DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 431 243 EA 029 896

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TITLE Commonalities between Perceptions and Practice in Models of School Decision-Making Systems in Secondary Schools in England and Wales.
PUB DATE 1999-04-00
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Montreal, Quebec, Canada, April 19-23, 1999).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Role; *Administrators; Educational Policy; Foreign Countries; *Participative Decision Making; Principals; *School Administration; School Based Management; Secondary Education; Urban Schools
IDENTIFIERS *England

ABSTRACT

This paper examines whether the delegating of whole-school decision making reaches to, involves, and empowers the middle-management level. It looks for evidence of alternative models of management for decision making and identifies commonalities between the perceptions and the practices of headteachers and middle managers. The research for the paper took place in a random sample of 21 urban-area, secondary schools in England. Two semi-structured interview schedules were developed, one for the middle-management representatives and one for the headteacher. The results indicate that there were three different types of schools: the type C school, which showed no evidence of a shared decision-making model; the type B school, which exhibited some movement toward middle-management access to decision making; and the type A school, which operated fully in a shared decision-making model. The decision-making type was not linked to any particular school size. The evidence shows that middle managers are increasingly seeking a greater say in decisions. It is believed that as middle managers come to share organizational values and goals, and have practice in administrative problem solving, organizational learning is enhanced. This belief is reflected in collegial models of education management. (Contains 56 references.) (RJM)

COMMONALITIES BETWEEN PERCEPTION AND PRACTICE IN MODELS OF SCHOOL DECISION-MAKING SYSTEMS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND AND WALES.

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Commonalities Between Perception and Practice in Models of School Decision-Making Systems in Secondary Schools in England and Wales

Introduction

The increasingly broad range of national legislation and local policies products of the dominant educational reform movements in both the United Kingdom and the United States, seem to reinforce a control orientation in school managers. Most of these reforms can be linked to a rational concept of leadership and bureaucratic models which foster tighter control through standardisation and accountability measures, for example, in teacher evaluation, curriculum and teaching methods (Wise, 1988). Within this framework school headteachers and principals are seen as "administrators", "technicians", "implementers of programmes and policies" and enforcers of rules, regulations, mandates and procedures defined by external agents." (Bates, 1986; Hodgkinson, 1986; Wise, 1988).

As micropolitical institutions, today's schools probably represent trade-offs between various interests as they existed at earlier periods in those institutions' lives For instance, teachers were in charge of their own schools and classrooms more so in the past than the present. Then the headteacher was not so much seen as wielding authority over the other teachers but was the one who, by mutual agreement, looked after necessary administrative details. Today's absence of regular occasions for teachers to exert collective decision making is a hangover from a more recent era when ministries and boards of education, pursuing centralised efficiency and leadership, encouraged a jaundiced view of teachers as low-level employees rather than colleagues whose professional opinions made a difference more so in the past than the present.

"Although their knowledge base has been enhanced considerably of late, teachers have not been deployed to work as a team of ready experts; almost as if one-room schoolhouses were still commonplace, many educators presently are confined to one classroom with twenty five students for an entire year." (Townsend, 1990).

Headteachers may construct decision making processes that seem on the surface to be participatory in order to gain greater acceptance of decisions and greater teacher satisfaction. However, they may be reluctant to extend genuine influence to teachers, assuming that they do not have the expertise to make valuable contributions, or because they do not trust them to make decisions in the best interest of the school. Research suggests that this is very often the case. (Bacharach, Bauer and Schedd, 1986).

Research on secondary school Senior Management Teams (SMT) which have been established for about two decades suggests that the rhetoric of power sharing, extensive delegation, collaboration and participative management that so often accompanies claims of having adopted a team approach is not necessarily matched by practice. (Torrington and Weightman, 1989; Wallace and Hall, 1994). One argument is that managers are interdependent, whatever their position in the management hierarchy, so every member of staff has a contribution to make because managerial tasks can only be fulfilled with and through other people. Gaining staff commitment to policy decisions is therefore necessary (Bell and Rhodes, 1996).

Studies of principal influence and micropolitical studies of principal-teacher relationships also underscore the centrality of control to school leadership. Ball's (1987) seminal political study of headteachers of British schools produced no evidence of facilitative/empowering forms of leadership. In a wide sample study of open and effective traditional US school principals, Blase (1993) found only limited data related to facilitative forms of leadership and teacher empowerment.

