

# The Non-Sharing of Organizational Culture: A Case Study Examining the Management Perspective

Sandro Serpa<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Educational Sciences (DCE), University of the Azores, Ponta Delgada, Azores, Portugal, and Interdisciplinary Centre of Social Sciences (CICS.NOVA), Portugal

Correspondence: Sandro Nuno Serpa, Department of Educational Sciences (DCE), University of the Azores, Campus de Ponta Delgada, Apartado 1422, PT-9501-801 Ponta Delgada, Azores, Portugal. Tel: 351-29-665-0000. E-mail: sandroserpa@uac.pt

Received: December 9, 2014 Accepted: January 7, 2015 Online Published: April 20, 2015

doi:10.5539/ass.v11n10p221

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ass.v11n10p221>

## Abstract

The degree to which cultural elements are shared by members of an organization is a commonly discussed topic in organizational culture. This research contributes to that discussion by analyzing elements that shape the concrete situations of cultural non-sharing or even conflict, diachronically examining a social and educational organization. A case study of a shelter organization for unprotected children and young female boarders was conducted by examining the organization's archival documents to discern the perspective of its boards of directors over time. The results demonstrate that the sharing of culture in this organization is not absolute: situations include formal rather than real sharing as well as disagreement, which is understandable considering the functional autonomy of employees and the relationships of the organization with the exterior (both with the State and with the surrounding community). Although the boards of directors sought to control these countercultural elements by establishing a dominant culture, their actions were conditioned by internal and external factors, both intentional and contingent. Thus, one implication of this qualitative research is that successful organizational leaders must be aware that they operate in complex and somewhat unpredictable contexts that influence the management of organizational culture.

**Keywords:** *Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta*, non-sharing of organizational culture, organizational conflicts, organizational culture, organizational management, Portugal

## 1. Introduction

Assuming that “any social unit that has some kind of shared history will have evolved a culture” (Schein, 2010, p. 17) and that organizational culture is a concept that assumes different meanings according to the author considered (Alvesson, 2007, 2013; Dauber, Fink, & Yolles, 2012; Schein, 2010; Torres, 2004, 2006, 2011), this research considers organizational culture to be a set of collective patterns of the ways of being, thinking and acting of people in coordination, with reciprocal expectations, that is shaped, disseminated, learned and transformed over time, providing certain specificities and some predictability, in its external adaptation and internal integration (Schein, 2004, 2010). It is generally accepted that organizational culture includes the following three levels of elements: level 1, *artifacts*, consisting of visible manifestations such as the physical space, material objects, written and spoken language, stories, ceremonies, heroes, traditions, habits, rules and regulations, and standards of behavior; level 2, *values*, composed of a range of elements that seek to attribute sense and justify organizational action; and level 3, *basic assumptions*, consisting of a set of assumptions that are internalized by individuals and that, at a pre-conscious or even an unconscious level, ground individuals' actions (Costa, 2003). Although authors frequently focus on one or more of these elements, the combination of these three levels shapes the culture of an organization as a whole.

Organizational culture is formed and transformed, gradually emerging through a process involving the interaction between the structure and the action, the inside and the outside of the organization, in a historical space-time that is socially located (Torres, 2004, 2006, 2011). In this sense, the “culture of organizations develops and settles up in time, through daily metamorphoses operated by actors in relation to a set of constraints that are internal and external to their organizational contexts” (Torres & Palhares, 2008, p. 103).

An element in the majority of approaches to organizational culture that is not addressed by all researchers

(Alvesson, 2013) is the existence of a greater or lesser sharing of cultural elements (Schein, 2004, 2010). The importance and level of sharing is discussed by various authors, who frequently link the sharing to cultural cohesion. According to Schein (2004, 2010), the degree of cultural cohesion (or strength), a homogeneous adhesion among the members of an organization, is dependent on factors such as the duration of its existence, the degree of stability of group belonging, the degree of emotional intensity of experiences shared over time, and the belonging of each member to several other groups that may enable the consolidation of the basic assumptions considered by this author to be the central element of any organizational culture.

