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Title: Lewin meets Confucius: A re-view of the OD model of change.

Subject(s): [ORGANIZATIONAL change -- Cross-cultural studies](#); [LEWIN, Kurt](#)

Source: [Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, Dec93, Vol. 29 Issue 4, p393, 23p, 4 charts, 3 diagrams, 1bw](#)

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Abstract: Examines Kurt Lewin's organization development (OD) change model. Comparison to East Asian and Confucian cultural traditions; Assumptions about change; Synthesis of two models as possibly addressing developmental and transformational change; Implications for action, research and theory.

AN: 9410256153

ISSN: 0021-8863

Note: This title is held locally

Database: Academic Search Elite

Print: Click here to mark for print.

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Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, December, 1993

LEWIN MEETS CONFUCIUS: A RE-VIEW OF THE OD MODEL OF CHANGE

Questions have been raised in recent years about the cultural limits and overall efficacy of organization development (OD) to address the current and emerging problems of contemporary organizations. This discussion attempts to speak to both issues by examining the OD model of change, that is, Lewin's three-stage change process of unfreezing, movement, and refreezing. When the OD model is compared to the model(s) of change based in East Asian and Confucian cultural traditions, different assumptions about change are revealed. The analysis suggest that different culturally based models of change exist and are likely to lead adherents to employ different change methods and approaches. Consideration of both models as valid points to a possible synthesis that would address developmental and transformational change processes. More research into the change models and assumptions inherent in different cultures and cosmologies is needed not only to inform current OD practice but to expand the range of change theories and methods available for dealing with contemporary organizational issues.

When you know a thing, to recognize that you know it, and when you do not know a thing, to recognize that you do not know it. That is knowledge.

Confucius (quoted in Waley, 1938, p. 91)

Organization development (OD) is facing at least two important challenges to its efficacy for addressing the current and emerging dilemmas of contemporary organizations. One challenge derives from the

increasing application of OD in cross-cultural and/or multicultural settings. This has generated a wide variety of commentary on whether or not OD is culturally limited. The other challenge is less well defined but brings into question, implicitly at least, whether or not OD can address the scope, pace, and/or nature of the required changes facing postindustrial organizations. This article attempts to speak to both issues by critically examining the fundamental theory of change underlying OD. This is done via a comparison with an alternative "theory of change" derived from ancient Chinese cultural traditions. The resulting analysis suggests that different culturally based models of change exist, that differences in how change is conceptualized are likely to lead to different intervention approaches, and that consideration of alternative cultural paradigms can help in the development of OD theory and practice.

CROSS-CULTURAL QUESTIONS

In recent years, a wide variety of authors have pointed out the cultural biases of American management theories in general (Adler, 1991; Boyacigiller & Adler, 1991; Hofstede, 1980a, 1993; Hofstede & Bond, 1988) and OD values and processes in particular (Golembiewski, 1987, 1991; Jaeger, 1984, 1986; Marshak, 1993a; Mirvis & Berg, 1977). For example, Jaeger (1986), using the OD values outlined by Tannenbaum and Davis (1969) and the cultural dimensions advanced by Hofstede (1980b), found OD values to be inconsistent with the values of most national cultures, and in some cases to be polar opposites. Others have echoed Jaeger's critique in a variety of cultural settings. Richards (1991) found the introduction of change and management development not possible in South-East Asia due to contrasting underlying cultural orientations. Reyes-Sagun (1988) notes that the value system of the Philippines is inconsistent with most OD values. Boss and Mariono (1987) report that various confrontation and team-building designs will not work in Italy due to cultural values related to personal pride and potential loss of face in a group setting. Johnson (1990) asserts that the cultural orientation of Venezuela is so far removed from OD values that there is no support for the application of any OD technique in that country. There are also reports by those who believe that OD or aspects of OD can be adapted to most any cultural setting by sensitive and alert practitioners (e.g., Golembiewski, 1991; Kiggundu, 1990; Rikuta, 1987; Tainio & Santalainen, 1984). Nonetheless, the recent critique of organizational *science* by Boyacigiller and Adler (1991) is unequivocal: "One of our primary conclusions is that of parochialism. Americans have developed theories without being sufficiently aware of non-U.S. contexts, models, research, and values" (p. 263). Their critique suggests OD practitioners and researchers need to be more than simply sensitive and alert in the application of OD in a global context.

CHANGE TECHNOLOGY QUESTIONS

The adequacy of OD change technology to address contemporary organizational problems is also a topic of discussion, especially in the practitioner community (see, e.g., Armstrong, 1993; McDonald, 1990; Thorne & Hogan, 1993; VanEynde & Coruzzi, 1993; Zilber, 1993). One dominant theme that runs through a wide range of both practitioner and academic discussions is the nature of the changes required to deal effectively with the issues facing organizations today. Different authors have different ways of describing the types of change required, but most distinguish between developmental (evolutionary) and transformational (revolutionary) change. Thus Greiner (1972) distinguishes between evolutionary and revolutionary change; Ackerman (1986) between developmental, transitional, and transformational change; Gersick (1991) explores revolutionary change theories in depth; Land and Jarman (1992) advance the concept of breakpoint change; Hammer and Champy (1993) argue that transformational reengineering, not incremental change, is needed; and Marshak (1993b) explores the metaphors associated with fix and maintain, build and develop, move and relocate, and liberate and re-create types of change. This is not just a question of classification but of theory and practice as well. Over the years, whether or not OD includes, or should include, transformational change technologies has been widely and hotly debated, especially among practitioners. Another aspect of the questions about the OD model

of change is whether or not a change model that emphasizes creating change is as relevant to contemporary managers and organizations facing continual change, "permanent white water" (Vaill, 1989), as it was to their counterparts of past decades when organizational life was more stable and bureaucratic. Indeed, a model of change that addresses how to deal with continual change might be especially appealing in today's organizational world. Consequently, because the efficacy of OD for dealing with change in contemporary organizations has been questioned, it is appropriate and necessary to review its most fundamental assumptions (Argyris, 1990; Katz & Marshak, 1993; Weick, 1990). In this case, that means a re-view of the assumptions underlying the OD model of change.

