

# DIFFERING MANAGERIAL RESPONSES TO CHANGE IN POLAND\*

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## Abstract

The paper is about alternative ways managers and enterprises respond to the contemporary situation in Poland. Adopting a cultural perspective and interpretive approach, it first seeks to establish in which ways the social role of

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manager has changed in regard to the professional dimension and contextual constraints. The main point concerns the current situation, where different ways of enactment of organizations' environments coexist, as do different managerial roles, as representing these different cultures of organizing. The paper proposes a typology of enterprises and roles, which can be used both in theory and practice, but perhaps more specifically by consultants who intend to introduce important change in East European enterprises. Taking the differences in responding to change into account would perhaps make the change itself more effective and more realistically aimed.

### Key words:

social role of the manager

managerial profession

basic mode of legitimization

communist management

post-communist management

# *DIFFERING MANAGERIAL RESPONSES*

## *TO CHANGE IN POLAND*

### *Introduction*

East European managers currently face dilemmas that go beyond the practical dimension of their job. Not only do they learn new methods and techniques, but they face a change of role in society and in the enterprise. They also confront change of their enterprises' identity, or origination of new identities, non-existent before 1989 (on organizational identity see e.g. Czarniawska-Joerges, 1994). How will managers react and how will managerial roles develop? Politicians, consultants and authors, using the normative framework are quite positive: they are to "adapt" and become oriented solely on the market. However, as a consultant and researcher, I have observed a variety of both managerial roles and cultures of organizing since 1989 in my home country, Poland. The paper is about alternative ways of responding to the contemporary situation in Eastern Europe. I focus on Poland, where I live and work, but some of the conclusions may be applicable to other East European countries.

#### *Industrial and institutional change*

The transition process in post-communist countries involves both important industrial and institutional change. The economies are being marketized, new forms of ownership are being introduced, through privatization and reprivatization and encouragement of entrepreneurship (even though Polish entrepreneurs often complain that they are being discouraged by the economic policy). The enterprises, including state-owned, are being subjected to economic rules of behavior, subsidies are renegotiated and it is generally thought that enterprises should be profitable, in all sectors and industries. On the other hand, democratic institutions are developing and taking over the political sphere. The authorities wish to demolish the close ties between economy and politics, so typical for communist countries (Beksiak, 1987; Bolesta-Kuku<sup>3</sup>ka, 1992). To begin with central planning was abandoned in all

post-communist countries. Next, the formal power of political institutions over economic life was reduced with the ultimate end of functioning similarly to western type democracies. Informal power was also discussed in many countries and it was considered how it could be reduced.

For the enterprise, the political sphere was intended to lose its vital importance, and the new economic rules become crucial for its survival and condition. Today, mixed rules apply, political and economic rationalities coexist and success is defined according to "communist" as well as "capitalist" standards by different actors and stakeholders (Kostera and Chrostowski, forthcoming). The scope for survival is still considerable through political lobbying and engaging in party politics, even though not the only survival strategy available. In the existing environment many different types of enterprises are common and all "adapt" to some aspect of that environment. However, the context in Poland is clearly under developing toward a more "western-type" economy, the route confirmed by all post-communist governments, the current "socialist" one included.

### *Method*

The aim of this paper is to make understandable the complications of management in Poland to a non-Polish reader through proposing a typology of differing managerial responses to the complex situation of today's Poland. The main focus is on the social role of the manager, the dimensions of its construction. The paper first describes the changing place of the manager in Polish society, or social prestige of the social role of manager (the societal dimension). The description is based on literature and an explorative effort by the author. Next, the professional dimension of the role are depicted, on the basis of literature and explorative effort. Then, the paper proceeds with the narrative on the past organizational dimension (the culture of organizing) with help of available literature. Further, a typology of managerial responses to change is introduced, including both managerial roles and different cultures of organizing. This section is based on excerpts from field studies, from the author's research and consulting experience, and material collected by her colleagues and students. The typology can be viewed as "grounded theory" (Glaser and Strauss, 1974) as it derives from empirical material I have collected. The cases serve as illustrating vignettes and not "evidence". Adherent to the interpretive approach, I do not believe in "proving" anything, but in illustrating my interpretations.

## *Changing managerial roles*

### *Increasing attractiveness of the managerial role?*

In a study quoted by Domański and Sawiński (1991) where a sample of Polish citizens was asked to rank 29 professions presented to them by the researcher, the profession of top manager was ranked as no. 4 (after university professors, miners, and doctors). In another study, where the respondents were supposed to name at least one profession they respected, resulted in a ranking headed by doctors, teachers and miners, and the managerial profession was not mentioned on the list of 20 professions named by 3 -- 80% of the respondents. (Domański and Sawiński, 1991). Discussing the results, the authors emphasized that managerial professions were clearly underrepresented on the second list (even among the lower frequency answers). The authors believed that this may be due to a traditional set of societal values, where only "traditionally useful" professions are valued, which allows us to think that opinion on the usefulness of the manager's work in the Polish society is not very high. A recent survey shows that Poles generally dislike business people: 56% of the respondents declared antipathy toward this social group; only 16% were positive toward business people. 41% thought that wealth was a result of theft, dishonesty, cheating, and so on. Business people were the least liked group among wealthy people. Others, like artists, scientists, sportsmen and women, people having made their money abroad (in Western countries), were more accepted by the respondents (Balicka, 1993). Also Thurow (1992) mentions that a rather unfavorable attitude towards entrepreneurship and beliefs about fairness, not encouraging individual achievement, can be observed in post-communist countries. However, there are indications that the place of the managerial role in Polish society is becoming more important and also attractive. For example, in Poland, Schools of Management mushroom while the popular interest in them grows (Koźmiński and Kwiatkowski, 1992). Management has become a fashionable topic. Publications on management (predominantly popular literature) are abundant on the market. The same is true of news-paper articles, TV and radio programs.

