The rationality of judgement: comparative perspectives on the social role of educational assessment

Thesis

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CHAPTER SIX

ASSESSMENT IN THE ENGLISH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the contemporary manifestations and the historical constants of the fundamental role played by various types of evaluation procedure in informing the characteristic patterns of selection and control in English educational provision. An analysis of contemporary policy debates and institutional practice provides a temporal cross-section of the changing pattern of checks and balances laid down by the constraining instrumental and expressive ideologies as they in turn reflect the dynamic social, economic and political context. Thus this chapter offers a second case study, the intention of which, like the preceding chapter, is to illuminate how assessment procedures relate to the critical characteristics of systemic functioning, rather than to attempt any comprehensive historical analysis of English educational provision.

It is part of the more general argument of this thesis that these pressures, both ideological and practical, may be analysed in terms of their manifestation in one of the defining characteristics of educational systems, namely assessment. The task of this chapter, as of the last, is the empirical substantiation of this general argument through an analysis of the way in which the constant requirements of educational systems are provided for in the idiosyncratic arrangements of a particular nation state at a particular time. In England this means identifying the more or less formal checks and balances which, following the model set out in Chapter Two, provide for the key functions of selection and control in the context of an education system which is at best decentralised,
at worst, anarchic. Pursuit of the themes of competence, competition, content and control - the latter being applied to both individuals and the system as a whole - will describe the role assessment procedures played in weaving the diverse ideological and institutional developments which prompted an ever-increasing state commitment to educational provision, into the coherent and remarkably uniform process it is in England today.

The first part of the chapter is concerned with the way in which assessment procedures have evolved to control the competition between individuals. It considers the reasons for the rapid growth in public examinations in the late nineteenth century and the profound effect such examinations soon came to have on the provision and content of schooling. It traces the gradually changing emphasis from essentially criterion-referenced assessment procedures which reflected a concern with the attestation of competence and hence, with content validity, to that more characteristic concern in England with mainly norm-referenced assessment which evolved as selection and its legitimation became the major task of public examinations. The ensuing struggle on the part of those who deplored the limiting curricular effects of such examinations and others for whom such problems were insignificant compared to the need to open up access to such examinations to all pupils, are themes that are constant in the twentieth century history of assessment procedures. How such pressures were rationalised, first in the fortuitous, but quite fundamental advent of intelligence testing and, more recently, when such tests had been to an extent discredited, by the institution of more relevant, broadly-based and continuous assessment, comprises a major part of the study. As such, the analysis illustrates one of the main ways in which the defining and constant characteristics of industrial societies - individualism, rational authority, bureaucracy, a division
of labour, liberal democratic values - have been translated into and, hence, provided for in the provision of mass schooling within a particular society.

The second part of the chapter takes up the theme of control even more explicitly in addressing the more macro issues of systemic functioning and accountability. Drawing on the theoretical conceptualisation of such control set out in Chapter Four, it looks at the way in which assessment procedures control the providers, as well as the consumers, of education and, hence, how the system as a whole is legitimated. Crucial to this case study is an explanation of how such control may be conveyed within a decentralised system. It is argued that the apparatus of public assessment procedures which, in its broadest sense provides the currency of accountability, structures the discourse of educational debate so that self-imposed, professional values reflect the criteria of successful performance embodied in assessment procedures. It is these informal, covert, but highly influential relationships which provide the key to understanding control in the English educational system.

The Context for Growth: The pre-history of educational assessment

Pre-nineteenth century England was an essentially static society. Social, occupational and personal roles were bound up together and determined very largely by birth. For most people schooling was irrelevant to the process of occupational selection but rather was important in providing (for those who had any at all) differential socialisation experiences which served as a preparation for the very different future life-styles of the various social strata. As a result, assessment, if it existed at all, was essentially a formality. Writing
in 1778, Vicessimus Knox provides a graphic testimony to the mainly social nature of education at this time and the consequent insignificance of formal assessment, in his disgusted description of finals examinations at Oxford University.

"As neither the officer, nor anyone else, usually enters the room (for it is considered very ungentlell), the examiners (usually three MAs of the candidate's own choice) and the candidates often converse on the last drinking bout or on horses, or read the newspaper, or a novel, or divert themselves as well as they can in any manner until the clock strikes eleven, when all parties descend and the 'testimonium' is signed by the masters" (quoted by Lawson and Silver, 1973).

In effect, four years' residence was the only qualification for a degree - not an inappropriate training for an elite for which the qualifications were almost entirely social.

Yet by 1772 in Cambridge University this picture had already begun to change. As Hoskins (1979) suggests, little did the Cambridge University examiner, William Farish, know the momentous significance of his suggestion in 1772 that numerical marks be given for each question in the Tripos examination, instead of, as hitherto, an overall ranking of the candidate's work as a whole. Not only was the Cambridge example soon copied by Oxford University, which in 1800 also instituted written examinations as a means of identifying the ability and rewarding the attainment of students, but from this and other apparently insignificant innovations has emerged a whole new apparatus of judgement in which, as set out in Chapter Three, the relatively anonymous individual of traditional society becomes subject to a qualitatively new form of control in the modern world. This control is based on twin techniques of 'hierarchical observation' in which evaluation is a constant presence and 'normalising judgement' in which categorisation according to a 'norm' is increasingly evident (Foucault, 1977, see Chapter Three).
"Written performances and written records ... make it possible to generate a 'history' of each student and also to classify students en masse into categories ... This new form of power locates each of us in a place in society... Because it is a technique of knowledge we overlook the fact that it is simultaneously a technique of power ..." (Hoskins, 1979, p. 137).

Central to this process is educational assessment which takes a particular kind of intellectual product as the basis not only for a complex division of labour, but also for a whole range of social and political positions (Broadfoot, 1981).

Thus, soon after the beginnings of the nineteenth century, the essentially static, traditional picture began to change. The pressure for change in England may be attributed to "political radicalism joined with the Evangelical Revival and the stirrings of Benthamite reform" (Maclure, 1965, p. 10), expressed in a rising moral and political concern among philanthropists at this time for social order and justice. It was also fuelled by a concern to find a means of stemming the lawlessness and debauchery which had become characteristic of the new industrial cities (Barnard, 1961; Johnson, 1976). Both movements testified to the new demands the burgeoning industrial capitalist economy was making on educational provision. But it was the availability of new techniques of individual judgement which led to these demands being very soon reflected in the development of assessment procedures as tools by which schooling might be made responsive to the needs of the economy.

The men who led the industrial revolution and the economic expansion of Victorian England were utilitarian, pragmatic and essentially rational men who put their faith in science and individual responsibility. Thus it was that many of the more cohesive professions began to feel the need to rationalise their organisation and to define a specific level of competence for which visible testimony could be produced. Living in a free market economy, they were not slow to recognise the value that
would accrue to individual practitioners through the creation of a monopoly over a particular profession, the entry to which was controlled according to fairly rigid standards of professional competence. Thus it was that in 1815 the first professional qualifying examinations were instituted by the Society of Apothecaries to ensure that doctors were adequately trained. The institution of written examinations for solicitors followed in 1835, for the Civil Service after the Northcote-Trevelyan report of 1853, and for accountants in 1880. Gradually, "the lazy doctrine that men are much of a muchness gave way to a higher respect for merit and for more effectual standards of competence" (Morley, quoted in the Beloe Report, 1960).

The growing concern with the attestation of competence was reflected at a national level in the Report of the Taunton Commission of 1868. The Committee's Report advocated a system of centrally-appointed inspectors to see standards were maintained and a central council to administer a system of examinations which would not be competitive but would rather provide a fair test of average work (Montgomery, 1965).

Although the first HMI were appointed in 1840 the recommendation for a central council to control school examinations was not fulfilled until 1917 with the establishment of the Secondary School Examinations Council (SSEC) but even then it was the universities who continued to exercise the principal control in practice. It was in keeping with the ad hoc, pragmatic spirit of English educational provision that examinations to control the flood of new aspirants (Roach, 1971) were initially the spontaneous creation of the universities. The first stage of this provision involved a system of 'locals' in which a respected outsider - often a fellow of an Oxford or Cambridge College or a local clergyman - was commissioned to evaluate the education being provided by a school and the level of standards being attained. But as Mortimore and Mortimore (1984) suggest, such 'moderation' was expensive
PAGINATION AS IN ORIGINAL
and somewhat haphazard since many schools, including those most needing inspection, chose not to invite external assessment.

Before long, yet another significant innovation took place which moved the assessment focus away from the quality of school provision towards assessing the achievement of individual pupils. The 1857 'Exeter Experiment' in which competitive examinations were organised for pupils from local schools in the South West, heralded a whole new dimension in the nature of schooling. Thus, following the 1850 Oxford and Cambridge Royal Commission, in 1857 and 1858 respectively these universities also set up School Examination Boards to organise a new form of 'locals' which would provide the necessary link with the increasing number of middle-class schools and hence with the new industrial and professional sections of society. The slightly later advent of the issue of certificates in 1877 represented yet another stage in this process in further depersonalising and hence, apparently rationalising the process of selection.

The fact that the universities were so quick to follow the example set by the professions in instituting formal entrance examinations meant too that very soon schools could not resist the backwash effect. Thus the mid-nineteenth century saw a gradual change not only in the mechanisms of assessment, but in the content of schooling itself as it reflected changing educational aims: "the age of school examinations controlled by university boards had begun" (Lawton, 1980).

The Institutionalisation of Mass Assessment: The effect on curriculum content

In England the elite public schools continued to emphasise toughness, team-spirit and leadership for those future leaders of the
Empire, Parliament and the Army whose elite status was so firmly ascribed that they could continue for a time to hold themselves aloof from the growing competition for educational qualifications. In the flourishing grammar schools in which were to be found the aspirants to the newly-created clerical, scientific and managerial jobs, there was little leisure or need for such character development and, instead, these schools were increasingly oriented to the burgeoning industry of competitive examinations. The rapid growth of examinations at this time may be indicated by the massive increase in the numbers of those taking the Department of Science and Art examinations which grew from a modest 5,466 in 1865 to 202,868 in 1895 and included as many candidates from mechanics' institutes and other similar institutions as it did from schools. Indeed, many Victorians saw success in examinations as a guarantee not only of knowledge, but also of those qualities so necessary in middle-rank occupations - common sense and diligence (Roach, 1971).

But, very quickly after the institution of university-regulated school examinations in the 1850s, the development of 18+ and girls' examinations by Cambridge University in 1869 and the City and Guild's examinations in practical subjects in 1880, a practice which had initially been adopted as essentially a means of quality control began to exercise an undesirable effect on the curriculum. Edmond Holmes' famous work 'What is and what might be', published in 1911, expresses a view of the undesirable effects of examinations increasingly recognised by people at this time.

"A school that is ridden by the examination incubus is charged with deceit ... all who become acclimatised to the influence of the system - pupils, teachers, examiners, employers of labour, parents, MPs and the rest, fall victims and are content to cheat themselves with outward and visible signs - class lists, orders of merit - as being of quasi-divine authority."

Concern about the effects this proliferation of examinations was...
having even at the higher elementary school level led the Board of Education, which had been set up in 1899 and included among its functions the running of non-elementary schools, to publish a report of its Consultative Committee in 1911 which urged instead of examinations for school-leavers the use of a more appropriate school record and closer liaison with employers. This attempt to encourage a more relevant and vocational emphasis in assessment was as unsuccessful as the subsequent Government Circular of 1913 which sought to encourage a more vocationally-oriented curriculum, and all other attempts since that time to institute the use of school reports rather than examinations.

Instead, 1917 saw the formal legitimation of academic school examinations in the establishment of the School Certificate. The new examination was a grouped certificate requiring passes in five or more academic subjects drawn from each of four groups of English, languages, science and mathematics, with music and manual subjects a fifth optional group. Thus the new Certificate established incontrovertibly the primacy of academic subjects and formal written assessments, relegating the aesthetic, practical and non-cognitive aspects of schooling to the relatively low status which still endures today. It is significant, as the Beloe Report (1960) points out, that although the Secondary Schools Examination Council was set up at this time to advise the Board in maintaining standards, thereby ensuring some degree of State control over the content of education, even at this relatively early stage of 'secondary' education, the universities were recognised as the appropriate bodies to conduct secondary school examinations and it is to them that we must attribute much of the emphasis in examinations on intellectual attainment and academic subjects. It is hardly surprising that the
traditional pinnacles of the education system which had for long been the almost exclusive monopoly of the elite should be given the task of determining the structure of the newly emerging mechanisms of social selection. Nor is it surprising that they were determined in that elite's own interest.

In fact the elite schools could and did continue to stress the Victorian virtues of honour and leadership since, for those already established at the top of the social hierarchy, the long-standing criteria of wealth and breeding combined to give them a variety of informal social advantages which allowed them still to be almost totally independent of examinations for maintaining their occupational status. For the rest of the population, the route to success now lay almost exclusively via examinations, either in winning one of the increasing number of free-place scholarships to the grammar school or, once there, in doing well in Lower and Higher School Certificate. Dore (1976) cites an interesting result of the change in the content of education which took place at this time. He identifies changes in the guides to various professions, such as journalism, which in 1900 emphasised the various qualities of character required for the job but which in 1950 specified only the formal academic qualifications required, as evidence of "the slow change in Britain's mechanisms and criteria for job selection ... with the emphasis slowly shifting from personal aptitude to quantitatively measurable educational achievement" (p. 24). As a result, "the social definition of the purpose of schooling changed and with it the motivation of students and the quality of learning" (p. 15).

Indeed another aspect of this change in the 'quality of learning' concerns the kinds of competency rewarded by examinations. The Consultative Committee Report of 1911, in discussing the effects of examinations upon pupils, pointed out that examinations place a premium
on the reproduction of knowledge, passivity of mind and a competitive or even mercenary spirit and by contrast, do not encourage independent judgement, creative thinking, true learning and criticism. Although educationists have consistently deplored this constraint on genuine learning, all the evidence is that in England at least it will continue and is in fact increasing at the present time (Fairhall, 1978). There are links here with the importance of assessment as a means of social control, because the encouragement of passivity and acceptance of prevailing knowledge, values and standards and the restriction of entry to elite positions to those willing to conform to such definitions, are vital aspects of the process of social reproduction. It was by no means accidental that this kind of learning came to be emphasised in schools, for indeed it was regarded as essential that mass schooling should not be such as to allow people to question their station in life or the standards laid down by their betters, but should rather serve to induce a greater degree of orderliness, morality and diligence. This strait-jacket was very conveniently provided by the form and content which came to characterise school examinations and to this day restricts the acquisition of school qualifications to those willing to accept the values of the school and passively to reproduce existing forms of knowledge (Keddie, 1971).

The rapidly expanding economy of early nineteenth-century England depended not only on the discovery of new techniques and the creation of new markets; it required too a new type of worker who was prepared to sell his labour in return for money. The decline of the family as an economic unit of production and the concomitant rise of individualism which the process of industrialisation had brought about, coincided with the need in the economy for a new class of more scientifically educated managers. Thus schools were increasingly looked to as providers of
individuals with the requisite knowledge and skills (Musgrave, 1968).
The rash of public schools founded at this time, particularly in the
1840s, of which Marlborough, Wellington and Rugby are amongst the most
well-known, was the direct result of the simultaneous influence of both
the old social tradition whereby the more successful bourgeoisie sought
to acquire for their sons the training of a gentleman, and the beginning
of a new emphasis on educational capital which was subsequently to be of
great significance. It was not long before the impecunious members of
the elite began to realise that their sons might maintain their political
and economic status by means of the acquisition of educational
qualifications.

So rapidly did the emphasis on educational qualifications for entry
to occupations grow, however, at the expense of the more traditional
methods that it was not very long before the pressure on entry to many
of the professions made selection imperative and gave schools a new role
in preparing and adjudicating between candidates for an increasing
variety of occupational roles. The result was that schools at all levels —
elementary, grammar and public — began to place a growing emphasis on
competition.

The Institutionalisation of Educational Competition

A significant example of the trend towards a merit and achievement
ethos at this time was the Northcote-Trevelyan reform of the Civil
Service which led to the institution in 1855 of examinations for entry
into the Home and Indian Civil Service after the model of those of
ancient China (Heyhoe, 1984), a model which was soon emulated in the
entry for training in the armed services at Sandhurst and Woolwich.
These examinations were significant not only as qualifying examinations
but particularly for their emphasis on **selection**. In many ways they marked the translation of the capitalist belief in raising standards of production by competition to a similar philosophy for education (Lawson and Silver, 1973). The increasing use of examinations to determine the awarding of scholarships and the allocation of vocational opportunity represents not only the origins of 'criterion-referenced' assessment (Rowntree, 1977) - the measurement of specific competencies - but also the origins of 'norm-referenced' assessment - the ranking of the performances of candidates one against another to determine the allocation of scarce resources. It was not long before the use of examinations to determine competence paled into comparative insignificance beside their use in selection.

During the nineteenth century, the almost total gulf between elementary and other forms of schooling and the perpetuation of traditional attitudes of acceptance were enough to prevent a significant pressure for more open access to educational opportunity. The creation of the School Boards in 1902, and with it, the significant expansion of the scholarship system were both a reflection of, and contribution to, the widespread emergence of a concern for greater opportunity - a pressure which, as in France, the social upheavals of the First World War greatly increased.

This is well illustrated in the use of examinations to determine the allocation of scholarships in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

**Scholarship Examinations**

After the Education Act of 1870, the Endowed Schools Commission was responsible for selecting children from public elementary schools for secondary school scholarships. The scholarship route was greatly
expanded after the 1902 creation of local authority secondary schools
and the Free Place Regulations of 1907 which required grant-aided
secondary schools to offer a quarter of their places to elementary school
pupils (Sutherland, 1977). But what had initially been intended as a
device for the attestation of competence - a qualifying test - was almost
immediately translated into an intensely competitive examination. Thus
the qualifying examination instituted in 1907 to ensure that the
introduction of free places "shall not have the effect of lowering the
standard of education provided by the school" by 1936 had become
formally recognised as a selection device, in which

"The purpose of the examination is the selection ... of children fit to profit by secondary education ... The main business is to get the right children..."

Concern with quality control was thus relatively unimportant when compared
with the need to identify and foster talent from all levels of society (i.e. selection) and the associated, if unarticulated, need to legitimate the
status quo by providing a measure of opportunity for all, allocated by apparently
objective, scientific means so that those not chosen accepted their own
unworthiness as the reason.

This change in emphasis from the use of assessment procedures in
the attestation of competence to their use in the regulation and control
of popular aspiration may be traced through both the major educational
selection devices which were widely used in the early twentieth century -
intelligence testing and school certificate examinations.

Intelligence Testing

Intelligence testing, in particular, was of enormous significance
in providing an acceptable means of rationing grammar school scholarships
and, after 1944, grammar school places. The work of Galton and Spearman,
Burt and Thompson (Sharp, 1984) could not have been more timely. The interrelation of cause and effect in the growth of intelligence testing will probably never be known and whether it was just its timeliness that led so quickly to such testing being fundamentally incorporated into educational thinking. Certainly historical studies of the advent of such testing on a large scale in England (Simon, 1953; Sutherland and Thom, 1983; Sharp, 1984) lend support to the work of American revisionist historians (eg. Karier, 1973; Kamin, 1974) which suggest that psychologists were powerless to influence the way in which their work was used to inform policy. Although a combination of local and national pressures determined when, and in what way, each local authority resorted to the use of intelligence and other kinds of standardised tests, "It was the conviction that children can and should be classified at an early age, according to inborn intellectual differences that underlay the entire remodelling of the school system at this time" (Rubenstein and Simon, 1969). From the Hadow Report (1926) onwards, when the setting up of a system of separate schools to provide post-elementary 'secondary' education for all was first mooted, the use of tests for the necessary 'differentiation' was never in doubt.

During the next decade the 'intelligence' testing movement was to go from strength to strength. Thus by 1938 the Spens Report, in recommending a tripartite 'secondary' school system, could say with conviction, that 'with few exceptions', it is possible at a very early age to predict with some degree of accuracy 'the ultimate level of a child's intellectual powers'. As a result, the few dissident voices, which included the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and the teachers' unions, as well as academics such as Godfrey Thompson, arguing for a common (if internally divided) multilateral 'secondary' school, were drowned by the tidal wave in favour of separate schools designed to cater for children with
different types of ability and inclination. This tide found its expression in the Norwood Report of 1943 and the Education Act of 1944 which enshrined the principle of education according to age, aptitude and ability and led to the establishment of the 'equal but different' secondary 'grammar', 'technical' and 'modern' schools which between them would provide for the new commitment to mass secondary education. Although this Act did not create the 11+ as such, since in many cases it merely rationalised existing practice (Sutherland and Thom, 1983), Robertson (quoted in Sharp, 1980) nevertheless suggests that

"The eleven-plus would have been with us just the same, even if Binet and Terman, Burt and Thompson had never lived. It was the creation not of the testers but of the Acts of 1944/45 (Scotland), the shortage of selective-school places, the new affluence of the working classes, and the demand for grammar school education both as a status-symbol and as career-asset. Only it would have been a worse kind of eleven-plus, with old style tests of attainment as it chief selective instrument, thus aggravating all the ill-effects of which Vernon writes" (p. 7).

These ill-effects were taken by Vernon to be public controversy, parental neuroses and the distortion of primary teaching (Vernon, 1962). In a footnote, Sharp questions this argument, suggesting that the development of intelligence testing was itself central to the way in which mass secondary provision came to be provided for in the 1944/45 Acts in that without it, the idea of selection according to innate ability which could be seen to be growing steadily in earlier government reports such as those of Hadow and Spens could not have been justified or even conceived. Intelligence testing was critical as a legitimating ideology. On it have come to be based some of the most characteristic features of the contemporary scholarship. It is now largely taken for granted by both experts and the general public that it is both necessary and desirable for teachers and external examiners (but seldom the pupils themselves) to grade pupils according to certain kinds of performance (usually academic)
in particular groupings of knowledge (some of higher status than others), usually in some kind of rank order, and on that basis to select some for opportunities leading to prestigious positions and usually high material rewards, and to reject others (i.e. the majority) for occupational roles of little reward and influence.

