ORGANIZATIONAL LIFE CYCLES
AND MANAGEMENT STYLES

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Abstract:

In this paper I try to emphasize the link existing among *organizational life cycles* and *management styles*, starting from the models of organizational evolution and the ways different type of organizations are managed according to the stage of their existence. I choose to study the model designed by Lawrence M. Miller, which had an interesting approach regarding *organizational life cycle.* Cyclic evolution of civilizations and larger organizations was described in the book *Barbarian to Bureaucrats* having six stages: *prophet, barbarian, builder & explorer, administrator, bureaucrat,* and *aristocrat.* Based on this model that is referring mostly to civilizations and corporations, I try to transfer the view toward military organizations. *S*ome typical features that characterized organizations according their life stage and, the relationship between the nature of *leadership* and the stage an *organization* go thorough will be presented.

The reason I choose this topic is connected to the idea, people could behave better and perform well in an organization they know and, also, they could be confidently involved in changes that faces organization environment and its management. It could be valuable in a military organization as it is worthy in others fields.

Key words: organization life cycles, management styles, organization, leadership, prophet, barbarian, builder & explorer, administrator, bureaucrat, Barbarian to Bureaucrats.

1.Introduction

The organizational environment faces continuously with old or new phenomena that affect organization evolution. To adapt organization to new challenges or change it according to new trends and environmental constraints is a matter of management. Some examples of phenomena which I would like to mention are: condensing activities, splitting in layers or substructures and decentralization – they belong to the group of old ones and, others: new informational infrastructure, fast informational flow, new technologies, globalization trends, and new expansion of virtual world. The impact of those phenomena in organizational environment is tough, sometimes could be predictable, and leaders and members should be ready to go though changes that occur inside organizations which must to adapt and sustain their existence and cyclic evolution. What's happened if adaption is missing or leaders can't figure out the challenges? Maybe the end is too closely for those organizations and for their members the song could not be from their favorite playlist.

Trying to understand how organization step over through stage to stage, I found models that presents organization as open system which start its life, goes further to a developed age and, somewhere further in time may touch its end.

Organization's evolution was compared by some theorists with human life and behavior; organization are passing stages as people go from early years, childhood, teenage phases, youth, and maturity through elderly. Other similar life cycle was compared to

seasons; the transformation of an organization being considered similar to seasons' cycle in a year.

In fact, among theorists there is a common approach regarding these three phases of organization life: beginning – evolution – ending. Also, some particular views are connected to the evolution part of an organization life which is considered more debatable due to environmental influences.

There is an interesting theory designed by Lawrence M. Miller referring to organizations evolution. Based on Miller's pattern the organizations go through diverse life cycles as people do. For example, people go through infancy, childhood and early teenage phases that are characterized by lots of fast growth. People in these stages often do whatever it takes just to stay alive, for example, eating, looking for protection and sleeping. Often, these people tend to make spontaneous, very reactive decisions rooted in whatever is going on around them at the moment. At the beginnings, new organizations are like this, too. Often, creators of the organization and its various members have to do whatever is necessary just keeping organization in function. Leaders make highly reactive and instinctive decisions. They dread taking the time to hold up and do planning.

In this comparison of organizations to people, could be noted that, as people continue to grown-up, they begin to understand more about the environment and themselves. In time, people develop a sort of wisdom that sees them through many of the challenges in life and work. They learn to plan and to use a definite discipline to put plans in practice. They discover how to manage themselves. To continue to exist and evaluate, organizations ought to do this, the same. Experienced leaders have learned to identify the specific life cycle that an organization is stepping through. These leaders know the kinds of difficulties faced by the organization at some stage in its life cycle. That understanding provides them a good judgment of perspective and helps them to choose how to respond to problems in the workplace.

2. Organizational life cycles and management styles

According to Lawrence M. Miller model, there is no doubt, organizations, have a cyclic evolution. Characteristics of new organizations are generally different from older ones. There are broad patterns that seem to follow some natural evolution as there are natural patterns in the birth and growth of infants, animals and even plants. There can be no exact roadmap drawn from history, but there can be wisdom derived from the patterns. The culture at the birth of an organization (or civilization) is of one kind, and that is entirely different than the culture at old age or in decline. The performance of leaders, their relationships, expertise and objectives are different at each age.

Organizational life cycle model designed by Lawrence M. Miller comprises six stages: prophet, barbarian, builder & explorer, administrator, bureaucrat, and aristocrat. Also, there is stage named "synergist" who is characterized by some innovative management, interventions and changing into organization in the way to continue at upper levels the previous stage.

