

# IS THERE HUMAN ORGANIZATION OUTSIDE CULTURAL TRADITION?

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## Abstract

Crucial changes are always coexisting with situations of disorder that are not opposing the stability as instability, but rather institute some unprecedented rules and rituals, which are just superficially new. The deeper layers of human activity usually have more kinship and legitimate legacy coming from cultural semantics of communities. However, the literature on management and social administration is full of specifications that differentiate “*organizational culture*” from “*culture*” as a social phenomenon. Meanwhile, the social technologies and other socially effective methods of public administration mostly rely on actual cultural contexts and influences without isolating some corporate phenomena from “maternal culture” as such. Here, a correlation of cultural variations, styles, and subcultures arrive to explain the essential mainstream of actual culture as meaningful consistency through times and changes. Moreover, civilizational development that comes exclusively with organizational growth and organizational optimization is unthinkable without cultural support that constantly represents solid foundations for progressive adaptation of humans. Methodologically, we must start with (1) religious / secular correlations within traditional dispositions, move on to (2) vocational / societal build of actual cultural symbolism, and (3) analyze the functional conflicts within personalities’ cultural survival within special cases of “neo-traditionalist” communities in modern universities.

**Key words:** cultural tradition, human organization, actual culture, social technology

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## Introduction

Didactically, ‘tradition’ is opposed to ‘changing’, when stability comes as an extra bonus for choosing some ‘traditional’ way instead of modern, rational, but unreliable one. Nevertheless, tradition offers a little bit more, as it is having nothing in common with rigidity, incessantly offering some living patterns of experience. Stability is a point of satiating the fans and

followers of tradition, or tradition *postmortem* transforms into a rigid caricature of itself, and mostly in the minds of over-fed clients. Modern and postmodern public opinion is on the run for stability that should be found somewhere outside the tradition. Actual societies striving to catch up the reliable ranking in the global world look for some extra-traditional contexts of social institutions, including the university education. Russia and other countries that are fighting to develop, have numerous cases of transformational experiences in universities. Widely discussed experiences of eastern European countries coming through adapting their institutions to a more civilized western versions demonstrates the significance of traditional factors within those institutions as inevitable resource of their change (Nicolescu, 2014).

### **1. Secular beliefs in stabilizing the bulk of failures**

Problems differ due to the status of their premises and consequences. Some problems are the diagnose, some are the situation (Talanker, 2016). Key civilizational institutions are undergoing radical changes that are not obvious for an unequivocal evaluation, as they are in a kind of unprecedented dynamic situation, when external challenges are not balanced by internal resources, but rather reflected in a mixture of inertial and emergent ways. Unifying, or supposed to be unifying forces of globalization influence the primary socialization institutions firsthand. Not romantically supporting the term of glocalization (i.e. the numerous local variations as the inevitable feature of globality, which is logically clear), we have to say that analyzing the global challenges loses its relevance in the global context, rather needs essential turns to regional options, as the latter are exclusive to demonstrate the semantics of globalization in its work. It is clear that: “The great institutional variability of different modern and modernizing societies - not only among the transitional, but also among the more developed, even highly industrialized societies - has become continuously more and more apparent.”[Eisenstadt, 1989] University traditionalism, nurtured mostly by individual liberties, faces universal challenges of globalization, moved by newly born stereotypes and digital surveillance practices saturating daily life in informational age. The events, including lectures and discussions could be slipping away to some vague post-modern exercises, mixing the principles of research methodology with institutionally formalized presentations and reporting.

University was and is originally scholastic project. The idea of educating adult people for future generations in the society presumes something predictable in the foundation of human knowledge. Yes, the religion, but it did not work for good. Moreover, the cultural specifics of orthodox cultures have no precedents of theological legitimacy within secular studies, as

mysticism dominated the power of political ideologies. Science remained a western appropriation in Russia (Obryvalina, 2013; Algina, Aleksandrova, 2017).

