

## Four Seasons in One Day: The Different Shades of Organisational Culture in Higher Education

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**Abstract.** *Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, this study seeks to explore the diversity of culture amongst the staff of a business school in Hungary and then examine how this diversity may impact upon the organisation's orientations towards three aspects of market orientation: interfunctional cooperation; competition and the student orientation. The diversity of culture is found through the identification of five subcultures. These subcultures exhibit signs of both heterogeneity and homogeneity as two pairs of subcultures are divided not by differences in values themselves but by the expressed strength of values. The empirical findings indicate that each subculture varies in perception of the dominant cultures of the organisation and its particular market orientation in relation to culture type. Furthermore, some subcultures perceive themselves as enhancing, when this may not be the case and others perceive themselves as counter cultures. The qualitative study confirms that subcultures have both homogenous and heterogeneous aspects in relation to other subcultures as well as the perceived dominant culture. This greater complexity gives an extension to the existing perspectives taken on organisation culture, although this would need to be confirmed with generalizable research.*

**Keywords:** *business school, subcultures, heterogeneity, homogeneity.*

### Introduction

The notion of territory seems endemic with subcultures. In the 1950s street gangs called 'the Bills' were named after their territories and gang wars globally display a distinct sense of territory and boundaries. This is not to say that all subcultures have distinct territories and boundaries, as with the Harley Davidson subculture (Schouten & McAlexander, 1993), the basis for commonality was common consumption habits based upon common values that transgressed boundaries as Schouten and McAlexander (1993) claim

the four main elements of the subculture to be: “consumer-initiated new-product development, mass-marketed mystique, extraordinary brand identification, and transcendence of national and cultural boundaries”. This paper seeks to examine whether subcultures in higher education can be considered inherently territorial or with transversal boundaries within the context of recent changes in Hungarian higher education.

The change drivers in both public and private organisations are often cited as: globalization, economic rationalism and information technology (Burke & MacKenzie, 2002; Weber & Weber, 2001). Following recent changes in Hungarian higher education, Business Faculties of universities and colleges and Business Schools are left with significantly less income from the government and with less students applying for their programmes, which are now almost all tuition fee based. Recent enrolment statistics show a 50% decline in the number of applicants to business programmes. The two latest changes to the Budapest Business School, the focus of this study, being firstly that as of 1 July 2013 a significant amount employees retired because working and receiving pension at the same time became illegal. At some Faculties (Colleges) of the Budapest Business School (BBS) the rate of retirement of lecturers over age 60 was as high as 30% of the total teaching staff. Secondly, all HEIs in Hungary are required as of September 2014 to have joint governance with the rector dealing with academic issues and the chancellor as a representative of government, dealing with financial and staffing issues. The aim of this study is to consider the culture of the entire organisation as it bears the weight of these changes.

### **The potential for cultural complexity**

The concept of a homogenous organisational culture is referred to as the unified or ‘unitarist’ perspective which allows the classification of organisation culture. However, the larger and more complex an organisation becomes the less likelihood of a monolithic culture with all members of the organisation ascribing to the same values. Kuh and Whitt (1988, p.27) highlight this point in the context of higher education: “the ‘small homogenous society’ analogue ... is surely strained when applied to many contemporary institutions of higher education”. Moreover, Bowen and Schuster (1986) found that members of different disciplines showed different values, attitudes and personal characteristics.

The concept of a culture having a number of differing cultures existing simultaneously within the organization seems to allow for the complexity of different functions and professions, varying locations, as are found in higher

education, and yet the question arises as to whether these cultural types co-exist within one culture or are rather indicators of significant fragmentation with the organizational culture. Subcultures are more likely to develop in bureaucratic, larger, or more complex organizations since these organizations are more likely to encompass a variety of functions and technologies (Trice & Beyer, 1993).

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); and location (offices arranged by discipline). However, that is not to say that all factors are found in all institutions with a plethora of emergent subcultures. Taking one example, location may be a limiting factor of who talks with each other, but that does not necessarily mean that such behaviours are related to assumptions and values about the culture or subculture (Kuh & Whitt, 1988, p.27). The relative importance of each in shaping subcultures is somewhat contested. Becher (1989) asserts that disciplinary cultures are the key to HEI cultures. Valimaa (1998) reinforces this with findings that disciplinary differences affect many areas of academic life such as modes of interaction, lifestyle, career paths, publishing patterns, and so on. Thomas, Ward, Chorba, and Kumiega (1990) even asserts that disciplinary differences outweigh gender differences.

Disciplinary cultures were first examined by Becher (1989) and have been used as a basis for research in many cases since that time (e.g. Collini, 1993; Snow, 1993). 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' with the basis being hard-pure, soft-pure, hard-applied and soft-applied (Becher, 1987). According to Becher (1989, p.57), the theoreticians are ranked highest with staff involved in practical, soft and applied disciplines ranked lower. However, Becher (1989) also points out there may be subgroups according to specialisation and that within disciplines and specialisations there may in fact be some overlap. Subgroups within disciplines include women faculty, minority faculty and part-time faculty (Bowen & Schuster, 1986). Becher (1984, 1989) focussed on these sub-specialisations as a unit of analysis. Sanford (1971, p.359) refers to rules being held in faculty culture so that only

specialists in a given field are permitted to discuss in conversation and present their ideas concerning the specialisation and thus other faculty should defer to the specialists. This sense of boundaries seems to be only transversal by administrative and library staff who, lacking academic credibility are actually interdisciplinary (Berquist, 1992, p.41). Freedman et al. (1979, p.8) described HEI culture according to the faculty as 'a set of shared ways and views designed to make their (faculty) ills bearable and to contain their anxieties and uncertainties'. Finkelstein (1984, p.29) saw the main components of faculty culture as: teaching, research, student, advisement, administration and public service.

There are some patterns that emerge in faculty cultures in terms of the values expressed. Kuh and Whitt (1988, p.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. Bila and Miller (1997) discovered that faculty perceived themselves to be isolated from the general public, under-appreciated, and true and honest; Junior faculty felt overwhelmed with responsibilities, and exploited; Senior faculty saw themselves to be survivors, with a certain degree of radicalism and seeing too high an emphasis placed on external activities. Bila and Miller (1997) found that similarities do exist between institutions, as well as that power was found to be somewhat related to tenure and rank, confirming the findings of Berquist (1992).