Conley and Bacharach (1990) have argued that site-based management will require not only more decentralised decision making to the school building, but decentralisation and participatory management at the school building. Kanter (1989) has also argued that in the complex, interdependent, highly networked corporate world, giants must now learn to dance with one another. This is no less true of professional educators, who, by traditional preference, have valued and defended independence and autonomy. Educators have been learning to dance. This type of power, involving a relationship between professionals who behave as peers rather than as superiors or subordinates, differs from authoritative, democratic, or anarchic power.

"It is consistent with both current educational reform emphases and with the earlier focus on effective schools and instructional leadership." (Austin and Garber, 1985; Soltis, 1987).

Collegiality, or at least collaborative management, has become a part of one of the ubiquitous international megatrends' in education of recent years. Such ubiquity must therefore be based on perceived benefits of the highest order (Brundrett, 1998). In the United States, initiatives in school management in the 1980's shifted notions of the management of educational institutions towards those of some of the country's most successful corporations, thus emphasising flatter management and decentralised authority structures (Shulman cited in Hargreaves, 1994). Hanks (1994) charts the background to the establishment of parish school boards in the Archdiocese of Canberra which are said to reflect the 'new management theory' which views the school principal as key stakeholder within a team, sharing leadership. Schwille (1993) offers a detailed comparative international treatment of collegial activity, observing the cultural perspective of Chinese teachers, case studies of school-based models of collegiality in Pakistan and the interpersonal dimension of teacher education programmes in Sri Lanka. Elbaz (1991) outlines developments in collegial management of educational institutions in Israel.

In the secondary school system in England heads of department are generally regarded as the middle tier in a tripartite structure. This structure is traditionally hierarchical with a top level of decision-makers, usually the headteacher (principal) and deputy headteachers, a secondary level of middle managers and a tertiary level of classroom practitioners i.e. the teacher. The hierarchical nature of the system is grounded in a tradition in which teachers have traditionally been disconnected from other parts of the system whether that system consists of teachers in other classrooms, other schools or the central office.

Efforts to integrate the divergent findings and contested interpretations from research into shared decision making in schools have demonstrated that the data are fragmented and fragile, the interpretations partial and provisional (Malen et al, 1990; Conley, 1991). Despite more than a half century of research, credible evidence regarding the nature of participatory structures and processes in schools and their impact on individuals and institutions is thinner than one might expect, given the recurrent advancement of shared decision making as a robust reform strategy (Leithwood and Menzies, 1996).

Much of the research takes the form of sentiment surveys that focus more on psychological dimensions (e.g. how participants feel about involvement) than political dimensions (e.g. whether participants influence decisions). This also applies to modern approaches, or what has been termed the New Leadership following McGregor Burn's important study (e.g. in particular the work of Bass, 1985; Avoho and Bass, 1988; Bass and Avolio, 1994). The New Leadership puts great emphasis on transformational qualities of leaders which variously comprise elements such as creating an organisational vision or mission, motivating and stimulating extra effort in staff and changing basic values and beliefs. (Bresnen, 1995).

The shared governance leadership model is demonstrated in larger secondary schools where the middle managers, including department heads and curriculum leaders as well as the principal are being re-cast as "one among equals" in the proposed shared decision making models. (Blase and Blase, 1997). However as research by McBeath (1998) emphasised "the school leadership paradigm is also one of shared leadership and that good leaders recognise that teachers are more likely to become engaged when more collaborative leadership models are the norm.". The exploration of this latter issue is one of the principal aims of our research.

Aims of the study

- To seek to establish if delegation of whole school decision making reaches to, involves and empowers the middle management level;
- To look for evidence of alternative models of management for decision-making;
- To identify commonalities between the perceptions and the practices of headteachers and middle managers of the models that they are operating within.

Methodology

This research has evolved from our previous studies on the role of middle managers (Brown, Boyle and Boyle, 1998) in school decision making. The middle management issue was thrust into national attention in the UK following criticisms by Chris Woodhead, Chief Inspector of Schools, of the lack of development of the role. "The key role of middle managers - mainly heads of department with responsibility for other staff - was often underdeveloped. Too many heads of department saw their role as managers of resources rather than people" (Ofsted 1997).

