

Subcultures: fragmentation in Higher education

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Introduction:

Over the years, many papers have been written on subcultures for specific contexts, such as organisational subcultures, youth subcultures and style or consumer behaviour, but it is rare to come across an overview of the topic as a whole. This paper intends to give a full context for the notion of subcultures from its beginnings through to its current applications. Cultures and subcultures are complex issues. This paper will not consider the factors that form and shape culture but rather will give an overview of subcultures.

In the beginning

“The reasonable man adapts himself to the world. The unreasonable man persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man”.

George Bernard Shaw (1903)

Due to the existence of subcultures, the applications in business are varied. For example, as a part of consumer behaviour, marketing experts are required to analyse subcultures as a means of understanding the consumer behaviour of that particular subculture, as a means to meeting their needs with certain products or services or targeting a particular subculture through

advertising. However, this paper will be primarily concerned with the application of subcultures to organisations.

The question as to whether subcultures exist in organisations is somewhat contested and a number of perspectives have been taken in relation to this. According to the unitarist perspective, there is an essential unity of the organisation that allows the classification of organisation culture as in the case of Handy (1993) with the four culture types: task, power, people and role-oriented cultures. This perspective also assumes top-down cultural leadership, which requires this aspect of unity to be effective and the culture is seen as homogeneous. The pluralist perspective recognises the existence of diverse subcultures in organisations (i.e. culture is heterogeneous) and as such, diversity management becomes a hot topic. According to Gregory (1983), large, complex organizations are likely to resemble the larger society in which they are situated and may, therefore, contain many of the same subcultures, or groupings of values, as would be found outside an organization. Ogbonna & Wilkinson's (1990) study of the effects of a supermarket cultural change program (from a cost-minimisation to a customer-service focus) demonstrates that, in some organisations, not only do distinct sub-cultures exist, but that changes in training, rewards and structures may achieve change in the values of one group and only superficial behavioural changes in the other group. The anarchist perspective indicates an even greater level of fragmentation, with all organisational cultures being made up of individuals with their own values and norms and as such neither a single dominant culture nor any subcultures are said to exist. Hofstede et al. (1990) found this to be the case in twenty case studies and as such, managing cultural change is impossible on an individual basis and the focus shifts towards communication and diversity management. In order to relate the parallels between subcultures in society and those in organisations, the pluralist perspective has been adopted in this paper.

In higher education, two of these perspectives are referred to: unitarist and pluralist (Metzger, 1987). Becher (1987) indicates the unitarist perspective when referring to the academic profession as a 'single homogenous profession', as it has many more similarities than differences and is based on the assumption that all faculty members share of common view of the world and scholarship. According to Kuh and Whitt (1988) the shared (and strongly held) values of this profession are: -

- The main responsibility is to be learned and convey this learning (through teaching, inquiry and publication)
- Autonomy in the conduct of work
- Collegiality (e.g. mutual support)

Whilst the profession may have significant shared values, in society itself – or amongst other professions – it is in itself a subculture. Furthermore, this view is somewhat debated as Bess (1982) describes the academic profession as a 'complex of subprofessions'. Becher (1987) points out that the differences in the academic profession may be more significant than the similarities.

Although there may be similarities in the profession, that does not negate the existence of subcultures in higher educational institutions. The pluralist view is certainly confirmed by studies such as that of Bowen and Schuster (1986) which found that members of different disciplines showed different values, attitudes and personal characteristics. Becher (1987: 292) even refers to subcultures within disciplines, which is a subculture in itself: "to affiliate with a particular specialism is to become, except in a few heavily populated areas, a member of a small and close-knit community". Thus, it could be said that despite the common and strongly held values of the academic profession, within each institution subcultures have been found to exist.

The socialization process

Before considering subcultures as a topic, the processes behind subculture formation and the values norms and such that are associated with subcultures should be considered.

The issue of determinism versus free will is important in considering the development of individual and society. Many sociologists refer to the structural approach to institutions, processes and groups. However, for this paper the cultural approach is preferred, which means that it is the values and beliefs that are central to society.

The step concerning how a society of individuals becomes a society with values and beliefs concerns a process of learning called socialisation: every society as its own codes of conduct, rules, regulations, norms and values and likewise, culture sets out what is desirable and undesirable behaviour. Arnett (1995) puts forward the three goals of socialization:

1. Impulse control and the development of a conscience.
2. Role preparation and performance, including occupational roles, gender roles, and roles in institutions such as marriage and parenthood.
3. The cultivation of sources of meaning, or what is important, valued, and to be lived for.

In other words, values of a particular culture are instilled through socialization. This is borne out by the fact that people in different cultures are socialized differently. Thus is culture is adopted through socialization.