Departmental subcultures have been developed as a concept which could be seen as subgroups of the faculty cultures (Quinlan & Akerlind, 2000). If employees are acculturated into various subcultures within organisations, then the factors affecting acculturation could also be applied to subcultures. Acculturation is the "exchange of cultural features that results when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact: the original cultural patterns of either or both groups may be altered, but the groups remain intact" (Kottak, 2005, p.209).

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. If higher levels of interaction are seen as a means of becoming assimilated into a subculture, then faculty can be considered according to an unusual mix of high levels of autonomy and interaction. According to Tierney (2008, p.35) when referring to HEIs "...on the one hand, they are organisations with highly autonomous workers – the faculty.

And yet, on the other hand these autonomous workers assume a great deal of voluntary work in their organisational and professional lives, a fact which binds them together". Thus, there is a tension between autonomy and interaction through certain work groups and projects. Bourdieu's work (1988) is cited by Naidoo (2008, p.47) as "the field of higher education is in fact not a product of total consensus but the product of a permanent conflict...with agents and institutions improving or defending their positions in relation to others", indicating perhaps a pluralist perspective of organisational culture with competing heterogeneous subcultures.

The external environment may also affect the culture of HEIs, and thus in turn the subcultures and their formation (Tierney, 1988). For an HEI the areas of knowledge and skills are determined externally to a large extent especially when accreditation is a central concern. Ruscio (1987, p.353) points out "faculty subcultures have institutional as well as disciplinary foundations". Local or regional issues may also affect the HEI culture as many of those employed and studying come from the host country or region, perhaps moreso in the case of institutions in Hungary where the Hungarian language is not widely spoken outside its borders. Institutions may also have a ranking and reputation which in turn affects how the organisation is seen and how members see themselves in relation to the organisation. Riesman and Jencks (1961) refer to this as the institutions having a place in the economic elite – the haves and have-nots.

Trice (1993) maintains that subcultures form according to occupation, as when members interact with one another differently than with people in the culture at large, then occupational subcultures form. Trice (1993) also claims that occupational subcultures also may arise if members of an occupation work in very close cooperation with one another but not with members of other occupations. Trice (1993) argues that the most important of the occupational subcultures is that of managers and administrators because of its impact on many other occupational subcultures. For example, the importance of the managerial subculture has resulted from its prominence in the bureaucratic organization. In fact, Trice (1993) makes a significant division between managerial and non-managerial subcultures citing competition between non-managerial subcultures based on their relative strengths and heightens the importance of technology as a means of enhancing occupational skills and thereby the strength of the occupational culture, such as the academic profession subculture referred to earlier.

When considering the likelihood of formation of subcultures in higher education, there seems to be a combination of characteristics with some encouraging and some discouraging subculture formation. The

decentralization of power makes an organisation more susceptible to subculture formation as found by Martin and Siehl (1983) with DeLorean's counterculture at General Motors. Prior to this, Hage and Aiken (1967) linked decentralized power with professional activity and hierarchical differentiation, which may be likened to HEIs where power is very much centralized, there is professional activity such as research and publication and distinct hierarchical differences in status, prestige and reputation. However, not all power is centralized as in the case with the autonomy allowed to teaching staff, 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..."* (Millett, 1962, p.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, p.148).

However, 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. Cohen (1955) claims subcultures form through interaction and building relationships. When individuals work together on a task, subcultures may also form (Trice & Beyer, 1993).

Faculty experiences substantial (if not complete) professional autonomy, and there is also a tendency toward long tenures. Autonomy appears to indicate a freedom to work and develop one's own way of working. Clark (1963) and Ruscio (1987) highlight that differences in mission and commitment affect faculty member behaviour as well as institutional size and complexity, as larger and more complex HEIs are likely to have more subcultures rather than one unified culture (Clark, 1963, p.139). The administrative structures also shape faculty subcultures (Ruscio, 1987, p.355), especially when considering decision-making and governance. Clark (1963) groups faculty members as: teacher, scholar-researcher, demonstrator and consultant, each with varying levels of identification with the institution and commitment to the organisation.

Bourdieu (1988) mentions one important issue with regard to autonomy in HEIs, which is that "the relative autonomy of fields varies from one period to another, from one field to another and from one tradition to another"

(cited in Naidoo, 2008, p.46). Thus it seems possible that as levels of autonomy vary between fields, subcultures may also appear more distinctively in certain fields and varying levels of autonomy could conceivably be the means for development of distinct subcultural territories.

Van Maanen and Barley (1985) approach the factors affecting formation of subcultures as a number of situations conducive to subculture formation and each of these factors will be considered in relation to higher education and the organisation. Amongst these factors we find the issue of territory and boundaries. Becher (1987) in his extensive study of subcultures in higher education claims that boundaries between functions may be strongly upheld between departments; especially when considering issues such as workload and budgets. Furthermore the only function which is able to cross such boundaries is administration. Becher (1987) found that boundaries of subcultures which formed on the basis of specialisation appear to overlap. This simultaneous occurrence of overlapping and firm boundaries highlights the complexities of culture and subcultures in higher education, although the detection of boundaries and the degree of overlapping of them in subcultures is beyond the scope of this study. Sackmann (1992) develops the concepts of boundary in subculture formation as it is asserted that the influence of function also includes boundary spanning and temporary groupings. This would seem to indicate that the use of organisation charts or job descriptions to understand where the boundaries to territories exist may be less useful than previously thought.

## **The organisation**

The organisation was formed as part of a merger between three colleges that took place in 2000. Two of these colleges were formed in 1857 with the other commencing in 1957. Each college has a particular focus in areas such as commerce and foreign trade, finance and accounting or tourism and catering, and offer courses ranging from foundation courses and vocational courses through to Masters' and PhDs. The three colleges are situated in locations around Budapest with one of the colleges having two satellite institutions based in the North and South-West of Hungary. In 2011, one of the satellites achieved independent status for itself and became the fourth faculty of the organisation. This handover took place around the time of the research, but as significant organisational culture change occurs over the long term rather than short term, the fourth Faculty has been treated as remaining a part of the Faculty, as existed prior to the change.

The merger was forced upon the three HEIs and the organisation has recently celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. As a result of the merger, it became the fifth largest Hungarian HEI with approximately 22,000 students. From an organisational culture point of view the fact that the colleges remained on their own campuses rather than on one shared location seems a significant barrier to integration. With a matrix form of organisational structure, each department of each college is accountable to both the Dean as well as the Head of Institutes. This encourages and maintains integration and homogeneity between colleges. The Heads of Institutes are thus responsible for Departments within all three of the Faculties.