The research took place in a random sample of 21 secondary schools based in the north west region of England. The schools were located in a range of urban areas, drawing from catchments that included a mix of public and private housing. Two semi-structured interview schedules were developed, one for the middle management representative of the school and one for the headteacher. The headteacher interview was tailored to elicit details of his/her management model and view of the decision making role of middle management within that model. The middle manager interview probed cross-departmental collaborative opportunities for shared whole school decision-making, planning and systems for evaluation. The middle management interviews aimed to elicit perceptions from that group of stakeholders of the management decision-making model currently operating in each individual school. The interviews were recorded and transcribed and these transcripts were analysed by coding the information into categories.

Through a series of structured interviews (Brown, Boyle, Boyle, 1998) we looked at middle managers' access to real power in whole school decision making. These middle manager interviews enabled us to develop a typology of school management. Three distinct patterns emerged in the styles of decision making in schools and these were classified as types A, B and C for the purposes of this research. (see Data and issues below). This paper correlates the responses of headteachers to the paradigms presented by their middle managers.

Data collection and coding procedures were used to produce categories, themes and conceptual understandings inductively from the data (Blase, 1990). Data were collected and coded according to qualitative research guidelines for grounded theory research. This approach to qualitative inquiry begins with open-ended questions rather than hypothesis. Data are generated and scrutinised concurrently, through an inductive process designed to produce description and theoretical ideas. In essence, grounded theory research focuses on the

discovery of substantive categories and hypotheses relevant to the phenomenon under investigation. This research methodology permits categories, themes and theory to be constructed directly from the data (Bogdan and Biklm, 1982; Bogdan and Taylor, 1975; Glaser, 1978; Glaser and Strauss, 1976; Le Compte and Goetz, 1982; Miles and Huberman, 1984).

In accord with theoretical sampling guidelines for grounded theory inquiry, a second phase of the project was planned to probe more deeply the dimensions of headteacher management styles. Field notes describing the context of the interviews were written systematically and coded. Constant comparative analysis was utilised to code the research data. This procedure refers to line-by-line inspection of all incoming data to determine "fit" to emergent categories and hypotheses or to create new categories and hypothesis.

The researcher collected and analysed all of the study data. Glaser and Strauss (1976) insist on the necessity of this, given the requirement of deep involvement and in the complex and cyclic nature of data collection and analysis in grounded theory inquiry. A panel of four experts (two senior researchers and two senior management experts from the private sector) was consulted when questions arose about coding or interpretation of the data. In addition, middle managers were asked to identify any other factors which were seen to impact upon participation in their schools. An interview schedule composed of open-ended questions was used to direct questioning. It must be acknowledged, however, that because the number of headteacher interviews conducted was small in relation to the number of managers in the study, conclusions emanating from this stage of the research should be viewed as suggestive rather than definitive in nature.

Norms, attitudes, shared beliefs and values of participating staff are important to the creation of a cohesive school community. Data analysis was completed by use of an adaptation of the Miles and Huberman (1984) coding system which consists of categorical coding of data and selection of descriptive quotations. The use of coding techniques allowed for data reduction, display and conclusion drawing/verification. These procedures helped to summarise, present conclusions and generate hypotheses about the phenomenon of professional collegiality that occurs in urban comprehensive high schools.

Each respondent was interviewed on one occasion with some of these interviews lasting as long as two hours with the average length being seventy minutes. The interview guide was constructed to reflect the research questions, but in order to allow for the greatest understanding of the subjective reality of each interviewee, a semi-structured interview format was used. Participants were encouraged to talk about the school organisation, school culture, school activities and school issues from their point of view.

At regular meetings of the research group during the data collection, analysis and writing of the interview reports, patterns of meaning, interpretations and assertions were presented and debated in a manner described by Stake (1995) as investigator triangulation (i.e. where alternative interpretations are discussed with other researchers).

