

Social organization of knowledge

covered by each class were tightly scheduled in an attempt to keep the whole year at the same stage and able to take the same assessment examination at the same time. Though each class had the same time for science, five periods per week, the distribution of that time was different. Some classes had an uninterrupted double and an uninterrupted triple lesson for science, others had a double lesson with the mid-morning break in the middle, yet other classes had two double periods for science followed by a single period. The management of time is a constraint on how the teacher is able to cover the material prescribed by the Project team. Hamilton concludes that at Maxwell the innovation had taken, albeit precariously, but in a context where there were pressures to return to the more traditional curriculum. It was difficult to maintain the innovation when organizational arrangements reflected a different, and contrasting, style of curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation.

Conclusion

The value of Hamilton's work is that it describes what happened when an innovation in the curriculum was introduced to particular schools. The future for research on the curriculum would seem to lie in the accumulation of evidence from such case studies, which have attempted to identify the constraints and possibilities for change. We know that there is no 'blue-print' for change; we know that individual teachers are constrained by the organization in which they work, the expectations of their pupils, and the pressures of other legitimate claims on the time available within school, as well as the limits to their own energy and enthusiasm. We also know that many teachers are successful in implementing change, in providing a curriculum which excites the intelligence of their pupils, develops their powers of judgment and evaluation while increasing their skills. We are less certain of how that curriculum was initiated, introduced and sustained, how constraints were overcome and resources mobilized to achieve success. The thesis of this chapter has been that our understanding of curriculum change will be best advanced through the adoption of a relational model. Such a model carries the recognition that knowledge is only one component alongside classroom interaction and teacher characteristics all of which come together as part of an analysis of the school as an organization, an analysis to which we turn in the following chapter.

Chapter 8

Schools as organizations

In the last three chapters we examined different aspects of the school: its classrooms, teachers and the knowledge that is transmitted. We now put these together, stand back a little, and consider the school as an organization. As usual in sociology, the title to the topic is deceptively simple; what is meant by an organization? Etzioni (1964) defined organizations as 'social units (or human groupings) deliberately constructed and reconstructed to seek specific goals' (p. 3). Schools have been 'deliberately created' in that at some point a decision was made to establish a school to facilitate the teaching of a range of subjects as diverse as the Koran to Trade Union Legislation. Schools are also reconstructed, in that each day people relate to one another in the context of the school; some teach, others struggle to learn, yet others clean, serve food or administer the school's various activities. The goals, however, are more complex than Etzioni's definition suggests. Goals may vary from those of Shakespeare's 'whining school-boy . . . creeping like snail unwillingly to school', whose goal may be to pass the time as quickly and painlessly as possible, through those whose goal is the desire to instil a love of learning, to those who want the opportunity to make a little 'pin-money'. Each member of the organization will want different things from his involvement, many of these goals being far removed from the purposes behind the deliberate construction to found the school. As Davies has it, 'Within any given institution, the only thing we may be sure about in advance of investigation is that what different individuals and groups of individuals are working towards will be partly common but often different' (1973, p. 256).

Schools are an example of a *formal* organization, and in 1958, Parsons wrote, 'An immense amount of work will be required before we can have anything that deserves to be called a theory of formal organization.' Bidwell (1965) and Davies (1973) have reiterated Parsons's comment in relation to education; Davies judges that, 'While

schools are familiar objects to us all, and colleges to many, our ability to explain and generalize about how they work in any degree of depth is still severely limited by the shortcomings of organizational analysis itself and by the paucity of worthwhile empirical studies within education' (1973, p. 249). The continued lack of any coherent, generally accepted theory of the school as an organization is probably indicative of a sociological chimera. The complexity of educational institutions is such that no general theory could represent the nuance and idiosyncracies of unique institutions without sounding banal and trivial. What has been developed are different ways of looking at the school, perspectives which illuminate some aspects and obscure others. As we shall see, the best are built around case studies, discussions of specific institutions through which an attempt is made to relate biography and structure to a historical context.

Weber and bureaucracy

A claim could be made that much of the work in the sociology of organization has been a debate with Weber and his theory of bureaucratization. In Chapter 1, we saw that Weber made a distinction between 'power' and 'authority', and that the latter could be legitimated in terms of a belief in either tradition or the charismatic appeal of some 'outstanding' person or in the legal/rational procedures which prescribe the rights and obligations of members of society. The bureaucracy is the embodiment of this legal/rational authority. The benefits of bureaucracy lie in the increased efficiency and justice which may develop, though there is always the danger of what Marx referred to as 'the sordid materialism of bureaucracy', that is, the tendency within the bureaucracy for it to become an end in itself. Bureaucracy is the master rather than the servant, such that instead of enjoying the benefits of increased efficiency we become trapped in bureaucratic procedures as satirized, for example, by Joseph Heller in *Catch 22*.

Weber identified six principles of bureaucracy:

- 1 Fixed rules and procedures through which the bureaucrat completes his task.
- 2 Hierarchy of offices with an associated structure of command.
- 3 Files which document the action taken.
- 4 Specialized training for the various functions within the bureaucracy.
- 5 An identifiable career structure.
- 6 Impersonal methods of dealing with both employers and clients within the bureaucracy.

