


Article

Resentment Barriers to Innovation Development of Small and Medium Enterprises in Upper Silesia

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Abstract: The first aim of the article is to diagnose the barriers of agency (including resentment ones) that occur during the implementation of innovations in the selected Silesian small and medium-sized enterprises. The second goal is to explain how the structural and cultural resentment contexts and the type of reflexivity undertaken by the employees determine an innovative activity in the state of morphostasis (contextual continuity) and morphogenesis (contextual discontinuity) at selected companies. The theoretical basis of the research is Margaret Archer's morphogenetic theory of structure and agency and her scheme of causal analysis. Based on this and using the qualitative analysis of data obtained during focus group interviews (FGI), a diagnosis is made regarding the presence of agency barriers in the innovation processes. A morphogenetic causal analysis of the emergence of agency barriers limiting the course of innovation processes in a business reality burdened with resentment contexts has been presented. On the theoretical and empirical level, the usefulness of the morphogenetic schema in the study of organizational behavior in small and medium enterprises was verified. Conducting diachronic causal analyzes among employees of selected SMEs made it possible to show the conditions between the scope of the existing resentment barriers (structural and cultural), the type of dominant reflexivity among their members, and the possibilities of innovation in these organizations. It has been shown that in organizational contexts burdened with group resentments, the agency of staff is mainly morphostatic. The dominant type of reflexivity (communicative, not autonomous) is focused on maintaining the existing contextual continuity and not on changing it. The results obtained from the research will allow the implementation of educational and implementation projects (research in action) in the future, adequate to the needs of the small and medium enterprise sector in terms of eliminating resentments in the structure and organizational culture. These aims will be implemented through the participation of external expert groups in the following areas of innovation of a given company: pro-innovative attitudes, competencies, processes, and strategies, perception of the environment, customer orientation, or branding.

Keywords: innovation; organizational morphostasis and morphogenesis; small and medium enterprises; barriers of agency; group resentments; FGI



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1. Introduction

What were the authors' motivations in choosing the issues of resentment barriers in introducing innovations in selected Polish SMEs?

Based on his own previous research in the area of SMEs, both qualitative and quantitative, as well as his experience as an entrepreneur, the author claims that the phenomenon of negative group emotions in the form of group resentment and envy is deeply rooted in the attitudes of many participants in Polish business organizations [1]. It conditions human resource management and constitutes a barrier to the implementation of innovation processes. Their sources are to be found in the structural and cultural conditions as well as patterns of dominant social attitudes (mainly types of reflexivity, characterizing specific subjects of action).

According to the author's knowledge, the above-mentioned issues have not been operationalized and empirically researched so far. The author made a meticulous search of the literature in the area of the investigated research issues. No empirical scientific literature on resentment barriers to innovation in SMEs was found in any available Internet resources. Hence, there is a need to outline the broader foundations of the ontological (structure, culture, and agency) and epistemological (critical realism) fields of research and the scope of research questions without being narrowed down to specific issues (e.g., only selected structural conditions).

It was necessary to find the theoretical foundations and then the resulting methodological directives adequate to the study of issues not previously subjected to empirical research. Therefore, it was necessary to outline the scope of the research questions both sufficiently and broadly so that the resulting analyses could cover all the determinants resulting from theoretical assumptions (the structural, cultural, and agency possibilities of the participants surveyed of the organization).

According to Max Scheler, and, also, Jack M. Barbalet, social tensions and structural conditions favor the emergence of collective emotions of a resentment-like nature [2,3]. Scheler's conceptualization of the structural conditions for the formation of group resentments is of particular theoretical importance for the research issues discussed in the article. Contrary to Barbalet's general and a priori assumptions, Scheler's conceptualization is characterized by the coexistence of several key factors that condition the occurrence of a resentment situation in the group. It is assumed, following Scheler, that the coexistence of (a) tensions and structural inequalities, e.g., of economic nature, social and cultural capital and barriers to the access of information, (b) thought systems, ideologies justifying the above-mentioned economic, social, and cultural inequalities, (c) the types of interactions derived from them, elevating some groups at the expense of others, and (d) with the applicable legal or organizational regulations formally equalizing everyone, results in the fact that the group resentments they cause limit the activities leading to social or organizational change.

The paper should begin with a presentation of the main macrostructural conditions and the cultural conditions that coexist with them, originating in history and shaping the modern management of innovations. Economic and social inequality is one of the key dimensions of structural differentiation that can generate social tensions and is a source of Polish negative collective emotions. The existence of the above conditions in Poland is confirmed by panel studies on the changes in the Polish social structure (POLPAN) conducted since 1988. As part of them, it was observed that the values of objective variables that express stratification differences, such as education, occupation, and the net income obtained, are relatively persistent and clear throughout the transformation period. The diagnosed rupture in the social structure also has its own psychological dimension. Social groups in the upper social hierarchy declare a deep acceptance of the existing socioeconomic order, personal well-being, and a sense of agency, while those who belong to socially excluded groups accept the existing socioeconomic order to a much lesser extent, causing experience deficits in the sense of agency [4].

The observations of the POLPAN research group are confirmed by more recent international research. According to the World Inequality Report 2022, there has been a sharp increase in income inequality in Poland over the last 30 years. In 1990, the poorer half of the population received 28 percent sum of all the Poles' incomes. In 2020, despite the introduction of redistribution programs in recent years, the poorer half of the population received a 20% sum of all the Poles' incomes. At the same time, almost 25% of respondents in Poland believed that poverty resulted from laziness rather than from social injustice. This is the highest result among all OECD countries. In American society, famous for its neoliberal and individualistic attitude, about 18% shared a similar opinion. On the other hand, in other Western countries, the percentage of people who believed that poverty was a matter of individual characteristics and efforts did not exceed 10%. The deepening economic inequalities are legitimized among a significant and relatively permanent part of

Polish society (mainly entrepreneurs and managers) by the neoliberal system of norms and values [5].

Economic inequality is a key dimension of structural differentiation that can generate social tensions and is a source of collective negative emotion. The scale of economic differentiation is most often measured by the Gini social inequality ratio of income (for Poland in 2020, it was 28.5). Since the main source of data on wages, market incomes, and the assets of Poles are surveyed in which the share of 1 percent of the wealthiest taxpayers is underestimated, it is necessary to correct the Gini coefficient. Unfortunately, the value of this universally applicable standardized measure of income inequality, in the case of Poland, is underestimated by the simplified measurement methodology. According to innovative research by Marek Kośny [6] on tax declarations in Poles, the value of this economic inequality index should be adjusted to a level of over 0.5, which is comparable with Russia and is the highest in the European Union. Such a high level of the above-mentioned index negatively determines the pro-development parameters. This relationship was confirmed by Gouido Alfani, Victoria Gierok, and Felix Schaff, who stated that, in the long run, the higher the value of the Gini coefficient, the lower the level of development and innovation potential [7].

The existing tensions in the social structure of an objective nature are magnified in the level of subjective feelings, which, according to Scheler and Barbalet, is a sufficient structural condition conducive to the emergence of resentment and tensions. The effect of the social structure and the exclusionary culture on the social categories is that it has been subjected to resentment is the lack of participation in the public sphere for more than half of citizens; low levels of bridging social capital, despite existing in a regional and local reality, also saw a limited development of innovation in a broad sense.

The sources of the contemporary state of Polish organizational culture, which functions especially in small and medium-sized family enterprises, can be found in the history of the feudal farm, lord, and peasant laborer [8]. From the sixteenth century, the Polish organizational culture (of the farm) led to the consolidation of two different types of behavior: employees and the management of the farm. The farm culture shaped not only the management style but also the way of responding to commands. The side of the owners and managers had full unrestrained power and an awareness of complete decision-making freedom. The side of the peasant laborer, an ethos of forced or internalized obedience was developed and coupled with a lack of a sense of responsibility and a need for detailed instructions at work and care outside of it.

For centuries, for the farm workers, it was an escape from risky and frustrating freedom and intellectual effort to the psychological comfort of serfdom. Contemporary research and observations by Janusz Hryniewicz show that there are still quite lively neo-feudal tendencies in Polish SMEs [8].

The autocratic nature of the people in power, the passivity of the ruled, and the deep barrier between these groups maintained by both sides are the most important features of this heritage. The next is collectivism and the reluctance to cooperate beyond the family. Managers and employees stay within their own family and friend groups to which they are loyal and express solidarity. The bonds between these groups are highly emotional. The idea is to recreate a unanimous family in the workplace. Representatives of these families are fearful, hence the widespread mistrust and the desire of managers to see everything personally and be in control of innovations. Often this state of affairs is confused with individualism; in fact, it is atomization. The primacy of the bond of family and friends over personal obligations creates a relationship of uncertainty about the intentions of partners. The average Polish employee or manager will more often choose a conservative group commitment rather than bold, individual innovative activities.

The macrostructural and historical cultural determinants mentioned above constitute the basis for the persistence of resentment group mechanisms that inhibit innovation in Polish SMEs. Examples of the operation of mechanisms and resentment effects can be found in all areas of organizational life. The authors found meaningful and diverse examples in

small and medium-sized business environments operating on the border between science and business (see Appendix A).

The intensive development of the SME sector in Poland began with the political and economic changes that occurred at the end of the 1980s. The SME sector accounts for over 99% of the total number of enterprises, generates 47.4% of GDP, and employs nearly 7 million people, which constitutes 70% of the job posts in Polish enterprises. It was decided to conduct empirical research in Upper Silesia because the companies in this region are among the most innovative in the country, and the number of registered companies in this sector is the highest, just after the Voivodeship Mazowieckie (11.4% of all Polish SMEs) [9]. These companies play an increasingly important role in the economy, despite the relatively low resource possibilities, limited financing sources, lack of capital, and difficult access to specialists.

Upper Silesia is the most urbanized part of Poland, the population of which lives mainly in large and medium-sized towns (more than 100,000 inhabitants). The population of the region is diverse in terms of both nationality and ethnicity. In a cultural sense, it is a Polish-German-Czech borderland. Until recently, it has been the largest industrial region in the country, dominated by heavy industry (metallurgical, machinery, and defense) and energy based on the mining and refining of hard coal and metal ore. Currently, it is moving more and more towards a post-industrial area and is undergoing intensive restructuring towards Economy 4.0 and Society 5.0. However, the permanent processes of systemic transformation are accompanied by social tensions typical for a society transitioning to the post-modern stage, and they are reflected in the socioeconomic relations of the enterprises operating in the region.

In the socioeconomic reality mentioned above, the author defined the scope of research issues. How does the existing resentment context determine innovation processes in small and medium-sized enterprises; do they only block them, or can they be a factor dynamizing innovation under certain conditions? In the following subsections, the above research question will be analytically clarified by answering three detailed questions: (1) how does resentment structural and cultural context condition innovative activities in the state of morphostasis (contextual continuity) and morphogenesis (contextual discontinuity) in the selected enterprises; (2) what barriers to the agency are perceived by representatives of the staff of the selected enterprises in their innovative activities; (3) how does the dominant type of reflexivity change among the entities in the state of morphostasis functioning in the surveyed enterprises, and how does it change in the state of organizational morphogenesis?

The agency barriers that result in imperfect activities in the area of innovation within the organization will be analyzed from a specific cognitive perspective. First, from the point of view of people defined in the convention of the conceptual morphogenetic theory of Margaret Archer [10–13], as collective subjects of action, that is, participants in organizations with a high agency potential, as opposed to the perspective of the primary actors of action, that is, the participants of organizations with a low agency potential. When causing, the conditions for innovation are created. It leads to innovation while meeting the appropriate structural and cultural conditions. It is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for innovation to occur. It is important to define under what structural and cultural conditions and what type of reflexivity by the surveyed entities can such innovation take place.