However, how may the sharing of culture in an organization be fostered? The more real power the member of the organization expresses, the more likely he/she is to influence organizational culture with his/her actions or omissions. In some organizations, the management level exerts the largest influence on the definition of what is, what happens or may happen and how it happens, because it is the body entitled either to interpret the external guidelines of the legislative and normative framework or to establish the internal formal rules of the activity that occurs within an organization. Nevertheless, not even formal rules have the power to determine the establishment of a culture in an organization. In an interpretative diachronic study in Portugal, Torres (2004) examines the places and times of the production of rules as “a guide or model that orients and regulates human action” (p. 245). Through a research study on organizational culture over time in a public high school, the author analyzes the places where *organizational rules* considered as guidelines for action is produced. Torres (2004) considers two coexisting levels of analysis of organizational culture as follows: first, the level of *guidelines for organizational action*, consisting of concrete and specific guidelines to be considered and followed with the *formal, non-formal and informal organizational rules* (interpretations and recreations of formal rules more or less close to them), and second, the *level of organizational action*, with the *rules actually updated* through and in the action of actors, and which may not match the formal, non-formal or informal rules, according to “the ways through which actors take ownership of certain cultural meanings, sometimes reproducing them, sometimes recreating them, sometimes readjusting them, or merely rejecting them in their practice” (p. 229). Thus, it is not enough to define normative rules in a very comprehensive manner such that they are applied according to the letter and the spirit of those who designed them, in an attempt to establish, in a controlled manner, a particular organizational culture (Torres, 2004, 2006, 2011).

Considering the “margins of relative autonomy” (Lima, 1998, p. 582) that actors possess in their organizational action, each member of the organization carries out a diversified appropriation of the culture or cultures that he/she finds and helps shape in the organization; thus, cultural sharing is always relative. Hence, there is a clear need not to overstate the level of integration of organizational culture in a unitary perspective of the organization, making homogeneous what may not be so (Alvesson, 2013; Torres, 2011). Torres (2004, p. 186) refers to the “triple naturalization” present in this integrative conceptualization: *the technicization of culture*, considering this concept as a sheer control and management technique; *the de-politicization of culture*, with the supposed axiological neutrality towards the political-ideological contexts; and *the mythification of culture*, with the unlimited belief in its abilities as a catalyst for excellence. These factors, according to the author, limit the potential of the concept of organizational culture.

The dimension of adhesion to organizational culture allows Martin (1992, 2002) to identify the following three perspectives of organizational culture: integrating view, differentiating view and fragmenting view, each with different implications regarding the role ascribed to each member of the organization in the sharing of organizational culture. In the integrating view, emphasis is given to organizational culture as the only homogeneous culture or culture capable of functioning as a unifying dominant culture, which is intended to be shared, in a somewhat monocultural perspective of the organization. The differentiating view highlights the importance of conflicts in organizations and the likely existence of several group cultures shared differently, which function as subcultures of the general culture of the organization. In the fragmenting view, the actions of the organizational members vary according to the situation; there is no uniformity in time, and the cultural ambiguity and the lack of a regular and constant cultural sharing are highlighted. An organization may have one or more cultures with approximate levels of importance, making it difficult for one culture to stand out as clearly dominant (e.g., in large organizations). There may be subcultures of the organizational culture (characterized by a culture that is similar to it) or even a counterculture (with a view that is radically different from the organizational culture). Therefore, the individual characteristics and the learning experiences may end in cultural collectives with variations in the sharing of cultural elements, in a selective appropriation.

However, empirically, what factors are involved in the process of the non-sharing of organizational culture? This research seeks to help clarify these issues through the analysis of situations involving the non-sharing of culture in a social and educational organization - *Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta* (AIDH), a coordinated collective

boarding unit that shelters unprotected children and young girls in Horta, Faial Island, Azores, Portugal.

## 2. Methodology

This study addresses the following goal: to determine which factors shape the non-sharing of organizational culture at the AIDH. The choice to study the AIDH was based on exploratory findings noting that its archives contained a relevant set of rich information regarding the stance of the board of directors over time. Considering the AIDH's autonomy and the relevance of the guidelines issued by its governing body of directors, the board formally assumes a high degree of importance in the production of a structure that both compels and enables organizational culture. Hence, it would be relevant to examine this wealth of information concerning the board of directors' perspective in the non-sharing of culture at the AIDH.

To achieve this purpose, a diachronic interpretive organizational case study was conducted. The study was based on the analysis of internal documentation in the archives of this organization, including the statutes, internal regulations, minutes of the board of directors, mail (sent and received) and other documentation related to the AIDH. After the initial collection of material, the documents were selected and systematized according to their relevance to the study, preparing the documents to be analyzed in a more systematic way (Bardin, 1995).

To characterize the non-sharing of organizational culture, we present illustrative episodes of low cohesion or a lack of cohesion, both internally and externally, in a period from the AIDH's foundation in 1858 until 1932 (when a new cycle begins with religious sisters taking over the operation of the asylum), with the focus on particular elements that shape that situation.

