

FROM PROCESS CONSULTATION TO ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP THEORY

Edgar Schein was influenced in his approach to practice and in his theoretical thinking by a number of people, but among these he gives special credit to certain specific sources. First among these is Douglas McGregor (see the discussion of theory X and theory Y in chapter 10), who was in many respects his mentor in the early days at MIT (Schein, 1975; Luthans, 1989). The second source singled out is what is referred to as the Chicago school of sociology by which Schein (1989b) says he means Everett Hughes, Melville Dalton, and Erving Goffman. These people tried to articulate a clinical approach to their work during the late 1950s by emphasizing careful observation, sensemaking, and theories built on observational underpinnings. Schein was much impressed by this approach, and he tried to emulate it in his own work.

Background

Schein is another of those who escaped to the United States from a Hitler-dominated Europe. He was born in Switzerland in 1928 and lived in several European countries before moving to the United States in 1938. He attended the University of Chicago and graduated in 1947. Then, after a master's degree from Stanford University in 1949, he went to Harvard University, where he obtained a doctorate in social and clinical psychology in 1952. From Harvard he moved to the Walter Reed Institute of Research for a 4-year stint in the military, which included an opportunity to study released prisoners who had been brainwashed during the Korean War.

In 1956 Schein joined the faculty of the newly formed Graduate School of Management at MIT. He was hired by Douglas McGregor, who also introduced him to T-groups at the Bethel, Maine center of the National Training Laboratories and to consulting work (Schein, 1993a). He has remained at MIT throughout his career, served on the Bethel faculty during the summer months for many years, and continues as an active consultant.

The interrelationships among the various areas of Schein's interest, and his publishing, are important to an understanding of the ideas to be discussed here. His initial work was the study of how prisoners were influenced by the Chinese Communists to do and

say things that without this coercion would have been out of the question for them (Schein, 1957; Schein, Schneier, & Barker, 1961). Taking up on the issue of organizational participants' reactions to influences exerted on them by their organizations, Schein next studied the effects of companies on MIT graduates as they moved on into the labor force. This concern with processes of organizational socialization continued for some time (Schein, 1968; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Gradually it merged into the subsequent formulations on organizational cultures and then into a broader concern with career dynamics and career anchors (Schein, 1978, 1987b, 1996a), which became a distinct theoretical thrust of its own.

However, Schein is best known for his contributions in the areas of process consultation and organizational culture (Luthans, 1989), and it is these that are given primary attention here. The process consultation ideas represent a direct contribution to practice and they came first. They were an outgrowth of Schein's early experience with laboratory training but were colored by other influences as well (Schein & Bennis, 1965). The theory of organizational culture, and leadership influences on it, came later. The latter reflects a desire to provide a broader underpinning for the process consultation ideas and was, in addition, a natural outgrowth of the work on socialization. Also involved was an intensified exposure to other cultures worldwide through a series of visiting appointments and consulting engagements (Schein, 1993a).

Process Consultation and Organizational Practice

The approach to practice that Schein developed was in its origins initially anti-bureaucracy simply because the laboratory training movement was of that nature. However, the idea of helping the client system help itself rapidly became central to process consulting, and with this there developed a more accepting approach to organizations in their current forms (Schein, 1990a). Yet bits and pieces of humanism and anti-bureaucracy continue to manifest themselves. There are references to bureaucracy as ineffective (Schein, 1981b), to the need to empower employees and eliminate dependence on the hierarchy (Schein, 1995), and to the uselessness of studying bureaucratic structural variables such as centralization and formalization (in Luthans, 1989). Humanistic values are frequently noted as a guiding force, although not always with

positive consequences (see Schein, 1990b). The possibility of abandoning hierarchy in the world of the future is given serious consideration (Schein, 1989a).

Early Process Consultation

The initial public presentation of process consultation (Schein, 1969) had a long history in the author's existing consulting practice, but not a long gestation period. The 1969 book was a first attempt to explain what was already an established approach. The definition of process consulting, along with the assumptions behind it, which derive from laboratory training, are as follows:

Definition. Process consulting is a set of activities on the part of the consultant which help the client to perceive, understand, and act upon process events which occur in the client's environment.

