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Horizontal Power Differences – An Exploratory Study

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HORIZONTAL POWER DIFFERENCES - AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

INTRODUCTION

In the late 1970s power was still regarded as a 'dirty word' in organisation studies (Salancik and Pfeffer 1977). Of course, it was widely recognised at the time that power and politics were a significant feature of organisational life. However, for many, this was mainly because the 'science' of management and organisation remained under-developed. Power and politics were considered to be the friction of organisational functioning, to be progressively reduced and marginalised, as organisational design and decision making technologies improved over time.

Since that period, however, attitudes and perspectives have been steadily changing. Power and politics are now viewed in much less pejorative terms. The predominance of the machine model of organisational structures and processes has given way to a more humanist and cultural model. Nowadays it is legitimate to be 'passionate' about the future mission of the organisation, and 'conflict' is no longer considered mainly as the exhaust fume of the organisation but one of its main sources of energy (Nonaka 1988, Senge 1993, Burgelman and Grove 1996). 'Management-by-objectives' has given way to the concept of the 'values driven organisation' (Howard 1990). Today the language of organisational life is rich in its recognition of the more positive aspects of power and politics, with concepts like 'empowerment' and 'creative tension' now firmly established in the lexicon of modern management. Today in the field of management theory and practice we no longer want to stop people from behaving politically. We now want to help them to learn how to do it in a more effective and positive way (Kanter 1983). We no longer want people to be merely rational, we want them to be advocates and activists in pursuit of their beliefs about where the organisation should be going and what it should stand for. Increasingly, the emphasis is on democratising workplaces, flattening authority structures, and giving greater autonomy to people and units at all levels, creating more power sources and more sophisticated politics within our organisations (Tichy and Charan 1989, Taylor 1991, Handy 1992, Peters 1992).

In sum, the study of power in organisational settings remains an important focus for research. The current trend away from the traditional 'command and control' model towards approaches to management that involve more autonomy and initiative at all levels, is generating renewed interest in patterns of power that are non-hierarchical.

This paper is particularly concerned with the differences in power that are discernible in most organisations among sub-units at the same level in the organisational structure. It reports on an empirical, case-based study that set out to explore how and why non-hierarchical or horizontal power differences arise among sub-units, and how such asymmetries in the distribution of power develop over time.

HORIZONTAL POWER

The study of horizontal power differences in organisations is not a new research topic. The seminal work dates back to the early 1970s (Hickson et al 1971, Hinings et al 1974). In reviewing the literature on horizontal power and explaining where this study fits in, it will be helpful in the first instance to examine what we mean by power itself, and how it is typically understood in organisational studies.

Researchers focusing on power in organisations face difficulties in defining the concept in operational terms and in dealing with its multi-faceted nature. Back in the fifties and sixties, for example, Emerson (1962, p31) reflected on the 'considerable confusion' that existed over the concept of power, while French and Raven (1968, p150) recognised its 'pervasive, complex and often disguised' nature. Wrong (1968) highlighted the problems in defining the concept and Dahl (1957, p201) was convinced that many of his contemporaries simply regarded the whole subject, somewhat despairingly, as a 'bottomless swamp'. Many of the complexities that faced these researchers still remain nearly four decades later, as the search for a more integrated knowledge of the concept of power goes on.

To begin with, power has been treated as a property, something that a person or sub-unit can hold or possess. It has also been treated as a process, something that can be mobilised or exercised. French and Raven were among those who tried to resolve the property/process dichotomy by making a distinction between power and influence. Using an analogy drawn from physics, they suggested that we might define influence as 'kinetic power' and power as 'potential influence' (French and Raven 1968, p152). This has indeed been helpful, but only to a degree. It tends to work best when dealing with situations in which both the property of power and its mobilisation are overt and clearly observable. However, this is not always the case.

