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

Thesis

How to cite:


© 1984 The Author

https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/

Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher’s website:
http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21954/ou.ro.0000de49

Copyright and Moral Rights for the articles on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. For more information on Open Research Online’s data policy on reuse of materials please consult the policies page.
THE RATIONALITY OF JUDGEMENT

Comparative perspectives on the social role
of educational assessment

by

PATRICIA MARY BROADFOOT, B.A., M.Ed.

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
in the School of Education, The Open University

May, 1984.

Author's number: HDG 0693
Date of submission: May 1984
Date of award: 5 October 1984
ABSTRACT

The subject of this thesis is the origins and implications of the elaborate apparatus of assessment procedures which characterises educational provision in advanced industrial societies. The analysis is divided into two parts.

Part I which is entitled 'Sociological Perspectives' is concerned with establishing the conceptual framework for such a study. An initial review of the literature, which delineates both the need for and the scope of such an analysis, is followed by a review which draws on comparative data to identify the major functions of educational assessment and the way in which such functions may change their form, but not their essential purpose, in response to changing social conditions. Having identified these functions as the attestation of competence, the regulation of competition and the control of both curriculum content and educational practice, subsequent chapters in Part I examine firstly the way in which the characteristics of industrial society give rise to the need for such educational assessment and condition its form, and secondly, how these forms and functions differ in relation to the idiosyncratic social context of different societies.

Part II of the thesis comprises case studies of two national education systems - France and England - in which the conceptual frameworks developed in Part I are applied in some detail to two very different social contexts. Each case study offers a brief historical review of the role educational assessment procedures have played in the emergence of the characteristic features of educational provision in the two countries studied and examines their contemporary role in terms of both the individual pupil and the system as a whole. A final, concluding chapter discusses some of the common trends which may be identified in both countries at the present time and attempts to assess their importance for the future role that education might play in such societies.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During the years it takes to research and write a thesis, one receives help from many different quarters. Some of this help is quite gratuitous, where the source is a timely article or a chance remark. Nevertheless, it is the insights and stimulus provided by the work of the invisible college of colleagues in the academic community that makes any particular project possible. Thus my primary debt is to the many scholars in this field on whose work I have drawn even though, as is the way of these things, they are for the most part unaware of this debt.

To many other people I owe more explicit thanks. These are the French and English educationists who gave time they could ill afford to provide interviews and, in particular, the advisors in Devon and Calvados who made the case studies possible.

I also wish to express my very sincere thanks to Mrs. Sue Cottrell for her quite outstanding patience and skill in decoding the hieroglyphics of a fragmentary and much-altered manuscript and translating them into the text presented here.

Above all, my thanks are due to Roger Dale, without whose sustained guidance, encouragement and intellectual inspiration through a number of years, this thesis would not have been possible.

PMB.
I confirm that no part of this work has previously been submitted by me or anyone else for a degree or other qualification to this or any other university or institution.

Whilst some of the data on which it draws were collected as part of a research project in which others were involved, the work presented is entirely my own.

P.M. BROADFOOT

May, 1984.
Parts of the analysis of this thesis have already appeared in the various publications of the author. The relevant publications are listed in Appendix B.
CONTENTS

PART I: SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER TWO - EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY 26

CHAPTER THREE - ASSESSMENT AND INDUSTRIALISATION 90

CHAPTER FOUR - ASSESSMENT AND THE NATIONAL CONTEXT 149

PART II: TWO CASE STUDIES: FRANCE AND ENGLAND

CHAPTER FIVE - ASSESSMENT IN THE FRENCH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM 194

CHAPTER SIX - ASSESSMENT IN THE ENGLISH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM 307

CHAPTER SEVEN - OVERVIEW, PROSPECTS AND COMMON TRENDS 434

BIBLIOGRAPHY 467

APPENDIX A - Methodology

APPENDIX B - Associated published work
PART I : SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

People are continually passing judgements on others - on their clothes, their accents, their actions, their beliefs - in fact in every area of human life. They pass judgement on products too - on books and television programmes, on buildings and furniture, on art and music, not least on football teams. People regulate and give meaning to their lives by the values they adopt. It is these values that influence their interpretation of the actions of others and their results. Most of the time people are not aware of the judgements they make for, unlike the drama or music critic whose job it is to evaluate an artistic performance in terms of the prevailing standards of a particular society, very few people would claim the right to pass a formal judgement in an area in which they have no special expertise. Rather, they appoint and train specialists who become expert at interpreting what they think are the values of society which operate in their own field and they are entrusted with the task of being arbiters of the quality of a particular performance. Thus, despite the fact that their criteria are often in fact greatly 'avant garde' in comparison with society at large, the decision whether to buy a particular painting for a national collection will be the responsibility of a few individuals whose experience and talent lead the nation to rely on their judgement. Informally of course individuals still reserve the right to decide what they personally find pleasing or moving, shocking or in bad taste, for such value-judgements are as integral to social life as social life is to being human.

Education is no exception to this general rule. 'Experts' are
appointed - people with specific qualifications and experience, who are entrusted with making judgements which conform to prevailing social values about desirable achievements. Thus in schools, teachers operate as 'educational critics' although they only evaluate educational performance and are not seen typically as setting the standards themselves. This evaluation takes many forms: in the classroom it may be the mark given for the weekly test or the ink exercise, or it may be expressed in the end of term class placement, the end of year exam, or the awarding of an external certificate. At the same time evaluation is continually taking place as part of the interaction between teacher and pupil: 'Johnny is always gazing out of the window', 'Susan will need more help with her handwriting', 'Lorraine always looks so untidy'. The same informal judgements are likewise continually being made by the pupils about the teacher and about each other: 'Mrs. Brown is even more boring today than usual', 'Sir had no right to tell Tom off like that', 'Tony is a creep'. Such evaluation, overt and covert, formal and informal, is as integral to school life as it is to all human relationships, immensely powerful but seldom questioned.

Teachers are also continually evaluating the learning process itself, trying to gauge the progress and problems of individual pupils in order that they may provide appropriate help and encouragement. Teachers need, too, to evaluate their own teaching in order to judge the value of particular teaching strategies and to discover to what extent the class as a whole has mastered a particular unit of work and thus can usefully be moved on to the next topic. Teachers have many techniques available to enable them to make such judgements. Research shows, (for example Brown and McIntyre (1977), Stubbs (1976), Flanders (1970), Boydell (1974)), that on average, teachers may spend almost half their time on oral questioning, partly of course as a teaching tool to move the lesson
on, but mainly to assess the understanding of individual pupils and, in aggregate, the class as a whole. In addition, marking written work, chatting to pupils, and even facial expressions will reveal relevant diagnostic information.

To the extent that the teacher is relating to the needs and interests of the individual pupil, this purpose of assessment would seem to approximate perhaps most closely to a child-centred interpretation of education. Indeed, the correspondence between the greatly increased emphasis on 'progressive' child-centred teaching methods and the decline of formal assessment seems to support the view that assessment can be divorced from social selection requirements and be geared only to the learning of the individual child. As Rousseau so well demonstrated in his Emile (Rousseau, 1911), the concept of an organised sequence of learning experiences depends upon the teacher's ability to judge the pupil's understanding and needs at any particular time.

Appearances are deceptive, however, for during the ongoing interaction between teacher and pupil, and even between the pupils themselves, over the weeks and months pupils come to an often unconscious assessment of themselves and their performance in relation to each other as they strive to achieve the socially-defined goals which underlie the teacher's activities. Although the teacher may seek to respond to the variety of pupil needs and interests, pupils become labelled by the teacher in relation to various pre-existing stereotypes (Becker, 1952) such as 'lazy', 'dull', or 'bright'. Gradually, pupils too come to recognise that only particular kinds of achievement are valued and they learn to assess themselves and adjust their expectations accordingly.

For whereas the 'formative evaluation' which is part of the process of teaching and learning is inherent in all educational activity worthy of the name, mass schooling systems have also evolved a quite different
sort of more formal evaluative activity - which may be termed 'summative evaluation'. This 'more or less formalized procedure usually separated from the classroom situation' (Ottobre, 1979, p. 12) comes at the end of a particular stage of school activity and has a quite different role to that of 'formative evaluation'. Its purpose is the externalisation of information about the process of education so that those not personally involved in it can still be provided with reliable information about the learning that has taken place. On the basis of such information, the characteristics, and hence quality, of pupils, teachers, institutions and even the education system as a whole can be judged. For 'insiders' such formalised judgements provide useful standards against which to measure their own progress, be they pupils, teachers or administrators. The internalisation by pupils of such assessments results in time in the very clear differences of behaviour and motivation characterising those labelled 'bright' and marked out for success and those 'less able' pupils destined for failure. Whilst it may be deplored educationally, this 'cooling out' process (Goffman, 1952; Clark, 1962, 1972) is highly significant in limiting the frustration that would be endemic in any system in which a large number of pupils aspired to a limited number of opportunities. For 'outsiders', the information generated by 'summative evaluation' can provide a rational basis for discriminating between individuals when there is a need to select, and is the basis of accountability in the sense that it provides for judgements to be made on the quality of the education being offered.

This kind of explicit educational evaluation is usefully distinguished by the term 'assessment' which may be taken to mean the deliberate and overt measurement of educational performance in order to provide information for purposes beyond the immediate interactive learning situation.
Some writers (e.g. Satterly, 1981) distinguish between 'assessment' as the actual process of measurement and 'evaluation' as the subsequent interpretation of such measurements against particular norms of performance. In formative evaluation these two stages are often synchronous. As teachers scan pupils for signs of non-attention or difficulty, they are also simultaneously interpreting what they see in terms of the criteria identified by their previous experience. In more formal assessments, however, there may be a more explicit distinction between the production of scores, often including a measure of standardisation, and the subsequent interpretation and use of those scores for various purposes such as reporting and pupil selection. Generally, however, assessment may be taken to refer to both the actual procedures and the uses to which they are put that have evolved as part of mass educational provision, whilst evaluation refers to the more general sense outlined above.

The repertoire of assessment techniques would be taken to include teacher-marked essays, exercises and class tests; standardised tests, periodic school examinations, and public examinations; school records, reports to parents, testimonials and references, as well as the more rare formal evaluations by outside bodies such as school psychologists.

This already lengthy list would be further added to, particularly in those education systems where schools enjoy a measure of autonomy, by the senior management of the school in their concern for the way in which the consumers outside the school, such as the parents of actual and prospective pupils, the local community in general, employers and further and higher education establishments, would judge the products of the school and, hence, its activities. Equally, senior management at least will be concerned with the assessments upon which the management hierarchy outside the school – the local education authority inspectors,
advisers, and officials, local political representatives—come to form their judgements about the quality of education provided in that particular school. There is also a third level of concern which preoccupies those charged with national responsibility for educational provision and standards—the Ministry of Education, the national Inspectorate and ultimately, Parliament. Indeed, educational assessment in various forms has been of central importance in the creation of educational systems per se through the rationalisation of educational provision and the control of educational practice. So integral to the mass provision of education has the ideology and the associated practice of assessment become that, like the honeysuckle and the bindweed, they are now so inseparable that any attempt to release education from the constrictions of assessment procedures would be likely to result in the collapse of the system itself. From the most informal micro-interaction of the classroom, through class tests, and certificate examinations right up to the macro levels of national monitoring, it is possible to trace a single underlying rationale, an ideology which embodies the contradictory purposes of mass education and powerfully controls the nature of its goals and rewards.

The scope of this thesis comprehends the whole range of such organised evaluative activity within the education system, from the judgements teachers form in the classroom about individual pupils through to the way in which various, more formal means of recording and reporting pupils' progress in the school as a whole provide for the accountability of the individual teacher, the school, the local authority and ultimately, national educational provision as a whole.
Theoretical framework: Selection, Certification and Control

This description of the pervasive and characteristic role of formal evaluative techniques in contemporary schooling defines and justifies the choice of subject for this thesis. It will be argued that assessment techniques provide one of the principal mechanisms by which those changing bases for social control within the broader society which gave birth to mass schooling in the first place are translated into the educational process. More specifically, it will be suggested that the solution to the quite novel problems of the regulation and legitimation of a proliferating division of labour which the process of industrialisation increasingly required, lay in the provision of formal assessment techniques within the process of schooling. Inherent in such an approach is the assumption that in those developed societies which have mass educational provision there is something generically different and characteristic about the way in which educational evaluation operates. These 'developed' societies which may be variously categorised as 'mass' or 'modern' 'industrial' or 'capitalist' - the latter being further divided into 'entrepreneurial', 'corporate', 'advanced' and 'post' manifestations - must nevertheless share common features which differentiate them from pre-industrial societies. For the purposes of the present analysis these common characteristics are taken to be those identified by Aron (1980):

"the simplest abstract definition of "industrial society" involves three principal characteristics: where the vast majority of the labour force is concentrated in the secondary and tertiary sector; where there exists a constant impulsion, in contrast to the relatively stable character of traditional societies to expand productivity; and, consequently, where there is a rapid rate of technology and innovation." (p. 22)

To the extent that these characteristics are present in any particular society, they are likely to give rise to a need for some
rational (i.e. justifiable) basis to be found for the allocation of unequally-desirable social roles. The most obvious rational justification is likely to be merit-demonstrated competence to perform the role. Allied to the demonstration of competence, typically represented in certification, is the idea of competition or selection - that individuals should be allowed to compete on an equal basis to demonstrate their claim to competence. The provision of such a fair and open competition suggests that those who are not successful in achieving their aspirations will accept the rational selection criteria being applied and hence, their own failure. In so doing they acquiesce not only in their own defeat but in the legitimacy of the prevailing social order. To this extent the provision of an apparently fair competition controls the build-up of frustration and resentment among the least privileged.

The issue of control extends beyond that of the individual, however, to include control of the educational system as a whole given that the system is composed of individuals who must themselves engage in the competition over competence. In some societies this systemic control will take the form of a powerful state bureaucracy whose activities regulate both the process of education - curriculum, pedagogy - and its institutional provision. In other, more 'de-centralised' societies where there is no such powerful state bureaucracy, control is exerted by the interaction of interest groups and various, less formal normative pressures such as feelings of professional responsibility. Thus, as well as attesting competence, regulating competition and reducing the frustration of individuals, assessment procedures have a crucial role to play in providing for such systemic control. It is these themes of competence, competition and control, together with the associated issue of 'content', that provide the analytical key to understanding the unique and characteristic role played by educational assessment procedures in
industrial societies. Following this basic theoretical framework, historical and contemporary developments in assessment policy and practice may be understood in terms of the interplay between these themes and the different priority accorded to each of them as social, economic and political factors dictate.

Yet, despite the fact that the panoply of marks and grades, tests and exams, reports and inspections, is one of the most characteristic features of contemporary educational provision; that many educational administrators and most teachers would identify the periodic necessity of having to submit themselves and their pupils to some kind of formal evaluation as one of the most fundamental constraints on their "professional practice"; and whilst there is no lack of research on most of the major aspects of assessment such as its effects on pupils or the advantages and disadvantages of various different measurement techniques; there has, as yet, been little attempt to explain why assessment procedures have come to have such a dominant role in contemporary educational provision.

One explanation for this omission is a relative lack of interest in educational assessment on the part of sociologists. Although such assessment is an implicit issue in many major areas of concern, such as the curriculum or social inequality, it is comparatively rare for sociological research to address educational assessment as an explicit topic and even more rare for such research to seek to explain the ubiquity of educational assessment. Indeed the sheer scale of such a task and the theoretical complexities involved render it daunting and it is not surprising that fear of superficial generalisations and over-deterministic explanations have led most researchers to choose a more limited focus for studies in this area. Yet only such a comprehensive study can explain this fundamental, and in some ways determining, aspect
of schooling, and hence illuminate a major feature of social life. It is thus this perspective that informs the analysis that follows.

The scope of the thesis is broad - historical and comparative, structural and processual - and the danger of superficiality correspondingly great. Nevertheless the importance of the issue is taken to justify the risks inherent in such a grand design, the overall aim being to provide a conceptual model for the study of educational assessment as a social form characteristic of societies with formal educational provision. The first stage of such an analysis necessarily involves a fuller justification of its importance as a topic.

In the pages that follow, the foregoing introductory remarks are extended and justified by means of a brief review of the existing literature on educational assessment. Having thus briefly established the context for the analysis the final part of this chapter introduces the thesis as a whole and outlines each of the separate strands of the study.

The range of existing studies

There exists a not inconsiderable body of research on the characteristics and effects of inter-personal evaluation in classroom interaction (see, for example, Jasman, 1981; Gearheart and Willenberg, 1979; Nash, 1976; Gilly, 1980; Wood and Napthali, 1975; Morrison, 1974). This work is largely confined to the role of such evaluation in the social creation of identity. The essentially social psychological perspectives of labelling theory (Lemert, 1967; Matza, 1969; Hargreaves, 1976; Becker, 1963), stereotype formation (Cameron; Jones and Morrison, 1973, Willis, 1977; Hargreaves, 1967), and the self-fulfilling prophecy (Rosenthal and Jacobsen, 1968; Rist, 1970; Fleming and Anttonen, 1971;
Rogers, 1982) are principally concerned with tracing the way in which such processes operate and their subsequent effects on pupil behaviour and attainment (Campbell, 1974; Beard and Senior, 1980; Sumner and Warburton, 1972; Gerlach and Sullivan, 1969). Other studies in this area are explicitly concerned with using assessment to create a different classroom climate in which the emphasis on mastery rather than competition increases pupil motivation. (Bloom, 1969, 1976, 1983; Thomas et al., 1978; Skaalvik, 1975; Mager, 1962; Glaser, 1963; Atkin, 1969; Berk, 1980; Block, 1971; Boehm, 1973). But although such studies of the effects of evaluation procedures in the process of schooling underline the latter's significance, they can in themselves throw but little light on why the extensive formalisation of such procedures should have been a defining characteristic in the emergence of mass schooling systems.

Again, although a number of more socio-historical studies of educational assessment procedures exist, notably with regard to the emergence of the two most explicit manifestation of such formalisation - academic examinations and intelligence testing - such studies (e.g. Evans and Waites, 1981, Torrance, 1981; Vernon, 1978; Sadler, 1931; Montgomery, 1965, 1978; Morris, 1961) are typically context specific and thus not explicitly concerned with generalising beyond the idiosyncratic concatenation of events to the broader social currents underpinning them.

By far the biggest volume of assessment literature, however, is concerned with the development of assessment techniques on the one hand and criticisms of the effects and shortcomings of these same techniques on the other. The issue of public examinations is typical in this respect with technical studies such as Nuttall and Wilmott (1968), Lauwerys and Scanlon (1969), Christie and Forrest (1981), Kelly (1976), Pilliner (1968) and Bruce (1969) - to give just a few examples of a huge
literature - being complemented by an equally large, if often less scholarly, body of literature which offers a more or less vitriolic critique of the harmful effects of such examinations on pupil motivation and creativity or exposes the inevitable inaccuracies of any formal assessment process (e.g. Pearce, 1971; Rust and Harris, 1967; Stones, 1975; Cox, 1966, Kelly, 1971). Often the technical studies are themselves highly critical of the shortcomings of educational measurement procedures even though they may not, like the non-psychometrician, deplore the need for such activity at all in the light of its claimed effects on the learning process (e.g. Murphy, 1982; King, 1955; Branthwaite et al., 1981).

The debate over examinations is matched by that over other forms of assessment. Objective testing and item-banking seem to some to overcome many of the technical disadvantages of traditional essay-type examinations and to allow a more curriculum-led assessment (Wood and Skurnik, 1969; Schools Council, 1971; Dobby and Duckworth, 1979). To others this very objectivity, with its inevitable restriction to the clearly defined curricular aims (Ebel, 1963; Eisner, 1969) is to be deplored since the price of more objective assessment is held to be curriculum banality (Hoffman, 1964; Tyler, 1964; MacDonald-Ross, 1973; Hogben, 1972; David, 1981; Herndon, 1975; Simon, 1978). The desirability of examinations versus that of continuous assessment is also a major and long-standing issue in the assessment literature (Burt, 1945; Forrest, 1974; Ford, 1980; Eggleston, 1974; Elley and Livingstone, 1972; Schools Council, 1967, 1975; Murphy, 1981).

These more or less scholarly debates are of enormous significance since they are often a major influence in the determination of assessment policy. It is thus not surprising that considerable sums of public money have been available to national research institutes and
psychometricians generally to develop and evaluate different assessment
techniques. Research and development of this kind has grown from being
a scholarly pursuit in the early years of this century (Hamilton, 1974;
Hamilton and Smith, 1980), into a major business, supporting organisations
the size of ETS (Educational Testing Service) in the United States and in a
smaller, but not less significant way, a whole range of research
institutes whose revenue is greatly increased from the sale of the
tests so developed. Indeed, the relationship between the psychometric
concern with the development of techniques for the measurement of
individual differences and that of the development of educational
research per se (Taylor, 1973; Landsheere, 1975) has been close since
the early years of this century: Indeed the psychometric tradition rapidly
became so powerful that it virtually constituted the 'normal science'
(Kuhn, 1962) of educational 'research for many years 3 (see, for example,
Dockrell, 1984).

It is the very power of the debates over rival assessment techniques
to inform policy which has helped to exclude discussion of more
fundamental reforms. Given the very urgency of the issues under
discussion, and the high stakes of individual life chances with which
any formalised assessment procedures are inevitably involved, it is at
first sight not surprising that in the heat of debate relatively little
thought is spared for questioning the very principle of educational
assessment and the organisational practices of contemporary schooling
based on it. On the other hand, given the size and quality of the
critical literature that now exists about the shortcomings of assessment
procedures, the continued exclusion of any fundamental critique from the
policy arena does indeed seem surprising.

The fact that assessments are now widely acknowledged to be at best
only a rough estimate of particular kinds of ability despite the
statistical finesse of the processing of the results and the considerable quantity of research directed towards improving their accuracy, has been extensively documented in a large number of research studies since the seminal work of Hartog and Rhodes in 1935 (see Ingenkamp, 1977). The vagaries of pupil performance and especially of exam stress, of differences between markers and the difficulty of questions, are only some of the more significant causes of inaccuracy which would now seem to be largely unavoidable. Research has revealed, for example, that differences between examiners, such as speed of reading, fatigue, and competence (see, for example, Dunstan, 1966), ideology (Husbands, 1976), the order and speed of marking or even the examiner's personal social situation, may affect the marking process (Branthwaite et al., 1981) and cause considerable unreliability. Or, in the words of one teacher,

'My marking is no worse than most - better than some, but I know it is bloody awful. The time you get to do any marking, the amount you are paid, the pressure on you to do it, and the absolute lack of any kind of instruction - you meet and you discuss and you are supposed to know how it is done. 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 exam they set, within a very narrow margin, you go to university. It is a much stiffer hurdle to get that mark than it is to get a degree. The difference between A and B and A and D can be about 6 marks which is the one duff question and one bad-tempered examiner or incompetent examiner or lazy examiner ...' (a Devon secondary school teacher)

It may well be partly for this reason that such certificate results are a very weak guide to the likely quality of future job or higher education performance (Eyre, 1966; Schools Council, 1972; Oxtoby, 1973; Eggleston, 1973). Indeed Powell (1973) has documented a whole series of other influences on attainment in higher education of which the most obvious are motivation and effort, but which also include quite subtle dimensions excluded from certification assessment, such as introversion and extroversion and confidence.
It is largely because the technical aspects of assessment are so readily amenable to systematic study that it is these very shortcomings of particular techniques which have dominated discussions about desirability. The debate - and there is currently a good deal of it - is conducted almost entirely in this arena, the arena of efficiency. The heated discussion initiated in England in this decade by the Schools Council's proposals for what were, in reality, fairly minor changes in the structure of certification awards at 16, 17 and 18+ (DES, 1978; Schools Council, 1977, 1978a, b) was matched by a similar debate in Scotland following on the publication of a Report there in 1977 of the Secretary of State's Committee on Assessment and Certification (SED, 1977). The focus of such discussion is overwhelmingly on examining current practice and working out how it may be changed to become more efficient and thus ostensibly more just. This point is made explicitly in the Waddell Report (DES, 1978).

'We were aware of general questions which are often debated concerning the need for, and place of, examinations in society and the imperfections which are inherent in the nature of any system of examining. As a committee we were not constituted, nor had we time, to re-examine and come to a view on all these broad issues as they merit, although we kept them in mind as a background to our work. In the circumstances we did, however, accept that public examinations would remain an essential feature of our educational system for the foreseeable future.'

This emphasis on short-term, pragmatic issues, this location of the problematic essentially within the status quo, is highly significant because of the legitimating influence of assessment procedures in reinforcing a particular understanding of the desirable nature of education. To put it another way, if only the efficiency of assessment practices is questioned and not their purposes and effects, and since formal assessment procedures exert a strong influence on the curriculum in reinforcing a particular interpretation of the nature of education
in contemporary society - one based on achievement stratified according to academic ability - then assessment procedures are likely to lead to inertia in the education system and its inability to respond to changing social needs.

Rarely have the various perspectives and traditions of research into educational assessment been brought together. The different professional communities represented and their different goals have encouraged at best a defensive neutrality, at worst, an overt hostility. Even more rare have been the attempts to widen the focus of debate in order to situate such research traditions within a more general understanding of the relationship between school and society. Test constructors, test users and test critics remain isolated from each other, locked into their professional communities and idiosyncratic concerns. At the same time, sociologists have been content not to intervene in the debate between psychologists, historians and pedagogues.

Why this should have been the case is a difficult question to answer. In part at least the explanation is the same as that for the comparatively recent sociological interest in curriculum and classroom processes generally, namely a preoccupation with the structural factors of input and output within the educational system. Until the early seventies the domination of psychological perspectives concerned with the measurement of individual differences (see, for example, Thorndike and Hagen, 1969; Pidgeon and Yates, 1968; Bloom, Hastings and Madaus, 1971; Ebel, 1965, 1972; Collins et al., 1976) and sociological perspectives concerned with the identification of educational disadvantage (see, for example, Banks, 1955; Halsey, Floud and Martin, 1961; Douglas, 1964; Floud and Halsey, 1958; Douglas et al., 1971), both supported an almost total commitment to positivist research techniques. Thus although formal assessment procedures of individual capacity and
achievement are clearly an important feature of such research, just as they are of the operation of the meritocracy itself, there was little explicit concern in such studies with the actual effects of the assessment procedures used. Although throughout the 1950s psychologists were assiduous in their attempts to uncover the inaccuracies of the 11+ and hence the assumptions on which it was based (Simon, 1953; Vernon, 1978) there was little attempt made to understand such procedures in terms of broader, social pressures.

In the early 1970s the sociology of education underwent a radical change in focus with the advent of the 'new' sociology of education (Bernbaum, 1977). But it was curriculum and, to a lesser extent, pedagogy which dominated such studies (e.g. Young, 1971; Whitty and Young, 1976; Eggleston, 1977). Bernstein was atypical in his identification of three message systems in schooling - curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation - in his work on education codes (Bernstein, 1977), but even here, evaluation received far less attention than the other two message systems which were embodied in the key concepts of 'classification' and 'framing'. Evaluation appears as a dependent, rather than a defining variable (see Chapter Three).

More recently, and particularly with the advent of the fashion for neo-Marxist political economy there are signs that sociologists of education have begun to take a more explicit interest in the origins and effects of formal evaluation procedures (Hextall and Sarup, 1977; Whitty, 1978; Mehan, 1973; Meighan, 1977; Broadfoot, 1984; Hargreaves, 1982). Some of these studies (e.g. Scarth, 1983; Turner, 1983; Bates, 1984) are directed at the curricular messages as they are effected by assessment at school and classroom level. Others (e.g. Collins, 1979; Dore, 1976; Ranson, 1984) are more macro-focussed, concerned with the credentialling function of contemporary school-systems. The amount of
work in this area is still small, however, and there remains a pressing need for sociological studies of assessment procedures of the kind represented by this thesis which can provide some kind of bridge between these various traditions and perspectives and so foster a more general understanding of the origins and effects of formal evaluation procedures in societies with mass schooling systems.

The thesis in outline

The topic of this thesis is thus, as its title suggests, an analysis of the part played by educational assessment in the kind of mass schooling systems which are typical of industrialised and industrialising societies. Such an analysis requires a combination of historical and comparative, theoretical and empirical, structural and processual perspectives within a general sociological perspective. In order to bring what is potentially a vast project within the scope of a single study, most of the empirical analysis of this study is based on two case studies of assessment practice in England and France. These two countries are taken to be sufficiently similar to be illustrative of the general themes yet sufficiently different from each other to illustrate important differences of emphasis in the use made of educational assessment which occur in national education systems and by so doing, guard against any trite determinism.

The organisation of the study reflects this tension between the general and the specific. The first four, largely theoretical, chapters constitute Part I of the thesis. This is primarily concerned with generating conceptual frameworks with which to structure an analysis of the range of assessment practices found in contemporary school systems. Part II of the thesis, which includes Chapters Five, Six and Seven, is
much more empirical in focus, its aim being to elucidate and substantiate
the analyses of Part I by means of detailed references to the two case
study systems. Within this general framework, the chapters are divided
as follows.

Chapter Two provides a fairly general overview of the nature and
significance of educational assessment. It has two major functions.
The first is to establish the pervasive presence and overwhelming
importance of formal assessment procedures in any mass provision of
schooling and, by so doing, justify the choice of topic for the thesis
as a whole. The second function is to clarify in fairly general terms
the reasons which lie behind the steady growth in the number and
significance of assessment procedures in formal schooling. Given the
essentially sociological rather than historical focus of the study as
a whole, Chapter Two also includes a résumé of some of the more marked
and generalisable trends currently identifiable in the assessment
practices of industrialised countries. Thus Chapter Two introduces the
major theoretical arguments which are expanded in Chapters Three and
Four, at the same time setting a general empirical context for the more
detailed case studies of Part II.

If the principal purpose of Chapter Two is to establish the importance
of educational assessment as a topic of study, the principal purpose of
Chapter Three is to explain why such evaluation procedures have become
so integrally connected with mass schooling systems. This quest
involves an examination of the generic characteristics of 'industrial'
societies through the insights provided by sociological theory, notably
that of Marx, Weber and Durkheim, and the more recent work of Bernstein,
Foucault, Habermas and Marcuse. Whereas the focus of Chapter Three
justifies and indeed requires a very general and extended theoretical
analysis about the common characteristics of such societies, it is
equally important that these generalisations can be conceptually linked to idiosyncratic characteristics of particular schooling systems.

Chapter Four therefore extends a rather different level of theoretical analysis to that of Chapter Three. It is explicitly concerned with the provision and justification of an analytical framework for the empirical analyses of Part II, that is to say, it is concerned with the way in which the common characteristics of mass schooling systems are mediated by the institutional archaeology and ideological traditions of a particular nation state.

There has been a marked tendency in recent sociology of education for macro analyses to fail to distinguish between the common and the idiosyncratic features of different societies, particularly where such societies can be grouped under a generic term such as 'capitalist'. One of the principal themes of this thesis is that both constant and contextual analyses are necessary for an adequate understanding of contemporary practice and that there are considerable dangers in extrapolating uncritically to all similar societies from analyses based on a particular society, as in, for example, Bowles and Gintis' 'Schooling in Capitalist America' or Bourdieu and Passeron's 'Reproduction'. The perspective adopted in Chapter Four draws heavily upon the work of Archer and her neo-Weberian analysis of the education system per se as a unit of sociological study. Continuing the search for theoretical insights and conceptualisation about the role of assessment in mass schooling systems, Chapter Four links the central arguments of Chapter Three with a more middle-range theoretical concern with the relationship between ideology, structure and action as it finds expression in the national system. Thus Chapter Four provides for an articulation between substantive empirical detail and broad generalisations.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven comprise Part II of the thesis and
serve the dual function of illustrating empirically the general arguments of the thesis and, at the same time, demonstrating the importance of the national context in determining the precise manifestation of more general pressures and trends. The selection of two national education systems for detailed study which differ radically in their ethos, organisation and origins, reflects one of the major themes of the thesis which is the relationship between educational assessment and social control. The growing currency of the concept of accountability in the last decade has helped to focus attention on educational assessment as a vital element of systemic control alongside its already widely accepted significance as the chief instrument of individual selection and legitimation. The analyses of Chapters Five and Six address both these major dimensions in the role of educational assessment in an attempt to show how very different institutional manifestations of these key functions nevertheless provide for very similar outcomes in the way in which evaluation procedures provide for certain critical functions to be performed by mass education systems.

Thus Chapter Five offers an overview of the way in which assessment procedures have operated in the institution and development of mass schooling in France since the early nineteenth century. Such an analysis requires a more general account of the ideological and institutional traditions which have become characteristic of French education since the days of Napoleon Bonaparte. It is argued that the most notable of these traditions is that of strong central control. One of the major theoretical arguments of the thesis is that the way in which assessment procedures are used for control of the education system is a reflection of the degree of central control embodied in that system. This hypothesis is the principal reason for the choice of case study material. Since the two systems under study - the French and the English - differ
radically in their degree of formal centralisation, it was envisaged that they would highlight the very different ways assessment procedures have come to be used in individual social settings to fulfil the fundamental objective of system control.

To make the comparison between constants and contextually specific factors as clear as possible, Chapter Six provides a very similar case study to that of Chapter Five based this time on the development of educational assessment procedures within the highly decentralised English context, since the early nineteenth century.

The seventh and final chapter of the thesis pulls together the various analytical strands of Parts I and II in a more speculative consideration of the implications of contemporary trends in educational assessment in the two countries under study. Whilst the theme of Part I as a whole is the significance of the move from collective to individual social responsibility, which was associated with the process of industrialisation, Chapter Seven introduces what seems likely to be the next stage in this process, the move towards an increasingly technicist value-orientation. This latter development is taken to be a further stage in that pursuit of rationality which is characteristic of industrial societies. A technicist-value-orientation requires that the judgements which lie at the heart of any assessment procedure are transformed from being evaluations of an individual's qualities or achievements made against a given or chosen set of criteria into evaluations in which the criteria are apparently the absolute dictats of scientific efficiency. Against the relative values of personal choice, culture or belief and the whole realm of politics are pitted the impersonal, objective canons of scientific logic. The implications of the changes in assessment policy which can be identified in both France and England as a result of these contemporary trends as discussed
in Chapter Seven also provide a conclusion to the study as a whole, since they underline the way in which assessment procedures reflect the broader social context.

The empirical data for Part II of the thesis were collected in the course of a larger, SSRC-funded study entitled 'Constants and Contexts in Educational Accountability: A Comparative Study' undertaken by the author between 1979 and 1981, whose results are already available (Broadfoot, 1981). The principal source of data in both countries was a series of semi-structured interviews with educational personnel at all levels of the system from the Minister's office to that of the classroom teacher (see Appendix A: Methodology). In each country a detailed local case study was undertaken to identify how patterns of accountability and control actually operated in practice. These two case studies - of Calvados in France and Devon in England⁴ - and the more general programme of interviews at national level are the source of most of the personal comments used in Part II and elsewhere in the thesis. An equally important source of case study material was the rich fund of official and unofficial documentation generated in the course of the research. Whilst much of the contemporary analysis draws on primary source material, the study as a whole makes no attempt at original analysis from historical primary sources. Indeed the eclectic methodology of the study as a whole is typical of that required of a case study approach when a number of different perspectives is involved - structural and processual, theoretical and empirical, historical and comparative (Silver, 1983; Grant, 1979). Thus, whilst there is an explicit attempt to generate theory from the case study material, the emphasis in data collection has been on generating illuminative insight rather than on the systematic comparison of particular variables; on hypothesis-building rather than hypothesis-testing.
In addition to these limitations there are other, quite arbitrary limitations to the analysis which reflect the need to find the optimum balance between depth and breadth. In particular, the study has little to say about primary, tertiary or higher education being based almost entirely on that stage of education in which assessment has typically been most portentous, namely secondary schooling.

Every effort has been made in the study to observe the canons of qualitative research, to use its concern with the meanings and perceptions of respondents to explore the reality as well as the rhetoric of educational practice. Analyses of the data have been submitted to respondents at various stages to check the interpretations made and to generate further insights. In the same spirit, every effort has been made to avoid selective quotations which might deliberately perpetrate bias. The gradual sedimentation of ideas that has taken place over the several years of study represented in this thesis and the parts of it that have already been published offer some safeguards against any more or less deliberate bias. In the end, however, like all sociological accounts, this thesis can only be one, essentially personal, attempt to explain some aspect of social life. As such it is but a small part of an endless debate.
Footnotes to Chapter One

1. This has been clearly demonstrated in the English primary school after the virtual demise of the 11+.

2. See the responses reported in Chapters Five and Six.

3. That educational research apart from psychometric research has only recently become established as a distinct field of study is reflected in the fact that both the British and Scottish Educational Research Associations are only ten years old.

4. See Appendix A for list of respondents.
CHAPTER TWO

EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

This chapter is devoted to an elaboration of the central argument of this thesis that historical and contemporary developments in assessment policy and practice may be understood in terms of the interplay between the themes of competence, competition and control and the different priority accorded to each of them as social, economic and political factors dictate. To justify the assertion that this analytical framework is applicable to industrial societies in general, it is necessary to review historical and contemporary trends in assessment procedures from a broad, if necessarily superficial, empirical base. Such a review has a second, equally important function of providing a more general context within which the two case studies which form the bulk of this thesis may be located.

One of the many debts owed by contemporary sociology to its founding fathers - Marx, Durkheim and Weber - is their emphasis on studying social phenomena in an historical and international context. It is perhaps only with the growth of neo-Marxist perspectives in recent years that the importance of the 'grande vision' has been re-established, along with the equally important in-depth insights of the 'new directions'. Certainly as far as assessment is concerned, a study of the historical and international contexts shows clearly the dilemmas inherent in its social role, for the issues that have dominated the debates on educational assessment in France and England have been echoed in most, if not all, of the industrial and industrialising countries of the world. In Germany, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands and in the less developed countries of Europe, in the United States, the USSR and the Eastern bloc and in Australia - indeed in any country with mass and extended education -
the same dilemmas are apparent.

In the Third World too, to the extent that such countries seek to emulate Western industrial society, and seek to engage in the world economy, they are likely to come to model their education systems in response to economic, social and political influences very similar to those affecting advanced industrial societies and, as Beeby (1966) has argued, go through similar stages of development.

Assessment practices reflect and reinforce the often conflicting values embodied in the education system. Debates over the reform of assessment procedures frequently illustrate the tension that exists between, for example, educational goals defined by industry and those of teachers, or that conflict already identified between elitists and liberal reformers. As Forsyth and Dockrell (1979) suggest, assessment procedures are likely to change incrementally rather than radically as a result of a process of oscillation in the degree of influence which various bodies associated with the education system are able to exert at any one time - itself a product of changes in the social, economic and political climate. To the extent that assessment practices are similar in different countries, they reinforce the importance of understanding education and, by definition, educational assessment procedures, in relation to the wider societal and indeed, inter-societal forces acting upon it, and hence of not overestimating the internal autonomy and scope for change of any one education system.

An analysis of developments in educational assessment procedures reveals more clearly than that of perhaps any other aspect of the education system, the irreconcilable demands which must be put on education in a stratified society. On the one hand it is possible to see the institution of various kinds of educational assessment as crucial steps in the necessary fight for rationalism against nepotism and inefficiency
and in opening up opportunity for social mobility to a quite unprecedented extent. On the other hand it is important to recognise the role of assessment in limiting such mobility and even more crucially, in legitimating what are essentially still education systems strongly biased in favour of traditional privilege.¹

In the pages that follow, these general developments and dilemmas in assessment procedures are reviewed. The advent of formal, written and ultimately, competitive, examinations is contrasted to the more directly instrumental assessments of simple societies. The increasing pressure for a means of regulating the potentially explosive demand for social mobility which underlies the overwhelming support for the newly developed 'intelligence test' is discussed in terms of its major influence on the shape of educational provision. The gradual erosion of the two bastions of the assessment edifice - public examinations and intelligence tests - by liberal reformist demands for greater equality in provision and competition in the 1950s and 1960s traced in terms of the four major changes in assessment policy to which it is typically giving rise - the postponement of selection, the 'comprehensivisation' of assessment, the increasing involvement of teachers in certification procedures, and a growing preoccupation with educational 'standards'. For the sake of clarity, the review is organised in terms of the three principal themes already identified - the attestation of competence; the regulation of competition; and the provision of control - of individuals and of the educational systems as a whole. It will become apparent, however, that these themes are not discrete categories in practice but are merely different priorities and pressures within a general spectrum of assessment activities and must be understood as such.
The Assessment of Competence

Even in the most simple societies, children must be trained and subsequently demonstrate competence in the appropriate forms of behaviour and skills required by all members of that society. In some societies, competences which are the result of such 'primary' socialisation will be extended by means of 'secondary socialisation' to include preparation for different roles in society. These are societies which are sufficiently complex to allow, and indeed require, their members to pursue a much greater variety of interests and to develop specific talents and skills. Typically such societies have more and more come to provide formally for such secondary socialisation in the institution of schools which are charged with the responsibility of imparting both a range of general competences to their pupils - now normally literacy and numeracy - and with differentiating between pupils for the fostering of specific competences.

But whether education consists simply of the passing on of a unified body of skills necessary for survival, often by elder siblings or, at the other end of the scale, is transmitted through the highly bureaucratised, elaborate and costly system which complex industrialised societies have typically evolved to provide for the wide range of specialist skills they require, some kind of evaluation procedure will be necessary. Not least because the willingness of the individual to submit to such evaluation reflects and reinforces his commitment to joining that particular society. Thus in simple societies the prevalence of 'rites de passage', often coinciding with puberty - the time at which a child is able and expected to take on the full obligations of an adult member of society - reflects the kinds of formal assessment procedures instituted in such societies. These are essentially 'qualifying' tests; the time at which a youngster can demonstrate his mastery of the norms and skills necessary for
effective participation in that society, thereby allowing the existing members of that society to judge his fitness to belong to it. Where the emphasis is thus on competence, the assessment procedures will be largely undifferentiated, except perhaps between boys and girls, since this is the only significant division of labour. Thus the questions of who to assess, what to assess, when, how and why, will be unproblematic. All aspirant members - and this will be almost exclusively children, since it is rare for adults to move from society to society in such situations - will be adjudged at the same stage of their life, on the same relevant criteria of basic competence in necessary skills, in order to ensure the continued survival of the society. How to assess will be largely determined by the need of validity in the test, that is, that the skills assessed match as closely as possible the potential real life requirements. Thus the Red Indian boy was traditionally required to slay his own buffalo and demonstrate his ability to provide all the essentials of life for himself from its carcass. Masai youngsters are required to demonstrate their ability to survive alone and unprovisioned in the bush for a substantial period of time. In many societies boys must demonstrate their ability to be the courageous warriors needed to defend their society by submitting bravely to the pain of circumcision. It is important to note, however, that in such simple societies it is expected that all members should pass the test: the emphasis is on competence; on qualifying, not on selection.