The added value of the article at the theoretical level is the use of Archer's theory of morphogenetic structure and agency and Scheler's concept of group resentment to analyze barriers to innovation in the SME sector. The concepts of morphostasis and organizational morphogenesis (in analogy to morphostasis and social morphogenesis) and the accompanying two types of reflexivity among the subjects of action (communicative and autonomous), respectively, will be introduced. A theoretically significant novelty is the conceptualization of the concept of agency barriers, an analytical separation of the structural and consciousness barriers of agency, which will allow the operationalization of the main research questions. At the methodological level, the morphogenetic causal analysis scheme will be clarified to the problem of barriers to the agency in organizations. Data from

interviews (FGI) with managers and SWOT analysis of the surveyed companies will be used to demonstrate the morphogenetic causal relationship (in time) between structural and cultural barriers and the agency of the actors. In the empirical dimension, the agency barriers that appear in the implementation of innovations in the selected Silesian SMEs will be diagnosed, and the relationship between the type of dominant reflexivity among the organization participants and the state of duration (morphostasis) and innovation (morphogenesis) in the surveyed companies will be demonstrated.

The article begins with a presentation of the concept of group resentment and their relationships with the processes of innovation understood in a broad sense (Section 2). The necessary elements of the theory of morphogenetic structure and agency, which will constitute the theoretical foundation of the analysis of selected business innovation activities, will be presented in Section 3. On the other hand, Section 4 contains the methodological directives, which are the consequences of the theoretical assumptions: the model of morphogenetic causal analysis and the characteristics of the research procedure. The key empirical results are presented in the next two sections. In Section 5, a diachronic causal analysis of the formation of barriers limiting innovative processes will be performed according to the morphostatic and morphogenetic scenario in two selected medium-sized enterprises. On the other hand, Section 6 will present the results of qualitative research (FGI was conducted among 180 deliberately selected entrepreneurs from SMEs) on the perception of the barriers of agency perceived by the project participants in their innovative activities and their types of reflexivity. A triangulation supplement to the focus research will be the analysis of 120 SWOT questionnaires from the companies represented by respondents.

2. Group Resentments and Innovations: Theoretical Background

In reference to Scheler's co-conditioning scheme, it is assumed that group resentments are a derivative of the co-occurrence of four factors. First, economic inequalities and class tensions are deepening, e.g., between the growing post-transformation new middle class and the poorer, less educated, nonparticipating part of society in the public sphere. These conditions create a resentful structural context. Second, thought systems appear, e.g., worldviews, conspiracy theories, and ideologies that justify these social and economic inequalities (resentful cultural context). Third, there are group interactions that elevate some socio-professional categories or national groups at the expense of others. Fourth, the factors mentioned above are accompanied by negative group emotions, expressed in a sense of undeserved harm, envy, or injustice at the situation of formal, legal, and organizational regulations equalizing all participants in the interaction. The co-occurrence of the above conditions results in the fact that the group's resentful effects caused by them limit the activities leading to structural and cultural change. It also means the existence of psychosocial barriers to organizing morphogenesis.

It is proposed that fixed group resentments should be treated as social facts that are understood in accordance with the classic conceptualization of Emil Durkheim. Let us recall that a social fact is a manifestation of the external reality of an individual, common to a given community, capable of exerting coercion on individuals, being an area of normative regulation, ordering certain actions, and prohibiting others [14,15]. Such understood collective resentment reveals its regulatory power in a given group, especially in a period of structural and cultural tensions, conflicts of interest, and values and additionally burdened with negative collective emotions. In this approach, collective resentments assume a compulsory and normative character as external non-subjective behavioral patterns.

Resentment as a social fact has a specific ontology in the context of time. If we refer to the methods of categorizing emotions introduced by Theodore Kemper [16], which distinguishes emotions focused on the past (nostalgia, regret, a sense of hopelessness), the present (anger, fear, and surprise), and the future (anxiety, sense of security), then it should be stated that resentment emotions have a special status because they come from the past, define the scope and nature of present activities, and negatively condition future relationships. They are characterized by durability because they are rooted in the past, they

condition the present, and potentially, without changing the existing resentment contexts and the scope of agency, they also condition a future of acting entities.

Due to the aforementioned characteristics, it will be eligible to analyze the formation and duration of the resentment mechanisms that determine attitudes based on the diachronic causal analysis of Archer [11,13,17]. It takes place in a morphogenetic cycle set in time: first, the resentment conditioning of groups, then intergroup interaction, and finally, working through the possibilities of agency in the specific resentment structural and cultural contexts.

Hence, in reference to the cycle presented above, it will be purposeful in a diachronic order: (a) to indicate the elements of resentment structural and cultural contexts in the analyzed organizations, allowing for relations of exaltation in some and the humiliation of others, which are embedded in the past. Then, (b) to diagnose what their current effects are, i.e., the objectified and conscious resentment barriers among the staff of enterprises. Finally, (c) it is necessary to extrapolate which of the structural and cultural functioning contexts observed in the organizational activities have the potential to create resentment empowerment barriers for the development of innovation in the future.

The author intends to typologize the various ways of defining the concept of innovation in the contemporary economic and sociological literature in order to present his own operational definition of the concept in their context. The basic criterion for assigning individual conceptualizations of a concept to a given type will be the attitude toward the category of novum, progress, the syndromatic variable, and the synthesis of actions [18,19].

The basic and most frequently used way to understand the concept analyzed is innovation as a novelty. This type is the simplest way of conceptualizing innovation as a novelty, i.e., creating something objectively new. However, it omits further and necessary stages when socioeconomic institutionalization is understood in a broad sense (acceptance, implementation, and dissemination). This type of definition for innovation was adopted, among others, by Percy R. Whitfield. He argued that innovation is a series of complex actions consisting of solving problems, as a result of which a comprehensively developed novelty is created [20]. Similarly, Stefan Kasprzyk defines innovation as a new, previously unknown way of satisfying new needs [21]. On the other hand, Genrikh S. Altshuller defined innovation as a different way of organizing, synthesizing, expressing knowledge, perceiving the world, and creating new ideas, perspectives, reactions, and products [22]. Piotr Sztompka also defines innovation in this way. Innovation manifests itself primarily through novelty, is associated with a departure from the previous tradition, and is a manifestation of originality, creativity, and innovation [23].

The second classic type of conceptualization of the concept studied is innovation as a new application. This way of defining complements the previous type, i.e., creating something new objectively, which is then implemented and disseminated as new. It is one of the most frequently used theoretical concepts in the literature on the subject. This type is represented by the classics Schumpeter or Drucker. Joseph A. Schumpeter claims that innovation is a new combination of various elements and human production power, the essence of which is to create a new product or market goods with new properties, use a new production method, find a new market, acquire new sources of raw materials, and introduce a new organization of some industry [24,25]. Peter F. Drucker defines innovation as a specific tool for entrepreneurs through which changes create an opportunity to start a new business or to provide new services [26]. Charles Freeman identifies innovation as the first commercial introduction of a new product, process, system, or device [27].

Innovation can also be seen as a novelty. In this approach to the concept of innovation, the absolutely objective existence of it is not essential. On the other hand, it is crucial that stakeholders perceive innovation as qualitatively new. It is sufficient if it obtains the status of an intersubjectively perceived and new innovation, for example, by a specific professional environment. This is how Philip Kotler describes the phenomenon: Innovation refers to any good, service, or idea that someone perceives as new [28]. On the other hand, Everett M. Rogers believes that it is not important for human behavior whether an idea is

objectively new, that is, only recently discovered or developed, but whether it is perceived by people as new [29].

There is also a way to define innovation as progress. The aforementioned conceptualization is axiological because it introduces an evaluating category—progress, i.e., a better, fuller, more efficient state than the previous one. The operational application of this type of innovation definition is limited to the situations in which the progress criteria appear that are at least intersubjectively accepted by specific groups and social and professional environments. For example, Zbigniew Pietrusinski uses the concept of progress *expressis verbis*, which changes intentionally and is introduced by humans or designed by a cybernetic system, which consists of replacing the existing state of affairs with others that are positively assessed in the light of the specific criteria that make up progress [30].

Last but not least, the fifth type of conceptualization of innovation can be distinguished as a synthesis of activities. It is very widespread today, even recognized as a standard, theoretical, and methodological model. Cover all stages of creating, testing, and disseminating innovations and indicate the areas in which innovations are implemented. An example of such an approach to innovation is the definition adopted by the OECD [31], where innovation means the implementation of a new or significantly improved product or process, a new marketing method, or a new organizational method in economic practice, workplace, organization, or relations with the environment. In this work, a similar conceptualization of the concept was adopted, which corresponds to the approach to innovation as a synthesis of actions.

Innovation is a multidimensional activity that leads to the creation, testing, and then implementation of new solutions that enable achieving a competitive advantage in relation to the environment understood in a broad sense. In the minimum variant, innovative activities should ensure the survival of the organization, including overcoming structural barriers and agency barriers, in a continuously changing environment [19,30,32–34]. A broad and holistic approach to the issue of innovation and the accompanying process of innovation in the dimension of time and space has been co-created on a conceptual basis for the presented research.

3. Innovations in the Morphostatic and Morphogenetic State of the Organization

In order to analyze the mechanisms determining the formation of group resentments and appropriate effects, resulting in dysfunctions in the field of innovation in small and medium-sized enterprises, the author also refers to the assumptions of morphogenetic theory and critical realism. Archer assumes, following Bhaskar, that the reality of the phenomena and social processes studied is manifested not only in their empirical character but also in their causality [35,36]. The real causal mechanisms that exist result from the relations existing between social beings: the relations between the properties, forces of social and cultural structures, and the causative possibilities of individual and group entities. The causal forces mentioned above are not necessary [11,13,17,37]. Not all mechanisms that are related to appropriate structures or social actors are activated in morphogenetic processes. Therefore, direct empirical research does not provide evidence of the “reality” of driving forces because some of these forces are not subject to direct experience, and others may be inactive due to the operation of other mechanisms [37]. The actions of resentment in structural and cultural contexts should be treated as causal forces that are only partially subject to direct empirical observation. Depending on the configuration of these contexts and the nature of the interaction between them and the agency of social entities, there are also causal forces that are inactive in a given context and time and may be activated in a different configuration of environmental factors. Hence, there is a necessity to search for relationships and the relations between the sphere of contexts and agency in a diachronic temporal order.

Archer defined the basic features of the main opposing states of all social institutions [13,17,38,39]. Referring to the aforementioned assumptions, the author proposes to define organizational morphogenesis as a set of processes that tend to expand or change

the form, e.g., institutional changes implementing already existing group interests and values that legitimize them in the organization; structures that can be defined as changes between the elements of the structural and cultural level, or changes in the relationship between the subjects of action within the organization and changes in the balance between the elements of organizational structure and culture and the level of agency experienced by the entities operating in it. On the other hand, organizational morphostasis refers to those processes that tend to keep the above-mentioned elements unchanged [13,40].

