CONCEPTUALIZATION AND SYNTHESIS OF THE INSTITUTIONAL (ORGANIZATIONAL) ARCHETYPE OF THE COLLECTIVE OTHER

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Abstract

The article proposes a conceptualization and methodology for synthesizing the archetype of the Collective Other – a dynamic archetypal image that represents a collective social organization as a multifaceted subject of interaction. It is shown that, in contrast to traditional approaches to archetypization, which primarily focus on leader figures, contemporary organizations require a new archetypal framework oriented toward polycentric, networked, and variable structures.

Within the developed methodology, the archetype of the Collective Other is synthesized on the basis of three parameters of the interaction situation – the structural configuration of the organization, the observer's position, and the nature of their interaction – represented through eight scales. For each scale, basic emotions have been identified, forming the emotional vector of the organization's image. Based on this vector, a corresponding archetypal image has been constructed – as a unique emotional-symbolic response of an individual to the social organism.

1. Introduction

Contemporary archetypal theory lacks a model that encompasses the full range of relationships between the individual and the group – from close and accessible to imagined and distant social communities. In our view, this gap stems from the long-standing dominance of a personalized concept of a social organization, which across various historical epochs has been associated with a leader – a ruler, priest, chief, or manager. Consequently, the projection of individual archetypes has predominantly shaped the archetypal representation of group interaction – the Hero, the Ruler, the Father, the Victim, among others (Jung, 1968; Pearson, 1991).

However, such an approach is insufficient for describing contemporary institutions or organizations in which a clear center of decision-making may be absent, and interaction is based on an egalitarian structure, shared access to information, role fluidity, and polycentricity. Under such circumstances, individuals no longer identify with the figure of a leader, but instead align themselves with the organization itself which functions as a source of meaning, orientation, and decisions.

Within the framework of the classical Jungian tradition, archetypes are regarded as deep psychological structures manifested in the images of the Anima, the Shadow, the Self (Jung, 1959), the Hero (Jung, 1968; Pearson, 1991), and others. Building on existing efforts to categorize the archetypal domain – which have led to the development of more elaborate models and classifications – the following types or aspects of archetypes have been identified: personal archetypes (the Hero, the Ruler, the Rebel, the Sage, the Creator, the Seeker, the Caregiver, etc.); value archetypes (Good, Evil, Justice, Beauty, Truth); cultural archetypes of interaction (Competition, Confrontation, Cooperation, Consolidation); mythological archetypes (the Great Mother, the Trickster, the Savior, the Dragon, the Eternal Child); social role archetypes (for example, the Leader/Ruler, the Rebel, the Teacher/Sage); and spatial-temporal archetypes (the Center, the Threshold, the Circle, the Journey, the Labyrinth, the Summit, the Path). Some of these classifications are addressed in (Pearson, 1991; Pearson, Mark, 2001; Bazarova, Eremina, 2002).

Cultural interpretations of archetypes – particularly in the works of J. L. Henderson (1964) and E. Neumann (1954) – explore the role of mythological symbols and unconscious structures in shaping both individual and collective consciousness. Henderson analyzes how ancient myths remain relevant in modern psychological experience, emphasizing their role in personal development and symbolic meaning-making. Neumann, in turn, examines the evolution of consciousness through archetypal structures, highlighting the transformative role of myths in shaping psychological and historical processes.

However, despite the depth of these approaches, they – like even the most comprehensive existing typologies – do not encompass an archetype that reflects a holistic collective entity: not as a function of leadership or hierarchy, but as an autonomous, dynamic, and multifaceted agent of interaction. Certain philosophical concepts – such as the ideas of the Big Other (Lacan, 2006), the Absolute Other (Levinas, 1969), and the figure of the Stranger (Schmitt, 1932) – as well as sociological notions of community. For example, in his work, F. Tönnies (1887) contrasted Gemeinschaft – a traditional community based on close, emotionally rich, and value-oriented relationships – with Gesellschaft, a society built on rational, formalized, and contractual relations), only partially address this issue. However, these concepts tend to emphasize the symbolic (J. Lacan), ethical (E. Levinas), political (C. Schmitt), or social (F. Tönnies) nature of institutional interaction rather than form a holistic archetype. As a result, all of these approaches remain fragmented and fail to capture the complex relationship between the individual and the diversity of social groups across space and time.