## 3. Results: The Non-sharing of Organizational Culture at the AIDH

The AIDH, a private institution of social solidarity that takes in and educates socially disadvantaged children and young girls, is located in Horta, Faial Island, Azores, Portugal (Fernandes, 2003, 2004; Lemos, 1958; Lobão, 1998).

At the time of its establishment, the AIDH's structure centered on a board of directors. Its president, overseen by the civil governor, ran the asylum with the assistance of several direct employees (a maid, a doorman and a chaplain). The education of the students was the responsibility of the director regent (a cumulative function as director of the asylum and teacher of the asylees), to whom the majority of employees, except the chaplain, answered. Substantial autonomy was ascribed to the director regent in practice. This autonomy occurred because the female director regent lived at the asylum; in addition, the boards of directors were non-professional males, thereby making it difficult for the board to directly supervise the functioning of the asylum, which sheltered from six to 28 girls during the analysis period.

During this period, internal disharmony and mishaps occurred in the consolidation of organizational stability. There were recorded moments that jeopardized the cohesion and sharing among AIDH members, based on the functional autonomy of employees and the relationships with the exterior, whether in governmental or social terms, as shall be put forward hereafter.

### 3.1 The Functional Autonomy of Asylum Members

Examining the internal functioning of the AIDH, the autonomy ascribed to the director regent caused profound tension regarding her actions, emphasized by the fact that the administrative bodies of the AIDH such as the board of directors were male and thus had limited access. This fact furthered the director regent's leeway in the functioning of the asylum, either in dealing directly with the sheltered girls or in acting as the hierarchical superior of the remaining employees.

The changes in the director regent positions reveal the board of directors' difficulty in achieving cultural sharing in the functioning of the asylum. This difficulty is demonstrated in the following excerpt:

[...] has experienced huge disappointments with respect to regents, not only in relation to the one in function when this Board took charge of the institute, but also regarding the one to hire on an interim basis, seeing in such a short time, not only the biggest mistakes in home economics, hygiene, literary education, home education (Session of November 30, 1884, in the minutes of the *Asylo de Infância Desvalida da Horta*. From 1-10-1883 to 7-4-1897).

In the example, the director regent's autonomy led to her resignation. This example illustrates a situation in which formal rather than real sharing occurred and relates to the image that the president himself has of the director regent. The minutes from a session in 1889 reveal a different tone:

After all the difficulties faced by the President in filling the post of Director Regent of the Asylum, this place was occupied, in 1888, by a Director Regent, to whom the President proposes a vote of praise for the quality of

her work (Session of June 30, 1889, in the minutes of the *Asylo de Infância Desvalida da Horta*. From 1-10-1883 to 7-4-1897).

This director regent is also praised in the newspaper *O Fayalense*, which highlights the educational success, both in terms of the preparation of the students concerning domestic work and in relation to teaching itself:

[...] and only a single lady who holds the position of director and teacher of all subjects taught there, [...] to whom, on behalf of our countrymen, we thank for the affection and zeal that for three years she has given out to underprivileged students, asylees (*O Fayalense* of January 12, 1890, year 33, no. 25, p. 2).

The central role of the director regent is again acknowledged by the president “for the affection and devotion with which she treats the students” (Session of April 21, 1890, in the minutes of the *Asylo de Infância Desvalida da Horta*. From 1-10-1883 to 7-4-1897), and “by her concern and care the hospice had attained a degree of perfection hitherto unknown” (Session of June 30, 1890). On June 30, 1893, the director regent was praised as follows: “the high regard in which this administration [...] all solicitude for the good names of such a useful institution, and virtues that heaven will reward her for” (*Idem*).

These latter minutes collectively appear to indicate that a communion existed between the culture promoted by the board of directors and the culture practiced under the direct supervision of this particular director regent.

However, without warning, the president calls the director regent’s actions into question, alleging a breach of several points in the 1860 statutes and the 1876 regulation regarding the functioning of the asylum, and a violation of the established timetables and duties of the director regent concerning the relationship with the asylees (the minutes of July 1, 1895, in the minutes of the *Asylo de Infância Desvalida da Horta*. From 1-10-1883 to 7-4-1897). The president dismisses the director regent after a relationship of trust that had lasted for eight years.

This situation was so critical that in the session of August 29, 1895 (the minutes of the *Asylo de Infância Desvalida da Horta*. From 1-10-1883 to 7-4-1897), the president notes that not only had he already informed the civil governor of this decision, but also that he had asked him for his resignation because “I had the duty to be vigilant to not find myself in the embarrassment [...] my predecessors have been,” thus finding similarities with previous management.

