chapter three - the concomitants of system orientation in secondary school counsellors

Counsellors resolve their working dilemmas in terms of an orientation which they bring to the system in which they work. This ranges from extremes of acceptance and close co-operation, to extremes of challenge and independence. Evidence is given to indicate that the position which an individual adopts on such a continuum is related to factors in his personality, to his experience of inter-role conflict between teaching and counselling, to his experience of intra-role conflict with colleagues, to the designation of his role, to the amount of time available for its fulfilment, and to the length of the counselling training he has received. The findings tend to indicate that counselling is beset by internal philosophical tensions, and that the introduction of counselling is not necessarily part of a historically inevitable movement towards more openness in schools.

Counsellors in schools may - and often do - claim that they seek to solve their problems and resolve their dilemmas on the basis of pragmatic considerations, unrelated to the apparently more remote considerations of ideology and philosophy. But a previous article (Law, 1977b14) has established that an observable and coherent consideration in the minds of practising and trainee school counsellors does influence the way in which they approach their problems. This consideration was called 'system orientation', a high degree of system orientation being represented in the counsellor by an inclination to legitimise the demands of the school upon himself and his client, and to work in close partnership with the conceptual and formal organisational structure of the school. An outcome of this initial phase of the study was the development of a 30-item System Orientation Inventory (SOI).

What follows is a report of an attempt to examine the hypothesised concomitants of system orientation by comparing the results gained from the administration of the SOI with other measures, and with observations concerning the work of secondary school counsellors. The pilot sample of 50 and the main study sample of 398 used in the study have been described briefly in Law (1977b) and in detail in Law (1977a).

the personality of the counsellor

As a first step, it was anticipated that counsellors who showed a high degree of system orientation in their professional work were more likely, in their internal personal organisation, to show a general tendency to respond to the cues generated by other people rather than to internally-generated cues. To test this hypothesis, use was made of the Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) (Shostrom, 1968), which incorporates an 'inner-support' scale of 127 forced choice items.

Knapp (1971) has set out the main research findings concerning the reliability and validity of the POI. Shostrom claims to derive his use of the term 'inner-directedness' from Riesman (1961), though it owes as much to Rogers (1965) and Maslow (1970). In Shostrom's use the term refers to freedom from dependency on present and immediate environmental cues and expectations. The

expectation is, therefore, that there will be a negative correlation between the SOI and the inner-support scale of the POI. The whole POI was accordingly administered to a sub-sample of 43 respondents taken from the study's main sample. All were experienced teachers undergoing in-service training at the Universities of Exeter, Keele, London or Reading, at Middlesex Polytechnic, or at Chiswick Polytechnic. A correlation of -0.46 (significant at the <.005 level) was found between the two instruments, confirming the expectation.

It seemed therefore that those counsellors in the sub-sample who were disposed to resolve their counselling dilemmas in the direction of legitimising the school's expectations tended also to be those whose personal attitudes were, in general, most responsive to the cues, expectations and needs of others. In Riesman's terms, they had a more 'radar-like' and a less 'gyroscopic' personal orientation

the counsellors' experience of inter-role conflict concerning teaching and counselling*

A recent article (Law, 1978**) has attempted to summarise the thinking which has underpinned one of the major pre-occupations for those who have concerned themselves with the introduction of counselling to secondary schools: should the counsellor also teach? Exploration of that issue led to the development of an inventory to measure the degree of identification with, or rejection of, the role of the teacher on the part of the school counsellor. Two sets of items were included: those which invited the respondent to identify with various aspects of the teacher's role (such as classroom work or extra-curricular work), and those which invited the respondent to identify with alternative roles (such as that of educational psychologist or child-psychotherapist). The development of the resulting Teacher-Identification Inventory (TII) is described briefly in Law (1978) and in more detail in Law (1977a).

The second hypothesis is that high degrees of system orientation are accompanied in the same counsellors by high degrees of identification with the role of the teacher. The expectation is, therefore, that there will be a positive correlation between the SOI and the TII. The two inventories were, in fact, correlated twice: once using the pilot sample of 50, and once using the main sample of 398. The resulting correlations were +0.78 and +0.61 respectively. Both were significant at the <.005 level.

