

Identifying Organizational Culture

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the historical conceptualization of organizational Culture (OC). It highlights major contributions by researchers in administrative and organizational fields. By classifying twenty major definitions of OC, cited from organizational theory research written between 1979-2005, the authors offer the theoretical assumptions that supported the major works of the era and provide a framework through which the emergence of OC in organizational theory literature may be clearly understood.

Keywords: Organizational Culture, organizational Behavior, Human Relations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizational Culture (OC) has gained increased interest by both organizational theorists and researchers. Since the 1930s, the social transparencies of collective activity have been a major subject in the literature of organization theory. In the late seventies and early eighties, researchers were successfully trying to legitimize the introduction of culture as a new organizational concept. Since then, the most constructive efforts have been directed to find an agreed-upon definition of OC. These efforts have had researchers busy conceptualizing OC and finding meaningful approaches to adapt it. Since the 1990s, the OC literature developed rapidly due, in large part, to the accumulation of quantitative and qualitative studies extending the efforts of researchers in theory building. Researchers adopted new methodologies; moving from using descriptive methodologies to clinical methodologies by viewing an organization as one-unit of analysis (Schein, 1993, 1999). Comparative studies during this period added significance to the OC study (Fraser et al., 2002; Al Khalifa and Aspinwall, 2001; Kit-Fai, 2001; Herselman, 2001; Metle, 2002; Saffu, 2003). To analyze cultural factors, researchers used statistical techniques that measure the likely influence of OC on organizational variables such as performance and change (Van Vianen

and Fischer, 2002; Swierczek and Onishi, 2003). Future studies need to build on the rich literature of OC to better understand the organizational phenomena (Van Vianen and Fischer, 2002; Van Vianen, 2000; Swierczek and Onishi, 2003; Yunxia, 2002; D'Annunzio-Green, 2002; Schultz, 1994).

The purpose of this study is to trace the development of OC in administrative fields, examine the literature written between 1979 and 2005, and construct a framework that can help build a theory of OC. Historically, lacking an OC paradigm has resulted in large part by the fragmentation in the OC literature. This study aims to confront this weakness by comparing and classifying twenty major definitions of OC, and building a framework on their thematic similarities. The framework suggests that OC can develop either from within the organization (internal perspective) or outside it (external perspective). These two perspectives as discussed in the following pages provide invaluable insights for researchers and practitioners.

2. HISTORICAL EMERGENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Organizational culture is the “collective experiences, formulated by multidimensional factors and influenced by the organization’s life, transmitted by individuals and groups from one generation to another as valid ways of dealing with life (Yaghi et al., 2004).” Originally, organizational theorists have borrowed the term “culture” from anthropology and employed it in their research to

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give meaning to organizational symbols such as language, myths, rituals, norms, artifacts, and legends (Smircich, 1983; Cooke and Szumal, 2000). Therefore, the term highlights “organizing” phenomena as a reflection of the human development rather than “organizations” as institutional bodies (Jelink and Smircich, 1983; Glaser and Zamanou, 1987). This social context or social anthropology developed the cultural concept in terms of human-to-human relations within communicative groups (Trice and Beyer, 1993; Schultz, 1994).

The Danish social theorist, Sorensen, refers the culture concept to that stage of ancient human history when people discovered their potential as “land users” (Schultz, 1994). Instead of depending on hunting and animal trapping, humans joined groups that cultivated the land and moved into a more civilized lifestyle and created the stability needed in order to maintain their social organizations; family, tribe, and village (Schultz, 1994). As the “use of land” era become dominant, the cultivation process had evolved as a group-cultural event that created the kinds of social interaction necessary to develop new social structures (Morgan, 1997; Schultz, 1994).

Organizational theorists did not adopt the concept of culture in their literature until the late twentieth century (Reichers and Schneider, 1990; Maslow, 1943; Roethlisberger, 1941, 2001; Follett, 1926; McGregor, 1957). The cultural roots in organization theory, however, may be traced to the works of Hawthorne and Elton Mayo’s research that have been directed to understanding the behavior of human beings in organizations under different conditions (Mayo, 1945). Elton Mayo and W. Lloyd Warner’s research led to a discovery of a new discipline where social context prepared for culture to become a major topic in the works of modern organization theory (Smith, 2001; Louis, 1985; Schein, 1985; Trice and Beyer, 1993). These efforts emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s to shape an enhanced version of organizational culture theory (Trice and Beyer, 1993).

