DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 410 654 EA 028 547

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TITLE Hearing Truth from Power? Organisation Theory, School Effectiveness and School Improvement.
PUB DATE 1997-03-00
NOTE 35p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Chicago, IL, March 24-28, 1997).
PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Change; *Educational Improvement; Educational Theories; *Effective Schools Research; Elementary Secondary Education; Organizational Climate; Organizational Theories; *Power Structure; *School Culture; *School Effectiveness; *School Organization

ABSTRACT

School-effectiveness and school-improvement researchers are increasingly looking to establish some kind of synergy between their respective fields; however, current attempts lack a clear understanding of organizations. School-effectiveness research tends to emphasize structural dimensions, while the focus in school-improvement work is on organizational cultures. This paper proposes that by incorporating a third dimension--power--the two fields can be more successfully brought together. A concept of organizations that uses structure, culture, and power as mutually reinforcing analytical tools is outlined, and ways in which "power" can illuminate both school-effectiveness and school-improvement research are discussed. The paper concludes by proposing some research questions that might provide a basis for a more successful integration of the two research traditions: (1) What forms of knowledge power are deemed to be legitimate and where are they located within the school? and (2) How is it deemed legitimate to exercise different forms of power resources for the purposes of school improvement? Two figures are included. (Contains 81 references.) (Author/LMI)

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ED 410 654

Hearing Truth from Power?

Organisation theory, school effectiveness and school improvement

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Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association: Chicago, March 1997.

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Abstract.

School effectiveness and school improvement researchers are increasingly looking to establish some kind of synergy between their respective fields, but current attempts lack a clear understanding of organizations which can provide a sound base for that linkage to occur. School effectiveness research tends to emphasise structural dimensions, while the emphasis in school improvement work is on organizational cultures. This paper proposes that by incorporating a third dimension - power - the two can be brought together more successfully. A concept of organizations which uses structure, culture and power as mutually reinforcing analytical tools is outlined, and ways in which "power" can illuminate both school effectiveness and school improvement writing are discussed. The paper concludes by proposing some research questions which might provide a basis for a more succesful integration of the two research traditions.

Introduction

Since the mid 1980s there has been increased interest in school effectiveness and school improvement among researchers, policy makers and practitioners. As Bollen (1996) suggests, this body of knowledge is trying to give answers to two fundamental questions: What do effective schools look like? and how do schools improve over time? The first of these questions has been the chief concern of school effectiveness research while the second question has led to much school improvement research work. Unfortunately, there has been relatively little overlap between these two research fields. For many years the two research traditions of school effectiveness and school improvement have stood as clearly differentiated fields of activities and traditions. More recently, efforts have been made to make more synergistic connections between them (Reynolds, Hopkins & Stoll 1993; West & Hopkins 1995; Hopkins 1995, 1996; Gray et al 1996). However, the true fruits of collaboration have not yet been fully realised (Elliott, 1997; Reynolds and Stoll, 1996)

The desire to combine both research fields is now somewhat more urgent. School effectiveness studies are currently in a period of stagnation as the seriousness of the research base to influence development remains under question. Similarly, models and approaches to school improvement remain idiosyncratic and process driven, without a coherent theory to guide their development and progress. Consequently, for each research fields some form of synergy with the other looks very appealing.

Despite such impetus for reconciliation it would appear however, that there are still substantial barriers to linking theory and practice in both research fields.

Part of the difficulty has been the absence of theories, or models which explicitly link the two research traditions. School effectiveness research has resisted developing models of schooling. Despite study after study producing effectiveness correlates, the school effectiveness field is nowhere nearer the goal of providing an adequate model of how schools function. Without such a model, it is difficult to see how the school effectiveness field can progress much further. Similarly, those within the school improvement field are in a theoretical impasse. There has been much improvement activity in schools but little debate about the underlying principles of school improvement. Even the best examples of school improvement have failed to elaborate theories of school development,or to begin in any systematic way to develop a range of models of school improvement intervention .

As Hopkins 1996 has suggested:

> *if the current efforts to integrate work in the areas of school effectiveness and school improvement are to result in the 'paradigm shift' the field requires, then more attention needs to be given to establishing theories and models of schools, how they change and develop, and what interventions assist the improvement process. Without such conceptual development, the field, despite recent advances, will remain moribund* (p31).

Our central argument in this paper is that organisational theory can provide a basis for meaningful synergy between the two research fields. In particular, we contend that the concept of **power** within organisations can provide a long overdue theoretical and practical point of unison. We suggest that the *paradigm shift the fields require* can be found by applying the concept of power to the basic tenets of school effectiveness and school improvement research i.e. to structure and culture respectively. We suggest that the construct of power is potentially synergistic because it is integral to both cultural and structural change. In our view, linking structure and culture is the key to merging the school improvement and school effectiveness research traditions.

This paper has five sections:

Section one considers the effectiveness and improvement research traditions and argues that they have not sufficiently utilised the concept of power within their separate considerations of structural and cultural change.

Section two introduces the concept of organisational change and development which stresses the importance of the integration of structure, culture and power in its analysis.

Section three explores the inter-relationship between power, culture and structure through illustrative examples.

Section four addresses the potential of adding power to organisational analysis within the context of school effectiveness and school improvement.

The concluding section raises a series of questions about the main issues emerging from this discussion for relating organizational analysis to school effectiveness and school improvement theory and practice.

I. School Effectiveness and School Improvement: Structure versus Culture?

As noted earlier, despite the logic of combining school effectiveness and school improvement at the level of practice, it would appear that at the theoretical level there is much less of a relationship, or commonality of perspective between these two fields. This situation of two separate, discrete bodies of knowledge, however, would not appear to be the existing norm in all parts of the world. In the United States, there exists perhaps the closest of the international relationships between school effectiveness and school improvement. As Reynolds and Stoll, (1996) note, at the start of the 1990s, over half of all American school districts were running improvement programmes based upon, or linked to the effective schools knowledge base. Albeit, these programmes have tended to be based upon the earlier, simplistic version of school effectiveness developed by Edmonds (1979) and popularised by Lezotte (1989).

