

ORGANIZATIONAL MYTHS: UNCONSCIOUS BASICS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Konstantin Olkhovikov – Svetlana Olkhovikova

Abstract

Organizational culture is a key factor of successful corporate and individual activity. Finally, organizational culture adds up to a market sustainability of the company. However, there is no cognitive agreement in comprehending this phenomenon in modern theory of management. People consciously invent and declare some rules, while unconsciously living by and submitting to other ones. To overcome this conflict situation, at least within one individual organization, means to understand what is primary and what is secondary in an organizational culture. To be “working” for company means to obtain the organizational culture which includes “living” myths, underpinned by real archetypes and by emotional appeal, which is significant and filled with sense. Confidence is an essential process in constructing and accepting organizational culture, resulting in social responsibility. Psychological manipulations can induce confidence phenomenon artificially. But artificial myths are negative, express the personalities’ destructive characteristics. ‘True’ mythology stimulates collective unconsciousness, strengthens autonomy of organization, which is linked to ‘mutuality’ inside and outside organization, resulting in feeling of social responsibility. When we talk about responsibility in social technologies sphere, we accentuate situational characteristics, which here and then are anthropological, and mythological as well.

Key words: organization, culture, myth, confidence, unconscious

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Introduction

Organizational culture is important strategically as well as in a quotidian activity. Still, the frequency of ‘organizational culture’ to be mentioned in actual managerial discursive practices is far from signifying unanimity of the term usage. A few words to vindicate the rights of the unconscious as equally predictable with the rational in understanding the

organizational culture are desperately needed. First of all, unconscious is not about irreversibly uncontrollable, moreover, it is about the inner qualities of reliable control as a social phenomenon. Predictability goes side by side with non-rational from a subjective point of view but objectively logical intentions and modes of action. People consciously invent and declare some rules, while unconsciously living by and submitting to other ones. To overcome this conflict situation, at least within one individual organization, means to understand what is primary and what is secondary in an organizational culture. Let us have a look at a draft version of organizational mythology.

1. Actual expert judgements on organizational culture: a few words on methodology

Organizational culture? Mostly, experts agree on alternative rationality status of these phenomena (organization and culture) as well as the intent to investigate them. “Development programs for entrepreneurs should incorporate culture-building skills to increase organizational competitiveness. Programs for entrepreneurs should incorporate culture-building skills to increase organizational competitiveness” (Abdullaha, Shamsuddinb, Wahabc, Hamid, 2014, p. 145). The predominant view of organizational culture falls within the range of instrumental perception of cultural elements that could be found in every organization. Hence, the instrumental turn that will accentuate the organizational mythology, also leads to risks assessment and optimization of non-formal aspects of organizational structure; or it should lead to some benefits for the perceptions of management at least. At the same time the well-known subject of non-economic efficiency arises and accompanies the discourse: “Organizational culture is not fully visible, but an observer can directly recognize behavior or culture symbols in an organization. Values form a central point of the organizational culture concept” (Urban, 2015, p. 729). Values in any authentic version fall beyond the limits of executable goal-setting, securing again the territory of unconscious intents and beliefs. Any argumentation relying on organizational culture cannot also escape the pros and cons of spontaneous social regulation, that is morality, and inevitably overloads management pragmatics with ethical intents: “Ethical organizational culture as a social phenomenon has drawn scholars and organizations’ attention after the global economic crisis in 2008 which, once again, proved the importance of the ethical component of organizational culture as a phenomenon potentially accounting for organizational failures.” (Novelskaite, 2014, p. 186). That is what can go on forever, but not optimistically signifying humanity

distant future as a true organizational culture, but still more in the sense of endless infinity of formally limited types of thinking about organizational culture as actually conceivable phenomenon.

Finally, it is true that organizational culture adds up to a market sustainability of company. “Culture is not just a factor of business success or failure; a positive culture can have a significant competitive advantage” (Mohelska, Sokolova, 2015, p. 1012). But how culture really works? However, there is no cognitive agreement in comprehending this phenomenon in modern theory of management. And the reasons are nowadays frequently linked to irrationalities of collective behavior and collective thinking. The most popular definitions of organizational culture include collective values, senses, tales, symbols, patterns, ways, mores, moods, myths, etc., which are in fact imperceptible as products of collective unconsciousness. “Since 1990, development of leadership theories turned to cultural influences due to the differences in the cultures of leadership and their social environment. At the global level, researches can show different aspects of leadership based on the separation of East and West world in particular.” (Top, Öge, Atan, Gumus, 2015, p. 12-13). The ups and downs of transformations within public institutional sphere of ex-socialist countries can but vindicate such attention to particular cultural aspects.