Certainly the idea of innate, measurable intelligence played a central role in the development of educational policy concerned with expanding provision in the early 20th century, the notion of pupils' different attributes not only justifying but apparently making desirable for all concerned a situation in which 'selection by differentiation takes the place of selection by elimination' (Hadow, 1926, quoted by Rubinstein and Simon, 1969). It may well be argued, for example, that only the advent of intelligence testing made possible a 1944 Education Act which was a 'looking-glass' image of mid-Victorian assumptions (Maclure, 1965), in its provision for three distinct educational routes which were an exact replica of those recommended by the Taunton Commission nearly a century earlier in 1868. But, as Bell (1975) points out, the growth

"of psychometry in Scotland (and, by implication, England) (notably intelligence testing) was not solely (or even primarily) the achievement of Thompson, nor was its development solely (or even primarily) geared to the needs of secondary selection ... it was as much a function of teacher professionalisation as of secondary school development ... and the needs of the 'new bureaucrats' of the 1920s" (p. 15).

Thus it was not the tests themselves which were critical, but the ideas on which they were based and their scientific quality which together provided for the administrative and pedagogic rationalisations necessary for mass educational provision, notably the hierarchical authority and normalising judgement discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

As Sutherland (1979) suggests, despite:
"The striking congruence between the mass production of group testing and its scores and a school system increasingly dominated by selective examinations, to regard the former as simply generated by the latter would be to engage in a vulgar and ultimately unhelpful form of determinism. Both are more likely to be related manifestations of the lengthy efforts of the archetypally close-structured society to generate mechanisms of mobility which reinforce rather than disrupt its structure" (Sutherland, 1979, p. 8).

Nor was the influence of the concept of differentiated and fixed innate ability confined to the provision of three distinct types of secondary education alone. The 11+ examination which included tests of English and Maths as well as of intelligence, just as formerly the scholarship examinations for entry into grammar school had done, was in fact only an arbitrary cut-off point in a much longer process of categorisation and channelling which became increasingly the norm in both primary and secondary schools. Many of those who rejected the idea of differentiated secondary schools on the grounds of their being socially divisive accepted the need for differentiation within them. Indeed this view was supported by the continuing influence of the child-centred movement which was informing both a philosophy and a psychology of education emphasising the importance of responding to the differing needs and interests of individual children.

As early as 1926, after the publication of the Hadow Report, a great deal of effort was put into providing both senior and junior schools in which there could be three or more parallel classes to provide suitable learning environments for children of differing 'ability'. After 1944, 'streaming' in the primary school was common from the age of seven onwards, to give 'bright' children the maximum chance of developing their abilities and passing the 11+. The constraining effects of the 11+ examination on the work of the primary school was to figure prominently in the movement for its abolition during the next decades.
Significantly for the theme of social control, it is this very liberation of the 'post-Plowden' primary school, freed by and large from the constraints of the 11+ that lies behind a good deal of popular concern about 'falling standards' and the pressure towards the institution of new mechanisms of control - that is to say, accountability.

The secondary moderns, too, catering for perhaps 75 per cent of the year group, soon took to streaming so that able pupils might have some chance of transferring to the grammar school or later, of GCE success. The result, especially when compounded by the effects of the competition for external examination certificates, was to effectively preclude any independent ethos of curriculum and evaluation developing in the secondary modern school, and hence, as Partridge (1968) argues, the sacrifice of the long term interests of the children who were likely to remain in the school throughout their school days to the overriding priority of the transfer out of the school of a few pupils. However, the provision for even a very small number of secondary modern pupils to transfer to grammar schools to sit for external certificates (still only 1 in 8 were sitting for GCE by 1960), allowed the belief in the system's capacity to identify and respond to ability at every level to persist. It encouraged confidence that the educational system was genuinely meritocratic in that for those few pupils who as late developers or for some other idiosyncratic reason had not demonstrated their ability early on in their school careers, the door to opportunity was never shut.11

During the 1950s the concept of 'intelligence' as fixed and inherited gradually became untenable, as a result of a series of research studies (e.g. Halsey and Gardner, 1953; Simon, 1953; Yates and Pidgeon, 1957) which showed amongst other things the social class and environmental influences on 'intelligence' and that the IQ of pupils in grammar schools improved whilst that of their counterparts in secondary modern schools
deteriorated. Such studies did little to attack the idea that it was possible to measure 'intelligence' objectively however, but rather fuelled the fires of those who believed that 'intelligence' was determined by environment rather than heredity and that some pupils were being prevented from developing their full potential by various kinds of disadvantages in their home background, such as coming from a large family, or having parents with low aspirations (Douglas, 1964).

The result was, on the one hand, pressure towards 'compensatory' education which found its major expression in the Plowden Report's (1967) recommendations for the establishment of Educational Priority Areas. Schools in these 'deprived' areas would receive additional funding to help them overcome their pupils' background disadvantages. On the other hand, there was a parallel pressure against selection for secondary schools which could no longer be justified on the assumption of fixed and differing levels of intelligence. An NFER study in 1957 (Vernon, 1957), for example, showed that 122 pupils out of every thousand had been wrongly assessed in the 11+. Thus the pressure for a common non-selective secondary school which would allow much more flexible provision for different abilities and interests - a pressure which had been eclipsed by the rival ideology of selection in the 1940s - became increasingly intense until finally incorporated as government policy, in the commitment to comprehensive schools expressed in the famous Government Circular 10/65 of 1965.

It seems probable that without the specific development of intelligence tests to justify different kinds of secondary provision, schools might have become comprehensive earlier with selection based much more on a progressive 'cooling out' (Clark, 1982) and 'guidance' process rather than a specific 'one-off' selection hurdle. But this can only be speculation. The theoretical arguments of Chapter Two suggest that there is a balance between the need for a powerful, impersonal
assessment procedure at key points of selection and, with qualification inflation, the replacement of such formal assessment mechanisms for those no longer in the critical competition, with the subtle, pervasive surveillance of teacher records which are the basis for a particular form of social control through various kinds of positive orientation. This is the argument put forward by Caroline Benn among others,

"It is vital to understand this difference" [i.e. within the comprehensive school rather than between secondary modern and grammar] "and to realise that the old 11+ - overt, universal, imposed and scientifically-based has been giving way over many years to the new 11+ - covert, restricted, optional and socially based" (Benn, 1980, p. 9).

The demise of formal 11+ selection in favour of comprehensive secondary schooling must thus be seen as a change prompted by the need for more publicly acceptable selection procedures in keeping with the growing strength of egalitarian and democratic educational ideologies. The balance at any one time between selection based on traditional examinations, selection based on standardised tests and guidance based on teacher assessment is thus a reflection of prevailing expressive ideologies rather than constituting any real change in the basis of that selection.

School Certificate Examinations

Meanwhile, higher up the school system, the increasingly important role of educational selection was being reflected in and in turn reinforced by a growing pressure for educational qualifications. Such was the emphasis on competition rather than competence, that the content of assessment often came to have little to do with the nature of the activity for which it was acting as a filter. School examinations, in particular, were prone to this lack of content validity, especially after the institution in 1917 by
the Board of Education of the School Certificate, which put an end to school examinations linked to particular professions and replaced them with a standard school-leaving and university entrance qualification. School Certificate examinations have continued to be used as a selection mechanism for activities with which their content bears little relation. In many instances, research has shown them in fact to have a low or even negative correlation with vocational training or performance (for example, Williams and Boreham, 1972; SCRE, 1976).

By 1922 and the establishment of the Higher School Certificate, a rationalised system of competitive, norm-referenced school examinations was firmly established through which all secondary school pupils apart from a very few professional and academic aspirants must pass (despite their already highly selected status). It must be pointed out, however, that these examinations still combined a large measure of attestation with competition, in that with the huge gulfs between the elementary, grammar and public schools, the crucial determining point for career chances was still gaining entry to the grammar school or, even better, via the largely nominal Common Entrance Examination, to a public school. (The institution of this latter examination is another telling example of how prevalent the emphasis on overtly educational competition had become even if much more important selection devices such as family connections or wealth were still decisive covertly.)

However, after the institution of 'secondary education for all' the 1944 Education Act and the raising of the school-leaving age to 15 in 1947, the de facto exclusion of the majority of children from the opportunity of taking School Certificate examinations could no longer be relied upon to limit competition. Thus, pursuing the philosophy expressed in the 1945 pamphlet, 'The Nation's Schools', which stated the government's intention to 'free' the secondary modern school from the constraints of
external examinations, Circular 103 in 1946 forbade schools other than
grammar schools to enter pupils for School Certificate examinations below
the age of 16, thereby re-establishing the pre-1944 situation by
effectively debarring secondary modern pupils de jure from any opportunity
to compete for formal educational qualifications.

Indeed the two themes of 'content' and 'competition' are inextricably
interwoven in the development of School Certificate examinations. Concern
over the domination of the curriculum by school examinations and arguments
in favour of more school-based reporting had been continuously expressed
since the Report of the Consultative Committee in 1911. The Spens Report
in 1938 deplored the fact that 'despite all safeguards, the School
Certificate examination now dominates the work of the schools, controlling
both the framework and content of the curriculum'. In addition, Hartog
and Rhodes' famous study in 1935 of the unreliability of examinations had
added fuel to the fire. Indeed Lowndes (1969) argues that, had it not
been for the Second World War, the School Certificate examination would
have become a thing of the past to be replaced by a modified internal
examination with national currency. In 1943 the Norwood Committee spoke
out against the reliance of examinations to motivate pupils when
stimulus should have come from other sources, and they too proposed
internal school assessment which would be a record of achievement in
each subject but would not be seen as a predictor of future performance -
or used as a mechanism of selection, a function which would be the
preserve of the new, single-subject, 18+ examination. They regarded it
as essential that the assessment at the end of general education be free
from domination by the universities - a view which was reiterated in
1947 in the Report of the Secondary Schools Examination Council which
argued that all forms of public examination should be kept till well
after the compulsory school-leaving age so that education for the majority
of secondary school pupils (some 80 per cent) could be freed from external academic constraints, with assessment being confined to the use of objective tests and school records alone. Circular 205 reiterated these proposals in 1949.

It is possible to regard the debate about opening up access to the School Certificate examinations as a clear example of the contradiction between the liberation and control functions of assessment identified in Chapter Two. At one level, many educationists, then as now, deplored the constraining influence of external examinations and genuinely hoped to liberate schooling for the majority of pupils who could not hope to succeed anyway. On another level, it is possible to see beneath these 'liberal' ideals a very convenient argument for the restriction of access even to compete for the passports to high occupational status and thus a restriction of 'competition' to those (predominantly middle-class) pupils who managed to pass the 11+.

By the early fifties, however, the great pressure from the secondary moderns for access to an external examination combined with the need for ever finer discrimination amongst certificate candidates themselves, resulted in the institution of the General Certificate of Education, Ordinary and Advanced Level, in 1951. This new, non-grouped Certificate had the apparent advantages not only of allowing more flexibility in the curriculum, but also allowed a greater proportion of pupils some hope of success in at least one subject. It had the advantage too of both allowing secondary modern pupils to compete and still, because of its higher standard than the old School Certificate, effectively preventing open competition (Rubinstein and Simon, 1969). In practice, the new examination was yet another reflection of the liberation/control paradox inherent in educational assessment. On the one hand it created ostensibly greater opportunity in allowing more pupils to achieve
external certification and in so doing, kept motivation and conformity to the system high - as demonstrated by the ever-increasing number of entries. But it also allowed a more finely divisive ranking of achievement, in terms of the number and status of subjects passed as well as the grades achieved in each. It is arguable that the finer differentiation and greater specialisation provided for by the new examinations, whilst apparently better serving the economy in its increasing need for different kinds of expertise, created a 'division of labour' among pupils which had important repercussions for social reproduction.

Firstly, as Bowles and Gintis (1976) argue in relation to the employment market, it allowed a situation of 'divide and rule' - a fragmentation which prevented the formation of united, self-conscious disaffected groups in the education system. Secondly, taking Bourdieu and Passeron's (1976) argument, as set out in Chapter Two, it allowed the elite to reproduce itself by identifying the more abstract and esoteric subjects which formed part of their traditional culture as 'hardest' and thus of the highest status academically. Thus in these subjects, by virtue of the particular linguistic and intellectual skills developed by their home background - defined by Bourdieu and Passeron as 'cultural' capital - the elite are enabled to perform better than pupils from other backgrounds, so that success in these subjects has a greater commodity value in the university and job markets. There is a good deal of contemporary evidence to substantiate this argument. Nuttall, Backhouse and Wilmott (1974), for example, found English language and literature and possibly Art was consistently leniently graded and Chemistry and French marking consistently severe in both CSE and GCE examinations with Physics too being severe in GCE and Maths at CSE.

With all their manifest disadvantages, the central role of
external examinations in determining career opportunities made it impossible for the secondary modern schools to remain uninvolved in the competition, for not only did parents and pupils push for at least the chance to compete, the status and morale of the school itself became increasingly dependent on how well its pupils did academically, in a vain imitation of the traditionally high status grammar school. Indeed so powerful was the lure of external qualifications that the idea of a radically different type of 'modern' school envisaged in the 1944 Act never had a chance.

By 1955 half the secondary modern schools were preparing pupils for external examinations such as those of the Royal Society of Arts and the College of Preceptors and indeed in 1954, some 5,000 pupils were entered for the GCE O-level itself. As the secondary moderns became increasingly geared to the small minority retaking the 11+ or 12+ and other external examinations, their organisation and curriculum reflected ever more closely that of the grammar school. As a result, the secondary modern school could scarcely avoid regarding itself as a second best and the pupils regarding themselves as failures for not having passed the 11+. R.H. Tawney (1951) described this as the 'tadpole' philosophy - that the unhappy lot of tadpoles is held to be acceptable because some tadpoles do in the event become frogs. Hargreaves' (1967) study of boys in a secondary modern school provides graphic testimony to this. Yet it would be hard to argue against giving the maximum number of pupils at least the chance to compete in the system and there can be little doubt that the move to extend the opportunity to sit for public examinations to the secondary modern schools was strongly endorsed by most liberal educational reformists.

Indeed, the grip of the liberal ideal of opportunity on the education system had become so strong that despite these problems, demand for the
extension rather than the abolition of the public examination system multiplied during the fifties. The Beloe Committee, set up in 1958 to investigate the possibility of such an extension, reported in 1960 in favour of a new 'Certificate of Secondary Education' (CSE). In their view an extension of the public examination system was inevitable. The 'CSE' instituted in 1965 was designed to provide the goal of a pass in at least one subject for about 60 per cent of the year group, the top band of the CSE being equivalent to an O-level pass. Thus once again, the public examination system was redesigned to prevent too great a build-up of frustration which might threaten the meritocratic system. The provision of an educational goal designed - as in the case of O-level - to be achieved by some 20 per cent of a group only - was already an anachronism in 1944. The creation of the CSE allowed far more, if not all, pupils to participate in the race without any serious threat to the reproduction mechanisms of the system.

The power of the legitimating ideology which informed the assessment practices developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to provide for educational and occupational selection is demonstrated in the fact that it has not yet been seriously challenged. Whilst there is now plenty of evidence to demonstrate the fallibility of 'objective' assessment (e.g. Pidgeon and Yates, 1968; Lauwerys and Scanlon, 1969; Ingenkamp, 1977), the assumptions on which such assessment is based - notably that learning capacity is fixed and innate and that there are 'bright' and 'dull' pupils - have become so deeply rooted in educational thinking that any fundamental challenge to this kind of assessment still remains almost inconceivable. Thus despite the availability of careful and sustained criticism couched in the same, positivist language, in his review of the evidence in 1977, Ingenkamp was able to write:
"By 1970 a stage had been reached when traditional oral and written school examinations had been shown to be neither objective nor reliable; their content validity was jeopardised by subjective influence, predictive validity was low and the marking of different examiners could not be compared ... (p. 14).

Thus it is perfectly possible that we are selecting our students by means of procedures that have no predictive value for academic success and that an examination is being used to determine academic success that has no predictive value for professional success ... we have not yet been able to produce research findings to refute the suspicion that we are continually selecting the wrong people with the wrong methods" (p. 62)

Perhaps the most important point to emerge from this apparent anomaly whereby seemingly inefficient assessment practices continue to enjoy widespread support is that ideology, especially if it has a political function, does not necessarily have any relationship with empirical evidence. In the same way, Dale and Pires (1984) argue that it is parents' belief in the value of educational qualifications, rather than their real market value, that maintains their powerful role. Ideology closely affects the way reality is perceived; sometimes it even allows evidence to be ignored or used arbitrarily. As Kuhn (1962) points out, scientists throughout history have tended to 'adjust' pet theories rather than reject them when new evidence threatens, since evidence is rarely sufficiently conclusive - especially in the social sciences - to make rejection of a theory unavoidable. Thus the 'liberal reformist' tradition would explain the apparent disfunctions in assessment as inadequacies of technique, the solution to which is a pragmatic one of finding more accurate and thus more just means of performing the essential allocative functions of the educational system.

It is rare for the fundamental assumption that it is the responsibility of the education system to provide for selection to be questioned. To do so would be to challenge one of the most characteristic features of industrial society and one of the major arguments for mass education.
Changes in Assessment Procedures since 1965

Whilst it remains generally true that industrial societies still look to the education system to provide the basis for occupational selection, England is essentially atypical in clinging to some of the more traditional institutional forms for such selection, notably public examinations, as the basis for certification. Indeed the recent history of assessment practices in England testifies to the tensions the increasingly incompatible demands being made on public examinations are producing. Whilst public examinations are still a key part of the apparatus of systemic control and the maintenance of standards, many people feel they do not emphasise the needs of industry and the economy for a suitably skilled and socialised workforce (Ahier and Flude, 1982). Nor do they provide adequate motivation and hence, control, for the forty or more per cent who cannot look forward to success. Because of the role examinations play in providing public evidence of curriculum control, standardised tests have made little impact beyond the level of selection for secondary schooling. Thus the last two decades have seen a whole series of abortive attempts to reform public examinations at the 'O' and 'A' level stage in which the pressure to provide for all the above needs in one operation has systematically defeated each initiative and led to the uneasy stalemate over 16+ examining that prevails at present.15

Since the creation of the CSE in 1965, the search for reform has been based upon the need for a rationalisation of the existing system - the provision of more relevant information for employers and the search for an assessment goal which would be within the grasp of and thus motivating for all pupils. The two decades which have followed the institution of the CSE in 1965 have seen four significant policy developments as part of this search - the pursuit of a common system
of examining at 16+; the rise and subsequent fall of teacher-based certification; a series of attempts at broadening and vocationalising post 16 qualifications and, perhaps most important, the 'profiles' movement. Each of these trends echoes a more general international trend as discussed in Chapter Two, thus reflecting a combination of the use of assessment procedures to influence content, regulate competition, attest to competence and control frustration.

Whilst the recommendations of the Beloe Committee which resulted in the institution of the CSE disappointed many educationists in not either abolishing public examinations or including the whole population in their scope, they were radically different from the traditional GCE in at least two important respects. First, unlike the mainly university run GCE boards, the CSE boards were essentially regional in character and explicitly designed to be teacher-dominated so that they were sensitive to and able to respond to local needs. One result of this regional autonomy was enormous divergence between the different Boards in examination procedure. The potential for such divergence had been considerably increased by the provision in the Beloe Committee's recommendation of three different modes of CSE examination: Mode I - an external examination based on a syllabus drawn up by a regional board; Mode II - an external examination based on the school's own syllabus; and Mode III - a school-based syllabus internally assessed. Whilst the CSE Boards have varied in their support for Mode III examining, the CSE was highly significant in allowing teachers a much greater role than hitherto in external certification. At the same time, however, it was a reactionary step, for in appeasing the pressing demands for public certification among the hitherto disenfranchised 'middle 40 per cent' - the top secondary modern pupils - it postponed the necessity to face up to the provision of a truly comprehensive certification procedure for
at least twenty years. The CSE also presented an administrative and curricular problem for schools in deciding which pupils to enter for GCE O-level and which for CSE, given that the latter was an explicitly inferior qualification and also lacked the credibility of tradition. Not surprisingly therefore, the CSE examinations had hardly begun before attempts were being made to devise a common system of examining at 16+.

A Common System of Examining at 16+

The Schools Council presented its proposals for a new '16+' in 1971 and in 1974 trial examinations were taken by nearly 70,000 candidates with a target date for introduction of 1980. It was recognised that a common examination per se was unlikely to be able to discriminate adequately across the ability range concerned, so that a common system of examining rather than a single exam might be more appropriate. Although reaction to the feasibility studies was mixed, by 1976 the Schools Council nevertheless felt able to recommend 'a joint 16+' to the Secretary of State for Education. Rather than face up to such a controversial issue, the then Secretary of State, Shirley Williams, prevaricated by setting up yet another committee. In 1978 the Waddell Committee reported that a single system of examining at 16+ based on a seven-point grading scale and tied into existing GCE and CSE grades was feasible. Notable in the proposals was the recommendation that the new examination be run by three or four regional consortia combining both GCE and CSE Boards and the proposal for national criteria on subject titles and syllabuses. Indeed it is these two aspects of the Waddell Committee proposals, rather than the 16+ examination itself, which have proved of major significance since they have allowed the DES to legitimate a much greater involvement on the part of central government in the whole public examination process in recent years. Given the key
role such examinations play in curriculum control, this represents a significant increase in central government's ability to influence the educational system more generally.