Under what structural and cultural conditions do existing resentment potentials lead to morphogenesis, and when do they lead to social and organizational morphostasis? The situation of social morphostasis is characterized by the fact that, despite the existence of permanent resentment contexts concerning the absolute or relative social inequalities, it results in restrictions to the access of elements of the Weberian triad: power, material status, and social respect. Additionally, it does not lead to a change in the legal, normative, and cultural legitimacy of a given socioeconomic system, i.e., it does not lead to social change. On the other hand, the situation of organizational morphostasis is characterized by the fact that, despite the existence of persistent resentment contexts, concerning the absolute or relative organizational tensions, it results in the limitations of formal and legally guaranteed individual and collective agency, and does not lead to a change in the management method of a given organization, or the understanding of its organizational culture in a broad sense. If the structural and cultural tensions in the organization do not concern all three spheres, a correspondingly lower resentment potential will also generate a lower morphogenetic pressure. In the structural and cultural conditions mentioned above, the formation of ecosystems that positively condition innovative processes is difficult.

However, in situations of permanent structural and cultural tensions and the resulting conflict-related interactions between the actors, which simultaneously relate to the sphere of power, wealth, and prestige, the existing resentment potential leads to a change in the elements of legal, normative, and cultural legitimacy of a given social system. Similarly, the existence of permanent tensions in the organizational structure and culture, and the resulting conflicting interactions between the collective actors, which simultaneously concern the sphere of power, wealth, and prestige, the existing resentment potential leads to changes in the elements of legal and normative legitimacy and organizational culture. As a result, these tensions lead to morphogenesis, that is, the state of structural and cultural properties, and the interaction between them and individual and collective agencies, conduce to innovation. It is expressed in the structural changes in the organization and the socioeconomic, technological, and institutional environment of innovators and in the appropriate group interests accompanying the changes. However, in the sphere of organizational culture, the applicable norms and values, customs, patterns of behavior, and ideologies that legitimize structural changes are changing.

4. Methodological Assumptions, Framework of the Research Procedure

In order to explain the causal relationships extended in time between the selected resentment contexts and their effects in the area of innovation, it is necessary not only to analyze the past sources but also the contemporary existing and evoked data. The state of resentment contexts and the effect of resentment effects can be studied if their complex status and be taken into account as the elements of a simultaneously dualistic reality (structure and agency). Two distinct types of causal forces operate in it [11]. To diagnose them and look for directions to condition contemporary organizational behavior, the author used a research procedure taking into account the diachronic temporal order.

The basic research method was a diachronically understood causal analysis morphogenetic. Its model derives from the three-phase model of conditioning, interaction, and work [9]. It will constitute an interpretative framework (a model for systematizing data) for the analysis of the formation and duration of the detailed barriers to perpetration that were identified, through the literature search, observations, focused group interviews, and theoretical deduction. They are the results of often socially unconscious conditioning mech-

anisms (e.g., envy and group resentment). The model will be the basis for the analysis of the identified barriers to perpetration in the selected Silesian SMEs. It is, first, an extension of the earlier ideas of the author [9,41], and second, it was based on the theory of structure and agency, as well as on the conceptualization of an organization in the state of morphostasis and morphogenesis [13,42,43].

Below, the elements of a model are presented that will explain the course, morphostatic (duration), and morphogenetic (change) scenarios of agency capacity within organizational, structural, and cultural contexts.

- 1 The diagnosis of the state of structural and cultural contexts in the organization (conditioning):
 - What structural conditions (interests) differentiate the company's staff?
 - Hence, the diagnosis of structural conditions (objectified perpetration barriers) can be understood as, i.e., infrastructural and economic conditions, knowledge resources, skills and competencies of members, political ties, group and union interests, which differentiate the company's staff in terms of access to power, wealth and prestige;
 - Do the areas exist within the above-mentioned conditions where all rights are formally ensured (civic, employee, social) but where business practices are in conflict with official legislation and adopted organizational regulations?
 - What cultural conditions, i.e., set of norms and values, organizational cultures, forms, and potentials of social capital, legitimize the structural determinants while at the same time legitimizing the relations between the exaltation of some entities and the humiliation of others? In the conditions of contextual continuity in the organization, cultural conditions magnify structural conditions.
- 2 Interactions between the structural and cultural context and the agency of the entities studied.
 - The growing contextual discrepancy between the formally guaranteed position of the subjects of action and the observed balance of power in the organization increases the potential for resentment tensions in it. The greater the inconsistency between the legal position of an entity or group and/or a position that is formally and normatively assigned and the observed deprivation in the organization, the higher the resentment barriers to the agency are. The indicator of the existence of the phenomenon is to emphasize the importance of negative group emotions (individual and group envy) by respondents as a barrier to innovation.
 - Defining the types of reflexivity of the subjects [44–48]. The subjects of action work internally (emotionally, reflexively) through the mechanism of internal conversation at the intersection of the structural and cultural context and individually configured motivations and organizational resentment conditions. Depending on the type of reflexivity that the entities of an organization engage in and the sense of continuity or discontinuity in the contexts of action, the entities differently implement their agency in relation to organizational conditions (morphostatically or morphogenetically) [10,37,44].
 - Entities provide feedback on the organizational, structural, and cultural conditions, creating collective subjects of action (with the agency) within the organization. In a resentment organizational context, the interactions between the actors, both collective and primary (with a limited agency), are a manifestation of the existence of tensions and an expression of the operation of resentment mechanisms (e.g., double axiological awareness, transferred hatred, negative acceptance, bitter grapes, or the effect of individual and collective envy). Which of the listed resentment mechanisms can be observed among the members of the surveyed companies?
- 3 Two scenarios of working through between the structural and cultural context and the agency of the respondents:

Morphostatic scenario.

- Under what conditions does the existing distribution of structural, cultural, and agency forces contribute to organizational morphostasis? Compliance among the collective actors of the action regarding the existing relations between the structural (group interests) and cultural (dominant ideas and values) context or the acceptance of existing tensions between the structural and cultural contexts blocks the development of new collective entities and changes in the continuity of organizational contexts.
- In the case of an organization remaining in the state of morphostasis (agreement as to the basic interests and values of its members), the existing resentment structural and cultural resentment contexts limit the emergence of innovation (an indicator of the state is the attitudes aimed at maintaining the organizational status quo).
- Indications of the dominant type of reflexivity. The course and effects of potential innovative activities are also the results of the reflexivity of the members of the organization who make decisions in the context of individual care for their practical projects in relation to the existing contexts.
- The morphostatic experience of contextual continuity is perpetuated by the dominance of the communicative type of reflexivity. The indicator of the existence of communication reflexivity is emphasizing the importance of structurally conditioned barriers by the respondents to a greater extent than the opportunities and possibilities of overcoming them by the members of the organization, then the lack of trust in the external environment, and domination of the binding social capital elements, i.e., based on family or social ties.
- Agreeing on mutual relations by operating entities within the framework of structural and cultural contexts blocks changes in the organizational status quo and innovation.

Morphogenetic scenario.

- Under what conditions does the existing distribution of structural, cultural, and causative forces lead to organizational morphogenesis? The emergence of disagreement between the main actors as to the distribution between the structural and cultural contexts and/or the emergence of new collective entities (new differences of interests, new ideas, and values) that question the existing structural and cultural continuity leads to organizational morphogenesis.
- In a state of contextual discontinuity, resentment tensions originating in the past activate new actors, thus facilitating organizational changes (positive conflict function) and conditioning the course of innovative processes.
- The factor dynamizing the above-described organizational morphogenesis is the type of autonomic reflexivity, which is spreading in the state of contextual discontinuity. It manifests itself in a growing critical attitude towards particular aspects of organizational life. It is developing at the expense of the previously dominant type of communicative reflexivity.
- The morphogenetic scenario with a type of autonomic reflexivity leads to change, especially in the conditions of contextual discontinuity; an indicator of its domination is emphasized by the respondents, e.g., in the SWOT analysis, which is concerned to a greater extent with the opportunities and possibilities of overcoming structurally determined barriers than the resulting limitations and threats; the existence of manifestations of bridging social capital among the members of the organization, i.e., declarations of trust in colleagues, participation in a network of organizational connections, acceptance of the introduction of horizontal structures in management, and declarations of being open and willing to cooperate with the environment.

The qualitative interview method was also used for the research on the issues described above. More specifically, the focus group interview (FGI) technique was used. A total of 180 entrepreneurs and managers, graduates of the Silesian universities of technology and economics, who were active in the labor market, participated in 16 focus interviews. The selection of individual focus groups was deliberate. Representatives of three main fields of the national economy were examined: industry, services, and trade, and also scientific

and research institutions in equal proportions. Equal proportions of the representatives of small and medium enterprises were included in the focus groups. Obtaining the fully representative distributions of sociodemographic characteristics in the composition of individual focus groups was not as important as the saturation of people with maximally diverse and well-established attitudes, knowledge, and opinions on innovation.

The respondents were attended by people who can be described as having the capacity of organizational agency, that is, those who are the management staff of enterprises, working in marketing and HR departments or directly dealing with the issues of initiating, testing, and implementing the product, organizational, process, and marketing innovations in selected enterprises. To deepen the triangulation of methods and data sources, the SWOT questionnaires were also analyzed, which were an integral part of 120 implementation documentation prepared by the respondents under the project (see Appendix A).

Four researchers participated in the research plan as FGI moderators. In this case, we can talk about the researcher's triangulation, i.e., the introduction to the research procedure of several observers who can verify each other's research. The triangulation of the researcher allowed the construction of an intersubjective image of the research subject through the use of unique autopsies, intuitions, or associations of the individual researchers with a similar set of source data. It was also assumed, according to the principles of grounded theory [49,50], that the data collected in individual groups were continuously compared with each other, and then codes were extracted to organize and interpret the research material from the focus groups. Moreover, the Atlas. Ti computer program was used to analyze the empirical data collected, thanks to which it was possible to present in a graphical form the frequency distributions of the categories of opinions emerging in the FGI and the connections between them.

During the research, the ethical canon in force in the social sciences was followed. The research was carried out impartially and responsibly by building mutual trust. Participation in the study was based on free and informed consent. The moderators, in a manner understandable to the respondents, informed them what the investigation was about, by whom it was conducted, and how the results would be made public and used. The respondents were informed about the right to refuse to participate in the study and the right to withdraw consent at any stage of the study without giving any reason. Separate and explicit consent was obtained for the use of sound recording devices. Participants were informed of their rights regarding the provisions on the protection of personal data and the protection of copyrights. Respondents were also guaranteed the highest possible level of anonymity, comfort, and safety at the research site.

5. Analysis of the Formation of Resentment Barriers: SME Cases

This section will attempt to answer the research question: How do the existing structural and cultural resentment contexts condition the innovative activities in the state of morphostasis and organizational morphogenesis in the selected enterprises?

The subject of the morphogenetic causal analysis will be two medium-sized enterprises selected from those participating in the project, from the IT and renewable energy sectors, respectively. The analysis will start with a case study of an IT company that has achieved a high position in the domestic software services market. It deals with the design and implementation of comprehensive, personalized, and constantly updated IT solutions that support business management. It belongs to several leading suppliers of the MRP II/ERP class systems in Poland. It is a partner of the world's largest database provider (Oracle). The enterprise provides software and supports approximately 750 companies in terms of IT, for example, in areas of accounting, logistics, customer relations, and production. After 18 years since the company was founded, its management board was made up of several IT specialist programmers from related generational and social (a collective subject of activity) areas. They were its founders and the owners of the majority of the shares. They created the company from scratch in the second half of the 1990s as graduates of the same faculty of the Silesian University of Technology. The company reached the peak of its development

after Poland joined the European Union in 2010–2014. However, in the years 2014–2016, i.e., the last years before the company was taken over by a global American IT concern in 2017, it was already possible to observe the serious symptoms of stagnation.

