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The map and the territory : sensemaking and sensebreaking through the organisational architecture

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The map and the territory. Sensemaking and sensebreaking through the organisational architecture

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“The map is not the territory” is a famous dictum by Alfred Korzybski that accurately describes the difficult relations between organisational structure and space. With the evolution of the contemporary approaches to organisational design, both these issues have faced a deep paradigmatic shift. The concept of organisational structure has advanced through functional, divisional, matrix, lean, networked, virtual and fractal approaches, reflecting the reorganisation of entrepreneurial processes and sources of competitive advantage. Concurrently with that, the principles of organisational space arrangement evolved from Taylorist offices, through Bürolandschaft, Action Office, cube farms, to networking, virtual and casual working places, reflecting the changing corporate cultures and the essence of modern work. While agility of organisational design, accompanied by elasticity of working environment might seem very appealing in a modern economy, it often lacks the elements of identity building and sensemaking that are crucial for contemporary knowledge workers.

Keywords: organisational structure, corporate architecture, sensemaking, organisational aesthetics.

Mapa i terytorium. Nadawanie i odbieranie sensu przez architekturę organizacyjną

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„Mapa nie jest terytorium” – ten sławny cytat autorstwa Alfreda Korzybskiego doskonale oddaje trudne relacje pomiędzy strukturą i przestrzenią organizacyjną. Wraz z ewolucją podejść do projektowania organizacji oba te wymiary przeszły głębokie zmiany paradygmatyczne. Organizacyjne struktury ewoluowały od podejścia funkcjonalnego, dywizjonalnego, przez macierzowe, szczupłe, sieciowe, aż po wirtualne i fraktalne, odzwierciedlając reorganizację procesów biznesowych i źródeł przewagi konkurencyjnej. Równoległe zasady projektowania przestrzeni pracy ewoluowały od taylorowskich biur, przez Bürolandschaft, Action Office i farmy kubików, aż po biura sieciowe, wirtualne i swobodne, odzwierciedlając zmiany w kulturze organizacyjnej i istocie pracy. Jakkolwiek przekonująca, w warunkach współczesnej gospodarki, jest elastyczność struktur organizacyjnych, połączona z łatwym do adaptacji środowiskiem pracy, to nie można zapominać, że często brakuje jej wymiarów odpowiedzialnych za budowanie tożsamości i nadawanie sensu, które są tak istotne dla współczesnych pracowników wiedzy.

Słowa kluczowe: struktura organizacyjna, architektura korporacyjna, sensemaking, estetyka organizacji.

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1. Introduction

“The map is not the territory” is a famous dictum by Alfred Korzybski ([1958] 2000). The words of the Polish-American scientist and philosopher, the father of general semantics, perfectly describe the difficult relations between modern organisational structure and space. The duality of this issue is represented in the very notion of what is called “organisational architecture”. In one sense, organisational architecture refers to architecture metaphorically, as an organisational structure (task allocation, coordination and supervision), while in another sense it refers literally to organisational space (corporate premises and office space). Throughout the evolution of the contemporary approaches to organisational design, both these aspects have faced substantial changes. The concept of organisational structure has advanced through functional, divisional, matrix, networked, virtual and fractal approaches, reflecting the reorganisation of entrepreneurial processes and sources of competitive advantage. Concurrently with that, the principles of organisational space arrangement evolved from Taylorist offices, through Bürolandschaft, Action Office, Cube Farms, to networking, virtual and casual working places, reflecting the changing corporate cultures and the essence of modern, knowledge-based work.

