

**Task 1, Option 1: Examine the reports and videos on gender equity in Week 8 and the other articles and videos on the topic and synthesize them into your own perspective on the subject. Some of the questions to consider and sort out are these: Does the problem really exist? Is it a public policy issue? Is the subject differentiated by region, or age, or ethnicity or other predictor variables? What current and long term policy issues loom? What are the most serious near-term and long-term challenges? Be sure to use a variety of clickable sources in addition to those available on the course site. 1200 words min.**

The popular statistic “women earn eighty-two cents to the dollar” has brought outrage on both sides of the political spectrum. On one side, there is resentment that such a discrepancy exists even nearly fifty-eight years after the Equal Pay Act<sup>1</sup>; on the other, there is indignation that such a statistic has been accepted by popular media without being scrutinized. Videos such as the ones uploaded by PragerU explain that such a discrepancy is not, in fact, fairly examining discrepancies occupation-by-occupation but rather the reflection of personal choices by women. Claims like these stipulate that society cannot be held accountable for free will: if women happen to choose lower-paying jobs and pursue the fulfilling role of caring for a family, those who want to make the statistic “every dollar to the dollar” cannot complain at the state of the world. However, as with most hot-button topics, the causes of the issue are much more complicated. Whether controlling the statistic for personal choices or not, a wage discrepancy does exist. **This essay will explore possible causes, societal implications, how it relates to public policy, and what challenges exist in the fight for improving wage equality ahead.**

Many people have addressed the issue brought up in the initial paragraph: that the “gender wage gap” paints a politicized, inaccurate portrayal of the actual state of the world. PragerU published a video titled “There Is No Gender Wage Gap” starting with the claim that if gender discrimination were real, companies would hire only women. The video then explains the methodology behind the “eighty-two cents to the dollar” statistic: the median incomes of women working full time are divided by the median income of men working full time. This number can be reduced, however, when occupation is taken into account, and the Department of Labor claims that once these decisions are factored into the equation, the true “wage gap” equates to only 6.6 cents. The five most top-paying careers are male-dominated; the five least-paying careers are female dominated. Even in situations where men are paid more than women in the same role, this can be explained by men’s willingness to relocate, pick up specializations, and work overtime. Ultimately, the eighteen cent gap is an overhyped, oversimplification of the many choices real people make in living their lives the way they want.

While they examine the issue of a pay gap from a different perspective, which should be encouraged in widely-spread statistics, such statements are not entirely comprehensive. The first claim that the wage gap instead is a “statistical artifact of failing to adjust for factors that could drive earnings differences between men and women”<sup>2</sup> sounds much less feasible when framed in the way that “if race discrimination were real, companies would hire only minorities”. Cost-effectiveness is often not on the mind of employers who are afflicted with bias and discrimination. Humans are not rational beings, and to expect a perfectly rational decision in the hiring process is to believe in a delusion. Additionally, while occupation and industry “account for over half of the overall gender wage gap”, studies find that as women increasingly enter a field and make it more representative, the field’s average pay tends to

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<sup>1</sup> “The Equal Pay Act of 1963.” U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, <https://www.eeoc.gov/statutes/equal-pay-act-1963>.

<sup>2</sup> “There Is No Gender Wage Gap.” YouTube.com, PragerU, 6 Mar. 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QcDrE5YvqTs>. Accessed 10 Nov. 2021.

decline: the inverse is true if men “flood” a female-dominated field.<sup>3</sup> Controlling for education and preferences, if 2% of all men and women were carpenters, this equal representation would only close 32% of the pay gap. Such devaluing of women’s work indicates that some amount of discrimination, if not overt, is a true factor.