To examine the relationship further, a distribution of scores for the SOI was used to divide the main sample into four sub-sets, the dividing lines occurring at the mean and approximately one standard deviation above and below it. The four sub-sets were designated 'low system-oriented', 'low-average system oriented', 'high-average system-oriented' and 'high system-oriented' respectively. Table 1 identifies the four sub-sets, and sets out the mean scores on the Teacher

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* There needs to be a bit of transposition to Connexions here. In the 1970s most counsellors also occupied the role of teacher for part of their working week; and some took the view that the two roles could not be reconciled - 'if I do this, I won't find it easy to that'. That kind of role diversification has not yet occurred in Connexions. So such internal role conflict won't be observed in terms that parallel 'teacher-counsellor' roles used here. But that does not mean that personal advisers are not getting screwed up about reconciling what they have to do with what they want to do. And, if that is so, internal role conflict lives!

** chapter two

Identification Inventory for each of them. The expectation set up by our hypothesis is that higher scores on the SOI will be associated with higher degrees of teacher-identification. As with the earlier method of calculating the relationship, the results confirm the expectation that counsellors who tend to legitimise the demands of the school as a system tend to be the same counsellors who identify themselves most closely as teachers. Indeed, the calculations in table 1 indicate a linear relationship between the two parameters.

Table 1- chapter three: Mean Teacher Identification inventory scores obtained by four sub-sets of the main sample classified by degree of system orientation (N=398)

	N	Mean TII score	Range of scores	SD
1. High system orientation (SOI scores of 135 or greater)	73	88.0*	49-118	12.8
2. High-average system orientation (SO1 scores of 119-134)	125	76.3*	33-107	14.9
3. Low-average system orientation (SOI scores of 101-118)	148	66.4*	29-109	16.8
4. Low system orientation (SOI scores of 100 or less)	52	52.3*	24-93	15.7
Whole sample	398	71.6	24-118	18.7

* Differences between means are significant at the <.005 level.

the counsellor's experience of transactional intra-role conflict with teaching colleagues*

The foregoing discussion was a consideration of internal inter-role conflict: how far do role occupants feel that the two roles are irreconcilable? What follows is a discussion of transactional intra-role conflict: how far do role occupants feel that the role of the counsellor is accepted by their colleagues? Examination of this issue requires a measure of the conflict which the respondents see between the way in which they themselves conceive of their counselling role and the expectations which their teaching colleagues have of it. To achieve such a measure, the thirty statements in the SOI (see Law, 1977b) were re-written to refer to the wishes of colleagues, substituting 'They want' for 'I want…' at the beginning of each statement. In order to get an impression of the strength of colleagues' expectations, the respondents in the study were asked to estimate on a seven-point scale what the feeling of the majority of their colleagues was on each issue, ranging from 'absolutely for' (+3) to 'absolutely against' (-3). Thus maximum transactional intra-role conflict situation was judged to exist where,

* There is another kind of role conflict here. Low system-oriented counsellors can see themselves, not just in conflict with themselves, but in conflict with the dominant role (teachers) in the dominant institution (school). There could - then - be, not just internal agonising, but interpersonal disagreements, about what they should do. Again, because the diversification of roles is not as explicit in Connexions as it was in school, any potential for this transactional role-conflict among personal advisers will need more subtle mapping.

say, the respondent registered 'absolutely want' (+3) for himself and 'absolutely do not want' (-3) for his teaching colleagues. A global measure of transactional conflict was calculated for each respondent by aggregating the differences. The perceived transactional conflict score is, therefore, an aggregated difference between a measure of role conception and a measure of role expectation. The resulting inventory is called the Transactional Conflict Inventory (TCI).