Data and issues

The categories which emerged from the responses tracked a continuum, from schools which showed no evidence of a shared decision-making model (type C) to those which were operating fully in this way (type A). Schools which evidenced some movement towards middle management access to whole school decision making processes were classified as type B. At school level, the responses of the headteacher and the middle manager were compared for correlation. The analysis of the interview data evidenced that each of the three types that

emerged encompassed the range of 500 to 1000 plus pupils i.e. decision making models were not linked or correlated to school size.

Type A schools

Type A schools emerged as demonstrating:

- a commitment to (i.e. with evidence of the necessary systems in place) regular formal opportunities for collaboration with other heads of departments (HODs) and colleagues from different subject areas;
- that their departmental priorities correlated closely with the School Development Plan, with themes and issues identified and agreed collectively;
- that heads of department were actively involved and consulted in whole school policy and decision-making that the headteacher saw them as having a wider whole school management role.

The four type A headteachers were completely committed to the importance of team management and sharing of expertise as the most effective way of achieving quality decisions. They believed that only by genuine shared decision making could they ensure that the necessary changes were implemented which would move the school forward.

"I know that to achieve successful change, I must take the staff with me."

"You need the collective support of your staff to implement any worth while change, so involvement in the decision making process is vital."

"A headteacher is not the holder of all knowledge, and I encourage and value my colleagues' involvement in school decision making."

"I am convinced that a wide cross-section of staff with such varied experience and skills is inherently more likely to take quality decisions than one person or a small elite group"

After three years of development one of the above schools decided that now its collegiate management model of decision making was so wide and inclusive that the title should change from Senior Management Team to School Management Team. This title was accepted as more appropriate for their management group which met weekly, included representation from all areas of the teaching staff plus a termly rotating place for any interested staff and also plan student inclusion in the near future.

Kirby and Colbert (1992) found that principal authenticity (i.e. genuineness) was related to teacher empowerment through access to manage (i.e. the ability of teachers to acquire information and skills about shared decision making). According to these findings, empowerment is in large part a function of external agents, in this case principals who are willing to share power with teachers as professionals, particularly with regard to instructional decisions. (Blase and Blase, 1997).

From our previous research (Brown, Boyle and Boyle, 1998), on type A schools, we found that the HODs felt actively involved and consulted in whole school policy and decision making and perceived that the headteacher saw them as having a wider whole school management role.

"I work collegially with the senior management team through faculty forum identifying areas of concern."

"Team work is the crucial ingredient for this school to be effective. There is no mystique and feeling of intimidation. It is almost a collaboration of equals."

These headteachers believed strongly in setting structures in place to provide opportunities for wider participation in the management of the school especially in key areas such as planning, assessment, monitoring and evaluation. Expert principals like corporate entrepreneurs "get their projects done by crafting coalitions and building teams of devoted employees who feel a heightened sense of joint involvement and contribution to decisions" (Kanter, 1983). Different types of group structures provided a variety of opportunities for teachers to become involved in their school's management. Working parties, action working groups or curriculum groups with cross-department and voluntary representation were highly favoured ways of widening involvement. Minutes of these meetings were distributed to all staff with agreed action points. Good communication and systems of information sharing were identified by type A headteachers as vital for ensuring cohesion of purpose.

The statements about putting formal structures into place which were made by these headteachers reinforced and correlated with the opinions given by their Heads of Departments (HODs).

"We have working parties who report back to faculties after consultation with the senior management team."

"There is a curriculum leaders' team where priorities are identified and discussed and collaborative policies are produced and implemented. Best practice is identified in systems and procedures."

In each type A school the headteacher viewed and treated the HODs as integral elements of the school management team. HODs were included in all aspects of the development of the SDP from the initial stages. This was seen as a collaboration of equals. The headteachers believed that through this cross-department dialogue and sharing of expertise, quality whole school decision making resulted. In each school all meetings, working parties and development groups were deliberately organised with the Chair person being selected on a rota basis:

"I discouraged the use of SMTs as Chairs of meetings."

"The assumption that the Head must be in the Chair at management meetings is misguided. The Chairperson/Head can inhibit discussion."

"Rotating the Chair emphasises the importance of each team member, helps build team spirit, encourages members to experiment with unfamiliar roles, and enables me to contribute more effectively in other ways."

"Opportunity to Chair a meeting is good in-service professional development."