Why might women’s work be devalued by society? Possibly it is because employers know that women may end up leaving the workforce to have children. A company can put time and energy into training a competent woman only for her to take on child-rearing duties. Under federal law, employers can<sup>4</sup> – and do<sup>5</sup> – ask whether a woman intends to become pregnant during an interview. Such a question indicates that the employer is at least thinking of potential costs to the company should the woman take maternity leave. These fears are not unwarranted: statistically, women are twice as likely as men to take on household chores and care for their children, which are time-consuming and do not afford women the luxury of taking on the longer hours required for financial reward in higher-level positions. Another reason that women may be seen as less profitable workers is the accumulation of educational expectations, guidance from mentors, hiring practices, and societal norms over the years. Children absorb stereotypes much earlier than we’d like to believe: girls rate their math competency below boys’, even if their math performances are the same. Parents usually expect their sons to follow STEM paths, rather than their girls, and this is reflected in women’s STEM interest upon arrival to college (Figure B). This presents a self-fulfilling prophecy where girls score lower in states that more often say “women [are] better suited for home” and “math is for boys”. While this is only a correlation, it makes more sense to assume a relationship than to believe geography determines gender aptitude.

FIGURE B

### Women arrive at college less interested in STEM fields as compared with their male counterparts

Intent of first-year college students to major in select STEM fields, by gender, 2014

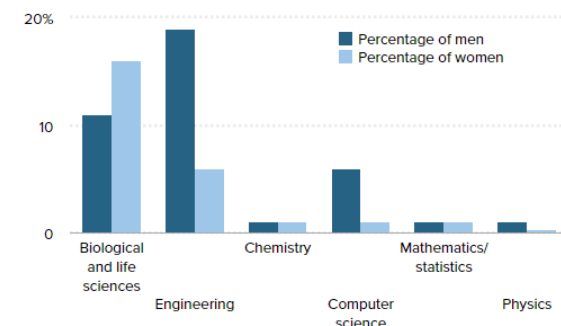


Chart Data

Source: EPI adaptation of Corbett and Hill (2015) analysis of Eagan et al. (2014)

Economic Policy Institute

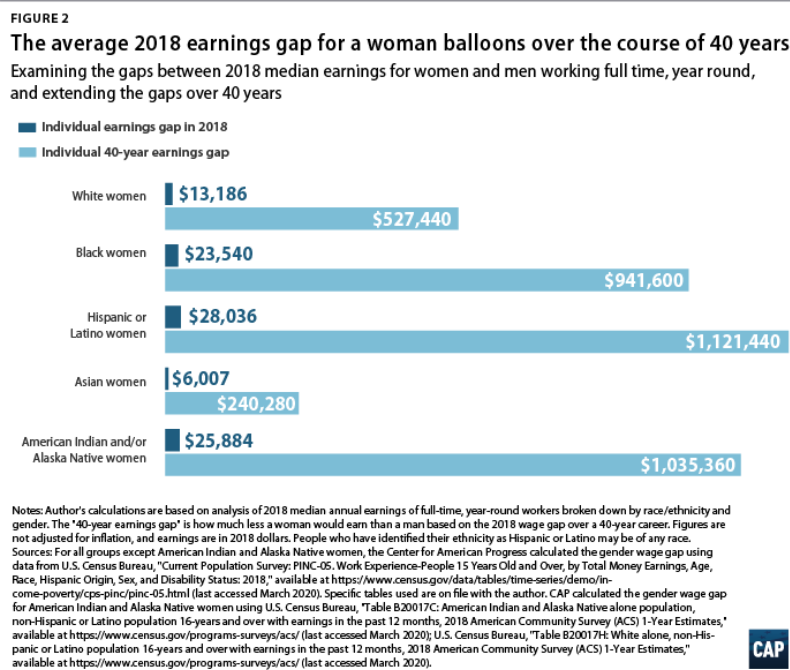
<sup>3</sup> Schieder, Jessica, and Elise Gould. “‘Women’s Work’ and the Gender Pay Gap: How Discrimination, Societal Norms, and Other Forces Affect Women’s Occupational Choices-and Their Pay.” Economic Policy Institute, 20 July 2016, <https://www.epi.org/publication/womens-work-and-the-gender-pay-gap-how-discrimination-societal-norms-and-other-forces-affect-womens-occupational-choices-and-their-pay/>.

<sup>4</sup> “Pregnancy Discrimination - Faqs.” U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, <https://www.eeoc.gov/youth/pregnancy-discrimination-faqs#Q10>.