Asked why they chose to study Management newly admitted students to the Warsaw School of Management (Fall 1993) aged 18-20 years, typically answered that they hoped to get a (good) job, that they wanted to earn a lot of money and that they wanted to "do things" and "change things" in Poland (the students wrote short essays which were later discussed in class; 52 students participated). The first type of motivation (individual) can be compared with for example US students' motivation (according to an American colleague who has asked her

students the same question), while the second is, I believe, quite unique and worth consideration. Young people seem to view their social role as a powerful one, associated with change, offering them a possibility to rebuild society. They hope to become more like Western leaders -- "Moseses", bringing about change, improvising, controlling fate (Czarniawska-Joerges and Wolff, 1991).

### *Professional dimension of the role*

The managers define the professional dimension of their role and thus attempt a more immediate construction of their social role. The dimension evolves from a co-authoring of standards, by such societal groups, as managers, their organizations, consultants, management writers, etc. The standards generally regard effectiveness-principles (what is considered an accomplishment?), norms connected to education and experience (the general principles) and ethical norms (code of ethics) (for a discussion of professionalism and the managerial profession, see e.g. Schein, 1968; Collins, 1979).

Effectivity and rationality are dependent on the larger institutional context. What was considered rational in the communist system could be regarded as *irrational* in the capitalist (and vice versa). While in the capitalist society profit was generally seen as an indicator of successful management, this was not the crucial issue in the communist bloc. Instead, formally, the indicator of good management was plan fulfillment. Informally, it could be the ability to minimize plan quotas. Ultimately, as Kostera and Wicha (1994) argue, it was survival of the company, achieved through increasing power (in the political sense) of the organization.

General principles and norms connected to management were also different. Professional education was not a requirement for the communist manager, particularly in the earlier years of communist rule. Najduchowska (1976) describes the early years of communist rule in Poland, noticing that the managers were typically "promoted from shop-floor", lacked education, but had to be active party-members. In the Post-Stalinist era a trend toward professionalization of management could be observed: education was playing an increasingly important role in appointments for managers, the managers already active were often undergoing schooling (Najduchowska, 1976). The need for professional education was, however, not fully acknowledged: it was not "really" necessary even if it was "not unimportant" (Fr1ckiewicz, 1956), it could be a means of "ruling the masses", (Kie¿un, 1978), not a standard (Lipiński, 1981). "The post of enterprise director does not require higher education in the same way as do

law, medicine and architecture" asserts the professionalization-advocating Najduchowska (1976: 444). The communist managers were rarely economists, often engineers (Najduchowska, 1976; Ob³ój, 1986). Political schooling controlled by the Party was also common. For many years only one Faculty of Management existed in Poland (founded in the mid-seventies as a part of the Warsaw University), and this was rather uncommon across the bloc (see e.g. KoŸmiñski and Kwiatkowski, 1992 for a discussion of management education before and after 1989).

The managers themselves had certain "rules of behavior", among which the issue of various *games* was perhaps, most obvious (Kostera et al., forthcoming). The communist managers played games with the authorities, the party and the secret service people, who had a considerable power over the enterprises. Playing these games successfully, that is without making themselves or their company and employees vulnerable, was considered the most important quality of the former professional manager, as interviewed managers for trading companies affirmed (Kostera et al., forthcoming). The professional dimension of the social role included also a good deal of hypocrisy. The manager was supposed to "act the good communist" outward, when party officials were present, and to be skeptical and even cynical about communist slogans among peers. Thus the managers were trying to protect their own and their companies' integrity, seeking to

buy a certain amount of independence by making the 'right' declarations at 'right' moments, and developing an informal old-boys network, preferably with high party-officials as powerful mentors (Ob³ój and Kostera, 1991: 10).

The insincere declarations and games were tools of accomplishing important aims which were expected of the managers by "their" organization, that is -- looking to that the planned quotas for their companies would be minimal, making it easy to accomplish them -- and to exceed them. This was the condition of gaining extra financial and material means for social programs, bonuses for the employees (often more attractive than standard pay), foreign travel, etc. and achievement recognized by colleagues as "good management".

Let us now consider the professional dimension of the manager's social role in today's Poland. First of all, as I have pointed out earlier, management education is winning growing interest, and business schools meet a great demand, both from young candidates for undergraduate studies, and from executives.

## FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

In 1993 I undertook an explorative study, a brief survey among 2 groups of Polish executive students, of Warsaw University MBA program. Of the 36 students who participated 35 responses were usable. Two questions were asked: first, list qualities they considered as most important for a manager; and second, to list qualities they believed to be most typical for contemporary Polish managers. The students answered by writing their own lists anonymously. The one student whose response I see as unusable, answered that "the Decalogue is sufficient". The other respondents all listed desirable qualities, but some (7) did not answer the second question. Some did not justify their choice not to answer, while some stated, that "they do not like to generalize", or that such "simplification is useless". The survey was conducted in class, and results were later discussed with the students (with some of the students absent).

The responses to the question about desirable managerial qualities varied. Typically, the individual lists were quite long (1 to 11 qualities). Some were listed by several students (see fig. 1). The most popular quality was "honesty", mentioned by a clear majority. Another popular answer was "fairness". I counted in "impartiality" in this group of answers. Nine students listed "openness" and "loyalty to the firm", or "loyalty to the organization", or "minding the firm's good". "Frankness", or "speaking the truth" was mentioned by six students, so was "professionalism", "punctuality" and "dependability". In a further discussion with the students, they often tended to summarize the lists in terms of "solidness", "professional manners" and "competence". They emphasized that "a manager should be a professional" and that one should be proud of "joining the club" of professional managers.

## FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

That was for the "shoulds". Now to the opinions on the typical Polish managers (see fig. 2). The students often listed negative traits (which predominated). Among them "dishonest", or "not entirely honest", or "rather dishonest" was the most popular answer. As many as 10 respondents stated that the typical manager in Poland is "concentrates on the short term", or is "shortsighted", or "concentrated on the present". He or she was also an "ignorant", "not educated" or "not sufficiently educated", according to 8 students. 6 stated that the manager was "not competent". In the later



discussion the students revealed that they did not equate competence with education, so I did not summarize the two answers. According to the students, competence is broader: it includes education, experience and talent. The typical manager was also often described as having the wrong attitude toward the employees and cheating with taxes, engaging in a luxurious life style, as an egoist, concentrating on financial gains. Just one positive trait was commonly enumerated: "innovativeness". However, many of the individual lists contained one single positive trait, which most often did not appear on other individual lists. The positive characteristic typically appeared at the end of a long list of negative characteristics. I believe that this is due to many of the respondents not wanting to be "just critical".

The respondents, asked if the conduct of other post-communist managers could be viewed as similar to the one of Polish managers, answered that they believed it was generally similar, but that it may be "worse" in the ex-Soviet Union, Bulgaria and Romania, and "better" in Hungary. During the discussion in class they asserted that a managers should be "high class" persons, representing their company and their country well.

The opinions of MBA students can be interesting material to compare. They can be seen as both active agents and the effect of the professionalization of management in Poland. Even if such a brief study can hardly be viewed as a reliable source for generalization, it is informative. It shows an eagerness to establish high professional standards of management and also bitterness in the respondents' view of the current standards. What resulted was the respondents' problem definition: a perceived discrepancy between the actual and the desired state of affairs.

### *Culture of organizing and role construction*

By culture of organizing I mean here the context of the managerial role, i.e. the cultural mind frames that "surround" the construction of the role within the organization. I would like to distinguish between two major dimensions of the context: the economic and the political. There are, of course many other possibilities, e.g. a symbolic and a practical dimension could be added (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1993), a physical one (Gagliardi, 1992), etc. These dimensions are neither absolute nor concrete and the aim of dividing up reality in such a way is to focus on interesting phenomena/ processes against a certain background. It is much like putting on a pair of glasses to be able to see certain things in a certain light. My original pair of glasses is "cultural". Additionally, I dispose of a "political" and an "economic" pair. The political and economic spheres I understand as dimensions of social life regulated,

respectively, by relationships of power or relationships of production and distribution of goods. The dimensions are ruled, in modern societies, by economic and political rationality (Kostera and Wicha, 1994). By economic rationality I mean maximization of material utility. By political rationality I mean maximization of influence and power "utility". Rationality is socially constructed (see Berger and Luckmann, 1983; Czarniawska-Joerges, 1992b): the rules for this construction are contingent with, among other factors, the basic kind of "utility" the society is concerned about to achieve.

### Basic mode of legitimization

For a "classic" capitalist enterprise it is particularly important to focus on the economic sphere, as it was the one directly determining its survival. Political games can be used for influencing the tougher economic games (e.g. the Chrysler bailout). Success, understood strategically (as long term performance) is primarily defined in categories of profit and positive market image (in the eyes of the consumers). Organizational success leads to organizational survival. The definition of success is constructed through negotiation between the social context of organizing and the organization (Kostera and Wicha, 1994). The classic capitalist enterprise is based on economic rationality. This is the frame of reference to which all the organizational actions are related, be it ex ante or ex post, the main language for accounts and the basis for legitimizing the actions (on accounting and its role in enhancing the dominating construction of reality, see e.g. Morgan, 1987). This picture, even though far too simplistic to represent the diversity of western economic and political reality, I see as an ideal contrasting type, i.e. a model aimed at contrasting two differing realities. More than being just such a "negative" mind construct, it is also, as I see it, the dominating East European myth about western reality. It is a very important myth, as the east is "becoming what they think [the west is like]" (Rohatyn, 1990 as quoted by Czarniawska-Joerges, 1993: 14), and is under the spell of an idealized picture of "Americanism" (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1993).

The "ideal model" of a communist enterprise is different. It is a characteristic of the communist system that the ties between economic and the political sphere (which exist elsewhere) are those of submission of the former in favor of the latter (Beksiak, 1987). From the point of view of the enterprise it was particularly important to focus on the political dimension of environment, as it was through political games the organization could ensure itself survival, development and also economic gains for its participants. The communist enterprise was based then on a different

definition of success. Survival was granted if the organization could "accumulate" political influence or "profit" to effectively control the environment (where the political sphere dominated). Enterprises aimed at gaining political power (Kostera and Wicha, 1994) and strived to achieve a positive image in the environment. It was not "market image", but an accurate appearance in the eyes of external political decision makers. The organization was based on political rationality (Kostera and Wicha, 1994). Economic organizations were expected to rationalize their actions in macro-economic terms which, in turn, were politically defined at the macro-level. This rationality construction mode served for ontologic justification of social action at the level of society, as well as at the level of individual organization.

Success criteria and rationality mode together I define as basic mode of legitimization. It pertains to the taken-for-granted, implicit and critical assumptions of organizing, and is rooted in the assumptions of the cultural context of organizing (for an explanation of the concept "cultural context of organizing" and its implications, see Hofstede and Boddewyn, 1977; Czarniawska-Joerges, 1986): what is "really" an enterprise? for whom? and why? The basic mode of legitimization of the enterprise has the most fundamental influence on the manager's organizational role. The manager is the agent of the relationship between various stakeholder groups (Leblebici and Salancik, 1989) and is, in the first instance, acting on grounds of the most vital assumptions.

The culture of organizing before 1989: it's a political world

The "organization" to the communist manager was not only their "own" company, but the wider "structures", including industrial organization (of which East German kombinats are perhaps best known to the western reader), even whole industries. Central planning and centralization of the economy in communist countries resulted in "extending" the organizational "borders" to the manager. The managers had obligations toward the "extended organization" and a part of their career fulfillment goals could be located outside the enterprise. However, Kořmiřski notes that most Polish managers identified themselves with their position as manager of the enterprise and did not wish for promotion (1976:410).

Even within their "own" company the manager's role was restricted. The Polish managers did not set goals, did not plan, motivate, organize, nor control in the words' proper sense (Obřój, 1986; Sarapata, 1992). Their role was the one of solving immediate problems, most of them concerning safeguarding necessary supplies (Obřój, 1986).

