

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT MODE AND MODELS

This chapter is about an organizational management mode of consultancy. Three principal models are described. The first is a *process* model; the second is a *process cum operational systems* (not systemic) model; the third is a *systemic* model. By way of conclusion, there are brief notes about some other models. The aim is to note and illustrate some different models in this mode of consultancy, not to survey the proliferation of models associated with it.

However, the models in this chapter do not have the monopoly on organizational management consultancy. Other models in this book have been or could be used in consultations with managers and organizations. They are described under headings according to the dominant feature that typifies the mode of consultancy that they bring to consultancy.

Model One: Process Consultation (PC)

I The Story of the Model's Development

Edgar Schein is a management and organizational consultant, Professor of Management in the Sloan School of Management in Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His background is in social and clinical psychology and in social psychology. In the 1950's he became involved in the field of group dynamics and became a trainer in various kinds of human relations workshops for managers. He used a model not unlike the psychoanalytical group model being proposed by Bion and used by the AK Rice Institute. "Given this background", he said, "I approached my first organizational consulting with models of effective interpersonal relations and group behaviour in mind and with an armamentarium of observational and intervention skills in my tool bag".¹ From these beginnings he developed Process Consultation, PC, and his name has become synonymous with it through two books which have become classical texts. The first was published in 1969 and the second in 1987.² During the period between the two books he discovered that process consultation is as useful and relevant to managers as to consultants.³ Both books have an introduction to PC. Broadly speaking Volume I explores its application to consultancy and Volume II to organizational management. We concentrate on the former.

II Knowledge Informing the Model [element (a)]

"Process consultation", says Schein at the outset of his exposition of it "is a difficult concept to describe simply and clearly. It does not lend itself to a simple definition or to the giving of a few illustrative examples, because it is more of a philosophy or a set of underlying assumptions about the helping process that lead the consultant to take a certain kind of attitude toward his relationship with his client".⁴ Nonetheless he ventures a definition:

PC is a set of activities on the part of the consultant that help the client to perceive, understand, and act upon the process events that occur in the client's environment in order to improve the situation as defined by the client.⁵

This definition points to an important distinction between the complex processes in human systems and consultancy process and procedures: the title of the model relates to the former, not the latter; a primary function of PC consultancy processes is to enable clients (consultors) to engage more purposefully and effectively with the human processes in their work situation and context. This is fundamental to this model.

Three major considerations led Schein to his PC model. *First*, he was convinced that the study of organizations must focus on processes rather than on structures and what he called "statics". "Structured processes", he asserted, "are very much the domain of the process consultant".⁶ *Second*, Schein says that as we have already noted, "PC is anchored deeply in social psychology, sociology and anthropology".⁷ Historical roots he says are: group dynamics and leadership training; systematic techniques for studying small-group and inter-group processes; studies of group relations and interpersonal processes in industrial organizations.⁸ These points indicate the way in which Schein saw PC in terms of authentic organizational development (OD). OD is "typically defined as a planned organization wide kind of programme".⁹ PC naturally adapts to OD. Essentially it is about the consultant's approach to the client's (consultor's) work. The *third* consideration turns from the consultant's approach to the client's work to the consultant's approach to the worker/practitioner as a client/consultor and from organizational processes to consultancy processes. In developing the PC model, Schein was influenced by client-centred counselling which is a form of non-directive therapy. From this discipline he saw that the job of process consultants is to help their clients and their organizations to solve their own problems. Amongst other things he saw this involves raising their awareness of their organizational processes and their consequences and the ways and means by which they can be changed. Several things that flow from this for Schein are described in the following quotation.

The process consultant helps the organization to learn from self-diagnosis and self-intervention. The ultimate concern of the process consultant is the organization's capacity to do for itself what he has done for it. Where the standard consultant is more concerned about passing on his knowledge, the process consultant is concerned about passing on his skills and values.

In fact, as he says in Volume II:

... PC is very similar in assumptions to many kinds of clinical and psychiatric counseling (sic) that puts the emphasis on clients figuring out for themselves what their problems are and what to do about them.¹⁰

Schein disassociates PC from two models of consultation, "the purchase of expertise model" and "the doctor-patient model" but he says that each model is relevant at times and describes the conditions and assumptions that make them so.¹¹

An analogy suggested by Schein for PC is to think of the consultant as a sociotherapist-providing, that is, that "the consultant is primarily dedicated to helping the system help itself in terms of whatever pathology he (sic) may find there".¹² This integrates into the model the factors described above.

Two things further elucidate this model: the underlying assumptions and the approach to human processes.

1. Underlying Assumptions

Schein notes seven main philosophical assumptions of PC. They can be paraphrased as follows:

- (a) Clients/managers often require special help in diagnosing what their problems actually are because they do not know what it is that is actually wrong in their organization.
- (b) Clients/managers often need to be helped to know what kinds of help to seek because they simply do not know what kinds of help they could get from consultants.
- (c) Whilst most clients/managers really want to improve things they need consultancy help in identifying what to improve and how to do so.
- (d) The effectiveness of most organizations can be improved if clients and managers learn how to analyse things themselves.
- (e) Remedies for organizational problems need to be worked out jointly by consultants and clients. Schein gives three reasons for this. First, it is the members who know what will and will not work in their culture. Second, remedies from outsiders are likely either to be wrong or to be resisted because they come from outsiders. Third, without exhaustive and time-consuming study or direct experience of their clients' organizations, consultants are unlikely to be able to suggest reliable courses of action.
- (f) Clients/managers need to learn to see problems for themselves and to develop the abilities to think through them to effective remedies and decision-making must remain in their hands. Without these abilities Schein notes that they "will not be willing or able to implement the solution and, more important, will not learn how to fix such problems should they recur".
- (g) Schein's seventh philosophical assumption is: "The essential function of PC is to pass on the skills of how to diagnose and fix organizational problems so that the client is more able to continue on his own to improve the organization".¹³

2. The Importance of Human Processes in PC

"Human processes and how to intervene in them" are so important to PC that almost a half of Volume I is given up to discussing those processes which have most often caught Schein's attention when he has been trying to be helpful. He says that the notes are "not meant to be an exhaustive treatment of inter-personal, group or organizational processes".¹⁴ Nonetheless they are significant and important. Schein has found the seven kinds of human processes described below central to PC. (Forms of intervention used by PC consultants will be described in the section on Praxis.)

(a) Communication processes¹⁵

Various facets of communication processes are considered: who talks; who talks to whom; who interrupts whom; styles and levels of communication; blind spots; tendency to "filter" in the role of both sender and receiver of messages.¹⁶

(b) *The process of building and maintaining a group.*¹⁷

Schein considers the following features of this process: aspects and functions of the individual's behaviour in groups including that which is "self-oriented"; task and maintenance functions relevant to getting jobs done; keeping a group in good working order and managing a group's relationship with its external environment; helping a group to learn.¹⁸

(c) *Group problem solving and decision making processes.*¹⁹

Two problem solving cycles are considered: one cycle involves analytical discussion of the problem; the other cycle involves action-taking and evaluating outcomes. Six methods of decision making and the processes associated with them are explored. They are decision making by lack of response, authority rule, minority rule, majority rule, consensus, unanimity.²⁰

(d) *Processes of group growth and development*²¹

Because of their importance, key processes to focus on and track are cultural norms and their formation. Criteria for group growth and learning are discussed.²²

(e) *Leading and influencing processes*²³

Leading, managing and influencing are identified as highly variable kinds of behaviour related to different kinds of assumptions and personal and inter-personal factors. It follows that generalizations cannot be made "about influence processes, except that they are highly contingent on the particulars of the situation".²⁴ For maximum effectiveness leaders need to diagnose the forces at work in themselves and in and between members of the workforce.²⁵

(f) *Appraising performance and giving feedback processes.*²⁶

Schein asserts that much of what the process consultant does is to help individuals and groups to manage feedback processes they are experiencing and those induced by consultant's input and the consultancy process. It follows that:

The process consultant must therefore be highly aware of the psychological dynamics of appraising human behaviour and providing feedback about it. In fact his (sic) skill in this area is one of the most important things to pass on to his clients so that they can improve the management of their own organizations.²⁷

(g) *Intergroup processes*²⁸

Inter-group and organizational processes can lead to competition and/or collaboration. Schein spells out the problems related to competition and how much more difficult it is to undo than to avoid these effects. Careful consideration must, therefore, be given to intergroup processes.²⁹

As noted in the introduction to this section, Schein does not present this as an exhaustive treatment of processes in human systems but as "the most important processes that the process consultant must know something about".³⁰ Nonetheless it is, in fact, an extensive process knowledge base set in profound theoretical concepts and thoroughly tested in process research and practice.

Clients are caught up in and relate to these human processes in different ways. Unavoidably they contribute to them through participating in them. They observe them from within the processes. They may also stand back from them, as it were, to objectify and reflect upon them analytically and to influence and manage them purposefully. Consequently, as they experience them, both subjectively and objectively, they add other process and epistemological dimensions to them.

III Praxis of the Model [element (b)]

PC praxis is about consultancy processes and procedures in contradistinction to the processes in the human systems with which consultants engage and work. It is about consultants introducing and deploying these processes in consultations and consultants using them and/or what evolves from their use in their work. Schein outlines the following substantive sequences in PC praxis:

1. creating relationships with clients which they will regard as helpful;
2. enabling clients to focus on the critical process events in their own environment;
3. enabling clients to diagnose and intervene in these processes to make their organizations more effective.³¹

When effective, PC praxis, therefore, induces processes and procedures by which clients can engage more effectively with the processes in their work systems and induce any other processes which are needed but lacking. PC praxis, is in fact an interventionist and facilitative process, a tool for working with consultants more effectively and with processes essential to the functioning of human systems in purposeful organizations.³²

One of the strengths of PC praxis is that it is as equally relevant to clients in their work as to consultants in their consulting. Schein in Volume II works out in detail how it can be used by managers, but it could equally well be used by other practitioners in secular and religious organizations. Amongst other things, therefore, consultations enable clients to learn experientially about the PC methodology.

An attempt to model these processes and their dynamics diagrammatically is presented in Figure 5:1

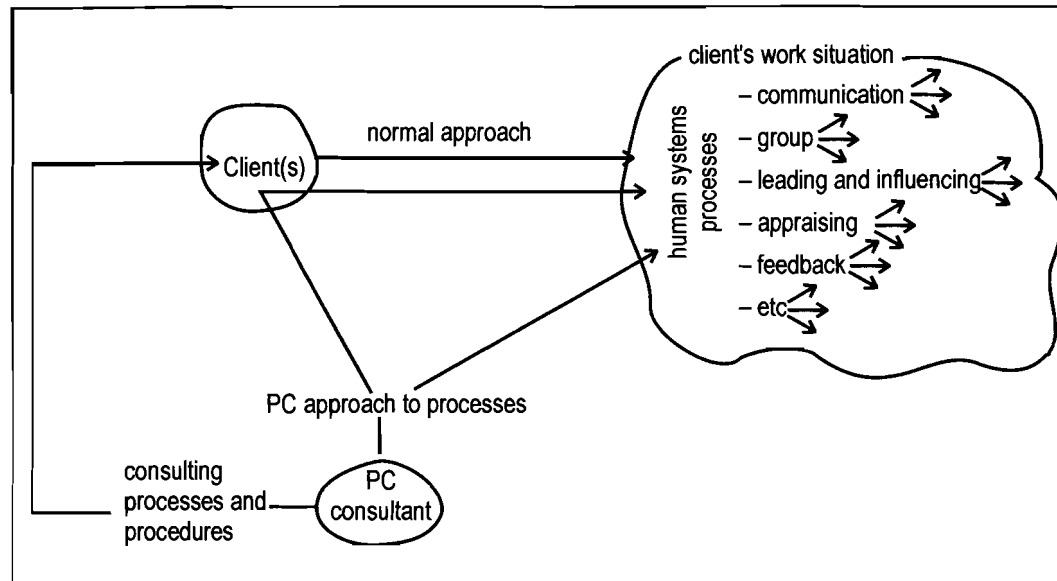


Figure 5:1: Human Systems, Client and PC Processes

1. Modus Operandi: How the consultancy model works

“Process”, says Schein, “refers to *how* things are done rather than what is done”.³³ This section is about the *how* of PC, the processes that make it work; in the next major section we review the procedure and sequences that activate those processes.

Schein lists ten things that consultants (or managers) might do³⁴ but here we focus on things key to the modus operandi of PC.

(a) Basic Premises about the client system and the goals of the consultation process.³⁵

Basic premises influence the way in which consultants structure consultancy relationships. The premises cited by Schein are as follows.

- The client owns the problem and continues to own it throughout (and beyond) the consultation process: “*It’s your problem*, but I’ll help you to work on it and solve it”.
- Clients must share in the process of diagnosing what might be wrong though consultants “can play a key role in sharpening the client’s understandings of what is wrong”.
- “Diagnosis and intervention cannot be separated in practice”. (On this and the next point, see below.)
- “Major criteria that govern what the consultant does ... derive from intervention theory, not diagnostic theory”,³⁶ that is, from the praxis of what kinds of intervention are possible and potentially productive.

Having discussed these premises, Schein reads off the attributes of clients who would benefit from experiences of PC. This is a convenient place to note them. They are:

- “the client is hurting somehow but does not know the source of the pain or what to do about it”;
- “the client does not know what kind of help may be available and which consultant can provide the kind of help that may be needed”;
- “the nature of the problem is such that the client not only needs help in figuring out what is wrong but would benefit from participation in the process of making a diagnosis”;
- “the client has ‘constructive intent’, is motivated by goals and values that the consultant can accept, and has some capacity to enter into a helping relationship”;
- “the client is ultimately the only one who know what form of intervention will work in the situation”;
- “the client is capable of learning how to diagnose and solve his own organization problems”.³⁷

(b) Focussing on human processes in the client’s working situation

Earlier, seven human processes which commonly and variously feature in PC consultations were described, see section II.2. But how can consultants and clients focus on these in order to work at them analytically? Schein suggests three things.

(i) Simplifying models of human processes

The first is to translate difficult ideas from fields of psychology, sociology and anthropology into what he calls, “simple formulations” or “simplifying models of human processes” so that they are more readily available to clients who have not formal knowledge of these subjects. Doing this enables clients to understand them and to use them alongside consultants. Making these translations requires skill and is not without its dangers. It is, however, an important part of what is involved in facilitating informed collaborative participation which helps clients not to be unhealthily dependent upon “experts”.³⁸

(ii) Differentiating process and structures

Schein suggests a simplifying model as an aid to focussing on processes in a given situation/context. Distinctions are not as clear-cut as the original model implies. Each of the six boxes is called “a cell”. In reality they overlap. To represent these attributes of the model, firm lines between the “cells” in Schein’s original diagram have been replaced by broken lines in the amended model presented in Display 5:1. The model differentiates *content* from *process* and *structure* and, in relation to each of these three aspects of a situation, it distinguishes between *tasks* and *interpersonal* issues. Schein explores in detail what is involved in focussing on each of the six cells: task content (cell 1); task process (cell 2); task structure (cell 3); interpersonal content (cell 4); interpersonal process (cell 5); interpersonal structure (cell 6). Amongst other things this model helps consultants and clients to survey the process and assess those “cells” to be analysed.³⁹

	Task	Interpersonal
Content	1. Formal agenda, goals	4. Who is doing what to whom
Process	2. How the task is done	5. How members relate to each other, communicate etc.
Structure	3. Recurrent processes "standard operating procedures"	6. Recurrent interpersonal relationships, roles

Display 5:1: The Foci of Observation and Intervention ⁴⁰

(iii) Forms of Intervention

Considerable attention is given to intervention strategy, tactics and style in Volumes I and II. Volume II has a chapter, "Towards a Typology of Interventions". Notes on the main points follow under three headings.

Strategic objectives of initial interventions

The following significant objectives have to be met during initial interventions.

Provide help: whatever consultants do at this stage must be seen to be helpful by clients.

Diagnose so that consultants begin to learn about clients and their situation and clients start to develop diagnostic insight and skills.

Build an intervention team in order to get shared ownership and responsibility for change processes.⁴¹

Intervention tactics and styles

Schein notes the following four types of interventions in terms of their tactical goals.

Exploratory interventions reflect the intention to make as few assumptions and gain as much information as possible. A typical question is "Can you describe the situation?"