However the debate as to whether people are instilled with such values or possess them through genetic coding is a continuous issue of debate, with the nature versus nurture argument. Many evolutionary psychologists assert that DNA can be considered as a "blueprint" for every aspect of life, including behaviour. According to the nature philosophy

the genetic code contains the instructions for millions of protein commands that determine our basic structure as human beings. This is often referred to as evolutionary psychology, although this perspective is seen as very much controversial and lacking scientific proof in a laboratory setting. It is conceivable though that a person's DNA, by affecting their physical traits may in turn affect the way they see the world and their behaviour, such as height or size. In fact, there is some scientific evidence that people are shaped by both social influences and their biological makeup (Dusheck, 2002; Carlson, 2005; Ridley, 2003). However, the biological aspect is beyond the scope of this paper.

Returning to socialization, the adopting of the culture in this process is referred to as assimilation and associated with the case of new born as they learn to differentiate between self and mother, then mother and father and then build up a social system. Enculturation refers to the learning of cultural patterns from one generation to the next and takes place consciously and/or unconsciously.

In regarding socialization as a means forming norms and values, the agents of socialization should also be considered. These agents are often separated into authoritarian and egalitarian forces:

- *Family*: Through greater contact, a child learns to imitate actions and behaviours patterns through different forms of responses such as anger and smiles and through movement and expressions. This includes not only behaviour but also knowledge and manners. Through this the child learns to adjust to the norms of the family
- *Neighbourhood*: The social and physical environment of the neighbourhood serves as a means of differentiating between different qualities possessed by different individual members and the communities and through this an understanding of his own self.

- *School / Institutions*: These provide learning situations and an environment to impart discipline and develop the personality (although it is often declared these days that a child's personality is fully developed by the age of 8). An inability to follow the standards of behaviour and norms may result in social ridicule, boycott or something more severe.
- *Society*: In society, living within norms is rewarded and deviant behaviour is punished.
- *Mass media*: In society, introducing new norms and values, reinforcing existing ones, questioning current / new norms and values.

In summary, the process of socialization can be seen as a learning process that includes the adopting of culture and is a term used by sociologists, social psychologists, anthropologists, politicians and educationalists all of whom are concerned with the process of inheriting norms, customs, ideologies, skills and habits. According to Clausen (1968), socialization is 'the means by which social and cultural continuity are attained'.

Diversity

So if individuals are socialized into a culture through all the different agents listed in the previous section and genetic makeup is also a factor, it is no surprise that everyone is different and that even twins are not simple copies of one another. Does this mean that culture is deeply fragmented? Well, yes and no. There are certain aspects which are shared and others that are not, but before considering the elements of culture and their universality or diversity, a definition of culture needs to be considered to establish exactly what is meant by culture.

There is a plethora of definitions ranging from the detailed to the more generalist. For a more generalist definition, Gudykunst and Kim (1992) refer to culture as "The systems of knowledge shared by a relatively large group of people" and Hall (1959) "Culture is

communication, communication is culture”. Needless to say, definitions vary according to the needs of the author and the context in which the word is being applied. For example, Hall’s definition is fitting in the context of anthropologist writing about the issue of language. Likewise, Gudykunst and Kim’s definition may seem a little simplistic except that their research is concerned with communicative predictions based on data from three levels, one of which being the cultural level within the context of communicating with a stranger. Thus, information here is rather information about a person's culture, such as its dominant values and norms as this is often the only level of information available when communicating with a stranger.

Within the scope of a paper concerning subcultures, perhaps Hofstede (1981) has a better definition of culture: “Culture is the collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from those of another. Culture in this sense is a system of collectively held values”. Samovar and Porter (1994) refer to culture as: “...the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving..”. If subculture is “a cultural subgroup differentiated by status, ethnic background, residence, religion” then, for this paper, these two definitions seem most suitable for culture as a context for considering the notion of subcultures.

Returning to the issue of diversity and universality then, it is first necessary to consider the elements of culture as exemplified in the definitions listed. The basic elements are seen as follows: Symbols; Language; Values; Beliefs; and Norms.

For these elements there is an aspect of sharing: language is only possible with people with shared symbols, norms can only be expected if the majority of society has a shared set of expected behaviours. The term ‘cultural universal’ has been applied to cultures as factors

common to all human cultures. The anthropologist Murdock (1945) determined 67 common practices and beliefs that all societies have developed such as, athletic sports, bodily adornment, calendar, education and status differentiation, all referred to as 'cultural universals'.

The formation of subcultures

Despite such a long list of common biological, psychological and social factors, cultures around the world are not the same and clearly society does not consist of one group of people who share all elements of culture. The differences within a society are called cultural diversity and this refers to differences between groups. These groups are often categorised as subcultures. These groups do not go against the main values of society, share certain elements with society and the subcultures have cultural patterns which are not rejected by society. A 'counterculture' on the other hand has cultural patterns which do go against the wider society and is often considered an extreme form of subculture.

