if he did not give her what she wanted. What she did not realize was that by leaving she was rewarding him, so he made sure he did not grant her request. She left. Hence, employees have to be cautious about trying to use coercion or reward to influence their supervisors. It might backfire.

No one has power over anyone who does not grant her or him that power. We grant someone reward power over us when we decide we want the reward. We grant someone coercive power over us when we decide we want to avoid a punishment. We grant someone legitimate power over us when we decide he or she has the right to make certain demands of us. We grant someone expert power over us when we decide he or she knows more about something than we do. And we grant referent power to someone when we decide we like and respect her or him and would like to be more like that person. In a free society, power is granted, not taken. Remember, you can always quit. If you decide you are not going to quit, then you are granting another person power over you.

Most power is relationally defined. Thus, you can develop power to control your supervisor's behavior to some degree, just as he or she receives from you some power to control your behavior. These powers are negotiated between supervisors and subordinates as a function of the relationships they build with each other. If you want to build a strong relationship with your supervisor, in all likelihood you can do so. Do what you were hired to do—your job. And do it well. This is the way to build the expert power base. When the supervisor asks your opinion about something concerning the job, respond in a positive manner. Let your supervisor "know you know your job." This will help build your credibility while at the same time building some power.

Next, build your referent base. This is built by communicating liking and respect for your supervisor. Demonstrate to your supervisor that you respect her or him and the organization. We don't mean you should be a "brown-nose." We mean be honestly dedicated and committed to the job and let your supervisor know you are dependable. How might an employee build referent and expert power? First, do your job well without whining. Let's face it. All jobs have tasks people do not like. Do them and go on. No one likes a whiner. In addition, avoid associating with whiners. They will want you to start whining too. Second, if your supervisor asks your advice, give the best answer you have or admit you are not sure, but would be willing to try and find an answer. Third, spend time observing and learning the right norms and behaviors to make you a more dedicated employee—one who looks as if he or she belongs in the organization. Fourth, avoid special-interest groups or groups that want to create tension in the organization. Many a good employee has been ruined by getting in with the perpetual protestors in the organization. Fifth, communicate with your supervisor in a positive verbal and nonverbal manner.

The main results of this approach will be that your communication with your supervisor will be improved, you will have established an influence base for yourself, and you will be a more satisfied, motivated employee. You will be able to influence your supervisor on occasion, and perhaps have input on some major decisions in the future. True, some of your peers may see you as a bit of a "kiss up." Smile all the way to the promotion, and do not be late for their going-away parties!

STUDY GUIDE

1. What is "status"? Give examples of "status symbols" in organizations.
2. What is the relationship between status and solidarity? How is each related to communication in an organization?
3. Identify and describe the seven primary types of power. Which ones are likely to enhance superior–subordinate communication? Which ones are likely to detract from it? Why?
4. Identify and describe the three levels of influence.
5. Identify and describe the three conditions necessary for people to engage in compliant behavior as a result of threatened punishment or promised reward.
6. Who determines how much power a manager has in an organization? Explain.
7. Explain what you can do to increase your power in an organization.

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CHAPTER
11

Organizational Culture

We are all "cultured." Those who believe it is necessary to have an appreciation for German funeral dirges, Italian operatic sopranos, Shakespearean theater, and abstract French paintings to be cultured will not agree with this statement. That is because they equate the term "cultured" with "refined," and reserve for themselves the right to prescribe what those terms mean. It is unfortunate that the term "culture" has been abused in this way for so long in North America. It has resulted in many people rejecting "culture" as an area of interest, and feeling like they are not a part of their own North American culture.

While many of us are not particularly "refined," especially in the way some American cultural elitists choose to define that term, we repeat: *We are all cultured*. Everyone is a part of some culture. Culture surrounds us, and everything we do. Culture simply cannot be avoided in contemporary society.

DEFINING CULTURE

Culture is "an accumulated pattern of values, beliefs, and behaviors shared by an identifiable group of people with a common history and a verbal and nonverbal symbol system" (Neuliep, 2000, p. 26). More simply, a culture is a group of people with similar backgrounds who think, act, and communicate a lot alike.