By contrast, the 'rites de passage' (Firth, 1969) of complex societies are likely to be differentiated, reflecting the allocation of privilege on the basis of ascriptive criteria such as age, sex, wealth and breeding. To the extent that such privilege can be passed on from generation to generation, its possession is likely to be self-legitimating in that the elite are in the best position to determine
the criteria for entry to that elite since their existing powerful position allows them to structure social institutions to favour themselves.

The Content of Assessment

In simple societies the content of assessment is largely determined by the competences required. There is likely to be little discussion about the desirable content of 'education' and little need to discriminate between the members of a society in terms of their mastery of it. In more complex societies these basic competences may be comparatively insignificant compared to other assessment criteria whose domination depend more or less entirely on their power to legitimate privilege. In stratified societies, the necessity for distinguishing between individuals and the high stakes involved result in powerful groups imposing what may seem quite arbitrary criteria for such ratings but which in fact reflect the characteristics on which that power is based and constitute a considerable handicap to the success of children from other social groups in the educational system. Indeed, the role of, for example, accent, dress, connections, birth and military prowess in pre-industrial but nevertheless stratified societies, as the basis for social status, is well-known. The lack of connection between such criteria and any rational allocation of privilege is well-documented by authors such as Molière or Sheridan.

As the advent of capitalism began to break down the existing bases for social divisions and the expanding economy of subsequent industrialisation created an unprecedented degree of social mobility in the early 19th century, the idea of competition for the more desirable social roles becomes an increasingly significant theme in evaluation procedures. Clearly nepotism and wealth are incompatible as selection criteria with
competence and competition. Thus, as the creation of wealth is more and more associated with the recruitment and fostering of talent on a large scale, competition becomes ever more important. The basis of this competition however - the form and content of evaluation - has been determined not so much by what the competition is for but rather by how such competition can best be controlled. That is to say, as the competitive element of assessment has increasingly come to predominate over its role in the attestation of competence, content has tended to be determined by its legitimatory power rather than its relevance to specific tasks. Although such choices are never clear-cut in their origins, it will be shown that the predominance of formal written examinations and intelligence tests (including the other, later forms of standardised test modelled on them) in the recent history of education, owes far more to the power of such devices to legitimate selection, than it does to their content or predictive validity. Apart from the degree of irrationality this injects into the selection process, and hence into that of occupational allocation, the content of schooling is itself closely affected. It is a common assertion that the 'assessment tail tends to wag the curriculum dog' (Wilson, 1975). Thus the content of assessment procedures is also very significant for the way in which it is likely to affect the entire teaching-learning process both in form and substance - a point that is explored at length in this thesis.

Following Foucault, Bernstein (1982) suggests that contemporary societies are characterised by a deep cultural 'fault'. This fault is the division between mental and manual labour, which is a product of an equivalent division between those who produce and those who reproduce forms of knowledge in society. One illustration of this 'fault' is the distinction between 'primary contextualising' - that is, the creation of knowledge; the 'recontextualising' of public examiners and curriculum
planners in the form of school subjects - and the final stage of 'secondary contextualising' carried out by teachers at various levels.

Those who control the process by which knowledge is 'recontextualised' into the particular versions of knowledge which become characterised in school subjects, curricula and text books, are in a powerful position to determine what kinds of intellectual activity are the basis for high status. Thus the assessment procedures used reflect and, in turn, reinforce an essentially arbitrary way of representing knowledge whose significance is not that it is the best or the only basis for knowledge, but it is that which happened to characterise elite culture in a number of countries when the force of the industrial revolution was being felt in the need for new work skills and new forms of social control. As other countries became caught up in similar movements - through colonialism, through trade, through various kinds of international contact and competition - they were not slow to recognise the utility of formal schooling and formal assessment procedures - not least as an acceptable means of regulating entry to different levels of job. In so doing, they helped to preserve and disseminate an approach to learning and curriculum organisation based on the traditions and conditions of a very different age and newly forced into the divisions of school subjects by the exigencies of the assessment system. One result of this, arguably, has been the persistence of a watered-down, nineteenth century elite school curriculum for generations of children who will be living into the twenty-first century, a mismatch between what is provided and what adolescents need which can only grow worse as the pace of social change accelerates (Hargreaves, 1982).

Assessment criteria are now normally based on certain academic and particularly linguistic achievements, although informally they may often still include the traditional status criteria of speech, dress and other
social behaviour as well.

"The style and wit, the correct dress and bearing, accent
and style of speech which is the characteristic of a
particular dress become the yardstick against which all
are judged." (Goody and Watt, 1962)

The choice of academic ability alone for formal assessment and certification
rather than, for example, non-cognitive social skills such as cooperation
and reliability, leadership and perseverance, parental and citizenship
skills- all ostensibly more relevant to the majority of prospective
members of society and to employers than academic skills - shows the
relative insignificance of competency-oriented assessment compared to
that concerned with controlling and legitimating competition.

To understand how this apparently irrational preoccupation with the
measurement of less relevant skills came about, it is necessary to
consider the early history of the mass use of assessment procedures.
It has been suggested that the institution of formal evaluation
procedures in education has tended to be contemporaneous with the
institution of mass educational provision per se with the advent of
industrialisation. Indeed, it may be argued that assessment procedures
have typically been directly instrumental in rationalising educational
provision into a system. So comprehensive has this process been that
it now seems scarcely credible that the type of national educational
provision and organisation characteristic of advanced industrial
societies and aspired to by developing countries is little older than
the memory of the oldest members of such societies.

It is now as difficult to imagine schooling without assessment as
it is to imagine society without the state-provided, compulsory, mass
education it heralded. It would have been equally difficult for pre-
nineteenth century society to have envisaged these developments, for
apart from isolated historical examples - such as the civil service
entrance examinations instituted in Imperial China (Heyhoe, 1984) -
the notion of educational assessment and, hence, educational
qualifications on a mass scale finds its roots in the combined growth
of political democracy and industrial capitalism of the nineteenth
century.

It has been suggested that one of the most important influences on
the development of assessment procedures in the nineteenth century was
a new concern with competence. This concern was reflected in the
institution of qualifying examinations for entry to particular professions
or institutions at this time. The pressure of numbers, together with
the need for comparability (Hoskins, 1979), meant such examinations were
normally formal written tests. But the effects of the institution of
such assessment procedures went much further than straightforward quality
control. In the first place the use of a written, theoretical test for
entry into high status professions invested the assessment technique
itself with a similar high status - a status it still retains. Secondly,
as Dore (1976) argues, the institution of formal examinations was made
possible by, and was a symptom of, a more profound change - the
systematisation of the body of principles on which the work of the
profession was based and its rationalisation into a form which made
it at least partly susceptible to teaching and learning in the classroom,
thereby greatly enhancing the importance of schooling. The third
outcome of the innovation of professional examinations was the impact
it had on vocational training and qualifications in other types of
occupation. Although 'on the job' apprenticeship training, traditional
to many occupations, still persists even in those professions which
early instituted examinations, the ending of the almost feudal 'whole
man' concept of apprenticeship (Montgomery, 1965) was not slow to follow
the increasing emphasis on educational qualifications and the change to
contractual, and impersonal employment. Recent studies of apprenticeship (for example Ryrie and Weir, 1978; Gleeson and Mardle, 1980) confirm this trend away from 'on the job' training in favour of the acquisition of more adaptable qualifications in educational institutions of various kinds.

Finally and most fundamentally, it was the institution of examinations related quite specifically to a particular vocation that marked the beginning of the trend away from the taking of ascribed occupational roles based on hereditary wealth and breeding alone - or lack of it - to a situation in which such roles were ostensibly at least the result of individual achievement and merit. As Chapter Three sets out, this move away from the simple ascription of occupational roles was made possible by the earlier major social upheavals in religion, knowledge and politics which found expression in the Reformation, the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, for in these three movements can be traced new rational, egalitarian and individualistic ideologies which, incubated in the industrial revolution, soon found their expression in the explosion of practices requiring formal demonstrations of competence. The notion of individual responsibility which Weber showed so clearly to be one of the most important contributions of Protestantism to the development of capitalism, was as clearly the contribution of capitalism to the developing educational system in the form of individualistic assessment. Although it was to be a long time before ascription, patronage and nepotism died out - if indeed they have - the fact that a variety of important social positions could no longer be procured without a certain type of demonstrated competence, was highly instrumental in the birth of the meritocratic ethos which has characterised to a greater or lesser extent all industrial societies since that time.
Assessment for Regulating Competition

Indeed, certification and the associated process of selection has always been the most commonly recognised function of school assessment. At the end of his school career, or a major stage of it, a pupil has the opportunity to demonstrate his achievements in relation to the goals of the educational system. His performance in apparently fair and objective tests is more or less formally evaluated by 'experts', usually teachers, appointed for their knowledge both of the subject matter and of appropriate standards. The results of this evaluation are compared with those of a large number of other pupils, thereby providing another means of 'quality control' on the system. This is not the specific intention of the exercise, however. The major aim is to rank the pupil in comparison with his fellow competitors against pre-determined criteria, a ranking which has a close relationship with entry to various points in the occupational hierarchy, allowing further and higher educational institutions and employers to select those whom they consider have 'performed' sufficiently well and have therefore obtained the requisite entrance qualifications. Such performance thus involves elements of both competence and competition. The extreme importance of certification as an influence both on educational practice and the wider society emerges from this 'gate-keeper' role, by which it can open and close doors for individuals to future life chances. The certification process is indeed the epitome of the overtly meritocratic basis of contemporary society. since in theory it allows free competition based on academic ability and industry and thus is regarded as the fairest basis for the allocation of opportunities for high status or remunerative careers. The discovery that the process is not in fact 'fair' and in particular favours pupils with certain kinds of home background, was a major achievement of sociologists of education in the fifties and sixties for
whom the relationship between social class background and school achievement was a major preoccupation for many years.

**Assessment for Individual Control**

Another major reason for the proliferation of educational assessment procedures is their ability to motivate pupils. Whilst the constraining effects of selection and certification examinations on the educational process itself may have been deplored, such examinations and the less significant tests and assessments associated with them are widely welcomed as an important source of motivation and thus, of control. Today, for many pupils, passing examinations is the only purpose of being in school (Broadfoot, 1977; Turner, 1983; Buswell, 1983). Any proposal to abandon competitive assessment meets with an outcry among teachers who fear the removal of one of the most powerful weapons in their armoury. The converse of this situation is, of course, also true - the increasing lack of motivation among those pupils who are not taking external examinations, whose assessments are rarely positive enough to motivate them to try harder, and for whom no very tempting bait can be offered in an educational system that recognises in its assessment procedures only one kind of ability - the kind which, by definition, they do not have. It is this problem that partly underlies the growing tendency at the present time to make formal assessment more comprehensive.

Until relatively recently however this problem hardly arose. Children were assessed early for allocation to different kinds of schools according to their purported needs and interests and once so assessed aspirations tended to be raised or lowered accordingly and the self-fulfilling prophecy came into operation. To understand why such selection was so successful for so long in controlling competition and
maintaining a 'sponsored' rather than a 'contest' mobility situation in the majority of industrial societies (Turner, 1960) it is necessary to examine the ideology of assessment which rapidly developed, and, in particular, the contribution of intelligence testing which has been and remains the most significant basis for such control.

**Intelligence Tests**

No other assessment technique so far devised has so perfectly combined the two principal legitimating ideologies of industrial societies - the liberal democratic principle of fair competition and the belief in scientific progress. Yet, just because for many decades such tests were believed to be the most accurate way of measuring intellectual capacity this need not in itself have led to a policy of educational provision based on such different capacities. The explanation of the commitment to providing different educational routes for different sorts of children which dominated educational policy in most European countries at least from the 1920s until the early 1960s can only be found in the social pressures which prevailed at the time such tests were first devised.

So great were the changes in the basis of class division in the nineteenth century (Musgrave, 1968) and the associated developments of social and geographic mobility, urbanisation, bureaucratisation and economic expansion, that pressure on all the various rungs of the educational ladder increased rapidly. The scholarship and certification systems of selection alone would very soon have ceased to be an adequate way of regulating access to educational and vocational opportunity, had not another mechanism of legitimating selection been found to disperse the accumulating popular frustration. The pressure from those anxious to climb the rungs of the ladder was reinforced by pressure from those
espousing the developing educational ideologies at the time. Williams (1961) has identified these various causes as the 'industrial trainers', the 'old humanists' and the 'public educators' but whether their concern was to make the maximum use of 'the pool of ability' by the institution of what Beatrice and Sidney Webb termed a 'capacity catching' machine or whether it was to promote social justice and social order, the effects were the same - a search for an apparently accurate and thus fair way of identifying talent and of discriminating among pupils on purely educational, rather than, as had previously been the case, on social grounds. Above all, there was a need for a procedure which would be widely acceptable. From these ideological and pragmatic pressures, the concept of the 'meritocracy' was born, a lusty infant which quickly came of age to dominate educational thinking virtually unchallenged to this day.

In France and England, as in other rapidly industrialising countries, the search for some means of implementing this apparent meritocracy, of finding some means of objective measurement of merit, was not to be a protracted one. The solution, like the problem, was found in the new individualist emphasis in education which was in itself the underpinning of the meritocracy. A growing interest in individual achievement had led many nineteenth century psychologists to study the determinants of various personal characteristics. Gradually, with the work of scholars like Galton and Spearman, there developed a conviction among psychologists that the determining factor in an individual's scholastic achievement was his innate ability or 'intelligence', a quality that was both fixed and measurable. In addition, studies arising out of Binet's early twentieth century work in France with 'slow learners', such as Burt's (1912) article in England, 'The Inheritance of Mental Characteristics', and the widespread and apparently effective use of such tests by the
United States Army in 1918, quickly convinced academics and laymen alike that not only was it possible to measure 'intellectual ability' objectively but that from these measurements, future academic and occupational performance could be accurately predicted.

"To the scholars and men of science of the Victorian era, imbued as this era was with the spirit of the physical sciences, the thought that qualities as intangible and insensible as 'intelligence' ... could be accurately measured was revolutionary indeed." (Williams, 1974)

Nevertheless, by the mid-twentieth century, so firmly established had 'intelligence' testing become that it dominated educational thinking. Sir Cyril Burt was for many people merely stating the obvious when in 1933 he wrote:

"By intelligence the psychologist understands inborn, all round, intellectual ability. It is inherited, or at least innate, not due to teaching or training; it is intellectual, not emotional or moral, and remains uninfluenced by industry or zeal; it is general, not specific, i.e. it is not limited to any particular kind of work, but enters into all we do or say or think. Of all our mental qualities, it is the most far-reaching; fortunately it can be measured with accuracy and ease." (pp. 28-29)

It is not hard to account for the rapid establishment of intelligence testing. It must indeed have been seen as an answer to prayer that, by means of a simple test, children could be readily and justly identified as 'bright' or 'dull'; their future predicted and, on this basis, categorised into different channels of the educational system. Not only that, but the scientific, 'objective' nature of such tests, their proven predictive power (Kamin, 1974) and their measurement of a characteristic believed to be as inborn as eye-colour, meant it was almost impossible for the recipient to reject the diagnosis. Thus intelligence testing, as a mechanism of social control, was unsurpassed in teaching the doomed majority that their failure was the result of their own inbuilt inadequacy.

No less significant than the use of 'intelligence' testing in scholarship
examinations and other individual hurdles, was the rationale that the concept of fixed, innate capacity provided for the development of differentiated secondary schools - at least in Europe. Indeed a great deal of the twentieth century history of innovation in educational provision can be attributed to its influence.

Gradually, however, the combination of post-war egalitarianism and research revelations that intelligence was neither fixed nor readily measured (Vernon, 1957) coalesced into a strong lobby for the expansion of opportunity for all and the abolition, or at least the deferment of selection. Although individual countries have differed in this respect, Sweden being perhaps the first European country to institute 'comprehensive' secondary schools (gesamtschule) in 1946 (Burns, 1981), they have all moved some way towards the deferment of post-elementary school selection or, where it still exists, as in West Germany, the incorporation of much greater measure of teacher assessment rather than formal tests (Elvin, 1981). It is generally true to say that in Western industrialised countries at least by the 1960s, it was no longer possible as it had been earlier, to shut out large sectors of the population from the opportunity to compete for educational qualifications and new forms of assessment control have had to be found. The underlying ideology of 'ability' that intelligence testing introduced has, however, remained.

"The grading of children by ability (streaming and setting), the structuring of curriculum subjects into age-related blocks, assumptions about learning, motivation and teaching style, even the physical design of classrooms, all embody a number of significant psychological principles." (Esland, 1977, p. 38)

Thus although schools are apparently providing ever more opportunities, in practice, the notion of differentiated ability still predominates, allowing selection to continue as before but in a much more acceptable guise.
It is the continuing class bias in educational achievement (Bourdieu, 1974; Tyler, 1977; Carelli and Morris, 1979), despite all apparent efforts to overcome it through compensatory education, comprehensive schools and curriculum reform, which has led sociologists of education in recent years to leave the squabbles over the hereditary versus environmental effects on intelligence to the psychologists and to examine, by disputing the apparent objectivity of intelligence testing, the role such testing may have played in perpetuating class differences in educational achievement. Thus it may well be argued that 'IQ' provided for the twentieth century the selection that wealth and breeding provided for earlier times, obscuring rather than abolishing the class influence on educational success. That is to say:

"the educational system legitimates economic inequality by providing an open, objective and ostensibly meritocratic mechanism for assigning individuals to unequal economic positions." (Bowles and Gintis, 1976, p. 103)

R.H. Tawney put the idea rather more pungently as

"the impertinent courtesy of an invitation offered to unwelcome guests in the certainty that circumstances will prevent them accepting." (Tawney, 1951)

Chomsky (1977) asserts that the ability of intelligence testing to obscure the perpetuation of class inequalities (which it did successfully for nigh on fifty years) has been one of its most important functions, for 'intelligence' tests served

"to so mask power as to effectively immobilize any real revolutionary opposition." (Bacharach and Baratz, 1962, p. 948)

Not only was the widespread trust in this apparently objective measurement of potential sufficient to ensure that once assessed, the effect of differential expectations was sufficient to make that assessment come true (Karier, 1973), the very content of the tests may be argued to
favour the dominant class.

Westergaard and Resler (1975) argue that although it was increasingly necessary from the late nineteenth century onwards to expand educational provision and opportunity so that the growing technical and managerial posts in the economy could be filled, it was not part of the plan that children from privileged homes should be thrown into competition with working-class children to sink or swim on 'merit' alone. Rather,

"the putting into practice of the conception of intelligence acted to control social mobility in such a way that only those acceptable to the middle class would become mobile." (Henderson, 1976, p. 148)

That is to say, the middle class were not better able to acquire intelligence but to define it according to their own characteristics. Bourdieu has perhaps done most to clarify this idea in his concept of 'cultural capital', in which the French middle classes, finding themselves unable to perpetuate their status through 'capital' alone, were able to fall back onto a second line of defence - a school system which, though apparently allowing equal opportunity, was geared to the cultural mores of the ruling class and thus allowed them to perpetuate their privileged position by giving them a head start towards success in the education system.

There has been a good deal of debate over the extent to which tests are in fact biased (Thorndike, 1968; Jensen, 1969). There is evidence to support the view (Giles and Woolfe, 1977) that intelligence tests, particularly the non-verbal variety, are typically less biased in favour of the middle classes than other kinds of assessment such as essay-tests or teacher-ratings. Other writers have argued that the questions in intelligence tests are indeed biased by drawing on cultural knowledge more readily available to some sectors of society than others.
(see for example, Havighurst, 1951; Davis, 1951, Hegarty and Lucas, 1979).

The result, Kamin (1974) argues, is that

"the tests measure only whether one has learned and believed what [the test-setters] have learned and believed. To the degree that one has, one may reasonably look forward to enjoying the kind of success that the [test-setters] enjoyed. The assumption that one who has not learned these things was prevented from so doing by bad blood is both gratuitous and self-serving." (Kamin, 1974)

The significance of such tests may lie less in any inherent bias but rather in their confirmation of intelligence as the key variable in school success. The scientific aura surrounding these tests was highly instrumental in hiding any hint of class bias in the very definition of what should constitute educational achievement.

"It is the ability of the middle class to select (if unconsciously) the criteria by which to judge intelligence 'in their own image' and then to effectively exclude questions about the class-linked nature of 'intelligence' from the arena of debate, which may be said to allow the perpetuation of the class system." (Henderson, 1976, p. 147)

It is arguable that such tests are inevitably biased. Firstly, the testing situation is an interactive situation between tester and tested. It can therefore not be seen as a neutral process but as subject to the same interpretation and negotiation that inheres in any social interaction. As Erickson (1970) points out, all experience is relative and thus all interpretation - of questions, of appropriate answers - must be equally relative. A class of thirty children given a 'standardised' test are making thirty individual responses to it. These responses, similar to the extent that the test relates to experiences the pupils have shared, such as teaching, are nevertheless uniquely influenced in each case by all sorts of personal characteristics. Application to the test, for example, depends upon a whole host of individual influences such as home background, previous school experience, attitude towards the tester.
and so on. In the United States, Roth (1974) has shown for example that the ethnic group of the tester may well influence the pupil's responses to a test. Feeling anxious or threatened may affect a pupil's ability to recall knowledge at a particular time; he may have the required knowledge but be unable to reproduce it in the form required. Cicourel (1974) criticises such tests for typically only being concerned to measure the products of learning as demonstrated in a few highly restricted ways. By so doing, he argues, the tests fail to monitor the equally important cognitive processes involved in the testing situation and in particular, the way these processes are affected by their interactive setting. He argues that the entire nature/nurture controversy on the determination of intelligence which raged for half a century, totally ignored the profound impact on test scores made by the interactive situation in which the test inevitably takes place. Even if the test is administered by machine, the situation is still a social one in that the making and interpretation of the tests are social acts - they embody value judgements emanating from the dominant culture as to what constitutes evidence of 'intelligence' and what constitutes valid realisation of 'educational knowledge'.

That particular types of verbal skills dominate testing as much as they do teaching (Bernstein, 1971) ensures an advantage to those children who come from (usually middle-class) homes where they are encouraged to develop such skills. Many sociologists have argued that this is indeed an essential aspect of the reproductive and legitimating function of the school. Mackay (1974) puts the point with some force:

"I would suggest that the powerful pronouncement of science sanctifies common-sense prejudice and legitimizes the production of persons whose qualifications (or lack of them) block them from anything but menial or semi-skilled jobs. But it is a vicious circle since the objective test started
from these prejudiced beliefs about the world. The tests are used by test constructors, teachers, administrators and politicians to support their own beliefs and value systems ... In use measures of performance relative to some unexplained standard (usually face validity, i.e., constructor's common-sense view of the world) become a measure of competence that have a determinative impact on students' lives ... hanging on this thin thread is the entire occupational and status structure of society."

Thus, Roth (1974) argues, all sorts of 'intelligence' are not measured in tests and thus 'intelligence' is a social phenomenon rather than the individual phenomenon it has usually been claimed to be for not only does the test tell the teacher something about the pupil, it usually tells the pupil something about himself - information he may choose to accept or reject as irrelevant. Whatever his reaction however, the possession of such information by both teacher and pupil irrevocably influences their future interaction and ultimately the choice of career path aspired to by the pupil and his teacher.

Thus, until recently, the majority of pupils in most industrialised countries were denied even the opportunity to participate in educational competition, the parallel, elementary system of schooling in which they were placed having already excluded them from aspiring to more than the attestation of competence. But, as suggested earlier, the enormous expansion of educational provision in the post-war years which has resulted from a widespread belief in 'human capital' theory combined with popular demand for greater equality of educational opportunity, has led to a situation in which such traditional forms of control based on simple exclusion are no longer possible. Thus, for example, the consistent trend for the number of statutory years of schooling to be extended has meant that more and more what were previously 'elite' examinations have become the target for the majority of pupils. Where this is explicitly against national policy, for example in England where
the target group for the O-level examination is still limited to the top 40% of the age group, the result is a massive build up of frustration and a consequent pressure for change in certification procedures. One of the major solutions to the problem of continuing to provide for selection whilst maintaining control has been also the least radical - the postponement of selection.

The Postponement of Selection

One of the most marked educational policy developments of recent decades in many countries has been the bringing together of the traditionally separate higher elementary and secondary schools into some more 'comprehensive' form of provision. Thus, increasingly, it is 'elementary' education that now extends up to the statutory school-leaving age (Grace, 1978). Where such education is provided in comprehensive schools this makes overt, formal selection before this stage unnecessary.  

This trend is particularly marked in Europe, where post Second World War school organisation typically reflected a clear system of 'sponsored' mobility (Turner, 1960). Where once the majority of children would be allocated at around eleven to a non-selective secondary school which they would expect to leave at the statutory leaving age with few or no formal qualifications, whilst for the minority there was the extended secondary school catering for perhaps 5-25 percent of the year group and geared to university entrance, opportunity to compete is typically now greatly extended.  

Just as the origins of this system lie in the social and economic forces of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, so similar common social and economic forces are effecting a change in this structure although national ideals of educational practice are sufficiently powerful to account for important and distinct national differences in the rate
and form of such change. The trend is by no means uni-dimensional. But typically now, selection is deferred at least to fifteen or sixteen or the end of compulsory schooling and increasingly to eighteen or nineteen when those continuing with their education divide once more into academic and technical/vocational routes, the third group entering straight into the labour market (if decreasingly into jobs) (Ranson, 1983). Even in those countries where selection for secondary school still takes place, this is now typically a protracted, teacher-based process of 'differentiation' rather than selection.

The social and ideological forces underlying the move towards comprehensive reform, which is indeed defined by the OECD as the 'postponement of differentiation', are immensely complex, the explanation of which for England alone has filled whole volumes (see e.g. Rubenstein and Simon, 1969; Benn and Simon, 1970; Le Grand, 1977). It is possible though to identify several specific influences which both arise from and in turn affect assessment practices in particular. One such is Dore's (1976) concept of 'qualification inflation'. The increasing expansion of educational provision, he argues, allows more people to gain those qualifications which traditionally led to high-status jobs. Without an equivalent expansion in the number of such jobs, the result is a devaluation of qualifications and a raising of the 'rate for the job' on the classic 'supply and demand' principle with consequent pressure on the education system as students seek to obtain ever higher level qualifications. Staying on rates in advanced industrial societies clearly testify to more and more pupils achieving qualifications at each level of schooling with the likelihood that these qualifications will have less and less value as selection instruments.

The postponement of the crucial point for selection is clearly evidenced by typical changes which have taken place in certification
procedures - the formal expression of assessment at the termination of a particular stage of schooling. Although the primary school leaving certificate is likely to be still critical in developing countries, certification at the end of compulsory schooling or even at the stage of university entrance is being progressively devalued in developed countries, becoming more continuous and informal or even, in some cases, being abolished altogether (Dunn, 1973; Bajah, 1979).11

Another reason for this change is the more or less explicit recognition that mass primary and secondary education requires a very different ethos for the education system than when it was basically geared to university selection if the university is not to determine the curriculum right down to the level of the lower primary school. The change required, according to Orring (1978), is an orientation in favour of getting all pupils above an "educational breadline", that is, providing minimum competency in, for example, reading. Thus, for example, as early as 1962 Sweden passed an Education Act which abolished pass/fail assessment in favour of 1-5 grading on voluntary, national, standardised achievement tests in Swedish, a foreign language and mathematics. Although voluntary, these tests are taken by nearly all pupils. After 1966 similar tests were instituted for upper secondary education as well, so that now not only are pupils freed from the pressures and injustices of formal examinations but schools too are freed from the imposition of examination curricula by higher education institutions and are consequently free to determine their own priorities. Since 1970 no matriculation qualifications for higher education entrance have been required. Instead, all students completing upper secondary school now receive a leaving certificate showing the subjects taken and the marks given by the teachers. Not even the standardised test result is shown since these are incorporated into teachers' assessments based
on all three years of the upper secondary course (Boucher, 1982).

The reality for the individual student is rather less Utopian than this description would suggest, however. For though no-one formally fails, students nevertheless know quite early on what kind of mark they will get, as do their teachers. Thus, although there is nominally a free choice between the 32 curricula 'lines' - vocational and academic - of upper secondary school, only about 60 per cent of pupils can get their first choice for practical reasons. The rest must take their second or third choice, their power to choose depending on their results as shown on the Elementary School Leaving Certificate. In the same way, although school-leaving examinations have been abolished between upper secondary and university education, there is a numerus clausus procedure operating for some of the most popular higher education subjects, entry to which again depends on marks reported on the school leaving certificate.

New Forms of Individual Control

To understand fully why the 'postponement of differentiation' should be such a powerful movement at the present time, it is necessary to explore in a little more detail how assessment procedures can operate covertly to control individual aspirations and frustrations. The control procedures that provided for the typically highly selective, differentiated forms of school provision characteristic of the early stages of mass schooling systems have now become so problematic that alternative selection and certification procedures are being instituted which draw on rather different sources of legitimation. "It is still certainly the case", as Eggleston (1984) argues,"that success in competitive examinations is, for most people, an essential prelude to the legitimate exercise of power, responsibility and status throughout modern societies. Lack of
accreditation constitutes a severe limitation and there is abundant evidence that the examination system, despite its technical and ideological critics, still enjoys widespread public acceptance" (p. 32). Now, however, the regulation of that competition is increasingly achieved by more informal forms of selection. Indeed the boundary between 'formative evaluation' and 'summative assessment' is increasingly blurred in this respect. Although there must be a form of 'summative' assessment when there are decisions to be made about alternative routes in the educational system, these decisions may be voluntary and based on informal discussion between teacher, parent and pupil, rather than imposed through a 'weeding out', formal selection procedure. Thus, for example, 11+ selection in Britain has been largely abandoned since the formal necessity for the allocation of pupils to different types of secondary school and thus to different educational routes has ceased with the institution of the comprehensive school. Less formal assessments, however, in the form of school records, may still follow the child from primary to secondary school where they may well be used for internal, informal 'tracking' in the receiving school.

This distinction between formal assessment and informal evaluation is an important one. As already suggested, teachers are continually assessing their pupils. Likewise, pupils are continually assessing themselves and each other. Such assessments are not significant in societal terms - though they may be to the individual - until they feed into the more formal, 'summative' processes of certification and control and the limitations these provide to future opportunities. The significance of any assessment procedure thus depends on a combination of its selection and legitimatory currency - its power to determine and justify the allocation of life chances. Thus, the significance of teachers' classroom evaluations may be confined in some circumstances
to their effect on the pupil's self-concept and aspirations only. In other circumstances, such as the current tendency for such evaluations to be formally incorporated into the processes of certification and selection, they become a great deal more significant, the verdict of a long-term in-depth positive guidance providing a powerful contemporary basis for the legitimation of selection.

Thus although more and more the mystique and ceremony, the fine grading, the formal external examinations which used to be an intrinsic part of summative assessment, have been transferred to the higher school certification stage and even beyond, the selection function itself is still present only in a more covert, benign form. Equally, although the expansion of educational provision has postponed the point of formal selection and the ensuing 'qualification inflation' is tending to postpone it still further, it is not safe to assume that this postponement of selection has in fact created any greater equality of opportunity in relation to social class than existed under the previous selective secondary education system. Bourdieu and Passeron (1976) argue by means of a complex statistical analysis that in France during the growth in higher education provision in the 1960s, the structure of the distribution of educational opportunities relative to social class did indeed shift upwards, but it remained virtually unchanged in shape. The increased enrolment of 18-20 year-olds was distributed among the different social classes in proportions roughly equal to those pertaining before. Bourdieu and Passeron also argue that a similar pattern of development of educational opportunity combining increased enrolment of all social classes, with stability of the structure of disparities between the classes, can be identified in most European countries such as Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden and indeed has similarly been identified in the United States (OECD, 1969). Eggleston
(1979), Halsey et al. (1980) and Goldthorpe (1980), among others, have shown that in England likewise, there has been little significant change in the relative achievements of social classes since comprehensivisation.

Thus it is arguable that the reorganisation of schooling and the postponement of selection, whilst freeing primary and elementary schooling from the worst excesses of cramming for the secondary school selection examinations, has done nothing to alter the tendency of schools to confirm pupils in channels according to their social class background. An alternative and complementary explanation of the international trend towards the postponement of selection is that selection has in fact merely been disguised, in order to prevent socially disruptive resentment and frustration among those who are early labelled failures in a system which they are obliged to endure for an extended period of time and which is apparently increasingly crucial in the allocation of life chances in a socially fluid society.

Whether or not Jencks (1972) is correct in arguing that education is not in fact a crucial determinant of occupational success - and there is little agreement on this - is less important than the fact that it is believed to be by pupils and their parents. A palpably class-biased, selective educational system is no longer politically acceptable, given the commitment to a meritocracy on both humanitarian and efficiency grounds which typically characterises contemporary educational policy in both liberal democracies and communist societies. Thus it may be argued that the changes currently taking place in assessment practice are typically informed by the need for a new form of legitimisation, rather than any fundamental challenge to the basis of selection per se. In Western education systems at least, the class biases inherent in the internal organisation of the school in the practice of streaming and grading, in the curricula and language of the school, and in teacher expectations,
probably still perpetuate class divisions more or less as if children were actually divided into separate schools.\textsuperscript{13}

This argument that contemporary changes in assessment procedures are as much to do with social control as they are with the real desire to create a significant change in the structure of opportunity illustrates how difficult it is in practice to separate the various functions of assessment procedures. This impression is further reinforced by a consideration of changes in the method and content of certification which are accompanying the changes in the timing of selection just discussed.

Neave (1980) posits a law of educational development

"in which assessment for all constitutes a fourth stage in what might be termed 'the universalization' of extended secondary education". (p. 73)

Bearing in mind the foregoing arguments about the postponement of selection it is logical to predict that assessment during the compulsory comprehensive stage of schooling will take on a different form and function. This has indeed proved to be the case with assessment procedures more concerned with motivation and diagnosis than selection and applied to all pupils in a routine way now becoming the norm. Although strong arguments have been put forward in England to institute such an assessment procedure for all pupils (e.g. Schools Council, 1975), England is almost unique in clinging to the idea that all children cannot be included in formal assessment procedures without a lowering of standards. Elsewhere examinations at the end of compulsory schooling have typically given place to a regular series of standardised tests, routinely administered to all children at certain points in their school careers (Neave, 1980). The extension of formal assessment to all the members of a year group is less a reflection of a new principle of certification than the extension of earlier certification procedures
geared to a particular percentage of the year group when only that percentage was in school, to embrace the wider secondary school population. More novel, arguably, is the content, mode and purpose of that assessment.

**Increasing Teacher Involvement in Certification**

It is significant that to the extent that school certificates have become devalued, teacher involvement in certification has typically increased. From Europe to Australia and the Far East, there is a tendency for school assessment to be increasingly handed over to teachers (Ottobre, 1978). Elsewhere, such as anglophone Africa and India, teachers are playing an increasingly important role in the setting and marking of examinations (Maguire, 1975; Srivastava, 1979; Broadfoot, 1982). As Wanchoo and Raina (1979) have it, describing the changes in certification, accompanying the current 10 + 3 reforms in India,

"the emphasis will not be on teaching but on learning. Students will move from passivity to activity, from conformity to creativity and originality; from authoritative acceptance of ideas to enquiry and discovery ... co-operative rather than competitive learning ... The whole system of education will be characterised by flexibility and dynamism rather than rigidity and inertia." (p. 120)

Pupils are counselled into taking the subject and later, career options, for which their day-to-day school progress seems best to fit them. This trend for formal selective examinations to be replaced by a gradual 'cooling out' process (Clark, 1982) has the advantage of preventing the build-up of frustration and criticism of examination procedures, whilst still providing for the necessary process of allocating pupils to different levels of the occupational hierarchy (Broadfoot, 1983).
Thompson (1974) has explained this trend towards teacher-based certification as the result of an increasing level of public trust and confidence in schools. Since it has been known for a long time that teachers are as reliable in ranking pupils accurately on both specific abilities and non-cognitive qualities as are any other form of test (Burt, 1945), and since many countries are explicitly worried about standards, a more likely explanation seems to be in terms of legitimation. If the examination is of crucial importance for selection it must be invested with as much apparent objectivity, ritual and formality as possible so that, almost after the manner of a divine utterance and certainly in the same way as an intelligence test, the results and the failure which they imply for many candidates are accepted. As the qualification concerned becomes progressively devalued and thus less significant in the allocation of life chances, so it can more safely be left to the informal, more personal responsibility of the teacher. Such a move, however, is likely to be accompanied by the institution of increasingly-systematic expressions of accountability in order to replace the degree of control over curriculum and pedagogy, lost to government when teachers take charge of the certification process.

The Changing Content of Certification

The trend towards increasing teacher involvement in assessment has also permitted, if not prompted, the re-emergence of non-cognitive characteristics for inclusion in formal assessment. This originally crucial aspect of schooling, particularly for the two very different extremes of the educational ladder was for the most part eclipsed in the late nineteenth century by the meritocratic movements towards apparently more objective cognitive measures already described. The re-emergence at the present time of such assessment may be explained
in terms of control. For, given the importance of assessment in the allocation of career opportunities, whatever is assessed will be reflected in both the formal and informal curricular activities of the school. Thus, it is argued, if pupils know for example that leadership qualities count towards their final assessment, they will tend to strive hard, and be encouraged by teachers to show such attributes.  

Whatever educational behaviour or achievement is ultimately rewarded in society with the sought after occupational roles, will be the behaviour and achievements towards which aspirants are motivated. The teacher of a non-examined subject knows this only too well. In industrial societies, for the historical reasons already outlined, this is mainly academic ability. By and large, schools have not traditionally assessed in any formal way, non-cognitive qualities such as effort, cooperation, leadership, responsibility or useful experience in extra-curricular activities such as school plays, social service units, outdoor pursuits or debating societies, although of course information on such activities is often supplied in confidential references. Since in many countries assessment of such activities and abilities is not yet a significant part of the formal certification system, the influence of which permeates right through the informal assessment network, even where they are provided, these activities do not provide an alternative source of motivation or self-valuation for pupils. In consequence a potential source of motivation for non-academic pupils and a potential mechanism for the development of many personal qualities has been neglected. The result has been a small, but increasingly significant, threat to educational order and, hence, ultimately to the social order. A major strand in the changes currently identifiable in the assessment practices of industrial societies is the attempt to overcome this problem, to broaden the basis for assessment and widen the range of rewards so that virtually all pupils can find a
reason to participate in the assessment competition and so support the prevailing social order. 19

The increasing use of informal descriptive records during the compulsory schooling stage, containing both cognitive and non-cognitive information, may be explained too by the orientation to a different kind of school-leaver than was traditionally the case with 16+ assessment, when it was aimed typically at the top, academic end of the year group. Much recent writing in the sociology of education has argued the primacy of the school's role, not in encouraging intellectual development, but in developing appropriate non-cognitive qualities and self-perceptions which will 'correspond' with the pupil's future occupational situation (see, for example, Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Willis, 1977). Employers of the young school-leaver do not want high intellectual calibre for boring repetitive jobs. Indeed they would tend to see it as a positive disadvantage in that such people would be likely to become easily disaffected and thus disruptive. Rather they are looking for basic skills and a good character (Brown, 1975; SCRE, 1977; MSC, 1977; Cumming, 1982). Even corporations looking for potential management trainees may rate personal qualities - especially capacity for commitment - higher than intellectual achievement alone. By including non-cognitive assessment more overtly in certification, the inculcation of appropriate attitudes and behaviour, which has always been one of the informal effects of schooling, is reinforced. At the present time, if youth unemployment on a massive scale is here to stay - as seems likely - it also seems likely that this traditional emphasis of mass schooling will again become paramount, that is, the development of appropriate personal skills and attitudes and the orientation of education and assessment not towards jobs and job selection but towards personal development and fulfilment and, above all, social control.
In many countries the attempt to move from selective and matriculation examinations towards descriptive school-leaving certificates and, associated with this, a more explicit link between general education and vocational training, is a direct result of the problems caused by traditional procedures. These problems are particularly clear in Eastern Europe where attempts to match educational provision against anticipated manpower needs is resulting in considerable tension at the interface between school and higher education (Mitter, 1979a). Where there is a strict numerus clausus operating for the allocation of places in higher education and consequently large numbers of qualified students are unable to find a place, and at the same time lack any more vocational qualification, a considerable threat to social order may be built up. One of the principal ways of reducing the massive increase in application for formal higher education, which otherwise would result from the expansion of secondary education which has taken place, is the extension of 'differentiation' to higher education to embrace different forms of vocational training or even 'preparation for leisure' within a more comprehensive tertiary system. The 'old' model of school certification was typically a grouped certificate in which candidates had to pass in five or so subjects to 'matriculate' and gain the qualification which was both necessary and sufficient qualification for university entrance. Formerly, when selection had already largely taken place before this stage, certification at this higher school stage was more concerned with the attestation of achievement than discrimination. Now, where such examinations still exist, it is no longer sufficient merely to pass but to pass well.²¹

The inauguration in countries such as England of a single subject examination replacing the former grouped certificate is also significant. Partly this may be accounted for by 'qualification inflation' for, as
the ultimate level of qualifications and thus of curricula rises, the specialist study which used to characterise post-graduate courses is adopted not only for undergraduate courses but even in schools. But it may be, too, that a single subject examination allows greater discrimination by including both horizontal discrimination between the value of subjects studied and vertical discrimination in the standard obtained. And yet, at the same time, it allows more people some chance of succeeding and thus fits better with the increasingly comprehensive intake of the upper secondary school. As Chapter Six sets out, England seems to be finding it harder to come to terms with these pressures than many other similar countries, although there are signs of a movement towards more descriptive teacher-based assessments, particularly at the end of compulsory schooling where there is widespread support for some kind of profile to be given to school-leavers (DES, 1983). But there is also a powerful lobby in favour of retaining and indeed strengthening traditional pass/fail certificate examinations (Whitty, 1983). As such, English procedures provide a good example of the way in which the general pressures affecting individual societies must be articulated within the idiosyncratic traditions of particular nation states, thereby producing quite wide variations in practice.  