The enterprises seemed to be copies of each others, tiny elements of a big mechanism (Ob³ój and Kostera, 1993). All important goals were imposed by a central plan (and the communist party) (Ob³ój and Kostera, 1993). The communist party controlled managers in such areas as motivation, control and appointment of managers (Kie¼un, 1978).

The manager had to play the role of protector of their "own" company. The needs of the employees, as well as the interests of the entire company, were to be taken care of. For reasons such as the unpredictability of the supply, the permanent shortage and highly regulated economy, the enterprise was the employer, neighborhood store and home for the employees. Big enterprises offered medical care, housing and the supply of most important goods to their personnel (Nowak, 1992). The client, or the "market" hardly had any meaning for management (Czarniawska, 1985).

To achieve their ends in the communist context, the managers had to engage in extensive political activity (Kostera and Wicha, 1994). Most of the communist manager's activity was of a clearly political nature, where both the means and the end were political. Through such activity, economic gains for their own company were, however, granted (Kostera and Wicha, 1994). The managers could play vital games as party members and activists, participants of informal networks, etc., stressing the "social and political" importance of their companies and/ or their networks and positions outside the enterprise. They would often use different and multiple political communication "channels", adopting many roles, both of a "defensive" and "proactive nature".

The political mode of legitimization is thus a model describing the logic of functioning of the communist enterprise quite well.

### *Differing managerial responses to change:*

#### *Roles and culture of organizing*

The transition process in post-communist countries, from the point of view of the enterprise, can be seen as a shift of emphasis, from political to economic basic mode of legitimization. This aspect of the transition is strongly

emphasized by mass media, by politicians and popular management authors, such as those publishing their texts in the monthly *Businessman Magazine* (for a critical cultural study on articles on management published in *Businessman Magazine* and other Polish press titles, see Kostera, 1994). Also researchers tend to agree with this vision of enterprises in transition.

In a report on privatization of state-owned enterprises in Poland (Che<sup>3</sup>miński et al., 1993) the authors, having analyzed the population and specific cases of privatization, conclude that three categories of enterprises can be discerned, depending on the level of adaptation: those having gone through thorough restructurization, those partially adapted and those having failed to adapt and restructurize. The authors assume that enterprises will adapt to new *economic* rules, in other words, they focus on one dimension of the environment only.

However, at this point very different kinds of enterprises coexist and they all negotiate their contingencies with the "environment" -- so they are all "adapted", but according to differing sets of criteria. In the changing East European business environment, the two basic modes of legitimization: the "communist", or the political and the "capitalist" or economic coexist. The enterprises of 1994 and their managers can be lined up along two axes, on a continuum from focus on political activity to focus on economic activity, and varying degree of competitiveness of the environment. The political and economic orientations correspond, respectively, with the political and economic modes of legitimization. The environment the organizations operate in can be competitive to a varying degree in the two spheres. Enterprises respond to these conditions in different ways. There are a variety of enterprises and managers. However, to make the point clearer, I chose three "ideal types": the strongly politically preoccupied manager -- the Political Gamesman (they are almost exclusively men for some reason), the strongly economically minded Marketeer; and the manager who can "switch" his or her attention from one sphere to the other (or the Janus). The enterprises that "entour" these roles I have labelled, respectively: the Empire, the Market Tiger (I have borrowed this metaphor from Barbara Czarniawska-Joerges, 1988) and the Chameleon. These types are best suited to act in an environment of varying degree of competitiveness, as illustrated in Fig.3.

I will now present some case studies, that in my opinion illustrate these types well.

FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

## *The Empire*

Mr Ciep³y is the managing director of a big Polish machinery producer. He was elected to the post recently. Before, he was a trade union leader, active within Solidarnoœæ. His election for the post, as rumors among the employees go, was due to his political activity. He became "visible" in 1991, raising local initiatives and giving interviews. His speeches were direct, he claimed financial support from the state for a deteriorating and ineffective company, arguing that a bankruptcy would ruin the whole region. On one occasion he straightforwardly demanded loans from the state budget, presenting a document which he entitled "business plan", containing a list of demands. Mr Ciep³y tried to organize a marketing department and hired a consultant to perform this task. The planned unit was championed by Mr Ciep³y and his union as the remedy for many of the company's serious problems. The company's survival was at stake, and this was not the first time. Since the fall of communism many attempts to "do something about the problem" were undertaken by subsequent governments. In this atmosphere Mr Ciep³y was elected to the post of managing director for the enterprise, with massive support of trade unions and the Worker's Council. As managing director he dropped his plans of organizing a marketing department. He became less visible in the company. But he continued his political activity, with the effect of further postponing of any economic decisions concerning the company's future. The company's losses were as big as ever and covered up by the state budget. Mr Ciep³y's proposed solutions to the company's problems were of the political kind. In order to save his company he performed the old organizational role of a communist manager; engaging in political games, lobbying, and party politics, developing a network of political support. "He's gonna run for the Parliament" -- one of the other directors commented. (In fact, he did on September 19, 1993, but failed to be elected.)

The material has been made available to the author by the consultant hired to organize the marketing department by Mr Ciep³y and reinvestigated later by students of Warsaw University. The material comes from 1992-1993. The consultant preferred to stay anonymous, and the names are changed.

The organizational role of Mr Ciep³y clearly reminds us of the "old" one, as it is based on the same kind of mode of legitimization, the political. He is still much of a Political Gamesman, acting according to enduring norms and values. The surface may change, such as up-to-date slogans, party affiliation (e.g. not the communist party but some other political party with important influence). The foundations, the prevailing rationality, definition of success remain the same. The organization is of the kind I here labelled Empire, the aim is to accumulate maximum power and thus survive. The Empire is the type of enterprise that Che³miñski et al. (1993) evaluate as having "failed to

adapt". In a report by D'rowski et al. (1991) it is stated that as many as 38% of Polish enterprises (a majority) adapt passively (which the authors define as a failure to what I here have named the economic rationality) and thus show unsatisfactory economic results. I believe, however, that they in fact do "adapt", and actively so, to certain aspects of the environment. Bolesta-Kuku<sup>3</sup>ka (1992) remarks that political activity still prevailed in post-1989 Poland, dominating over economic. In other post-communist countries this statement holds true, even if the intensity of the links between the economic and political sphere vary from country to country. Presently, the prospects for survival through such action is considerable.