Most discussions of culture are directed toward national groups; thus, we hear about Japanese culture, Brazilian culture, Irish culture, Mexican culture, Turkish culture, and American (usually meaning U.S.) culture. As this suggests, a culture can include an entire nation or even more than one nation. It also can include only a portion of a nation (such as Texas culture). Most importantly here, it may include only the people in a given organization. We will return to this concern shortly.

CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION

A major characteristic of a culture is that the people within the culture communicate frequently with one another. Most often, the majority of the people in a given culture will speak the same language and share the usage of nonverbal emblems. As a result, the people have regular patterns of communication behavior that may be different than patterns from other cultures.

The role of culture is critical in the communication development of children as well as other "newcomers" to a culture. Although humans are genetically programmed to learn language, what language (or languages) they learn is a function of what one(s) they are exposed to. Not only will children learn the language(s) they hear, they will learn to speak the language with the accent they hear and employ the dialect to which they are exposed. As we noted in Chapter 3, most of the nonverbal behavior patterns that we learn are those to which we are exposed as children. In addition, most of the social skills of communication are learned via modeling of others in our environment. Since communication is a central aspect of being human, communication is primarily responsible for sustaining the values, beliefs, and behaviors common to the culture.

Cultures pressure their members to communicate in very similar ways. However, we all know that there are major differences in communication behaviors among people in our own culture. The same is true of other cultures. The reason for this is that each individual, regardless of culture, is born with temperamental and personality orientations that make her or him distinguishable from others. Temperamental and personality orientations, while they may be shaped by cultural influences, have a strong genetic base. In the absence of the genetic differences, cultural influences would likely be much more successful in their persistent attempts to get all of the culture's members to think and act alike.

CULTURAL TERMINOLOGY

There are a variety of terms that are used to describe cultures and contacts among people from different cultures. Most of these are relatively easy to understand, but it is important that we clarify how people commonly use them to avoid confusion.

Subculture. Although there are many cultures, which are composed of hundreds of thousands or even millions of people, most of these have smaller cultures within them. These are commonly called "subcultures," meaning they are subdivisions of a larger culture whose members have a variety of shared differences between themselves and the larger culture. Some refer to these as "co-cultures," to suggest their equality with regard to the larger culture. Within the larger U.S. culture, for example, we have subcultures based on region (Northeast, Midwest, Southern California, Texas, etc.), ethnicity (African American, Japanese American, Mexican American, Italian American,

Irish American, Cuban American, etc.), and religion (Catholic, Jewish, Baptist, Islamic, etc.). The people in each of these groups share with each other characteristics, beliefs, attitudes, and/or behaviors that mark them as different from the larger culture. However, they still share a great number of similarities with members of the larger culture (and other subgroups) that mark them as members of the larger culture as opposed to a different large culture. For example, African Americans compose a distinct subculture within the United States, but generally are more similar to other members of the general U.S. culture than they are to any of the cultures of Africa. Similarly, Irish Americans are culturally much more like people in the general U.S. culture than they are like people living in Ireland. Living as a member of a subculture does not remove one as a member of the larger culture. It merely means that one may have closer ties to the subculture than to the larger culture. We will consider this later in terms of working in larger organizations, for the implications of this for organizational success are substantial.

Communication between Cultures. There are a variety of terms employed to describe various contexts for communication. *Intracultural* refers to communication between people of the same culture. *Intercultural* describes communication between people of two different cultures or, in some cases, two different subcultures. *Cross-cultural* sometimes is used interchangeably with intercultural. However, it most often is used to describe references to comparisons between or across cultures.

International most commonly refers to communication between people from different countries. They may be from highly different or very similar cultures, but the fact of being of different nationalities is a central characteristic of the communication. Government to government communication, for example, is international communication. *Interethnic* refers to communication between members of more than one ethnic subculture. *Interracial* refers to communication between members of more than one racial subculture. This term is declining in usage due to the difficulty in making clear distinctions among racial groups.

Special Terms. There are several terms that are used in discussions of culture and communication, which are not generally used in the same way in other contexts. It is important that we clarify their common usage within this context.