Another situation relates to the director regent’s internal relationship with the board of directors, focusing on her autonomy in breaching the rules of internal service. In 1918, the board of directors issues a warning on non-compliance regarding certain administrative rules: “the book of consumption maps, the food trunk, donations, etc. was presented, acknowledging the incompleteness of the December map, to which, in work order, the attention of the Regent, who is in charge of this book, shall be drawn” (regular session of January 5, 1918, in the minutes of *Confraria de Santo António de Padua e Asylo de Infância Desvalida da Horta*. From 27-10-1912 to 4-3-1921).

This context also reveals criticism from a member of the board of directors regarding the internal functioning of the AIDH and is directly associated with the action of the director regent in regulatory visits regarding normative non-compliance:

[...] about the way the internal service of the Asylum, in charge of Madam Regent, is managed, information that is very unfavorable to her for the failures and irregularities found in the visits often made, against expressed determinations of the Regulation. Besides what is recorded in the book of visits, this board member [member of Board of Directors] made several considerations about the solutions to give to such a lack of respect for the Regulation of the House, and pointed out to the Board that other very important faults may happen, which the board members may not be aware of, considering the sensitive nature of the Establishment that deals with female children’s education, where there cannot be a strict supervision at any time of day or night, to all rooms, reminding, thus, the convenience to retry the creation of positions of “Inspectors”, performed by ladies that the Board [of Directors] relies on, and that the Regulation establishes, and which is the only means that the Board possesses to be aware of the education and intimate nature of the asylees’ gender, and how they are subject to the rules of good hygiene and “toilette”, which the same board member believes to be neglected by the current Regent (regular session of January 5, 1918, in the minutes of *Confraria de Santo António de Padua e Asylo de Infância Desvalida da Horta*. From 27-10-1912 to 4-3-1921).

As a result, it has been “determined that the visitors write in the book of visits, in the mid and at the end of each month, the way the services are carried out in the Asylum, noting any irregularities found” (Session of February 5, 1918, in the minutes of *Confraria de Santo António de Padua e Asylo de Infância Desvalida da Horta*. From 27-10-1912 to 4-3-1921).

With regard to the remaining staff, the degree of autonomy of the maid occurs because of a change in the organization of the AIDH's internal work, generating unintended consequences regarding her position. In the board of directors' first session of October 6, 1883, the president proposes that the asylees wash their own clothes, which he justifies on the basis that "it is most convenient for the asylees to be very familiar with house service, which is an indispensable element to their future lives [...] relieve them of the cooking service", not forgetting to mention also the implications for the staff, with the exemption of the washerwoman and, correspondingly, for the accounts of the Asylum, although "he thought it would be fair to raise the maid's salary from two thousand reis to two thousand two hundred reis a month, which is justified by the economy and new services she has to fulfill, assisting and instructing the asylees in them," which was unanimously approved (minutes of the *Asylo de Infância Desvalida da Horta*. From 1-10-1883 to 7-4-1897).

However, this resolution had unexpected counterproductive results, as may be seen in the following reference of February 7, 1884:

[...] due to the service lately attributed to the internal maid, she resigned, claiming that she could not continue as the workload was too heavy, and as another maid could not be immediately found, under appropriate conditions, [the President] instructed the Regent to distribute the services that were ascribed to the maid that resigned by some of asylees, who would be in a position to carry them out, for which they would be paid, and that, due to the increase of the asylees' work, he was forced to hire the washerwoman; this hiring does not increase the expense, because two board members have lent their servants for external services, which resulted in the economy of the external servant, who was also dismissed (Minutes of *Asylo de Infância Desvalida da Horta*. From 1-10-1883 to 7-4-1897).

Finally, another relevant situation deals an unexpected blow to the stability thought to have been established regarding the AIDH's internal and external harmony, with the institution's external image shaken by the action of one asylee.

In May 1907, public praise occurred in the newspaper *O Telégrafo* regarding the action of the president of the AIDH's board of directors. The paper suggests that given the proximity of the festivities of *Espírito Santo*, the brotherhoods and the reverend priests should recommend the Asylums of Mendicity and Helpless Children as "houses of charity that lately have been the focus of public charity for their honest administration" and for their proper application to invalid poor and to "unfortunate children" (year 15, 11/05/1907, no. 3992, p. 2).

This example suggests the existence of stability and harmony in the processes and in the persons both internally at the AIDH and in the relationships established externally. However, in October 1907, a striking and unexpected episode occurred regarding the board of directors, challenging this stability and having profound implications for the president, the directors, and the AIDH's organizational culture. The episode involved the escape of an asylee with the purpose to commit suicide, which became public knowledge and thereby jeopardized the reputation of the AIDH in "the event that is the order of the day, in public opinion, and which consists of the escape of a pupil from the Asylum" (special session of October 24, 1907, in the minutes of *Confraria de Santo António de Pádua e Asylo do Infante Dom Luis*. From 1-7-1903 to 4-9-1912).