Despite the endorsement of many of the Waddell Committee's proposals by the 1978 White Paper, 'A Single System of Examining at 16+', even provisional commitment to a new 16+ examination was not forthcoming until February 1980, and the advent of a Conservative Secretary of State. Mark Carlisle's plans, however, included provision for the GCE and CSE Boards to retain their separate identities within the consortia and for the GCE Boards to have the right to control the top three grades of the new examination. This seemingly moderate and reasonable proposal arguably tolled the knell of the CSE Boards since it meant very few schools would choose to enter candidates for the CSE conducted examination when the maximum grade they could attain was 4. Given this proposed framework, the difficulties experienced in producing even draft national criteria in history, physics and maths, and the continued existence of separate Boards, whether the 16+ is eventually instituted may make little difference in practice. Indeed it is an interesting comment on the ambivalent role of the central ministry that many of the exam boards - notably the Joint Matriculation Board (JMB) and the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC) have been providing a 16+ examination since the early seventies and entries for this examination have risen by about 14 per cent every year - clear testimony to both the practicability and the desirability of such an examination as far as schools are concerned. As Vickerman has recently stated, "whatever doubts still linger in Elizabeth House about the need for a single system of examining, the schools themselves have made up their minds".20

The history of attempts to reform public examinations since the early sixties would be risible if it were not revealing of so many
characteristic features of English educational provision. The apparently widespread desire for a more relevant and broad-based curriculum has in practice never been strong enough to defeat the vested interests of tradition and the market. The Schools Council, nominally charged with the responsibility for such development, has proved impotent to influence policy-making in practice, and ironically its ultimate demise is being largely legitimated by this very failure to influence the course of events. It is revealing of the quite arbitrary power of a Secretary of State to ride roughshod over the combined weight of professional opinion – as when Sir Keith Joseph recently rejected the proposed criteria for the 16+ physics exam although they had the support of teachers' unions, the Association for Science Education, the Institute of Physics, the CBI and HMI (Mortimore and Mortimore, 1983). And perhaps most important of all, the history of recent attempts at exam reform reveals an amazing intensity of debate over the details of a procedure which most equivalent countries have already abandoned (see Chapter Two).

Examinations post 16

The recent history of other attempts at public examination reform tell a similar story. Another major strand of examination reform since the sixties has been the search for a means of broadening the sixth form curriculum by the provision of some kind of two-stage examination in place of GCE A-level. Thus in their Working Papers 5 and 13, the Schools Council set out proposals for a new 'modular' sixth form course based on a typical pattern of two 'major' and 4 'minor' subjects. These proposals were eventually modified into a proposal for 'Q' (qualifying) and 'F' (further) examinations, but this proposal was defeated by the
Governing Council of the Schools Council in July 1970. The vested interests of the GCE Boards - who feared the demise of A-level, of the universities who feared a dilution of standards and of the teachers unions, many of whose members feared the constraining effect on the curriculum of an extra level of examinations, combined to defeat the proposal and with it, the greater degree of teacher involvement in the assessment process the Butler-Briault report had proposed.

The 'Q' and 'F' proposals re-emerged in a modified form in 1973 as 'N' and 'F' levels in which 'F' would be further study in two of the five subjects taken at 'N' level. But, after four years of feasibility studies, this proposal was also defeated, again largely because the universities were unwilling to countenance any lessening in sixth form specialisation. What this opposition in effect amounted to was an unwillingness on the part of the intellectual elite to accept any erosion of the 'collection code' which underpins the existing university structure and thus their own status. In this they were, not surprisingly, supported by the GCE Boards. The result, reinforced by the advent of the 1979 Conservative Government, has been to exacerbate the division between the 'old' and the 'new' sixth with the former continuing to take 'A' levels and the existence of the latter leading to the continuing search for an alternative qualification. As early as 1970 the Schools Council had published a resolution supporting the introduction of an 'Extended CSE' for the 'new sixth form pupil' for whom A-levels were unsuitable and in 1972 it set out specific proposals in its Working Paper 45 '16-19 Growth and Response 1'.

Following on field trials in the early seventies, in 1976 the Schools Council recommended to the Secretary of State, Fred Mulley, the establishment of the Certificate of Extended Education - a new one-year, five subject course for those who had obtained CSE grades 2-4.
Given the uncertainty over 16+ examining and the less than whole-hearted support of the Examination Boards, in 1977 Shirley Williams set up the Keohane Committee to study the proposals. Keohane recommended a much more vocational, applied emphasis to the certificate and, in so doing, reflected the changing ideology which overtook educational provision and hence, to an extent, public examinations in the late seventies, namely an increasing utilitarianism and with it, the acceptance of a relatively explicit division between academic 'sheep' and vocational 'goats'. In the same year, the Schools Council put forward proposals for yet another examination - the Intermediate or 'I' level designed to broaden the traditional sixth form curriculum by being equivalent to about half an A-level course. Whilst in its 1980 Green Paper: 'Examinations 16-18: a Consultative Paper', the Government expressed some limited support for this proposal as a complement to the traditional two-A-level course, it rejected a CEE modelled on such traditional lines and instituted the development of yet another new exam - this time explicitly pre-vocational in character.

The undoubted influence of the work of the Further Education Unit of the DES on the government's thinking in this respect - notably through the 1979 report 'A Basis of Choice' and the 1981 report 'Vocational Preparation' - had the effect that the new certificate was to incorporate a profile assessment. In 1982 the government published its proposals for a Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE) to be run by a consortium of further education, GCE and CSE Boards and local authority associations, who would between them provide comprehensive assessment of a wide range of courses and so provide a means of linking the bewildering array of different courses available in further education and schools.

Macintosh (1983) describes the new certificate as follows:
"The CPVE has been designed as full-time education's counterpart to the New Training Initiative, with its Youth Training Programme for unemployed 16-year-olds. The certificate, which is intended for those post-16 students in schools or colleges who are not preparing for higher education, will, in the words of an article in The Times Educational Supplement dated 30 April 1982, 'be as variable as a jump-jet' and come in three forms. Marks One and Two will provide technical support for Technician Education and Business Education Courses (TEC and BEC) and will cater for those who know what kind of a job they want in a technical field or in offices and shops. Mark Three will provide more general all-purpose cover for those who do not know what they want to do or whose job aspirations are not covered by the first two. It will thus build upon the Certificate of Extended Education (CEE) and the work of the City and Guilds of London Institute (CGLI). The new 17+ certificate will almost certainly be controlled by a third quango, although what form this will take is not yet known" (p. 15).

As many people predicted, this examination has become more and more the preserve of the further education Business and Technical Education Council and the City and Guilds Examining Boards - a development which may prove to be highly significant. In theory the exclusion of the GCE and CSE Boards represents a major victory for the 'new industrialists' over the university-dominated 'old humanist' ideals of the GCE Boards and the 'public educator' commitment of the teaching profession and, hence, to a considerable extent, of the CSE Boards. In practice, the pervasiveness of the prevailing ideology is such that who actually runs the new examinations may make little difference in practice. This development - in many ways paralleled by the rapid growth of technical and vocational qualifications in France - must be read as a manifestation of the prevailing utilitarianism of the eighties in which unemployment and economic recession have served, ironically enough, to emphasise vocational training and hence, selection in education rather than its liberating role in promoting self-development and personal enquiry.

But whilst the continuing elusiveness of a common 16+ examination and the institution of a new, more vocationally-oriented CPVE is an
an important political issue in terms of the power struggles it
represents between the different interest groups in education, it is
becoming increasingly irrelevant in the educational climate of the
eighties. As suggested in Chapter Two, 'qualification inflation' and
industrial recession have together resulted in the virtual disappearance
of a formal labour market for most sixteen and seventeen year old school
leavers. Whilst the few obtain jobs through an informal network of
personal contacts, the majority, as in other industrialised countries,
are being kept off the job market either by staying on at school in
increasingly open-access sixth forms or entering some form of further
education and training, either through the government sponsored YTS
training schemes or as direct entrants to further education colleges.
One notable effect of this development has been the 'profiles' movement.

Records of Achievement

During the last ten years there has been a rapid growth in interest
and experimentation in the area of Records of Achievement or pupil
'profiles'. This term usually refers to a school-based, comprehensive
record designed to encompass detailed information on a pupil's progress
in all areas of school life and normally culminates in some form of
school-leaving report. The information included usually covers basic
skills, subject achievement, personal qualities and a statement of other
activities. Having said this, the range is enormous (Hitchcock, 1984),
extending from a completely pupil-produced 'diary' type record such as
the Swindon Record of Personal Experience (RPE) (Stansbury, 1980) and
the more recent Pupil's Personal Recording (PPR) in the West Country
to profiles where the pupil is not involved and teachers are required
to 'tick the box' in order to build up a profile of the pupil as, for
eample, in the City and Guilds 365 pro forma or the earlier and even
more influential SCRE Profile Assessment System (SCRE, 1977). The amount of variation in profiling practice is principally a result of the characteristically English system of educational innovation in which each school or local authority is free to pursue its own initiative. Lacking even that degree of communality that central legitimation and wide geographic spread gives to the activities of the GCE and CSE examination boards, the 'profiles' movement has proceeded very much in the same way as the curriculum development work of the sixties, namely through 'disease dissemination' based on a small number of highly influential models.

So powerful has the movement now become, however, with well over five hundred schools involved either individually or as consortia (Bowring, 1983) and many local authorities and even examination boards establishing their own working parties and development studies in the wake of the Schools Council's lead, that it is now a major policy issue to which £10 million of government money for development work was recently committed by Sir Keith Joseph. It is now explicit DES policy to introduce such 'Records of Achievement' for all pupils.

Thus it seems reasonable to predict that in a few years almost all pupils will be provided with some kind of school-leaving profile some of which will be criteria-referenced, some of which will include public examination results, and some of which will be exclusively pupil records. It is too early to say whether these will be institutionally, locally or nationally validated or an anarchic mixture of the three (Nuttall and Goldstein, 1984) but the importance of the movement is already apparent. (Broadfoot, 1983, 1984).

An important 'spin-off' from the interest in profiles has been the development of 'graded tests' based on the attainment of specified levels of skill, as for example in the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of
Music examinations. Pursuing the typical emphasis in profiles upon positive, personal assessment, graded tests are designed to increase motivation and indeed attainment by the provision of short-term mastery objectives. It is too early to evaluate the full potential of this movement since most development work is still at an experimental stage in England (Harrison, 1982; HM Inspectorate, 1983).

However, to the extent that such assessments do come to replace the traditional 'one-off', predominantly norm-referenced Certificate examinations — and this seems increasingly likely given current Examination Board initiatives — they have major implications for the organisation of schooling. Mixed age teaching groups would have to replace age-based classes for example, with curriculum organisation reflecting the individual needs of each pupil (Mortimore, 1983). While this idea has considerable theoretical appeal and appears to work well in hierarchical subjects such as maths and modern languages, it could also result in much tighter curriculum control at every level of schooling in which such tests were applied and a much greater emphasis on formal testing than at the present time. Whilst the advantages of such assessment in terms of pupil motivation are relatively clear, the idea of pupils' learning along a narrow path defined by a whole series of assessment hurdles once again evokes the Foucaultian concept of the norm. In a very real sense, despite their apparent psychological advantages, such tests are fundamentally a source of control, legitimating even narrower bounds to the content of schooling than exist at present. However, this analysis is necessarily rather speculative at such an early stage of the development and use of graded tests.

This is not the first time Records of Achievement for school leavers have been proposed. Precisely why it should on this occasion snowball into a major policy issue is difficult to explain. Certainly the raising
of the school leaving age to sixteen in 1972 greatly exacerbated the number of non-certifiable pupils staying on at school, since previously most of the 'bottom forty per cent' would have left before this stage. The spirit of democratic egalitarianism which so characterised the policy initiatives of the sixties as in, for example, the creation of Educational Priority Areas, the setting up of comprehensive schools and the major programme of curriculum development arguably also inspired a desire to deal justly with the whole range of pupils, not just those bright or privileged children that had traditionally been the concern of secondary education. With the rapid expansion of further and higher educational provision which was yet another characteristic of the expansionist climate of the sixties, the level of qualifications demanded of school-leavers could become steadily higher so taking some of the selection pressure away from 16+ assessment, thus creating for the first time a situation in which a major part of such assessment could be left to teachers. In many ways, the institution of Mode III examinations in both the GCE and CSE, the creation of the teacher-controlled Schools Council, and the massive teacher involvement in the Schools Council programme of curriculum development are parallel developments to that of profiles. But whereas the demise of professional autonomy in favour of more explicit accountability during the late seventies and eighties has all but stifled these other initiatives, the profiles movement continues to grow unchecked.

Part of the explanation for this is that despite the mass of development work initiated by the Schools Council on a new basis for 16+ examining, England now seems to be further from any major change in the system of public examinations at 16+ than at any time since the institution of CSE in 1965. This partly explains the enthusiasm for profiles as an alternative and more meaningful goal for
pupils than that provided by public examinations. In addition, the new needs of the burgeoning further education sector have fuelled the growth of 'profiles' as nothing else could have done since it is this area of educational provision which is most free of the constriction of historical tradition and thus able to design novel assessment procedures which will reinforce its equally novel curricular goals without the constraint of the public pressure which supports the public examination system in schools.

English institutional tradition largely restricts such innovation to 'the back door', since the need for radically new forms of assessment as a basis for the attestation of competence, and the regulation of competition conflicts with the key role external examinations have traditionally played in providing for system control. The comparison with France is particularly helpful here since in France, the traditional dependence on a rather different basis for system control has meant competence, competition and individual control requirements have received priority in recent educational policy-making. In the place of a plethora of local initiatives has been a centrally-designed and nationally imposed 'orientation' procedure the spirit of which - as is apparent from Chapter Five - is very similar to the profiles movement.

Thus under the continuing and pronounced national differences in assessment practice, it is possible to identify in both France and England at the present time a common pressure towards a quite different set of assessment procedures in which the overt and explicit sorting of examination-based selection, like the overt categorisation of subjects under the 'collection code' is being replaced by the covert 'channelling' of continuous, detailed and pervasive assessment. As Bernstein (1977) has suggested, this form of evaluation, along with other aspects of 'invisible pedagogy' such as integrated curricula and progressivism,
provides for an altogether new form of social control based on 'mechanical solidarity' (see Chapter Three). The replacement of 'sudden death' assessment by benign and positive guidance is producing a form of control that is very much more difficult for the individual to resist and of which he may not even be aware. Although the recent unpopularity of 'invisible pedagogy' has brought Bernstein's argument into some disrepute, the role of profiles in England and the orientation procedure in France in reinforcing a much broader, more informal curriculum in which personal qualities may count for as much as academic ability, is clearly of great significance. On the one hand it is important in providing a goal for all pupils - thereby reducing frustration and promoting social control - and, on the other, it allows a much wider application of norms than hitherto in which it is not just the individual's intellectual activity which is subject to 'hierarchical authority and normalising judgement' (see p. 310) but, as in the elementary schools of the nineteenth century, the whole person.

In a recent paper, Ranson (1984) has extended this argument to seventeen plus assessment, suggesting that the 'new tertiary tripartism' is almost an exact replica of the old secondary tripartism and the control that provided. The combined effect of this trend towards educational utilitarianism combined with on-going 'orientation' is likely to be, Ranson suggests, earlier rather than later, selection for different curriculum paths, selection every bit as divisive as that provided for under the 1944 Act but now endowed with the new legitimating rhetoric of guidance and personal choice necessary to a much more aspiring society. The implications of this development are discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven.

It is impossible to evaluate these policy debates fully however without some understanding of the broader and complementary role
evaluation procedures play in system control for it is the character of the educational system itself which determines the institutional form of the procedures set up to provide for attestation and selection. It is the division between the general requirements on educational systems in industrial societies and the determining characteristics of the national context which govern the institutional expression of those general requirements that is the justification for Part II of this thesis and underpins the paramount importance of an analogous role of evaluation in system control. An explication of this argument through an analysis of the role played by evaluation procedures in the organisation and control of English educational provision thus forms the final part of Chapter Six.

System Control : The English Approach

Before the mid-nineteenth century, the concept of system control and hence, of accountability, would have had little meaning in the context of the largely ad hoc educational provision of the time. As the century grew older, however, it became increasingly apparent that voluntary agencies and in particular the Church could no longer provide schooling on the scale necessary to train and control the masses for the new industrial society in which so many of the old skills and old social codes were being swept away. As already suggested, this was the time when the privileged sections of society were having to resort to schooling as the new means of perpetuating that position of privilege that land and money could no longer ensure. Thus it was necessary both that the state should provide at least an elementary education for the masses in order that they should acquire both relevant skills and appropriate work and social disciplines, and that the state should be able to control the amount and content of schooling according to the
needs of the economy and the funds available.

But when a form of education system eventually emerged, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, its character was quintessentially English. In no sense could it be an explicit attempt to impose a cultural norm through the education system as in the French 'mission civilisatrice' or the German 'Kulturstaat'. The power of local interests (Simon, 1965) and an ideology of grass-roots autonomy which was already deeply rooted in English institutional history meant that central control of the English education system - if it existed at all - had to be largely informal. (Johnson, 1980; Fiske, 1982).

It will be argued, following the theoretical model set out in Chapter Two, that assessment procedures have had a crucial role to play in this respect as the currency on which accountability is based. In Chapter Two it was suggested that whereas in the centralised system, the emphasis is on the evaluation of educational provision and processes to see if central directives are being carried out, the emphasis in a decentralised system is much more on the evaluation of educational products. The market economy of qualification trading is able to ensure a very high level of institutional conformity despite the ideology of professional autonomy.

The remainder of this chapter is devoted to a detailed consideration of the foregoing argument through an analysis of the evolving framework of accountability procedures in the English educational system. It considers the different forms of control provided by the three major dimensions of accountability - the professional, the moral and the bureaucratic - the latter inevitably weak in a formally centralised system, and essentially the backdrop against which the struggle between central, local and professional interests for control of the 'currency' of moral and professional accountability is waged.
This 'currency' is conceptualised in terms of educational assessment procedures, notably public examinations and other forms of testing and monitoring on the basis of which individual, institutional and systemic performance can be judged. A central element in the argument is that the very effective control so provided is control by colonisation rather than coercion, though 'normative-reeducative' rather than 'power-coercive' strategies (Chin, 1968). Since the educational goals represented in these various assessment procedures became the currency of the self-imposed moral and professional accountability of teachers and other actors in the educational system. To put it another way, in the decentralised system where bureaucratic prescription and coercion cannot be legitimated, it is the ability to influence professional values which is critical in determining which educational goals are pursued. How this can be brought about is explored in the pages that follow.

First, however, it is necessary to give a brief account of some of the more significant developments in the English educational system; the changes in ideology and policy that have taken place in response to changes in the broader social context. The purpose of such an account is to provide a context against which to consider the specific issue of the different ways in which assessment procedures have been used to provide for system control at different times. In what follows, a number of the more significant institutionalisations of such control are studied in some detail. Particular emphasis is put on showing how those elements in assessment-based, system control which have been more or less constant in English educational provision, the public examination system and other kinds of inspection and monitoring have been made responsive to the changing pressures on educational provision. Prominent in such an account must be the on-going struggle between various interest
groups to determine what is to be assessed and hence the criteria for accountability and professional priorities. Since the overall intention of such an analysis is to illustrate how the more general theoretical framework of Part I might be applied, descriptive references to the historical context as such are kept to a minimum. Similarly descriptive references to the general structure and functioning of the English educational system are necessarily brief. Excellent studies in both these areas already exist (for example, Lawson and Silver, 1973; OECD, 1980, Salter and Tapper, 1981). The emphasis in this analysis is on identifying the more ephemeral phenomena of ideology and perceived constraint as these are represented in assessment procedures. Apart from some brief reference to some of the more significant historical developments, the analysis is mainly focussed on the last two decades in which the quite unprecedented public interest in accountability provides an ideal subject for exploring the essential characteristics of English systemic control.

The Beginnings of Control

One explanation for the tradition of weak central control in English education is the argument put forward by Finer (1970) that in England politics are dominated by class issues simply "because nothing else is important". The relative homogeneity in the values of the English bourgeoisie (in contrast to those of the French) has allowed the development of a stable two party system and democratic state (Smith, 1980). The gradual political transformation from absolutism to democracy in England versus the abrupt transition on the continent has in turn affected the nature of the administration. If in England the central administration machinery has traditionally grown according to need and against sometimes powerful opposition from vested interests...
rather than as the result of any deliberate modelling (as in the French Napoleonic style) (Laqueur, 1973), the power of local government has also grown in proportion to this weakness (Allsop, 1979).

The English education system is decentralised to an extent that has at times bordered on anarchy. It was born of a very different feudal legacy than the French (Veulard, 1970; Archer, 1980), political and ecclesiastical interests having combined to support the development of strong local government from mediaeval times. The establishment of a legal basis for a system of education in 1870 was more an act of recognition than the result of any very deliberate attempt to create such a system. Rather the necessarily rapid development of other public services such as transport and welfare at this time required a state infrastructure which only served to reinforce the independent power of local government.

It would be quite wrong however to deduce from the formal allocation of responsibilities between central and local government that central government does not have a powerful role to play. In the case of education the DES exerts a strong normative influence despite and perhaps to a degree even because of its weak bureaucratic powers. Other arms of central government exert strong financial control, notably the Treasury and the Department of the Environment. Just as HMI are by far the most formally independent inspectorate and yet are subject to considerable hidden 'channelling', so the 'guidance' which Whitehall exerts has a powerful role to play. But the earliest and most enduring control devices were particularly concerned with 'assessment' - gathering information in a variety of different ways in order to monitor and hence influence the standards being achieved by schools and the workings of the system as a whole. Traditionally, systemic control in England has had little to do with the operation of a central bureaucracy and a
great deal more to do with local and national testing, inspection and monitoring, national commissions, and, above all, public examinations.

One of the earliest manifestations of the desire to use assessment to monitor and hence influence the standards achieved by schools was the setting up in 1839 of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education, whose role was to monitor the expenditure of grants-in-aid to the National and British societies for school building. This was to be done through the first national machinery for evaluating and influencing schools - Her Majesty's Inspectorate (Silver, 1979). The function of HMI, however, was to disseminate good practice and to provide information for government on the state of the nation's schools; they were a "communication system between government and its main educational agency on the one hand and the schools for which they provided support on the other hand" (Silver, 1979, p. 5). Characteristically control was explicitly excluded from the terms of reference.

The Revised Code

But the widening gulf between elementary and 'secondary' provision (Higginson, 1981) in the second half of the century and the rapid increase in state financial involvement in the provision and management of mass education (Simon, 1965) soon produced a need for more explicit control procedures for elementary education. The result was the 'Revised Code' recommended by the 1861 Newcastle Commission to provide for formal control of the elementary school curriculum, which soon became known as the 'payment by results' system. Morris (1970) suggests that one of the principal reasons for instituting the 'payment by results' system in 1862 was that it enabled the volume of central government activity to be reduced given that the trebling in the number of schools between 1831 and 1861 had made the Kay-Shuttleworth system of ad hoc grants for
each school unmanageable. Thus the Revised Code offered each school a
block grant based on a common formula, a system designed to cope with
the rapid expansion of elementary school provision that was then taking
place. "If indeed its immediate aim was to curb expenditure then it
was successful" (Simon, 1965). By contrast, Silver (1978) has put
forward the view of some recent historians (e.g. Hurt, 1971) that one
of the principal if covert motives for the Revised Code was to reinforce
the secular nature of the curriculum and the centrality of the Three
'R's against the traditional power of the Church. By successfully
introducing the Revised Code, Lowe had vindicated the state's right to
make the "content of elementary education meet the wider needs of
contemporary society" (Hurt, 1971).