In a secular context, subcultures range in type from high culture, pop culture, youth culture through to criminal subcultures. Subcultures can form for any number of reasons, but often the more common are: -

- When a combined effort is required (synergy)
- Encourages collusion (sharing/rating unpopular tasks)
- Provides companionship (understanding and support)
- Provides a sense of belonging
- Provides guidelines on generally acceptable behaviour
- Provide protection

The study of such deviant subcultures in Britain dates back to at least the nineteenth century and can be seen in the work of Henry Mayhew in the late nineteenth century, who viewed

subcultures as 'those who will not work' and various novels such as Charles Dickens, such as Fagan's gang in 'Oliver Twist' and Arthur Morrison's novels about London's East End and its associated violent side. A more 'scientific' approach was taken in the 1920s by the Chicago School when it began to research and establish evidence on juvenile street gangs and deviant groups such as professional criminals and bootleggers through such tasks as observing the interaction of gangleaders. Gender (2007) identifies six key ways in which these subcultures have been understood:-

- An often negative relation to work (idle, parasitical, hedonistic, criminal)
- Negative or ambivalent relation to class
- Association with territory (the 'street', the 'hood', the club) rather than property
- Movement away from home into non-domestic forms of belonging
- Ties to excess and exaggeration (rather than restraint and moderation)
- Refusal of the banalities of ordinary life and especially 'massification'

Gender (2007) puts forward many reasons for the formation of subcultures such as geography (subcultures inhabit places in particular ways) and that the focus is as much literary as sociological when considering the whole range of groups from hip-hop to hippies and digital pirates and virtual communities to bohemians.

Becker (1963) developed labelling theory (social reaction theory) through the study of deviant subcultures. It was found that behaviour such as smoking dope was learnt through subculture and that deviance is a process of interaction between deviants and nondeviants. Primary deviation is the initial act. The social structure allows some people to define others as deviant (with terms such as 'pothead) and when the individual comes to accept the label and act according to it, then secondary deviation has occurred.

Deviant subcultures were also considered by the likes of Marx and Engels (1960) and used the term ‘Lumpenproletariat¹’ to describe a segment of the working class and similar to the six characteristics identified by Gender (2007) as Marx associates this group as one that would never achieve class consciousness and therefore would not be part of any revolutionary struggle (if not a counter-revolutionary force) as well as lacking discipline, scruples, and generally violent and criminal. Nowadays this term is used to describe those seen as ‘victims’ of society, existing outside the system, such as beggars, swindlers and drug dealers and yet, there is still the link to society as they depend on the formal economy for their day-to-day existence. Often such subcultures are referred to as the ‘underclasses’.

However, subcultures are not necessarily deviant through criminal or anti-social behaviour. When considering various racial, ethnic, age-based, and religious groups, the need for ‘neutralization’ to society’s norms, values and beliefs may not be entirely necessary. Consider an African American with an African mother and American father. Through the socialization process the person has two agents with different cultures influencing the learning process. As such, the values, beliefs and norms of such a person could well be the same as the society in which they are raised but having an additional perspective through an agent with a different cultural background. Subcultures can be based on ethnicity, age, race, religion and many others which would fall into the generalist definition of a subculture as ‘the symbols and lifestyles of a subgroup in society, one that deviates from the ‘normal’ more general (dominant) culture of a society.

Culture and subculture in Higher Education

In higher education, there are three connotations of culture. The first is that universities are cultural institutions in the same way that museums and libraries are, transmitting traditions

¹ Lit. „rag proletariat”

and cultural and social values to younger generations. In this way, universities and colleges are seen as the carriers of intellectual, academic and national traditions - as educational establishments that carry with them the idea that such institutions are ruled and managed by academics with some help from administrative staff. The second is the connotation of culture regarding disciplines, institutions and national traditions. The third is in relation to the 'methodological, epistemological, and philosophical discussion on the nature of knowledge' (Valimma, 2008: 9).

This paper is concerned with the first connotation of culture, which presents a rather traditional image. However, in recent years this has been changing. With the emergence of mass higher education and the greater need for self-sufficiency, many universities have come under criticism for being out of touch with market needs or lacking adequate skills and knowledge in top management with primarily academic backgrounds. Some universities have adapted and changed, and brought upon themselves the description of 'academic capitalism' (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004). Some research indicates how universities should adapt to entrepreneurial activities, strengthen their institutional management, and their interaction with industry and rest of the society (Clark, 1998; Etzkowitz, 2003).

Based on the work of Elliott, Swartz and Herbane (2002: 126), it is possible to draft out a paradigm of a University as an example of the cultural web in HEIs (see Figure 1). Although the chart gives significant insight into the key aspects of HEI culture as opposed to other organisations, there are a number of issues specific to HEI cultures that require further consideration.