More recent research has drawn our attention to the limitations of this one dimensional view of power. Bachrach and Baratz (1962) were among the first to

highlight another, more covert, face of power. The use of power can be seen not only in the overt attempts to influence decision-making, but also in the more subtle ways that issues put forward for decision making are selected and presented. The covert face of power can be seen in operation where latent issues are prevented from becoming questions for decision, through the effective mobilisation of bias by certain interests and agencies, whether individuals or groups. Later research by Lukes (1974), further extended by Hardy (1996), has drawn attention to an even more subtle face of power, the ability to manage meaning and shape perceptions, preferences and cognitions in more cultural and ideological ways. In this dimension, power is vested in the ability to define reality for others, so that they internalise the existing order 'as divinely ordained and beneficial', or at least acquiesce in it because they can 'imagine no alternative' to it (Lukes 1974, p24). Indeed political bias may be so deeply embedded in 'the unconscious acceptances of the values, traditions, cultures and structures' of a given social system that it 'advantages or disadvantages individuals without being consciously mobilised' (Hardy 1996, p.S8).

Hardy (1996), in her review of the multiple faces of power, summarised the dimensions in terms of power over resources, power over processes and power over meaning. The first dimension of power, and the notion of power as primarily a property, were dominant in the seminal perspective on horizontal power difference, the strategic-contingencies theory of Hickson et al (1971).

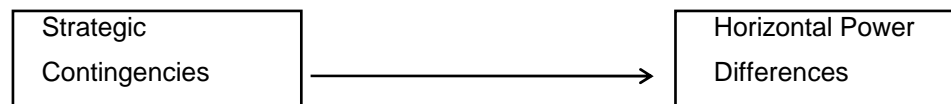
THE STRATEGIC CONTINGENCIES MODEL OF HORIZONTAL POWER.

The strategic-contingencies theory of horizontal power differences is rooted in the power-dependency theory of Emerson (1962), in which power is taken to be a property of a social relationship rather than of an individual actor. The basic premise underlying the Hickson et al (1971, p217) perspective is that when organisations are conceived as interdepartmental systems 'the division of labour becomes the ultimate source of intraorganisational power', and power is explained 'by variables that are elements of each subunit's task, its functioning, and its links with the activities of other subunits'. In short, the horizontal pattern of power is primarily a product of structural, rather than personal, factors .

In its simplest form, the strategic-contingency model of horizontal power difference revolves around the basic premise that organisations face certain critical or strategic contingencies originating from the environment in which they operate. These

contingencies create uncertainty which must be managed. Sub-units that cope with the contingencies most critical to the organisation come to acquire the most horizontal power, because coping confers power by creating dependencies. In its most basic form the Hickson et al model (1971) can be represented as shown in figure 1.

Figure 1: The Strategic Contingencies Model of Horizontal Power



They argued that organisations face uncertainty in the sources and composition of inputs, the processing of throughputs and the disposal of outputs and that they must have some means to deal with these uncertainties for adequate task performance (Hickson et al, 1971, p219). Hence the ability to cope with uncertainty becomes critical to the organisation and the power structure therein. Early empirical evidence linking horizontal power difference with various ways of coping with uncertainty can be found in the classic studies of Crozier (1964), Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) and Perrow (1970). Three ways of coping with uncertainty exist, through prevention, stopping the uncertainty from arising; through information, forecasting the occurrence so that responses can be planned; or through absorption, where the fluctuations are countered or dealt with. The reason why coping is important is that it provides a pseudo certainty for the other sub-units by controlling what are otherwise contingencies for other activities (Hickson et al, 1971, p220).

Coping with uncertainty or control of resources cannot in its own right provide power. The uncertainty dealt with must in some way be important to the organisation and the department coping with it must have some links to the departments dependent on that coping. Hickson et al (1971) referred to this as the centrality of the sub-unit, a notion anticipated by Woodward (1965) in her study of production technology and its effect on structure. Sub-unit centrality, in turn, is a product of both the pervasiveness of a department's links with other sub-units and of the immediacy of its activities to the workflow of those other units. Hickson et al (1971) also saw non substitutability of departmental activities as critical to maintaining power. To the extent that a unit's activity or coping can be replaced by another then its power is diminished. The maintenance engineers in Crozier's (1964) study of the French tobacco plant enjoyed substantial power well beyond their organisational position. They coped with

the main uncertainty facing the organisation, and were also the sole source of this service.