Another advantage of moving from examinations to descriptive assessment in the selection of higher education students is suggested by the findings of Mitter (1979b) which show that in the majority of the countries he studied, school marks on secondary school leaving certificates were found to be the most reliable predictors of success at university, and more useful than scholastic aptitude tests, achievement tests, interviews or indeed lotteries which, whilst being formally fair, lack public acceptability in the places where they have been tried, such as the Netherlands. Mitter also found that counselling and work experience
could both contribute significantly to producing highly predictive school assessment.

Despite marked national variations in the rate and form of change which reflect their need to find the optimum balance between the selection and control functions of assessment in line with differences in the institutional and ideological context, the two case studies which provide the empirical basis for this thesis are reasonably representative of the current range of international practice, and of the general trends in assessment policy which have been identified. These are an ever-later key point of selection with a concomitant decline in the formality and significance of assessments for certification prior to this stage. Both these trends may be attributed to powerful and common pressures resulting from the combination of a changing employment structure and the emergence of a powerful ideology of educational equality.

In an attempt to summarise the foregoing analysis, Figure 1 sets out this changing social role of assessment with the growth of mass secondary education. At the left-hand end is the traditional picture of certification, when the exigencies of open and fair competition increasingly inherent in the meritocratic ethos of schooling throughout the industrialised world after the Second World War, were most strongly felt at the point of selection for secondary school and then later, at the termination of compulsory schooling. The right-hand end of the continuum reflects the changes which are taking place in certification with the postponement of the key point of formal selection to 18+ and beyond. In place of the emphasis on formal, external, impersonal assessment - essential where the determination of life-chances is at stake if disaffection is to be avoided - is a new emphasis on broader-based, teacher-conducted assessment which can allow a greater concern in assessment procedures with diagnosis and motivation. The stage of
Figure 2.1: The changing pattern of contemporary assessment at the end of compulsory schooling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>competitive</th>
<th>non-competitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Examinations (externally set and marked)</td>
<td>Moderated School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment (scaling, item banks, moderation committees etc.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FORMAL FORMAL external

INFORMAL internal

increasing public trust in teacher assessment

---

decline in importance of certification for selection

---

increasing importance of assessment to retain commitment

---

increasing importance of non-cognitive assessment

---

Note: Although the typical trend at the time of writing seems to be from left to right on the continuum, there are some indications, particularly in the Communist world, of a movement in the opposite direction, towards increasingly formal assessment. The diagram is best visualised as expressing a constant relationship between various forms of assessment, the particular point on the continuum being determined by the prevailing social, economic, political and ideological conditions at any one time in any one country.
pupil self-assessment only now beginning to emerge (see, for example, DES, 1983) is logically implied by this trend since if pupils are given responsibility for monitoring their own learning, the degree of personal involvement they have in their learning and their commitment to it is likely to be maximised (Broadfoot, 1979). Indeed, it is argued in later chapters that pupil self-assessment is likely to provide one of the most efficient modes of social control in the same way that Bernstein (1977) has argued informal pedagogy is most controlling by being both intrusive and apparently benign.

However, the delegation of control over the content and form of assessment to teachers and perhaps before long to pupils, raises other, macro-problems of control. Although, it has been argued, such delegation may enhance individual commitment to the education system, it leaves problematic the control over the system itself. Thus it is necessary to add a third dimension to Figure 1 which identifies the growth of a different kind of assessment in direct relation to the decline in external school assessment. This parameter is accountability - the means by which the controlling interests in society monitor the operation of the education system as a whole and make it responsive to the needs of society as they define them.

Assessment for System Control

Running through this discussion of the way in which assessment procedures have been instrumental in regulating the attestation of competence, the content of the curriculum, the competition (i.e., selection) function of mass schooling and the control of aspirations has been, more or less explicitly, the theme of system control. From this very brief, and necessarily selective analysis of developments in
assessment procedures it has been possible to show how the form of such procedures tends to change in response to new demands upon the education system whilst the underlying functions remain unaltered. Thus one would expect to find changes of emphasis in assessment policy and practice with the ebb and flow of events in a particular country. These changes would, however, be oscillations within the limitations provided by ideological tradition and institutional inertia and thus typically reflect the characteristic ethos of a particular national system. Thus, two countries faced with very similar pressures might be quite different in the way in which they respond to a changing balance between the competence, competition and control requirements of assessment procedures. Indeed, it is the detailed exploration of this argument that is the concern of Chapter Four and the empirical case studies of Chapters Five and Six. The purpose of raising the argument at this stage is to underline the importance of a consideration of systemic variables to any sociological analysis of educational assessment within the system itself as well as that of individual pupils and the way in which it is used to make schooling responsive to the needs of the wider social order. Indeed, it is this latter function which ultimately gives form and content to all educational assessment. It is therefore a central theme of this analysis thereby justifying the extended systemic case studies which follow.

Before the institution of state-funded education, schools played little part in the lives of the majority of the population, and so the issue of control hardly arose. Indeed the Church's influence was virtually unassailable. With the advent of industrialism, and its associated political and social upheavals, it became increasingly apparent that voluntary agencies and, in particular, the Church, could no longer be trusted to provide schooling which was adequate or suitable for the task of controlling the masses in societies in which so many of the old social
codes had been swept away. At the same time, privileged sections of society were more and more being forced to resort to schooling as the new means of perpetuating the elite status that land and money could no longer ensure. Thus it was necessary that a means be found of carefully controlling the nature of an ever-expanding state educational provision and of regulating the new basis for class differentials. Much has already been said about this latter issue of competition in this chapter and it is with the issue of the use of assessment procedures for quality control that the final part of this general discussion is concerned.

Perhaps the clearest expression of the combined need to control the content of mass education and to ensure standards which reflect a good return on investment was the nineteenth century 'payment by results' system in England in which school grants, and indeed teachers' salaries, depended on the standards achieved by their pupils in certain basic curricular areas, as measured by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (see Chapter Six). Such a crude basis for control would not now be possible in any advanced industrial society given the sheer size of the educational system and the potential strength of the opposition. However, it is still normal for education systems to support a large army of local and national inspectors and this is testimony to a continuing concern that schools should be accountable to society for the investment in them as measured by the achievements of their pupils and their conformity to accepted practice.

Such accountability can take many forms depending on the ideological and institutional traditions of a particular national system. As already suggested, where there is a strong central authority, control is likely to focus on provision. Where this is lacking, control tends to be exerted through judgements of the results of the system although there may well be variations in this respect even within a particular national system.
over time (Atkin, 1972). It is necessary too, to distinguish between legal or bureaucratic accountability to superiors and a moral element of responsibility to clients. Bureaucratic accountability may be regarded as a two-stage process involving first the identification of the performance of the education system in relation to its goals, as defined at any one time, and second, the response by educational institutions brought about through the mechanisms of system control in response to any shortfall between performance and goals. Although conceptually distinct, these two stages are frequently simultaneous in practice. As well as these bureaucratic and 'moral' accountability relationships, every education system may be characterised by other patterns of informal accountability in the form of the constraints and responsibilities that actors in the education system impose upon themselves as part of their 'professional' standards.

For greater clarity, bureaucratic accountability, which is the visible manifestation of authority and thus of legitimate control, can be further subdivided into performance reporting, the institution of technical analyses of the system, provision for political participation and provision for institutional response as in, for example, voucher systems (Levin, 1974; Kirst and Bass, 1976). A similar breakdown is offered by Eraut (1978) in which he suggests accountability can be based on student gain in terms of individual assessment; alternatively it can be based on feedback to central and local government in the form of inspection and reports (Sockett, 1980), the achievement of objectives (process evaluation) (Popham, 1971) or, less commonly, on an agreed contract (Atkin, 1972) and the maximisation of utility.

Where accountability has emerged as an explicit issue — typically in systems where there is weak central control — the focus has tended to be on student gain — the result of the system (Brodinskey, 1977; Atkin,
1972; Nisbet et al., 1974). The assumption is that the supply of information and knowledge about the system is the basis for various forms of control - the sanctioning of individuals, the allocation of resources, and more general exhortation including occasionally explicit coercion, although as Chin and Benne (1968) point out, it is rarely effective to run organisations on a power-coercive basis. Educational control is thus much more commonly exerted through attempts to colonise professional attitudes and other 'normative re-educative' strategies. Rarely do specific proposals for action follow directly from the provision of information (Kirst and Bass, 1976). Rather, it is the act of assessment itself which is crucial, for the way in which information is gathered and the content of that information itself embodies prevailing values. Thus, the responsibility to give an account or be accountable acts in itself as an important force of control. This essentially theoretical perspective is discussed at more length later in the thesis. It is sufficient at this point merely to introduce the important argument that even where formal, bureaucratic provision for central control is weak, to the extent that indirect methods for influencing the content and style of educational discourse can be mobilised, and thus, the criteria for teachers' self-imposed moral accountability, the influence of central government can in practice be very great.

In Chapter Six, it is argued that this is the characteristic mode of central government influence in the decentralised organisation of English education. Thus it is suggested, the recent overt preoccupation with providing for more bureaucratic and moral accountability is less significant than it at first seems, and it is the much less controversial but nevertheless increasing power of government to influence the canons of professional accountability which has far more impact. But whilst the precise balance of pressures and policies concerning accountability is specific to
England, the way in which accountability provides for system control is also generalisable across countries.

Given the arguments of Chapter Seven that there are common and deeply significant developments currently affecting the control of education, which have their roots in international economic and political development, it is pertinent to refer briefly here to the historical context for this movement. It has been suggested that the use of assessment procedures in systemic control reflects a combination of concerns which includes the identification and maintenance of national educational standards. This is in turn closely connected with the need to ensure a reasonable rate of return on educational investment, and the political problem of maintaining public confidence in the educational enterprise. Alongside concern over the level of standards is the desire to control the content of education and, in particular, that the competences being fostered are such as will, on the one hand, meet national needs as identified by those in power and, on the other, maintain a sound basis for social cohesion and control.

In England it is not necessary to look further than the William Tyndale affair (see for example Gretton and Jackson, 1976) or the sacking of certain radical headmasters in recent years to see the sanctions which come into operation when individual head teachers or groups of staff attempt to depart from the accepted norms of school conduct. Part of the increasing concern for accountability in recent years and consequent pressure towards a more precise monitoring of educational standards in many countries is undoubtedly due to the 'democratisation' of education. Bourdieu and Passeron (1976) have suggested that the extension of academic education to a new population not equipped with suitable skills to benefit from it is likely to result in a lowering of academic standards and public concern. Certainly in England there is an
obvious connection between comprehensivisation and the consequent increased visibility of the failures of the erstwhile secondary modern pupil, and between raising the school leaving age, opening up public examinations to a much greater number of pupils, and the growing concern with falling standards. Although the evidence points to more pupils both attempting and gaining external qualifications, the insecurity induced by such major organisational and curricular changes has led to the institution of new 'quality control' mechanisms such as the DES Assessment of Performance Unit. This Unit, discussed in detail in Chapter Six, is not concerned with identifying the performance of individual pupils but is designed to assess the overall standards being achieved at the various stages of schooling and in different aspects of the curriculum. Although in practice the APU seems to be having relatively little impact, its activities do represent a backlash against what Williams (1961) has termed 'the public educators' and in favour of the 'old humanists' and the 'industrial trainers', and, as Salter and Tapper (1981) have it, the 'state bureaucrats'.

Part of the explanation for the recent explosion of accountability programmes can certainly be found in the logical extension of principles of management control which are increasingly being incorporated into the school system (Timpane, 1976) - the increasingly formal division of labour and bureaucratic hierarchy in the school are obvious manifestations - which may be expressed in bald economic terms as 'getting value for money'. This analysis does not, however, explain the relatively sudden upsurge in public concern in this decade. The explanation is certainly enormously complex but once again may be found in the tension between the two conflicting goals of the education system with, in this case, the pendulum perhaps having swung too far in one direction.

The 1960s had seen an international trend against elitism and towards
the expansion of opportunity for all in education. It had revealed in many cases a liberalisation of discipline; the increasing impact and radicalism of youth subcultures all over the world and a fashion for 'progressive' education. The effect of all these social forces was a major onslaught on the school's function as a socialisation agency - as a mechanism for social control. Although the debate is ostensibly about 'falling standards' in terms of academic achievement, Burstall and Kay (1978) point out that the concern is a much broader one - at least in America - about the extent to which the educational system is successfully meeting the present and future needs of society. Public discontent focuses on both 'standards' and 'behaviour'.

"In fact the current educational debate in spite of all the concern for assessment of performance is not really about the measurable but about values." (Watts, 1978)

It is thus certainly arguable that concern over supposedly 'falling standards' in England, for example - particularly in view of the (1978) HM Inspectorate report that standards in basic skills had if anything improved during the preceding years - was merely the tip of the iceberg of a much larger concern: that the decline of external examinations and the corresponding increase in the power of teachers to determine their own curricula and try out new 'progressive' methods during the 1960s had the effect of making the education system appear increasingly autonomous of any external control. In particular, it may be argued, the innovations which characterised education in the 1960s, in challenging the traditional elitism, curricula, pedagogy and discipline of schooling, appeared to threaten the ability of the dominant social groups who had themselves set up this system to work in their own interest to reproduce the status quo. In particular the cold wind of economic crisis in the mid-seventies meant renewed pressure too for education to be as closely geared as possible to the needs of the labour market. In an era which requires prolonged
'elementary' (i.e., mass) schooling; which is dominated by the ethos of meritocracy; it is no longer possible to deny the majority of school pupils a tangible goal in schooling, particularly when employers equally conditioned to the meritocracy ethos have learned to discriminate between applicants very largely on the basis of formal qualifications (Dore, 1976). Thus it can be argued that the international trend towards internally set school examinations (and, by implication, curricula) discussed earlier in this chapter, which was made possible by their declining importance for selection, brought with it unforeseen problems of control. To the extent that teachers can decide what they want to teach, how they want to teach it and whether they have been successful, with little reference to any outside authority, the dominant interests of the State are losing control of the most powerful agency of social reproduction.

In view of the fact that, as Raven (1983) has shown, teachers value most highly the personal and social development of their pupils, it is not surprising that the more autonomous the school system, the greater the disparity between the emphases and hence achievements of schools and the demands of industry and the job market in general. To the extent that the school emphasises responding to the needs and interests of the child, awakening critical awareness, informal pedagogy, liberal discipline and flexible curricula, it will be conflicting with employers' needs for recruits to the lower levels of the labour market equipped with basic yet flexible skills and appropriate attitudes, such as meticulousness and persistence in tasks (Neave, 1980).

It should be pointed out, however, that such had been the position of many teachers and pupils in higher elementary schools for many years without any very threatening changes in goals or practice having typically taken place. The difference at the present time is that the movement away from external control is concerned with those mechanisms (public
examinations) which regulate the first stages of entry to higher occupational status. Thus as such alternative forms of certification come to be accepted by universities - as they increasingly are in many different countries - such a lack of external control over the form and content of certification poses a fundamental threat to traditional definitions of educational knowledge and standards. The student unrest of the late sixties in France and in many other countries may well have produced an insecurity which, when exacerbated by an increasingly dismal economic picture at the beginning of the seventies and ensuing public concern over educational standards, resulted more or less directly in the institution of new, different means of system control. In the United States, national efforts to define and assess educational standards date back even to the halcyon days of 1964 when the tide of public opinion first began to flow strongly against liberal and progressive practices in education and in favour of more traditional pedagogy, discipline and 'minimum-competency' testing.\footnote{There are echoes in this policy of the worst traditions of the typically European practice of children endlessly and often futilely repeating 'grades' they have not adequately mastered - a practice still common in less developed countries.\footnote{In England the legacy of the 'Revised Code' is a deep-rooted hostility to the kind of curriculum direction such testing implies. Nevertheless, the desire of many teachers and policy-makers to provide a motivating and informative certification process and the general trend towards descriptive, comprehensive records underlies a growing body of support for 'grade-related' tests and 'criterion' rather than 'norm' referenced assessment.\footnote{(Brown, 1980; Harrison, 1982). This development may readily be explained in terms of the postponement of selection beyond the stages at which such testing of competence is typically applied (16+ and below) and its replacement by the themes of competence - as workers, as citizens and}}
control - of standards and of individuals.

The historical examples of the use of criterion-referenced assessment are rare simply because the competition and eventual 'success' had so often to be on a 'numerus clausus' basis - limited to the number of places or scholarships available rather than the number reaching a given standard. 'Payment by results' was possible in the nineteenth century elementary school in England simply because the intention of these tests was quality control, not selection. Consequently, it was relatively easy to define specific criteria for the required standard such as "to make out or test the correctness of a common shop bill" (Midwinter, 1970) and it was desirable that every child should achieve this standard. The emphasis was on content, competence and control rather than competition, on evaluating the overall standard of the class, the school, the system, not the potential of the individual child.

These somewhat contradictory trends in the institution of contemporary testing may be explained with reference to the dilemma already identified, namely the problem of matching a liberal educational ideology with the need for social control and social reproduction inherent in a stratified society. Thus, competency-testing is by its very nature, conflictual, since it combines on the one hand the needs of employers for an attestation of competence and, on the other, is intended to provide, through a series of short-term experiences of success, the personal fulfilment and involvement in education which must be encouraged to maintain the commitment of individual pupils and thus, ultimately, social control.

Another effect of the closer monitoring and control of educational standards is that the attribution of responsibility for pupil achievement may come to be seen increasingly in terms of the school rather than the individual pupil. Focusing once again on the English and American experience, since these two countries have taken some of the most overt
measures in this respect, it is possible to trace a move away from the concentration on the environmental influences affecting the performance of certain class- and ethnic groups which so preoccupied the Newsom and Flowden generations in Britain and the Coleman generation in America. This preoccupation has, in these two countries at least, faded in significance relative to the emphasis on school responsibility for pupil achievement. Although the sampling of national standards currently being undertaken by the APU is designed to preclude comparisons between schools as much as between pupils, the underlying ideology of judging schools by pupil attainment has directly contributed to the legal requirement to publish public examination results and hence the local identification of 'good' schools. In the United States the New York Times publishes the city's 'League Table of School Attainments' without any qualifying information (Sherwood, 1978). Burstall and Kay (1978) describe the hostility and bitterness aroused in Michigan when the State educational authorities were pressured by politicians into releasing achievement test results for individual schools, having previously assured the teachers concerned that the results would be confidential -

"these results were published in local newspapers, giving rise to a 'league table' of schools (apparently much in demand among the estate agents of the area), which took no account of the school's differing human and financial resources. Teachers complained bitterly that the tests used did not adequately reflect the school curriculum, [and] that there had been little teacher involvement in the development of the tests ..." (p. 34)

Although 'light' sampling as opposed to 'blanket testing' has avoided in England some of the problems condemned in the American National Association of Elementary Schools Principals' book The Myth of Measurability, the recent move in 1983 by one local education authority to institute blanket testing for all the pupils in three different age groups as a basis for judging school quality and teacher competence is clear evidence that
such policies are still very attractive to some educational administrators.  

The new emphasis on accountability and system control now to be found in many countries is likely to have a third very significant effect in allowing the State a much greater influence on educational content and standards.

Arguably, what is happening is a return to a more utilitarian emphasis in education and what Johnson (1976) has called, in the context of nineteenth-century English education, 'the cul-de-sac of skills' - education geared to only basic competences, the labour requirements of a technological society and the development of appropriate attitudes rather than free expression and personal development. On the other hand, external control of the content and practice of schooling in this form, rather than relying only on the more formal controls of either a nationally imposed curriculum (as for example in France) or a resurgence of external examinations based on externally-devised syllabuses, helps to mould professional standards in the same image and thus to prevent a direct confrontation with the powerful lobby of liberal interest supporting school and teacher autonomy. Thus, it may be argued, in England teacher-developed curricula and teacher-conducted school-based assessment, progressive teaching methods and even the greater pupil and parent involvement heralded by the recent Taylor Report (DES, 1977) on school management, were rendered largely impotent as potential agents of educational 'liberation' (Holly, 1976) by such unobtrusive accountability controls. Recent measures in both England and France to give parents increased consumer choice over education are also likely to reinforce rather than reverse this trend to the extent that parents and indeed pupils espouse the same goals for education as the system planners. Given the importance of assessment as a means of regulating life chances, the likelihood of parents and pupils emphasising alternative goals to those implicit in formal
assessment procedures is not very great. Thus it may be argued that in co-opting parents and pupils - who are often for this reason some of the more conservative participants in the education system - into the accountability process, the mechanisms of control over the education system, and teachers in particular, are in fact strengthened. An idealised representation of this balance of control is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2.2: Model showing overt accountability procedures as a function of declining public control of certification procedures

External control over
Pupil Assessment Procedures (Certification)

Pupil self-assessment
Teachers' descriptive records
Attestation of course completion
Moderated school assessment
Public exams (externally set and marked)

Underlying these more or less explicit concerns at the present time, however, is a much more fundamental, if rarely acknowledged, crisis of values. Although the provision of mass education has always reflected a range of motives - national development, personal fulfilment and social control being the most prominent, there was, until recently, a surprisingly
uniform belief in the power of education to liberate the individual whilst at the same time helping to provide a nation of committed and skilled workers from among whose number selected individuals could be rationally chosen for positions of power and privilege. A complex concatenation of factors including economic recession, affluence and its associated anomie, changes in the capitalist mode of production, an increasingly schooled and increasingly unemployed workforce, has resulted in growing disillusionment with the cost of education and an erosion of confidence in its value. Not only parents and politicians, but even teachers and pupils may be found among those who no longer know what school is for. "Thus those responsible for education were confronted by a double malaise: that of senior secondary school pupils rebelling against teaching which did not meet their needs and against an education system which did not give them enough responsibility and freedom, and that of the teachers who had to face up to the new demands being made by the young people and their families whilst in theory satisfying the traditional exigencies of a particular level. The objectives of teaching have ceased to be clear, particularly at the secondary stage. The status of teachers in society has gone down with the extension of schooling. Their expertise is no longer sufficient to maintain their prestige and their remuneration has fallen behind that of other professions demanding a similar level of qualifications (Herzlich and Vandermeersch, 1981, p.8). Thus, the widespread institution in recent years of corporate management techniques at various levels of the education system may be seen not just as part of the pursuit of greater efficiency, but also as part of the more or less conscious desire to hide this crisis of values under the self-justifying demands of efficiency. But, as Pateman (1978) suggests,

"If there really is a deep-seated crisis of motivation and belief, the effect of the political and administrative measures being proposed may only be to increase conflict
at the classroom coalface and deepen antagonism between teachers, government and parents and within the teaching profession itself." (p. 29)

These questions are addressed in Chapter Seven which is specifically concerned with this contemporary and highly significant development in the role of educational assessment.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored some of the ways in which assessment procedures mediate the relationship between education and society. Some common trends have been identified which illustrate the constant themes in this relationship - the attestation of competence, the regulation of competition, and the control of individuals and the educational system itself. There is a good deal of evidence to support the identification of similar trends at this time in many industrialised countries towards a decline in formality in individual pupil assessment with a corresponding increase of other external forms of system control such as monitoring, standardised tests and centralised curricula.

Equally though, it is important to stress that national education systems are each uniquely situated in an historical and contemporary social context which determines not only their position at a particular point of the continuum identified in Figure 1, but determines too the particular assessment techniques chosen at any particular time. Thus it cannot be argued that there is any unilateral trend. Rather a concept of oscillation is perhaps more helpful which situates the actual practices of assessment at any one time within the constant parameters of the functions of school assessment in an era of mass education. It is these same constants which are the continuing themes of this thesis: - that assessment mechanisms develop to operate as a series of checks and balances
on the education system in order to ensure its major function of perpetuating the social, economic and political status quo;
- that apparent changes in assessment procedures in recent years have been only superficial changes in response to changing legitimating ideologies
- that these changes have come about to defuse potential conflict and frustration whilst at the same time enabling schools to continue their traditional role of selecting and channelling pupils to different levels of the occupational and social hierarchy - a role which is indeed increasingly becoming problematic in a situation of chronic and large-scale youth unemployment;
- that assessment mechanisms are used to control the form and content of schooling, ensuring the preparation of youngsters in the necessary skills and attitudes for their various roles in advanced industrial societies.

Thus it is possible to trace in the growth of mass educational provision in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the way in which assessment procedures have simultaneously helped to expand opportunity and, at the same time, reproduce an apparently meritocratic status quo. In so doing they have also elevated particular forms of knowledge and ways of reproducing it.

The particular ways in which the assessment procedures perform these functions in any one education system depend upon the ideological and historical foundations of any one national context and the developments referred to briefly here are taken up in more detail in subsequent empirical chapters. The intention of this, more general, chapter has been to demonstrate and, to some extent, account for, the central role that assessment has come to play in the educational provision of industrial societies and so justify an analysis of the similarities and differences between such societies in these terms. The interrelated themes which have been identified - competence, competition and control - point to the
need for a deeper, more general level of analysis which will explore not only the ways in which school assessment practices operate in relation to industrial society but rather why it was that assessment could come to play this central role in societies so deeply divided in their political and social traditions and hence what are the characteristics common to that type of society which gave birth to mass schooling. In this sense, the origins of mass schooling and the origins of assessment are essentially similar - and this is the focus of the next chapter.
Notes to Chapter Two

1. It is necessary to point out, however, that this contradiction goes beyond any simple conspiracy theory or political argument. As is evident from contemporary trends towards selection and elitism even in people's democracies such as the USSR and China (Bonavia, 1978), the contradiction is, in many ways, an economic one, between the need to produce as quickly and efficiently as possible those who will lead society in the national and international economic battle, as against the commitment typically found in both liberal democracies and socialist states to creating equal opportunity for growth and development among the mass of the population.

China offers one of the clearest illustrations of this process. It has been one of the few countries to recognise as an explicit problem the deep division Bernstein refers to between 'mental' and 'manual' that contemporary forms of schooling and particularly contemporary forms of assessment lead to. For two decades after the revolution, educational and political priorities diverged radically. Academic learning, theoretical studies and memorisation continued to predominate.

"Manual labour, ideological education, local opinions and initiatives were ignored, rote learning remained the main mode of learning ... the reward system (examinations) was directly at odds with the philosophy of schooling." (Kwong, 1980)

The Cultural Revolution was one of the few popular movements against this division and against the associated recontextualising of knowledge in a formal curriculum. But there can be no better testimony to the world-wide power of the prevailing intellectual hegemony that a country of 960 million people (Sloss, 1981) was unable to challenge it. The excesses of the Cultural Revolution in practice are well known and its passing is not mourned by the Chinese (Unger, 1980). Still, in its early and spontaneous form, it represented a genuine and almost unique desire to challenge the irrelevance and injustice of an education system dominated by the exchange value of an arbitrary and limited set of intellectual exercises, namely formal examinations. The political shift which has taken place in China since the fall of the 'Gang of Four' in which ideological purity is less important than economic development, has led to a radical change in educational policy. A critical shortage of middle-level technicians and managers in particular has led to the proliferation of selective, academic examinations and the institution of a system of 'key': schools and colleges in which selected students receive more than an equal share of educational resources in order that their development may be both better and swifter (Bonavia, 1978). If the consequence is that

"the nationwide examination system is likely to accentuate the inequities in educational opportunities that the government has been at pains to overcome all these years .... Chinese officials accept that this is the price they have to pay in order to modernise rapidly." (Kwong, 1980)

From this example, it seems unlikely that any country will be able to overcome the constraints exerted by existing forms of assessment by not giving primacy to currently dominant forms of intellectual performance and, by the same token, use such assessment procedures for the identification of individuals for different roles in the division of labour.
2. Current curricular priorities have a relatively short history, essentially post nineteenth century, the 'quadrivium' and 'trivium' which predated them in England having a very different emphasis. Hamilton, 19 81, 1983, describes these various developments in England since the first formal schools were founded in the 11th century. Durkheim (1977) offers an equivalent very detailed analysis of such changing curricular emphases in France in response to developments in prevailing ideologies and conditions. See also Apple (1976) for a useful general discussion of the relativity of curricula.


5. It is recognised that such non-selective 'elementary' education has a much longer history in some other countries, notably the United States.

6. The tripartite model of secondary schooling based on 11+ selection, introduced in England in 1944 was typical of European practice at that time in providing prestigious academic institutions for the few, technical schools as a second best for some and extended elementary schools for the majority. Thus for example in the Netherlands, selection at twelve and a half years of age channelled pupils into the Lower and Intermediate General Secondary School (LAVO), the technically- and vocationally-oriented Higher General Secondary School or, for a favoured 4 per cent (in 1968), the university-oriented high school (VWO). In Spain, before 1970, pupils were selected at ten years of age either to continue their elementary education to fourteen or go into the secondary school: until they were seventeen or more. In France pupils were divided between the collège d'enseignement générale, the collège d'enseignement technique and the prestigious lycée. Similar patterns could be found in most European countries until fairly recently.

7. West Germany is making particularly slow progress in this respect, (Rowan, 1976)

8. In 1946 the Report of a Royal Commission in Sweden proposed a new comprehensive 'grundschule' for all pupils, thereby pioneering in Europe the model of non-selective schooling throughout the period of compulsory education - a model which was already established in the Soviet Union and the United States, perhaps because of a more long-standing preoccupation in these countries with education as a means of creating equality of opportunity and national unity, in contrast to the more single-minded European association of secondary schooling with academic excellence.

9. In the Netherlands for example, the selective examination for secondary schools has been replaced by an Admissions Committee composed of the school's governing authority, the school's principal and some teachers who make a decision based on the report of the head of the primary school. In West Germany also examinations have been replaced by selection based on teacher assessment, followed by a common orientation stage in the fifth and sixth classes which decides, again
on the basis of class tests, whether the pupil has truly been allocated to the appropriate secondary school. This spirit of positive guidance continues in Germany as it does in France with a continuous monitoring of the pupil’s progress. In Italy, too, the traditionally elaborate system of teacher grades and annual promotion in the elementary and intermediate (11-14) schools has been abolished and replaced by an assessment card providing an "analytical and rounded assessment for each pupil" (Elvin, 1981) which is also the basis for school reports.

10. Thus in the United States for example the percentage of 18-21 year olds enrolled in post-secondary educational institutions had increased from 20 per cent at the end of the Second World War to approximately 50 per cent in 1973 (US Bureau of Census, 1973). In Japan the numbers enrolled in higher education have doubled since the war and now over 90 per cent of pupils obtain the basic high school qualification and stay on beyond the end of compulsory education. In Norway, over 99 per cent now stay beyond the statutory leaving age and not only has university provision doubled, there are experiments with comprehensive 'post 19' education. In Britain, in 1963, 27,800 school-leavers entered degree courses but in 1973 the equivalent figure was 44,600. In 1982, it was 120,000. Similarly, the proportion of school-leavers with no formal qualifications dropped from 66.8 per cent in 1963 to 21 per cent in 1973.

11. Italy is perhaps unusual in still setting a final examination as early as age 14 after three years in the intermediate school for the Intermediate School Leaving Certificate and access to higher secondary education to which about three quarters of the age cohort proceeds. The Netherlands is marginally further along this path in that whilst still setting an entrance examination for the higher secondary schools providing pre-university education, such examinations are combined with the results of psychological tests and continuous assessment of the last year’s school work for the final decision to be made. The picture is similar also in Belgium where the Certificate of Lower Secondary Education is increasingly being awarded on the basis of continuous assessment with only borderline candidates now sitting for a formal examination. But, in the USSR, the 'Attestation of Maturity' examination at the end of compulsory schooling still determines access to the various forms of continuing education and, although largely school-based, is a relatively formal examination (Glorigov, 1974). In Denmark, despite the widespread reforms in the school system since 1970, including the efforts by most of the recent social democrat Ministers of Education to abolish selection for upper secondary school, public preoccupation with standards and the maintenance of academic excellence prevented Ms. Britt Bjarregaard, the Minister of Education, from succeeding in her attempt in 1977 to abolish such tests. France has recently (1978) gone slightly further in abolishing formal tests of selection for entry into post-16 education for all but borderline and private school pupils (Dundas-Grant 1975; Journal Officiel, 1977). In Norway, the Committee on Evaluation reporting in 1978 and in Sweden, the Commission on Marking which reported in 1977, both recommended the complete abolition of marks for formal assessment in the comprehensive school (Council of Europe, 1977, 1978).
12. See also articles in the TES, 3/12/83, 20/12/83.

13. As Bourdieu (1974) so cogently shows with his French data, for a working-class child to be 'sponsored' — that is, encouraged to stay on at school and aim high — they must do better than their middle-class counterparts (Neave, 1980). In France all children have at least their 'livre scolaire' or school record to take with them from school. In the United States all children have a leaving certificate which simply consists of a record of the courses the pupil has taken and the grades he has received (Maguire, 1976). In Norway and Sweden, assessment is a routine matter for all pupils, normed and standardised to allow teachers to gauge their pupils' progress in relation to that of the country as a whole.

14. Australia provides an interesting case study. All 16+ certification in Australia has been teacher conducted for some considerable time and has now begun to reach the next stage of disappearing altogether (Withers, 1982). (This has already happened in New South Wales and South Australia in 1976 (March, 1974; Maguire, 1976).) Likewise, 17+ and 18+ certification, although varying from state to state, manifests the same trend of being allowed increasing teacher control as its significance decreases until it ultimately withers away. Thus in Queensland, for example, certification is based on a school assessment scaled according to the Australian scholastic aptitude test. In Western Australia, likewise, school assessments are used. In Victoria, as in New Zealand, the accreditation system is used which requires only pupils from non-accredited schools to take formal examinations. In 1973 the Campbell Report in the Australian Capital Territory recommended the use of continuous school assessment as the basis for certification. But the most extreme example of this trend is in Victoria where in 1975 teachers refused to conduct the matriculation examinations for university entrance (Hill, 1976). They felt a lottery was the only fair way of selecting students for university until sufficient higher education provision could be made. Subsequently they have devised an alternative School Certificate which is now accepted by at least some universities (see Withers, 1982).

15. It is worth noting, however, that such effective objectives have always been more explicit in Indian educational goals than in the west.


17. In Denmark the U90 Commission, setting out the form of Danish education for the years up to 1990, has stressed the need to broaden assessment to include personal and social qualities (Central Council for Education, 1977). In France, the 'Haby' reforms of the 'livre scolaire' (although rescinded in 1978) were significant in including assessments on affective characteristics such as 'sense of responsibility and 'team spirit'. In Sweden the new structure recommended by the Commission on Marking in which parents, teachers and pupils would be jointly involved in assessment, also recommends that non-cognitive aspects of a pupil's progress be taken into account along with academic achievements (Duckenfield, 1977). Norway has made similar recommendations (Neave, 1979). So, too, have India and Tanzania.
18. The United States is a good example, in this respect, where the inclusion of information about extra-curricular activities such as debating or sport, and personal qualities such as leadership and sociability, have always made the school record an important complement to the largely ungraded High School Certificate. King (1981) argues that schooling in the United States has always of necessity given highest priority to the need to socialise and weld into a social unit all the diverse cultures represented in its immigrants. The stress on democracy and patriotism in American schools as evidenced by, for example, the morning flag-raising ceremony, may indeed be at considerable cost given that one in five American adults have been claimed to be functionally illiterate (Binyon, 1976). At the other end of the political spectrum, too, communist countries such as the Soviet Union and China have clearly recognised the political and ideological conformity that can be reinforced by taking into account a very much wider range of information about pupils than simply academic attainment (Price, 1976, 1977).

19. Indeed there has been a good deal of criticism of such records in terms of the kind of '1984' control they are taken to herald. See, for example, Ranson, 1984.

20. As, for example, in Rumania, Poland and Bulgaria and the USSR where up to 50% of aspiring students are unable to find a place in higher education.

21. Throughout Europe the traditional policy of open admission to higher education for those with matriculation, in, for example, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, Italy, West Germany and France, is now being modified in many countries to restrict entry to the most popular faculties. In Germany, for example, the grouped subject Abitur is carefully graded to allow university admission on a strict 'numerus clausus' basis (Dungworth, 1977).

22. England's preoccupation with public examinations is indeed an interesting manifestation of the important and close relationship between certification mechanisms and mechanisms of system control - accountability. The hitherto very informal methods of system control characteristic of all the education systems of the British Isles to a greater or lesser extent have resulted in their being much slower to respond to the pressures for change in assessment procedures which have led to the international trends under discussion.

23. That such trends are not yet typical of Third World countries is because, as has been suggested, the particular assessment policies of individual countries will be a reflection of the stage of development reached, combined with the particular institutional
traditions, policy priorities and resources characteristic of that particular country. But, despite their very different stage of development, Third World countries are still identifiably on the same continuum of examination practice as the developed world, albeit at an earlier stage. As King (1976) suggests:

"as long as selection remains more important than socialisation at all levels of the educational system, it is probably unrealistic to expect any significant retreat from formalism ... The parents seem not at all anxious that they adapt the formal government curriculum to the solution of local community issues ... The main community issue still seems to be securing through education a few more jobs outside the local community."

This phenomenon remains typical of developing countries despite vigorous attempts to overcome it.

24. For example, Michael Duane from Risinghill, London, in the late 'sixties and R.F. Mackenzie from Summerhill, Aberdeen, in the mid 'seventies.

25. The Victorian alternative matriculation procedure (Withers, 1982) is perhaps the most radical but even in France, teachers' assessments are assuming ever greater importance in comparison with the Baccalaureat examination (Pautier, 1982).

26. So strong has this concern with standards now become that by the beginning of 1978, 31 States had introduced some form of 'basic skills' testing in their schools and only 4 of the 50 States had no plans to do so. The scale of the movement is clearly shown by the fact that less than two years earlier, only 8 States required 'minimum competency' testing (Cookson, 1978). In California alone the Reform in Intermediate and Secondary Education movement (RISE), set up to ensure minimum standards of competency, will cost £200 million a year. In Oregon, Florida and Arizona, school-leavers must already demonstrate minimum standards before graduating (Binyon, 1976) and in some States, the controls are even more stringent in that grade to grade promotion within the school ceases to be automatic and is dependent on adequate performance.

27. Thus, since most Third World countries are still at the stage of developing mass primary rather than secondary education, they still typically have their key point of selection at 11+, that is, at the end of primary school. Since secondary education is still normally highly selective in such countries, there is still little pressure for reform of the necessarily formal examinations upon which selection is based. The anonymity of public examinations is crucial in this respect. Any alternative would be likely to expose teachers to quite intolerable pressures in the need to select the favoured few from a very large number of aspiring and subsequently frustrated candidates. Thus, in Tanzania, despite President Nyerere's explicit identification of examinations as the source of individualism and elitist attitudes - despite a series of reforms in the organisation and orientation of public examinations - any attempt to move away from traditional academic standards is steadfastly resisted by parents, pupils, teachers and many administrators and politicians.
motivated by concerns over academic respectability in the eyes of the world, colonial tradition or occupational advancement (Morrison, 1976). Neighbouring Kenya provides an equally explicit example (National Committee on Educational Objectives, 1976) where even the radical Harambee movement has equally failed to make any serious impact on this attitude.

28. That is, assessment against a fixed standard rather than against a population. Progress towards 'grade-related' testing at the 16+ stage has been much greater in Scotland with the major reforms in certification which were instituted as a result of the 1977 Dunning Report. See also Savary (1984) on growing French interest.

29. In New Jersey recently, a court upheld the petition of two parents against a school for the child's lack of achievement.

30. For details of the furore provoked by the London Borough of Croydon's initiative in this respect, see TES, December 12, 1983.

31. Under the 1980 Education Act in England and the new system of representative Councils at every level of the system from classroom to Minister in France.

32. Enfin, les responsables de l'éducation étaient confrontés à un double malaise. Celui des lycéens, en rébellion contre un enseignement éloigné de leurs aspirations et contre un système scolaire qui ne leur donne pas assez de responsabilités et de liberté. Celui des enseignants, qui doivent faire face à de nouvelles demandes des jeunes et des familles tout en satisfaisant, en principe, aux exigences traditionnelles de 'niveau'. Les objectifs de l'enseignement ont cessé d'être clairs, en particulier dans le secondaire. Le statut des enseignants dans la société s'est dégradé avec l'extension de l'instruction; leur savoir, inégal, ne suffit plus à leur assurer du prestige, et leur rémunération a pris du retard par rapport aux professions exigeant un niveau d'études comparable.

33. Such a system is graphically described by the pupils of the Barbiana School in Italy in their Letter to a Teacher, in which they show that of the 454,094 thirteen year old Italians in school in 1969, 5 per cent were already in a scuola superiore, (to which pupils are supposed to transfer at fourteen), 33.9 per cent were in the third year (where they officially should have been), 28.7 per cent were in the second year and 18.2 per cent in the first year of the scuola media. The 13.9 per cent still in the elementary school, a third of whom had 'not yet reached the top class, must surely have been disillusioned with education'! In the USSR, not only are children required to repeat grades they have failed but there's an increasing emphasis, after years of ideological prohibition, on various kinds of formal testing (Ingenkamp, 1977). A similar situation is developing in China too (Bonavia, 1978). Denmark was typical of the European liberal democracies in passing an Education Act in 1974 emphasising standards and formal testing and drastically redressing the balance against the earlier far-reaching progressive innovations in assessment instituted in 1972. The Netherlands, too, has almost reverted to a 'payment by results' system in that State grants are only given to schools whose pupils can demonstrate acceptable standards in numerical and other basic skills (Maguire, 1976).
Other countries are finding less obvious but nevertheless powerful modes of accountability. The new assessment system in Norway is designed to allow not only the monitoring of individual progress but indeed an evaluation of the performance of the institution itself by parents and pupils (Neave, 1979). In Sweden the nationally standardised tests used to scale internal school assessment and regularly administered to pupils have a triple function. They permit pupils to assess their progress and teachers to gauge pupil and class achievement against national norms. But they provide, too, detailed information of national standards and indeed a certain amount of curricular control as expressed in the nationally standardised tests of Swedish, mathematics, foreign languages, chemistry, physics, economics and accountancy (SED, 1977).
CHAPTER THREE

ASSESSMENT AND INDUSTRIALISATION

Introduction

Chapter Two set out to examine in detail the part played by the idea of educational assessment in helping to shape the organisation and ethos of the provision of mass schooling which emerged in response to the major changes in the economic and social order brought about by industrialisation. This analysis was based on an identification of general trends in assessment procedures in education systems with very different ideological and institutional traditions in order to demonstrate that the determinative role of educational assessment was a feature of the common characteristics of industrialisation rather than simply an institutional feature of a particular kind of educational system. Chapter Four refines this argument further in making a distinction between this general role, common to all such societies, and important variations between societies in the institutional expression of this shared rationality, variations which are the product of the same idiosyncratic, national social forms which give rise to major differences in the organisation and ethos of the education system itself. Before coming to such a discussion, however, it is necessary to extend and deepen the analysis beyond simply describing the relationship between assessment and mass educational provision, to explore at a more fundamental level the common characteristics of the societies which give rise to such provision, and why it is that educational assessment has so conveniently been able to achieve such incontrovertible legitimation.