The harmonisation process of the three colleges following the merger appears as a slow one; only in recent years have colleagues mentioned conflicts concerning harmonisation of courses and course materials. Many staff has experienced minor changes in the way they work to-date. The varying degrees of complication and need for acculturation between organisational cultures associated with mergers are likely to impact upon the subcultures therein and will be discussed further in the literature review.

Part of this study seeks to examine the territories displayed in relation to market orientation. The organisation demonstrates a number of aspects associated with a market-orientation; competition orientation, customer orientation and a focus on the market and innovation (Narver & Slater 1990). One particular issue that came across in many documents as important to the organisation was that of practice-orientation. This is aimed at providing students with competencies useful to employers, thereby enabling students to find workplaces and be successful in their chosen careers. This whole concept encroaches across a number of aspects of market orientation. Firstly, customer satisfaction: the aim for most students is to get a job and have a successful career or at the very least feel they are equipped with the skills to fulfil their employer's or manager's expectations. Secondly, the aspect of being practice-oriented in the face of other institutions with a more theoretical leaning indicates a desire for differentiation on the market as well as an awareness of what the competition is offering in relation to the organisation's position. This organisation is also concerned with maintaining firm relationships with employers and the labour market, which is tied to achieving customer (student) satisfaction with courses.

The organisation is also becoming increasingly international with an ever-increasing number of courses held in English and an increasing focus on attracting foreign students, Erasmus schemes for their own students and



more collaborations and contacts with universities, colleges and companies abroad. This global aspect is borne out by the fact that competition in higher education comes not only from local but also foreign universities / colleges, private institutions and the relatively new “virtual universities”, with a seemingly endless range of courses and curricula in many cases set to suit the student. All these factors combined with the greater dependence on external sources of funds (rather than the government) lead to an increasing urgency to keep abreast of competition locally and, if possible, globally. HEIs such as smaller colleges may look to merge with larger universities or colleges as a means of growth, surviving in the face of strong competition and / or may develop as a research institution and in many countries mergers of HEIs was enforced by law (South Africa, New Zealand, Hungary etc.).

With the increased need for a market-orientation, some HEIs have come under criticism for being out of touch with market needs or lacking adequate skills and knowledge in top management, who tend to have academic rather than business backgrounds. In contrast, other HEIs have brought upon themselves the description of ‘academic capitalism’. Some research indicates how HEIs need to adapt to entrepreneurial activities, strengthen their institutional management, and their interaction with industry and the rest of society (Clark, 1998; Etzkowitz, 2003).

In 2012 the funding of students in courses in business and economics was drastically reduced in Hungary, whilst students of subjects such as IT and engineering have kept their government support. This has put the organisation at the centre of this study at a competitive disadvantage in the local market as the majority of the courses are in tourism, finance and management, resulting in a drop in the number of students for 2012. However, thanks to its good reputation as a school and especially regarding the prospects of students upon receiving their diploma of finding work, the organisation was not as hard hit as many others in Hungary. Nevertheless, there is a distinct increase in pressure to survive in the face of competition and attract students to the organisation.

### **Territorial notions**

There are many pressures upon staff in Higher Education institutions (HEIs) to direct their focus towards a particular area: lecturers may feel pulled (or pushed) towards a focus on research or reputation, administrative staff may see students as the number one concern and management may be concerned with enrolments and survival as well as

staying ahead of the competition, to name but a few possibilities. Early works on academic culture such as Becher's (1987) tribes and territories, HEIs are perceived as comprising of diverse groups, protective of their territories and rather heterogeneous in nature. Furthermore, Musselin (2013, p.26) refers to the academic profession as "simultaneously affected by bureaucratic and market forces". The apparent diversity across functional and hierarchical divisions and the tug-of-war between internal bureaucracy and external market pressures indicate the need for an extensive study beyond the espoused values and desired orientations offered by top management. Hence, this study seeks to explore the role that interfunctional collaboration plays in this picture, but rather between departments and faculties rather than looking for external collaboration with employers and other institutions, and consider all employees from all levels and functions of the organisation.

In his book 'Images of Organization', Morgan (1986) put forward that all theories of organisation and management are based on implicit metaphor. These metaphors are seen as crucial to understanding and highlighting certain aspects of organisations, and yet they also may restrict understanding or ignore others. Morgan (1986) illustrates his ideas by exploring eight archetypical metaphors of organisation: Machines, Organisms, Brains, Cultures, Political Systems, Psychic Prisons, Flux and Transformation, Instruments of Domination. In an academic context of organisational metaphors, Becher's (1987) metaphor of academic tribes and territories carries with it images of groups fighting over a scarcity of resources and attempts to push forward existing boundaries as a means of increasing resources available. This doesn't seem to far from the image of academic departments looking to increase yearly budget allocations at the expense of others and aiming for a greater range of courses or projects that may be seen as 'belonging' to other departments. It may be easy to imagine wise tribal elders who know the ropes and are more highly respected by younger generations. Becher claims that boundaries even exist within boundaries and mini subcultures exist through specializations within a given discipline. Yet despite the apparent plethora of boundaries, Berquist (1992) found that the borders between the disciplines and specializations in HEIs are vehemently upheld to such an extent that in many cases only the administrative staff and librarians are allowed to be interdisciplinary. Tierney (1988) asserts there may be numerous subcultures in a university or college.

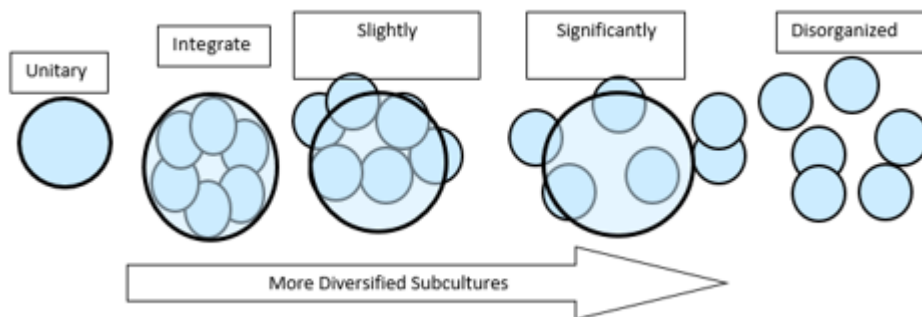
As subcultures may emerge in reaction to external factors such as a forced merger, new technology or a desired market orientation, it should be noted that this study is concerned not solely with the strategic level thinking of

top management but rather the entire staff that make up the Business School. The reason for including the entire staff in this study is not only as a means of getting a snapshot of the culture of the entire organisation rather than the espoused values of top management but also as all levels of the organisation have contact or connection with the student.