After this special session, the minutes become widely spaced in time, possibly because of the discouragement that this event generated for the president, the board of directors and the external image of the AIDH, as revealed in the words of the president himself:

[...] having been usual not to meet for session since October of last year, certainly due to the unfortunate event described in the last session's minutes, which was on October 24, because that event deeply saddened everyone, however, he decided that he should convene for this session, so that, all gathered, boost each other for the growth of the Asylum, to see if we can, thus, obscure in the public the impression that the event also caused, being then presented several considerations and suggestions that, being time-consuming in terms of their assessment, were subject to further discussion (Session of May 3, 1908, in the minutes of *Confraria de Santo António de Pádua e Asylo do Infante Dom Luis*. From 1-7-1903 to 4-9-1912).

Although the cause of the change is unknown, the AIDH's relationship with the journal *O Telégrafo* worsens during this period. The relationship shifts from one in which the journal "sometimes made some typographical work and the publication of thanks and announcements without payment" (Session of July 1, 1907) to the same president noting that the appreciations to the AIDH benefactors have not been published, as they used to be:

[...] and, quite frankly, it is difficult for him to make such a request again, a publication that, as the Board knows, is made free of charge and, thus, it seemed appropriate that, at least, the names of the benefactors and donations would be mentioned in the minutes, so that they were stated in the future, since they were no longer published

(Session of December 25, 1908, in the minutes of *Confraria de Santo António de Pádua e Asylo do Infante Dom Luis*. From 1-7-1903 to 4-9-1912).

As a possible consequence of the asylee's escape, there is a notable departure of pupils (11, six and nine, in 1908, 1909 and 1910, respectively) (Session of December 25, 1908); the non-replacement of a deceased member of the board of directors (Session of October 22, 1909); and delays in the submission of the revenue and expenditure accounts. In the session of October 2, 1910, the accounts of the 1907-1908 financial year were unanimously approved, having been decided that, with urgency, legal destination would be given to them; the 1908-1909 accounts, in the special session for the accounts of October 23, 1910, and the 1909-1910 accounts, in the special session of November 27, 1910 (Minutes of *Confraria de Santo António de Pádua e Asylo do Infante Dom Luis*. From 1-7-1903 to 4-9-1912).

### 3.2. Relationships with the Exterior

To illustrate the role of exterior elements in the non-sharing of core cultural aspects, an enlightening moment in the effort to create a steadily shared culture, both internally and externally, will be highlighted.

With the foundation of the Republic in Portugal in 1910, the new external precepts of secularism in the relationships with the exterior became clear, as shown in the following excerpt: “[Thanks for the invitation to attend the festivity of *Santo António*] but I cannot accept, given that the current legal precepts do not allow me to officially attend the cult acts of any religion” (from the civil governor of the District of Horta, June 15, 1911, in correspondence received by *Confraria de S. António de Pádua e Asilo de Infância Desvalida*. From 15-12-1910 to 10/12/1917).

This secularization fostered by the exterior produced a statutory amendment, with the approval of the 1913 Statutes (Statutes of *Confraria de Santo Antonio de Padua e Asilo de Infancia Desvalida “Dom Luiz 1º”*. Horta - Fayal (1913)), explicitly in compliance with the external law of the time, of separation of religion and state, “according to the Law of Separation of the religion and the State [...], being, thus, the statute of this Brotherhood amended according to the law” (special session of the General Assembly of *Confraria de Santo Antonio de Padua e Asylo de Infancia Desvalida da Horta*, on October 27, 1912, in Minutes of *Confraria de Santo António de Padua e Asylo de Infância Desvalida da Horta*. From 27-10-1912 to 4-3-1921) and also “its Statutes, duly amended according to the Law” (to the administrator of the Municipality of Horta, October 30, 1912, in correspondence sent of *Confraria de S. António de Pádua e Asylo de Infância Desvalida*. From 2-1-1905 to 31/12/1913).

There appears to be a need for the AIDH to explain its statutory adhesion to the new regime, given the few, yet very significant, differences between the *1913 Statutes* in relation to the *1860 Statutes*. The statutes include several references to the Law of April 20, 1911, the self-imposition regarding the implementation of the budget of expenses with acts of cult (*1913 Statutes*, Chapter 9, Article 51), and also, at the management level, a caveat that arises in these statutes - the impossibility of ministers of any religion or church to be elected to the board of directors (Chapter 3, Article 12, 4). This statutory change is primarily caused by external issues, in a constrained conversion, in a formal control of the religious dimension in the statutes.

