

Decision-Making and the Creation of Counter-Cultural Organizational Power Structures

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Abstract

This study examines an instance in which organizational change occurred due to perceived issues with decision-making practices, specifically the threshold at which organizational members opted to work outside the already established guidelines for enacting change. Organizational members banded together in a formalized movement to enact change, acting in countercultural fashion (i.e. challenging organizational norms, establishing radical changes in leadership and management practices). Using Edgar Schein's (2004) model for culture, data illustrate a three-tiered model for change motivation: reasons, espoused motivations, and common expectations. This study ultimately intends to further the understanding of crises and change movements in organizations and to enhance organizational learning processes for those experiencing or have already experienced social upheaval.

Keywords: Organizational Change, Employee Communication, Employee Motivation

1. Introduction

Formal and informal rules govern normal, day-to-day operations in organizations. It has been long established that rules formalize the culture of organizations, societies, even governments. Formally established methods (i.e. establishing a vote calendar, closely following Robert's Rules of Order) have offered us a stable opportunity to regularly enact change. Controversy often arises when members decide to work outside of these guidelines (i.e. civil wars or corporate rebellion). Many large scale controversies evidence this form of controversy (i.e. in Caracas, Venezuela (Euronews, 2014); in the Syrian civil war and subsequent cyber war (Shehabat, 2011); Great Britain's recent riots (Maer, 2013)).

This controversial nature also seems to be applicable on a smaller scale for local, organization-centric change events. This study examines a particular instance that could be labeled as controversial on such a scale: organizational change occurred because of certain decisions made, and the perceived abuses of these powers. Specifically, this paper offers an introductory pilot study, examining the threshold at which cultural members opt to work outside the already established guidelines (i.e. committee structures, parliamentary procedure). To accomplish this, this study examines the stories of members of an organization who acted to change organizational norms and decision-making practices to understand why they perceived their actions were necessary.

Those who hold decision-making authority have myriad explanations as to why such structures are in and should stay in place. This power gives authoritative figures dominion over what organizations value, as well as what may be considered as the nature of each culture. Prior research, such as that from Edgar Schein, in *Organizational Culture and Leadership 3rd Edition*, has contributed many explanations as to why these power structures are in place. Specifically, Schein offers a foundational understanding of culture itself. Here we see culture as a "shared" and "stable structure;" filled with complex and has great depth, breadth, and tends to "integrate into a large paradigm" (Schein, 2006, p. 14-15). This complexity offers us the wonderful opportunity of diversification of

ideologies, of disagreement between such ideologies, and ultimately more discourse (should that opportunity not be squandered or impaired in some way).

To complicate our understanding of culture, one must also take into account the case study being used in this research. The subject of this study consists of employee participants from a small, private, liberal arts college located in central Kentucky. The institution recently underwent radical change (in leadership, finances, etc.) as a consequence of financial problems caused by a slumping tertiary ("higher") educational market and on-campus dilemmas. In this regard, this change movement can be best described as one attempting to establish new norms for this organization.

The movement was essentially countercultural, in that its purpose was to stand against already established organizational norms. Applebaum and Anatol (1979) describe these norms as being:

...Established to identify what employees should or should not do (behavior), or be (attitudes), as group participants. Organizational norms define the manner in which individuals are to behave and act; prescribe the proper values, attitudes, or opinions to hold or express; and determine the pattern of interaction among organizational employees. Steele and Jenks suggest that norms have the greatest effect on the interpersonal day-to-day climate (p. 83).

Norms are embedded in the structural components of an organization as well and serve to reflect and reinforce the culture of an organization. The effects that these norms may have on an organization include the institution of performance standards, the creation of in/out groups, and directly influence decision-making practices.

Further consideration should be given to the principles theorized by Karl Marx. To have an appropriate frame of reference, understand the nature of power at this institution, and build upon the foundational understanding of culture provided to us by Schein, one may look to Marx's principles to provide each. Following the foundational principles set out by Marx, we begin with the assumption that capital originates with the student (customer); they are using their capital (intellectual, monetary, or talent capital) to purchase a commoditized product through the payment of tuition. With this, a typical customer will reside within a traditional four-year cycle, from orientation to graduation. (This paper operates under the assumption that the cycle will average out, including transfers in and out and students dropping out of the institutional cycle.) The infused capital then perpetuates the organization allowing for expansion, maintenance, benefits and salary for faculty members, etc.