Probably the civil service in any country has the closest fit to Weber's ideal type. Bidwell (1965) argues that schools are characterized by a 'structural looseness' which tends to mitigate the pressures towards bureaucratization. By structural looseness, Bidwell means the tension within schools between the autonomy of the teacher and the requirement to meet the universal needs of the students. Each teacher has considerable freedom over *how* she teaches within her own classroom; nevertheless, the content of what is taught is laid down by a syllabus, be that the construction of members of the school staff or the requirements of an examination board. Teachers also have some latitude in how they respond to the individual within a class yet ultimately must use universal criteria in any public assessment of the individual's performance. There is also a structural looseness in the way in which the school is articulated to the rest of the educational system. Head teachers have some freedom and a deal of responsibility for what happens within their schools, yet the evaluation of what happens is subject to the opinions of parents and local politicians and is also circumscribed by the rules and regulations of the Education Department.

Elements of Weber's ideal type can be seen in most schools. There is a hierarchy of offices supervised by, and stemming from, that of head teacher, though in many large schools the role of the head is diffused through a small executive committee of senior staff. Files are kept on student progress and, as we saw in Chapter 6, there is the danger that students 'become' the file; their identity is the description contained within the files. There is specialized training which in secondary schools tends to be along subject divisions and one could argue that primary school teachers, though not specialized in the sense of secondary specialists, are nevertheless specialists within the educational system. There are career lines within schools, albeit rather squat, as teachers becomes heads of years/houses or heads of departments, then deputy heads and finally head teachers.

The school has some bureaucratic tendencies though there is a 'structural looseness' which reduces the appropriateness of Weber's concept. The greatest problem, however, lies in fitting the children, the students, into the Weberian model. Students are an essential part of every school yet individual students probably spend less time, fewer years, in the school than individual teachers. As an organization, the school is continually faced with the task of socializing new recruits, often with little choice over who those recruits will be. The need to incorporate recruits will also tend to detract from the formation of a tight bureaucracy. Schools need to continually adapt to their clients if they are to accommodate their idiosyncracies, whims and different needs. An organization cemented into 'correct' rules and procedures of bureaucracy would be less flexible to the needs of clients than a more open, less bureaucratic, structure.

Management approaches to organization

In Chapter 7, we saw how a rationalist model came to dominate curriculum theory, the origins of this perspective being assumptions about the nature of science prevalent in the nineteenth century. Miller (1973) shows how the concept of school organization was related to another nineteenth-century invention, the factory. The prime concern behind the establishment of schools was that it be done cheaply and with maximum efficiency - hence the popularity of the monitorial system of Joseph Lancaster and Andrew Bell. The former was able to report in 1803 that, 'due to his reorganization of the system and the introduction of new methods of tuition in spelling and arithmetic, "proficiency" in these areas had been "more than doubled" with "individual scholars spelling 20,000 words and working 2,000 sums . . . per annum; whereas, the same space of time, in the common modes of tuition, would have been . . . irretrievably lost in idleness' (quoted in Miller, 1973).

Like the factory, then, the monitorial system, whereby the 'master' taught the lesson to certain monitors, who in turn taught it to other children, was cheap, efficient and made considerable economies of time and labour. The form of the school organization dictated what was to count as education, the domination of 'facts'. This domination is reflected by Dickens through the words of Mr Gradgrind in *Hard Times*, 'Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else.' The monitorial system did not allow that facts are conditional, that there are conflicting facts about the same event, or that circumstances may well alter facts; it only permitted the regurgitation of facts. Where one master supervised the activities of a thousand children it was inconceivable that individuals be allowed to discuss, let alone argue against, the facts being presented. The principle is clearly expressed by Bentham for his model school, Chrestomathia, where the primary objective was to attain 'the union of the maximum of despatch with the maximum of uniformity; thereby proportionably shortening the time, employed in the acquisition of the proposed body of instruction, and increasing the number of pupils, made to acquire it, by the same teachers, at the same time' (cited in Miller, 1973, p. 19).

Scientific management

In the USA, Frank Spaulding, superintendent of schools in Newton, Massachusetts, used the principles of *scientific management* in the organization of schools. Like the monitorial system, or the factory, scientific management was an attempt to obtain the most rational and efficient form of organization for the tasks it had to fulfil. Callahan

(1962, p. 68) summarizes the essentials of scientific management as:

- 1 The measurement and comparison of comparable results.
- 2 The analysis and comparison of the conditions under which given results are secured - especially the means and time employed in securing given results.
- 3 The consistent adoption and use of those means that justify themselves most fully by their results, abandoning those that fail so to justify themselves.

The implication is clear; there is a 'best' organizational form for schools which will maximize learning outcomes and at the same time minimize cost. Reminiscent of the claims of Joseph Lancaster, Spaulding calculated that, 'twelve pupil-recitations in science are equivalent in value to 19.2 pupil recitations in English and that it takes 41.7 pupil recitations in vocal music to equal the value of 13.9 pupil recitations in art' (quoted in Callahan, 1962, p. 73). Presumably if one wanted to increase the cost effectiveness of schools one concentrated resources on science and strongly discouraged 'vocal music'. This bizarre calculus would seem to have no relation to the educational grounds for an activity, but simply to reflect a dubious notion of efficiency.

In essence, scientific management claims that there is a best form of organization for each task and, despite its limitations and dehumanizing aspects, it continues to be used. Perrow (1970) argues that most of the criticism is a consequence of scientific management being the first attempt to understand the large corporations and government agencies which were being created at the turn of the century. Many of the prescriptions which stem from scientific management - like a command structure where subordinates only receive orders from one source, or a control structure where no more than five people report to one supervisor - have an intuitive 'good sense'. They are also prescriptions which are frequently ignored such that some groups receive contradictory orders from different superiors.