The formation of subcultures

Subcultures are groups whose common characteristic is a set of shared norms and beliefs. However, subgroups tend to form around existing subdivisions and this is not the case for

subcultures which may not necessarily form around existing subdivisions in the organisation such as departmental or functional groups. There can be no question about whether or not subcultures exist in organisations (Hofstede, 1998; Martin & Siehl, 1983; Trice, 1993). The question of whether subcultures exist in all organisational cultures is difficult to result. Martin (1992) asserted that organizational cultures were cohesive and unitary, or integrated, and characterized as collections of subcultures, or differentiated. A fragmented culture is ambiguous and open to members' multiple interpretations. From Martin's work it seems that an organisation described as unitary may not have subcultures and that a culture characterized as a collection of subcultures has no dominant culture, although it seems hard to conceive of an organization with no dominant culture having a clear direction, and mutual cooperation.

According to Cohen (1955) subcultures are likely to form among members who interact often and who face similar problems, providing them with opportunities to exchange concerns about the existing culture and through interaction, build relationships. When individuals work together on a task, subcultures may also form as values may become specific to the task on which the group is focused (Trice & Beyer, 1993). As with the development of subcultures in society, organisational subcultures can be said to exist when employees of a certain work group develop and adopt common norms and values that may not be in line with the dominant culture. One such example is provided by Boisnier and Chatman (2002): "*a peripheral overall cultural value that favours individualism may be dysfunctional for a team that requires close, interdependent teamwork to complete their tasks. Therefore, the team may adopt a different set of more collectivistic values, forming an orthogonal subculture*".

Subcultures may also form through dissatisfaction. In the same way that a group was formed in the film 'the Dirty Dozen' when a group of dysfunctional criminals shared one common point: dissatisfaction and dislike for their leader. This also has happened in mergers, where groups have formed with other individuals in the organisation sharing feeling such as job

insecurity, lack of trust in leadership and so on. This is very similar to the subcultures in society with the idea of the dissatisfied 'underclass' and gang cultures or punks resenting their lack of prospects.

Boisnier and Chatman (2002) refer to the work of Berscheid (1985): "*Like-minded individuals are attracted to subcultures in each of these cases for the same reasons: The well-supported similarity-attraction paradigm suggests that individuals would prefer to be around others with similar attitudes, including perceptions of the organization and their jobs*". It is not only dissatisfaction but any shared belief or value which could bring together a subculture provided that there is also frequent interaction. Boisnier and Chatman (2002) also mention that "*as a work group's performance expectations and goals change, their values will change as well*". Again using the example of mergers, according to Nahavandi & Malekzadeh (1988) the changing environment that is produced by mergers or acquisitions may result in subculture formation as members of the consolidated firm attempt to cling to their previous firm's values. Furthermore, conflict arising from mergers takes many forms and according to Trice and Beyer (1993), subcultures may develop due to ideological conflict or even intentional countercultural movements.

In higher education, Clark (1987) claims that HEI cultures are extremely fragmented into what Clark refers to as 'small worlds'. According to Becher (1987: 298), it is only 'by understanding the parts and their particularity, one can better understand the whole'. Therefore subcultures seem to have formed in higher education and can be considered as a means of understanding the culture as a whole.

In higher education, one of the way that institutions are split is by faculty. Freedman et al. (1979: 8) described faculty culture as 'a set of shared ways and views designed to make their (faculty) ills bearable and to contain their anxieties and uncertainties'. The shared views of the staff of the various faculties of an HEI containing various departments, disciplines and

specializations are often viewed as subcultures rather than as one dominant monolithic faculty culture. There are some patterns that emerge in faculty cultures in terms of the values expressed. Kuh and Whitt (1988: 76) claimed that the core value of faculty was the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. Sanford (1971) claimed that faculty cultures encourage a focus on specialization within a given discipline and through this, subcultures are created. The borders between the disciplines and specializations are vehemently upheld to such an extent that in many cases only the administrative staff and librarians are allowed to be interdisciplinary (Bergquist, 1992).

According to Tierney (1988) there may be numerous subcultures in a university or college and the basis could be:

- Managerial
- Discipline based faculty groups
- Professional staff
- Social groups of faculty and students
- Peer groups (by special interest or physical proximity)
- Location (offices arranged by discipline)

Faculty also experiences substantial (if not complete) professional autonomy, and there is a tendency toward long tenures. Autonomy appears to indicate a freedom to work and develop one's own way of working. Over time, this could be seen as a means of developing norms and values which may be different to those of the dominant culture but not in opposition to them i.e. a subculture, but only if these views are shared amongst members. This seems to indicate that over time norms and values form outside the dominant culture through the autonomy and that due to long tenures, over time values become shared, and subcultures develop.