Despite the fact that the issues of organisational architecture have been present in the earliest organisational studies, it is only recently that related problems have been addressed in a complete manner, within the so-called ‘spatial turn’ in organisational science (van Marrewijk and Yanow, 2010). The most known approaches include Foucault’s ([1975] 1995) notion of disciplinary space and Bentham’s *Panopticon*, as well as Lefebvre’s ([1974] 1991) concept of social production of space that proceeds in three overlapping dimensions: conceived, practised and lived. The latter approach was developed further by many authors including Dale and Burrell (2008) with the ideas of enchantment, emplacement and enactment or Taylor and Spicer (2007) investigating how organisational spaces are practised, planned and imagined within the space understood as physical distance, materialised power relations or lived experience. The issues of organisational architecture were also presented in the works by Kronberger and Clegg (2004), concluding with the Hillier’s idea of generative building and fluid architecture that reflects the powerful, changing and bidirectional role of architecture in shaping social structures. The empirical studies into that matter seem to be quite limited and the most known is Guillén’s book (2006) about spatial implications of Taylorism. However, some notable examples of studies on organisational change in terms of structural and spatial evolution include works by Gieryn (2002), Dale (2005), van Marrewijk (2009) or Peltonen (2011).

Although the mutual influence between structure and space is present and on-going, the proper alignment is often hard to attain. Especially because traditional organisational structures (maps) seem to face an ine-

vitable deconstruction, while at the same time the organisational spaces (territories) are often surprisingly reconstructed. This problem is especially relevant in terms of identity, enactment, retrospection and continuity, namely the key elements of sensemaking (Weick, 1995). While organisational structures are becoming more blurred, complex, temporary and virtual, the office spaces are built to be more and more personalised, adaptable, narrative and engaging. This tension could be treated as a source of the structural and spatial sensemaking, since Weick himself has defined the genesis of sensemaking as “disruptive ambiguity” (Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld, 2005, p. 413). Moreover, “Weick takes the view that a sudden loss of structure can lead to a loss of meaning and should thus prompt a re-evaluation of the situation and an affirmation of the need for more (perhaps different) structure” (Munro and Huber, 2012, p. 535). What is even more interesting, Weick uses the exact example of the map and the territory in the story of the soldiers who lost their way in the Alps during WWII. Even though they had found a map and used it to find their way back, they ultimately discovered that the map was the one of the Pyrenees, not the Alps (Weick, 1995, p. 55). The best conclusion here could be the one cited from Weick (as quoted in Sutcliffe 1994, p. 1374) – “having an accurate environmental map may be less important than having some map that brings order to the world and prompts action”. Consequently, organisational mapping and travelling are interconnected but not in an obvious way. Moreover, while in terms of the structural sensemaking organisations seem to face a continuing meaning-breaking, at the same time the spatial sensemaking is growingly responsible for meaning-making.

2. Meaning-breaking through organisational structure

Until the advent of Industrial Revolution, most people were involved in agrarian activity and were self-employed. The church, the state and the army were the only large organisation existing at that time. That is why the early entrepreneurs followed these initial models of organisational design. They copied hierarchical, centralised command and control structures into their business ventures (Salaman, 2001), which led to the development of linear structures, emphasizing the importance of the division of labour and the layered organisational arrangement (McMillan, 2002). This organisational perspective was dominant till the beginning of the 20th century. But even later, the early theorists of organisation, like Frederic Taylor and Max Weber, were still stressing the importance of mechanistic structure for effectiveness and efficiency. Their theories, enhanced later by more human oriented works by Henri Fayol or Elton Mayo, were the corner stone of the modern management and served as a base for the so called functional organisations. In terms of the structural sensemaking, they were simple to understand, consisted of clear lines of command, specified tasks and

formalised responsibilities. Employees were able to specialise in particular areas of expertise and follow precise career paths within fixed social relations and motivation systems. Apart from the highly dehumanising aspects of Taylorism and Bureaucracy, theoretic foundations of early organisational structures could be easily related to the very basic needs for identity, retrospection and continuity. Although very distant from the postmodern world, they are still valid, especially in small and medium companies. However, larger corporations were quickly forced to find better ways of coordination and supervision.