Socio-technical systems

Perrow's own analysis of organizations is labelled *socio-technical*, that is, the distinguishing characteristic which differentiates between organizations is the work for which each organization was established. All organizations have a raw material on which they must act to produce a finished product. This holds whether the organization is a factory producing manufactured goods or a school producing educated individuals. The technology used by the organization is dependent on what is known about the raw material; either a lot is known, in which case the

organizational processes will be predictable, or only a little is known, and consequently the processes will be less predictable. As socio-technical systems, schools may well cover the range of organizational forms. In some schools the staff will 'know' the nature of its clients, will have a clear conception as to where pupils intend to go on completing school, and therefore the organization will have a predictable structure. An example would be a traditional 'public' school in England where the raw materials are relatively homogeneous and the intended outcomes well defined and accepted by the clientele.

Other schools will have such a range of clients that it is impossible to specify the nature of the raw material. Such schools will tend also to have a wider range of goals, reflecting the diverse nature of the raw material, and hence will have a less predictable organizational structure; reverting to Bidwell's analysis, there will be a greater structural looseness within the school. An example would be a secondary comprehensive school serving a heterogeneous neighbourhood. Such a school would tend to have a well developed pastoral network as well as its academic structure, and would offer students a multitude of options in an effort to match the requirements of each individual.

The advantage of socio-technical approaches towards organizations is that they move beyond the unitary, 'best form', or organization so assiduously sought after by scientific management theorists. However, there is still the suggestion in socio-technical theories of a most appropriate organizational format. Schools may differ, but each ought to strive after an optimum form to best serve its raw material. The difficulty with this view is seen in answer to the question, whose organization? Both scientific management and socio-technical approaches to organizations adopt an explicit managerial perspective, that is, in the case of schools, what is good for the head teacher is necessarily good. If we were able to construct a general theory of formal organizations we would need to recognize that the management perspective is a partial perspective which complements but does not override other view points.

Systemic approaches to organizations

The earliest theoretical perspectives on organizations were those of scientific management. The most widely adopted, however, are various forms of systems theories. The hallmark of such approaches is the recognition that the parts of the system are related to the whole. Such an inter-relationship necessitates that we can specify what the parts are, as well as the 'whole' to which they relate; it also implies that we can identify the *boundaries* of the parts, in other words that we can

distinguish what is, and what is not, the part, be this the classroom, the pastoral system, the school or the educational system.

Gray (1979) suggests that boundaries can be classified as 'psychological, temporal and physical' and points out that membership of one does not necessarily include membership within others: 'A pupil who day-dreams may have physical and temporal membership of the school but not psychological' (p. 35). As boundaries exist, so each organization has what Gray calls a 'boundary-spanning function', that is the task of managing who crosses and who maintains the boundary. He argues that it is the regulation of various boundaries which gives an organization its identity, delineating what is and what is not the organization. Given a conception of organizations as interlocking parts, each part can also have sub-parts, or internal boundaries. Thus schools consist of departments, departments of year groups, year groups of classes and classes of sub-groups of friendship systems, work groups and 'anti-social' groups. The teacher normally maintains the boundary-spanning function of what is, and what is not, the classroom, allows access and exits and strives to keep her pupils within the 'psychological' boundary of the classroom.

Organizations do not just exist, they were created for some purpose; that is they have *goals* or what Miller and Rice (1967) label a *primary task*. In order to fulfil its primary task an organization needs *inputs*; for schools these would be pupils, teachers and materials. These inputs are processed within the organization (*throughput*) to become the *output* of the system; an output which presumably corresponds to the organization's goals or primary tasks. In the case of schools, children learn something which has been taught to them. The evaluation of the output, whether or not the system is meeting its primary task, acts as a *feedback*. The continual monitoring of the 'feedback' will result in the adaptation of the 'throughput' such that the 'output' corresponds to the 'primary task'. Such a mechanistic conception of the school is an example of the 'scientific-economic-technological' (SET) approach to the social sciences of which Yee (1972) expresses the fear that 'the ultimate outcomes of the strict SET approach to social policy will be totalitarianism and disrespect for individuality' (p. 22-3). This is not a call for the abandonment of systemic approaches, but for a recognition that embedded in all decisions are values and intuitions as well as rationality.

Part of the social system within which schools operate, part of their environment, is the complex of values and expectations. Each school must accommodate legitimate and conflicting demands, from parents, local industry, professional opinion and educational policy. The notion of 'boundary' has an empirical aspect in that it is relevant to ask of each school which demands it recognizes and the priority given to each. This

recognition need not entail an assumption of a uniform, homogeneous institution, responding as a whole to outside pressures, but can allow that within the school there may well be contradictory values. The mapping of the school's ideological environment presents some of the constraints within which the school has to function.

A second area of constraint for all schools lies with the nature of their input. Some comprehensive schools may recruit predominantly from the lower end of the ability spectrum, have teachers who are inexperienced with low-ability children and lack the capital and material resources to mount a wide range of courses. Others will have a 'balanced' intake, a staff committed to the idea of comprehensive education and a range of specialist rooms and equipment to cater for the needs of its pupils. There is a clear affinity here to socio-technical systems: the nature of the raw material can have an influence on the structure of the organization. There is, however, nothing deterministic; schools with similar inputs may well have a range of different organizational forms. At best, system theories are an economical way of describing organizations, they do not explain *why* a particular school has the structure that it has.