Consequently, in 1910, 1911 and 1912, there is a reduction and selectivity regarding religious references, either in the content or in the language used, and which is visible both in the correspondence to official authorities and to private individuals. However, there is a clear difference in the language to official entities and to benefactors, even if dated the same day, revealing a certain duality (to the civil governor of the Municipality of Horta, September 21, 1912; to the reverend, September 21, 1912, in correspondence sent of *Confraria de S. António de Pádua e Asylo de Infância Desvalida*. From 2-1-1905 to 31/12/1913). The choice of language (with or without religious references) depended on the recipient, as may be seen in the following examples in letters of appreciation to private benefactors:

- May Your Excellency accept the assurance of my particular esteem and consideration, and thus also the blessings of heaven, daily implored by the poor children who never forget, in their prayers, their unforgettable benefactors (August 15, 1911);
- On behalf, thus, of the Governing Board [Direction], and especially of the poor children sheltered there, I kiss Your Excellency's hands in recognition of your generous donation, and believe, Your Excellency, that the children of that orphanage will never cease to beg the Divine Providence the blessings of Heaven for all who, like Your Excellency, understand well what charity is (October 22, 1911);
- May the Almighty God, to whom we owe everything, provide Your Excellency the graces and blessings of Heaven (April 12, 1912, in correspondence sent, *Confraria de S. António de Pádua e Asylo de Infância*

*Desvalida*. From 2-1-1905 to 31/12/1913).

An obvious return of religious references is evident with the proposed changes towards a greater religious weight in the functioning of the AIDH early in 1915:

The President exposed the advantages for the Asylum if, in its Church, a Mass would be celebrated on Sundays and holy days, for many reasons presented by him and with which the Board agreed, authorizing him to seek chaplain and to solve this issue as he pleased, without adversely affecting the Asylum (Session of January 6, 1915, in the minutes of *Confraria de Santo António de Padua e Asylo de Infância Desvalida da Horta*. From 27-10-1912 to 4-3-1921).

The change in the positioning over time is another factor that heuristically is evident in situations concerning the non-sharing of organizational culture caused by exterior factors. We will report a situation regarding the return of a regent teacher, a scenario imposed by the state exterior but not desired by the board of directors. The teacher had previously taught at the AIDH and had been highly praised by the board in place 20 years before.

In a special session, the board of directors decided to reply to a letter in which the inspector of the School Circle of Horta announced that by ministerial order, the former teacher would be sent back to the management of the AIDH school. In 1904 this educator had been officially appointed as teacher of the school, with support and high praise from the board of directors at the time.

The trust regarding this director was demonstrated at the special session of March 28, 1904 (minutes of *Confraria de Santo António de Pádua e Asylo do Infante Dom Luis*. From 1-7-1903 to 4-9-1912). The board of directors was convened to this session to evaluate an application of the director, in which “her moral behavior, service effectivity and performance of functions inherent in her function are certified”, which was required in her application. The board, understanding that the performance of the applicant has always been good, unanimously decided that the following order should be given: “the moral conduct of the applicant has been irreprehensible, and she has always carried out, without interruption, the duties of her function with maximum proficiency, zeal and solicitude”. Similarly, a representation was subscribed to the king (special session of April 14, 1904, in the minutes of *Confraria de Santo António de Pádua e Asylo do Infante Dom Luis*. From 1-7-1903 to 4-9-1912; *O Telegrapho*, year 22, 16/04/1904, nº 3099, p. 2), having in this same session decided that this request would be delivered the following day to the civil governor by all the petitioners “in his office to personally deliver him the representation and ask his high favor and protection” (special session of April 14, 1904), which was accomplished (special session of May 25, 1904, in the minutes of *Confraria de Santo António de Pádua e Asylo do Infante Dom Luis*. From 1-7-1903 to 4-9-1912).

However, in 1924, 20 years after the aforementioned events, the current board of directors expressed criticism regarding the teacher’s return:

This governing board [Board of Directors], considering that, during the recent times that this teacher has performed her duties in this asylum, school performance was null, due not only to the professional incapacity of this teacher, but also to the little zeal, and no interest in teaching; considering that there was no discipline, not only during school exercises but also outside them, not having that teacher, moreover, any respect for the hygiene and health of the children entrusted to her; considering her indolence and manifest incompetence for her position, deeply harmful to the education of children, given that, if teachers must, at the same time, be educators, in this House they should be educators par excellence, because this house takes in children with no family to support and assist their education; considering that this teacher, for these reasons, is very far from being an educator, as this asylum needs, having her performance deeply damaging effects and counterproductive results; this governing board decides unanimously to inform his Excellency the School Inspector of the consequences that may result from the return to service of that teacher, hiring immediately a private teacher to teach the pupils domestic education, determining that they do not attend school while that teacher is responsible for its regency, and this is to prevent that discipline, hygiene, moral and education return to the deplorable condition they were when the same teacher left. It was further decided to send copies of this Minutes to his Excellence the School Inspector of this Circle of Horta (special session of February 26, 1924 in the minutes of *Confraria de Sto. António de Pádua e Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta*. From 2-5-1921 to 11-10-1932).