The precise balance of motives in the institution of the Revised
Code is less important than its palpable effects which provide clear
testimony to the significance of assessment procedures in the emerging
system of education in terms of the themes identified, namely competence,
content, competition, and through it all, control. The principles of
the 'Revised Code' corresponded exactly to the cost-effectiveness
principles characteristic of business at that time - "a logical
development of the Benthamite idea in subjecting education to the
yard-stick to which the Victorian expected his business to be subjected"
(Midwinter, 1970). In Robert Lowe's famous words, a system which ...
"if it is not cheap, it shall be efficient, and if it is not efficient,
it shall be cheap".

The system required the overall level of school grants - from which
teachers were paid - to be dependent on the proficiency of individual
children in meeting the standards laid down for the various grades.
The effect of the 'Code', which was to encourage drilling, rote-learning,
and frequent testing in the three 'R's, to the exclusion of almost every
aspect of the curriculum, academic or social, was to last for generations. Although providing less overt emphasis on character training than the schooling of the early part of the century, the system provided an excellent example of what Johnson (1976) has called the "cul-de-sac of skills" in its emphasis on the unquestioning and diligent application of pupils to the learning of very basic skills to precisely defined standards. As such it was also another manifestation of the kind of control external examinations were already encouraging in restricting learning to memory and repetition rather than creativity and criticism. The Revised Code was also significant in other, less obvious ways.

Firstly, it reinforced the trend in all types of school towards a greater stress on assessment by implying that the outcomes of education could and should be measured and by implication, reinforced the growing emphasis on academic rather than non-cognitive development by implying that outcomes of education not amenable to systematic measurement were not important - a view that is still prevalent today (Broadfoot, 1978a). Secondly, and quite fundamentally, it initiated the concept that accountability for the use of public funds could and should be reckoned in terms of the academic performance of the scholars.

In 1867 it became possible under the Code of Regulations governing elementary schools to add other subjects to the original standard subjects so that by the 1890s the number of subjects had greatly increased (Simon, 1965). Teachers were given 'guides' rather than set books. Indeed by 1895 the system was already crumbling, so that by 1907 the curriculum was open to a measure of negotiation between teachers and HMI to the extent that the 1911 Schools Board Report shows an increasing difference in provision for different schools, areas and sexes (Eaglesham, 1956).

Musgrave (1980) explains the 'rise and fall' of the Revised Code
in terms of the newly established education system's development through Beeby's (1966) three stages - 'formalism', 'transition' and 'meaning'. All education systems, Beeby suggests, can be located at a certain point on the continuum linking these three stages, a continuum which is characterised by an increasingly sophisticated teaching profession, management superstructure and institutional provision which leads in turn to a much greater measure of professional autonomy for teachers as they can be assumed to have sufficiently internalised the systemic priorities as to pursue them without formal supervision.

Whilst suffering from the disadvantages of any deterministic theory, Beeby's model points up the importance of certain administrative and professional developments in the education system at this time which allowed and before long required a more flexible system of control to be found, and hence tolled the knell of the 'Revised Code'. Critical in this respect was the growth of teacher unionisation, local authority power and public examinations. These three developments were closely related.

**Teacher Unionism**

The growth of teacher unionism may be seen as directly related to the 'payment by results' system and one cause of its decline. The National Union of Elementary Teachers was founded in 1870, the same year as the major Education Act, arguably because it was already apparent that the real power in elementary education was the state and not the School Boards. A principal factor in this, according to Parry and Parry (1980, p. 356) was "the fact that the state controlled the certificate and was able to 'manipulate' it, [which] meant that the elementary teachers were in a market where the state was close to being a monopolist". The effect of "forty years in which the work of public elementary schools had been dominated by annual examinations conducted
by the government inspectors and which determined the size of the school's annual grant" (Sutherland, 1977, p. 149) had been to build the National Union of Teachers into a force to be reckoned with. The 1902 Education Act helped to fuel this growth as it meant that elementary schools became increasingly irrelevant to mainstream provision, one effect of which was to allow elementary teachers considerable autonomy. Thus, for example, it became politically necessary that teachers be involved in scholarship examinations and elementary head teachers were often involved in either recommending candidates for the examination or marking their scripts. "Until 1935 the NUT was willing to conduct the entire organisation of their free-place examination for any local authority who requested it" (Sutherland, 1977, p. 150).

There is a certain irony in the history of teachers' attitudes to selection and the use of standardised achievement tests. In the very early days of mass educational provision, the 'payment by results' system reflected an assumption that it was the teacher, rather than the child, who was responsible for learning having taken place. The rise of intelligence testing and its associated assumptions about fixed learning capacity should have been welcome to teachers as a means of absolving them from taking the responsibility for pupils' learning. Instead, their attitude has tended to be ambivalent, reflecting a tension which was already apparent in the earliest days of group (i.e. standardised) testing. In the early years of the century, teachers campaigned vigorously for the formal inclusion in scholarship examinations of some kind of teacher record based on observations and class tests. Their motives may be deduced as a mixture of 'public educator' concern over the anti-educational effects of examinations and concern over their own professional status, both bound up in the recent professional folk memory of the Revised Code.
Whilst standardised tests in one way boosted teachers' professional status in giving the learning process and the evaluation thereof an esoteric status based on specialist knowledge, they were also a serious threat, implying as they did that the teacher could make little difference to the child's development. Thus, where such tests contradict their estimation of a child's ability or achievement, teachers have always tended to trust their own judgement (Gipps et al., 1983). Croll et al., 1984) partly at least because not to do so would be to devalue their own claim to professional expertise and indirectly their bargaining position.

Silver (1979) identifies two other developments brought about by the School Board era which have remained characteristic of English educational provision. The first is the delicate balance of power between the lay interests of the elementary school managers, the newly created professional role of the local inspectors and the equally newly unionised teachers who then as now were subject to considerable, if informal, control by these professional mentors in their practice and in the key area of promotion. The fact that such inspectors were recruited from their own number meant that their institution helped foster the growth of teacher professionalism. Thus, Silver suggests, together with local authority involvement in teacher training, university training for secondary school teachers and the new patterns of control which began to make a unified teaching profession look a possibility, by the beginning of the First World War, teachers' increasing professional identity meant that they were beginning to be subject to the internal control of professional norms as well as the external pressures of HMI, local inspectors, and examination results. The significance of these early developments for the contemporary basis of teacher accountability and control in England will be explored in
more detail later in this chapter. This brief account serves to highlight at this stage how the important differences in the management of educational provision in England and France, already enshrined by the turn of the century, were crucial in determining the emerging power structures in education and the characteristic ways in which the basis for either conflict or consensus between interest groups was created.  

The spirit of the 'payment by results' system can also be traced in the custom of appointing Government Commissions on particular issues which emerged at the turn of the century. Silver (1979) suggests that after the Newcastle Commission of 1861 in particular revealed the shortcomings of existing means of surveillance and control in education, this prompted the practice of using such Commissions to bring "data and evaluations ... into the political arena [to] become a possible basis for legislation" (p. 11). The monitoring of educational activity, the flow of information within the system is a key element in system accountability and hence, control. Thus the institution of Commissions of this sort in the nineteenth century can be seen in the same light as innovations such as the Assessment of Performance Unit in more recent times and a characteristic feature of a decentralised system in which government, both local and central, depends upon such information to provide for its own accountability to electors and, hence, for its own policy-making. In centralised countries such as France it has been more possible to assume the nature and quality of educational activity because of the tight control of all ingredients in the educational process, notably resources, management and curriculum.

Public examinations

Another 'quality control' device was provided at this time in the rapid growth of public examinations. It has been suggested that these examinations were increasingly important in restricting access to various
points in the occupational hierarchy to those with proven competence. The pressure to gain such qualifications was highly instrumental in ensuring the efficient functioning of schools. As early as the first half of the nineteenth century, Woodward and Brereton - two contemporary educationists - had recognised the power a system of external examinations would have to bring about curriculum unity, common organisation and a raising of standards in the teaching profession, whilst at the same time safeguarding the schools from state control as such (Roach, 1971). Thus examinations were already being regarded as the alternative to a centralised system of teaching and inspection and in this sense, they were a political device.

The fact that public examinations were so early enshrined into English educational provision with the explicit intention of protecting local autonomy, significantly affected the organisational development of the educational system thereafter. Only twenty years after the institution of (mass) compulsory education for all, the determining characteristics of the control of its provision were already apparent, and, in particular, the crucial role that assessment and monitoring were to play in a system where ideological tradition and associated institutional development had already made explicit central direction a political as well as a practical impossibility (Bishop, 1971).

It is indeed no accident that England is characterised by one of the highest degrees of school autonomy and at the same time, one of the greatest preoccupations with public examinations of any country. As a result, 'good' schools tend to be identified as those with a good record of public examination passes and particularly a high proportion of entrants to the twin academic pinnacles of the education system - Oxford and Cambridge Universities. As a result, too, a 'good' teacher tends to be defined in terms of his or her ability to get pupils through public
examinations. Combined with the fact that the various Examining Boards are dominated by personnel representing various established interests in society, such as the universities and the professions, the power of the public examination system to define and maintain standards in the interests of that 'establishment' is immense and all the more effective for being covert.

In recognising public examinations as an alternative to a centrally-directed education system, many people also recognised the potential power of such examinations for imposing their own form of control and, as was suggested in the first part of this chapter, many feared and deplored their effects. When Selby-Bigge asserted in 1927 on behalf of the Board of Education "we must look to examinations rather than inspection to check, test and secure the efficiency of public education" (Silver, 1979), he summed up the English educational tradition very well for although the precise emphasis on different control procedures varies according to the prevailing economic and social climate, the importance of assessment procedures in this process does not.

Control in the Post-1944 Era

A thumb-nail sketch of the essential aspect of English educational provision in the early twentieth century reveals a system still dominated by the nineteenth century legacy of the struggles of non-conformists and Anglicans alike for control over the emerging educational system - a struggle which gave rise to an 'anarchic' ideology of teacher autonomy and governmental interference as a monstrous entity to be resisted at all costs - a situation in which central government was typically happy to concur (Salter and Tapper, 1981). By charging the local authority with the statutory responsibility for the running, staffing and teaching of its schools, the 1944 Act posed no threat to
the traditional alliance between teachers and local authorities. The result was that a good deal of what was officially local authority responsibility devolved upon individual schools and head teachers. When the grouped School Certificate Examination was replaced in 1951 by the single subject O and A levels, this gave yet more freedom to individual schools (Brooksbank, 1980).

There were, of course, inevitable limitations on teacher autonomy: teacher-pupil ratio, the inability of most schools to choose their pupils, public expectation of appropriate teaching and moral rectitude, and external examinations. The curriculum equally was subject to a variety of influences, including HMI and local inspectors, subject associations, national statutory bodies, and standing Advisory Councils, as well as periodic government committee reports and the educational press. Nevertheless it is probably true to say that during the 1950s and 1960s, the reality of teacher autonomy in practice approached more nearly to the prevailing ideology than it ever had before. The growing willingness to trust teachers' 'professionalism' which made possible this autonomy at the level of practice was also the basis for teachers to have a strong voice in policy-making at both local and national levels.

Price (1980) has suggested that until recently the promulgation of educational policy was largely the prerogative of the National Union of Teachers on the one hand, and the Association of Education Committees — representing local educational authorities — on the other. Within these two colossi, Price suggests, the ebb and flow of both Established and Roman church interests, charismatic heads, individual chief education officers, local and national inspectors, universities, educationists, civil servants and even Ministers did little to damage the dominant consensus between the providers and practitioners of education.

That this consensus was possible was directly attributable to the
social democratic, egalitarian ideology of the post-war era which for professional and public alike was the basis for a deep commitment to the reforming power of education for social progress.

The Plowden Era

The early 1960s witnessed the recognition of the key role teachers were playing in policy making as it became increasingly institutionalised. The establishment of the, nominally at least, teacher-dominated Schools Council in 1964 reflected more than any other single event the prevailing trust in teachers and the general enthusiasm for reform and development, particularly with regard to the curriculum. It is widely accepted that the Plowden Report of 1967 marked the high point of this tide, shot through as it was with the conviction that schools could help to overcome social problems if teachers were allowed to exercise their professional judgement in relation to the needs and interests of the individual child (Becher and Maclure, 1978). But the Black Papers (Cox and Dyson, 1969a, 1969b, 1970, 1975, 1977) bear ample testament to the concern of certain sections of society even at this time, over the apparent movement away from traditional curricula, pedagogy, discipline and internal grading practices in schools, in favour of teacher autonomy. Both the setting up of the Schools Council in 1964 and the development of the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) in 1963 - an examination designed to give maximum freedom to individual schools and teachers in curriculum and assessment - were significant in ceding a substantial responsibility for the definition and control of educational standards to bodies dominated by teachers where before, through the Secondary Schools Examination Council, the DES itself had close control over public assessment and thus educational standards. In addition, the existence of three different modes in the CSE greatly increased the number of syllabuses - as many as one thousand different papers in a
single subject for a single board - thus preventing any close scrutiny of courses by the Schools Council - of either CSE or O-level syllabuses, unlike pre-1964 practice. Becher and Maclure (1978) explain this change as the expansion of secondary education from elite to mass proportions which strained the traditional mechanism for central control of the public curriculum almost to breaking point. In England, they suggest, external examinations had been one of the most crucial mechanisms of control in a highly decentralised system and their importance in this respect may be one reason why any attempt to reform or abolish them meets with a good deal of opposition and concern over the likelihood of thereby encouraging 'mediocrity'. Even the attempt to institute the relatively minor change of uniting GCE and CSE into a common system of examining at 16+ has now been under debate for nearly twenty years.

If Plowden was the high point of the tide, it also marked its turning, and with the 1970s came a fairly rapid crumbling of the faith which had supported the previous decades of educational expansion. As the faith crumbled, so did the consensus which had overarched policy deliberations since 1944. This change had been heralded as early as 1960 when the then Conservative Minister of Education, David Eccles, had announced that he intended "to make the Ministry's voice heard rather more often and positively" (Dorn and Troyna, 1982, p. 178). But it was in the mid seventies, that the tide of industrial renewal washed over the DES at last. Whereas the ideology of democracy had found its expression in the sixties in support for diversity, in the seventies this was reinterpreted into support for greater consistency of provision and, hence, central rationalisation.

"During the 1970s, the DES assumed a much more assertive role in educational policy, in relation to its partners in the educational alliance ... Policy-making which was traditionally finely balanced between a centralised and decentralised system has become far less pluralistic in
nature ... The contributions of non-governmental groups to decision-making have been gradually restricted as the central government has sought to impose national goals upon the rest of the system" (Litt and Parkinson, 1979, p. 15).

Increasingly, too, these goals were being influenced by industry's demand for a vocationally-skilled labour force rather than the less utilitarian professional ideology of teachers. Writing in 1973 House suggested:

"The major shift in values is from the individualistic values, the traditional emphasis, to societal goals and values, from the individual to the government. The long-standing consensus on traditional aims has been broken and the pattern of educational government is at issue". 45

Thus whilst the individual is still the unit of account, it is the collective, rather than the individual, goals of education which are increasingly evident in the rhetoric.

Recession and Utilitarianism: The Era of Accountability

The speed and scale of the changes which took place may be attributed to the concatenation of the two main causes of this change in the tide - the economic depression which set in in the early seventies, and the changing style of government, at every level. As the growing shortage of public money combined with an equal measure of disillusion about the benefits of education, the pressure for a more utilitarian approach in schools correspondingly increased. At the same time, the prevailing fashion for a corporate management approach to government and the more and more bureaucratic nature of civil service activity as the complexity of its functions increased, meant this utilitarian ideology was reinforced by an uncharacteristic demand for bureaucratic accountability at every level of the education system. No longer was professional responsibility an adequate basis for public confidence in what was going on in the nation's classrooms (Evans, 1977).

Particularly noticeable in the early seventies was the growing opposition between central government and teachers over pay and a resurgence
in the social, political and curricular power of the main teacher unions to influence English education (Banks, 1977). The equally uncharacteristic interest in education of non-educational bodies such as industry and broadcasting at this time combined with a developing economic crisis to increase central government's negotiating strength vis-à-vis, for example, the TUC, and the desire for national rationalisation of educational provision. The associated phenomenon of teacher unemployment also weakened the latter's bargaining power. Not surprisingly, the existence of increasingly visible lobbies in education led fairly rapidly to public concern over the operation of the education system and specifically, to a demand for a greater say in the running of individual schools (Sallis, 1979).

Against this background of a sudden and profound reversal of the educational status quo which had prevailed more or less unchallenged for 25 years must be set the specific and qualitatively different developments of the 1970s - changes in budgetary policy, in curriculum, in assessment and in administration, all of which combined to make accountability an explicit issue.

One of the most predictable and widespread attempts to curb the power of the teaching profession was the upsurge of a whole variety of educational testing activities. Another, not unconnected, development was the local government reform of 1974. Later, more explicit moves to exercise a greater central control of the curriculum became apparent. At the same time, the institutional expressions of teachers' professional power - notably the Schools Council and the CSE - correspondingly came under attack.

The institution of the Macfarlane Committee on the 16-19 age group which reported in 1981 illustrates this change well. In a radical departure from previous practice, the Committee excluded that wide range
of professional and lay interests deemed necessary for such a wide-ranging question. In particular, it excluded teachers. The format of the Committee - civil servants and local authority representatives chaired by a Minister and 'underpinned' by another group of central and local government officials - could not reflect more clearly the changing basis for policy making. This explicit commitment to a bureaucratic approach to policy-making marked the final stage in the growing ostracism of professional interests which characterised the seventies.

In all this, central government had more or less consciously been increasingly abrogating to itself more and more responsibility for the direction of the education system. Given the economic climate and the associated rise of the 'New Right' laissez-faire monetarism, such a move for a government committed to individual initiative was at first sight contradictory. In this respect it is important to consider the precise nature of this increasing control. Whilst a commitment to egalitarianism might argue for a central uniformity of provision, a commitment to utilitarianism argues for a 'free for all' in terms of provision. While "industrial decline has egalitarianism by the windpipe, legitimating inequality in the name of efficiency", increased central control is essentially an economic strategy little concerned with more socialist arguments for centralisation as a basis for social justice (Ranson, 1980).

The two principal goals of central government in this respect would appear to be the control of expenditure on education and the control of educational standards through a combination of curriculum and assessment strategies. These two policies are linked by the commitment expressed in the Ruskin College speech, for the government

"to take the necessary financial power to give teeth to its intentions; the control, through specific grants, of up to 20 per cent of local expenditure, is a stated aim" (Banks, 1977, p. 7).
But it was central government's attempts at curriculum intervention which were perhaps most uncharacteristic. It has been argued that the particular concatenation of circumstances leading to the institution of mass educational provision in late nineteenth century England led to central government's acceptance of a relatively weak role, such control as it did exert coming through inspection and assessment rather than prescription. The details of the curriculum were to be the responsibility of local authorities, a responsibility with which they were statutorily charged in the 1944 Act. But, as at least one Secretary of State for Education has recognised:

"The curriculum is a matter in which many people have a stake; parents, teachers, employers, trades unions, Parliament and, of course, the government itself. We have, through discussion and debate, to produce the most satisfactory curricula we can" (DES Press release, Oct. 22, 1976).

As Banks (1977) suggests,

"It is one of the features of a decentralised system that, as long as roles and co-operative strategies between the different levels of authority are not defined, the status quo is easily maintained, whether by politicians, civil servants or teachers. The current stress on accountability reflects an alarmed consensus that the status quo is inadequate for the tasks of today; a combination of events had made it possible for the central government to focus this alarm and open up the issues for discussion" (p. 13).

This last phrase may well be read as a euphemism for intervention.

The first overt step in this direction was Mr. Callaghan's Ruskin College speech in 1976, which echoed prevailing public concern over supposedly falling standards and launched the 'Great Debate' in which the call for a 'core' curriculum and more vocationally-oriented skill-training were prominent. Several recent research studies have demonstrated that employers are not dissatisfied with the young people they recruit and are not in fact very interested in educational qualifications as such (MSC, 1977; Cumming, 1983). Nevertheless, the apparent failure of teachers to prepare young people for work adequately provided an ideal excuse for
central government to take out of the hands of teachers the responsibility for defining educational goals. If previously the education system had been a rather indeterminate process in professional hands, it was now to become under public control.

The strength of feeling behind the increasingly interventionist stance of the Department of Education and Science at this time is clearly expressed in the notorious Yellow Book which was never intended for public consumption. A document:

"full of prejudice and half truths, distortions and downright whoppers offered as advice by the DES to the Prime Minister. Schools, teachers, unions and the Schools Council were all slandered by anonymous contributors. Not only were the victims given no opportunity to challenge the document, before presentation, but the DES at first actually denied its existence....".

Max Morris' vitriolic critique of DES secrecy scarcely exaggerates the bitterness of the criticism this document expressed. Its sequel, the 1977 Green Paper, set out in more measured tones the proposed government solution - more central direction and a 'core' curriculum.

The first step towards completing this pincer movement of control was to reawaken local authorities to their statutory responsibility for the curricula in their schools and by so doing put into question the ideology of de facto control over curricular decisions on the part of teachers which had been the norm for some considerable time. In 1977, Circular 14/77 was sent out to all local authorities asking them to report on the curricula of their schools, so prompting "the best exercise in creative writing in recent years!".

The publication of the results of this survey (DES, 1979) together with the HMI Primary and Secondary Surveys (1978, 1980) revealed considerable local variation in provision. Thus November 1979 is generally taken to mark a new stage in the move towards not only more
centralised control of the curriculum, but a significant increase in the ability of central government to justify such an overtly radical departure from English educational traditions on the basis of this information. In their introductory commentary, the Secretaries of State for Education express, somewhat coyly, their belief that the time is ripe for central government "to give a lead in the process of reaching a national consensus on a desirable framework for the curriculum ... [which] would give central government a firmer basis for the development of national policies and the deployment of resources".