There is a danger in the search for an all-embracing explanatory theory of schools as organizations that the critical features of specific schools will be lost. Davies makes the point that 'the urge to generalize between organizations has usually tended to depress the importance of focusing on differences stemming from the relatively unique tasks of organizations' (1973, p. 285). In his paper, Davies argues that educational institutions are so pervaded by the values of teachers, parents and pupils that any single model of organizations will be too mechanistic and partial to capture the complexity of schools. His prescription is for empirical work which recognizes that organizations have histories (it is important to disentangle how the organization came to be) and work within a series of constraints, the complexity of organizations being such as to require the strengths of many perspectives in their analysis rather than the slavish adoption of a single approach.

Individualized approaches to organizations

Both management and systems approaches to organizations tend to reify the organization; that is, the organization is discussed as if it were a real active agency, independent of the purposes and intentions of its members. Individualized approaches resist this tendency having in common the recognition that organizations consist of people. There are differences within this tradition, however, between those who adopt a passive view of the individual and those who adopt an active view.

Passive theories

In a much-quoted paper published in 1973, Argyris argues that there is an incongruity between the needs of a mature personality and those of formal organizations. For the purposes of his discussion he constructs an ideal type model of both a mature personality and a formal organization. His characterization of personality, which he attributes to American culture, is seen as evolving, for example, from a passive state in infancy to increased activity as an adult; from dependence to relative independence; from erratic, capricious interests as a child to pursuing interests in depth and accepting challenges; and from a lack of awareness of self to developing a sense of integrity and self-worth as an adult. Argyris argues that in the struggle for maturity, individuals will tend to strive for the optimum expression of their personality. On the other hand, the ideal-typical formal organization will, in the drive for efficiency, tend to institute a chain of command and increase the specialized nature of work. These developments will inhibit the evolution of a mature personality in that the increased specialization of work fails to offer a challenge to the individual and the prescribed roles within the organization will inhibit the expression of initiative. In this way the organization person will experience frustration, failure and conflict and will be unable to develop identity through work. Argyris ends his polemic with the challenge, 'How is it possible to create an organization in which the individuals may obtain optimum expression and, simultaneously, in which the organization itself may obtain optimum satisfaction of its demands?' (1973, p. 314).

The problem facing schools is that they span the years from infancy to maturity and must therefore have an organizational form which facilitates the struggle for maturity of its student recruits; we return to this issue below. The difficulty with Argyris's approach rests with the notion of the 'needs of the mature personality'; it suggests what in Chapter 3, we called a passive model of individual socialization, with a uniform path being taken to an unclear goal, maturity. Maturity is a prescriptive, not a descriptive concept, its designation probably saying more about the values of the person using the concept than the attributes of the person so labelled.

Active theories

An *active theory* of organizations is that proposed by Silverman (1970): 'The action of men . . . stems from a network of meanings which they themselves construct and of which they are conscious' (p. 129). An

organization then, is among other things, the active creation of its members; the stock of knowledge about the organization must be continually reaffirmed by the actions of others. Like Davies, Silverman stresses the importance of also conducting a historical analysis of organizations, in his case to identify why the particular definitions of the situation have emerged. He recognizes the importance of Berger and Luckmann's aphorism that 'He who has the bigger stick has the better chance of imposing his definition' (quoted in Silverman, 1970, p. 138), that, for example, a head teacher has more power in ensuring that his meanings are accepted and sustained within a school than has a probationary teacher. Organizations exist, then, in the sense that they are an expression of the meanings which people attach to their world; they are objective in so far as these meanings become 'sedimented', or laid down and accepted over time as 'normal'.

The implications of alternative perspectives to the study of schools such as Silverman's 'action frame of reference' have been pointed out by Barr Greenfield (1975). He argues that 'organizations are cultural artefacts which man shapes within limits given only by his perception and the boundaries of his life as a human animal' (1975, p. 65). The existence of conflict within organizations is seen to be a crucial problem, not in terms of whether order is maintained, 'but rather who maintains it, how and with what consequences' (1975, p. 72). Barr Greenfield urges that we remain sceptical of any claim that a general theory of organizations is obtainable. Thus one must treat with caution those models of organization developed in one cultural setting, usually that of the USA, when applied to other settings. A corollary of this view is that 'the possibility of training administrators through the study of organization theory has been seriously overestimated' (1975, p. 76). There is no universal blueprint, most efficient model or ideal organizational framework for Barr Greenfield; organizations are definitions of social reality and 'some people may make these definitions by virtue of their access to power while others must pay attention to them' (1975, p. 75).

Any understanding of what goes on in school must start with a description of what happens within the school; the different images and meanings people experience. For Barr Greenfield, the image of the school is not the factory of scientific management, nor the natural system, but, 'the public utility which produces a service which people use for their own ends' (1975, p. 78). For P. and J. White (1976), this is a 'grotesquely inadequate model', as it neglects the purpose of the school to change pupils and, paradoxically, suggests a passive view of the pupil. In the end, it is difficult to see Barr Greenfield reaching C. Wright Mills's injunction that an adequate social science

will entail structure, identity, and the delineation of the historical background to each.