<sup>5</sup> Smith, Jacquelyn. “What to Say When a Hiring Manager Asks, ‘Do You Have Any Kids?’ during a Job Interview.” Business Insider, Business Insider, 20 Oct. 2016, <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-to-answer-do-you-have-kids-interview-question-2016-10>.

Personal choice does indeed have an affect on the wage gap, yet decisions made under imposed limitations are not necessarily freely chosen. The choice of women to pursue low-paying jobs may be logical given existing constraints. Women will not see an automatic pay boost if they switch careers into a male-dominated profession, but they are more likely to climb the ladder in a female-dominated one. Additionally, the culture of male-dominated industries may be discouraging for women to enter them. There is much well-publicized evidence of sexism in the tech industry: when facts like this are well-known, fewer women will pursue said field. In the interest of disclosing possible bias, the author of this essay likewise experienced a hostile environment that drove her to switch career paths from Engineering to Urban Planning. Learning and networking in a field in which female ideas are considered and accepted was far preferable to doing so in a field that did not provide this respect, whatever the pay.

A look at the financial opportunity cost of the wage gap is astounding. While presented in small terms of eighty-two cents per the dollar, the fiscal impact over a forty-year period amounts to \$407,760 earning gaps between men and women, with higher values for women of color (Figure 2)<sup>6</sup>. It is not only women that come out behind: society and the economy as a whole detriments from reduced earnings<sup>7</sup>. The world's global economy could increase by 11%, a value of \$12 trillion, if women's equality was advanced. If women participated in the economy just as men did, global GDP would increase by 26%, or \$28 trillion. Worldwide, the roadblocks to this equal economic participation are blocked economic potential; time spend in unpaid care work; political representation; violence against women; and fewer legal rights. While not as concerning an issue in more developed nations, these five hurdles are realities that harm all.



<sup>6</sup> Bleiweis, Robin. "Quick Facts about the Gender Wage Gap." Quick Facts About the Gender Wage Gap, Center for American Progress, 2 Nov. 2021, <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/quick-facts-gender-wage-gap/>.

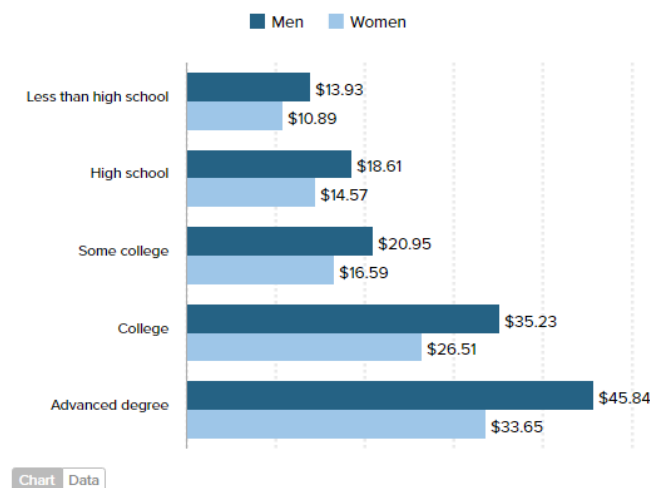
<sup>7</sup> Woetzel, Jonathan, et al. "How Advancing Women's Equality Can Add \$12 Trillion to Global Growth." McKinsey & Company, McKinsey & Company, 16 Sept. 2020, <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/employment-and-growth/how-advancing-womens-equality-can-add-12-trillion-to-global-growth>.