During the management process of the company by its founders, as part of statutory activities and in accordance with the adopted mission and strategy, the company's board of directors declared a democratic (integrative) and participatory style of managing a team of employees and consciously created horizontal organizational structures in the company, based on the independent teams of experts. Compliance with the standards of responsible business was declared. On the other hand, the actual, practically used style of managing a team of employees and managing the company was closer to an autocratic model, in which the board of directors set the goals and tasks of the team themselves. They also divided labor in terms of setting goals between the groups of employees. The organizational culture in the company reflected an autocratic style of management. It legitimized the relationships of the exaltation of employees who strictly and uncritically implemented the ideas and orders of the board and the humiliation of independent and critical people. A democratic and participatory style of managing a team of employees was sustained in official declarations, which in practice was expressed, for example, by appointing façade expert groups who were unable to solve the existing technological or organizational problems. After some time, it remained more and more dissonant in relation to the actual management and motivation method. It came down to the implementation of the attitudes of a lack of trust in bottom-up innovative proposals. The existing contradictions between the declared and enforced style of management (of power) and the methods of rewarding and explicitly awarding those associated with it (an element of intra-organizational prestige) deepened inequalities in the following years. They sharpened the double axiological awareness of employees who were forced to "play" in building an open, partner team of innovators. Thus, they increased the potential of resentment tensions among the company's staff (the stage of organizational morphostasis). The employees subjected to the actions of the resentment mechanism were forced to overwork these conditions emotionally and reflectively. The stage of organizational stagnation loaded with resentment diagnosed above was stabilized by the dominance of the communicative reflective type among employees. Toxic interactions between the representatives of the company's authority and employees, as well as the everyday organizational behavior of the members of the analyzed team, revealed the existence of tensions and were an expression of group resentment. They also brought about certain resentment effects. Dozens of high-class IT specialists left the company. Demobilization resulting from the limitation of professional development opportunities for a group of specialists serving several dozen key institutional and corporate clients had an impact on the overall operation of the company. A dozen or so key clients resigned or limited the scope of cooperation with the company, significantly limiting its profits and economic condition. In 2018, a large group of employees made decisions, often emotionally motivated, to change the employer, i.e., the innovative ecosystem. An equally large group adopted a survival strategy, adapted to the course of events, and the impending ownership transformations lived to see organizational morphogenesis, the change in the owner, change in the style of enterprise management, change in the organizational culture, and the motivating system which encouraged the initiation, testing, and implementation of innovations.

This case study presented of an IT company implies several broader observations. When a group or organization remains in a state of morphostasis, the existing resentment structural and cultural contexts usually limit the formation of innovative ecosystems (see the stage of organizational stagnation presented above). In the state of the emergence of contextual discontinuities, i.e., changes in the ownership structure and organizational culture, resentment contexts not only do not limit the emergence of innovation but also strengthen the morphogenetic states (the stage of organizational transformations). As a result, resentment tensions contribute to systemic change, organizational morphogenesis, and the formation of ecosystems that positively condition innovative processes. Resentment

effects, both arising in the morphogenetic environment, for example, in the analyzed case, adopting the attitude of an acceptance of change as a negation of the current state, and in the morphostatic environment (double axiological awareness and migration), are the result of emotional and reflective overwork carried out by the subjects facing resentment and the effect of their feedback (agency) on the organizational, structural, and cultural conditions.

The second case study of the emergence of resentment barriers in the process of creating innovation in an enterprise will be presented below. The analysis will cover a medium-sized enterprise from Upper Silesia operating in the field of the installation of photovoltaic cells and panels as well as solar collectors (RES). The elements of the causal explanation model, already included in the methodological section, will constitute the basis for the analysis of the resentment mechanisms and effects that occurred in the company.

The large and spectacular success of the company in the market of installation and service of photovoltaic panels took place from 2009–2016. At the peak of the company's development, business activities were conducted throughout the country. The success was related to the correct diagnosis by the owners of the company, on the one hand, and the social need for electricity sources independent of the state power networks. On the other hand, the owners quickly noticed the possibility of coordinating the acquisition of commissions for their own company with simultaneous participation in the procedure of obtaining funds from the European Union funds by the clients through local government institutions. The result was an offer of co-financing from European Union sources up to 80% of the order value for potential RES customers. Knowledge of the strategic policies in the European Union aimed at promoting and financing under the RES structural funds, technological competencies, and an accurate diagnosis of the needs of the Polish middle class, who were becoming richer, adopting pro-ecological attitudes, allowed building quickly and required not a small, locally operating enterprise, but a medium-sized company employing around two hundred people at its peak.

The analyzed company was established as a small family business, where trust between the participants was built on the basis of binding social capital. The above-mentioned type of bond is characteristic of primary groups (family, neighborhood, and peer groups). The interest of such a company is identical to the interest of the family. In the relations between the participants of the examined enterprise, for obvious reasons, there were no elements of bridging the social capital (based on trust in a generalized other). The characteristics of task groups that are linked by material, not emotional, ties are people with common social goals and interests.

The presented case study presents the problem of a company that developed too quickly, in which the way of management, the evolution of organizational culture, delegating competencies, and trust in colleagues in the increasingly complex processes of the organizational, process, and social innovation did not keep up with the growth in numbers, revenues, and customers. As one of the respondents put it, for family related to the members of the management board of this company:

There was an introduction of innovation in some way to bad structures, to such structures that in a very short period of time they earned a lot of money from the European Union on these things, for domestic and solar installations. Their turnover increased significantly, employment jumped rapidly, but the management system remained as it was for a small company with a dozen or so people, not a medium-sized company.

In a situation of the necessity to employ new, numerous employees, who were connected with the organization by a different type of relationship than the family members, mutual trust between the board of directors and the masses of new employees should be built on a different type of social capital than bonding capital and the domination of autonomous reflexivity over communication. The way of managing the enterprise should also change. However, the board did not make any effort to identify new hires as partners to help the family develop the business and who was trusted. Instead of trusting the employees and building an innovatively managed enterprise operating in the industry of innovative technologies, the focus was on technological innovations in the field of control

and the monitoring of fitters-specialists working independently throughout Poland. This is what the aforementioned observer said about this period of the company's activity:

“An innovation was implemented that introduced the tools that were to monitor fitters and traders. They brought in some great executives from Western corporations. They were able to pay them, but the mania of mistrust and control remained. Each innovation was implemented in the field of control and surveillance. Where it was easy to cheat and that is where the managers introduced electronic control. Yes, I don't know . . . , I think they work like that with Coca-Cola. These traders recorded their steps—door closings, car stops”.

The style of managing a team of employees and managing the company was initially based on a traditional paternalistic relationship of direct contact between the patron and the employee. It was also characterized by a limited degree of delegation of responsibility. At the same time, the owners' family felt that they were helping employees in nonprofessional matters related to the company, the team was truly integrated, and emotional ties close to the family, father-and-son ties, were built. The paternalistically (“manually”) managed enterprise was based on the type of communicative reflexivity that generated profits and was competitive in a turbulent mesostructural environment. Business activities carried out on the regional scale of Upper Silesia could be planned, controlled, and accounted for through daily contact with fitters and thanks to the developed, universally approved community of organizational values.

However, over time, as the tasks and number of employees increased, the management style became closer to an autocratic model. The board continued to set the goals and tasks of the team on their own, leading to their achievement, and it also divided labor in terms of setting goals between the groups of employees in the field. The process of board alienation from real problems, operating largely autonomously, and employees operating in regions more and more distant from the company's headquarters was progressing. The organizational culture existing in the company became a reflexivity of the autocratic, impersonal style of management. It legitimized the relationships of the exaltation of the employees who strictly and uncritically carried out the orders of the board and the humiliation of independent and for critical people, whom the traditional management style was typical for the company's headquarters they found incomprehensible.

Sustained in official declarations, the community-family style of managing a team of employees, which in practice was expressed in calling pointless meetings, which did not translate into increasing the efficiency of the field workers in areas requiring them to solve technological or organizational problems on their own, after some time remained more and more distant from the real way of management. It boiled down to the implementation of the attitudes of a lack of trust in bottom-up innovative proposals and strengthening the culture of distrust towards the fitters-specialists working independently in the field.

In the analyzed case, the companies in the RES sector, the existing contradictions between the declared and enforced style of management (power) and the related methods of rewarding and open bonuses (an element of group prestige, burdened with resentment) deepened the inequalities in the following years. They sharpened the double axiological awareness of employees who were forced to build a pseudo community, thus increasing the potential of resentment tensions among the company's staff (the stage of organizational stagnation). The employees subjected to the actions of the resentment mechanism were forced to work through the above-mentioned conditions emotionally and reflexively. The group of veteran employees from the Upper Silesia region that had been associated with the company for the longest time accepted the façade, the appearance of a traditional paternalistic management style, and were characterized by communicative reflexivity, i.e., the need to accept and confirm its usefulness for the organization (the board) before they start acting. However, other attitudes were adopted by independent fitters from other regions of the country. Among the dominant part of newly hired employees, mainly from the voivodeships distant from the company's headquarters, the type of autonomous reflexivity, critical towards the management method represented by the board of directors, began to

dominate. The criticism and undisguised distance towards the company's managers came from the way of awarding bonuses and motivating (strict subordination), but above all, from the increasing control carried out with the use of digital technologies (GPS). It resulted in the creation of a collective entity that could channel and coordinate the frustration of field workers and organize temporary Italian strikes.

Toxic and morphostatic interactions between the board representatives and employees, as well as the everyday organizational behavior of the analyzed team members, revealed the existence of tensions and were an expression of group resentment. They also had specific effects. The demobilization resulting from the structural, chronic lack of trust and the limited professional development opportunities of the fitter-specialist group had an impact on the functioning of the company. A large group of employees who formed the opposing collective subject of action decided to change employers. They were employed in a competing company in similar positions. This is how the operation of the resentment mechanism and its effect on the enterprise was summarized by the aforementioned observer:

“The result was that the employees stopped working efficiently. Once, someone mistook the net for the gross, and this plunged the company, because it made a big minus and got fixed again. On this big minus, instead of going forward and letting go. And it was again falling apart. Until bankruptcy”.

Let us return to the question: How does the group resentment condition the emergence of innovation; does it only block it, or can it, under certain conditions, constitute a factor that dynamizes innovation? One can try to look at the collapse of the examined enterprise from the point of view of the positive effects of resentment tensions on the development of individual and collective organizational entities. In analogy to the concept of positive conflict functions by Lewis A. Coser [51], it is possible to find positive conflict functions or, more broadly, negative emotions [3,8] in organizational life, which are the result of tensions in the structure and/or culture of the organization. Negative emotions, for example, a feeling of envy close to resentment, in the situation of a lack of acceptance for the innovator in his immediate environment, as in the studied enterprise, generate in a potential innovation creator the need to bypass the social control mechanisms, institutional, and personal barriers limiting the possibilities of his creative development. Additionally, fears of violating the existing balance of interests among the members of the analyzed organization, which result in formal sanctions, e.g., through increased control of their behavior, strengthen the resentment emotions of a potential innovator. In effect, an autonomous subject of action works emotionally and reflectively through their interactions in a resentment organizational context. Then, they make decisions about migration to a new environment that is open to introducing technological, organizational, process changes, or social innovations.

This process, following Helmut Schoeck, can be assessed as paradoxically positive. The innovators who are motivated to act by negative emotions overcome their envy of the environment and migrate to innovation-friendly ecosystems, thus strengthening their creative potential. For such spatial mobility and, indirectly, social mobility (social advancement), social openness to structural changes are necessary, supported by institutional incentives for the development of innovation in a given society and culture [52,53].