At the same time, the Ukrainian researcher O. Donchenko, in the work (Donchenko, Romanenko, 2001), within the framework of further developing Jungian ideas of archetypes at a new theoretical and practical level, introduced the fractal principle of archetype structuring, arguing that each archetype, as a cumulative phenomenon, exhibits a certain fractal dimension.

In her view, a fractal archetype can be considered a kind of ordering matrix that is superimposed onto chaos in such a way that any content finds its place. The features of scales or organizing principles are positioned on the fractal not randomly, but in accordance with real correlations and transitions between phenomenal structures. These features, representing a particular way of life, do not fully represent its entirety. Only taken together do they form a certain organizational type of society, setting its spiritual atmosphere, its integrity: the spirit of society, its aura, and the overall emotional state of its people.

Based on this, O. Donchenko identifies the following four components of a unified fractal archetype: totalitarian (totemic), authoritarian, liberal, and democratic. She proposes identifying the proportional composition of these components within the fractal archetype of any society or individual organization and using it for their description, analysis, and transformation.

The corresponding cultural archetypes that, in our opinion, reflect the essence of these components are Consolidation, Confrontation, Competition, and Cooperation – as used by T.Ju. Bazarova and B.L. Eremina (2002). This classification, in turn, closely correlates with the Competing Values Framework developed by K. Cameron and R. Quinn (2011), which identifies organizational cultures as Clan, Adhocracy, Market, and Hierarchy. In our view, these types of organizational culture adequately reflect the above-mentioned cultural archetypes, making them suitable for analyzing archetypes in the context of organizations. We believe that the fractal archetype concept proposed by O. Donchenko captures the complexity and multidimensionality of communities, associations, organizations, and entire societies more effectively than other existing approaches.

However, this concept does not take into account the position of the individual in whose unconscious a corresponding variation of the fractal archetype is activated at the moment of his or her encounter with these collective entities, nor the nature of his or her interaction with them.

This is particularly relevant from the perspective of the situational approach in social psychology, which considers the situations of interaction in which individuals find themselves in each specific case, along with their broader contexts, as the primary factors shaping behavioral choices.

Thus, L. Ross and R.E. Nisbett (2011) identified and thoroughly analyzed three fundamental principles of social psychology:

• the significant determining influence of the immediate social situation on an individual's behavior;
• the influence of the subjective interpretation of that situation on behavior;
• the dependence of behavior on the state of the individual psyche and the social group as dynamic and tension-prone systems.

According to these authors, these principles form the foundation of contemporary social psychology.

Thus, a specific variation of the fractal archetype that is activated at the moment of an individual's encounter with a specific collective entity, is determined by his or her position and the nature of interaction with this entity, and forms the individual's subjective interpretation of that situation of interaction. In turn, this interpretation significantly affects the individual's behavioral choice during interactions with the respective collective entity. At the same time, as we will demonstrate later, this concept is difficult to apply to the analysis of polystructural organizations whose organizational structure changes cyclically with relatively short periodicity.

Based on this, we propose introducing the concept of the archetype of the Collective Other – a construct capable of reflecting the variable and dynamic nature of the collective entity with which the individual interacts. Thus, we view this archetype as a multifaceted construct that emerges in response to the structural configuration of such a collective entity, the individual's position in relation to it, and the nature of their interaction.

Our attempt to conceptualize the archetype of the Collective Other is based on the notion of an organization as an integral social organism capable of self-reflection, transformation, and archetypal structuring of its own internal dynamics. This approach is partially supported by the results of interdisciplinary Ukrainian studies of mass consciousness, particularly in the context of the transformational model of the collective psyche proposed by E. Afonin and A. Martynov (2019). This model articulates the potential for collective individuation – a progressive transition from a traumatic archetypal experience toward a renewed wholeness, through the introspective and transformative processes within the collective subject.

The objective of this article is to identify the archetype of the Collective Other as a distinct and dynamic archetypal formation; to determine how the archetypal image of the Collective Other depends on the structural configuration of the group, the observer's position in relation to it, and the nature of their interaction; and to develop a methodology for the synthesis of this archetype for monostructural and polystructural organizations.