Subcultures are also formed in higher education by discipline. Disciplinary cultures were first examined by Becher (1989) and have been used as a basis for research in many cases since that

time. Becher (1989) indicates that disciplinary cultures are differentiated according to knowledge and classifies the cultures into four categories: hard, pure, soft and applied knowledge. These disciplinary cultures are also found by Becher (1989) to be either socially convergent or divergent. It is this study that led Quinlan and Akerlind (2000) to the introduction of department culture as a concept. Disciplinary cultures not only indicate the potential for the formation of subcultures but also indicate the ranking of staff, or 'pecking order'. According to Becher (1989: 57), the theoreticians are ranked highest with staff involved in practical, soft and applied disciplines ranked lower.

Susceptibility to subculture formation and division

According to Boisnier and Chatman (2002) there are certain characteristics (e.g. organizational size, task differentiation, power centrality, and demographic composition) that make some organizations more susceptible to subculture divisions than others. Subcultures are more likely to develop in larger, more complex, or bureaucratic organizations since these organizations are more likely to encompass a variety of functions and technologies (Trice & Beyer, 1993). With a variety of functions and technologies, professional groups may appear. The decentralization of power is another way of making organisations more susceptible to subculture formation. Martin and Siehl (1983) attributed the emergence of DeLorean's counterculture at General Motors to their decentralized power structure while Hage and Aiken (1967) found that more decentralized power was associated with more professional activity and hierarchical differentiation. In the same way that Higher Education Institution's allow a lot of autonomy for their teaching staff and this contributes to the deeply fragmentary nature of such institutions, as can be seen in the following comments: -

“The scholar wants to be left alone in the conduct of the academic enterprise. He does not welcome innovation in instructional procedures, in instructional arrangements, or in the organization and operation of a college or university. . . . The scholar is a conservative in his attitude towards and appreciation of the academic process.” Millett (1962; 104)

“We cannot help but be struck by the virtual right so many academics seem to possess to go their own way, simply assuming they can do largely as they please a good share of the time, all in the nature of rational behaviour.” Clark (1987; 148).

However, this does question whether such subcultures are feasible in cultures as deeply fragmented as this. If the scholar ‘wants to be left alone’ then this would indicate a low level of interaction with colleagues / subculture members which in turn could prevent the formation of subcultures. This seems to indicate a need for further research as to whether the issues of decentralization and power or interaction are more central to subculture formation or whether it must be a combination of the two, or some other factor not considered.

Finally, according to Nahavandi and & Malekzadeh (1988), organisational cultures may be unicultural or multicultural with the latter valuing the existence of many cultures within the organisation. It seems likely that organisations valuing many cultures are more likely to allow subcultures to develop rather than a unicultural organisation which may take steps at preventing them, since it values having a single dominant culture. This is exemplified by the work of Tushman and O’Reilly (1996) who observed organizations containing multiple cultures and characterized them as being simultaneously tight and loose; they had strong, consistent cultures across the entire organization, but allowed for “appropriate variations to occur across units” (1996: 27).

Traditions play a large role in the formation of a culture and subcultures in HEIs, be they traditions of the individual or those of the discipline, department, Faculty or institution. Since many HEIs are steeped in history, with unchanging traditions and members with long tenures, a strong culture is likely to prevail. According to Nahavandi and Malekzadeh (1993: 19), there are three elements to a strong / weak culture: the 'thickness' of the culture which refers to the number of shared beliefs, values and assumptions; the proportion of organizational members who share in the basic assumptions, which means the more shared assumptions, the stronger the culture) and finally; the clarity of the order of values and assumptions in terms of which are major and which are minor. Minor ones are more easily changed. A larger number of clear shared assumptions is more likely in organizations where members have been there for a considerable period of time, such as long-standing university professors. Whilst a strong culture might provide a strong sense of identity and clear behaviours and expectations, it is has also be associated with a lack of subcultures. Recent work by Boisnier and Chatman (2002) indicates however that it is perfectly plausible for a subcultures to exist as a part of a more dominant strong culture as those found in higher education.

A high level of autonomy and long tenures are key factors in the formation of subcultures in higher education staff. Handy (1993: 196) also refers directly to universities as traditionally having a role culture but that professors see themselves as part of person culture. Based on Hardy's ideas, Anderson, Carter and Lowe (1999: 128) point out that as Higher Education Institutions become more 'corporatized', they tend to become power cultures (under centralized control) or task cultures (when departments are dismantled and faculties are transformed into ad hoc research or instructional units). Mullins (1999: 804) argues that the person culture is prevalent among doctors, consultants and university professors. In this case, individuals have almost complete autonomy and influence is usually on the basis of personal

power. As such, individual traditions, along with identities are a real social force in higher education (Valimaa, 2008: 18).