In addition, in the United States there have been the well-known demonstration projects which have involved the direct, controlled transfer of effectiveness knowledge into school improvement programmes (e.g. McCormack-Larkin, 1985). Similarly in Canada there have been programmes premised upon a necessary relationship between school effectiveness and school improvement (Stoll and Fink, 1996). In Israel there is widespread evidence of the systematic application of school effectiveness findings in school improvement programmes (Bashi, 1995). However, these international examples of an active application of school effectiveness principles for school improvement purposes are the exception rather than the rule.

In the UK relatively few projects or programmes have emerged from such synergy between the two fields of research. Until very recently, there was little collaboration between those working in the school effectiveness and school improvement paradigms. Moreover,there was very little practitioner scrutiny of the knowledge base of school effectiveness in the UK (Mortimore, 1991; Reynolds, 1992). In other parts of the world the current situation is similar to that of Britain. In New Zealand (Ramsay et al, 1982), the Netherlands (Scheerens, 1989) and Australia (Chapman and Stevens, 1989) all the evidence would confirm a distinct absence of school effectiveness based improvement programmes.

This divide has little to do with the quality of the research evidence provided by the school effectiveness and school improvement fields. Instead, the problem lies with differences in epistemology. The research on school effects adopts a very basic conceptualisation of the school as input-thoroughput-output. It emphasises the importance of **structure** in organisational development and change. School effectiveness research takes little account of different levels within the school, or of the process factors which contribute to the effectiveness of individual schools. In direct contrast, the school improvement research tradition has been largely concerned with process factors as part of organisational development and change. The school improvement research base has traditionally focused upon the processes which occur within the structure of a school and has emphasised the importance of **culture** as an important component of organisational development and growth (Hopkins et al, 1994).

It is possible to make a fairly clear set of statements about the nature of the school effectiveness research tradition. In the first place, its protagonists have established clearly what they regard as "effectiveness". They have taken for granted, in Scott's (1987) terms, that schools are rational, goal-oriented systems, that the goals are clear and agreed, that they relate to pupil- or student-achievement, and that those achievements should be measurable. Effectiveness can then be measured by comparing the level of achievement in these measurable attainment targets in order to identify which schools' pupils are achieving more, and which less. They have decided that the issue of educational goal-definition is not for debate within the research: what is, however, open to debate is the extent to which school effects can be consistent over time.

The other key characteristic of school effectiveness research has been its attempt to link the quality of performance with particular characteristics of the schools. A wide range of school characteristics have been identified and correlational research has been undertaken to link particular characteristics with higher pupil performance. In a recent survey, Sammons et al. (1995) proposed eleven factors which research suggests can be associated with effective schooling. However, another analysis by Scheerens (1992) argued that out of sixteen factors frequently identified in school effectiveness studies, only three could be regarded as having any consistent relationship: the determination to get better results; the maximisation of learning time; and the amount of structured teaching (Gray et al,1996).

The list of effectiveness factors generated by Sammons et al. (1995) relates to school-wide and classroom-focused concerns, with a strong focus on leadership, unity, order and high expectations. However, a closer examination of these factors suggests that they focus on two dimensions of the work of the schools: decision-making about the direction of the school's work and approaches to the task of teaching. From the point of view of the school as an organization, they focus on the technical core and the structure which supports it, and the leadership provided for its staff. The values and principles which support those decisions and that leadership, and shape the relationships between the members of the school, receive less attention.

It is our view that a major limitation of this work resides in the fact that effectiveness studies have tended to focus attention at the level of the organisation and have not looked as school level interactions, or processes in any depth. Much of the school effectiveness work has neglected conditions outside the school and conditions at other layers within the organisation which contribute to overall effectiveness (eg Harris et al, 1995). The effectiveness research has rarely been detailed enough to provide information on what is needed for school improvement. The lack of a focus upon the conditions which foster effectiveness, or improvement in a school has meant that the practical application of much of this research base in terms of school development and improvement has proved to be somewhat limited.

In summary, it would appear that the school effectiveness literature takes a technical rational view of schools as organisations and focuses all its attention on ensuring that school outcomes are clearly defined and accurately measured In this respect, the school effectiveness research tradition is strongly normative in orientation and set in a clear organisational paradigm. It focuses primarily upon the structural and technical aspects of the organisation rather than the process or cultural dimensions. It is here that the organisational model adopted by school effectiveness researchers is in our view vulnerable, in that it describes the factors associated with greater school effectiveness but is unable to operationalise the research findings into a process of increasing school effectiveness. Therefore, it resides at the level of description rather than action.

In marked contrast to this position, school improvement writers emphasise two particular dimensions of schools: the norms and values which shape individual and collective action and the structural arrangements made at the school level. Collectively, these two dimensions produce a view of the organisation as a culturally coherent and unified artefact. In the school improvement literature, the unit of analysis is the whole school as an organic and dynamic culture. In contrast, within the school effectiveness literature there is an increasing knowledge of the importance of different layers within the organisation i.e. the school as a hierarchical, bureaucratic system.

Most schools in Western countries are now familiar with the approach to structural change via some form of the school development planning. This entails a process that encourages schools to express their developmental aspirations in the form of ***priorities***. The school's development plan consists of a series of priorities which ideally are supported by action plans. Most approaches to planning place great stress on the implementation of priorities which are formulated within a coherent ***strategy***. The exact nature of the strategy, or combination of strategies, is, however, peculiar to each school. Strategies need to take account of the priorities that have been agreed, existing conditions and the resources that are available. When structural change takes place then changes occur simultaneously to the ***culture*** of the school. For example, as a result of development work, teachers began to talk more about teaching, collaborative work outside of the particular project becomes more commonplace, and management structures are adapted to support this and future changes. When taken together, such changes in culture and structure increase the school's 'capacity for development' and prepare the ground for future change efforts. Schools who have been through a number of 'change cycles' either experience less internal turbulence, or are able to tolerate greater levels of turbulence, because they have progressively enhanced their capacity for development as a result of this process.