Not surprisingly, arguments such as those of Barr Greenfield provoke much comment. In a symposium published in response to his paper, P. and J. White (1976) also questioned the status of 'objectivity' within phenomenological perspectives. Members of organizations may have different experiences and views as to what the nature of the organization is. The point, however, is that there is still something common to all to which these differing views refer. The argument is rather similar to that we made in discussing Durkheim in Chapter 1: the form of the organization may be culturally and historically relative, but it is still possible to identify what is, and is not, the organization or school. What counts as a school is *not just* the collected meanings of its members. Other authors in the symposium saw a danger that benefits would be lost in rejecting systems theories. Reiterating a point which reflects Perrow's socio-technical model, Bone commented, 'there can be good and bad structures for particular purposes, and that analysis of the effectiveness of different structures is not wasted' (1976, p. 13).

The curriculum and organizations

For socio-technical models like Perrow's, the critical factor which determines the form an organization takes is the nature of the raw material. For schools, this may be thought just to include children, teachers and the material resources used. Bernstein (1975) added another dimension, namely, the nature of the knowledge transmitted. In the last chapter, we examined Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing; the former may be either weak or strong, strong classification indicating strong boundaries and separate subject identities and weak classification the bringing together, under the aegis of some relational idea, previously insulated subjects. We looked at the consequences of Bernstein's model for conceptualizing the process of socialization, and in this section we discuss its relevance for the structure of educational organizations.

Where the curriculum reflects strong classification, a collection code, the school will tend to be organized into well insulated subject departments. Bernstein suggests that such a structure points to a management pattern where the institution is controlled by an oligarchy of head and senior heads of departments. Such staff will have both strong horizontal work relationships with other subject heads, and strong vertical work relationships within their own department. Junior staff, however, are likely to have only vertical work relationships, that

is they will probably only have working allegiances within their own department. This tendency is reinforced by the socialization of staff into specific subject identities as mathematicians, scientists or geographers. Each subject department is also often in competition with other departments for scarce resources, thus staff are more likely to feel secure within their departmental enclaves rather than risk the hostile comments of non-departmental colleagues over the efficacy of departmental work. In schools, for example, science departments receive greater resources per child than other departments, a fact which may attract critical comment from non-science colleagues even to the point of putting in jeopardy some future developments in science teaching.

This departmental competitiveness is further exacerbated by the career structure within schools whereby promotion is within departments and thus more likely in an expanding rather than a contracting department. Bernstein concludes, therefore, that horizontal relationships of junior staff will tend to be limited to non-task-based contacts. It is worth noting that in most comprehensive schools the departmental career structure is supplemented by the pastoral structure, such as head of year/house, school counsellor, deputy head (pastoral), which could be as strongly classified as any subject department. Bernstein concludes, 'This is a type of organizational system which encourages gossip, intrigue and a conspiracy theory of the workings of the organization, for both the administration and the acts of teaching are invisible to the majority of staff' (1975, p. 103, emphasis Bernstein).

According to Bernstein's models the move towards an integrated code, weak classification, where subjects are interrelated, will also affect the organizational structure. The nature of the task, which is now the integration of subjects, requires that staff share teaching and co-operate in both the planning and execution of the curriculum. The consequences are that the power structure of the school will become more open and both administration and acts of teaching shift from invisibility to relative visibility. Thus, for example, a junior member of staff may be the co-ordinator of a topic area and over the year the co-ordination function will be held by different staff as the topic changes. It will therefore be important that each member of staff is equally informed as to the use of resources within school. Within this management pattern, students are also more likely to be active participants in decision-making as against the collection code where there would be a clear divide between staff and student.

The empirical exploration of this aspect of Bernstein's work is as yet limited, thus his thesis must be seen as an ideal type model awaiting confirmation. Using data drawn from his study of seventy-two secondary schools in the south-west of England, King (1976)

suggests that the relationship between the curriculum and the organizational structure is not as clear as Bernstein implies: 'Put simply, it is suggested that the introduction of one "open" innovation into a school is not necessarily associated with moves to "open up" other aspects of the school, and may sometimes be associated with the closure of others' (King, 1976, p. 440). Organizational forms may persist which correspond to past curricular arrangements but which reflect the present demands on the school, the diverse and conflicting demands to which all schools accommodate results in a structure more complex than Bernstein's modified socio-technical approach would suggest.

An attempt to reflect this complexity is Smith's extension of Bernstein's work. Recognizing that 'Cultural transmission within educational institutions is located in a mosaic of highly differentiated groupings' (1977, p. 4), Smith argues that Bernstein's model has two inadequacies. The first is a failure to explore the interrelationship between school and wider structural variables, the second, to encompass the heterogeneity within student sub-cultures. In meeting and responding to its ideological setting, every school faces two orders of problem. The first is the technical one of how to *implement* decisions, the second and more fundamental, is how to *legitimate* those decisions. Like Bernstein, Smith sees a general drift away from the strongly classified curriculum and its concomitant organizational form, but also sees this move challenging the ideologies of legitimation, the basic rationale of the organization.

Smith identifies three dimensions to the drift away from the collection code. One he labels 'egalitarian collection', or a shift towards greater democracy *within* a subject department. Another is the instance where a head forces an innovation, such as team teaching or interdisciplinary enquiry, through the existing hierarchical structures; as Smith puts it, 'Such reforms remove many trappings associated with the old academic hierarchy; taken to extremes they undermine the very power structure within which they are carried out' (1977, p. 13). Finally there is the dimension identified by Bernstein as the integrated code, which Smith labels 'co-operative integration' and which bestows upon the whole group control over all its members. The dilemma which staff face is that having lost a subject identity they have not gained a purpose. Schools are not isolated, so that staff having gone to the extremes of democracy and student participation are still caught in a net of external legitimacy, a mesh consisting of certificates, diplomas and degrees. Smith comments on the change to co-operative integration that, 'Such a change simply alters the *conditions* of competition, giving new advantages to those who still recognize the competitive character of the educational system' (1977, p. 13, his emphasis).