The agents affecting newcomers to HEI cultures

The table below is not intended to be an exhaustive list as other cultural factors affecting acculturation could include leadership, power structure, organisational structure and so on (Nahavandi & and Malekzadeh,1993), but serves to illustrate the common ground shared by the agents and their effect in the socialization process for a child (newcomer) and that experienced by a school leaver acting as a newcomer to organisational culture in general. In fact looking at this from the point of view of society as a whole, the organisation becomes an agent and by becoming part of a company culture, if those values, norms and beliefs are maintained out of work, then surely this can be viewed also as a form of subculture. It could even be said in the case of countries like Japan, the corporate culture is a key and central part of the dominant culture in society.

Table 1 illustrates the common ground of between agents affecting socialization and organisational acculturation. Although the table does seem to indicate that parallels can be drawn between the processes in organizations and society, there are of course more factors at play here. The table does provide a means for taking the opportunity applying further theory from sociological, psychological and anthropological models to organisations as a means of understanding organisational cultures and subcultures.

In higher education, the agents in the socialization process are similar to those listed in the above table a few additions. Firstly, based on the work of Clark and Corcoran (1986), Kuh and Whitt (1988) refer to tenured faculty (and returning students) as culture bearers who *'provide newcomers with the information necessary to participate successfully in the life of*

the institution and to make meaning of new roles, tasks and experiences'. Secondly, the concept of 'anticipatory socialization' is introduced to the socialization process of HEIs. For Faculty this means that during doctoral studies there is positive orientation towards discipline-based and institutional prescriptions, such as behavioural guidelines for the group to which the doctoral student aspires (Freedman et al., 1979). Thus it could be entirely plausible that a doctoral student already starts to develop the norms and values of a Faculty subculture even before full employment in Faculty.

As a final note on the socialization process in higher education, Bess (1978) developed a model for some typical steps in the socialization process: -

1. identification of role models
2. observation of role model behaviour
3. imitation of role model behaviour
4. evaluation by others of the 'imitation'
5. modification of behaviour in response to evaluation
6. incorporation of values and behaviours of the role-model into the newcomers self-image

Further research would be needed to consider if this is the case for newcomers in higher education institutions in general or if another model needs to be considered.

Negative views of subcultures and higher education

The existence of organisational subcultures may be seen as rather negative and somewhat deviant as with the criminal subcultures, especially if the company is formed as a result of shared dissatisfaction or conflict. However, the question arises: Is this always the case or, as in society, are there distinct counter cultures and varying levels of deviance.

As seen in this paper, from its origin in sociology and anthropology, the term “subculture” has been associated with images of deviants, delinquents, gangs, and other nonconformists such as British punks. Organizational ethnographers have found a variety of types of organizational subcultures, not all of which are based on expressing opposing views (Jermier, Slocum, Fry, & Gaines, 1991; Martin & Siehl, 1983; Sackmann, 1992). As mentioned earlier in this paper, while some values and norms may change, there is still in adherence to the values and norms of the dominant society. A subculture that does not ascribe to the more dominant culture’s norms and values is considered a counterculture. Thus, countercultures are unacceptable to members of the larger organization and only in certain circumstances could such counter cultures emerge such as when there is strong union presence in the organisation which is in conflict with the organisation. Perhaps severe strikes as in the coal miners strike in the UK in the 80s could even be seen as a counterculture displaying its contrast in values with the dominant culture.

This link between conflict and subcultures is not new. Van Maanen and Barley (1985) characterized subcultures as “containing seeds of conflict” as conflict may emerge when members of differing subcultures confront one another. Gregory (1983) noted that operated in multicultural organizations; members of subcultures perceived things only from their cultural perspective (ethnocentrism), also perpetuating conflict. In this case, the issue is not that the subculture has formed due to conflict but rather, any subculture indicates a difference from the norms and values of the dominant culture and as such two subcultures formed by work groups that are faced with a situation of working together as a team could be seen as potentially conflictive.

Martin (1992) puts forward that subcultures are not conducive to certain cultures, especially strong organizational cultures. However, Boisnier and Chatman (2002) claim that strong culture organizations can become agile without losing their basis of strength, by allowing

certain types of subcultures to emerge as subcultures may provide the flexibility and responsiveness that a unitary culture may limit. Boisnier and Chatman (2002) also claim that subcultures may actually strengthen an organization's dominant culture. This is achieved in a number of ways:

1. Subcultures vary in the extent to which they disrupt the overarching culture.
2. Subcultures often emerge in response to changing demands and can serve as an outlet for members to express conflict and dissent arising during turbulent times. Thus, subcultures may provide a mechanism for changing less central values.
3. The fact that subcultures are potentially important with respect to affecting core values may further substantiate how difficult it is to change an organization's culture (e.g., Trice & Beyer, 1984).

In higher education, multicultural student groups are seen as a means of giving a competitive edge through increased creativity, perspective and innovation (Heidrich, 2010) and so there seems no reason to assume that rather than conflict, subcultures may also present different perspectives on problems and perhaps even increase creative solutions to a problem. According to Martin and Siehl (1983) subcultures can act as containers of creativity in which ideas can formulate relatively independently of the constraints or influences of the (strong) culture.

