SIGNIFICANCE OF CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES IN ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

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Academic leadership culture

• **Academic leadership culture**: a group’s distinct set of (leadership) patterns, features, traditions as well as the values and assumptions on which these patterns have been based, in the context of higher education institutions (Kekäle 2005),

• **greater attention should be given** to contextual or cultural factors in educational and international development (Crossley and Jarvis 2001; Crossley 2009, 2010)
  
  - Many international development approaches already show some approaches cannot be simply applied from one context to another
  
  - Inaccurate analysis and understanding of Chinese education: misunderstanding of the context and culture (Yang, 2011)

• Implication: importance of **cultural sensitivity**
Three aspects of culture (Pang 2005)

- **Material layer**
  (hardware of movie production)
  e.g. University governance structure

- **Social layer:** material ideology, e.g. theory, system
  (institutions, systems, behaviours that produces the movies)
  e.g. regulating academic leadership,
  • norms and practices of academic leaders

- **Ideological/psychological layer:** deeply rooted in a nation’s tradition and ideology and is resistant to change.
  (values, beliefs, concepts, etc, that the movie wants to convey)
  e.g. beliefs, values about academic leadership that are taken for granted

*important for comparative cultural studies (Yang 2011)*
values

myths

heroes / heroines

rites / rituals

norms

behavioral regularities

language
IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE IN ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

• Profound *impact* of culture on organizational/managerial behavior and organizational performance
  • “The group performs far beyond the sum of its individual talents”
  • Universities are not exempted!
IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE IN AL

• Common mistake at universities.
  • The age of *change and transformation* at the academy
    • Increasing calls for changing and transforming the universities

• Large scale change requires culture change
  • *Change that touch mission, vision and mission* of the organization
    • We undertake huge changes, but we ignore to think about the impact of change on culture and vice-versa
    • In many cases, *resistance* results from cultural reasons
  • *Mismatch* between organizational actions and cultural elements
    • Example, universities in Turkey
    • Example, internationalization
CHALLENGES IN MANAGING CULTURE

• “Some argue that organizations have cultures; others insist that organizations are cultures.”

• *Fluid* nature of cultural context
  • Unlike the formal structures, culture is invisible
    • Nontraditional and nonstructural dimensions
    • Linear causality does not work
CHALLENGES IN MANAGING CULTURE

Product
it embodies wisdom accumulated from experience

Process
it is renewed and re-created as newcomers learn the old ways and eventually become members themselves
The culture at the university is a *multilayered* concept
  - The culture of a specific *discipline*,
  - The culture of a specific *profession*,
  - The culture of an *institution*
  - Culture of a *national system* (Clark, 1980)

Similar challenges different approaches
  - Universities are facing with similar challenges but they have to *implement different approach* in order to deal with these difficulties.

Distill a culture serving organizational goals
CHALLENGES OF MANAGING CULTURE IN THE ACADEMIC CONTEXT

POWER DISTANCE
how much *inequality* between bosses and subordinates?

UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE
How much comfort with *ambiguity*?

INDIVIDUALISM
how much value on the *individual vs. group*?

MASCU LINITY-FEMININITY
how much pressure on *males/females* for career-success and workplace dominance?

“collective programming of the mind that distinguishes one human group from another”
### CHALLENGES OF MANAGING CULTURE IN THE ACADEMIC CONTEXT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Collegial</strong></th>
<th>Emphasizes the <em>traditional nature of campus settings</em> and the origins of North American higher education in England’s Oxbridge Model (faculty culture, liberal arts traditions, and research and scholarship)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Managerial</strong></td>
<td>Outlines the <em>administrative</em> side of higher education organizations. Premier emphasis on ways to manage the university more <em>efficiently and effectively</em>.</td>
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<td><strong>Developmental</strong></td>
<td>Roated in 1960s student activism, focuses on faculty development, curriculum expansion, and institutional research, thus augmenting the discussion of <em>student development topics</em> (e.g., teaching and learning, and institutional change).</td>
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<td><strong>Advocacy</strong></td>
<td>Have connotations with the 1960s student activism but originates from faculty unions, collective bargaining, and academic freedom...introduction to <em>faculty life</em> from which one could better understand faculty priorities and emphases</td>
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<td><strong>Virtual</strong></td>
<td>Focuses on <em>the realities of work life in higher education in the 21st century</em>. How lives of students, faculty, administrators, and staff are firmly entrenched in the technological inventions (e.g., the internet, computers, cell phones) as well as the developments in ODE</td>
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<td><strong>Tangible</strong></td>
<td>Covers a <em>broad discussion on space, architecture, and pedagogy</em>, understand why students, community members, parents, and alumni, among others, are drawn so convincingly and habitually to collegiate environments</td>
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MANAGING CULTURE - VALUES

- How do we want to conduct our business (how do we do things around here)?
- How do we want to treat our key stakeholders?
- What do we value—in other words—what do we really care about? (respect, trust, honesty, integrity, and teamwork)
EXAMPLES

- http://www.metu.edu.tr/general-information
- http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/estates/aboutus/customerservice/vision/
- http://www.vub.ac.be/en/we-are-vub#vub---this-is-us
- https://oaa.osu.edu/mission-vision-values-and-core-goals
TASKS FOR WORKSHOP

• TASK 1:
  • What you consider to be your university’s key values *in practice* at the present time?
  • What are the differences between Chinese and European universities with regard to their current values?

• TASK 2:
  • List six to eight values that you think are *most important (ideal)* for your university and; therefore, you would like to see your university adopt to guide the conduct of its business and its relationships with key stakeholders.
  • What are the differences between Chinese and European universities on the key desired values?