The structural explanation of horizontal power differences has enjoyed considerable support in the literature. It was first validated empirically by Hinings et al (1974), and it has since provided the conceptual springboard for much subsequent research (Pfeffer and Salancik 1974; Pfeffer and Moore 1980; Enz 1986; Latchman 1989). Notwithstanding this, the model is not without a number of limitations. To begin with Latchman's (1989) work, while confirming the association of critical contingencies and horizontal power difference, disputed the direction of causality. Furthermore, the model is essentially an equilibrium one, and tells us little about the processes by which horizontal power differences are created and changed. The research of Enz (1986), for example, suggests that a less structuralist and more cultural mode of analysis may be necessary to understand more fully the dynamics of the process. Finally, the model posits a direct link between strategic contingencies and horizontal power difference, without consideration for any mediating variables that might affect the strength of the association. It is this final limitation that the exploratory study reported in this paper aims to address.

THE PRESENT STUDY

The study reported here set out to examine the link between strategic contingencies and horizontal power differences in a number of different settings. Hickson et al (1971), the originators of the model positing this linkage, operated within a strongly positivist and structuralist orientation, validating the relationship between strategic contingencies and horizontal power differences through extensive, cross-sectional, empirical analysis. However, such analysis by design paid little attention to context, even less to process, and in fairness to Hickson et al (1971, p226) the original model was acknowledged to have 'err[ed] on the side of simplicity' in order to facilitate testability. The intention in this present study was to explore the possibility that the nature of the link might be mediated by contextual factors, and that explanations for such mediation might require historical and cultural, as well as structural, modes of analysis (Pettigrew 1985, 1990). In all, three cases were chosen for comparative study. Case selection was determined after some preliminary empirical probing, reflecting the exploratory nature of the project (pseudonyms are used to protect company confidentiality). Companies with different types of owner-management structure were selected.

The first company, which we will call 'Ownco' (a direct marketing operation) was owned and managed by the directors. It emerged from a 'garage project' of three friends started in the late 1980s. The main promoter of the operation was a focused and well organised leader who tightly controlled the growth and development of the business. The company saw expansion and market share as the key to long term success in their industry. The company was hugely successful, growing rapidly and becoming the number 1 operator in Ireland within a few years of set-up. Ownership and management of the business remained with the original promoters. Initial staff levels were low, but as the company grew so did the staff numbers. Activities were not organised around functional areas but grew in response to tasks that needed completion. The company did not accordingly develop along a departmentalised structure. A redesign of the organisation took place in the mid 1990s and a functional departmentalised structure was adopted, consisting of 8 operational and administration departments.

The second company, 'Profco', (a retail distribution company) was a professionally managed company where the owners were non-executive directors. It was established in the late 1980s by a number of corporate investors. The new firm was involved in activities that were substantially different from those previously undertaken by the investing companies and accordingly a professional management team was recruited to run the operation. The main issue facing the organisation was the turbulent market it faced, being set up in direct competition with what previously had been a state run monopoly. This dominant market incumbent used every competitive edge available to it to limit and restrict the growth of Profco. The company was set up on a national basis from the beginning of operations. This required a planned and well staffed functional structure. While minor modifications to the structure took place as the company developed, the core departmental structure remained intact. There was an administration department, two administration based sales support departments and a sales and marketing department.