### **Traversing boundaries**

Martin and Siehl (1983) categorised organizational subcultures into enhancing, orthogonal, and counter cultures. Within the context of Schein's (1988) pivotal and peripheral values this subculture typology indicates a co-existence of subcultures within an organisation without detriment to the dominant culture and its core values. In *enhancing subcultures*, members adhere to dominant organizational culture values enthusiastically, with both pivotal and peripheral values being consistent with the larger organization's core values. In *orthogonal subcultures* members uphold the dominant cultures' values as pivotal values, but they also have their own set of distinct, but not conflicting, peripheral values. The third type is the *counterculture*. In a counter culture, the members reject the core values of the dominant culture and have peripheral and pivotal values contrary to core organizational values. In this study, the perceptions that subcultures have of themselves as enhancing, orthogonal or a counterculture will be examined in relation to other subcultures as well as the market-orientation. This typology of subcultures can be seen in higher education, as according to Martin and Siehl (1983, p.53), an orthogonal subculture was found in faculty as they 'simultaneously accept the core values of the (institution) and a separate, non-conflicting set of values particular to themselves'. Kuh and Whitt (1988, p.50) proposed that in higher education there may be "conforming (enhancing) or orthogonal enclaves, such as the faculty senate, that may challenge aspects of the dominant culture".

Hatch (1997) presents a slightly modified view of subculture types as they are seen on a scale of increasing diversification rather than as three concrete types, as can be seen in the following figure:



**Figure 1. The diversification of subcultures (Hatch, 1997, p.229)**

As can be seen in the figure, a unitary culture refers to the integration or unitarist perspective of Martin (2002) with a single monolithic organisational culture. An integrated organisational culture is when the enhancing subcultures are a part of the overall dominant organisational culture which may be seen as a combination of the integration and differentiation perspectives of Martin (2002). The slightly differentiated organisational culture refers to a collection of both enhancing and orthogonal subcultures, with varying combination of peripheral and pivotal values and still takes a combination of the integration and differentiation perspectives of Martin (2002). A significantly differentiated culture refers to no enhancing subcultures and only orthogonal or counter subcultures. The subcultures may be heterogeneous (a differentiation perspective), but there is still the existence of a dominant culture as well. In the disorganised form of organisation, there is no dominant culture and subcultures have no common values, which takes the fragmentation perspective of Martin (2002). Hatch's (1997) work not only serves to support the possibility of a multi-perspective approach to research into organisational culture but also entertains the idea that the cultural map of an organisation could be one of a number of possible combinations with varying degrees of common peripheral and pivotal values for enhancing and orthogonal subcultures, countercultures, a dominant culture and fragmented sections of ambiguity and uncertainty.

Yeung, Brockbank, and Ulrich (1991) found clusters of cultures within a single firm and developed typologies based on these culture types as follows: the 'group culture' is a subculture with a high degree of commitment, loyalty and tradition ('employee-oriented culture', Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv & Sanders, 1990); the 'hierarchical culture' has a large number of professional rules and policies ('profession-oriented', Hofstede et al., 1990); the 'rational culture' puts a focus on the accomplishment of tasks and goals ('task-oriented' / 'results-oriented', Hofstede et al., 1990); and the 'developmental culture' has a strong commitment to innovation and

development ('innovation-centred', Hofstede et al., 1990). This list of four typologies is not exhaustive and should not be seen as discounting the concepts of pivotal and peripheral values, as each of them may contain the aspects required to become one of three typologies put forward by Schein (1988). For example, the value of commitment, loyalty and tradition of the group culture could be the pivotal values of the subculture and it may have other peripheral values which are in contrast to the overarching values of the dominant culture. However, this does indicate another means by which subcultures may be classified. In contrast with this, Alderfer (1987) finds two types of groups in organisations; organizational groups (based on tasks, hierarchy, location etc); and identity groups (based on birth, race, gender, social origins etc.). Salk (1989) adds a third group referred to as the associational groups (based on external associations such as political party, educational and professional group memberships).

Merton (1957) characterizes different behaviours of staff members as part of their role sets and in connection with this, role expectations and norms appear. An example of this could be that of a teacher in an HEI who is part of an occupational group with a strong orientation towards research and learning and whose expectations are constrained by local government and the Ministry of Education. Likewise a female teacher may have role expectations associated with gender or marital status despite being in a professional context. This seems to indicate that typologies may be far more complex than simply three or four groupings and that there are possibilities for overlap as mentioned earlier when referring to subculture boundaries.

When considering typologies of subcultures, those used for organisational culture may also be applied. For example, the question of whether a culture is strong or weak, soft or hard, formal or informal, could also be examined in the context of subcultures in relation to other subcultures or the overall dominant culture within an organisation (Boisnier & Chatman, 2002).

## **Methodology**

To study the organisational culture of the Budapest Business School, a mixed methods approach was used. Following the literature review and the inherent complexity of culture in higher education, a method was sought that would uncover the disparity of values rather than generalize the entire culture into one specific type. Furthermore, a method was considered by which subcultures could emerge. Although a few studies pointed towards initiating the study with a qualitative approach, however there were concerns that methods such as interviews might highlight the values and

perceptions of a number of individuals but not be considered representative of an unknown number of subcultures. Moreover, usage of this method to uncover subcultures in the entire organisation presupposes that all staff have an awareness of culture, subcultures and the values of other members across an organisation that is split by location and still feeling the effects of a merger. We considered this assumption too great a leap of faith and opted for a quantitative approach as a means of assessing the key characteristics that fit the definition of subcultures as: “a subset of an organisation’s members who interact regularly with one another, identify themselves as a distinct group within the organisation, share a set of problems, and routinely take action on the basis of collective understandings unique to the group (Van Maanen & Barley, 1985). Thus, the initial study measured organisational culture using the Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI), which is based on the Competing Values Framework (CVF). This framework was originally designed and implemented by Cameron and Quinn (1999) in an educational context and it has since been used to analyse the organisational cultures in many HEIs around the world (Ferreira & Hill, 2008; Kleijnen, Dolmans, Muijtjens, Willems & Van Hout, 2009). The model allows for a number of different cultural types to exist simultaneously within one organisation and has already been used in Hungary although not for a higher education institution (Gaál, Szabó, Kovács, Obermayer-Kovács & Csepregi, 2010).

