

«GRAMMAR» OF THE WORLDVIEW «PENTABASIS» MODEL FOR NATIONAL MANAGEMENT CULTURE

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Abstract

The article discusses the general structure of the worldview model of «Pentabasis» and attempts to produce practical explications of the system for corporate governance and culture. The study comprehends the named system of values within structuralism as an axiological code that encompasses all spheres of social life. It also gives the analysis of syntagmatic and paradigmatic interactions within the system. Analytical consideration of the links between the elements of the model provides the basis to make a conclusion about possible simultaneous work with attributes (selected values), regardless of the level at which the interaction takes place. It is noted that «Pentabasis» is aimed at reproducing the structures of the state in those areas where it is applied, however, the very concept of «state» here refers to the concept of state-service and does not have an explicit paternalistic tinge. Further, the article transfers the cultural Russian value dominants to the field of governance and management. The authors prove the advantage of the theory of motivation Y within the Russian management culture, based on the principles of «Pentabasis», and also compare the corporate maxims of both national and foreign companies to check them against the model provisions and further improve in line with the proposed recommendations.

Keywords

Russian management culture, governance and management in Russia, «Pentabasis» of values, theory of motivation Y, state-service, corporate values, foundations of Russian nation-building, corporate ideology, «Pentabasis» factors, Russian culture.

In September 2023 it is planned to introduce a new large-scale course in the curriculum of higher schools - «Foundations of Russian nation-building». The authors of the course emphasize that its objective is to fill in the gaps in the knowledge of national culture and history, however, it should be noted that in parallel it is supposed to place certain worldview accents [1]. Then it is obvious that there is a need for an ideological base which will underpin the educational function of the course and one of the main sources can be the worldview model of “Pentabasis” developed in 2022.

This study is planned to look into possible practical application of the model for the national corporate culture, the culture of governance and management in general. It also seems appropriate to problematize some related theoretical aspects of model application in governance and management in the interests of teaching management, as one of the possible units of the new educational course. To this end we will consider “Pentabasis” within structuralism, transfer its provisions and basic principles from the general culture to governance and business ethics, compare the results obtained with studies of the actual situation in the Russian management culture and the content of the value dominants of the corporate cultures in companies operating (or who have operated recently) in Russia.

We metaphorically call the results of theoretical consideration and structural conceptualization of the model “grammar”, in the sense that it is assumed to possess implicit structure of the system, the understanding of which will allow one to adequately operate with its elements in a communicative way, in this case within managerial activity. Moreover, the authors of the model themselves (A.D. Kharichev and others) tried to formulate a nationwide civilizational code using the materials of group discussions, which, in our opinion, can be interpreted in a broad sense as a structure with a language-like order.

It should be noted that this study is not the first on the specified issues. According to the state task of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation (draft No. FZNF-2022-0001 - Potential and features of worldview development in the digital environment), studies have already been carried out, some of which are closely related to the issue under study, for instance: «The development of Patriotism in Russia: Pentabasis and Corporate Culture» [2]. It is also worth noting the InterComm 2022 conference - “The route has been rebuilt. We are looking for a new coordinate system”, which gave the platform for discussion of, inter alia, new value orientations amid restructuring the system of internal communications.

To begin with, let's share a brief insight into the «Pentabasis» model. The study, which first presented the model, was conducted through group discussions from 4 March to 20 May 2022. The method trial was effected to describe worldview systems in groups of students of Moscow State University and the Higher School of Economics and the teaching staff of the conference participants in Sevastopol [3]. As a result, it was possible to encode the socio-political discourse of modern Russia within a five-part model: a person - a family - a society - a state - a country. The levels of discourse reveal an obvious, paradigmatic connection, since the system is hierarchically ordered at the first three levels, the fourth (a state) is the result of their interaction as a whole, and the last level, a country, is the same result of the overall operation of the system. At the same time, in the whole model, they are connected syntactically as equal elements of the «Pentabasis» set.