The importance of the 'conditions of competition' has also been recognized by Bourdieu (see Chapters 2, 9 and 11). At a time of greater democracy within school without a parallel shift in the mode of selection and allocation in the wider society, *cultural intangibles* - like style of speech, background and 'taste' - will increase in importance. Smith emphasizes that understanding the organizational form of a school requires an understanding of its historical and of the ideological framework within which it is located, but, like Bernstein, his theoretical discussion awaits empirical exploration.

Case studies of schools

Schools as organizations

Given the lack of an adequate general theory of schools as organizations, it has been suggested above that the most useful work has been case studies of individual schools. However, such case studies must meet two major requirements; first, to identify how the organization came to be, or a *historical* requirement; and second, to identify the social structure within which the organization must work, or a *structural* requirement. A part of the structural requirement is what Smith identified as the ideologies of legitimation and implementation, the constraints of different values and expectations to which schools must accommodate. With these requirements in mind, in the remainder of this chapter we will look at two case studies of schools and in the final section consider case studies into schools as agents of socialization. The two case studies of schools represent different perspectives, that of Richardson (1973, 1975), an open systems model whose central concept is that of boundary; that of Woods (1979), in the symbolic interactionist tradition of Mead, Blumer and Becker.

From September 1968 until December 1971, Richardson worked as a consultant with the head teacher and staff of Nailsea school in south-west England. She described her role as consultant as being to help the staff of the school to understand the problems involved in the management of change. The school has a primary task made up of an 'import-conversation-export' process, that is, 'a school can survive only if it fulfils its primary task of taking in children, providing an educational programme that . . . will enable these children to grow and learn, and sending them out after a number of years as more mature persons than they were when they came in' (1973, p. 18). As well as the task system within the school there is also the sentient system, or the emotional, personal attachments which people make within an organization. Richardson argues that one of the functions of leadership

in a school is to bring the task and sentient systems together so that both staff and pupils derive personal satisfaction from the work that has to be done. There are boundaries to both systems; as there are to the inner and outer world of the individual; acting as a kind of membrane which separates one group from another, and indeed one institution from another. Much of Richardson's analysis is an exploration of these boundaries - how they are created, sustained and changed, how the individual negotiates a path across and protects his own and the institutional boundaries. It must be stressed, however, that Richardson is using boundary as a heuristic device, that is, as a means of explaining the pattern of interaction within schools, and is not suggesting their existence as some objective category.

Within this framework, Richardson's study is of the changes in the form of management within the school as it moved from a grammar to a comprehensive. The study does not present 'findings' as such, which one might transfer to other settings, but rather records the processes of a school coping with change. For example, the problem faced by the head teacher in the creation of a standing committee of senior management in terms of his own role within the school. The problem is not one which leads to an apt solution valid for all time, but is a continual source of tension more intense at some periods than others. This tension involves the extent to which the head teacher should take responsibility and initiative or follow the lead of other colleagues, a problem of being too autocratic and creating too much dependency on the part of staff, or being too democratic and leaving colleagues with the impression that the school lacks leadership.

At the end of her study, Richardson has produced a description of the management of authority within a school. She presents a view of the interplay between personal biography and a changing structure; of individuals taking responsibility (or failing to do so) for their acts, and the consequence for the school's pursuit of its primary task. The weakness of the case study is a relative lack of emphasis on social structure, on the social class of the pupils, and the related opportunity structure which they face. The world of pupils, classrooms and of teachers managing their identities in the face of groups of children receives scant attention. In terms of the two requirements which we suggested case studies ought to meet, Richardson's work does include a history of Nailsea school including a discussion of how its present structure evolved. The structural requirement, however, is not developed; conflict is recognized but as something which is resolvable given the individual's complete understanding of his responsibilities within the school or a more appropriate management style. The fundamental conflict which can question the legitimacy of the school, challenge its primary task, such as that between the value of encouraging the

child to develop her own interests as against the expectation of employers for workers who are obedient and who will 'fit-in', is a conflict which goes unremarked in Richardson's study. Ultimately, Nailsea school is viewed from the position of management and not from that of the clients it serves.

A contrasting case study is that of Woods (1979), to which we made reference in Chapter 6. Rather than acting explicitly as a consultant he was an 'involved' observer at Lowfield secondary school. As such he worked with pupils as well as staff, shared the humour of the staffroom as well as the jokes of the classroom, involving himself in most aspects of the school's life over a period of a year. The study draws from a symbolic interactionist perspective in that Woods attempts to present a picture of the school through the shared meanings of its members. The central concept which evolved during his study was that of 'division' (1979, p. 256):

division of the 'self' and of 'consciousness' on the part of both pupils and teachers, division of public and private spheres of life, between choice and direction, of laughter and conflict, pleasure and pain, as well as divisions between and within groups of pupils, teachers and parents owing to their different social locations, both in regard to the school and to the social structure.

