their contexts. The research that was conducted in two primary schools in Slovenia is based on the symbolic notion of organisational culture. We explored what meanings are assigned to schools in public documents, during rituals and in teachers' and headteachers'narratives. The findings indicate the co-existence of two cultures and hence of two identities, 'the public' and 'the private', the former being closer to the corporate identity and the latter to multiple identities. The managers should be aware of both and should use the in-between space for on-going discussions and negotiations.

Key words: organisational culture, identity, globalisation, management

1 Introduction

Culture has been the subject of intensive academic debate for more than twenty years. It is has received a lot of attention by anthropologists, phenomenologists, critical theorists, and recently also by organisational theorists. In spite of this, it lacks a common definition and "has no theoretical paradigm that cultural researches share" (Martin 1992: 4). While some researchers can be referred to as generalists, "writing as if any aspect of organisational life were part of culture" (Martin 1992: 7), others attempt to define culture more narrowly, "in order to distinguish it from related concepts, such as norms, climate, or values" (ibid.). Even in anthropology, 'culture', has no fixed or broadly-agreed meaning.

A useful overview of schools of thought in cultural anthropology has been provided by Allaire and Firsirotu (1984:193-221). The first distinction to be drawn is between those theorists who view culture as incorporated into the social system and those who conceive it as a conceptually separate, ideational system. The former school of thought leads to the notion of sociocultural systems "postulating harmony, consonance and isomorphism", while the latter views culture as a system of ideas, or as "inferred ideational codes lying behind the realm of observable events".

Different concepts of culture may be found in the conception of culture as an *ideational system*. For three of those schools of thought (cognitive, structuralist and

mutual equivalence), culture is located "in the minds of culture-bearers" (Allaire and Firsirotu 1984: 202) as a system of knowledge, of learned standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating and acting. It is beyond the scope and relevance of this article to go more deeply into each of these views but we might claim that their concepts could be traced in management literature.

In its broadest terms, organisational culture can be dealt with from two different points of view:

- as something an organisation *has*;
- as something an organisation *is*.

The first view is closer to what can be understood as the management aspect of organisational culture, while the second is related to anthropological understanding. Both schools of thought, however, relate the concept of organisational culture to the idea of that which is 'common'or 'shared', and that is the essence of organisational identity (Južnič 1993). Ule (2000: 84) refers to various concepts of identity at the epistemological level. In terms of understanding 'organisational identity', we shall focus on the relational aspect that means »defining individual identity in relation to its context« where, in this case, the individual refers to an organisation.

Such a concept of identity can be related to identity in a global context. Culture as a group identity involves elements of stability, homogeneity and integrity but this can be very much altered through post-modern understanding of relationships between localities and their contexts. It is about »primarily contextual relationships« (Appadurai

1998: 178). Within the global context, identities are being constantly reshaped in the relational process between an organisation as culture and its changing context. Hence, culture and identity have become »unstable as they are being created through a discourse« (Kuper 1999: 239) and as such they have become »plural and fluid« (Giroux 1994: 1).

The research was conducted in two primary schools in Slovenia (Erčulj 2004) and is based on the symbolic notion of organisational culture. It refers to "the importance for people of symbolism and the interpretation of events, ideas, and experiences that are influenced and shaped by groups within which [people] live" (Alvesson 2002: 3). We explored how schools are presented in public documents, during two rituals and in teachers' narratives.

The findings indicated the co-existence of two cultures and hence of two identities. The idea of commonality can be found in the so-called 'public culture' maintained by artefacts such as written documents, rituals, system of rules etc. At the level of 'private culture' identity in relational sense is being developed. Changing context, knowledge and experiences of individuals create multiple identities that reflect »complexity of social relations and diversity of individual responses« (Augé 1995: 50). Meanings and beliefs are related to individuals and thus an ever-changing pattern is being created.

So we can not only open the question about the relationship between both cultures but also about which of the two reflects the 'true' organisational identity especially because an interesting paradox can be witnessed: the public culture is becoming more and more the same in most schools in Slovenia since they follow global trends and already tested patterns of functioning. Private culture on the other hand remains unique, different and as such it contains more elements of identity of an organisation as an individual entity.

Therefore organisational leaders are facing the challenge of how to link both cultures so that the public culture will reflect a deeper, organisational 'character' as well as its specific.

