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ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Organizations have aspects of culture that are particular to them, and it is these particular aspects of culture that help to define the organization. "Organizational culture is represented by the norms, beliefs, values, and attitudes of those within the culture" (Tosi, Rizzo, and Carroll 1986, 65). Patterns of assumptions or beliefs or philosophical roots of the organization influence the culture. These assumptions shape those within the organization and are shared by the founder, leaders, and employees. Those in the organization are influenced by the culture and, in turn, influence the culture based on their lived experience in the organization. "In short, the content of culture derives from a combination of prior assumptions and new learning experiences" (Sathe 1985, 14).

Organizations differ according to their history, purposes, and structures, in the scope of their moral and cultural integration, and in the extent to which commitment to core values and exemplary behavior is required or enforced (Sergiovanni and Corbally 1984, 126).

The expression of the values and assumptions which are sufficiently central o the life of the community are the ones of major significance.

It is assumed that there are basic value assumptions that are the essence of the entire Catholic school system. Like all other areas of culture, exactness in defining Catholic school culture may prove difficult since there is a very general "Catholic school culture" and a more particular school culture based upon the group/order administering the school. Each group/order brings a particular meaning to the educational experience depending upon the

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philosophy of the order. There are, however, some basic norms, beliefs, values, and attitudes particular to the Catholic school system.   One of the basic tenets of the Catholic school system is the formation of good Christians, that is, those who profess belief in the truths and practices required by the Church (Buetow 1988, 13). "A definition of the Catholic school, whatever else it indicates, must contain the teaching of faith" (Buetow 1988, 16).

In his book, <u>The Catholic School: Its Roots, Identity, and Future</u>, Buetow further states that the Catholic school is a place:

> ...where evangelization should take place-an introduction to the gospel for children who may come from homes that have never heard the good news. The difficulty in trying to apply Catholic faith to culture, as Catholic schools must do, is that Catholic schools must do it without allowing faith to be submerged by culture, and at the same time not allowing culture to become subservient to faith (Buetow 1988, 15).

Catholic schools are not neutral. They propose many Christian values to students, aboveboard and out in the open, in subject area and in co-curricular activities, in liturgies and other religious celebrations. Their teachers also have many indirect ways of presenting values, but they are techniques of teaching or symbols or posters that are supportive of the basic values of both the children and their parents (McDermott 1985, 50).

Catholic schools exist for more than education in a general sense. They also exist as integrators of faith, and life, and culture (McDermott 1985, 21). The very essence of their culture is the formation of community. They have been brought into existence by the believing community of laity, religious, and clerics. They support and nourish those within the community of believers by focusing on the message of Paul that each person has a gift which is shared with others in order to form one body, the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12). Faith is the unifying factor for people in the community and the community

helps to support a person's faith. "Faith is a gift from God which calls men to conver-

sion....The Christian community...lives in a mature faith, constantly [striving] for

conversion and renewal" (General Catechetical Directory 1971, 21-22).

It is the sense of community and common vision that is part of the culture of the

Catholic school. The Catholic school proposes for itself and for its students a values laden

education.

> The Catholic schools have a vision and values: a vision of Jesus Christ
> calling all members of the school to be an active community of faith in
> restoring all things in Christ; values like faith, hope, reconciliation, courage,
> service, justice, and love (McDermott 1985, 58).

Although all Catholic education is based in a faith and community, not all Catholic

schools are the same in their culture or the actual lived experience. "The concrete

expression [of community and the faith experience] will correspond to the specific

charism of the religious institute that founded the school and continues to direct it"

(Flannery 1988, 645).

CHARISM

The cultural assumptions and/or experiences are sometimes called charisms, that

is, beliefs, norms, or values which particularize the gospel message to a style within a

religious order. These may be called corporate charism to distinguish them from one

individual's style or way or doing things. The charism of the religious order sets the

cultural tone within the life of the order and influences all aspects of life within the order.

"The specific charism which all the members share in common is primarily identified with

the corporate personality of the group itself" (Clark 1988, 117). What is called culture

within the secular community may be defined by the word, charism, within a religious

order. "It is this communal charism that is largely instrumental in establishing the group's corporate identity" (Clark 1988, 117). As part of the Catholic school culture, that is, the basic assumptions and beliefs, there is an element of the spiritual/supernatural aspect of life. The particular set of norms by which this spiritual element is interpreted is the charism of the religious order. It is the "corporate image" of people working together "enhanced by the importance of the supernatural dimension of the community of faith for the transmission of religious belief, the presence of a shared charism of education" (Clark 1988, 118) that establishes the culture of the school.