Hopkins (1996) has summarised this process using the following notation: **P** stands for the priority the school sets itself, **S** the chosen strategy, the wavy line the period of de-stabilisation, **Co** the schools' internal conditions that are modified in order to ameliorate the de stabilisation, and **Cu** the resulting change in culture.

P> *S>* *{ }* *Co>* *Cu*

Real life of course is not as simple or as linear as this formula suggests, but this way of describing the process of development resonates with the experience of many of teachers. The process of cultural change is also not a 'one off' as implied by the notation, but evolves and unfolds over time. Often many sequences, have to be gone through before a radically different culture emerges in a school. Indeed, many heads and school leaders seem to agree with Schein (1992:5) when he wrote, 'that the only thing of real importance that leaders do is to create and manage culture'.

Much school improvement work has assumed in practice that all schools are the same, that a strategy such as development planning will work as well in one school as another. Yet it is clear from the research on school effectiveness (see for example, Reynolds and Cuttance 1992) that schools are differentially effective. This would suggest that schools at different levels of effectiveness require different school improvement strategies. This is not well trodden territory. Attempts have been made to address this issue (Hopkins *et al* 1994, Harris and Hopkins, 1997).but in thinking about these matters we suggest that power is a useful means of relating effectiveness and school outcomes, to the 'dynamism' of school improvement.

A key assumption within the school improvement literature is that school improvement strategies can lead to cultural change in schools through modifications to their internal conditions. It is the cultural change that supports the teaching and learning process which leads to enhanced outcomes for students. The types of school cultures most supportive of school improvement efforts appear to be those that are collaborative, have high expectations for both students and staff and exhibit a consensus on values , support and orderly and secure environment , and encourage teachers to assume a variety of leadership roles .

In summary, the emphasis of school improvement is on cultural change i.e. the processes which occur within the structure and the assumptions and values of the leaders and the led. However, as Hopkins (1996) has pointed out, despite a clear view of the change process, there is much less clarity about the theories upon which school improvement writers can justify its practice and predict how interventions might work. We would argue that some clarity in the area can be derived from using power as a unifying concept within the culture and structure dynamic . Futhermore, we suggest that there is much to be gained from analysing the necessary interrelationship between structure, culture and power in organisational change and development.

II. Structure, Culture, Power and Organisational Change

Our view of an organization, essentially stated, is that it is a set of relationships between the individuals who staff it. Without the members there would be no organization, and everything which is achieved within the organization is the result of some kind of interaction between its members. The nature of any given relationship is influenced by three wider organizational factors, which we shall refer to as structure, culture, and the distribution of power. School effectiveness and school improvement writers tend to have more limited views of both structure and culture as we have seen and both schools of thought largely ignore the importance of power as an analytical construct. We now examine structure, culture and power in turn.

Organizational structures relate to the distribution of decision-making responsibilities and their associated accountabilities. They lay out the formalised relationships between individuals, and the area of work within which they are entitled to make decisions for themselves. They provide the means through which it is possible for the organization to identify the demands being placed upon it, decide upon priorities within those demands, and allocate resources to particular areas of work in order to meet them. Structures are frequently depicted through the medium of organization charts which describe people in terms of formalised titles that are supposed to outline the decision-making responsibilities formally allocated to that office-holder. However, structural factors go further than that. By defining decision-making responsibilities and related resource-controls, they also define ways in which it is expected that decisions will be taken: by individuals, through committees, or by democratic whole-school meetings. Thus, for example, Bush's (1995) distinction between models of management and organization is a definition of different structural dimensions. Importantly, he identifies six structural models: formal (bureaucratic), collegial, political, ambiguity, subjective and "cultural" .

What often gets overlooked in the delineation of structures through organization charts is that the picture they present is not a fixed statement of the organization but a description of existing relationships which shows the current distribution of knowledge, responsibilities and resources. It is therefore susceptible to change. Structures are created, can be changed deliberately, or can produce change for themselves. This is because as well as being statements of the current distribution of resource controls and decision-making, they are expressions of power relationships. The originator of a structure, be it an individual, a committee or a meeting, possesses the means of defining and changing peoples' responsibilities. Once established, individuals may be able to, or find that circumstances, increase their influence by virtue of the decisions they have to take. Structures, therefore, can be seen as both created by, and creating, power relationships. They are simultaneously static and fluid, fixed and changing.

Exactly how individual organizations distribute responsibilities and respond to and prioritise between the multitude of external pressures will vary depending upon the beliefs and assumptions of the individuals who are involved in deciding how to arrange the internal workings of the organization. In other words, as Schein (1992) would argue, the precise pattern of structural arrangements which delineate an organization's relationship with its environment and its internal workings to respond to that relationship are outgrowths of the culture of the organization.

Culture is taken in the literature to mean almost anything from "the way we do things around here" (Bower 1966) through Bolman and Deal's (1991) shared values which give rise to shared behavioural norms, to Heck and Marcoulides' (1996) statement that it

> *may be thought of as the manner in which an organization solves problems to achieve its specific goals and to maintain itself over time. ... It is holistic, historically determined, socially constructed and difficult to change.* (Heck and Marcoulides 1996: 77)

More all-embracing concepts of culture allow us to incorporate not just the norms which are supposed to govern behaviour but also the concept of what the organization is about which gives rise to the norms. In Schein's (1992) wide-ranging view of organizational culture we have to include what the members believe their work involves and requires and the consequent organizational decisions which result, both structural (as in the sense outlined above) and physical. The prior decision to found a Steiner or Montessori school is part of its culture. Similarly, a decision by a primary school headteacher to knock down the walls between the classrooms and introduce open-plan schooling would be not a structural but a major cultural change. The challenge to the existing norms surrounding teacher behaviour which this decision would involve would be a result of fundamental decisions about the core technology of the school, reflecting Heck and Marcoulides (1996:77) view.