The expectation is that highly system-orientated counsellors will be aware of less conflict with their colleagues. This will be confirmed where the correlation between the two inventories is negative and significant. The correlation from the main sample was indeed -0.58, though from the pilot study it was +0.24. The latter finding, however, should be interpreted in the light of the fact that the trainees in the pilot study completed the questionnaire during the second term of a full-time course. Their perceptions of the expectations of their colleagues back in the school-setting are likely to have been less immediate than those of the main sample, most of whom were at the 'coal face'. There were also some misunderstandings of the wording of the question stem - misunderstandings which were cleared up for the main sample study (see Law, 1977a). The main sample finding accordingly forms much the more substantial basis for assessing the relationship between system orientation and the perception of transactional intra-role conflict, and its effect was to support the hypothesis.

The differences between means for sub-groups in the main sample are set out in table 2. The progression in the means obtained from the TCI is in the predicted direction, although the sharp increase in mean scores between sub-sets 3 and 4 indicates a curvilinear relationship between the two parameters. It seems that the perception of transactional conflict may act as a 'threshold' variable, becoming dramatically more intense at very low levels of system orientation.

use of the designation 'counsellor'*

The designation 'counsellor' is the first of three concomitants identifying aspects of professional specialisation in counselling. The general argument is that the more specialised the counsellor, the less likely he is to be highly system orientated in the resolution of his counselling dilemmas. Three criteria of specialisation have been selected: the use of the designation 'counsellor', the amount of time allotted to the performance of the counselling role, and the amount of training informing it.

Twelve types of counselling-related role designations were found in the main sample, many respondents occupying more than one of them. It was therefore decided to select six of the larger groups for separate consideration. The six roles selected are set out in table 3. Each of the sub-groups in this table is made up of respondents who perform one of the six roles, but none of the other

* The findings of this study indicated various ways in which role designations are important. And, beyond that, there is some indication here that the creation of new and different designations may be significant in establishing new kinds of work. These findings may help us to see why the role term 'personal adviser' – unqualified by any reference to careers work or other specialism - is a contemporary issue.

Table 2 – chapter three: Mean scores obtained on the Transactional Conflict inventory by four sub-sets classified by degree of system orientation (N = 398)

	N	Mean TII score	Range of scores	SD
1. High system orientation (SOI scores of 135 or greater)	73	32.6*	11-65	10.0
2. High-average system orientation (SOI scores of 119-134)	125	38.8*	9-96	14.9
3. Low-average system orientation (SOI scores of 101-118)	148	47.8*	20-84	14.2
4. Low system orientation (SOI scores of 100 or less)	52	64.7*	27-113	21.6
Wholesample	398	44.4	9-113	21.6

* Differences between means are significant at the <.005 level.

five. The groups are, therefore, entirely discrete. There were 303 respondents in this part of the study, and their overall SOI mean was 117.9 (i.e. very close to the mean for the whole sample, 118.3). The results show that system orientation is significantly more closely associated with the roles of careers teacher, tutor, deputy-head and pastoral-care head than with the designated role of 'school counsellor'.

Table 3 - chapter three: Mean SOI scores obtained by six discrete groups having only one of six designations (N = 303)

Designation	N	Mean TII score	Range of scores	SD
Counsellor	91	110.0	77-139	14.4
No official designation	27	115.2	83-147	17.6
Careers teacher	28	117.7†	60-145	17.3
House-, year- or form-teacher	65	120.7	76-162	18.1
Deputy head	16	120.9	90-141	15.5
House-, year- or section-head	76	125.3*	94-157	13.9
Whole sub-sample	303	117.9	60-162	16.7

Significance of differences between means and mean for counsellors
† significant at the <.01 level;
* significant at the <.005 level.

It is worth noting, too, that the 27 respondents who had no official designation for their counselling work in schools came so close to the counsellors in their lack of system orientation. They represent an interesting sub-group of respondents who, according to the 'top-sheet' information on their questionnaires, had received little official sanction for their interest in counselling before they sought training, and in some cases even after they had completed it. They were thus likely to be in a position of 'role achievement' rather than 'role assignment' - the latter representing a component, it will be remembered, of system orientation. Since they had so far received little legitimisation from the systems in which they work, it is not surprising to find, as a cause or effect of this, that they did not reciprocate legitimisation of these systems.