To discover further potential of working with the system, let us look into the nature of the links among the elements in more detail. At each paradigmatic level the authors single out a value dominant, an attribute that, for the above order, can be represented accordingly: creativity - traditions - consentience - trust in institutions - patriotism. Syntagmatic links within the levels, on the

one hand, enable scaling and thus changing the level in nesting relations, which can be illustrated by the example of the article text: «the people of the Russian Federation [note of the author “level of society”] is a family of families” [4]. On the other hand, the syntax of level attributes is possible, for instance, where the dominant “trust in institutions” for the level “state” can enter into a horizontal connection with the dominant “traditions”, respectively, for the level “family”, etc. As evidence one can go on the contrary and assume that each attribute is an isolated property of the level to which this attribution is made. However, then we should recognize as a necessary conclusion that the level of a state does not retain the discursive right to “create”, which is clearly not to the liking of the model authors, and even more so is unlikely to be true in all cases from a pragmatic and correspondent point of view. Then we should return to understanding the model as a system which properties exceed those of its individual objects, and value dominants are emergent properties that emerge when and only when all parts of the model work together. Thus, regardless of the attribution to different paradigmatic levels, all value dominants shape an anthropological microparadigm with syntactic links. That’s where we can draw the first practical consequence: despite the maximum actualization within a particular level, all value dominants emerge and are actualized in their own way at each other level in the course of their inevitable systemic interaction.

Therefore, we deem it essential to work in all five areas, and not to localize management within one of the levels, for instance, a family (if we imply a family business or an enterprise with strong horizontal ties), a society or a state (if we imply an enterprise possessing special role in ensuring the activity of the state, and the employment is a form of «sacred» service).

What else remains to be done for a minimum approximation to the general rules (“grammar”) of the worldview system in question? We shall consider again the names of value dominants. It can be assumed that all of them belong to the lexico-semantic field of the concept (archilexeme) «nation-building». We can go further and think about the fact that the whole system involves the reconstruction of state structures at different levels of human existence. But what does this mean and what do the authors of the study imply by a state? In addition, we specify that a distinction should be made between a “state” as part of “Pentabasis” and a state as a concept in national culture.

The study provides some metaphorical images of the future of Russia, some of which may be useful for understanding the structures that should be deployed within the worldview system. «Concepts of the modern state» block demonstrate two images with similar features: a technological state, a social state, a point of forces unity, a personalized state [5]. All this comes together no longer in the image of a paternalistic state, the existence of which is a goal in itself, and subordinates to its idea and itself the life projects of citizens, but rather as a service state, which allows, due to positive feedback, actualizing the internal needs of citizens, demanding in return loyalty and per se «contribution by deed». At the individual level it works in the following way: “... Russian ideas about self-realization are strikingly different from those that are common in the Western (Anglo-Saxon) world. Self-realization or destiny in the Russian case implies that an individual contributes to the development of the country. The destiny capitalization stage is optional. At the same time, capitalization in the minds of the section participants does not have negative connotations. Moreover, one of the tasks of a person living in Russia of the future is the capitalization of Russian citizenship” [6].

Now let’s transfer these values to labor culture:

Table 1

The Content of the Value Dominants of the «Pentabasis» Model in Management Culture of Russia

| | Content within management culture |
|------------------------------|---|
| Creativity | The code holder perceives his work as self-realization. The maximum capitalization of labor is not a priority, but it is desirable. The priority for the worker is the performance of work, which, in his opinion, is essential. |
| Traditions | For a worker, the balance of work and family leisure, active involvement in the affairs of his family, is important. The culture of overtime at work and office atomization are unacceptable to the code holder, unless they are compensated by the involvement of other value dominants. |
| Consentience | The code holder is open for mutual understanding and support of his own initiative, trust in his own creative choice of the way to implement the task at work. Restrictions on these freedoms are perceived as a discriminatory measure. |
| Trust in institutions | The code holder has a need for the openness of the management system, for its non-indifference and service approach, as well as for the common goals for himself and representatives of the management. |
| Patriotism | The code holder considers it essential to be a part of a common cause, which he implements at his job and which his company implements in the country. |

Source: Grishanin N.V., Minevich Y.V., Merkusheva A.S. Development of patriotism in Russia: Pentabasis and corporate culture // Bulletin of Omsk University. Series «Historical Sciences». 2023. №2 (38). URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/formirovanie-patriotizma-v-rossii-pentabazis-i-korporativnaya-kultura> (Accessed 7 July 2023).