Pancultural refers to something that holds true over all (or nearly all) cultures. That which is characteristic of all humans is pancultural. Our basic anatomy and biological functions, for example, are pancultural. How we adjust to these characteristics, however, is not. The human smile is pancultural, but what produces it is not, and how we should interpret it is not. Very little in communication is pancultural.

Diversity suggests differences. Cultures influence their members in ways that reduce diversity and make differences among people less acceptable. Nevertheless, international commerce and tourism have brought a high degree of

diversity to areas that used to be extremely homogeneous. This is true of the United States, generally, and organizations in the United States in particular. Diversity is a fact of life in most organizations today. It has many impacts on organizational life, both positive and negative.

Gender is considered in many dictionaries to be equivalent to "biological sex." However, in discussions of culture, these two concepts are separated, for good reason. *Female* and *male* and their linguistic translations refer to biological sex in all cultures, and they reference the same biological qualities.*Gender* refers to the concepts of "femininity" and "masculinity." These concepts do *not* reference the same characteristics across cultures. What is feminine in one culture may not be in another, and the same holds true for masculine. For example, male friends holding hands while walking or sitting and talking is masculine in many cultures, while it typically isn't in the general U.S. culture.

ORGANIZATIONS AND CULTURES

Henna gaijin is a Japanese word politely and loosely translated as "strange foreigner" in English (Nguyen & Kasper, 2009). The term is a derogatory reference applied to visitors to Japan who seem to have little or no knowledge of Japanese culture but muddle their way through events anyway. The actions of such people cause embarrassment for their hosts and amusement for other observers. The *henna gaijin* himself, though, is usually unaware of his awkward and inappropriate behavior and thus continues to be an embarrassment. Such behavior is sometimes understandable and forgiven in cross-cultural communication, but organizational cultures are much less forgiving. New employees who do not understand the norms of an organization will quickly find themselves losing favor with their bosses and coworkers. The other workers in that organization are unlikely to consider such behavior that of an uninformed newcomer. Rather, they will assume such newcomers are merely rude people who disregard proper protocols and the norms of the organization.

Organizations exist within cultural environments. Within each organization there is a culture unique to that organization. These are the contexts within which organizational communication occurs. To say that these cultures have an influence on communication in organizations is an understatement. They virtually determine that communication.

The Organization within a Culture. All organizations have a home base, even Internet organizations. The vast majority have workers who live reasonably close to a central location where they all come together to work each day. Many of these workers are hired because they live in that area. Others move to that area after they are hired. That area provides the culture in which the organization lives. The organization depends not only on their own employees who live in that culture, but also on other people living in that culture for what it needs to survive—water, gas, electricity, roads, airports, telephones, food service, etc. The governmental policies, schools, churches, and recreational opportunities provided by the area directly impact the organization.

The organization is never "free to be what it can be." In some cultures, it may not even be allowed to operate on Sundays!

If an organization is based in New York City, it likely will be dramatically different than one located in Birmingham, Alabama; San Diego, California; or Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The people in it are likely to differ on the accent and dialect they speak, their religion, a general attitude toward life, what is good food and what time of the day it should be eaten, work habits, ethnic background, and a wide variety of other things that are culturally relevant. All of these external cultural elements work to shape the nature of the organization. Whatever area the organization chooses for its home base, the people from that area will serve as a significant proportion of the organization's work force. That work force will expect (or demand) that the organization will operate in ways that are consistent with the local culture. The bottom line is that cultures shape organizations.