#### 4. Discussion

The study’s findings suggest that the situations of non-cultural sharing that were presented and that translated into manifest disagreement or formal but not real sharing were shaped by the functional autonomy of the AIDH members and/or by the organization’s relationships with the exterior (the state or the surrounding community).

In the functional autonomy of the AIDH members, it was possible to observe situations centered on the difficulty

of director regents in sharing the culture that the board of directors sought and believed to have established regarding the functioning of the asylum. Notably, in another situation, unintended effects occurred because of a change of staff and a requested resignation. Finally, the study exposed the impact of one asylee's behavior on the AIDH's external image, functioning and temperament of the board of directors itself. All of these examples call into question the sharing, both internal and external, of the culture that seemed to exist, based on the supervision of the director regent, framed by the board of directors, and legitimated by the use of statutes and regulations.

Concerning the relationships with the exterior, two examples were notable. The first, resulting from a shift in political regime with the establishment of the Republic in 1910, implies a formally established secularism (Vilarinho, 2000) in a context that promotes a relationship between an interior with a clear religious weight and an exterior (state) with an officially secular weight, but with several benefactors who expect and seek attention through religious references. This shift resulted in a duality of sharing, translated through the use of secular language for the AIDH's external official entities but with religious references in the correspondence to private benefactors. The AIDH's boards of directors demonstrated this interior/exterior relationship in a period that promoted an adaptive relationship. Because of this shift, there is a change in the perception of the quality of work of the director regent, who apparently shared the culture of an earlier board of directors.

Over time, the board of directors demonstrates its power through the establishment of a dominant culture, functioning as a unifier of the AIDH culture, which could refer to a managerial perspective of organizational culture (Costa, 2003; Schein, 2010). Nevertheless, even given the management perspective in this research, situations involving non-cultural sharing were found to account for the fact that organizational action is always conditioned by factors that are internal and external to the organization, assuming either an intentional or a contingent nature (Alvesson, 2013; Torres, 2011).

The actors in a given situation, therefore, exhibit their learning and motivation in a context of social relationships framed by social origin, gender and duties performed/place occupied/expectations, permeated by power relationships and also by factors that are unpredictable. In addition, these actors demonstrate active ownership, more or less conscious, which accentuates the complexity of organizational reality and undermines an overly unitary perspective of organizational culture, conditioning the possibility of its management, as well as the time socially lived by individuals, groups and community. When examining organizational culture, researchers must be concurrently receptive to the triple integrating, differentiating and fragmenting perspective (Martin, 1992, 2002). Several levels of sharing tend to be present in any culture (Alvesson, 2013; Torres, 2004, 2006, 2011) and must be given case-to-case consideration; there may be more unity in diversity or more diversity in unity.

Notably, the case study itself refers to a situated analysis, which does not allow a direct or immediate extrapolating of the findings to other research studies on organizational culture, given that the sharing of organizational culture, either in different organizations or in organizations of different kinds, may reveal differences.

Organizational culture may function, to some extent and under certain conditions, as an ideological instrument of the dominant members of an organization in promoting the culture that they desire. However, this scenario does not give rise, in a simplistic way, to its exploitation by these leaders, because it is not necessarily shared. As stated by Smircich (1983), a *continuum* exists between having culture (as a variable likely to have rational control that is internal and/or external to the organization) and being culture (to focus on the active and, to some extent, unpredictable role of each individual and team actor, internal and external to the organization). In this sense, the organization, in different moments, may be closer to having or closer to being, considering its own characteristics. Thus, the degree of cultural sharing must be verified at the empirical level in each specific situation.

As an implication of this case study, it may be stated that successful organizational leaders must be aware that they operate in complex and somewhat unpredictable contexts that influence the management of the culture of an organization. This work highlights the functional autonomy of the AIDH members and/or the organization's relationships with the exterior (either the state or the surrounding community).