Because of the nature of the cycle itself, the capital, after purchase, goes to fund at least one semester's worth of commoditized product at a time; billing on a semester-by-semester basis. This leads to a confusing state of affairs for the modern customer, as it seems that they have bought into an already rigid and stable system. This suggests that the opinions they have in regards to the perpetuation of the institution are neither needed nor wanted. Using traditional power approaches enhanced by the production of coercive symbological structures designed to reinforce their ideologies, members of management (administration) also serve to preserve this inherently managerially biased structure. Management relies on the assumed expert status their titles lend them and, through this perceived power, create policies that further their goals. This adds greater oppression to other subordinates, such as employees.

Ultimately this study intends to further the understanding of crises and change movements in organizations and larger cultures. Those in danger of movements that run counter to current organizational norms would also benefit from this knowledge. Also, this research offers the opportunity to enhance the organizational learning processes for those who have already experienced social upheaval within their organization. The next section of this project covers a review of literature pertaining to decision-making, and the nature of power and resistance. The review encompasses two research questions, one examining the current culture at this institution, another examining the culture after members reach emancipation status. These questions are studied by qualitative methodology, as outlined after the review of literature.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Decision-Making

Decision-making exists as a central tenet of organizational management. Its pervasive and intrinsic nature is at its core concerned with "the allocation and exercise of power in organizations" (Miller, et al 1999, p. 43). Who is involved, how it is accomplished, and the political impact are important to understand how and why organizations make decisions. Control is also an important aspect to understand as decision-making effectively establishes a form

of concertive control in organizations, with one group (those who make decisions) controlling another by enforcement of these decisions made (Miller, et al, 1999, p. 44).

To examine this culture, it is first assumed that organizational decision-making, particularly that of resource allocation (i.e. budgetary issues, an important issue defined above for the studied organization) decision-making, is a political process. Further, the assumption also considers that this process can be explained by relative subunit power, as well as possible bureaucratic criteria (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1974). Within this political process, research acknowledges the seemingly paradoxical nature of organizational decision-making in a university setting, as they contain both decentralized and centralized properties. Typically, decisions are considered, proposed, and ratified at the faculty level, but usually require support from the dean or president of the institution for complete passage (Pampaloni & Berzinski, 2009). As Pampaloni & Berzinski (2009) note, most decentralization efforts typically create a centralized effort elsewhere. The organization used in the case study uses a committee structure with defined jurisdiction for each (i.e. curriculum, retention, committee on committees).

With this political system, examining the construction of policy knowledge is of primary concern. Contradictions in power structures are an integral part of the process (Canary, 2010). As Canary notes, there are levels multitudinous (primary, secondary, and tertiary) of contradictory structures emergent within and between policy related activity systems. Canary (2010) also notes that contradictions manifest in the development of policy knowledge, as well as in its orientation, amplification, and implementation to employees. Furthermore, contradictions play an integral role in the development process, found in two key dialectics: 1) policy legitimation/allocative resources tension and 2) control/autonomy tension.

Another key consideration is found within the practice of reflexivity of management. As Barge (2004) describes, management typically defines reflexivity in terms of the forms of description they developed for punctuating the meaning of situations and how they related to people. Also, self-reflexivity emerged as a theme with participating management. Barge (2004) continues to note that managers who act in a reflexive manner typically see an increased perception of agency and a capability to speak with a clear intent in ways that correctly illustrate the intricacy of our lived understandings.

Organizational control is also contingent upon members' willingness to be controlled (or unwillingness, leading to resistance). A sliding scale between zealotry to skepticism exists within organizational members. Zealots typically offer and adhere to a managerially-prescribed organizational premise, whereas skeptics tend to offer premises of their own (Bisel, Ford, & Keyton, 2007). In addition, skeptics report no pride in being a part of an organization and report that a skeptic's orientation to other salient groups within or outside of an organization was in line to the found disdain to the organization.

Other aspects impacting the decision-making process are found in performance, slack, and risk taking (Singh, 1986); conflict management styles (Kuhn & Poole 2000); organizational identity (Ashforth and Mael, 1989); and organizational transparency. Singh examines performance within an organization, explaining that poor performance is related to high risk taking in organizational decisions, whereas good performance is related to low risk taking. Good performance is also related to high absorbed and unabsorbed slack. Kuhn and Poole (2000) note that groups engaging in an assimilative (of all constituents and affected parties) conflict management style typically are the most effective in decision-making, whereas those with distributive and avoidance styles will be less effective or ineffective, respectively. Ashforth and Mael (1989) describe organizational identity as a key factor in decision-making also; how members identify with the organization itself as well as the macroidentity of the organization will play an important role in exactly how organizational decisions are made.