The role of resentment, not only as a brake but also as a stimulator of innovation, was also presented by H.G. Barnett. In his pioneering work, *Innovations*. He researched the basis of cultural change on the grounds of anthropological research among North American Indians from the Yurok and Tsimshian tribes and comparative research among the American lower and lower-middle class contemporary to him and proposed the thesis that the emotions of resentment that occur are relatively rare among the representatives of social groups dissatisfied with their social position as an unobvious situation. It characterizes only some individuals among social groups in a situation of objective deprivation. These people are usually negatively conditioned in relation to the existing status quo by an above-average sense of injustice and exclusion with more or less objective justification. They are characterized by a stronger lack of consent to the existing situations of humiliation and the exaltation of others than in other members of their group. They gain a deeper awareness

of their situation in the context of the situation of others (the state of relative deprivation). Furthermore, potential innovators burdened with resentment are often externally inspired to disagree with economic, cultural, or institutional reality and promote change. As Barnett writes: they do not give in to fate; unlike contented individuals who make them envious, they are clearly amenable to suggestions for change [54]. Their high level of envy, identified by Barnett with resentment, and disagreement with the existing order of things, combined with the state of consciousness “I have nothing to lose”, leads to a rebellion against the existing organizational system or a fragment of it. In the long run, an innovation introduced as a result of resentment can be accepted, bringing added value to the organization or the dominant social and professional group which the introduced innovation was intended to harm [53,55].

6. Perception of Barriers to Innovation and Types of Reflexivity

The other participants in the focus group interviews also pointed to barriers to their agency. The analysis of the transcription of focus interviews, obtained with the help of the Atlas.ti 9 Windows program, in which 180 representatives of the companies surveyed participated, will be presented. What barriers to agency do FGI participants perceive in their innovative activities? All types of barriers that occur in the implementation of innovations were indicated by the participants of the group interviews, and the relationships between them are presented in the following perception map generated in the Atlas.ti program (see Figure 1). This tool allowed the generation of codes and their families, presenting the main categories of the respondents’ responses received from the group interviews, as well as emerging terms that allowed for a clear presentation of the survey results. For example, one of the most significant codes was called “envy” 23-3 and consisted of two elements: the first was the degree of grounding (23), that is, the number of code links to citations within the text document, and the second (3) was cohesiveness, that is, linking a given code with other codes. This code was included in the code family (CF): barriers to innovation.

The respondents notice several key groups of barriers limiting the implementation of potential innovations: first is the awareness barriers for decision-making entities and cultural conditions, i.e., in the applicable system of organizational norms and values, then in the relationships between the members of the organization, and finally in the structural barriers occurring in their social environment, both economic and political. These results correspond positively to the results of other Polish and international studies on the barriers to innovation introduction [54–58].

It should be emphasized that the barrier most frequently indicated that a hindered innovation introduction in surveyed companies was the decision-maker’s habits (code: habits 28-1). It is definitely an awareness barrier to agencies, which is an indicator of a tendency to implement morphostatic scenarios in organizations. The three next factors, most frequently indicated by FGI participants, for inhibiting innovation are also a manifestation of the existence in the surveyed companies of the dominance of awareness barriers to the agency, conducive to the implementation of morphostatic scenarios: (code: fear and fear of change 24-1), (code: envy 23-3), (code: human factor—no consent/support from superiors for introducing changes 21-2). It is worth highlighting that, according to the research of the behavioral economics team of the Polish Economic Institute, fear of change and risk-taking is the main variable affecting innovative activities for 80% of the Polish entrepreneurs surveyed [30].

On the other hand, the first structural factor limiting innovative activities, and the fifth among all those indicated (see: Figure 1), which the respondents pointed out was the limited access to funds to implement innovations (code: lack of funds 21-1). The respondents also emphasized the misalignment of the law with the needs of business and organizational innovators (code: misalignment of law 17-0). Furthermore, structural limitations in the economic and socio-political environment include continuous and turbulent changes in the market that hinder the introduction of new solutions (code: changes on the market 14-2), (code: external competition 10-2), as well as the passivity and maladaptation of actions

concerning the state and local government administration to the needs of innovative enterprises and organizations (code: bureaucracy 11-1). It should be noted that the respondents practically did not indicate any limitations of a technological nature that would prevent the introduction of innovations (code: technological barriers 2-1). Hence, the conclusion that the resources of objectified agencies possessed by the respondents did not constitute a major obstacle in undertaking innovation. This cannot be said about the aforementioned resources of conscious agency.

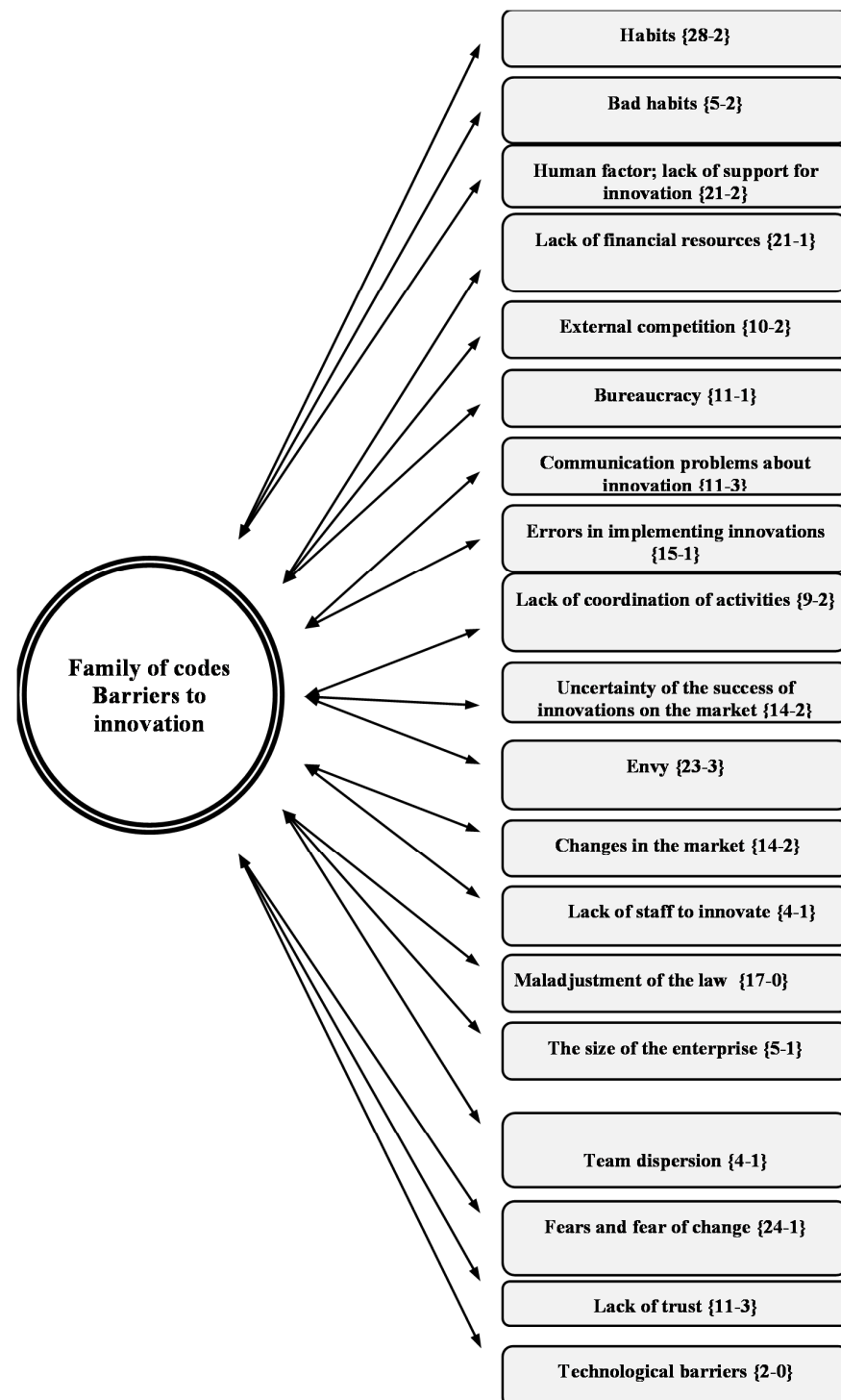


Figure 1. Perceptual map of the code family: barriers to innovation. Source: own work.

Respondents, when asked about the barriers resulting from interpersonal relationships that existed in their enterprises, mentioned factors that are synthetically illustrated by the following perceptual map (see: Figure 2).

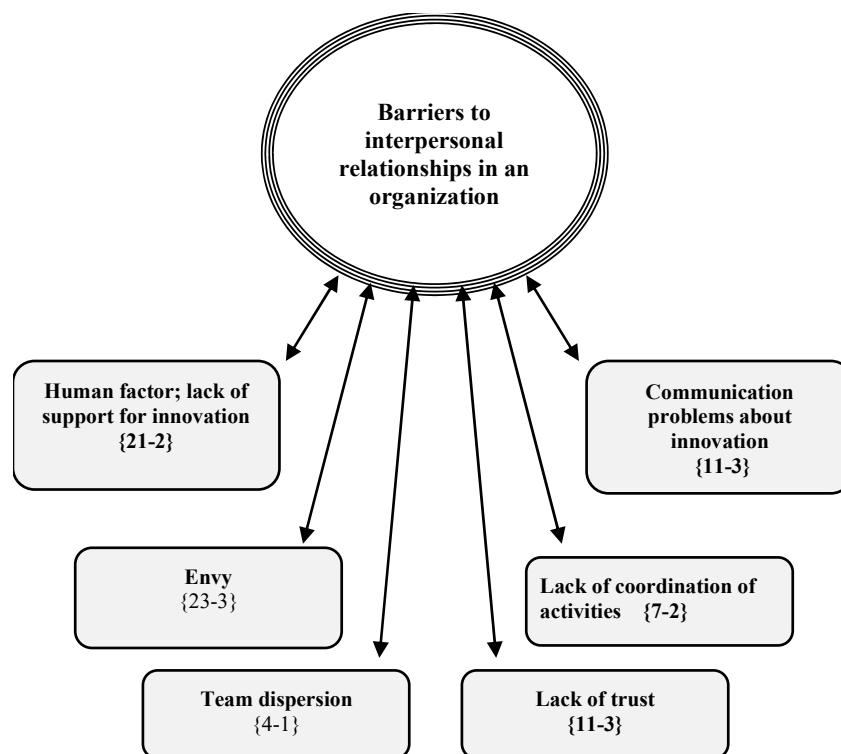


Figure 2. Perceptual map of the code family: barriers to interpersonal relationships in an organization. Source: own work.

The most important barrier related to the activities within the organization that lead to innovation is the already mentioned specific negative emotions, which are defined as individual and group jealousy (code: envy 23-3), followed by the reluctance/fear of the management board to introduce changes (code: human factor 21-2), lack of mutual trust and problems in building a team focused on the implementation of a common task/interest/value among employees together with innovators (code: lack of trust 11-3) and communication barriers between the board of the organization, potential innovators, the people responsible for their implementation and the users of potential innovation (code: problems in communication about innovation 11-3) which is related to the previous category: the lack of coordination of activities 7-2 and dispersion of teams set up to undertake innovations (code: team dispersion 4-1).

The analysis of the perceptual map of the code family: barriers to interpersonal relationships in the organizations survey allowed us to conclude that the most frequently perceived barrier limiting the introduction of innovations is the negative group emotions (mainly envy) experienced by potential innovators in their immediate environment while taking up their actions, and then the lack of support from the organization's management staff and the lack of mutual trust [30], i.e., the deficit of a very important component of bridging the social capital.