1. Managers often do not know what is wrong and need special help in diagnosing what their problems actually are.
2. Managers often do not know what kinds of help consultants can give to them.
3. Most managers have a constructive intent to improve things, but need help in identifying what to improve and how to improve it.
4. Most organizations can be more effective if they learn to diagnose their own strengths and weaknesses. . . . every . . . organization will have some weaknesses.
5. A consultant could probably not . . . learn enough about the culture . . . to suggest reliable new courses of action. . . . He must work jointly with members of the organization who do know the culture.
6. One of the process consultant's roles is to provide new and challenging alternatives. . . . Decision-making . . . must, however, remain in the hands of the client.
7. It is of prime importance that the process consultant be expert in how to *diagnose* and . . . *establish effective helping relationships* with clients. Effective process consultation involves passing on . . . these skills. (Schein, 1969, pp. 8–9)

The human processes involved here that contribute to organizational effectiveness include communication, member roles and functions in groups, group problem-solving, group norms and growth, leadership and authority, and intergroup cooperation or competition. The approach clearly operates primarily at the group level.

The stages of process consultation tend to overlap one another. However, they may be specified as follows:

1. Initial contact with the client organization—indication of the perceived problem
2. Defining the relationship, including the formal and psychological contract—focus on how the group gets its work done
3. Selecting a setting (what and when to observe, as near the top of the organization as possible, one in which it is easy to observe group processes, one in which real work is involved) and a method of work (as congruent as possible with process consultation values, thus making the consultant maximally visible to develop trust)
4. Data gathering and diagnosis, which inevitably are interventions—use of observation and interviews, but not questionnaires and survey measures, which are too impersonal
5. Intervention—in declining order of likelihood, the use of agenda-setting interventions, feedback of observations or data, coaching or counseling, and structural suggestions (which occur rarely)
6. Evaluation and disengagement—looking for evidence of changes in values as related to concern for human problems and process issues, as well as in interpersonal skills

Throughout, efforts are concentrated on helping the organization to become aware of organizational processes and to engage in self-diagnosis. Much of what is described represents extending laboratory training into the real, working groups of an ongoing organization.

Process Consultation in Maturity

While Schein's first presentation was intended largely to tell his colleagues what he did out in the corporate world, his initial writing in the 1980s was directed much more at managers. The intent was to show them how they could exert influence without resort to power and authority (Schein, 1987c) and, thus, to demonstrate the value of assuming the same helping role that process consultants assume. When this happens, the organization achieves its goals and subordinates are helped to grow and develop. In discussing these process interventions, Schein has the following to say:

1. Process is always to be favored as an intervention focus over content.
2. Task process is always to be favored over interpersonal process.
3. Structural interventions are in principle the most powerful . . . but they are also likely to be most resisted. (1987c, p. 52)

The list of human processes that contribute to organizational effectiveness is extended to include intrapsychic processes, cultural rules of interaction, and change processes as epitomized by Lewin's unfreezing-moving-refreezing model. The intervention process is expounded in much greater detail; four basic types are noted: exploratory interventions (What do you have in mind?), diagnostic interventions (Why is this more of a problem now?), action alternative interventions (Have you considered either of these alternatives?), confrontive interventions (It sounds to me like you feel angry at this person, is that right?). Also a variety of techniques that may be built into process consultation with the assistance of key client members are noted: intergroup exercises, survey feedback, role playing, educational interventions, responsibility-charting, and many others. In dealing with structural issues, process consultants should limit themselves to raising questions that make structural options clear.

In a small book written in this period, Schein (1987a) makes a distinction between the clinical perspective that characterizes process consultation and the ethnographic perspective of the cultural anthropologist. The former focuses on helping and producing change, while the latter is concerned with obtaining valid data for science and leaving the system undisturbed. To really understand an organization, both approaches must be combined in some manner.

Schein (1988) is a revision of the 1969 volume with considerable expansion of the discussion. The definition of process consultation noted previously is amended by adding the phrase "in order to improve the situation as defined by the client" (p. 11). A chapter is added on performance appraisal and feedback on the grounds that both appraisal and process consultation require skills in giving feedback. The general structure of this book, however, is much the same as that of its predecessor.