None of this prior literature concerning organizational decision-making has taken to research with the intent of examining how this motivates organizational members to create change outside of already established guidelines. Given the tension within this organization and those like it, the following research question is proposed:

RQ1 – How is decision-making viewed?

2.2 The Nature of Power and Resistance

The true nature of power in an organization is elusive, especially in that of an essentially commoditized institution of education. Firstly, educational culture is one based upon experience and expertise. The students are, for example educated by experts in their field of study and are differentiated from the students by the power given to them by the various graduate degrees they hold (PhD, MA, etc). In contrast, given the commoditized nature of education in our capitalist culture, the power would reside in those who provide the capital to perpetuate the institution and embody a supply/demand perspective.

As is noted by Golish and Olsen (2000), students already have some degree of power within the classroom setting. Reward power is typically the most effective way students assert this. In keeping with a highly educated setting,

Larson and Tompkins' (2005) study of management in a concertive control system paints interesting parallels: their case study involved a highly educated workforce, and in such, management tended to side with employee resistance rather than against it thus offering at least a modicum of explanation as to why faculty (a partially dominant coculture at this institution) is inclined to stand with students over that of the administration.

As with all cultural oppression, hegemony is a main concern. One major source of alienation and marginalization arises from optimistic claims from a governing body (Waymer 2009). However, hegemony which is readily seen can be more readily resisted. Co-cultures, which have established themselves and found ways to formalize their own instruction, can also more easily combat established power systems (Cyphert 1998). When differences arise and are seen as aberrant behavior the joy of this self-instruction is thus removed (Cyphert 1998).

To further combat this hegemonic entrapment, Lain (1997) suggests that reality must be challenged in order to create a world conducive to transformation. Lain (1997) goes on to say that discourse enables one to have a greater perception for theoretical perspectives, as well as its practical usage. Reality is something open to individual interpretation; it is constituted of an individual's capacity to express their situation. To this, Kassing and McDowell (2008) suggest that dissent plays a key role in the establishment and perception of justice. Upward dissent, they note, correlates positively and significantly with management's perception of justice.

Afifi and Olson (2005) make note of an issue that is perhaps unique to that of small, liberal arts colleges (this institution in particular) in that a popular metaphor used to describe them is that of a family. They describe a chilling effect in families which leads to burdens members to not disclose secrets. Afifi and Olson (2005) explain that it is coercive power which influences disclosure—or lackthereof, insofar as to repress a yearning to disclose sensitive information for fear of negative consequences. The result is that coercive power, oppressive power, and symbolic and physical aggression are all positively associated with concealment. In addition to this, Roskos-Ewoldsen, Yu, & Rhodes (2004) explain that fatalism is directly related with the believability and ability of a threat to actually be followed through with. In consideration to the current situation of this institution, this is eerily pertinent in regard to perceived oppression and masked appeals to fear.

Clair (1994) offers an interesting analysis of resistance and oppression in that they coexist with one another. Clair explains that, in order to dominate others, you, yourself, must stand under oppression. This, among other works, have only studied an individual, micropolitical case study, however (Ganesh, Zoller, & Cheney 2005). Ganesh, et al consider the macropolitical approach to give research better understanding of relationships among corporate practices and practices of injustice.

Given this literature on the subject of oppression and power structures, this study will then examine the findings from RQ1 from a critical perspective and propose this second research question:

RQ2 – What motivates members to operate outside of already established guidelines?

3. Methodology

Firstly, this paper exists as a pilot study. These forms of study seek to understand the implications, capacities, and weaknesses of a particular path of research (Leon, Davis, & Kraemer, 2012). Leon, et al, (2012) explain pilot studies as being a necessary first action in exploring and informing the feasibility of a particular idea or research model. The benefits and limitations of this pilot status are discussed in proceeding sections.

This pilot study uses qualitative research consisting of one case study of a population from a small, private, Liberal Arts College in central Kentucky. Participants were selected from organizational faculty and voluntarily interviewed on various subjects such as how aware these members were about the change, their involvement, and how they feel about the studied organization. This frame is anticipated to give a foundation to why each of these organizational members decided to continue taking steps toward cultural (see: norms (Applebaum and Anatol, 1979)) change.