Using the data, a hierarchical cluster analysis was undertaken using Ward’s method as a means of identifying potential subcultures. This method was used by Hofstede (1998). In this way, participants are grouped into clusters based on the commonality of values across four dimensions (see figure 1), and using SPSS software this results in a dendrogram (tree diagram). The Market Orientation Inventory (Hemsley-Brown & OPlatka, 2010) was used to assess the orientation in the organisation, which was developed for a higher education setting and considers three dimensions of market orientation: customer orientation, competitor orientation and interfunctional orientation.

This study uses two models for assessing the culture and orientation of the organisation. The first model based on the Competing Values Framework (CVF) designed and implemented by Cameron and Quinn (1999), and uses the Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI), which is. This model distinguishes four culture types (clan, adhocracy, market, hierarchy) using four dimensions: internal focus and integration; external focus and differentiation; stability and control; and flexibility and discretion. This may be explained using the table below, which is referred to as the ‘competing values map’ (Cameron & Quinn, 1999):

Internal focus and integration	Flexibility / Discretion		External focus and differentiation
	<i>Clan</i>	<i>Adhocracy</i>	
	<i>Hierarchy</i>	<i>Market</i>	
	Stability / Control		

**Figure 2. The common dimensions of the four cultural types**

The second model is that of Hemsley-Brown and Opatka (2010), which divides market orientation in a higher educational setting into three areas: student, cooperation and competition orientation. This instrument was used as a means of detecting perceptions of subcultures with regard to the organisation's orientation and comparing this to their values.

Since the quantitative study two years have passed during which funding and enrolments have dropped and a large proportion of the teaching staff has been forced to retire. The aim of the qualitative study was to examine the subcultures after these many changes and compare the findings to those of the quantitative study in relation to values and market-orientation. When conducting the qualitative interviews purposeful sampling was employed in an attempt to obtain representatives from all five subcultures according to the results from the previous quantitative study. The group interviews were semi-structured and adapted from those used by Hofstede et al. (1990), but if other issues were raised, those were also addressed. The questions can be seen in the summary of findings for the qualitative study (Table 3). A total of five approximately 50-minute group interviews took place with 4-6 members per group. To ensure the understanding of participant responses the researcher summarized and reiterated responses immediately after they were stated for each group. Interviews were conducted in a private onsite room as a means of maintaining confidentiality and trust with the participants.

### **Findings (quantitative)**

From a total possible 959 employees from all levels of the organisation, 369 completed questionnaires were received (38.5%), from which 3.5% were either incomplete or invalid, giving a final sample of 35% (334 employees). The distribution and characteristics of the participants into clusters can be seen in the following table:

**Table 1. A summary of the most common characteristics by subculture**

Dominant characteristic	Subculture				
	1	2	3	4	5
Size (number of persons)	140	84	34	30	44
Dominant culture type	Market	Clan	Hierarchy	Strong Hierarchy	Strong Clan
Perceived dominant culture type	Hierarchy	Hierarchy	Hierarchy	Hierarchy	Clan
Position	Lecturer	Lecturer	Office staff	Office staff	Lecturer
Function (Teaching/admin./unskilled/mgt.)	Teaching	Teaching	Admin	Admin	Admin
Tenure (years)	< 5 and 10-20 years (two groups)	10-20	10-20	< 5	5-10
Identifying name	<i>Market mentors</i>	<i>Nostalgic professors</i>	<i>Devoted Smooth operators</i>	<i>Ardent Bureaucrats</i>	<i>Cohesive Community</i>

Using these empirical findings, the subcultures' orientations seem to be complex with varying orientations by subculture type. This seems to present an argument in favour of multiculturalism.

In addition to the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) questionnaire used in this study, the researcher obtained approval to use the market-orientation questionnaire from Dr. Jane Hemsley-Brown (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2010). The market-orientations were assessed for each subculture and the findings are as follows:

**Table 2. Mean values for the market orientations of the five subcultures (standardized)**

Market Orientation	Subculture				
	1	2	3	4	5
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Student orientation	0.71	0.53	0.92	0.74	0.85
Competition orientation	0.61	0.34	0.56	0.47	0.49
Co-operative orientation	0.64	0.55	0.79	0.56	0.86
<i>Market orientation (total)</i>	1.96	1.42	<b>2.27</b>	1.77	<b>2.2</b>

According to the Competing Values Framework of Cameron and Quinn (1999), the market-oriented culture should have both an external focus and



a tendency towards stability and control. According to Cameron and Quinn's (1999) model the clan type is in opposition to the market orientation type, however one of the clan type subcultures (subculture five) has a strong co-operative and student orientation, leading to the second highest market orientation. Surprisingly, the market culture type doesn't have the highest market orientation and this may be due to these additional dimensions of student and co-operative orientation in a higher education context. The hierarchy culture type (subculture three) has the highest market orientation, and this is largely due to a very high student orientation. According to the competing values framework, the market and hierarchy culture types have a common dimension of stability and control. These findings will be covered in greater detail in the discussion section.

### Findings (qualitative - group interviews)

The qualitative data was analysed using a multi-stage content analysis approach (Berelson, 1952). For the first stage, responses to questions were reviewed within each subculture. Transcripts were inspected and sentences and phrases were identified and then categorized according to emergent and similar themes and concepts (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The following themes emerged:

**Table 3. A summary of the findings of the group interviews**

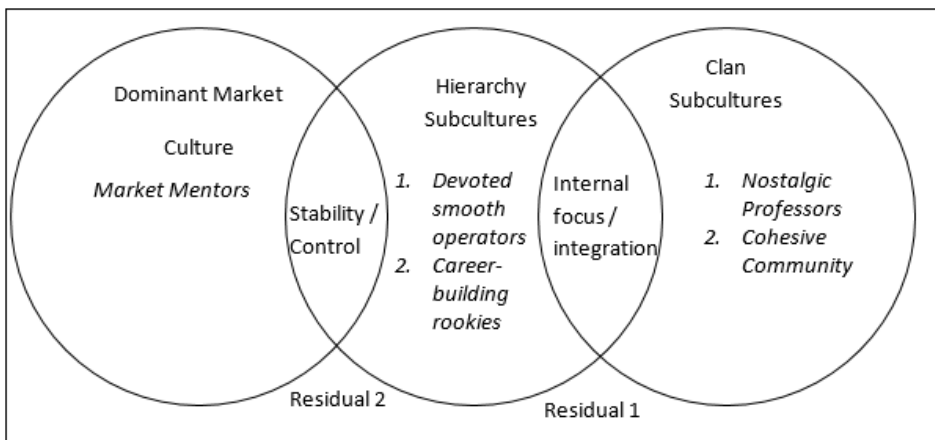
<b>Question</b>	<b>Group 1 Market mentors</b>	<b>Group 2 Nostalgic professors</b>	<b>Group 3 Smooth Operators</b>	<b>Group 4 Cohesive community</b>	<b>Group 5 (mixed) Cohesive Community / nostalgic professors</b>
What kinds of people are most likely to make a fast career here?	Scientific research activities, PhD, publications, approval by higher echelons	Men, PhD, Degree in Economics, fluent English, publications and conferences	Outsiders PhD Administrative	PhD, favourites / connections, more qualifications in more fields, not to travel away too much	polite, meeting newcomers, meeting management interests, contribute to incomes, positive image, public visibility
Whom do you consider as particularly meaningful persons for this	Head of studies, dean, deputy dean – power; department	Technical staff, lawyer, dean, dept. administrator, deputy head of dept., persons who know the	Secretary Finance director Deputy Dean	receptionist, dean, head of department, technical staff, IT staff, TO	Dean, rector, head of dept., Financial director, HR, receptionist, Student Admin leader,

organization ?	ntal administrator, technical staff	ropes, section head, head of dept.		department	direct supervisor
What things do people very much like to see happening here?	Students gaining knowledge and passing with flying colours, positive feedback in newspapers and magazine s; promotion of competent people	New subject, new majors, internationalization, mobility, simplifying administration, computerization, modernization of building and ways, more elective subjects	successful students, getting jobs, passing exams, job security	continuous development, fast IT tech, hard-working students, understanding colleagues, perks	Birth of a baby, changes – success and contribution to the fame of department, failures
What is the biggest mistake one can make?	Forgetting to come to work, losing test papers, being unfair to students, being late often	not conscientious, poor communication skills, disloyalty, losing face in class, criticising boss	going against the wishes or aims of superiors	travelling too much, not keeping lessons, PhD starting, contradicting management, not following directions without protest	Harming the reputation by publishing some critical opinions, sincerity, honesty and criticising colleague issues
Which work problems can keep you awake at night?	deadlines (of submitting test questions ), job insecurity , PhD	interdepartmental fights, increasing workload, deadlines, too much administration, PhD pressure	job security, heavy workload, departmental money pressures, uncertain future, student numbers	Personal conflicts, insecurity, unaccountability, short deadlines for challenging tasks, pointless tasks, unfair task allocation, PhD, unnecessary	Being unsure in working, fair working, deterioration of professional level, worsening moral approach of students to academic work

				ty tasks	
What are the values of the BBS?	Good brand name, recognition, relative financial stability	Practice-oriented, good reputation, standards and quality	Reputation, student satisfaction, practical	quality, respect, family, expertise, flexibility	Survival and good reputation on the market, meeting market expectations
How do you see the organisation?	Hierarchy, groupwork	hierarchy, orchestra, machine all with a limited mind as its core	machine, orchestra, hierarchy	orchestra, machine, brain in cage	Caged Brain
How do you see the market-orientation of the BBS?	the BBS is market-oriented – employer orientation is important too – we provide the excellent employees	market orientation, student orientation, cooperation internally, competition externally, innovation, if possible, diversification	student orientation, cooperation (if possible and necessary), some innovation	mass production - reality, market orientation, competition orientation, innovation ability	IS: the BBS is market-oriented and cooperation orientation, although quality is deteriorating; SHOULD BE: maintaining quality gained

## Discussion and implications

Based upon the results from the quantitative research, the subcultural territories and the basis by which subcultures may reinforce the values in other subcultures can be seen in the Figure 4. As can be seen from Figure 4, there is a combination of integration (the whole sample), differentiation (competing subcultures) and fragmentation (residuals that do not fit any category). This confirms the claim by Martin (2002) that these perspectives or levels are seen to exist simultaneously throughout organisations. Furthermore, there are examples of enhancing (hierarchy subcultures) and orthogonal (clan and market subcultures) in relation to the organisation's hierarchy culture, as claimed by Schein (1988). However, there is an important difference in the findings of this case. It seems that subcultures may exist separately with the same culture type, but with different characteristics within the subculture as well as a different strength of that culture.



**Figure 4. The composition of culture in the organization**

The results of the interviews reinforce that there are commonalities across subcultures as both studies indicate little preoccupation with competition from any of the subcultures, even the market subculture. Furthermore, the focus is very much on internal issues for individuals and the perceived orientation of the organisation. For discovering who is the most important in the organisation, many of the answers are overlapping, naming the same people (positions) by different names indicating a commonality across subcultures and yet perhaps using different names indicates a difference in perception or jargon to differentiate between subcultures

The qualitative study unearthed a deeper understanding of each subculture. Market mentors are still very much academic-minded although they see the use of the organisation as a brand as a key value as well as successes portrayed in the media and achieved by students. This is also reflected in a high student orientation in the quantitative study. Nostalgic professors pointed to a somewhat passive view of participation in the organisation. They saw the market orientation of the BBS as wide-ranging as well as indicated a preference for change and modernization. The smooth operators confirm their student focus in both the quantitative and qualitative studies as well as a concern for job security which may account for the desire to conform to the perceived organisational culture. The smooth operators are mainly office-based staff and yet they had by far the highest student orientation, which was also borne out in the interviews as the most frequently cited concern. These employees also expressed a concern for job security. Further studies beyond this case study may indicate a correlation between a student orientation and job security. The cohesive community stressed the people focus with contacts and networks

being the means to career success and heavy reference to colleagues for both success and conflict. A key concern was the massification of education.