2　Organisational culture and the concept of group identity

The notion of 'shared' seems to be the essence of definitions provided by numerous authors of organisational culture, such as Dalin (1993), Pheysey (1993), Brown (1998), Trice and Beyer (1999), Bennett (2003) and Schein (2004). These authors refer to culture as a 'pattern', as something which can be perceived as implying the notion of integration.

The phenomenon of organisational culture as addressed in the management literature usually refers to the common and to the shared and as such resembles the notion of group identity. Ule (2000) and Južnič (1993) have provided a thorough overview of various approaches to the phenomenon of identity. On the other hand, it should be realised that identity has been one of the most contentious notions in contemporary texts. The issues about the nature of identity, about how identities are created, reproduced and transformed within the global context have been extremely complex. The multiple processes of globalisation are actually "creating a global arena of potential identity formation reflecting the interaction between locally specific practices of selfhood and the dynamics of global positioning" (Lewellen 2002: 94).

Južnič (1993) describes social identity as group identity and equates it with the notion of belonging. In his view, group identity is closely related to general 'typicalness' that requires individuals' subordination to commonalities (or at least similarities) of the group or individuals belonging to it. His view of group identity could easily be compared with the idea of, for example, shared values, beliefs and rules, implied in different definitions of organisational culture. It is interesting that Južnič (1993: 141) argues that "commitment and responsibility are required when a certain group identity is accepted". On the other hand, every individual acquires protection from the group. Similarly, Trice and Beyer (1999: 9) argue that organisational culture creates social order where norms control organisational members' behaviour and relate it to the creation of a collective identity and commitment.

Ule (2000) distinguishes between different conceptions of identity on an epistemological level. The relational aspect of identity seems to be close to the notion of organisational culture. Ule (2000: 84) argues that relational aspect is usually deriving from internal characteristics, although no identity can exist without "acknowledgement of an individual's identity from others in the environment". Carrithers (1992), for example, also views culture in relational terms. She agrees that values are the essence of any culture, "sensible only in the perspective of others" (Carrithers 1992: 36). From this stance culture is a relational notion. It is, however, worth referring again to Ule's (2000) summary of definitions of identity. She points to a significant characteristic implied in them: to remain the same in spite of all changes because it is "about the sense of the sameness and of one's own continuity in time and space as well as about perception of the fact that others can identify and acknowledge individual's sameness and continuity" (Ule 2000: 59).

The idea of sameness and continuity has prevailed in many organisations and that it has strongly influenced authors dealing with organisational culture. It can be seen from the definitions themselves that the idea of organisational culture itself implies strong, shared values that are not easily altered. This can be illustrated by Schein's (2004: 16-22) interpretation of levels of culture. He argues that every culture can be analysed at different levels where the term level "refers to the degree to which a cultural phenomenon is visible to the observer ". On the first level there are artefacts that include all the phenomena that can be seen, heard or felt when a member enters an unfamiliar culture. On the second level we can encounter espoused values expressed thorough strategies, goals and philosophies. If these values are perceived as 'good', they gradually start to transform into shared assumptions that

exist at the third level. Their main feature is that they are taken-for-granted to such an extent that "we neither confront nor debate and hence are extremely difficult to change". If we then want to understand or study culture, we have to decipher these complex patterns and their plurality of surface levels.

At this point we would like to refer to the notion of stability and hence of strong, organisational cultures expressed through shared values, commonly renowned heroes, programmed rites and rituals and effective cultural networks – the means of communication (Deal and Kennedy 2000). Some authors (i.e. Kotter and Heskett 1992; Beaumont 1996; Morgan 1997) express certain ideas about a positive correlation between organisational performance and strong, organisational culture. Their main argument refers to the organisation's ability to cope with a changing environment. Morgan's (1997: 259) notion of organisational egocentrism implies a similar view. He claims that it leads to a tendency "to sustain unrealistic identities or to produce identities that ultimately destroy important elements of the context of which they are part".

In spite of a certain level of scepticism, the arguments on behalf of a stable and united organisational culture still prevail. We agree that there ought to be consensus among organisational members about an organisation's mission, goals and priorities – pure eclecticism could lead to chaos.

