

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURES

Culture in Anthropology (ethnographic studies of tribal societies)

“A system of **shared** beliefs, values, customs, behaviours, and artifacts that the members of society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning.”

(Franz Boas)

Organizational Culture (formal organizations & informal groups)

“The pattern of basic assumptions that **a given group** has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that have worked well enough **to be considered valid**, and, therefore to be taught to new members as **the correct way** to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.”

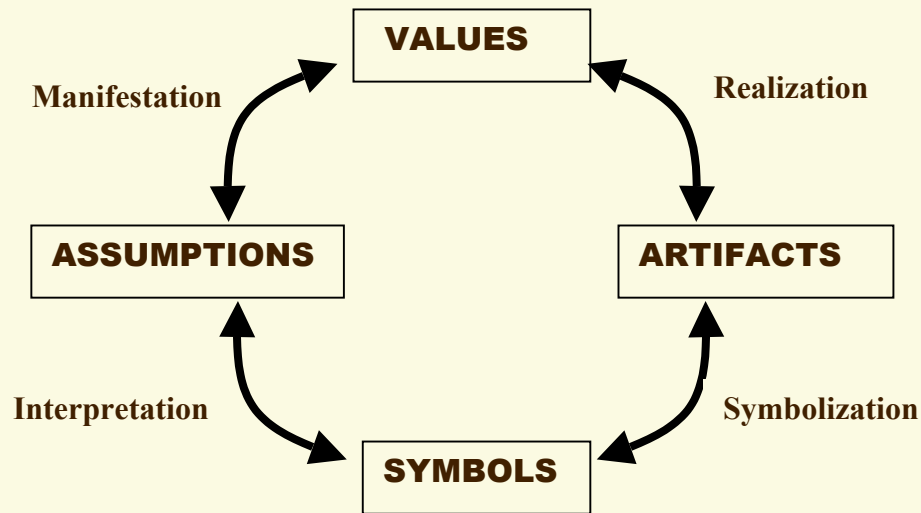
(Edgar H. Schein)



Note that organizational culture creation involves institutionalizing a group's shared beliefs, values, and norms (taken-for-granted legitimation) through organizational learning processes

HATCH'S CULTURAL DYNAMICS

Schein developed a 3-level model, which Mary Jo Hatch expanded into her cultural dynamics model with four concepts (“VASA”) and four linking processes



The Domain of Cultural Dynamics (Hatch 1993)

Cultural changes occur through clockwise & counter-clockwise influences over time (generating a spiraling double-helix image)

ARTIFACTS & SYMBOLS

Artifacts and Symbols are surface components

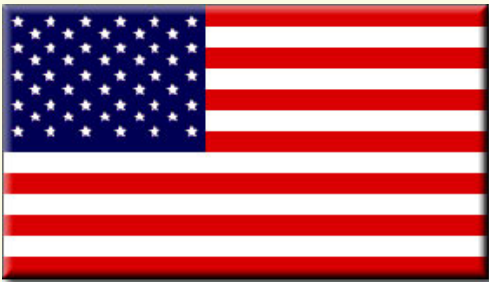
Artifacts: the visible, tangible and audible results of activity nature grounded in values and assumptions

Symbols: anything that represents a conscious or unconscious association with some wider, usually more abstract concept or **meaning**

Symbolization process turns artifacts into symbols through the experience of meanings

Interpretation process specifies those meanings

EX What symbolic meanings do you attribute to these artifacts? Have their meanings changed as result of recent events?



VALUES & ASSUMPTIONS

Assumptions and Values are deep-structure elements

Assumptions: taken-for-granted beliefs about reality & human nature

Values: social principles, philosophies, goals, and standards considered to have intrinsic worth

Manifestation occurs when specific values, behavioral norms evoked perceptually, cognitively, or emotionally

Realization occurs when values expressed in outcomes or acts

EX 3M Corp describes itself as having a “Culture of Innovation.”

- What underlying assumptions does 3M make regarding human creativity and learning capabilities?
- How are those assumptions manifested as values of employees in R&D dept, product marketing, human resource management?
- Which org'l artifacts express its values (e.g., reward ceremonies)?

SYMBOLIC BUILDINGS I

Organizational cultures are most visibly symbolized in such artifacts as logos, brands, and buildings. What corporate cultural assumptions and values are expressed by Walt Disney's HQ building in Burbank, CA:



SYMBOLIC BUILDINGS II

Now consider the Chiat Day advertising firm with such clients as Apple Computer, Seagram, & Levi's

What's the meaning of this entrance to their Venice, CA, office building?
(Designed by Frank Gehry, who also designed U of MN's Wiseman Art Museum, in collaboration with pop artist Claes Oldenburg)



ORG'L SUBCULTURES

Subcultures Given ambiguities held by many participants, we shouldn't assume the existence of a unitary organizational culture

Differentiated org'l subcultures persist, especially among various occupational communities making different assumptions about what's important

- Alternative values and interests, competing occupational commitments overwhelm conformity to a single corporate culture
- Many participants resist the culture & ideology imposed by the org's dominant coalition (owners, managers)

Schein identified **three conflicting subcultures** inside many companies, whose integration requires better understanding how these occupational communities learn and interact.