The case of old-style orthodoxy within the resources of Russian ability to revolt is ignored. Meanwhile, that spiritual energy had been noticeable on all sides of Russian socialist drama in the previous century. Talking about the Ural Federal University we cannot make that gross mistake, old-style orthodoxy is not a regional exotics at all, as it forms the basic layer of internal migrants that influenced the regional opposition during all totalitarian periods, winning the dislikes of imperial, soviet, and federal rulers in their reliance on vertical structures.

## **2. Actual vocational symbolism in the mirror of university**

Vocational traditions cannot but follow the religion-like principles and technologies of self-representation, which are always an internal personified invention within the secular projects. Globalization moves people by environmental variables mostly, thus reshuffling the perceptions of vocational callings (Sheffield, Korotayev, Grinin, 2013). Decision-making had incorporated all previous ideological intents that in fact were formulated post factum (Talanker, 2018). Nowadays, the educationist managers running the universities are absorbed in designing unimaginable number of parallel structures within university, reaching for vagueness that allows them to ignore competent subjects within their sphere of responsibility. All decisions come from above and beyond the competence of any existing subject in the hierarchy. Individual responsibilities of the teaching staff remain in the shadow of *gloria mundi* as a silent pragmatic re-interpreter of all stupidities and inconsistencies arriving with the actual situation. The vocational culture is being informalized, while some official codes and attributes are being produced as externalities only. The best as well as realistic prototypes of corporate social responsibility seem to be relevant only to a theoretical speculation of administrators in modern Russian universities (Dohnalova, Legnerova, 2017).

The very name of university is seducing in globalization talk (Nicolescu, 2014). After all, universality is not the globality of the world. It has the human dimension. However, in modern Russia, university is not a name for some type of adult educational institution that is engaged in all fundamental scientific spheres and the humanities, but the name of university had been transformed into a bureaucratic identity for structures in the state budgeting programs. Thus, polytechnical, agricultural, and even railway universities were born. Surely, every human activity deserves to become a science at some point, but no activity is universal on its own. On the other hand, the simple conglomerate of professors from fundamental spheres of study does not produce the universality either. In any case, the globalization as a provoking factor for class

struggle looks somewhat exotic from any point of view, still being important situationally [Ortega, Otero-Iglesias, Steinberg, 2018].

Modern universities go through different types of structural changes to reach the globally expected level-marked construction, where Bachelor programs are followed by Master and PhD ones. Moreover, the three-level algorithm provokes the spreading of similar formal requirements, tools and meaningful events to realize the university mission. Humanities are brought to didactically isomorphic technicalities, while the technological disciplines pretend to perpetrate some advanced universal mission of modern education as such. The core idea of the university education lies underneath such an agenda. It is worth citing Karl Popper's characteristics of critics as a human cognitive project, including its refined scientific forms: "what characterizes the empirical method is its manner of exposing to falsification, in every conceivable way, the system to be tested" [Popper, 1959]

Notoriously famous soviet-style patterns of organizational behavior cannot disappear with a strike of political command, moreover, when the competence of that command comes not from any university tradition and does not belong to its consequences. It leads to several situational shuffles, masquerading themselves under the banner of structural innovations 'from above'. The governing policies that propagate a newly revived communal traditionalism pedals the most superficial changes and instrumental innovations that arrive from the globalist competitors. The case leads to self-aggravated inability to approach the calculations of corporate risk management in the context of regional style university positioning [Benetti, 2016]. Meanwhile, the liberal rudiments of cognitive liberties keep up the coded formal practices that do not belong to any external ideology, but inertially oppose the globalizing progress as a an internally obsolete prototype, which already fell in the heart of globalization principles being born.

### **3. Communities between real and virtual challenges of university survival**

Historically Russian universities do not belong to their local environment that includes local communities. Genetically realizing European university patterns, Russian universities represent an unrealistic mixture of social norms and regulators that bring them to a sort of institutional hierarchy defining the social life and public opinions. Ideological rule is always unspecified when grounded on the idea of self-perfection, as it has no roots. The imitation of intelligentsia social mission plays a bad joke to resources-overloaded managers without internal vocational discipline. So, the rulers are usually looking for the best intelligentsia individuals to betray their social and cultural calling by replacing it with a formal position within the secular omnipotent

pyramid. Even president Putin had functioned in the university structures, however, passing the change of sides not from classes to decision-makers, but from secret police to decision-makers. Some qualities are not prone to change at all.