In the mid-20th century many functional structures faced an excessive growth and were particularly prone to interdepartmental conflicts, since coherence and dialog are almost impossible to achieve between essentially independent organisational parts. In order to avoid that flaw and foster organisational development in the increasingly competitive business environment, organisations needed a new approach to their design. That new approach was based on systems theory, stating that organisations are systems in which all parts are interconnected and mutually dependable. This perspective resulted in the structures that emphasised adaptability and collaboration across functions. The so-called divisional structures were built by splitting operations into self-contained units based on the product, region or customer served. From the sensemaking point of view, divisional structures encouraged enactment and identification. However, just like in functional structures, divisional structures were prone to the “silo mentality” syndrome, blocking the meaningful retrospection processes. Moreover, duplicating activities between the head office and divisional managers, as well as the conflict between staff in successful and unsuccessful divisions often resulted in a very complex organisational landscape (Price, 2007).

To overcome these problems, somewhere around the 1970s the post-bureaucratic structures began to appear. They embraced the so-called matrix organisations. The matrix forms of management can be regarded as a combination of functional, divisional and process-based approaches. They focus on project teams, bringing skilled individuals from different parts of the organisation to work together. The matrix structures were the first to cause major disturbance to the structural sensemaking. They were troubled by duplication, confusion and conflicts, caused by the skewed design of the structure, unequal distribution of authority and responsibility, mixture of autocratic and participative leadership, as well as competing demands and omnidirectional goals (Degen, 2010). Although matrix structures finally found their place in some corporations (e.g. IBM, P&G, Boeing), which was possible with the advent of proper information systems, strategic alignment and collaborative team culture (Galbraith, 2009), they ultimately served as an introduction to even more meaning-breaking structures.

The last decades of the 20th century, marked by the development of information networks, global markets and hypercompetition, enforced the

need for efficiency and flexibility. Large corporations were no longer regarded as being able to act in a “new economy” (however wrong the whole idea of the “new economy” was). Companies have been slimmed down or broken up, merged and demerged. Downsizing and business process reengineering were used by many companies for improved agility and effectiveness. However, outsourcing, as a dominating strategy, resulted in such problems as employee insecurity, loss of expert knowledge, work overload, increased work stress, lack of vision, poor decision making and lack of an overall long-term effectiveness strategy (McMillan, 2002), causing the growing need for finding the meaning in individually performed activities. Nevertheless, the new forms of organisational design, like project, cluster, networked and virtual, were introduced. Based on the complexity theory, as well as entrepreneurial, contractual and behavioural theories of management, these structures were deconstructing the classical definition of an enterprise and were redefining the traditional notion of ownership, control and goals. They conformed with the necessity for fast gathering of resources and competences, without the burden of rigid organisational structures. The most “deconstructed” form is a virtual organisation, understood as an open and temporary coalition of independent and usually geographically dispersed economic entities, whose structure is constantly reorganised, whereas the scope and aim of the performed activities depend on the emerging market opportunities (Dzidowski, 2011b). The very definition of these “de-structured” entrepreneurial designs shows why they caused severe sensemaking issues within the perception of identity, enactment, retrospection and continuity. Today’s organisational designs tend to be less hierarchical, less formalised and less specialised than ever. Many organisations reduced their structures to lean or flat. Employees, especially in high-tech and creative industries, are empowered and self-governed, while companies try to reassure the work-life balance and individual development to retain the most skilled workers. However, the degree of self-awareness and mindfulness that is required in the deconstructed organisational design is unprecedented. The act of meaning-making is no longer restricted to the actions of the most reflective individuals. It is required for all employees, who were left without predefined structures and procedures and have to fit into that open system on their own, self-chosen conditions. Moreover, the guarantee of stable employment was replaced by the freedom of career paths choice for the sake of positively understood adaptability, and backed up by the prevailing idea of self-development. This idea of self-governance is taken to extremes in the most recent approaches to the organisational design.