The findings not only indicate that subcultures cannot be considered entirely homogenous or heterogeneous, but also that some subcultures may cluster together on a common basis or bases. For discovering who is the most important in the organisation, many of the answers are overlapping, naming the same people (positions) by different names indicating a commonality across subcultures and yet perhaps using different names indicates a difference in perception or jargon to differentiate between subcultures. Likewise, *market-mentors* and *nostalgic professors* subcultures sense the new culture at least on the espoused values level, regardless of agreeing with it or not. Quite a few subcultures see that newcomers have more opportunity to become valuable members of the organisation, except for market-mentors some of whom are newcomers, we assume. Thus, there are elements of heterogeneity with specific characteristics within each subculture, homogeneity in certain perceptions, certain subcultures are differentiated by the strength of their values, despite having common values, and some subcultures are linked by a common sense of the future of the organisation, although it may be their attempts to understand and deal with this future path may be different.

It was an interesting finding that the mixed group provided a wider range of responses and this could be due to representatives from two subcultures having a greater range of perspectives and input. They differentiated between what the culture is and should be. There was some concern with quality, fairness and morals. There are no explicitly published values of BBS, which may explain the different answers to the question but also the differences in subcultural perceptions of what the organisation values.

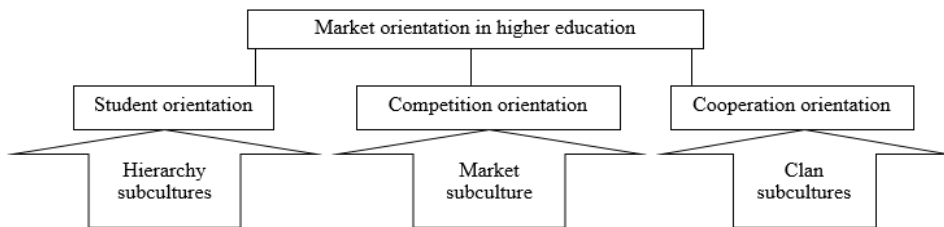
The empirical study included an analysis of the orientations of the 5 subcultures. The orientation of the subcultures was examined using the market orientation (MO) questionnaire, which was designed by Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2010). This questionnaire was designed specifically for use in higher education and has been used in a number of countries. Based upon the theoretical work of Narver and Slater (1990) on market orientation, Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2010) developed this instrument with the following three dimensions: customer orientation; competition orientation; and inter-functional orientation. The orientation lists certain behavior seen as fitting into one of three categories of market orientation as can be seen in the following table:

**Table 4. Market orientation and associated behavior (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2010)**

<b>Orientation</b>	<b>Behavior</b>
Student (customer) orientation	<p>University measures students' satisfaction every academic year</p> <p>University cares about students' well-being</p> <p>University understands the needs of students</p> <p>Complaints by students are dealt with quickly</p> <p>The complaints procedure is easy for students to access</p> <p>The complaints procedure is easy for students to understand</p> <p>Students are given information that helps them to understand what to expect from this university</p> <p>Staff in this university are eager to support students and go beyond their role definition</p> <p>Students' feedback on their experiences influence the teaching and learning process</p> <p>Staff are attentive to students' concerns</p> <p>We encourage students to offer constructive positive comments</p> <p>Staff are regularly provided with information about students' views and experiences</p> <p>The university understands what kind of teaching and learning the students value most</p> <p>We encourage students to offer constructive negative feedback</p> <p>Responding to students' needs is my major task</p> <p>A good teacher is one whose students are happy as satisfied</p> <p>The university meets and goes beyond the promises it makes to students</p> <p>Senior staff promote the spirit of customer orientation and focus</p>
Competition orientation	<p>This university compares favorably with other universities in meeting students' needs</p> <p>Information about what my colleagues in other universities are doing helps me in my role</p> <p>Senior managers often refer to the actions of other universities</p> <p>3.6029</p> <p>The majority of staff take an interest in what's going on in other universities</p> <p>This university usually responds positively to other universities' new initiatives and developments</p> <p>This university understand the needs of students better than other universities</p>
Cooperation (Intra-functional) orientation	<p>In meetings we discuss information about students' concerns in order to make improvements</p> <p>Academics help to attract prospective students</p> <p>Academic staff cooperate to promote the university's image</p> <p>Administrative staff cooperate to promote the university's image</p> <p>All faculties and departments contribute to the marketing of the university</p> <p>The guiding light in curriculum development or new initiatives is the demands of the students</p>

	Marketing information is discussed and shared with academic staff Current students are always central to decision-making in this university
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The findings indicated a link between culture type and dominant market orientation. As mentioned earlier, the five subcultures could be split into three dominant culture types: market (subculture one); clan (subcultures 2 and 5); and hierarchy (subcultures 3 and 4). Each of these subculture types was found to also have a dominant market orientation as can be seen in the following figure:



**Figure 5. The contributions of subcultural norms to market-orientation**

Using these empirical findings, the subcultures orientation seems to be complex one with varying orientations. According to the evolutionary theory of organisational orientation, this indicates that each subculture will evolve a different set of competences in line with their respective orientations.

## Conclusions

Despite initial apparent divisions in the subcultures found through the cluster analysis, it appeared that subcultures were separated not only based upon dominant culture type but also based upon the strength of the culture. Although this is not generalizable, it does bear further consideration if in addition to subcultural boundaries such as location, structural divisions, age, gender, function and so on, the strength of culture is also a dividing factor between subculture. Gregory (1983) highlighted that large, complex organisations resemble the society around them and this may not only serve to indicate the potential for subcultures in organisations (Hofstede, 1998), but using the same analogy, there are many groups in that are clearly divided but have the same common values, such as the difference between political parties from the right and the far right, or religious groups and extremists. However, further research would need to be undertaken to confirm if divisions of subcultures based on the strength of values can be