The position of the counsellor in relation to the other three major roles represented in this study (careers teacher, tutor and pastoral-care head) is also of some interest. It offers some food for comment on whether the role of the counsellor is more readily reconcilable with that of careers teacher or that of pastoral-care head. The evidence suggests that the custodial, disciplinary and hidden-curricular roles of the pastoral-care heads do not permit them to adopt such an 'open' orientation to their work as the careers teacher's role does. An alternative explanation would be that people who select themselves for the work of pastoral-care head do so because they are more motivated towards the 'system' end of the orientation spectrum. Whether it is the role that makes the person, or the person who chooses the role, is a moot point.

the amount of time available to do counselling work*

Earlier in this article it was noted that a concomitant of high system orientation in the counsellor was an accompanying orientation towards identification as a teacher, towards the acceptance of the combined role, and away from an identification with roles outside teaching. That was a discussion of concomitant attitudes. We now examine the concomitants for system orientation of the fact of role combination with teaching. The hypothesis is that the less of such specialist time the respondent has (i.e. the more 'teaching' time he has), the more system-orientated he is likely to be. But as we have just seen, the designation 'counsellor' is itself associated with low system orientation. Table 4, therefore, sets out the mean SOI scores for groups having the designation, 'counsellor' and those not having the designation 'counsellor', each group being sub-divided in terms of the time they have available for counselling, interviewing and related work. For both those designated 'counsellors' and 'non-counsellors', it seems that the availability of more time to do the work is accompanied by a significant shift away from system orientation. This hypothesis can therefore be retained.

* At a level, the amount of time assigned to the counsellor can be understood as a marker for the importance attached to the work: more time signifies more importance. The statistics in this section suggest that time allocation is also a more subtle marker: it signifies the extent to which an institution is prepared to accept an alternative voice. The ways in which Connexions institutions mark their valuing of such non-conformity would have to be mapped in more searching ways.

Table 4 - chapter three: Mean S0I scores obtained by two groups of designated 'counsellors' and two groups of non-designated counsellors, classified according to the proportion of time available for counselling, interviewing and related work (N = 398)

Time available	(a) Designated counsellor group			(b) Non-designated counsellor group		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
1. No timetabled time or less than half	28	116.5	12.8	247	121.7	16.0
2. Half or more of time or full-time	91	111.0	14.2	32	114.5	19.6

The differences between the means for groups 1 (a) and 2 (a), and for groups 1 (b) and 2 (b), are both significant at the <.05 level.

Again, however, no inferences concerning what are causes and what are effects are possible from this study. It may be that the allocation of time permits or encourages the development of a more open orientation. Or it may be that role occupants who have a more 'open' orientation seek out work where there is a more generous time provision*. Indeed, it may be that each explanation accounts for part of the variation. Both are reconcilable with the evidence we already have, that low system- orientation is accompanied by greater internal inter-role conflict with the teaching role.

amount of training received in counselling work

Respondents in the main sample study had received a very wide range of types of training in counselling and related work. Some had had, or were in the course of, a one-year full-time training; some had attended part-time and full-time shorter courses; a very few had had no training at all. It was hypothesised that role occupants who had less training would be more system-orientated.

Table 5 sets out the association between SOI scores and the amount of training both for those designated counsellors and for those not so designated. The designated group, with and without lengthy training, seems to be located fairly firmly at the 'low' end of the system-orientation spectrum. For those not designated 'counsellor', however, the amount of training received is negatively associated with system orientation. The hypothesis concerning the relationship between specialism through training and counselling orientation is, therefore, partially confirmed. Non-designated counsellors with less training are more system-orientated.

* These caveats would also apply to the role of personal advisers in Connexions: do organisations choose orientations or do orientations choose organisations? It is a key question, to which much of the rest of this study is devoted.