3.1 Interview Questions

How aware are you of the events regarding the administration change at this institution? I'd like to hear the story of your involvement.

What brought you to creating/participating in it specifically?

How did you feel about working here before this event? How do you feel now?

How aware are you of how decisions are made at this institution? How do you feel about transparency?

Did you talk about things you felt were wrong or bad about this institution? How often?

How pervasive was the discussion about the perceived wrongs in the organization pre-movement?

How would you describe the collegiality in this institution? How well do people work with one another?

How much pride did you take in your employment here pre-movement? How about post-movement?

Do you feel like that is a typical experience for a faculty member? What about those who participated in the discussion with the Board?

Open floor: what issues come to your mind that we haven't already discussed?

This frame will also help to build the story of each participant. Namely, stories from organizational members have the power to "generate and sustain meanings" (Gabriel, 2000, p. 6). Gabriel (2000) states, "Organization and management studies ... have enthusiastically adopted the idea that, in creating a meaningful universe, people resort to stories" (p. 17). These stories help to understand the person's individual experiences (i.e. how they perceive organizational events, changes, other members) through the emotional and symbolic detail each will have (Gabriel, 2000). These emotional and symbolic details provide the foundation for understanding the motivation of organizational members.

The nature of the organization at the time of research collection is volatile. Because of this nature, consideration was paid to not only the phrasing of the questions, but also the environment in which the interview was conducted. Interviews were conducted personally, in a one-on-one setting. Each participant chose the environment in which they felt the most comfortable to discuss each topic covered. This allowed for more intimate discussion, which gave more personal answers from each of the participants.

This approach is also more conducive of anonymity of participants. The volatile nature of the culture and business notwithstanding, participants required great effort toward keeping their identities anonymous due to fears of repercussion. Joining together for the actual discussion with administration was a difficult task in and of itself for these participants. Thus, anything that would further jeopardize their careers (i.e. personally identifiable information such as names, titles, ranks) were not taken and each participant was given a pseudonym to further conceal their identity.

Findings from these stories/interviews will act as collaborative data with ethnographic findings from the researcher's participation and observation of the events that unfolded. Bryman defines ethnography as

...[Immersion] in a society to collect descriptive data via fieldwork concerning the culture of its member from the perspective of the meanings members of that society attach to their social world, and render the collected data intelligible and significant to fellow academics and other readers. (Bryman, 2001, p. 1)

This immersion greatly benefits this study, as it further contextualizes results from the stories/interviews from participants.

4. Results

Using Schein's model of culture (2006) as a model to understand the countercultural movement, this study sought to ascertain why members opted to act outside of already established guidelines to enact change. In accordance with Schein's three-tiered model (artifacts, values, and assumptions), this study discovered that countercultural actors have a similar method of understanding the necessity of change. The three tiers of understanding the motivation of countercultural actors stand as:

- 1) Reasons,
- 2) Motivations, and
- 3) Expectations.

Reasons, much akin to artifacts, offer a basic, foundational understanding of group and organizational culture. These reasons are complicated as one begins to understand the motivations, much akin to a member having values, behind each member having them. Ultimately the expectations, similar to that of Schein's assumptions, are the most complex, complicated, and strongest driving force behind why an organizational member would choose to act outside of the already established guidelines to enact change.

4.1 Modeling the Motivations

The organizational members who took part in in this movement each had possibly unique or different reasons for actively participating. Reasons, for this context, are defined as a simple basis for justifying their individual participation. These bases offer the foundational understanding of why they would choose to enact change by opting out of already established guidelines for change.

These reasons may, but not necessarily always, explicitly vary from participant to participant. For example, participant Claudia stated, "Let's get the shit out on the table. We're sort of done getting fucked on this whole financial situation that none of us are responsible for." Participant Mary had different reasons for participating, saying, if the leadership "had left ten years before, it would have been better. They would have left on strength rather than a decline. It was pretty clear leadership wasn't going do it of their own accord." These reasons can and typically do vary for each participant.

These differing reasons offer a sense of diversity and complication to an otherwise uniform group of organizational members. For example, participant Mary frequently stated that, "I thought for several years that leadership had given everything that they had to give to this institution but it was time for a change." Claudia on the other hand offered a different take, saying, "We felt there needed to be some sort of accountability and transparency on the part of the administration to see their role in" the current organizational crisis. It is evident that reasons can and do differ in terms of zealotry, appreciation of current leadership, and perceived necessity for change.