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

This article might best be described as an exploratory analysis of some of the fundamental assumptions about the phenomenon of change believed to exist in two different cultural settings. The primary thesis is that different assumptions about change are likely to lead to different theories and practices related to change methods. Because the discussion is cross-cultural in nature, a phenomenological and/or anthropological orientation is necessary; that is to say, assumptions must be interpreted from the frame of the originating culture. Evaluating the meaning of an assumption, or set of assumptions, from a viewpoint other than its own cultural context would be inherently specious and probably pernicious. The methodology was first to derive a set of candidate assumptions through induction from a review of pertinent literature within each of the subject cultures (see Hall & Ames, 1987, for a discussion of a similar approach). Candidate assumptions were then reviewed for logical consistency with the "theories" and practices related to change as reported in the relevant professional and/or philosophical literature of each culture. Candidate assumptions were also reviewed for consistency with attributes and assumptions associated with each culture as described by other commentators (see, e.g., Capra, 1982; Hall & Ames, 1987; Loewe, 1982; Nakamura, 1964; Tamas, 1991). The final sets of assumptions were selected based on their apparent internal logic, consistency with culture specific theory and practice related to change, and attempts to be parsimonious. The comparisons and discussions of potential implications that follow the presentation of the assumption sets were then developed to test their utility and to stimulate the thinking of both theorists and practitioners of OD.

The discussion focuses first on the model of change advanced by the European-American social scientist Kurt Lewin (1890-1947). This model is in the Enlightenment tradition of European *science* and is consistent with that worldview (Tamas, 1991). Lewin's model was selected because his theories of change are generally recognized as the "underlying and guiding frames of reference for any OD effort" (Burke, 1987, p. 53; also see Marrow, 1969). Next, the "model(s)" of change underlying Confucian, Neo-Confucian, and Taoist philosophies are examined. These philosophies offer another worldview with quite different assumptions about change. For the purposes of this discussion, these models are "attributed" to the Chinese philosopher-sage K'ung Fu-Tzu (Master K'ung), called Confucius (551-479 B.C.) in the West (Chai & Chai, 1973; DeBary, Chan, & Watson, 1960; Eno, 1990; Legge, 1893). However, it should be remembered throughout that these models could just as easily be considered Taoist models of change, as readers familiar with Taoist philosophy will quickly recognize. Confucius and Confucian/Neo-Confucian philosophy were selected in particular for several reasons:[1] first, because by attribution and legend Confucius studied, arranged, and then wrote the first philosophical commentaries to the I Ching (Book of Changes) (Cleary, 1992; Legge, 1882; Wilhelm & Baynes, 1950). The I Ching is one of the oldest (circa 1143 B.C.) and most influential East Asian paradigms of change and the universe. As such, it represents a cosmology and philosophy embraced by both the Confucian and Taoist traditions alike (Chart, 1963).² Confucius was also selected because he and his followers advocated action and intervention in the world, unlike the Taoists and Buddhists who sought withdrawal or escape from it (Munro, 1969). Partly as a consequence, Confucian and Neo-Confucian philosophy became state-endorsed doctrine in China and Korea and deeply influential in Japan and the rest of East Asia. As one of the primary cornerstones of East Asian civilization, the Confucian tradition is still

influential, if no longer orthodox or endorsed, in modern-day China, Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Singapore (Rozman, 1991; Tu, Hejmanek, & Wachman, 1992; also see Hofstede & Bond, 1988). As Chan (1963) observes, "Confucius . . . can truly be said to have molded Chinese civilization in general" (p. 14).

What should become clear from the following analysis is that many of the almost taken-for-granted assumptions about change underlying OD may be different in kind or emphasis from deeply rooted cultural beliefs about change in most East Asian countries. Differences in assumptions could, of course, lead to difficulties in the application of OD in countries or cultures with alternative change concepts and/or traditions. Of equal or greater importance for OD theory and practice is the recognition of the potential bounds and limits to current OD theories of change and the awareness of new possibilities and options revealed by alternative paradigms (Kuhn, 1962). The presentation begins with a brief overview of the Lewinian and Confucian (and Taoist) models of change, compares and contrasts them, and concludes with a discussion of some of the implications for OD theory and practice.