The HODs confirmed their headteachers' statements

"Each member of staff rotates a chair"

"Working groups have a joint approach or moving chair, or chair which is not senior management'

"Knowing when, and how extensively, to involve teachers will make moving towards more collaborative styles of management, more productive in facilitating organisational learning." (Tschannen-Moran, Uline and Hoy, 1998).

Research in the United States, showed that in schools with shared management, teachers were deeply involved in formal and informal governance structures and processes and thus enjoyed substantial authority in school-wide decision making, encouraging the focus on teaching and learning. Principals promoted teacher innovation through formal decision making structures (e.g. teams, committees, special task forces), professional development structures (e.g. staff development, workshops, conferences) (Blase and Blase, 1997). The same authors go on to say that undoubtedly facilitative leadership is based on a complex set of organisational and individual factors (e.g. principals' values, goals and knowledge).

Each Type A headteacher saw it as an important part of his/her role to set high goals for the staff in management. They viewed this as a major factor in raising standards of teaching and learning. Monitoring and evaluation were seen by the headteacher as important processes for quality control. Each school had a reciprocal process of evaluation between the SMT and HODs. (The teachers said the process was successful because of the accepted ethos of openness and trust). In some cases awards from Investors in People and the Centre of Excellence were seen by headteachers as important 'badges' of approval and good management development vehicles.

Words such as dialogue, collaboration, problem-solving, enabling, valued, open, empowerment, respect and trust were used by the headteachers and HODs in these schools. The headteachers' interviews highlighted the philosophy and aims which underpinned the direction in which they believed their schools to be moving. The HODs interviews generally confirmed these beliefs together with expressing a real sense of job enjoyment, satisfaction and motivation.

Type B schools

Type B schools demonstrated:
less frequent formal opportunities for collaboration with other heads of department;

- the heads of department believed that they were viewed by the headteacher as having whole school management roles and involvement in whole school policy decision-making;
- some involvement in the School Development Plan (SDP) other than their own department's aspects;
- positive perceptions of the management model's development towards a more co-operative horizontal model of decision-making.

We interviewed four headteachers from schools allocated a B designation after the HOD interviews. Three of these had been in post for three to four years after internal promotions. The other had become headteacher of the combined school when her own girls' school (where she was headteacher) was amalgamated with the boys' school to create a mixed comprehensive five years before. All headteachers were therefore relatively new to their present posts.

When asked about their management philosophy one headteacher (who had previously been deputy head in this school for eight years) declared it to be: " An open-door policy of management. Lots of discussion and lots of corporate decision making. He explained that he had inherited a traditional hierarchical structure which had developed over the four years. He had introduced staff daily briefings and a staff newsletter disseminating information. Two

headteachers commented on problems with communication with one giving a telling insight into the 'us' and 'them' mentality which still existed in the type B schools (Ball, 1987):

There was a real need to facilitate communication and encourage openness and more involvement in the decision making process."

"Too many people felt excluded from the important decisions which were affecting them in their departments. It was evident that we (SMT) needed to listen to their complaints and include them in the decision-making process."

The headteacher of the amalgamated school had also inherited a hierarchical structure which she felt" prohibited any middle management involvement in decision making." She explained that there were lots of tensions and frustrations between the two staff teams at the outset of the amalgamation, mainly due to communication problems. Staff complaints filtered down to the SMT who took these problems to the headteacher. Together they concluded that staff criticism of the management of the curriculum and pastoral meetings as *"mere information sessions"* was valid. After discussion about these communication problems, it was decided by the whole SMT to set up a more collaborative system of management which integrated the management teams of both schools into one unit. It is worth noting that this process of integration had evolved over five years.

"There was a need for improved communication and acceptance that middle management should also have a whole school role. A structure was put into place to facilitate better communication and to involve middle management in the whole school decision making process. We realised that it was important to be seen to have listened to them."

Schools benefit when information for decision making is systematically collected, and made widely available to most school members for decisions. (Reynolds et al 1996; Mortimore, 1993). A 'culture teamwork' may develop among SMT members, consisting of shared beliefs, values and associated norms or rules of behaviour about working together to manage the school. Many academic researchers have advocated a collaborative approach to management on grounds of effectiveness. One argument is that managers are inter-dependent, whatever their position in the management hierarchy so every member of staff has a contribution to make since managerial tasks can only be fulfilled with and through other people. Gaining staff commitment to policy decisions is therefore necessary (Bell and Rhodes, 1996).