37% of all women have advanced degrees compared to 32% of all men<sup>8</sup>. Women cannot educate themselves out of the wage gap (Figure A): what, then, are some other options? Advocates for closing the wage gap can turn to policy solutions. Mandatory maternity and paternity leave would remove one layer of employer hesitation to choose a woman over a man. Currently, the US is the only industrialized country without federal paid maternity leave policy, let alone father leave<sup>9</sup>. Companies make decisions regarding leave at their discretion: while offering paid leave could be seen as a way to retain top talent, not all companies may see it as a retention tool and not all employees may be able to afford being picky in their job search. Federally mandated leave would change this. France gives expecting mothers 16 weeks off and fathers up to 25 days of leave to use within six months delivery<sup>10</sup>. Sweden has the highest labor participation rate in the country, yet gives a whole 240 days of leave to each parent<sup>11</sup>. Implementing this solution in America may mean that implicit discrimination targets married candidates rather than female candidates, yet it would help make pay and opportunities more equitable between genders. Currently it is seen as “rational” to prioritize man’s career, and if both partners have demanding jobs and a child gets sick, women traditionally puts their career at risk. Recognizing equality in parental leave may be a step towards changing such cultural attitudes.

FIGURE A

### Women earn less than men at every education level

Average hourly wages, by gender and education, 2015



Source: EPI analysis of Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Group microdata

Economic Policy Institute

As another policy point, legislators could make it easier for women to sue via bills like the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009, which expanded the period for filing sex discrimination claims against

<sup>8</sup> Schieder, Jessica, and Elise Gould. “‘Women’s Work’ and the Gender Pay Gap: How Discrimination, Societal Norms, and Other Forces Affect Women’s Occupational Choices and Their Pay.” Economic Policy Institute, 20 July 2016, <https://www.epi.org/publication/womens-work-and-the-gender-pay-gap-how-discrimination-societal-norms-and-other-forces-affect-womens-occupational-choices-and-their-pay/>.

<sup>9</sup> Michelson, Joan. “How Small Companies Can Offer Great Paid-Leave Programs.” Harvard Business Review, 31 Aug. 2021, <https://hbr.org/2021/01/how-small-companies-can-offer-great-paid-leave-programs>.

<sup>10</sup> “Parental Leave in France: Paternity and Maternity Leave in France.” Oyster, Oyster, 7 Sept. 2021, <https://www.oysterhr.com/library/parental-leave-in-france>.

<sup>11</sup> “Work–Life Balance.” Sweden.se, 15 Oct. 2021, <https://sweden.se/life/society/work-life-balance>.

employers and increased penalties<sup>12</sup>. Further legislation is in the works. If passed, the Paycheck Fairness Act would protect against retaliation for discussing salaries with coworkers; prohibit past salary screening in hiring process; require proof that pay discrepancies are legitimate; and create a negotiation training program for women<sup>13</sup>. The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 can also be expanded to cover part-time and small business workers, as well as offer paid leave on a federal level<sup>14</sup>. The courts can also ensure fairness: in 2018, the 9<sup>th</sup> US Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that employers cannot pay women less than men just because they made less at a previous job<sup>15</sup>.

Additionally, while its morality is questionable, policy advocates could promote such policies as maintaining the demographic integrity of the American people. Birth rates are falling and the United States' population is currently supplemented by immigration<sup>16</sup>: to get individuals predisposed to xenophobia on board, advocates could say that family-support policies will help prevent immigrants from displacing "true Americans". However, due to its extremely racist rhetoric, such an approach is not recommended, especially given the polarized state of the country.

As with many wicked problems, there is no one clear cause nor one clear solution to the gender wage gap. Despite this, the wage equality of women and thus economic prosperity of society as a whole can benefit by implementing policies that reshape deeply held beliefs, which is a challenge regardless of the issue. Whatever policy options are pursued, it must be remembered that women's decisions occur within the context of society, not alone in a vacuum: their decisions not only reflect their own personal preferences, but expectations that have been imposed on them since childhood. It is up to society to redefine these expectations and remove any real or perceived limitations that hinder women from exercising their full agency.

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<sup>12</sup> Kurt, Daniel. "What Is the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act?" Investopedia, Investopedia, 11 Nov. 2021, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/l/lilly-ledbetter-fair-pay-act.asp>.

<sup>13</sup> "H.R.7 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): Paycheck Fairness Act ..." H.R.7 - Paycheck Fairness Act, Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/7>.

<sup>14</sup> Bulger, Adam. "The State of Paternity Leave in America." Fatherly, 19 Aug. 2021, <https://www.fatherly.com/love-money/paternity-leave-laws-state-us/>.