Many analyses of organizational culture focus on the norms which bind together individual behaviour into a pattern, tending to stress what Meyerson and Martin (1987) describe as the integrative dimension of culture (e.g.., Schein 1992, Bolman and Deal 1991, Nias et al. 1989, Wallace 1989, Campbell 1989). However, cultures need not be integrative: rather, they are definitional and distinctive. Each organizational culture is unique, but as Meyerson and Martin (1987) argue, it may be a culture which differentiates subunits and elements or one which accepts and copes with ambiguity. Each is likely to generate a different structural pattern or artefact (Schein 1992:17): a culture of differentiation, for example, is more likely to be associated with a loosely coupled structure or system (Weick 1976) than is a culture of integration.

In the view of culture being developed here, the norms and rules which culturally govern the actions of organizational members derive in part from the concept of the work in which the organization is engaged. This understanding originates outside the organization, and many of the norms which influence actions within both cultures and subcultures are also derived in part at least from the organization's environment. Cultural norms rest in many cases upon institutional definitions (Meyer and Rowan 1977, Ogawa 1996). For example, larger United Kingdom secondary schools have tended to conform to an organizational arrangement which combines subject departments into faculties. Nevertheless, the amount of cross-subject teaching is very varied: relatively rare in "Humanities" faculties, where History teachers are rarely asked to teach Geography, but common in "Science" faculties, where Physics teachers will often be found teaching Chemistry to younger pupils. (Bennett 1991, 1995). Once again, this reflects Schein's argument about the need to incorporate organizational members' view of their work and its demands within the cultural definition.

The values of individual members and their concepts of the work of the organization, embedded in wider institutional contexts, may give rise to the cultural norms and so to the behavioural rules which limit individuals' freedom of action, but this does not explain how such norms are established and maintained. Schein (1992) is quite clear that they derive initially from the founder, who gathers together like-minded people who then continue to recruit similarly like-minded colleagues as the organization expands. Writers on corporate culture (which Anthony (1994) distinguishes from organization culture by arguing that corporate culture is the vision of senior management whereas organization culture is the norms that shape actual current practice) also see the role of the chief executive as crucial for the development of cultural norms (Deal and Kennedy 1982, Bolman and Deal 1991).

These views of culture creation, which see it as a deliberate activity, invest particular individuals with a great deal of power to direct the actions and behaviour of others. Writing of how cultures are maintained, Deal (1985:607) refers to the "informal network of priests and priestesses, gossips, storytellers, and other cultural players" who sustain the culture of "how we do things around here". We suggest that these "cultural players" possess particular forms of power resources, which they have acquired by first accepting particular norms and then developing, articulating and sustaining a particular interpretation of them.

Culture as observed is the pattern of rules and norms which derive from the basic understanding of the work which is done, and which shape the actions of those in the organization. As structures are enacted and create formal and publicly accepted rules, so cultures are also enacted and create informal and often unstated rules. Both represent forms of constraint upon the individual, and as such represent statements of power relationships between members of the organization. However, just as structures are susceptible to both direct and organic change, so cultures are not fixed either. The possibility of advocates of a new corporate culture creating a new set of norms to replace those of the old organization culture is one potential form of change.

The distribution of power within an organization is simultaneously a key determinant and consequence of culture as it is both a determinant and a consequence of structure. We view power as a relationship through which one individual causes another to act in a particular way. The basis upon which this can be done is the resources which can be called upon in the exchange. The greater the disparity of resources between the two parties to the exchange, the more likely it is that one will be able to cause the other to act as desired. Hales (1993) has conveniently distinguished between four kinds of resource - physical, economic, knowledge and normative - which may be available to an individual in any exchange.

Physical resource power represents the ability of one person to use physical force to coerce another to comply. Economic resource power rests upon the ability to provide or withhold things which someone else needs, such as a salary or the means of doing a job. In organizational terms, it is usually associated with a formal role rather than an individual. Because it rests upon the ability to call upon the formal resources of the organization, this is the form of power most closely associated with the functioning of formal structures.

Knowledge power can take two forms: administrative or technical knowledge. Administrative knowledge relates to the operation of the organization, whereas technical knowledge relates to the core of the work which the individual does. It is a resource because it can be used to provide assistance and support to a colleague who lacks it, or as a counterweight to the planned exercise of economic resource power. The last form of power resource Hales identifies is "normative" power. This should be distinguished from norms in the cultural sense: rather, it is access to scarce values or desired ideas. Normative power can also rest upon personal friendships and broader reputation: the colleague who is able to persuade colleagues to do something as a personal favour calls upon normative power resources when this happens. Clearly, then, such normative power resources, like knowledge power resources, rest in individuals rather than the positions they may hold.

The variable distribution of economic, knowledge and normative power resources accounts for the disparity in power which exists between individuals and, through the activities of individuals within them, of units within an organization. When the disparity is great, it is likely that the result will be substantial element of compliance; when there is a more equal distribution of these resources, compliance may have to be obtained through a more negotiative process. In such circumstances, the structure is likely to provide for substantial levels of discretion for the individuals in discharging their technical activities, which makes it more difficult for managers to influence directly what they do. Economic power resources may have to fight the influence of knowledge power resources when this occurs.

Compliance may come in several forms, depending on the power resources being exercised and the legitimacy accorded to them. Normative power resources are, by definition, deemed legitimate, and Hales (1993:30) suggests that they result in a values-based commitment to act: compliance linked to a cognitive or emotional attachment to the task. Physical power resources, however, are non-legitimate, and result in "alienative compliance" and a search for countervailing power resources to deploy against them. Economic and knowledge resources result in a more calculative response, which might be "cognitive compliance", wherein the person is persuaded that what is being required is correct, or "instrumental compliance", which rests purely on a calculation of benefits and disadvantages. An important factor in the response is the availability of countervailing power resources Economic power resources, which pass from office to office and derive from structural decisions, are likely to result in instrumental compliance, whereas knowledge power passes from person to person and is more likely to result in cognitive compliance, and, since it can be reused and internalised over time, may develop into commitment.