"It is the dissonance between the fragmented, departmentalised context of the high school, and the prescriptions for shared vision - which challenge the leaders of secondary schools. To develop a coherent whole that would be more than the sum of its departmental parts, there is a need to start building bridges, supporting strong leadership within departments, but also creating a variety of committees, task forces and exchange programmes that will span them." (Siskin, 1997).

These type B headteachers' awareness of communication problems and their need to develop more inclusive decision making opportunities were also highlighted by the HODs. Some structures were developing, for example:

"We have half termly head of department meetings"

"We have monthly management meetings for HODs and senior management where we can write papers for inclusion in the agenda"

but when asked about their knowledge of other departments' planning models, it was evident that there was still some distance to go for some of the schools.

"No I don't know really"

"No but it would be interesting"

When discussing whole school planning, two headteachers when referring to the SDP (School Development Plan) mentioned half-termly faculty and staff meetings to set whole school and faculty targets in the light of OFSTED action plans. In these schools, HODs were included in these meetings where they reported back their departments' views for input into the SDP. Two other headteachers said that there were no regular formal opportunities for collaboration between HODs or between HODs and SMT but that there were working groups on whole school issues which had open access. The headteacher of the amalgamated school explained that her senior management team had set up a cycle for the SDP, initially HODs and senior managers were asked to review and evaluate the current plan identifying the priorities. This review and evaluation was documented by a member of the SMT and in this way middle management were given opportunities for input. SMT did the fine detail e.g. setting targets before the document was sent to the rest of the staff for comment prior to completion. Medium term planning was done termly with the SMT plus two co-opted HODs. The SMT also met weekly to address planning issues and HODs attended these sessions on a rota basis.

" I *want HODs to have a maximum understanding of how the SMT work and this provides good in-service training/staff development for these HODs"*

These type B headteachers were perceived by their HODs as developing more collaborative whole-school models. The HODs when describing their involvement in whole-school aspects of the SDP remarked

"Yes I am shown draft copies of the SDP for my comments."

"SMT write the initial draft but HOD input is encouraged'.

On auditing whether HODs had a whole school management role, all the type B headteacher responses indicated a movement in towards whole school management involvement.

"Being co-opted onto the whole school planning group alongside the SMT gives the HOD an opportunity to get into whole school decisions"

"The working parties are open to HODs and target whole school issues"

"We've moved towards more collaboration in our decision-making so HODs feel more involved"

However, although the HODs measure of whole-school involvement in the SDP varied, they all felt positive about being included in the process and perceived that their headteacher viewed them as having a whole-school management role.

"We are invited onto all the working parties about whole-school issues and can give our views at middle management meetings."

"School policies are discussed at staff meetings in an open forum."

"We are consulted democratically but the process is lengthy and can be frustrating."

Blase, (1991) stated that "the most effective form of leadership in professionally staffed organisations is that of genuine collegiality. This model acknowledges the legitimacy of professional values and the expertise of staff to share in decision making, thus empowering teachers." The extreme forms of formal and democratic models are unattractive for teachers. A favourable structure is one in which teachers enjoy a degree of freedom in the exercise of professional practice and an authority pattern which represents a balance between control and autonomy. (Philips, 1996). Shilman (cited in Hargreaves, 1994:187) states that: "teacher collegiality and collaboration are also needed to ensure that teachers benefit from their experiences and continue to grow during their careers."

In schools where working parties have been started, teachers are beginning to appreciate the organisational perspective rather than the more limited departmental viewpoint. Dutch research has revealed that schools differ with respect to their policy-making capacity. This appears to be highly determined by the extent to which teachers participate in decision making processes (Sleegers et al, 1994). Thus, increasing teacher participation in major decision-making processes is considered as a way to transform schools into more professional organisations. (D Hargreaves, 1994; Nyberg and Farber, 1986; Smyth, 1995; White, 1992).

When considering whether their school management structures were hierarchical, the answers given by the HODs underlined their optimism about the direction in which their management structures were moving.

"Yes, on paper, but it is developing into a more co-operative model with lots of two way access."