In the late 1970s, organizational theorists dealt with the “culture” as an administrative concept (Pettigrew, 1979; Smircich, 1983; Kolb and Shepherd, 1997). When researchers showed the interaction between employee’s values (as a culture feature) and organization’s activities (as a very well developed artifact of human being), organizational culture (corporate culture) had been developed from anthropological roots and appeared in organization literature as independent concepts (Simon, 1997; Adams and Ingersoll, 1985). Since then,

organizational culture has been highlighted intensively as an administrative phenomenon that has impact on the whole organization, public or private (Pettigrew, 1979, 1990; Schein, 1999, 2001).

3. THE EARLY WORKS IN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Pettigrew (1979) was one of the first administrative scholars to write about culture as an organizational concept. He discussed the anthropological meanings of the new term, arguing that cultural components (i.e., myths, rituals and symbols) could be used in organizational analysis (Pettigrew, 1979; Schein, 1985). Cultural components are those elements of cultural product that explain organizational phenomena (Ott, 1989). They are characterized as visible but hard to decipher such as values, norms, artifacts, habits, traditions, ways of doing things, methods of communication, language, myths, experiences, stories and ways of dressing. These components are shared by a group of people who perform organizational tasks together (Schultz, 1994; Schein, 2001, 1999, 1985). Myths, for example, describe events or behaviors that have occurred in the past and have built an image of success or failure. Rituals and ceremonies are behavior of groups that exemplify a group member’s way of doing things such as sharing coffee in the morning or going on a picnic once a month during which the group discusses work issues or set departmental agenda. Rituals would have symbolic meanings such as solidarity or loyalty to specific values or norms. These cultural components transition from an individual phase (each human has his/her own experience) to a collective phase (individual experiences build a common experience that is large and coherent for the group). When a common experience prevails in an organized entity (institutions or groups), it elaborates into a third phase, which is an organizational phase.

In 1983, *Administrative Science Quarterly* published a special issue on organizational culture and its connection with other organizational concepts (Smircich, 1983; Jelinek and Smircich, 1983). Also, in the same year, *Organizational Dynamics* devoted an issue to papers on the culture concept (see Reichers and Schneider, 1990). We can argue that this devotion points to the emergence of OC into the broader literature of organization theory. Since the 1990s a new stream of research developed in the field of organizational culture that connected this concept with other organizational concepts like total

quality and administrative reformation (Arellano- Gault, 2000; Ashkanasy et al., 2000; Deter, 2000; Silvester and Anderson, 1999; Zetiz et al., 1997; Tata and Prasad, 1998; Sigler and Pearson, 2000; Kit-Fai, 2001; Herguner, 2000; Fedor and Werther, 1995).

4. OC RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT AND DEFINITIONS

Organizational Culture is often described in terms of different kinds of human-related aspects (Krefting and Frost, 1985; Schein, 1999; Young, 2000; Hofstede and Peterson, 2000). Whether it points to a value system, a way of thinking, or ways of action, the definition of OC describes a human phenomenon that explains human behavior within organization systems (Ogbor, 2001; Lim, 1995). OC also serves as a key issue for understanding organizations as whole (Heracleous, 2001; Morgan, 1997; Mercier, 1994).

Because anthropologists utilized the concept of culture before administrative theorists did (Senge, 2001; Van Maanen and Barley, 1985; Reichers and Schneider, 1990), the literature in OC in the early period- before the 1990s- was dominated by anthropologic approaches and researchers focused on conceptualizing the phenomenon of OC by searching for an approved or valid organizational definition for culture (Smircich, 1983; Pettigrew, 1979; Jelinek and Smircich, 1983).

As research efforts grew, new trends appeared that go beyond these definitions. Specialized studies analyzed the functions of OC by tying it to other organizational elements (to assess organizational survival) like performance, effectiveness (Dansereau and Alutto, 1990; Schein, 1985), leadership, and innovation (Offermann et al., 2001; Claver et al., 1999; Lok and Crawford, 1999; Simon, 1997; Claver and Llopis, 1998; Rondeau and Wagar, 1998). Survival is attained by helping organization management adapt with its environment. To do so, organizational research focuses on TQM (Tata and Prasad, 1998; Ritchie, 1997; Deter, 2000; Zeitz et al., 1997), learning (Hays, 1997; Rhody and Tang, 1995; Davis and Weiner, 1985; Fedor and Werther, 1995; Lakomski, 2001; Estienne, 1997), communication and human resource interaction (Argyris, 1994; Wood, 1999), effectiveness variables (Denison and Mishra, 1995), organizational change and adaptation (Marshall, 1993; Simon, 1997; Bradley and Parker, 2001; Silvester and Anderson, 1999; Lewis, 1994; Driscoll and Morris, 2001;