Religious orders within the Church in America took up the work of education in order to transmit these values. How the Christian values were presented depended upon the specific character, charism, or educational philosophy of the religious order in each school (Flannery 1982, 644-645).

As the Church grew in America, the number of Catholic schools also grew until the mid-1960's. The "specific charism of the religious institute that founded the school and continues to direct it" (Flannery 1988, 645) influenced the culture within the school. Because of the large numbers of religious within the Catholic schools, the school took on the culture of the particular religious order that was administering the school. The spirit of the religious order infiltrated the school, if for no other reason than many of the teachers within the school itself had the "lived-experience" of the order as the foundation for what and why they were in education. If enough people share the same basic assumptions, those assumptions become part of the very cultural fiber of the school.

Things began to change in the mid '60s. From 1965 to 1983 there was a loss of approximately 4000 Catholic schools within the United States and a loss of approximately

two-and-a-half million students (Ganley 1983, xiii). Part of the reason for this decline was the decline in the numbers of teaching religious within religious orders; and, secondly, those religious who remained began to focus on other apostolates such as issues of the poor and needy. The educational apostolate was no longer the sole focus of some religious within their orders.

As the numbers of religious who are in the educational ministry of their orders declined, more and more lay people became directly involved with the administration of the religious order schools. What was once assured by sheer numbers, that is, that the school would take on the characteristic virtues or the charism of the order, could no longer be presumed. As teacher turnover took place, no longer could the religious orders assume that those teachers within the school would know, understand, and accept the cultural foundations of the order. Therefore, the passing on of the basic cultural assumptions upon which these schools were founded became a challenge for the members of the religious orders operating the schools.

The more positively the stakeholders' perceptions align with the principles of Marianist education the more congruence there is between the culture of the school and the beliefs and assumptions of the Marianist order. The closer the alignment, the more influence the Marianist culture has had upon the school culture and the more effectively the school operates in terms of educating students in light of the Marianist principles. As the number of lay people continues to increase in the Marianist schools, there is a continuing need to impart the aspects of culture that help to characterize the Marianist school in order for the school to be true to its mission and its charism.

ELEMENTS OF CULTURE

Efforts to understand organizational culture are similar to the Sufi story of the blind men trying to describe the elephant. Many people are interested in the culture of an organization but each person pursues it from a particular point of view. Depending on the point of view of the person surveying the culture, the "elephant" will have a different attribute. Some people are concerned with the origins of the culture and what continues to feed the culture, the "trunk of the culture", so to speak. Other people are concerned with the perspective of how the culture has affected the members of the organization (Frost 1985, 82). These are the people who live in the shadow of the "elephant" since it affects all they do. In either case, what is real is that the cultural elephant is larger than any one focus (Frost 1985, 83).

The attempt to define culture is, in some ways, similar to attempting to holding Jello before it has totally molded. It is known that culture exits, it can be seen and its results are understood but it is difficult to shape it in any one form. Culture, says Sergiovanni, "is an all-purpose term that encompasses everything but specifies nothing with precision..."(Sergi-ovanni and Corbally 1984, 131). There are perhaps as many definitions of culture as there are books about the topic. To review Tosi's definition, it "is represented by the norms, be-liefs, values, and attitudes of those within the culture" (Tosi, Rizzo, and Carroll 1986, 65). "Culture" for Laudin, "is a complex system of relationships that are reciprocal and to which we are conditioned informally and formally (Laudin 1873, 16). Keith Davis describes an organization's culture as "the combination of attitudes, relationships, developed capabilities, habits, and other behavior patterns that characterize the dynamics of an organization" (Davis

1981, 190). And finally, Sathe's view of culture is that it is: "the set of important

assumptions (often unstated) that the members of the community share in common" (Sathe

1985, 10). Thus it can be seen that indeed the concepts of culture are numerous and varied.

ELEMENTS OF CULTURE

In looking at any of the above definitions, plus the many others available, what seems

to be common to all of them is that it is almost impossible to separate each aspect of the

definition of culture from the culture itself since norms, values, attitudes, actions, and beliefs

all are interwoven one with the other to make up culture.