In the context analyzed, the phenomenon of envy, derived from resentment, deserves special attention. For Schoeck, the source of resentment is universal, the negative social emotion, envy [52,53]. It constitutes a certain anthropological constant that cannot be completely eliminated from social relationships. It can only be reduced through conscious and consistent socialization to freedom, not equality. Strong and rooted in the views of the liberal-conservative intellectual circles of the second half of the twentieth century is, for some, also the controversial claim of the author of the work *Der Neid* (Eng. *Envy*).

The source of aggression, destruction, and poverty reflects the essence of the action of the resentment effect of collective envy. Its reference can also be found in social microstructures and mesostructures. Schadenfreude felt that the drive to build [. . .] a welfare state is driven not by the joy of giving but by the envy when one takes those who have more [59]. An illustration of how this resentment effect works can also be found in the reality of the surveyed companies.

In the statements of the respondents, envy is manifested, among others, by emphasizing the reluctance of colleagues towards those who dare to change something, and thus, they obtain financial bonuses but also respect among the company's board. These emotions are reflected in the quote: . . . *but the award is considerable, recognition, recognition of the board of directors, but again the reluctance toward me from my co-workers appeared. Because they perceived me as a threat, and they were a bit angry that I was the one who got some great bonuses* (Figure 3, [1:98] [735]).

Innovators are also perceived as breaking the norms and values of informal employee groups, e.g., the norm of "not sticking out" and not crossing the structural and mental boundary between the employees and the board, which threatens the existing normative status quo. Therefore, statements such as *he (an innovator) were considered some kind of president's ear or something like that* (Figure 3, [1:134] [1010]).

The emotions of envy towards those who had the competence, courage, and self-denial to convince the company's management and introduce an innovation appear in those who, despite the fact that they do not have the above-mentioned qualities and do not compete with the innovators, consider the awards and distinctions obtained by them to be undeserved and unfair. This leads to group ostracism. The mechanism mentioned above is exemplified by the quote: *But, as you said, the more money is at stake, the greater is envy, in fact, and the desire to diminish the role in the group of those who did something* (Figure 3, [1:87] [642]) and another statement: *Yes, he had difficulties in the department right away, because the one who goes to the board may report on us in the meantime* (Figure 3, [1: 135] [1012]).

The barriers to the relationship of companies with the environment indicated by respondents have endogenous and exogenous sources of origin (see: Figure 4). Particularly important from the point of view of the issues raised are the barriers of endogenous origin to the surveyed enterprises. The awareness barriers to the agency were emphasized, resulting from the lack of trust mentioned above in the representatives of the micro- and mesosocioeconomic environment (code: lack of trust 11-3). The problems of decision-makers with constructive communication with the environment were also highlighted (code: problems with communication about innovation 11-3). Barriers of exogenous origin to the organization include turbulence and rapid changes in the environment (code: rapid changes in the market 14-2), related concerns about the chances of potential innovation in the market (code: uncertainty about the success of innovation in the market 14-2), and the scale of the existing external competition (code: external competition 10-2).

How does the type of reflexivity change among the entities operating in the surveyed enterprises depending on the state of structural and cultural continuity (morphostasis) or the contextual discontinuity (morphogenesis) of their enterprises?

The dominance of the awareness barriers of the agency presented is a manifestation of the fact that most of the studied morphostatic scenarios are realized in these enterprises; that is, they focused on maintaining the organizational status quo and indirectly on the existing type of innovative community. Indicating such barriers and not others constitutes the syndrome of group thinking of a conservative nature. The attitude of the respondents to maintaining contextual continuity was observed, which is magnified by the domination of communicative reflexivity over autonomic reflexivity [44–48]. The manifestations of the existence of communicative reflexivity were emphasized, according to the respondents, the importance of difficulties in overcoming both objectified and conscious barriers of agency; in particular, pointing to negative group emotions that blocked innovation (mainly group and individual envy), a lack of trust in the external environment, the domination of the elements of binding social capital, a largely uncritical compliance with the decisions of the company's

superiors and the board, as well as with the applicable system of organizational norms and values, meant no clear declarations of openness to cooperation with the environment.

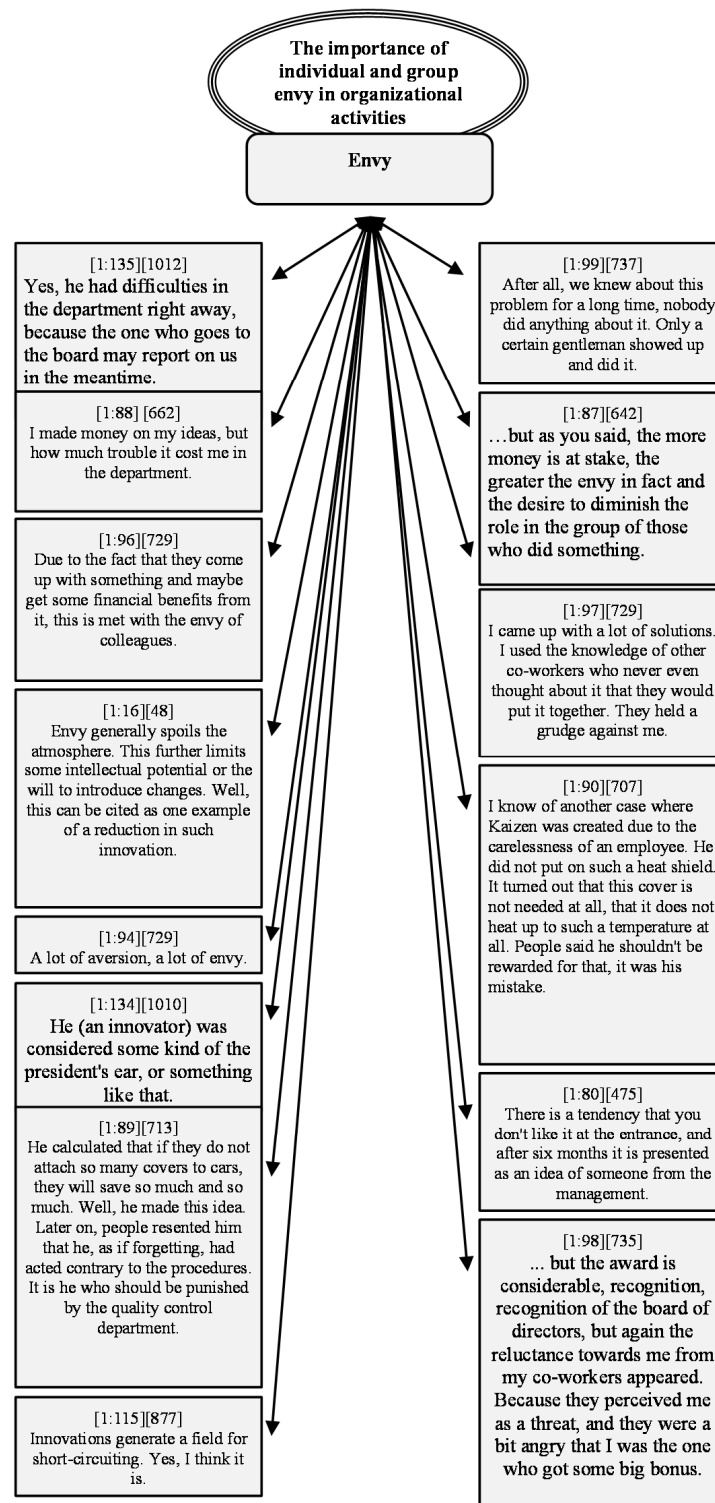


Figure 3. Code citation map: the importance of individual and group envy in organizational activities. Source: own work (Appendix B).

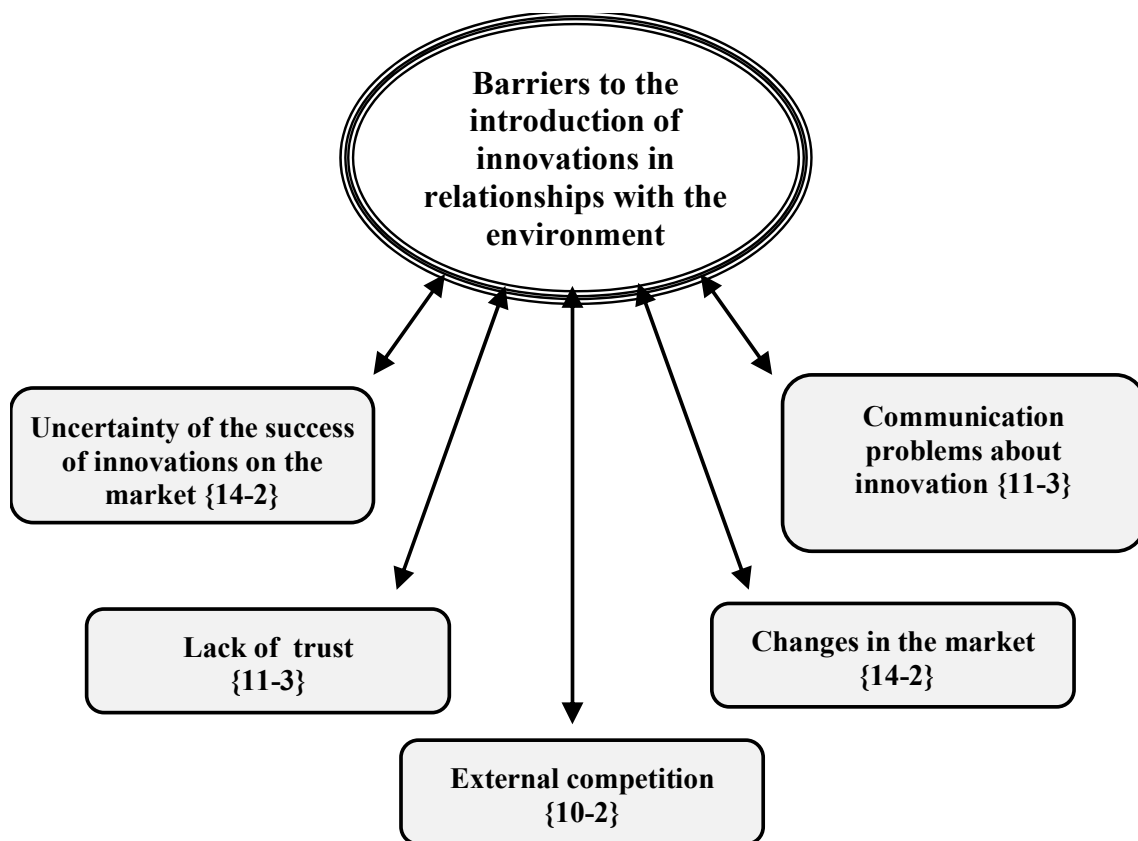


Figure 4. Perceptual map of the code family: barriers to the introduction of innovations in relationships with the environment. Source: own work.

The perception maps prove the existence of serious deficits, mainly in the consciousness dimension of the agency of the examined entities. Therefore, it seems legitimate to say that most of them carry out organizational activities in a conservative and conformist manner in the face of the existing structural and cultural context in the company, which is supported by their reflexivity to maintain the organizational status quo.

The presented results also show the existence of bridging social capital deficits in the analyzed organizations and a lack of interpersonal and group trust [60–62]. The low level of the social capital bridge and generalized trust in the partners of the interaction is a feature of Polish society that was historically preserved during the communist period (1945–1989), which structurally inhibits the development of, for example, civil society, but also bottom-up innovation in enterprises [30].