Next, we will provide a number of practical consequences and recommendations, starting with the expansion of the value dominant “creativity”. It is worth resorting to the theory of employee motivation to work. Theories X and Y characterize two possible variants of a person’s attitude to work. In accordance with the first variant (theory X), the set of worker characteristics is as follows: the average individual seeks to shirk his duties, does not like work, is passive, prefers to be led, does not want to take risks and responsibilities, focuses only on personal security and material benefit, i.e. this is an “economic individual”. Based on this, most people need to be forced, strictly controlled, to ensure the achievement of the goals of the organization. In contrast to Theory X managers, who see it as their primary responsibility to manage employees, Theory Y managers seek to help employees acquire self-management skills.

Theory Y suggests that there is another category of workers. For them, physical and mental labor is as natural and necessary as play or rest, so they do not avoid labor. Such workers do not just wish to shirk responsibility, but also strive for it, do not need control and are able to control themselves, demonstrate imagination, ingenuity and initiative.

The manager, according to D. McGregor, must, based on corresponding assumptions about human motivation, adhere to a certain style of leadership: authoritarian in the first case and democratic in the second [7]. The authoritarian style (a variant of motivation according to theory X) is tight control, coercion to work, negative sanctions, an emphasis on material incentives. Democratic style (variant of motivation according to theory Y) emphasizes the use of the creative abilities of subordinates, flexible control, lack of coercion, self-control, participation in management, moral stimulation.

In Russia we witness use of various theories of personnel motivation.

When managing personnel, one cannot do without world's best practices, however, it must be considered that mere imitation is impossible. The development of Russian management should take into account the main trend in the development of mentality towards individualism, focusing more and more on the individual, control by an individual, keeping record of the individual contribution and remuneration based on it. This means that enterprises should assign priority to promotions based not on acquaintance and family ties, but solely on the personal abilities of each individual. When shaping a management system, it is essential to consider the business qualities of an individual, his ability to perceive the new, determination.

It is advisable to use workers with a collectivist mindset in areas with specific methods of management that are adequate to them, with an emphasis on collective work, collective responsibility and control, the use of a brigade form of labor organization and its compensation, etc.

A modern Russian manager should be flexible in defining the goals and objectives of management and persistence, when a goal is selected, in a steady striving to achieve it. This type of manager, which combines flexibility, adaptability and great strong-willed qualities, will have to be raised for many years to come.

Thus, given the Russian reality our study should pay more attention to theory Y, which is based on flexibility, adaptability, maneuverability and dialectic.

Now let's turn to the perception of the corporate culture itself in its traditional forms. In the above mentioned paper by Grishanin N.V., Minevich Y.V. and Merkusheva A.S. we see the following statement: "... in a historical perspective, patriotism, or sacrifice in the name of the state, country, family, society, was opposed by a company, especially a multinational one" [8]. In the post-Soviet area the stereotype of the "bourgeois" and, accordingly, the anti-people capitalist enterprise is really rooted. As far back as the middle of the last decade studies sometimes revealed that in Russia the corporate culture, as part of the management culture and social code, had not taken root and was not the case everywhere. "All the above characteristics of the current state of the culture in national organizations give reason to believe that it is too early to talk about it as a factor in improving the efficiency of enterprises, motivating staff and boosting labor productivity" [9]. However, by 2022, according to a survey by Rabota.ru service, 67% of respondents (the users of the service) said they were aware of the corporate culture of their company [10]. Modern studies of the vision of the future among Russians testify to its eclecticism and uncertainty, however, it is noted that: "such an idea cannot be the idea of money, wealth and its accumulation" [11].