Lindholm et al., 2000; Berg, 1985), and performance measure and employability (Grifel, 1994; Alkhazraji et al., 1997; Kirsh, 2000; Rondeau and Wagar, 1998; Vandenberghe, 1999). These characterizations assume that OC is a single manifestation of organization.

Other scholars, however, have argued it is a multi-phase organizational construction that influences organization's life through its subcultures and inter-cultures (Marquand, 1998; Hansen, 1995; Faules et al., 1991, Ott, 1989; Siehl and Martin, 1990), psychological effects on organizational behavior (Judge and Cable, 1997), and institutional values and ethics (Boxx and Odom, 1991; Near et al., 1993; Theobald, 1997). Recent literature investigates the relationship between OC and the formal structure of organizations in the public and private sectors (Smolowitz, 1995; Buch and Wetzel, 2001). For instance, many studies try to reach for generalizations about the role of computer and information technology in explaining humans' culture in organizations (Holmes and Marsden, 1996; Preston, 2002; Molta, 1998; Hoffman and Klepper, 2000).

The vast expanse of OC definitions have lead the way for valued research into the role culture plays in organizational activities. However, the conceptualization of the term has a significant baring on the construction and findings of OC research. The fragmentation of definitions made it difficult to pursue an OC theory building. In the following section, the OC literature is classified according to its content and methodology. This categorization demonstrates OC literature in sequential order, taking into account theoretical and empirical development.

5. CLASSIFYING OC LITERATURE

We selected twenty definitions of OC cited since 1979 in various administrative fields that seemed thorough and non-repetitive (see appendix for summarization). Based on the content and common themes of the literature, the study explains that OC develops from two sources: internal and external. After that, the study classifies the literature into internal-external perspectives allowing some subgroups to emerge. By doing so, the study aims to make sense of the huge accumulation of OC literature and make it easier for researchers and practitioners to better utilize OC (i.e. build a theory or execute organizational strategies).

Culture as External Variable. This perspective suggests that OC works with other organizational

variables (i.e. leadership, regulations, strategy, social values, economic conditions) to shape organizations (Offermann et al., 2001; Van Maanen and Barley, 1985; Smircich, 1985, Siehl, 1985). The external approach (perspective) defines OC as a set of values, beliefs, rituals, symbols and myths that influence an organization's life. Therefore, organizations are developed from the outside through the member's carried social culture and then develop from the inside through nets of human communication. When these cultural components develop inside an organization, they move in transitional ways, giving identity to organizations (Smircich, 1983, 1985). In this approach, the ecology (external environment) is the independent variable that influences the processes of shaping organizational culture and, in turn, creates the significant identity of each organization based on the transition of ecological variables into organizational life.

When employees or other organization members carry their inherited social values (e.g. national), rituals, and other cultural components into the workplace, they actually shape the future identity of the overall organization whether they mean to do so or not. In order to understand these processes of organizational culture, studies suggest that we have to analyze all cultural transparencies held by individuals and groups (Peters and Waterman, 2001; Davis and Weiner, 1985; Smircich, 1983). Some researchers argue that one way to analyze such transparencies is to treat OC as either a metaphor (root metaphor) or a function (Krefting and Frost, 1985).

The metaphoric approach considers OC to be a whole phenomena wherein an organization is just one feature of a culture (Pittegrew, 1979; Smircich, 1983; Morgan, 1997). Morgan (1997) argues that OC is a collective pattern of understandings that help organization members interpret their day-to-day events using shared culture (i.e., rituals, values). Morgan's wider definition of OC broadens the search for more variables that influence the way organizations operate, in their day-to-day life, making the organizational phenomenon more comprehensive than the confinement of a view limited to only organizational elements that develop internally. While Morgan extends the understanding of the culture phenomenon beyond "what organization has" (Smircich, 1983), the implications of his argument suggest that organizations do not exist but come to exist by members' culture where their values and beliefs create the organization itself and identify its future goals and

missions (Morgan, 1997). The metaphoric approach, however, sees OC as a whole concept in that organization becomes just "one dimension" of culture and part of it. Organizations are perceived as "forms" of culture (Morgan, 1997; Krefting and Frost, 1985) and, to understand organizations, we need to understand the culture itself, not the opposite.