Diagnostic interventions shift from information gathering to getting the client to think about what might really be going on. Typical questions are: "How do you see the problem?" "Why is an outside consultant needed?" The aim is to get clients to think diagnostically not to offer diagnostic insights – they would be "confrontive interventions".

Action alternative interventions move towards new behaviour. Typical questions are: "What have you tried to do about this yourself?" "Have you considered either of these alternatives?" Such questions prompt clients to think about behavioural options.

Confrontational interventions shift the focus to possible areas of resistance through combining diagnostic insights with client's behaviour. Typical questions are: "Why won't you do...?" "You seem to be blocked and need to unblock?" Schein notes that this mode of intervention would normally only be used when the other interventions did not produce insights or alternative possibility for clients. It can energize clients and provide additional information which can be "agenda-making and agenda-managing". Such interventions can be made by questions, inputs, feedback, coaching or by counselling or structural suggestions.⁴² Interestingly, following Kurt Lewin, Schein notes that "it is only by trying to change (human systems) that we learn how they really work. This is what "action-research means..."⁴³

Towards a typology of interventions

Ten categories of intervention are considered:

- active interested listening (exploratory);
- forcing historical reconstruction (diagnostic);
- forcing concretization (diagnostic);
- forcing process emphasis (diagnostic);
- diagnostic questions and probes (diagnostic, action oriented);
- process management and agenda setting (confrontive);
- feedback (confrontive);
- content suggestions and recommendations (confrontive);
- structure management (confrontive);
- conceptual inputs (potentially confrontive).

Schein suggest that interventions one to five can be seen as client centred; six and seven as interactive between consultant and client; eight to ten as consultant centred. They move from inquiry to diagnosis to confrontational. Each of the ten forms or intervention are considered first in the one-on-one setting and then in the group and inter-group consultancy settings.⁴⁴

By way of conclusion, Schein says about the "concept of facilitative intervention":

The effectiveness of a given intervention is primarily related to the degree to which it facilitates forward movement in the client or client system, as defined by the client.

The worst thing the consultant can do is to intervene in a manner that disrupts, delays or otherwise interferes with the client's agenda and sense of direction, unless the consultant is deliberately attempting to disrupt, something that would rarely be appropriate in the PC model.⁴⁵

The “bottom line” for the consultant or manager as consultant is whether the intervention really helped accomplish the shared goals, not whether it fitted some theory of what would have been appropriate at any given moment. The skill of intervening is to be so tuned in to what is going on that one’s sense of timing and appropriateness is based on the external events, not one’s internal assumptions or theories.⁴⁶

2. Operational Modes

Two aspects of the operational modes are noted here: the steps and stages that characterize Process Consultations; working relationships and styles.

(a) Steps and Stages in Process Consultations

Schein says that “PC is a very open ended activity that is usually not formalized in terms of contracts, timetables or project definitions. Nevertheless there are steps and stages that characterize the PC relationship that can be described and analyzed”. Schein does that in some detail.⁴⁷ He presents them in a linear fashion although many of them go on simultaneously and involve renegotiation of psychological contracts.⁴⁸ His listing is followed here with brief notes of especial features.⁴⁹

(i) *Initial contact with client organizations.*

This is made by someone from the client organization.

(ii) *Defining relationships and making psychological contracts*

Early exploratory meetings are with people sympathetic to bringing in a consultant and high enough in the organization to influence others. Formal contracts are limited to time and fees in order that any of the parties are free to terminate the arrangement at any time. Much importance and careful attention is given to the “psychological contract” between clients and consultants about their expectations, obligations and aims and style of work.⁵⁰ The emphasis, therefore, is upon unwritten relational rather than written formal contracts.

(iii) *Selecting a setting and method of work*

The methods must be congruent with PC. As I understand it, the “setting” refers to the part of the organization at which the consultant should start to observe it. Settings and methods should be decided by clients and consultants. Settings should be near the top of the organization where “real work” is going on and in which it is possible to observe problem-solving, interpersonal and group processes.⁵¹

(iv) *Diagnostic interventions*

Inter alia, these interventions, described above, facilitate data gathering.⁵²

(v) *Confrontive interventions*

These interventions, described above, are also described as “agenda-making and agenda-management interventions”.⁵³

(vi) *Reducing involvement and termination*

Possibly a better title is *evaluation of results, reducing involvement and disengagement* (cf the title of Chapter 16). Ideally, re-involvement is always possible!⁵⁴

(b) Working Relationships and Styles

PC can be applied equally to consultants working with single clients and/or small groups. Consultants or consulting teams work with entire top management client systems, organizational departments or entire organizations.⁵⁵

Consultants can engage in a wide range of interventional behaviour and a range of methods including: data gathering through observing, interviewing and surveys; face to face work with individuals and groups of varying sizes; coaching; counselling; lecturing. Strategically, as noted earlier, consultants aim to engage, at least initially, “as near the top of the organization or client system as possible”.⁵⁶

IV Application: Work Settings to which the Model is Applicable [element (c)]

Some idea of the effective application of PC can be gained from the case studies used to illustrate PC praxis throughout Volumes I and II of *Process Consultation*. These case studies show that PC has been used in work with individuals, managers, groups and organizations engaged in manufacturing, servicing, consumer goods and high tech companies; oil, chemical, electrical and aerospace companies; academic groups and a laboratory; a consultancy firm.⁵⁷ Indeed Schein describes the PC consultant as an “organizational catalyst”.⁵⁸ Wide and impressive as this list is I suspect it is by no means comprehensive. David Coghlan SJ, an advocate of Schein’s work and PC who teaches in The College of Industrial Relations in Dublin, has used it effectively in many different groups and organizations.⁵⁹ Some people have, I know, used it in Christian Churches. It resonates with “process theology” expounded by Professor Norman Pittenger in the 1960’s and 70’s.⁶⁰

V Understanding of the Consultor’s Work [element (d)]

Knowledge of the operation of various processes common to purposeful human systems is the essential generic understanding that consultants need to have of the work in which consultors are engaged. Prior detailed knowledge of the idiosyncratic features of a particular kind of work or specific examples of it is not necessary and would be difficult to obtain, see II, 1(e). Sufficient understanding of the given characteristics of the consultor’s work is teased out through the use of the consultancy process and procedures of PC.

VI Principles [element (e)]

Essentially there are two bodies of knowledge upon which this model of consultancy draws. First there is the vast bodies of knowledge about processes operative in human systems. (Schein does not pay much attention to systems theory.) Second, there are the emergent PC processes which enable consultants to work with clients on human systems processes in their organizations and which enable clients to engage with them more purposefully with consultants and on their own in their own right.

All that needs to be said to profile the philosophy and theory of PC has already been said or indicated. However, drawing attention to two complimentary aspects of PC could be helpful. The first is the “client centred” consultancy processes. The philosophical and theoretical roots are in counselling and clinical psychology. The second is the processes

common to human systems with their roots in social psychology, sociology and anthropology and especially in group dynamics.

VII A Summary of Key Features of the Model

PC emerges as a multi purpose consultancy model. Basic elements are modelled diagrammatically in Figure 5:2.

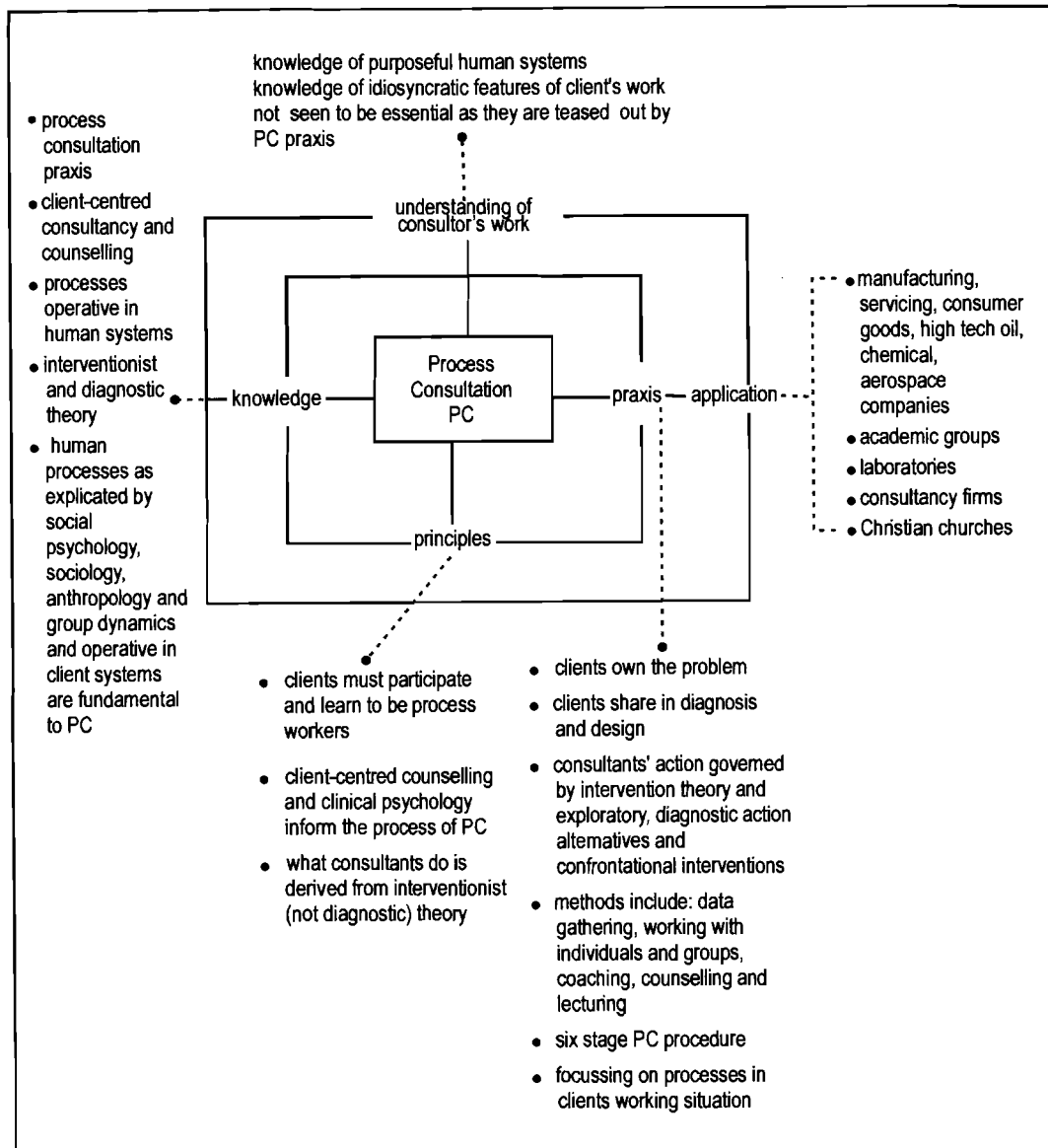


Figure 5:2: A Diagrammatic Representation of Fundamentals of the PC Model

A Note On Directive and Non-directive Approaches

A note on a similar process consultation model could help to clarify distinctions between directive and non-directive approaches to consultancy. It is a model propounded by Gordon and Ronald Lippitt in a book entitled, *The Consulting Process in Action*.¹ Like Schein, the Lippitts are committed to process consultancy. Schein pays equal attention to the human processes in client systems *and* to those of the consultancy relationship. Lippitts, on the other hand, dedicate almost all their book to phases of consultancy processes and praxis.² They have only two paragraphs on Schein's emphasis on the processes in human groups.³ Their bibliographical note on Schein's Volume I (first edition) is a somewhat misleading statement of his approach. However, generally speaking, their description of consultancy processes resonate with those of Schein's PC model, although they are expressed somewhat differently as one would expect. They have a chapter on "interventions" and a useful "intervention matrix"⁴ Also they have a useful section on the consultant's legitimate and necessary role changes in consultations.⁵ But a key model showing the consultant's approach from non-directive to directive as a straight line graph misrepresents the nature of these approaches. The diagram is reproduced in Figure 5:3.

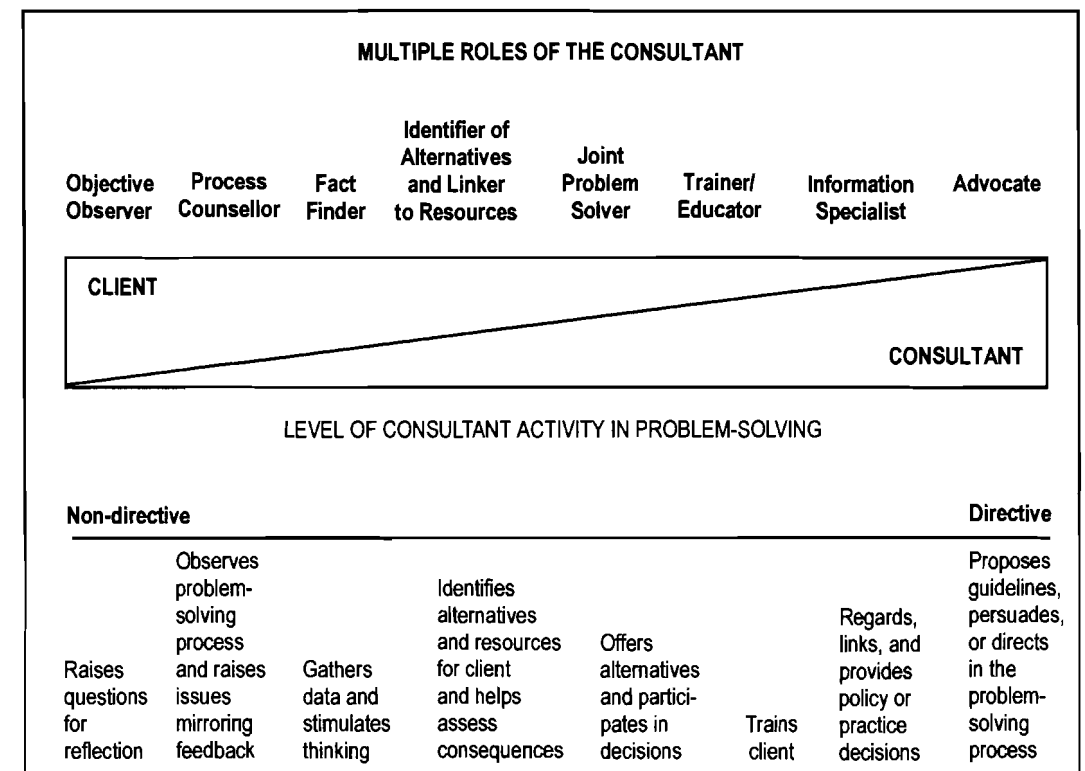


Figure 5:3 Lippitts' Diagram on Directive and Non-Directive Roles⁶

In many ways the diagram is revealing but with respect to the directive/non-directive notation it is not convincing, in fact I believe it is misleading. Directive and non-directive approaches are essentially quite different from each other with complementary uses in work consultancy (as well as in work with people in development programmes in social and religious communities and organizations). The diagram seems to infer that directive action tapers inevitably into non-directive and vice versa. This is simply not possible because of differences in their natures. It is possible and at times necessary to change from one approach to the other in any work with people including consultancy. Also it is possible, of course, to be more or less directive or non-directive. But being less directive does not lead necessarily or inescapably into being more non-directive. Being less directive could be connected or associated with or caused by someone becoming laissez-faire or withdrawing, giving up, relaxing or disengaging. None of which can be described as being non-directive. Similarly, becoming less non-directive does not necessarily mean becoming more directive. It could occur when someone becomes laissez-faire for instance. They are simply different activities with different uses to be deployed appropriately according to purpose and circumstances. In fact, their natures are very different, they are opposites.