Thus the analysis of Chapter Three evokes some of the central themes of sociology in its attempt to identify those characteristics of
the transition from feudal to industrial society which may be associated with the rise of educational assessment procedures. To do this it draws briefly on the work of Weber, Marx and Durkheim, as well as that of several more recent writers, notably Bernstein, Foucault and Habermas. The chapter distinguishes between the part played by educational assessment in what might be termed the 'instrumental' demands of the new order, that is, those procedures concerned with the key issues of attesting competence and regulating competition given the selection and allocation requirements of a complex division of labour; and that part played by educational assessment in helping to provide for what might be termed the 'expressive' or control demands of that order, the legitimation of inequality and an alternative basis for social cohesion.

**The Characteristics of Industrial Society**

Assessment has become integrally connected with teaching and learning as we know it in contemporary educational practice simply, yet fundamentally, because in its broadest sense of evaluation - to make reference to a standard - assessment is one of the most central features of the rationality that underpins advanced industrial society itself. Assessment procedures are the vehicle whereby the dominant rationality of the corporate capitalist societies typical of the contemporary western world is translated into the structures and processes of schooling. As Cherkaoui (1977) suggests, the system of assessment that emerged with mass education systems must be understood as 'organically connected with a specific mode of socialisation' (p. 562). A mode of socialisation in which preparation for a division of labour, bureaucracy and surveillance were dominant characteristics.

Sociology has been much concerned to conceptualise the difference between 'traditional', 'pre-modern' and industrial societies. Although
varying widely in their perspective on central issues such as the basis for social order, social divisions or the scope for creative social interaction, sociologists spanning the whole range of order/control, system/action perspectives (Dawe, 1970; Bernstein, 1977; Banks, 1978). find substantial areas of common ground in their discussion in general terms of the changes in the basis for social institutions which characterised this transition. Such changes included a number of different social institutions, notably the legal, the religious, the economic, the political and the familial. But, whilst it is relatively easy to identify associations, the attribution of causation is a good deal more problematic once the emerging capitalist order was reflexively related as both cause and effect of the changing nature of social life.

The changes made necessary by the emerging capitalist order were both 'practical' and 'ideological'. Under 'practical' would be included the necessity for a mobile workforce in which the individual - not the family or the community - would take responsibility for a particular unit or stage of production the whole process of which he might not even be able to conceptualise. This in contrast to the hitherto prevailing work organisation in which one individual was typically responsible for the whole task. Given the cost of any long term use of 'power-coercive' control strategies (Chin and Benne, 1978) it was a 'practical' imperative that this new type of worker should come to accept as quickly as possible the legitimacy of a system in which he was paid a money wage which was only a proportional return for his contribution to a system he was powerless to control.

These changes in the nature of work, its increasing fragmentation and alienation for some, expanding entrepreneurial activities for others, offered and required a degree of geographical and social mobility which brought about associated changes in the family's economic and educational
role (Coleman, 1968). This increase in flexibility and mobility was also increasingly apparent in the ascendancy of protestantism over catholicism in many industrialising countries; and in legal innovations based on the right of the individual before an impersonal law which came to replace the old feudal system of reciprocal obligation. Associated with legal developments of this kind were political movements which also had at their centre the idea of liberal democracy - the right of individuals to self-determination (Smith, 1980).

These changes reached their apotheosis in the major scientific, religious and political movements which marked the end of the Middle Ages - the Enlightenment, the Reformation and the French Revolution respectively (Parsons, 1937, 1967; Nisbet, 1967). Herein lies the link between associated changes in social forms - between base and superstructure. Although the profound changes which took place in every aspect of life at this time were legitimised and reinforced by the challenge and later, hegemonic domination of a new entrepreneurial class, the most central theme in the changes taking place went far beyond class in both its origins and its implications and, for this reason, cannot be neatly categorised as either cause or effect. This was the theme of individualisation.

The change from a predominantly communâlist basis for social integration to an individualist orientation is of crucial importance since it was this new orientation that made possible changes at this time in the whole range of social institutions and legitimating ideologies. The key to these changes was the growth of a particular kind of rationality. Gordon (1980) suggests that the dominant theme in philosophy from the end of the eighteenth century concerned the nature of rational thought, a theme which constituted the heart of the Enlightenment,
"this involves the search to identify in its chronology, constituent elements and historical conditions in the moment when the West first affirmed the autonomy and sovereignty of its own mode of rationality, the rationality of the Lutheran reform, the 'Copernican revolution', Cartesian philosophy, the Galilean mathematization of nature, Newtonian physics ..." (Foucault, quoted by Gordon (1980), p. 106)

This is the rationality of science, of logic, of efficiency and of individual rights and responsibilities.

The nature and significance of these changes is a central theme in sociology and particularly in the work of Weber, Durkheim and Marx whose very different approaches to the study of post-feudal society are characteristic of the range and significance of attempts to understand these changes within sociology. Clearly there is a monumental volume of writing now available on this subject and of necessity the discussion of it here is confined to those aspects of the work available which bear centrally upon the question being explored here - the origins of educational assessment.

Weber's analysis of the transformation from feudalism to industrial society is dominated by a preoccupation with the rationality that informed the scientific-technical progress of the age, together with the associated bureaucratic and institutional structures and the ideological legitimations. Durkheim's very different social system perspective nevertheless emphasises the same ideas of the rational, individual, hierarchical and specific allocation of roles in his fundamental distinction between mechanical and organic solidarity. More recently, and building on this Durkheimian tradition, Parsons (1951) has conceptualised the distinction in terms of 'pattern variables' with 'affective neutrality', 'universalism', 'achievement' and 'specificity' replacing the 'affectivity', 'particularism', 'ascription' and 'diffuseness' of 'traditional' or 'simple' societies. These
distinctions enunciate very clearly some of the key characteristics of
the modes of social organisation which emerged. Actors were increasingly
required to perform specific, defined roles in a whole range of social
institutions, notably the division of labour. They were increasingly
chosen on the basis of their demonstrated competence as measured by some
rational criterion. In this process - assessment - in one form or
another - would henceforth be central.

The Protestant Ethic

To offer such a brief description of the changes in the social order
which accompanied the rise of capitalism is very much simpler than any
attempt to explain the source of these developments. An over-simplistic
reading of the Weberian perspective suggests that capitalism was brought
about by the associated rise of protestantism despite the fact that
specific instances can be found where both capitalism and protestantism
have flourished independently of the other.

In fact Weber's analysis suggests a more limited attribution of
causality. Weber is careful to be historically specific, linking
specific stages and types of capitalism with other specific social
formations. Thus his account of the transition from feudalism to
capitalism in Europe refers to the significance of the traditional
European distinction within the peasant household of the functions of
ownership, production and consumption - a relationship further specified
in, for example, England, by the existence of the market which was at
least partly due to the centralised state and the rational legal system
imposed by the Norman conquest (Marshall, 1982). Even the notion of
rationality itself is not used as a blanket term but as a historical
specific.
Although it would be inappropriate to go into the details of Weber's wide-ranging analyses here, the general thrust of his argument is central: that there is an important, empirically documentable relationship between a particular world view and a particular form of economic relations, between superstructure and substructure, but that the direction of causality between economic, political, legal and religious factors is not generalisable (see Chapter Four).

Weber's refusal to descend to determinism in this respect is a product of his sociological perspective; his respect for empirical reality and for detailed historical study and his lack of sympathy with deductive approaches which refer to the concrete merely to substantiate general theories. Weber's distrust of abstract theorising is based on his ideas of social action. For Weber, ideas can exert an independent influence on social conduct; understanding of the world can change independent actors' views of their material situation.

"I would like to protest the statement ... that some one factor, be it technology or economy, can be the 'ultimate' or 'true' cause of another. If we look at the causal lines, we see them run, at one time, from technical to economic and political matters, at another from political to religious and economic ones, etc. There is no resting point. In my opinion, the view of historical materialism, frequently espoused, that the economic is in some sense the ultimate point in the chain of causes is completely finished as a scientific proposition." (Weber (1924), p. 456, quoted by Marshall (1982), p. 151).

Thus, as Marshall (1982) suggests, Weber avoids any attempt to formalise his implicit theory of the relation between substructure and superstructure because he denies all forms of necessary determinism in the social sphere

"Empirical research alone can establish, in each instance, whether ideas exert a direct and independent influence on social action (as in the case of ascetic Protestantism and economic conduct); function in the legitimation of social institutions or structures and hierarchies of
dominance (as they appear to have done at various times in Chinese and Indian history): or, serve to refract interests in the manner of 'switchmen'. All three situations are empirical possibilities. (And neither the categories nor the situations are mutually exclusive) " (p. 155)

"Weber was insistent that ideas became significant in history and are causally effective in shaping social conduct because, at certain points, a class or status group with specific material or ideal interests takes up, sustains, and develops these ideas, and is influenced by them. He accepts, as we have seen, that ideas are both shaped by and, in turn, help shape interests and action. As a general principle, however, the 'inner logic' of their development does not proceed independently of all other spheres of social reality ... " (p. 161)

Thus Weber's analysis is important because it emphasises general themes in the development of capitalism whilst in no way denying the significance of specific social forms in mediating the precise effect of such movements. It therefore points the way to the kind of approach being adopted here which seeks to understand how educational assessment procedures relate in general terms to education under capitalism by a study of the specific and different forms it takes in individual systems. 7 Weber's emphasis on the independent contribution of interest groups in the process of 'structuration' (Dallmayr 1982) justifies the detailed attention given to educational politics in this thesis both in theoretical terms (Chapter Four) and in empirical terms (Chapters Five, Six and Seven).

A less obvious contribution of Weber's work to this study is the way in which it underlines the importance of the political unit - the state. In his General Economic History, Weber (1923) distinguishes between rational capitalism and all earlier forms of capitalism, arguing that rational capitalism is distinguished by its systematic orientation to a mass market. He draws a distinction between antiquity in which the freedom of the cities was dominated by a bureaucratically organised
world empire and in which, consequently, there was no place for political capitalism and the modern city as it came under the power of competing national states in a condition of perpetual struggle for power in peace or war.

"This competitive struggle created the largest opportunities for modern western capitalism. The separate states had to compete for mobile capital, which dictated to them the conditions under which it would assist them in power. Out of this alliance of the State with capital, dictated by necessity, arose the national citizen class, the bourgeoisie in the modern sense of the word. Hence it is the closed national state which afforded to capitalism its chance for development ... " (Weber, 1923, pp. 334-5)

One may speculate, if Weber were writing now, how he would view the advent of yet another type of capitalism - international, corporate capitalism. The symbiotic relationship he depicts between national state and entrepreneurial capital is now being eroded by a new kind of 'bureaucratically organised world empire' based not on conquest, or, as under feudalism, on the Roman Catholic church which at times united the whole of feudalised Western Europe into one grand political system, but on technology and capitalism itself. The implications of this development are discussed in detail in Chapter Seven but it is noted here in order to identify another important strand in the analysis which is essentially Weberian, that the relationship between the economic and the political as it finds expression in the nation state will vary with changes in one or other of these dimensions, producing new pressures on associated institutions such as the education system and leading to the kind of 'crisis' which is currently receiving so much attention (e.g. Crozier et al., 1975; Habermas, 1975; Offe, 1975; Rose, 1980; Weiler, 1980).

This balance between 'the general' and 'the specific' is similarly reflected in Weber's analysis of the characteristics of protestant mentality as expressed in the dominant social form of bureaucracy - "the
institutional prototype of the emerging rationalised society" (Wilson, 1977, quoted by Saleman, 1981, p. 188). Whilst the institution of bureaucratic organisation is common to all industrial societies in some degree there is also clearly a good deal of variation between societies in the extent to which this mode of organisation is predominant. In the provision of mass education for example, elements of Weber's 'ideal type' of bureaucracy are necessarily manifest in every national education system, but there are equally significant variations in bureaucratic style so that notions of hierarchy, general rules, continuous and impersonal offices, the separation between official and private life must be inter-related with historically specific social situations (Gouldner, 1948). As Bendix (1952) suggests

"No attempt has been made (by students of bureaucracy) to show the sociopsychological and institutional differences in the process of bureaucratisation in so far as it can be attributed to a retarded breakdown of feudal institutions and traditions. As a result, little attention has been given to the effect of noncontemporaneous industrialisation in different countries on the rise of their respective bureaucracies. It would be very important to investigate the effect of such factors on the pattern of obedience to authority and of the degree of spontaneous public co-operation which characterises the different 'bureaucratic cultures' of the Western world. (p. 134)

Thus there are different styles of bureaucratic provision just as there are significant differences in all the other social institutions in countries which nevertheless share a common capitalist and industrial revolution.

**Weber and Marx**

It is this emphasis on bureaucracy which forms one of the major distinctions between Weberian and Marxist perspectives. Although both share a common emphasis on the economic interests arising out of the
ownership of property as the key to social conflict and change, the Weberian perspective includes other important sources of social power notably the control of organisational resources especially in state and private bureaucracies and control of cultural resources, notably religious ones initially, but increasingly, in secular terms through, for example, the education system. Thus from a Weberian perspective, interest groups and their associated struggles reflect the whole range of economic, cultural and political divisions in society, divisions institutionalised in terms of Weber's well-known distinction between status and party. Collins (1981) argues that the education system embodies all three of these struggles in its economic concern with the production of appropriately skilled workers, its cultural concern with social integration and the maintenance of prestige and its political concern with the legitimation of control through certain formal organisations. Collins argues, following Weber, that

"education, which has arisen as part of the process of bureaucratisation, has been shaped by the efforts of elites to establish impersonal methods of control; the content of education here is irrelevant but the structure of grades, ranks, degrees and other formal credentials is of central importance as a means of discipline through hierarchy and specialisation" (p.282)

It is this Weberian emphasis on the form or mode of control, as well as on its purpose, which is crucial to the attempt to understand the origins of educational evaluation. The Weberian emphasis on social action, on multiple sites for struggle, on bureaucratic organisation and on scientific rationality are themes which dominate the emergence of mass schooling whilst allowing for all its variety. In particular it provides a specific logic for the developing significance of formal evaluation and qualifications as a logical and integral part of this process - a theme which is taken up in similar vein, if in much more detail, in more recent structuralist work, notably that of Foucault.
Although there are many similarities here with Marxist perspectives on the capitalist state, there is clearly a fundamental distinction to be made as to whether primacy is given to economic determinants. Marxism locates forms of struggle other than the economic in the determined superstructure in which the battle to legitimize the power relations of the status quo is waged through the ideological domination of various forms of false consciousness. It would seem, however, that most Marxists, as well as many non-Marxists, would want to concede "some measure of genuine interaction between the spheres of production and other spheres of social life ... and, at the level of individual actors, a 'dialectical' relationship between class interest and ideological representation ..." (Marshall, 1982, p. 145).

For the purpose in hand, it is less necessary to adjudicate between these fundamental distinctions than to recognise their common identification of the new forms of essentially ideological control in the changing basis of social organisation which characterised industrial society.  

Thus the characteristics of the social order associated with the emergence of capitalism as the dominant economic system were neither simply causes of, nor caused by, these economic developments. Rather they must be regarded as mutually dependent and reinforcing developments the lack of either one of which - as India and China for example testify - would have inhibited the development of both. It is certainly true that the central themes of this chapter - rationality and individualism - are deeply integrated with both the economic and the social order, finding their origin and their expression in both arenas. This point is well made in the following description by Marshall in which he condemns Luethy's overstatement of Weber's 'spirit of capitalism', namely:
"... no less than the entire inner structure governing Western society's attitudes, not only its economy but also its legal system, its political structure, its institutionalised sciences and technology, its mathematically-based music and architecture. Its economic modes of operation, work discipline, and accountancy methods are all regarded by him as the mere pars per toto of a whole civilisation-type for which Weber's final word is rationality - a rationality which permeates all fields of social behaviour, the organisation of labour and management as well as the creative sciences, law and order, philosophy and the arts, the state and politics, and the dominant forms of private life. This rationality, driven by its own internal dynamic, has overthrown (or tamed) every form of resistance offered by pre-rational human nature, magic and tradition, instinct and spontaneity. Finally with the Reformation, it has forced its way into the innermost temple wherein the motives behind human behaviour are generated, into the very heart of religious belief, there to destroy all the dark, magical, mysterious tabernacles - image, cult and tradition - for which it substitutes the Bible as the authentic truth, supposedly unshakeable, accessible to critical examination, and susceptible of proof." (Luethy, 1964, p. 27)

**Individualism**

Just as it is possible to overstate the triumph of rationality over belief, so it would be wrong to assume that one particular form of individualistic organisation is central to the development of capitalism. Nevertheless in the western world individualism has emerged as both the necessary practical basis for the rational allocation of roles and the necessary source of legitimation. As the dominant ideology it allows classes to be reduced to individual persons who are then reorganised into various imaginary and non-antagonistic unities such as the 'nation' and the 'community' (Poulantzas, 1973). Taking up this point Larson (1981) argues that:

"The penetration of market relations into all areas of life is immensely accelerated and completed by capitalism. This character insepably links the extension of market relations to the rise of a modern class system and a juridico-political ideology which ideologically makes the isolated individual into the essential unit of the social and political orders". (p. 325)
Larson goes on to argue that this allows the principle of equality between atomised individuals to be the central basis of class, the cornerstone of the new inequality which appears to be based only on the rational criteria of will, competence and drive. In particular the existence of state education systems which apparently provide for meritocratic competition on the basis of equality of opportunity deflect the criticism of professional elites and allow them to legitimate their own position (Larson, 1981).  

If some conflict theorists like Poulantzas and Larson emphasise the advantages of the ideology of individualism as a major way of deflecting self-conscious class conflict, others have taken a more pessimistic view of it in identifying a profound contradiction arising from this dependence on individualism, between the instrumental and the expressive order, between public and private life, between general and particular interests. This contradiction is particularly evident in education since the latter plays a crucial role in both allocation and integration.

"There is a fundamental contradiction within the heart of education: while embodying and reproducing a system of domination based on hierarchical control, the form of the discourse — and hence content — in education is that of the liberal discourse of the state, according to which rights are vested equally in all members of the community. This contradictory position of education explains its dual progressive/reproductive role promoting equality, democracy, toleration, rationality, inalienable rights on the one hand, while legitimising inequality, authoritarianism, fragmentation, prejudice and submission on the other" (Gintis, 1980, p. 2)  

This contradiction is not new; it is, as Habermas (1975) suggests, the perennial 'legitimation crisis' arising out of the fundamental contradiction of capital — the necessity for wealth to be socially produced whilst being privately appropriated.
"Because the reproduction of class societies is based on the privileged appropriation of socially produced wealth, all such societies must resolve the problem of distributing the surplus product inequitably and yet legitimately." (Habermas, 1975, p. 96)

Thus the education system embodies a constant contradiction between the need to differentiate pupils on the basis of an order of merit which ultimately serves to legitimate differential chances in the labour market and the contradictory need to integrate pupils, parents and teachers in a way which enables the school to be seen as serving commonly conceived purposes. While the need for the former is conceived by teachers in terms of a relatively fixed distribution of basic 'abilities' which pupils, as individuals, may be identified as possessing, the need for the latter is a social imperative which has to be worked for in terms of desirable general social attributes based on principles which may be accepted as legitimate.

"The language of this legitimation, as it is argued by teachers, draws on traditional values of interdependence and exchange of equivalents, while ignoring or obscuring the outcomes of the differential treatment of pupils which springs from the differential value placed upon the conception of their ability." (Wallace, 1982, p. 4)

This contradiction is receiving particular attention at the present time as part of sociological concern with the crisis of contemporary capitalism. There are increasingly intractable problems for capitalism and hence for the associated role of education as the price of legitimation becomes ever higher (Dale, 1982a). These problems and the particular contribution educational assessment seems likely to make in the search for a solution are the subject of Chapter Seven. Nevertheless the current crisis is only a particularly acute manifestation of the fundamental contradiction between the need to divide and yet unite, to create inequality and, at the same time, to promote social cohesion. This problem goes well beyond a Marxist
interpretation specifically in terms of class struggle, to the heart of the division of labour itself and the problems of social order.

As suggested earlier, the contradiction is essentially between the 'instrumental' function of education - the training of people for jobs both in terms of the requisite skills and knowledge and in terms of appropriate personal expectations and behaviour (Willis, 1977; Bowles and Gintis, 1976), and the 'expressive' function of education aimed at fostering at least a minimal level of social integration despite the inevitable and disintegrative effects of the prevailing individualist 'instrumental ideology' (see Chapter Four), and the potentially even more divisive tendencies of the associated inequality. Although class-based inequality is central here; it is the form of social organisation and legitimation characterising the current basis for inequality which gives rise to this distinctive problem. Unlike other more explicitly coercive forms of economic exploitation - as found under feudalism or tribalism for example - the dilemma of capitalist society is a manifestation of the change in the nature of social bonds which has at its heart rationality and individualism. This latter point is clearly made by Durkheim for whom 'capitalism' is essentially an 'abnormal form' (O'Connor, 1980) and for whom the issue of individualism and the consequent problems of social integration was fundamental.

Solidarity and Division

The theme of Durkheim's 'The Division of Labour in Society' (1947) is the source of social solidarity and social order. He argues that the increasing work specialisation in a division of labour replaces the 'mechanical' solidarity of pre-market societies based on homogeneity by an 'organic' solidarity based on mutual interdependence. The political and social upheavals of 19th century France eventually forced Durkheim
to modify his earlier analysis to argue in Moral Education (1961) that new forms of social solidarity do not occur spontaneously but require new social institutions to be set up. He envisaged that these institutions would be a sort of occupational 'guild' which would bind individuals into special interest organisations and hence to the State. Durkheim saw a key role for schools in this - preparing and socialising individuals for their place in the division of labour and, at the same time, providing the basis for communalism and true organic solidarity.

Durkheim's distinction between social divisions arising from 'anomie' and social divisions arising from 'egotism' is useful here since the former refers to 'system integration' - the integration of social functions and the latter to the integration of people into social functions. From this distinction, Durkheim's work offers an implicit critique of the ideology of egalitarianism - income redistributions and equality of opportunity for, although it may militate against 'egotistic' social divisions, far from ending 'anomie', where "self-interest striving has been raised to social ends" (Horton, 1964) 'anomie' is increased. Rather what is required, in Durkheim's view, is a 'moral' regeneration and a fundamental change in the nature of social relationships.

Clearly there are important parallels here with Marxist theory's emphasis on the necessity for a change in consciousness, as well as economic relations, as the precursor of a genuinely socialist society. Nevertheless Durkheim's preoccupation with the problem of social order does not recognise the particular economic relations of capitalism and the separation of capital and labour as determining features of the problem. Durkheim is not specifically concerned with class struggle and what he regarded, albeit mistakenly, as the 'abnormal form' of the capitalist society which formed the context of his writing. This critique is well-made by O'Connor (1980):
"Although he tries to find the basis for solidarity outside of struggle in effect he states the conditions of unity, solidarity and some would add, morality within struggle ... Under capitalism, the social division of labour is subsumed within the industrial division of labour; tendencies towards solidarity give way to conflict tendencies; hence the fact that under capitalism his 'abnormal forms' of social relationships are really normal forms ... what is normal today in the advanced capitalist world is not the end of exploitation or even redistribution or 'equal opportunity' but rather more social regulations; more ideologies of integration; more crisis management." (p. 62, 67).

Despite its over-optimistic view of the short-lived future for capitalism, Durkheim's work provides important insights into the basis for social order and particularly the contribution schooling has to make. Later writers, such as Bernstein and D. Hargreaves, who have built on the work of Durkheim, have reinforced Durkheim's own emphasis on studying the basis of social order, even if, like him, they have largely chosen to leave on one side how far the problems identified are fundamentally economic in origin, or, alternatively, are necessarily associated with the social characteristics of industrial society per se.

In seeking to understand the associated question of the origins and significance of assessment as a social and educational characteristic, this Durkheimian emphasis is likewise valuable. In Chapter Two it was suggested that the institution of formal evaluation procedures within education was directly instrumental in rationalising educational provision into a system and, in particular, emphasised three themes which became dominant in the provision of schooling, namely the attestation of competence (including the rationalisation of syllabus content), the regulation of competition, and provision for individual and systemic control. The first two themes may readily be associated with the instrumental role of education in providing and selecting individuals for specific slots in the division of labour. The third, control, is associated with the expressive order. This control may be mediated
through one or more of the following: the apparently objective testing of individual potential (intelligence tests), assessing individual performance (e.g. continuous assessment, guidance and examinations), the evaluation of teaching or school performance (inspection and accountability) and the evaluation of the system and performance as a whole (national monitoring).

The operation of these forms of control depends upon the dominance and consequent legitimacy of an individualist rationality of personal talent, personal responsibility, personal endeavour, and personal reward. It is the unquestioned acceptance of the individualist ethos (Mills, 1979) which permits social integration and control to be mediated in this way since such judgements and their more or less pleasant consequences are seen, nevertheless to be a legitimate, rational basis for the inequalities associated with a division of labour. Thus assessment plays a central role in making the education system responsive to larger social pressures, and it also plays an equally important role in helping to minimise the effects of the contradiction between the instrumental and expressive functions of education by providing for the legitimation of the necessary inequalities.

This contradiction is that between the training and allocation of people for different jobs (both in terms of the requisite skills and knowledge and in terms of appropriate personal expectations and behaviour) and the need for social integration to be maintained despite a hierarchical division of labour and diverse pressures towards individualism (Durkheim, 1947). Both these aspects of school functioning - the 'instrumental' and the 'expressive' are informed by the dominant individualist rationality.

To explain how this change came about, Durkheim goes back to the major historical transformations which immediately preceded
industrialisation. To begin with, Durkheim (1947) protests that:

"Even the most cursory historical survey is enough to make us realise that degrees and examinations are of relatively recent origin; there was nothing equivalent in classical antiquity ... the word and the thing only appear in the Middle Ages with the university" (p. 126)

The explanation Durkheim offers for this invention is that the system of degrees and examinations derives from the corporate organisation of educational provision. He suggests that the existing feudal model of the series of initiations or stages which must be gone through before penetrating to the heart of any organisation - such as page, squire and bachelor before becoming a fully-armed knight - was a natural model for educational 'stages' to be introduced once the teachers, "instead of teaching separately, formed themselves into a corporation with a sense of its own identity and governed by communal laws" (p. 130). That is to say, the advent of certification depended on the institutionalisation of education in the form of schools and colleges. From this it was but a short step to the institution of some organised course of study or curriculum (see Hamilton, 1983).

At this stage the function of assessment was almost entirely ritualistic, a 'rite de passage' (as described in Chapter Two) modelled on traditional concepts of initiation which served the purpose of demarcating those who had reached a level of scholarship and commitment which justified their entry to the next level. The examination itself may be seen purely in terms of legitimation - a public relations exercise which confirmed a selection which had already been undertaken, informally, by the teacher. But if the university was to keep this manifestation of its corporate existence almost entirely unchanged in its essential structure until the present day, one element was to change fundamentally the use of assessment for motivating and controlling students.
Durkheim describes the situation of the young arts student in the Middle Ages who at between 13 and 15 years of age was accorded almost complete freedom from supervision or exhortation. This was a system of education which

"endured several centuries, which excited intellectual life throughout Europe and maintained it at a particularly high level of intensity and in which, nevertheless, such artificial educational devices (competitions, tests and periodical formal rewards) were unknown" (p. 160)

"We are so accustomed to believing that emulation is the essential motivating force in academic life, that we cannot easily imagine how a school could exist which did not have a carefully worked out system of graduated awards in order to keep the enthusiasm of pupils perpetually alive. Good marks, solemn statements of satisfactory performance, distinctions, competition essays, prizegivings: all these seem to us, in differing degrees, the necessary accompaniment to any sound educational system. The system that operated in France and indeed in Europe, until the sixteenth century, was characterised by the surprising fact that there were no rewards at all from success in examinations. What is more, any candidate who had assiduously and conscientiously followed the course of studies was certain of success." (Durkheim, 1947, p. 159)

Until the end of the 15th century, pupils were treated like autonomous adults. Then, in France at least, the status of pupils gradually changed. They became minors, shut off from the world in educational institutions in which they were powerless to resist the authority of those put in to teach and regulate them. Although the timing of this process was particular to the educational history of France, the link between the advent of institutionalised education organised around substantial, monastic-style disciplinary powers, and the advent of educational assessment is a more general one. "Academic discipline implies a system of rewards no less than a system of punishment" (Durkheim, 1947, p. 159). ¹¹

Nowhere was this more clearly seen than in the educational practices of the Jesuits from the mid sixteenth century. The Jesuits placed equal
emphasis on the power of competition.

"Not only were they the first to organise the competitive system in the colleges but they also developed it to a point of greater intensity than it has ever subsequently known ..."

"Academic work involved a kind of perpetual hand-to-hand combat. Camp challenged camp, group struggled with group, supervised one another, corrected one another and took one another to task. It was thanks to this division of labour between the teacher and the pupils, that one teacher was able without much difficulty to run classes which sometimes numbered as many as 200-300 pupils. In addition to such methods of chronically recurring competition there were intermittent competitions too numerous to enumerate ... Thus an infinite wealth of devices maintained the self-esteem of pupils in a constant state of extreme excitation." (p. 261)

One effect of this policy, Durkheim suggests, was that the genuinely intensive activity which it fostered was flawed by being expended on the superficial rather than the profound, still a major criticism of the effect of exam-motivated learning.

The reason for this sudden shift from the extreme of no assessment to that of extreme competition, Durkheim suggests, was the advent of individual self-consciousness that characterised the Renaissance. Thus education too had to become individualised, no longer a uniform and homogeneous activity, the teacher must get to know pupils and be able to provide differentially according to their diverse needs. In the same way, "the individual cannot be motivated or trained to act in the same way, as an amorphous crowd, he must be convinced and moved by considerations which are specifically appropriate to him" - notably, competition.

"It is no accident that competition becomes more lively and plays a more substantial role in society as the movement towards individualisation becomes more advanced. Since the moral organisation of the school must reflect that of civil society, since the methods which are applied to the child cannot differ in essence from those which, later on, will be applied to the man, it is clear that the processes of the medieval disciplinary system could not survive; it is clear that
discipline had to become more personal and take
greater account of individual feelings and
consequently allow for a degree of competitiveness."
(Durkheim, 1947, p. 264)

Thus not only did the institution of formal assessment procedures
encourage the growth of individual competitiveness in education, it also
helped to change the quality of the teacher-pupil relations to one which
emphasised a more personal, 'formative-evaluation' in teaching in place
of the older more impersonal style.

Durkheim's analysis evokes an important general theme in this thesis
that it is the apparently benign and desirable individualistic emphasis
in assessment which also embodies new, more intrusive modes of 'surveillance'
and hence social control. Particularly significant, it will be argued,
is the political dimension to such assessment, and the way in which such
procedures covertly delineate a particular set of values. The literature
on classroom assessment, whilst technically less sophisticated than that
of psychometrics as a whole, embodies the same unquestioning commitment
to the desirability of identifying individual characteristics. ¹³

If Durkheim's analysis is more generally applicable than just to
French history alone, it is possible to argue that the various
ideologies of schooling that have developed - the developmental, child-centred
the moral, and the meritocratic (Hargreaves, 1979) - are all options
within an individualist rationality which emphasises personal needs,
personal responsibility and personal reward. At the present time it is
possible to identify a further stage in the development of this mode of
control in attempts to 'personalise' assessment still further by blurring
the formative-summative divide. The tendency for assessments to become
more comprehensive, and continuous, diagnostic in orientation and
sometimes even negotiated between teacher and pupil, has been interpreted
by Bernstein (1977) as part of a new, more pervasive basis for 'invisible'
control. Indeed many of the major themes of Durkeim's work on the relationship between schooling and society are taken up in Bernstein's analysis of educational codes.

Invisible Control

Bernstein is one of the very few sociologists of education who has attempted to conceptualise the relationship between the constant requirements of education systems in capitalist societies and the particular variations in the way in which those requirements are fulfilled in particular national systems. In a now well-known quotation, Bernstein asserts:

"How a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public, reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control. From this point of view, differences within and change in the organisation, transmission and evaluation of educational knowledge should be a major area of sociological interest."
(Bernstein, 1977, p. 55)

The Durkheimian echo in this quotation is not accidental. Bernstein is preoccupied with questions of social order, social control and social reproduction. He sees the education system as a major determinant of both the strength and the nature of that order in that it regulates (a) the kind of worker produced (with all that that implies for economic efficiency and industrial relations), (b) the kind of social integration upon which social order will be based, and (c) which individuals will accede to positions of power and privilege (i.e. control). Implicit in his theories is the need for the circle of control to be made complete in that society must possess the means of determining and controlling the education system because it is to a great extent determined and controlled by it. Taken together the papers on 'classification and framing' and on 'visible and invisible pedagogies' (Bernstein, 1977)
make it clear that 'control' is not being taken in a Durkheimian, structural-functionalism sense, although Durkheim's categories of social order are used. Rather the education system is seen as working in the interests of particular, dominant class groups. It accomplishes this by being slow to change from traditional modes of enshrining privilege (e.g. the collection code), but at the same time incorporating new control techniques which allow the education system to respond to new social and economic conditions or to establish its legitimacy (public confidence) if the inequalities inherent in it are likely to become too glaring. Thus, as Chapter Two sets out, the pressure of population, the values of traditional humanism, the requirements of democratic equality and the needs of a sophisticated industrial economy (OECD, 1971) are currently bringing about international pressure for educational change. Particularly notable has been a trend towards the structural reorganisation of schools, the abolition of internal school divisions, the institution of a common curriculum and the democratisation of assessment procedures (Neave, 1980). All these dimensions of change involve a breaking-down of educational barriers in favour of a more flexible, open and democratic basis for educational competition.

Assessment is central to such changes, for the shift in the basis of social order that Bernstein identifies as being reflected in such policy developments is integrally bound up with the way in which educational assessment procedures represent the changing characteristics and requirements of the social context within the provision and process of schooling.

Employing Durkheim's categories of social order, Bernstein identifies a tendency in contemporary society for there to be a transition from a social and economic order based on overt mechanical solidarity and covert organic solidarity to one of overt organic solidarity and covert mechanical
solidarity. The outward signs of this change in education systems are the current trend towards invisible pedagogies and integrated codes, the latter being defined as a movement towards weak classification and weak framing. The reason for this trend, Bernstein argues, is, on the one hand, developments in technology which have given rise to the need for a more flexible, inner-directed labour force (which may be envisaged as the product of an education system which develops pupil rather than teacher control of learning and seeks to inhibit the development of specific subject identities). On the other hand, such a development, Bernstein argues, may challenge society's basic classifications and frames (for example, assumptions about job identities, authority structures and status) and therefore its structures of power and principles of social control (which of course includes social reproduction). He suggests that if the integrated code is successful - if in producing its less specialised outputs it is successful in perpetrating effectively and implicitly an ideology which is explicit, elaborated and closed - then order based on mechanical solidarity will follow. This is exactly the same situation as that facing a team of teachers seeking to implement an integrated course in a school in which the traditional standards and controls provided by individual subjects have disappeared and hence the curriculum can only be successful to the extent that the mechanical solidarity of a common ideology and situation is adhered to by the teachers concerned. If integrated codes are not 'successful', Bernstein suggests, social order, in all its forms is immediately made problematic.

Associated with this trend, Bernstein identifies the rise of a 'new middle class' who depend upon the education system to perpetuate their status and control. For them, the need for personal organic solidarity has increased with an increasingly complex division of labour. The strength of the 'new middle class' dependence on its symbolic and
cultural control of the education system for perpetuating its status has meant a shift in the major locus of social reproduction from that of the family to the school. Bernstein argues that what is and will be increasingly found in schools is an integrated code/invisible pedagogy in primary schools - that is in the stage of mass education - but an increasingly distinct separation into visible pedagogy and collection codes in the avenues of the secondary school leading to middle class positions and a continuation of invisible pedagogies and integrated codes for the working class-oriented curricula and children. He argues that the type of code transmitted by the university dominates the education system and that this is unlikely to be changed in its organisational structure. He further argues that the collection code must predominate since it is the basis of existing social reproduction and to change it would involve changing the basis of culture in privatised class relations. The present system will both ensure the production of the two different kinds of worker required in the production system - the undifferentiated but committed and controlled worker and the self-consciously committed supervisory and service worker of whom differentiated skills are required. 14

Associated with this, Bernstein suggests, drawing on his previous work on language codes and family socialisation patterns, is the argument that the child-rearing practices of the middle class prepare their children to be both better able to cope with invisible pedagogies and later on, collection codes because both are far removed from working class modes of relation, symbolic meanings, and understandings of education.

A related and important point in this discussion of changes in curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation is the balance between the overt and hidden curriculum in social control and reproduction. In the overt curriculum, where a collection code operates, considerable differences
in pedagogy and evaluation are permissible because the limits of curricula and standards are so clearly set. Where such constraints do not operate, there may well have to be more explicit attempts to make content and standards defined and homogeneous if order is to be maintained. This then is the variability at the level of the overt curriculum. Equally, however, the hidden curriculum, as mediated by both pedagogy and evaluation, varies in content significantly between visible and invisible pedagogies and collection and integrated codes. In being so much more pervasive in the latter two educational settings, and in emphasising different qualities, it may be seen as providing that extra degree of control lost in the overt transition to apparently more open and flexible curricula and pedagogy. Thus the balance between the hidden and overt curriculum in relation to control is likely to be significant in determining social reproduction and social order.

Most of this analysis offered by Bernstein, in 'Class, Codes and Control', Volume III, is theoretical. The exception is his discussion of different forms of the collection code itself in which he compares the non-specialised, subject-based 'collection' code of most European education systems with their strong classification and very strong framing with the relatively weaker framing but exceptionally strong classification of the English collection code. Bernstein argues that the key concept of the European collection code is discipline - learning to work within a received frame which is only relaxed when a pupil has progressed sufficiently far upon the academic path to be able to show those signs of successful socialisation which refute any fear that he may challenge the existing order. Thus, he suggests, following Durkheim once more, the European form of the collection code is rigidly differentiating, hierarchical in character and highly resistant to change. Bernstein's argument in this respect provides an interesting gloss on the work of
Foucault, reviewed later in this chapter, who, writing within the French tradition, is preoccupied with the concept of discipline.

By contrast, Bernstein suggests, in England (within the constraints of the public examination system, which are major) the heads of schools and colleges have a relatively wide range of discretion over the organisation and transmission of knowledge. He suggests that to produce widespread change in Britain would require the co-operation of hundreds of schools. It is important to recognise in this respect though one of the central themes of this thesis, that changes in organisation may not necessarily effect any real change in the educational code. Bernstein also reinforces the point already argued in Chapter Two, that centralisation and decentralisation do not in themselves imply a more or less fertile basis for change.

Little of the foregoing relates explicitly to assessment, since little of Bernstein's work is directly concerned with evaluation, but his emphasis on the inter-relationship of curriculum and pedagogy - of classification and frame is nevertheless highly relevant. Although not producing a concept equivalent to classification and frame for his third message system - 'evaluation' - there are many references to changes in such procedures associated with the shift from visible to invisible pedagogies and from collection to integrated codes. Fundamentally, Bernstein argues, there has been a change from overt to covert assessment and from specific to diffuse evaluation criteria as set out in Chapter Two. In visible pedagogy, the 'objective grid' for evaluation is based on clear criteria, delicate measurement and standardisation which can allow comparison between schools so that pupil, parent and teacher can all 'make an apparently objective assessment of a child's progress. This very objectivity, this recourse to scientific rationality, lends to the assessment a legitimacy which makes it hard to refute.
(Outstanding in this respect are of course intelligence tests and public examinations.)

In invisible pedagogies, evaluation procedures are multiple, diffuse and not easily subject to apparently precise measurement so that it becomes difficult to compare pupils or schools. The tendency of invisible pedagogy to be associated with weak classification and framing means that there are few traditional criteria for evaluation, and there is little standardisation of curriculum content or pedagogy between teachers and schools. Thus assessment comes to be part of the pervasive and private personal relationship between teacher and taught. Bernstein suggests that in invisible pedagogies, assessment will be in terms of those dispositions of a child which become candidates for labelling by a teacher and given that in such visible pedagogies, the attention of the child is focused on the teacher, the teacher will tend to compare children in terms of motivation and interest, attentiveness, co-operation, persistence and carefulness. The judgements will usually be short, stereotyped, unexplained and public. By contrast, the invisible pedagogy is likely to be associated with a dossier covering a wide variety of the child’s internal processes and outer acts and the teacher’s explanation of the relationship between the two. Not only does this latter approach allow a much more subtle and pervasive discrimination and control, it makes assessment harder to challenge and hence raises the teacher’s power. The current emphasis in literature concerned with classroom assessment certainly seems to support this argument (see, for example, Black and Broadfoot, 1982; Cliff and Imrie, 1982).

Bernstein’s analysis was made before the current fashion for the concept of accountability and this is evident in his writing since he does not draw out the implications that his analysis of invisible pedagogy and its accompanied informal assessment is likely to have for
maintaining confidence in the education system as a form of control and legitimation. It is clear from English and American experience that trends in the 1950s and '60s towards invisible pedagogies in basic schooling together with the decline or abolition of the external control exerted by public assessment procedures has been a direct source of calls for more overt measures of accountability (control). In England at least, such measures have helped to restore the legitimacy of more traditional educational transmissions, in Bernstein's terms: strong classification, strong framing, visible pedagogy and formal, overt assessment.  

It is at this point that the shortcomings of Bernstein's analysis become apparent in that it only relates to the one-dimensional perspective of developments in the mode of production and in the nature of the late capitalist state. It does not relate to the oscillations, the checks and balances which take place within this on-going development which are the price of popular legitimation and the manifestation of the basic contradiction of the educational site between the collectivist discourse of the economy and the individualist discourse of the state. The most cursory of studies of contemporary educational developments in two countries which Bernstein himself identifies in his analysis - England and France - reveals that whilst elements of Bernstein's predictions are certainly manifest (notably with regard to evaluation), any attempt to identify a uni-dimensional trend or to interpret current policy changes merely in terms of social control would be a grossly over-simplified and over-deterministic explanation of the diverse and complex, and at least partly autonomous, interaction within the education system.