The final stage of organisational deconstruction is organisational flow (McMillan, 2002). In other words, the idea of agile adhocracy, the structureless organisation that operates in a totally opposite fashion to bureaucracy. This idea was popularised by Alvin Toffler (1984, pp. 124–151) and was fulfilled by the existence of fractal and boundaryless organisations (espe-

cially within IT, aerospace or film industry). However, when flow is to be considered in terms of the individual sensemaking, it should probably be treated in the form proposed by Mihály Csíkszentmihályi. In his works he presents the notion of flow as an optimal state of intrinsic motivation, where a person is fully immersed in what they are doing, without temporal concerns (time, food, ego-self, etc.). Csíkszentmihályi characterised nine components of flow that could be related to sensemaking. They include: challenge-skill balance, merging of action and awareness, immediate and unambiguous feedback, concentration on the task at hand, paradox of control, transformation of time, loss of self-consciousness, and autotelic experience. The autotelic experience is one that could be directly equated to the effect of ultimate sensemaking, in which a person performs acts because they are intrinsically rewarding, rather than aiming at external goals (Fullagar and Kelloway, 2009). The remaining question is how to bind structural fluidity with the individual flow.

3. Meaning-making through organisational space

The idea that the workspace determines employees' efficiency and wellbeing is so evident that even the earliest organisational studies, such as the works by Frederic Taylor or Elton Mayo, were concerned with work environment. However, for many years, all these considerations were focused on physical labour or administrative work, mainly in the context of productivity, power or ergonomics. Modern work is more knowledge-based and cannot be treated from the physiological or even purely social perspective. In order to contribute to the spatial sensemaking, the development of modern workplace must involve intellectual, cultural or even spiritual needs. Modern offices often have to be treated as a space for creativity stimulation and innovation. In this perspective, a workplace is an architectural, design and social phenomenon (Baldry, 1997, pp. 365–366). The problem is that for many decades workplaces were not treated in that manner.

Just like in the case of organisational structures, before the Industrial Revolution large buildings were limited to the state, clerical or agricultural ones and most people worked in the building they lived in. The emergence of modern offices was the effect of new types of production, which required a relocation of managerial processes beyond the factory walls. Concurrently with the influence of Taylorism on organisational structures, office spaces were also constructed on the basis of Scientific Management (Guillén, 2006). They were designed just like the factories, which resulted in the creation of the spaces that were subjugated to the concepts of the economy of motion (efficiency) and the visual accessibility (control). Moreover, the Weberian model of Bureaucracy emphasized the role of symbols of office, which were highlighting organisational norms and rules through slogans, artefacts of power and spatial representation of the hierarchy. The Taylorist-Weberian

approach to efficiency led to one of the most dehumanising and degrading work environments in which employees were forced to abandon all traditional practices and the system exempted them from any kind of intellectual activity (Donald, 2001, pp. 284–286), making identity and enactment, as well as other related social issues of sensemaking, almost non-existent.

Bürolandschaft (office landscape) was intended to provide a more collaborative and humane work environment. The idea evolved in Germany in the 1950s, based on the works of Eberhard and Wolfgang Schnelle. Although it was rooted in the works of Taylor and Ford, the rationale of *Bürolandschaft* was more related to the Human Relations approach. Office space was freed and designed in a more dispersed and informal manner. The more ordinary working environment was accentuated by plants and natural light. The Social Democratic ideals of post-war Europe fostered a more egalitarian and open approach to the spatial sensemaking, opening new ways for people to enact the environments they encounter. All employees were encouraged to sit together on one open floor in an attempt to create a non-hierarchical and communication fostering space. What is more important, communication was to be performed in a holistic manner, across the departments and hierarchies. It also meant eliminating individual space and status symbols. That bold approach to organisational space design did not however fulfil its promises, quickly blurring its ideals and re-establishing hierarchical relations. To some extent that course of action could be interpreted as a need for clearer identity and continuity. One must remember that the *Bürolandschaft* egalitarian workspaces, although probably appealing and more human oriented, were still serving hierarchical structures (usually fictional or divisional). Moreover, the employees working in offices inspired by Schnelles' ideas complained about the noise, constant disturbance and the lack of privacy (Donald, 2001, pp. 290–291).