Culture as a root metaphor, for example, describes organizations and organizational culture in a very comprehensive way. According to the root metaphoric view, we cannot restrict organizations to certain variables or attributes. In other words, we cannot measure culture on a scale or classifying its elements into specific dimensions. Instead, we might study OC according to how organization members interpret their own experiences and how their interpretations are expressed (Morgan, 1997; Smircich, 1983).

The other external approach is to view OC as function. Sociological and anthropological methodologies view OC as a pattern of shared assumptions that lead to helping organizational members solve their work problems (Ritchie, 1997; Heracleous, 2001; Schultz, 1994; Vandenberghe, 1999; Schein, 1985). It also helps organizations adapt to different situations and survive by carrying out specific functions (roles) in the organizational environment (Koch et al., 2000; Schultz, 1994; Louis, 2001; Faules et al., 1991; Schultz, 1994; Stroup, 1996). The functional perspective, according to Schein (1985), suggests that OC is a shared assumptions, learning process, group function, adaptation process, problem solving (objectives), environmental force, and new member's integration to the whole.

Researchers used the functional approach to solve the problematic nature of organizations. Knowing that organizational environments are uncertain, OC can tame the environment by fostering the growth of shared assumptions among members (Tata and Prasad, 1998; Schein, 1985; Schultz, 1994; Phalen, 2000). The functional use of values and beliefs, for example, to develop common assumptions can create certain environments (or at least lessen uncertainty) because organization's members may solve many problems by relying on values such as trust, rationality, or solidarity. This influential role of culture indicates that OC is shared, which gives it the capacity to influence larger groups of organizational members. The shared assumptions mean that OC grows outside the organization and in the people's every-day interactions. They come to

work and bring their human relations with them, thus making it possible to create shared assumptions.

The “shared” feature of OC is consistent with the group function, in that no sharing is performed without at least two people involved. The people who function as organizational actors share the basic assumption as though sharing the differences and similarities among the whole group. Schein (1985) called such process a “learning function” where employees influence one the other. They do that because they come to the workplace with perceptual readiness to interact and socialize with others (culture of the group).

The limitation of perceiving OC as a function stems from the characterization of all environment issues as problems. The assumption is that by identifying the environment as a problem, it becomes easier and accessible for people to notice the strengths and weaknesses in the organization thus it enables them to solve identified problems. This argument may be accurate until the culture reaches a stage where it is considered a problem as well. Nevertheless, Stroup (1996) and (Schultz, 1994) assert that OC is a problem in and of itself. Therefore, practitioners should bear in mind that not all values and shared assumptions are positive.

As we saw, the external approach with its metaphoric and functional lenses can be useful in understanding OC. However, researchers and practitioners need to analyze each organization and try to find answers to the following questions that may not have direct or universal answers in the external approach; what is the role of individuals’ culture in the overall OC construction? What differences are there between the ecological effects on individuals and those on the group? Does it make a difference if the external culture has components that are incompatible with the internal culture?

Culture as Internal Variable. OC is an outcome of the elaboration processes performed inside organizations as a response to other organizational variables such as leadership, technology, structure, and size of the organization (Peters and Waterman, 2001; Miller, 2000; Offerman et al., 2001; Thompson and Luthans, 1990; Smircich, 1983, 1985; Mills and Mills, 2000). This approach assumes that OC is a dependent variable that works inter-organizationally and is completely dependent upon other organizational variables. The difference between the internal approach and the external approach is that the latter treats OC as a non-organizational phenomenon until it develops through communication

between organizational members. While the external approach denies other strong organizational variables that conjunct with OC, the internal approach takes into account all organizational variables as independent variables that influence OC. It explains the OC phenomenon in terms of dependency and development. Notice that the external approach defines OC as an independent variable that works in semi-isolation, even when it develops itself, because it does not- according to the approach’s assumptions- interrelate with other organizational variables. Researchers who conceptualized OC as an internal variable have used symbolism, rationalism, cognitive, and psychodynamic approaches to describe OC.