The following section outlines the conceptual framework for the proposed archetype and provides a theoretical discussion of its components and potential applications.

2. Research methodology

Throughout its evolutionary development, the human being has always existed within groups and interacted with other groups of people. It is evident that the primary forms of sociality were biological in nature – primarily families, into which most warm-blooded animals unite to fulfill the supra-individual needs of the population: survival and reproduction. Accordingly, it can be assumed that in the deepest layers of the human unconscious, the images of the "own" group and the "alien" group as integral formations became entrenched, gradually influencing the individual's selection of behavioral strategies and patterns of interaction with such groups.

Human groups across the entire spectrum – from clans, tribes, communities, and organizations to institutions, societies, states, and civilizations – as social formations, simultaneously exhibit the characteristics of living, integrated organisms. Specifically, they undergo growth, respond to external stimuli, self-regulate, self-recover, self-renew (self-reconstruct), and exchange matter and energy both internally (among their participants or constituent parts) and externally (with other formations). They are also capable of reproduction (typically through division), display diversity, possess a lifespan that exceeds the lifespan of individual members, adapt to changes in both their internal and external environments, and, ultimately, are subject to degradation and disappearance.

As a result, such groups are often represented in the individual psyche as images of living, integrated social organisms, endowed with supra-human agency and a set of inherent properties – such as strength, potential, omnipresence, and multiplicity – that surpass the capacities of any single individual.

The integrity of such organisms, of course, is imaginary – it does not exist in physical space. Nevertheless, these imagined integrities acquire

symbolic and emotional significance, become mythologized, and are endowed with the traits of divine, fantastical, or mythical beings. In the real world, they may manifest through concrete, and at times harsh or even brutal, actions, in response to which atomized individuals may experience existential horror, frustration, and apathy, recognizing their own inability to influence them.

In organizational theory – the most developed discipline studying business and industrial organizations – a double shift in the organizational paradigm occurred over the course of the twentieth century (Gharajedaghi, 2006). Initially, organizations were viewed as mechanistic systems, devoid of their own mind and entirely subordinate to external control. The first shift led to the perception of organizations as biological systems with a single mind, similar to a living organism whose primary purpose is growth. The second shift gave rise to the notion of organizations as social multi-minded systems, in which multiple individual "minds" align their interests with one another and with those of the whole, forming a coordinated direction of collective movement.

It should be noted that here and throughout the text, the term organization refers to both social organisms and institutions, which are treated as subjects of study within organizational theory.

Thus, the three aforementioned paradigms – mechanistic, biological, and social – constitute a conceptual framework capable of encompassing the vast majority of known organizational types.

The most comprehensive classification of groups and organizations, in our view, was presented by Eric Berne in his work Structure and Dynamics of Organizations and Groups (Berne, 1963). However, in order to account for all the structural features of the polystructural political organizations we have designed – organizations with a variable structure, the dynamic network – this classification had to be expanded (Plakhtiy, 2025). At the same time, all organizations are reflected in archetypal images that emerge in the psyche of individuals during interaction with such entities.

Ukrainian researcher Olena Donchenko emphasizes that archetypes in the unconscious mind of an individual are activated by the situations of interaction in which that individual is involved (Donchenko, Romanenko, 2001). This provides grounds to assert that the archetypal image of an organization as a social organism is always emotionally charged and depends on several factors that shape each specific situation of interaction:

• its structural configuration at the moment of encounter with the observer;
• the observer's position in relation to it;

• the nature of the interaction between the social organism and the observer.

Based on this, we will attempt to establish the relationship between the archetypal image of the Collective Other and the parameters of the interaction situation that triggers its emergence, taking into account the influence of this image on the individual's emotional space – or, in other words, on the structuring of his or her affective attitude toward the organization even before or during the interaction with it.