In figure nr. 1, the graphic presents, cyclic evolution of organizations from beginning to the end, going through integration to disintegration process, or having the chance to step on new start under the synergist intervention and transformation. [1]

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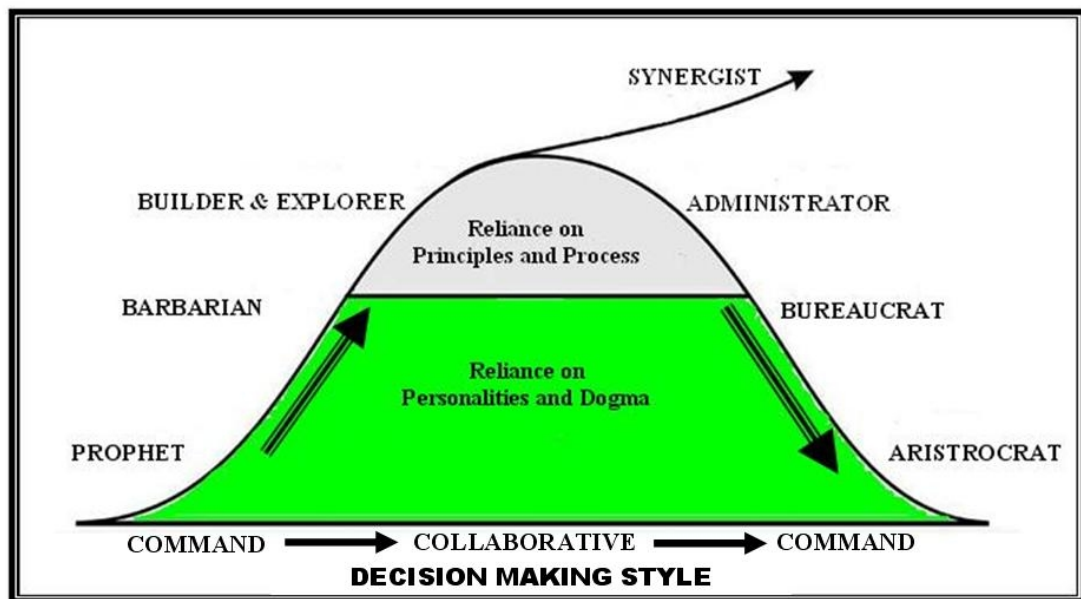
LIFE CYCLE STAGES AND LEADERSHIP STYLES

Fig.1

2.1. The Prophetic Age: Inspiration and Innovation

The prophetic stage is in fact generated by inspiration and innovation. According to Miller's model, "in the beginning is the word, the creative act, the spirit of renewal. Creative personalities, including religious prophets, seem to follow a pattern of withdrawal-and-return. They disappear into the mountains or desert. They remove themselves from the distractions of the current order and seek some vision of a better future. Their power to inspire others is only seen on their return when they are intentionally disruptive. A revolution begins and their followers can hardly be called an organization, more a group of disciples. It is disruption, not order. It is the nature of creative personalities. The vision of these prophets is like a rocket blast, a surge of energy that disturbs the old and propels movement toward something new. Often these prophets are incapable of doing their work within the framework of the old order, but must but be exiled to a new land."[2]

Characteristics for organization in the Prophet stage
- it is lead by a visionary and creative person on whose ideas the organization was founded;
- organization is at risk because it is a beginner in the environment;
- there is more chaos than organization, with things changing frequently, reporting relationships ambiguous, structure and processes uncertain;
- there is an excitement and deep belief in what leader and members are trying to accomplish.

Leader as a Prophet
- ideas are long range and visionary;
- is willing to make great sacrifices in time and energy to see your ideas realized;
- tends to withdraw for long periods to work through your ideas;
- sees challenges others don't see;

- others see leader as being "different";
- is probably not very well organized, and is impatient with details and administration.
  Example: Alexander the Great, Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, Alexandru I. Cuza

2.2 The Barbarian Age: Crisis and Conquest

The prophet founders of organizations are soon followed by, or become themselves, *barbarians*, the commanding generals whose strength of will focuses energy in crisis. The initiative and inspiration must be continued with decisive action in building the organization. "Every new organization is in a crisis, a fight for survival. The ability to move quickly, with discipline and unity of energy and effort, is the key to victory". [3]

Characteristics for organization in the Barbarian
- it is rapidly expanding, taking in new territory and integrating the conquered;
- the decision making process is fast and only a small group of members are implied in decision procedure;
- administration, processes and organization structure are well definite;
- the demand for performance is high and those who can't are left behind or expelled.