This is not to say that it is the training which causes the change in orientation. It may do so*. But, once again, there is an alternative explanation: that role occupants who have a low system orientation towards their roles are more likely to seek out lengthy training than those who do not.

Table 5 - chapter three: Mean SOI scores obtained by three groups of designated 'counsellors' and three groups of non-designated counsellors, classified by the total amount of training they have received (N = 394)

Amount of training (or equivalent)	(a) Designated counsellor group			(b) Non-designated counsellor group		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
A year or more full-time	90	111.8	14.0	38	115.0*	16.5
More than a week, less than a year full-time	24	114.1	12.7	192	120.8*	16.9
A week or less full-time, or none	4	112.6	22.1	46	125.8*	13.8

*Differences between means are significant at the <.05 level.

summary of findings

The findings reported here and in Law (1977b) are derived from a pilot sample of 50 and a main sample of 398, although some of the findings are based on sub-sets of the main-sample. The findings can be arranged into a coherent statement of high and low system orientation (see Law, 1977b) and of the concomitants of degrees of system orientation in the personality, experience of conflict, and degree of specialisation of practising counsellors. This is set out in summary in figure 1.

discussion

(a) Meanings in relation to the philosophy of counselling and guidance**.
Among the attempts to trace the philosophical roots of counselling and guidance in schools, two - Beck (1963) and Allport (1962) - are notable for their attempt to formulate systematic accounts. The findings of this study can be interpreted within a developmental and historical framework not unlike that described by Beck. He distinguished five phases for the development of counselling, ranging from the 'amorphous', through the 'prescriptive' and the

* There is evidence in chapter four to suggest that, although a counsellor may initially embrace and implement a low-system orientation, the system can – over time – neutralise that state of mind.

** The analysis of orientations in Figure 1 is applicable to Connexions. Indeed much of the discussion of the actual and potential value of Connexions move into issues identified by the contrast between the 'high' and 'low' columns of the figure. Policy, of course, now has more say about the terms in which the issues are discussed. It is a vocabulary of delivery and accountability rather than – as in this study – of progress in technique and ebb-and-flow in values. There has been no comprehensive account of how policy changed careers work after the General Election of 1979. This study weakly anticipated the thwarting and back-swing effects to come. And now: in response to issues that this study does identify, the Connexions chapter of that account will be interesting.

Figure 1 – chapter three: The content and concomitants of high and low system orientation

	Issue	High system orientation	Low system orientation
Content in terms of organisational relationships	School value system	Support	Independence
	Problem identification	Educational-vocational	Personal
	School social system	Maintenance	Reform
	Role influences	Role assignment accepted by counsellor	Role achievement sought by counsellor
	Decision-making responsibilities	Sought by counsellor	Not sought by counsellor
	Organisation of school	Formally integrated counsellor	Counsellor is informally supplementary
Content in terms of client	Individual in relation to group	Group needs emphasised	Individual needs emphasised
	Client identification	Normal clients	Needful clients
	Problem definition	System-defined	Client-defined
	Orientation to client	Change in client	Choice by client
	Contract with client	Power with counsellor	Power with client
Personality of counsellor	Personal orientation of inner-directedness	Less likely	More likely
Perceptions of conflict	Internal inter-role conflict with teacher identification	Lower conflict	Higher conflict
	Transactional intra-role conflict with teachers concerning counselling	Lower conflict	Higher conflict
Specialisation	In terms of designation 'counsellor'	Less likely	More likely
	In terms of amount of time available to do counselling work	Less likely	More likely
	In terms of amount of training to inform counselling work	Less likely	More likely

'client-centred', to the 'phenomenological' and ultimately (or so Beck hopes) a 'daseinanalyse' phase. The present study may be interpreted in a developmental framework which is similar, although not as precisely analysed nor as extended.

In summary, the differences between the characterisations of counselling in the last two columns of figure 1 may be the difference between counselling in its 'traditional' and in its 'emergent' sense.

