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Conflicting at the juxtaposition of organizational turbulence and values

Despite the omnipresence of religious organizations, there are relatively few studies on these settings (Tracey, 2012). Yet, studying religious organizations, such as churches, may bring a novel understanding of various organizational issues as they represent extreme cases (Kreiner et al. 2009). For instance, it can provide a unique and in-depth understanding of the role of value of the leaders and followers, enactment of leadership, decision making, and conflict management (Grandy, 2013) such as when conflicts of value differences are suppressed, they might end up causing warlike quality and turbulence (Smith & Berg, 1987). Studying complexities, paradoxes, conflict, and turbulence in organizations enhances the understanding of leadership (Zietsma & Toubiana, 2018). Overall, leadership in churches is more complex than in most other organizations and it depends on the financial support from the congregants they lead, making the power relations diffuse. Furthermore, various church activities rely on followers as volunteers. Volunteers are free to leave at will, thus depriving the church of financial and human resources (Hoge et al. 1998; Cnaan & Cacio, 1999). Finally, deciding on leading in accordance with religious values in an ever-changing world, is a serious affair in value-based organizations such as churches (Grandy, 2013). All these factors create more room for conflict suppression and its eruption when it is not addressed but rather pushed under the organizational surface. Once the suppressed conflicts are dealt with turbulence might occur. Yet, we know very little about how leaders manage values differences in times of turbulence. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to investigate how leaders in a value-based organisation handle conflicting behaviour due to contrasting values that causes turmoil.

The potential for turbulence is inherent in all social relations (Fisher, 2012), just as conflicts in organizations are unavoidable (Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2020). However, the primary task of leaders is to make critical decisions, such as how to deal with followers who behave in a manner contradicting the values of the church, during organizational turbulence (Flotmann, 2020). In turbulence and conflicting circumstances, an organization might regress due to the anxiety this evokes and deploy a defence mechanism such as splitting i.e., dividing the organization in two where each part possesses qualities at odds with the other (Gabriel, 1999), although they might be complementary (Smith & Berg 1987). According to Smith & Berg (1987), new leaders are often brought in for the value of novelty. Hence, there is a paradoxical link between creativity that they bring and destructiveness which maybe a result of their actions. The study was conducted in a free church in Denmark, applying three different qualitative research methods: psychoanalytic observation (Hinshelwood, 2013) of leadership team meetings, organizational role analysis (Borwick, 2006) studying significant happenings, and narrative interviews (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). A multi-methods approach chosen for data collection because it helped illustrate various aspects of leadership. The extended case study (Burawoy, 1998) introduced briefly below illustrates the interplay between creativity and destructiveness when a new leader is brought in. This was evident in the case of a provincial church, that has been split for fifty years on different values and motives (Van Kleef & Côte, 2018; Fischer, 2012). This split was between a conservative wing and a charismatic (novelty seeking) wing. It was manifested in the following areas of church life: a) the worship music at Sunday service was sometimes psalms and hymns and at other times all contemporary music and b) young leaders living a contemporary lifestyle colliding with the values of the church leadership.

Through the analysis of findings of the extended case of Peter's leadership as a new pastor in the church studied, we show that leaders unconsciously are hired to handle ongoing value conflicts and initiate change based on their valency. When leaders avoid open conflict with the implicated and

impose rules upon them, they might react by leaving, causing turmoil. Peter decided not to initiate any changes during his first year in the church. However, he quickly identified several longstanding unresolved conflicts, which he could not ignore. Shortly after Peter was employed, he recognized the group dynamic conflicted with his values and felt a need to act (Tyrstrup, 2006). He developed rules and regulations with the church council for volunteer leaders to follow. He did not confront the people causing the impasses but offered a solution they imposed on the volunteer leaders. However, this led to another enactment of conflict when the volunteer leaders left the church (Vince & Mazen, 2014). The first implication of our research shows that the conflicts had to change areas several times before Peter addressed them. Secondly, when ignoring the low-simmering conflicts was not possible, it was important for Peter to resolve these to obtain peace in the church rather than prolonging them and benefitting from the tension between two opposing factions. We conclude that it appears as if the church unconsciously hired Peter due to his valency (Bion, 1961) for initiating changes to solve the conflict.

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