It is also important, when considering the nature of power within organizations and its relationship to structure and culture, to take account of the ways in which it might be deployed. Power can be deployed overtly and covertly; overt power can be direct or provisional; and all methods of deployment can be positive or negative. Thus a manager might provide additional resources (overt, actual, positive), withhold them (overt, actual, negative), promise them or threaten to withhold them (overt provisional, positive and negative), or imply that resources may be available or withheld (covert positive and negative).

Thus in this formulation, power resources come in four different forms, each capable of deployment in three ways, and of being positive or negative in their use. For managers and consultants it is important to invest their power resources with as much legitimacy as possible, since only power resources deemed legitimate are likely to produce positive forms of compliance. Structures and cultures are crucial ways of attempting to provide legitimacy for power resources, since these reside in the office rather than the individual. Structures provide in particular the legitimation of economic resources, and the deployment of economic resources in ways not permitted by the structure is likely to be seen as corrupt and therefore non-legitimate. However, cultural norms may permit such corruption. Power resources whose deployment is legitimated through the structure of the organization tend to be used overtly.

Cultures provide the legitimation of normative and much knowledge power, since these reside in the individual rather than their office. They also provide crucial means of aligning legitimate normative and knowledge power with the institutional norms within which organizational members live, and which organizations have to acknowledge (Ogawa 1996, Meyer and Rowan 1977). It is important to recognise that institutional norms can be a major source of organizational cultural norms. Indeed, one can argue that members transact institutional norms into the culture of the organizations to which they belong. Such transactions can cause shifts in the norms of organizational cultures and subcultures, and with them, changes in the power resources deemed legitimate. Cultures have to be continuously re-enacted and re-stated, and the act of restatement gives room for the statement to be changed.

This process of legitimation and re-legitimation of power resources provides a tool for examining the process of cultural change, and to explaining how organizational culture can be at once an agent of change and stasis. We would suggest that there is also a relationship between the kinds of power resource and their associated compliance, and the issue of power disparity. The greater the power disparity, the less countervailing power can be brought to the exchange by the weaker party. Weaker parties to a relationship, we suggest, are more likely to possess elements of knowledge and normative power than they are economic or physical power, and so are less likely to recognise economic and physical power resources as legitimate, so that these receive compliance rather than commitment. Indeed, a characteristic of the cultural knowledge power is that it is widely shared.

This discussion of power, which is summarised in table 1, has attempted to demonstrate how we believe it is a crucial variable which needs to be incorporated into our analysis of structures and cultures, and why we argue that an analysis of organizations along all three dimensions is important. However, we would also stress the interconnected nature of the three dimensions. Structures can be understood as artefacts generated by the particular combination of values and assumptions which comprise the basic elements of the culture. Structures can be both formally created and informally established as networks of social relations. Cultures develop as they do because of the particular disposition of power resources among their members and the ways in which those resources are used over time. Formal and informal structures provide the vehicle through which power resources can be deployed. Legitimacy is accorded to particular forms and content of power resources depending upon the previous exercise of power resources and the extent to which they are perceived as reflecting external expectations and pressures. This interrelationship is summarised in figure 1.

III. Power, structure and culture in interaction: an example.

Bennett (1991) records the experience of a newly appointed Head of English in an English comprehensive school who believed in collaborative working and in the need for an agreed syllabus, but who found that her newly-acquired area of responsibility had a culture of total teacher autonomy and individualism: no co-operation, no collaboration, no syllabus. In this situation, her formal position in the school gave her no power at all over her colleagues. Further, she had previously spent her entire teaching career in selective schools, so was deemed to have no relevant teaching experience by her departmental colleagues. But, at this time the government was introducing a totally new arrangement for the 16+ school-leaving examinations, and there was a signal lack of guidance and information about them. She was able to argue that everyone was ignorant, that collective ignorance was more reassuring than independent ignorance, and might throw up some good ideas. Fear of the unknown encouraged fierce defenders of personal autonomy to start to seek and share ideas for teaching and assessment, and her judicious use of the (inadequate) training sessions provided by the government led to an increasing willingness on her colleagues' part to work together and actively seek out feedback from people who had experienced training. The government's principle of "cascade" training was exploited by the head of department to promote co-operative planning. When she was interviewed, she reported that co-operative planning was now actively sought by her departmental colleagues in relation to the new examination, and an agreed syllabus, associated scheme of work and approach to its teaching had been established. Her concern was to extend that co-operation into other areas of departmental work.

We suggest that a number of things occurred. Firstly, there had been a cultural shift within the department, but it was still tentative and the situation was more one of conflicting norms than a new coherent culture: co-operation was alive but in strictly defined areas. Thus the process had begun of transforming the traditional norm of independent English teaching into the new institutional norm of co-operative planning and agreed programmes of study. Second, the move towards co-operation was seen by departmental members to have alleviated real fears about their work, and to have generated a legitimate structural shift in the approach to decision-making about examination teaching. Thus what was initially a sense of instrumental compliance was moving towards a form of cognitive commitment. Third, by moving towards such a situation, individuals had changed their sense of power relationships towards one another. In particular, knowledge power was being recognised as legitimate in a way that it had not been before. Fourth, as the author of this security, the head of department had acquired considerable knowledge power resources within the department: she may not have been the most dynamic teacher of all-ability classes of fourteen-year-olds, but she was good at solving problems, and her ideas about collaborative working were seen to produce results. Although she would have bridled at the suggestion, she had a much more powerful position within the department than had been the case when she had started there. Further, she used the economic resources power which, as head of department, she had at her disposal, delegating to the co-operating group much of the responsibility for obtaining resources for the examination classes. Fifth, she had moved both overtly and covertly in deploying the power resources she had: overtly and positively, in offering a strategy for dealing with a situation of extreme uncertainty for her colleagues, and rewarding her colleagues with financial means to resource their decisions, and covertly in establishing a strategy which could then be set up as a model for future work. Her apparent delegation of resource control was an assertion of her economic power within the department.