Symbolism identifies the meanings in people’s culture by focusing on the shared symbols (Schein, 2001; Hofstede, 1994; Lee and Barnett, 1997; Ott, 1989). By focusing on symbols, researchers are concerned with how to analyze the elements of culture, such as values, beliefs, artifacts, and norms, in order to understand the human interaction within organizations (Near et al., 1993; Valle, 1999; Juechter and Fisher, 1998; Malloy and Fennell, 1998; Rondean and Wagar, 1998; Ouchi, 1981; Alkhazraji et al., 1997). Symbolic analysis also investigates what organizations and their systems mean to those who work at them (Schultz, 1994). The basic assumption is that OC is not a particular variable; it is not a process; and, it is not a feature of organizing. Rather, OC carries symbolic meanings that we cannot measure directly but we do through other known variables (i.e. values and beliefs). In other words, the organization is translated into symbols that members retain within themselves and share with others. The physical world is converted into a symbolic universe where employees, managers, clients and shareholders construct their realities of the organization using symbols (e.g. computer as a symbol of reform, flat structure as a symbol of globalization). Therefore, subcultures are not significant for symbolic analysis because organizations as symbols have the same meanings whether they are viewed from culture or subculture lenses (Acker, 2001; Rafaeli and Worline, 2000; Lok and Crawford, 1999; Schultz, 1994). This simplicity and comprehensive nature of symbolism have made the symbolic approach popular among researchers. They used a whole organization as the unit of their analysis.

The second internal approach is rationalism. Within the rational perspective OC is defined as a tool for the efficient achievement of organizational goals (Schultz,

1994; Trice and Beyer, 1993). Rationalism assumes that cultural elements like values, rituals, artifacts, and beliefs are used to enhance the mechanistic organization. Some researchers have criticized the rational perspective in the cultural field for the same reasons they rejected the mechanization of the workplace (humans are tools and equipment to fulfill the organization's needs for accuracy and efficiency). In addition, assuming that organizations are rational systems may yield to a distinguished analysis between the organization as a collective body and culture as individualistic attribution of member's behavior. Organizational theory could not, thus far, accept such a separation because individual behaviors are seen as a manifestation of organizational collective behavior (Tosi et al., 1986).

The third internal approach is cognitive (Thompson and Luthans, 1990). The cognitive approach analyzes the phenomenon of OC as a process that gives deeper insights to behavioral aspects in conceptualizing OC. In this perspective, scholars study the interaction between employees (organization members) and consequences of their behavior which they learned while being members of the organization (Thompson and Luthans, 1990; Silvester and Anderson, 1999; Hays, 1997). When employees exhibit some kind of behavior (act), other organization members receive this act and respond to it giving meaningful and specific organizational behavior (response). Due to repeating the entire process, responses solicit feedback by which "acts" result to some learned behaviors (Alder, 2001; Thompson and Luthans, 1990).

The cognitive approach assumes that organizational behavior is a means of learning and the interaction among members and subsequent feedback is all systematic processes to produce a new "learned behavior" based on learned values and basic assumptions that spread by repeating behaviors. Feedback in the cognitive approach has a major role in transforming culture and developing new organizational behavior from one generation to another and sustaining culture. Therefore, the process of cognitive change is a complicated process of learning and adaptation (Thompson and Luthans, 1990; Cook and Yanow, 2001; Tyrrell, 2000; Mahler, 1997; Hopfl, 1994; Alder, 2001)

The last internal perspective of OC is psychodynamic. This approach has been used in a limited number of organizational studies because of its likely non-organizational complications (Young, 2000; Bagraim, 2001; Aurelio and College, 1995; Smircich, 1983, 1985).

The primary assumption is that OC reflects limited elements of organizational environment that relate to the personal psychology of its membership. The human unconsciousness determines the meaning of organizational life based on levels, conditions, and natures of awareness that members can develop. Turner (1977) believes that the anthropologist notion of "structuralism", as developed in Levi-Strauss works, gives human beings the capabilities to understand the setting beyond consciously felt realities. Therefore, organizational activities, decision-making processes, communication patterns and other aspects of organizing would be broadly determined by an awareness of the broader subconscious context (Turner, 1977; Gabriel and Schwartz, 1999). Hence, human's life at work is formulated both consciously and unconsciously (according to this perspective); it would be an incomplete effort for organizational analysts to ignore unconscious factors that extend beyond each aspect of the organization (Mitroff, 1982; Gemmill, 1982; Walter, 1982). For practitioners, analyzing OC would require a rigorous psychological analysis by organization members (Schwartz, 1987; Urdang, 2002; Tosi et al., 1986; Simon, 1997; Gale, 2002; Castka et al., 2003; Swierczek and Onishi, 2003).