Leader as a Barbarian
- mission is understandable and imperative;
- the priority is to conquer and go forward faster;
- is in charge and very comfortable making decisions;
- others view the leader as being authoritarian and not consulting them on decisions;
- is very action-oriented and has little patience with planning and administration.
  Example: Alexander the Great, Hernando Cortez, Attila the Hun, George S. Paton, Michael the Brave.

2.3 The Age of the Builder and Explorer: Specialization and Expansion

The period of the Prophet may be a brief moment in the history of the organization. The age of the Barbarian should also be short. The organization's leadership should not remain in the Barbarian Age, trying to move on and enter a period of specialization, a time when the organization is developed whit specific systems and structure.

Now leadership has to take on a different quality. It must be joint, delegated, and increasingly collaborative. While the decision making process must continue in a creative way and fast moving, leaders must also develop new particular competences. If this happens, this stage may last for centuries in the case of civilization and decades for largest organizations.

Characteristics for organizations in the Building and Exploring Age
- rapidly growing based on competitive services and products;
- great efficiency;
- needed staff to develop management systems and to make processes routine and stable;
- numbers of members increase rapidly.

Leader as a Builder
- enjoy the "real work" of organization, involved in making the products, outputs or delivering the service;
- enjoy measuring the results of work;
- lead the decision process with efficiency, decisions are made quickly, action is a priority, and results must be seen;
- know is not a visionary and don't waste a lot of time dreaming about the future;

- committees are avoided, the schedules are precisely structured and time is considered worthy.
  Leader as an Explorer
- is a convincing and enthusiastic communicator;
- sometimes feels that work to accomplish objectives and others often seem to be obstacles in reaching the organization's goals;
- believe the organization should place a high priority on expansion;
- is curious and naturally explore for new opportunities for organization;
- is competitive by nature and has records of performances.

2.4 The Age of the Administrator: Design Systems, Build Structure and Provide Security

Increasingly the challenge is within, not from the external environment. Increasingly the leaders are seeking to bring order to the chaos of differentiated organization created in the previous stage. Counting and recording, systems and structure, are now important. And increasingly the processes of administration become dominant in their minds, and the leaders are drawn from the administrators. In time, with Administrators in charge, counting and recording become more important than the substance and spirit of creativity, the response to the external challenge that was the source of initial growth. Increasingly the focus is on internal, rather than external, challenges. The unchecked priorities of administration will soon lead to bureaucracy. [4]

Characteristics for organizations in the Administrative Age
- the managers are focused on modernizing and updating procedures;
- stability and confidence in relation with others;
- the stability cover the possibility of surprising situations or crises;
- workplaces, staff headquarters and offices have an expensive endowment;
- new services and new performance are expected to come from the staff research and development group.

Leader as an Administrator
- develop his career in the corporation's staff functions;
- is considered by himself as expert at the procedures and coordination of management;
- order, consistency, and smooth operations are high priorities for him;
- he devotes more time to checking on what has happened, as reflected in analytical and other reports, than he spend focused on future growth in services and outputs, or exchanges with other organizations.

2.5 The Age of the Bureaucrat: the Tight Grip of Control

The transition from the Administrative Stage to that of the Bureaucrat occurs without any plan or intention. Old age comes to pass. It needs no support. No one in the history of organization ever created a design team to design and implement bureaucracy.

As soon as the leader imposes increasing levels of control in his love for order, he becomes a bureaucrat and loses understanding of the original organizing principle that was the energy created by the "word," the creative act that was the reason to unite and sacrifice. Now the lack of creativity leads to impotence in the marketplace, and survival is dependent on cost cutting and control and anyone with the creative spirit, potential Prophets who possess the very cure that is so needed are driven to exile or crucified for their violation of order. The decline will soon lead to death. The bureaucracy causes the exile or execution

of those who are creative but unable to conform to the required order. With the departure of creativity, the fate of the company is sealed. [5]

Characteristics for organizations in the Bureaucratic Age

- organization is growing more by acquisition than by internal new services creation;
- organization has reorganized more than once in the past three years;
- it is more interested in the internal challenges of the organization than the external relationships and interchanges;
- organizations members and leaders alike feel that they couldn't alter the company's fortunes;
- the stories about "good old days" are often told by managers and members.

Leader as a Bureaucrat

- spend most of his time in meetings reviewing what has already happened or should have happened;
- cannot remember when he last participated in the development of a new product or service, or output and, doesn't think that's job belong to the leader;
- is more concerned with how he and him organization are viewed by analysts than by members or customers;
- believe tighter control will solve many of organization's problems;
- activities at the top management, meetings with central staff members are too frequent and the based line and structures are quite isolated and faraway from leaders.