What this 'framework' would look like became apparent in early 1980 with the publication of the DES' 'Framework for the Curriculum'. At the same time, HM Inspectorate published its riposte to what it saw as the inadequacies of the DES 'Framework' in 'A View of the Curriculum'. In fact, both documents were unexceptionable in themselves, being largely rather bland statements of conventional practice. The response from educationists to this message of caution, utilitarianism and retrenchment came more in sorrow than anger, since few had expected any significant innovatory thrust from such an exercise. As Chanan (1980) has suggested, "the most likely end product of such a process would be conventional practice minus the innovation" (p. 8).

Nevertheless, the publication of these volumes signalled that the public disquiet of a decade had culminated in a quite specific policy change. The impact of the documents on practice is much harder to judge, although it seems unlikely that either schools or local authorities are free at the present time to make any curricular decisions not directly dictated by very basic financial considerations. Indeed, given the English tradition of opposition to overt central control it is not surprising that government attempts to introduce a greater measure of rationalisation and national responsibility into educational provision
should be via financial measures rather than statute, by using what Kogan (1972) refers to as non-operational powers. Maclure has suggested that the issue of cost is central to understanding these contemporary initiatives in that the priority of keeping costs down restricts central government to negative interventions only, since it lacks the resources to support positive initiatives. This lack of finance in itself is enough to prevent the idea of a core curriculum becoming a reality since it requires allowing local authorities not to pursue such a policy where this cannot be done within expenditure constraints. On the other hand, these same financial constraints are likely to lead to a different sort of increased control where the need to facilitate economies such as shared courses or staff re-deployment will drive local authorities to pursue greater homogeneity between schools and allow central authorities, via the new block grant, to press for greater homogeneity between local authorities.

Thus on this logic it is possible to argue that far from wishing to exert increased central control of the curriculum, "it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the Secretary of State has neither the power nor the inclination to monitor and enforce Section 8 of the Education Act [1944] in any meaningful way", a quotation from the Times Educational Supplement leader article (6.3.81), in which it is argued local authorities will be allowed not to provide music lessons if this is the only way they can conform to the first priority as far as central government is concerned of keeping within their budget. This case well illustrates a situation in which central government's desire to intervene or not to intervene depends upon its perception of what seems most expedient to its larger political projects of reducing state expenditure and encouraging national economic growth by the promotion of laisser-faire social policy and personal rather than state responsibility. The
contradictions inherent in this attitude are only matched by the contradictory attitude of professionals and the public who, depending on the circumstances both want and reject 'etatism'.\textsuperscript{52} It is arguably only the prevailing financial circumstances which has deflected public pressure of leadership, hitherto invested in such semi-autonomous Quangos as the Schools Council, to the DES itself,\textsuperscript{53} that is, from bodies representing the consensus to one representing national leadership.

There is now a growing body of literature which seeks to account for and assess the implications of what appears to be an increasingly interventionist stance towards education on the part of central government at the present time (e.g. Ranson, 1980; Salter and Tapper, 1981; Crispin, 1983). Although there are some quite explicit manifestations of this trend — such as the recent DES curriculum documents — most of the evidence is extremely difficult to unravel from a confusion of other developments in which changing ideologies, economic recession, local government reorganisation and institutional reform have been prominent. Consequently there is less agreement about whether and if so, why, the DES has actually set out to pursue such a policy. Indeed as Dale (1983) suggests there are good grounds for believing that such a radical change in the traditional stance of English central government vis-à-vis the education system has rather been forced upon the DES by the activities of other branches of government, in particular, the Department of Employment and its Manpower Services Commission.

Certainly a consideration of some of the more significant of recent educational developments supports the argument that growing central government influence in education, if it exists at all, must be seen as the overt exercising of hitherto covert powers in response to the impetus of economic recession on the one hand, and an increasingly bureaucratic, corporate management approach to government on the other.
In what follows it will be argued that the recent trend towards more explicit bureaucratic accountability apparently initiated by the DES, has had relatively little effect - apart from provoking a storm of opposition - in comparison to the DES' role in a much more subtle restructuring of professional discourse which is currently taking place - notably through a changing emphasis in the content of assessment procedures and hence, in the language of accountability. To understand why this should be so, it is necessary to look at the various accountability relations within English education in rather more detail.

Modes of Bureaucratic Accountability

Mention has already been made of the historical circumstances which led to central government in England being largely unwilling, as well as unable to attempt the creation of a highly bureaucratised, centrally-controlled education system like that in France. Instead, central government came to depend on more or less direct forms of educational assessment to be the channels through which it could exert its influence and in a few cases, explicit control.

Apart from its minimal statutory obligations as set out in the various education acts, the formal powers of the DES are limited to those identified by David (1977). Leaving aside the setting of a value framework, these are principally the control of resources and the monitoring of local authority activity. It is this kind of power which is associated with explicit accountability involving legal or financial sanctions. For the most part the control so engendered is negative and inhibitory rather than positive and facilitatory (Pattison, 1979).

Newsom (1979) suggests that
"what the Department can do - and does well and conscientiously - is to prevent things happening. It is designed as a permission-refuser. No you can't build that there here; nor shut this or open that. But on its own behalf the DES can do little to or for schools. Its creative ideas have to find expression through others, principally the Local Education Authorities ... It has a motor-cycle engine and the brakes of a juggernaut" (p. 8).

This network of formal controls is also referred to by Salter and Tapper (1981):

"all LEAs operate within an established network of national policies : the length of school life, salaries paid to teachers, minimum building standards and maximum building costs and pupil-teacher ratios. Any consideration of departmental control must in the first instance recognise that this framework exists and itself sets limits upon an LEA's capacity to deviate too far from central guidelines. Similarly the much vaunted autonomy of the classroom teacher is regulated by the national system of curriculum control, namely the GCE at O and A levels and the CSE in their various modes. Although the actual exams are administered by autonomous exam bodies (8 GCE and 14 CSE), the Secretary of State decides what changes will occur in the system after listening to the advice of an intermediary body - the Schools Council. Beyond this framework of controls the DES has financial controls, whatever overlap exists between local and central administrator values on policy-making and last but not least, HMI" (p. 106).

This rather lengthy quotation provides a useful summary of the basis of DES control and hence part of the explanation as to why the TUC Education Department has been struck by the similarity between "schools in a situation where the legal framework gives you the theoretical possibility of infinite variety". 54

What emerges clearly is that leaving aside that small, if celebrated part of DES control in which it is called upon explicitly to adjudicate between divided local authorities, 55 the DES' role is to be just one part of a framework of institutional constraints. The attempt of the Labour Government to complete the process of comprehensivisation with the issue of circular 10/73 is a good example of DES inability to enforce specific policy initiatives on the one hand because it lacks the statutory
power to exert detailed control over local authorities; on the other
because the institutional framework cannot be changed overnight and
thus also acts as a constraint on the DES itself (Ranson, 1983; Fenwick, 1976).

Where explicit rules and responsibilities are few, as in English
education, power to influence what goes on in the education system is
likely to belong to those groups who can successfully harness the power
of "deference politics" (Pratt, 1982) in their own interests, and in
one way or another, introduce their own values as criteria of informal,
self-imposed accountability.

This ideological dimension is of central importance since it provides
the yardstick for accountability, the criteria against which individuals
and institutions are judged as these reflect the goals of the
administration. Maurice Kogan has well expressed this in defining
accountability as being concerned with

"determining the way in which different sets of values
become articulated as norms within the different groups
in the educational system of government, and are
expressed in operational or decision-making terms,
and the resulting institutional relationships, structures
and modes of behaviour" (Kogan, 1979, p. 1).

Value Systems in English Education : Professional Accountability

This qualitative, ideological dimension of influence and control
is of particular interest since it enables the system to break out of
the 'zero-sum' nature of formal control in which it is impossible for an
actor to respond in two contradictory directions at the same time (Bligh,
1983). To the extent that other individuals and institutions in the
system, whether educational actors or consumers, can be persuaded to
adopt the values of central government, the need for explicit coercion
on the part of the latter is correspondingly diminished. Focussing
just on the centralisation of power may show where power lies. Thus.
Donald (1981) suggests:

"implicit in the restructuring of education [at the present time] ... is the question of how the state exercises its power in part through the production of 'truth' and knowledge about education" (p. 100).

It is the ability of the DES to legitimate a particular value position vis-à-vis education, and to disseminate its own version of educational priorities which is a "critical ingredient in its 'puissance'" (Pratt, 1982) determining what is done.

Given that education in capitalist societies is the product of competing definitions and claims to cognitive and moral legitimacy rather than being integrated round a core set of absolute values (Young, 1976); that the competing definitions and claims of for example industrialists, professionals and bureaucrats are so rarely explicitly in evidence in the vast bulk of educational discussion can only mean that the different interest groups in the system - from the DES through to parents - either find it possible to talk a common language and to identify most of their priorities in-common, or are sufficiently in awe of the DES to adopt the politics of deference. This in turn means as far as the DES is concerned, that either these various interest groups have successfully colonised it or that the DES in turn has been effective in influencing the values of such groups - or indeed a measure of both.

How far this has been in the past an intentional or conscious process on the part of DES officials is open to question. For much of its history the DES and its predecessors have found the creed of local autonomy a very convenient excuse for inactivity and the avoidance of contentious issues. 56 Like the relations between local authorities and schools, centre-local relations have been a complex blend of advice, policy-statements, encouragement, monitoring, provision and sanctions. The keynote has been 'guidance', and the translation of 'ideas in good currency' into
explicit policy. This is essentially 'bandwagon' policy-making, the expression of ideas that find support amongst the majority of educational interest groups. The accountability movement was itself an example of this and similarly the more recent 'profile and graded-tests' bandwagon. Where the idea comes from in the first place is thus not particularly significant in itself but rather how much momentum it has gathered before being translated into explicit policy. In a study of educational policy-making in Scotland of the kind sadly lacking in English education, McPherson (1982) has argued that:

"social reproduction (persistence and change) must be understood in terms of the interplay over time of policy and process, idea and form, person and institution ... it is necessary to find ways of describing how certain ideas and persons become part of 'a convincing body of experience' whereas others are excluded or edged towards the shadows. Dewar, for example, was one of several distinguished educationists of like-background and mind with whom the SED and Brunton found they could work from the mid fifties onwards. This arguably gave the SED confidence in its moves to replace the SACE in the 1960s with executive and advisory structures that extended 'lay' involvement without sacrificing central control. It was, in turn, Dewar's understanding of the Scotland that was there to be re-presented that influenced the character of public involvement in one of these new structures and the content of the messages thereafter transmitted between centre and periphery ... I have discussed elsewhere some ways in which the Scottish myth has functioned to restrict the constructs through which people experienced the education system and has thereby facilitated the reproduction of the dominant categories through which control is exercised. A convincing body of alternative experience cannot be accumulated about ideas or forms that are not practised or whose practice has been forgotten owing to the selective operation of myth on the past" (McPherson, 1982, p.

HM Inspectorate

HMI have a critical role to play in this respect both in identifying potential policy issues to be fed back to the DES and in disseminating policy out from the centre. The link between central and local government that HMI provides is indeed critical. The increasing centralisation of HMI during the last two decades during which it has increasingly come to
see itself as a national body reflects a more general growth in the idea of education as a national service brought about by the need for a measure of rationalisation as a result of demographic change and the sheer size of the educational enterprise. In recent years the growing internal cohesion of HMI has strengthened it against external attacks and allowed it to maintain its independence, which is symbolised by its right of access to the Secretary of State independent of the Permanent Secretary of the DES. Far from recommending its abolition as may have been its intention, the Raynor Committee Report on the work of HMI further strengthened it, pointing to its vital function of providing for national policy formulation and implementation in a locally-administered system. Although there is a long history of HMI involvement in policy-making, the formal task of HMI is still, as it was when they were first instituted, to collect information. Whilst the division between HMI and DES is occasionally made explicit in the task of advising the Secretary of State - as in the annual reports since 1981 on the effects of budgetary cuts on educational provision - the policy-making relationship between DES and HMI is essentially reflexive. The power of HMI is in no way reduced by their lack of formal sanctions. On the contrary, given the hostility that any explicit prescription is likely to arouse, the stance of HMI as independent and impartial expert makes it a particularly effective source of influence.

HMI was originally set up to monitor standards - that is, as an instrument of accountability. Through the years this role has become two-way, both collecting and imparting information. Nevertheless, their principal role is still inspection and although, unlike France, teachers are not typically frightened of HMI since they inspect schools rather than teachers, the latter remaining formally anonymous, it is HMI's power to define evaluative criteria for the definition of good practice, their
critical role in translating general policy statements and national, political priorities into terms of professional accountability which makes them the major influence on which interests are the currency of the micropolitical negotiations (Hoyle, 1982) underpinning educational control in England. Thus process evaluation, carried out by an inspectorate, can be equally if not more effective, used as a rational-empirical or a normative-reeducative source of influence as when it is used as the currency of power-coercive control. The English experience suggests that legitimate influence can be more effective in practice than bureaucratic authority (Pile, 1979).

Thus the extent to which the DES can influence the professional currency of accountability at any time depends not least upon the amount of influence the DES can exert over nominally independent activities of HMI to translate the former's own concerns into professional issues. Just as it is properly impossible to identify a specific date for the institution of an English education system as such - in contrast to, say, France, it has hitherto been equally impossible to delineate clearly the respective obligations of central and local government in the formulation and implementation of educational policy. The DES has traditionally been one of the least interventionist of Whitehall departments (largely, it has been suggested, because education, unlike many other services, fits into the scale of local government\(^58\)). On the other hand, it also has one of the most effective inspectorates. The few statutory responsibilities enjoined upon central government with regard to the provision of mass education and on local government for an adequate establishment of schools, teachers and curricula, have largely been obscured beneath a welter of accepted, if unofficial, practices.

It has been suggested that at the present time, this 'gentleman's agreement' approach to educational government is being challenged. The
p. 1944 tradition of a somewhat untidy interaction of educational interest groups and a 'fainéant' DES is now increasingly being subject to central government rationalisation, based on new forms of evaluative legitimation.

Corporate management

In his book, 'Why is Britain becoming harder to govern?', King (1976) argues that government responsibility has proliferated at the very time when it is increasingly unable to carry out these functions because of a lack of resources, the sheer scale of the enterprise and a lack of value consensus. The contemporary 'crisis of capitalism' is discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven and is only referred to here as the context for understanding changes in the nature of DES control at the present time. Both St. John Stevas (1976) and Mackintosh (1976) argue that there is a decline in value consensus currently taking place at a time when the growing complexity of society requires an ever greater measure of interdependence. At the same time, the economic contradictions endemic to liberal democracies become apparent with the generation of excessive expectations and the pursuit of group self-interest placing an excessive burden on the 'sharing-out' aspect of government (Brittan, 1976). Thus central government is now increasingly being charged with responsibilities which it must fulfil without the necessary value consensus to determine and hence legitimate the way in which these are to be fulfilled. The issue of educational provision illustrates this dilemma clearly. Whilst education is an enormous and growing cost on government (£41m in 1978), public opinion is increasingly divided about the priorities that should be pursued and thus, as has already been argued, it is the ability of government to impose a common value-framework which is critical to its ability to impose effective and acceptable control. The idea of rationalisation and corporate management
which emphasise processual efficiency and de-emphasise if not totally obscure the issue of value objectives has thus been critical to the continued legitimation of central and local government activity in the last two decades.

The move towards more central control of the education system during the last decade, might have been planned like a series of complex moves towards checkmate in a game of chess. The careful articulation of ideological and practical developments, the complementary effects of covert and overt steps towards greater central control, the careful manipulation of curriculum, assessment and budgetary pieces in the overall strategy designed to first demoralise and then to subdue - all these might have been planned as part of a deliberate intention. But they were not. Rather they must all be seen as flotsam on the tide of rationalisation and stringency of which the shift towards greater control in education is but one manifestation. As one senior DES official has suggested, although relations between the DES and local authorities are at present in flux, both are still working within the existing statutory framework. The DES' aim is not to reduce local authority responsibility but to make them exercise it fully just as the DES is increasingly seeking to exercise its own. As Neave (1981) suggests, like several other European countries, the DES is now "actively exercising a residual power they had chosen not to wield before" (p. 80). Certainly the effect of current budgetary policies is to so take up the attention of local authorities with financial issues that the erosion of other areas of autonomy provokes remarkably little hostility. Such is their demoralisation that "for the time being, retrenchment and stringency have stymied not only the ability but even the wish of local authorities who provide education at the grass roots, to shape that national system which was envisaged - indeed enjoined - in the 1944 Education Act."
(my emphasis).

Whether this trend is likely to prove permanent is, at this stage, hard to predict. To some extent it depends on the future trend of centre-local relations and whether local authorities are willing and able to grasp the nettle of asserting their statutory rights over a much broader spectrum of educational issues than those pressing but largely second order problems with which they are currently most concerned. Although local government may seem superficially to have retained its autonomy during the recent educational upheavals and indeed, in some cases, to have increased it at the expense of teachers, this may well have been largely because it shared with central government a common commitment to accountability and rationalisation as a necessary strategy for meeting a decade of public disquiet.

More recent moves by central government to institute greater financial control on local authorities by 'capping the pool' may represent a more explicit attack on the traditional autonomy of local government and may be the impetus for some opposition to the prevailing climate of centralisation. Whether this will be the signal for the re-making of the old alliance between teachers and local authorities remains to be seen.

It seems possible, however, that in the long run new budgetary corsets will not prove to have been the most significant change in accountability relations during this period - at least in educational terms. If, as will be suggested, what is now taking place is a quite fundamental change in the mode of policy legitimation through the growing dominance of a technocratic rationality informed by mechanistic evaluation as the basis for decision-making, this suggests that day to day policy making in the DES and apparent changes in centre-local relations must be interpreted as much in terms of the institutional and longer term
political policy cycles. (Ranson, 1982), as of short term resource issues, as part of a much larger restructuring of the relationship between education, work and society and, most notably, in the forms of social control.

The nature of this restructuring is apparently contradictory since it revolves around attempts to impose a greater measure of consistency on the educational system on the one hand and attempts to justify and encourage (centrally-approved) diversity on the other. The various recent attempts to strengthen central government control over such key areas as curriculum, assessment procedures, finance and teacher supply to ensure more uniformity in the system have been matched by a 'post-Taylor-Report' (1977) climate of parental choice and local participation in school governance. Both trends are justified on the basis of increasing democracy in the system - the centralist notion of democracy inherent in inequality of provision versus the traditionally English liberal notion of democracy as participation and freedom of choice. Thus whilst it is explicit government policy to enhance parental choice in education and, of necessity, the schools' ability to respond to market forces, there is at the same time a growing lobby in favour of central funding and hence, control of educational provision.

"The fascination of a Conservative education policy [would] therefore be to see how long the incompatible threads of international corporatism, decimated public expenditure, 'parental choice' and 'standards' could be held together before the whole garment came apart at the seams" (Donald, 1981, p. 112).

Underlying the paradoxical political rhetoric of these trends however is a uni-dimensional commitment to utilitarianism and a model of industrial accountability centred on the notion of productivity. In 1975 when the OECD reviewed the role of the DES, it argued for "more aggressive corporate management" to counteract the weakness in central policy planning. With
the worsening economic climate of the seventies and the ascendancy of 'new-right' liberalism, the DES has been faced with the need to be seen to be strengthening the bureaucratic basis of its control in the interests of the efficient management of dwindling resources. Such strategies to increase its overt, bureaucratic role in the face of the strong ideological tradition of local autonomy in English education have been successful, not least by the institution of a form of participatory democracy which is more cosmetic than real but which "comes in as the necessary corollary of corporatism ..." (Donald, 1981) in providing the legitimation of apparent participation. Both these developments have contributed to the increasingly overt concept of accountability which has served to reconcile these two, potentially paradoxical, versions of democracy.

At the same time it is the concept of accountability which has given form to the increasing dominance of industrial values in the education system. This has taken a variety of forms ranging from an acceptance on the part of some teachers of a vocational 'new industrialist' rather than liberal 'old humanist' bias in curricular priorities on the one hand, to a similar acceptance by the profession of an input/output model in which educational quality is judged by an evaluation of its products. In recent years, the market forces of falling rolls, strained resources and unemployment have provided powerful support for a professional language in which the industrial and bureaucratic values of efficiency and utilitarianism have predominated.

Thus the final part of this case-study of assessment-based system control in England is devoted to a more specific exploration of the characteristic way in which assessment procedures have provided for such control through the powerful influence they exert on the identification of professional values and hence the criteria for self-imposed accountability.
Starting with an analysis of how such constraints are actually experienced by teachers, the chapter concludes by looking at three of the most significant assessment policy areas of recent years - the struggle to control the public examinations apparatus, the demise of the Schools Council, and the institution of national monitoring. While in no way a comprehensive study, as is suggested in Appendix B, these three issues together are sufficient to illustrate the major elements in the perennial struggle within English education to win control of its assessment procedures and in so doing, to win control of the system itself.