The answer to these problems was proposed in the 1960s by Robert Probst. His project called "Action Office" was the assortment of office furniture inspired by *Bürolandschaft* and introduced in Herman Miller company. Action Office (still available – see www.hermanmiller.com/actionoffice) is a modular office system that includes desks, walls and other elements which could be freely moved and adapted to the current needs of a given organisation. In theory it could have had a great sensemaking potential, especially in terms of spatial enactment and identity. However, the spatial efficiency of that system quickly led to its devaluation. In its assumptions, Action Office was developed to adapt the workplace to the needs of a given individual. Ultimately the system was used as a method of placing the largest number of employees on the smallest space available (Schlosser, 2006). Probst's system efficiency, deprived of its adaptability and individuality, led to the reduction of the used forms to one form – the cubicle. That is how the "Cube Farms" or the "Seas of Cubicles" were created, which were the bane of many offices in the 1980s and still are in some modern companies.

The cubicles are very interesting from the sensemaking point of view. It is hard to conceal the fact that cubicles serve as a very specific way to organise reality, by dividing and enclosing it in containers. Using these containers, things could be separated, counted, stored, catalogued, standardised and controlled, while maintaining elasticity and scalability of the whole system (Mitchell, 1988, pp. 45–46). This notion is similar to Foucault's *enclosure* and disciplinary space. "Disciplinary space tends to be divided into as many sections as there are bodies or elements to be distributed" (Foucault, [1975] 1995, p. 143). Disciplinary space, like that of Taylorist offices and Cube Farms, enables the use of the so-called micro-physical power (Foucault, [1975] 1995, p. 139), one that closes bodies and minds of the subordinates and acts from their inside (Mitchell, 1988, p. 96). Disciplinary space of the cubicles solidifies the mechanistic model of power based on the invisible and automatic surveillance that could be easily related to Jeremy Bentham's *Panopticon* and Foucauldian self-surveillance (Foucault, [1975] 1995, p. 200), where architecture by itself describes the power relations.

The advent of the new working class, predicted by Alvin Toffler, eventually forced working space to change its disciplinary functions. Knowledge workers are people sufficiently trusted by enterprises to make all decisions within their respective domains. Being a major part of knowledge economy, independent and highly skilled professionals, often nomadic and nonconforming in nature, cannot be easily bound to a given place or position. This is a growing challenge for managers, especially in creative and hi-tech industries. They need to create meaningful and inspiring workplaces, where sensemaking through organisational space could be an answer to the continuous deconstruction of organisational structures and support meaning-making in modern, intellectually demanding work environment. In terms of organisational space it means the creation of team-based work areas, docking stations, hot desks, videoconferencing facilities, collaborative workshops, but also personal quiet rooms, reconfigurable conference premises, sleeping cocoons and other conveniences for organisational travellers.

Ultimately, all these features finally break down the traditional meaning of the office and open ways for new interpretations. Modern offices are often spatially deconstructed yet individually created. They are more socially enacted than physically identified. Finally, the continuous involvement in office work through telework means that it is often hard to retrospect when one was present in a real office setting. All that could be referred to Zygmunt Bauman's idea of liquid modernity, where one can shift from one social position to another, traditional patterns being replaced by self-chosen ones and nomadism becoming the main trait of a modern human being (Bauman, 2000). What it means is that in order to translate organisational fluidity into an evocative and individual feeling of flow, organisations cannot only make the workspace adaptable. The space also needs to be individually constructed, through the spatial empowerment of the employ-

ees. That is why modern offices, in order to be useful or even to survive at all, not only need to be open and flexible, but progressively individual, casual, comfortable or even entertaining.