Figure 1 presents the parameters of an individual's interaction with an organization as eight scales, which encompass:

• the structural configuration of the organization itself (Hierarchy–Horizontal, Formality–Informality, Effectiveness–Symbolism, Growth–Marginalization);
• the observer's position in relation to the organization (Center–Periphery, Clarity–Opacity);
• the nature of the interaction (Own–Alien, Voluntary interaction–Forced interaction).
 Accordingly:
• The Hierarchy–Horizontal scale reflects the type of organizational structure: centralized (hierarchical) or decentralized (network-based).
• The Formality–Informality scale indicates the extent to which the organization operates according to formalized rules or informal agreements.
• The Effectiveness–Symbolism scale illustrates whether the organization performs a practical goal-oriented function or rather acts as a symbol or carries out ritual functions.
• The Growth–Marginalization scale shows whether the organization is expanding its influence, membership, and resources or, conversely, it is being pushed to the margins of the social and political environment.
• The Center–Periphery scale characterizes the observer's position in relation to the organization– whether he or she is engaged in direct interaction with it or merely aware of its existence and acknowledges the possibility of contact.
• The Clarity–Opacity scale indicates the extent to which the individual understands how decisions are developed, discussed, harmonized, adopted, and approved within the organization.
• The Own–Alien scale reflects the degree of psychological closeness or estrangement the individual feels toward the organization.
• The Voluntary interaction–Forced interaction scale indicates whether the individual engages with the organization on his or her own initiative or under external compulsion.
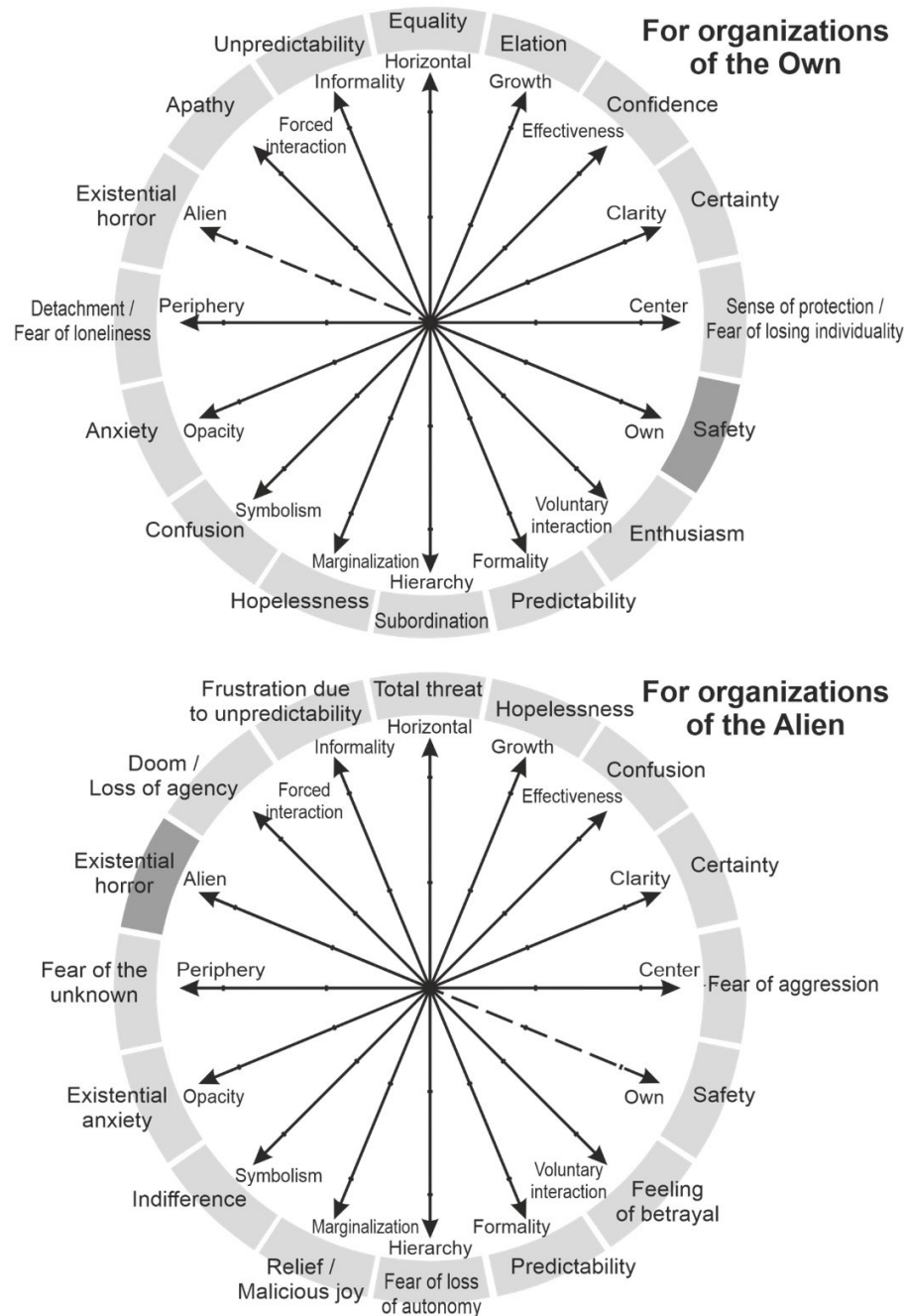
Fig. 1. The influence of situational parameters – structural configuration, observer's position, and the nature of their interaction – on the emotionally charged archetypal image of the organization
Source: Own elaboration