In conclusion, like the external approach, some questions may not have direct answers in the internal approaches of OC analysis. Therefore, researchers and practitioners need to micro-analyze organizations in order to identify answers to questions such as: what is the role of the external environment in shaping OC (Ouchi, 1981; Aurelio and College, 1995)? Can OC be developed in isolation from outside variables such as political life and social values (Herguner, 2000; Arellano- Gault, 2000; Cooke and Szumal, 2000; Hofstede, 1994)? To assume that culture is a variable means that culture is a composition of several other variables that create the system (Smircich, 1983; Schultz, 1994; Miller, 2000), which may highlight the question of interdependency between several organizational elements, internal and external...what are these variables?

In light of the previous typology, we see different theoretical perspectives based on how researchers define organizational culture. Despite the lack of consensus on one specific definition of organizational culture (Adams, 1993; Schein, 1999, 1985; Schultz, 1994; Crane, 1998), the diversity in perspectives has produced new rich thoughts on the nature of culture that help us better

understand organizational phenomena (Bagraim, 2001; Reichers and Schneider, 1990; Sathe, 1985). Some argue that the development of OC research resulted from the break with the rational and mechanistic thoughts in organization theory (Schultz, 1994), as OC challenges the structural theory that believes in the one best way and efficiency in organizational operations. In the assumptions of organizational culture theory, however, there is no one best way to perform tasks and “historical” assumptions guide organizational behavior and help in creating realities based on what organizational members carry in values, beliefs and other cultural components (Deter, 2000; Smircich, 1983, 1985). Morgan explains that such realities are the major factor that influences informal organization (Morgan, 1997; Tosi et al., 1986). These differences in framing OC reflect different schools of thought and organizational theorists’ opinion about OC. Therefore, it is critical to note all OC perspectives contribute to the definition, description and analysis of OC (Ouchi, 1981; Smircich, 1983; Schultz, 1994; Schein, 1985, 1999; Trice and Beyer, 1993; Rousseau, 1990; Hofstede, 1994; Lim, 1995; Siehl, 1985; Morgan, 1997; Martin and Siehl, 1983).

6. CONCLUSION

Since Elton Mayo had conducted studies in the Hawthorne plant in the 1930s, the social context has been highlighted in the literature of organization theory by focusing on humans rather than machines (Trice and Beyer 1993). Organizational culture derives its theoretical roots from human relations theories, the assumptions of the open system, human needs, and ecology of organizations (Schultz, 1994). These theories build the basic ground for OC theory which emerged in the late 1970s, as a new way to interpret organizational phenomena (Schultz, 1994; Ouchi, 1981).

This study is an attempt to organize the literature of OC and make sense of it. The aim is to help researchers and practitioners understand OC and better manage it. To this end, the study builds on common themes of twenty definitions of OC and classifies the literature that was published in administrative fields from 1979 to 2005. The classification outlines two major perspectives within which researchers have studied OC, namely external and internal. The external perspective argues that OC is an external variable that develops outside the organization. Within this perspective, OC was investigated as a

metaphor of the organization and a function that organization members apply. The internal perspective suggests that OC is an internal variable that develops within organizations. Therefore, OC can be a symbolic expression of the way organization members perceive life or a rational way to accomplish organizational goals. It can also be a cognitive process through which organizations learn to adapt with organizational environments. Internal perspectives also reveal that OC can be understood as a psychodynamic reality in which researchers analyze psychological factors that influence organizational behavior.

The general framework of internal and external perspectives provide vital ways to develop a theory of OC and incorporate cultural aspects in organizational development. In other words, there is no a good or bad perspective. Both perspectives draw a comprehensive picture of the OC creation and development (Ouchi, 1981; Hodgkinson, 2003; Miroshnik, 2002; Yunxia, 2002; Aragon, 1993; Heracleous, 2001; Driscoll and Morris, 2001; Pettigrew, 1990; Claver and Llopis, 1998; Gale, 2002; Bagraim, 2001; Castka et al., 2003; Groeschl, 2003).