3   Identities in the global context

Cultures, as group identities, are traditionally referred to as relatively stable, homogenous and integrated. In this sense, Featherstone (1995: 103) argues that it has often been assumed that "members of a locality form a distinctive community with its own unique culture". That may be accepted – but it is important to note how the very idea of culture is understood. When it is equated with coherence and order, we conform to the traditional management view of an organisation as a particular bounded space (in a spatial and ideational sense). However, our understanding of organisational culture is much closer to Ule's (2000) late-modernist concept of identities. It can be compared with some of the authors (Giroux 1994; Featherstone 1995; Hall and du Gay 1996; Appadurai 1998; Kuper 1999; Buenfil-Burgos 2000) that have adopted the view that boundaries and identities are unstable and in flux.

The cultural perspective on globalisation as well as the global perspective on culture produces two contradictory phenomena: homogenisation and diversification. From this point of view, the global context may also be related to either as homogenising or as a context in which there is the ability for the coexistence of diverse social interactions and for cultural flow.

As a homogenising force, it is usually perceived as corrosive, as "a threat to the integrity of all particularities" (Featherstone 1995: 87). The recent emergence of different types of resistance towards globalisation has indicated that globalisation is stronger than previously

perceived and also most likely experienced primarily as "an economic planetary model conducted by a rich minority and ruled by the hegemony of multinational financial companies" (Hren 2001: 22). Some parallels may be drawn with the management model of organisational culture. The claim for a strong culture as well as emphasising the manager's role in creating and sustaining organisational culture may denote that culture lies in the domain of the manager and that values different to those of the manager may not be desirable or acceptable.

We would rather take the view that greater awareness and stimulation of plurality should be enabled in a global context. Furthermore, localities, such as organisations, are assumed "as primarily relational and contextual" (Appadurai 1998: 178) rather than spatial. From this point of view the global context does not destroy the peculiarities of identities; it is rather viewed as a new condition from where identities may be produced and reproduced as a negotiable process. It is interesting that locality (*the here*) may operate in a two-fold way: it produces local subjects while, at the same time, it produces local neighbourhoods within which such subjects can be recognised and organised.

A relational view on contemporary conditions has already been referred to by Giddens (1990). His notion is of the disembedded institution, where local practices are linked with global social relations points to an interlocking of the local and the global through which the context is constantly recreated. Kuper (1999: 239) refers to contemporary anthropologists whose discourse on identity is pitched against every kind of essentialism and thus insists that culture and identity "are made up, invented, *unstable*, *discursive* fabrications". Consequently, cultures are fragmented, and internally contested and enclosed by porous boundaries. Thus cultural identity can never provide an adequate guide for living because we all have multiple identities.

Giroux (1994: 1-7) also agrees that the fixed and unified identity has been replaced by "a narrative space that is pluralized and fluid". Although his main interest rests with pedagogy, there is a lot to apply to organisational culture. If indeterminacy, rather than order, should become the guiding principle of pedagogy in which multiple views, possibilities, and differences are opened up rather than from the perspective of a master narrative then the message (for what he calls a post-modern conception of culture linked to the diverse and changing global conditions) is rather clear.

4   Organisations as multiple identities

Some further comment is needed at this point. The tendency towards homogenisation and standardisation underpinning the functionalist view of organisations may also explain the ideal of shared values as the essence of organisational culture. Moreover, functionalists relate organisational survival to internal order and discipline. It is not difficult to draw parallels with a management lite-

rature that promotes cultural stability and strong, shared values as an ideal of effective organisations.

We have explored another weakness in the management literature related to organisations as corporate identities. An overview of literature about the issue of identity may indicate that stability is not anymore implied in it. Ule (2000) argues that the identities of late modernity (the period we now live in) are broken into particular areas of experiences and identities that cannot be incorporated in common images anymore. Tierney (1999: 452) provides a similar view. He sees a post-modern sense of identity as "fractured and splintered rather than cohesive and unitary". Identities can form common images through tangible symbols or they are shaped into common images by powerful individuals to impress those who believe that stability and shared values throughout organisations denote good, effective organisation and effective leadership, particularly. From this stance, it is worth considering Kuper's (1999) prejudice against such cultural consensus because it requires conformity.