The opposing ends of each scale correspond to fundamental emotions that arise in the individual's psyche during interaction with the organization – provided that the organization's structural configuration, the observer's position in relation to it, or the nature of their interaction are reflected along these scales (see Fig. 1 and Table 1). In this way, the influence of the activated archetypal image of the Collective Other on the emotional space – namely, on the mode of affective perception of the organization – is recorded.

A distinctive feature of the proposed approach is the recording of a radical shift in emotions associated with specific scales, depending on the change in the nature of interaction. This refers to the observer's interaction with Own and Alien organizations. To reflect how these interactions are emotionally charged, we have presented two separate radar diagrams in Figure 1 and, accordingly, added additional columns to Table 1.

The emotions presented in Figure 1 and Table 1 are intuitively understandable and easily recognizable. However, in our view, the origin of the emotions associated with the poles of the Center–Periphery scale – which indicates the observer's position in relation to Own organizations – requires separate clarification.

Tab. 1. Basic emotions at the poles of the applied scales

Emotion (Alien)	Emotion (Own)	Scale	Emotion (Own)	Emotion (Alien)
Total threat	Equality	Horizontal–Hierarchy	Subordination	Fear of loss of autonomy
Predictability	Predictability	Formality–Informality	Unpredictability	Frustration due to unpredictability
Confusion	Confidence	Effectiveness–Symbolism	Confusion	Indifference
Hopelessness	Elation	Growth–Marginalization	Hopelessness	Relief / Malicious joy
Fear of aggression	Sense of protection / Fear of losing individuality	Center–Periphery	Detachment / Fear of loneliness	Fear of the unknown
Certainty	Certainty	Clarity–Opacity	Anxiety	Existential anxiety
—	Safety	Own–Alien	—	Existential horror
Feeling of betrayal	Enthusiasm	Voluntary–Forced interaction	Apathy	Doom / Loss of agency

Source: Own elaboration

The fear of losing one's individuality when being part of a group and the fear of loneliness when leaving it resonate with the ideas presented in the works of Irvin D. Yalom (1980) and Fritz Riemann (1961). Irvin Yalom, a prominent existential psychotherapist, outlines four ultimate existential concerns in his book Existential Psychotherapy (Yalom, 1980): death, freedom, isolation, and meaninglessness. He notes that while individuals strive for connection with others, they simultaneously become aware of the impossibility of fully overcoming existential isolation – an awareness that may provoke anxiety and fear. As a result, an individual may either attempt to avoid isolation through fusion with the group or, conversely, avoid immersion in the group due to fear of losing his or her individuality.

In turn, Fritz Riemann, a German psychologist and psychoanalyst, in his work Grundformen der Angst (Riemann, 1961), analyzes four basic forms of anxiety, which, in his view, stem from fundamental human longings organized around two core polarities: closeness/belonging versus distance/autonomy, and stability/order versus change/freedom. These anxieties reflect fears triggered by perceived threats to the corresponding existential needs and can be described as follows:

• Fear of self-surrender and loss of the "I" – arises as a threat to the longing for autonomy and individuation, associated with the fear of being engulfed by others, of losing independence, and of restrictions on one's freedom within close relationships.
• Fear of loneliness and isolation – emerges as a threat to the need for closeness, unity, and love,

and is accompanied by feelings of abandonment and separation.
• Fear of change and transience – reflects a threat to the longing for stability, order, and predictability, and is linked to a reluctance to take risks or step outside the familiar.
• Fear of necessity and finality – arises as a threat to the longing for freedom, change, and novelty; it involves anxiety about unavoidable constraints, rules, responsibility, and finitude (including death as the ultimate form of finality).