The above observations are also confirmed by the analysis of 120 SWOT questionnaires, which were an integral part of the implementation documentation prepared by the respondents as part of the project. The vast majority of the representatives of the surveyed enterprises emphasized the strengths of their organizations and the current opportunities for development prospects (see: Figures 5 and 6) to a greater extent than the weaknesses of their enterprises and the internal and external threats they perceived (see: Figures 7 and 8). The perception maps presented in the following clearly show that the advantage of strengths is manifested both in the scope and frequency of the indicated categories (codes). In other words, the surveyed companies, according to their representatives, have more strengths than weaknesses, and the development opportunities eliminate the potential threats. These facts indirectly prove their acceptance of the existing organizational status quo and willingness to maintain the continuity of structural and cultural contexts in the surveyed enterprises.

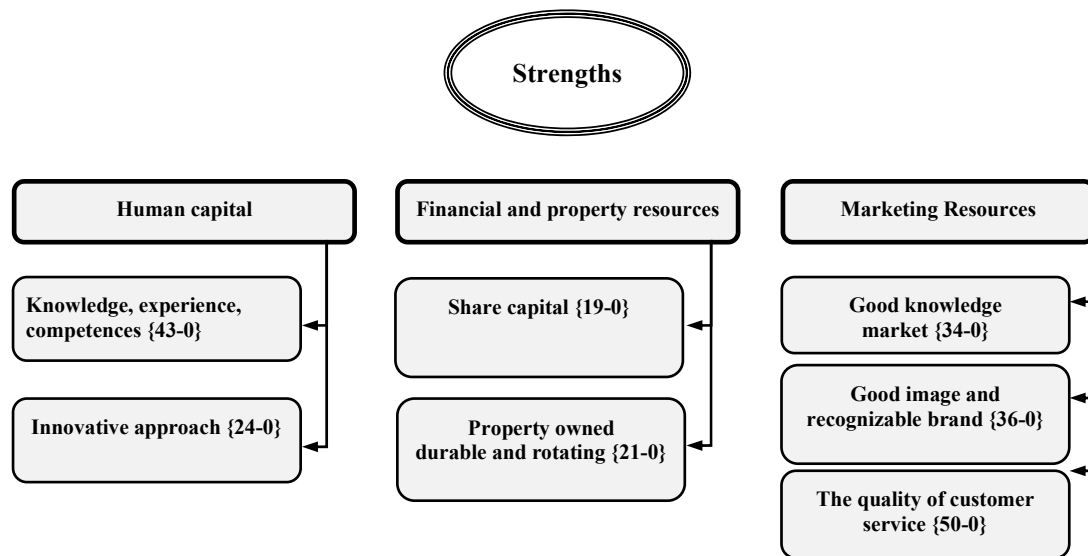


Figure 5. Perceptual map of the code family: part of the SWOT analysis, strengths of the surveyed SMEs. Source: own work.

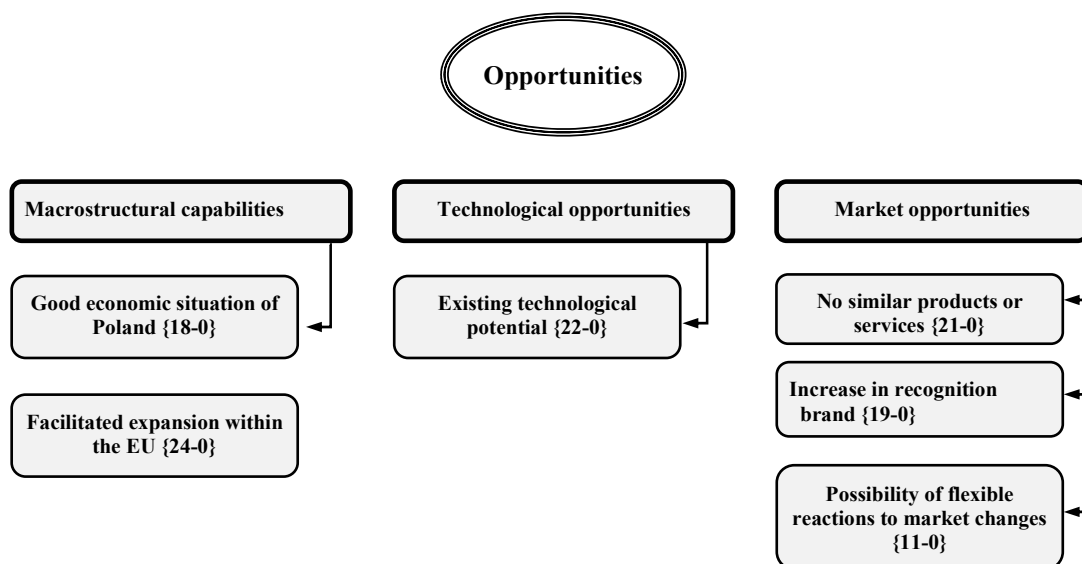


Figure 6. Perceptual map of the code family: part of the SWOT analysis, opportunities of the surveyed SMEs. Source: own work.

In the language of the theory of structure and agency and the use of the model of causal analysis, the course of the cycles in organizations can be presented: (1) the representatives of the surveyed enterprises diagnose the structural (concerning the distribution of organizational power, wealth and prestige) and cultural conditions (norms and values in force in the organization) and (2) identify tensions between them (indicated deficits and barriers). (3) Then, as collective actors of action, they work through the external conditions emotionally and reflexively to assimilate the feedback. (4) They interact with the environment in a morphostatic scenario based on the type of communicative reflexivity, and in the morphogentic scenario, they use the type of autonomic reflexivity. (5) The resources of the objectified agency, including the technology and know-how possessed by the respondents, constitute a relatively smaller obstacle in undertaking innovations, while the problem is the deficit of awareness agency, which inhibits the above-mentioned processes. (6) The undertaking of innovative activities among the representatives of the surveyed enterprises is limited by the advantage of communicative reflexivity over autonomous reflexivity.

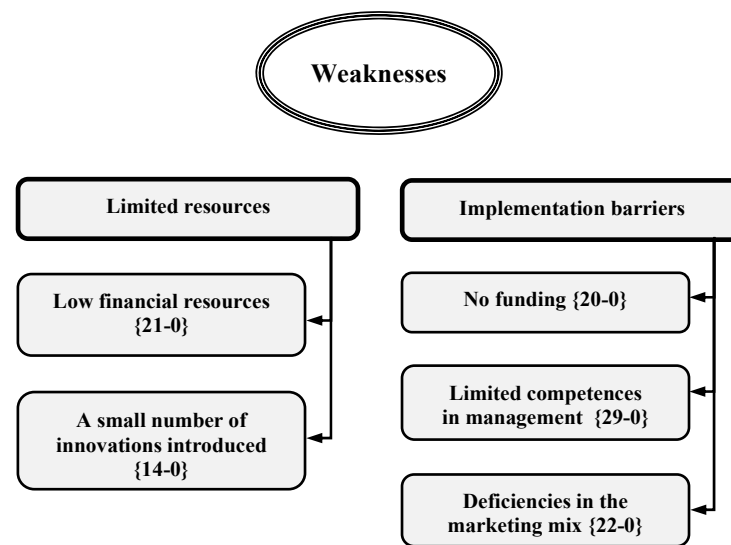


Figure 7. Perceptual map of the code family: part of the SWOT analysis, weaknesses of the surveyed SMEs. Source: own work.

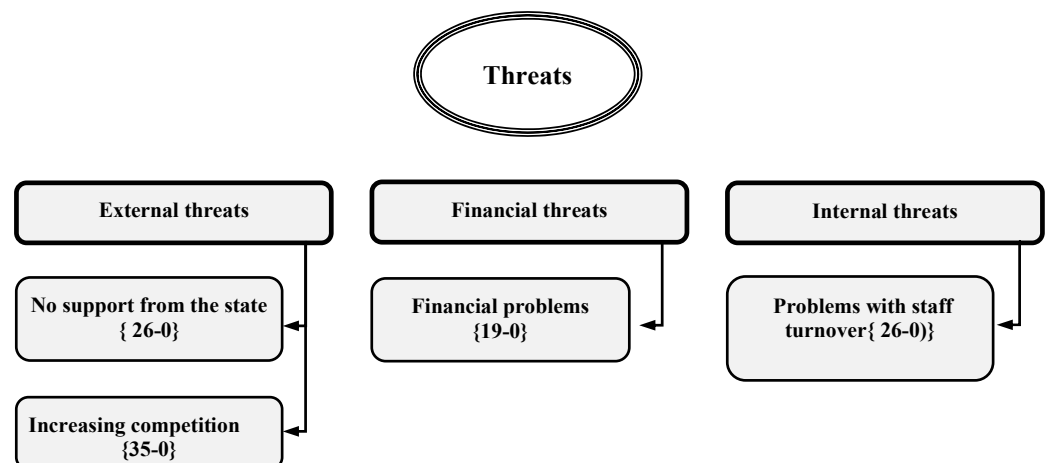


Figure 8. Perceptual map of the code family: part of the SWOT analysis, threats to the surveyed SMEs. Source: own work.

7. Results

During the conceptualization of the selected issues, three research questions were asked. One of them was diagnostic (question 2). It concerned the types of barriers to the agency that the respondents perceive in their innovative activities. Apart from envy, the most important factors limiting the introduction of innovations in the surveyed SME enterprises, both among members of a collective entity of activity (e.g., company management) characterized by a high level of agency and among primary actors, i.e., employees deprived of a direct influence on the enterprise management, include: the habits and defense of the existing status quo, fears and fear of change, lack of consent/support from the superiors for introducing changes, negative experiences from introducing changes from the past, uncertainty as to the future effects of innovation, communication problems with the representatives of other departments, organizational units participating in the innovation process, and distrust between partners and bureaucratic barriers.

In the surveyed enterprises, there is a bridge social capital deficit between the potential partners of innovative business activities, deficits in trust in institutions and generalized others, and gaps in tacit and reflective knowledge between potential creators, users, and the recipients of innovations limiting the possibilities of building innovative ecosystems [8,30,63,64]. In situations of overt inequality in the remuneration of innovators,

individual and group envy is observed and is often inscribed in institutional activities in relation to creators, initiators, and implementers of innovations.

In summary, the respondents mainly pointed to the barriers that came from organizational cultures, group social capital, toxic interpersonal relations, and the state of mind of the management staff. They structurally inhibit the development of, for example, innovation within civil society but also bottom-up innovation in enterprises. They make it difficult to build institutionalized cooperation networks, for example, business for the customer (B2C), business for business (B2B), and cooperation networks with scientific and research institutions, local government, and state administration institutions [30].

Technological barriers or knowledge gaps were not, in the perception of the respondents, a significant obstacle to innovation [58]. The noted awareness agency barriers, to a much greater extent than the objectified barriers (e.g., technological ones), condition the choice of the morphostatic direction of development in the surveyed enterprises.

The other two questions (1 and 3) were of an explanatory nature, and their issues complemented each other. The first concerned determining how resentment structural and cultural contexts condition innovative activities in a state of continuity and in a state of contextual discontinuity of selected enterprises. On the other hand, question 3 was, in line with the conceptualization of organizational morphostasis and morphogenesis presented, a supplement to question 1. It concerned the question of how the dominant type of reflexivity changes among the entities operating in the surveyed enterprises in the state of morphostasis and in the state of organizational morphogenesis.

The situation of permanent tensions resulting from inequalities between interest groups within the organization, specific thought systems that justify social and economic inequalities, and the types of interactions derived from them, exalting some at the expense of others, with the applicable legal and organizational regulations equalizing everyone, results in the fact that the group resentment caused by them limits the activities that lead to organizational change [1,3]. These conditions create structural and cultural resentment contexts for the functioning of the enterprise.