THE LEWINIAN/OD MODEL OF CHANGE

The basic image representing the theory of change underlying OD is shown in Figure 1. The translation of this image is simple. There is a current state (A) and a desired future state (B). Through planned change interventions (right arrow), one moves from State A to the more desirable State B. How to do this is informed by Lewin's three-stage change process, based on his field theory (Lewin, 1951). Current State A is maintained by a field of forces in equilibrium. By altering the field of forces through a planned and managed intervention, State A will unfreeze and there will be movement. When the desired State B is reached, an equilibrium of the field of forces is reestablished so as to refreeze the situation and maintain the desired State B. As Burke (1987) summarizes,

Thus, according to Lewin, bringing about lasting change means initially unlocking or unfreezing the present social system. This might require some kind of confrontation. . . . Next, *behavioral* movement must occur in the direction of desired change. . . . Finally, deliberate steps must be taken to ensure that the new state of behavior remains relatively permanent. (p. 56)

This particular image and underlying theory is so much a part of OD that most practitioners would be hard pressed to react other than "So what?" Indeed, it is only when it is contrasted with an alternative image of change that the underlying assumptions and limits of the model become clear

THE CONFUCIAN MODEL OF CHANGE

Although it would be inappropriate to say that there is a single Confucian/East Asian model of change, it is fair to assert that there is a dominant image and it is cyclical (see, e.g., Wilhelm, 1960; Wilhelm, 1979). The two representations of cyclical change underlying Confucian, Neo-Confucian, and Taoist philosophy, in addition to the I Ching system of hexagrams, are shown in Figures 2 and 3.

In the image shown in Figure 2, there is inherent and continual alternation between the cosmic forces of yin and yang and they are understood to be the polar aspects of one unity, the T'ai Chi, the Great Ultimate. The concept of polarity is critical to an understanding of yin and yang. It denotes an existential interdependence wherein each defines the other, unlike the concepts of dualism and dialectic wherein each exists independent of the other. Furthermore, yin and yang are constantly in the process of becoming the other in an endless cycle. That is why yin and yang are represented as two intertwined aspects of one circle. The polarities represented by yin and yang are inherent in everything and reflect a cosmology that views everything in the universe to be in constant flux as the balance between them continually changes. According to Chou Tun-I (1017-1073 A.D.), a Sung, Neo-Confucian philosopher,

The Great Ultimate through movement generates yang. When its activity reaches its limits, it becomes tranquil. Through tranquillity the Great Ultimate generates yin. When tranquillity reaches its limits, activity begins again. So movement and tranquillity alternate and become the root of each other, giving rise to the distinction of yin and yang. (quoted in Chan, 1963, p. 463)

In the image shown in Figure 3, there is inherent and continual cyclical movement among the Five Forces or Agents that make up the universe (represented as Earth, Metal, Water, Wood, and Fire). Movement from one to another is a natural process and occurs in a specific sequence when there is harmony and equilibrium in the universe (e.g., from wood to fire, not fire to wood). Thus the Five Agents image reflects cyclical change that is harmonious and in balance when it occurs in its natural, correct order. When it is out of balance (e.g., one agent overwhelms the other agents, as in too much fire) or out of order (e.g., fire consumes wood rather than being fed by wood), unfortunate consequences result, hence the emphasis in traditional Chinese medicine and geomancy (Feng Shui), which are based on this model, on maintaining and restoring natural harmony, balance, and equilibrium (Beinfield & Korngold, 1991; Porkert, 1974; Veith, 1972; Walters, 1991). Furthermore, the Five Agents are derived from the interplay of yin and yang and are, therefore, conceived of as being but five aspects of the same one unity. Chou Tun-I also wrote,

By the transformation of yang and its union with yin, the Five Agents of Water, Fire, Wood, Metal and Earth arise. When these five material forces are distributed in harmonious order, the four seasons run their course. The Five Agents constitute one system of yin and yang, and yin and yang constitute one Great Ultimate. (quoted in Chan, 1963, p. 463)

Thus in the Confucian model everything and everyone in the universe is interconnected and part of continuous cycles of change. When these cycles follow the natural order of the universe there is harmony and equilibrium, and when there is harmony and equilibrium the natural order of the universe will be manifest. In both the Confucian and Taoist traditions, the natural order and cycles of the universe are called the Tao, or Way (Graham, 1989). If one follows the Way, all will be right, if one loses the Way, misfortune will result.

We are now in a position to compare and contrast the assumptions underlying these two different images/models of change. Selected quotes from leading proponents associated with each model are used to help document the analysis.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT CHANGE

The Lewinian-based model underlying OD includes beliefs/assumptions that change is

- linear. One moves from one state to another state in a forward direction through time (past-present-future). "Beckhard and Harris, based on the earlier thinking of Lewin, view the change process in three states: Present State right arrow Transition State right arrow Future State" (Burke, 1987, pp. 115-116).
- progressive. One moves forward from a current, lesser state to a future, better state. According to Burke (1987), "Developing a new mission, a new vision, a fresh image of the future is the process of creating a desired state . . . that is more desirable than the present state" (p. 115).
- destination or goal oriented. One moves toward a specific end state or goal that one sets out to achieve. "In their formulations of change objectives, most change agents reveal an implicit assumption that movement toward the final change goal is a sequential process" (Lippitt, Watson, & Westley, 1958, p.

100).

- based on creating disequilibrium. To get movement from the current state, one intentionally creates disequilibrium to alter the field of forces. Then one moves to the desired state where equilibrium is reestablished. According to Lewin (1951), "The unfreezing of the present level may involve quite different problems in different cases. . . . To break open the shell of complacency and self-righteousness it is sometimes necessary to bring about deliberately an emotional stir-up" (pp. 228-229).