The traditional use of the term 'counselling' has some parallels with Beck's characterisation of the `amorphous' and 'prescriptive' phases. It is informed by a 'common-sense' understanding of the nature of the problems, concerning which there is some agreement among members of the group. It leads to a tendency for the system to define the work of the counsellor and the way it should be done, and to a situation in which little conflict is perceived between what the counsellor is doing and what is being done in other parts of the organisation. Emergent counselling, on the other hand, is closer to Beck's characterisation of the 'client-centred' and 'phenomenological' phases - emphasising the desirability of identifying and defining problems independently of the system, and accepting the consequences for achieving one's own role definition and for conflict with the organisation.

Beck also includes in his description of the development of counselling phases a consideration of the effects of improved techniques. Correspondingly there is a further distinction between traditional and emergent counselling in terms of the types of organisational and face-to-face techniques which are preferred (see Law, 1977b). Evidence has also been given here to indicate that part of the distinction between traditional and emergent counselling is based upon the introduction of more specialisation on the part of the counsellors - specialisation being defined in terms of the improved instrumentality of more time and more training. So it is not only that the emergent counsellor sees himself as defining what he does in ideologically different terms, it is also that he sees himself doing his work in a different instrumental way. The historical developmental model for understanding the findings, therefore, suggests that emergent counselling is an improved means of achieving humanising ends for schools as organisations - a development that Beck would applaud.

This is an appealing meaning to attach to the findings, but it is by no means the only possible one. Allport's philosophical analysis of counselling ideologies is, in its essentials, an alternative to Beck's in that it focusses not so much upon a linear model of historical development as upon lateral conflicts between opposing elements in the ideologies of guidance. Allport's (1962) application of his analysis to guidance represents a particular case of his earlier and more general attempt to identify some of the assumptions in general psychological theory (Allport, 1955). He traces such assumptions back to what he identifies as the 'Lockean' and 'Liebnitzian' philosophical traditions. He summarises the distinction between these traditions succinctly: 'for Locke the organism was reactive when stimulated, for Liebnitz it was self-propelled' (ibid, p.8).

The Lockean portrait of man as behaviourally dependent upon his environment, manipulable by means of controlled exposure to experience of pain and pleasure, and comprehensible in terms of what can be verified by observation, is reflected in more than one way in high system orientation in counselling. System orientation emphasises the value of extending the consultative effect of the counsellor into the influential general environment of the school, gives higher priority to the use of behaviour modification techniques, and tends to give a lower priority to means of comprehending the

child which pay attention to his own consciousness of himself and his environment.

The opposing Liebnitzian portrait, presented and applauded by Allport, sees man as more 'proactive' than reactive, as independent and autonomous, and as creating his own 'truth'. There are points of contact here with low system orientation to counselling, with its greater tendency to operate independently of the environmental constraints of the system, to accord high priority to 'client-centred' techniques, to reject 'compliance' objectives, and to legitimise the 'child's point-of-view' in contentious situations.

Whether what has been observed in this study represents the irreversible maturation of counselling ideology from one developmental level to another, or whether it represents the (temporary) swing of a pendulum from one ideology to its opposing alternative, is a moot point. There are, however, some indications that the second interpretation - suggested by Allport's analysis - is to be preferred.

In the first place, it is probably misleading to see the introduction of counselling in schools as itself generating a humanising influence upon the way in which school systems are run. The way in which counsellors view the relationship between the counselling role and the role of the teacher (Law, 1978) suggests very strongly that they see themselves as participating in a perennial and antecedent debate on pedagogic ideologies as 'child-centred' or 'idiographic' on the one hand, or as 'academic' or 'nomothetic' on the other. It is not that the introduction of emergent, low-system-orientated counselling has introduced a new message to the organisation of schools: it is that it has attached itself to a message which was already identifiably there in the aspirations and practice of child-centred teachers. Emergent counsellors do not see themselves in conflict with teachers per se: they are themselves, with child-centred teachers, in conflict with the nomothetic tradition of pedagogy.