The claim for strong cultures may have another explanation. Stable, corporate identities are much more secure and predictable and, since many people "are afraid of the experience of ontological homelessness" (Ule 2000: 280), they have recourse to strong group identities. A similar 'fear' has already been expressed by Rosenau (1992). Although she believes that collective affiliation may be considered a hindrance, she points to the possibility that scattered identity can result in an anonymous existence with no positive identity. Moreover, since many regard the era we live in as a "crisis of community" (Hargreaves 2003: 172), organisations may retain the role of regenerating it and of providing some kind of (false) certainty by demonstrating common vision, mission, purpose, to which everybody within the organisation should be committed. If we accept that the meaning of organisational culture is close to that of group identity, we should be aware of two contradictory tendencies within the same issue.

Firstly, identity is denoted and maintained by external artefacts, such as name, symbols, rites, rituals, etc. (Južnič 1993). We do not oppose this basic characteristic of identity, nor of culture. Organisations have their names; they invest quite a lot of time and money in their so-called corporate image expressed through logos, publications and other public documents. Besides, many rituals also are perceived as common practice. *The tangibles* (as we call these symbols) may thus be perceived as shared among the members of the same organisation so identity of this kind might give people some sense of belonging.

Secondly, in relational terms, the notion of identity and culture has lost the ingredient of stability. Changing context or neighbourhood, members of an organisation who belong to various networks of relationships and porous boundaries do not correspond with its vocabulary anymore. These concepts may rather be related to multiple identities and thus to »a complexity of social tissue and a variety of individual [responses]" (Augé 1995: 50). The inner, less tangible life of an organisation may thus not form any of the shared forms or patterns that are

so vehemently promoted in management literature. ***The intangibles*** (relationships, beliefs) may only exist as individual perceptions and may resemble more the metaphor of a patchwork. Patterns (so often referred to when dealing with organisational culture) have not disappeared but their shapes have been made much more flexible and more fleeting.

Finally, such a view of organisational culture demarcated into tangible and intangible components may provoke an ongoing question about the relationship between the two. Tangibles (the shared image of a culture) and intangibles (a bunch of multiple, relational identities) of a culture exist simultaneously within the same organisation. The former may perform the role of identification while the latter may be perceived as a context in which networks and the flow may occur. They should not be judged as better or worse but rather as composing 'a tale of two identities' in which both of them perform a different function.

5   Research

The research presented is a qualitative case study of two primary schools in Slovenia. We employed the case study method because »case studies recognise the complexity and 'embeddedness' of social truth« (Yin 2005: 59). Moreover, »case studies have been related to »an in-depth understanding of the situation and its meaning of those involved« (Merriam 1998: xii) and to investigation of the »contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context« (Yin 2005: 13). Owing to these features, case study seems to be an appropriate method to study organisational culture. The main aim of the research was to explore how schools are perceived by teachers, by headteachers and in school documents that are publicly available.

We selected two primary schools as two units of analysis. Since we wanted to cover contextual conditions, we sought for two schools that are situated in different contexts. The perceived effectiveness of the schools was the most important criterion for selection because culture and effectiveness have been traditionally described as related notions in the management literature. Beside this, we wanted to cover 'maximum variation' to achieve »more conceptually dense and potentially more useful findings« (Merriam 1998: 62). Our selection was based on our own professional knowledge about schools (working with headteachers and running workshops for teaching staff, general 'reputation' in Slovenian context), on informal interviews with headteachers and on an informal interview with the Chief Inspector. The schools differ in the following characteristics: location (urban – rural), size (average – small), years of headteacher's experience (less than 10 – more than 30), parents' level of education and number of extra-curricular activities. We labelled them E (effective) and S (silent) school.

Data were collected by three different methods, namely, documentary analysis, observation and semi-structured interviews. First, we analysed how schools are presented to the public through school brochures, and

school annual plans. We observed two typical events,that is, the first school day for new pupils and the graduation ceremony because they had traditionally been significant public events in each school where the headteacher gives his/her speech for pupils and parents. Within these events, we were especially interested in the messages about the schools and the 'lives' within them being conveyed to parents and pupils. The most important source of information was interviews because they allowed us »to get closer to understanding people's views than would have been able by any other method« (Seidman 1998: 19). Besides, Stake (1995: 84) perceives interview to be a powerful method in qualitative research and »the main road to multiple realities«. We used a 'criterion-based sample' (LeCompte and Preissle 1993), so we selected teachers representing different profiles, age, status on the promotion scale, length of service within the school and gender. We used headteachers to help us select informants because this was the most probable way to get access to teachers. The size of the sample was approximately one-third of the teachers in each school (17 in E school and 8 in S school) and the headteachers.