Decision-making is either systematic or situational. Human factor constitutes the relativity of institutional contexts. Meanwhile, the criteria of efficiency are thought to be objectified. If we add up another simple distinction of product and result, the objectification of efficiency starts to seem perfect. Nevertheless, human subjects, or actors are being produced by themselves in a form of self-presentation and socially approved confidence, and by other situational factors of their activities. But people are systematically independent of the situation, unless they are not totally manipulated. However, the university management ethics does not actually bear the features of modern management ethics [Olkhovikov, Olkhovikova, 2017].

Turning the university education into a higher form of manipulation, we should eliminate all classical erudition, as this form of knowledge has nothing to do with specific competences, which are highly specialized, and situational, of course. That is the actual Russian universities mainstream. Hunting for competences brings to the curricula non-existent disciplines and courses, bidding to produce the ultra-demanded competences, while the humanities courses, starting with philosophy and up to any theory of culture, or other social science with indistinguishable classical roots, like e.g. cultural studies, all they produce zero competences. Meanwhile in modern Russia, the project of erecting federal universities as regional integrative educationist centers is underway. There are some regional inclinations and interpretations of integrative university idea. Thus, in the Ural federal University, or president Yeltsin University in Ekaterinburg, the wild slogan of converting the university to a “social super-net” is periodically and persistently articulated. The walls of university buildings, as well as its’ corridors are being semantically replaced by internet virtual communication [Ural Federal University official site, 2015-2019].

#### **4. Traditional roots of pragmatism as a basis for actual social technologies**

Pragmatism is not the last word of cultural tradition, but its basic internal premise that pushes cultures through history. However, the history is also dependent on casual decision-making by spontaneously unique individuals who mediate the choices for communities. Social technologies that seem to diagnose the near and further future do not come from the unprecedented situations on our way, rather arriving from deep internal dispositions and inclinations that were born long ago within ugly truths of primitive cultures. Initially, true

pragmatism in the status of internal forming factor had ruled the traditional Chinese civilization. Kantian re-invention of vague daily notions as the mighty alternatives for concepts of pure reason, arrived as a romantic anticipation for American pluralistic pragmatism that lead to sophistications in the ways of instrumentalism, operationalism, and all versions of interactionism. Meanwhile, the brave new options could not evade repeating and re-inventing of undirected utility faith that inspired old Chinese culture. Nevertheless, the cultural cycle of pragmatism is inexhaustible in sharp contrast with all possible version of rationality and even empiricism. Risk institutionalizes in the global multiplicity to justify true irrelevance of local decisions made for the good of the university education through converting it to some consumerist model of socially efficient management. External administration is always on the demand to support externally prestigious projects. Such challenges are hardly being overviewed, but still lie outside the premises of traditionally motivated counter-traditionalism of administrative technologies in educationist rule (Benetti, 2016).

Management rules the consumer civilization. All social institutions and human communities face the critical test of productivity and demand. Furthermore, the university system propagates some competences production, keeping in shadow the old ideas of human individual and personality. Humanity is an essential part of common sense and cognitive activities called science. But common sense is pale and obsolete in the eyes of competent bureaucrats and managers. Maybe they keep it for themselves, still the educational achievements of the universities seem to lose the anthropological dimension forever, as the competences could be easily delegated to robots, or to AI in any attainable form. Meanwhile, the cognitive point is not over yet, as human individual is a denominator of subject – object correlation, and any social normative system still looks irrelevant without living personality.