According to Kuh and Whitt (1988: 51) subcultures may also form within subcultures and this happens in higher education too: "schisms in disciplines sometimes begin when members cluster themselves on the basis of different views toward the discipline". Kuh and Whitt (1988) also claim that in a college or university, the antagonism between these subgroups may result in members conflicting and stop talking – in doing so they become two subcultures,

which as Van Maanen and Barley (1984:344) refer to as subcultures 'delimited mainly by their scorn for one another'.

As a final response to the negative view of subcultures in higher education, Boisnier and Chatman (2002) point out that smaller groups are more likely to be given a degree of autonomy that is less viable in large, centralized organizations. Smaller groups are associated with being strategically weak and, therefore, not threatening (Galunic & Eisenhardt, 2001).

Types of organisational subcultures

The basis for membership of subcultures in society vary (age, ethnicity, interests etc), and the question is whether the groupings that are found in society are the same in organisations. Organizational subcultures may be based on membership in various groups such as (Jermier, Slocum, Fry & Gains, 1991; Trice & Beyer, 1993):

- Departments
- workgroups, and teams;
- levels of hierarchies, such as management versus support staff;
- professional and occupational affiliations;
- physical location in the organization;
- socio-demographic categories such as sex, ethnicity, age, or nationality;
- informal groups like those formed by friendships
- performance-related variables such as organizational commitment and work performance

Schein (1988) observed that values varied across organizations and claimed that members held more closely to some values than others. The two main types are as follows: -

1. Pivotal values are central to an organization's functioning; members are required to adopt and adhere to the behavioural norms derived from these values and are typically

rejected from the organization if they do not (e.g., Chatman, 1991; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1996).

2. Peripheral values are desirable but are not believed by members to be essential to an organization's functioning. Members are encouraged to accept peripheral values, but can reject them and still function fully as members.

With Schein's work in mind, subcultures could be seen to exist that maintain the pivotal values but only some or a few of the peripheral values. In this way, the subcultures not only cannot be viewed as a counterculture, but should not affect the organization's function. According to Boisnier and Chatman (2002), the "members' degree of conformity to peripheral norms can vary considerably". Thus it could be claimed that subcultures may vary in the extent they are related to the dominant organisational culture.

Martin and Siehl (1983) developed a typology of organizational subcultures, including enhancing, orthogonal, and counter cultures. Within the context of Schein's pivotal and peripheral values this subculture typology clarifies how subcultures can exist in an organization without detracting from the strength of the overall culture: -

1. Enhancing subcultures
 - Members adhere to dominant organizational culture values enthusiastically
 - Members agree with and care about both pivotal and peripheral values, consistent with the larger organization's core values.
 - intense commitment to particular peripheral values, that are consistent with those of the overarching culture
2. Orthogonal subcultures
 - Members embrace the dominant cultures' values but also hold their own set of distinct, but not conflicting, values.

- Members embrace the pivotal organizational values but, simultaneously, hold values that are peripheral to those of the overarching culture.
3. Counter cultures
- Members disagree with the core values of the dominant culture
 - Members hold values that directly conflict with core organizational values.

This typology can also be seen in higher education. According to Martin and Siehl (1983: 53), using an example of an orthogonal subculture was found in faculty using particle accelerators to conduct research in high-energy physics as they ‘simultaneously accept the core values of the (institution) and a separate, unconflicting set of values particular to themselves’. Counter cultures are not prolific in many organisations as they often pose a direct threat to the values of the organisation. However, in higher education some form of counter cultures may exist to some extent at least in student cultures with radical groups such as the ‘students for Democratic Society’ of the 1960s. Although countercultures may not exist greatly in organisations themselves in higher education, that does not mean there is not opposition to the dominant culture: according to Kuh and Whitt (1988: 50), “conforming or orthogonal enclaves, such as the faculty senate, may challenge aspects of the dominant culture”.

Conclusions:

Subcultures in higher education exist in many forms and with a varied range of agents applying pressures to newcomers to ascribe to a certain culture or subculture. According to the literature, subcultures in higher education may not necessarily be a negative factor although it can be seen to lead to conflict on occasion.

The implications of the complexity are even greater when considering the merging of two higher educational institution. There is more potential for conflict and a closer relationship

between the organisations. In fact, many mergers of Higher Educational Institutions have collapsed early on in the merger process due to conflict, especially in the UK, e.g. UWIC and Glamorgan University, University College London and Imperial College, Bradford University and Bradford College, to name but a few. This may be due to the strong cultures and the fact that although many have previously collaborated, increased daily interaction has increased the potential for conflict. For HEIs considering significant change, such as in the case of a merger, a cultural audit would be a wise precaution.