"Yes and no, because it is not intimidating, it is an accessible flatter model with a human face. You feel listened to and involved."

Type C schools

Type C schools demonstrated:

- little formal collaboration between heads of department;
- little or no co-operative working with other staff colleagues;
- a wide divide between the role of the headteacher and the heads of department in decision-making;
- little evidence of whole school committees for curriculum and management;
- no whole school decision-making role for heads of department;
- no consultation on whole school decisions for heads of department.

"Some schools at the present time still tend to be characterised by a clear sense of 'them and us' of management and line of employer and employee" (Ball, 1987). Beyond that, senior management "indulges" teachers by giving them only the illusion of autonomy within a certain sphere, as projected by the head (Townsend, 1990). Ball does allude to inhibitions and losses of self confidence that may be associated with teachers who are frozen out of democratic decision making. (Ball, 1987).

This underlines the chasm which the C type HODs perceived as existing between the Senior management and themselves. Their responses underlined this feeling of isolation:

"The faculty is very much a stand alone one."

"Management meetings have the feel of an information given forum rather than a policy forming body."

"Very little collaboration - only informal, on the corridor usually."

'Any head of department collaboration is almost stumbled upon by accident."

All four of the type C headteachers had been in post for ten or more years. Each had inherited a strongly hierarchical management structure. Each headteacher had retained the inherited structure with very few changes. When asked about any changes to the structure the responses given were either related to reductions or increases in deputy heads or senior teachers in response to rising or falling roll numbers:

"Now we are on a split site so we needed a deputy head and senior teacher to be responsible for the other building."

"Our numbers have dropped and now we are only allowed two deputy heads."

"When teachers' participation was confined to informal channels, their role tended to be limited to giving advice. In contrast, teachers were more directly involved in decision making when formal participatory structures existed." (Blase, 1993).

These headteachers saw the HODs as mainly having responsibility for their departments.

"Departments have a great deal of autonomy'.

Many researchers have decried this isolation as counterproductive to the purposes of schools. However, it would appear that these type C headteachers were either unaware or disinterested in these possible negative outcomes.

"Departmental divisions confront reforms with powerful barriers to school wide communication and community." (Siskin, 1997).

"Formal models ignore or underestimate the contribution of individuals within organisations." (Gray, 1982).

It would seem therefore that what is required is to accompany the formal model with a model which identifies the workers as being professionals, each with expertise to offer an opinion which need to be voiced for the school to fulfil its aims and goals. When asked about their views on whole school planning one type C headteacher said he used the LEA template model throughout the school. Another explained that he was considering setting one up in response to recent OFSTED inspection but the model was still in development. The remaining headteacher explained that each department wrote its own development plan. When asked about opportunities for HODs to be involved in whole school management decisions, two headteachers mentioned a school committee or council which included HOD representatives as well as senior management. One committee met annually and the other termly. In both cases the SMT set the agenda and chaired the meeting which both headteachers stated to be normal, accepted practice.

"The HODs representative can give their opinions in this committee."

"Final decisions are made by the SMT but departments have a chance to input."

One headteacher mentioned ad hoc working parties open to all interested staff and chaired by the SMT. The HODs' perceptions of their opportunities for their whole-school decision making were very different.

"There is a lack of consultation - you feel undervalued."

"The Department plan is written separately, given to the SMT then it disappears - so what's the point"

"I am rarely consulted, only when it suits them (SMT) and my skills are deemed appropriate but not if I am likely to rock the boat."

When asked about HOD involvement in the SDP the headteachers all agreed that HODs write their department DP for inclusion in the SDP. Our sample felt that
"They contribute to the SDP by their Departmental Development Plan (DDP) fitting into the SDP priorities where appropriate."

"H ODs write their DDP and the deputy head curriculum includes it in the SDP."

When asked about the professional development of middle managers, these headteachers said that they did not have whole school guidelines but did have job descriptions and appraisal procedures.

"We use the money for professional development where the SMT have identified a weakness or an area to be targeted on the SDP."

"We are guided by our OFSTED action plan this year."

"H ODs can discuss these matters with their appraiser."

Responses from these headteachers of the type C schools indicated static management structures which were reactive to external pressures rather than internally evolving and a middle management which was isolated from power-sharing and deprived of the potential for professional development.