Revisitation

In returning one more time to the topic of process consultation Schein (1999b) covers many of the same

matters that were considered in previous volumes. But there are additional points made as well. Process consultation, for instance, is likened to Argyris's double loop learning in that the intent is to increase the client system's capacity for learning. Furthermore, a set of principles is set forth with the intent of providing guidance to the process consultant:

1. Always try to be helpful.
2. Always stay in touch with the current reality.
3. Access your ignorance.
4. Everything you do is an intervention.
5. It is the client who owns the problem and the solution.
6. Go with the flow.
7. Timing is crucial.
8. Be constructively opportunistic with confrontive interventions.
9. Everything is a source of data; errors will occur and are the prime source of learning.
10. When in doubt, share the problem. (Schein, 1999b, p. 60)

Although these principles are amplified with much more specific detail, their listing here helps to provide a feeling for what process consultation entails.

Schein (1999b) now places considerable stress on a technique called dialogue, which may be used with quite large groups and which he contrasts with the sensitivity training approach that came more directly out of the laboratory training at Bethel. The following quotes reflect a certain distancing from the positions Schein took in the 1960s:

Sensitivity training is focused more on hearing others' *feelings* and tuning in on all the levels of communication; dialogue is focused more on the *thinking* process and how our perceptions and cognitions are preformed by our past experiences. (1999b, p. 203)

In the typical sensitivity-training workshop, participants explore relationships . . . through giving and receiving deliberate feedback. . . . In dialogue, the participants explore *all* the complexities of thinking and language. (1999b, pp. 203–204)

In sensitivity training the goal is to use the group process to develop our *individual* interpersonal skills, whereas dialogue aims to build a group that can think generatively, creatively, and most importantly *together*. . . . Dialogue is thus a potential ve-

hicle for creative problem identification and problem solving. (1999b, p. 204)

It is this latter feature that makes dialogue particularly attractive for use within the context of process consultation; it now appears to have taken center stage.

Theory of Organizational Culture and Leadership

The concept of organizational culture can be found in Schein's earlier writings, and in Blake's too, but in the 1980s this is a topic that suffused the field of organizational behavior. Schein was at the forefront of this onslaught, starting with a number of articles that dealt with components of his theory. These often derived from the work on socialization and careers, but they were also informed by their author's experiences as a process consultant (Schein, 1981a, 1983, 1984a, 1984b). This all came together in a subsequent book that represents the most comprehensive theoretical statement (Schein, 1985). This book is the primary source for the following discussion.

Basic Statement

Leadership comes in the front door of any discussion of culture because what leaders actually do, as distinct from managers, is to create and change cultures. Culture, in turn, means

a pattern of basic assumptions—invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration—that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (Schein, 1985, p. 9)

Figure 21.3 depicts the levels of culture; the essence of organizational culture is at the level of basic assumptions. These assumptions set limits on corporate strategies such that if the alignment is not appropriate the strategies cannot be implemented. Thus, cultures, like structures, are a means to strategic implementation, and, in fact, cultures incorporate structures as one of their components.

Schein's knowledge of cultures and his ideas about them derive primarily from his clinical experience with them, and thus from process consultation. This

may be a limited perspective in certain respects, but it is a rich source as well. However, just as Schein's consulting has been focused at the group level, his concept of culture has a similar focus:

Culture formation is . . . identical with the process of group formation in that the very essence of "groupness" or group identity—the shared patterns of thought, belief, feelings, and values that result from shared experience and common learning—is what we ultimately end up calling the "culture" of that group. . . . So group growth and culture formation can be seen as two sides of the same coin, and both are the result of leadership activities.

What we need to understand, then, is how the *individual* intentions of the founders, leaders, or conveners of a new group or organization, their own definitions of the situation, their assumptions and values, come to be a *shared, consensually validated* set of definitions that are passed on to new members as "the correct way to define the situation." (Schein, 1985, p. 50)

Cultures are interrelated sets of assumptions and thus multidimensional. They are far superior to typologies, such as those involving bureaucracy, as bases for understanding organizations; two organizations with the same structures may otherwise have totally different cultures.