In the second place, it seems likely that at least some of the explanation of differences between counselling orientations is to be found in the personalities of the role-occupants rather than in whether they happen to come at an earlier or later stage in the emergence of specialised counselling. Allport's characterisation of the roots of counselling ideology, in a picture of man as reactive or proactive, sets up strong parallels with the findings of this study that system orientated counsellors tend to be other-directed and that - open-orientated counsellors tend to be inner-directed. Part of the thrust for the development of counselling may well be coming from the personal orientations, assumptions and philosophies of the people doing the work rather than from the maturation of a social movement operating above the level of personal preferences. If that is so, then changed patterns of recruitment and self-selection into counselling and guidance roles will change the dominant ideology of the 'emergent' role.

Thirdly, there is evidence (not reported in this study but to be reported in detail later) that by no means all of the centres for the intensive training of

counsellors share in the sort of low system orientation identified here with emergent counselling. It is true that the more intensive the training, the lower the system orientation score. But some of the courses have produced students whose mean scores are at, or significantly above, the mean for system orientation (see Law, 1977a, pp. 355-358).

It may be too easy, and it is certainly too early, to conclude that open-orientated counselling is part of an historical development from less humanised to more humanised forms of provision. What we have witnessed may have been but one swing of a pendulum. Pendulums also swing back.

(b) Meanings in relation to the sociology of the school. School counselling is not only an expression of a professional ideology (however variable); it is a component of the sociology of the school. Schools, like counsellors, vary in the way in which they resolve their organisational dilemmas, and explanations of that variability are also varied!

The sociology of the school suggested by Bernstein (1967) has a developmental explanation for variability that is similar, in some respects, to Beck's developmental explanation of the variability in counselling philosophies. It is based upon Durkheim's (1893) analysis of the development of social integration from what he calls 'mechanical' to 'organic' solidarity. Mechanical solidarity is indicated where members of a society share a common belief system which produces a detailed regulation of conduct, where a system of punishment is the means by which the belief system is communicated, and where that punishment system is enshrined in a complex legal system which is in the custody of society and is, in that sense, a 'criminal law'. Organic solidarity is indicated where the differences between individual members of society are allowed to become the basis of achieved - rather than assigned - roles in that society, and where the function of the law is to reconcile conflicting claims in the manner of civil law, rather than to impose compliance to an intervening detailed belief system.

Mechanical solidarity implies that a society can lose much of its personnel without damage to its continuity; the higher degree of individual specialisation within a system of organic solidarity implies that the loss of some of its members can seriously impair such a society. Under mechanical solidarity there will be little tension between private beliefs and role obligations because the assignment of the role is rooted in a generally legitimised belief system. But under organic solidarity such tensions can be considerable. Under organic solidarity there is less likely to be a clear distinction between what is 'inside' and 'outside' the society.

Bernstein details the developments in British education which seem to him to indicate the movement from mechanical to organic types of social

* There are, in Émile Durkheim's and Basil Bernstein's shared account of modern change, important issues for Connexions. A certain kind of personal adviser could become, in this view, a key figure in a process of openly managing change. (Incidentally, Basil Bernstein's parallel work on curriculum, overtaken /conitinued...

integration*. He mentions the general trend away from ritualised forms of social control towards more personalised forms; the shift towards a more complex division of staff roles in the school ('counselling' is cited as an example); the shift away from fixing the positions of children in the system on crude criteria of sex, age and IQ; the greater flexibility which has been introduced into the organisation of teaching groups; the shift in pedagogic method from teaching by an authoritarian teacher to the facilitation of learning by an autonomous child; the shift from a concern with rigidly-defined 'subjects' towards a more flexible, topic-centred, interdisciplinary type of enquiry; the shift to a blurring of the boundary relationship between school and non-school. In short, he describes movement towards the development of secondary schools which 'celebrate diversity, not purity'.