- planned and managed by people who exist separate from and act on things to achieve their goals. People learn and apply the principles about how to master and manipulate the forces in the world so as to achieve their intended ends. "[The] question of planned change or any 'social engineering' is identical with the question: what 'conditions' have to be changed to bring about a given result and how can one change these conditions with the means at hand?" (Lewin, 1951, p. 172). People also exist separate and apart from the objects of their planned change interventions. As Argyris (1970) notes,

To intervene is to enter into an ongoing system of relationship, to come between or among persons, groups, or objects for the purpose of helping them. There is an important implicit assumption in the definition that should be made more explicit: the system exists independently of the intervenor. (p. 15)

- unusual, because everything is normally in a quasi-stationary or static state. Unless something is done proactively, things tend to stay in the same place or condition. In fact, extra force is often needed to overcome inertia. Furthermore, once you disrupt the steady state and move to a new state, it is then assumed that you can and will remain there if some stabilizing actions are taken. "A successful change includes, therefore, three aspects: unfreezing (if necessary) the present level, moving to the new level, and freezing group life on the new level" (Lewin, 1947, p. 34, emphasis in the original).

The Confucian (and Taoist) model(s) includes beliefs/assumptions that change is

- cyclical. There is a constant ebb and flow to the universe and everything in it is cyclical. No matter what begins, it always ends. No matter what ends, it always begins. According to the Sung, Neo-Confucian philosopher Chu Hsi (1130-1200 A.D.), "There is no other event in the universe except yin and yang succeeding each other in an unceasing cycle. This is called Change" (quoted in Chan, 1963, p. 641).

- processional. One moves from one condition/form/state to the next condition/form/state in an orderly sequence. If not, disharmony, disequilibrium, and misfortune result. The Han, Confucian philosopher Tung Chung-shu (c. 179-c. 104 B.C.) wrote, "Wood produces Fire, Fire produces Earth, Earth produces Metal, Metal produces Water, and Water produces Wood. . . . Each of the Five Agents succeeds the others according to its order. Each of them performs its official function by fulfilling its capacity" (quoted in Chan, 1963, p. 279).

- journey oriented. Because there is continual cyclical change it makes no sense to aspire to reach an "end state." What matters is how well one follows the Way along the great wheel of life. Confucius said, "The Odes are three hundred in number. They can be summed up in one phrase: swerving not from the right Path" (quoted in Lau, 1979, p. 63).

- based on maintaining equilibrium. The universe and everything in it is naturally harmonious, perfect, and in flux. Therefore, one intervenes/acts only as it is necessary to maintain or restore balance, harmony, and equilibrium. The Confucian classic, *The Doctrine of the Mean* (unknown, 500-200 B.C.?)

states in part, "Equilibrium is the great foundation of the world, and harmony its universal path. When equilibrium and harmony are realized to the highest degree, Heaven and Earth will attain their proper order and all things will flourish" (quoted in Chan, 1963, p. 98).

- observed and followed by people who are one with everything and must act correctly to maintain harmony in the universe. One constantly strives to be in harmony with the Way, the natural order of the universe. Because everything and everyone in the universe is interconnected, by bringing oneself into harmony one brings the universe into harmony. Yi Yulgok (1536-1584 A.D.), a Korean Neo-Confucian philosopher, wrote,

The ruler, by correcting his mind, corrects all directions. When all directions are corrected the ch'i (vital energy) of Heaven and Earth is also corrected. . . . Once the ch'i of Heaven and Earth is in correct order, how can the sun and moon invade each other, or the stars lose their correct places? Once the ch'i of Heaven and Earth is in harmony, how can storm and lightning threaten with their fearsome power, or wind, cloud, frost and snow lose their proper time? (quoted in Ro, 1989, p. 34)

- usual, because everything is normally in a continually changing dynamic state. The continual process of everything in the universe is change. The Yin-Yang Law of Opposites says everything contains its own negation, so nothing remains the same forever (Munro, 1969). The Ming, Neo-Confucian philosopher Wang Ji (1498-1583 A.D.) wrote,

As human beings, we must take creation and transformation as our study. From nonbeing, creation manifests being. From being, transformation returns to nonbeing. Our pure awareness gives birth to heaven, earth, and the myriad things, and heaven, earth, and the myriad beings in turn go back to nonbeing. There is no time when creation and transformation are not operating; they never stop or pause. (quoted in Cleary, 1991, p. 49)

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Thus being long lasting does not mean being in a fixed and definite state. Being fixed and definite, a thing cannot last long. The way to be constant is to change according to circumstances. (Ch'eng I, quoted in Chan, 1963, p. 571)

The major contrasting characteristics of the OD and Confucian models of change are summarized in Table 1.

What is most important to realize about this analysis is that the differences in underlying assumptions between the two models are likely to lead to quite different actions and orientations toward change and change methods. To illustrate this point more clearly, consider the following comparisons.

Linear-Progressive Versus Cyclical-Processional

When change is viewed as linear and progressive, it is logically inappropriate and/or impossible to go back to something that came before (in the less effective past). The focus of attention and action(s) is on striving toward the (better) future. As a result, redoing something in the linear-progressive model is likely to be viewed as "going backward," "not making progress," or "going around in circles." To repeat something is almost synonymous with failure and is frequently avoided even when needed. Thus in a team-building intervention, the focus might be to move the team through various stages of group development until it becomes a "high performing team." Returning at that point to an earlier stage, such as group formation or norm setting, would be viewed negatively because the (implicit) objective is to achieve and maintain (permanently) the high performance stage. This contrasts with the Confucian

model where cyclical and processional change is the natural Way and returning to some stage/phase/state, albeit in a different form perhaps, is normal and needed to maintain continuing harmony and equilibrium. In a cyclical model, after all, "going around in circles" is both normal and necessary. Returning to something is not only expected but, in fact, needed to "keep things moving."