The interview questions addressed key processes and/ or stakeholders in schools because we wanted to find out the informants' perceptions about the organisations they work in. The same questions were used for teachers and headteachers namely:

- How do you view your school?
- How would you describe teaching staff? How do you feel as a colleague among them?
- How would you describe your pupils?
- What are parents like?
- What has been the most important recent change in your schools? Can you describe how it has been implemented?
- How do you see the future of your school?

The interviews lasted from 35 minutes (5 of them) to 90 minutes with headteachers. They were recorded and transcribed. During the analysis, we focused on meanings the informants ascribed to various issues and so we clustered the answers accordingly. Interviews with headteachers were analysed separately and were related to the leader's role in shaping and re-shaping organisational values.

All the respondents were informed about the aim of the study; they were given the possibility that the researcher could present findings at the staff meeting. Anonymity was ensured so that teachers' names were coded in capital letters in E School and in numbers in S school. Headteachers were given false names. We also avoided a more detailed description of both schools because in Slovenia it would be difficult not to identify them.

Uniqueness, that is considered an advantage of case study research, has potential implications on the issue of validity. We are aware that 'perfect validity' (Kirk and Miller 1986: 12) is not even theoretically attainable so various authors, such as Merriam (1998) Yin (2005) and others, refer to triangulation that might provide more convincing data and get a more holistic understanding of the situation. Hence we employed three different research

methods. The study does not fulfil criteria for generalization beyond the case study schools but this was not our intention. It is readers who might build connections to their existing perspectives and thus make generalisations either by analogy or by extrapolation.

6 Findings

6.1 Schools presented in the documents and during public events

From this perspective, the schools seem to be presented in ways that conceal more than they reveal. The image of the school is wrapped in figures and tables and in praise of pupils and of their successes. Messages about the school's 'policy' and about teacher attitude to newcomers and school leavers were conveyed in messages, such as »I am proud of you and so are all the teachers« (in E School) or »We have had you here for eight years and now it is time to wish you all the bet« (in S School). They were uttered by headteachers, who obviously performed their role in shaping the public conception of the schools.

It seems that schools are presented to the public (parents, visitors, local community, other schools) as unified organisations where shared beliefs prevail. Hence, they may be referred to as 'corporate cultures' or 'corporate identities'. The schools might present themselves as such because of a high level of social cohesion, frequently referred to as a 'culture of collaboration' (Stoll 1999; Hargreaves 2003) which is usually linked to successful schools. On the other hand, the traditional perception of organisational identity seems to be based on the concept of sharing and is incorporated in common images (Ule 2000). E School seems to reinforce its image as a solid and stable organisation even more during the graduation ceremony than S School. Common photos and small presents to pupils might support unity and promote children's commitment to the school. By contrast, on the first day, in the gym - where pupils and parents were gathered, the headteacher in S School gave a welcome speech - which could be understood as his attempt to build a sense of community on that first school day.

From the language used in documentation (and in headteachers' speeches) one might easily recognise 'the economic register' »usually expressed in 'global' terms« (Stronach 2000:13) of effectiveness, measurement and competition. The brochures and the annual plans contain figures and tables. They would rather inform pupils and parents about the number of extracurricular activities than about content or issues behind them. Teachers are also presented only in relation to their responsibilities. The same can be said about headteachers' speeches. They use the global language of effectiveness and marketisation while they were reporting about their pupils' success. Standard phrases did not reveal much about the schools' internal world. We could refer to documents and observed events as tangibles that try to preserve organisational

identity but are in fact »a false surrogate« (Stronach 2000: 34) for the social life of schools.

6.2 Schools presented in teachers' stories

Teachers in both schools talked about their schools and related issues in a different way from how schools were presented in documents and through headteachers' speeches. Multiple views and interests were revealed. We could not actually identify specific subcultures in either of the schools because teachers identified with different groups around different issues. Although one group in E Schools at first seemed identifiable in this way, a deeper analysis revealed that they shared common views merely of some events and of the general view of the school while their views about parents and pupils differ a lot.