The Language of Assessment

Teachers and accountability

Of all the sources of constraint on their practice that teachers appear to be aware of - pupil expectations; initial training; school organisation and ethos; time, resources and staffing; colleagues' and the headmaster's expectations, it is assessment procedures and the activities of the Exam Boards in particular which emerge as the major control on what is done. The following quotations from secondary teachers in Devon are representative of a very widely held point of view:

"You accept what the Board offers even if you don't like or approve of what it is" (t 30, 29)

"Apart from the exams, I have total autonomy" (S36)

"Autonomy is 100% provided you get the exam passes yet the syllabus is a very tight constraint" (t 37)

"... exams rule the school" (t 12)

"there is a tendency to concentrate on that which can be measured" (SDH 20)

"We don't know what's going on in there but it gets the results in the end, so we might as well leave it alone" (S12)
"We know what we're supposed to cover and how we do it is up to us. Really the responsibility is to ensure the exam sets reach as high a standard as possible and that the non-exam sets, I suppose I cynically say, are kept quiet - but I'd like to think they got something out of it ..." (S21)

"I'm also responsible for what I teach, getting my pupils through exams. I think that's quite a heavy pressure, knowing at the end of your teaching there's this outside exam which is a bit of an unknown quantity and yet you are supposed to be teaching towards it" (t 24)

"As long as a subject doesn't have a particularly bad record of exam passes - I'm afraid that is how we are made accountable - then you are left alone ..." (t 35)

"People get made chief examiners, which is a lot of power without any kind of training and they are the ones that run the educational system because, in an obscure way, if you pass the exams they set, within a very narrow margin, you go to university" (t 41)

Another part of the explanation for teachers' acceptance of examination constraints seems to be because it provides an acceptable basis of accountability to the two audiences teachers in England identify as paramount - 'clients' (i.e. parents and pupils) and the head teacher (Elliot et al., 1981). In addition, French experience suggests that teachers may well resent constraints which emanate from 'non-professional' bureaucrats rather than bodies such as the examination boards or the inspectorate which are made up of recognised experts in their field. This argument has already been borne out to some extent by teachers' reactions to the rapid growth in external demands for school accountability (Becher and Maclure, 1979), particularly where this means accountability to 'lay' people such as governors. It has also been borne out by teachers' lack of enthusiasm for the DES-based Assessment of Performance Unit set up in 1975 to establish the incidence of under-achievement in the nation's schools on a 'product-evaluation' basis (DES, 1978). Although designed to avoid the identification of the results of particular schools and teachers (and
hence explicit control), there has been a significant reaction on the part of teachers against accountability based on product-evaluation criteria emanating from central or local government alone (McCormick, 1982). Part of this reaction has taken the form of a quite novel concern with teachers being able to develop their own criteria of accountability through institutional and personal self-review (Nuttall, 1982). But, whilst these may be disputes over the right to determine the criteria of assessment, English teachers' 'practitioner perspectives' (Parsons, 1981, 1983) may still be seen as the response to a managerial technology based on accountability for successful outcomes. This is in contrast to French teachers' perspectives which, following Offe's (1975) distinction, may be seen as the response to a bureaucratic order based on the following of rules. Further clarification is offered by Rowbotham and Billis (1977) whose hierarchical model locates 'product-evaluation' accountability as a higher stage of responsibility than that of 'process-evaluation' accountability and thus offers some explanation of why English teachers are prepared to accept this kind of constraint more than any other.

Rowbotham and Billis' model requires a distinction between the way in which teachers in England have traditionally had greater scope for their 'professionality' (Hoyle, 1974) than their French counterparts whilst their 'professionalism' has, perhaps in consequence, been rather less. In the 'pre-Tyndale' days of 'licensed autonomy' (Dale, 1980), the need for such overt struggle and indeed its logical focus was little apparent. In the more recent climate of 'regulated autonomy' in which the various public pressures for greater accountability are being used to justify an increasingly explicit transfer of power from teachers to the state, professionalism is similarly increasing (Elliott et al., 1981).

Whilst an analysis of policy changes undoubtedly points to increased limitations on teachers' professionalism, teachers themselves seem
remarkably unaware of these new controls. Instead they seem to feel that in their professional role they are still insulated by the norms and institutions of educational governance from both top-down and bottom-up pressure. In another empirical study, Nias (1981) found that

"between their practice and every aspect of accountability, teachers erect the barrier of professionalism",

so setting limits to their legal accountability to governors and to LEAs by references to their professionalism. Similarly in their self-confessed moral accountability to clients and consumers

"when the crowd begins to cry 'the emperor has no clothes', teachers have nothing but their own protestations of professionalism with which to disguise their nakedness" (p. 224).

That they exercise this influence effectively is revealed in a study by Munn et al. (1983) in which the authors were surprised to find most parents unwilling to challenge teachers' professionalism. In the same way, greater regulation in practice can only come through voluntary compliance on the part of teachers to external influence or enforced conformity backed up by power-coercive sanctions. The issue of sanctions is critical in this respect. Just as French teachers are relatively free in many aspects of their practice because of the impossibility of adequate 'policing' by the authorities, the English teacher can also go a long way before the sanctions inherent in her formal accountability begin to apply.

"Seems to me that accountability in education is a bit of a farce really, until they start talking about sanctions on particular people (in authority) which they don't by and large" (t 11)

Rather it is the professionalism which teachers use to protect their autonomy which also powerfully constrains them through its 'normative-reeducative' pressures. One of the effects of the predominance of self-imposed, professional accountability and the weakness of potential
sanctions to enforce formal accountability is that as far as the latter is concerned, individuals at different levels of the system tend to look upwards to their professional superiors rather than downwards on those they are supposed to manage (t 41), management being seen more as a professional responsibility for leadership rather than the imposition of bureaucratic directives:

"If they are responsible to me, I am equally responsible to them (i.e. as head of faculty). - I am accountable to them in that I provide the right and proper framework in which they have to do their job" (t 30)

Thus although the formal "lines of accountability run through the governors to the area office then on to county hall" (t 38h) the typical professional view is that expressed by one teacher:

"I don't feel accountable in the sense that I should accept from anyone in the authority instructions on what I should actually do. The LEA doesn't tell me what to teach or how to teach it" (t 30, Head of faculty).

It is clear from talking with teachers however that they are aware of an increasing pressure for organisation, structure, and above all, communication in their work. Thus typically either at school or departmental level, teachers are feeling the need or being told by the head to produce curriculum frameworks and to be able to justify what they are doing explicitly. "Accountability is writing down aims and objectives" (t 15h). Whereas hitherto it was sufficient simply to claim professional status as the basis of autonomy, now it is necessary to demonstrate professional competence as well. Clearly, the idea of communication is central to the concept of 'accountability' and the growing importance of this idea of 'giving an account' can be traced through all levels of the system from schools to parents, governors and local authorities; from local authorities to local government and the DES; from the DES to Parliament and the people. But although it is
possible to trace growing formal requirements in this respect, the pressure for such accounts to be provided still seems to be experienced as predominantly normative rather than coercive, voluntarily complied with rather than forced, self, rather than bureaucratically, imposed. Most still feel that they are "behind closed walls" (t 11) and that "once you are in the classroom you can do very much what you want" (t 17).

"The college hierarchy and the LEA play no part in the actual quality of teaching" (t 36)

"You don't make waves ... no student or parent complains and they pass in the end ... you are able to carry on ... " (t 41)

For one teacher at least the result is

"a fantastic amount [of autonomy] - practically complete ... I only came into teaching three years ago and I've been amazed at the freedom ... and a little bit worried" (t 33)

To teachers it seems to be their informal accountability which is the real constraint. To them, formal accountability is concerned with such bureaucratic concerns as the provision and use of resources which, whilst it is necessary, is not critical as a determinant of the real business of education, namely teaching (t 36, t 38h). By contrast, informal accountability is "almost like a religion" because of the (professional) expectation that teachers will care about pupils.

"The individual teacher keeps trying to maintain standards whether supervised or not therefore formal supervision is seen as an insult to professional integrity ... heads of department quickly learn that the level of efficiency will remain whether they do something or not and find that the amount of effort required to raise it even a small amount is so great because of teacher non-cooperation, that most of them give in" (t 36)

"In the past it was very much the class teacher and the class and as long as the results came out right in the end, the way in which we did things was left to the individual whereas now I feel the grand scheme of things is far more obvious and it is very much expected that one does things in a certain order, in a certain way, to a certain level with a certain group ..." (t 5)
Clearly whether accountability is formal or informal it involves the identification of more or less explicit criteria of evaluation, a measure of consensus about what standards and goals are to be pursued. Where accountability is formal, these criteria are spelt out bureaucratically and backed up with the threat of sanctions: through central curriculum provision, for example, or inspection. Where accountability is predominantly informal, as in England, there must still be a large measure of agreement over the standards to be pursued, which can then be translated into more or less explicit professional norms which guide teachers' practice. It is on these norms, too, and the results of teachers' practice based on them that judgements are made of individual teachers, schools, local education authorities and, ultimately, the system as a whole.

The 'Post-Plowden' era has been characterised by declining public confidence that teachers' professional values were sufficiently in line with those of consumers, a fear that was reflected in central government's attempts to impose a common value framework through its curriculum publications, and the formulation of national assessment criteria, and to impose a measure of more formal accountability within the system based on bureaucratic and consumer, rather than professional criteria. Such attempts have included reforms to provide for tighter 'top-down' constraints via increased financial control of local authorities, and tighter 'bottom-up' constraints through formal provision for greater parental choice (1980 Act) in school selection and community representation as set out in the Taylor Report. Whilst such initiatives have undoubtedly been instrumental in making teachers more explicitly aware of their accountability, in themselves they could have little influence on the determination of professional criteria. On the one hand it has proved difficult, with one or two exceptions such as the Industrial Training Boards, for non-professionals to formulate such criteria in
any detail; on the other, teachers' professionalism, as already suggested, would resist any such lay interference in their professional domain as an illegitimate encroachment.

The key to this potential stalemate is public assessment procedures. The activities of the APU, local authority testing procedures and the public examination system embody the criteria of formal accountability in such a way as to translate them into teachers' own professional goals as well. This is partly the power of tradition, partly the recognition of the professional (exam boards, professional testers etc.) rather than lay source of such criteria but most of all a reflection of teachers' recognition of the crucial importance of selection for their pupils and hence, the need to pursue such assessment criteria if they are to fulfil their self-imposed informal accountability to pupils - of prime importance to the majority of teachers. "... If people feel joint responsibility, they also feel more accountable" (t 18h).

Given the veracity of the above analysis, it becomes possible to account for recent DES policy initiatives in the field of assessment - the institution of the APU; the encouragement of local authority testing; the requirement of national criteria for the new 16+ exam; the replacement of the Schools Council by an Examinations Council; the encouragement of Records of Achievement and, above all, the almost unprecedented support for 'grade-related testing' according to nationally agreed curriculum objectives. These initiatives must be seen not simply as an attempt to gain greater formal control within the system by the institution of new formal accountability criteria. Rather they must be seen as an attempt to influence the criteria teachers themselves adopt as the basis for their own, self-imposed, professional accountability. This latter strategy has the dual advantage of being more effective and less likely to provoke opposition.
Teachers are typically not aware of the DES' activities (t 22, 23, 24)

"I don't think anything comes from the DES to ordinary teachers at all" (t 41)

"I think that anything from the DES is watered down so that by the time it reaches me I don't feel very much at all" (t 13, also t 32 verbatim)

For other teachers,

"DES influence is insidious - we are influenced by them but not in any direct way that we can say, well, that is the DES" (t 4)

These latter teachers, typically more senior, feel they are made aware of DES policy through publications and courses (t 1h, t 6h, t 7, t 2, t 3, t 16). Others testify to the role of HMI in consciousness-raising.

On the other hand, any more explicit bureaucratic control is resented. Out of a sample of 34 teachers interviewed, only 2 mentioned any accountability relationship with the DES at all; one, a head teacher, as a second priority after the LEA, the other at the end of a list on which he put himself, pupils, colleagues, parents, the head teacher and the LEA in order of priority. One teacher felt that:

"Personally, I think schools should be more accountable but to which section of society? To the ratepayers - I don't mind, but I'm not so happy about the mandarins of the DES because they don't seem to be accountable to anybody. We're being judged but nobody is judging the judges" (t 20dh)

In the same way, although local authorities exert a good deal, if varying amounts of influence through the work of their advisors, courses and publications, testing and monitoring, and at the present time, economic restrictions, this influence is typically filtered through the head teacher and not experienced directly by teachers. Although teachers vary widely in the extent to which they are aware of local authority activity, to the extent that they are aware of it, it would appear to be in the form of attempts to influence them through exhortation or restrictions through lack of provision rather than any sense of formal,
personal accountability to an employer:

"These things are not really defined securely in British education but it would be difficult to step outside what one feels are acceptable bands - you couldn't suddenly change your policy radically - go completely mixed ability or change school hours without consultation with the area office and the LEA - you just wouldn't be able to do that ..."

"It is not a direct order but the message is very clear and you'd be silly if you didn't listen to it".

This is normative, consensual accountability at its most explicit.

This difference between the power of professional as against lay interests to affect the content of informal accountability is also shown by the attitude to clients - parents, pupils and governors. Interestingly, although teachers are formally accountable to this last group, very few identified them spontaneously as part of their accountability relationships whereas almost all mentioned parents and pupils. On the borderline between clients and superiors, governors seem to fall between two stools with almost all teachers emphasising that they cannot really 'govern' in any real sense because they are not professionals (Wragg and Partington, 1980).

"They are interested, but I don't think they are sufficiently expert in any area of the curriculum to form any judgement. What they will bring in though is the views of the community so therefore I will listen to what they have to say ..." (t 1h)

More particularly, whereas teachers, pupils and parents are united in their pursuit of assessment goals which thus provides a focus for this avenue of accountability and control, governors remain largely outside the assessment system and, therefore, on the basis of the foregoing argument, outside any means of influencing one of the principal channels of informal accountability. This is the point made by Barnes when he suggests:

"We are led to conclude that with regard to control [of the curriculum] as distinct from providing expert advice about it, the prime task of both the DES and the LEAs should be to secure the effective functioning of governing bodies which in turn depends on the provision of effective mechanisms of assessment" (Barnes, 1977, p.28)
Since they are also largely without financial or bureaucratic authority, governors have few sanctions with which to realise their role in the formal accountability hierarchy. It is important to distinguish between the bureaucratic and professional criteria on which the formal accountability hierarchy between school, local authority and DES is based as opposed to the much more consumerist, lay criteria of the political accountability linking schools and local inspectors to governors and the education committee. Whilst political rhetoric may support the latter it is the former which is largely responsible for recontextualising societal pressures into educational priorities.

But formal accountability relations of any kind - the network of obligations and responsibilities enforced by sanctions - is only 'the drop at the back of the stage' - it sets the atmosphere for what goes on in front, it colours the action and the presentation of the play but the actors themselves are concentrating on their own performance. This backdrop may move forwards (as at the present time) or backwards, depending on the times, so giving more or less prominence to the constraining context for action.68

Control in English education must thus be seen predominantly in terms of "the micropolitical processes of strategies rather than enacted rules, influence rather than power, ... knowledge rather than status..." (Bailey, 1982, p. 100). Thus not only for governors but for local authorities, and central government too, apart from the general administrative framework, knowledge and informal influence is a good deal more significant than the formal rules of account for getting things done. Knowledge is critical as ammunition in debates over resources and in justifying influence. Thus as one Chief Education Officer has suggested,69 professionals (e.g. teachers) seek to safeguard their knowledge whilst government and lay interests seek to gather such
information. The fact of communication in for example reports is itself not equivalent to breaking down such barriers since the progressive rapprochement of professionalism and bureaucratic administration towards what Bates (1980) terms the "expert bureaucracy", "deskills" or disenfranchises the ordinary person, producing a "conspiracy against the laity" which encourages their dependency since it controls access to services. As Bennington (1978) suggests,

"... corporate management is being promoted throughout local government as a more comprehensive and systematic approach to decision-making. Its claim to be a more rational basis for decision-making is not new but it adds the powerful legitimation of social and mathematical science ... what it does not do is illuminate problems as they are experienced by other communities of interest whether these are residents, trades unions, councillors or any other group. Rather, it mystifies the whole decision-making process for councillors and laymen, and tries to limit their contribution to that of generalised 'policy guidance' or nominal 'public participation' (quoted in Bates, 1982).

It was this 'conspiracy of silence' that the recent 'Great Debate' was set up to overcome - to break down the barriers of professional knowledge which many other interest groups felt teachers were using to delegitimate public debate about educational issues. The breakdown of consensus about educational goals in the 1970s increasingly required discussion and negotiation over the nature of such goals. For the non-professional "there is a dearth of evidence to inform the discussion; and a still greater dearth of strategies or theories about how to handle the problems within the education system, or within the schools" (Banks, 1978, p. 13), leading the Minister of State to assert "what is needed above all is an improvement of communication between education and industry, and I am bound to add that in too many parts of the country, this really means the introduction of communication". At the national level, too, the supply of information for political
accountability is critical, not least to inter-departmental wrangles over resources. To this end, as has already been suggested, central government employs a variety of information gathering procedures including national committees and commissions, national testing programmes and HMI. Harrison (1979) explicitly contrasts this essentially Anglo-Saxon concept of knowledge-based professionalism which gives so much scope for the micropolitics of what Hoyle (1982) terms the "dark underside" of organisations, with the more task-oriented continental approach. The implications for educational provision of this style of government and the associated forms of professionalism are considerable, because it means that the power of any one group within the education system to exercise effective control depends upon the ability of that group to establish efficient ways of gathering knowledge and, just as important, being able to influence the content of such communication.

Once more it is assessment which would appear to be central to the formulation and imposition of systemic values as embodied in particular criteria of performance. More specifically in a non-centralised system in which there are few overt policy-making fora, the information producing, accounting process is critical in two further ways. First, it is a source of constraint since it provides a basis for judgement. Second, it contributes to the process of policy-formation in terms of Lukes' (1974) second and third orders of power - by keeping certain items off the policy agenda and even preventing some potential issues being recognised as concerns.

The predominance of micropolitics, of informal influence and constraint based on forms of evaluation, is both cause and effect of why so few policies achieve statutory status, the majority typically remaining as guidelines. This in turn leaves the criteria of accountability similarly unexplicit or where they are explicit, open to professional
groups to define for themselves. Thus in England the lack of a coherent central machinery for educational policy-making and implementation only serves to reinforce the importance of assessment procedures in system control since it is only in the judgements that are made that many policy priorities are made explicit. In the same way the source of such accounts and their acceptability is revealing as to who is perceived to have a legitimate voice over policy in the system. Thus, for example, the school self-evaluation movement is testimony to the considerable autonomy available to the individual school in the English education system to identify its own priorities. But if such autonomy during the fifties and sixties meant "the right to do what you want without interference", it now increasingly means "the right to make decisions within an understood framework of operation". As far as the curriculum is concerned, this framework typically means a shift from the post 1944 pre 1977 situation in which curriculum responsibility was delegated to head teachers, the only formal curriculum 'policies' being on religious education, and in Wales, Welsh. Since circular 14/77, which asked local authorities to describe the procedures which they had established for carrying out their responsibilities under section 23 of the 1944 Act concerning local curriculum arrangements, there are nationally, and in most cases, locally, broad statements of intent in every area of provision backed up by an increased monitoring and inspection role of local advisers and inspectors. This may be read as an attempt on the part of government to infiltrate more directly the process of identifying professional values. From his inside knowledge, Fiske (1982) has suggested:

"When circular 14/77 on the curriculum was issued I believe that it came as something of a shock to some LEAs to discover that they were held to have some major curriculum responsibilities".
Since 1977, whilst local authorities may still support the rhetoric as expressed in Devon:

"The authority assumes that schools will maintain an appropriate balance within the curriculum without explicit guidance". 75

in practice, there is still typically, as in Devon, provision for a plethora of informal mechanisms of influence including inspections, advice, working parties, in-service education, governors' seminars, Academic Boards, 76 Advisory Committees, 77 heads and advisers meeting together in the Academic Council; and the provision of a Handbook of Policy Statements for schools, all of which exist to provide pressure on schools to conform with local authority policy.

Local Authorities and Accountability

Just as the balance of power between schools and local authorities is a complex mixture of formal obligations and the informal constraints they can mobilise at any one time, so too is the balance of power within local authorities similar to that between professional and political interests at school level. Local government reorganisation, usually into larger, more bureaucratic units which replaced the more personal relations of the small, informal authorities which had gone before was particularly significant in this respect. 78

Central government's encouragement of corporate management strategies as part of this reorganisation further encouraged the transfer of power to permanent officials capable of mastering the complex committee structure. The provision of a block grant to local authorities as part of this move towards corporate management also weakened local political interests by giving ultimate financial control within the authority to the finance department. Given the non-specialist character of such
departments, the expenditure criteria and hence education policy were likely to change. The efficient use of resources is the aim of corporate management and almost by default, can become elevated from a means to becoming the end itself. The result is that a body within the local authority such as the School Advisory Service may be subjected to review by a body such as the Performance Review Sub-Committee whose criteria are likely to be utilitarian and bureaucratic, rather than professional or political. Local authorities obviously vary in the extent to which their policy-making has been affected by such initiatives but the trend is not insignificant and is part of the much larger movement towards technocratic accountability.

As educational administration becomes 'depersonalised' it must become increasingly dependent on the provision of some apparently objective information about the quality of the service being provided. The onus put on schools in recent years to provide information about themselves, and notably the requirement to publish public examination results enjoined in the 1980 Education Act, underlines the potential importance of assessment procedures in this respect. The result of public examinations and other kinds of standardised tests are often interpreted uncritically and out of context, their use involving the application of simple bureaucratic criteria rather than the application of the expert professional analysis which would be necessary to draw any true meaning from them (Gipps and Goldstein, 1982). At the present time it is the unproblematic acceptance of the content of such testing by lay people, not versed in the language of professional concerns but who have been taught through recent policy initiatives such as the publication of public examination results and the APU, how to address the issue of standards, which is encouraging the technicist interpretation of educational problems. The struggle between the various interest groups
in education - teachers, the Universities, local authorities and, through HMI, the DES, to control this powerful influence on the source of educational discourse is therefore as long-standing as the system itself and takes many different forms - as the consideration of three recent policy initiatives in this respect, which forms the last part of this chapter, shows.

Changes in the Organisation and Control of Public Examinations

The Schools Council

Given the importance of examinations in forming and constraining teachers' practice from the very beginning of their widespread use, it is not surprising that the history of the development of public examinations, even in the nineteenth century, is coloured by the struggle between central government and the universities over who should control them. The Taunton Committee of 1868 and the Bryce Committee of 1895 both recommended a Central Council for Examinations. This recommendation was not fulfilled however, since the new power of the local authorities after the 1899 and 1902 Acts encouraged them to support university control rather than lose any of their new found autonomy to the centre, for control of examinations was already seen as more important than control of the curriculum (Lawton, 1980). In 1917 a compromise was achieved in the establishment of the Secondary Schools Examination Council which was to be advisory to the Board of Education. It comprised 5 local authority representatives, 6 teachers and 10 university representatives and in maintaining and coordinating standards was intended to discourage any other bodies from setting their own examinations. In 1936 the Council was reformed to include 10 representatives from each of the three constituencies and in 1946, all university representation was removed, thus progressively
reducing the universities' formal role though not their power, since they still set and marked the examinations (Lawton, 1980). After 1946 the process of separation was complete since the examining bodies no longer took part in SSEC proceedings. Circular 11, June 1946, made the Minister of Education fully responsible for coordinating secondary school exams, leaving the Boards no formal decision-making powers, although they were still, inevitably, the major curriculum influence. Thus battle between central government and the 'professional' examiners was to be re-enacted after the demise of the SSEC in 1964 and its replacement by the Schools Council, whose history is an interesting illustration of the critical interplay of different interest groups in the public examining system.