There are enticing parallels between what Bernstein suggests as a general trend in education and what appear to be perceptible trends in the particular development of the conception of school counselling. We have examined evidence that counselling in its emergent sense is in the process of disentangling itself from commitment to the belief system of the school. Central to the conception of system orientation is the legitimisation of the school's disciplinary demands and the maintenance of the interest of the school against those of the individual. There are parallels, too, in the way in which emergent conceptions of counselling tend to be those which see roles as emerging from the personalities of the occupants. Evidence has been presented which suggests that open-orientated counsellors pay more attention to their own internal sense of what is appropriate than to externally-generated cues. Indeed, it is part of the conceptualisation of openness of orientation that the work is not simply assigned by the school and that there is freedom to work out one's own role (see Law, 1977b). The implication of this for an organisation is, as Bernstein points out, the acceptance of variety in the group and of uniqueness in the individual in the way in which each member achieves his role in society, and a much higher degree of dependence on the part of society upon the initiations of its members. A further concomitant identified by Bernstein is the acceptance of higher degrees of role conflict on the part of those who have socialising roles in our society. That observation, too, is echoed in the findings of this study. Open-oriented counsellors do appear to see themselves as involved in higher degrees of both internal and transactional role conflict concerning their work.

At least one attempt has been made empirically to check Bernstein's suggestions. King (1976) - in a secondary analysis of data collected for another purpose (King, 1973) - found limited support for Bernstein's suggestion that open and closed schools were identifiable, in the sense that the descriptive variables tended to be correlated in a way which indicated the kind of internal consistency that had been predicted. King, however, is sceptical about the sort

...continued/
by the National Curriculum, actually helps us to understand both why it was developed and why it is now disintegrating. (See Basil Bernstein 'On the classification and framing of educational knowledge', in Richard Brown (ed.) (1973). Knowledge, Education and Cultural Change. London: Harper and Row.) Pendulums do swing, and how and why they do needs to be understood.

of explanation that Bernstein offers. He doubts that such patterns emerge in adaptation to a single or limited number of predictive variables - in the school's environment. Notwithstanding the fact that his study was not designed to check Bernstein's hypotheses, the muddiness of its findings suggests to King that more than one causative factor is operating. In particular, he names the actions of those within the school who have power - intended and unintended —to influence its stance. The school must be explained, King claims, in terms of itself, since it is 'the multiple and sometimes conflicting construction of its members'. In other words, the relationship between elements in explaining the variability between schools is not linear (one form being adaptively supplanted by another) but lateral (each form competing for its place in a flux of meanings generated by participants). Progress may not be inevitable.

The view that schools are capable of exercising a high degree of impermeability to outside influences is consistent with a further finding of this study. There is evidence (to be reported in detail later) that even where trainee counsellors come from extensive training with low system orientation scores, those orientations do not survive for long in practice. Such findings are consistent with the view that students who have been socialised into the dominant value system of the course are re-socialised into the dominant value systems of their schools during the first three to five years of counselling practice (see Law, 1977a, pp. 351-355).

conclusion

The emergence of school counselling as a specialised provision in schools has been found to be associated with an ideological movement in terms of more client-centrality, a lowered commitment to the ideals of the school as a system, and the acceptance of higher degrees of conflict with the school system. This can be interpreted, as Beck has done, in terms of a movement from 'amorphous' and towards more 'existentialist' ideologies for counselling. It can also be interpreted, as Bernstein does, as part of the progressive adaptation of schools in the direction of more openness. Both explanations are open to doubt - doubt which may be reinforced by a reading of the education press in recent months*. The emergence of specialised counselling may have a more historically limited significance: it may represent the temporary ascendancy of one particular view of people and education. Such a view is consistent with Allport's analysis of the relationship between counselling ideologies, and with King's pluralistic explanation of how schools change and persist.

History may not be on the side of those who want more open counselling and more open schools. They may have to do something about it themselves**.

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* These are references to Prime Minister Callaghan's 1976 Ruskin Speech, and its questioning of the education service. Reaction to this, and a raft of politically conservative 'Black Papers' on education (1969-1977), coalesced into a popular coalition against educational 'progressivism' – some of which deserved to be opposed.

** They still might!

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