Model Two: Management Consulting (MC)

This section is based on a monumental and magisterial book, *Management Consulting: A Guide to the Profession*.¹ It was first published in 1976, references here are to the third (revised) edition, 1996. There is now a fourth edition. It has xxi + 850 pages! The material is presented most accessibly through well defined and ordered sections with a comprehensive index. A veritable encyclopaedia of management consulting to which twenty-three authors contributed major sections with short contributions, mostly in box form, by twenty-six other people: and this in addition to many more who contributed to the first two editions. Their contributions are not attributed: Milan Kubr, acting as team leader and technical editor, wove them together in a seamless text.² References to Kubr, therefore, are references to this team of contributors. He says:

In our book we have opted for an eclectic approach, providing the reader with a comprehensive and balanced picture of the consulting scene, including the different methods, styles, modes or techniques applied, and pointing out their advantages and shortcomings. Thus the reader can make his or her own choice, consistent with the technical, organizational and human context of the given organization.³

Difficulties and dangers of a short piece on such a detailed presentation are apparent. However our purposes are just possible. Management consulting (MC) in this book is treated “as a *method* for improving management practices” and as a *profession* in which thousands of individuals and organizations make consulting their full-time occupation and strive for high professional standards.⁴ (Over a quarter of the text is given up to managing and developing consultancy firms.⁵) Our focus is on the attributes and application of the *methods*, as it is throughout this book.

I The Story of the Model's Development

For Kubr management consulting has its “origins in the Industrial Revolution, the advent of the modern factory and the related institutional and social transformations. Its roots are identical with those of management as a distinct area of human activity and a field of learning”. However it is only when management attains a relatively advanced stage that consulting in or for management becomes possible. That occurred in the latter part of the nineteenth century when the “scientific management” movement emerged.⁶ Originally this was known as “industrial engineering” and its practitioners often called “efficiency experts”. A strain in consulting emerged which focussed on productivity, efficiency, organizing work rationally, time and motion study, eliminating waste and cutting costs. On the one hand these consultants were admired for their drive and the improvements achieved. On the other hand they were “feared and detested by workers and trade unions because of their often ruthless approach”. The limitations of these approaches and studies such as the Hawthorne experiment in the 1920's gave new impetus to research and consulting in human relations, resource management and innovation. Consulting firms were established “able to diagnose business organizations in their totality”.⁷ Management consulting made important contributions during the Second World War and burgeoned during the post-war reconstruction. This was a period of “rapid expansion of business coupled with the acceleration of technological change, the emergence of new developing economics and the

growing internationalization of the world's industry, commerce and finance". This "created particularly favourable opportunities and demands for management consulting".⁸ MC has been at the forefront of technical progress and developments in management and related fields.⁹ Alongside the development of the consultant's skills the competence of clients in using consultants increased. Kubr writes:

Many organizations, private and public, have become real experts in using consultants effectively. They have developed their own criteria and methods for selecting consultants, collaborating with them during assignments, monitoring their interventions, learning from their approach and evaluating results. The progress made by the consulting profession would not have been possible without these improvements on the clients' part.¹⁰

This is a very telling comment about approach. Even though it is obvious that the effectiveness of consulting depends upon the combined skills of consultant *and* client, there is a propensity in the literature to concentrate on the skills of consultants and neglect those of the consultants.¹¹ Paying proper attention to both derives much from developments in the social and behavioural sciences, and particularly in community development and in client centred therapy and counselling. This is emphasized in the following summary of methodological progress in consulting:

Great efforts have been made to increase the long-term benefits derived by clients from consulting assignments by diversifying and perfecting the intervention methods applied at all stages of the consulting process. Greater emphasis has been placed on clients' active participation in problem solving, new and more effective approaches to organizational change, the development of clients' own problem-solving skills, and the need for clients to learn from every consulting assignment generally.¹²

II Knowledge Informing the Model [element (a)]

Underlying concepts and ideas of MC can be summarized under two headings: the approach to consultancy as a professional activity and the approach to critical aspects of situations in which clients operate.

1. Consultancy as a Professional Activity

Kubr defines basic terms he uses in the following ways: a *management consultant* is anyone, including managers themselves, who perform some or all of the typical consulting functions on a full-time or part-time basis; a *client* is anyone using the services of a consultant; a *consulting firm/unit/organization* is used for any type of consortium providing consulting services; a *consulting assignment/project/case/engagement* is a particular job done for a specific client.¹³

Four aspects of MC as a professional activity are noted in this section.

(a) Active participation of clients

Two quotations at the end of the previous section clearly indicate that Kubr is highly committed to the active participation of clients in the consultancy processes. He says that the authors have a strong bias for a form of consultancy in which:

- the consultant shares expertise with the client instead of trying to hide it;

- the client participates as closely and intensively as possible in the assignment;
- both parties spare no effort to make the assignment a valuable learning experience.¹⁴

So strongly does Kubr feel about this orientation that he gives a title with religious overtones to a list of behavioural implications, "The Client's Ten Commandments." They are reproduced in Display 5:2.

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1 | Lear about consulting and consultants |
| 2 | Defin your problem! |
| 3 | Defin your purpose! |
| 4 | Choose your consultant! |
| 5 | Devel a joint programme! |
| 6 | Co-operate actively with your consultant! |
| 7 | Involv the consultant in implementation! |
| 8 | Monitor progress! |
| 9 | Evaluate the results and the consultant! |
| 10 | Beware of dependence on consultants! |

Display 5:2 The Client's Ten Commandments ¹⁵

(b) Definitions and generic purposes

MC is a professional advisory, independent, temporary commercial service where "the consultant is not actually responsible for doing the task itself but is helping those who are".¹⁶ Kubr's definition follows and he illustrates it in Figure 5:4.

Management consulting is an independent professional advisory Service assisting managers and organizations in achieving organizational purposes and objectives by solving management and business problems, identifying and seizing new opportunities, enhancing learning and implementing changes.¹⁷

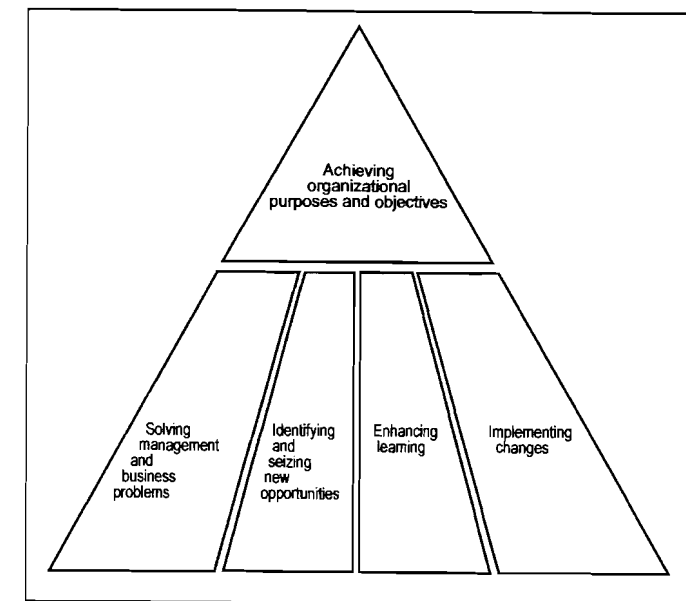


Figure 5:4 Generic Consulting Purposes ¹⁸

The status of purpose is ascribed to all five segments of the triangle. This is somewhat confusing. "Achieving organizational purposes and objectives" is an overall consultancy purpose, the other four segments are objectives which, if achieved, contribute to the purpose.¹⁹

(c) Professionalism and Ethics

Professionalism and ethics in consulting are two interrelated subjects profoundly important to MC. Kubr thinks it is an "emerging profession" because it meets some but not all of the criteria widely used to define a profession which he summarizes as: knowledge and skills; the concept of service and social interest; ethical norms; community sanction and enforcement; self-discipline and self-control (exercised by individuals and professional associates).²⁰ What is of profound importance for the provision of effective high quality consultancy services is that consultants are committed to and able to pursue a professional approach and to practise professional standards. Amongst other things this involves: technical competence; achieving the best possible results for the clients and serving their best interests; being impartial and objective; maintaining confidentiality; avoiding the payment or receipt of "commissions" which are ethically dubious; providing value for money; taking seriously wider social concerns, the client's ethics and ethical dilemmas experienced by the client and/or the consultant.²¹

2. Fundamentals of the Nature of the Work in which Clients Engage

Some underlying concepts and ideas are about what consultants consider to be fundamental critical aspects of the nature of the situations in which clients operate. Clearly these concepts shape, inform and even suffuse the consultant's approach to clients and to their work. When apposite they are fed into or used in consultations. Thus they become part of consulting processes in a dialectical relationship with the actualities of the client's work situation and the way(s) in which s/he sees it i.e. her/his "work-view". Effective use of this group of concepts depends, inter-alia, upon using them for what they are, significant ideas and theories about the nature of the species of human work systems with which consultants and clients engage and upon which they operate. Three concepts are noted in this section. They are: consulting and change; consulting and culture; structures and systems.

(a) Consulting and change

Effective management consulting engages with *technical* and *human* dimensions for change.²² For Kubr "the human dimension of organizational change is a fundamental one" because "business firms and other organizations are human systems above all." Inescapably, technological and structural change variously affects working conditions, interests and satisfaction of work people. People throughout organizations have to acquire new knowledge, tackle new tasks, upgrade their skills, give up what they would prefer to preserve and often modify their work culture, values and attitudes. A golden rule of organizational change is that those who want subordinates and colleagues to change must themselves be prepared to change.²³

Significantly, Kubr focuses on the internal human processes that bring about behavioural change in organizational life. A concept of change which enables him to do this is one developed by Kurt Lewin. It is a well-known three-stage sequential model: *unfreezing* set patterns of thought and feelings in order to consider their modification or transformation; *changing*, this stage involves "identification" and "internalization" through exploring, trying

and testing out proposed changes to be made and the associated new working relationships, methods and behaviour; *refreezing* occurs when new behaviour and attitudes are adapted and internalized or rejected and abandoned.²⁴ MC distinguishes between changes in knowledge, attitudes, individual behaviour and organizational or group behaviour which are variously induced internally and externally. A chart, reproduced in Figure 5:5 compares the difficulty involved and the time required to introduce these changes.

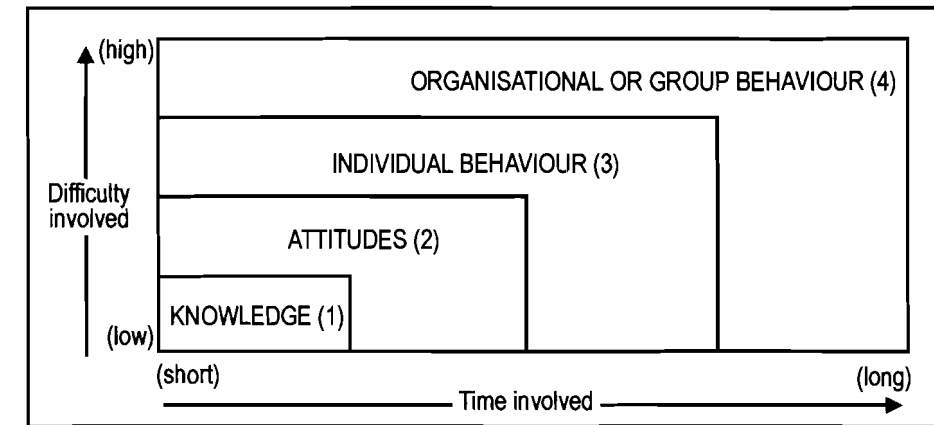


Figure 5:5: Time Span and Level of Difficulty Involved for Various Levels of Change.²⁵

Two key sentences indicate that the approach to change in MC is utilitarian: "Organizational change is not an end in itself." and "It is only a necessary means of adjusting to new conditions and sustaining or increasing competitiveness, performance and effectiveness."²⁶ Kubr says that in business practice, a great deal of change is *decided and imposed* on the organization by management.²⁷ Having noted that imposed change can create volatile situations he says that "*the trend towards participative change is ever more pronounced in most parts of the world*".²⁸ That is a movement from hierarchical action to many different levels and forms of participation dependent upon factors such as the nature of the change, the maturity of people and the working relationships in the organization. Those who wish to "promote change must encourage innovation, experiments and entrepreneurship".²⁹ One of the many ways by which this can be done is through the use of organizational development (OD) techniques such as: team building; confrontation in which selected staff are exposed to ideas about change and organizations, problem areas, development plans, feedback; coaching and counselling.³⁰ Another powerful technique for change is by training and developing staff members particularly through action learning programmes.³¹ Two basic types of change agents or facilitators are required: those whose ability is predominantly technical; those who can help to promote the active involvement of people, individually and in groups, in change processes and programmes.³² As change programmes often generate conflict, facilitators need to be able to "manage conflict". Display 5:3 reproduces a box used by Kubr to outline a recommended approach.³³

Kubr suggests "the use of special structured arrangements and intervention techniques for handling change." Examples of special structures are: special projects and assignments; temporary groups; workshops; experiments; pilot projects; new organizational units. Reasons for this are: the regular structures may be fully stretched; resistance to change may be too

strongly rooted in the existing structures; the need to test change on a limited scale; the need to find a suitable, easily understood formula which sets out the critical factors in the change programme and mobilizes support.³⁴

In planning and implementing change, interpersonal or intergroup conflict may develop for a number of reasons:

- poor communication;
- disagreement on objectives and results to be pursued;
- disagreement on intervention methods used;
- differences over the pace of change;
- resistance to change;
- fear of losing influence and power;
- competition for resources;
- non-respect of commitments;
- refusal to co-operate;
- personality and culture clashes;
- poor performance and inefficiency.

The principal methods of interpersonal conflict resolution were summarized by Gordon Lippitt in the following terms:

Withdrawal: retreating from an actual or potential conflict situation.

Smoothing: emphasizing areas of agreement and de-emphasizing areas of difference over conflictual areas.

Compromising: searching for solutions that bring some degree of satisfaction to the conflicting parties.

Forcing: exerting one's viewpoint at the potential expense of another – often open competition and win-lose situation.

Confrontation: addressing a disagreement directly and in a problem-solving mode – the affected parties work through their disagreement.

As a rule, it is advisable to depersonalize conflict by ensuring that the disputants do not sit in judgement over each other, and to focus the conflict on the basic issue by concentrating disagreement on factual grounds. Withdrawal avoids the issue, but the solution may be only provisional; it may be used as a temporary strategy to buy time or allow the parties to cool off. Forcing uses authority and power and can cause considerable resentment; it may be necessary in extreme cases where agreement obviously cannot be reached amicably. Smoothing may not address the real issue, but permits the change process to continue at least in areas of agreement. Compromising helps to avoid conflict, but tends to yield less than optimum results. Confrontation is generally regarded as most effective, owing to its problem-solving approach involving an objective examination of alternatives that are available and the search for an agreement on the best alternative. Finally, adopting an attitude of one side winning and the other side losing is like pouring gasoline on the fire of conflict.

Source: Gordon Lippitt: *Organizational renewal* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1982), pp. 151-155.

Display 5:3: How to Manage Conflict

(b) Consulting and Culture

Kubr emphasizes the importance of consultants being aware of “the power of *culture*”. They need to be “culture conscious” and “culture-tolerant” and that involves understanding and respecting it.³⁵ Culture is defined as “...a system of collectively shared values, beliefs, traditions and behavioural norms unique to a particular group of people.”³⁶ Amongst other

things, it helps people: to differentiate themselves, live and work together, cope with their environment, cohere and express their identity. Deeply rooted culture is not easily changed.³⁷

MC takes seriously the interaction between national, professional, organizational and group cultures and their sub-cultures in the client's work place. Consultants have to engage with relevant aspects of these cultures out of, and in relation to their own consulting culture. And clients have to engage with the consultant's professional culture out of their own work culture and in relation to it.³⁸ It follows, and Kubr emphasizes this, that consultants need to research the cultures with which they are working and especially how interpersonal relations and manners operate and trust is established. Knowledge of this kind is essential but it is also necessary to acquire the ability to work with clients and their culture.³⁹

(c) Systems

Organizational systems or “systems of organizations” receive considerable attention in MC. The term refers to such things as: processes, procedures, methods related to management information systems, business planning systems, operations scheduling and control systems and IT systems. Some systems may be proprietary ones. Consultants variously help clients to: establish new systems; improve or develop existing ones or simply to “service” them; develop their competence in using them. In fact Kubr claims that a major portion of all consulting services concerns such systems and methods.⁴⁰ For the purposes of analysis, design, development and consulting, therefore, organizations are seen to comprise a number of work systems or processes. These systems, or possibly more correctly sub-systems, are ways of doing things, procedures, processes, working relationships, modes of operation etc. Each of which can be considered separately in relation to the others. Overall organizational effectiveness and efficiency depends upon them working well both independently and interdependently. However, working to and with these systems is not to be confused with systems thinking or a systemic approach to organizational consulting. There are very brief references to systemics but hard or soft systems thinking does not appear to be a feature in Kubr's *Management Consulting*.