The recommended approach to deciphering culture is observation and interviews. Artifacts are used only to check hypotheses that are derived from other sources. Culture questionnaires are not recommended because they get at espoused values at best. They do not tap the basic assumptions that represent the essence of culture. Also Schein has serious doubts about the efficacy of feeding back written culture descriptions to the organization involved. To do this is often interpreted as akin to an invasion of privacy. It may remove the defenses against anxiety that the culture provides for its members and thus leave them emotionally exposed.

Culture and Leadership

Culture is the result of group learning experiences in which a number of people face a problem and work out a solution together. To the extent the solution is effective, it and the factors associated with it become embedded in the emerging culture. Variations in cultures reflect differences in the personalities of leaders,

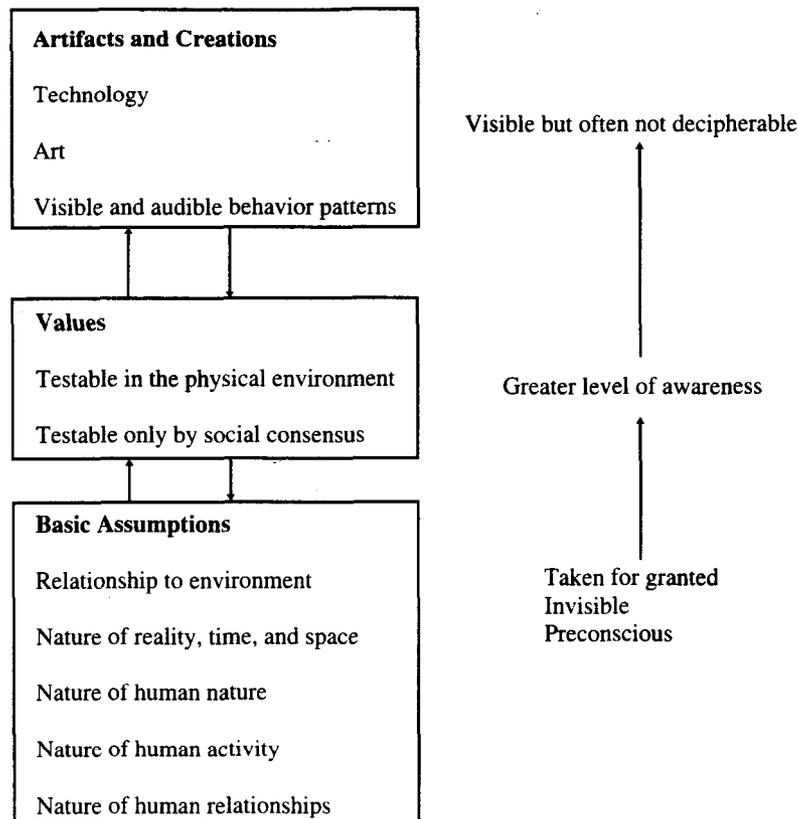


FIGURE 21.3 The levels of culture. From Edgar H. Schein (1985), *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass), 14. Copyright 1985 by Jossey-Bass. Reprinted by permission of Jossey-Bass, Inc., a subsidiary of John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

members, and the circumstances of early problem solutions. It is assumed that all organizations start as small groups, and that therefore organizational cultures inevitably have their origins in the development of group norms.

Both at the level of the initial group and as organizational dynamics are added with growth, founders and leaders are a key ingredient of culture formation. Founders have a vision for the organization and they bring in others who share this vision. Founders also have strong assumptions in the areas noted in figure 21.3, and many of these assumptions survive in the culture because they contribute to effective problem solutions. If this is not the case the venture fails. As certain founder assumptions prove effective, they reduce the anxieties of members, and this reinforces learning of specific ways of thinking and doing things. Thus a process of cultural embedding occurs.

The primary mechanisms for embedding are (1) the things leaders pay attention to, measure and control; (2) leader reaction to critical incidents or crises; (3) deliberate leader role modeling and teaching; (4) the criteria for allocation of rewards and status applied; and (5) the criteria for recruitment, selection, promotion, and termination applied. In addition, there are certain secondary mechanisms for embedding that work only if they are logically consistent with the primary ones; to obtain this reinforcing effect, leaders attempt to control these secondary mechanisms. They are (1) organizational structure and design, (2) organizational procedures and systems, (3) the design of buildings and physical space, (4) stories and myths about important people and events, and (5) formal statements of organizational philosophies and missions.