The Culture within an Organization. Over time, organizations create their own cultures. While, as we have just noted, the culture of an area impacts an organization, there are other forces at work as well. The culture of the organization is impacted by the kind of work that is done in the organization—blue-collar and white-collar organizations tend to have very different cultures. The leadership of the organization has a major impact on the organization—the kinds of people who are at the top tend to define what kinds of people the organization values, and often what kinds of people are hired and retained (remember our earlier discussion of the impact of homophily). Over time (usually only a few years) an oral history of the organization develops. In this way, myths about great and terrible things that have happened become real, and current and former employees become the rogues and heroes of the organization. Traditions are built, and acceptable (as well as unacceptable) behavior patterns are determined. Most everyone learns "how we do it around here." Diversity, at least in terms of values, beliefs, and attitudes, declines. Individuals begin to identify with the organization and an "in-group" is identified (the organization becomes "we"), and other competing organizations are increasingly seen as evil and not nearly as good as "we" are, hence "out-groups" are formed ("they"). Expectations for new employees become more elaborate and more rigid—and more programs designed to mentor, train, and socialize new employees are developed.

The bottom line is that organizations shape cultures. Organizations are a lot like people. Where they grow up makes a big difference in how they are acculturated. Nevertheless, each one develops its own personality. However, organizations which have multiple work sites, even if they are all within a close geographic area, are likely to develop different cultures. And if organizations physically move from one area to another area, the impact is much like moving a person from one area to another. They go into "culture shock" and may have an extremely hard time dealing with the culture of the new area. If they get past that, and many do not, they develop a new culture, one that has some of the old and much of the new. Imagine, if you can, what happened to the

people in American Airlines as well as the organization itself. They had been solidly lodged in New York City for decades. Then they moved to Dallas, Texas. As the Texas tourist bureau puts it: "Texas, a Whole Other Country!" While this may be thought of as an amusing slogan and good attention getter for the tourist business, never doubt whether it is the actual orientation of a very large proportion of "real Texans," as well as long-term immigrants from elsewhere!

Global Organizations. Until recently, most organizations had their home base in one country and conducted most of their business in that country. Some are still like that, but many others have become multinational or global organizations. Some of these have accomplished this by creating branch organizations in countries beyond their home country. Others have accomplished this through mergers with or acquisitions of other organizations. At one time many products had a "Made in the U.S.A." identification on them. That was taken to mean that the product was made from U.S. materials by U.S. workers in a U.S. located plant owned by U.S. citizens. Being "Made in Japan" meant the same thing, except that Japan was substituted for U.S. Today, being made in the "U.S.A." (or any other country) is hard to define. We buy a product that was designed by a German-owned firm in Canada, put together by U.S. workers in a plant in California, which is owned by a Dutch conglomerate, from parts imported from 35 other countries. There are so-called "American" cars that have fewer U.S.-made parts than so-called "Japanese" cars, and vice versa. And we can buy blouses made in Indonesia in Dutch-owned factories with material made in Mexico in Canadian-owned factories according to specifications of U.S.-based designers. And they have the designer's label on them!

Organizations aren't what they once were. They are much, much more complex. When multiple large cultures come together within a single organization, we would assume that the cultures merge into some blended culture. Many people who have looked at this phenomenon suggest this often is not the case. Rather, there often is a culture clash where people from the different cultures actively seek to get rid of one another; ultimately one group wins, and the other loses. This can be very costly on all dimensions for the organization. Similarly, sometimes organizations branch into new cultures and try to make things work the way they do in their home culture. They virtually always fail. Both of these patterns are commonly based on the same basic cause: the organization is highly ethnocentric.

On the positive side, an attractive organizational culture makes it easier to hire qualified new workers (Gardner et al., 2009). But an unattractive organizational culture can make it harder to assimilate new workers into the organization (Waldeck & Myers, 2007) and also make it harder to institute organizational change (Sopow, 2006). Problems can be particularly acute in the context of acquisition, i.e., when two companies merge or one takes over another. In such instances, acquisitions can create conflict if the two companies have dramatically different cultures (Pepper & Larson, 2006).

ETHNOCENTRISM

When children are born, they are virtually helpless. Their parents lay them in a crib, and after a while, they are able to see around them in their environment. Everything that exists to the child is what is in that environment. People come in and out. Some talk, some touch, some hold, and all go away. When cultures developed originally, they were created by groups of people whose worlds were almost as restricted as the typical child's. They didn't know much about the world that was over the next hill or across the river. While they may have known that there were some other people over the hill or across the river, they knew little about them—except that they definitely were not like themselves. Their world was what they could see around them. It is no wonder that little children see themselves as the center of the world (as early cultures did).