2.6 The Age of the Aristocrat: Alienation and Revolution

Management derives its power from its legitimacy, and in the Aristocratic Age legitimacy is lost. It is lost because the managers have stopped doing their job, that of leading, creating vision, and building unity of energy and effort across diverse people and interests.

Legitimacy is a matter of perception, and it is the perceptions of the constituent groups that matter. In every relationship there must be a balance of power, a mutual concern, and respect. When these mechanisms break down, leadership acts on its own interests, and contrary to the interests of its followers; rebellion inevitably results. [6]

Characteristics for organizations in the Aristocratic Age

- there is a complete separation in perception, expectations, and communication between those workers and managers who produce and provides and those who claim to be the leaders of the corporation;
- the leader thinks of himself (herself) as indispensible and almost synonymous with the organization;
- a great deal of the time and energy is spent in internal warfare, both between horizontal units and vertical "classes";
- reshaping and reorganizing are almost continuous;
- there is a continual effort to cut costs, hold down salaries;
- leaders are constantly warning of the situations and organization problems;
- leaders compensation is increasing without any relationship to the efficiency.

Leader as an Aristocrat

- manages an organization that has not successfully developed and marketed a new product or service for several years, and the only expectation for growth is through acquisition;
- most of leader time is spent on restructuring the organization, planning, budgeting and the organization outcomes are somewhere far-off ;

- leader offices are plush with expensive artwork, have limousine service, and spend a lot of time at expensive social gatherings, for organizational maters;
- leader feels that only him and a small circle of advisers are capable of understanding the strategy of the organization.

Synergist:

Miller says a synergist is *"... a leader who has escaped his or her own conditioned tendencies toward one style and incorporated, appreciated and unified each of the styles of leadership on the life-cycle curve. The best managed companies are synergistic."*[7] Miller asserts that the synergist is a synergy of the other management styles, and therefore, is best described by a set of principles.

3. Cyclic evolution of Romanian Army

History gives us significant data about evolution of Romanian Army during time. There are three cycles I would like to mention: 1859-1945, 1946-1989, and 1990-present time. First period mentioned had started with reforms implement during the lead of Alexandru I. Cuza, continued with Independence War, First World War, and ended right after the Second World War. Second period was under the communist regime and also under the Soviet Union influence. After 1990, Romanian Army faced a new cycle in evolution.

Starting from the characteristics of stages described by life cycles theory, I wrote down some ideas regarding the revolutionary change of culture have happened in military environment right after 1989. It is obvious, in 1989, the Romanian Army touched a sort of end for a one of its comprehensive cycle and faces to new challenges and maybe started a new stage in its evolution.

Some features could link the Romanian Army stage in the 1989th to a sort of aristocrat age. The aristocrat stage is characterized by the preparation of a revolution done by leaders (aristocrats). The facts happened in social real life as the theory presumes. Some aristocrats created revolution and the revolutionaries have the mission to do it. Changes in social environment determine a lot of transformation at institutional levels and military organization begun a revolutionary transformation process from 1990. At that time people imagined a lot of changes and as a burning revolutionary flame, they not only dreamed and expected them, but fought to have those changes. The revolutionary people dreamed in a way and leaders did the job in their proper styles. Maybe, wherever the revolutions have happened, there are significant differences in the real world beyond the dreamed lines.

There are two important levels where the revolutionary change of culture has happened. First one, which is an almost soft level, comprises changes in sentiments, beliefs, personal behavior and leadership. The second one is a significant level and includes changes in system and structure embedding the principles of a new culture in a practical process.

For the first level, some views over sentiments, beliefs, personal behavior and leadership in military environment will be presented as results of direct observation of occurrences and others coming from event analysis.

Right after 1989, young people wanted to deal with new professional challenges, expected a new world of requirements and they were going ahead without worries about their private life, having the belief they will do the best and many returns they will have.

At that time, just older professional people were thinking and behaving differently, that could be a mater of motivation, but they really expected dissimilar returns which were

anchored in a sort of stability, continuity at the level of professional power more balanced to an essential option for a social powerful situation.

What about leaders? They have to manage new challenges from the perspective of a new environment and to work along with organization's goals and missions. Many leaders were tending to keep the balance between old culture and new challenges.

Who were right? In the options and dreams mater, it is right to assume each of them were correctly but the big question is "Which was the best way to face the change?"

Were young people touching their dreams?

Do the older professionals receive power and continuity in their social status?