Furthermore, in a cyclical-processional model no stage is presumed to be better than another. Each stage is just different and necessary to maintain the natural cycle. Consequently, in the cyclical-processional model, one would assume there is a stage after high performance (perhaps decline or deforming) that the team would naturally move into after achieving peak performance. Deforming or decline would then inherently lead to team re-forming, re-norming, and so on, back to high performance and decline in endless cycles. Thus the Confucian change agent would work to facilitate harmonious movement through all the natural stages of the cycle, whereas the OD change agent might be more likely to be called in to help move the team to a higher level of performance and then try to keep it there (see Figure 4). As a result, each might respond differently to the situation of a mature team beginning to experience increased conflict, loss of purpose, challenges to established norms and/or leadership, and the like. The OD change agent might view this as a form of "backsliding" and pursue interventions to reestablish the team's purpose, norms, collaboration, and leadership. The Confucian change agent might see, instead, a team entering the deforming stage and pursue interventions to help the team first deform (de-establish itself) so as to begin forming new purposes, new norms, new ways of resolving conflict, and new leadership patterns.

Destination Versus Journey Oriented

When change is viewed as goal or destination oriented, the primary emphasis is on setting and achieving objectives, targets, and end states. Indeed, many could scarcely conceive of starting a change effort without the clear goal of an end state that is better than the present situation. Thus most OD interventions begin with data collection to help establish the discrepancies between current and desired conditions or with a visioning or goal-setting session to establish what to achieve in the change effort. Milestones and targets are set and evaluations conducted to assess how well or to what degree the desired end state is really achieved. The reward is not in the journey but in reaching the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. In a cyclical model, however, where there is no end state per se, one strives continuously to enhance in the present moment how well one conducts the journey, that is, follows the Way. The better one follows the Way, the more every aspect of one's being and doing is enhanced and, therefore, the more likely just rewards will naturally result. Consequently, improvements for the sake of improvements, without the need for a specific goal, or problem to fix, are more likely to be compatible with a cyclical journey model than with a linear destination one. The journey-oriented change agent therefore would be prepared to help a client system learn how to improve itself continuously, regardless of its current condition. This could be done, for example, by helping the system align itself with some set of universal principles to follow and emulate constantly (e.g., the Way). Thus at the beginning of a change effort, an OD-oriented change agent might seek first to initiate activities and interventions intended to set specific goals and/or objectives. The Confucian-oriented change agent might instead first pursue activities and interventions that emphasize the "proper" orientation, way of being, and/or *behavioral* values that would need to be continuously exhibited.

Create Disequilibrium Versus MAintain Equilibrium

When change is viewed as something initiated by creating disequilibrium, it is both appropriate and necessary to disrupt current conditions so as to "break away" and move forward. Consequently, the OD model instructs change agents to focus on developing the means and methods for creating disruptions to the status quo to overcome resistance and get movement toward the change goal(s). In short, change must be consciously induced by a change agent acting on an otherwise fixed situation. On the other

hand, when change is seen to be initiated by the natural ebbs and flows of the universe, then unnatural disruptions should be avoided because they would interrupt and/or distort the natural change process. This, in turn, would threaten the inherent harmony and equilibrium of the universe. The Confucian model, therefore, instructs the change agent to find, follow, and/or restore the natural harmony and equilibrium inherent in all situations. Thus the focus would be on harmonizing disruptions and/or restoring balance to a client system. An organization experiencing rapid growth might require additional emphasis on systems and procedures to keep things in balance, or too great an emphasis on existing product lines might signal a need for more innovation.

The Confucian approach could also include seemingly nonsense or paradoxical interventions from the frame of the OD model. In the OD model, the way to move to the desired future state is to focus on breaking away from the present state. In a cyclical processional model, where each state succeeds the completion of the prior state, the way to move from one state to the next is to focus on fully realizing the present. Change toward the next state begins immediately after the present state reaches its zenith (e.g., the way to induce activity is to become fully tranquil). Thus the Confucian change agent might first help an organization become more completely centralized to facilitate movement toward decentralization. One follows the Way to the correct future by fully actualizing and harmonizing the present.

Another example might be the challenge of changing an "authoritarian" management system into a more open and participative one. The OD-oriented change agent might immediately pursue interventions to confront and/or expose the negative impacts of the authoritarian system so as to disrupt the status quo and facilitate movement to a more open and participative system. In contrast, a change agent oriented toward maintaining harmony might pursue one or another of the following approaches. First, by looking to harmonize with the natural, continuous changes inherent in all situations, the change agent might assume that the authoritarian system was a stage/phase that needed to be fully "played out" before the system would move, on its own, to another management stage/phase. Therefore the approach would be to wait to intervene until the time was ripe and then act to facilitate harmonizing with the new and/or emerging system. Alternatively, the authoritarian system might be viewed as "out of harmony" with the proper Way. If viewed in that manner, the approach would be to pursue more direct interventions to restore balance and harmony, even if fundamental and/or "revolutionary" change was required. After all, in Confucian China, revolution was considered a legitimate means to replace an emperor who had lost the "Mandate of Heaven" by ruling in a manner not in harmony with the Way.