Schools that were presented in figures, table and fine words in documents and during observed events seemed to have different meaning for teachers. In both schools, there were teachers who talked enthusiastically about their schools as well as those who would like to see things different. But even enthusiastic ones pointed to different issues. For example, three teachers in S School seemed to be enthusiastic about working in a small school while Teacher 5 compared the school to 'paradise' because it is situated in a beautiful village. So, our overall perception of teachers' views of the two schools as a whole and their staff may be referred to as a bunch of multiple views. Unity and sharing expressed in documents and public speeches have been replaced by diversity.

In terms of language, schools that were presented in documents and speeches in management language conveying messages about 'economy of performance' and unity seemed to have another face when teachers were talking about them. They constructed their meanings with different words that were not a part of 'global rational vocabulary'. Their register was much more 'local' as they were talking about 'their' colleagues, 'their' classrooms, and 'their' pupils. They described them through their experiences and talked about their practices. It could be argued that they were reproducing a culture which had not been caught in tables or figures, or in grand words about outputs, efficiency or marketisation. This does not mean that teachers were not involved in the schools' efforts for good results as they not only pointed to common vision in E School but also to the importance of good results in both schools. Most of their views, however, focused inward into a more private sphere of organisational life. Since they strongly reflected the current context of schools, they are probably constantly being constructed, reshaped and thus much more unstable.

6.3 Schools presented by headteachers

Both headteachers seemed to use the same management language when they talked about the schools and the related issues implied in the interview questions.

E School's headteacher emphasised control and external accountability when he talked about the school and its staff. He described his staff in percentages putting them into a 'league table' of effectiveness. He was aware of his role as 'culture founder' because he had introduced some ritual in his school, such as collective in-service training days. A similar attitude could be traced in his view of pupils and parents. He considered them as clients whose demands influence school's offer and his policy of 'being distinctive' in the environment. His language reflected his concern about the 'economy of performance' and about »exploring the particular arrangements which are developed to translate policy agendas and goals into practical organisational consequences« (Bottery 2003:201). The latter was especially obvious in his relation to changes. Hence, he might be viewed as a cultural gatekeeper trying to preserve the public image of unified organisation with strong shared beliefs which is traditionally the management ideal.

S School's headteacher emphasised powerlessness in relation to external circumstances, such as the decrease in the number of pupils, and other changes which could also be heard in some teachers' stories. In relation to pupils and parents, he seemed to be responsive but not proactive and even the future of the school seemed to him something he could not influence much. In this sense, he may also be perceived as cultural gatekeeper who was much more sceptical about global ideas of competitiveness and marketisation. However, his role remains the same as in E School and his laissez-faire attitude seemed to be even stronger safeguard to external and internal influences.

In both cases we could realise that headteachers did not refer to teachers' stories or to teachers' views. Although we tried to avoid any generalisation it was significant that language about the key aspects of a school's life used by headteachers and teachers did not come to any common denominator.

7 Corporate identity and multiple identities – between the public and the private

Although we would not like to make any generalisation, we can refer to the coexistence of two cultures. The corporate dimension of culture may be referred to as 'public' culture while the issue of 'private' culture refers to as a highly contextual and multiple retaining of 'local' diversity (Erčulj 2004: 80-84). Since we have argued that organisational culture and identity might be perceived as two sides of the same coin, then we could argue that organisational identity – if understood as being constituted through difference – has been also developed at two levels, public and private.

The *public identity* of these two schools maintained in documents and public events has been based on a modernist concept of community concerning »a particularly constituted set of social relationships based on something which the participants had in common« (Mills, Boylstein,

Lorean 2001: 126). Such a notion of identity has been characterised by a high degree of cohesion, continuity and spatial grounding. Artefacts and rituals can be considered as if they were 'employed' to sustain public identity in these two schools. This view might even be extended to other schools in Slovenia since they have used very similar artefacts (especially language) and rituals. Another aspect of public identity in the two schools is that there has been a disconnection with what is going on in a private sphere of organisational life but this issue cannot be generalised beyond the two case studies.

The public identity implied by 'integrative artefacts' and rituals during which an integrative view of organisational culture is promoted has itself been folded into a global context that has been redefining it through the language of global educational discourse. But considering that artefacts and rituals are usually perceived as indicating 'corporate identity' and 'elements' that sustain it, it might be claimed that the public identity of schools is paradoxical in its nature. By searching for the 'best' way to present individual schools, headteachers tended to use 'universal' language form a 'global vocabulary' which lead to a 'global culture' of schools with a negative connotation, as »a corrosive homogenising force, as a thereat to the integrity of all particularities« (Featherstone 1995: 87). It seems that, in this sense, schools are becoming more «detached from the particularities of place and context« (Morley and Robins 1995: 41), pushing themselves towards greater and greater homogeneity.