In his more recent work, Bernstein (1982) has revised his theory to associate weak classification and weak framing with economic expansion, strong classification and strong framing with economic contraction. This
suggests that Bernstein's analysis is now more in line with current 'crisis' theory in associating educational codes with changes in the legitimating context rather than in the mode of production itself.

The inadequacies of Bernstein's otherwise highly perceptive and important theory of educational codes is an example of the tendency discussed in Chapter Four for sociological theory not to pay sufficient attention to empirical reality and to generalise from theory to substantive reality rather than the other way round or indeed seeking a reflexive relationship between the two. It is also arguable however that the problems are partly due to his giving insufficient weight to his third message system, 'evaluation', which comes over in his analysis as an essentially determined system. In fact, there is a strong indication from contemporary evidence that because assessment procedures are so closely bound up with the legitimation of particular educational practices, because they are the overt means of communication from schools to society, and to a greater or lesser extent in different societies, the covert means of that society's response in the form of control, assessment procedures may well be the system that determines curriculum and pedagogy and hence, social reproduction.

As Dale (1979) argues, evaluation must be regarded as an epistemologically and conceptually separate category since the nature of assessment procedures precludes certain kinds of curriculum and pedagogy and raises the status of others. Because it is central to both the expressive and the instrumental order, it is crucial to the process of legitimation and thus, ultimately, determining. This argument hinges upon the issue of evaluative criteria - what are the canons of desirable educational performance and where do they come from? The traditional source of such criteria as manifest in public examinations and intelligence tests was discussed in some detail in Chapter Two.
As Bernstein suggests, "The public examination system is based upon a visible pedagogy as it is realised through strong classification and strong frames" (P. 98). As such it must be regarded as the mediator of 'symbolic property' - educational goods exchangeable in the educational market. "Knowledge under collection is private property with its own power structure and market situation" (p. 97) (the traditional order of capitalism which still retains ideological legitimacy). At the present time, however, this traditional source is being eroded. Where there is weak classification and framing, there must be weak criteria of evaluation (i.e. very much more ad hoc and lacking the external legitimation provided by subject disciplines or external control over aspects of pedagogy). In this situation "neither teacher nor taught have any means to consider the significance of what is learned, nor any means to judge the pedagogy" (p. 108). Perhaps more significantly, the lack of a yardstick applies to institutions too, and even to the system as a whole.

The significance of this issue of the nature and origin of evaluative criteria has already been touched on in Chapter Two, where it was suggested that those who are in a position to define such criteria are also in a position to regulate entry to the elite and so provide for social reproduction. The change from narrow, academic, externally-imposed certification procedures towards broader, more continuous teacher-based certification procedures that was described in that chapter means that the criteria of successful performance are increasingly left to teachers to decide. Even where such criteria are externally agreed, as is still often the case, the breadth of such assessments is likely to make any effective moderation of the application of the criteria almost impossible, leaving teachers very significant power in determining life chances.
But although this increased power of teachers to identify evaluative criteria is likely to prove of considerable significance, the power relations involved in the definition of such criteria are very complex and go considerably beyond any simple dualism involving central government and teachers. That Bernstein himself has recognised both the significance of the issue and its extreme complexity is reflected in his recent work on 'Codes, modalities and the process of cultural reproduction' (Bernstein, 1982) in which Bernstein tries to provide a model for the highly complex and reflexive articulation between central government rhetoric, actual and perceived constraints and professional ideology in the formulation of educational 'modalities'. Bernstein has attempted to conceptualise what he terms the 'discourse of education' in terms of the 'primary' context, "where specialised discourses are developed, modified or changed" and the 'secondary' context where various types of educational agencies engage in the "selective reproduction of educational discourse" (p. 351). Such discourse, he argues, relates the context for primary contextualising - that is, the "positions, relations and practices arising out of production" itself with the recontextualising involved in the generation of "pedagogic theory, research and practice" (p. 351).

Although essentially a theoretically-derived analysis, Bernstein's argument here usefully expresses the idea of several interlocking, if not concentric arenas of social action through which the changing exigencies of the social and economic order are successively translated and mediated in a process which culminates in providing the context and rationale for classroom practice itself.

Assessment procedures which provide the language of accountability are a vital element in this reflexive process, since the assumptions and the priorities they ensure may be regarded as the code which is translated
into the appropriate forms of discourse at each stage of the recontextualisation. How this process actually works in practice is a highly complex, empirical question which resurrects the theme of this thesis, namely that the fundamental role of assessment procedures in advanced industrial societies is a constant but that the institutional expression of that role will vary with the social context.

The extent to which such variations are essentially determined - the different institutional mediations of a common economic order - and the extent to which such variations represent real differences in the actual content of educational messages is again an empirical question. That is to say, using a conceptual distinction discussed at greater length in Chapter Four, are the apparent differences in the organisation and provision of education systems of different capitalist societies simply reflections of different instrumental legitimating ideologies or are they at least to some extent reflections of differences at the level of the expressive order itself - the fundamental value systems of each society?

Part of the answer to this question is embodied in the rationale for the move towards more 'invisible' evaluation - the increasing difficulty of identifying educational objectives and hence, criteria of achievement, which will command support from all sections of the community at a time when the domination of liberal democratic principles has made at least the appearance of such support essential. The conflict of aims which has always been implicit in educational provision between the 'old humanists', 'new industrialists', 'public educators' and 'state bureaucrats' (Salter and Tapper, 1981) has recently been greatly exacerbated by economic recession, youth unemployment, technological change and other, equally fundamental, changes in the social order. The ensuing 'crisis' is a major theme in the contemporary sociology of
education.

Following Habermas and Marcuse, among others, it may be argued that the 'crisis' is largely kept in check and social control maintained by the elevation of the pursuit of rationality - always a characteristic of industrial society - from being merely the means of providing for efficient social organisation (the instrumental ideology) to being the end itself (the expressive ideology). There is considerable disagreement among sociologists as to whether this trend is but one element in the hegemonic domination of a particular class and is thus still part of the instrumental order, or whether the growth of scientism and technical rationality has been such as to render increasingly anachronistic traditional definitions of class struggle. The changes currently taking place in assessment procedures strongly support this latter argument which is taken up in detail in Chapter Seven. Before proceeding to such a substantive analysis, however, it is necessary to clarify the general issues involved by identifying one final theme in this review of educational assessment in industrial society, that of technological rationality.

Rationality and Legitimation

This emphasis on the form of social life and its significance for social control is dealt with at length in the writing of the German philosopher, Jurgen Habermas. Although some kind of distinction between the 'instrumental' order (normally economic) and the expressive (normally social) order is common to a wide range of sociological theory from both conflict and functionalist perspectives 17. Habermas' distinction between the 'practical' (praktisch) and the 'purposive rational' (zweckrational) is particularly relevant to understanding the role of educational assessment.

Habermas defines the 'practical' as the basis for symbolic
interaction within a normative order - the level of feeling, consciousness and volition and the associated level of ethics and politics (loosely, 'superstructure'). The 'purposive rational' is action which is directed towards specific purposes (loosely the economic and administrative 'base'). Habermas' 'zweckrational' links closely with Weber's concept of rationality which he used to define the form of capitalist economic activity, bourgeois private law and bureaucratic authority. Habermas (1968) argues that as social labour is increasingly industrialised, the criterion of rationality penetrates ever further into other areas of life through such developments as urbanisation and the technification of transport and communication. Indeed it may be argued that the growth of rationality has been of more importance than that of capitalist production itself and that the story of modern history is essentially that of the growth of bureaucracy: "apart from the opaque line of technological rationality, social life is drift and habituation" (Gerth and Wright-Mills, 1952, p. 165).

There is a clear Weberian legacy here. In 'The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation', Weber draws a distinction between the simple, undifferentiated society accepting the traditional authority which embodies prevailing social values; the charismatic leader able to inspire the kind of collective value consensus to which Durkheim attached such importance and thirdly, the 'routinisation' of that value consensus into institutional structures and practices. Weber argues that such an active 'moral consensus' is a temporary phenomenon inevitably to be replaced by the much more enduring and essentially impersonal authority of institutional process and bureaucracy (Weber, 1947).

But there is equally a Durkheimian legacy in Habermas' conception. Durkheim describes the gradual change from 'humanism' to 'realism' in the
content of education from the seventeenth century onwards, a change in
the legitimating ideology of education which has endured until the
present day. Humanism in one or other of its forms, Durkheim argues,
was the guiding spirit of all education in the Christian era until the
early seventeenth century, or in France, where change came later, the
eighteenth century. In this perspective, he suggests,

"Things were not intrinsically interesting: they were
not the object of a special study carried out for its
own sake, but were only dealt with in connection with
the human beliefs to which they had given rise. What
people wanted to know about was not how the real world
actually is but rather what human beings have said
about it... Between the things of the world and the
things of the mind falls the text, which acts as a partial
veil between them" (Durkheim, 1947, p. 279)
(author's emphasis)

The traditional, humanist paradigm, Durkheim suggests, resisted the
incursion of any form of science, of finding out about the real world,
into the curriculum. "There even seems to be something contradictory
and profane about thus seeking to educate conscious man in the school of
nature and modelling the noblest part of reality upon the basest" (p. 283).
By contrast, the new perspective that Durkheim describes as being
inspired by writers such as Comenius is designed to create good and
useful citizens. It is 'realist', concerned with the study of things,
with preparing men for every possible action and giving them insight
into the world in which they live.

Although a complex and confused tradition, subject to many
re-interpretations and changes of emphasis, it is still essentially the
educational 'realism' of Comenius, Montaigne, Rousseau and others which
provides the contemporary legitimating rhetoric of 'scientism' which is
one of the major strands in the analysis of this thesis. At the same time,
as Durkheim suggests, the alternative, humanist tradition of the study of
man, his interpretations and his creations has never been eclipsed, the
struggle between the two perspectives constituting a persistent theme in educational theory and educational policy.

Whilst Durkheim clearly welcomes the advent of non-'bookish' learning which was so long struggling for a place in the French curriculum alongside the still definitive French scholarly tradition of abstract Cartesianism, he could not foresee, writing in 1904, just how pervasive this 'realism' would become in the years ahead; that with the accelerating technological development which allowed the products of such knowledge to intrude ever more prolifically into daily life, the old 'humanist' tradition might be in danger of being totally eclipsed. That the study, and by implication, mastery of 'things' should become the prevailing ideology, the study of the nature and essence of man and of the ultimate good correspondingly devalued.

Durkheim suggests that there is no precedent for such 'realist' philosophy. Whilst classical antiquity had a similar preoccupation with understanding the world, it was nevertheless fundamentally different to 'realist' ideology since it was the world itself that was taken to be divine, man's mind the profanation of the absolute and supreme creation. Christianity took the opposite view in locating man's consciousness, his soul, as the direct emanation of the divine. The world around him was thus profane and vile so that the gulf betwene the mind and the material world is equivalent to that between the spiritual and the temporal. But in the development of realism, it is the logic of knowledge generation itself which takes the place of earlier theist philosophies so providing for debates about values to be reduced to debates about techniques.

There are echoes of Durkheim's argument in Pirsig's popular classic, 'Zen and the Art of Motor Cycle Maintenance' (Pirsig, 1976), in which he distinguishes between the technological, rational, scientifically-organised 'classical' mode and the imaginative, emotional, aesthetic, intuitive,
'romantic' mode - the motor cycle and the 'unlogic' of Zen. Pirsig too suggests that history may be in large part understood in terms of the shifting balance of power between these two cultures. Under the 'classical' mode - predominant since the Enlightenment and increasingly evident in the all pervasive influence of science and technology, the 'person' is excluded in favour of the abstract 'operator': notions of 'good' and 'bad' are replaced by 'facts'; and the organisation of reality itself is an arbitrary but significant 'carving up' of perception. "The passion of contemporary society is to eliminate human unpredictability; it seeks to promote technological change not just to increase efficiency but also to control human beings - human judgement and initiative. Such technological control is achieved at the price of human warmth." 

Thus the progression from feudalism to capitalism and, in particular, from entrepreneurial to corporate capitalism, may be seen as one in which the ever increasing power of technical-scientific rationality structures not only the ideology and organisation of production, but is more and more pervasive in the ideology and organisation of social life as a whole. Reimer (1971) puts the point with some force:

"School has become the universal church of a technological society, incorporating and transmitting its ideology, shaping men's minds to accept this ideology and conferring social status according to its acceptance. There is no question of man's rejecting technology. The question is only one of adaptation, direction and control. The role of the school teacher in this process is a triple one combining the functions of umpire, judge and counsellor" (p. 19).

Associated with the depoliticisation of social life and the rise of normative and hierarchical forms of control is a change in the basis of social divisions. Not only has the recent growth in technological determinism mystified the relationship between schools and the social relations of production (Finn, Grant and Johnson, 1977), Giddens (1980, p. 290) cites Ossowski's theory that the classical Marxist concept of
class can be no more usefully applied to the analysis of the class structure of the Western societies which have moved far away from a situation in which private property 'rules' than it can be to those societies in which private property has been formally abolished.

"In situations where the political authorities can overtly and effectively change the class structure; where the privileges that are most essential for social status, including that of a higher share in the national income, are conferred by a decision of the political authorities; where a large part or even the majority of the population is included in a stratification of the type to be found in a bureaucratic hierarchy - the nineteenth century concept of class becomes more or less an anachronism, and class conflicts give way to other forms of social antagonism" (Ossowski, 1963, p. 184)

This point is also made by Marcuse (1964), who argues that it is the ideological power of technocratic consciousness which now provides for an unacknowledged political domination.

"In industrially advanced capitalist societies, domination tends to lose its exploitative and oppressive character and become 'rational' without political domination thereby disappearing" (Marcuse, 1970, p. 16)

Thus it is not ownership, but control and participation which are central determinants of class (Gintis, 1980). As Dahrendorf suggests in 'Class and Class Conflict',

"in every social organisation some positions are entrusted with a right to exercise control over other positions in order to ensure effective coercion ... in other words ... there is a differential distribution of power and authority ... this differential distribution of authority invariably becomes the determining factor of systematic social conflicts of a type that is germane to class conflicts in the traditional (Marxian) sense of the term. The structural origin of such group conflicts must be sought in the arrangement of social roles endowed with expectations of domination and subjection" (Dahrendorf, 1957, p. 165)

'Authority', following Weber, is defined as the legitimate right to issue commands to others: 'domination' represents the possession of these rights, while 'subjection' is exclusion from them. Within
'imperatively co-ordinated associations' - i.e. groups which possess a definite authority structure (e.g. the state, an industrial enterprise) - possession of, and exclusion from, authority generates opposing interests.

Thus the effect of the increasing dominance of bureaucratic forms of organisation in both base and superstructure is to discourage individuals from coalescing into interest groups. As institutional life becomes more hierarchically and pervasively ordered, social life becomes correspondingly fragmented. Not only, as Dahrendorf (1957) suggests, does the existence of high rates of social mobility serve to transform group conflict into individual competition, the effects of the extension of a hierarchical division of society renders it increasingly difficult for common interests and values to be identified as the basis for informal, democratic, collegial, that is horizontal forms of organisation (Bates, 1980a, c).

Habermas too suggests that in advanced capitalist societies, deprived and privileged groups no longer confront each other as socio-economic classes. Although class distinctions still persist in the form of subcultural traditions, life styles and attitudes, the scope for normative activity - political initiatives, debates about the nature of the 'good life', the ability for conscious action as a class, are increasingly drowned in the technocratic consciousness.

"Today's dominant, rather glassy background ideology, which makes a fetish of science, is more irresistible and farther-reaching than ideologies of the old type. For with the veiling of 'practical' problems it not only justifies a particular class's interest in domination and represses another class's partial need for emancipation, but affects the human's race's emancipatory interest as such ... technocratic consciousness reflects ... the repression of 'ethics' as such as a category of life." (Habermas, 1971, p. 112)

Or, as Marriott (1983) suggests,

"I fear (even more) that the rationalistic ideology has come to be spread so wide that Man himself is in danger of losing those features which so clearly distinguishes the human from other levels of being" (p. 5).
The legitimation for this process, according to Marcuse, is the constantly increasing productivity which keeps individuals living in increasing comfort.

"In this universe, technology also provides the great rationalisation of the unfreedom of man and demonstrates the 'technical' impossibility of being autonomous, of determining one's own life. For this unfreedom appears neither as irrational nor as political, but rather as submission to the technical apparatus which enlarges the comforts of life and increases the productivity of labour ..." (Marcuse, 1964).20

One example of this process is that:

"The liberation from the old poverty has been paid for by the expropriation of those precious intangibles (a shared response to a common predicament, a recognition of the universality of certain human needs) and the transformation of them into marketable commodities ... It is cruel enough to replace human consolations with a dependency on things that can be bought; but it is far worse to create such dependency and then deny people the means of expressing it. This is the essence of modernised poverty." (Seabrook, 1981, p. 9).

What is being described here then is the phenomenon of 'one-dimensional man' - the logical development of the process of individualisation and rationalisation associated with the development of capitalist economic relationships. As capitalism has itself become more and more institutionalised, into various kinds of state and corporate capitalism, its ideological legitimation has equally moved from the hegemonic domination of a particular class to the predominance of a common prevailing rationality per se, where science and technology are both base and superstructure. If earlier, ownership and control of the means of production were crucial to effective domination, increasingly it is the bureaucracies of production and of administration which have become both controlling and self-determining. In this sense, class is not a tangible entity but rather the form of relations between interests and individuals (Hogan, 1981). The rise of corporate capitalism has witnessed on the one
hand the growth of a new 'technocratic' middle class of bureaucrats and technicians and, on the other, a related shift in power from the legislative to the executive branches of government in the rise of corporate management styles (Gerth and Wright-Mills, 1952).

What started as a desire to understand and, hence, harness the material/natural world for the means of production is increasingly being extended by both technocrats and bureaucrats alike into an attempt to extend 'technical' control into the realm of social life itself. This takes the form of new and more pervasive techniques for the surveillance, monitoring and control of both individuals and organisations.

"The economic take-off of Western Europe began with techniques that made possible capital accumulation, methods for the accumulation of men made possible a political take-off, as the traditional, ritual, costly, violent forms of power were superseded by a subtle calculated technology of subjection ... The establishment of a coded, formally egalitarian constitution supported by a system of representative government. But this 'Enlightenment' politics had its dark underside in the ever-proliferating network of disciplinary mechanisms ..." (Foucault, 1977, pp. 201)

Foucault (1975) suggests that the 'scientific method' of observation and evaluation was related to a growing post-enlightenment preoccupation with rules and normality. It was this tradition, heralded by earlier, more extreme attempts to impose a norm, as found for example in the Spanish Inquisition, which has also come to underpin the acceptability of making judgements on others in relation to prevailing norms. It is this aspect of scientism that has become a characteristic feature of contemporary, social institutions such as schools, prisons and hospitals. More significant even than the evaluation of individuals according to some arbitrary social standard, disguised in the language of apparently objective science, is the bureaucratic style of administration that this makes possible. In practice, this means that issues which are in reality
questions of alternative values are perceived as technical problems to which a 'right answer' - an 'optimum solution' exists waiting only to be discovered.

**Structuralism and the Power Relations of Discourse**

Foucault's structuralist perspective adds a new dimension to that of Durkheim, Weber and Marx. Durkheim has been criticised for not recognising the ideological basis of all societies; that even the 'chiefs' embodying the "collective sentiments of societies characterised by mechanical solidarity have their own material interests" (O'Connor, 1980, p. 67). Similarly, Weber's emphasis on impersonal, bureaucratic and in his view, benign authority to provide a legitimated use of power for the rational organisation of large-scale institutions becomes in Foucault's analysis an emphasis on coercive disciplinary mechanisms which embody the particular configuration of power relations at the heart of modern industrial society and in particular its capitalist manifestation.

Foucault's theories have much in common with the emphasis of Marxist theory on the crucial role of false consciousness in the ideological legitimation of capitalism. Foucault differs strongly, however, in his identification of unequal power relations as the inevitable feature of any social intercourse, rather than a particular manifestation of capitalism (Donald, 1981). Thus structuralism is located somewhere between the freedom of interactionism and the determinism of much macro theory.

"'Structuralism, then, involves deconstructing the subject'. Certainly the individual remains at the centre of the analysis: what he or she 'knows' is the starting point. However, the subject is not seen as a free agent, centre of his own self creating and conferring meanings on the social world around him. Rather the approach effectively 'deconstructs' the subject, explaining meanings in terms of a structure which lies beyond the individual's
comprehension and control ... this necessitates a perception of the individual act as a representation of the underlying structure ... (p. 6) ... a node through which language and the social formation speak ... " (p. 7) (Webster, 1981)

As such, the structuralist debate embodies the central dilemmas of sociology between action and system, voluntarism and determinism. As Grimshaw, Robson and Willis (1980, p. 74) argue, the need is for a 'post-structuralist' perspective in which structuralist reaction against an excessive voluntarism is balanced against their 'theoreticist' tendency to ignore the diversity of human behaviour.

One of the main strengths of Foucault's analysis in this respect is his commitment, like Weber, to empirical study and his attempts\(^{21}\) - such as his recently published biographical study of the 19th century French hermaphrodite, 'Herculine Barbin' - to map in detail the outcomes of specific human actions. His work defies neat categorisation, straddling the normal boundaries of history, philosophy, politics, sociology and the history of science. It has grown in significance recently partly in response to the vacuum created in France at least, by the discrediting of both Marxism and 'reformism'.\(^{22}\) There is no conspiracy theory in Foucault's work. His essentially phenomenological approach argues that all types of social form from sexuality to penology and the law, are relationships of power. He thus locates power, not in particular social structures, but as an effect of the operation of social relationships between groups and individuals. Hence power cannot be located as emanating from any particular point such as 'the State' since Foucault sees the state as a composite of a multiplicity of centres and mechanisms of 'micro-powers' such as hospitals, schools and factories.\(^{23}\) Thus the strategic aims of the state apparatus, in particular, must be understood in relation to these 'micro-powers'. Far from being the currency of the ideological superstructure in relation to the economic base, power and
the political transformations it informs "are not the result of some necessity, some imminent rationality but the responses to particular problems combining not in a totalised, centralised manner but by serial repercussion" (Sheridan, 1980, p. 218).

"Political power from this perspective, is not the possession of a social class, but a proliferating, anonymous force which cannot be attributed to the ideological self-expression of a unified economic group ... disseminated through many and varied discourses and institutions, power possesses no single determining centre and cannot be identified with a monolithic state apparatus which it largely outstrips ... his [Foucault's] work invites a radical rethinking of such notions as the neutrality of scientific truth and the progressive acquisition of knowledge through trial and error, just as it challenges us to re-examine the idea that political power is increasingly centralised within the state and that power emanates from ideological oppression and ownership of the means of production." (Hill, 1981, p. 7)

It is clear from this that in Foucault's view power and knowledge are two sides of the same process; knowledge cannot be 'pure' but is necessarily political, not because it has necessarily political consequences or utility but because "knowledge has its conditions of possibility in power relations ... knowledge is not true or false but legitimate or illegitimate for a particular set of power relations ..." (Sheridan, 1980, p. 20).

Thus Foucault's work challenges the very basis of modern rationality and science which have, according to this argument, the same ignoble origins as the lunatic asylum - one of Foucault's favourite subjects of study. People are only mad and in need of containment when they lack the power to assert the legitimacy of their version of reality, their knowledge over that currently prevailing.

In Foucault's work there is no conception of historical determinism or of 'false' as opposed to 'true' consciousness. Although for him, history is not simply the product of human interaction; it is nevertheless
incomprehensible except as the outcome of human projects. Clearly there are strong links here with Giddens' notion of 'structuration' (Giddens, 1976) in which he conceives structures as existing "out of time and space and impersonal for purposes of analysis but structures which (nevertheless) only exist as the reproduced conduct of situated actors with definite intentions and interests" (p. 127). Indeed Giddens' more recent work explicitly acknowledges the influence of Foucault. In Volume One of his 'Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism' (Giddens, 1981), Giddens pursued Foucault's emphasis on covert domination as the basis for social control, identifying two of Foucault's principal themes - the commodification of time and the use of surveillance as a form of social control as central in his own analysis of the characteristics of modern industrial society.\textsuperscript{24}

In his 'Two Lectures' (Foucault, 1976), Foucault argues that one of the great inventions of bourgeois society and industrial capitalism is that of disciplinary power. This new type of power, he suggests, replaced the rule of law which was a conception derived from the monarchic pre-history of modern industrialised societies. This nevertheless continued to exist as a 'legitimating ideology'. This ideology of right, the organising principle of legal codes, persists as "a ritualised spectacle to pacify social conflict and to blur the effective history of political power" (Hill, 1981, p. 7). The perpetuation of these traditional forms allows a system of rights to be superimposed on a mechanism of discipline; to conceal it and the domination inherent in it; to "guarantee to everyone by virtue of the sovereignty of the state, the exercise of his proper sovereign rights" (Gordon, 1980, p. 106). The parallel with Marxist analyses of the role of the liberal discourse of the state (see, for example, Gintis, 1980) is evident here.
"Modern societies, for Foucault, function not as societies of repression, but as societies bent on normalisation and technical control ... power needs to be understood as a positive and productive resource, as a technology which has vitally transformed both ourselves and the world we inhabit. Power asserts itself creatively and produces, under such names as criminality or sexuality, new areas for scrutiny and control, new tactics and techniques for subjugation."
(Hill, 1981, p. 7)

In 'Discipline and Punish', Foucault describes the emergence in France of a whole range of new 'disciplines' between 1760 and 1840 as an army of technicians - warders, doctors (and later) psychiatrists and teachers, came to replace the executioner whose crude retribution is replaced by processes of assessment, diagnosis and normative judgement covering not only explicit offences but the "whole range of passions, instincts, drives and desires, infirmities and maladjustments".25 (Sarup, 1982, p. 15).

These new tactics of disciplinary power involve two principal techniques. The first, 'hierarchical observation' involves a "permanent and continuous field of surveillance". The second, 'normalising judgement', involves the novel concept of a norm which serves as the basis for categorisation. The initial, negative role of these emerging disciplines which was simply to protect society, rapidly gave way, Foucault suggests, to a more positive emphasis on 'socialisation' to reinforce the norm.

Foucault's analysis of the way in which 'delinquency' is 'neutralised' and deprived of any potential political content by the operation of total institutions such as prisons, has some common ground with the work of Durkheim who also stressed the significance of the public identification of deviation not so much for the protection of society but crucially for the reinforcement of social norms among the majority of the population. The two Frenchmen share a common interest
in the techniques evolved by industrial society to provide for the
division of labour and, at the same time, for social order. They have
both been criticised for not distinguishing adequately in their analysis
between the specific social configurations of France (O'Connor, 1980;
Sarup, 1982) and its more general applications.

Nevertheless, Foucault's preoccupation with the micro-processes of
power as they emerge from the whole range of interactional discourse,
separates him fundamentally from Durkheim's étatist and benign view.
Although based on the specific micro-politics of France, Foucault's
arguments offer insights which are generally applicable to societies
undergoing an equivalent transformation of the social order to that of
France. His description of the way in which the new 'disciplines'
rapidly became attached to the new class power which developed with industri-
alisation and its central concern with reproducing national security,
the power relations of the status quo through the maintenance of the
expansion of production and the provision of a docile and appropriately
skilled work force would appear to be valid for industrialising
societies generally.

Crucially though again, Foucault rejects a Marxist analysis which
locates power within the economic relations of capitalist society. He
explains the emerging disciplinary mechanisms through the technical
requirements of mass production in industrial society itself (Sarup,
1982, p. 24). His work is thus more in line with that of other
contemporary scholars such as Marcuse, who, despite his Marxist
orientation, emphasises the characteristics of social life under
capitalism and the implications which transcend questions of class
struggle and inequality. Thus Foucault argues, like Marcuse, that
there is a :
"Proliferation of 'judges' who take the form of technical experts - teachers, doctors, psychologists, guards, social workers. As they operate in a sphere well protected from judicial or popular intervention, an antithesis has developed between discipline and democracy. Disciplinary power co-exists with democratic forms and undermines them from within. The roots of discipline are so deep in the organisation of modern society that the subordination of discipline to democratic control is increasingly difficult."
(Sarup, 1982, p. 24)

It is this emphasis on the significance of the form of social life itself rather than on the specific balance of power relations, which makes Foucault's work so central to this thesis. More particularly, Foucault has himself identified educational examinations (i.e. assessment) as one of the more significant disciplinary mechanisms to have emerged. For Foucault what might appear to be only a harmless technique of knowledge is in fact, simultaneously, a technique of power. By combining each of the two principles of hierarchical observation and normalising judgement, the examination becomes one of the major instruments for locating each individual a place in society. It both helps to establish the 'truth' and deploys the force to maintain it. The student is controlled through a system of 'micro-penalty', the constant giving of marks which constitutes a whole field of surveillance.

Foucault's own analysis of the nature of this discipline is drawn predominantly from French examples. He describes a school of drawing for tapestry apprentices in 1737 emphasising the detailed ordering of every minute of time, the regular, individual and carefully-graded exercises, the supervision, assessment and subsequent allocation of individuals. The essentially monastic model of elaborate and detailed prescriptions for curriculum and pedagogy for each minute of the day is, and has remained, characteristically French. Although it made a significant, if relatively brief appearance in England under Bell and Lancaster's tightly structured monitorial system, England has not typically provided generalised rules for such detailed curriculum
structuring. The differences between the two countries, with regard to the commodification of time, stress the importance of identifying those other themes of control which are generalisable in Foucault's work.

In this respect, observation is much more critical than time. Drawing on Jeremy Bentham's architectural concept of 'The Panoptican'\textsuperscript{28} in which the isolated individual is constantly visible to a central authority, Foucault extends Bentham's idea that the perfection of surveillance makes the actual exercise of power unnecessary - the visible and unverifiable power will make the individual 'self controlling' as he is conscious of being observed, assessed and classified. There is again an echo of Marcuse in the following:

"Panopticism appears to be merely the solution of a technical problem; but through it a new type of society emerges, a society not of spectacle but of surveillance. This is done through the disciplines, those tiny, everyday, physical mechanisms, those systems of micro-power that are essentially non-equalitarian and asymmetrical. The disciplines characterise, classify, specialise; they distribute along a scale, around a norm, hierarchise individuals in relation to one another and, if necessary, disqualify and invalidate." (Sarup, 1982, p. 20)

Very few individuals, except perhaps those in some prisons or mental hospitals, are now subjected to an explicit 'panopticism'. Although 'open-plan' schools were, arguably, a brief resurgence of the panoptic idea which characterised much of 18th and 19th century school architecture,\textsuperscript{29} the panoptic function is now largely symbolic, carried out pervasively and efficiently with little real opposition not least by examinations and various other forms of assessment and accountability.\textsuperscript{31}

As Foucault suggests, the age-based organisation of the school, the graded curriculum, the marks for performance produce an ensemble of compulsory alignments, some physical, some mental by means of which individuals replace each other in a space "marked off by aligned intervals" (Foucault, quoted by Sarup, 1982, p. 18). The examination
is the fixing, at once ritual and 'scientific', of individual differences.

Hoskin (1979) sets out in detail one example of how Foucault's theory may be applied to the empirical reality of the development of examinations in England. He suggests that the traditional 'transmission' model of western education offers no challenge to the prevailing rationality since in both England and France the most prestigious exams reinforce this 'banking' approach, that is, demonstrating the acquisition of established disciplines. As Bourdieu (1977) has so cogently set out in his discussion of cultural capital, the pinnacle of the French education system - the 'Agregation'—which is the most sought after teaching qualification and competitive examination is "the highest educational expression of the legitimate manner of using the legitimate culture" (p. 143). It rewards the reproduction of existing knowledge and forms of arguments. Hoskin suggests that this long-standing scholastic emphasis on rationality and authority became fused by the 18th century advent of the examination into one 'rational authority' which became the distinguishing characteristic of modern schooling. The advent of print and the explosion of knowledge was associated with the development of examinations based on individual questions, marks and syllabuses. The giving of marks for individual questions constituted a major step towards establishing a mathematical model of reality, a step which was in Hoskin's view arguably as important as the invention of the alphabet in that "the science of the individual was now feasible, for the principle had now been articulated that a given 'quality' could be assigned a quantitative mark" (p. 144). It was therefore possible to weigh up the individual and compare him to others.
"Stricter evaluation, narrow specialisation and examination based on the principle of testable knowledge became the new parameters of undergraduate education. Gone was the sociable Georgian idea of a liberal education, and imperceptibly in its place was a new intellectualist ideal, what we now call proficiency or the acquisition of skills."
(McPherson, 1980, p. 145)

Closely following Foucault, Hoskin argues that the new technique of disciplinary power emerging from the fusion of traditional rationality and authority into 'rational authority' finds its archetypal form in the examination. It is the examination which lies at the heart of the control function of schooling. Equally it is clear that the principles of examination - quantitative, particularistic, pseudo-scientific evaluation for specific purposes, are not confined to education, their growth in that sphere being reflexively related to a developing 'rational authority' in industrial western society as a whole.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven pursue Foucault's concept of 'discipline' as embodied in educational assessment, and draw on the experiences of two quite different societies in an attempt to show the integral relationship of such practices to industrial society.

Industrial Society, Capitalism and Evaluation

The complex and wide-ranging analysis of this chapter has been directed at understanding some of the deepest societal characteristics that underpin the now widespread use of educational assessment procedures in all societies with mass education systems. An attempt has been made to understand the role of educational assessment in representing the demands of the instrumental order and of the prevailing ideological basis for social control.

Some questions necessarily remain unresolved. The intention has
been rather to draw, eclectically, on the common and relevant insights of often contradictory perspectives in addressing a specific question, rather than undertake the inevitably vain project of seeking to reconcile fundamental divisions in sociological perspective or, equally undesirably, to ignore many valuable insights in seeking to maintain the coherence of a unitary perspective.

Thus despite many conflicting perspectives, a number of central issues have emerged as the basis for an understanding of the growth of evaluation. These may be summarised as follows:

1) **individualism** - instrumental and expressive social functions are now organised on the basis of the individual. Thus both instrumental and expressive legitimating ideologies, the whole basis for social integration and control, are now defined in terms of the individual.

2) **rational authority** - traditional, coercive authority is replaced by a rational and impersonal (scientific) basis for hierarchical control. This authority increasingly takes the form of hierarchical observation and normalising judgement (i.e. evaluation) which, with the growing dominance of a technological rationality, the individual is increasingly powerless to resist.

3) **contradiction** - despite the carefully concealed power-relations underlying the institutions of rational authority, the fundamental irreconcilability between the need to provide for social integration (by 'buying' commitment, through economic growth, by 'moral socialisation', by the arguments of scientific rationality, or by disciplinary mechanisms) and the need to maintain inequality, leads to a continuing tension, not to say crisis, within capitalist society.
It is because educational assessment is central to all three of these characteristics of capitalist societies that it has become so central to contemporary social organisation. In education, as in other areas of social life, the advent of 'normalising judgement' makes possible the idea of fixed definitions of competence. This normalising judgement combines with the idea of 'hierarchical observation' to provide the 'rational authority' for competition and selection. The new 'panoptic' surveillance in which individuals learn to judge themselves as if some external eye was constantly monitoring their performance, encourages the internalisation of the evaluative criteria of those in power, and hence a new basis for social control. Competence, competition and control, as Durkheim (1947) so well illustrated in his description of Jesuit education, are the characteristic themes of the new disciplinary power which education provides in industrial societies.

As well as being central, assessment is also necessarily flexible as an allocation and legitimisation technique. That this is so is best demonstrated by illustration from the wide range of empirical practice. Before turning to this part of the analysis, however, it is necessary to complement the foregoing general discussion of the social role of educational assessment with a conceptual analysis capable of addressing the issue of systemic variation. This is the subject of Chapter Four.
Notes to Chapter Three

1. 'Rationality' is here taken to refer to both forms of logic and ideology.

2. These terms embody a Marxist conceptualisation of the relationship between economic and social relations (see, for example, Williams, 1961).

3. Although some industrialising societies, such as Japan, retain a 'collectivist' rather than an 'individualist' orientation, in general, underneath this there is intense individualist competition provided for in what is now regarded as an excessively competitive educational system (TES, December 1983). As Weber points out in 'The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism', there are major national differences in the impact of capitalism. The Japanese case usefully emphasises the point that whilst the provision of a rational means of allocating individuals to differential social roles and hence, educational assessment, is a necessary feature of an expanding division of labour, the precise way in which this process is organised will be specific to the societal context. Japan arguably still represents an extreme case of 'sponsored' mobility (Turner, 1960) in that once selected for elite educational institutions, the individual no longer needs to compete for status. After entry, such status comes from seniority.


5. For an analysis of Japanese society in these terms, see Shimahara (1979) – see note 3 above.

6. Marshall (1982), p. 133, cites the examples of Italy, France, Spain and Portugal which had capitalism long before the Reformation and conversely, where ascetic Protestantism seems to have given no impetus to capitalist development in Switzerland, Scotland, Hungary and parts of the Netherlands.

7. This is comprehensively demonstrated in Margaret Archer's analysis of 'The Origins of Educational Systems', Sage, 1979.

8. Matteo (1980) argues that pre-capitalist society was also essentially pre-ideological society, the term 'ideology' being coined by Antoine Destutt de Tracy in 1795.

9. Hence the conservatism of the teaching profession identified by Durkheim and Bourdieu.

10. The three levels of the mediaeval French university – the Baccalaureat, the License and the Agregation are still essentially the same today nearly eighty years after Durkheim remarked upon this (Durkheim, 1947, p. 129).
11. The link with the ideas of another French writer - Foucault - are explicit here. Foucault's analysis of the increasing tendency of society to remove into institutions the criminal and the insane in order that they might be subject to hierarchical authority and normalising judgement strangely echoes Durkheim's analysis of changing social attitudes towards another only semi-socialised group - the young, who were at this time also increasingly subject to surveillance and enclosure.

12. For a description of the Jesuit system, see Durkheim, 1947, p. 260.

13. The title of Derek Rowntree's book, 'Assessing Students: how shall we know them?', is particularly revealing in this respect, but the tone is essentially similar in any of the standard works on classroom assessment techniques. See, for example, Dunn (1967), Jackson (1974), MacIntosh and Hale (1976), Schofield (1972), Summer (1982).

14. Recent educational policy initiatives to provide a greater measure of vocational training for lower-achieving pupils may be read in terms of this argument, notably the development of TVEI courses in schools (DES, Autumn 1982) and the growth of the MSC who in three years time will have a quarter of the budget for further educational provision. Commons Statement 1/2/84 and White Paper 'Training for Jobs', DES 1984.

15. It is important to note that it was the prevailing rhetoric, far more than the practices themselves, that changed - more traditional pedagogy now being supported by a legitimating ideology which is the product of recent years of recession and disquiet.

16. The trend towards graded-tests and grade-related criteria in England, even in the most novel assessment schemes such as the Oxford Certificate of Education Achievement initiative (OCEA) and the detailed curricular objectives laid down in France in the 'Code Soleil' suggest the issue is less the identification of criteria as such but their implementation.

17. See note 2 above.

18. The significance of this trend for social control - notably in the growth of corporate management styles is taken up explicitly in Chapter Seven.

19. Commentary on documentary on BBC 2, 5/1/84, '40 Minutes: Life in 1984'.

20. Quoted by Habermas (1971), p. 84. See also Schostak, 1983.


22. An interesting parallel with the context for Durkheim's work.

23. There are echoes here of Ivan Illich's concern with the effects on social life of total institutions such as schools and hospitals.
24. See also Giddens (1982), 'Profiles and Critiques in Social Theory', Macmillan, Basingstoke, Chapter 15.


27. Bell and Lancaster's monitorial system is described in Foucault (1977).


29. Foucault cites the example of the most gruesome public executions - the supplice, reserved for the greatest crime under the 'ancien regime' - regicide in which the poor victim was tortured in various ways before being hung, drawn and quartered. Foucault (1977), p. 3.

30. In some Victorian school buildings such as Greenock Academy in Scotland, elements of this panopticism are still visibly represented and in current use in the architectural design of a large central hall and an encircling gallery to allow for supervision.

31. The significance of such 'self-control' is discussed in Chapter Two in relation to accountability where it is argued that the exposure of teachers to both public and bureaucratic 'surveillance' is a great deal more effective in influencing how teachers set their own canons of moral and professional accountability than the more formal authority of a central bureaucracy.

32. Hoskin gives 1792 as the date when this practice was first instituted at Cambridge University on the advice of one of the moderators, William Parish, Oxford University reforms not beginning until 1800 with a more thorough oral examination and the institution of written examinations in 1807.
CHAPTER FOUR

ASSESSMENT AND THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

Chapter Three was concerned with the way in which assessment techniques have evolved in the education systems of advanced industrial societies to provide for the complex socialisation and training made necessary by a division of labour and the breakdown of the social homogeneity and traditions which had formerly provided the basis for social order and control. It is readily apparent, however, that despite institutional similarities, there are major differences in the provision and practice of education in such societies. At the level of educational process, there are different emphases in relation to both the form and content of the curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation. At the level of provision, too, there are differences in the organisation of educational institutions and in the power and associated budgetary structures which link central, local and institutional functioning.

As part of their central concern with the problem of social order, social scientists have long been preoccupied with tracing the relationship between education, the economy and social structure. Such analyses, Pusey (1980) suggests, have typically been couched at a general, abstract level which "confines itself to an extremely condensed, macro-level theoretical discussion which only very occasionally makes reference to concrete situations in particular nation states" (p. 45). Archer (1981a) takes the view that "the single most neglected question in the vast literature on education concerns is the educational system itself..." (p. 261); that is, "... the nationwide and differentiated collection of institutions devoted to formal education, whose overall control and supervision is at least partly governmental and whose component parts
and processes are related to one another" (Archer, 1979, p. 54). In particular, Archer suggests, "The defining characteristics of a state system are in it having both political and systemic aspects" (1981a, p. 261). Whilst the term education system is not necessarily synonymous with the national level — Fuertet (1982) for example distinguishes between micro, meso, macro and meta-systemic levels (loosely, institutional, regional, national and international)¹ — these are not strictly independent systems but more or less autonomous, interaction 'sites' of the practical outworking of national provision. Thus whilst in empirical terms they are an essential part of the conceptualisation of 'relative autonomy' (Hargreaves, 1983) they do not contribute to an analysis of educational provision between the state as the principal determining context for economic, political and social institutions and hence of cultural tradition and legitimating ideology. The questions which arise from this relationship, "Questions both of the origins of structural variations and of their consequences for educational effects and other social variables remain relatively unexplored" (Ramirez and Meyer, 1980, p. 380), and are the concern of this second theoretical chapter in which an attempt is made to draw up a conceptual framework on which to base an analysis of the relationship between specific social formations and the more general characteristics of education under capitalism as they are expressed in assessment practices.