4. Modern organisational architecture

Modern organisational structures and offices that are a result of network, virtual and informal concepts, function in a working environment completely different from the one existing as recently as just a decade ago. While most approaches to organisational architecture in the 20th century could be, to a certain extent, referred to the Bauhaus well known motto “Form follows function”, nowadays organisational architects need new paradigms. This is why new answers must be provided to the questions on the social dimension of office space, i.e. about (Baldry, 1997, pp. 367–368):

- the scope of personalisation of space which can be independently adapted and decorated, and the degree of control that can be ensured by enclosing such space, controlling temperature or lighting;
- the size of the space assigned to persons, groups and organisational levels, in general positively correlated with one’s place in the hierarchy which, however, is not so unequivocal according to the *Bürolandschaft* concept or the recently popular “open space” approach;
- layout, design and office symbolism both in the Weberian sense, and in the corporate image or even gender dimension;
- segregation and exclusiveness of space with regard to hierarchy, function or gender, i.e. the assumed or promoted social configuration within the available space.

The general answer is that managers and employees can no longer live in a world of structural functionalism. This normative approach, in which maintaining the *status quo* through quantitatively understood objectivity is the essence of organisational efficiency, is not sufficient anymore. The traditional, functionalist-based understanding of organisational development tends to be limited to the effects of scale and the replication of existing structures (“managing the known”). On the contrary, the interpretative-based and phenomenologically inspired approaches could lead to new emergences and meaningful differentiation (“building the unknown”) (Jones, 2008, p. 20). That is why special care should be focused on the organisational structure and space that facilitates the transfer of knowledge (both tacit and explicit), while ensuring the individuality of particular employees and their working style.

4.1. Form follows flow

The basis for spatial solutions that support knowledge work should be rooted in the promotion of spontaneity, freedom of idea demonstration, direct relations, group meetings and organisational narration. What is more,

modern, pro-innovative interior design should foster the adaptation of its functions both in the time and space aspect. In the time aspect, it should correspond to various stages of project teams' work, and the related needs of groups, teams and individuals, since spatial needs depend on the nature of work, the number of the people involved, the need for communication or being separated from others. In the space aspect, a modern office should break with the static and linear character which preserves hierarchic relations and routines, for the benefit of a journey which inspires employees to new concepts and facilitates interactions with others. Offices designed this way promote interactions among employees, enhance the role of informal meetings and the exchange of experiences. At the same time, employees can still work individually and quieten down; however, personal spaces are always located in the immediate vicinity of meeting spaces and are not separated, for instance with long and narrow corridors (Becker and Steele, 1995; Becker, 2004).

The ultimate illustration of these changes in the corporate architecture design is provided by the works of the Henn Architekten. Its founder, Professor Günter Henn, designs corporate headquarters, factories and offices according to the principle "Form follows flow", which is a travesty of Bauhaus design maxim "form follows function" and at the same time, a perfect illustration of combining structural, group and individual flow. A leading example can be the *BMW Projekthaus* in Munich, a design centre of the BMW corporation. Basing on the analysis of social networks, work flow, probability and the importance of communication and hierarchical relations, the architects designed a construction with a central part shaped as a tower surrounded by the proper office building. The atrium between the tower and the office building is a meeting and idea exchange place, while the car prototypes located on particular floors of the tower determine the interaction centre for the rings of the surrounding design offices (Allen and Henn, 2007, pp. 114–126). In the "form follows flow" approach architects do not try to fit organisations within buildings, but create the buildings that embrace organisations and are aligned with their structures and strategies, for better satisfaction and innovativeness. This approach could be easily related to one of the most influential approaches in knowledge management, the Nonaka's SECI model, where the Japanese notion of place (*Ba*) is the essential part of knowledge socialisation (Originating *Ba*), externalisation (Dialoguing *Ba*), combination (Systemising *Ba*) and internalisation (Exercising *Ba*) (Nonaka, Toyama and Konno, 2000).