Organizational members acting counterculturally seek this diversity and complication in the face of change. Participant Mary stated that she was not part of the original group of employees seeking change. Further, her reasons tended to differ somewhat in that she still respected the amount of dedication leadership had shown. Speaking about other group members, Mary said, "At least one of the [original group members] told me, when I signed on they had a sigh of relief because I don't say very much or get involved in very much. But I thought this was crucial, and they thought I helped validate what they thought." This diversity of thought was perceived within the group to not only strengthen morale and resolve of countercultural actors, but also to act as a calming and rationalizing agent.

These different reasons come together and form motivations, which was pervasive within this countercultural group. Motivations are the common incitation factors that transcend or arise from personal reasons. These motivations are ultimately based in what participants in the movement offer as their reasons. However, they differ in that they are a shared and implicit consideration within each participant. These motivations are also not necessarily communicated openly, but are typically universally understood.

Comparing and contrasting each reason given can offer examples of motivations, to which each participant contributed. These motivations may be varied, as well. These examples include, for this study, the thought that there was no other way to accomplish effective and lasting change without a somewhat radical approach, that leadership was perceived to be incompetent, that decisions made by leadership were of detriment to the organization. These motivations help to define the scope of a countercultural organization and understand what exactly problems may be.

Motivations, as akin to Schein's underlying values (2006), are more complex and deeply held by an organizational member than a standard reason would be. This underlying value helps to guide participants in creating a cohesive, unified narrative between one another. Motivations act as an underlying bond between possibly disparate or different reasons (expressed or otherwise) one wishes to enact change in this manner. This particular section relies less on what participants say explicitly. It examines the commonalities between what is said—how often, how emphasized it is—in order to ascertain a set of unique and pertinent motivations.

There are several motivations for this particular group. In order to make sense of the diverse backgrounds from which the countercultural actors come, the number was necessarily higher. As well, dealing with a case study whose population belongs to a higher education status than the general population, their considerations, implicit motivations, and reasoning will be more complicated in conjunction.

The first of these motivations arises from participants' belief that without their actions, the institution would suffer greatly. Participants believed that there was the necessity for change for the institution to continue operating and to

thrive in the future. Claudia and Mary both substantiate this idea each time they speak of necessity, of systematic and institutionalized problems, and a block to open communication.

This motivation works in conjunction with others. Participants were motivated by the thought that change could not happen through any other avenue. This thought permeated through the group for a number of reasons, particularly because members believed a more radical, yet still institutionally-based approach (i.e. an open floor vote of no confidence from employees) would further damage the organization, or that leadership simply would not listen to any option more liberal. (It should be noted that radical/liberal is a discussion of available methodologies to accomplish their desired goal.)

These motivations are not the final aspect of consideration, however. The motivations speak to common expectations, or the nature of change necessary, that each participant has (which contributes to the group as a whole). These expectations, akin to Schein's assumptions, are the taken for granted assumptions each group member has, which speaks to the heart of the countercultural group. Also, just as the motivations, these are shared within members of the group. This is, in essence, the most important aspect of group members to consider, as it offers the core galvanizing forces within each group member.

Acting as perhaps the most profound aspect of a countercultural actor's impetus for change, expectations serve in similar capacity to Schein's cultural assumptions. Schein (2006) describes assumptions as the taken for granted assumptions about a culture's perception of the nature of human nature. Expectations exist as the countercultural actor's assumption about the nature of change necessary for an organization to once again thrive in the face of trouble or crisis.

One must look to the espoused motivations in order to understand what these actors believe is the nature of change necessary in this organization. Similarly to Schein's espoused values, espoused motivations are essentially the building blocks for understanding why a countercultural participant believes they can change an organization. This 'why' serves as the fundamental rationale for acting counterculturally, which again parallels Schein in terms of assumptions.

The first and perhaps most important expectation from these actors is that they expected the institution to be, and to continue to be, worth fighting for. The relationships, the bonds, the experiences each brought to the table were at least in some way defined by the organization and were of the utmost importance to continue and foster. This is evidenced by the frequent repetition of the great pride each participant has in this organization as a motivating factor and further supported by the knowledge each member already has about decision-making in this organization. Because they are aware of the system of shared governance, they feel their input—which was perceived to be desperately undervalued—was valuable and necessary.