Such an analysis is necessary, for two reasons. First, it avoids an over-deterministic perspective. It allows the particular events of national educational history such as the contemporary accountability movement in England to be interpreted as manifestations of more general developments in the contemporary social order but not subsumed within them, thereby retaining a vitally important voluntarist dimension in the analysis, a dimension which allows for the creative effects of the
interaction of individual actors. In so doing it also guards against the more obvious dangers of 'armchair theorising' and forms a rich inductive basis for examining and developing a more general analysis of the role of educational assessment in modern educational systems. These points are, once again, well made by Archer (1981b) - a leading exponent of this perspective in her criticism of the work of Green et al. (1980):

"imputation dispenses with analysis of social interaction and the interests actually salient in it at the time. For these are the real processes which drive the system - which are responsible for structuring it and for its re-structuration ... to deal only with abstract interests (e.g. parents seek the best for their child, the State has an interest in a minimum level of civil disobedience within the total population) prevents interests from a) ever being seen as vested interests in a particular structure that is firmly anchored in time and space and conditioned by that specific educational reality and b) as elements whose results depend exclusively upon interaction taking place in that context" (p. 213, original emphasis)

Two further points made by Archer are worthy of note at this point. First, she suggests that such an over-theoretical perspective endows educational development with rationality and is artificially to absolve it of the accumulation of unintended consequences. This is what Davis (1961) refers to as "the unrecognised social consequences of an action as leading by their unrecognised effect ... to the continuous reinforcement of that action" (quoted in Edwards, 1980). Secondly, Archer takes issue with the use of terms such as 'the nation state' and 'the educational system' which are not defined, when her own work on the origins of education systems (Archer, 1979) shows clearly that systems emerge in different ways with important consequences for the role they play in articulating the activities of various power bases and interest groups within any one society.

Hargreaves (1982a) makes a similar point in his criticism of "'macro' level statements about dominant patterns of social relations, forms of
hegemony, features of the capitalist mode of production ... ambitious explanations of the nature and effects of capitalism in a search for 'deeper underlying forces' (Anyon, 1981) without in any way specifying how these broad social structural forces are filtered down to the school level...". What such theories, Hargreaves suggests, lack, is an extra political dimension – in particular an analysis of educational policy, the state and capitalism, as important providers of the context in which teachers and pupils do their work (p. 117). Indeed, this political dimension is much harder to ignore at times, like the present when educational contraction is making it more explicit (Dale, 1983).

In the light of these arguments, this chapter attempts to provide a theoretical basis to link the current and historical developments in educational provision in two such nation states with the more general analyses of Chapter Three. The aim in so doing is to substantiate the foregoing general, theoretical arguments about the centrality of an evaluative rationality whilst demonstrating that the institutional form of its expression may be very different.

**Historical Precedents for Systemic Analysis**

The neglect of comparative studies of the social context is a relatively recent phenomenon in the sociology of education. A succession of otherwise very different paradigms have helped to reinforce this neglect whether it be through the arid theorising of structural functionalism, the tendency to extreme relativism of the 'new sociology of education' and ethnography or the left-wing radicalism of the even more recent fashion for political economies. Thus Parson's (1951) 'pattern variables' belong to no real society. In his later 'developmental' or 'evolutionary' works (see, for example, Parsons, 1966) Parsons writes as if societies as divergent as the hunting and gathering
groups of the Kalahari, on the one hand and the contemporary United States on the other, can be analysed using exactly the same conceptual, theoretical and explanatory framework (Marshall, 1982, p. 158). But the more recent and highly influential work of, for example, Willis (1977) or Bowles and Gintis (1976) can equally be criticised for not distinguishing adequately in empirical terms between analyses of the nature of education under capitalism in general and the detailed social worlds of particular groups or the specific educational arrangements of particular nation states.

In arguing against the essentially mechanistic model of the relationship between capitalism and education which Bowles and Gintis set out, Dale (1980) identifies the concept of 'relative autonomy' as a useful way of approaching the independent life of educational systems, that despite the constant demands that capitalism, patriarchy, racialism and tradition make upon education, they are not defining. In a later article Dale (1983) suggests that:

"education systems are to be seen rather as the arenas, with their own boundaries and historical specificities, and housing their own sets of interests within which the separately and collectively contradictory sets of demands are mediated into educational practice" (p. 187)

The growing contemporary concern with the study of education systems (see, for example, Seidman, 1980; Laska, 1979; Arno, 1980) echoes the earliest traditions of sociology. The ethnocentrism of recent decades would have found little favour with the 'founding fathers' of the discipline, who typically showed a much greater commitment to comparative social studies. Their concern was the induction of general theories from the very variety of empirical reality rather than the application of a hypothetico-deductive paradigm to a specific social world as is so often the case now.
Durkheim (1977) puts the point with some force:

"When one studies historically the way in which education systems have been formed and developed, it is apparent that they depend on religion, political organisation, the degree of scientific development, the state of industry etc. If one detaches them from all these historical causes, they become incomprehensible. Educational institutions are social institutions" (p. 42)

But the context for such developments is not confined to the nation state, as Wickham (1980) outlines, referring this time to the effect of broader international influences,

"it has proved difficult to relate abstract state theory to the concrete world of a particular national system. Rather the tendency has been to show how a particular education system relates to the requirements of 'the state' (these requirements being 'induced' in the process), the 'state' is thus taken as equivalent to the specific empirical reality of a particular nation state without adequate attention being paid to the role of particular foreign and domestic forces ... similar external influences will not have the same effects with different nation states ... the way that such forces are taken up and articulated with national interests will vary" (p. 322)

The significance of this difference is seen clearly in the work of Marx himself whose early work, notably 'The Communist Manifesto' (Marx and Engels, 1973) can be criticised for having no adequate discussion of the relationship between the economic and political aspects of class and the specific expression of such interests in the struggles of a particular society leaving, in Hall's (1980) words, "a gap through which the abstract error of a Lukacsian historicism constantly escapes" (p. 206). By contrast, in Marx' later discussion of the class struggles in France and in the Eighteenth Brumaire, Marx' detailed study of the specifics of a particular struggle convinced him of the existence of a degree of autonomy between political and economic spheres. He identified the "unrelenting application of 'determinations' which objective conditions
place over the political resolutions" (Hall, 1980, p. 229). A century later Althusser was to echo this same point,

"The capital-labour contradiction is never simple but always specified by the concrete forms and circumstances in which it is expressed. It is specified by the forms of the superstructure ... by the internal and external historical situation ... many of these phenomena deriving from the 'law of uneven development' in the Leninist sense" (Althusser, 1969).³

Still more recently, Whitty (1983) has again echoed this tradition in his criticism of 'the structuralist Marxist focus upon the reproductive effects of the articulation of economic, political and ideological instances' (p. 8), in suggesting that "theoretical issues cannot usefully be considered independently of studies of ideological practice within historically specific conditions of existence" (p. 8).

To establish the importance of such a perspective in which attempts are made to explain why particular educational practices emerge and are maintained (Edwards, 1980) does not itself suggest how this might be done. Any consideration of the relationship between general sociological insights and the substantive realities of a particular social world, raises in an acute form the central debate within sociology itself between determinism and voluntarism, structuralism and interactionism, system and action, macro and micro perspectives. ⁴ "No easy or instant synthesis can be expected between the 'old' and the 'new' traditions; any possibility of synthesising them would involve creative work of considerable theoretical sophistication" (Archer, 1981a, p. 265). In recent years, there has been some progress in the sociology of education in the provision of conceptual frameworks that offer some mediation, between these perspectives - notably in concepts of 'resistance and social transformation' and 'relative autonomy'. It is the "struggling with abstract problems in relation to substantive areas of enquiry"
(Archer, 1981a, p. 265), which is likely to provide the best basis for progress in this respect in revealing greater understanding of the determinants of social action. This point is reinforced by Hargreaves (1982b) who argues the necessity of reconciling the diversity of policy outcomes within ostensibly similar economic and political conditions. Nevertheless the articulation of abstract with concrete remains a central dilemma.

Among neo-Marxists in particular there are major disagreements regarding the interpretation of Marx's central metaphor of 'base and superstructure'. The issue here boils down to one of establishing precisely what determines what, how, and why. Marxist theory, as Raymond Williams has pointed out, offers at least two fundamentally different interpretations of the key term 'determine'. 'There is, on the one hand', he writes, 'the notion of an external cause which totally predicts or prefigures, indeed totally controls subsequent activity. But there is also ... a notion of determination as setting limits, exerting pressures.' Whereas earlier, more mechanistic Marxists tended to adhere to the former viewpoint, more recently it is the latter which has become fashionable. Nevertheless, the parameters of disagreement within even the 'limiting conditions' interpretation are still large, and currently include versions of idealism, structuralism, functionalism, culturalism, and a number of loosely related attempts to reconcile these and apply a sophisticated 'non-deterministic' Marxist analysis which accords due weight to 'consciousness' and 'agency', in addition to 'structure', to the study of empirical problems of both historical and contemporary relevance. There are, it seems, fundamental issues yet to be resolved. How 'autonomous' is 'relatively autonomous'?

(Marshall, 1982, p. 143)

There is an enormous literature on the relationship between action and system, a thorough exploration of which per se is beyond the scope of this thesis. Rather the intention here is to discuss briefly those theories which are most concerned with the constituting and reconstituting of organisational structures and educational systems in particular within the dynamic articulation of major changes in the social context and the associated changes in individual consciousness and volition.
Archer (1981a) reviews the potential contribution of several major theoretical perspectives in this respect. She is not sanguine about the scope for systemic insights from the accumulation of ethnographies or other interactional studies - "about the utility of any hybrid combining the atomism of methodological empiricism with the episodic character of interpretive sociology" (p. 263). By contrast, she suggests, neo-Marxism has tended until recently to be over-deterministic and limited in its preoccupation with class struggle, undervaluing in so doing the independent role of the system per se and historical conjunctures. Parsonian functionalism is criticised for seeking to solve problems about institutional operations and origins by theoretical fiat. Although Archer gives a guarded welcome to the neo-functionalism of Merton, Gouldner and Etzioni among others, for giving far more weight to the interdependence, autonomy and consequent strain of different parts of the system, such theories still fail, in her view, to distinguish sufficiently between actors and institutions. Two later developments of functionalism - general systems theory and exchange theory - notably in the work of Blau, are by contrast much more positively evaluated by Archer. Their contribution to her own theoretical perspective is evident in the latter's central concern with exchange and bargaining, with the way in which interaction contributes to the formation of social structures and the question of the way in which the different structures of educational systems originated in different countries (Archer, 1981c).

Archer's highest praise however is reserved for Bernstein and Bourdieu as the most likely "harbinger(s) of a new synthesis" (Karabel and Halsey, 1977). Both afford theoretical importance to 'structure' as well as to 'action', "viewing the former as shaping the contexts in which the latter takes place and conditioning the objective interests and subjective outlooks of the actors involved" (Archer, 1981c). But still,
Archer suggests, both writers neglect the educational system as such. They ignore the relationship between the education system and the historical social context in which it operates. To ignore the major differences between systems in this respect, as Bernstein and Bourdieu do, is to assume that they have no independent effect, the result is that, as in the 'old' sociology of education,

"The system is just an administrative shell, in so far as it is anything more than the sum of component schools and colleges ... it does not selectively filter the demands of groups or interests to which education proves responsive. Instead the system is held to operate as a fully permeable membrane which can thus be by-passed when formulating the cultural transmission thesis" (Archer, 1981c, p. 266).

As set out in Chapter Three, Bernstein is concerned with how the power relationships created within the wider society influence the transmission agencies of schooling. The crucial relationship is that between school and society. That between system and society is of relatively little significance.

Bourdieu on the other hand is explicitly concerned with conceptualising the power relations between groups or classes as the basis for the 'symbolic violence' of schooling. Like Bernstein, he too has little to say about the processes by which such power relations are converted into cultural reproduction. Indeed Bourdieu is quite explicit in this rejection of the comparative and historical context, analysing education systems in terms of those basic functions which are not "reducible to the essentially historical search for the social conditions of the apparition of a particular educational system" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1976, p. 15). Thus, Archer (1981a) suggests, "in this theory there can be no variation in the relationship between education and society, variations in education systems thereby being reduced to the status of functional alternatives" (p. 267).

Although both Bernstein and Bourdieu assume the dominance
of a particular group or class, no explanation is offered of the interactive process by which such supremacy must have been achieved. The process of educational politics, struggle, negotiation and debate between rival interests anxious to influence the provision of education which is so evident in any empirical study of systemic functioning, is ignored - there is no struggle for educational control "power then operates as a passive conductor, perfect and without resistance, linking social domination to educational control" (Archer, 1981a, p. 267).

Instead, Archer argues that what is required is a

"proper theory of educational politics within the context of the educational system [which] would provide a) a detailed specification of the processes producing educational change and stasis which are structured in different ways by different educational systems and b) a theory of the conditions under which different social groups can influence the prevailing definition of instruction through the above processes" (Archer, 1981a, p. 268).

In such a perspective, no relationship can be simply assumed; it must be both theoretically and empirically argued. In Archer's view, Bernstein is particularly open to criticism in this respect for trying to capture the basic principles of each 'code' by intuition rather than through any detailed, empirical study.

Thus it may be said that studies of the education system have suffered a relative neglect in recent decades during which the sociology of education has been preoccupied with the debate between system and action perspectives (Nieben and Peschar, 1980). Now, however, it is increasingly being recognised that there is a need for comparative sociological studies couched within a theoretical framework which is sensitive to both action and system, as these are related at institutional, national, and supra-national levels. Such studies must combine the best of the comparative education methodology (Holmes, 1982)
with its emphasis on empirical research and its refusal to countenance any unilateral transferability of concepts and institutions (Almond and Verba, 1963) between national systems with the powerful theoretical perspectives of sociology and the latter's insistence that an educational system must be understood as a dynamic whole which is substantively different from the sum of its component parts (Broadfoot, 1977a). This perspective is well summarised by Therborn (1978) who argues that the problems facing any particular state cannot be identified theoretically alone since they do not always appear in the same form and must be identified by detailed empirical analysis of each separate social formation.

"The ability of a particular bourgeoisie (or fraction thereof) to hold state power is ... structurally determined by : 1. the stage reached by capitalism in the society in which it functions; 2. the central or peripheral position, and the advanced or retarded stage of the capital it represents, as well as the expansion, crisis or contraction of international capitalism as a whole; 3. the manner in which its relations to feudalism and petty commodity production, as well as its own internal cleavages, have historically evolved and currently manifest themselves in the given constellation of forces; the international conjuncture facing the social formation - the peculiar strengths and weaknesses of the latter within the international configuration of harmonious and conflicting forces" (Therborn, 1978, p. 163, quoted in Dale, 1982).

Thus the state is simply "a type of formal organisation ... distinguished by its specific functions ... coercive defence, political governance (by supreme rule-making), administrative management (by rule-application) and judicial regulation of a given social formation ... a formally bounded system of structured processes within a global system of societal processes" (Therborn, 1978, p. 37).

Thus whilst analyses such as those of this thesis, which are couched in very general terms in an attempt to identify and account for the constant presence of assessment procedures in mass education systems
are necessary, to be adequate, such analyses must also be extended, conceptually and empirically, to take account of the detailed processes of systemic development. In particular, some attempt must be made to explain why individual societies have evolved different and, sometimes, what appear to be counter-productive procedures for achieving these same general goals. A model of educational politics is necessary to underpin the case-study material, presented in Chapters Five and Six, which focusses upon the struggle within the education system, to win control of the various procedures for educational assessment. These instruments are a critical element in regulating access to power and privilege in society on the one hand and on the other inform the discourse of educational accountability and thus provide for control of the ethos of the system as a whole. For, as Clegg and Dunkerley (1980) argue, "any concrete social formation does not contain just one hegemony, but many" (p. 496). What this model might look like is discussed in the rest of this chapter.

The Social Construction of Education Systems

The dynamic functioning of education systems may be understood as the product of three interacting rationales. First there are the requirements imposed upon the system by the nature of the capitalist state as discussed in detail in Chapter Three. These may be loosely summarised as first, the provision of an appropriately skilled workforce and the provision of an appropriately socialised workforce. Second, there is the requirement for the system to legitimate itself – a process which may be distinguished from the legitimation the system provides for the social structure as a whole and which may well require the toleration of practices within education which are at best irrelevant
and at worst counter-productive to the main purposes of 'manpowering' and 'socialisation' (Dale, 1980). Ramire and Meyer (1980) suggest that "structures are often the results of such compromises between competing ideologies ... The emphasis in centralised systems upon egalitarian ideology (Clignet, 1974) is balanced against that of efficiency-oriented central planning of educational allocation" (Giles, 1979).

Compromise is not confined to the level of ideology, however. 'Micro-politics' (Hoyle, 1982) at the level of practice ensure that decisions ... result not from

"the application of well-tried rationales enabling pre-specified ends to be realised through uniquely appropriate means, but from a quasi-political process which allows policy to be discovered through negotiation, objectives to arise when choice points are reached, and accommodations to be found which enable competing belief-systems to achieve a modus vivendi" (Shaw, 1975, p. 31)

There is then, thirdly, the creative and independent life within the system itself which can never be entirely constrained. In practice, these last two dimensions are frequently conflated. The 'relative autonomy' enjoyed by educational personnel is thus partly the inevitable product of social interaction and partly a deliberate sacrifice to enable traditions important for legitimation to be maintained.

"The nature of the functions of the state does not imply the forms in which they are carried out. The same broad functions can be met in many different ways, and the study of the ways is not only valid but essential for a comprehensive understanding of the education system. Similarly I would not want it to be thought that everything that goes on in schools can be related back to one of the functions of the state" (Dale, 1981).

Dale further refines his argument in identifying three different levels of social functioning - the legitimation of societal goals, the legitimation of societal process and the educational contribution to
those societal processes. Level one is legitimated by expressive ideologies - the conception of societal goals which, in the case of capitalist society ranges from economic theories to theories of personal motivation such as acquisitiveness and personal responsibility. Levels two and three are legitimated by instrumental ideologies - accepted conceptions of how to reach the defined goals. These latter conceptions are nationally specific and the product of a specific historical social formation. Thus although the mode of production itself - in this case capitalism - is not a specific national configuration, its existence leads to certain requirements and problems to which the potential responses are as varied as the differing national contexts.

Each of the three levels of social functioning identified above must thus be seen as a compromise between function and legitimation whether it be the capitalist mode of production itself or the education system which is associated with it. Education's contribution to control is thus a function of this relationship between levels two and three, between education and the societal process and not at the level of expressive ideology which is above this. The state is the context for the educational contribution to societal process (function and legitimation) but some form of this relationship will be a constant feature of all capitalist societies.

Thus the educational codes determining the characteristics of curriculum pedagogy and evaluation are informed by and in turn reproduce the ideological discourse which is the basis for instrumental legitimation. Such discourse is also a reflection of the characteristics of the overarching expressive ideology.

Thus in this thesis it has been suggested that particular forms of evaluation are characteristic of the expressive ideology of
industrial society; that the individualism which was a defining characteristic of the advent of industrialisation, and which is the legitimation of societal goals (i.e. level one), is translated into societal processes based on 'hierarchical observation' and 'normalising judgement' (level two). This legitimating ideology finds expression at the level of educational discourse (level three) in various forms of individual and institutional assessment whose precise form varies in response to changes in the broader instrumental ideologies characterising level two.

The distinction Dale and others provide between the over-arching requirements of capitalist societies and how these requirements find different expression in particular societies suggests certain inadequacies in theories which lack either one of these two defining elements. Thus Archer's elaborate model of educational systems might be criticised by neo-Marxists for its failure to address the characteristics of the over-arching capitalist order (level one). Equally, Bernstein is typical of those writers who are open to criticism for ignoring the realm of educational politics and the instrumental ideologies of level three. Or, as Whitty (1980) puts it:

"even if we are to understand recent developments in education as attempts to secure the conditions of existence for a new phase of capitalism, they are not in any straightforward sense a determined effect of capitalist economic relations. Thus, they have to be established via ideological discourse and political struggle ... It is also clear that since it is difficult to be specific about the ideological requirements of capital beyond the most basic level and since, as Dale says, 'the nature of the functions of the state does not imply the forms in which these functions will be carried out', a variety of contents and forms of schooling can be accommodated without any threat being posed to capitalism" (p. 71).

Thus it is suggested, following Dale (1980) that "the common problem of supporting the process of capital accumulation will present
itself in very different forms, not only between social formations but within them as well" (p. 13). Indeed without such a theoretical perspective, it is hard to see how the very real differences in national systems could be accounted for. The detailed empirical studies of national educational policy-making that exist (see, for example, Archer, 1979; Pusey, 1980; Ranson et al., 1980, Salter and Tapper, 1981; Lodge and Blackstone, 1982; Hargreaves, 1982; Nagy, 1982) underline the importance of 'institutional archaeology' in mediating such general trends, and highlight the multicausal, pluralistic conflict, administrative complexity, and historical inertia which deny the validity of any simple determinism. Careful empirical documentation of these processes can reveal much more about the complex nature of educational decision-making and state policy than mysterious invocations of concepts like 'centralisation' which simply tend to gloss over these differences and subtleties.

Detailed policy analyses can demonstrate the existence of diverse social and educational motives leading to multiple conflicts in the policy-making process; they also illuminate the way in which any specific policy proposal is selectively filtered through the system to eventual implementation or rejection and the important constraints exerted on educational policies by the material and ideological legacies of the past, as well as the economic and political demands of the present. Analyses at all levels of the education system - the micro-politics of school policy-making (Hoyle, 1981), local authority initiatives such as that described by Hargreaves for the West Riding (Hargreaves, 1982b) central government policy-making (Tapper and Salter, 1981) or the fate of those system-wide attempts at policy-innovation more characteristic of the centralised system (e.g. Duclaud-Williams, 1982), point to the independent contribution of specific situations and actors to the
construction of educational practice and hence the dangers of a narrowly deterministic approach to the understanding of contemporary trends. For this reason, too, it is important to view resistance to policy changes as a mixture of long-term and short-term, often contradictory and counter-productive stances.

Whitty (1980) provides a good example of this tension. He argues, quoting Nowell-Smith (1979), "a full analysis of, say, the changes in the examination system must take into account the way the requirements of capital accumulation make themselves felt in the education sector ... But the ideology of examinations cannot be 'derived' in any adequate way from the logic of capital and the capitalist state", Whitty stresses the importance of documenting the struggles within the prevailing hegemonic ideology between different 'fractions of capital' (p. 185), the outcomes of which in terms of examination policies are not all equally useful for capitalism. In the same way, Whitty too stresses the importance of distinguishing between capitalist societies in this respect in order to take into account the considerable and varying degrees of autonomy which characterise examinations policy in each case.

Whitty (1981) argues that

"whatever imperatives may be identified as emanating from corporate capitalism via the state ... Outcomes are achieved via ideological discourse and political struggle and there is considerable scope for resisting such imperatives at a political and discursive level" (Whitty, 1983, p. 182, 184).

What Dale (1983) refers to as a 'political sociology of education' requires a preparedness to come to terms with the outcomes of the many different layers of social action which comprise national educational systems. Such a task is greatly facilitated by tracing the common and the idiosyncratic ways in which such systems have developed in different capitalist societies.
The balance between 'relative autonomy' and the determinacy of state and, ultimately, economic requirements, is a central issue in the sociology of education and an issue which is frequently over-simplified. A comparative, empirical analysis of educational systems reveals both the necessity and the difficulty of what Althusser (1977, quoted by Hall, 1977) called "hanging on to the two ends of the chain at once" (p. 11). The willingness to accept the articulation of structure and action on which the study of educational politics is necessarily based helps to focus attention on the process of negotiation and legitimation which constrain the process of structuration and thus provides a conceptual framework for understanding how such national differences emerge.

**Archer's Model of Educational Systems**

Archer (1979) has provided one of the most developed and empirically based models of this process of negotiation. Archer's work is particularly relevant to the discussion of this chapter since it is specifically applied to the emergence and operation of four national educational systems, two of which, France and England, are also the bases for this thesis. Archer focusses upon the reflexive relationship between structure and action, the social structures which shape the context in which interaction and change occur and hence result in the emergence of particular forms of educational provision. A crucial element in Archer's perspective is the emphasis on the present as well as the past so that the social context is, in this view, not only the result of historical interaction, but also the result of contemporary behaviour and individuals or groups who cannot or will not change these structures. This perspective enables Archer to open up the whole area of 'educational politics' and the 'internal strains' which lead to change. According to Ramirez and Meyer
(1980), these are

"the ideological and organisational inconsistencies that characterise the present systems [and which] produce competing structural consequences. There are individual demands and social priorities, market forces and central planning, state bureaucracies and professional rules of autonomy" (Ramirez and Meyer, 1980, p. 383).

The focus is thus on interest groups, on the processes of exchange, negotiation and consolidation - within more general changes in the social context. It is these more general changes variously conceptualised as functional incompatibilities by Merton and structural contradictions by Marx\(^6\) which lead to strains and a pressure for change which has repercussions throughout the system because of its interdependence.

Building on what is clearly a Weberian perspective, Archer distinguishes between privilege, authority and power which she links in educational terms to achievement, organisation and curriculum respectively. Beyond this basic currency of analysis however, Archer's focus is specific rather than general, concerned with developing a conceptual framework which can explain the historical idiosyncracies of individual education systems within the more general pattern of their growth in post-feudal societies.

Drawing on Blau's concept of exchange theory (Blau, 1964) in which the possession of various kinds of resources allow competing groups to trade off against each other, the major distinction Archer makes between societies is in terms of their degree of centralisation. Such differences are taken to be a product of whether state involvement in education was the result of a deliberate attempt on the part of a political group to gain control over education (restriction) or whether the state was historically reluctant, dragged into the educational debate by one particular interest group as provision expanded and thereafter fought over as a prized ally as its role became one of creating some
kind of system out of these competing interests. Archer argues that successful control of the emerging system depended upon monopoly ownership of educational facilities (thereby preventing others from converting financial and human assets into schools and teachers). This was achieved through convincing competing groups they lacked the right, ability or experience to provide education. This is a combination of the operation of a legitimating ideology based on traditional charismatic or rational grounds and symbolic or coercive protective constraints. Where, as in France, the elite was sufficiently homogeneous to operate such a restrictive approach successfully the result was a highly centralised bureaucratic system specifically designed to reproduce the culture of the dominant group. Where, as in England, no one group could establish such a monopoly, the education system was decentralised. its character changing with the shifting alliances (substitution) between competing groups.

Archer's analysis is open to criticism for not giving sufficient weight in this respect to inter-societal forces which can help explain cultural markets, how and why they change and the ways in which national social structures are related to world systems (Wallerstein, 1974). In an analysis of the Israeli education system for example, Yogev (1980) argues that the character of the education system is a product of two components. One, following Archer, is the power structure of indigenous ethno-cultural groups. The other is the dependence on an external nation which enhances the emulation of a particular normative model of education. In less developed countries in particular, congruence between these two sources is likely to lead to centralisation, conflict to decentralisation. Thus the international context must be a crucial variable in the analysis. Nevertheless, the basic currency of Archer's analysis is still valid, as is the utility of her model of a complex
series of exchange relations which govern the different internal dynamics of each type of system.

Archer draws a distinction between emergent and established education systems. As the system becomes consolidated, there are structural changes within the education field itself which she terms 'unification', 'systematisation', 'differentiation' and 'specialisation'.

'Unification' is not equated with centralisation although more explicit in such systems. Rather Archer identifies unification as an inevitable feature of state-provided education. Unification is closely linked with the systematisation embodied in national exams which delineate the boundaries and levels of the system, and are a vital part of the regularisation of teacher recruitment, training and certification. In contrast, the decentralised system is characterised by differentiation and specialisation. Differentiation reflects the diverse interest groups involved, a politico-educational alliance which repulses the emergence of a strong central authority and in which in contrast to the centralised system, legislation can only be at the level of the lowest common denominator. Archer argues that differentiation and specialisation lead to increasing professionalisation, and a teaching body conscious of the power provided by its expertise to take part in negotiations over the nature of educational provision. Critical in this respect is the devolution of power over public assessment procedures to several interest groups rather than one central bureaucracy. "The net consequence of multiple integration for education is an increase in autonomy . . . the capacity for internal determination of its operations" (Archer, 1979, p.22). In Archer's view, the character of the education system based on differentiation and specialisation, is determined by negotiation based on internal initiation (from within the system), external transaction (resource based) and political manipulation
(power based); that is from both pressures and characteristics in the system itself. In this respect her analysis has some similarities with Dale's emphasis on different levels of legitimating ideology (see p. 163).

Archer's elaborate and empirically-based analysis of the common and variable characteristics of education systems highlights a number of themes already discussed in this chapter, notably those of relative autonomy, ideological legitimization and negotiation — in short the ingredients of educational politics. But it is Archer's identification of the centralisation-decentralisation continuum as the principal defining characteristic of educational systems which adds an important conceptual dimension for the analysis of the case studies reported here. The fact that Archer explicitly identifies national examinations as one of the crucial ingredients of central control makes her model even more relevant. If individual evaluation and accountability are definitive characteristics of all education systems, as argued in Chapter Three, Archer's theory allows this general concept to be refined differentially in centralised and decentralised systems. Thus in centralised systems the ideological homogeneity of the prevailing legitimating ideology allows the dominating elite to design a system of centralised control procedures including a variety of assessment procedures such as public examinations, inspection and bureaucratic accountability which carry the legitimating rhetoric on which that status is based. In so doing it also reinforces it. To the extent that reality falls short of this ideal type of central control, as in decentralised systems, there is likely to be conflict between the substantive interests of different social groups, one expression of which will be a struggle to influence the legitimating rhetoric and hence, the content of education. Thus, following Archer, it is possible to argue that in both decentralised and centralised systems assessment procedures have a different but equally
central role to play in providing the explicit articulation of this legitimating rhetoric; that there is typically an on-going struggle between the different interest groups involved in the education system who seek to establish control of the content of education, one crucial element of which is control of the public assessment apparatus in its several forms.

But in centralised and decentralised systems alike, the education system has a measure of autonomy which is the result of the social construction of its participants and the processes of interpretation, and action they undertake in the light of their perceived 'micropolitical' interests. One of the most significant groups of participants in this respect is the teaching profession on whom devolves the task of carrying out the work of the system, of making a reality of its more or less explicit and contradictory objectives.

The significance of teachers 'resistance', of the possible boundaries of their autonomy, has recently received considerable attention (e.g. Grace, 1978; Barton et al. (1981) from other sociologists of education who, like Archer, reject the determinist perspective of, for example, Bourdieu and Bernstein, in which teachers are seen simply as passive agents of reproduction. Although some interactionist accounts (e.g. Sharp and Green, 1975) have tended to cast teachers as victims of a double-bind from which there is no escape, detailed classroom studies have revealed considerable creative action by teachers (e.g. Woods, 1981). Lawn and Ozga (1981) are typical of more policy-oriented studies of teachers which focus on the power teachers have been able to wield as a group through political and interest group pressure and the monopoly they have been able to build up over scarce and necessary expertise and internal initiatives. Archer (1979) analyses the conditions which determine the strength of the profession
in a bargaining situation, distinguishing between the apparently powerful but in practice relatively powerless, confrontational stance among teachers in the centralised system and the more 'sales-oriented' approach of teachers in the decentralised system which emphasises stimulating consumer need, offering a high quality product and restrictive practices (Duclaud-Williams, 1982). Archer's model of how teachers have won for themselves a measure of professional 'space' reinforces Bourdieu's explanation of why they so rarely use this power to challenge the status quo. Teachers are not simply 'cultural dupes' but are acting in terms of their professional vested interests and the protection of their own bargaining currency.

Once again the relevance of this analysis to understanding the social role of assessment procedures is apparent, since one of the most important 'goods' that teachers have to 'sell' is their ability to prepare candidates to acquire valued qualifications. On occasions such as at the present time in France or during the 1960s in England, they actually become the direct as opposed to the indirect arbiters of such awards. To the extent that teachers are entrusted directly with the responsibility for assessment - rather than being employed simply as markers for a nominally independent agency - that power is increased.

The Ideological Context

But whilst Archer's model readily embraces the conceptual approach to assessment procedures on which this thesis is based, it may also be criticised for under-emphasising the more covert, ideological forms of power struggle and social control in comparison to that based on more obvious currencies of power such as the law or financial resources. A slightly less mechanistic approach to such negotiation is that afforded by Salter and Tapper (1981) in their
emphasis on ideology as the underlying determinant of power relations, such that if legitimation is the necessary instrument of power, ideology is the necessary instrument of legitimation (Larrain, 1979).

Whitty (1980), following Johnson (1979) and Giddens (1979) makes a two-fold distinction between ideology as 'lived existence' and ideology as 'discourse', between what may be loosely referred to as culture and the way in which the content and form of discourse works to produce meaning and structure consciousness. Matthews (1980) also focusses on the relationship between ideology at the level of objective social consciousness and its transition into subjective private consciousness through general exhortation, reification or selective application of concepts (p. 131). Despite the foregoing criticism of his work, Bernstein (1982) offers a useful examination of the nature of educational discourse in this respect. He relates the process of ideological repositioning between the social relations of the production of 'discourse and the resources' and the various stages of recontextualising and secondary contextualising which determine how the discourse is received and hence the social relations of reproduction. In education this relationship is embodied in the transactions that take place in curriculum content between the original perpetrators of knowledge and the eventual form it takes in the learner's mind.

As has already been suggested, although the relationship between the ideological function of such a model of discourse and the nature of the state is only very loosely drawn in Bernstein's analysis, and reflects no particular social formation, the links with Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) more substantive analysis of the 'habitus' and the 'pedagogic arbitrary' are clear. Particular conventions of educational practice and of knowledge are so structured into the system that 'the habitus' is readily legitimated by both tradition and apparent rationality,
its ideological power rarely questioned. Thus an analysis of educational discourse is necessary to emphasise the process of negotiation and construction between rival ideologies and the extent to which 'commonsense' can be made to conform to the necessities of production, consent and political order (Whitty, 1980, p. 17). In this model of ideology, then, there is room for the various legitimating traditions - political, religious, moral, nationalist, utilitarian, economic and technicist (see Chapter Three) and the possibility of a series of compromises and contradictions in response to changing historical conditions, people's lived experience and the struggles that ensue. But, at the same time, this is only flexibility within a defining political agenda. Such 'hegemonic ideology' (Whitty, 1980) defines the issues and terms of debate ... it has its 'structuring silences' (Bacharach and Baratz, 1962; Lukes, 1974. Kellner (1978) stresses the need to study "specific regional ideologies in specific societies, uncovering their production, transmission and interaction...". What emerges is a degree of autonomy, in which ideological, political and economic policies mutually provide each other with their broad conditions of existence ... "a degree of relative autonomy for different levels and instances of the social formation, culture and ideology included" (Barrett et al., 1979, quoted by Whitty, 1980). Thus although the 'educational apparatus' can be said in general terms to be geared towards the reproduction and legitimation of capitalist social forms, this 'educational apparatus' has also a complex life of its own, which is the product of the changing historical context and inter-group power relations.

This rather abstract discussion of the social construction and legitimation of education systems is usefully translated into more specific terms by Dale (1981b).
"The aims of education in any society cannot be plucked from the air, nor do they develop in hermetically sealed units ... It is also the case that what it is taken for granted education is capable of achieving, what we might call the feasible expectations of education are not wholly the product of deliberate rational calculation but are themselves also rooted in existing ways of doing things in a society, in its existing pattern of social institutions. Hence we might expect the feasible as well as the normative expectations of education to vary culturally, to be affected for instance, by, among other things, the degree of centralisation of state activity, by the proportion and strength of various religious groups within the society, and by the existing development of educational provision within the society" (p. 12).

That is to say,

"the cultural choices involved in the selection of content have an organic relation to the social choices involved in the practical organisation" (Williams, 1965, quoted in Dale, 1981b, p. 12).

But it is not just the aims of education which will express the diverse and perhaps contradictory ideologies of different sites. Institutional structures and practices such as the curriculum and pedagogy are equally affected by the ideological power of different social forces. Gramsci and Althusser among others have been criticised (Salter and Tapper, 1981) for failing to recognise that ideology is locked into the institutional structure itself and not just into member's consciousness. A major and often overlooked consequence of this institutional incorporation of ideologies is the degree of 'inertia' in the system to which it leads. Practices which play no obvious ideological or practical role but which are simply the more or less haphazard hangovers of tradition (Hargreaves, 1982b) may result in the system being slow to change and unresponsive to larger societal pressures. A good example in this respect is the contemporary failure of the school system in both England and France to respond adequately during the 1970s to government pressures for a greatly increased vocational emphasis and hence the setting up of alternative 'youth
training schemes.  

The concept of 'relative autonomy' partly explains why, despite having instituted one of the most carefully designed and highly-centralised education systems ever devised, Napoleon was forced to recognise how "by force of circumstances it [the Napoleonic school] was to elude what he hoped for from it and to form its own traditions and physiognomy and to acquire its own distinctive character in spite of the surveillance to which it was constantly subject" (Durkheim, 1977, p. 307).

Giddens (1979) addresses the phenomenon of institutional inertia in his concept of 'structuration'. Starting from an ethnomethodological perspective of the way in which interaction is shaped by actors' taken for granted meanings, Giddens uses the concept of 'structuration' to conceptualise the way in which existing deep-seated bases of orientation operate as shared assumptions about how to evaluate and interpret situations. These assumptions are the result of and in turn create what Femia terms those "myriad ways in which the institutions of civil society operate to shape, directly or indirectly, the cognitive and affective structures whereby men perceive and evaluate social reality" (Femia, 1975, p. 31).

Ranson et al. (1980) also explore this Weberian problematic of the relation between cause and meaning, between determinant and voluntary in the relation of structure and action. Like Archer, they are specifically concerned with structures from a 'neo systems theory' perspective which focusses on the interaction between meaning, power dependencies and contextual constraints. Unlike Archer, however, the five sources of change which Ranson et al. identify as contributing to "the structuring of organisational structures" are embedded at the level of culture and ideology. Thus they suggest change is likely:

1) if organisational members revise the provinces of meaning, the interpretive schemes which underpin their constitutive structuring of organisations.

2) if there are contradictions between the purposes, values and
interests behind the strategic implementing of structural features.

3) if there are significant changes in resource availability and in
other key sources of organisational uncertainty which undermine the
power bases of dominant coalitions.

4) if there are major changes in situational exigencies such as
technology and environment, this will require changes to be made in
structural arrangements.

5) if there are contradictory imperatives in situational constraints,
this will entail change in structural arrangements.¹¹

Ranson et al. stress the importance of locating such contradictions
among meanings, power, structure and context in a temporal dimension if
the determining influences are to be unravelled. Following Braudel
(1973) and Perrow (1967) they distinguish between the uncertain day-to-
day experience of organisations - in which the actor and interaction
patters are dominant; the medium term in which the emergent regularities of
size, technology and environment are more apparent; and the long term
in which meaning, value and belief, 'sedimented' into institutional
structures, provide for the dominance of a cultural system.

"In short, the closer the 'horizon' the more visible
the actor but constrained by his context, in the
longer time perspective, actors become less 'visible'
but their frames of meaning, the product of their
structuring, more determinate: constituted structures
have become constitutive" (p.17) ¹²

Thus it would be quite wrong to anticipate any neat correspondence
between systemic requirements, cultural norms and educational practice.
Rather what is required is a reflexive theory capable of conceptualising
the articulation between action, system and context over time.

This is the rationale for the empirical chapters that follow which
trace the social role of assessment procedures in two different national
systemic settings. Taking the very general theoretical framework outlined
in Chapter Three of the defining characteristics of industrial societies and the more detailed analysis in Chapter Two of the different parts assessment procedures play in making schooling responsive to the needs of such societies, Chapters Five, Six and Seven set out to trace the different elements of this relationship in two contrasting substantive contexts.

The organisation of the analysis follows that already identified in Chapter Two in distinguishing the themes of competence, content, competition and control, the last being further divided into its individual and systemic, micro and macro aspects. But there the resemblance to the approach of Chapters Two and Three ends for the analyses of Part II are also informed by the arguments of this chapter which stress the need to avoid any simple determinism in accounting for the development of assessment procedures. Thus Chapters Five and Six, if Chapter Seven rather less so, are accounts of educational politics and of the way in which the emerging state apparatus of assessment in two very different societies reflected both the common pressures experienced by all industrialising societies and nationally-specific cultural norms which combine to form the context for micro-political struggle. Although analyses couched at the level of educational systems typically address the whole range of educational politics, no attempt is made in this thesis to provide such a comprehensive study. The aim is rather to provide an understanding of the characteristic part educational assessment plays in such systems rather than to provide an understanding of the system per se. Part of the reason for this chapter however has been to justify the quite substantial excursions into the realms of culture, control and pressure-group politics which even this limited remit requires. Much of the foregoing argument has not been directly concerned with the question of assessment procedures as such but has been concerned rather with the more general question
of the articulation between action, system and context over time, which determines the development of specific assessment procedures.

The arguments of this chapter underline the need to understand the evolution of assessment procedures in terms of the prevailing legitimating rhetoric and the way in which the various interest groups involved in education succeed in defining the values and ethos of institutional practice through their influence on the language of accountability. The study of such discourse reveals that whilst the attestation of competence and the regulation of competition; the 'selection and certification' functions of assessment - are informed by a common legitimating rhetoric of education which is a product of the individualisation and rationality on which industrial societies are based, the 'control' function reflects a much more idiosyncratic legitimating rhetoric which is bound up with political rather than economic exigencies and the specific national traditions of government.