2. Types of organizational culture

In a number of models for organizational culture we can identify dominating features concerning the basics of a given culture; these are (1) “natural”, or evolutionary, and (2) goal-rational types of models. Therefore, so called “effective management” is up to a “mixed” model which is hardly realizable in practice. Real companies actually apply the second type of model (that is, goal-rational) which is absolutely artificial, ignores and subverts “natural” subcultures that could exist in an organization.

The rigorist type of organizational culture lies outside the premises of humanitarian technologies, is essentially destructive, and violent towards personalities. Romantic hopes to counterbalance the ethical approach by the strict calculated ones could lead only to a more perfect way of evading human problems in the organizations. The ineffectiveness of different psycho-trainings is definitely conditioned by impossibility to create a universal method of influencing people, because of every personality uniqueness. Nevertheless, people could be and are influenced, just not only being manipulated, what shows the reality of misperceptions within working organizational schemes and patterns for social regulation and social rule of

staff. Nonetheless, the first type of model (that is, “natural”) could not be effective in its “pure” version, fore being spontaneously reflective to its conditions of origin, it will heavily need some definitely conscious corrections and rule in changing situations. Forming a “mixed” organizational culture reiterates the civilizational conflict which is global – the conflict of consciousness and unconscious.

A philosophy of company, including values and beliefs, starts from the basics of myths, rituals, tales, and symbols, where the latter are primary sense forms, and not vice versa. Symbols do not create myths, but symbols can make myths actual. Whenever some inexistent emotions are conscripted to justify rational formula, just to insert an alive human being into that non-living construction, a new instrument of torture is produced, alike to “Spanish boot”, but named the “organizational culture”. To be “working” for company means for the organizational culture to include “living” myths, underpinned by real archetypes, by emotional appeal, which is significant and filled with sense. Myth has a function to give a pattern, a model. Due to this, the most important part of any mythology is a story of original creation, of origins.

3. Organizational mythology

Patterns of behavior and activity come from symbolic heroes who took part in company creation. Mythology includes rituals that give perpetrators a feeling of energy coming from “original creation”. According to M. Eliade (2005), the significance of ritual is hard to over-evaluate. Ritual makes humans to enlarge their capabilities, to recognize their place nearby gods and mythical heroes to be able to fulfill heroic deeds. Directly, or indirectly myth conditions the “upcoming” of human being.

New organizations miss myths of origins, because such myths could be born with time only. Due to this, another difficulty for creating mixed organizational culture appears – historicism principle contradicts the fact of plasticity, which is characteristic to newly created or actively changing organizations, meaning the simplicity of reforming basics of culture in such organizations. Chief administrator of organization is also a key figure in forming and supporting the organizational culture; chief administrator is a pattern, a behavioral role model ritually substituting the symbolic heroes. That is why announcements, calls, and declarations of administration to be effective should appeal to employees’ emotions. Director personally influences people, instituting “personality working technique” for involving employees into organizational processes emotionally. To propagate such emotional participation in common

cause means applying and using emotionally induced artistic influences; for example, company hymn, students' songs (reminding of common students' past) and other similar artistic works 'with past'. But to make this symbolic instruments 'working' means also relying on an emotional wave, which comes from chief and his team, and makes organization united in any weather. Thus, chief should be a human of high empathy, able to understand feelings of other person and in the context of situational mythological resources.

Participation feelings, according to L. Levy-Bruhl (2015) come from community of mythology and rituals. Rituals and ceremonies could be a part of motivation strategy. The formation of an organizational culture starts with the enrolment and selection of staff, which is able to make possible social activity of all employees in the organization. Enrolment and staffing are called to select definitely wanted candidates, who are carriers of wanted organizational culture. Basic values and archetypes of existing organizational culture should define the criteria to assess vocational culture of applicants.