The Council was set up in 1964 to be responsible for curriculum and assessment development, one of its principal purposes being to rationalise these two lines of development into some kind of harmony. The Council was closely identified with the expansionist and opportunistic educational climate of the 1960s when it was first instituted. Not only was it explicitly committed to change and expansion in its areas of responsibility, it was a multipartite body involving representatives of central and local government, teachers and parents. This multipartism was reflected in its funding which came jointly from central and local government. Thus not only did the Council reflect the prevailing commitment of the sixties to development, it also reflected a high point in teacher autonomy since its first constitution gave teachers a majority in the Council as a whole (if not in the critical area of financial control, Broadfoot, 1979).

The initial institution of the Schools Council, its constitutional revision in 1978 after the attack of the 1977 'Yellow Book', its review by Nancy Trenamen in 1982 and finally its demise in 1983 as part of Sir Keith Joseph's rationalisations, provide an interesting reflection of the rise and fall of a particular educational ideology, each stage in the decline marking the growing
strength of utilitarianism. In particular, these several stages reflect the decline of public and governmental trust in teacher professionalism and a desire, on the part of government at least, to return to a more traditional balance of power between local authorities, central government and the universities in the provision of public examinations (Whitty, 1983a; Bowe and Whitty, 1984). Thus under the new constitution of 1978, decisions of the Professional Committee were to be subject to the Finance and General Purposes Committee dominated by the paymasters - the Department of Education and Science and the local education authorities.

As the seventies wore on, the reliance on professional responsibility increasingly gave way to a concern with 'management objectives' and, later still, corporate management and bureaucratic accountability. Increased controls on local government expenditure through the rate support grant and expenditure sub-groups were reflected in a major reorganisation of the Council's structure. One of the principal effects of the new constitution was to merge the two sides of the Council's work into five major programmes. This may have reflected a belated recognition of the need to harness assessment procedures for any really effective curriculum development. Certainly it represented a much more explicit commitment by the Council than hitherto to policy-making and a considerable scaling-down of its curriculum development work as such. The recent demise of the Schools Council as such in favour of a powerful Examinations Council and a much smaller and weaker Curriculum Council is a further reflection of this trend and an interesting illustration of the way in which the anomalies built into the old Schools Council's role and particularly its institutional expression of a consensus that no longer existed, ultimately brought about its destruction. As one of its secretaries has suggested, the Schools Council was broken on the
division between the curriculum and assessment sides of its work. It might be argued that the economic stringencies which had already severely curtailed its curriculum development work had also changed the ideological climate to an extent where the DES could legitimate a measure of direct interventionism in specific policy areas, no longer needing the 'cover' of an apparently teacher-controlled body to be its major policy organ. Certainly the climate of the 'Great Debate' was such as to reinforce the feeling that teachers could no longer be trusted to identify curricular priorities, without some more formal external control. Given the impotence of curriculum initiatives without associated assessment developments, it only required the advent of the current, increasingly explicit, desire by the DES to 'hold the ring' over public examinations for the rug finally to be pulled from under the Council's feet. Indeed the progressive emasculation of the Council during the 1970s in its attempt to reform the structure of public examinations - notably the 16+ - can now be seen as a forerunner of the current situation.

The Council produced its recommendations for a new 16+ in 1976 after years of discussion, consultation and feasibility studies. When eventually, two years and another committee later, the proposals for such an exam were at last accepted by the then Secretary of State for Education, Shirley Williams, she decided that the Council was only to be one voice among many in the new coordinating committee set up to implement the changes. The response by the Exam Committee's Chairman at that time, Arnold Jennings, was that such a move amounted to the Secretary of State saying the Council could not be trusted with the new exam it had itself suggested.

The demotion of the Council, prior to its demise, to a largely consultative role has been further reinforced in more recent discussions about the formulation of the 'national criteria' for the new 16+, as recommended by the Waddell Committee, which are very largely the
responsibility of the exam boards. This decision not only marked a severe reduction in the power of the Schools Council to set assessment and hence curriculum standards, it also reflected yet another subtle, but pervasive increase in central as opposed to local interests. Not only is the work of producing 'national criteria' being coordinated centrally but the local interests hitherto represented in the various CSE Boards are to be incorporated into four or five federated examining boards, each comprising a number of the previous 23 GCE and CSE Boards. The power of the Department of Education and Science to adjudicate in this amalgamation is no less significant than its power to give or withhold its blessing on each individual GCE certificate. As the 1978 White Paper sets out: "The Government agree ... that there will be a need for stronger central coordination of the new single examination system". In consequence, Nuttall (1979) speculates whether the government's real motive in accepting the proposals for a common system at 16+ was not to secure the undoubted pedagogic educational and administrative advantages of the common system but to obtain much firmer central control of the activities of the exam boards and hence, of the curriculum (p. 3).

The outcome of these initiatives is still far from clear. The 16+ debate now threatens to be overtaken by the much broader issues of a comprehensive assessment at 16+ for all pupils which may well take the initiative back to local authorities and individual schools or, at a national level, to the Department of Industry rather than of Education. Before turning to these developments, it is necessary to examine the traditional role of examination boards a little more closely.

The Examination Boards

Whilst the era of trust in professionalism allowed the Schools Council enormous curricular influence, this period must be seen as exceptional.
For the most part it is public examinations which have been the major arbiter of standards, the major source of educational values. The question of from where the perpetrators of those standards - the Exam Boards' own committees - are influenced and to whom, in return, they feel accountable is complex and problematic - "the price we pay for no central control". Certainly, there is no one body within the education system which has the power to define educational standards. Although certain formal relationships exist - such as the former Schools Council involvement in the approval of some GCE syllabuses or the DES signing of GCE certificates, the power and legitimacy of what the Boards themselves acknowledge to be a consumer-oriented product is probably sufficient for them not to need such official government endorsement. The power of a DES pronouncement about public examinations if it were to be challenged is difficult to weigh. If, as one DES official suggested, the 1980 Consultative Document on Examinations post-16 was partly "a white paper with green edges, and partly a green paper with white edges", this implies a degree of statutory authority. In fact this is an example of 'deference politics' (Pratt, 1982) where there is no formal provision for control of this kind; the Department's role, as clearly demonstrated in its recent efforts to promote the GCE/CSE Boards merger, is essentially that of 'holding the ring', and trading a valuable legitimation with the Boards in return for collaboration.

To identify the real power of the Examination Boards and thus of one of the most potent sources of influence on educational practice in England, it is necessary to examine their internal structure which may be even more significant in practice than who formally controls them. Such a study reveals (as it does for the Schools Council) that although the various Boards differ in the power of the component interests represented, particularly universities in the case of GCE Boards and
teachers in the CSE Boards, they share, as do the local authorities, a
common tendency to be increasingly dominated by their own professional
bureaucracy.

Within the Boards themselves, there are five elements of power -
markers i.e. class teachers, panel members (who are also class teachers),
heads, local authority representatives and permanent staff. Although
virtually all policy decisions are made by the teacher-controlled
'examinations committee' in the various Boards, teachers are never in a
majority on the Finance and General Purposes Committee which for CSE
Boards is dominated by local authority representatives who are the
paymasters, in the GCE Boards by the universities although the local
authorities are still the principal paymaster (Nuttall, 1979). The
Boards, like the DES itself, have not been immune to recent trends
towards corporate management however, and inside commentaries suggest
that control is becoming increasingly bureaucratised, with power passing
to the permanent officials familiar with the committee structure and with
accumulated expertise in examining. 86 A Board secretary himself,
MacIntosh (1982) argues that the Boards

"remain essentially administrative organisations maintaining
that they reflect and respond to the curriculum and do not
dictate it - curriculum thinking is thus sometimes alien to
those who work for them. All boards suffer from progressive
arthritis of the procedures and from various forms of tunnel
vision. The boards operate today as they did in 1945 and
indeed since their inception on a syllabus construction and
not a course approval model, in marked contrast to many
similar situations in other countries" (p. 14).

The current financial stringencies besetting local authorities are
tending to exacerbate this process of bureaucratisation which has the
additional, somewhat ironic effect of simultaneously curbing the
potential power of Board Secretaries, some of whom have, in the
past, been personally quite autocratic. 87 The implications
of this trend, not so far systematically documented, are
likely to be similar to those more general developments in the local
and central government of education where there is less and less scope
for the influential individual to make his or her mark on the impersonal
structures informed by technological rationality.

The fact that most of the time the relationship between the DES,
local authorities, schools and Examination Boards is harmonious owes a
good deal to a consensus between the various sources of influence on
educational practice. This consensus is probably attributable to the
informal pressures whereby community and parental pressure for school
and individual 'success' is based on the same criteria as those
informing local and central government as well as teacher priorities,
namely the passing of formal academic hurdles. Indeed the traditional
power of the Exam Boards has been central to the development of this
consensus defining the legitimate basis for the 'quality control' of the
education system. Thus the very significant gaps in statutory accountability
relationships within the English education system have not typically
resulted in overt power struggles or significant variations in practice
in which individual schools or teachers seek to depart radically from
the norm of established practice because of this crucial normative role
performed by the Exam Boards. This style of power relationships —
quintessentially English — in which, rather than being an overt process
enshrined in the initiatives of central government, normative control is
developed de facto through covert processes of negotiation, debate and
practice itself, can only be understood in terms of the long history of
unexplicit, informal agreement which has formed the basis of English
democracy since the Parliament of Simon de Montfort, according to students
of the British Constitution. It is this tradition that provides the
basis of the power of an unwritten constitution which is nevertheless
arguably more binding than the more explicit documents of a country such
as France.

It may be, however, that the days of such an informal, consensual style of control in England are numbered, for although it is clear that in both England and France the present economic crisis makes for widespread support of the prevailing utilitarian ethos, the events of the last few years in encouraging grass-roots participation may well mean that "we have an increasingly negotiated order made more difficult because of a decreasing consensus about what is goodness". To the extent that this has happened, it has been the signal in England for central government to seek to curb some of the traditional autonomy of bodies such as the Examination Boards. Although current trends in this direction are most visible in terms of financial provision, in the long term such controls are likely to be more covert and more pervasive to the extent that they bring about a change in the prevailing ideology. If overt centralised control is being overtaken in a country such as France where it has long predominated in favour of more sophisticated 'norming' and orientation devices, it is very likely that one significant mechanism for increased control in England will also be a growing emphasis on rationalising assessment procedures so that they are an explicit basis for central control and bureaucratic accountability. Certainly current movements towards the identification of centralised assessment criteria for the new 16+ exam and novel forms of school-based assessment could be interpreted in this light.

The long-standing struggle between the universities and central government over who should control the public examination system and with it the ethos of the education system itself becomes overt only when, as at the present time, the value positions represented are notably different. The DES has never had any formal control over the GCE Boards. Since the demise of the Secondary Schools Examination Council in 1964,
its formal influence on examinations has been confined to published policy-statements and its representation—albeit a dominant one—on key Schools Councils Committees. Technically the GCE Boards are accountable only to their customers—like any other business—and morally to the universities whose expectations and attitudes they continue to perpetrate even where, as in the case of the AEB, for example, they no longer have an explicit link. In practice it can be argued that the GCE Boards are largely autonomous and not accountable either financially or professionally. This is in contrast to the CSE Boards which like the contemporaneous Schools Council are formally accountable to teachers. In addition, CSE Boards are geographically located. Thus not only does the current drop in Mode III entries in the CSE represent a decline in teachers' power to influence the content and conduct of the exam itself—that is, its curricular implications—the present initiative in favour of 4/5 federated Boards is also likely to alter the balance of power away from teachers on the one hand and from local authorities on the other—a presentiment which is causing local education authorities concern. It may be that it is the DES' attempt to exert an uncharacteristic degree of control over the organisation of the examining bodies and the criteria on which their assessments are based which gives a new meaning to the cliché that in England "education is a national service locally administered". As Pearce (1982) has suggested:

"If local education authorities really wish to exercise the curricular power they statutorily have, they would have to do a lot more to get representation on the exam boards..."

By contrast, he argues, the changing balance of power between, for example, central and local government and the Schools Council; and policy initiatives such as the APU or LEASIB are largely unimportant rhetoric,
control of the curriculum being dominated by a tacit alliance between selective school teachers and the Exam Boards (notably the GCE Boards).

MacIntosh (1982) also suggests that of the three most obvious strategies for providing 'quality control' in the education system - a centrally-controlled public examination system, a national assessment programme and in-school self-evaluation, "after a nod in the direction of the Assessment of Performance Unit (APU) central government - both Labour and Conservative - has concentrated upon the first, only at the local level through the local education authorities (LEAs) has there been any serious consideration of the third" (p. 14).

What is certainly indisputable is that the issue of who controls what the Exam Boards actually do will continue to be of major significance in England as long as public examinations play a dominant role in English education. As HMI report in Aspects of Secondary Education in England (HMI, 1980),

"public examinations were a major preoccupation of the schools inspected ... too many teachers and pupils were concerned with the pursuit of examination success to the relative neglect of all other considerations ... The style and quality of pupils' work in the fourth and fifth years are dominated by the requirements - as most teachers perceive them - of public examinations".

But whether changes in the balance of power between the DES, local authorities, teachers and professional staff in the control of the Exam Boards produces any noticeable effect for teachers in the amount of constraints on their practice is doubtful. Whilst such changes may relocate the power to establish educational priorities, up to the present time they have done nothing to challenge the traditional pre-eminence of public examinations per se as the principal source of teacher control in England and the source of both teachers' own and externally-imposed criteria of professional accountability.
The Assessment of Performance Unit

This does not mean, however, that the APU is as unimportant as MacIntosh suggests, for whilst the changing balance of power over public examinations between the Schools Council, the Exam Boards and the DES might appear to be the more explicit and influential effects of current changes in DES policy, it was the institution of the Assessment of Performance Unit which most clearly expressed the prevailing concerns over standards in the early seventies. Although the APU may not have had the overtly coercive role that many commentators feared when it was first instituted (e.g. Dennison, 1978), it has had an increasingly important part to play in defining educational standards and hence has an increasingly powerful influence on the major mode of control in English education. To understand this significance it is necessary briefly to describe the Unit's history.

A major factor in the pre-history of the APU was the halt to the steady post-war rise in reading standards that the NFER National Reading Survey of 1970 revealed and which triggered off the establishment of the Bullock Committee. 92 Concern within the DES about the lack of information about educational standards more generally was explicit as far back as 1968 93 and underlay the establishment of a research project at NFER to test national standards of attainment in maths, a project which virtually amounted to a feasibility study for the establishment of the APU (Banks, 1977). The American precursor of the APU, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, was established in 1969. Given these several factors, it was not surprising that when the Bullock Report recommended better monitoring of standards, this should combine with the Commission for Racial Equality's growing concern over educational disadvantage to provide the impetus to the establishment of the APU, first mentioned in the 1974 White Paper 'Educational Disadvantage and the Educational Needs
of Immigrants'.

A less laudable, but still very real motive was the need to provide evidence with which central government could refute the claims of the 'black paper hangers' and justify the very large national investment in education. This was particularly necessary since, despite the growing financial crisis in the early 1970s which culminated in the IMF loan of 1976, between 1966 and 1976 real growth in educational expenditure rose by 53%, compared with a growth in the national income of only 22%. In particular there was a need for evidence in Cabinet debates to counter rival claims for resources to tackle educational disadvantage from the Department of Health and Social Security and the Department of Employment. 94

All these developments were straws in the wind of accountability that was blowing more and more strongly. Hextall (1984) provides a succinct summary of this context:

"The first thing to note about the APU is that it is not an isolated initiative. The existence coincides with a whole constellation of other developments. The reactionary Black Papers heralded a decade of debate on education which would focus primarily on the accountability of schools, the standards being achieved by pupils, the relevance of the curriculum to the acquisition of basic skills, and the validity of the liberal-democratic principle of equality of opportunity as a basis on which to base educational policy and practice. Within this general framework more specific questions were posed about progressive teaching methods, mixed ability grouping, pupil indiscipline, parental choice, and the autonomy of teachers. The meshing together of such issues served to produce the sense of 'a crisis in education'. Responses followed thick and fast: the Bullock Report on literacy, the William Tyndale enquiry, the Great Debate and the ensuing Green Paper, the Taylor Report, centralisation of HMIs at the DES, retrenchment on CSEs, the mushrooming of disruptive units, inspectorate reports on mixed ability teaching and the core curriculum, the Rampton/Swann commission, the Assisted Places scheme, the imminent demise of the Schools Council, the entry of the Department of Employment into schools and colleges via the Manpower Services Commission (MSC), and the Department of Industry sponsoring the micro-electronics programme, the Education Act of 1981, and most recently, the White Paper on 'Teacher Quality'" (p. 249).
Given the tradition of quality control by examination dating from the earliest days of mass education in England and with the particular example of the nineteenth century Revised Code or 'payment by results' system as a model, it was not hard for central government to revive the idea of centralised monitoring. Indeed the post-1981 expression of the Revised Code contained many similar elements to the APU in providing for the monitoring of a one-third sample of pupils in key subject areas. But the APU is nevertheless fundamentally different in not focussing on individual schools and teachers. Rather the institution of the APU makes accountability the responsibility of the teaching profession as a whole and not, as hitherto, that of the individual pupil, teacher, school or local authority. Thus the establishment of the APU may be seen as yet another manifestation of government, that is, public, distrust in the situation of teachers' 'licensed autonomy' which had prevailed for the previous two decades and an element in the move towards more 'regulated autonomy' for the profession as a whole. That it stopped well short of providing any machinery for judging individual teachers' performance may be explained with reference to the traditionally effective reliance in English education on normative re-educative rather than bureaucratic-coercive means of control.

The Unit was set up as part of the new Schools Branch III of the Department of Education and Science - itself a testimony of more direct government interest in curriculum and examinations. The APU was designed to monitor national standards in each of the major curricular areas, language, mathematics, science, personal and social development, aesthetic development and physical development (Kay 1977). In the event, the last three proved either technically or political unfeasible and were replaced with monitoring modern languages and technology, itself a significant change of emphasis in favour of the prevailing scientism.
"At the outset the Unit's terms of reference were: 'To promote the development of methods of assessing and monitoring the achievement of children at school, and to seek to identify the incidence of under-achievement'. To accomplish this brief the following tasks were laid upon it:

1. To identify and appraise existing instruments and methods for assessment which may be relevant for these purposes.

2. To sponsor the creation of new instruments and techniques for assessment, having due regard to statistical and sampling methods.

3. To promote the conduct of assessments in cooperation with local education authorities and teachers.

4. To identify significant differences of achievement related to the circumstances in which children learn, including the incidence of under-achievement, and to make findings available to all those concerned with resource allocation within the Department, local education authorities and schools." (DES, 1974)

One of the earliest statements of publicity from the APU, 'Assessment: Why, What and How' (DES/APU, 1976), identifies the measurement of change over time as an issue:

"... at present, there are few national facts and figures available on which to base significant statements about standards in schools. We need such information not only to describe the current situation but also to record changes as they occur ... such information would both:

- help determine national policy, including decisions on the deployment of resources; and
- help teachers in planning the balance of pupils' work in schools, without an attempt at national level to define detailed syllabus content."

Yet neither the concern with changing standards nor the focus on under-achievement was a major part of early APU thinking. Some of those involved in that early work have attributed the explicit inclusion of under-achievement as an issue with the need to legitimate the idea of national monitoring when the APU went public. 97 Certainly the Unit did not provoke the hostility that a direct attack on the freedom of teachers and local authorities would have elicited. Nevertheless even this
this relatively low key attempt to have some overall picture of the operation of the education system provoked vitriolic critiques from a number of quarters.

Criticism focussed mainly on the technical limitations of such tests which were not able to measure some of the most valuable outcomes of schooling, and on the constraining effect of measuring outcomes on what is taught. Dennison (1978), for example, argued the impossibility of defining aesthetic, moral or personal development adequately enough to assess it, and, if it could be done, how clearly it would be seen as an infringement of personal liberty.

"Accountability loses meaning and significance if juxtaposed or linked with the psychometric world of testing and assessment. The misuse of the concept of accountability distorts the educational benefits that could stem from testing and assessment." 98

In the United States, where such monitoring had started some years earlier, it was already apparent to critics that national monitoring was too narrow to inform judgements about good and bad practice, and insufficiently comparative to influence policy. The following criticism is typical:

"I believe such schemes are simplistic, unworkable, contrary to empirical findings and, ultimately, immoral. They are likely to lead to suspicion, acrimony, inflexibility, cheating and finally control - which, I believe, is their purpose." 99

But influence, if not control was a deliberate intention of the Assessment of Performance Unit. This is made explicit in its own publications, viz:

"Q: How will wash-back effect be avoided?
A: ... If we monitor things regarded by a large number of people as important this will help ensure that society's priorities are reflected appropriately in school curricula." 100

With hindsight it appears that a combination of technical and
political problems have proved these fears largely groundless since they have prevented the APU from fulfilling any of its original intentions. Changes over time have never really featured as an issue for the monitoring teams. The Rasch model, originally adopted for use with the 'matrix sampling' approach as pioneered in the United States was intended to provide for this as it controlled differences in the questions asked and thus allowed the questions to be changed each year which was essential if a 'practice effect' was to be avoided. The fierce debate over Rasch modelling which ensued within the Statistics Advisory Group of the APU led to Rasch ultimately being abandoned, and with it, the possibility of monitoring changes over time. Although another strategy would be to keep a small proportion of the total items secret and use these every four years to show changes over time, such items would rapidly become dated and therefore invalid. But as Nuttall (1982) argues, even if it had been possible to measure changes over time, the policy implications of the evidence produced would not be clear since given the impossibility of controlling other inputs, it would not be clear how such changes were produced. If the APU had really been able to relate differences of achievement to the different circumstances in which pupils learn it would have been the instigator of one of the most significant pieces of research ever done. In the event, 'underachievement' proved to be a weak psychological concept which could not be conceptualised (Wood, 1982), leaving the APU only the possibility of identifying 'low' achievement. Ten years after it was instituted the APU has still to do anything useful about underachievement.