III Praxis of the Model [element (b)]

This part has two main sections, the longer one is on the modus operandi of MC and the second is about its operational modes.

1. Modus Operandi: How the Model Works

This section makes an attempt to show how MC works by describing consultant and client relationships, how consultants seek to influence client systems and the five phase consulting process.

(a) The Consultant-Client Working Relationship

This consultancy model emphasizes the importance of consultants building and maintaining relationships of understanding and trust with clients and the client system.⁴¹ In the widest sense the organization which employs the consultant is the client system but in the narrower sense it is individuals or groups with whom the consultant engages and through whom the consultant-client relationship is actualized and “personalized”.⁴² Such active clients are not independent operators, they are integral members of their organization with its structures, processes and relationships which can be highly complex and recondite. To take all this seriously involves, inter alia, consultants referring to “client systems”, taking a

systems view of the client organization and trying to map out the network of relationships in which they are going to operate.” Doing this involves, for instance, determining who holds power related to the consultancy assignment, who is mainly interested in its success or failure and whose collaboration is essential. [This and one to the “systems principle” related to problem diagnosis are the only references I have found which could point to a systemic view.] Consultants seek to influence the client system in a range of ways by: demonstrating technical expertise; exhibiting professional integrity at work; demonstrating empathy with the client; using assertive persuasion; developing a common vision; using participation and trust; using rewards and punishments (e.g. enhancing someone’s self-esteem, privately or publicly); using tensions and anxieties⁴³

Kubr argues that “the overriding objective [for consultants and clients] should always be the creation and maintenance of a *true collaborative relationship*. This is a golden rule of consulting”.⁴⁴ Within that relationship consultants can adopt various “behavioural roles”. Two of the basic ones are resource and process roles. Resource consultants suggest to clients *what* to change. Process consultants suggest *how* to change and help clients to do so.⁴⁵ (This role refers to an Edgar Schein’s process consultation model described in the Model One of this Chapter.)

Using an adapted version of Lippitt’s diagram, Figure 5:6, further suggestions are made of the spectrum of roles spanning the two basic roles.⁴⁶ These roles are “seen as ‘spheres of influence’ rather than a static continuum of isolated behaviour”.⁴⁷ Consultants can play several roles simultaneously or consecutively. “Directive”, for Kubr, means “behaviours where the consultant assumes a position of leadership, initiates activity or tells the client what to do. In the non-directive role he or she provides data for the client to use or not to use”.⁴⁸ [I am bound to say that this is an emasculated understanding of the non-directive approach which provides a strong lead to clients to think things out and to take responsibility for themselves as practitioners and for their work and engages intensively with them about whether or not to use the data they have provided – and any other ideas – and if so how, when and why. See Chapter Six, Model One. Earlier, in this chapter there is a critique of a slightly different version of Lippitt’s diagram which equally applies to Figure 5:6. on the next page.]

Additional to the roles discussed above and noted in Figure 5:6, Kubr sees “tremendous potential for using counselling as a tool of consulting” especially in helping individuals or groups to overcome personal difficulties. Similarly he sees coaching as a way of helping clients to improve their performance or their interpersonal working relationships.⁴⁹

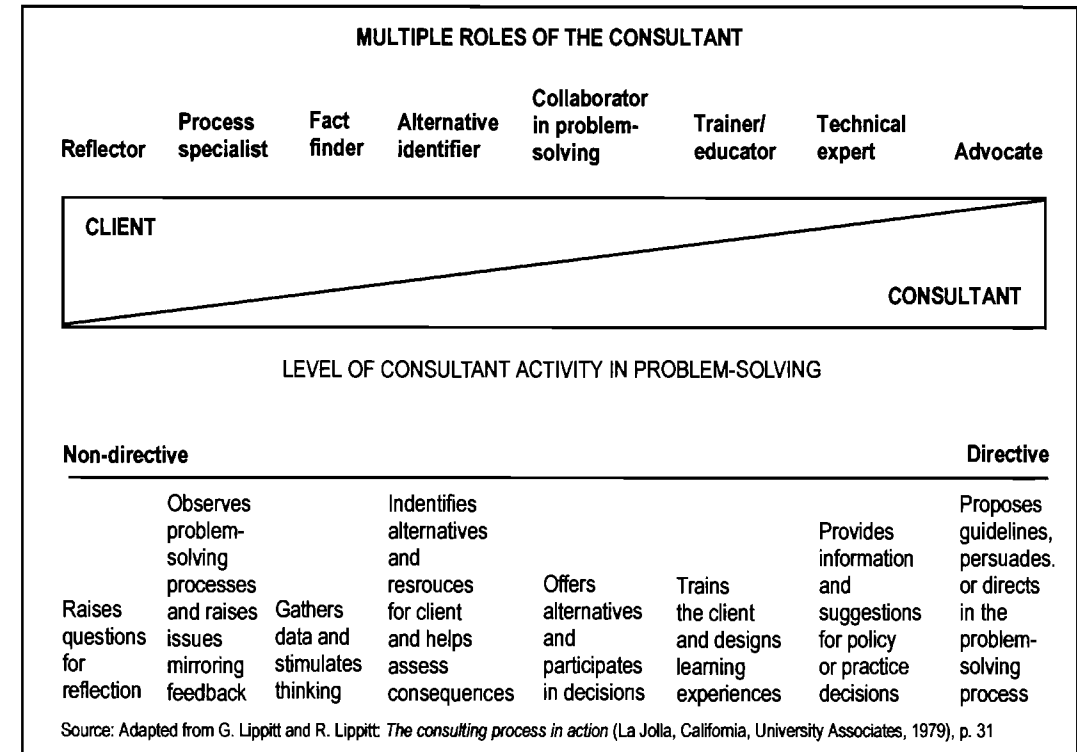


Figure 5:6: Description of the Consultant’s Role on a Directive and Non-Directive Continuum

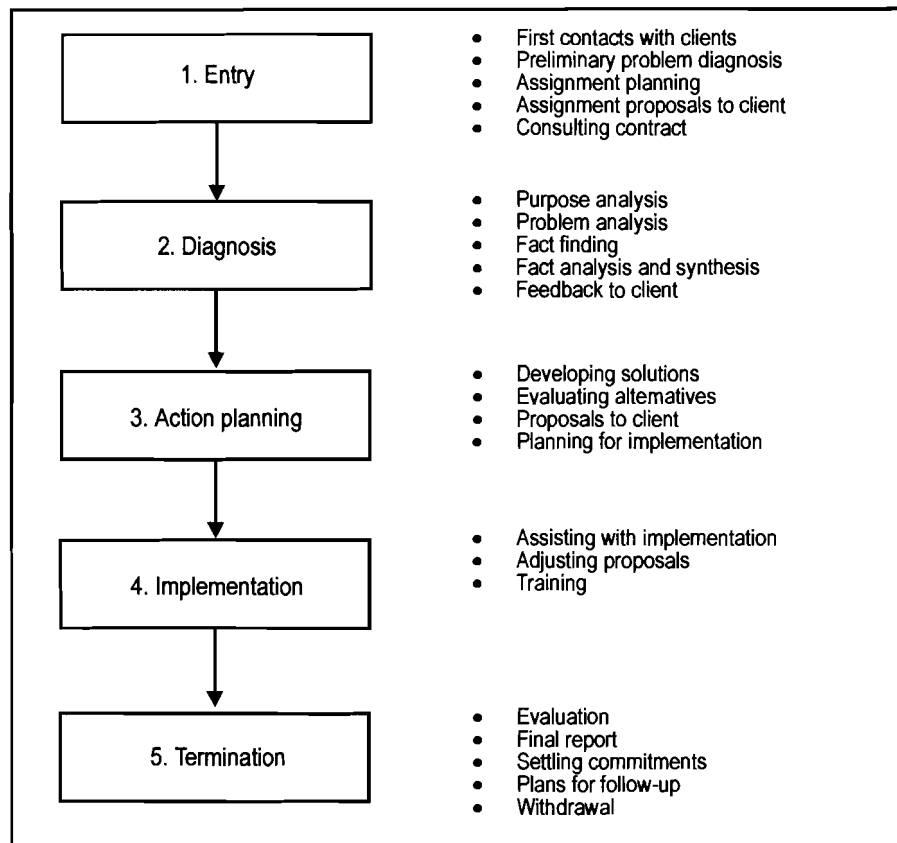
(b) The Five Phase Consulting Process

An overview of the consulting process is given in a chart which is reproduced in Display 5:4 on the next page. It comprises five principal phases each of which is broken down into sub-phases or parallel activities, shown on the right column of the chart as bullet points.

These traditional phases are described and discussed most helpfully in considerable detail.⁵¹ For the most part the Display and what has already been said about this model are all that our purposes require in relation to the consulting process. Apart, that is, from highlighting significant things related to Phases 1 to 3 which cannot be deduced from the display.

Using comparisons in preliminary problem diagnosis (Phase 1)

Kubr claims that comparisons are powerful diagnostic tools. Comparisons, that is, of the current situation with past achievements and the client’s own objectives, plans and standards; or, alternatively by comparing the client organization with comparable organizations whilst remaining fully aware that clients and organizations are unique and to be treated as such. Such comparisons guide consultants in “preliminary quick assessments of strengths, weaknesses, development prospects and desirable improvements”.⁵²



Display 5:4: Phases of the Consulting Process⁵⁰

Diagnosis (Phase 2)

This section⁵³ explores issues related to diagnosing purposes and problems. A guiding principle is stated at the outset: “diagnostic work should start with a clear conceptual framework”.⁵⁴ An important part of that framework in MC is that “effective diagnosis is consistently focussed on the purposes of the project”.⁵⁵ Applying this “purposes principle” to problem diagnosis means that consultants and clients first explore what is the purpose of tackling the problem rather than examining the nature of the problem, “define the purpose, not the problem”.⁵⁶ So a consultant’s opening question is, “What are we trying to accomplish here?” rather than “What’s wrong here?”.⁵⁷ These approaches are significantly different. Defining the purposes of working on a problem involves, inter alia, assessing: what a solution of the problem will achieve; who will benefit and who will “lose out”; whether this is *the* problem that needs to be tackled; the human and physical cost of tackling it; whether the resources are available to do so and, if so, is this the best use of them. This sets the problem in the *array of purposes* associated with the problem and enables the identification of the *focus purpose*. Focussing on purposes makes it far more likely that consultants and clients will work on the “right” rather than the “wrong” problem and commit themselves to doing so and that effort is applied when and where it is likely to have the greatest impact. Purposes provide directional and contextual reference points for problem diagnosis.⁵⁸

A framework is offered for planning diagnostic work. It consists of five principal dimensions or characteristics by which clients’ problems can be identified. They are:

- *substance or identity of the problem and its symptoms* (e.g. low performance or shortage of competent staff);
- *organizational and physical location of the problem;*
- *problem “ownership – who are the people affected by the problem?”*
- *absolute and relative magnitude of the problem* (its importance to the clients, the client organization system and the organization);
- *time perspective of the problem – how long it has existed, rate of recurrence etc.*

Further diagnosis will involve establishing: the causes of the problem; other significant relationships; the client’s potential to solve the problem; possible directions of further action.⁵⁹

Six other approaches to diagnosis are used in MC: first, causal analysis “of relationships between conditions and events”;⁶⁰ second, “force-field analysis” originally developed by Kurt Lewin;⁶¹ third, “comparison” (see earlier description of this approach); fourth, analysing the future;⁶² fifth, feedback to clients;⁶³ sixth, synthesis which provides a link with “action planning” i.e. phase three of the consulting process. Synthesis, more difficult says Kubr, than analysis, is the other side of the analytical coin. It involves, inter alia, identifying and correlating “basic relationships, trends and causes” to be taken into account in relation to promoting change.⁶⁴

Action Planning (Phase 3)

Kubr argues that clients should become more actively involved in action planning than in diagnosis: clients must find plans acceptable and be able to implement them; it helps to mobilize all good ideas and to do the best design work; it generates client commitment to plans; it increases learning opportunities.⁶⁵ The emphasis in MC is on promoting creative thinking “defined as the *relating of things or ideas which were previously unrelated*. It combines a rigorous analytical approach with intuition and imagination...to develop something new”.⁶⁶ And, presumably, something that works! Kubr believes creativity can be learned. To get the best results five phases need to be practised (much in this model comes in 5’s and 10’s). They are:

- **preparation** (gathering facts, restating purposes and problems, analysing them etc.);
- **effort** (divergent thinking which generates many ideas);
- **incubation** (leaving what emerges in the subconscious whilst engaging in other things);
- **insight** (flashes of illumination);
- **evaluation** (analysis of ideas to find an action plan).

The first two stages require analytical thinking; the others require suspended judgment and free wheeling. A key to successful creative thinking is the separation of ideas-production and idea-evaluation. Techniques which variously help people to engage in creative thinking are:

- *brainstorming;*
- *synectics;* (A sequence of exchanges between a client and members of a small group about a problem and suggestions for solving it until possible solutions are found.)

- *attribute listing*; (Attributes of ideas or objects are examined separately to see how they can be changed, normally used on tangible rather than intangible things.)
- *forced relationships*; (A technique for examining different ways in which ideas or objects can be combined.)
- *morphological analysis*; (In this technique variables are set down in a matrix and attempts made to combine them in new ways.)
- *lateral thinking and PO*; (PO stands for “give the idea a chance”).
- *check lists*;
- *the six thinking hats* (An approach developed by Edward de Bono in which each hat has a different colour and represents a particular mode of thinking: white, assessing information; yellow, looking for advantages and black, looking for constraints; green, creative thinking; blue, for bringing thinking processes together. Participants actually wear these hats during sessions!)
- *breaking through thinking*; (This approach developed by Gerald Nadler and Shozo Hibino, is widely used by Kubr and is based on “seven principles of creative problem solving, see Display 5:5.)
- *day-dreaming*;
- *group-genius*. (This technique involves forming groups of people who use different forms of creative thinking.)⁶⁷

Breakthrough Thinking provides a more effective approach. It is not a step-by-step process but seven ways of thinking about problems and their solutions, based on the following principles:

- (1) **The uniqueness principle**: Whatever the apparent similarities, each problem is unique and requires an approach that dwells initially on its own contextual needs.
- (2) **The purposes principle**: Focusing on expanding purposes helps strip away non-essential aspects to avoid working on the wrong problem.
- (3) **The solution-after-next principle**: Innovation can be stimulated and solutions made more effective by working backwards from an ideal target solution. Having a target solution in the future gives direction to near-term solutions and infuses them with larger purposes.
- (4) **The systems principle**: Every problem is part of a larger system of problems, and solving one problem inevitably leads to another. Having a clear framework of what elements and dimensions comprise a solution assures its workability and implementation.
- (5) **The limited information collection principle**: Excessive data gathering may create an expert in the problem area, but knowing too much about it will probably prevent the discovery of some excellent alternatives. Always determine expanded purposes of any proposed information collection before doing it.
- (6) **The people design principle**: Those who carry out and use the solution should be intimately and continuously involved in its development by getting involved in the first five principles. Also, in designing for other people, the solution should include only the critical details in order to allow some flexibility to those who must apply the solution.
- (7) **The betterment time-line principle**: The only way to preserve the vitality of a solution is to build in and then monitor a programme of continual change to achieve larger purposes and move towards target solutions.

Author: E. Michael Shays. A detailed discussion can be found in G. Nadler and S. Hibino: *Breakthrough Thinking: The seven principles of creative problem solving* (Rocklin, California, Prima Publishing, 1994).