*Quidquid discis tibi discis*, no matter, how often one had changed spheres of activity and narrow-pointed disciplines of study (Dorozhkin, Kislov, Olkhovikov, Shcherbina, 2018). Unspecified confidence should not mix with outright ignorance, especially when the ignorance is niching in the shadows of pragmatically acknowledged practicalities and appliance of new technologies and social technologies. Nevertheless, humanities do not pay for themselves in public so long as there is not some traditional spirit of cognitive consensus. Humanitarian influence arrives only from internal experiences of individuals, as they get chances to personify their life career.

Human individuals, or the people are the true final product of university system. In other words, every education is humanitarian in its essence. Formal classifications of diplomas and degrees must be interpreted not in the lists of competences, but by unique bundles of human life stories.

Modern Russian universities are still coping with deeply inherited Marxist legacy in its predominantly Asian form of Leninist and even Stalinist transformation. Maybe globalization is eternal; still the actual human problems in the university context should be solved within meaningful time span.

“Knowledge is power” maxim sounds from hoping to threatening during the last four centuries. Anyway, all advancement in knowledge cannot miss the questions of influencing people. But even so, the humanities seem to miss the authority of informal recognition, as they slide down to the common-sense contexts. Still, we should never mind the positivity of common sense in human culture and civilization!

The unceasing acknowledgement of pragmatism in modern social technologies also nurtures the approved consumption of traditional legacy in a form of situationally demanded resource. However, it is better realized in case of authentic autonomy of the legacy. In general, the demanded communicative efficiency brings together the versatile components of pragmatic contexts, when they are at least properly developed. In any case, the communicative efficiency goes far beyond the technicalities of data management, reviving good old criteria of human comprehension (Lunenborg, 2010). Methodology is always keeping its chance, no matter how externalized the deeply essential contradictions of the past philosophical agenda are, as the repeating technicalities do not speak for themselves, just manifesting the change of reality and actual perceptions of society. While power arrives with the ‘mind-framing’, the human counter-power still arrives with offline practices of human daily interaction, which mostly reflects in the categories of cognitive tradition, in the humanities (Castells, 2007). Power sharing is always informal, and in stark contrast with the normative division of powers, that supports viable administrative systems. The opinionated misunderstanding of the humanities by governors and university administrators grows from the stereotypical negation of anarchism in human creative essence. To be precise, one must be spontaneous, which is outside managerial contextualization of social institutions.

## **Conclusion**

Traditions that are not properly formal, not reaching their authentic stereotypical phase, have much in common with advanced social technologies, especially as they officially position in existing universities in the developing countries. Diagnostically, they demand a total revision of criteria for analyzing organizational cultures. Of course, university is not a prototype company; however, considering the context traditional influences, it shows the roots of any

corporation as producing social senses. People of the world transform themselves through education, not yet through genetic engineering. As figures matter, they bring only doomsday information for contents-changing decisions within the existing university system (Čonková, Závadský, 2011). Rulers can produce only an imitation of traditional authority, and it seems to be sufficiently working for all “predictable” cases of imminent social change. Thus, fake traditionalism is for a long time, but not for good. The alternative comes freely from below the university life, as professors are being converted into proletariats by the ruling administrators. The worst scenarios usually loom with the imitations of powerful bureaucracy under the banners of independent clubs and parties of teaching and studying individuals. The true revolution takes place in the classes where the anti-didactic practices revive human intentions of university people.

University, as a class of social corporation, reproduces multiple traditionalist schemes of activities that are easily overlooked in the shadows of transformative projects introduced from above. We need a broader understanding of cultural tradition not as something external and obsolete, but as the intrinsic core of cultural survival that does not subordinate individual variation of human relations to a standardized civilizational scheme.

So, no organization exists outside authentic cultural tradition, and modern universities experiences are the best examples of the principle. The Russian regional case of Ural Federal University could not be solved in societal trends of modern Russia, showing only weak signs of surviving the federal tyranny. Last, not least, the light of hope shines with the informal influences of non-formal professors on their students, and it brings the huge payback of support for the university as a socially responsible corporation. Well, it is not politics, it is worse, namely, the reincarnation of authentic cultural tradition.

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