Separate From Versus One With the Client System

When people are understood to exist separate from, but capable of acting on, things in the rest of the universe, it is appropriate to begin a change effort by planning the desired end state and then working with the client system to bring it into alignment with the desired change goal(s). Alternatively, when people are seen as being one with everything and needing to behave correctly to maintain the Way, it would be appropriate to begin and continue a change effort by working to bring oneself into alignment with the Way, modeling the Way to the client system, and ensuring that one and all behave correctly, according to the Way, in all circumstances. Thus the fundamental relationship of change agent and system differs in the two models. In the one it is assumed that the change agent stands apart, as a neutral catalyst, from the change itself. In the other, the change agent is one with the system, and both are inexorably linked as interdependent aspects of the same Way. As a result, the OD change agent may be more preoccupied with planning what to do and how to do it in a client system, whereas the Confucian change agent might focus more on serving as a role model of how to be so as to bring the client system into harmony (with the Way). Thus in a contracting meeting, the OD change agent might focus more on what needs to be done, when, where, and how in such areas as diagnosis, feedback, intervention planning, and so forth. The Confucian change agent might instead emphasize and role-model the need for the change agent and client leader to behave consistent with the Way (or some set of principles), as

the primary means to bring the client system into proper alignment. Although each might be concerned to some degree about what to do and how to be, the primary emphasis would be different.

Static Versus Dynamic Universe

When the normal condition of most entities in the universe is thought to be primarily static, or reflecting quasi-stationary equilibrium, constant change would be experienced as dangerous, abnormal, or chaotic. People would likely seek to stop continuous changes so as to restore "order," that is, a more stable, stationary state. After all, the OD change model instructs change agents that their final task is to refreeze a situation. This is done precisely to stop the continuous movement of the unfrozen state. Alternatively, when the normal condition of all entities is viewed as undergoing continual, inherent change (i.e., being fluid), then stopping the ongoing changes would be experienced as dangerous, abnormal, and inviting chaos. Instead, people would likely seek to restore and/or harmonize with the natural change cycles. Thus the Confucian change agent would seek to discover and remove blockages so as to restore the natural ebb and flow of everything. In sum, the OD change agent plans how to start and stop movement to achieve a desired steady state, whereas the Confucian change agent seeks to release or remove blockages created by static, stagnant, and/or stuck conditions to restore the natural flow, harmony, and balance of the Way. For example, at the end of a change initiative, an OD change agent might focus on interventions intended to maintain the change (e.g., adding new norms, new reward systems, new values, new training, etc.). The Confucian change agent might focus less on maintaining anything and more on how to keep changing with grace and harmony (e.g., ways to enhance continuous learning and/or adaptation).

Summary

The above discussion suggests that change agents operating from the OD model will approach situations and take actions based on a different conception of change and change processes than will change agents operating from a Confucian model. The change agent guided by the OD model of change is likely to seek to help determine an end state that is better than the current state, to find ways to unfreeze the current situation so as to move directly to the desired state, and then help refreeze the situation so as to maintain it. This is all done from the stance of a neutral third party, that is, someone not an integral part of the system in question. In contrast, the change agent guided by a Confucian model of change is likely to seek to help the system find and follow the Way (the natural order and principles guiding the situation), to work to help restore balance and equilibrium to the system, and help enable the system to move continuously through the natural cycles inherent to its existence. This would all be done from the stance of a person who is one with the system and who has the responsibility to role-model or embody the Way in everything that is said or done (as a primary form of intervention).

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND THEORY

The ranks of stars revolve in procession, the sun and moon shine in turn, the seasons succeed one another, the forces of yin and yang (alternate) in great transformation. (Hsun Tzu, quoted in Eno, 1990, p. 198)

Based on the above analysis it is possible to conjecture about the relative robustness of each set of assumptions for addressing different change scenarios. An illustrative list of such hypotheses is shown in Table 2.

Taken individually, and especially as a set, the examples can be formulated into testable hypotheses about the relative effectiveness of the Lewinian model of change in different situations and the relative effectiveness of the Confucian model of change in the same or similar settings. For example, two

hypotheses are suggested by Table 2:

Hypothesis 1: OD will be more successful when called on to create change toward a specific goal and less successful in addressing continual change, especially absent clearly stated goals. This will be particularly true in cultural settings with similar assumptions about change.

Hypothesis 2: A Confucian approach to change will be more successful when called on to pursue continuous enhancements without need of a specified problem and less successful in challenging the (natural) order of things. This will be particularly true in cultural settings with similar assumptions about change.

Anecdotal and testimonial data alone would suggest that these hypotheses cannot be rejected on their face. Therefore, this might be a fruitful line of inquiry for field research.

A second line of inquiry is also suggested by Table 2. Based on the alternative assumption sets about change presented in Table 2, it is possible to hypothesize about the nature of cross-cultural difficulties that could be experienced in the application of OD. For example, an OD consultant operating from the assumptions associated with the Lewinian model of change when dealing with a client system operating from the assumptions associated with the Confucian model of change would be predicted to encounter confusion and various forms of "resistance." Furthermore, based on a consideration of the specific assumptions involved, the nature of the "resistance" might also be predictable. For example, attempts to focus on setting and achieving clear-cut goals might be "resisted" if appropriate attention was not also being paid to observing the proper way of doing things. Requests for the client to take a stand and speak out against the system might be "resisted" because that would threaten the (natural) order of things. Alternatively, the client might perceive the OD consultant as unusually brash and/or reckless because of a failure to pay adequate attention to the rhythm of change and therefore the proper time for action. The Confucian-oriented client might also wonder about the OD consultant's ability to maintain balance and equilibrium in the face of constantly changing conditions, especially if the consultant's first response is to challenge and/or confront the causes of the changes in an attempt to gain stability and control. Thus a range of hypotheses related to the outcomes of specific interactions in cross-cultural settings could be developed and tested.