The third company, 'Transco', (operating in the computer sector) was somewhat older and larger. It had developed initially as an owner-run business but had later made the transition to a professionally managed company. It was formed in the late 1970s and experienced rapid and successful growth. The management structure of the business developed in line with the growth the company experienced. The

business was taken over in the early 1990s by a larger corporation, facilitating the complete transition to a professional management structure. The company had undergone some changes in structure throughout the eighties and early nineties as it adjusted to its continued growth. Its key success factor was maintaining revenue growth and maximising the profit potential of that growth. Being older than the other two case study companies, Transco had experienced greater change in its departmental structure. It started out, like Ownco, with a small task orientated structure, growing into a departmentalised structure and continually increasing in structural complexity. It consisted of a number of administration departments with staff relationships to the CEO and five product related departments concerned with product development, customer services, product sales, support sales and international operations. The study concentrated on the product departments as it was these departments that dealt with and managed the critical issues facing the organisation.

Data was collected primarily through personal interviews with the CEO and senior managers in each of the companies (4-5 in-depth interviews per case). This was supplemented with archival material, where available. The interviews sought data not only on horizontal power differences, but also on the history and context (internal and external) of each of the companies. The critical contingencies, which were firm-specific, were assessed from the interview with the CEO and from a review of the organisation's strategy. The data collection, in the first instance, concentrated on exploring:

- (i) whether critical contingencies could be identified in each case and, if so, how clearly they were perceived and understood across the organisation;
- (ii) whether the horizontal power differences associated with these contingencies (as posited in the strategic contingencies model) could be clearly identified.

Table 1: Comparison of Clarity on Strategic Contingencies and Existence of Horizontal Power Differences in each case.

Company	Clarity On Strategic Contingencies	Existence Of Horizontal Power Differences
Owncos	Clear	None
Profco	Clear	Strong
Transco	Clear	Not Clear

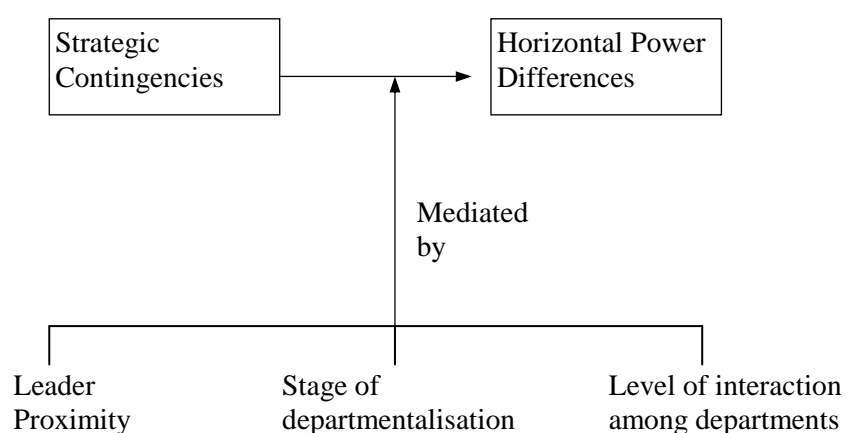
As summarised in table 1, the data confirmed the presence of strategic or critical contingencies in all three cases. Moreover, these contingencies were clearly and consistently perceived and understood across the three organisations. In Owncos the strategic contingency was perceived to be the enhancement of the company's reputation with consumers, for Profco it was the expansion of sales channels, and for Transco it was revenue growth. However, the situation with regard to the presence of horizontal power differences was less consistent, indicating that the link between critical contingencies and horizontal power differences was not as direct as the traditional model seems to indicate. The effect was different in each of the three cases, and only one of them, Profco, appeared to fit the traditional model with any degree of precision. Strong perceptions of the presence of horizontal power differences were found to exist, and the perceptions of the relative power of the different sub-units was very consistent across the organisation. The situation in the other two cases did not fit the model directly. In Owncos there was little, if any, perception of horizontal power differences, in spite of the presence of clear and consistent perceptions of critical contingencies. In the case of Transco the perception of horizontal power difference was strong and widespread as predicted by the model, but, while Transco executives were very clear about these power differences they were very unclear about which units enjoyed the most power, and their ranking of the relative power of the different sub-units was very inconsistent. These findings strongly indicated the presence of mediating factors that tended to vary with history and context. The interviews also concentrated on trying to identify any such mediating factors and getting some insight into their operation.