Display 5:5: Breakthrough Thinking ⁶⁸

2. Operational Modes

There are ten ways in which MC consultants give consulting assistance:

- Providing information.
- Providing specialist resources.
- Establishing business contacts and linkage.
- Providing expert opinion.
- Doing diagnostic work.
- Developing action proposals.
- Improving systems and methods.
- Planning and managing organizational changes.
- Training and developing management and staff.
- Providing personal counselling.⁶⁹

Management Consulting describes in detail ways in which professional consultants provide these services either as external or internal consultants or through external/internal partnerships. Some external consultants operate as “sole practitioners” or as “consulting professors”, i.e. people who teach or research management or management consulting praxis or those who train managers and act as consultants. Others do so through consulting organizations – large multifunctional or small or medium sized consulting firms. Internal consultants operate through consulting units established within organizations, businesses, government departments. Kubr says that “in a growing number of cases, assignments are entrusted to joint teams of external or internal consultants”.⁷⁰ A substantial part of the book is given up to considering “managing a consulting firm” and “developing management consultants and the consulting profession”.⁷¹ MC is big business. Kubr says the current market for consulting services is global, important, competitive, open and liberal, centralized and polarized and professionally challenging. In 1992 management consulting revenues worldwide amounted to US\$28.3 billion. And at least 25 international firms employed more than 1,000 consultants and there are thousands of sole consulting practitioners and small firms.⁷²

Consultancy services are variously delivered by “generalist” and “specialist” consultants. Generalists deal with several areas of management and focus on their interaction, coordination and integration”. They consult about the “very existence, the basic goals or ‘mission’, the business policy and strategy, and the overall planning, structuring and control of an organization”. These issues formerly referred to as *general management* subjects are now referred to as *corporate strategy* or *strategic management* subjects. Generalist consulting is *multi-functional and interdisciplinary*. Specialists deal with “special areas of knowledge and its application”. There is a “pronounced trend”, says Kubr, “towards greater specialization which reflects the growing range and complexity of issues handled by consultants”.⁷³ Both approaches are illustrated in *Management Consulting* by eleven chapters describing in some detail generalist and specialist consulting in eleven areas of management. One chapter, for instance, is on “consulting in general and strategic management” and there are chapters on consulting in financial, production and human resource management.⁷⁴ Both generalist and specialist consultants are needed: co-operation is essential; generalists are informed by

specialists; specialists need to set their subject matter in the wider context and to look at things from the generalist's perspective.⁷⁵

IV Application: Work Settings to Which the Model is Applicable [element (c)]

It is clear from the description of this model that it is applicable to the general and specialist management of organizations in industry and commerce in the private sector and in the public sector.

V Understanding of the Consultor's Work [element (d)]

In this model, consultants are required to have a profound understanding of general specialist management praxis and its application to a wide range of organizations and organizational settings.

VI Principles [element (e)]

Thoroughgoing professionalism undergirds MC philosophically and theoretically in relation to both management consultancy and the management of secular organizations in the private and public sectors. This dual professionalism emerges from the scientific management movement (see the introduction to this model). It draws on the concepts and theories about: change in people and in institution's organizational and community culture; systems in organization but not upon systems thinking praxis. It assumes that management can be analysed logically and systematically through various consultancy processes and procedures and that consultants, clients and managers can engage in creative thinking. It is committed to actively involving clients in consulting and in collaboration with consultants.

MC draws eclectically upon four fundamental basic bodies of knowledge. First, it draws upon the general body of knowledge about consultancy and the specialist body about management generalist and specialist consulting. Second, it draws upon the bodies of knowledge associated with the multi-disciplines associated with general and specialist management. Third, it draws upon the bodies of knowledge about professional consultancy and consulting firms. Fourth, it draws heavily upon the social and behavioural sciences especially in relation to change, culture, organizational structure and behaviour.

VII A Summary of Key Features of the Model

MC emerges as a generic, multi-purpose model for management consulting in secular business institutions and organizations. Basics of the model are modelled diagrammatically in Figure 5:7. on the next page.

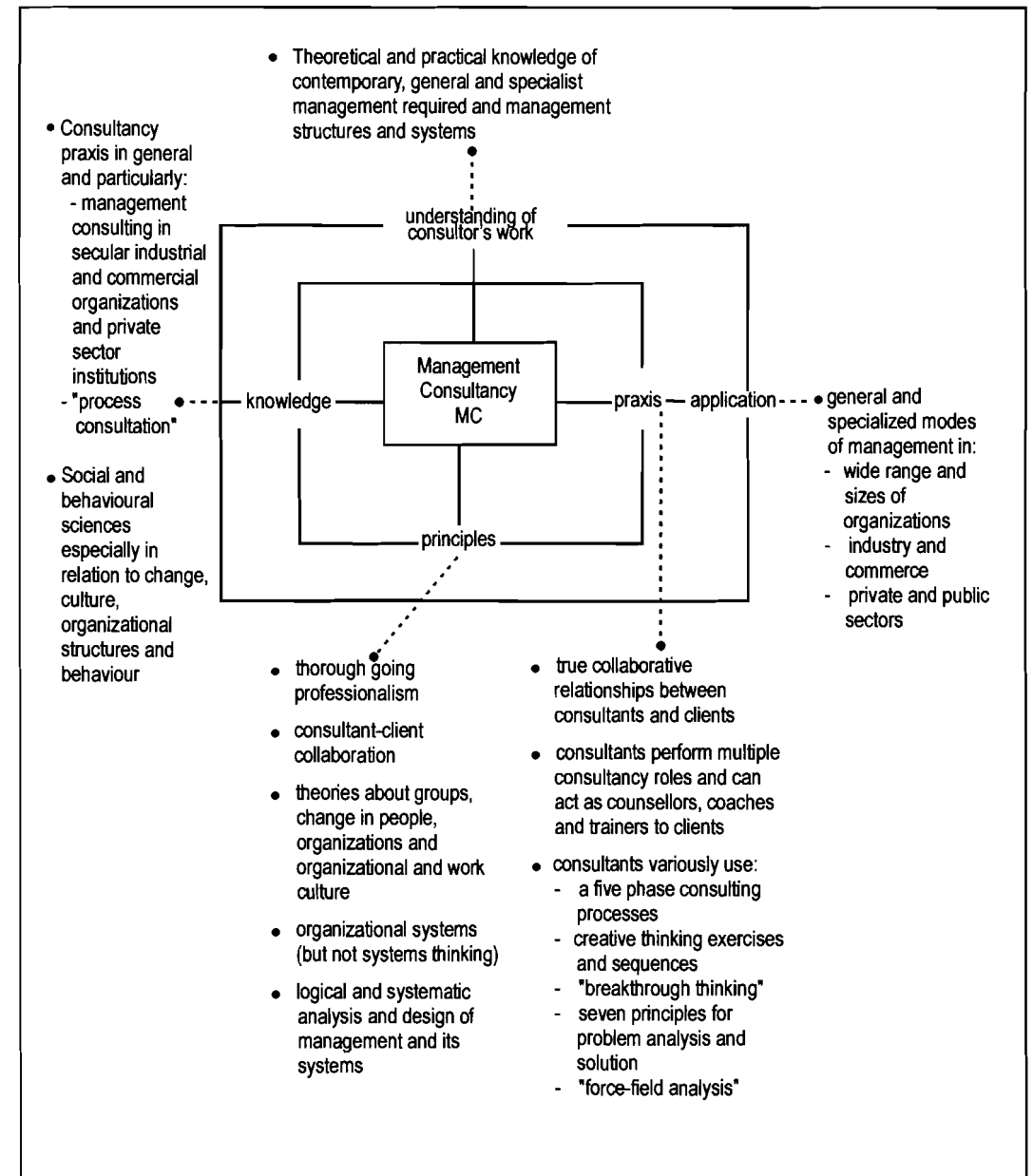


Figure 5:7: A Diagrammatic Representation of Fundamentals of the MC Model

Model Three: Systems Thinking for Managers (STM)

Critical aspects of this model are described by Nano McCaughan and Barry Palmer who designed, tested and researched it and have described it in *Systems Thinking for Harassed Managers*.¹ This book, they say, “is an attempt to put into words, necessarily incompletely, concepts and principles that illuminate what managers and consultants do when they are using a systems approach” in relation to organizations, real problems and problematic situations in organizations.² McCaughan and Palmer say that the book contains “say-how” rather than “know-how” which cannot be gained without practice in work situations or training workshops. They do not attempt to give a comprehensive account of management or consultancy.³ This model with its emphasis on systems thinking and systemics, contrasts with the two previous models which emphasize process and systems but not systemic concepts.

I The Story of the Model's Development

Nano McCaughan became interested in systemic thinking when she was a local authority Development Officer through being introduced to the Milan approach to family therapy. Until 1981 Barry Palmer had been working for the Grubb Institute when he too was introduced to and embraced the Milan approach. Quite independently and from different backgrounds both of them came “to systems thinking from prior experience of work with groups and organizations using psychoanalytic concepts, based upon the premise of a dynamic unconscious”. They had both experiences of workshops on group relations based on the open systems model of organizations.⁴

In the early 1980's they began to collaborate in running workshops for managers initially based on the group relations' models. In 1985 they began to introduce participants to systems thinking as developed in family therapy. Their model draws upon their experience of nine such workshops, entitled, “Change Without Chaos”.⁵ They like “the systems approach because: it is an adult-to-adult approach”; it focuses upon the participants' “experience of their organizations, and upon the theory, rather than upon us (the consultants) as repositories of superior knowledge”; it enables managers to engage with and begin to shift “large problems without being overwhelmed by them”.⁶ In all this and in writing the book about it, they say that they drew upon the ideas and experiences of many other writers. Some of these are apparent in the book.

[Barry Palmer's research with Philip Boxer into the fool position in consultancy is discussed in Chapter Nine. The report on that research and the book about this model were published in the same year. But as far as I can tell they are not cross referenced.]

II Knowledge Informing the Model [element (a)]

Underlying concepts and ideas of this model are similar to those described in relation to some previous models. So, what follows is restricted to emphases and significant differences to what has already been said about them.

1. Systems and systems thinking

Following Gregory Bateson and the Milan School, McCaughan and Palmer are primarily concerned with “systems as patterns of interaction” and systems thinking as “a way of describing and explaining the patterns of behaviour in the life of organizations”. They do not distinguish between “hard” and “soft” systems as Checkland and Scholes do. However, the following statement suggests they are nearer to soft than to hard systems thinking:

In all these statements we have used phrases like “may be looked upon”, “may be understood”, because systems, like beauty, exists in the eye of the beholder. No system exists without someone who perceives or distinguishes the components as components of a larger whole.⁷

Understanding systems as “closed feed back loops” involves distinguishing between *linear* and *circular or recursive* interactive processes.⁸ Linear processes are those which occur when one form of behaviour is seen to trigger another. Circular processes are those which occur when each behaviour triggers the other in continuous processes of circular causation. Circular processes “run back”, the root meaning of recursive. A basic skill of systems practice (practising systems thinking) is that of recognizing these recursive processes, or feedback loops, which “go round in circles”. A system is structured, constituted and regulated by feedback; a system “is this recursive pattern”. Thermostatically controlled heating systems have been widely used to illustrate feedback: when the temperature falls the heating is switched on and vice versa.⁹

2 Organizations as Systems

Distinctions are made between two broadly systemic approaches to understanding organizations. One is the “open system” model. It derives from physical and biological systems' studies. It focuses on the dynamic relationship between an organization and its environment. Widely used by managers it is particularly useful in exploring and designing processes operative in organizations.¹⁰ The other approach is referred to as a “recursive systems model” and represents “organizations as patterns of feedback loops” described in the previous section. This is the model used in this mode of consultancy. “These feedback processes include those by which the organization as a whole retains its identity, in the eyes of those who have dealings with it”. The body of theory to which they refer is that originating from two scientists already referred to, Maturana and Varela. They give an excellent, accessible and succinct summary of this body of theory. A basic understanding is that social systems such as organizations are comparable to biological systems such as plants and animals. One of the capacities that they have in common is the ability “continuously to regenerate the relations by which they are constituted”. Maturana and Varela call this process “autopoiesis”, which means “self-making”. Amongst other things, this means a human being is recognizably the same individual throughout her/his life, even though they are not made of any of the same stuff after seven years due to the constant turnover of their body's constituent molecules. Similarly, it is argued, “an organization is recognizable as the same organization, even after 100% turnover of staff - provided they do not all leave at once!”¹¹

Autopoiesis results from feedback processes.

A distinctive feature of human organizations is that the people in them can learn. Organizational learning is important; the survival and effectiveness of all kinds of organizations depends upon their capacity to learn. Learning organizations help their

members to learn and are capable of corporate learning which is expressed in modifying their structures and practices. Promoting learning is clearly a function of consultancy. It is important, therefore, to take seriously things which inhibit and prevent the development of “self-questioning culture” in organizations. McCaughan and Palmer quote from Gareth Morgan the following three things which do so. They are:

- “impression–management”: the methods by which managers and staff set out to make the situation look *better* than it is, rather than *as* it is;
- inattention to the gap between rhetoric and practice, or between what Argyris and Schon have called “espoused theories” and “theories-in-use”;
- group influence: the considerable social rewards that come to those who do not challenge current practices.¹²

3 Linear and Paradoxical Interventions

Now we turn to forms of intervention practised by McCaughan and Palmer in their systemic approach to consultancy. (Forms of intervention practised by Edgar Schein in Process Consultation are described in Model One of this Chapter.) First, following Selvini-Palazzoli they claim that human beings “have to find a way between two modes of communication: through verbal language, which is essentially linear in structure, and through the non-verbal language of behaviour, which is essentially circular, based on feedback”.¹³ Proceeding from this, they practise two modes of intervention. One form they describe as “linear” or “straight interventions”. By this they mean “common-sense interventions that take no account of dynamic complexity”. Such interventions can involve advising (the word they use) clients to: get fuller information; share information; bring people together; clarify roles, aims and objectives. The other form they call “paradoxical interventions”.¹⁴ They are contrasted in this way:

Making straight interventions is like talking prose: we do it all the time.
Paradoxical interventions are the poetry of consultancy practice.¹⁵

To add to the difficulty of grasping precisely what is meant by a paradoxical intervention McCaughan Palmer say: “However, no intervention can be labelled “straight” or “paradoxical” without reference to the circumstances”.¹⁶

According to McCaughan and Palmer, the Milan Group of family therapists came up with the idea of giving “paradoxical instruction” to solve the problem of blame that they were encountering in families. The common practice of blaming one member or each other for their difficulties, locks them into assumptions of linear causation which precludes acknowledgement of recursive processes within the family. Therapists who accept such explanations become part of the problem and endorse the blaming culture. The Milan group began practising “positive connotation” which is described earlier.¹⁷ So for example, the positive connotation of a girl refusing to go to school could be that she is staying at home to care for her mother and to see that no harm comes to her. Communicating this to the family has been referred to as a “paradoxical injunction”.¹⁸

In trying to describe what is meant by paradoxical interventions McCaughan and Palmer say that systemic practice is “concerned not with the paradoxes that have preoccupied philosophers, but with what have been called “existential paradoxes”; that is, with paradoxes that are lived and not merely thought about”. Following Wilden they say these are experienced “as a command that can be neither obeyed nor disobeyed; or to put it more

subtly, to obey it is to disobey it, and to disobey it is to obey it”.¹⁹ Examples are given to help us to get our minds round this paradoxical conundrum. One example is of a notice in a corridor that says, “No authorized persons beyond this point”. If we assume we are unauthorized we are authorized to proceed; if we are authorized we are forbidden; so we must be unauthorized persons who are entitled (authorized) to continue. Most people would step outside the frame of the order with a laugh – and that is one way of dealing with such paradoxes. Except, that is, if you were a prisoner in the building and had been told by your captors that if you disobeyed any command you would be executed. Then you might feel you were in an untenable position. (As a young national serviceman in the British Army I frequently experienced paradoxical commands!) Other simple instructions are said to have the same structure: “Cheer up!” “Go to sleep”; these are seen to be variations on the “be spontaneous” paradox; choice is an illusion.²⁰ Another example is the following Jewish joke:

Give your son Marvin two sports shirts as a present. The first time he wears one of them, look at him sadly and say in your Basic Tone of Voice: “The other one you didn’t like?”²¹

Essential ingredients of paradoxical injunctions according to Watzlawick are:

- a strong complementary relationship (parent and child, boss and subordinate, captor and prisoner [or consultant and client?]);
- within the frame of this relationship, an injunction that can neither be obeyed nor disobeyed;
- conditions that inhibit or prevent the one who is subject to the injunction from stepping outside the frame and so dissolving the paradox.²²

But consultants are generally not able to instruct their clients even if they should want to; clients are more likely to instruct them.²³ McCaughlan and Palmer seek to have colleague relationships with their clients rather than ones of dependence and hierarchy.²⁴

McCaughlan and Palmer say they are still exploring the application of the concept of paradoxical intervention to organizational consultancy.²⁵ (That is reassuring because I am struggling to make connections between its theory and practice.) They make three points about the way in which they saw things at the time of writing. First, their aim is to help clients to understand the recursive logic of their situations and their relationships with them. If they are able to work with systemic hypotheses they are better able to discern options for action not suggested by common sense and linear thinking. “In this sense”, they say, “they could be called paradoxical. But they will not be experienced as existential paradoxes by the client”. Second, “it is one thing to formulate hypotheses, and another to translate them into action”. They claim that “the most powerful interventions bubble up from the unconscious and have a quirky playfulness that cannot be achieved by applying a formula”. People (consultants and clients) who have in their unconscious models of paradoxical interventions are better equipped to generate innovations when required. Third, it is possible for consultants to playfully behave as though they are in hierarchical relationships to make effective paradoxical interventions.²⁶

Following Papp, McCaughan and Palmer say that there are, “three major techniques used in designing and applying a systemic paradox: reframing (Papp uses the term ‘redefining’); prescribing; restraining”.²⁷ An example is reproduced in Display 5:6 of a prescribing,

systemic paradox intervention. (This I understand even though I would not use these concepts to describe the nature of the intervention.)