It would be possible to present a view of this vignette shaped entirely in terms of cultural change. We suggest, however, that while cultural change may be the most evident development, the structural changes which are intertwined with culture change are crucial to the development of the future operation of the department. Further, without a change in the distribution of power resources and the recognition of new legitimacies in those power relationships, no culture change would have occurred. The crucial point we wish to make in this is the interconnectedness of the three dimensions of power, structure and culture in analysing organizations. We shall now show that one of the errors being perpetrated by both school effectiveness and school improvement writers is a repeated insistence on emphasising one or, at best two of these dimensions, so producing a partial and incomplete picture of the schools they seek to serve.

This conceptualisation of power and compliance provides us with a basis for exploring the dynamics of both culture and structure. For, as we have repeatedly stated and is acknowledged almost axiomatically in the school improvement literature, neither the structure nor the culture of schools is fixed and unchanging: both are dynamic. Our concern is to unlock the dynamic. Power, we believe, can open the door to an understanding of the dynamic of change in both areas.

IV What power can add to the analysis.

The construct of power which we have outlined provides an explanatory instrument which may take school effectiveness research beyond the descriptive and normative towards providing both an understanding of why particular combinations of characteristics produce more effective schools and an approach to moving schools form ineffectiveness to effectiveness. If we conceptualise the school as a pattern of relationships with differential power distribution between their members, wherein those in relative dependency to those with more power resources have to decide between compliance and resistance, then structures and cultures both provide vehicles for legitimising power.

For example, the first of Sammons et al's (1995) effective schools characteristics, "professional leadership", can be analysed in terms of the power resources which can be deployed in order to provide professional rather than, say, executive leadership. Economic resources may be a part of this, but they are not sufficient for *professional* leadership. Rather, forms of normative and knowledge power are necessary to underpin this factor, and these forms of knowledge are more likely to generate commitment than compliance. The power-base of professional leadership is therefore likely to legitimise what the principal who exercises professional leadership is attempting to achieve. This makes the second characteristic - "shared vision and goals", which is subdivided into unity of purpose, consistency of practice and collegiality and collaboration - logically related to professional leadership, since commitment rather than compliance is likely to result in a cognitively shared perception of the school's purpose and core task, and a shared interpretation of how it should be achieved.

This analysis is effective when applied, for example, to the case study presented by Reynolds (1996:155-8) of a newly-appointed headteacher in South Wales who had an extensive knowledge of the school effectiveness literature and was determined to introduce these characteristics to a school which, in value-added analyses of its performance, was placed in the bottom four out of the 32 secondary schools in its local authority. Despite attempts to establish extensive in-service training, an "open door" policy from management, moves to "empower" the staff and the creation of whole-school policies to generate the effective school correlates of high academic expectations, the four years of activity produced no visible improvement in performance, and the head eventually left to take up a post in Botswana.

Reynolds (1996) demonstrates how the staff were not convinced that the approach would make any difference, nor that the children had the capacity to raise their achievement, and how some saw the new moves as attempts to discredit their efforts to improve the school prior to the head's arrival. Thus we have knowledge power within the school acting as a countervailing resource to the head's knowledge power, denying it legitimacy and resulting in at best instrumental compliance with the head's initiatives. Staff didn't actively oppose the head, and played along with the policy changes, but refused to acknowledge that they could be successful. Consequently, the head had no access to normative power resources, and professional ethics denied him access to physical power. Economic resources, as we have argued, do not in themselves achieve more than instrumental compliance, and so the crucial winning of the hearts and minds of the staff was not achieved.

School improvement writers such as Nias et al (1989) categorise the kind of divide that Reynolds (1996) outlines between the headteacher and his staff as cultural. That simply sets up an alternative analysis to an essentially structural approach, rather than offering a means of unpacking it. We believe that employing the concept of power is helpful to the theoretical conceptualisation and practical realisation of school improvement. We will illustrate this by reference to one major school improvement project in the UK known as the "Improving the Quality of Schooling for All" (IQEA) project developed by David Hopkins and colleagues at the Insitute of Education, Cambridge(Hopkins et al.1994)

The characterisation of the school upon which Hopkins (et al, 1994;1996) has founded his work in school improvement is essentially holistic and collegial Within this model a necessary pre-requisite would be for "the school" to favourably construct its "management arrangements", establish its improvement priorities for action and develop a strategy for implementation. Thus whereas school effectiveness offers an example of a rational system approach to organizations (Scott 1987), Hopkins' school improvement model approximates to a natural system, stressing equalisation of decision-making and minimising status differences, the importance of individuals and the need to acknowledge and resolve differences in the interests of the continuing development and survival of the organization.

This orientation is stronger in the IQEA research manual (Ainscow et al. 1994), which includes in its instrument on cultural analysis not only the features just identified but also an opportunity for staff to express support for the abolition of defined responsibilities and specialisation in favour of collegial assigning of short-term responsibilities. The IQEA strategy of intervention by the school improvement consultants lays down a number of ground rules, of which the following are important for our argument (Hopkins et al. 1994:109):

- the decision to participate must result from consultation among all staff;
- at least two members of staff will be designated as project co-ordinators, one of whom must be the head or deputy head, and who will meet with co-ordinators from other schools;
- substantial staff development resources must be allocated to the project;
- at least 40% of all staff, representing a cross section of staff, must take part in those staff development activities, and in specified activities in their classrooms.

Such a set of ground rules make it straightforward for the project to continue its holistic stance, but creating their starting point they allow the IQEA team to overlook some important points. Immediately, there is the question of what internal processes lead to the creation of the "favourable" management arrangements, the setting of improvement priorities, and the development of strategies. Not all schools adopt such collegial approaches naturally, and while it may be a necessary dimension of successful school improvement, it is arguable that the IQEA ground rules avoid the most difficult part of all: achieving the "in school" situation or climate in which the ground rules can be observed.