## References

- Alvesson, M. (2007). *Understanding organizational culture*. London, UK: SAGE Publications.
- Alvesson, M. (2013). *Understanding organizational culture* (2nd ed.). London, UK: SAGE Publications.
- Bardin, L. (1995). *Análise de conteúdo*. Lisbon, Portugal: Edições 70.
- Costa, J. A. (2003). *Imagens organizacionais da escola*. Porto, Portugal: ASA.



- Dauber, D., Fink, G., & Yolles, M. (2012). A configuration model of organizational culture. *SAGE Open*, 2. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/2158244012441482>
- Fernandes, A. A. S. (2003). *Uma obra ímpar abençoada por Santo António*. Lisbon, Portugal: Editorial Minerva.
- Fernandes, A. A. S. (2004). *Uma obra ímpar abençoada por Santo António. Casa de Infância de Santo António - Horta*. Lisbon, Portugal: Author's edition.
- Lemos, R. R. G. (1958). *Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta. 1858-1958*. Manuscript work celebrating a century of existence.
- Lima, L. C. (1998). *A escola como organização e a participação na organização escolar. Um estudo da Escola Secundária em Portugal (1974-1988)*. Braga, Portugal: Centro de Estudos em Educação e Psicologia, Instituto de Educação e Psicologia, Universidade do Minho.
- Lobão, C. M. G. (1998). *Casa de Infância de Santo António - Subsídios para a sua História*. Horta, Azores: Casa de Infância de Santo António.
- Martin, J. (1992). *Cultures in organizations: Three perspectives*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Martin, J. (2002). *Organizational culture: Mapping the terrain*. London, UK: Sage Publications. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781483328478>
- O Fayalense de 12 de janeiro de 1890, year 33, no. 25, p. 2.*
- O Telégrafo, year 15, 11/05/1907, no. 3992, p. 2.*
- O Telegrapho, year 22, 16/04/1904, no. 3099, p. 2.*
- Schein, E. H. (2004). *Organizational culture and leadership* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Schein, E. H. (2010). *Organizational culture and leadership* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Smircich, L. (1983). Concepts of culture and organizational analysis. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 28, 339-358. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2392246>
- Torres, L. L. (2004). *Cultura organizacional em contexto educativo. Sedimentos culturais e processos de construção do simbólico numa escola secundária*. Braga, Portugal: Centro de Investigação em Educação do Instituto de Educação e Psicologia da Universidade do Minho.
- Torres, L. L. (2006). Cultura organizacional em contexto escolar. In L. C. Lima (Ed.), *Compreender a Escola. Perspectivas de análise organizacional* (pp. 133-195). Porto, Portugal: Edições ASA.
- Torres, L. L. (2011). Cultura organizacional em contexto escolar. In L. C. Lima (Ed.), *Perspectivas de análise organizacional das escolas* (pp. 109-152). Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal: Fundação Manuel Leão.
- Torres, L. L., & Palhares, J. A. (2008). Cultura, formação e aprendizagens em contextos organizacionais. *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, 83, 99-120. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4000/rccs.4579>
- Vilarinho, M. E. (2000). Somos gente! As crianças entre a família, o estado e a sociedade. *Forum Sociológico*, 3/4, 95-112.

## Appendix

- Minutes of Confraria de Santo António de Pádua e Asylo do Infante Dom Luis. From 1-7-1903 to 4-9-1912.*
- Minutes of Confraria de Santo António de Padua e Asylo de Infância Desvalida da Horta. From 27-10-1912 to 4-3-1921.*
- Minutes of Confraria de S<sup>o</sup>. António de Pádua e Asilo de Infância Desvalida da Horta. From 2-5-1921 to 11-10-1932.*
- Minutes of Asylo de Infância Desvalida da Horta. From 1-10-1883 to 7-4-1897.*
- Correspondence received by Confraria de S. António de Pádua e Asilo de Infância Desvalida. From 15-12-1910 to 10/12/1917.*
- Correspondence sent of Confraria de S. António de Pádua e Asylo de Infância Desvalida. From 2-1-1905 to 31/12/1913.*
- Statutes of Confraria de Santo Antonio de Padua e Asilo de Infancia Desvalida "Dom Luiz 1<sup>o</sup>. Horta - Fayal. (1913).*

*Statutes of Confraria de S<sup>o</sup>. António e Azylo de Infância Desvalida. January 10, 1876 (includes: Statutes of Confraria de S<sup>o</sup>. Antonio e Azylo de Infancia Desvalida da cidade da Horta, of 1860, and the internal Regulation of Azylo da infancia desvalida, annexo á irmandade de Santo Antonio de Padua, erecta no extincto convento do mesmo Santo, na cidade da Horta, da ilha do Fayal, of 1876).*

### **Copyrights**

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>).