In the context of our analysis, the first two of Riemann's basic forms of anxiety are especially relevant – anxieties that represent opposing poles. On the one hand, there is the fear of loneliness and isolation – a threat to the need for belonging and connection. On the other hand, there is the fear of self-surrender and loss of the "I", which manifests, in particular, as anxiety about the loss of individuality and excessive constraints on personal freedom resulting from overly close emotional proximity or fusion with the group – a threat to the need for autonomy.

Riemann emphasizes that these fundamental longings and the fears associated with them can come into conflict, forcing an individual to constantly balance between the need to belong to a group and the desire to maintain autonomy. This directly correlates with our Center–Periphery scale, which describes the individual's position in relation to Own organizations.

Thus, in light of the concepts developed by Yalom and Riemann, the optimal position for the individual in relation to Own organizations is to remain at the boundary of the group – so as to avoid both dissolution

within it (loss of individuality) and isolation outside it (loneliness). Therefore, the emotional ring depicted around the diagram (Fig. 1) serves as a projection layer through which the archetypal image of the organization is manifested at the level of its emotional perception. It illustrates how the emotional charge of this image varies depending on the organization's position along the scales. Thus, interaction with an organization leaves a lasting emotional imprint in the individual's psyche, which may motivate him or her either to move closer to the organization or, conversely, to avoid it.

In this publication, we do not analyze the dynamics of the individual's relationship with the organization over time; however, it is important to note that both the interaction itself and the archetype of the Collective Other are multi-variant and subject to change over time.

Let us now turn to the synthesis of the archetype of the Collective Other. Given its dynamic and multifaceted nature, we assume that the synthesis of this archetype is possible only for specific organizations with a clearly defined structural configuration. At the same time, three additional elements must also be clearly outlined: the moment in time at which the synthesis is conducted; the position of the observer in whose unconscious the corresponding archetype is activated; and the nature of his or her interaction with the organization.

The methodology for synthesizing the archetype of the Collective Other presented below was developed specifically for its study as an organizational or institutional image, taking into account the limitations of existing approaches to the study of organizational images and the application of archetypes in social contexts. It combines key elements of Jungian analytical psychology – particularly the concept of archetypes and the collective unconscious – with the phenomenological analysis of the subjective emotional experience of perceiving an organization, and the use of projective techniques to uncover deep, unconscious images.

The starting point is the Jungian notion of archetypes and the collective unconscious, according to which deep symbolic structures shape our perception of social phenomena. This is implemented through determining the coordinates of the organization (Stage 1) and analyzing the emotional vector (Stage 2), which reflect projected archetypal motives. Phenomenological analysis focuses on the subjective experience of the organization (Stage 3), while projective techniques help to identify unconscious elements of its image through symbolic generalization (Stage 4). Thus, the proposed approach to synthesizing the archetype of the Collective Other includes the following stages:

(1) Determining the coordinates of the analyzed organization on the scales and identifying the corresponding emotional reactions.

The coordinate of the organization is established on each of the previously proposed scales – that is, its position within a predefined range (e.g., from 0 to 10). This is based on the results of empirical research (interviews, surveys, focus groups) in which respondents assess their perception of the organization.

In parallel, the emotional reaction that the organization potentially evokes in the observer is identified – such as fear, distrust, confusion, admiration, or a sense of protection. Emotions can be identified either directly (through respondents' self-assessments) or indirectly – through the analysis of typical descriptions and symbolic associations. In the absence of empirical data, the determination may be based on generalized conclusions from the literature and practical experience, which require mandatory critical justification.

(2) Determining the emotional vector of the organization's image.

By the emotional vector of an organization's image, we refer to a metaphorical designation of the generalized direction of affective perception that arises from evaluating the organization's characteristics along each of the proposed scales. This direction reflects the dominant emotional tendency perceived by an observer either before or during interaction with the organization.