Another Political Gamesman from my collection of case studies, is Mr Górecki, recently nominated for the post of general director of a large trading company. Unlike Mr Ciep<sup>3</sup>y, he has not been elected by the employees, but promoted when the "moment was right", when the political party he belonged to won the elections. His enterprise also changed political color, depending on who was in power at a given time. The rumor goes that Mr Górecki was the perfect director, because "he knows people". Some of the important political posts are now occupied by his friends and colleagues.

This case (dating from 1993) was developed by the Author. Górecki is a pseudonym and the informants asked to keep all information unrevealed, except for the point itself.

This latter case shows that it is in principle of secondary interest, *which* political formation the company "supports" or relies on. Not "political colors", but political involvement seems to be the Empire's main idea on how to survive. Some of the gossip I have heard in the latter enterprise, points at clearly political motives, even for the appointment of Mr Górecki. He replaced the former director *because* "the time was right", and *because* of his party affiliation (the former director was a member of a different party, influential before September 1993). It is far from certain, whether these motives were indeed the strongest ones. The enterprise's culture tends, though, to emphasize exactly this dimension of social life. Some other cases I dispose of, even if somewhat old (1989-1992) are narratives with the same point: directors lobbying in the Parliament, or outside Parliament, building up "current" and "strategic" (long-term, presumable) networks among politicians, using political rhetorics, etc. The press describes this kind of enterprise as "remnants of the old times", examples of communist management, etc. (Kostera, 1994).

## *The Market Tiger*

Ms Kamecka and Mr Krumov have been partners in business for long time. Before 1989, they both worked for state owned companies and developed good professional contacts. They used to meet over a cup of coffee and engage in "dreaming" about how they would run a "real" company if only such activity were allowed. In 1991 they took the chance; they created a trade and distribution company of their own. The idea turned out to be a feasible one, the business grew fast and they started to employ more and more people. Currently, they own a broad distribution network covering all of Poland. Ms Kamecka says:

Frankly, I do not care for politics and neither does my partner. I'm just not interested and I suppose I don't have the talents. It's a relief you now can do without it. Here at KAMA we make money and nothing else.

This does not mean that they do not face problems at times. Mr Krumov says:

It's a sensitive story, so I will just tell you this: we have had quite serious problems because we did not respond to them. They threatened that they would "teach" us -- fortunately, we did not really need them, we can make it without the "kids".

"They" and "the kids" mean political activists and people from the administrative apparatus. As my interlocutors told me, it is still important to "know the right people", but there are ways to manage without them.

The case has been developed by the author. The names have been changed.

The partners, Marketeers, are preoccupied with economic success of their enterprise, a Market Tiger. The enterprise is trying to "dis-enact" the political dimension of the environment (but this negative attitude is also a recognition that such an "environment" exists). There are quite a few examples to illustrate this type of organizational role, e.g. many of the MBA students I have had contact with express their lack of interest in the political. Owners of growing small business sometimes even display an open disdain for political activity and declare that they are



"incompetent" as political gamblers/ -women. This kind of one-sided commitment is perhaps the most risky (and daring) one. The managers act on the economic dimension, relying on rules-of-the-game which still belong perhaps more to the future than the present and pretend as if no other criteria were in force. This attitude they proudly label as "the normal one" and some promise themselves that it is to them the future truly belongs.

Market Tigers are typically young enterprises, created after 1989, which never had been state owned. The Managers, Marketeers, are often young, or have had worked in the west (but not necessarily, as the first example shows).

We are a team of young people, who have worked in the west -- Western Germany, to be exact.

We have learned to work hard and also to respect the customer.

The above quotes come from a manager from a car service station. The manager was proud, because customers praised him and the station for their "customer focus" He was also very pleased that they stressed the difference between his business' and his competitors' way of treating clients. He recalled that many of competing service stations were labelled "communist". He was glad to introduce different improvements to the service offered, with the customer's good or "just" comfort in mind: the service station offers the customers coffee, while they wait, they wash their cars "for free", and so on.

Author's interview with the owner of the service station, 1993.

Some Market Tigers do not perceive a political dimension to their functioning as enterprises at all. The service station was "blind" toward such a dimension.

Another firm showed similar "blindness", but was not as customer friendly as the car service station. A young enterprise, in the travel and tourism industry, Perfect Tour, were depicted by the Polish mass media as being arrogant and dishonest. A consultant for a competing enterprise interviewed the clients of competitors during a market research project, among them clients of Perfect Tour. The consultant found out, that the clients felt cheated and deceived, but could not take the company to court, as it was acting within the limits of the law, in principle, even

if the clients were treated with arrogance. The company was perceived as a "robber", and one "being only after their money". They would "never go with them anywhere again".

The material has been forwarded to the author by the consultant mentioned in the case. The information comes from 1991-1992.

Both the car service station and Perfect Tour were Market Tigers in the sense that their management spoke with contempt of politics and, as far as I know, did not engage in political games. Their only concern was with "economic profits". However, their method of reaching it was understood differently. The car station aimed to develop long-term relationships with the clients. Perfect Tour wanted to make "fast money". In the former case, the market was personified, it is a client, a person who chooses to spend his or her money. In the latter it was depersonalized and anonymous -- a place where money can be "found".

### *The Chameleon*

To illustrate the functioning of the Chameleon, I chose an Ukrainian case. The reasons for this are twofold. First, the Ukrainian company has hired Polish consultants, who also were my informants. Secondly, the enterprise is, in our (my and the consultants') judgement, not very dissimilar from Polish organizations of this kind. However, the Ukrainian context allows for much more open political networking.