Woods's portrayal of Lowfield school captures the complexity of the organization. His figures are active in that they make decisions and respond to events as they occur in creative ways, but also their acts become routine. Part of all teachers is what Woods refers to as the 'teacher bureaucrats', where the individual concentrates on the rules and rituals of the school as a response to the pressures of the job. Under-resourced, maybe facing 200 different pupils each week, the teacher cannot develop 'warm' relationships with everyone; for her own 'survival' she has to use routines. The danger, as Woods, following Waller, points out, is that the routine can take over; the teacher's individuality becomes lost in the school bureaucracy. As well as being a problem for teachers, the maintenance of individuality is also faced by children, 'Pupils are engaged in a continual battle for who they are and who they are to become, while the forces of institutionalization work to deprive them of their individuality and into a mould that accords with teachers ideal models' (pp. 247-8).

The way in which social structure impinges on the everyday life of the school is partially explored in Woods's study. He demonstrates the weakness of any mechanistic view of structure which sees the school as simply reproducing the conditions of wider society. However, he does not fully explore the ideologies which surround Lowfield; the views of local industry or the school's governing body could have

provided an additional dimension to the constraints within which the organization must work. Also, the historical requirement to case studies is under-developed, such as how the school came to have its present form or the aspirations and background of its staff. These criticisms must be seen in relation to the immense task facing any attempt to present a case study of a school, an immensity which lends support to the assertion made at the beginning of this chapter, that a generally accepted theory of the school is probably a sociological chimera.

Effects of school

Both Richardson and Woods have presented case studies which attempt to describe the processes, the pattern of interaction within schools as organizations. A further group of studies examines the effects that schools have on children, as it were, the consequences of the organization for the child. Himmelweit and Swift (1969) recognized that it was not sufficient to regard the school environment as being equivalent for all pupils but that the *same* school could have different effects on different children. This was important for, as we shall see in the next chapter, research like that of Coleman (1966) had been read to conclude that schools had little influence on their pupils; that, in short, schools did not matter, a conclusion which indicates more about the limitations of social research and the inability of large-scale surveys to tap the intricacies of the school than making a valid assessment of school effects.

An indication that schools do matter came from Himmelweit and Swift (1969), who concluded that where a school is a 'strong system' - that is, has a clearly defined 'input' and 'output' - so it will have a strong influence over pupils. Power *et al.* (1967) and Phillipson (1971), using data from a London borough, show a range in the annual average of boys making a first appearance in court from 0.9 per cent in one school to 19 per cent in the school at the other extreme. This range could not be explained by obvious characteristics such as the size of the school, the nature of its recruitment, variation in police practice or the influence of differing catchment areas. Phillipson concludes that 'Some schools apparently protect their pupils from delinquency while others may put them at risk of it' (1971, p. 245). Unfortunately, the local education authority would not allow the research team to collect organizational data from the twenty schools involved to enable this conclusion to be elaborated.

The challenge made by Phillipson has been taken up by Reynolds (1976a, 1976b; Reynolds and Sullivan, 1979). The intent of his

research in a relatively homogeneous community in Wales was to see if 'some schools are managing to prevent - and others promote - the growth of deviancy amongst their pupils and to see what it is about the successful schools that may help them excel' (1976b, p. 220). Like Power and Phillipson, Reynolds found large differences in indices relating to boys in the nine secondary modern schools in the area. Rates of attendance ranged from 89 to 77 per cent, the number of boys going to the local technical college on leaving school from 52 to 8 per cent, and the proportion being found guilty in court from 10 to 4 per cent. With the co-operation of the local education authority, Reynolds was able to explore possible school organizational factors related to the different rates of success. The more successful schools tended to be smaller, though by national standards *all* the schools in Reynolds's sample were small, ranging in 1974, from 136 to 355 pupils as against the national average of 600 for maintained secondary schools in Wales. The successful schools also had a lower staff turnover, smaller classes, and tended to be housed in older and less adequate buildings. It is important to remember that Reynolds is exploring associations between two variables and is not implying any causal connection such, for example, that poor school buildings 'cause' successful schools. Initially, all the schools appeared to be similar in their internal organization, all 'rather "unprogressive", traditional working-class secondary modern schools, closely modelled on the grammar schools of Wales' (1976b, p. 224). On closer observation, however, subtle differences became apparent; the more successful schools, for example, tended to have school prefects. In one school 30 per cent of final year pupils were prefects, 12 out of 40; to obtain the same participation ratio in an average sized school would entail 45 prefects from a year group of 150. It is unlikely that members of the 45 would feel as special and have the same commitment to the school as the fewer number in the smaller school. The most significant difference, however, was in the relatively high degree of autonomy, what Reynolds calls 'the truce', which characterized relationships between staff and pupils. Though not condoning activities like smoking and eating in class, staff at the more successful school were less punitive in enforcing school regulations. Reynolds summarizes the point as (1976b, p. 226):

It is worth saying quite simply that the evidence from these schools suggests that the more a school seeks high control over its more senior pupils by increasing organizational compulsion and decreasing pupil autonomy, the more these pupils may regard their schools as maladjusted to their needs. Rebellion within and delinquency without will be the result of the failure of the pupils and their teachers to declare a truce.

Without doubt school organizational factors are associated with differences in pupil outcomes. What is less clear from Reynolds's study, despite his statement that the schools serve 'a relatively homogeneous former mining community, with very small differences in the social class composition of the people', is how much the difference is a function of variation in the nature of each school's input. As he recognizes, we also need to know why teachers use the different management styles they adopt, how 'the true' is manifest in classroom interaction, and the effects of the pattern of expectations held by teachers; in short further empirical work is required.