The private identity has been constructed through teachers' views of the schools, pupils, parents, changes and the schools' future. They did not tend to be closely-related to the contents of the 'public identity'. They appealed »to different sorts of register« (Stronach 2000: 30) than the documents and headteachers' speeches during events. Each of their stories could be developed as a case-study *per se* because they were so diverse. In this sense, 'the private identity' may be viewed as a set of diverse interpretations. Its constructors (teachers in our case) »do not agree upon clear boundaries, cannot identify shared solutions, and do not reconcile contradictory beliefs and multiple identities« (Meyerson 1991:131). Meanings are »characterised by fluidity, the ability to mobilise and disperse« (Martin 1992: 154) and as such they form a structure of heterogeneity of diverse, constructed narratives. Organisational members are actively constructing a community of belonging through variety of meanings. Multiplicity of views and instability of patterns indicate that organisations have been represented as multiple identities at the level of 'private identity'.

8　Conclusions

The coexistence of organisations as 'public' and 'private' identities opens up several questions. One of the questions is the relation between them. In the context of our research, they are not viewed as binary oppositions nor are they viewed in hierarchical terms. We can rather talk about realigning »the customary boundaries between the private and the public« (Bhabha 1994: 4). Hence, the relationship between them seems to become complex and unstable but further discussion would go beyond the scope of this article.

As it has been argued, organisations should be viewed as 'public' *and* 'private' cultures and identities consequently, the former being closer to a management view and pervaded by global language and the latter closer to an anthropological perspective, implying multiple, 'local' views. This side-by-side nature of the notion of bothness develops »an interstitial intimacy« (Bhabha 1994: 16), an 'in-between' space where negotiations can occur. In our case study schools, no negotiations seemed to occur so 'private' identity was not especially considered by managers at all. They built their images about organisations on their own views and created the public identity in accordance with all-Slovenian and global educational trends.

This opens a wide scope for further research in organisational studies but also some implications for managers. If we want to learn about cultures in organisations it is essential to explore beyond the public culture, i.e. beyond rituals, written documents and managers' presentation of an organisation because in both cases the headteachers' perception of schools was closer to public than to private culture. By this, we do not mean that we should neglect them because they present a corporate image of the organisation. On the other hand, managers should be much more aware of their staff's personal beliefs about the organisation they work in and about their views of »what's worth fighting for« (Fullan and Hargreaves 2000: 12). It is not, however, enough just to recognise people's views and beliefs. The manager should learn how to use »the in-between space« (Bhabha 1994: 3) for ongoing discussions and negotiations. The organisation's identity is not something stable and taken-for-granted. It is being re-created and re-shaped not only because of external influences but also through people's knowledge, experiences and their personal beliefs. Therefore, the manager should engage his/her staff to help him/her relate 'public' and 'private' identities or the organisation and thus create a unique identity that would reflect the organisation's special character. Organisational identity is not only important for their members in its symbolic sense. It may be understood as »a significant strategic advantage because it represents a source for creating understanding, credibility and support among key stakeholders« (Dowling 2001: 47).

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Organizacijska kultura kot organizacijska identiteta – med zasebno in javno

Avtorica predstavlja pojem organizacijske kulture in jo povezuje s pojmom organizacijske identitete. Kultura kot skupinska identiteta vsebuje elemente stabilnosti, homogenosti in povezovanja, kar pa se zelo spreminja s postmodernim razumevanjem odnosov med lokalitetami in njihovim okoljem. Raziskava, ki je potekala v dveh slovenskih osnovnih šolah, temelji na simbolnem pojmovanju organizacijske kulture. Raziskovali smo, kakšne pomene pripisujejo šolam v javnih dokumentih, med svečanimi dogodki ter učitelji in ravnatelja v svojih pripovedih. Ugotovili smo, da obstajata dve kulturi in tako tudi dve identiteti, javna in zasebna. Prva je bližja korporativni identiteti, slednja pa predstavlja mnogotere identitete. Managerji se morajo zavedati obeh in izrabiti vmesni prostor za nenehne razprave in pogajanja.

Ključne besede: organizacijska kultura, identiteta, globalizacija, management