If and only if the unconscious level of compatibility with organizational values is evaluated at the start of enrolment process, the company gradually grows its staff with highly motivated and loyal employees, worth confidence. Confidence is an essential process in constructing and accepting organizational culture. But confidence is also the necessary condition of mythological thinking. Confidence comes with mutual comprehension and participation. Psychological manipulations can induce confidence phenomenon artificially. But artificial myths are negative, personality destructive character. Confidence naturally grows through personality living experience, relying on representations of truthfulness, honesty, benevolence, and correctness. Confidence is formed by influences of numerous factors, including common values of social milieu.

The sources of confidence in organization are openness of data, just basic norms, and social attitudes, together they create opportunities to express personal interests and influence decision-making processes, and last not least, come good will, honesty, and professional competence of administrators, guaranteed by stability of rules, contracts, and partnership in the organization. Confidence is a survival factor for organizations during crisis periods, because of low stress in communities with high confidence level. So, organizational culture leads to maximization of integrity, by uniting people in some new wholeness.

The archetype of Self is the prototype for such wholeness of collective unconsciousness of organization. Rational level of wholeness is equivalent to ideas of cooperation, co-work, and solidarity. Organization adapts effectively in the environment through realizing the wholeness. A. Maslow (2004) called this an effect of internal and

external synergy, leading to maximum motivation and loyalty. 'True' mythology stimulates collective unconsciousness, strengthens autonomy of organization, which is linked to 'mutuality' inside and outside organization, resulting in feeling of social responsibility.

Moreover, we should keep in mind the versatile transformation of public institutions, including last not least the higher education in most countries of the world. Romanian authors underline the specifics which turns out astonishingly acquainted to researchers in other countries, and in Russia also: "The organizational culture of a public institution, as opposed to the organizational culture of a private organization, is developing within a broader spiritual matrix" (Rus, Rusu, 2015, p. 566).

The Ural federal university is only five years old, still incorporating two respectable soviet-style brands of Ural polytechnic institute and Ural state university. Both could not be mixed without self-destruction because of relying on separate and autonomous myths of their creation almost for one hundred years. Ural federal university structures are abundantly using all kinds of branding attacks and net types of public opinion manipulations, but all these means do not help. Projects, rating, and even financing cannot compensate mutual participation nurtured by organizational myths exclusively. In this case, we can clearly see that modernization, or optimization can easily sleep to sheer destruction of still alive organizational foundations and lead to straight diminutiveness and humiliation of professors. However, the crossroad of no-return is not passed yet. Any transformation could be only partially manageable, and the unpredictable surprises of personal reactions fall distinctively into the unconscious logics of myth. New organization is weak without parents, and parental organizations in case of Ural federal university are not just bad patterns or obsolete prototypes, but should be recognized as basic value treasures in a new aspects and really new prospective situations.

Conclusion

Management procedures indulge different methods and technologies unpredictable in relationships with organizational culture. Administrative and economic approaches usually do not catch the actual situation. Differentiation of organizational living worlds moves the pragmatic evaluations closer to social engineering. Thus, psychoanalytical methods compensate the traditional rational calculative judgements in their application to cultural contexts of organization. The limits of commandments as prescriptions are already reached and exhausted. These limits show, that management is not only functional goal setting and

gain, but also presupposes the consummation of organization as a holistic entity. ‘Soft’ methods open new resources of emulation in modern organizational life. Moreover, the softer and simultaneously relevant diagnostics is needed. However, psycho-trainings are for the most part a bait for old mechanisms of manipulation and objectification of staff. Missing the organizational culture leads to personalities destruction. The extent of internal aggression in the organization cannot change the organizational environment for the better. It is a pity that modern law does not incorporate norms which restrain the psychological violence, perpetrated by institutionalized means, or by means of administrative pressure. Constructive emulation of organizations goes hand in hand with a free will of personality. The unconscious of organizational activities has no alternatives in producing and reproducing cultural meanings and senses. All these conclusions are derived from authors’ personal ideal experimenting, that is research.

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Contacts

Konstantin Olkhovikov

Ural Federal University

620002, 19 Mira street, Ekaterinburg, Russia (www.urfu.ru)

ok.konstantin@gmail.com

Svetlana Olkhovikova

Ural Federal University

620002, 19 Mira street, Ekaterinburg, Russia (www.urfu.ru)

S.V.Olkhovikova@urfu.ru