Do the leaders manage the organization toward a new age or do they just assume and rich the existing goals and missions?

Let's joggle somehow with what was possible to happen if they will face again whit the similar situation. I assume the fact as a personal opinion, al of them, young people, experimented professionals and leaders have changed their dreams, beliefs, behavior and decisions if the life bring them in similar situations.

Regarding this first level of revolutionary changes, I would like to mention the fact, leaders have the entire responsibility regarding the path organization have to follow, they must respond creatively with challenges, understood what people wanted before people wanted, imagine the future, be models, manage the environment, build structures, design systems, generate values based on behavior, be and create models.

Were these responsibility done? Maybe yes or sometimes they were done partially. Seeing around and encountering the organizational environment which is totally different, new organizations, new structures had appeared, changes after changes have been done, new types of leaders in charge, new structures, new missions, theatres of operations, heroes, it could be said "Yes, they were done". But those changes did not occur just with positive results. There were a payroll containing a lot of disappointments for some organization members and those bad results must be assumed by leaders as lessons learned and important information for the future decision-makers.

Regarding the level which includes changes in system and structure embedding the principles of a new culture in a practical process, I will mention the key elements of Romanian Army transformation roadmap.

After 1989, transformation of Romanian Army was considered a key element for the new democratic and economic environment. The reformation of security system was connected to a new transformation program, which will modify the Romanian military system and its main components: structure, education, training, logistic, action, mentalities. The main goal was to build a new army, with optimal dimensions, ready to serve efficiently the national security interests and to participate in cooperative security. The transformation means also to achieve some objectives: a new legislative framework in defense field, distinct and comprehensible attributes for political and military command structures, civilian and democratic control over military system, modernize army structures and endowment, simplify de command act, redesign the education and training system, develop the relationships with other army.

The new strategic goal for Romania – integration in NATO, brought for the Army other changes: Partnership for Peace, new security concept as part of government program, decentralization of Ministry of Defense management by giving to Army Services larger responsibilities, establishing distinct attributes and competences for Ministry of Defense, also for General Staff and chiefs of Army Services, concept of "sufficient defense".

An important fact in this process was the appointment of the first civilian as Minister of National Defense, in person of politician Gheorghe Tinca in 1994.

Till 2000, new important documents completed the transformation framework: Romanian National Security Strategy, White Book of Romanian Government and Romanian Military Strategy.

The changes made in Romanian Constitution in 2003 were the base lines for a framework that offered the possibility to be part in collective security structures and suspended the obligatory military service in peace time switching to voluntary military service.

Becoming NATO member in 2004 and EU member in 2007 Romania had to reconfigure its strategy considering new conditions. Those facts have influenced all domains where Romania had built strategies. In such kind of situation was the defense domain where the National Security Strategy would have been changed. That had happened and, in 2007 a new National Security Strategy was built. Based on National Security Strategy, Romanian Army had to build its own strategy. In this way the new Strategy of Romanian Army was born in 2007. Transformation of Romanian Army started from the argumentation of necessity of military transformation based on the evolution of security environment. Some new concepts appeared: military vision, fundamental mission of transformation, the objective of transformation. NATO transformation, the processes developed at the level of EU military structures and regional initiatives influenced transformation of Romanian Army.

In present, Romania is deeply involved in international efforts to manage the new threats in global security environment. Romanian armed forces have participated in abroad missions, in theatres of operations with units, structures and military personnel. Also, Romanian Army is involved in peace keeping operations or peace support operations under the ONU mandate, leading by NATO and UE.

Transformation process continues and Romanian Army has new challenges to step through: capability based planning system, new informational infrastructure, new level of ambition for NATO, new capabilities required, changing and reshaping the political and military command structures in NATO, changing and adapt its structures, and all of them under the constraints of not enough resource allocations.

It could be said, till now, Romanian Army have been managed well the transformation process, and this means the way Army goes on is the path of integration through a builder and explorer stage.

4. Conclusions

The theory of life cycle could be use to analyze the stages military organizations go on. Also the model designed by Lawrence M. Miller offers some interesting tools that could be useful in understanding the present and the future of huge organizations including here also the military ones. Beyond the characteristics of organization ages it is obvious that, there is a strong link between management styles and life stage of an organization. Managers should know the stage organization they lead go through and in this way they could be innovative, creative during decision they made in order to establish conditions to integrate and develop the organization and keep it in a growing and efficient trends. The managers ought to assume the changes needed to be made and keep a balance between organization life, performance and evolution in one side and the organization members' interests and determine members to be part in transformation processes.

5. References:

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