What incompatible assumptions and values are held by:

1. Executives – in charge of overall corporate strategic direction
2. Engineers – professionals engaged in research & design
3. Operators – direct production & service activities



EXERCISE: U of M CULTURE



We all know something about the organizational culture (and subcultures) of the University of Minnesota. Let's see whether we can collectively identify some of the U's core assumptions, values, artifacts, and symbols:

- **Each group works on one of the 4 components**
- **Re-assemble and list some of these elements**
- **Discuss how these cultural elements are connected**
- **How and why is the University's culture changing?**



The DARK SIDES of CULTURE

Root of both culture and cult derived from Latin “cultus” = cultivate, care, adoration

Greedy institutions: Pathologies of unconstrained demands that members internalize a total-institution identity

Absorption of individual’s personality into the org’s mission, to neglect of alternative external ties to family, friends, community

At extreme, cult-like orgs enforce a structural isolation & complete milieu control that allows them to dominate via the one-directional flow of information

- Korean POW camps’ coercive persuasion [“brain-washing”] (Schein)
- Domsday religious cults (Jonestown; Branch Davidians; Heaven’s Gate)
- Even direct sales orgs such as Mary Kay Cosmetics; Herbal Life; Amway

CIA's INEPT CULTURE

Central Intelligence Agency, with FBI, blamed for failure to identify, infiltrate, and stop the 9/11 terrorist attacks



Despite \$ billions, CIA culture still prepares for Cold War conventional armed conflicts

After USSR fell, CIA cut overseas HUMINT & dismantled spy recruiting operations; relied heavily on technical data collection, foreign intelligence service reports, & CNN!

CIA grew “increasingly bureaucratic and unwilling to take risks and has promoted officers who shared such values” (S. Hirsch)

To succeed, CIA must change its culture to reward:

- **increasing cooperation with other agencies**
- **rebuilding clandestine (undercover) operations**
- **getting in bed with dirty informants & assassins**

CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP

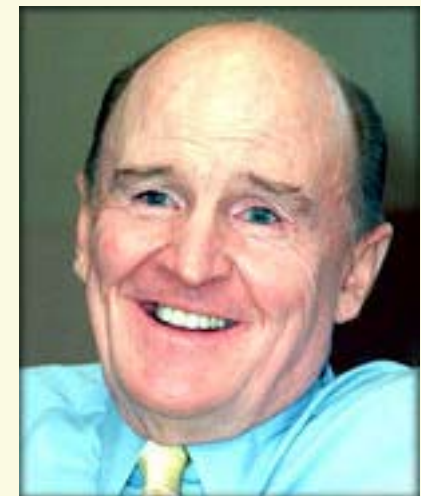
Hatch adapted Max Weber's theory of charismatic leadership to explain both cultural stability & change



- Charismatic leader (“entrepreneur”) introduces new artifacts into org’l culture; e.g., policies, programs, rhetorical styles
- Change occurs only if followers transform **artifacts** (incl. leader’s example) into **symbols** having new meanings *within culture’s existing frames of meaning*
- **Routinization of charisma** dampens revolutionary impacts, “makes change possible by blending it with stability (i.e., giving it continuity and coherence)”

EX General Electric CEO Jack Welch widely seen as super-manager whose confrontational style (“Neutron Jack”) legitimated cutting costs & employees to boost corporate profits

Did Welch create innovations that made GE a model to emulate, or was his genius in understanding changes well under way & positioning himself at the head of the parade?



'SEX' at 'WORK'

Hearn & Parkin: sexuality is present in cultural processes that penetrate into every aspect of organizational life

Heterosexual males maintain their patriarchal power by:

- Altering spatial proximity & distance to women and other men
- Valuing men's emotions & desires over women's
- Dominating org'l ideology & consciousness
- Developing patriarchal language and imagery of orgs (e.g., ads)

Has sexualization of orgs changed with increased presence of women in more powerful roles & professions?

GROUP EXERCISE: What attributes and qualities do these organizational jobs signify:

MANAGER

SECRETARY

MID-TERM EVALUATIONS

Fill out customary rating scales

Write suggestions about course content & methods:

- **Readings (book & papers)**
- **Films**
- **Lectures**
- **Class discussions**
- **Group exercises & activities**
- **Writing assignments & grading**
- **Webpage materials**
- **Service learning component**
- **On-line bulletin board**