Without going into any extensive connective link among these elements, it may be

important to generally define terms in order to distinguish one from another.

NORMS

Norms are expectations for the behavior of those within organizations. They may not

be written, yet everyone in the organization seems to know them (Kurpoius 1978, 12). Norms

are a related concept of culture. "Norms are prescriptions for behavior that emerge in a

particular social context. They are more tactical and procedural than are internalized beliefs

and values" (Sathe 1985, 13). Norms are standards of expected behavior, for example, be on

time, while values represent a more fundamental assumption, for example, respect for the

individual (Sathe 1985, 13).

VALUES

A value is a "type of belief, centrally located within one's total belief system, about

how one ought or ought not to behave, or about some end-state of existence worth or not

worth attaining" (Rokeach 1968, 124). A value is an "enduring belief that a specific mode of

conduct...is preferable to an opposite...mode of conduct" (Mueller 1986, 5). The values of a culture are made explicit through goals and objectives set forth by the organization. Goals are the things "worth striving for" (Kurpius 1978, 12). Says Mueller, "values are determinants of attitudes" (Mueller 1986, 5).

ATTITUDES

"An attitude is a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner (Rokeach 1968, 112). From another perspective, Laudin describes an attitude as "a state of mind, a way of regarding a person, thing or an idea. Attitudes are fed by values and beliefs" (Laudin 1973, 8-9) and influence behavior. There is a difference between attitude and behavior yet they are related. "Attitudes indicate how people feel about particular objects or situations, as distinct for their actual behavior toward those objects or situations" (Sathe 1985, 13). It is not possible to measure or observe attitudes directly. Their existence can be inferred from their results (Mueller 1986, 1-2). One practical consequence of thinking about attitudes as a type of predisposition is that, by changing attitudes, a change in behavior would also result (Zimbardo, Ebbesen and Maslack 1977, 22).

BELIEFS

"Guiding beliefs and expectations produce norms that powerfully shape the behavior of individuals and groups in the organization" (Davis 1984, 83). Although attitudes affect behavior, internalized beliefs affect both attitudes and behavior and are more central to one's personality (Sathe 1985, 3). And so the cycle restarts. Beliefs influence norms which are the results of beliefs, which create attitudes which influences behavior from which norms are

determined and upon which the culture is developed. Says Stanley Davis, "strong beliefs make for strong culture" (Davis 1984, 8).

CULTURE LIKE LOVE, GOODNESS AND TRUTH?

Answers to such questions as what is this organization about, what is of value here, what do we believe in, why do we function the way we do, and how are we unique come from a definition or description of the organization's culture. The answers to these questions as well as many others, help to create the perceptions about an organization which are the result of the cultural aspects within the organization. Understanding the cultural strands gives a person a sense of orderliness within the organization, provides a sense of purpose and gives meaning to life within the organization (Sergiovanni and Corbally 1984, 112).

In other words, in studying an organization's culture, it may be more important to look at the results or activities of the culture than it is to look at the definition "culture" itself. In this sense, the culture takes its cue from life itself. Can one really define "love" or "goodness" or "truth"? Surely there are definitions for each of these virtues but the definitions are best understood in their expression. People understand virtue and culture because they see them in lived experiences, not necessarily because they are defined.

"All reality is culturally defined" (Laudin 1973, 55). Culture creates a particular point of view, helps to develop attitudes, and is expressed through norms and behaviors. The culture within the organization shapes all of those in the organization and becomes a self-fulfilling socialization process. "Culture, then, is a process that socializes all human beings" (Laudin 1973, 14) within the organization.

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CULTURE EXPRESSED THROUGH PHILOSOPHY. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

"Organizations differ according to their history, purposes, and structures, in the scope of their moral and cultural integration, and in the extent to which commitment to core values and exemplary behavior is required or enforced" (Sergiovanni and Corbally 1984, 126). The need for organizations to develop an integrated philosophical context is crucial since the philosophy expresses the assumptions by which the organization lives its life. These are the expression of the assumptions which are sufficiently central to the life of the community to be of major significance (Sathe 1985, 11). The culture is set by how the basic assumptions are prioritized since these assumptions will be the guiding principles for daily activities and will be the guiding principles to resolve conflict (Sathe 1985, 13).