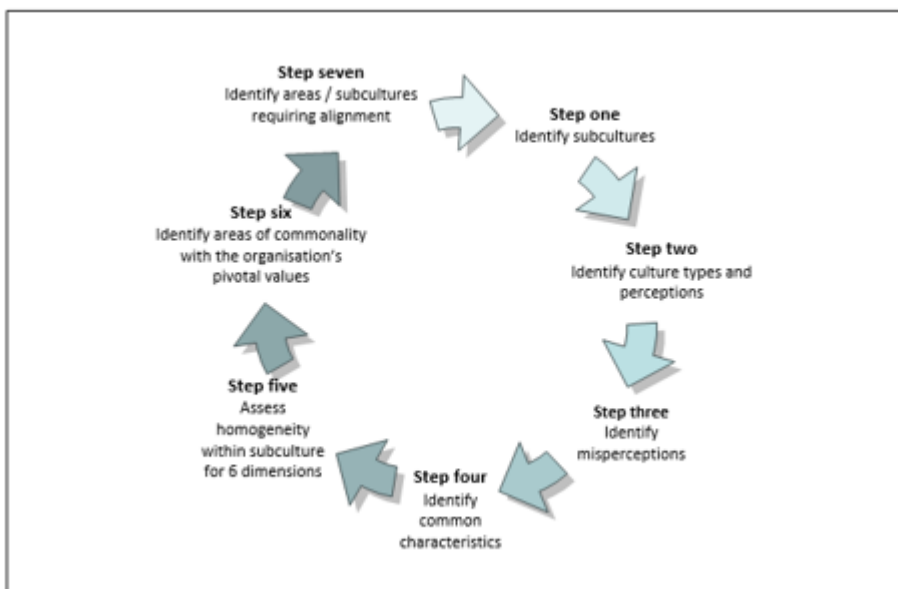
found beyond the organisation of this study. Furthermore, subcultures with different cultural types also exhibited elements of commonality and diversity, which may be explained with Schein's (1988) pivotal and peripheral values which result in three subculture types: enhancing, orthogonal and counter subcultures.

Out of the five subcultures found in the organisation, the two clan subcultures exhibited the highest cooperation orientation, and this fits the culture type as the clan culture is described as family-like, with a focus on mentoring, nurturing, and 'doing things together' (Cameron & Quinn, 1999). However, it was also found that cooperation and student orientation are directly related for the subcultures. This seems a greater potential for cooperation in the organisation when there are a number of clan subcultures. However, in order to achieve a market orientation in higher education, all three of the dimensions of market orientation need to be covered: student, competition and cooperation. Thus, the impetus to change a culture towards a collaborative orientation, as found in the literature, may increase the cooperation and student orientation, but the competition orientation is also a part of the equation.

Such distinct subcultures with overlapping areas of homogeneity and distinctive homogeneity with other subcultures and the greater organisation as a whole give rise to a number of practical implications such as that of person-organisation fit, especially in relation to the impact upon organisational performance, especially in relation to a person fitting into the culture. Studies have shown that recruitment and selection processes are concerned with a job candidate not only having the right knowledge, skills and aptitudes for a job, but also that they fit the organisation's culture – or at least fit the management's espoused values. In this case, subcultures also are a factor for consideration for HR strategy in employment models (Palthe & Kossek, 2002). Through highlighting the complexity and overlapping values of subcultures, this study highlights the need for an in-depth analysis identifying subcultures, their territories and their levels of homogeneity / heterogeneity prior to creation of HR strategies. In this way, it may be found that the core values of the organisation may, for example, be held by all subcultures and in this way the need for consideration of subculture as prescribed by Palthe and Kossek (2002) may be unnecessary. On the other hand, if the majority of employees within a department are, let's say, career-building rookies then the HR strategy may have to allow for the recruitment and selection procedures to stipulate that the applicant should fit or at least show the potential to adapt to the subculture in which they will be working.



The existence of subcultures and their associated territories in higher education institutions has been found in the literature review to have a high likelihood. This study has shined a light on the complexities in such an organisation culture as well as that subcultures may in fact become specialised with a given set of competencies specific to that particular subculture type in the organisation and none other. This appears to indicate an argument for multiculturalism – as the loss of, let's say, a hierarchical subculture will result in the loss of the subculture with the greatest focus on student orientation, and consequently the most highly developed set of competencies in relation to that orientation. However, Hopkins, Hopkins and Malette (2005) indicate that strategy implementation is impossible without subcultural alignment. If we consider this imperative, then we need to consider how the territorial boundaries may in effect be taken down and subcultures aligned to the organisation. Gerdhe (2012) conducted a study into the policies that assist in the alignment of subcultures through the assessment and improvement of the visioning process, the communication of values to various subcultures and if the artefacts and behaviours support the vision and values, then subcultural alignment can take place, through which companies can create a strong culture (Gerdhe, 2012, p.13). When considering practitioners, the study underscores that the organisation needs to consider whether the path to success is through a homogenous culture demanding conformity from its members or a 'subcultural approach', which would affect organisational functions such as human resource management (Palthe & Kossek, 2002) and marketing, as can be seen in this case, with the varied range of market-orientations found within one organisation.



**Figure 6. The change management process for aligning organisational subcultures**

When organisations wish to develop a strong culture in large complex organisations with a high likelihood of subcultures, then, according to the studies mentioned, subcultures may be aligned as a means of strengthening the culture. Based on methodology used in our study, the following model is proposed as a process by which organisations may seek to strengthen organisational culture through the alignment of subcultures (Figure 6).

In the figure, it can be seen that this is a continuous process as it is assumed that cultures and subcultures are dynamic in the organisation and that through interaction, as was suggested in the discussion part of this study, when one subculture changes another may respond in kind either following the new set of values, taking them on partially (as in this case when subculture three expected the leadership to take on a market-culture style of leadership despite being a hierarchy subculture type), or rejecting them partially or fully. Alternatively, this model could be applied in practice as a means of conducting a 'subculture' audit prior to the commencement of any change processes or when looking to implement a change in the direction of the organisation.

In summary, it seems that stability has long gone from Higher Education and the question lies in how HEIs offering business studies courses can handle the complexities found in their own organisational cultures in the face of fourfold challenges of the socio-economic environment, namely that advanced countries have fewer undergraduate and graduate students, students demand more emphasis on project based work, students are more aware of the complex challenges of the job market and finally the traditional operational model of business schools is financially no longer valid.

### **Limitations and further directions of research**

The quantitative research involved a sample of over three hundred participants from a total of more than nine hundred. Although five subcultures were found, it may be that there are many more subcultures within the organisation, or that the only subcultures found were those with the time and inclination to contribute to the study. Alternatively, some of the smaller subcultures may be larger, if a larger sample had been achieved. Ideally, when identifying the subcultures in an organisation using a cluster analysis, the larger the sample, the fuller the picture of the subcultures that encompass the culture of the organisation.

The quantitative research allowed for three types of orientation, but the qualitative results indicate that subcultures such as the market subculture are still academically minded in addition to a student orientation. Some correlations may be found with further research into the relationship between student orientation, as part of the market orientation, and being academically minded.

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