In a later paper (Reynolds and Sullivan, 1979) explanation is sought from the adoption of a Marxist perspective. In this paper, the successful schools are seen to be adopting an 'incorporative' strategy and the less successful a 'coercive' strategy. Both types of school are vehicles for the implementation of social control which is seen to be the legitimation of 'the ideology and values of the dominant class in society'. There is a danger of the analysis sinking to 'romanticism' and ignoring the fact that all education has a control element, be this in Cuba or Canada, the USSR or the UK, China or Chile. The forms of control will differ in each society but it is essential to remember that a paradox of education is, as Johnson notes, that 'schools reproduce forms of resistance too' (1976, p. 52). In this later paper there is a resurgence of a passive model of the organization where teachers, pupils and parents are, by implication, the dupes of the state. 'Basically, teachers in these incorporative schools attempt to tie pupils into the value system of the school and of the adult society by means of developing "good" personal relationships with them' (1979, p. 50). This is a denial of the intention of members of the organization and a return to the assumptions of clearly defined and unitary goals which are a part of some functionalist models of the organization.

Ostensibly, the most 'scientific' British investigation into the effects of schools is that by Rutter and his colleagues (1979). Having reviewed the research in the area, including that of Power and of Reynolds, Rutter concludes that any evaluation of school effects needs to consider *both* the characteristics of children on entering the school as well as organizational variables. Rutter's team was able to do this; from earlier research, Rutter had data on the ability and behaviour characteristics of a sample of ten-year-old children in a south London borough. Similar data was collected from the *same* children when they were in the third year in twenty comprehensive schools in three areas of south London. At that time, 1974, similar data was also collected from the other third-year pupils in the twenty schools, data which confirmed that the original children did not differ from their peers. Twelve of the twenty schools were then chosen for detailed investigation into

school effects; the twelve covered the range of organizational forms from boys only, girls only, mixed, Roman Catholic and Church of England as well as local authority controlled.

Like Reynolds and Power, Rutter's team found significant differences between the schools on four 'outcome measures'. These were attendance, behaviour (such items as, 'skipping lessons', damage to school property, late arrival in lessons and disallowed chatting and calling out in class), delinquency amongst boys, and attainment in school examinations. These differences were not the result of variation in any of the intake measures for each school, such as ability at eleven, parental occupation or the child's behaviour in primary school. This is not to say that the schools admitted identical children but rather than knowing the characteristics of the school's intake would not allow one to predict the nature of its outcomes.

The differences in the four outcome measures were not associated to either the size of the school - in this case ranging from about 450 to about 2,000 pupils - the quality of buildings or to variation in size of classes. What the research team report is a positive and significant association between academic, or instrumental, values and school outcomes. What is meant by academic values, or the school 'ethos', seems to correspond to what might be called professional good sense. That is, a successful school is one where teachers prepare their work in advance, turn up promptly to lessons, set homework, mark books regularly and where the senior staff 'know' what is happening in the school.

As Rutter continually emphasizes, the causal relationship between school variables and pupil outcomes still awaits exploration. Thus the association between homework and success must not be read causally but rather that homework probably has 'symbolic importance in emphasizing the schools concern for academic progress' (p. 110). Homework is part of a set of expectations that children will work, will succeed, that seems to mark out the successful schools. This study supports Reynolds's conclusion that successful schools are also schools where pupils are given responsibility. 'The findings suggest that there are likely to be benefits in ensuring that a high proportion of pupils have opportunities to hold some kind of post of responsibility' (Rutter *et al.*, 1979, p. 130).

Apart from confirming 'professional good sense', however, it is not possible to demonstrate from Rutter's work *how* or *why* school processes influence learning outcomes. Corbishley and Hurn (1979) argue that the research provides 'no overall model to enable us to summarize more precisely what school process is' (p. 50). They go on to show that the method of constructing an overall school process score used in the research - that is adding together such discrete component variables as number of friends a student has in the same year,

whether teachers have adequate clerical help, the percentage time teachers spend on the topic of the lesson and the percentage of lessons ending early - does little to increase our understanding of organizational processes. In Corbishley and Hurn's assessment, 'Their combination to form an overall school process score makes the interpretation of why this combined score should predict school outcomes almost impossible' (1979, p. 51).

Conclusion

We have now discussed four aspects of educational transmission: classrooms, teachers, knowledge and, in this chapter, organizations. Viewed overall the scene is messy, uneven and in many areas illdeveloped. There is, however, a thread, a leitmotif passing through our discussion of the school and its processes, that is the theme of *differentiation*. This may be seen in the formation of sub-groups within classrooms, in the use of labels, the assumption of certain kinds of knowledge for different types of children and in the divisions within the organization as identified by Woods. Each example reflects, though by no means in a unitary way, a moral concern with equality. At the beginning of this book we argued that the many perspectives within sociology were a necessary feature to an understanding of education. The search for a common, consensual sociology of education which held on to the 'best' features of functionalism, interpretive and Marxist sociologies, is misplaced. Tension between perspective is normal, conflict in approach is natural in a subject whose essential problem is moral, the promotion of equality. In whatever guise it appears, sociology of education is addressing the fact of differential achievement between groups of people - most frequently between different social classes, but also between sex, region and racial groups. In our discussion of school processes this fact has always been present. Exploration of it has taken us through topics as diverse as classification and framing, social and coping strategies, hidden curriculum and school effects. Always the ultimate issue is the explanation of differentiation, a moral issue. Not all equalities are even, not all are possible, the pursuit of equality is not always in accordance with justice, there are unresolvable contradictions within education. In the next chapter we give further consideration to these issues as we step outside the school to look at the opportunity structure within which it is located.