The culture can be looked at as the complex of basic factors that are always present and influencing the behavior of those within it (Laudin 1973, 9). The synthesis of the guiding beliefs, that is, the cultural foundation stones, can be thought of as the "vision" that underlies an organization's strategic "mission." Yet once the goals are set, it is the daily beliefs that take over. The daily beliefs should flow from the guiding beliefs, assumptions or principles (Davis 1984, 5).

"Organizational culture contributes to the stability of behavior patterns because it results in a form of mental programming of those who join and stay in the organization" (Tosi, Rizzo, and Carroll 1986, 65). Behavior patterns are influenced by the culture. There are some who either come with similar values or find themselves thinking in such patterns. Once indoctrinated into those thought patterns, those same people stay in the organization. The closer the fit between the basic assumptions, which is really the prevailing culture, and

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the individual's values or assumptions, the stronger the culture and the happier the employees who stay in the organization (Davis 1984, 83).

Every person develops a cultural personality as he/she comes in contact with certain persons and events with the organization (Kantor 1982, IX). In a school setting the result is that a student or a teacher or an administrator begins to take on the personality of the school because of the events he/she chooses to attend and the norms that he/she follows. These, in turn, begin to influence a person's attitude toward the culture.

CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS

There are two major implications of culture for an organization. On the one hand, culture brings about clarity, security and direction for an organization. It eases and economizes communications, facilitates organizational decision making and control, and may generate higher levels of cooperation and commitment in the organization (Sathe 1985, 25). On the other hand, the implication of a strong organizational culture can be frightening since it makes any movement toward change within the culture very difficult and challenging. The culture is formed by the norms, beliefs, and attitudes as reflected in the patterns of behaviors of those within that culture. Although it can be argued that changes in conditions, events, and behaviors can and often do occur prior to any changes in norms, beliefs, and attitudes, success in changing the culture usually requires change at both the attitudinal and behavioral levels (Kelley 1980, 2).

In one sense then, each person within an organization participates in the formation of the organization's culture while at the same time each person is a "victim" of that same culture. Once again, in a school setting, the administrators, teachers, students, parents and

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alumni would form the culture while at the same time they would be victims of that culture. If the culture is positive and uplifting, then there are positive returns to the culture. If, however, the culture is negative, then the culture creates negative returns. In either case, people within the culture become victims of that same culture.

Sathe points out three important implications of culture. First, culture develops and changes because of the learning going on in the organization as it copes with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration. Second, because culture is made of existing basic assumptions which do not readily change, any change is "normally incremental and evolutionary rather than radical and revolutionary" (Sathe 1985, 15). And finally, because any organizational culture has its roots in the culture of the wider communities from which the people in the organization come, the content of an organization's culture is apt to be a "variation on a theme" of the wider culture (Sathe 1985, 14-15). As fundamental principles, the guiding beliefs in the general community rarely change. They are held in the realm of "universal truths", and are general enough, however, to accommodate any variety of circumstances (Davis 1984, 4). "Cultural behaviors are therefore definitely influenced in their existence and specific character by the societal situations in which they occur" (Kantor 1982, 86).

People act as they do because they have been "acculturated" to do so. Their behavior is conditioned by the group in which they have developed (Kantor 1982, 10). Therefore, a person coming into an organization for the first time needs to know the culture into which he/she is entering. The closer an individual's "cultural foundation" is to that of the organization's "cultural foundation" the easier it is for that person to feel comfortable and to

adapt to the culture. The greater the distance between the organization's culture and the individual's culture, the greater the stress and the more difficult it is to "feel at home."

Culture permits the study of ways in which people behave similarly and differently (Laudin 1973, 21). It shows the possible place of unity and disunity. The culture of an organization tells the new person how "we do things 'round here!"

CULTURE-ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY

The administrators of organizations are faced with the responsibility of continuing and developing important and positive aspects of the organization's culture.