Thus, for example, whilst the provision in both England and France of a national educational inspectorate may be read as a reflection of the assumption of normalising judgement and hierarchical authority which accompanied the increasingly powerful expressive ideology of individualism in both societies, the nature and function of that inspectorate varied considerably at different times both within and between systems. Not only have French inspectors always been concerned with individual teacher quality whilst their English counterparts have been charged with inspecting schools, the character of each inspectorate has itself changed radically over time in the ebb and flow of educational politics. It is only recently, for example, that HMI in England have thought of themselves as a national service concerned with standards in general as much as the rolling inspection of individual schools. Similarly, in France, the impact
of educational policies on the National Inspectorate may be traced in its increasingly conciliatory and benign stance in which 'animation' rather than judgement takes precedence.\textsuperscript{14}

Why these and other changes in the character of assessment procedures in the two systems should have come about are questions which are addressed in detail in Chapters Five and Six. Before moving to such a substantive level of analysis, however, it is necessary to provide a rather more explicit bridgewith the very general discussion of most of this chapter which has been principally concerned with establishing the need for such an approach. Thus the final part of this chapter attempts to provide a conceptual framework with which to approach the different parts played by assessment procedures in advanced industrial societies. As such, the analyses of Chapter Four complement those of Chapter Three which were were concerned with the common and constant part played by educational assessment in such societies.

**Modes of System Control**

It has been suggested that much of the variation between educational systems can be understood in terms of the different patterns of power relations that characterise them; that the complex interaction between ideological tradition, institutional inertia and changing social pressures produces a unique mediating context for determining how education will be provided. At the same time, however, it is also possible to categorise at least some of these differences systematically (see, for example, Arnove, 1980; Ramirez and Meyer, 1980). Often this is done in terms of a particular variable such as patterns of social mobility (Turner, 1960; Hopper, 1968) or stages of development (Beeby, 1966). One of the most common categorisations used is also one of the
most significant as Archer (1979) has demonstrated, namely the centralised/decentralised dichotomy.

In systems categorised as 'centralised' power to control educational provision and process is taken to reside in central government. In systems categorised as 'decentralised', such power is taken to be dispersed among various competing interest groups including local government, the teaching profession, other interest groups and local communities.

In Chapter Two, it was suggested that such power to control is ultimately bound up with assessment procedures to the extent that it goes beyond mere coercion, since any rational authority depends on a two-way flow of information. Not only does it require 'accounts' of how far policy is being achieved, it also needs to inculcate criteria of self-accounting on a 'normative-re-educative' basis. Indeed, given the difficulties of enforcing bureaucratic control, it is this latter sense of 'moral' accountability which is likely to be the more important source of constraint. Thus it was argued in Chapter Two, the critical influence on the identification of educational goals and practices is likely to be that interest group which has the power to determine the criteria for self-imposed, 'moral' and 'professional' accountability. In a strongly centralised system this is more likely to be central government. If goal-setting is not enforced by some form of evaluation, however, the mere articulation of priorities is likely to be largely a rhetorical exercise.

For where a strong central bureaucracy closely prescribes the form and content of education and yet does not monitor whether its directives are being followed lower down the hierarchy, the demand for information about such activities to be produced is reduced and with it, the control that the need to give an account provides. Although nominally it may
still be correct to regard teachers in a centralised system as closely
controlled employees where their colleagues in a decentralised system
are autonomous but accountable professionals, this distinction does not
necessarily reflect the reality of control. To assume "that the
declaration of national goals for education is the same as ensuring
that learning takes place" (Chanan, 1976, p. 24), is to adopt a
mechanistic model of systemic activity in which the identification of
objectives is taken to be synonymous with the educational process
itself (Church, 1979).

Thus, despite the long-standing assumption that in 'centralised'
education systems such as those of France and Sweden, teachers' practice
is more closely controlled than in 'decentralised' systems such as that
of England or the United States,\textsuperscript{15} this is misleading. The equation of
strong control with a high degree of centralisation fails to take into
account less obvious and generally much more powerful sources of control
and constraint, notably that of assessment - the collection and
evaluation of information about the system.

A more useful way of identifying differences in control in
different types of education systems is in terms of the different
assessment procedures employed within those systems since in any sort
of mass education system, assessment procedures act as one of the
greatest constraints on classroom practice. In this sense, much of
the variation between systems in terms of their dominant patterns of
control can best be understood in terms of the particular form that
control by assessment takes in each case. Such differences in control
cannot be reduced simply to differences between centralised and
decentralised systems. Assessment procedures vary on grounds other than
this. They may, for instance, be informal or formal, school-based or
external. This does not mean that the importance of assessment factors
makes the centralisation issue irrelevant to the study of control.

Indeed, a centralised, government-controlled, external assessment apparatus possesses great power to enforce the pursuit of a centrally-determined curriculum. But the distinctions between different forms of assessment are much more subtle than this; more than a dichotomy between school-based (decentralised) and external (centralised) procedures of assessment. For where a number of more or less independent institutions like the English examination boards and the Schools Council provide for external assessment, control can be both tight and uncentralised.

It is therefore important to distinguish between the degree of assessment control on the one hand (strong or weak), and the source of that control (central or local) on the other. This distinction is crucial, for the tendency to conflate strong control with central control within the concept of centralisation has led to an over-preoccupation with administrative variables in the study of differences between educational systems and a consequent disregard for how that control is actually mediated and ultimately experienced by teachers in the schools.

Thus apparently different education systems such as those of France and England, which are often taken to be classic instances of centralised and decentralised systems respectively (Archer, 1979), may, despite initial appearances, be characterised by a remarkably similar degree of systemic control. At the same time, differences between the systems in the form that control through assessment takes and where power over those assessment procedures is located is likely to be significant (Rodmell, 1977). In so-called centralised systems, there has traditionally been a great emphasis on assessment by 'process evaluation', by the exertion of control through the bureaucratic relationships of
accountability to which teachers are subject. This is essentially the control of inspection of the quality of the educational process itself. By contrast, within the very strong traditions of curricular freedom and professional autonomy which have characterised decentralised systems, control over teachers' behaviour and the basis of their accountability has, in the main, been via 'product evaluation' — by evaluation of educational products as expressed in various forms of measurable pupil achievement.¹⁶

On the question of where power over assessment procedures is located, this too is associated with the form of evaluative control — process or product. In process evaluation, power over assessment procedures resides in that part of the education system which controls inspection — usually central but to some extent also local government. In the case of product evaluation, power is located more within those institutions which control the design and administration of assessment procedures — usually in central government together with local government authorities to whom some limited power has been devolved, and also, in decentralised systems, in a large number of other non-statutory bodies such as examination boards and their clients (notably parents, pupils, employers and, of course, teachers themselves).

Thus a consideration of the nature and amount of control over their practice experienced by teachers in terms of assessment procedures demands a more complex conceptualisation than the traditional centralised/decentralised dichotomy. In particular it requires a theoretical model which is based on the way in which the education system actually works rather than on its formal administrative arrangements alone (Zeldin, 1979). Only such a model, which takes the form and location of assessment procedures as determining criteria, can explain the increasing convergence in the form of control between societies at the present time, a
convergence which, as the following section sets out, cannot be explained simply in terms of movements along the continuum between centralisation and decentralisation.

Control by Assessment: A Model

It is widely accepted that education systems in advanced industrial societies are becoming increasingly similar in their organisation and objectives (Sutherland, 1977).

"It is possible to wonder, today, whether a certain degree of centralisation is required for the efficient running of education systems given the nature of their objectives. At a time when we are rightly asking ourselves in France about the advantages of a greater degree of freedom and thus of a greater degree of deconcentration, other countries with different traditions look with interest towards a more centralised model better adapted to the achievement of equality in education. The decade which is now beginning could be marked by a greater homogeneity of structures within education systems . . ." (Garrigue, 1980, p. 3).

The reason for this increasing similarity, it is usually suggested, is that the central governments of countries like England are exerting ever-more centralised control on a whole range of educational provision, most notably on curriculum, assessment and finance, while countries such as France are moving in the opposite direction towards decentralisation (deconcentration) in finance and administration. (See Fig. 4.1).

Figure 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRONG CONTROL</th>
<th>WEAK CONTROL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>central funding</td>
<td>local funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>centralised curriculum</td>
<td>curriculum autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>process evaluation</td>
<td>product evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>central control of certification</td>
<td>decentralised certification</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This model of systems which are the polar opposites of one another gravitating towards a mid-point of similarity is misleading, however. For, in many respects, the systems are not polar opposites at all. In reality, the movement towards a common pattern of centrally directed control by product evaluation has, in each case, commenced from very different starting points which cannot be identified simply on a centralised-decentralised continuum. The traditional associations between decentralised and product evaluation on the one hand, and central control and process evaluation on the other, misrepresent what tends to occur in practice. Thus, it is possible to maintain a traditional emphasis on product evaluation within a context of increasingly centralised control. Alternatively, it is possible for a system to change its traditional pattern of assessment towards an emphasis on product evaluation, but without lessening its central grip upon the education system. (See Fig. 4.2).

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 4.2**

Representations of changing patterns of assessment control

As Fig. 4.2 shows, it is no longer sufficient to conceptualise control over education in terms of its strength or weakness (as in Fig. 4.1 because control cannot be equated with centralisation. Rather, what appears to be important in determining patterns of educational control is the relationship between the two variables mentioned earlier - the
form of assessment control, and the location of power over assessment procedures. Thus, it is not the gravitation of centralised and decentralised systems towards some educational mid-point that has produced the growing convergence between education systems, but the particular way in which these two variables, the form and location of assessment control, are tending to intersect in such countries.

Thus, in England, for example, there has been something of an oscillation between a more 'free market', decentralised approach to assessment control mediated by the semi-autonomous Examination Boards and the links they in turn have with the universities at times of plenty, and more directive, centralised strategies based on the tighter control of public examining and institutional accountability when economic and social problems dictate a more utilitarian direction for educational activity. In France, by contrast, the development has been from what was in fact the relative freedom of a highly centralised system in which assessment control was vested in national, government-run selective examinations and personal teacher inspection. This has been replaced by a nominally more decentralised, positive control based on a reflexive relationship between teacher-conducted continuous assessment according to nationally prescribed norms, and an increasingly corporate management approach to educational administration, provision and control. The information thereby generated provides an increasingly powerful means of both directing the careers of individual pupils and of directing the educational system as a whole. By the same token, the institution of continuous assessment based on national norms now not only exhorts teachers - as the system has always done - but makes that exhortation effective as these norms relate directly to the assessment of pupil progress and simultaneously provide for the national statistical monitoring of educational standards within the system.
Although the trends in decentralised systems are less clear-cut, the activities of the Assessment Performance Unit (APU) in England and the National Assessment of Educational Performance (NAEP) in the United States are similar to some aspects of the French initiative. The search for national norms as assessment criteria at the present time in England is also a comparable development. A currently less developed but potentially very significant trend in England is the increasing government as well as popular support for the idea of 'profiles' based on continuous assessment and culminating in a 'positive' record of achievement' (DES, 1983) for all pupils. More recently still, DES support for 'graded tests' (DES, 1984) offers the possibility of even closer central control. For whilst these initiatives may have much to recommend them educationally, they nevertheless have the potential to provide for the very effective imposition of centrally-determined curricular norms and pedagogic directives. If in some ways such developments can be seen as steps towards greater equality of educational provision, they are just as much a step towards greater control. As such they represent yet another reflection of the liberation-control dilemma in assessment procedures already discussed. In the past, where autonomy was safeguarded by the lack of central curricular prescriptions, the very powerful control exerted by the emphasis on 'product evaluation' still left considerable room for individual teachers, pressure groups and semi-autonomous bodies such as Examination Boards to influence the content of that control. Similarly, in other systems, in the past autonomy could be safeguarded by the relatively minor role of 'product evaluation' despite the existence of a highly centralised, bureaucratic education system in which every aspect of pedagogic activity, and especially curricular objectives, was tightly controlled. The increasing similarity at the present time between England and France, as documented in Chapters Five
and Six, reflects the fact that each is tending to institute the aspect hitherto lacking to ensure effective control.

Perhaps even more important than this increasingly effective control, however, is the growing association of educational administration in both countries with a corporate management approach. Such an approach is likely to disguise the essentially political nature of educational goals - in an ideology of scientific rationality. In this event, value-judgements appear as merely administrative decisions dictated by rationality and the goal of maximising efficiency.

"In so far as the argument about aims can be reduced to one about objectives, it takes on a technical character which strengthens the claims of teachers and educational specialists to exert influence ... and obscures the problematic" (Taylor, 1977)

It seems probable that effective educational control implies the existence of a social order ready to concur in educational goals. The way in which assessment procedures help to bring this about will, perhaps prove ultimately more significant than their role in imposing such goals for the requirements of mass testing are such as to require a considerable measure of agreement over educational objectives. It may well be that the testing technology overwhelms the initial, sensitive identification of educational goals, reinforcing the long-deplored tendency for assessment to reduce curricular goals to what can be measured and bringing a stage nearer the predominance of a technocratic ideal of managerialism (Gouldner, 1976; MacDonald, 1978) as set out in Chapter Seven. Before coming to such a discussion in detail, however, it is necessary to establish how far the theoretical explanations for systemic similarities and systemic differences in educational assessment procedures, as set out in Chapters Three and Four respectively, are adequate to explain the specific assessment practices of the two countries under study. This is the concern of Part II of this thesis.
Footnotes to Chapter Four

1. See also in this respect Council of Europe (1974) 'Report on the training and career structures of educational researchers', Strasbourg, Council of Europe.

2. "Lorsqu'on étudie historiquement la manière dont se sont formés et développés les systèmes d'éducation on s'aperçoit qu'ils dépendent de la religion, de l'organisation politique, du degré de développement des sciences, de l'état de l'industrie etc. Si on les détache de toutes les causes historiques, ils deviennent incompréhensibles, les institutions scolaires sont des institutions sociales" (Durkheim).


4. A debate which ultimately cannot be resolved - at least with the current array of conceptual tools - for, as Marshall (1982) suggests, "discussion of which changed first - the world (Marx), or people's understanding of it (Weber) - is likely to be interminable because what is at issue is not the status of this or that body of empirical material but is rather the validity of competing frameworks for the interpretation of social reality" (p. 150). See also Barton and Meighan (1978) for an overview of the issues.


7. As it often is in centralised systems - if for rather different reasons.

8. It is interesting to note that 'ideology' was a term coined by Antoine Destutt de Tracy - a member of the newly-founded 'Institut de France' (1795) whose members were known as 'ideologues' - progressive, radical, liberal-scientific scholars during the French Revolution (see Matthews, 1980; see also Larrain, 1979).

9. See also CERI (1973).

10. The growth of the Manpower Services Commission during the late seventies and early eighties in England has been nothing less than spectacular in this respect. See also Williamson (1981) for a comparison of English provision with that of West Germany, and Jessel, TES, 12.2.80 and 16.1.81 on recent French initiatives.

11. The example Ranson et al. cite of when the increasing size of an organisation constrains it to become more bureaucratic and, at the same time, it is located in a turbulent environment and therefore constrained to become more flexible and adaptable in its structural arrangements, is very clearly the situation currently facing the education systems of advanced industrial societies.

12. See also Ranson et al. (1982).

13. A point made by HMI John Graham, former professional head of the APU, in interview.

15. See, for example, Unit 15 of course E222 The Control of Education in Britain, Open University 1979 or for the layman's view, Turpie (1978) Report on Strathclyde Regional Council Study, Tour of French Educational Establishments, mimeo.

16. See Broadfoot, P. (1980a) for an enlargement of this argument.

17. "On peut aujourd'hui se demander si un certain degre de centralisation n'est pas requis par le souci de l'efficacite et la nature des objectifs que se donnent les systemes d'education. Au moment ou nous nous interrogeons legiment en France sur les avantages d'une plus grande souplesse et donc d'une plus grande deconcentration, d'autres pays de traditions differentes regardent avec interest vers un modele plus centralise et, partant, mieux adapte a la realisation de l'egalite devant l'education. La decennie qui s'ouvre pourrait etre marquee par une plus grande homogeneite des structures des systemes educatifs ..."

P. Garrigue, Chef du Service des Affaires Internationales, Ministere de l'Education, Paris, 'Etude comparative des Systems educatifs', ministerial paper, October 1980, p. 3. It is not clear, however, whether the explanation for this tendency is the common experience of economic recession, or a more inevitable progression towards some optimum arrangement in keeping with the economic realities of technological competition in advanced industrial societies per se.

18. Evidence of this intention with regard to curriculum is manifest in most recent government publications on education since the Great Debate of 1977, notably the 1977 Green Paper, 'Education in Schools', the 1980 response to the 1977-9 review of local authority arrangements for the curriculum (report published 1979) namely, 'A Framework for the School Curriculum'. With regard to assessment, see, for example, Vickerman, C. (1982) 'The organisation and structure of the new examining groups', in Secondary Education Journal, 12, 1 and the 1982 DES booklet on the new Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education, '17+ : A New Examination', which illustrate similar intentions.

The direction towards increased financial control is expressed in the revised procedures for the allocation of the Rate Support Grant and in hints that government may be exploring the possibility of an education 'block' grant (see, for example, Annex B of the Green Paper, 'Alternatives to Domestic Rates', para. 7).


20. It would be misleading, however, to regard the trends depicted in Figure 2.2 as anything more than general tendencies and to ignore the many examples of resistance on the part of educational practitioners and consumers to such changes which may be identified and the associated pattern of negotiation between politicians, administrators, teachers and the public this has made necessary.
21. This refers to the DES's request— at present still in experimental stage— to the Examination Boards to submit jointly grade-descriptions for three different levels of performance in three different subjects at O-level.
PART II: TWO CASE STUDIES: FRANCE AND ENGLAND
CHAPTER FIVE

ASSESSMENT IN THE FRENCH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Introduction

Up to this point, the analyses of this thesis have been concerned with identifying the significance of assessment as an aspect of mass schooling and the different forms such assessment may take within any one education system. After the general theoretical analyses of Chapters One to Three, Chapter Four explored the more specific theoretical issues which arise in a consideration of how these constant features of educational systems in modern industrial societies are mediated through the substantive reality of any particular national context. Here it was suggested that the idiosyncratic blend of ideological and institutional traditions and contemporary social, economic and political pressures which determine the nature of educational provision in any one country, will be reflected in the form that assessment procedures take but not in their essential importance which is rooted in the characteristic ideology and resultant institutional structures of industrial society itself.

In this chapter and the next, these theoretical arguments are explored by means of a detailed comparative study of two national education systems - those of France and England. These two countries were chosen, as suggested in the introduction, because of their relative similarity in terms of national characteristics such as socio-economic development, size, geographical and historical context, ethnic mix and political traditions. That is to say, they share many common features as advanced industrial societies. On the other hand, they differ markedly in terms of several key aspects of their respective educational arrangements and traditions,
notably that of the degree of overt central government of education, differences which it was anticipated would help to illuminate the significance of assessment in educational provision. There is no suggestion that the empirical descriptions which follow are in any way definitive. Apart from the impossibility of such a project the aim here is rather to pick out those characteristics of each system which are, or have been, significant in its development, particularly with regard to assessment and accountability procedures.

In each national case study, the first part of the discussion is concerned with all four of the principal themes identified - competence, content, competition and control as they are interrelated in the development of evaluation procedures for assessing the performance of individual pupil's performance within the education system. The second part of each case study is concerned with the part played by assessment procedures within the system as a whole, and is thus explicitly concerned with the very different ways in which the necessary provision for systemic control is provided for in the two countries. Although these two aspects of the part played by evaluation procedures are necessarily interrelated in practice, they are treated separately for the sake of clarity.

This thesis is written from an English perspective for a largely English audience. Thus whilst the case studies are intended to offer comparable insights, they are not similar in format. Chapter Five on the French system includes a great deal more descriptive material than Chapter Six, on the assumption that readers will in general already be relatively familiar with the English context.

Both chapters, however, focus on the struggle between various interest groups to gain influence within the education system and by so doing establish their own value priorities in the evaluative criteria of the assessment apparatus. It is this assessment apparatus - of individual
progress, of teacher effectiveness, of systemic efficiency — which is the template that gives meaning to all educational activity; it is the more or less explicit articulation of educational goals. Thus the two chapters that follow must necessarily embrace — albeit briefly — the whole range of systemic activity, if they are to conceptualise the social role of assessment at all adequately. If sometimes this results in what may seem a protracted departure from the subject of assessment per se, the underlying theme of its role in the struggle to control education practice by defining the criteria of accountability is omnipresent. The third chapter in this section, Chapter Seven, draws together these separate analyses in a consideration of those features which the two systems have in common and the significance of those more general developments in forms of evaluation which may be identified as acting upon and within educational systems at the present time.

The methodological problems of comparative education research are legion.¹ Not only do they encompass the whole range of issues inherent in the quantitative/qualitative dilemma which characterises educational research in general, they also include quite specific problems of cultural assumptions. The most obvious manifestation of this latter issue is in the problem of translation and the ease with which the researcher may translate words literally and fail to examine the differences of interpretation which surround an apparently similar term in the two languages. 'Accountability' which is a key analytic concept in this thesis and one which is rédolent with meaning in England provides a good example in this respect, since not only is there no equivalent word in the French language, there is as yet no equivalent concept in French educational parlance. Thus whilst the very lack of such a concept in France makes the English–French comparison a particularly desirable one to pursue in an attempt to understand the emergence of accountability as
a policy in English education, the inadequacy of any of the available French terms - 'rendre compte', 'la responsabilité', or the 'franglais' 'l'accountabilité' to encompass fully the meaning of the word accountability in English, renders any comparative empirical research in this area, particularly problematic. In the same way, the French term for the study of educational measurement, 'la docimologie', has no ready translation in English.

The problem, however, goes much deeper even than the issue of language, down to the level of the cultural constructs on which that language is itself based. Thus in the collection of interview, documentary and observational data of the kind which is the basis for Part II of this thesis, it is necessary to be constantly aware of the 'structuring silences', the cultural assumptions and traditions which are not explicitly rehearsed in policy debates because they are deeply enshrined in the very cultural constructions which determine how such debates are formulated.

Every effort has been made in the analysis that follows to address this problem. A considerable number of direct quotations have been included to maximise the provision of evidence as well as interpretation. Although these quotations have been translated, since the thesis is written within the English educational system, the original French is provided in each case in the footnotes, to enable the reader to detect any infelicities of translation. The findings of the study have already been submitted to, and in some cases, discussed, with both English and French respondents, so that the researcher's interpretation can be checked and modified against the perceptions and understandings of the participants themselves. Whilst the analysis presented here has not as yet been subjected to such a critique in its entirety, every effort has been made to check its veracity at various preceding stages of
development. Nevertheless, the account remains essentially hypothesis-raising with emphasis on the formulation of theoretical insights rather than the testing-out of generalisations. Similarly, no attempt has been made to construct an original historical account from primary sources. Rather, existing historical studies are used as appropriate to extend and contextualise the attempt to understand the social significance of assessment procedures.

The Ideological Context

At least half a century before the essentially ad hoc, 'anarchic' (Veulard, 1970) evolution of a state education system even began to emerge in England in the latter half of the nineteenth century, French educational provision was already being rapidly and systematically bureaucratised. The legacy of their different origins endures in the fundamental differences between the two systems that are still apparent today, which are the reason for the choice of France and England as case studies for this thesis. Nevertheless it has already been argued that the underlying societal movements on which the development of the two systems was based were essentially similar, concerned in both cases with the attestation of competence, the rationalisation of content, the regulation of competition and the provision of control as already suggested.

The analysis which follows addresses both of these themes. The first part of the chapter provides a brief sketch of some of the more important political and cultural traditions which have underlain the evolution of the distinctive legitimating ideology of French educational provision. Subsequent sections of the chapter attempt to explain
significant policy developments in the field of educational assessment in terms of this legitimating ideology as it has mediated the more general pressure within the developing education system for social selection and control.

In France, the provision of mass education started rather earlier and more explicitly than in England, with the catharsis of the 1789 revolution and the equally fundamental changes brought about by the Napoleonic era. Nevertheless the rationale was arguably very similar in both cases - on the one hand egalitarianism and a concern for social justice, and on the other a concern for order and control. Throughout the 19th century there was to be conflict between those liberals who saw mass (elementary) education as a form of control as opposed to those conservative and church interests who feared its potential to make people discontented with their lot and to replace the largely fictional idea of "a peasant people living in dignity, sobriety and ordered calm" (Anderson, 1975) with the very real unrest brought about not by education per se, but by industrialisation itself.

In 1816, the newly restored monarchy did much to redress Napoleon's antipathy to mass education, issuing an Ordinance making primary school attendance compulsory (Vaughan and Archer, 1971). This move was directly concerned with strengthening social control since the teachers were to be under the supervision of the Université and the moral control of the local mayor and priest, in the 'Communal Council'. Of low status and poorly paid as they were, the instituteur's remuneration depended directly on the inspector's judgement. The passing of the Loi Guizot in 1833 which consolidated state control over all branches of education was an even more explicit expression that the traditional fear of elementary education as a source of social unrest had given way to a considerable extent to the more liberal view that such control could be
strengthened by elementary schooling, provided the teachers themselves were strictly controlled. The aim was to avoid "fomenting in the pupil-teachers (and hence teachers) that distaste for their very modest situation, that excessive thirst for material well-being that today torment the destiny of so many men and corrupts their character" (Loi Guizot, 1833). This concern with moral control reflects a more general concern with the basis for social order.

The growth of educational arrangements in France, like the growth of most other French social institutions, needs to be understood fundamentally as the search for an ideological synthesis for the 'new' (i.e. post revolution) society. The explicit ideologies informing post revolutionary France - 'liberté', 'égalité' and 'fraternité' have deep roots in French history and command considerable consensus. They have, however, become increasingly contradictory. The ideal of centralisation espoused in the interests of égalité and fraternité, fundamentally conflicts with the equally powerful ideal of individual liberté. The 'fatal irreconcilability' (Thompson, 1964) between the political and social strands of the revolutionary tradition became increasingly apparent as the revolutionary emphasis on the paramount rights of the individual were superseded by Napoleon's emphasis on the needs of the state. This tension spreads right through the French educational system - in its finance, its organisation and its content, a tension clearly recognised by Condorcet in his distinction between the necessity for the state to finance education but not to control its operation if individual rights were to be enhanced and protected (Lynch, 1973). This tension is visibly still acute in the contemporary contradictions of the fifth republic in which a succession of social and political crises have led intellectuals as diverse as Camus, Sartre and Marcuse to see a threat to human personality itself in modern society (see Chapter Three). This
threat was arguably and in a sense, ironically much less under the 'new right' Giscardian 'laisser faire' philosophy of the non-intervention of the state than it is now with an increasingly active state presence in all areas of public life under the new socialist government. As Thompson (1964) suggests, "The Renaissance antithesis of sovereign individual and sovereign state has persisted in sharper terms than in England. Even when France has been most anxious to make men free, she has been tempted the next moment to believe that they can be forced to be free" (p. 126).

But although this tension is particularly acute and explicit in France, it is not confined to France, being rather a manifestation of that more general tension characteristic of all mass education systems between the 'old humanists', 'the new industrialists' and 'the public educators' (Williams, 1961). In France overt statements of these three different educational ideologies, referred to by Fourier as the 'traditional', 'the technocratic' and the 'liberatrice' (egalitarian), can be traced back to the mid eighteenth century. The 'old humanist' lobby represented by the conservative and catholic interests stood for the traditional hierarchy and against disturbing the status quo. By contrast, 'liberal bourgeois' opinion was in favour of an increased measure of social mobility and meritocracy and a third 'republican' group was concerned with the 'masses' need for education as a human right and for social order. Archer (1979) has described the complex and characteristically French process of pressure group politics which has led to the predominance of different educational ideologies with the changing balance of economic and political interests.

Nevertheless, despite the virtual eclipse of the aristocratic classes in the 1789 Revolution, the power of the traditional 'humanistic' emphasis in education (Durkheim, 1977) continued to underpin a deliberately
separate 'pedagogic universe' (Anderson, 1975) and one that consistently predominated over the 'third estate' of the aspiring bourgeoisie and their emphasis on instrumental, scientific, rational and industrially-oriented education until recent decades. Since in France, unlike England, the entrepreneurial group was, and remained, subordinate to the power of the professional, bureaucratic strata, the 'distancing' function of education in perpetuating an esoteric and abstract curriculum geared to the reproduction of this professional elite endured the political upheavals of three centuries and did not change radically until the 1930s. Indeed Bourdieu and Passeron's analysis indicates that it has still to be convincingly defeated by the consistent pressure of the increasingly dominant 'new industrialist' lobby for more vocationally oriented education. The 'ideal type' of the French education system, they suggest, is still one which emerges from "an academic Christian reinterpretation of the social demands of an aristocracy" (p. 15) and manifests "brilliance without originality and heaviness without scientific weight ... The pedantry of lightness and the coquetry of erudition" (p. 202) (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1976).

Contributing to the longevity of this "lunar landscape, coldly brilliant but with its dark shadows" (Turpie, 1978) has been the inevitable inertia of the education system per se, despite apparently major changes in policy in recent years. Since it is impossible to change such central elements as buildings, curricula, examinations and teacher practice at anything like the same pace that political climates change, the history of French education (as indeed that of any other education system) during the past two centuries provides few examples of radical change in educational policy and many more examples of compromise and the uneasy co-existence of contradictory practices.?
the school curriculum is also partly due to this inertia. Despite a long standing and explicit policy commitment to raising the size and status of technical and vocational training, traditional 'pure' academic subjects still retain their prestigious position throughout French education with the one notable exception of the pinnacle of the system, the Grandes Écoles. The belief in high level applied training which lay behind Napoleon Bonaparte's support of the 'Grandes Écoles' re-emerged with regard to the lycée curriculum after the experiences of the Franco-Prussian war convinced Napoleon III that "the nation with the most schools will be the first nation in the world" (Zeldin, 1977, p. 15). The Salvandy reform of 1847 proposed a much increased measure of science and maths and the option of a 'modern' strand in the lycée curriculum as was also suggested by Dumas, the Dean of the Faculty of Science in Paris. A similar attempt, to reform the curriculum in the interest of the 'new industrialists' was made by Fourtoul under Louis Napoleon but all such attempts made little impact on the dominant 'classical' (i.e. old humanist) orientation, certainly until the turn of the century, (Durkheim, 1977) and arguably until well after the second world war when gradually maths and science came to displace classics as the subjects necessary for entry to the élite professions and courses. A Ministry of Education statement in 1967 suggested that "Latin is still the main medium of contemporary thought" (Slevin , 1974) and despite the momentous struggles of 1968 there is still conflict between an emphasis on applied studies and that on the development of individual reason and rationality as the basis of democratic politics (Vaughan and Archer, 1971, p. 141). The development of an individual's character and morality is still dominant compared to the development of specific competences, at least in élite education. Above all, the heritage of the classical tradition of rhetoric - the learning of the rules of
of argument which Hoskins (1980) identifies as the foundation of Western scholarship, is still central in French educational policy and practice. As Turpie (1978) suggests, "French schools in the 1970s are still based on philosophies of a different age and country; they follow with remarkable fidelity and with considerable success, if at a considerable price, the Social Contract of John Locke, and Bishop Berkely's most English doctrine of Benevolent Self Interest, both coming up for 300 years old and still going strong, at least in France" (p. 4).

If, as Anderson (1975) suggests, the most outstanding 19th century French educators such as Carnot, Guizot and Cousin were able to achieve some integration of catholic conservatism, bourgeois meritocracy and republican philanthropy, this may have been because they were able in some way to approach pragmatically "the anxieties of a society which has long cherished the letter of Cartesianism but feared the gleaming light of analysis" (Zolberg and Zolberg, 1971). The tension between statism and individualism and between the ideal of equality and the reality of a deeply divided, hierarchical society has frequently been solved by pursuing pragmatic policies within a more acceptable rhetoric such as national need or democratisation.

If few would have overtly echoed Rousseau's belief that "the poor have no need of education. It is shaped by their situation ... they can have no other" (quoted by Vaughan and Archer, 1971, p. 159), underneath the liberal political rhetoric of equality, economic efficiency and social tradition dictated a continuing elitism which was readily justified by the persistent emphasis on state need at the expense of individual social mobility.

A second source of compromise is seen in those times when Ministers' ambition for reform is brought to fulfilment by an unusually high degree of support for a particular policy which finds favour with more than one
ideological perspective. The institution of the 11+ examination was a classic example of this sort of policy consensus in England and in the mass provision of primary schools in the 1880s and the reform of the lycées in the 1930s, were similar examples. But such examples are rare and another more general explanation of how these contradictory ideologies have been made to work together is that offered by Neave (1981). He suggests that the characteristically French conception of the state is very different from the English traditional belief in local autonomy. Central to this French concept is the state as the protector of liberty (i.e. through the law which is the main defence against anarchy). The state is a cultural entity and thus a legitimate synthetic source of educational ideology. These ideas have been an important message of the 'hidden curriculum' of French schooling. Particularly powerful is the Napoleonic tradition which legitimates strong hierarchical authority at every level from Minister of Education down to individual pupil. This may be part of the reason why there has been less conflict than there might have been between the strong and contradictory educational ideologies of individual versus state rights, personal versus national development, liberal versus applied studies.

Another more recent basis for compromise may be identified by an analysis of more contemporary ideological movements. Kedward (1981) suggests that recently there has been a shift in the intellectual climate away from literature and philosophy (old humanists) not this time in favour of the technical and scientific education of the 'new industrialists' but in favour of the 'public educators', 'the new story tellers' and their more empirical concern with popular problems. This latter tradition is equivalent to that in England of Raymond Williams or E.P. Thompson. Although convincing, this argument is belied by the recent rise of the 'New Right' in France and the new individualist Gaullist politics of
influential figures like Alain de Benoist (Johnson, 1980). Thody (1981), in similar vein, questions whether it is 'Vichy' or 'Mitterand' that represents the real France, setting out the view of the currently influential 'Nouveaux Philosophes' and in particular, Bernard-Henri Levy that, far from being the aberration it is popularly regarded as being, the pro-ecclesiastical, elitist Vichy regime of the 1940s which stood for 'travail; famille et patrie' rather than 'liberté', 'égalité' and 'fraternité' actually reflected the real France and is still an ideology which characterises all shades of the left/right spectrum. If this is so, it offers one explanation as to why the most traditional conservative values continue to be a major factor in educational policy-making.

The work of other more left-wing intellectuals however such as Marcuse or Foucault suggests that traditional categories are no longer adequate to explain contemporary developments. As Chapter Three suggested, the change from entrepreneurial to corporate capitalism, to an increasingly 'overloaded state' and to a predominantly technocratic value-orientation has had its effect on educational ideology. Part of this effect has been brought about by the erosion of traditional power bases. There are now several elites - each with its own priorities for education reflecting its own power base. But there is also considerable overlap between the various ecclesiastical, aristocratic, economic and democratic values of these groups, resulting in sometimes quixotic changes of educational policy and militating against any enduring educational consensus. This situation may be seen as both symptom and cause of the deep crisis in French education today in which the increasing impossibility of coming anywhere near a value consensus, or even of pretending one can be covered up only by a pragmatic emphasis on growth (Lynch, 1973).

Prost's analysis, referring to the period immediately before the events of 1968, is similar in tone:
"But as the society, absorbed with worries about its growth, refuses to say clearly on what system of values education should rest, which is a political and philosophical choice, education itself becomes impossible. The tragedy is that these systems which are falling into ruins cannot be replaced by the more practical and functional conceptions which industrial society suggests to the school; prepare the workers, teach them to learn, etc. Economic growth and social integration cannot long pretend to be other than what they are: the means to which society must give ends; they cannot take the place of a system of values and norms which all education requires ..." (Prost, 1968, p. 493) 13

And yet it is possible to find essentially similar criticism written at much earlier periods. The following quotation from Péguy, written in 1904, applies with equal force today and is important in suggesting that educational demoralisation is not unique to the contemporary period.

"When a society cannot teach, it is that that society cannot learn. For all humanity to teach is at root to learn. A society which does not learn is a society which does not like itself; which has no self-respect; and this is precisely the case of modern society." (p 24). 14

The foregoing analyses suggest however that the contemporary crisis is fundamentally different in character because it is not, as hitherto, a crisis of conflicting values. It is rather a crisis of no values in which the hegemony of technological rationality admits of no alternative interpretations of efficiency. There can be no overt value - position now because there is only a consensus of uncertainty (Hanley et al., 1984). To make clear and to justify this assertion it is necessary to examine more detailed trends in contemporary French educational provision and this is the subject of the rest of this chapter.
The Political Context

If the first step in seeking to understand the relationship between education and its societal context is to understand something of the ideological tensions which must continually be balanced in an uneasy compromise between priorities, the second is to trace how these same conflicting priorities find practical expression in the education system and, in particular, in policy making. Clearly these are highly complex and much researched fields and the intention here is only to touch on a number of key aspects central to the analysis in view. Two such aspects are the highly centralised nature of the French state machinery and the relative instability of French politics.

In one sense these two aspects are united in that the very rigidity of centralisation means that a relatively minor reform challenges the whole system - administrative and political. Given that government sees itself as the embodiment of the regime, not just the temporary holder of power, reform can never be just administrative (Hayward, 1974). Nevertheless, the two characteristics - the administrative and the political - find their origins in very different traditions. Centralisation is a French tradition which stretches back through Napoleon, Louis XIV, Richelieu, the Bourbon Kings and ultimately, the Carolingian Empire. Political instability, on the other hand, may be accounted for by the lack of a unified elite and, in particular, constant strife between church and state and between regional interests. It is possible to argue that although national unity was made by the kings, this has not prevented a continuing conflict between different political and religious factions.

One major effect of political instability and of the necessarily large number of coalition governments which has resulted, has been the tendency for educational policy to stray only rarely from a middle-of-
the road position acceptable across a broad spectrum of opinion (Archer, 1979). It is ironic that although most movements for reform have emerged at times of left-wing domination - such as the early 1880s or immediately after the first world war (Cahn, 1972), actual reforms have more often taken place when democracy was at a low ebb as, for example, during the 1940-44 Vichy regime or in the early days of the fifth Republic in 1959. This is because political will is almost never in itself sufficient to bring about a political reality unless there is sufficient popular support for one party to legitimate an essentially autocratic approach to reform. Although it is true, as far as the reality of social life is concerned, that "On ne change pas la société par decret" (Crozier, 1954), there are many instances which show major structural and institutional changes can be formally brought about in this way. The history of the fifth Republic in its earliest stages and the more recent Loi Sauvage on university participation are clear examples. Such radical change can only take place however when government has the will and the security to enforce a decision without waiting for the necessary political consensus to develop, assuming rather it will do so afterwards (Neave, 1981). By contrast, "pour faire une politique de gauche il faut un gouvernement de droite" - the often insecure leftist administrations cannot typically take such radical steps.

Another effect of relatively unstable politics has been the frequency with which Ministers of Education have changed and with them at least a personal and often a political change of direction. This is well illustrated in recent times by the replacement in 1969 after the events of 1968 of M. Faure, author of far-reaching reform legislation, by M. Olivier, whose very different ideals prevented the Faure reforms becoming a reality. Similarly when the furore against some of M. René Haby's proposed reforms prompted President Giscard D'Estaing to replace
him in 1976 with M. Christian Beullac, it did not require an overt change in political direction to ensure that the very different career background and orientation of the two men - the former a career educationist, the latter an industrialist - left much of the spirit, if not the letter, of M. Haby's wide reaching and controversial reform in ruins. More recently still, the advent of a socialist minister of education, M. Alain Savary, has led to more explicit policy changes concerned with providing equal and relevant provision for all children and not simply equality of opportunity as expressed in the 'meritocratic' ideology which has been dominant since the Second World War. 18

It would, however, be quite wrong to see the ebb and flow of priorities in educational provision as merely one of reflecting the balance of party politics. In her comprehensive analysis, Archer (1979) shows clearly how a number of different pressure groups, with their own idiosyncratic currency, are involved in the identification of educational priorities. Particularly important historically has been the church, the original provider of schooling, bastion of traditional values and implacably opposed to central control by an explicitly secular state. The changing fortunes in this battle are briefly summarised by Karady (1979) who identifies the authoritarian phase of the Restoration, the Second Empire and the last phase of the Second Republic as being against state monopoly of education, whereas the July Monarchy, the early Second Republic and the liberal Second Empire as being for it.

The bitter struggle between church and state for ideological control of the content of education and by the church for formal authority within the state system is still today one of the most delicate issues facing the Minister of Education. Although the 1959 Loi Debré did a great deal to provide a mutually acceptable relationship between the mainly Catholic
private schools and the state system, further legislation is currently impending on this issue. What appears now to be a political battle between the étatist left and the individualist right is rooted in a much older conflict between republican and traditional (religious) ideologies and hence, between different notions of equality.

There are thus no neat correspondences between ideological and political positions since these merge and contradict each other according to the issue. The activities of the various teacher unions both now and in the past illustrate this well. It is often difficult to predict or understand the stance taken by a particular teachers' union on any one issue. The widespread opposition among teacher unions to the Haby reforms of 1965 provides a good example of this (Duclaud-Williams, 1982) when in general terms, teachers found grounds for rejecting as a 'cosmetic palliative' something they had been fighting for for decades. This must be understood in terms of the claims of rival ideologies further complicated by more mundane considerations of conditions of service. As such it reinforces the theoretical argument of Chapter Four that any analysis which is based on, rather than merely illustrated by, empirical reality must reject any simple determinism of cultural and economic reproduction and address the reality of "contradictions, conflicts, mediations and especially resistances, as well as reproduction" (Apple, 1982, p. 24).

But if it is important to be alive to such ideological contradictions and their effects at the political level, it is just as important, though more easily ignored, to recognise their operation through the nominally neutral hierarchy of government administration. Indeed as Pickles (1974) suggests, 'politics' must be understood as the complex interpenetration of formal structures and political activity which cannot be divided. Clearly the tradition of centralisation is crucial in this respect, the
ideological cornerstone of "the One and Indivisible French Republic" (Hayward, 1974). Yet despite the fact that the ethos of centralisation combines the powerful and traditional forces of rational efficiency, equality and fraternity, it is nevertheless increasingly being challenged both in principle and in its laborious practice as strengthening rival ideals of personal and local need, freedom and efficiency, challenge tradition. The implications of this contemporary pressure for change in the traditional modes of systemic control are a central theme of the analysis of this thesis, as they give rise to new, often more pervasive modes of systemic control which reflect the changing basis of legitimation. At the present time, the education system is having to respond to the tension created by, on the one hand, the economy's need for careful manpower planning, and hence strong central control, and, on the other, the powerful political and professional lobby for greater local freedom. According to Weber (1947), this is a characteristic problem of the modern political order of Western capitalism, which requires a reconciliation between widespread demands for democratisation, itself a product of mass enfranchisement, and the consequent need to 'woo' the masses and the location of real power, not in parliamentary democracy, but with the leaders of these bureaucratised political parties which are themselves a response to this same increase in political activity of the masses (quoted by Giddens, 1972, p. 51).