4.2. Form follows fun

Since socialisation and internalisation are so curial for knowledge conversion, it seems that an additional paradigm shift is needed. „Form follows fun” is another dictum referring to the Bauhaus original. It can be found in Bruce Peter's book *Form Follows Fun: Modernism and Modernity in Bri-*

tish Pleasure Architecture 1925-1940 (2013), where he describes how the architecture of pleasure could be related to the ideological concerns of modernism in the Britain of the 1930s. This idea stays in a direct relation to a growing trend of incorporating the sense of play and fun into working activities and work space, which further refers to the concepts of playful work and serious games that try to bind the ideas of *Homo Ludens* and *Homo Faber*. The examples of such an approach to office space design are the companies operating in the high-tech and creative industries (see: www.officedesigngallery.com or www.officesnapshots.com). Google, the Internet leader, is famous for the surprising designs of its offices. Google's offices have colourful furniture, playrooms, slides, hammocks, relaxation zones, and similar solutions whose purpose is to stimulate the employees' creativity and their good mood. Similar philosophy of shaping employment space is followed by Facebook, another Internet giant. The plan of its new headquarter was preceded by detailed interviews with the employees regarding the design of their future offices. The employees were also allowed to draw on the walls, bring paintings and sculptures, and freely rearrange the furniture. This way, both Google and Facebook enter into visual dialogue with their staff, emphasising the openness and innovativeness of corporate culture.

The experiences of the architects who design within the "flow and fun" paradigm can be reduced to several recommendations. The essential function is to support the meetings and interactions among employees in the spaces and communications hubs which symbolically refer to the function of a market square, a main street, a sandbox or a cafeteria (Schneider, 2007). Architects also suggest highly advanced individualisation of space both in the ergonomic aspects (lighting and temperature control, separation from the exterior noise, adjusting the visibility of office interior), as well as in the social aspects, especially with regard to creating separated private space (with family pictures, personal items or relaxation zones). Interestingly, while allowing the personalisation of office space, at the same time various solutions to hide personal things quickly or reconfigure "homely" design to ensure professional meeting space or a place for other workers are proposed (Shellenbarger, 2011). These ideas correspond with the notions of "playful work" (Hunter, Jemielniak and Postula, 2010), "objects in exile" (Ng and Höpfl, 2011), "nomads, settlers and vagrants" (Hirst, 2011) and many other recent findings that stay in contradiction to the traditional understanding of stable organisational space and predictable spatial behaviour. All these issues directly correspond to the key elements of sensemaking, but it is also worth mentioning that investing in more spatially empowered offices seems to be quite profitable. There are several studies on office productivity. One of them shows that decorating an ordinary and impersonal workplace with plants and pictures, ordered by the employer, caused a 17% increase in productivity, but a double productivity increase was achieved when employees themselves were allowed to decorate their workplace the way

they wanted (Knight and Haslam, 2010). That brings another common idea that resonates within the issue of organisational architecture – the importance of visual metaphors and aesthetic reflection.

5. Sensemaking as a matter of perception

As perception is one of the most important contributors to the acts of meaning-making and meaning-breaking, organisational architecture should be ultimately referred to the broadly understood organisational aesthetics (Strati, 1999; Linstead and Höpfl, 2000; Guillet de Monthoux, 2004; Taylor and Hansen, 2005; Hatch, Kostera and Kozminski 2005; Gibb, 2006). The organisational aesthetics as a holistic combination of sensory experience, corporate identity, visual thinking and art seems to be an interesting approach to the structural and spatial sensemaking. As it turns out, the principles derived from the theory of perception and the theory of art can be directly translated into the functions, structures and strategies of modern organisations. This symbolic and sensory approach provides a new cognitive perspective and helps to understand changes in organisational and individual behaviour as the effects of changes in the perception of reality. Of course, aesthetic categories cannot serve as sole and universal indicators. However, they could be useful when analysing and trying to attribute the meaning to the issues like order and proportion of the organisational design, rhythms and motion within office space, patterns and harmony of employees' behaviour or scale and shape of the relationships' networks. Aesthetics could also be used to conceptualise an organisation as a form of expression, prone to various aspects of human perception, interpretation, reception and reaction (Dzidowski, 2013). It also helps to distinguish between meaningless organisational veneer and meaningful organisational beauty or even sublime.