Without going into an entirely different study here of the influence of administrators on the culture of a school, for example, it has been widely accepted that the chief administrator(s) within a school setting play an important role in setting the tone of the school. This notion will be important for understanding the role that the administrator plays upon the Marianist school culture. Says Sergiovanni: "The administrative influence in school language, metaphors, myths, and ritual in a major factor in the determination of the culture which is reproduced in the consciousness of teachers and pupils" (Sergiovanni and Corbally 1984, 272). One important aspect of the role of the administrator in terms of leadership is to know which set of symbols to call upon at different times to produce the culture that is important to develop (Sergiovanni and Corbally 1984, 120). How the administrator represents the school to others, what areas receive emphasis in budgeting, what philosophy, beliefs, and/or assumptions influence decisions are all crucial in establishing a school's culture. How decisions are promulgated and how they are explained, what one chooses the write about in newsletters, what areas are explained in handbooks, and who one thanks and

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praises for jobs well-done are all determinants of the school's culture. Culture is shared by means of thoughts that the administrator verbalizes. People understand each other when they understand similar language. Language then, becomes the means of sharing the culture (Laudin 1973, 12). Of course, the areas which are singled out for emphasis and the language used to underscore the important points depend upon the basic assumptions that an administrator brings to the position. "The leader is an embodiment of the central purpose of the organization" (Sergiovanni and Corbally 1984, 164).

In organizations, leaders will try to commit others to the values that they themselves believe are good. Organizations are built on the unification of people around values. "The business of being a leader is therefore the business of being an entrepreneur for values" (Sergiovanni and Corbally 1984, 166).

EDUCATION AND THE SOCIETY OF MARY

Although it is the founder who set the tone of the organization, it is the responsibility of those within the organization to continue to live and be moved by the spirit of the founder if the organization is to be true to its mission. For Marianists, then, each one must continue to be a "new founder" in order to both be true to the original mission as well as to move the Society into the cultural times in which it exists.

As one studies the writings of Father Chaminade, it is clear that the spirit of faith, devotion to Mary, and the multiplication of Christians were key ideas. The expression of these ideas may be stated differently in more modern times but the kernel of truth spans the decades since Chaminade's death.

Likewise, there are concerns within the Church today that were not so clearly in

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focus at the time of Chaminade. The Characteristics of Adaptation and Change alone with Justice and Peace come to mind immediately. Although Chaminade did not speak to those specifically, the members of the Society have addressed these concerns in their more recent writings. In many ways, these concerns are true to the heart of the founder if one looks at his concern that the members of the Society have equal status as well as his concern for the members of all classes even from the very beginning of his Society.

The spirit of the Society of Mary can be summarized in the importance of an interior spirit of faith and in apostolic action, or more simply in the idea of being in conformity with Christ (Vasey, Marianist Pres in Educ, 27).

From the earliest times of the Society, education has always played an important part of the organizational culture. Father Chaminade opened schools throughout France. It was one of the purposes for the foundation of the Society. The work of education, however, was not an end in itself. It was the way to "multiply Christians" a favorite phrase of the founder. "Instruction," he says, "is only a means that we employ to fulfill our mission, i.e. to introduce everywhere the spirit of faith and religion and to multiply Christians" (Letters III, 378).

The Characteristics of Marianist Universities express the organizational culture for the Marianist universities today. They set the norms, beliefs, values, and attitudes of those within the culture and help to define the lived experience for the stakeholders. They are noted below.

THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF MARIANIST UNIVERSITIES

Marianist Universities Educate for Formation in Faith
As higher educational institutions, Marianist universities have kept, along with education in the disciplines, a commitment to the development of the whole person, which includes the dimension of religious faith and its personal appropriation and practice.

Marianist Universities Provide an Excellent Education
In the Marianist approach to education, "excellence" includes the whole person, not just the technician or rhetorician. It also includes people with their curricular and extra-curricular experiences, their intellectual and spiritual development, understood and supported best in and through community.

Marianist Universities Educate In Family Spirit
Marianist educational experience fosters the development of a community characterized by a sense of family spirit that accepts each person with loving respect, and draws everyone in the university into the challenge of building community. Community support for scholarship, friendship among faculty, staff and students, and participation in university governance characterize the Marianist University.

Marianist Universities Educate For Service, Justice, and Peace
The Marianist approach to higher education is deeply committed to the common good. The intellectual life itself is undertaken as a form of service in the interest of justice and peace, and the university curriculum is designed to connect the classroom with the wider world. In addition, Marianist universities extend a special concern for the poor and marginalized and promote the dignity, rights and responsibilities of all peoples.

Marianist Universities Educate For Adaptation and Change
In the midst of rapid social and technological change, Marianist universities readily adapt

and change their methods and structures so that the wisdom of their educational philosophy

and spirituality may be transmitted even more fully.

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