The combination of emotions associated with the organization's positions on the scales forms a coherent emotional image of the organization, which may:

• evoke sympathy or aversion,
• generate a sense of belonging or alienation,
• elicit trust or anxiety.

This generalization is achieved through the analysis of dominant affective patterns recurring in respondents' assessments or through the interpretation of typical emotional associations that emerge at the intersection of multiple scales. In a quantitative approach, average values of assessments may be used, followed by a qualitative interpretation of the prevailing emotional tendency.

(3) Identifying key archetypal structures (the mechanism of archetypization).

The emotional vector of the organization's image serves as the foundation for an archetypal image – understood as a generalized emotional-symbolic response to the organization.

This process can be considered a mechanism of archetypization: based on the organization's

coordinates on the scales and the corresponding emotions they evoke, an emotional response structure is identified. This structure is then interpreted through comparison with typical archetypal models that:

• correspond to fundamental archetypes described in the works of C. G. Jung (e.g., the Self, the Shadow, the Anima), J. Campbell (e.g., the Hero, the Mentor, the Opponent), and E. Berne (e.g., the Parent, the Adult, the Child),

• or form a unique archetypal combination that represents a synthesized archetype of the Collective Other specific to the organization in question.

This archetype is formed through interpretation of the organization's composite emotional image in light of known archetypal patterns, taking into account its structural configuration, history, symbolism, and modes of interaction with the social environment.

(4) Synthesizing the archetype of the Collective Other through the creation of a verbal description.

The final stage of synthesis involves constructing a comprehensive verbal description of the archetype of the Collective Other, which reflects the outcomes of the previous stages. This description includes the following structural elements:

• a metaphor (e.g., "it is like…");

• emotional atmosphere;

• behavioral expectations (what the observer "should" or is "inclined" to do);

• boundaries of contact (to what extent the observer may interact with the organization, under what conditions, in what status, and for how long);

• internal logic of the image (what unifies the emotional reactions into a coherent archetypal representation).

To reduce subjectivity and improve the reliability of interpretation, adapted projective techniques may be applied – such as methods of free association, work with metaphors, symbolic stimuli, or visual imagery. The results of interpretation are refined through group discussion, comparison with typical archetypal structures, and triangulation with empirical data from previous stages. Each of the five descriptive elements may be formulated using a standardized template to ensure reproducibility of results in subsequent studies.

The methodology for synthesizing the archetype of the Collective Other presented above is fully sufficient for the study of a monostructural organization. However, in the case of a polystructural organization, the steps described above must be repeated for each structural plane, with a focus on the key archetypal images, emotional vectors, and perceptual characteristics that are activated within each plane.

This approach will make it possible to register the multiplicity of archetypal images that emerge within different planes of a polystructural organization, depending on the situation of interaction.

Subsequently, based on the obtained results, the Integral Archetype of the Collective Other should be formed – as a multi-component archetypal structure that arises through the sequential activation, overlapping, and integration of multiple archetypes within different structural planes of the polystructural organization in the course of their cyclical change.

3. Conclusions

The concept of the multifaceted and dynamic archetype of the Collective Other proposed in this article, along with the methodology for its synthesis – developed on the basis of the structural configuration, the observer's position, and the nature of his or her interaction with the organization or institution – enables studying a variety of monostructural and polystructural organizations within the framework of the archetypal approach, by forming and analyzing their archetypal images and the emotional responses they elicit.

In turn, the resulting archetypal images and the associated emotional responses will serve as a foundation for the practical design of organizational architecture – specifically, for shaping structural configurations that evoke desirable emotional reactions in target groups.

Further theoretical research should include an analysis of sequential activation, overlapping, and integration of multiple archetypes across various structural planes of a polystructural organization during their cyclical change. This may serve as a foundation for developing a methodology for synthesizing the Integral archetype of the Collective Other and for forecasting the external properties of such organizations.

Further practical research should focus on the empirical application of the proposed methodology to real political organizations. In our view, it should include the synthesis and analysis of the archetype of the Collective Other for a traditional monostructural political party, as well as the Integral archetype of the Collective Other for the next-generation polystructural political party we have designed (Plakhtiy, 2025).

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