The enterprise was a Ukrainian spirits producer, one of the most effective companies in the country, a huge employer, headed by the dynamic Mr Mikhalchuk. He was in his late 40-ties, an ex-party man (but not a "true" communist, he emphasized) and, although lacking economic education, certainly a man with experience. As an open minded manager and the head of an effective company, he was in a different situation than most of his Ukrainian colleagues. He had, however, similar problems. The pivotal problem for many Ukrainian enterprises was to ensure necessary supply, in basic materials and input. The better the manager was able to "organize" the supply, the higher he (more rarely, she) was held in esteem by his employees (and also peers). Mr Mikhalchuk was considered an excellent manager. He knew how to "organize" necessary raw material, spare parts. He managed well, because he "knew" all the right people and kept up with time, currently the key people (political decision makers) change a bit faster than before. Mr Mikhalchuk had almost total control over his company. Unlikely other Ukrainian managers, he

was, however, not a despot. He even encouraged his vice-president (a post otherwise "mute" in Ukrainian companies, without real power) to take part in important negotiations, to make important statements and decisions. He reserved for himself strategic issues, and especially those of a political nature. He was considered a good employer by his subordinates: he took care of his employees, e.g. he "organized" an attractive vacation site thanks to his networks. The company profited from his power and it was clearly Mr Mikhalchuk's intention to increase the profits. Presently it is in negotiations with a foreign partner, willing to launch a JV with the company. Mr Mikhalchuk was like other post-communist managers in many respects. But he also knew how to make money and how to ensure his organization benefitted. He used his power to achieve this end.

The material for the case has made available to the author by Mr Pawe<sup>3</sup> Jab<sup>3</sup>oński, consultant, who has been involved in a project concerning the described company and developed extensive and prolonged contacts with Mr Mikhalchuk and other employees of the company. The name of the director has been changed.

Mr Mikhalchuk also concentrated on political activity, but not exclusively. In a changing environment, Mr Mikhalchuk has learned his lesson about how to make money (i.e. gain profits in and through the economic dimension of the environment). He played the role of Janus: sensitive to either dimension of the environment, ready to engage in both economic and political activity. The company can be seen as a kind of "twilight enterprise", or that of Chameleon in my typology. The company was using the old norms and values in a neo-rational way, i.e. based on the old assumptions, but in a way that brought success according to a new definition (an economic one). Success was both "to be profitable" and "to be powerful". Enterprises actively adapted to the new rules, was quite common (34% of state owned enterprises) in Poland, according to D'brewski's et al. (1991) report. I estimate a good number of them are Chameleons, as it is probably the safest way to survive in a heterogenous environment (even if a difficult one). No statistics are available, however, so further research is necessary in order to make any positive statements. Che<sup>3</sup>miński et al. (1993) describe this type of enterprise as having adapted partially, which is true as to the new economic rules being introduced. The companies guard themselves, not willing to take too great a risk and prefer to adapt to a twofold set of criteria, both using the economic and the political mode of legitimization.

Another case comes from Poland, 1990. A group of consultants, among them the author, was hired by one of the more economically effective Polish enterprises. The consultants interviewed many employees, engaged in observation and developed an intensive relationship with the enterprise. The project lasted for one year. The organization, a state owned enterprise, WPHiP, was founded in the early 1950's. by a well known Polish political

activist, Mr Bolecki. He knew Stalin himself, but was not seen as a "real communist", rather a very tough pragmatist. He grouped some private enterprises, to be nationalized, within one organization -- his WPHiP, and he let the former owners continue to work as managers. Knowing "everybody", not only he did develop helpful networks, but created his own "satellite" of the communist party, a political organization. The enterprise and the organization were mutually supporting each other. The organization fought for the company's survival. WPHiP assured important economic income. Needless to say, the managers of the company were acting at the same time as leaders for the political organization. When the consultants entered WPHiP, it was very much the same as in the "old days". The managers considered how to enter the new political scene more effectively, and decided to form a non-communist political party, which they judged would be able to gain power in the new parliament. At the same time, they thought in economic terms. Every issue clearly had a double value to them, one political, and one economic. As they spoke for example of privatization, they openly acknowledged the political meaning that would have in the "new Poland", and they analyzed the planned move in strictly economic terms. They rejected a strategic plan, proposed by the consultants, because it did not contain any consideration of what they called "the political reality". Later on they accepted the plan, with some political revisions. The general manager for the enterprise was, traditionally, a leading political activist. As far as I know, this is still true.

The case was developed by the authors, who gathered information together with a group of consultants in 1989-1990. The names are changed.

WPHiP is in the consumer goods industry. So is Mr Mikhalchuk's company, as well as other enterprises of this kind that I know. Another enterprise, investigated in 1992 by a group of students, is fairly similar to the former two Chameleons. Like the two, it was, and still is, economically profitable. By 1992 it was, in the words of a middle-level manager, "one of the few in Poland with a decent cash-flow and not too many bad debts". It was a quick learner, among the first to organize a marketing function, adopting an ingenious privatization path which strongly benefitted the company, having an excellent financial director with competence within western financial management. The company knew how to play political games, it was as talented in this dimension, as in the economic one. The managing director of the enterprise "knew all the right people" and even made "right guesses about whom to support strategically", and the director was said to be a "talking news paper" by one of the employees. The latter means, that he mastered the dominating rhetorics outstandingly. The enterprise was "playing fair" all the time, not engaging in any suspicious or shady affairs, fully correct from the legal point of view. So were

the two former enterprises I have described here, particularly WPHiP. Being a Chameleon does not need to imply "suspect affairs" (even if some other enterprises and their managers might engage in such dealings).

The material was forwarded to the author by her students who developed the case. The company is anonymous and asked for discretion, including the branch of industry it is active within.