Bredeson (1989) and Chapman (1988) provided encouragement to these headteachers:
"clearly, the success of participatory decision making has much to do with the readiness of the principal to share power and his/her ability to provide
processes, information and resources necessary to make shared decision
making work"

Conclusion

Much of the recent work on school improvement and effectiveness in Britain, such as that of Hargreaves (1994) and Gray et al (1982) had either an open or tacit acceptance of collegial management styles as one of the keys to enhanced school development. Blum and Butler (1989) similarly emphasised the importance of collaborative management styles.

The research reported here confirms the work of Wallace (1998)" that real life is not simple, and the sooner training catches up with this complexity the better". He comments that he finds it ironic that yet another UK reform - preparatory training for aspiring headteachers which was introduced in 1997- has been framed very much in terms of school hierarchy. The

training documentation focuses on the headteacher almost as a corporate manager (TTA 1997). Wallace states that "leading an SMT scarcely makes it onto this new training agenda. Yet team approaches emphasising equal contribution, with a contingent regression to hierarchy, may be where the degree of synergy lies that could really make a difference to the quality of school leadership" (Wallace, 1998).

We are of the view that there is sufficient evidence from the study to contend that middle managers are increasingly seeking a greater say in decisions about the school. In short, they want bureaucratic approaches to leadership to be replaced by distributed leadership throughout the school. We acknowledge that implementing 'distributed leadership' must be worked through in ways appropriate to local contexts but we are firmly of the view that in a collegial setting such as a school, moving in this direction is essential.

It is not possible, and not even be desirable, for one individual to undertake every leadership task within a school. Good leaders who operated in this way recognised that teachers are more likely to become engaged in making changes within their own schools when more collaborative leadership models are the norm. As Gammage (1955) implied in his account of the good school, good leaders recognise the importance of relationships, enrichment and an interactive community. The style is also an inclusive one, for the reasons suggested by the findings from this North American study. Though this study focuses on teachers, the findings can also be applied to middle managers:

"Teachers' willingness to participate in school decision-making is influenced primarily by their relationships with their principals Teachers appear more willing to participate in all areas of decision-making if they perceive their relationships with their principals as more open, collaborative, facilitative and supportive. They are less willing to participate in any decision-making if they characterise their relationship with the principals as closed, exclusionary, and controlling." (Smylie, 1992 quoted in Murphy, 1994).

As middle managers increasingly come to share organisational values and goals, and have practice in administrative problem solving, organisational learning is enhanced. As both headteachers and middle managers participate in group problem-solving processes where the thinking and results are superior to the processes they could have produced on their own, and as they reflect on those experiences, not only is their own problem solving improved, but the problem-solving capacity of the school is improved. As middle managers are involved in solving problems that affect them and for which they have knowledge and skills to contribute organisational commitment and motivation are likely to be increased. Collaboration, then, holds promise for making schools smarter. (Tschannen-Moran, Uline and Hoy, 1998).

Instead of most of the school managers' time and energy being focused on control, it can be focused on facilitation of others knowledge, talents and expertise. (Dunlap and Goldman, 1991). One lesson to emerge from our research was a significant one for headteachers and principals in that facilitative power does not imply abdication of control. Instead it emphasises the potential of maximising problem-solving capabilities by incorporating more of the professional skills available in educational organisations (Dunlap and Goldman, 1991).

Hoy:(1986) referred to "collegial authority" which was described by Hargreaves (1994) and Blase (1991) as the "most effective form of leadership in professional staffed organisations is that of genuine collegiality. This mode acknowledges the legitimacy of professional values and the expertise of staff to share in decision making, thus empowering teachers."

Collegial models of education management are becoming the dominant paradigm in the literature relating to the theory of the management of educational institutions, and in many

ways, have become an 'official policy' of central government agencies, both in Britain and many developed and developing countries. There are however, pragmatic and ideological factors which raise the question of the attainability of collegiality. Collegiality thus offers many persuasive benefits, but is in reality, difficult to attain to its fullest as our research has demonstrated. It is an 'ideal paradigm' which under current legislation in Britain and the US, offers promise for any manager or administrator who would seek to introduce it.

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