A third line of inquiry might combine the first two approaches into a contingency model based on the nature of the change(s) and the assumption set. For example, if the OD model of change is an effective approach for dealing with a particular situation and it also matches the client system's assumptions and models about change, then success might be predicted. Similarly, a mismatch on both dimensions would be predictive of failure. Of more interest is what happens when the situation is mixed: OD fits the change situation but not the client system's assumptions about change; or OD fits the client system's assumptions about change but not the nature of the change situation. These possibilities are summarized in Figure 5.

Research that controlled for differences in types of required change(s) as well as for the models of change held by the OD consultant and host system could be especially revealing. This line of research might be clearest in international settings but could also be conducted within a particular national culture, as assumptions vary across subcultures and organizations.

Finally, this analysis, along with the earlier discussion of different types of change, suggests at least one approach for developing a unified theory incorporating both models of change. As previously noted, many authors have commented on the differences between the change processes that occur during times of an established underlying paradigm (Kuhn, 1962), deep structure (Gersick, 1991), or "pattern" (Land & Jarman, 1992) and those that occur when the underlying pattern itself-shifts. The former processes are

usually described as developmental/evolutionary, whereas the latter are seen as revolutionary/transformational. When looked at together, however, the ongoing process of paradigm/pattern birth, development, maturity, decline, death, and birth of a new paradigm/pattern is best described using both models. Change is both linear within a particular pattern and cyclical as different patterns emerge, then dissolve, emerge, and then dissolve again (Land & Jarman, 1992). Change may be progressive within a pattern but is processional between patterns (Gersick, 1991). Changes within a pattern may be goal oriented, but it is the quality of the journey that matters when moving between patterns (Land & Jarman, 1992). Creating disequilibrium may be necessary for change to occur within a pattern, but harmonizing with a new pattern as it emerges is essential for successful change between patterns (Kuhn, 1962). Change can be planned and managed within the context of an established pattern but must be observed and followed when an old pattern ends and a new pattern emerges (Land & Jarman, 1992). Finally, an established underlying pattern provides a more stable, or quasi-stationary, context within which (temporary) changes occur, whereas change between underlying patterns is inherently more fluid, dynamic, and chaotic (Gersick, 1991). These observations about within- and between-pattern-change processes are summarized in Table 3.

This embryonic unified theory of developmental-transformational change, incorporating aspects of both the Lewinian and Confucian models, may or may not prove viable. It does, however, offer a promising schema that includes yin and yang, the Five Forces, and present-to-future-state "models" and images. That is, patterns emerge, dissolve, emerge, dissolve; there is continuous cyclical movement from birth (Wood) to growth (Fire) to maturity (Earth) to decline (Metal) and then death (Water), leading again to birth (Wood); and there is movement from a present state to a future state both within and between patterns.

CONCLUSION

To begin in an orderly fashion is the concern of the wise, while to end in an orderly fashion is the concern of a sage. (Mencius, quoted in Lau, 1970, p. 150)

The change model that one explicitly or implicitly operates from has a great deal to do with how one thinks about and goes about a change effort. To the degree that OD change agents follow the Lewinian model of change, their theories and methods may prove to be out of step with those operating, explicitly or implicitly, from other models of change. This is more likely to occur as OD moves from its North American roots into countries and cultures historically or presently based on different cosmologies. Thus more research into the change models and assumptions inherent in different cultures is needed not only to alert sensitive OD practitioners but to expand the range of change theories and methods. For example, this discussion focused on the dynamic cyclical model of change that is part of most East Asian cultural traditions. Beyond the scope of this article, but equally relevant, are the models of change inherent to other cultural traditions (e.g., different African cultures, Native American cultures, and so on). An example of this line of research is Srinivas (in press), who compares and contrasts different aspects of OD with traditional Indian religio-philosophical ideals and practices.

Furthermore, we may need to alter or amend our model(s) of change as we enter the 21st century and confront the revolutionary changes that lie ahead. Besides drawing on wisdom residing in other cultures, both ancient and modern, recent discoveries and theories in the "new sciences," especially physics, may prove helpful (Goldstein, 1993; Wheatley, 1992). Newton's mechanical universe has been challenged and is no longer preeminent in physics, yet the worldview he helped create lives on in many guises (Capra, 1982; Tarnas, 1991). One, perhaps, is OD, where the unfreeze-movement-refreeze change model is strikingly similar, both theoretically and metaphorically, to Newtonian physics where movement results from the application of a set of forces on an object (Capra, 1982; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Marshak, 1993b; Zukav, 1979). As a reminder, Newton's First Law of Motion (written in 1687) states,

"Every body preserves in its state of being at rest or of moving uniformly straight forward, except insofar as it is compelled to change its state by forces impressed upon it" (quoted in Gregory, 1988, p. 23). Interestingly, "the new physics" that have challenged Newton's universe have been compared to the Eastern dynamic, cyclical, interconnected models of the universe presented here (Capra, 1982, 1984). Clearly, a new or greatly revised theory or theories of organizational change that reflects a synthesis of the linear and cyclical models needs to be born. That would surely please both Lewin and Confucius.