In view of the foregoing, we see the clear need to apply the value dominants of the model to create a corporate culture adequate to our conditions, as long as it reflects the current need. Are these dominants reflected in the corporate cultures of large corporations and not only national ones? Five principles of MNC Mars Inc. include such value dominants as: quality, responsibility, mutual benefit, efficiency and freedom [12]. However, let us note that the lexico-semantic fields of these two tiers (the five principles of Mars and the value dominants of "Pentabasis") are different. Where the attributes of «Pentabasis» reproduce the structures of the state discourse, the five principles reproduce the structures of capitalist discourse possessing a different semantics.

Let's take another example. The Coca-Cola Company distinguishes three dominants in its corporate culture: cultural and gender diversity, equity and inclusion (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion) [13]. The presented concepts, in turn, refer to the field of left-liberal value discourse. At the same time, by the way, the text of the article by Kharichev A.D. et al. also mentions a need for "inclusion", but then makes an interesting comment regarding the meaning of the concept:

"[author's note about the image of Russia of the future] A community based on certain rules and principles, regardless of gender, race, nationality, ethnic group, etc., whose members are happy against all odds. Acceptance of different, i.e. inclusion, coexistence, acceptance of others as equals (in no case be confused with the term "tolerance")" [14].

Consider now the example from national practice. PJSC Gazprom distinguishes the following value dominants: professionalism, initiative, thrift, mutual respect, openness to dialogue, continuity, image [15]. This tier of dominants is also more about a rather traditional corporate approach of a capitalist enterprise, however, in contrast to the Five Principles of Mars Inc. beyond its value dominants, it includes other components that already belong to the state or, to be more precise, country discourse: for instance, the slogan "Gazprom is a national treasure", which caused a conflict with the Federal Antitrust Agency in 2016 [16]. Within the current consideration such a slogan sounds more than appropriate, since it reflects the need of both workers and society as a whole for patriotism. One more difference from Mars Inc. is another semantic accentuation of values: not "mutual benefit", but "mutual respect", not "freedom", which in the case of Mars Inc. means a certain general level of freedom implying the financial sovereignty of the company, and «initiative», «thrift» and «professionalism», addressing agency directly to the worker. Apart from that, the "Pentabasis" model fits such items as "continuity", which coincides with the concept of "traditions" and "image" transferred to the corporate area, in the Company Code it is materialized as a set of measures aimed at symbolic capitalization of the common cause of workers in front of society. Thus, we see that some elements of the «Pentabasis» model are already traced in the management practice of national companies.

Our practical recommendations can be summarized as follows: based on the provisions of the worldview «Pentabasis» model in Russia, management theory Y is the most suitable for motivating workers; at the level of corporate culture, we recommend introducing all the value dominants of the model simultaneously with contextualization to the activity of the enterprise.

Our study of the specified worldview model as a structured system that involves addressing messages significant for a representative of the Russian society, which, being for a person on the same level of his lifeworld, and providing an inextricable connection of entire social life, can be considered the first approximation to the «grammar» of managerial «Pentabasis», which in future will enable further practical applications for the system. At the same time, the system focus on reproducing state discourse in the areas it is applied, coupled with a rethinking of the role of the state (as a service state), gives clearer understanding of the desired identity of a hypothetical modern worker and his view of life.

Summing up, it should be noted that the studied model was considered, first of all, as a theoretical system that reflects some relationships between groups of people, ideas, and other abstract and material actors and systems, which does not encompass the entire chaotic socio-political discourse. However, this does not prevent us from approaching Pentabasis as, on the one hand, a certain need and, on the other hand, a document of the era we live in. The first dimension of the study, which offers practical recommendations, may be of interest to practitioners, the second - to researchers and teachers of management.

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