Incorporating the power dimension into the analysis of the school as an organization addresses the question of where it may be in relation to this desirable situation, and identify some possible strategies for moving it towards it. There seem to be two central issues to explore:

- What forms of knowledge power are deemed to be legitimate and where are they located within the school?

- How is it deemed legitimate to exercise different forms of power resources for the purposes of school improvement?

Given the stronger emphasis on culture rather than structure in the school improvement approach, the issue of how power resources are exercised is potentially significant. In particular, it may be important to identify the extent to which knowledge power is used covertly and negatively within schools, and to ask whether this is at odds with the use of economic power resources and administrative knowledge arising from the decision-making and accountability structures.

From these two basic questions, others naturally emerge:

- What does the exercise of these forms of knowledge power in these ways do to influence the relationships between individual teachers and define the boundaries of professional autonomy and discretion?

- To what extent can countervailing power resources be identified, and where are they to be found?

- Are there differences between the exercise of economic and knowledge power resources - are economic power resources deployed overtly and knowledge covertly, or is there a prevailing tendency to use knowledge resources negatively whereas economic resources are positive even if provisional?

Thus in the case study from Reynolds (1996) discussed above, an IQEA intervention would need to inquire into the relationship between legitimate knowledge power in the school and the principles of collegiality and participation in decision-making which underpins the IQEA approach to school improvement.

It is important to consider, too, the extent to which normative and legitimate knowledge power is in line with the formal decision-making and accountability arrangements, the perceived external expectations of the school, and the extent to which formal decision-making rests upon different power resources exercised in different ways from the powers exercised in less formal exchanges. Such an analysis might find a strong "management" working to create the direction and goals of the school, working in a strongly technical-rational model (see, for example, Runnymede School in Glover et al. (1996)

The Runnymede case study (Glover et al.,1996) illustrated how countervailing knowledge power in certain areas of the school could be overridden by the tight control of economic power resources by senior management. This was building up a sense of resentment and increasingly alienated instrumental compliance in those areas, while other areas of the school accepted the overall strategy and increasingly deemed the knowledge of planning systems and rational management to be legitimate. However, it was a command and control management model, and the headteacher was prepared to overrule departmental heads and remove them from office if they declined to accept the characterisation of their responsibilities which he was imposing through new job descriptions.

It was difficult to envisage that school being prepared for an IQEA intervention, and we suggest that to condense the reasons into a simple statement that the culture was not ready is to leave too many questions unanswered. Furthermore, it was certainly arguable that such a school, which lacked many of the characteristics which Hopkins et al (1994:90) distil from Rosenholtz's (1989) analysis of "stuck" and "moving" schools, nevertheless was anything but "stuck", and the resistance was localised rather than diffused.

V. Power, culture and structure: three wings of analysis.

We may have appeared in this discussion to have presented the case for power instead of structure and culture as the defining characteristic of organizations which school improvers and effectiveness researchers alike must address. That is not our intention: we wish to argue that each of the two fields of study can benefit from taking on board both the fundamental orientation to organizational analysis of the other and supporting it by looking at power relationships as well. Power as we have developed the concept here has perhaps more affinity at first sight with Scott's (1987) natural systems perspective appropriate to school improvement studies than with the rational system viewpoint that underpins school effectiveness research, but it is, we contend, relevant to both and may provide something of a bridge between them.

Questions that arise from adopting a focus on all three dimensions of our simple organizational model - power, culture and structure, include the following:

- Which forms of knowledge power are deemed legitimate within the school under study, and why are they seen as legitimate?

  What has happened to endow them with legitimate status?

- How is legitimate knowledge power distributed within the school, and why?

- How is legitimate knowledge power deployed by those who possess it?

- Are there tensions and contradictions between the forms of knowledge power which are acknowledged to be legitimate? Is there consistency across all the units and subunits within the school in what is acknowledged as legitimate? How much countervailing power resources can be identified, where is it located, how is it deployed and to what effect?

- What does legitimate knowledge power define as high performance by staff and students?

- How does legitimate knowledge power compare with current understanding of the characteristics of effective schools, and effective units within them? Are there any points of contact?

- What are the prevailing norms which surround the exercise of different forms of power resources? In particular, is the tendency towards employing them positively or negatively? Is there a move towards sharing different forms of power resources or is the tendency to keep them private?

- What is done with economic resource power to promote high performance as it is defined within the knowledge power?

Such generally-framed questions may lead on to others, such as the following:

- What is the impact of different forms of power upon the deeper level of structural and cultural change?

- Can certain forms of power positively enhance an organisations capacity for change and development?

- How far does different forms of power generate and sustain a particular set of priorities and chosen strategies for school development/growth?

- Do effective leaders begin by asking what type of power resource allocation will mobilise structural and cultural change for school development? If they do, under what circumstances and in relation to what issues do they adopt one power resource in favour of another?

- If it is true that schools at different stages of development require different school improvement strategies, is it also true that schools require different types of power resourcing for different stages of development?

What these questions suggest is much needed research which focuses upon the power dimension in school improvement and which empirically tests the distribution and deployment of different types of power resourcing in the context of school change and development. Clearly, the existing research methodologies open to those in school improvement are limited in scale and potential to undertake this task. Consequently, as Hopkins (1995) suggests there is a need for more quasi-experimental designs for tracking the relationships between complex process and outcome variables in school improvement.

By applying the concept of "power" to school effectiveness and school improvement we contend that it is possible to expose and explain the inter-action between structure and culture which is necessary for organisational change and development. It is this power dimension which we argue provides the basis for conceptual and theoretical synergy between both research fields. In this paper, we have argued that the nature and enforcement of power within an organisation can act as a substantial barrier to the pursuit of school effectiveness and school improvement. Too little attention in our view,has been paid within both these research fields to the influence of the power dimension upon structural and cultural change. Both research traditions have tended to treat the power dimension as relatively unproblematic in their research and development work.