Even in the relatively simple task of identifying standards, the APU has proved largely useless in informing policy decisions. None of the information about the circumstances in which children learn such as the quality of laboratory accommodation, the number of technicians or
capitation allowances seems to make any difference to the results. Indeed, the worst performance seems to come from schools with the best pupil-teacher ratios and the smallest classes. Whilst it is not hard to interpret this result intuitively in terms of the number of remedial classes, it provides a good illustration of the old social science adage that correlation is not causation. Again, the matrix sampling approach of the APU means that it is not possible to say how far the results are a reflection of a topic not yet having been taught as much as how well pupils have learned.

Thus there is little to fear in terms of overt curricular control from the APU. In future it is likely to be increasingly research-oriented, addressing more specific issues such as girls' underachievement in maths or variations between different regions of the country. That APU policy is now to monitor every year for five years and then once every five years is symptomatic of a shift away from any expectation by government that the APU will make a direct input to policy-making. By contrast, to the extent that local authorities copy the APU approach for their own screening purposes if the APU items become available to them, this is likely to be a great deal more significant since local authorities have the power to respond with specific variations in findings in the light of such information.

That this was part of APU policy is made explicit in another DES statement, this time the 1977 Green Paper, which spells out clearly the responsibility of local government to use monitoring as a precursor to action:

"It is an essential facet of their [local education authorities] accountability for educational standards that they must be able to identify schools which consistently perform poorly, so that appropriate remedial action can be taken."
The DES itself explicitly recognised that the most delicate aspect of monitoring standards lies in comparison between schools. "It is not only silly but damaging to compare schools which may be in completely different environments and coping with completely different situations ... But in terms of the context in which a school operates, we do need to know something about the standards being reached, if only to bring help to those who need it" (DES press release, 7.1.77).

As the first director of the APU, Brian Kay HMCI, himself recognised "LEAs are more and more feeling the need to monitor schools in their own areas in greater detail than would be either possible or proper for the Department of Education and Science. Some are trying to develop their own instruments; most are using existing instruments - few are satisfied with either. It would be foolish indeed for the work put into the APU's first task of monitoring not to be made available to improve the quality of the LEAs' knowledge of their schools ... I should be very surprised [too] if the work of analysis that goes into the preparation of the APU's test material does not have a spin-off as far as the teacher is concerned and if the actual instruments, or some of them, were not to find a use in the classroom" (DES press release, 30.12.76).

With hindsight, even these fears about the APU to improve policy-making seem grossly overstated in terms of any explicit effect on the curriculum. The hopes of what it might do have been equally dashed. The impact of the unit's activities, now confined to the more conventional curricular areas of mathematics, science, modern languages and English, seems to be more equivalent to that of a research exercise than any policy implementation. The reason may be because the light sampling approach which avoids the identification of individual schools and teachers, focusses any pressure arising out of the Unit's findings towards the profession as a whole rather than to individuals and thus does not provide the basis for either influence or control at the level of personal accountability. But if the APU now seems unlikely to make a major impact, it remains 'a piece of political furniture in the waiting
room, and it has been of major significance in its legitimization of the idea that the outcomes of schooling can and should be subject to formal testing at the behest of government.

As anticipated, the Assessment of Performance Unit has spawned a testing explosion, not least among local authorities. A NUT survey in 1978 attempted to map the great variety of local authority testing activity then emerging, ranging from simply testing for secondary school transfer, testing for screening purposes, batteries of tests for a comprehensive record card, to schools and local authorities with detailed programmes of internal evaluation. In 1980, similar surveys have revealed very few local authorities with no testing schemes. Three-quarters engage in blanket testing for reading and a considerable number for maths (Gipps and Goldstein, 1983). There is also the growing fashion for school self-evaluation. The year 1978 saw the debut of the related and even more controversial practice of publishing examination results on a comparative, authority-wide basis.

Thus although the APU has not had the effect that was intended or expected this does not mean it has had no effect. In keeping with the style of control in English education as a whole, the APU may be seen as playing a major role in influencing the agenda of discussion and legitimating particular educational priorities. Three main channels of such influence may be identified - the role of the monitoring teams in the identification of standards, the role of the APU's own management apparatus - the steering committees and the consultative committee - in identifying standards and the role of the DES itself.

Whether or not the institution of the APU was a deliberate subterfuge on the part of the DES to enable the government to be seen to be doing something about standards is debatable (Nuttall, 1982). Certainly there was a real need for government to have the information which was required
as the basis for its own accountability. On balance it seems that bureaucratic constraints rather than subterfuge led to the shortcomings of the APU's activities. Kogan (1978) describes the DES as a 'multiple tribal system' of different interests whose competing and conflicting expectations of the APU were ultimately incompatible. These tensions were further exacerbated by the APU's bipartisan political rationale resulting from its being conceived by a Conservative administration and implemented under a Labour one. Not only did the bureaucrats responsible for the APU not address these tensions explicitly in the design of the proposed monitoring, they did not appear to recognise that it is impossible just to 'monitor' without that monitoring embodying values and interpretative bias (Gipps and Goldstein, 1983). Because the APU was run as part of the government bureaucracy rather than as on explicitly research exercise, it was built on the same rather naive epistemological assumptions that inform other government statistics gathering (Broadfoot, 1980). Thus the criteria which informed the APU's approach were essentially a selection of the bureaucratic and political priorities informing government as a whole. Its primary task was legitimization. But as Hextall suggests "They [educational policies and practices] may be expressed and presented as issues to be formulated and resolved in objective, technically neutral ways, but to delimit their discussion in such a way loses sight of their social resonance" (Hextall, 1984, p. 249).

"Official statistics tend to be regarded as particularly authoritative and objective sources of data. This view is supported by the Government Statistical Service, which portrays itself as a neutral fact-finding agency, as a kind of statistical 'camera' used by the government to provide information to help run social affairs more effectively ... This view of official statistics is however not the real situation at all. If taken a little further the snapshot analogy may itself be used to challenge this view. We may go on to ask whether the nature of the
numerical picture is dependent in any way upon who takes
the picture, the particular instruments they use or the
requirements of those who commission the picture in the
first place. To pose these questions is to raise the
whole issue of whose picture of society is reflected in
these data." 108

Thus Nuttall109 describes the tension between expertise and
management in the work of the Statistics Advisory Group in which, for
example, the reporting of detailed, technical discussion was couched
in vague generalities. In addition, since the APU staff could control
the number of meetings held, the membership of the committees, the
agendas of meetings and their minutes, they could effectively 'squeeze
out' controversial items. The influence of the DES in organising
controversies off the agendas of meetings is also documented in the
detailed study of the APU by Gipps and Goldstein (1983). How far this
was a deliberate policy or the result of selective perception cannot now
be determined. More important was the means so provided to reinforce
particular concerns at the expense of others. Hextall (1984) argues
that the selective structuring of agendas was further influenced by the
membership of the Steering Committees which were dominated by HMI, staff
from higher education and men. The Consultative Committee, supposedly
fully representative of outside interests is seen by Hextall as "an
expression of a dominant tendency to 'corporatism'. In this sense,
'corporatism' represents an attempt to evacuate politics from the agenda
by drawing all sides into an active, participating partnership intended
to reflect 'interests' under the impartial guidance of the 'neutral'
state" (p. 254).

Thus,

"under cover of a system of standardised national tests,
the term 'accountability' acquires a resonance normally
missing from its populist presentation. In the hands of
LEAs faced with the problem of cutting expenditure on
education, such tests may become valuable means of judging
the cost-effectiveness of schools, departments, or methods of organising curricula and teaching. Parental wishes, political interests, inspectors' reports are all factors which contribute to decision-making, but they generate complex and often contradictory pressures, and may result in decisions which evoke opposition from local and national pressure groups, including the teacher unions. In short, such decisions are seen as what they are, namely, contentious political choices. A series of tests carrying the national stamp of the APU/DES would have great legitimacy in providing an 'objective' reconciliation for such dilemmas" (p. 256)

There is, as Woods and Gipps (1981) suggest, "a strong tendency for quantitative data to overwhelm other sources of information, whatever the protestations to the contrary" because of the legitimatory power of apparently objective science.

The third and perhaps most significant way in which the APU can influence professional objectives is through the content of the tests themselves. Gipps and Goldstein (1983) suggest that as in the United States - where NAEP national monitoring has been going rather longer (Wirtz and Lapointe, 1982), the APU "needs to face up to the effect it may be having on the curriculum and to attempt to monitor this systematically, whether or not it was, or is, viewed by the Department as a way of having an influence on the curriculum, it would be naive to pretend that such an influence is absent: Any influence that it is having must be assessed systematically and openly for the sake of DES' credibility as much as for the sake of the curriculum" (p. 11).

"Accepting that a curriculum effect is inevitable and then deliberately setting out to see how it can be managed" (Gipps and Goldstein, 1983, p. 7) is already evident in the some monitoring teams, if not yet within government itself. As was seen in Chapter Two (Harlen and Orgee, 1983), the science team at least now envisage the major role of the APU less in terms of its generation of information than in terms of this 'primary contextualisation' function of defining what should constitute the objectives of science teaching. Given the professional rather than
bureaucratic orientation of the APU survey reports, the advent of the more accessible newsletter and the involvement now of every secondary school, it seems likely that the APU will have an increasingly significant 'normative re-educative' influence within the teaching profession. To the extent that it does it will have succeeded where the 'disease dissemination' model of curriculum development pursued by the Schools Council for the major part of its life, failed. It means too that the long-standing tendency in English education for curricular goals to be defined by assessment agencies such as Exam Boards, rather than either government or teachers, is reinforced. But the DES concern with establishing national criteria for the 16+ examination, its increasingly overt role in the instigation of qualifications, as in the recent CPVE and Records of Achievement, initiatives, as well as its formal control of the APU, means that central government's role is likely to be strengthened in this respect. As Dale (1981) suggests,

"both the definition of quality and what counts as its achievement are to be taken out of the hands of teachers. Teachers are to be made accountable for the achievement of externally set targets at an externally set level".

Educational priorities are now increasingly being defined at the greatest possible distance from the chalk-face - among the professional administrators at Whitehall and the professional test-constructors within the NFER, Universities and the Exam Boards.

Elliot (1978) provides a specific example of this in an article in which he equates the increase in testing and inspection by local education authorities with a tendency to transfer power over decision-making away from schools and hence as "the means of getting schools to comply with policies decided elsewhere ... although the cry of accountability is used to legitimate it, the truth of the matter is that such a development makes it impossible for schools to exercise any genuine accountability to
society or themselves". The significance of this sort of influence is that any monitoring assumes a value-consensus, just as

"Inspection assumes that in every aspect of schooling the Inspector knows best and will judge teachers to the extent to which they have 'got it right'" (Delves and Watts, 1979).

Most of the debate over the APU has centred on the technical difficulties of comparability. In practice, its most controversial role is in the assumption of a value consensus about educational goals. It is thus yet another example of the way in which apparently benign, rational techniques of assessment are currently being used to impose norms by reducing value debates to technical questions. Thus whilst the APU has relatively little significance in terms of first order, coercive power, it is an important constituent in rendering uncontroversial potential value disputes by disguising the establishment of any such position as the norm. In this respect the APU joins another contemporary evaluation initiatives the implications of which are discussed in Chapter Seven.
Footnotes to Chapter Six


2. The institution of 'Matriculation' entrance examinations by London and Durham Universities at the same time was yet another manifestation of this trend.

3. It should be noted that these examinations were directed almost entirely at boys - the objects of girls' education still being almost exclusively domestic, rather than intellectual. (Delamart, 1983).

4. No certificates were given until 1905.

5. Recent DES initiatives to institute 'Records of Achievement' for all pupils suggests this may now be changing.

6. Until the institution of School Certificate in 1917 the Universities actually inspected schools where they had 'local' candidates because schools were able to mark their own examinations (Kingdom, M. in interview 1980). Thus it is not without relevance that pupils had to have attended an inspected school continuously for two years to three years before they could enter for such examinations.

7. Sharp (1980) describes a similar pattern for Scotland where in 1923 'local examinations' administered by County Education Authorities were set up to regulate access to the different types of secondary provision and which, inevitably, against the intentions of the authorities, operated as competitive examinations.


10. Hamilton (1983) puts forward a parallel argument about the origin of schooling itself which around the end of the twelfth century replaced older, more informal forms of education when the administrative demands of a changing social order required the inculcation of particular skills and attitudes and thus a greater formalisation of educational provision.

11. The existence of such possibilities has encouraged many 11+ failures, including some notable educationists such as Rhodes Boyson, to support the continued existence of the tripartite system.

12. The success of such a strategy is perhaps best illustrated by the Jesuit educational practice of institutionalised individual and group competition. See Durkheim (1977).

13. Kelly (1976), in a Scottish study, substantiated these findings for the Scottish O-grade examinations, noting in particular the extremes of the continuum which were modern languages at the end of maximum difficulty and home economics and metalwork at the other. Even more significantly, Kelly points out that 'pupil ability tends to cluster in academic or non-academic subjects with grouping of presentations tending to follow ability clusters - so that there are, in a sense, two certificates of unequal value'.

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14. The CSE was designed so that a Grade 1 pass in it was equivalent to a 'C' grade pass at O-level. It was thus aimed at pupils from the 40th to the 80th percentile. Almost all pupils are now entered for at least one CSE. The value of them however is that many candidates do not even bother to collect their certificates when the grade they achieve is lower than 3.

15. The most recent chapter of this debate occurred at the 1984 North of England conference, when Sir Keith Joseph announced that the Government would be seeking to institute more relevant examination curricula which, because they would be largely based on a series of graded tests, would be more motivating, enabling more pupils to reach a higher standard.

16. Thus for example TWYLREB became famous for its almost total dependence on teacher-based assessment and inter-school moderation committees.


18. Recently, a Schools Council report has recommended the third of three different options in this respect - common examinations; common papers plus an equal option; and differentiated examinations - as the best way of overcoming the problem (Tattersall, 1983).


20. Speech by Colin Vickerman, Secretary of the JMB, reported in TES, 4/2/83.


22. Schools Council Working Paper 46, 1973, '16-19 Growth & Response', Working Paper 47, 1973, 'Preparation for Degree Courses', Evans Methuen. See also Schools Council Examinations Bulletin 38, 1978, and Working Paper 66, 1980, for further discussions of these proposals. The similarity with the pre GCE School Certificate is striking. It is interesting to note the very different Scottish tradition in this respect in which a less specialised 'higher' course, sometimes but not necessarily complemented by a Sixth Year Studies qualification is still the normal entrance qualification for university (see, for example, Gray, MacPherson and Raffe, 1983). Part of the explanation for this difference was the development of Scottish Universities within the more liberal European tradition shared also by France, in which specialisation and selection takes place within, as well as before, university entrance.

23. DES (1979), 'Proposals for a Certificate of Extended Education', HMSO. The most recent proposal (May 1984) is for 'Advanced Supplementary' (AS) level.

24. Again the comparison with the more centralised Scottish education system is instructive where there is a much greater degree of coordination between assessment and curriculum initiatives and a much greater rationalisation of post 16 provision, as set out in the SED's 1984, 'Action Plan' for 16 to 18s in Scotland.

26. Designed by Richard de Groot, a Wiltshire headmaster in association with the University of Bath School of Education.


28. See the DES 'Draft Policy Statement on Records of Achievement', November 1983. Major initiatives are currently under way at the Oxford Delegacy (OCEA), the South Western Examination Board, the Northern Association of Examining Boards and ILEA among others.

29. See note 28.

30. The OCEA initiative has had to drop the projected graded-tests in English for example.


32. See for example, Archer (1979).

33. Such as Henry II's itinerant judges and pipe rolls and the Elizabethan judges.

34. Burgess and Travers (1980) liken the growth of bureaucratic control at the expense of popular democracy to pre-revolutionary France.


36. Attendance became compulsory in 1880 and lack of attendance was penalised, although it was not free until 1891.

37. The Cross Commission, which reported in 1888, was particularly important in this respect. This was also the beginning of the Higher Grade Schools and with it the first attempts to provide 'secondary' education for the masses in a system which would be parallel, but separate from existing elite provision.

38. That is from 'power coercive' to 'normative reeducative' (Chin, 1968).

39. The parallels that Grace (1977, 1984) draws between the Victorian elementary school and the contemporary comprehensive school suggest interesting dimensions to some contemporary development.

40. A key point in this development was arguably the curriculum reorganisation initiated by Robert Morant between 1903 and 1905 which was explicitly designed to stop elementary schools developing in a secondary direction by excluding secondary-type subjects, such as science, from the permitted curriculum. Another element in this development was the new Education Code of 1926 in which the ruling Conservative government deliberately ceded some of its control over the broad framework of what elementary schools were expected and permitted to teach - possibly as White (1975) suggests, to prevent any future Labour government being able to radically change the character of such elementary schools. Certainly Lawn and Ozga (1981) describe the developing professional consciousness of teachers at this time and their deliberate resistance to increasing state control. See also Manzer, (1970).
41. It is worth noting that the higher status A-level exams, which
guard most closely the entry to elite status, were still controlled
by the Schools Council in that all new or substantially-revised
syllabuses had to be approved by them.

42. Interview with J. Banks, Assistant Secretary, DES, 1979.

43. Interview with P. Halsey, Assistant Secretary, DES, 1980.

44. Quoted in Dorn and Troyna, 1982.


46. McDonald (1978), op. cit.

47. See also Newsam's comment in this respect : "First, LEAs are so
suspicious that they resolutely turn down gifts from the Secretary
of State. The result is that Central Government offers money in
less acceptable forms; through the Manpower Services Commission,
through bits and bobs of urban aid, through weird and wonderful
partnership arrangements, through arcane Section 11 schemes and so
on. The distinguishing characteristic of all these offers is that
they are unco-ordinated, wasteful and require Local Education
Authorities to jump over portentously time-consuming hurdles to get
at the money. But anything is to be preferred to something coming
directly from the DES, the Department most concerned and knowledgeable
about education. It has led to my own education authority now spending
its money in compliance with 41, I repeat 41, separate capital
allocations by central government departments. It is a stupefyingly
inefficient business. The second problem is even more serious. I
have not been describing fluff in the works; disarray can stop the
whole machine. 'Prisenews' December, 1979, p. 8.


49. It is important to note, however, that whilst this limitation applies
to the DES, new modes of MSC-resourced educational provision; such as
TVEI, reflect explicit financial power.

50. See note 48.

51. Current support by the Society of Education Officers for an education
block grant may be understood in this light. See Venning (1980),

52. Interview with L. Brandes, Assistant Secretary, DES, 1979.

53. Ibid.

54. Interview with V. Botterill, Regional Secretary, NUT, Devon., 1980.

55. As at Tameside or in the more contemporary case of Croxley
Comprehensive School, Liverpool.

56. See Dorn and Troyna (1982). Comprehensivisation provides a good
example of this.

57. Interview with HMI J. Graham, former head of the APU. See also
58. See note 35.
59. See note 42.
60. See also D. Coates, p. 32 in the same volume.
61. Interview with Mr. N. Summers, Assistant Secretary, DES. See also Pratt, J., Burgess, T., Allemano, R. and Locke, M. (1973).
62. Interview with Mr. J. Pearce, Secretary, National Association of Educational Inspectors and Advisers, 1980.
63. See appendix for key to respondents.
64. See note 62.
65. This finding held true in both England and France and is borne out by the accountability literature in general. See, for example, Elliott et al. (1981).
66. See the Education Guardian, 7.1.84.
68. A metaphor provided by HMI John Graham in interview.
70. Professor J.D. Nisbet, at the same seminar.
72. Interview with T. Jones, Chief Adviser, South Glamorgan.
73. Interview with M. Shortney, Chief Adviser, Clwyd.
74. The establishment of the Educational Policy Information Centre jointly sponsored by NFER/DES reflects this growth in importance of explicit policy-making.
75. Devon LEA's reply to Circular 14/77, p. 14.
76. 6 major groupings of secondary schools in the county.
77. Comprising councillors, education committee members and representatives of the teacher unions.
78. Interview with David Morrish, Liberal councillor, Devon Education Committee.
79. Report by the Chief Executive, 27.6.77, Devon.
80. This fashion also found an expression in the use of 'objectives' in curriculum planning at this time.
81. Interview with C. Vickerman, Deputy Secretary, Joint Matriculation Board, 1980.

82. Interview with J. Mann, then Secretary of the Schools Council.

83. The Waddell Committee reported in 1978 and was followed later the same year by White Paper: 'Secondary Schools Examinations: a single system of examining at 16+', HMSO, London.

84. Interview with Mr. John Mann, op. cit.

85. Interview with Mr. Noel Summers, Assistant Secretary, DES, 1980.

86. Interviews with Mr. Alan Brown, Assistant Secretary, West Midlands Regional Examining Board, Mr. John Christopher, Secretary, JMB and Mr. H. MacIntosh, Secretary, Southern Regional Examining Board. According to Howells (1984), the same is true for the International Baccalaureat in Geneva.

87. Nuttall (1981), (himself an ex-CSE Board Secretary), personal communication.

88. Interview with N. Titball, NUT, Devon, 1980.

89. Interview with Mr. John Hedger, Assistant Secretary, DES, 1980.

90. The Local Education Authorities' Item Banking Project was set up at the NFER to examine the feasibility of making some of the APU items available as a bank to LEAs.

91. A battle that has similarities with the church-state struggle in France.


93. According to Dr. William Taylor, director of research within the DES at that time.


95. It is interesting to note that one of the major reasons for this reduction was cost.

96. Interview with Mr. John Graham, Professional Head of the APU, 1980.


98. See also his article in the TES, 27.10.78.


100. Quoted in Nuttall (1979).

101. It is still being used in British Columbia, Canada.
102. Prof. D. Nuttall, seminar at Bristol University, February 1983.

103. Ibid.

104. 1-7% of the age-groups selected are tested each year.

105. R. Wood, SSRC Seminar, 22.5.80.

106. See, for example, Cookson (1978) 'Testing, testing, testing', TES 10.2.78.

107. See note 97.


110. Ibid.