Presumably, systemic paradoxes can be used in similar ways that systemic hypotheses can be used. Two principal ways of translating hypotheses into options for action are offered: to present them to clients who may then present them to colleagues; to address them to oneself.²⁸

Sarah ... was involved in a symmetrical power struggle with a senior worker, Robert, who did not attend staff meetings. A member of the consulting group made three suggestions to Sarah:

Make Robert the expert – he could ask the young people what they want from the project. [It had emerged that of all staff members, Robert was closest to the young people.]

Recontextualize the conversation with Robert by trying to enter a neutral zone: have a rule that you and he can ask questions of each other, but nothing can be *demand*ed.

The first intervention proposes that Sarah should approach Robert in a different way. The second makes more specific proposals for “recontextualized” meetings between them – that is, meetings with different ground rules. Both, if adopted, may block them from taking up their usual antagonistic pattern of relating to one another, and may create space for something different to happen between them.

Two months later, it was evident that Sarah had moved on. She said that all she could remember of the various interventions was that she should clarify Robert’s role and undertake a joint task with him. It appeared that the questioning that had revealed Robert’s closeness to the young people had made the manager feel better about his work and role. At a recent job evaluation, Robert had himself decided that he would be better off without management responsibility. Sarah ended by saying: “Robert has become much less significant to me, others more so; he is well down my list of worries about staff”.

Display 5:6: A Prescribing Systemic Paradox Intervention²⁹

[By way of confession, whilst I glimmer the significance in the concept of paradox and the various insights, I feel I have not made firm connections between them and consultancy praxis. In fact, I am left with the feeling that the material presented on “paradox” is praxis thinking which has not yet matured and is, therefore, difficult to grasp and to translate into practice theory. For this reason I have put it in this section rather than III.]

4. Conflict and Collaboration

In a brief section on conflict and collaboration the interesting point is made that shared aims may be the ideal for cooperative activity but the reality is that it is conflicting beliefs and

ideologies which shape organizational affairs. They do not generally “add up to an integrated, consistent system of aims and values. Instead, individuals and groups are committed to an array of only partly compatible assumptions”. As a result managers find themselves confronted with apparently insoluble dilemmas, and they may lurch between one false solution and another, or become immobilized between factions representing different commitments”.³⁰ As we shall see, an important part of the praxis of consultancy and management in this model is tackling “dilemmas”. And, as McCaughan and Palmer say, “systemic thinking is a way of bringing into view the rich network of connectedness that is at risk in organizational change”.³¹

III Praxis: of the Model [element (b)]

This part has two sections: *modus operandi*; operational modes.

1. Modus Operandi: How the Model Works

In the introduction to this model it was noted that McCaughan and Palmer do not give a comprehensive account of consultancy. What they offer is a “framework for defining, analysing, intervening in, and learning from problematical situations, one that might be adopted in a variety of consulting relationships”.³² Some aspects of the framework have already been noted. As others are familiar especial emphases only are described.

(a) Problems

Four snares to tackling problems effectively are identified: focussing on presenting problems and quick-fixes; attributing difficulties to blameworthy individuals or groups; defining problems in ways that they cannot be resolved; applying energy at the wrong place.³³ Avoiding these snares involves, *inter alia*, making several distinctions which crisscross problems, help to understand them and constitute ways of approaching and tackling them.

Following Peter Checkland, *hard problems* are distinguished from *soft* ones. Hard problems are about “achieving an identified and desired end”, for instance, arranging a staff meeting for people on different shifts. Participants are agreed about the value of the meetings, the problem is how to organize it so that all can attend. Soft problems are those “in which purposes are problematic”. On the basis of these definitions, McCaughan and Palmer observe, “So problems are not as solid as they sometimes appear”.³⁴ This leads to distinguishing between *malfunction* and *complaint*: a malfunction occurs when, for instance, a machine breaks down; complaint, “a more dynamic condition”, occurs in conversation when, for example, someone reports and bemoans the breakdown of the machine. (A complaint can also be an illness.) Differentiating between them in organizational life can be revealing, although it is sometimes difficult because the relationship between them can be complex.³⁵ Another distinction is that between *detail* and *dynamic complexity*. The logistics of a college timetable is an example of detail complexity. A situation in which the same action leads to dramatically different results is an example of dynamic complexity. Yet another distinction is that identified by Watzlawick between a *difficulty* and a *problem*: a difficulty is an undesirable state of affairs which can be resolved or accommodated; a problem is an impasse created and compounded by mishandling a difficulty.³⁶ Consequently “problems are made and not born”. “They do not come into existence independently of us: they are created in our minds and conversations”. They are shaped by:

- The aims and wishes that are motivating the problem-owner to act.
- The context in which the problem-owner defines the problem, and in particular the way he or she perceives the one to whom the complaint is addressed.³⁷

(b) Questions and Questioning

“Wisdom in human affairs seems to be a matter of asking the right questions”.³⁸ Certainly it is seen to be key to good consulting in this model. McCaughan and Palmer emphasize listening and clarifying. Much of what they say resonates with the Milan approach to and use of questions and questioning. They deploy systemic (or circular) questioning to establish circuitry and patterns and to explore meaning. To explore meaning they use a framework developed by Cronen and Pearce for “analysing communication which they call the theory of the Co-ordinated Management Meaning (CMM)”. The theory proposes that “people in a system ‘co-create’ their reality, with all its complexities, puzzles and problems. They ascribe meaning to what is happening between them, by reference to one or more contexts that they assume they share”.³⁹

Several types of questioning are used. One type they call *comparative questioning* by which they mean getting clients “to translate broad generalizations into precise differences”.⁴⁰ *Circular questioning* is another type which derives from the Milan Group of family therapy and is described earlier.⁴¹ Then there is *reflexive questioning* introduced by Karl Tomm after studying the work of the Milan Group and that of Maturana. McCaughan and Palmer have found the following four of Tomm’s categories useful.⁴² First, there are *observer perspective questions* designed to enhance self-awareness and sensitivity to others by getting clients to draw out consequences of action and patterns of behaviour. An example they give is, “How would your line manager see your future – if he were here what would he say about his predictions of your career?” A second category is *unexpected context change questions* which “hinge on the fact that whenever we ascribe a quality to something, we imply a contrast with an opposite or complementary quality”. So, for example, a manager who calls a colleague’s work incompetent might be asked what s/he might be doing when experienced as competent. A third category is *future-oriented questions* designed to bring into focus fears or hopes for the future, which are influencing the client’s present behaviour. The fourth category is *process interruption questions* about processes observed and interrupted by consultants. Asking, “who would actually lose or gain most if you were to make a decision about this”, for instance, might be a way of interrupting an evasion process.⁴³

(c) Constructing and Using Hypotheses

Generally speaking McCaughan and Palmer follow the Milan Group on the use of hypotheses. They use a definition by Maturana and Varela. A hypothesis is “a conceptual system capable of generating the phenomenon to be explained in a way acceptable to a body of observers.”⁴⁴ As noted in Section I:1 of the description of this Model, they distinguish between linear and circular explanations of human behaviour. Their emphasis is upon circular or systemic or paradoxical hypotheses which explain and describe things in terms of closed feedback loops, homeostasis (stable patterns) and how problem owners perpetuate problems. McCaughan and Palmer give a sober warning about the nature of hypotheses: “no hypothesis can be more than a ‘take on what is going on’...” In using them the map must not be confused with the territory.⁴⁵ (This resonates with what is said about knowledge representations in Chapter Nine).

(d) Positive Feedback and Schismogenesis

References have already been made to feedback. McCaughan and Palmer define “a system as *structured by feedback*”.⁴⁶ (Original italics.) They distinguish positive and negative feedback. Positive feedback leads to “escalation”, further action, change or development. Bateson distinguishes between “symmetrical” positive feedback (the more A does, the more B does) and “complementary” positive feedback (the more A does for B the less B does for herself/himself). When an unacceptable level of escalation is reached one of two things can happen. One is that something operating much like an electrical fuse, which breaks the feedback loop. Another possibility is what Bateson calls “schismogenesis”, which means “split-production” which can destroy the system.⁴⁷ Yet another possibility, is that another process comes into play which counteracts the positive feedback loop. Peter Senge, they note, has identified several such loops in organizational and social life which he calls “systems archetypes”. He calls these counteraction loops which act as negative feedback, “Limits to Growth” archetypes. Negative feedback “corrects deviations from a normative state”. But many organizational and societal processes “are too complex to be modelled adequately by single positive or negative feedback loops”.⁴⁸

(e) Articulating Rules

McCaughan and Palmer find that a good way to get to grips with repetitive patterns of behaviour in a group, team or organization is to describe them “in terms of the rules people appear to be observing”.⁴⁹

(f) Reframing

Descriptions of reframing are given earlier. McCaughan and Palmer use Watzlawick’s definition of reframing

To reframe means to change the conceptual or emotional setting or viewpoint in relation to which a situation is experienced, and to place it in another frame, which fits the “facts” of the same concrete situation equally well or even better, and thereby changes its entire meaning.⁵⁰

Brief mention is made of a particular form of reframing, *positive connotation*. This is the reframing of behaviour that has been presented as bad in one frame of reference as functional in another and therefore in that sense good. So, for example, someone seen to be resisting change could be said in an alternative reading to be preventing things moving too fast.⁵¹

(g) Intervening and Interventions

See Section II:3 above.

(h) Mapping Dilemmas

A useful technique that McCaughan and Palmer have adapted from Hampden Turner is to map dilemmas diagrammatically. They do this on a single quadrant graph in such a way that the dilemmas are at right angles rather than in opposition to each other. This enables alternative courses of action to be positioned on the graph in relation to the dilemmas. They have applied this approach to hypothesizing and found it “powerful and releasing”.⁵²

2. Operational Modes

As already noted, McCaughan and Palmer do not give a comprehensive account of consultancy. But what they do give is an insight into workshops from which they have taken much of the case study material in the book on their model. These workshops or courses are

designed to introduce participants to systems practice. Participants have been senior managers drawn from health and welfare settings, voluntary care organizations and agencies serving families and the probation service. Courses comprise between ten and fifteen participants with two tutor-consultants. Four main activities comprise the workshops.

Activity one, the consultation exercise. The consultation exercise is the core activity. It is repeated several times and backed up with explanations of the theory as the exercise proceeds. There are five stages in the procedure which are not rigid and are still evolving.

- *Presentation and clarification:* a participant presents his or her work situation whilst the others act as consultants.
- *Re-telling:* pairs of participant-consultants discuss what they have made of the situation and draft a brief "re-telling" that summarizes the picture they have of the situation. These are read out to the presenter.
- *Questioning:* the pairs frame and put two or three questions to the presenter.
- *Hypothesizing:* participants, having heard all that has been said by other participant and tutors, frame their hypotheses and put them to the presenter who is invited to respond and to share his/her hypothesis.
- *Interventions:* pairs of participants make specific proposals to the presenter.

Activity two, theory sessions in which students are introduced to relevant theories.

Activity three, other learning methods. These include drawing upon various things from the work of Cronen and Pearce and Senge already referred to. Value, for instance, is placed upon "playfulness" through for example, role play.

Activity four, testing what has been learned. Initially the course was in modules. The first was for five or six days in two or three parts. The second, three months, later. Linear and circular methods of evaluation were used in the closing sessions.⁵³

IV Application: Work Settings to which the Model is Applicable [element (c)]

This model has been effectively applied to work with managers in statutory and voluntary health and welfare organizations in Britain. It is also being applied in business, education and government organizations, the armed forces, churches and synagogues and other types of organizations in many parts of the world.⁵⁴ (See also Section III: 2 above.) The emphasis is upon knowledge of systems rather than knowledge of organizations and management.

V Understanding of the Consultor's Work [element (d)]

This model is based on the assumption that clients work in and are engaged with human organizational systems. Therefore, knowledge of the operation of various processes common to purposeful human systems is the essential generic understanding that consultants need to have of the work in which consultors are engaged including the praxis implications for managers of working systemically. Prior detailed knowledge of the idiosyncratic features of a particular kind of work or specific examples of it is not necessary. Sufficient understanding

of the given characteristics of the consultor's work is teased out through the use of the consultancy process and procedures of STM.

VI Principles [element (e)]

The underlying principles of this model relate to a broad based body of knowledge about systemic and systems thinking approaches to consultancy. In particular McCaughan and Palmer draw upon the work of the Milan Group, Humberto Maturana, Gregory Bateson and Peter Senge.

Recursive systems thinking is the undergirding philosophy and theory of this model as well as the methodology. It draws upon a wide range of sources and operates within this theoretical framework. This is clearly distinguished from but seen to be complementary to psychodynamic systems thinking. In a very helpful final chapter of *Systems Thinking for Harassed Managers*, entitled "Theoretical Postscript", five themes are discussed: identity and organizational change; paradox; unconscious processes in organizational life; systems archetypes; mapping dilemmas.⁵⁵ The material on "paradox" has already been considered in II:3; that on systems archetypes in III:1(d); that on mapping dilemmas in III:1(h); the other two are considered in this section.

1. Identity and Organizational Change

One aspect of McCaughan and Palmer's underlying theory is that "organizations confer an identity on their members and that to the extent that they become attached to these identities, they resist organizational changes that threaten them".⁵⁶ They refer to what Peter Marris has called "the conservative impulse" and similar ideas from writers in the Tavistock school⁵⁷ and argue that "the concept of identity is inherently paradoxical". To clarify this they distinguish between a human being as an *individual* and as a *person* in the way done by the Grubb Institute. Respectively they refer to linear and recursive views of causation. "As *individual*, a human being is a biological entity bounded by a skin, which is separate from other beings, and from collectivities like organizations". Human beings are separate biologically but not psychologically. They "are constituted as *persons* by the network of relationships and transactions of which they are a part". As persons, it is suggested, "we are 'excorporated' in all these relations" and "out of our experiences of these relations we crystallize a sense of a 'me', which seems to have an existence of its own, which we identify with and protect from change".⁵⁸ For McCaughan and Palmer these pointers to a view of personality impact upon the following critical factors related to organizational change.

- (a) There is a tendency, they claim, for managers to define their problems from their individual point of view which in linear terms do not include their own complicity in the problem or the tacit desires that constitute their particular circumstances as a problem for them". Consequently they have no difficulty with an approach that treats the problem as separate from themselves but they can be uncomfortable when the "consultant looks not only at what they are pointing at, but also at the person who is pointing", that is, at the person who is the problem owner. "Any change that takes place requires change in the problem owner".⁵⁹
- (a) "If a person is constituted by his or her network or relations, that person cannot change without others in the network changing too".⁶⁰

- (b) Those responsible for reorganization need to “consider how they are, to a lesser or greater degree, rejigging the *worlds* or contexts of meaning, of those who are reorganized”.⁶¹
- (c) Some individuals “choose organizations or types of work that provide them with a context in which they can continue to engage with conflicts in their own psyche. This may or may not be developmental for the individual and the organization.”⁶²
- (d) According to Torbert and Fisher, dysfunctional and unjust organizations can only be transformed by people committed to radical reflexive processes of learning including those which question and challenge their personal purposes, principles and paradigms and disturb their sense of identity. But few people approach life with this kind of detachment.⁶³

2. Unconscious Processes in Organizational Life

The introduction to this consultancy model shows that both McCaughan and Palmer came to it from “working with groups and organizations using psychoanalytic concepts based upon the premise of a dynamic unconscious” as promoted by the Grubb and Tavistock Institutes with their emphasis upon Kleinian concepts and the open systems organizational model. They say they have been uncertain how to relate *recursive systems thinking* (as described above) to *psychodynamic systems thinking*. Both approaches are seen to be systemic and this can be confusing.⁶⁴

Some recursive systems thinkers, they say, dismiss the value of referring to unconscious processes. Both kinds of systems thinking, they claim, make little use of each other’s concepts. Gregory Bateson was an exception: he saw himself as “extending the elucidation of mental processes that Freud began rather than setting up a competing theory”.⁶⁵ McCaughan and Palmer give several pointers to their position which can be summarized as follows.