### *A time of plenitude*

As I have shown, the current managerial responses are far from uniform. Even if contemporary Poland can hardly be said to be prosperous in the economic sense, it certainly is in the cultural. Many ways of interpreting reality coexist, and for the time being, they all imply "success" for organizations who adopt them, in the sense that the all organizations exist. If some of them fail in the future, the surviving will account for their "success", constructing a "plot", with its "causes" and "effects". Weick (1969/1979) rightly pointed out, that we rationalize our actions ex post. In the present, the reality is open to many such rationalizations.

Instead of speculating about implications for the future, I will speculate about the "causes", or the "whys" of the current situation, building my interpretation on the empirical material I have shown and on the above argument.

First, I believe that the most important reason for the "choice" of the actual mode of legitimization is embedded in the organizations' culture. This is not surprising for someone adopting a cultural perspective, who believes that people make sense of their lives through culture (Smircich, 1983/1987). The older and bigger the enterprise, the more and long-lived the "inherited" unconscious cultural mind frames. The Empires were large and they have a long "communist" history, it is more difficult for them to renounce their cultures than it is for Chameleons, who usually were smaller. The Market Tigers are typically small and young businesses, with no or a very short "communist" history. I am also predisposed to think, that the employees' and managers' age vary with the type of enterprise, those active within Empires would be the oldest, and within Market Tigers, the youngest. I do not have any evidence supporting this last opinion, however.

I tend to believe that the type of enterprise and managerial role also varies with type of business. Heavy industry, and perhaps the public sector, seems to be a favorable milieu for the development of Empires. Producers

of consumer goods and services tend to be Market Tigers, especially if they are young businesses. Older and bigger producers of consumption goods can act as Chameleons. This is due to the fact, that heavy industry was viewed as "the most important" and "strategic" part of the national economy under communism and so seen as particularly significant from the political point of view. Consumer goods producers were "less important", and could be less "dogmatic" and look for other ways of granting themselves the desired gains, including the economic ones. They were perhaps also required to look for such ways, as the political arguments they used were of "lower merit". Many of today's Chameleons are companies that had an important share of exports to the West in their gross sales. Thus they "learned" how to enact the economic environment, while not renouncing from enacting the political.

Another important "cause" may be the past success the organization achieved, and the way it did. Empires were very successful enterprises during communism. Their mode of legitimization, their managers' social roles, their identities were strong and powerful. They were similar to small empires indeed, owning large pieces of land, housing, shops which sometimes could be quite "exclusive" for communist conditions, own health and child care, sports areas and sometimes big and famous national sports teams, vacation centers, etc. In reality, they did not "own" anything, as the communist state was the sole and definitive disposer of all property. In practice, however, they were small worlds in themselves, functioning somewhat differently than the world outside.

As Gagliardi (1986) points out, success tends to enhance and strengthen the organization's culture. In my opinion, it certainly has enhanced the Empires' modes of action and the Political Gamesmen's roles. For Market Tigers, the situation is quite different. They are young and they seek to define their success for themselves. Their managers and often also founders, the Marketeers, often have two major sources of inspiration for this definition, the mass-media, and their past experience. The media speak almost in unison for a radical market orientation and success, very often referred to in the press, is accounted for almost exclusively in economic terms (Kostera, 1994). As for their past experience, the Marketeers have only one reality to refer back to, the communist. That reality is criticized by the mass-media and it is often pointed out that the transition process is about abruptly breaking with the communist past. Not having much managerial experience and perhaps not old enough to have developed the "right" political contacts, the Marketeers see the future as belonging solely to economically minded managers and businesses. The Chameleon used to enjoy success of varying kind: political (it had to, in a communist country) and economic (it was often active on some kind of market). The Janus is often old enough to "know", that being committed to one vision, and only dimension of the environment, can be dangerous in the long run. He or she had

seen too many pitfalls and failures of such "one-sided" managers under communism, and later on. And communism itself fell, too. Therefore it is better to guard oneself and be open to many possible interpretations and turns of fate. The Januses I have spoken to, told of their political and economic activities to me and they seemed pleased to talk informally. However, asked for a formal interview, they refused flatly, or accepted and then asked for almost complete discretion. I wondered, why they were so reluctant to speak out; none of my respondents told me about any illegalities in our informal conversations. One of my interlocutors answered that "one should be careful all the time", and all the rest tended to support this opinion. The Janus is then pragmatic and also experienced, expecting the worst, but also knowing how to draw the most possible benefits. A management consultant I have been speaking to about one of the managers playing the role I here have labelled Janus, said that he was like a professional bridge player, always calculating probabilities and guarding himself from all odds.

## *Conclusion*

One the transition's main characters is the manager, whose social role is being renegotiated, and probably also getting more attractive. Enterprises themselves are in the midst of a process of re-negotiating their environments, and also their identities. The cultural context of organizing changes, and so does the basic mode of legitimization. The most important issues are under discussion: what is "really" important for and enterprise to "do"? why? for whom? In other words, the transition and adaptation process of managerial roles involves the status of the enterprise and projects at least two basic ways of defining it; as a basically economic or political social construct. At this point no other definitions are seriously emerging in Eastern Europe (such as they do in the West, e.g. the social legitimization mode). In the near future, the negotiation will probably be enriched by more options.

However, the mass media, and also the academic authors tend to overemphasize certain answers and de-emphasize others. As reality is socially constructed, the importance of open discussion and negotiation of important social problems is immense. Unfortunately, the discussion is not openly held, and some characters, who are both interesting and sometime very successful -- the Januses, do not openly exist as social roles (Kostera, 1994). They even refuse to speak out.

Consultants and reformers adopt the more streamlined, one-sided view of what the situation "is like", and how it should develop. Meanwhile, different types of enterprises tend to react in different ways. I think it is about time to abandon the romantic and idealist belief that by repeating "magical formulae" will change the world. As Ob<sup>3</sup>ój and Kostera (1993) pointed out, such magical thinking is quite typical for the Polish transformation, but it is not only ineffective, but counter-effective. It tends to support the "traditional", pre-1989 double-bind mode of construction of culture. Double binds give birth to further double binds, people become more and more wary, feel deceived and even cynical. A Swedish management consultant, working for a Polish-Swedish joint venture in Poland, asked me why people here were so skeptical and refrained from taking initiative. I believe that, besides the anxiety "normal" in times of dramatic change, the explanation may be offered by the double-bind theory (Hennestad, 1990). Hennestad reminds us that repeating double binds make change impossible, because people tend to see anything as "just another double bind". Polish employees thus probably see a "hidden meaning" in all the declarations and decisions made by the current reformers. If the reformers were more sensitive to the reformed enterprises' cultures, their efforts might be more constructive.