THREE MEDIATING FACTORS

Three mediating factors (see figure 2) emerged from the cases which provide some explanation for the variation in the nature of the horizontal power differences found in this exploratory study. These were:

- a) The process of leadership, (leader proximity) and the degree to which the exercise of hierarchical power may amplify, attenuate or even totally override horizontal power differences;
- b) The stage of departmentalisation, and the degree to which the historical evolution of the departmentalisation process affects the emergence of clear departmental orientations associated with ownership of issues;
- c) The level of interaction among departments, and the degree to which departmental activities were interlinked and their contributions were widely visible.

Figure 2: Factors Mediating the Relationship Between Strategic Contingencies and Horizontal Power Differences



LEADER PROXIMITY

Leadership appears to be an important factor in mediating the relationship between strategic contingencies and horizontal power differences. The data indicate that the level of direct involvement by the organisation's chief executive in the activities of departments tends to moderate the strength of the horizontal power difference effect. This can be illustrated through comparing the cases of Ownco and Profco.

In the case of Ownco, as we saw earlier, the horizontal power difference effect was almost entirely absent, in spite of the presence of clear, widely perceived critical contingencies. The most plausible explanation coming from the data concerned the degree of direct influence exercised by the Ownco chief executive in departmental activities, which was notably higher than for either of the other cases. This high level of leader proximity was manifested in the leader being closely involved in all the decisions that were made, having a high level of understanding about the task activities of the staff and having a high degree of communication with direct subordinates on a formal and informal basis. The overall pattern of power and influence that has emerged in Ownco is one in which vertical relationships are emphasised, and horizontal ones under-developed. The pattern is like a wheel, with the leader as the axle, and the departments as the spokes (Handy 1976). The close proximity of the leader in this case was seen to inhibit the emergence of any strong pattern of interdependency among departments. The leader continued to retain the major share of the responsibility for coping with critical contingencies, with functional responsibility (like marketing, operations, finance etc.) only partially devolved to the departments.

In contrast to Ownco, the predicted link between strategic contingencies and horizontal power differences was more clearly in evidence in the Profco case. In terms of age and size the two organisations were similar. In terms of leader proximity, however, they were very different. This difference can be traced back to early history. Ownco started as a small owner-managed operation, and the present departmental structure, such as it is, evolved from there. Profco, in contrast, was founded with a professional manager as chief executive, and a planned structure built upon functional specialities. The proximity of leadership has, from the beginning, been less pervasive here than in Ownco. At Profco, the leader has been extensively involved in all of the activities of the organisation, but the nature of the involvement has been more indirect than in the Ownco case. The leader has tended

to operate more through systems and reporting structures than his counterpart at Ownco, and the overall pattern of power is less wheel-like in form. Lower proximity has allowed a degree of autonomy to develop within the functional areas based on established criteria. The chief executive has tended to set these criteria and then manage by exception. This willingness to devolve more complete role responsibility to the units has permitted functional preferences and interdependencies to emerge. This in turn has allowed a much clearer and stronger horizontal power difference effect to emerge in Profco. For example, the sales and marketing department was widely seen to exercise great influence over the others in the company. The department was perceived as central to the achievement of the objectives of the company, and to be coping with the most strategic contingency facing the organisation, which was the expansion of sales channels in an overall context that was becoming ever more competitive.

STAGE OF DEPARTMENTALISATION

Horizontal power differences, according to the original model, are rooted in the division of labour, and are governed by 'variables that are elements of each subunit's task, its functioning and its links with the activities of other subunits' (Hickson et al, 1971, p217). The data from our cases suggest that the manner in which departments are formed influences the strength of the horizontal power difference. This variable is related to leader proximity in the cases studied, but is also analytically distinguishable from it, and as such can be considered as a mediating factor in its own right.