Egocentrism. To understand ethnocentrism, we must first understand egocentrism. All children (and most adults) are egocentric; that is, they see themselves as central to everything that goes on in their world. Since little children have been waited on "hand and foot" by their parents and others their whole lives, does it not make sense that they would think that way? It is not hard for them to learn that if they scream loud enough, long enough, someone will come wait on them and do their bidding. As they grow older, they become aware of the community in which they live. That place is the center of the Earth, of course, because they are not aware of anywhere else yet. Now they begin to sort out people in their community. There are those who seem to agree that they are the center of the universe and should be catered to (good people), and those who don't behave that way (bad people). Others begin to call them names—"spoiled" often comes first. Then they move on to "self-centered." The subsequent list of names is probably best left to the imagination. What they all really mean is "egocentric."

Ethnocentrism Defined. Klopf (1998) notes that the term "ethnocentrism" is derived from the Greek words *ethnos,* which refers to "nation," and *kentron,* which refers to "center." This term literally refers to the view that one's country is the center of the universe. Hofstede (1991) has argued that ethnocentrism is to a people what egocentrism is to an individual. It is important that we recognize that "a people" is not necessarily restricted to a large number of people, like a country. It can also apply to any group that forms a subculture within a larger culture. It can also apply to the people in a given organization. Most importantly, it can even apply to a relatively small but identifiable subgroup within an organization. This can be a branch of the larger organization, or even a division or department within the organization or the branch. The production division is the central unit of the organization—to people in the production division. The marketing division is the central unit of the organization—to the people in the marketing division. If these two ethnocentric divisions cannot learn to work together, the organization is in trouble.

In-Groups and Out-Groups. An important aspect of ethnocentrism is the creation of in-groups and out-groups. When we become ethnocentric there must be a "we" and a "they." We are the good people, of course, and everyone who is in our group is good. Hence, "in-groups" are good, and it naturally follows that other people compose "out-groups" and "they" are the bad people. All cultures are ethnocentric (including subcultures) and thus identify people in their culture as the in-group and people in all other cultures (and subcultures) as the out-group. This, of course, provides the basis for dislike, hate, discrimination, conflict, and even war between cultural groups. In the presence of too much ethnocentrism, friendly competition between people of different organizational cultures can evolve into hatred and sabotage of each group by the other. So a major function of managers in organizations is controlling the ethnocentric (as well as egocentric) tendencies of the various subgroups (and individuals) within the organization. Since it exists in all cultures (is pancultural), it is reasonable to conclude that ethnocentrism is a naturally occurring phenomenon in human societies. The key to dealing with it is understanding its various levels.

Levels of Ethnocentrism. There are five levels of ethnocentrism. From the least to the most extreme, they are equality, sensitivity, indifference, avoidance, and disparagement.

Equality is the lowest level of ethnocentrism. People and groups at this level treat others as equals (do to others as you would have them do to you). While they may notice diversity between themselves and others, they see the other peoples' customs and ways of thinking and behaving to be equal to their own. Cooperation is likely under these circumstances, as is effective communication and problem solving. In political terms, these people treat each other as "allies." It is a "we" relationship.

Sensitivity is the second lowest level of ethnocentrism. People at this level see others as culturally diverse and recognize that this may be problematic. However, they want to better understand where the others are "coming from" and decrease the differences between themselves and the others if possible. They are willing to compromise with the others if the others are willing to compromise as well. If the people from the other culture are also sensitive, the likelihood of successful communication between the two groups is good. They may be able to cooperate, compromise, and successfully work together. They may be able to convert "they" orientations to "we" orientations, at least on a temporary basis.

Indifference is the so-called moderate level of ethnocentrism. People at the indifferent level don't much care about people from other cultures; they prefer to communicate only with people like themselves. They reject diversity and embrace homophily. These people will not go out of their way to cause trouble for people who are different from themselves. But if contact with diverse people is forced upon them (by the other people or by circumstances), they may react very negatively. Organizations undergoing change that requires cultural adaptation may have serious problems with people at this level. These