Participant Claudia spoke of the "noise" inherent in this organization: "There was a lot of noise." "Systematic and institutionalized roadblocks" to institutional success constituted much of Claudia's issues with former leadership. Mary spoke frequently of her belief that leadership was past their point of usefulness to the organization. An expectation that arises out of these specific concerns is institutional, leadership change is necessary and should be frequent. These members expect organizations to thrive if they have access to consistently changing philosophies and ideas.

One other expectation arises out of participants' focus on leadership incompetence and issues with the lack of transparency in this organization. Participants were frequently troubled by communication at the organization. How and why organizational members share meaning is important to these participants. Thus, they hold the expectation that clear and open channels of dialogue and discourse must be available for an organization to survive and thrive. These participants are thus encouraged by this expectation in hopes of establishing such in this organization.

Ultimately, expectations—just as Schein's assumptions, may not be uniform. These expectations may vary for different countercultural groups within different organizations. The impetus still remains to ascertain and understand the stimuli groups have in countercultural movements on a grander scale. However, this study offers a foundational insight into these movements in general.

5. Discussion

The employees of this organization care deeply about its success and future. Ascertaining the high level of association with this organization was a strength of this research. Rate and Sternberg (2007) explain that when good people do not step forward to enact meaningful change, organizations as a whole face these consequences. They further explain that negative consequences can be a strong mitigating factor against this action:

“Avoiding such negative consequences can be a compelling basis for failing to act courageously and, instead, for ‘minding one’s own business’ and for being a proponent of the status quo. It is the responsibility of the collective organization to create and sustain an atmosphere and culture where courageous behavior can be developed and exercised, thereby reducing retributive sanctions on the part of the organization” (p. 4).

Participant Claudia spoke frequently about this phenomenon. Employees either simply shy away from enacting meaningful change immediately or become exhausted from facing the negative consequences for some time. Thus, in an environment rife with employee fatigue it is interesting to see how some employees overcame this.

Another strength of this research was found in finding organizational members’ belief in the necessity of removing former leadership to ensure survival and thriving. Shapiro and Von Glinow (2007) speak to how perceived bad leaders can stay in an organization for what seems to be past their point of usefulness. They argue leadership can be “shielded” from emotional impact via negative emotions (i.e. fear, loathing). “These emotions blind followers from seeing ‘bad’ in what leaders do” (Shapiro and Von Glinow 2007, p. 94). However, when members overcome this “shield” and act punitively towards leadership, “perceived responsibility and outcome severity are key determinants of people’s punitiveness toward” those who have caused harm to the organization (p. 93). Participants were frank with their perception that leadership had caused great harm to the organization. Their desire to see these wrongs rectified, in conjunction with their high levels of positive association with the organization, helped to encourage change agents.

A weakness of this research was its pilot status. This pilot status affected not only its scope, but also its frame and reach for other organizations. A pilot study offers only a foundational, introductory understanding of the topic. However, it is a decisive way to ascertain whether there is enough in a topic to conduct further research in a given field. Future research will help to overcome this weakness, as it will expand and complicate the material found here.

Another weakness can be found in the skill level of the interviewer/researcher. As this is the first time the researcher has approached gathering qualitative data in an in-depth manner, undoubtedly phrasing of questions and confidence in interviewing abilities can be improved upon. Future research in this topic will also strengthen these weaknesses. Despite this weakness the strong and decisive responses given by participants offered clarity to this project

Future research may be multifaceted. Firstly, it is incumbent upon future research to expand the scope of research conducted in this study. More data can be collected which will build upon the foundational understanding offered in this study. Also, future research can be centered upon needs fulfillment in accordance with Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs to complicate our understanding of motivation outside of a cultural perspective. While individual participants were considered for this research, it was understood from this perspective.

6. Conclusion

As previously stated, formal and informal rules govern our day-to-day interactions. This study sought to understand what motivates an organizational member to opt out of these already established guidelines and rules to enact change in their organization. Using Schein’s Onion model of culture, this study proposed that countercultural actors operate under a similar model. This model consisted of reasons (basic justification), motivations (shared incitation factors), and expectations (the nature of change expected).

The nature of critical scholarship is one that focuses on power. Using Marx’s ideas as a complicating perspective, this study has implications for power in organizations: both administrative powers, as well as how organizational members react to rules, guidelines, and policies. Interestingly, what motivates members to act in a critical manner has been a taken-for-granted aspect of a culture in our current understanding. This study seeks to bridge this understanding gap, if only in an introductory capacity.

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