When we compare the cases of Ownco and Profco we not only see differences in the way that the leaders operate (in terms of proximity), but also in the degree to which clear and distinguishable subunit interests and group consciousness have developed. Leadership proximity (or override) mediates the expression of such interests in its attenuation of the horizontal power difference effect, but the variable now being considered, the stage of departmentalisation, mediates their formation in the first instance.

For example, Ownco developed a task based approach assigning roles and responsibilities to individuals. Jobs were created as a response to the work that needed to be performed and staff were task orientated rather than department orientated. Their activities often spanned more than one functional area.

Departmental orientations were consequently less developed, thus limiting the potential for cohesion in forming departmental perspectives. Accordingly, organisational members perceived issues in the context of task effects rather than unit interests.

In contrast, the Profco case revealed evidence of a marked horizontal power difference effect from early in its life. While formed at the around the same time as Ownco, Profco employed a professional management team from inception and developed a departmental structure from the beginning of operations. Task activities developed within this departmental structure. Tasks were designed by the functional specialists in each department, thus heightening the differentiation in orientations across departments. There was a much more developed sense of sub-unit ownership for particular issues, and clearer demarcations over the control of critical resources and strategic contingencies, which in the original model are among the major prerequisites for the generation of a strong horizontal power difference effect.

There was evidence in the Ownco case of recent moves towards a level of departmentalisation closer to the Profco model. However, this has still not yet led to the emergence of the kind of horizontal power difference effect that was evident in the Profco case from very early in its history. Clearly from our analysis of the data so far the degree of leadership proximity remains an explanatory factor. However, it may also be that the emergence of the kind of intra-unit group consciousness and inter-unit divergence of interests and preferences may take time to develop, even after the degree of departmentalisation from which they are most likely to emerge has already been adopted and structurally implemented. Such issues of time, change, and path-dependency were not really considered in the original model, and might now form an interesting focus for further research.

LEVEL OF INTERACTION AMONG DEPARTMENTS

Even in cases where the degree of departmentalisation is similar, and the leader proximity effect is relatively weak, the data show differences in the nature of the horizontal power difference effect. This was most evident when the cases of Profco and Transco were compared and suggests that at least one further analytically distinct mediating factor is at work, the overall level of interaction among departments.

The strategic contingencies model recognises the importance of linkages among subunits in the explanation of horizontal power differences. However, the original model tends to take the overall presence of such linkages as a given, and concentrates on explaining the variation in subunit power within organisations in terms of variation in individual subunit linkages (as reflected in the notion of relative centrality). It does not deal with the relationship of the overall level of these linkages and variations in the strength of the horizontal power difference effect across organisations.

The data indicate that when this relationship is examined, some interesting new issues arise. In both the Profco and Transco cases there were clear and widely shared perceptions about the strategic contingencies and the presence of subunit power differences. However, perceptions within Transco about the relative levels of subunit power were very inconsistent, in distinct contrast to the Profco case. How can executives in different parts of the Transco organisation be clear on the nature of the strategic contingencies and on the existence of horizontal power difference, but be inconsistent in their perceptions of relative power?

In Transco the various departments are relatively independent, or loosely coupled (Weick 1976, Spender and Grinyer 1996), and the overall pattern of interdepartmental linkages and interactions are weaker than in the Profco case. Work does flow between the departments, but with a much lower level of interunit process dependence than was the case at Profco. For example, at Transco the implementation department completes the site work and establishes a live site which is subsequently passed over to the customer services department for maintenance. Sales sell current systems regardless of the pending enhancements coming from the development department. The range and scope of departmental activities are not visible across departmental boundaries. The relatively weak pattern of interaction among subunits means that activities undertaken in any department are not very well understood by the others. There is little opportunity for shared experiences and perceptions. Without a certain level of interaction, subunits are unsure of the range and extent of the activities of other departments, and are therefore inconsistent in their judgement of relative power.