This study classifies the literature into a workable typology based on the dichotomy of internal and external perspectives of organization culture. This classification has important implications. First, OC approaches reflect the peculiarity of each organization’s environments. Different organizations will have different cultures thus, different organizational behavior and work systems. Second, whether organizational culture has been theoretically perceived as an internal or external force, the practical implication of the cultural analysis of organizations suggests that national cultures (i.e. religion, traditions, mode, history, heritage, and so forth) can shape different components of the OC. In other words, organizational behavior would not be understood without a proper investigation of the various cultural elements that people bring with them to the workplace. Third, while globalization puts national cultures in competition with a new pattern of “globalized” cultures, the interaction between internal and external organizational environments remains the key point to understand organizations and organizational behavior. The way an organizational system, for example, operates may either facilitate or hinder the emergence or adoption of “global” cultural elements (e.g., values). Fourth, despite the contextual differences of organizational cultures due to reasons such as the variation of national cultures or

organizational missions, the construction of OC remains similar across environments. Having said this, the typology this study has developed enables managers and practitioners to better utilize organizations' resources to first understand their own OC, and second, to design work systems and practices that enhance the harmonization of competing cultures; cultures that influence organizational behavior.

In this sense, future research lies in answering persistent questions as to the usefulness of organizational culture inquiries. We cannot neglect the cultural influences in the workplace, however, what role(s) does/should OC play in a high-technology environment? In what capacity can OC theory be utilized in addressing electronic management issues? Can we manage OC and control it within structural

frames? Does OC theory serve as a substitute for other organizational theories or does it complement them? What significance does OC theory provide in examining organizational operations as compared to other human relation theories? Does OC theory add fundamental understanding to the relationship between structure and social elements in organizations? Does OC represent a new paradigm in organizational studies and theories? These questions should provide organizational theorists plenty of fodder for future research.

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Appendix

An Alphabetical Listing of OC Definitions

Author/work	Limitations of definition	Strengths of definition
Alder (2001)	-Organization is viewed as a whole one culture rather than subcultures -No external environment consideration	- Social construction
Herguner (2000)	- Role of influence is not clear within the shared values and beliefs at workplace	- Internal implications
Hofstede (2000)	-No clear boundaries between the elements of culture	-General definition (general frame)
Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1951)	- Historical cultural elements could not be valid in all cases of adaptation	-Movement of culture and transformation, and the importance of values
Lim (1995)	- Simple identification to a complex concept	-Social considerations -Sociological wide perspective
Louis (2001)	- Not all culture's elements are tacit	-Subcultures -Communication
Martin and Siehl (1983)	- Culture as a superior to organization	- Subcultures
Miller (2000)	-Group behavior is targeted by culture, rather than organization (through leadership, supervision, and mechanisms of culture movement)	-Subcultures -Informal organizations
Mills and Mills (2000)	-Simplicity -Focus on bureaucratic systems	- Informal rules of behavior
Morgan (1997)	- Culture as a metaphor could limit our ability to understand organization's life in different ways and lenses (blinding us)	-Development nature -Subcultures
Ouchi (1981)	-Organization and its members are two separate entities -OC is a mediator between the two: organizations and members	- Communication and transition
Sathe (1985)	- Cultural assumptions are not necessarily have important content rather than have simple stories or managerial habits	-Challengeable nature of basic assumptions -Subcultures

Schein (1985, 1993, 2001)	-Culture adaptation aims to reach for the “correct way” to solve problems, rather than giving alternatives and solutions to organizational behavior -Interaction between subcultures	-Organization is problematic -Environmental approach
Schultz (1994)	-Interaction between the three perspectives is not clear -According to the leadership style, any organization could have different types of culture at the same time	-Systematic definition classification to OC (system focus)
Silvester and Anderson (1999)	- Symbols of culture are not clear, while the process-perspective is dominant (how culture is formulated)	-Ability for continuous development -Subcultures -Informal organization
Smircich (1983, 1985)	- OC is a function of x organization	-Development nature -Social context
Tata and Prasad (1998)	- Culture is a tool in hands of management to achieve rational objectives	- Subcultures
Trice and Beyer, (1993)	- Not all cultural substances are observable	-Problem solving -External environment considerations -Communication
Uttal (in Ott, 1989)	- Structural, control system produces OC	- Symbolic
Van Maanen and Barley (1985), and Schein (1985, 1993)	-Organization’s members are independent variable (the dominant variable) rather than a production of culture	-Symbolic -Social context

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