NOTES

1. Confucian philosophy developed over a period of several thousands of years, beginning with Confucius (Master K'ung, 551-479 B.C.). Most notably, it was reinvigorated and further developed by Mencius (Meng K'e, 371-289 B.C.?) and then extended and organized into an orthodoxy by the Sung, Neo-Confucian Chu Hsi (1130-1200 A.D.), whose orthodoxy was challenged and modified by the Ming, Neo-Confucian Wang Yang-ming (1472-1529 A.D.). In addition to further developing Confucian philosophy, Neo-Confucianism also incorporated various aspects of Taoism and Buddhism without abandoning the central tenets of the Confucian worldview. Hence there are both similarities and differences among the three great pillars of Eastern wisdom.

2. Indeed, the I Ching is one of the five Confucian classics of antiquity, along with the Book of History, Book of Odes, Book of Ritual, and Spring and Autumn Annals. Later, Chu Hsi (1130-1200 A.D.) grouped The Great Learning (500-200 B.C.), The Analects of Confucius (551-479 B.C.), The Book of Mencius (371-289 B.C.?), and The Doctrine of the Mean (500-200 B.C.?) to form the classic canon of Confucian philosophy. In 1313, these "Four Books" became required texts of the Imperial Chinese education system and the basis for the prestigious civil service examinations. Korea followed in kind in 1392 with the founding of the Yi Dynasty as an official Confucian State. Confucianism remained the official doctrine in China and Korea until the end of the dynasties in both countries at the beginning of the 20th century.

TABLE 1 Assumptions About Change

Lewinian/OD	Confucian/East Asian
Change is:	Change Is:
1. Linear. One moves from one state to another state in a forward direction.	1. Cyclical. There is a constant ebb and flow to the universe and everything in it is cyclical.
2. Progressive. One moves from a less to a more desired state.	2. Processional. One moves constantly from one condition/form/state to the next condition/form/state in an orderly sequence through a cycle.
3. Destination Oriented. One moves towards a specific end state;	3. Journey Oriented. Because there is constant cyclical change, what matters is how well one follows the Way.
4. Based on Creating Disequilibrium. In order to get movement from the current state, one must alter the equilibrium of the status quo.	4. Based on Restoring/Maintaining Equilibrium, Everything naturally in harmony and perfect. One acts only as needed to restore balance and equilibrium.

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|--|--|
| <p>5. Planned and Managed by People Who Exist Separate From and Act on Things to Achieve their Goals. One learns the principles about how to master and manipulate the forces in the world in order to achieve one's own ends.</p> | <p>5. Observed and Followed by People Who are One With Everything and Must Act Correctly to Maintain Harmony in the Universe. One constantly strives to be in harmony with the Way, the natural order of the universe.</p> |
| <p>6. Unusual, Because Everything Is Normally in a Quasi-Stationary or Static State. Unless something is done, things will stay the same because a body at rest stays at rest until force is applied.</p> | <p>6. Usual, Because Everything is Normally in a Continually Changing Dynamic State. The continual process of everything in the universe is change. The Yin-Yang Law of Opposites says everything contains its own negation, so nothing stays forever.</p> |

TABLE 2 Some Potential Impacts of Different Aspects About Change

Legend for Chart:

- A - Assumption
- B - More Effective When
- C - Less Effective When

A	B	C
Linear-progressive	The current situation can be contrasted unfavorably with some future condition	It is hard to prove there is something wrong with current conditions
Cyclical-processional	Required to move from a current satisfactory situation to a different one	Need to secure "gains" and/or maintain a specific plateau or condition
Destination oriented	A specific achievable goal can be clearly articulated	A specific goal is absent, unclear, and/or cannot be provided
Journey oriented	Continuous enhancements are needed without a given problem or goal	Need to focus more on the goal than the means
Create disequilibrium	Need to challenge the status quo or marshal forces to create change	Need to accept things as they are and harmonize with them
Maintain equilibrium	Need to harmonize while waiting for the appropriate moment of change	

	Challenging or disrupting the (natural) order of things
Planned and managed	Need analysis of what to do to modify or change existing factors and forces
	Required to "go with the flow" against one's wishes and desires
Observed and followed	Observing natural "rhythm" of change and aligning oneself and others with it
	Need to act in opposition to flow of events (e.g., "swim against the tide")
Change is unusual	Dealing with stuck or static situations
	Facing continual change without the chance to stop and plan
Change is usual	Adapting to constantly changing conditions while maintaining equilibrium
	Need to plan ways to defend and/or stabilize a particular situation

TABLE 3 Within and Between Pattern Change

Change Processes Within a Pattern Are:	Change Processes Between Patterns Are:
Linear	Cyclical
Progressive	Processional
Goal oriented	Journey oriented
Based on creating equilibrium	Based on returning to disequilibrium
Planned and managed	Observed and followed
Unusual, or temporary, because conditions are more stable	Usual, or continuous, because conditions are more dynamic

DIAGRAM: FIGURE 1: OD Image of Change

DIAGRAM: FIGURE 2: Yin-Yang Cyclical Change

DIAGRAM: FIGURE 3: Five Agents Cyclical Change

DIAGRAM: FIGURE 4: Two Views of Team Development

DIAGRAM: FIGURE 5: OD Contingencies

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**Source:** *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, Dec93, Vol. 29 Issue 4, p393, 23p, 4 charts, 3 diagrams, 1bw.

**Item Number:** 9410256153