In contrast, the sales and marketing department at Profco is central to the work flow of the organisation as a whole and its contribution is highly visible throughout the

organisation. All departments wait for the input from the sales force to maintain their operations. Orders stem from them, returns are collected by them, queries can only be sorted by reference to them. The relative power of the sales and marketing department is visible to all within Profco. This facilitates the linking of critical contingencies to horizontal power differences. The sales and marketing department's domain and range of activities include dealing with the important competitive issues on which the survival of Profco depends.

On the basis of the strategic contingencies model it would not have been surprising to find a weaker power difference effect in Transco than in Profco based on the lower level of interdepartmental interaction, even though the model does not explicitly address the issue of inter-organisational differences, as already noted. However, little in the model as it stands would have prepared us for the inconsistencies in the perceptions of power difference found within Transco. This would seem to indicate that horizontal power difference emanates not only from 'objective' structural factors but also from the shared cognitive and cultural filters through which such sources of power are recognised and interpreted.

CONCLUSIONS

In this study we set out to explore the phenomenon of horizontal power differences, which has taken on a new significance in the context of the overall changes taking place in organisational life at the present time.

Using a case-based approach our more specific aim was to examine the link between strategic contingencies and horizontal power difference posited in the classic Hickson et al (1971) model across a variety of contexts to see if and how this relationship is mediated by other factors. Our data revealed that three mediating variables - leader proximity, stage of departmentalisation and level of interdepartmental interaction - appeared to moderate the posited relationship, and allowed us to examine why. We recognise that our findings are based on just three cases, and that our explanations are both tentative and still somewhat speculative. However, it is hoped that the results of this exploratory probe have at least demonstrated that there is still much of interest in horizontal power differences to be studied, and have also indicated where future research effort can most fruitfully concentrate.

To begin with, the data indicated that while the classic strategic contingencies model remains valid, it is in need of further development. We have identified three mediating variables here based on a relatively small exploratory study, so it seems likely that further research will reveal others. Furthermore, while the classic model emphasises only structural sources of horizontal power, these are not the only ones. We would expect the overall pattern of horizontal power difference to be affected by variations in subunit leadership, though this factor was not examined here. However, previous research by one of the authors on the resource allocation process (which is one of the arenas where horizontal power differences typically express themselves) indicated not only that subunit leadership was likely to be an important variable in its own right but also that its influence might be expected to vary with history and context (Leavy 1993).

Further research might therefore examine the relationship between structural and non-structural variables in the generation of horizontal power differences. Research designed to investigate this interaction will necessitate a much closer examination of the dynamics of the process of horizontal power difference creation than any that has been carried out so far. However, the data from this present study were sufficient to suggest that these dynamics are likely to be historically and contextually sensitive, and that any systematic study of them is likely to advance our understanding of horizontal power well beyond that offered by the strategic contingencies model in its classic form.

Finally, the data also indicated the importance of social-psychological and cultural influences in explaining the phenomenon of horizontal power difference. This was particularly apparent in the Transco case, where perceptions on the relative power of the sub-units were inconsistent. The strategic contingencies model as it stands remains rooted in the wider resource-dependency/transaction cost economics perspective on intra-organisational activities. As Granovetter (1985) and others have pointed out, this represents an undersocialised view of the relationships among people and subunits in organisational contexts. Further research is therefore needed to examine what effect shared perceptions, norms, values and beliefs at organisational level have on the nature of the horizontal power difference pattern.

Deeper insight into all of these areas could have major implications for practice. As Hickson et al (1971) recognised in their development of the classic model, no facile

inferences should be drawn about the functionality of a horizontal power distribution just because it fits closely with their strategic contingencies theory. Horizontal power differences can still be used and abused in advancing sectional interests at the expense of the organisation as a whole. However, with further insight of the type indicated above management concerned with empowerment and political balance at subunit level should understand more fully how to shape the horizontal power pattern in ways that are functional for the organisation overall, not only through structural interventions but also through processes which are more cultural in nature.

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