The cultures thus constructed can be very strong, so that much change can occur within an organiza-

tion, even though the basic culture remains unmoved. When culture change does become an issue, however, the change mechanisms that are mobilized, and the unfreezing forces which begin to operate, appear to be a function of the firm's age. Table 21.1 demonstrates how the growth stages of an organization influence culture changes.

At both stage I and stage II, organizational theory and development are noted as change mechanisms on the ground that culture is in part a defense mechanism to protect against anxiety, and, consequently, these approaches should be appropriate to helping organizations change themselves. Organization devel-

opment, although not totally of a therapeutic nature, does start with therapeutic interventions intended to promote self-insight. In this connection Schein (1985) indicates doubts as to whether Blake and Mouton's grid approach is sufficient to produce culture change. To achieve change it is necessary to bring the buried assumptions of culture to the surface in such a way that they are confronted and evaluated; this is rare.

In closing the 1985 discussion Schein emphasizes various "do nots" for managers. Such concepts as values, climate, and corporate philosophy are determined by culture, but managers should not assume that they *are* the culture; culture operates at a deeper level.

TABLE 21.1 Growth stages, functions of culture, and change mechanisms

<i>Growth stage</i>	<i>Function of culture/issue</i>	<i>Change mechanisms</i>
I. <i>Birth and early growth</i> Founder domination, possible family domination	Culture is a distinctive competence and source of identity Culture is the "glue" that holds organization together Organization strives toward more integration and clarity Heavy emphasis on socialization as evidence of commitment	Natural evolution Self-guided evolution through organizational therapy Managed evolution through hybrids Managed "revolution" through outsiders
<i>Succession phase</i>	Culture becomes battleground between conservatives and liberals Potential successors are judged on whether they will preserve or change cultural elements	
II. <i>Organizational midlife</i> Expansion of products/ markets Vertical integration Geographical expansion Acquisitions, mergers	Cultural integration declines as new subcultures are spawned Loss of key goals, values, and assumptions creates crisis of identity Opportunity to manage direction of cultural change is provided	Planned change and organization development Technological seduction Change through scandal, explosion of myths Incrementalism
III. <i>Organizational maturity</i> Maturity or decline of markets Increasing internal stability and/or stagnation Lack of motivation to change	Culture becomes a constraint on innovation Culture preserves the glories of the past, hence is valued as a source of self-esteem, defense	Coercive persuasion Turnaround Reorganization, destruction, rebirth
<i>Transformation option</i>	Culture change is necessary and inevitable, but not all elements of culture can or must change Essential elements of culture must be identified, preserved Culture change can be managed or simply allowed to evolve	
<i>Destruction option</i> Bankruptcy and reorganization Takeover and reorganization Merger and assimilation	Cultural changes at fundamental paradigm levels Culture changes through massive replacement of key people	

SOURCE: Edgar H. Schein (1985), *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass), 271-272. Copyright 1985 by Jossey-Bass. Reprinted by permission of Jossey-Bass, Inc., a subsidiary of John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Assuming that culture applies to the human side of the organization only is also a mistake; products, markets, missions, and the like are also important aspects of culture. Culture cannot easily be manipulated, and to assume otherwise can produce trouble; managers are controlled by culture much more than they control it. No culture should be assumed to be inherently better than others, and strong cultures are not better than weak ones. Do not assume that culture relates only to the matter of organizational effectiveness; it is much more than that.

Subcultures and the Learning Leader

In the preface of his second edition, Schein says that "the major changes are in dropping various materials that were peripheral to culture and in adding a number of chapters on subculture, culture deciphering, and the learning leader and culture" (1992, p. xvii). There is less attention to theory and more concern with subcultures.