This paper has not presented a sophisticated view of schools as organizations, nor has it taken much account of some of the very sophisticated macro-analyses of power such as the work of Clegg (e.g., 1989). Rather, it has attempted to identify a common weakness in both the school effectiveness and school improvement traditions. We would argue that without a sufficiently sophisticated analysis of power within both these research fields such weaknesses will remain. By incorporating a conceptualisation of an additional dimension into their organizational analysis we suggest that the potential for a future collaboration and synergy between them may be increased. Finally, we would contend that without a clearly defined overarching analysis which considers the importance of power, structure and culture, and the relationship therein, school effectiveness and school improvement are destined to remain incompatible and incomplete fields of study.

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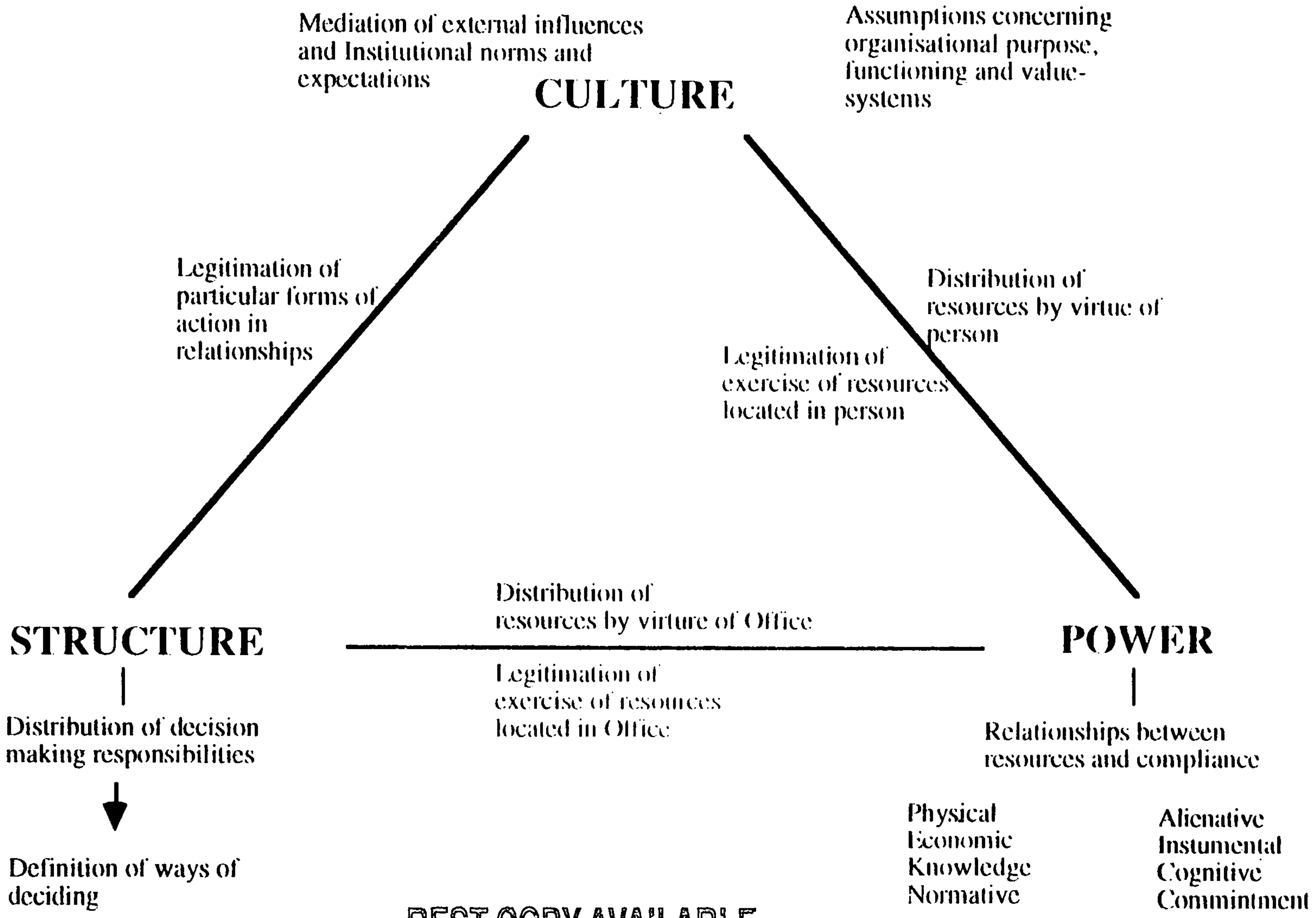
FIGURE 1


Mediation of external influences and Institutional norms and expectations
CULTURE
Assumptions concerning organisational purpose, functioning and value-systems
Legitimation of particular forms of action in relationships
Distribution of resources by virtue of person
Legitimation of exercise of resources located in person
STRUCTURE
Distribution of resources by virtue of Office
Legitimation of exercise of resources located in Office
POWER
Distribution of decision making responsibilities
Definition of ways of deciding
Relationships between resources and compliance
Physical
Economic
Knowledge
Normative
Alienative
Instumental
Cognitive
Commintment

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THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF ORGANISATIONAL OPERATION

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TABLE 1

Power Resources

Kind of resource	Physical	Economic	Knowledge Adminis-trative	Technical	Normative
Location of resource	In the person	In the office	In the person	In the person	In the person
Status of resource	Non-legitimate	Conditional legitimacy	Conditional legitimacy	Conditional legitimacy	Legitimate by definition
Response	Alienative compliance	Instrumental (calculative) compliance	Cognitive compliance	Cognitive compliance	Moral commitment
Consequence	Search for counter-vailing power resources	Acknow-ledged only while resources are forthcoming	Growing tendency to internalise through repeated use and discovery of continuing effectiveness, leading to commitment		Moral commitment
Characteristic of organization where this predominant	<-----contested legitimacy		agreed legitimacy----->		

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