Whats more, if Empires prevail among heavy industry enterprises, we know where to look for them. If the reformers want to accomplish change in those enterprises, they have to work on new assumptions; not that they "should" think economically (as Market Tigers), but that they actually are "blind" to the economic dimension of their environment. They will not "get more market-oriented", because their *enacted environment* is almost exclusively political ("the map is the territory"; see Weick, 1969/1979). To them, "market orientation" makes as little sense as to the communist enterprise. Rethinking of assumptions could perhaps make reorganization of these most difficult and socially sensitive organizations, often monopolizing whole regional labor markets, more effective.

The data from my explorative efforts seem also to indicate, that Polish managers and future managers are willing to participate more actively in the construction of their social role. They want to set high education standards, they welcome specialist professional education, which can be seen as something of a specific entry barrier to the profession, they also want to establish a code of ethics. Younger students tie their education more and more tightly to their future job as managers, and they declare that they would like to "change things", i.e. participate actively in social life. I believe that it would be of great value to listen more intensely to what these current and future practitioners have to say, a strong argument for the development of more interpretatively oriented research. From what I can judge, Polish Business Administration is almost exclusively functionalist, and the models used are of the



diagnostic-clinical kind. Not taking into consideration what the practitioners have to say always means losing important information, and perhaps particularly so when the practitioners are active and ambitious.

Further, the varying responses to change offer a thrilling opportunity to researchers of the East European transition. It would be of interest to establish, which type of answer prevail, in which countries, if Empires really achieve greatest political/ social importance, or if some other type of enterprise does, which type tends to be the most effective economically in the short and in the long run, which type grows fastest, and so on. On the other hand, it would also be interesting to establish, what the different types of managers think of change, whether they fear it or see it as an opportunity, how they feel about managerial professionalism, or the professional dimension of their social role, etc. What kind of employers are the different types of enterprise? In our search for more humane organizations, can we point at some already existing type? Abandoning the one-sided, normative perspective, could, in my opinion, open up new exciting research horizons, to representatives for many paradigms.

A last remark I would like to make is that the current diversity is not necessarily "evil", nor "temporary". Organizations do not react according to those intended by the authorities "one best way" logic. The ideal types drawn here are just characteristic points on a map enclosing a whole range of actual responses. Polish politicians still dream of consensus and unanimity. But is it not like what we had to endure under totalitarian communism: unison and monophony? The current diversity is then, perhaps, not to reduce, but to be elevated in the future: new rationalities (or post-rationalities), new roles and identities.

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Error! Bookmark not defined.CHARACTERISTIC NAMED BY RESPONDENTS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS HAVING NAMED THE CHARACTERISTIC
1. honesty	25
2. fairness/ impartiality	12
3. openness	9
loyalty to the firm/ to the organization/ minding the firm's good	9
4. frankness/ speaking the truth	6
professionalism	6
punctuality	6
dependability	6
5. competence	5
knowledge	5
6. good treating of employees	4
paying taxes	4
resistance to stress/ cold blood	4
respect for other people	4
perseverance	4
be energetic/ active/ dynamic	4

visionary/ dreamer/ thinking in long terms	4
7. good manners/ civility	3
innovativeness	3
creativity	3
to keep one's word	3
openness to new ideas/ openness to others' ideas	3
ability to behave in different situations/ all situations	3
to be an example for others/ for employees	3
modesty	3
responsibility	3
orientation for personal growth/ development	3
8. decent looks/ good appearance	2
style	2
entrepreneurship	2
determination	2
to be a good listener	2
to be able to communicate well	2
to be trustworthy	2
to awake respect in others/ be an authority	2

education	2
to engage in fair competition/ be a gentleman competitor	2
experience	2
to be demanding	2
to be ambitious	2
to be nice/ friendly	2
to have a clear goal/ ...in life	2

FIG. 1. Results of survey among MBA students: answers to question *Which are the desired characteristics of the manager?* (36 participated; 35 valid).



Error! Bookmark not defined.CHARACTERISTIC NAMED BY RESPONDENTS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS HAVING NAMED THE CHARACTERISTIC
1. dishonest/ not entirely honest/ rather dishonest	14
2. concentration on short term/ shortsightedness/ concentration on "now"	10
3. innovative	
ignorant/ not educated/ not sufficiently educated	8
4. not competent/ not really competent	8
bad treatment of employees/ wrong attitude to subordinated/	6
disrespectful attitude to employees	6
5. tax evader	6
sumptuous life style/ life in luxury/ consuming the income	4
egoist	4
only/ mostly interested in money/ in profits	4
6. not / not always punctual	4
brutal	3
7. easy to adapt	3
uses other people/ employees	2
does not keep his/ her word	2
impatient	2

impulsive	2
interested in / wants fast profit	2
lies	2
dresses poorly	2
no language proficiency	2
enjoys taking risk	2
nepot/ an "old-fellow club" networker	2
	2
	2

FIG. 2. Results of survey among MBA students: answers to the question *List characteristics of the typical contemporary Polish manager*. (36 participated; 35 valid; 29 answered this question).

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	Political Orientation	Economic Orientation
Highly Competitive	EMPIRE (Political Gamesman Manager(s))	MARKET TIGER (Maketeer Manager(s))
Less Competitive	CHAMELEON (Janus Manager(s))	

FIG. 3. Types of enterprises "best adapted" to economic and political environment of varying degree of competitiveness; or apt to enact a certain type of environment and respective managerial roles.