- They have headed workshop participants off psychoanalytic hypotheses because they were introducing them to something different. “Prudent consultants”, they say, “stick within one discourse once they are using it, since the discourses are not ultimately assimilable by one another”.
- They believe that to set up recursive and psychodynamic systems thinking as competing accounts undermines understanding. “No theory has an exclusive claim on the truth because what is *said*, in language, can never be equated with what *is*”. (This resonates with knowledge representations being surrogates, cf Chapter Nine.)
- They believe that, as consultants (and managers) need to be as well stocked as possible with organizational theories and methods of intervention, psychotherapy is a field for learning about the powerful and deep things in human beings.
- They consider, therefore, that recursive and psychodynamic systems thinking are “best regarded as two distinct languages”, howbeit with some common terms such as systemic.

- Following Keeney, they work on the assumption that the feedback loop is the basic element of behaviour in recursive systems thinking.
- Recursive thinking is a wise approach to organizational affairs because it recognises circularity.
- They do not think it is possible for people operating in either systemic mode to take a “meta” position as though it were a perspective “from which they could speak which was not local and one-eyed. They may speak from a position that is different from that of the client, but what they say is necessarily shaped by their own conscious or unconscious preconceptions”.
- Hypotheses and interpretations “come to us out of the blue, out of the void, out of nowhere” after all our hard intellectual and emotional work. If they do not come there is nothing we can do, they say, “except have a cup of coffee or go for a walk !”⁶⁶

VII A Summary of Key Features of the Model

Basic elements are modelled diagrammatically in Figure 5:8 on the next page.

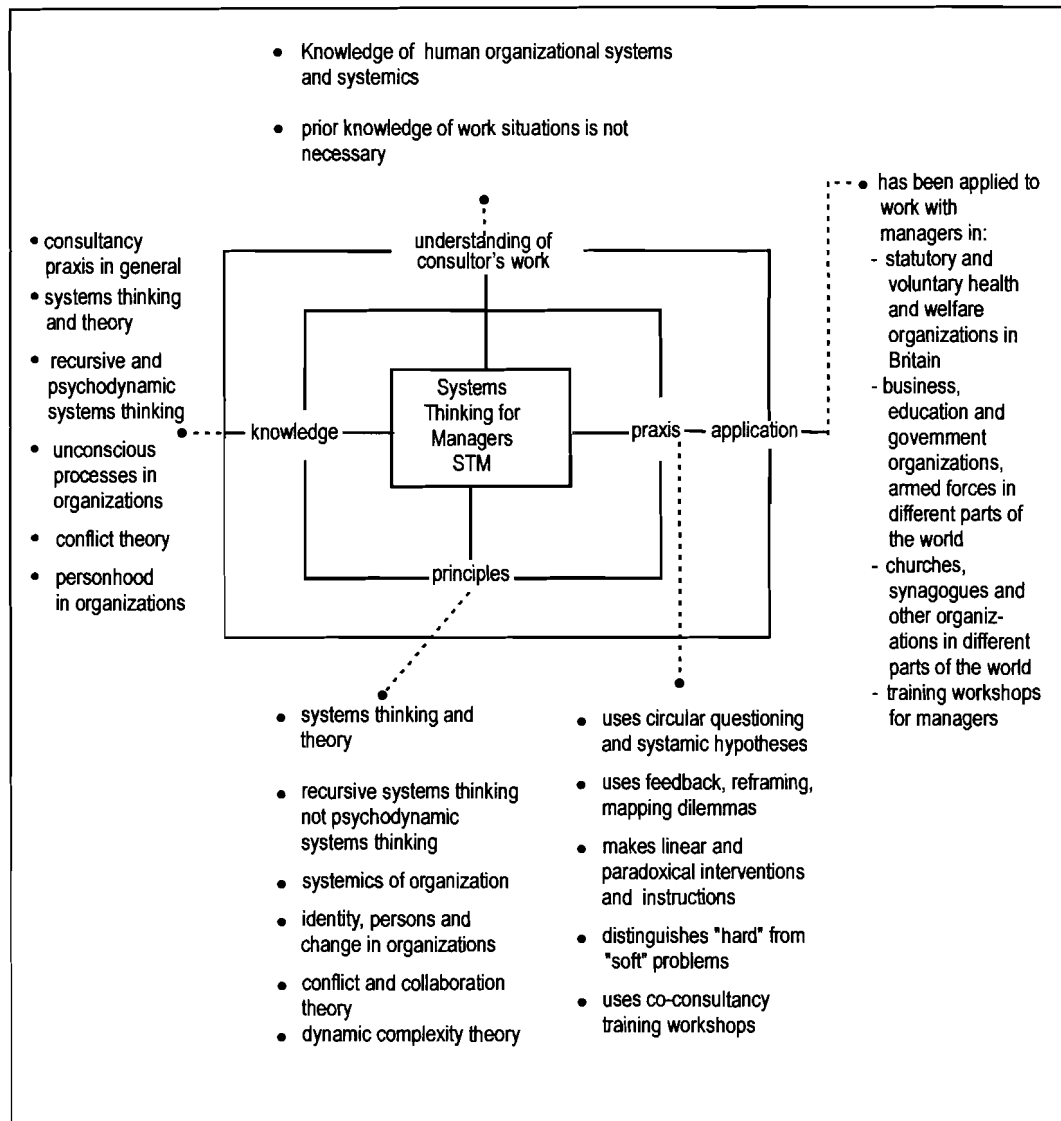


Figure 5:8: A Diagrammatic Representation of Fundamentals of the STM Model

Three Other Models In Brief

Management consultancy and the models associated with it proliferate. That is clear from the work of Milan Kubr and his colleague described in Model Two above. In *Management Consulting Skills: A Practical Guide*¹, Charles Margerison has surveyed and summarized the basic ideas of some seventeen leading consultants who have published their work and that of the Tavistock Institute and the International Management Centre. Reference has already been made to this very useful volume.

Brief notes of three models follow. There is no attempt to survey the range of models.

1. Collaborative Enquiry: A Post-modern Approach to Organizational Consultation

Harlene Anderson and Paul Burney² have developed what they describe as a post-modern approach to organizational consultation which they call "collaborative enquiry". Consultations are collegial egalitarian partnerships in which "consultant and client combine expertise to explore their dilemmas and challenges and develop new possibilities". It is not possible to describe the model fully here but the following sequence of key quotations from the nineteen page article indicate aspects of the underlying philosophy and the praxis of this model.

In its simplest form, postmodernism refers to an ideological critique that departs radically from modernist traditions in its questioning of the mono-voice modernist discourse as the overarching foundation of literary, political, and social thinking... In general the post-modern discourse challenges the singular modernist notions of: knowledge as objective and fixed; the knower and knowledge as independent of each other; language as representing truth and reality; and human nature as universal! Consequently, the post-modern perspective challenges the technical and instrumental nature of consultation and the notion of the consultant as the expert on organizational culture. It favours, rather, ideas of: the construction of knowledge as social; knowledge as fluid; the knower and knowledge as interdependent; and thus knowledge as relational and the multiplicity of *truths*. Said differently, knowledge and language as a vehicle for creating knowledge, are the products of social discourse.

From a post-modern perspective, then, organizational consultation is a linguistic event that involves and takes place in a particular kind of conversational process, a dialogue. Dialogue, the essence of the process, entails shared inquiry a mutual search and co-exploration between client and consultant, as well as among the client system members ... Client and consultant, and client system members, become conversational partners in the telling, inquiring, interpreting, and shaping of the narratives.

Dialogical conversation involves both internal and external dialogues as people talk with themselves and with each other. We contrast dialogical and monological conversations. The internal dialogue consists of a person's

internal unformed, and forming, thoughts and ideas Transformation occurs within such a collaborative process....

As consultants, our aim, expertise, and responsibility is to create a dialogical space, ... And to facilitate a dialogical process.

The most critical aspect of this stance is *not-knowing*... (which) refers to the assumption that we do not know what is best for the other person or how they ought to be conducting their business.

When a consultant assumes this stance, consultation is changed from an archaeological, hierarchical, and interventionist relationship between an *expert and non-expert* to a collaborative, egalitarian, and mutual endeavour by people with different types of expertise. Client members ... become actively and enthusiastically engaged. Consultants become facilitators of the dialogue regarding the concerns of the client instead of experts expecting to provide solutions. As we become conversational partners with our client, the dialogue brings forth new ways of thinking and acting ...

In this kind of process the consultant is also at risk of changing. In our experience, the approach is a philosophical one; the consultant's beliefs and biases are not only part of the consultant's professional work, they become a way of being in our professional and personal lives. Our approach frees us to work in a variety of organizational settings, with individuals and groups, without regard to gender, culture, or type of dilemma. Interestingly, we have found that ... our stance models new and alternative ways for client system members to be with each other ...

A consultation with a corporate client is presented to illustrate the various ways in which they facilitated and engaged in conversations of the kind described above with their clients, through interviews and small and large group discussion and reflective conversations.

2. Management Consultancies and the Diffusion of Knowledge

Anthony Berry and Kate Oakley of the Manchester Business School conducted a survey of twenty five of the largest consultancy firms in the UK in relation to three primary knowledge tasks of consultancy which they refer to as:

Knowledge creation by which they mean the development of theory in relation to the experienced world;

Praxis by which they mean the fusion of theory and action in the continuing experience of working at problems;

Knowledge application by which they mean taking forward tractable problems with existing theory.

The limited data showed that this knowledge-based typology "provides a reasonable fit" to the differing work of the firms surveyed. They found that "Consultancy practitioners viewed themselves as developers of both discourse knowledge (in a minor role) and of practical knowledge (in a major role)". Notwithstanding, they conclude that further issues and questions need to be researched.³

3. Macdonald Associates Consultancy (MAC)

Essentially Macdonald Associates Consultancy is a small business with a small number of consultants offering a high quality service. From companies in the UK, Australia and New Zealand they also work with a network of other consultants and in association with other organisations including the Brunel Institute of Organisation and Social Studies (BIOSS) and Empower in the UK, Response Consulting in Australia, and Hilton Barnett Associates in South Africa.

Macdonald Associates is an international consultancy consisting of partners and associates who have, for some years now, formed a relationship through a particular way of working on very practical projects. Their work is based on a theory of organizational behaviour constructed over many years of experience and learning.

They offer analytical rigour in order to understand and clarify the current situation and offer advice on future strategy. Their consultants offer focused, well informed, high level analysis. To achieve an organization's aims its people need clarity of purpose and a clear understanding of authorities and accountabilities. For this they should be able to answer three basic questions at work: What am I meant to do? How well am I doing? What is my future?

They work by invitation from the leadership of an organization and on a broad programme of change starting with a general discussion of the current organisation and what it is trying to achieve. Based on analysis, synthesis and continuous feedback and discussion, the work can involve strategy, training, restructuring, and review and, possibly, redesign.

Typically they work with organizations over a number of years staying with them through the process and helping to evaluate the effect of the change.

They see their work as a partnership. Change can occur only if those in the organization own the change purpose and process. They respect the authority and accountability of an organization's leadership when offering advice and recommendations. In this collaboration they assume they will be held accountable for the quality of their advice in the same way that the leadership will be held accountable for any changes implemented.

Purpose

MAC has a straightforward purpose, which can be realised in relationships with clients in many different types of organization. They endeavour to work in all three major fields of private business, the public sector, voluntary/charitable organizations, churches and Christian organizations.

Managing Change

They have a record of and preference for establishing long-term consultancy relationships where they can work with a client throughout the change process at a level and pace that suits the particular client. The work they undertake, whether training or consultancy, is seen as part of an integrated approach to managing change. This approach is based on a coherent theoretical foundation and very much tailored to clients' needs. They do not come with totally pre-packaged materials but rather a set of ideas and models that have been tried and tested over many years, and with a group of skilled, professional consultants.

Philosophy

If organizations are to achieve their purpose as efficiently, safely and cost-effectively as possible and to the desired quality, the people in any organization need to be able to give of their best. For MAC the notion of meritocracy is key – the right people in the right jobs doing the right work. This means that the organization's systems and leadership should support any person within the organization in understanding what they are supposed to do, in giving them feedback on how they are working and in helping them develop in such a way that their capability is used to the full.

MAC enjoys long-term consultancy relationships with the leadership of organizations mainly in the commercial, public and voluntary sectors but also in churches. Organizational development entails consistent work over time and they see themselves as partners with the leaders in organizations they are assisting, clear at all times that the leaders have executive authority for any change they are working on.

Organizations are made up of people. It is essential to remember that people are people, not assets or tools or objects. Thus, whether we are leaders or members of organizations or both, we need to be aware of the social process that goes on in any organization – how people interact, how they perceive the way they are treated and led, and how they will behave as a consequence. Central to MAC's work is helping organizations develop a keen understanding of social process amongst the people they affect.

References and Notes:

Model One: Process Consultation

1. Schein, Edgar H. an article entitled, "A General Philosophy of Helping: Process Consultation" in *Sloan Management Review*, 57, Spring 1990, p58. For other background information see: Coghlan, David an article entitled, "In Defence of Process Consultation", *Leadership and Organization Development Journal* Volume 9 No. 2, 1988; Margerison, Charles J (1988, 1999 reprint) *Managerial Consulting Skills: A Practical Guide* (Gower) cf p 74
2. Schein, Edgar H (first published 1969; second edition, 1988) *Process Consultation Volume I: Its Role in Organizational Development* (Addison-Wesley Publishing Company). Schein, Edgar H (1987) *Process Consultation Volume II: Lessons for Managers and Consultants* (Addison-Wesley Publishing Company); See also an article by E H Schein, "A General Philosophy of Helping: Process Consultation" in *Sloan Management Review* 57, Spring 1990. See also Schein, Edgar H (1992 Second Edition) *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco.)
3. cf Coghlan, David "In Defence of Process Consultation" *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 9 1988, No. 2. p27
4. *ibid.*, Volume I, pp4-5
5. *ibid.*, Volume I, p11
6. *ibid.*, Volume I, p17, cf 15-16
7. *ibid.*, Volume I p 19
8. *ibid.*, Volume I, pp17-19
9. *ibid.*, Volume I, p3 cf Coghlan quoted in ref. 3, p27
10. *ibid.*, Volume I pp193-194 and Volume II p21. "Client-centred" became a term favoured by Carl Rogers. In his opinion it came into full flower during the period 1938-1950 and provided a summation of development to this point. See Ivan H Ellingham in an article on client-centred therapy in: Alastair V Campbell (Ed) (1987) *A Dictionary of Pastoral Care* (SPCK) pp35-36.
11. *ibid.*, Volume I pp5-10 and Volume II pp22 & 23
12. *ibid.*, Volume I p193, cf p192
13. *ibid.*, Volume I pp10-11
14. *ibid.*, Volume I p19
15. *ibid.*, Volume I pp21-39
16. *ibid.*, Volume I cf summary on pp38-39
17. *ibid.*, Volume I pp40-59
18. *ibid.*, Volume I cf summary on p59
19. *ibid.*, Volume I pp60-75
20. *ibid.*, Volume I cf summary on p75
21. *ibid.*, Volume I pp76-83
22. *ibid.*, Volume I cf p83
23. *ibid.*, Volume I pp84-93
24. *ibid.*, Volume I p93
25. *ibid.*, Volume I cf p93
26. *ibid.*, Volume I pp94-105
27. *ibid.*, Volume I p105
28. *ibid.*, Volume I pp106-115
29. *ibid.*, Volume I pp114-115
30. *ibid.*, Volume I p19
31. *ibid.*, Volume I p20
32. *ibid.*, Volume I p15
33. *ibid.*, Volume II p39