In a situation of an organization in a state of morphostasis, that is, with no changes or limited changes that do not violate the system of interests and values of the main actors of action, the existing structural and cultural contexts limit the emergence of innovation, consolidates the existing agency relationships, and limits the introduction of new actors. Maintaining a contextual continuity (morphostasis), which manifests itself in the consensus of the organization members on the basic interests and organizational values, is supported by the type of communicative reflexivity that is dominant among the collective actors.

It has been observed that the projects undertaken by members of the organization, before putting them into practice, require confirmation by others important to them, who create structural (e.g., inherited material interests) and cultural conditions (e.g., internalized ideas, patterns, and family values). Hryniewicz has a similar type of observation about the morphostatic type of attitude in Polish SMEs. According to his research, stability in these family businesses must be preceded by detailed regulations. This leads to the overregulation of economic life. Safe activity is a family activity. Hence, there is a reluctance of the owners to pool their capital and transfer power outside the family. This is accompanied by conservatism and a strong aversion to innovators, perceived as individuals who put themselves above the group and harm the group bond [8].

As a result, the above type of reflectivity limits social mobility, as well as professional and economic aspirations. The subject of action, from among the available alternatives, chooses to care for harmonious relations in the work environment. In the morphostatic reality, i.e., the duration of the resentment structural and cultural context, and the communicative type of reflexivity is not only their product but also restores their contextual continuity.

In a state of organizational morphostasis, group resentments and destructive group emotions close to them also limit the existing potential of social capital, the trust in interaction partners in a given organization, weakens the existing organizational culture, and permanent institutional and personal ties [60–62] (see the stages of organizational

morphostasis presented above) of the surveyed enterprises). The resentment effect that consolidates the state of morphostasis is the adoption by the organization members of the attitude of a double axiological awareness and migration.

On the other hand, the disagreement between the main actors as to the existing distribution between the structural and cultural contexts or the emergence of new collective actors resulting from a new difference of interest, new ideas, and values that question the existing distribution of structural and cultural forces, leads to organizational morphogenesis. In a situation of contextual discontinuity, i.e., waiting for changes or introducing changes in the system of basic interests and organizational values, means that resentment contexts not only limit the emergence of innovation but also strengthen morphogenetic states and activate new causative entities. The factor dynamizing morphogenetic activities among the members of the organization, which in the situation of contextual discontinuity is strengthened by the potential of past resentment tensions, is autonomic reflexivity.

Due to contextual discontinuity, the internal conversation of such entities is individualized and not mediated by consultations with the immediate environment (e.g., superiors, opinion leaders). The lack of a reference to significant others is conducive to the pursuit of self-realization and is especially practical. The entities characterized by autonomous reflexivity relatively quickly, after formulating the project, move on to its implementation. The conditioning mentioned above makes it easier to overcome the limitations inherent in existing structural and cultural contexts.

Resentment effects arise in the morphogenetic state, for example, adopting the attitude of the acceptance of change as a negation of the current state, and is a factor of working through from communicative reflexivity (morphostasis) to autonomic reflexivity (morphogenesis).

8. Discussion of the Results and Theoretical and Practical Implications

At this point, a methodological and interpretative reservation regarding the obtained research results should be made. If we disregard the results obtained during the FGI, it could be concluded, taking only the SWOT analyses into account, that emphasizing opportunities and possibilities by the respondents to a greater extent than the limitations and threats would be one of the manifestations of morphogenetic attitudes and the dominance of autonomic reflexivity. However, a holistic and triangular approach to the results obtained from the focus interviews and SWOT questionnaires gives grounds for more morphostatic interpretations. Similarly, morphostatic conclusions were obtained by the behavioral economics team of the Polish Economic Institute. Fear of change and taking risks were found to be the main variable that disrupted innovation activities for the vast majority of Polish entrepreneurs [8,30].

What theoretical and practical implications does the article bring to the existing knowledge about SMEs?

When analyzing organizational barriers to an agency, references were made to the theory of morphogenetic structure, the agency, critical realism [35,65–67], and the concept of group resentment [1]. The author has not found in the existing literature the subject of conceptualization and operationalization of the resentment barriers of agency in business organizations. Therefore, a proprietary research procedure was created to diagnose the potential of resentment structural and cultural contexts and explain the effects of their effects in a situation of contextual continuity or discontinuity. The two case studies (Section 5) were characterized by a diachronic approach, taking into account the causal relationships linking elements in structural and cultural properties, as well as the causative possibilities of the groups burdened with resentment.

According to Archer, the feature of the agency is not only the subject's ability to act but it is also reflected in the very existence of this subject [43,68]. Therefore, the very existence of certain groups of workers as subjects of collective action is proof of their agency. Although in the analyzed organizational contexts, the agency of their participants assumes mainly a morphostatic character, it focuses on maintaining the existing contextual continuity.

Conducting diachronic causal analyzes among employees of the company from the IT industry and the photovoltaic services industry allowed the author to demonstrate the conditioning between the scope of existing resentment barriers (structural and cultural), the type of dominant reflectivity among their members and the possibilities of innovation within these organizations. Their application to the analysis of broader resentment contexts in organizational meso- and macrostructures requires further research.

9. Conclusions, Limitations, and Future Research

Small and medium-sized enterprises are certain entities, not only economic or social but also cultural. They are conditioned from the outside, from the macro, meso, and microenvironment. However, they also develop specific (formal and informal) social (domination and subordination), psychosocial (envy and resentment), and cultural (values) conditions. Hence, there is a need for broad and contextual analysis, especially at the beginning of the exploration of the issue. In addition, the issue of organizational activities burdened with group resentments, in accordance with the theoretical directives of Margaret Archer, should include the co-conditioning of structural and cultural factors and the possibility of agency in the context of the members of the organization. It was also necessary to take into account the conditioning of psychological origin, i.e., the types of reflectivity undertaken by a given subject. The author conducted analyses that implement the above theoretical assumptions and the resulting methodological directives (triangulation of quantitative and qualitative methods that provided data for morphogenetic causal analyzes).

Sustaining contextual continuity (morphostasis), which is manifested by the consent of the members of the organization as to the basic interests and organizational values, is supported by the dominant type of communicative reflexivity. In the realities of the resentment structural and cultural context, the communicative type of reflexivity is not only their product but also restores their contextual continuity. Thus, it limits the organization's ability to undertake innovative processes.

The factor that dynamizes innovative activities among the members of the organization is the existence of autonomous reflexivity. It intensifies when a contextual discontinuity appears. In such circumstances, the need for organizational changes is reinforced by past resentment tensions. This change is also being made through the marginalization of the so-far dominant type of communicative reflexivity.

What limitations did the author face while performing the presented research?

- A. The main difficulty in conducting the investigation was the lack of prior operationalization of the issue of the emergence and duration of group resentments and resentment barriers in business organizations and, thus, the lack of appropriate empirical research. It was necessary to create a set of indicators for the individual parameters of the model of the analysis of the duration and organizational change derived from the Scheler group resentment concept and the assumptions of Archer's morphogenetic causal analysis, that is, the parameters of diagnosis, interaction, and workmanship between the structural and cultural context and the agency of SME staff.
- B. It was also difficult to convince the project participants, entrepreneurs, and managers, to participate openly and actively in focus interviews. This was because, during the FGI, they were asked about, among other things, the psychologically difficult issues of negative group emotions, envy, and resentment arising from innovation processes.
- C. The author had to be aware of specific historical, structural, and cultural determinants that affect the management of small and medium enterprises in Poland.

The task for the future remains to expand the scope of research on resentment barriers of agencies in conducting innovations to a representative number of regional SMEs and, in the longer term, to undertake cross-regional and multinational comparative research. Specific historical, structural, and cultural conditions influencing the management of small and medium-sized enterprises in Poland may make it difficult to construct cross-border comparative studies. However, there are greater or lesser layers of negative group emotions and resentment tensions that exist in all societies and organizations, incl. concerning

the delegation of powers and the redistribution of income that justify undertaking the above-mentioned research.

In addition, the author intends to develop theoretical works, build methodological constructions adequate to them, and study the structural, cultural, and awareness barriers of subjectivity (including barriers to resentment) that appear when introducing innovations not only in the area of SMEs but also in larger business organizations. Cognitively, it will be interesting to: (1) diagnose the difference between the dominant types of reflexivity among SME employees in relation to the reflexivity of employees of large enterprises; (2) identify the relationship between the effectiveness of introducing innovations and the type of reflexivity dominating in a given organization, in which the independent variable will be the size of the enterprise.

A way to reduce resentment barriers in the organizational realities analyzed is the introduction of a participatory management style that is often innovative in Polish realities, expressed through the sustainable development of products, processes, and organizations, but also horizontal structures, autonomous experts [8,67,69–71]. It would also be necessary to introduce participatory communication within the organization, especially in innovative activities that are flexible and based on trust in the employees delegating competencies in innovation processes. The set of the aforementioned activities would lead to the transformation of the enterprise into a participant in a sustainable economy. Participation in market processes should be accompanied by a simultaneous increase in the organization's contribution to the common good of employees and their environment, their wider social well-being, and their sustainable lifestyle (see Appendix C).

The above application recommendations will be implemented in small and medium-sized enterprises through the implementation of subsequent projects, not only of a diagnostic and analytical nature, e.g., through branch marketing analyses but also through direct action research [69,72,73]. These goals will be implemented through the participation of external expert groups in the individual areas of innovation of a given company: pro-innovative attitudes, competencies, processes and strategies, perception of the environment, customer orientation, or branding [19,74,75].

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Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was conducted in accordance with the guidelines of the Helsinki Declaration and approved by the Project Ethics Committee on 1 February 2019.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Appendix A

The author collected the empirical research material presented as the creator and co-implementer of the project “Silesian staff for innovative entrepreneurship”, which was implemented in 2017–2019 under the European Social Fund (EU), action 11.3 Regional Operational Program of the Silesian Voivodeship. The project aimed to increase the competencies of 180 participants in the field of knowledge, qualifications, and skills in the field of innovation and innovation project management, information and communication technologies, and e-marketing. The project target group consisted of managers of small and medium enterprises in Upper Silesia. The analysis of the enterprises was based on the evoked research materials: 16 focus group interviews with their 180 representatives and 120 implementation projects carried out by them. They contained SWOT analyses of the surveyed enterprises.

The main scopes of questions that make up the scenario of the focus group interview (FGI):
The area: understanding of innovation

1. What are the characteristics of an innovative company?
2. Which company do you think is an innovation leader?
3. Who in the company has the decisive influence on whether the company is innovative?
4. What in the company determines whether the company is innovative?

The area: resentment and innovation

1. What barriers do you see in your company that make it difficult to introduce innovations?
2. Which of the barriers you mentioned relate to interpersonal relationships?
3. Which of the barriers you mentioned relate to the relationship with the environment of the enterprise?
4. What is the meaning of personal and group envy in your company?
5. How can personal and group envy be reduced in your company?

Appendix B

The following encoding was adopted, for example: “a lot of aversions, a lot of envy” [1:94] [729] means that the given citation is in the first base document, is the 94th citation identified in that document, and begins at paragraph 729. Citations and paragraphs are counted in the same way that Atlas.Ti counts them.

Appendix C

Examples of the above sustainable organizational practices can now also be observed in Poland [76]. Their promoter for thirteen years is, among others, the monthly “Manager Magazyn”, then “Dziennik Gazeta Prawna”, and the Kozminski University in Warsaw. Every year, DGP publishes the Ranking of Responsible Companies and Positive Impact Start-ups.

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