<sup>15</sup> Chapell, Bill. "Women Can't Have Prior Salaries Used against Them, Court Says in Equal Pay Case." Colorado Public Radio, Colorado Public Radio, 10 Apr. 2018, <https://www.cpr.org/2018/04/10/women-cant-have-prior-salaries-used-against-them-court-says-in-equal-pay-case/>.

<sup>16</sup> Barroso, Amanda. "With a Potential 'Baby Bust' on the Horizon, Key Facts about Fertility in the U.S. before the Pandemic." Pew Research Center, Pew Research Center, 7 May 2021, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/05/07/with-a-potential-baby-bust-on-the-horizon-key-facts-about-fertility-in-the-u-s-before-the-pandemic/>.

**Task 2, Option 2: In chapter 16 of Schein the author begins to describe the ultimate purpose of the book, which is to demonstrate how change in organizational culture can actually be effected. While Schein mentions only one desirable approach, there are actually dozens which have been proposed. A summary of them can be found in the assigned readings at [Changingminds.org](http://Changingminds.org) . Choose a few of these alternatives and discuss how they may or may not be more successful than Schein's three-step approach. Please make it clear, through your citations, which course sources you are drawing from and be sure to include plenty of new ones. Min 1200 words.**

While an elusive concept for some, most managers are aware of the aspect of “culture” within their organizations. The way that employees operate via norms, rules, and reward structures has a profound impact on the day-to-day lives of those within a company as well as overall performance: this impacts not only employee retention but the survival of the employers. But how should an organization go about instituting change, when societal change itself is rarely transformed by conscious effort or design? This essay explores the three-step process proposed by an expert in organizational culture and leadership, compares it to three other approaches suggested by [Changingminds.org](http://Changingminds.org), then concludes with some general advice that can help leaders with whatever cultural challenge they face.

Before Edgar H. Schein and Peter Schein break down the organizational cultural change process into three steps for change leaders, they invite managers to examine why there is a need to change the status quo<sup>17</sup>. Change for the sake of change may not necessarily be a good tactic: most leaders seek it out because someone they care about is experiencing some level of pain or dissatisfaction, whether customer, client, or subordinate. When something is not going as expected, that is the time to act.

Change leaders must first create motivation and readiness for change, a process called “Unfreezing”. In this, “disconfirmation” occurs, where information is collected that shows goals are not being accomplished or met. Sometimes this can be the result of scandals or leaks. This information is symptomatic, yet should a manager be particularly manipulative, they can create a crisis to fabricate the motivation for change. While this may not necessarily seem like a good idea due to the potential for eroded trust and diminished psychological safety within the organization, there might be a situation so dire that such craftiness is needed for survival. Indeed, “survival anxiety” is needed for change to occur: employees must understand that important goals or values are not being attained, thus compromising the survival of the company. “Learning anxiety”, related but opposite, is where employees are afraid that their knowledge, status, safety, identity, or group membership are challenged as a result of adopting new behaviors. This creates a barrier to change and is practiced via scapegoating, denial, maneuvering, or bartering. While tempting to increase survival anxiety to overcome existing learning anxiety, change leaders must reduce learning anxiety instead. This can be done by creating a psychologically safe environment where people feel valued and safe. Leaders can create such an environment by providing a compelling positive vision; formal training; resources; positive role models; support groups that help with learning problems; involving learners; and removing barriers.

Once this groundwork is done, change leaders can move on to Stage 2 of Schein's process: learning new concepts, learning new meanings for concepts that already exist, and creating new standards with which to be evaluated. Managers must understand that imitating a role model and psychologically identifying with that person is one of the most effective ways to learn new behaviors, especially when values and behaviors themselves are clear. Employees can also “scan” the environment using trial and error by inventing their own solution until something sticks and works. This approach, as opposed to the role model approach, is best for finding solutions that work for individual personalities. Smaller

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<sup>17</sup> Schein, Edgar H. *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. eBook ed., Wiley, 2017.



organizations, such as start-ups that rely on several dedicated people, may benefit most from this approach. While leaders might think that it is easier to change beliefs and values first, with the expectation that behavior will follow, changing behavior first is better because by doing so, employers define what's expected of employees. New beliefs can be the result of recycling old ones: this might be seen as “rationalization”, but it really is just “restructuring”. Whether employees learn new concepts or attribute new meaning to old ones is up to the discretion of the change leader.