The proposed method of deciphering culture is a considerable extension of the earlier procedures. It starts with establishing the commitment of leadership to deal with some problem (usually strategic) that is assumed to require culture change. A group of up to 50 members from the culture is then constituted, and the process consultants works with them by giving an initial lecture on the nature of culture, eliciting values, and probing into the area of shared underlying assumptions. The last process involves looking for disparities between identified artifacts and proclaimed values. Next, the large group is split into subgroups, which, if possible, represent subcultures within the whole. These subgroups work on identifying more assumptions and on categorizing assumptions as to whether they will help or hinder solution of the problem at hand. The subgroups report back to the whole where consensus is ironed out. The change process is then initiated with a lecture on that subject, new subgroups, and the development of a change strategy by the whole.

Subcultures tend to form around areas of differentiation within the organization—functional units, geographical divisions, acquisitions, and the like. Usually the people in these components carry with them an outside culture that becomes melded into the prevailing organizational culture to form a subculture. Professional identifications, geographical variations, customer characteristics, and such may thus intrude into the process of culture formation. Subcultures also

form at various levels of the managerial hierarchy, where they are influenced by the types of tasks to be performed. Sometimes subcultures arise that are deliberately countercultural vis-à-vis the main culture; diversity on ethnic, racial, gender, and other such grounds can also be a source. A particularly salient subculture at present often develops around the information technology component.

An especially intriguing challenge for leadership is to develop a learning organization that can continue to make its own diagnoses and self-manage the change process. Such a culture institutionalizes learning and innovation. Schein's (1992) theory of the assumptions inherent in such a culture is set forth in table 21.2. This is a very difficult type of culture to establish and maintain.

As stated previously, leadership is the capacity to understand and change cultures; this applies to subcultures as well as main cultures. Different stages of organizational development (see table 21.1) require different approaches to handling culture, as do different strategic issues. Dealing with cultural transformations requires a leader who is a perpetual learner. Leaders of this kind must possess the following:

1. New levels of perception and insight into the realities of the world and also into themselves
2. Extraordinary levels of motivation to go through the inevitable pain of learning and change
3. The emotional strength to manage their own and others' anxiety as learning and change become more and more a way of life
4. New skills in analyzing and changing cultural assumptions
5. The willingness and ability to involve others and elicit their participation
6. The ability to learn the assumptions of a whole new organizational culture (Schein, 1992, pp. 391–392)

Schein (1996c) provides a particularly insightful analysis of how leaders can create and nurture an organizational culture, with special reference to the role that Singapore's Economic Development Board has played in the economic success of that country.

Cultural Learning and Change

More recently Schein has concentrated on giving his theory wider exposure and on fine-tuning some of

TABLE 21.2 Assumptions required for a perpetually learning culture

<i>Assumption regarding</i>	<i>Learning culture response</i>
Relationships to the environment	Organization dominant
Nature of reality (truth)	Pragmatic
Nature of time	Near-future oriented, medium units of time
Nature of human nature	Basically good, mutable
Nature of human activity	Proactive
Nature of human relationships	Blend of groupism-individualism, blend of authoritative-collegial
Information and communication	Fully connected
Subcultural uniformity vs. diversity	High diversity
Task vs. relationship orientation	Blend of task and relationship orientation
Linear vs. systemic field logic	Systemic thinking

SOURCE: Adapted from Edgar H. Schein (1992), *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass), 364–372

the ideas. A small book (Schein, 1999a) is the major vehicle for these latter purposes, although there are several significant theoretical extensions noted there also. Among these is a treatment of the anxiety that is associated with learning, and particularly with the learning that occurs during culture change. This learning anxiety can be disruptive, and, accordingly, leaders must create a sense of psychological safety by providing a compelling positive vision, formal training such as team building, for involvement of the learner, practice opportunities and feedback, positive role models, support groups, and consistent systems and structures. Without these conditions, change programs will fail.

Culture change normally requires establishing a temporary parallel learning system where new assumptions are practiced and learned in comparative safety. The establishment of various groups to foster change is inherent in this parallel learning procedure. The steps involved are (1) to ensure that before anything else the leaders have learned something new, (2) for the leaders to create a change management group or steering committee, (3) for this steering committee to go through its own learning process, (4) for the steering committee to design the organizational learning process to include various task forces focused on the major issues, (5) for these task forces to learn how to learn, (6) for the task forces to create specific change programs, (7) for the steering committee to maintain communication through the change process, and, finally, (8) for the steering committee to develop mechanisms for continuous learning (Schein, 1993b). Pro-

cess consultants work with these various groups to facilitate the learning and change processes.