Understanding cultures in higher educations acts as a means for understanding not only the distinctive culture of HEIs but also a means to understanding the organisational behaviour. From this paper, it can be seen that due to a multitude of subcultures (and even subgroups within them) basic routines can be affected and communication has to be specifically targeted at the subcultures values and norms for it to be received well.

On a positive note, subcultures actually can exist without being in opposition to the dominant culture and are seen as smaller and therefore weaker or perhaps less likely to have a significant impact on the workings of the organisation. As such subcultures don't pose a threat to the operation of universities and colleges.

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Figure 1 The cultural web in HEIs: A paradigm of a University

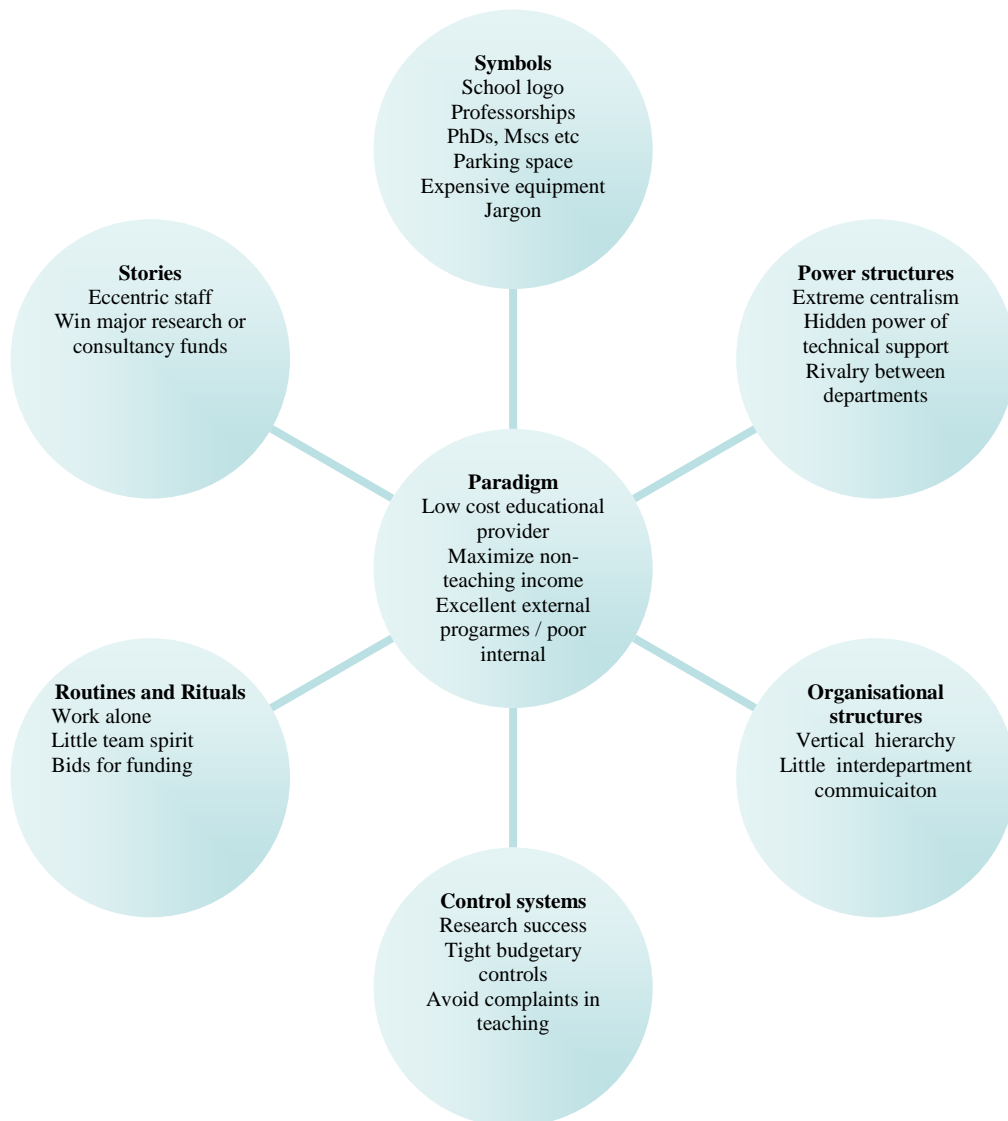


Table 1 Illustration of the common ground of agents affecting socialization and organisational acculturation

Agents in the socialization process	Effect on ‘newcomer’	Agents affecting organisational acculturation
Family / Parents	Learns to imitate acceptable actions and behaviour Adjusting to norms	Colleagues / Managers
Neighbourhood	Differentiating between different individual members and groups Understanding own self and place in society	Other departments. Formal and informal groups
School / Institutions	To impart discipline Follow standards of behaviour and norms	Company Policy: rules, regulations, manuals Group pressure to conform (or not)
Mass media	Introduction of new norms values / Reinforcement of norms and values	Company newsletter, reputation, PR