The final step in Schein's three-step model is “refreezing, relearning, and learning agility”<sup>18</sup>. Change leaders must understand that human systems are in flux: the more dynamic the environment, the more responsive people need to be regarding the perpetual change and learning process. Managers must encourage this flexibility and monitor their organization to ensure that it is adequately handling the environment, or else proactively shaping the environment into one that can be handled.

Schein provides an approach to organizational change that is logical and well thought-out: are there any alternatives that could be just as effective? One of these is “whole-system planning”, an approach in which a group of at least 20 but usually 50 people from all areas of an organization convene and follow a structured, conference-like agenda<sup>19</sup>. The first day focuses on the past, where participants talk about their stories and struggles, good or bad. The point of this exercise is to understand diversity from a growth perspective and map out the “geological range” of the company. This is also an opportunity to look at the culture of an organization. On the second day, participants talk about external forces openly, including customers, markets, services, and products, then discuss how the organization is responding to these forces, coping methods, and structural responses. Conference facilitators can either mention removing the inevitable negative emotions that stem from this or call the instances out when they first show up. Another goal might be to talk about cultural elements in relevant, present-day terms. Finally, on the last day, the participants talk about their desired future. This is shared and developed as a group, whereupon thoughts are broken down into plans developed by smaller groups. Participants identify blocks and risks to the shared future and identify ways around them. Management then identifies the needed structure and later meets with key members from the conference in creating finalized plans.

There are several benefits to such an approach. One is that people deeply care about what they create: involving those from all areas of an organization guarantees a high level of buy-in<sup>20</sup>. Avoiding a “top-down” approach is to use a more democratic system that reflects the deeply-held values of most American employees. Whole-system planning is a comprehensive process that accumulates knowledge from a wide swath of people which may not be available or included via other methods. Additionally, it allows employees to socialize and celebrate the past, which is a bonding experience in itself. The structure of the conference also helps set up a system where people ease into the hard work during the first day, which helps it not become overwhelming. One major drawback of the tactic, however, is that it is extremely time consuming, which means some participants might find themselves mind-numbingly disinterested. Such an integrated approach may also have the downside of hierarchy: even though everyone is together with the assumption that they are giving equally valued input, divisions may still exist in participant's minds, leading them to without their input and not be forthcoming.

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<sup>18</sup> Schein, Edgar H. *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. eBook ed., Wiley, 2017.

<sup>19</sup> “Whole-System Planning.” *Changing Minds*, [http://changingminds.org/disciplines/change\\_management/creating\\_change/whole-system\\_planning.htm](http://changingminds.org/disciplines/change_management/creating_change/whole-system_planning.htm).

<sup>20</sup> “Three Reasons to Use a Whole System, Strength Based Planning Approach for Your next Big Initiative.” *Insight Solutions, LLC*, 2 July 2019, <https://getinsightsolutions.com/three-reasons-to-use-a-whole-system-strength-based-planning-approach-for-your-next-big-initiative/>.

Another alternative to Schein's process is that of "rites of passage"<sup>21</sup>. These are celebrations or rituals for when a change is completed. Alternatively, a ceremony can kick off a change by celebrating the "life" of something old that is no longer relevant. Such events are usually seen in a positive light and, indeed, has remarkable benefit in organizations. Humans place a lot of value in rituals since the beginning of recorded history and perhaps before. These help people acknowledge and move on from something as well as work through emotional ties holding them back. Rituals benefit the workplace by helping new employees get excited about a new job and craft a shared purpose with new coworkers<sup>22</sup>. Rites of passage also help people with promotions mentally prepare for leadership-oriented mindsets. The overall experience of a ritual is bonding, since it includes one's team or department<sup>23</sup>.