Previously we have considered the dialogue approach as it relates to process consultation. Schein (1993c, 1996d, 1999a) also introduces the dialogue concept into his discussion of culture. He feels it is a particularly appropriate technique for bridging the gaps between organizational cultures when companies are joined via merger and acquisition, or when subcultures are in conflict. Among the latter situations are those involving different levels of the management hierarchy, as well as the perennial disparities between the executive, engineering, and operating cultures in manufacturing firms. Dialogue is the method of choice for dealing with differences that extend across culture boundaries, especially differences that need to be ironed out during periods of culture change.

Evaluation and Impact

Schein (in Luthans, 1989) notes that somewhere in the 1960s he largely gave up on experimentation because he felt work of this kind was not adequate to explain the real world variables with which he was dealing in process consultation. The result has been that he has neither carried out research to evaluate the results of his process consulting engagements nor conducted tests of his culture and leadership theory. In fact, there is little by way of discussion of research in Schein's writing on these subjects; he appears to perceive himself as a clinician, not a researcher, and at times he seems to be unsure as to whether he is a

theorist, either. Yet he has contrived a logically tight and compelling theory, as well as methods of approaching the measurement of many of its variables. It is simply that he prefers to leave the whole matter of conducting related research to others, if they feel that is what is needed, or possible. He, himself, has not published research in the scholarly literature since the 1960s, although he has made contributions of other kinds to this literature (see for example Schein, 1996b). For a statement of his current thinking on research, which is basically unchanged, see Schein (2000).

Status of Research on Process Consultation

As so often happens, the author of this approach to organization development has served as a role model for others in the field of organizational behavior. His failure to conduct research on process consultation has been emulated by others. There is no research to my knowledge that one can point to and say "this is a test of the effectiveness of Schein's procedure for carrying out organization development." Schein does not mention any such studies, although there are investigations that attempt to assess procedures of a *human processual* nature, to include team building, T-groups and other techniques that Schein has used on occasion. We will consider these shortly. The problem is that without specific guidance on the matter, it is impossible to determine whether a given application was carried out in a manner that Schein would accept as an appropriate instance of his process consultation. Thus a particular study may or may not be suitable for consideration as a test. Lacking guidance from Schein we cannot know.

There is some evidence that relates to the viability and impact of process consultation, however. A study conducted by Allan Church, Warner Burke and Donald Van Eynde (1994) indicates that approaches to organization development other than process consultation have achieved greater popularity in the field; nevertheless, process consultation ranks fifth among 22 interventions and activities considered. Another study (McMahan & Woodman, 1992) uses broader categories of analysis and focuses only on internal OD consultants, but seems to indicate that roughly one-third of the time of these individuals is devoted to something that would pass as process consultation. Although indicative of substantial popularity, comparisons with data for 10 years earlier suggest a consider-

able decline in the use of process consultation procedures.

A final point is made in a discussion of the use of organization development approaches in relatively small entrepreneurial firms. W. Gibb Dyer (1997), who has had considerable experience with process consultation, reports that in his experience these firms require content consulting in addition to a process approach. This focus on both the content of the problem and the process used to solve it appears to be spreading into some applications in larger firms as well. Relying entirely on the knowledge base of the firm involved in the manner of process consultation would appear to be on the decline.

Status of Research on Cultures and Leadership Theory

There is a dearth of solid research testing Schein's theory of cultures and leadership, but not for the same reasons. The often unconscious or preconscious nature of cultural assumptions, combined with the fact that the study of culture has its origins in clinical and ethnographic approaches that are primarily based in anthropological observations, has made for a situation where qualitative procedures far outweigh the quantitative. As a result, numerous theories of organizational culture have emerged, often with diverse viewpoints (Martin, 1992), but little by way of quantitative testing. Thus Schein's theory is in the position of being merely one among many such theories whose validity is unknown, even though it was received with considerable acclaim and appears to have substantial potential.