The latter issue could be especially relevant. The progressing sensualisation of organisational space gives rise to many doubts, especially when sensemaking is taken into account. They are particularly focused on the issue of anaesthetisation, the notion postulated by Wolfgang Welsch (Carroll, 2006, pp. 36-46), meaning indifference to excessive and common aesthetic impulses. The authors referring to Welsch's ideas take account of excessive excitement at the sensual and phantasmagoric aspects of corporate visuality whose purpose, in fact, is to promote increased productivity and consumptionism (Dale and Burrell, 2003), whilst falsifying the image of reality and corrupting the deep meaning of aesthetics (Hancock, 2003). According to other authors, the problem with stimulating innovative actions does not lie in the existing cubicles which are replaced with new and sophisticated forms of office space but in a lifestyle and openness to new sensations than often occur outside work environment (Arieff, 2011). It is also stressed that in a decade or so, the cubicles replaced with slides, hammocks

and game zones can become pathetic for the ageing employees (Chappell, 2012). At the same time, a majority of specialists claim that they are more productive at home than at their work desk. However, they also admit that meetings and interactions with their colleagues are the most productive source of new ideas (Maitland, 2005). All of that calls for a deeper understanding of organisational architecture in the context of organisational aesthetics.

Moreover, the aesthetical approach to organisational studies calls for the development of specific research methodologies. Probably the most adequate one is visual organisational anthropology (Dzidowski, 2011a) and the application of visual ethnography toolkit (Warren, 2008), combined with actor-network theory (Gieryn, 2002), Gestalt laws of perceptual organisation (Biehl-Missal and Fitzek, 2014) and art-based methods. These methods could be used to build a new theoretical background for a better understanding of organisational architecture, both in its literal and metaphoric sense.

6. Conclusions

The author's pilot study on the Google offices, based on visits and interviews performed in the Google headquarters in London and Kraków in 2014, shows that mutual relations between structure and space could be very complicated. On the one hand, the prevailing workplace casualness that could be found in those offices is a direct consequence of a flexible work structure and task based management. For the employees, being able to show up in the office at noon, grab a free coffee and snacks and lie with the laptop on the beanbag is a natural part of the flexible work approach and open organisational culture. On the other hand, the employees are eager to be trapped by the informality of the offices and their playful nooks and crannies, while availability of canteens, gyms, massage rooms and showers facilitates the choice of staying overtime. Moreover, sometimes the spatial features that were made for recreation or resting, ultimately operate solely in the realm of potentiality. The employees simply do not have time to rest on a deckchair, borrow a book from the open shelf library or indulge themselves in a cafeteria. Still many of them do, at least for the brief moments of relaxation. Especially the young and single coders are willing to use free gyms and canteens or engage in office-based fun activities like a table tennis league or board game meetings, often admitting that many life-related necessities could be fulfilled by the employer. What is even more interesting is that both Kraków and London headquarters are soon to be expanded or moved. New premises will include even more attractive facilities such as playgrounds for kids, workshops for bikers and DIYers, a movie projection room (Kraków) or a bowling alley, two outdoor swimming pools and a minigolf putting green (London). All those featu-

res are introduced to encourage frequent casual meetings, whereas the omnipresence of mobile computing devices, thinkpods or laptop stations facilitates the instant conversion of personal encounters into organisational productivity.

Although the mentioned studies are only preliminary, they seem to expose an important problem. While modern organisational architecture attempts to renounce the concepts of Bentham's *Panoptikon* or Foucault's *enclosure*, still many organisations are willing to create very attractive, yet deceptive workspaces. It seems that Weber's "iron cage" (Weber, [1968] 1978) is often replaced with Gabriel's "glass cage" (Gabriel, 2005), only to be transformed into the "golden cage" of productivity, where Foucault's self-surveillance is substituted by the illusion of self-indulgence.

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