However, despite its allure, employers must be aware that "rites of passage" can quickly toe the line between beneficial and hazing. If unchecked and if not held in a psychologically safe space, rituals can be more about reinforcing power and status hierarchies than about marking a monumental change in the individual's life<sup>24</sup>. Additionally, by thinking of things in an orderly fashion with a clearly defined completion hierarchy, rites of passage can contribute to "linear" thinking, which organizations that are responsive to constantly changing environments shy away from<sup>25</sup>.

The final alternative to Schein's process is that of "golden handcuffs". These are incentives that are put in place when people might be otherwise tempted to leave an organization<sup>26</sup>. By putting "significant benefits in their middle-term future", companies can hold on to people by providing the promise of reward at a later date. Employees who feel that their work is currently dull can continue with their duties knowing that their life will get exciting at a later point. Using this approach has two distinct positives: 1) as long as the reward is offered within a year, it may be enough to keep a person on board beyond loyalty or job enjoyment, and 2) a "rolling reward system" can be put in place to keep the employee on once the initial reward is released. On the other hand, this approach has several patent detriments. Golden handcuffs can be put in place without an organization even delivering on their promises, which makes them extremely manipulative. It creates a sense of anticipation but not reward, and may be inadequate for those who are not feeling fulfilled: these employees may be lost to an organization who offers what's being held over their head as a carrot more immediately. Golden handcuffs also have a negative connotation: people typically see that they won't be paid well and will lose benefits if they leave before their contracted term, which is not an incentive to join said organization<sup>27</sup>. Overall, this approach must be carefully considered and should be implemented only if it can be done so in a humane manner.

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<sup>21</sup> "Rites of Passage." Changing Minds,

[http://changingminds.org/disciplines/change\\_management/creating\\_change/rites\\_passage.htm](http://changingminds.org/disciplines/change_management/creating_change/rites_passage.htm).

<sup>22</sup> "Why We Need Rites of Passage at Work." Rosetta, 13 Mar. 2020,

<https://www.rosettatg.com/blogtoon/2018/10/8/why-we-need-rites-of-passage-at-work>.

<sup>23</sup> Ahmed, Anam. "Examples of Company Rites & Rituals." Small Business - Chron.com, Chron.com, 8 Mar. 2019, <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/examples-company-rites-rituals-66258.html>.

<sup>24</sup> Burn, Shawn. "Hazing: When Rites of Passage Are Harmful Practices." Psychology Today, Sussex Publishers, 30 Sept. 2019, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/presence-mind/201909/hazing-when-rites-passage-are-harmful-practices>.

<sup>25</sup> Blumenkrantz, David. "Rites of Passage in a World That Is Not Flat." The Systems Thinker, 14 Mar. 2018, <https://thesystemsthinker.com/%EF%BB%BFrites-of-passage-in-a-world-that-is-not-flat/>.

<sup>26</sup> "Golden Handcuffs." Changing Minds,

[http://changingminds.org/disciplines/change\\_management/creating\\_change/golden\\_handcuffs.htm](http://changingminds.org/disciplines/change_management/creating_change/golden_handcuffs.htm).

<sup>27</sup> Olsen, Stephanie. "Caught in the Golden Handcuffs? Here's How to Break Free." In Her Sight, 13 Jan. 2021, <https://www.inhersight.com/blog/salary/golden-handcuffs>.



These three alternatives are only some of the tools available for change leaders who want to benefit their organizational culture. **As general recommendations, leaders must make sure that their change goal is put in behavioral terms and not simply labeled as “cultural change”<sup>28</sup>.** Firing those who “carry” unwanted cultural elements will not remove the culture itself, but new culture can be learned if the desired new behaviors are successful or lead to satisfaction. True, the unlearning period to change cultural assumptions may be psychologically painful as employees wrestle with their anxieties, but change leaders should keep their eyes on the future: discomfort is inevitable if organizations are to constantly change under the interdependent demands of increasingly complex environments.

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<sup>28</sup> Schein, Edgar H. *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. eBook ed., Wiley, 2017.