The study of organizational culture has been described as in a state of chaos at present (Martin & Frost, 1996), and with good reason. There is no science to sort out truth from fantasy, and stridency of protestation becomes the major criterion for fleeting acceptance. This state of affairs appears to be primarily attributable to the strong qualitative orientation of the field, and this is readily evident from a reading of edited volumes on organizational culture (see, for example, Frost, Moore, Louis, Lundberg, & Martin, 1991).

Although many have argued that organizational culture is not amenable to quantitative research, and some view it as outside the realm of science as well, these positions do not seem tenable. Just as projective techniques can be used to get at unconscious motiva-

tion in micro organizational behavior, they can be used to get at cultural assumptions in macro organizational behavior. The Thematic Apperception Test has been proposed as particularly applicable for this purpose (Trice, 1991). Furthermore, observations and field notes can be categorized and scored to get at dimensions of culture, and these procedures can be repeated to determine reliability of measurement. My point is that techniques are available to test the hypotheses of culture theories. The preference of those who work in the field for producing what amounts to fiction (Trice, 1991) cannot be an excuse for leaving theories untested. Unfortunately, the theory of organizational culture and leadership that Schein has proposed has become caught up in all this. As a consequence, we cannot know its validity.

Effectiveness of Organization Development in the Early Period

Organization development comes in many colors, as we have seen. In addition, researchers in the field have not always described in sufficient detail either the techniques used or the theories that underlie these efforts. Thus, reviews of the research literature often provide a good indication of the effectiveness of organization development as a whole, while leaving the specifics of what changed what and what theory worked best rather uncertain. Nevertheless, by looking at these reviews, we can reach some conclusions about the effectiveness of the various approaches and theories considered in this and the preceding chapter, and particularly those of Edgar Schein.

In fact, the amount of research on the topic is quite extensive, going back a number of years. The quality of this research has been questioned on occasion, but it appears to be adequate and it is improving. Roughly 75 percent of early studies, and by that I mean those conducted before the mid-1970s, used procedures related to laboratory training at some point in the overall process and thus had something in common with process consultation. There clearly have been major changes in the nature of organization development practice over the years (Esper, 1990; Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992), which were particularly pronounced during the 1970s as T-groups and sensitivity training fell into disrepute. Thus, it is appropriate to separate the reviews conducted before and after the middle of that decade; they deal with different types of interventions.

In chapter 13, reference was made to an analysis by David Bowers (1973) of data from organization development programs carried out in 23 organizations. Laboratory training had a predominantly negative impact using the system 4-oriented Survey of Organizations variables. Related approaches along the lines of process consultation yield somewhat more positive results, or at least somewhat less negative. Overall, the results are not favorable to the kinds of interventions we have been considering. Importantly, however, all these studies were carried out in conjunction with the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan and relied entirely on a single change measure that dealt primarily with climate.

Analyses that cast a wider net tend to yield somewhat more favorable results. Clayton Alderfer (1977) considers a still limited range of studies and finds evidence for changes in work attitudes, production rates, quality of production, turnover, and absenteeism—all in an organizationally positive direction. The results of a much more extensive research survey by Jerry Porras and Per Berg (1978) are outlined in table 21.3. Their most striking finding is the high frequency of change in performance indices, as contrasted with factors such as individual job satisfaction. Although these results do not allow us to isolate the effects of procedures based on laboratory training only, the results cannot be entirely independent of laboratory training procedures simply because some 75 percent of the studies used them. When traditional laboratory training was the dominant intervention, however, the percentage of significant results obtained was the lowest among the five approaches considered and a more task-focused version of laboratory training was only slightly superior. Overall, the data suggest that positive results can be anticipated approximately half the time and that organizationally significant factors such as profits, performance, and output are most likely to be affected.

An additional review by Peter Smith, which focuses on the effects of laboratory training as well as its use in organization development, concludes:

Of the studies reviewed in this article, 100 permit the drawing of a conclusion as to whether or not an effect of training was obtained. Of these studies, 78 did show an increase in one or more scores after training which was significantly greater than any change the controls may have shown. . . . Only 31 studies permitted the drawing of a conclusion