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## Organizational Culture and Motivation in the Public Sector. The case of the City of Zografou

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### Abstract

In an era of increasingly diminishing public funding for local government organizations, motivating public employees is becoming a nearly impossible mission, with managers searching for non-monetary reward practices, to maintain or even increase motivation and performance of their subordinates. The purpose of this study is to investigate the motivational dynamics of the employees of a public sector organization and their relationship to its culture. The Competing Values Model was employed to diagnose the organizational culture and to illuminate the relationship of culture and motivation in the organization studied. The research has shown that the dominant culture type is Hierarchy (Bureaucracy) while motivation level was found to be low, demonstrating a negative association between the two variables. Also found was a positive relationship between the desired culture (clan) and motivation. The findings point to the need of a re-examination of the existing organizational culture by the local government and the creation of one that is closer to the one with greater motivating potential

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## **1. Organizational Culture**

The definition of organizational culture has been the subject of a wide debate, and scholars from various disciplines have been drawn to it offering diverse perspectives. As a result, the term culture came to be used interchangeably with concepts such as values, organizational climate, physical and cultural artifacts, norms or as the “normative glue” pervading organizational action and holding members together (Schneider, Brief & Guzzo, 1996). However, all the above represent manifestations of culture rather than the culture itself (Schein, 1983).

Perhaps the most commonly known definition is “the way we do things around here” (Lundy & Cowling, 1996). In this research the term organizational culture means: i) the sustained patterns of perceiving, interpreting and acting of organizational members ii) the set of assumptions that determine the above patterns (Schein, 1985) iii) the amalgam of beliefs, ideology, language, ritual and myth as well as norms, stories, legend and physical artifacts such as buildings and offices (Schein, 1985).

The culture of an organization is manifested in its typical characteristics. Therefore, we can say that it refers to a set of assumptions which are accepted within the organization because they have worked well in the past. These assumptions are seen as valid assumptions and may be beliefs or values of the founder, or the solution to a problem that has been frequently met and solved and which is now implicitly and unconsciously solved. Also, they are seen as the right way in which things are done or problems should be understood in the organization. Norms, values, philosophy, rules of the game and feelings are part of the organizational culture (Hellriegel et al., 1998; Smit & Cronje, 1992).

Organizational culture plays an important role in the general functioning of an organisation. It is an important parameter of the organization’s performance and effectiveness. Firstly, organizational culture helps members of an organization obtain a sense of identity. Employees understand that they belong to a “company – community” that has certain values, beliefs and ideology. Thus, they have a sense of commitment to something larger than their individual interest and they understand that the organization in which they belong is different from others. Organizational culture creates distinction between one organization and others. Robbins (2001) calls this “a boundary – defining role” of organizational culture. Also, culture serves as a sense making and control mechanism that guides and shapes employees’ attitudes and behavior. It provides employees with the necessary rules for what they should say or do and in this way it helps hold the organization together (Robbins, 2001).

Furnham and Gunter (1993) present the functions of organizational culture as “internal integration and coordination”. By the term internal integration they refer to the socializing of new members in the organization, to the feeling of commitment to the organization and of identity among personnel and, finally, to the creation of the boundaries of the organization. The term coordination means “creating a competitive edge, making sense of the environment in terms of acceptable behavior and social system stability” (E.C.Martins & F. Terblanche, 2003).

A very well-known culture typology is the one developed by Cameron and Quinn (1999). This model argues that organizational cultures have two dimensions. The first entails a continuum of flexibility and control while

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