34. cf *ibid.*, pp19-20. The ten things consultants might do according to Schein are: (1) provide information; (2) analyze information; (3) diagnose problems; (4) train clients to use diagnostic models that help them to make better decisions; (5) listen and give support, comfort and counsel in troubled times; (6) help implement difficult and unpopular decisions; (7) reward and punish certain kinds of behaviour; (8) carry information not moving up the normal chain of command to higher levels or that which does not move laterally; (9) make decisions and give commands; (10) take responsibility for decisions, absorb anxiety and provide emotional strength.
35. *ibid.*, Volume II pp29-34
36. *ibid.*, Volume II, quotes in this section from pp29-31
37. *ibid.*, Volume II, quotes in this section taken from pp32-34
38. *ibid.*, Volume I pp19-20 and Volume II pp61-62
39. cf *ibid.*, Volume II pp40-48
40. *ibid.*, Volume II p40
41. *ibid.*, Volume II p132 cf pp130-144
42. *ibid.*, Volume II pp145-150 and Volume I pp148-176
43. *ibid.*, Volume II p148
44. *ibid.*, Volume II pp161-179
45. *ibid.*, Volume II p179
46. *ibid.*, Volume II p180
47. *ibid.*, Volume I p117
48. *ibid.*, Volume I p117
49. *ibid.*, Volume I pp119-189
50. *ibid.*, Volume I pp119-130
51. *ibid.*, Volume I pp131-140
52. *ibid.*, Volume I pp141-147
53. *ibid.*, Volume I pp148-176
54. *ibid.*, Volume I pp177-189
55. *ibid.*, Volume II p162
56. *ibid.*, Volume I p132 see also for this paragraph Volume I pp 108-134 and Volume II pp161-162 et al
57. *ibid.*, Volume I: 120, 134-137, 144-145, 151-158, 164-165, 183-184. Volume II: 10ff, 36ff, 53ff, 57, 74ff, 88, 100, 107, 111ff, 128, 135f, 140, 150, 154, 174, 183, 190, 193, 200.
58. *ibid.*, Volume II p189f
59. See Reference 3
60. See for eg. Pittenger, Norman (1967) *God in Process* (SCM Press) and (1971) *The Christian Church as Social Process* (Epworth Press) cf Margerison, Charles J (2000) *Management Consulting Skills: A Practical Guide* (Gower) pp111-112

References and Notes: Directive and Non-directive Approaches

1. Second Edition 1986 (University Associate Inc.)
2. see an article by Ronald Lippitt, Dimensions of the Consultant's Job" in *Readings in Community Practice* Kramer, Ralph and Specht, Harry (Eds) 1969, (Prentice-Hall International Inc), pp 278 - 284
3. *ibid.*; Lippitt and Lippitt pp69-70
4. *ibid.*, pp37-55 and 42-43
5. *ibid.*, pp57-63
6. *ibid.*, p61

References and Notes: Model Two: Management Consulting

1. Kubr, Milan (Ed) (1996, third edition, first published 1976) *Management Consulting: A Guide to the Profession* (International Labour Office, Geneva)
2. *ibid.*, pp xv-xxvi
3. *ibid.*, p xviii
4. *ibid.*; p xviii
5. Part IV, nine chapters, deals with the management of consulting firms. The main aspects examined are the nature of management in the professions and in consulting, the strategy of consulting firms, marketing of consulting services, costs and fees, assignment management, quality management and assurance, operational and financial control, structuring of consulting firms and the use of information technology in consulting. Part V, three chapters, focuses on careers and remuneration in consulting, the training and development of consultants and the future perspectives of the international consulting profession. Then there are some related appendices. See pp xx-xxi for an overview of the book.
6. *ibid.*, p27
7. *ibid.*, p28
8. *ibid.*, p29
9. *ibid.*, p30
10. *ibid.*, p31
11. I discuss the importance of developing the skills of both consultants and consultors in Lovell, George (2000) *Consultancy, Ministry and Mission: A Handbook for Practitioners and Work Consultants in Christian Organizations* (Burns and Oates, A Continuum Imprint) pp23-27, 51-71, 143-144 et al.
12. *ibid.*, pp 0-31
13. *ibid.*, pp xix-xx and xviii
14. *ibid.*, p xviii
15. *ibid.*, p721. There is a detailed discussion of each commandment see pp721-727
16. *ibid.*, pp3-7
17. *ibid.*, p8
18. *ibid.*, p9
19. The differences between purposes and objectives and the importance of distinguishing between them are also discussed in: Lovell, George (1994) *Analysis and Design: A Handbook for Practitioners and Consultants in Church and Community Work* (Burns and Oates) pp123-125 see other index references to "purposes".
20. *ibid.*, pp117-119
21. *ibid.*, pp120-126. Kubr then proceeds to discuss professional associations and codes of conduct and what they can do to assist professional development pp125-137. And, Appendix 3, "Professional Codes (Examples)", discusses the "Codes of Professional Conduct of the European Federation of Management Consulting Associates (FEACO)" and the "Code of Professional Conduct of the Institute of Management Consultants (United Kingdom and Ireland)". See pp735-743.
22. *ibid.*, p18
23. *ibid.*, cf p73f for the quotations and material in this paragraph
24. *ibid.*, cf pp73-74
25. *ibid.*, p75
26. *ibid.*, p77
27. *ibid.*, p79
28. *ibid.*, p80
29. *ibid.*, p83
30. *ibid.*, pp94-95
31. *ibid.*, pp96-97
32. *ibid.*; pp83-84

33. *ibid.*, p89
34. *ibid.*, pp90-94
35. *ibid.*, pp103-105
36. *ibid.*, p103
37. *ibid.*, p103
38. *ibid.*, pp105-111
39. *ibid.*, pp111-116
40. *ibid.*, cf pp15-16, 506-507, 266-268, 284-287, 363-376
41. *ibid.*, p51
42. *ibid.*, p55
43. This paragraph draws upon two section in *Management Consulting*: 3:3: The client system, pp55-56; 3:4 Behavioural roles of the consultant, pp 56-67. For references to "systems" see pp 20-56
44. *ibid.*, p54
45. *ibid.*, pp57-58. The following note is give in "Box 3:3 Soft and hard process consulting", p59 William Altier and Miles Overholt have observed that Schein's concept of process consulting is appropriate for a limited range of situations calling for an intervention of an organizational development (OD) nature. They propose to use an umbrella term, "participative process consulting", which covers a wide variety of approaches and methodologies. These are described as either "soft", i.e. those focusing on people's behaviour, attitudes, values and relationships, or "hard" suitable for systematic, rigorous and disciplined problem identification and problem solving, in ways suggested by Kepner-Tregoe in *The National Manager*. As distinct from soft process consulting, in the hard sector the consultant suggests a structured process methodology likely to lead the client on the path to correct results, the intention being to limit the information used by the group to that which is deemed to be relevant. ... In between the hard and the soft, there is an infinite range of combinations of information-oriented and people-oriented processes.
46. *ibid.*, p61
47. *ibid.*, p62
48. *ibid.*, pp60-61
49. *ibid.*, pp67-69 and 95
50. *ibid.*, p22
51. *ibid.*, pp21-26 and 141-249
52. *ibid.*, pp151-152 see also pp 97-198
53. *ibid.*, pp167-203
54. *ibid.*, p167
55. *ibid.*, p167
56. *ibid.*, p20
57. *ibid.*, p170
58. *ibid.*, pp19-21 and 170-171
59. *ibid.*, pp171-176
60. *ibid.*, pp194-196
61. *ibid.*, p196
62. *ibid.*, pp198-199
63. *ibid.*, pp200-202
64. *ibid.*, p199
65. *ibid.*, pp205-206
66. *ibid.*, p209
67. for this section see *ibid.*, pp210-212
68. *ibid.*, p20
69. *ibid.*, p13
70. *ibid.*; p41 for this paragraph see also pp 36-42

71. *ibid.*, Parts IV (pp485-662) and V (pp665-718) respectively. Chapter headings in Part IV are: fundamentals of consulting firm management; the consulting firms strategy; marketing of consulting services; costs and fees; assignment management; quality management and assurance; operational and financial control; structuring consulting firms; information technology in consulting firms.
72. *ibid.*, pp 1-32 cf Parts IV, managing a consulting firm and V developing management consultants and the consulting profession pp485-718
73. *ibid.*, pp34-36 and 253-254
74. *ibid.*, pp253-481. The titles of the eleven chapters are: consulting in general and strategic management; in financial management; consulting in marketing and distribution management; consulting in production management; consulting in human resource management; consulting in information technology; consulting in small business management; consulting for the informal sector; consulting for the public sector; in privatisation; consulting for productivity and performance improvement.
75. *ibid.*, p34-35

References and Notes: Model 3 Systems thinking for Managers

1. McCaughan, Nano and Palmer, Barry (1994) *Systems Thinking for Harassed Managers* (Karnac Books in their "Systemic Thinking and Practice Series: Work with Organizations" , website, www.karnacbooks.com.)
2. *ibid.*, p1 and 2
3. *ibid.*, p2
4. *ibid.*, p4 cf pp3-4 and 105-106. To help readers to make connections, the people referred to are: "David Campbell, who acted as an adviser to us in the early stages; Bruce Reed and our other former colleagues at the Grubb Institute; Peter Lang and Martin Little at the Kensington Consultation Centre; Humberto Maturana and Karl Tomm, whose seminars we attended, Philip Boxer, with whom Barry has had a long and valuable association; and all the veterans of our workshops and members of the Systems Group to which they gave rise; and, through writings, Gregory Bateson, Mara Selvini-Palazzoli and her collaborators, Paul Watzlawick and his collaborators, Fritjof Capra, Gareth Morgan, William Torbert, Peter Senge and Charles Hamden-Turner".
5. *ibid.*, p4-5
6. *ibid.*, p5
7. *ibid.*, p11
8. *ibid.*, p12
9. *ibid.*, pp12-15 upon which I have drawn heavily for this paragraph
10. *ibid.*, p16
11. *ibid.*, p17
12. *ibid.*, p18. The reference to Morgan is *Images of Organizations* (Beverly Hills, London: Sage, 1986). And the one to Argyris C and Schon, DA (1978) is *Organizational Learning: A Theory of Action Perspective* (Reading, MA: Addison Wesley)
13. *ibid.*, p80
14. *ibid.*, pp82-83
15. *ibid.*, p83
16. *ibid.*, p90
17. *ibid.*, pp100-101
18. *ibid.*, p101
19. *ibid.*, pp101-102
20. *ibid.*, pp101-103 for quotation in this paragraph
21. *ibid.*, p102 attributed to P Watzlawick and G Bateson
22. *ibid.*, p102
23. *ibid.*, p103
24. *ibid.*, p104
25. *ibid.*, p104

26. *ibid.*, this paragraph draws heavily upon pp 104-105
27. *ibid.*, pp85-86. The reference is to Papp, P (1981) "Paradoxes" in Minuchin, S and Fishman, H C (Eds) *Family Therapy Techniques* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press)
28. *ibid.*, pp71-78
29. *ibid.*, pp87-88
30. *ibid.*, p19
31. *ibid.*, p20
32. *ibid.*, p2
33. *ibid.*, pp 22-24
34. *ibid.*, p 24
35. *ibid.*, pp24-25
36. *ibid.*, pp28-29
37. *ibid.*, p26
38. *ibid.*, p32
39. *ibid.*, p42
40. *ibid.*, pp47-48
41. *ibid.*, pp48-50
42. *ibid.*, p50
43. *ibid.*, pp50-52 cf Lovell, George (1994) *Analysis and Design: A Handbook for Practitioners and Consultants in Church and Community Work*. pp185-186 for an alternative but complementary view of Tomm's questions.
44. *ibid.*, p57
45. *ibid.*, pp59-61 cf pp71-78 and 112 on working with hypotheses
46. *ibid.*, p61
47. *ibid.*, pp61-63
48. *ibid.*, See p63 cf pp108-109 et al for reference to Senge, Peter M. (1990) *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (C Century Business) pp378-390. Limits to growth can be a resource restraint or an external or internal response to growth. "The accelerating collapse (when it occurs)" says, Senge, "arises from the reinforcing process operating in reverse, to generate more contractions". Other examples given by Senge are: "Learning a new skill, such as tennis, you make rapid progress early on as your competence and confidence builds, but then you begin to encounter limits to your natural abilities that can be overcome only by learning new techniques that may come 'less naturally' at first. A new startup that grows rapidly until it reaches a size that requires more professional management skills and formal organization; a new product team that works beautifully until its success causes it to bring in too many new members who neither share the work style nor values of the founding members; a city that grows steadily until available land is filled, leading to rising housing prices; a social movement that grows until it encounters increasing resistance from 'nonconverts'"... op cit., p380
49. *ibid.*, pp66-69
50. *ibid.*, pp69
51. *ibid.*, pp70-71
52. *ibid.*, pp112-116
53. This section draws extensively on pp5 and 117-126
54. *ibid.*, p1 cf p117. Also see Palmer's work on synagogues: Palmer, B (1997) *Congregational Profiling: Developing the Concept* London, Leo Baeck College. Palmer, B, E. Crossick, et al. (1997) *Partners in Leadership: The First Ten Years*, London, Leo Baeck College
55. *ibid.*, pp96-116
56. *ibid.*, p96
57. *ibid.*, p97. The reference to Peter Marris is to his book *Loss and Change* (London: Routledge, 1974 revised edition 1986). Two authors are referred to in relation to the Tavistock school: Menzies-Lyth, I (1959) "The functioning of social systems as a defence against anxiety", reprinted in *Containing Anxiety in Institutions* (London: Free Associations, 1988) and Rice, AK (1965) *Learning for Leadership* (London: Tavistock)

58. *ibid.*, pp 97-98
59. *ibid.*, p99
60. *ibid.*, p99
61. *ibid.*, p99
62. *ibid.*, p99
63. *ibid.*, p100, the reference is to: Torbert, W R (1991) *The Power of Balance: Transforming Self, Society and Scientific Enquiry* (Newbury Park- London Sage) and Torbert, W R and Fisher D (1992) "Autobiographical awareness as a catalyst for management and organizational learning", *Management Education and Development*, 23 (Part 3) pp184-198
64. *ibid.*, p105
65. *ibid.*, p107 and pp103-104
66. *ibid.*, The points in this section are variously taken from pp 105-108. The reference to Keeney is to Keeney B P (1983) *Aesthetics of Change* (New York: Guilford) Vol. 14

References and Notes: Three Other Models In Brief

1. Margerison, Charles J (1988, 1999 reprint) *Managerial Consulting Skills: A Practical Guide* (Gower). It contains summaries of the work of the following consultants: Peter Drucker, Rensis Lickert, Peter Block, Edgar Schein, Chris Argyris, Gordon Lippitt, Reg Revans, Tom Peters and Bob Waterman, Hal Leavitt, Dick Beckhard, Carl Rogers, B.F. Skinner, Victor Frankel, Ian Mangham, Larry Greiner and Robert Metzger.
2. See Anderson, Harlene and Burney, J. Paul "Collaborative inquiry: a post-modern approach to organizational consultation in *Human Systems: The Journal of Systemic Consultation and Management*, Volume 7, issue 2-3, 1996. All Quotations are taken from this paper.
3. See a chapter by Anthony Berry and Kate Oakley entitled "Management Consultancies: Knowledge, Praxis and Application" in Casemore, Roger; Dyos, Gail; Eden, Angela; Kellner, Kamil; McAuley, John; Moss, Stephen (Editors) (1994) *What Makes Consultancy Work – Understanding the Dynamics: International Consulting Conference 1994*. (South Bank University) pp332-357. See particularly pp332-333 and 352. Unfortunately this book is out of print but an earlier version of the paper was published by Berry and Oakley (1993) under the title "Management Consultancies: 'The Agents of Organizational Development'" in *Leadership and Organizational Development*, Vol. 14.
4. This piece draws heavily on papers produced by Macdonald Associates Consultancy kindly provided by The Rev David Daswell with permission to quote them for which I am grateful. Address: Cedar House, Vine Lane, Hillingdon, Middlesex UB10 0BX. Website: www.maconsultancy.com