The Administrative Context

The celebrated centralisation of French education is both a major cause of and at the same time, something of a solution to the paradoxes with which it is beset. Agblemagnon, quoted by Perrin (1979), suggests "what has come out of our debates is, above all, a process - that of administration", but a process which assumes, nevertheless, a consensus
which is, in reality, lacking "the administration's problem is perhaps having to manage contradiction where the logic of that administration excludes any contradiction" (Ardoino, quoted by Agblemagnon, 1979). 21

The politics of the supposedly neutral administration of the education system may be addressed at two levels. First the interests which were or are embodied in the notion of centralisation itself and second, the political interests which govern the reality of the control of education in practice. Certainly the French were not slow to recognise either the power which lay in the conditioning of young minds which control over the education system provided (vaughan and archer, 1971), nor that a centralised system could be made particularly efficient in this respect. 22

Under the 'ancien régime', schooling had been important in helping to provide for the intellectual homogeneity of the different classes. "Rationality was for the privileged; for the poor there was religion with faith the guarantee of popular passivity" (vaughan and archer, 1971, p. 118).

"By moral and religious instruction, it already foresees a different order of needs, just as real as the others and which providence has placed in the heart of the poor just as in the blessed of this world, for the dignity of human life and the protection of social order." (guizot, 1833) 23

But despite the traditional utility of the church for this purpose, it was at the same time a threat to the secular predominance of the state. "From 1815 the battle of the church and the bourgeoisie as to who should act as proxy for the masses in deciding the shape of their meagre educational provision" has been constant (lynch, 1973, p. 8). Small French communities were split for more than a century with the priest as symbolic head of one side and the village school teacher as head of the other despite the alternating political fortunes of the church throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. 24
The post Revolution struggle between church and state for control of the education system was an ideological struggle which increasingly fuelled the political desire for centralisation on the part of secular interests. As industrialisation helped to erode the traditional control of church and family in the 19th century, this concern was further strengthened by the need to find a new moral force. Thus in the 1880s Jules Ferry relieved teachers of clerical inspection in favour of government control of curricula, textbooks, examinations and the appointment of teachers. Elementary teachers from the time of Guizot onwards (1833) were subject to severe discipline in training so that they might subsequently enforce severe discipline in schools, thereby ensuring that the 'masses' grew up with a proper respect for legitimate authority (Zeldin, 1971, p. 161).

It is not surprising that "the parties that contended in turn for domination of the educational system regarded the possession of this huge state edifice as the principal spoils of the victor" (Archer, 1979). The church's struggle against the secularisation which was the increasingly explicit policy of centralisation (Hans, 1958) took place within the context of another economic struggle between the bourgeois and the working classes (Cahn, 1972). The combatants were slow to recognise that "with the schools system [the state] had brought into being a monster it could not control ... like the bureaucracy, they did not just serve the state but made their own preservation and expansion a primary goal" (Zeldin, 1971, p. 161). "... Comme la cosmogonie de Ptolémée plaçait la Terre au centre du tout, nos modernes administrateurs mettent le monopole d'État au coeur de l'enseignement" (Laurent, 1980, p. 30).

The establishment of an educational monopoly was clearly the motivation behind Napoleon's educational innovations. Every commune was
to provide a school" (Vaughan and Archer, 1971). In 1805 Napoleon wrote "il n'y aura pas d'état politique fixé, si il n'y a pas un corps enseignant avec des principes fixés". Thus in 1808 Napoleon instituted the Université - an attempt at a state monopoly of educational provision which included the key areas of teacher provision and training, schools, qualifications and the curriculum. The intention was that expressed in article 38 of Titre V of the Décreté of 17th March 1808, to form "des citoyens attachés à leur religion, à leur prince, à leur patrie, et à leur famille". Later when Guizot came in 1833 to pass the law that instituted elementary education on a mass scale, he told the prefects "we have tried to create in every commune a moral force which the Government can use at need" (quoted by Zeldin, 1971, Vol. II, p. 150). The creation of 'académies' in 1808 and later, in 1854, their subdivision into départements, each administered through a centrally appointed official and a series of representative councils, provided the centralised bureaucratic structure that endures to this day. The structure was further strengthened with regard to education by the creation in 1852 of Inspecteurs Généraux to advise the Grand Maitre of the Université.

In his concept of a bureaucracy of professional educators charged with the administration of a clearly prescribed educational programme, Napoleon was drawing on a model inspired by the Jesuits and by the 18th century Savoyan Kings of Turin (Haus, 1958). Recognising that the school had a potentially powerful role to play in cementing and encouraging nationalism, (Barnard, 1969), Napoleon asserted that schools must be of not in the State - "as the state is one, its schools must be the same everywhere" (Liard, 1994). Thus "monopoly was the first law of the system: it did not tolerate the least competition" (Crozier, 1970).

This logic of educational provision was borrowed from the much
earlier political legitimation for centralisation which had underpinned
the centralised control of the monarchy since the decline of feudalism —
namely that in a democracy, the locus of power must be the central
government who are elected to represent the 'true will' of the population
(Halls, 1976).

At the beginning of the nineteenth century "On the continent the
bureaucratic state was already in being and nothing more was required
than the transference to other hands of the pre-existent, machinery
and its employment for novel purposes" (Halevy, 1960). Thus it is
important to recognise that "the development in France of a rationalised,
articulated, bureaucratised educational system and the absence of such
a system in England is therefore a special case of more fundamental
differences in the development of institutions in both countries"
(Laqueur, 1973, p. 60) — despite the common pressures to which each
was subject, as already outlined.

Equally, the patriarchal fervour inspired by the Revolution and
later, the advent of Napoleon, created both the idea and the reality
of a centralised education system. Such a system was highly desirable
in terms of the expressive order, helping to build a strong nationalism
as a basis for state and hence economic stability (Barnard, 1969) and
diverting potential hostility abroad and away from the internal class-
based dissatisfactions and disunity which would otherwise, under
capitalism, inevitably grow. At an instrumental level too, as Karady
(1970) points out, the centralisation of education made possible its
subjugation to the state in direct conflict to the traditional domination
of the church. Hence it made possible a new rationale for social order
and control more in keeping with changes in the economy. The battle
over educational control was, however, long and bitter (Vaughan and
Archer, 1971), principally because it represented a fundamental and
irreversible shift in the instrumental order (Lynch, 1971) - the basis for the allocation of social roles as well as in the legitimating ideology. In both respects, educational assessment was to play a vital part.

The Assessment of Competence

In the battle over control, assessment procedures had a crucial role to play in helping to reinforce the pursuit of state rather than church inspired notions of competence, and, in so doing, had a major influence on curriculum content. It was not the provision per se of schooling for the masses which was significant. It was the changing content of that schooling.

"For long the church schools dispensed education as though it were a mystic initiation into sacred truths ... traditional Catholic teaching was designed not to awaken the child but to teach him that desire could never be satisfied, except in the next world" (Zeldin, 1971, Vol. II, p. 101).

Examinations made possible and indeed essential a different emphasis in schooling in which, though even many liberals and intellectuals continued with the conservative and clerical interests to support 'religion for the masses and rationality for the privileged" (Vaughan and Archer, 1971), the growing importance of formal qualifications and their changing character belied this belief in practice. The qualifications associated with entering into teacher-training and qualifying as a teacher provide a good illustration of this.

As early as 1793 the idea of formally certifying competence may be identified in the establishment of an official certificate in civic virtue as a requirement for all instituteurs in the 'écoles centrales'. From 1816 however elementary teachers had to have a 'brevet' qualification but the certificate in civic virtue was no longer required. Instead the
model of the recently instituted Baccalauréat exam (1806) and the
tenuous scholarship system set up by Napoleon in 1808 was increasingly
to be the source of assumptions about what was to be taught and how
it should be tested. In 1831 the demise of the 'certificat d'instruction
religieuse' marked a further stage in the changing content of schooling.
Although pressure for this change came as much from anti-clericalism
as from any explicit desire to 'modernise' schooling, the precise form
of the emerging curriculum was as much a reflection of what was
assessable as it was of what was relevant. Indeed, assessment procedures
have consistently been an important weapon in the state's struggle against
clerical interests in education since not only do they not easily lend
themselves to reinforcing religious and affective aspects of the
curriculum but also the very existence of coveted national certificates
over which the state has consistently held a monopoly has forced church
schools very largely to accept the state-determined curriculum.

Thus at the very earliest stages of mass educational provision,
assessment procedures were already playing a highly significant part
in introducing those features characteristic of schooling in an industrial
society with which it is associated: the formal attestation of competence,
and the replacement of the traditional, holisitic concept of education
as being concerned with both mind and character, with the more limited,
predominantly academic, curriculum which, being organised into subjects
and levels, is amenable to formal written, and to a lesser extent, oral
examination. Whereas in the late eighteenth century it was the non-
cognitive criteria of character and virtue that were paramount in
deciding who was fit to provide elementary education for the masses,
by the early nineteenth century this emphasis had been replaced by a
concern with cognitive competences as assessed in the 'brevet'.

But these changes in the certification procedures for elementary
school teachers did not simply reflect and reinforce changing notions of competence and the appropriate content of schooling, they also heralded a changing basis of social control. In the ideological battle between church and state, examinations were to prove a decisive weapon, not only in establishing academic rather than spiritual criteria as the paramount goal of education, but also in introducing control based on the idea of a qualification-based meritocracy rather than the ascriptive criteria of birth and breeding. One example of this process was the establishment of the Certificat d'Études Primaires as a national certificate in 1880. Not only had the London International Exhibition of 1862 convinced the French - as it had the English - of the need for new skills to be taught. It was also necessary at that time to find some means of retaining children in elementary school. Thus in 1867 the then Minister of Education, Duruy, established a primary leaving exam so that the lure of formal qualifications would meet both these needs. In so doing he also provided a significant stimulus to the idea of a qualification-based meritocracy.

For the elite, too, similar changes were taking place. The establishment of the Baccalauréat in 1806 meant that, as in England, what had formerly been primarily a residential and informal 'stage' of education for the elite became part of the bureaucratic structure of the Université. The 'Maitrise es Arts' was now to mark a specific grade in the Université, regulated by an examination to be known as the 'Baccalauréat'. As Frémy and Frémy (1978) suggest, the Baccalauréat examination which marked the first 'grade' of the Napoleonic Université was a direct legacy from the orders of chivalry of feudal times when it marked the stage of apprenticeship before the attainment of a particular social role.
"As in the middle ages, the whole of society was regulated on the basis of a feudal hierarchy, the idea of the young knight came to be applied more broadly to refer to all those about to start on a career. Monks who were not yet priests were called 'bacheliers' [bachelors!], a young unmarried man, an apprentice studying a craft and lastly a theologian or a student who had achieved the first grade of the university. The word 'bachelier' is now no longer used with this one exception." (Frémy and Frémy, 1978) 28

This influence of feudal bases for social organisation on the emerging structure of the exam-based qualifications which were to replace them in the new social order of an industrialised society is also manifest in the widespread use of the term 'brevet' for lower and more applied qualifications. From 1816 prospective elementary school teachers had to sit for the 'brevet' examination. The word 'brevet' - which came to be widely used for such examinations - incorporates the same feudal idea of apprenticeship and the attestation of a particular level of competence. Traditionally the brevet was a royally-given right to an apprenticeship:

"An act, taken before a lawyer, by which an apprentice and a master made a mutual commitment, the apprentice to learn an art or a craft, the master to teach him, during a certain period of time and under certain agreed conditions" (Cherval, 1874, p. 5.) 29

The ideology implicit in this choice of feudal terms to label the different rungs of the new educational hierarchy points to the way in which, during the 19th century, social status became increasingly bound up with educational qualifications for all but the very few remaining aristocrats whose status was still essentially of feudal origin.

In particular, in a century of social and political upheaval characterised by the growing power of the bourgeoisie, the anti-clerical movement and anti-monarchical republicanism (Archer, 1979), the Baccalaureat and to a lesser extent other forms of certification played an increasingly crucial role as the arbiter of membership of the
increasingly powerful bourgeois class - a new sort of elite whose status depended on academic qualifications, confirmed by attendance at the Université faculties and the more professional Grandes Écoles and military colleges.

As Vaughan and Archer (1971) suggest,

"The role of the baccalauréat epitomised administrative control over the testing of merit and constituted a demarcation line between secondary and higher education. It also symbolised the social bias of the system towards the bourgeoisie" (Vaughan and Archer, p. 143)

The way in which formal qualifications continue to provide for the reproduction of the bourgeoisie has been analysed in detail by Bourdieu (1974) in terms of his concept of 'cultural capital'. Although the most prestigious schools in France are state rather than private, Bourdieu's work shows clearly how the internal processes of schooling, and particularly of selection, were increasingly oriented in favour of the reproduction of the elite rather than constituting a genuine meritocracy. The school system was designed to favour bourgeois 'cultural capital' and experience, so that as well as his practical problems, the working class child had to demonstrate a good deal more ability and tenacity reach the same point in the education system as the child from a more favoured background. "At every stage of their school careers the individuals who survive the system exhibit less and less the career characteristics which have eliminated the other members of the category" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1976, p. 82).30 Although the French did not develop an elite, private school system equivalent to the English public schools, the success of different lycées in preparing students for the Baccalauréat and the entrance examinations for the Grandes Écoles continues to reinforce inequality in the system.

The ideology of national homogeneity which was one of the first
principles of the Université meant also that the Université clung to the principle that all educated Frenchmen should share a common culture and was opposed to allowing pupils a choice of subjects (Anderson, 1975). Attempts to introduce even a minimal degree of specialisation between classics and science - such as that of the early 1850s largely failed. 31

"By 1912 the Baccalauréat had become the barrier which separated the bourgeoisie from the population as a whole, but it had also become the leveller which erased distinctions within that class" (Goblet, 1967).

It had also become of major importance both in influencing the way in which the centralised curriculum objectives were defined and in helping to make those objectives a reality in the schools.

Assessment in the Regulation of Competition

Gradually, however, as in England, the emphasis on examinations to provide for standardised curricula and the attestation of competence gave way during the nineteenth century to an increasing emphasis on their role in the regulation of competition for places within the new, more flexible social order. With the expansion of educational provision in the twentieth century, this role now predominates. Whilst both England and France are facing very similar pressures in this respect, both having provided for a 'comprehensive' secondary school for example, England is still pursuing the long-standing tradition of external examinations as the main basis for the regulation of competition and the control of disaffection. Attempts at radical reform such as the abolition of 16+ examinations have largely come to nothing, such change as there has been being confined largely to issues of administrative efficiency and the wider provision of traditional 'forms of examining in response to structural changes in the labour market.' 32 Why this should
be so is discussed in Chapter Six. In France, by contrast, pressures for greater democracy and opportunity in educational provision have resulted in a radical restructuring of the traditionally highly selective and elitist educational system, the commitment to comprehensivisation going far beyond the institution of a common school, as has largely been the case in England, to include significant changes in curriculum, internal school organisation and, not least, assessment procedures. Notable among these last has been the virtual abolition of all public examinations below the Baccalauréat level together with, officially at least, the regular promotion tests during the course of schooling and their replacement with continuous assessment by teachers. The Baccalauréat, too, whilst still a formal public examination, has been subject to major reorganisation and there is growing pressure for it also to become an award based on continuous assessment. (Jessel, 1980). But the recent Prost report on the lycées (1983) has stopped well short of abolition in its recommendations for Baccalauréat reform, suggesting instead a new, simpler organisation for the exam with largely local papers aimed at certifying "a certain number of competences linked to "une caractéristique référential pour chaque type d'apprentissage"" (p. 146), and based to a considerable extent on continuous assessment. This is the way Prost suggests of overcoming the well-known subject and geographical variations in the supposedly uniform 'Bac' without provoking the hostility which would result from any attempt to remove one of the last bastions of tradition in French education.  

Examination reform at 16+

One of the most notable attempts at reforming French education in recent decades was that of René Haby in the mid-seventies when he was
Minister of Education. With the explicit support of the Giscardian government, Haby’s measures, in keeping with the prevailing educational ideology, were designed to make the education system more democratic and egalitarian and less explicitly, to go some way towards reconciling this ideology with a modern economy’s demand for differentially-trained, vocationally-oriented, school-leavers.

Previously, in direct contradiction with the strong nineteenth century republican tradition of ‘égalité’, the French education system had been dominated by selection hurdles – ‘les compositions’, ‘les devoirs mensuels surveillés’, determining progress – or lack of it – from year to year and the phenomenon of ‘le redoublement’ – repeating the year; examinations for selection for various kinds of secondary schooling; and a range of formal, exam-based qualifications. Over the last fifteen years, this traditional pattern has been overtaken, as in many other countries, by an apparently strong political commitment to egalitarianism which has resulted in the institution of comprehensive schooling up to sixteen (la collège) now with mixed-ability teaching in the first four years of secondary education (since October 1980) and movements towards a common curriculum now even at lycée (post 16) level.

The need for change as a result of the pressures for greater opportunity and the disaffection caused by early failure in selection hurdles is well-described by Fraser (1971):

“a system that depends upon impersonal assessment of achievement, that has only recently introduced more personal and continuous evaluation; that needs to ‘mark’ precisely and that must therefore set a syllabus and questions that can be reduced to measurable data. The curriculum is taught abstractedly, verbally, precisely. The machinery of examinations needs constant maintenance and minor adjustment; but seems not to be able to cope with the pressures of large numbers of aspiring, articulate students, conscious of their power” (p. 167).

What has evolved to try to meet the dual need for more relevant
curriculum content and for some means of controlling 'bottom-up' pressure from the inevitable disaffection caused by too many aspiring students is an assessment procedure which provides for a very gradual 'cooling-out' kind of selection (Clark, 1962, 1982). This return to what is essentially an up-dated version of the traditional 'sponsored mobility' (Turner, 1960) approach provided for by selective schooling is highly significant for pupils but it is also significant in substantially adding to teachers' power. As one teacher suggested, "French education is centred on the syllabus whereas the English is centred on exams. Assessment is an integral part of the French system but the English works better ... we are now trying to make the French more informal ...".37 The form this increasingly 'informal' assessment is taking is that of 'orientation'.

Given the widespread assumption (if not the reality)38 among policy-makers and public alike of tight central control of curriculum and pedagogy and the removal, with comprehensive educational provision, of the necessity for formal selection hurdles, it was relatively easy to abolish the traditional apparatus of regular tests and formal public examinations during the course of compulsory schooling. Thus not only were pupils no longer subjected to regular, formal class tests, the 16+ examination, 'the Brevet d'Études du Premier Cycle' was itself transformed from a pass/fail selection device to a teacher-assessed award based on an average of class marks and achieved by the majority of pupils (Dundas-Grant, 1975). Although some pupils can and do still opt to take the 'Brevet des Collèges' as an examination - either because they dispute the continuous assessment or need it for some special purpose - for the majority 'failure' is at least nominally, a thing of the past.

The prevailing rationale is well expressed by René Haby's successor as Minister of Éducation, Christian Beullac, and is reminiscent
of the English 1944 Education Act, that no educational path should represent failure, the paths being rather equal but different:

"What must be avoided above all is 'orientation' by failure ... No career should be seen as failure, but there are careers which correspond with diverse dispositions ... moreover orientation cannot be the product of the school alone. It must be the result of a collaboration between, first and foremost, the children concerned, the parents who are responsible for them, and the school." 39

The idea of orientation originally dates back to Jean Zay's plan in 1937 in which he appeased the powerful egalitarian interests which had been growing since the end of the First World War 40 by instituting experimental 'classes d'orientation' in which pupils would be directed to 'classical', 'modern' and 'technical' streams in the first two years of secondary education during which time they could be observed and re-directed as appropriate. As in England, the prevailing assumption at this time of fixed and innate capabilities provided a rationale for a continuing process of educational sorting whilst allowing the abolition of what was clearly a formally divisive system. It was not until the Fouchet reforms of 1959 however that this idea was actually put into practice in the division in 1963, of the junior secondary college curriculum into an initial two year 'cycle d'observation' and a subsequent two year 'cycle d'orientation' (Pautler, 1981a),

"during the first cycle of secondary education, senior teachers and educational guidance specialists are required to take account of the pupils' abilities - to map out each pupil's academic career in the context of the class he attends, the whole group of classes existing at the same level, and the resources of the school, college district or educational administrative area" (OECD, 1970, p. 41).

Since in practice pupils tended to continue in the stream (filières) in which they were initially put, this reform did little to increase opportunity or reduce disaffection in the lower streams. It only justified the vain attempt to make all three streams follow a common
syllabus. In practice 'C' stream pupils were so frequently required to repeat the year's work, they had little hope of ever 'catching up'.

Building on plans and consultations begun during the Pompidou presidency under Minister of Education, Joseph Fontanet (Duclaud-Williams, 1982), Haby proposed a much more subtle solution to the problem. Such streaming was to be replaced by mixed ability classes pursuing a common core curriculum with continuous, individual pupil orientation linked to the new structure of collaborative, democratic councils involving the whole range of participants in the educational process and, not least, pupils and parents. Thus part of Haby's reform included a proposal for 'orientation' to be based on group recommendation - in which the vagaries of individual teachers (and hence the exposure of individual teachers to excessive pressures) would be guarded against by 'orientation' based on the 'conseil d'orientation' which would discuss with the pupil and responsible personnel the recommendations of the 'conseil des professeurs'. This procedure requires that throughout a pupil's school life vocational guidance is to be based on continuous observation by his teachers, recorded in a cumulative dossier. Regular meetings are to be held between the teachers, a guidance counsellor (conseiller d'orientation), a school doctor and psychologist, and representatives of parents. Such meetings are to be held every year, with two major ones taking place at the end of the second and last years at collège, when decisions must be made on the basis of the 'dossier' as to the type of studies the pupil will subsequently undertake.

During the Spring term before these meetings, the parents are invited to express their wishes concerning the guidance of the child; taking account of these wishes the council draws up and submits to the parents a proposed programme of future studies or training for their
child. The parents' final views are considered by the guidance council which sits during the summer term; it includes the head and several other teachers, one of whom is the child's class teacher, a doctor, school social welfare officer and guidance counsellor.

When the parents feel the decision of the guidance council is unacceptable an appeal committee, including the 'inspecteur d'académie' examines the case. If their advice still differs from the parents' wishes an examination is set for the child and the results assessed by a committee external to the college. Despite the rhetoric of partnership, however, in reality it is teachers who play the determining role in pupil orientation through their classwork assessments, the recommendations of the Conseil de Classe and the powerful Conseil des Professeurs. 43

Thus the 'orientation' procedure appears to solve the dual problems of selection and the control of pupil and parental frustration at a time when public opinion is still strongly egalitarian and democratic. The reality of this trend is, however, rather different. It is not simply that, as we know well in Britain, 'equal but different' is at best a naïve hope, but more that this form of allocation to variable opportunities is a much more pervasive and insidious form of social engineering and control than overt selection (see also Ranson, 1984). If formal examinations are arbitrary and unreliable the results are at least open to debate since all parties are aware that both pupil and examiner are bringing to bear their subjective personal perspectives. Orientation is based on the idea of a norm. It is a measure of conformity to this norm as adjudicated by a corporate decision which, if it prevents the operation of individual prejudice, nevertheless disguises value judgement under a bland, objective, technocratic facade in which the individual is powerless to challenge the norm. 44 Given the immense amount of evidence available of the bias, particularly class bias, inherent in teachers' assessment of
their pupils, the 'orientation' movement is likely to provide a new and increasingly rigorous basis for the identification of an elite since orientation towards vocational education is six times more frequent among the working class.46

At the same time it is likely to ensure, too, a relatively novel way of making central control a reality through the national provision of detailed curricular objectives which are thus translated into evaluation criteria. The co-existence of this trend with an already centralised system is doubly significant in the contemporary utilitarian climate, in that tracks or orientations which correspond most to society's current economic needs can receive most emphasis; the number of places available in each type of course can thus be determined on a sort of 'numerus clausus' idea, this restriction of opportunity being arguably a good deal more significant than the actual content of such courses. This is explicitly recognised in the 1983 Prost Report.

"In the first place, the criteria chosen are uniform. Orientation rarely takes into account pupils' centres of interest and the diversity of their aptitudes. The two major criteria are their results in mathematics and their age (as we have already indicated). In second place, orientation is frequently transformed into a procedure of practicality. Pupils must be divided up between the sections that exist, according to the space available in different establishments. This bureaucratic procedure, together with the rigidity of the learning programme, engenders in families a feeling of helplessness in the face of a blind technostructure. In the third place, it [orientation] constitutes a vast fragmented distillation which divides up pupils between streams which are strongly bounded and hierarchic as a function of dominant social models: supremacy of training in abstract science, less consideration for technical and professional training ..." (p. 134).

Thus although "the principle of 'orientation' is at the heart of all the reforms of education carried out since 1959 by the Vth Republic" (Rothera, 1968), and although "left-dominated teachers' unions have officially been in favour of greater equality, particularly since the
influx of young teachers after 1968, they have fought tooth and nail against the proposals" (Stevens, 1980) as they have against the similarly-inspired institution of a common-core syllabus and mixed ability classes.

Some of this hostility is simply resistance to the practical problems posed by the new procedures. Many teachers resent the additional burden it places on them and their exposure to criticism as well as their almost total lack of preparation and training for this task. Not surprisingly the result has been that many dossiers are not filled in with more than rudimentary information and the single 'conseiller d'orientation' in a college has neither the time nor the information to give a considered response to each child. The 'orientation' is thus as often as not merely the recognition of a choice already made, often by default.

As well as these 'professional' misgivings is the profound hostility felt by many radical groups such as the left-wing 'École et Famille' pressure group whose opposition was one of the main reasons for the government having to back down on the issue of computerising the dossiers.

Such groups interpret the Ministry rhetoric:

"For the whole of his school life he will be the object of continuous assessment on the part of his educators which will allow teaching to be better adapted to his needs, will help him to know himself and to prepare well for his future school and professional career choice" (ONISEP, 1979, p. 10),

not as benign diagnostic assessment and educational guidance but as a source of social control. Not only is 'assessment' a finer means of judgement than exams, "Orientation is submitted to, not chosen". The individual is powerless to resist the identification which is the end product of a continuous and benign surveillance.

There is too a gap between law and reality over the notion of choice of educational paths since future orientation tends to be predicted by
primary schooling, by social group and by teachers' decisions. In some
rural areas too, organisational factors further limit the potential
choice. As Herzlich (1980) suggests:

"Thus, for the most part, orientation functions as a
mechanism of successive exclusions to the detriment of
less favoured social groups ... one says what
one wants: they say if one can ..."51

or, as the Le Grand Report puts it, 'être orienté' now means to be put
into a 'short' (i.e. less prestigious) cycle and a lycée d'enseignement
professionel for vocational training. It is rooted in failure rather
than success and its image is of arbitrary manipulation (p. 135). Thus
many such youngsters are 'cooled out' before they reach the stage of any
public examination,52 and many more, it is argued, are forced to make
career decisions before they feel able to decide. Great reliance is
placed on the results of 'objective' tests at the end of troisième (the end of the compulsory stage of schooling) which, when combined in the
dossier with the orientation counsellor's report, provides the principal
basis for subsequent educational and career choice despite what research
has revealed to be their low predictive power.53 Those who choose and
are chosen to continue in the formal school system by entering the
'classes de seconde' of a lycée are accompanied by their 'dossier
scolaire' which continues to play an important role in determining the
choice of Baccalauréat option available and, in many cases, eventual
selection for a particular course of higher education.

The long-term significance of an assessment system in which the
arbitrary power of the individual teacher is replaced by the benign and
scientific efficiency of an impersonal norm which is simply operated by
teachers has yet to be understood or even recognised.54 Berger55 suggests
that in French education 'control' - assessment based on impersonal norms -
is replacing 'evaluation' - the personal assessment of an individual's
value. Furthermore, he suggests that the growth of 'orientation' as the dominant vehicle of that 'control' is part of a more general movement towards 'corporate management' in education in which the traditional, personal authority of local officials, inspectors and teachers is being replaced by the impersonal regulation of statutory obligations and mechanised administration.

Crucial to this development is a computer-based facility for collecting and coordinating a whole range of information about the functioning of the education system on a national basis. Thus, if 'orientation' is part of a policy of 'democratisation', it is also, and more significantly, closely connected with this 'rationalisation' of educational administration and hence control.

"Orientation leads almost inevitably to computer-based administration." If continuous assessment in relation to detailed, nationally prescribed norms of performance eliminates the injustices of the caprice of an individual teacher and the variations in the exam papers set by the various Départements, it is by the same token more irresistible. Moreover, it is also a means of making a practical reality of the tradition of imposing curricular and pedagogic norms which was hitherto the responsibility of the inspector and thus represents a shift from 'process' to 'product' evaluation.

Thus, the assessment 'dossier' - the elaborate profile which follows a pupil throughout his or her school career - combined with a series of 'orientation' decisions taken by a pupil's teachers in the periodic meetings of the Conseil de Classe, carries into the classroom the same assumptions of scientific rationality which characterise all aspects of corporate management. That is to say that the norms of performance chosen are taken to be in some sense absolute and given the pseudo-legitimacy of science and not the values of a particular group and time. As authority
within the education system is thereby dispersed, control becomes a composite and increasingly impersonal phenomenon, impossible to pin down and hence to resist. If what is to be taught to whom, when, how and why, can only be answered by reference to particular values, disguising such pedagogical and curricular decisions under the cloak of an apparently objective, scientific assessment is perhaps the most effective form of educational (and thus social?) control yet developed. Thus where traditionally assessment represented the personal and possibly arbitrary judgement of an individual, it now tends to disguise both these under an appearance of conformity with rational norms. When the then Minister of Education, M. Haby, instituted the computerisation of pupils' dossiers as part of his major reform of the education system in 1975, there was sufficient public outcry for this practice to be abolished shortly afterwards. But although there was public disquiet at this very obvious step towards 'l'informatisation', the potential significance of the power of continuous cumulative group assessment to provide for both 'process-evaluation' based control of curriculum and pedagogy (by the central prescription of objectives) and the 'product-evaluation' of pupil performance is not yet generally perceived. This itself further enhances that potential. The 1982 Le Grand Report drew attention to some of the problems with orientation for example, pupils' lack of self-knowledge and of the range of possible employment opportunities which Le Grand suggests, often makes it difficult for pupils to choose the most suitable career path even where appropriate provision for this exists, which is itself relatively rare. The Report urges the introduction of a personal 'tutorial' system in the collège which can take over the existing guidance function of orientation, confining the latter to a single summative evaluation at the end of 'troisième'. This certificate is the statement, in the form of a profile, of the objectives achieved by the pupil. It is
the only point at which there is a summative evaluation." Although this proposal has provoked considerable opposition amongst teachers in particular and thus is unlikely to be implemented, it does suggest that French educational thinking is currently moving in a very similar direction to that in England in giving increased emphasis to pastoral care and pupil-teacher dialogue in 'formative' evaluation which culminates at the point of school-leaving, in a positive, summative 'profile' report which provides a comprehensive statement of the pupil's school achievements. It is too early to predict what the effect of such a move might be, but previous experience suggests that however disguised, the use of school qualifications for selection will still create a sense of failure for many pupils with all the problems that this causes.

Nevertheless, the 'orientation' procedure neatly solves several problems at once. First it provides a means of selection and of controlling pupil and parent frustration at a time when public opinion is still strong egalitarian and democratic. Secondly, it provides for greater 'product evaluation' control of teachers by clearing away some of the traditional assessment bureaucracy and making teachers directly and visibly responsible for their actions. Thirdly, it allows for a more technocratic, depersonalised approach to educational administration and more efficient 'process evaluation'. Fourthly, it provides for the most effective sort of assessment control of teachers - a combination of 'process' and 'product' evaluation in which the central prescription of curriculum norms is linked to the formal processes of pupil assessment.

For teachers, the effect of these four, closely interrelated processes which nominally increase their power is likely to be the removal of much of the traditional impotency of central government whilst giving them a quite new vulnerability to consumer pressure. Teachers in France are thus likely to find themselves moving steadily nearer the top of the
vertical axis in Figure 4.2 (Chapter Four), becoming increasingly more like their English colleagues than hitherto. The significance of these changes is taken up in more detail in Chapter Seven.

**Public Examinations and Selection for Higher Education: The Baccalauréat**

The explicit policy commitment to wider, more vocationally-oriented provision which has characterised French educational policy in the last two decades has resulted in major changes in both school and higher education organisation. These changes, I have suggested, are reflected in changing assessment policies and practices, most notably in the progressive devaluation of formal public examinations in favour of the use of certification and selection based on teachers' assessments in the form of school records. So far the post 16 lycées, in which students study for the Baccalauréat examination, have been, officially at least, largely untouched by these movements except for the significant increase in the numbers of pupils now attending them. Yet, given that the Baccalauréat exam automatically provides the matriculation requirement for university entrance, universities would have gradually become overwhelmed with applications without some means of selection in addition to the attestation of a particular standard as provided by the Baccalauréat. In 1900, for example, only 10% of young people obtained the Bac II or its equivalent - some 5,717 people. In 1976, by contrast, the number was between 35 and 40% - 204,480. Numbers in higher education have increased proportionally. Where there were 20,000 students in higher education in the 1950s, in 1981 there were approximately one million. At the same time the level and number of entrants to the pinnacles of the education system - the Grandes Écoles - has hardly increased so that whereas the proportion of 'top places' to candidates was 1 in 20 in 1900,
in 1985 it is likely to be 1 in 1,200.

The increasing over-subscription to university has mainly been controlled by selective examinations during the higher education stage itself, and the creation of alternative Instituts Universitaires Techniques (IUT), which, like the polytechnics in England, have prevented a dangerous build-up of excessive competition without threatening the traditional bases for high status. In addition, the 'cooling out' process based on a programme of monthly gradings and yearly promotion tests have resulted in a considerable number of pupils being subjected to 'redoublement' so that only those reaching the required standard have been able to aspire to study for the Baccalauréat. But one effect of the increasing democratisation of secondary education has been to increase the numbers of pupils in the lycées (now confined to the post sixteen, Baccalauréat-preparation stage). There are now signs of increasing pressure for a greater measure of democratisation at this stage of schooling also and, in particular, reform of the Baccalauréat. There is considerable government concern about the over-academic nature of many of the specialisms pursued and the over-recruitment to particular prestige subject areas which has little to do with future career intentions. Associated with this is increasing public concern over the declining market value of the Baccalauréat overall.

Recent attempts to reform the Baccalauréat examination to bring it more in line with the reality of mass secondary education date back to the Fouchet reforms of 1963 which attempted to break the hold of the university professors who had been given control of the Baccalauréat and hence considerable influence over the secondary school curriculum in the 1950s (Goblot, 1967). Fouchet introduced a programme of 'modernisation from above' in which an element of 'streaming' in secondary and higher education would differentiate between an upper stratum of modern
PAGINATION AS IN ORIGINAL
professionals and a middle stratum of educated semi-professionals - the bulk of Baccalauréat holders. From this reform developed one of the most significant trends affecting the Baccalauréat in the last two decades - its increasing differentiation into subject specialisms of different status.

To try to overcome this problem Haby proposed as part of his reforms a scheme for postponing specialisation in the Baccalauréat. His idea was to return to the traditional model of a two part Baccalauréat, the first, more general part to be taken at the end of the second year in the lycée and the second part at the end of the third and final year during which students would be more specialist, studying only four subjects, three in depth. The intention was to encourage higher education institutions to require passes in particular subjects and so broaden the number of desirable Baccalauréat specialisms, emphasising content rather than status in the subjects pursued as the important criterion for selection.

Although Haby himself was not able to introduce such a policy, the need for reform was such that 1981 saw some of Haby's ideas being implemented in the institution of a 'common core' in the first year of lycée study so that students can have a more broadly based course of study and keep their options open. Also higher education institutions are being encouraged to value other Baccalauréats than the Baccalauréat 'C'. Explicit efforts have been made to raise the status of technical studies in particular, first by the institution in 1966 of the Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie and, in 1971, of the Maîtrise de Science et de Technologie; and finally, in 1977, by opening access to the Grandes Écoles to holders of the Technical Baccalauréat (Pautler, 1981b).

Whilst these policies to 'vocationalise' the Baccalauréat seem to be bearing some fruit, the more general problem of the devaluation of the
'Bac'as a qualification remains. To a considerable extent this problem arises from the 'democratisation' of upper secondary and higher education.

Thus although the official standing of the Baccalauréat has not changed since the decree of March 17th, 1808, which gave Baccalauréat holders the right of admission to higher education, in practice the possession of the certificate per se no longer guarantees the holder the free choice of subject specialism in higher education to which he or she is nominally still entitled. Apart from the fact that some universities and the very popular University Institutes of Technology have the right to dispense with the Baccalauréat entirely, increasing pressure of numbers has led many other facultés to discriminate more or less overtly on the basis of the Baccalauréat specialism pursued and the candidate's school record (Pautler, 1981b). Whether a student opts for one of the five subject areas of the 'General' Baccalauréat, literature (A), economics and social studies (B), mathematics and physical sciences (C), mathematics with biological sciences (D), and mathematics with technology (E), or one of the three 'technical Baccalauréats' covering industrial studies, social and medical sciences and music and dance (F), mathematically-based economics (G) and computer science (H), tends to determine whether he or she pursues a 'long course' of higher education in the university or a short, more applied higher education in some form of technical institute.

More important is the relative status ranking between subjects, and, in particular, the prestige of option 'C' (mathematics and physical sciences), the only specialisation which still allows successful students access to the whole range of disciplines in higher education. Not surprisingly, there is considerable competition within lycées to be allowed to take the Baccalauréat 'C' option and many students will repeat a year in order to achieve this, particularly given the increasing
tendency for universities to follow the Grandes Écoles and the IUTs in selecting on entry. Hitherto, the practice has been to allow open access and then to fail students either in the Propédéutique examination at the end of the first year, or at the stage of the Diplôme d'Études Universitaires Générales (DEUG) after two years which may be obtained by only 20-25% of students. In some faculties, weeding out may be postponed until graduation stage itself. Universities have been increasingly losing status as a result of a growing increase in the number of unemployed graduates since such unemployment is attributed to the universities not being sufficiently selective and not offering useful courses rather than to the state of the job market as a whole. These sorts of criticism have been a major cause of the increasing tendency to select students on entry rather than at graduation. In many popular faculties such as medicine and pharmacy the necessity of a 'numerus clausus' policy has strengthened the faculties' hand in this respect. It is also clearly one of the reasons behind the re-establishment of central government control of the content and grading of national diplomas.

An important effect of this trend towards initial selection in all the prestigious branches of higher education has been to increase teachers' power in a number of ways. The decline in value of the Baccalauréat which has been associated with its "quantitative democratisation" and "qualitative differentiation" (Rothera, 1968) has given teachers an increasingly important role in 'guiding' students into the different options. In addition, the devaluation of the Baccalauréat has led to an associated increase in the importance of the marks obtained in the last two years of upper secondary education and, in particular, the 'dossier scolaire' based on the continuous assessment of teachers.

Recognising this and wanting to give it official expression, Haby wanted as part of his reform to limit the formal Baccalauréat examination
to borderline candidates only by 1982 as in the Brevet des Collèges
since, as he expressed it,

"a certificate [of secondary education] should be awarded
on the basis of continuous assessment of knowledge and
abilities rather than on the traditional one to three
day examination" (Haby, 1974)

This proposal was vetoed by Haby's successor, Christian Beullac, and
came to nothing. 68

Yet Jessel (1980) reports the results of a poll which purports to
show 75% of adults would prefer continuous assessment in the last three
years of school. Few thought the Baccalauréat would be useful for
getting a job and although 84% thought it was useful for getting into
higher education, they thought it had little value in itself. Similarly,
'Le Monde de l'Éducation', March 1980, carried an article entitled 'Bac
Impopulaire', citing the views of a wide range of educational pressure
groups. This report showed even the traditionalist Union Nationale des
Parents d'Élèves de l'Enseignement Privé as being in favour of continuous
assessment and, more radically, those of Henri Lefebvre, President of the
Union Nationale des Associations de Parents d'Élèves de l'Enseignement
Libre, who argues that such reform is needed to allow all pupils to be
fulfilled. Surprisingly enough even Guy Bayet representing the highest
and hence most conservative stratum of the teaching profession - the
Société des Agrégés - expressed his organisation to be in favour of the
Haby proposals for Baccalauréat reform. Many teachers deplore the
existence of crammers, specialising in Baccalauréat preparation - 'les
boîtes à bachot' - and the associated practice of 'bachotage'. 69 They
argue that pupils who have never faced a formal public examination before
are subjected to enormous tension. Several teachers suggested in
interview that the lack of marketability of the Baccalauréat often came
as a surprise and consequent let-down to youngsters reaching this stage
of their education.

In addition, there is public recognition that

"when, the following year, they [the question papers] are published, every teacher tries them or makes their pupils try them" (Le Courier, 1979).70
to the extent that examination questions virtually become the syllabus.71

Concern for reform comes too from the recognition of significant regional variations in Baccalauréat standard,72 a problem made more acute since 1966 when the responsibility for the Baccalauréat examination was entirely devolved to the Recteur d'Académie. Now in each académie there is an elaborate committee structure, a small permanent staff who, with the aid of a computer, must set and mark over a hundred different examination papers for something approaching a million candidates.73

The result, as Reuchlin and Bacher (1968) suggested, some time ago is that almost inevitably

"it is sadly to be feared that the differences observed between examiners may not be entirely explicable by the characteristics of the examination situation".74

It is also not surprising that many senior educationists and administrators are in favour of the abolition of public examinations on the grounds of cost and teacher-time alone.75

Paradoxically, however, despite this very widespread dissatisfaction with the Baccalauréat, very few would actually abolish it. Several commentators76 explain this phenomenon in terms of the 'esprit Carthesian', the national myth that the Baccalauréat preserves academic excellence and equality of opportunity. Certainly there are government fears that curriculum standards might be put in jeopardy without it, particularly since the alternative proposal of a separate university entrance examination has so far come to nothing. In view of the Prost Report's failure to grasp this particular nettle, and M. Savary's acceptance of their proposal to
reform, rather than rescind the Baccalauréat (see page 223 of this chapter), it is unlikely that there will be any radical change in this respect in the near future. 77

There is considerable evidence too that many teachers and parents fear the personal consequences which may result from the abolition of external examinations. 78 Many parents still cling to the security of the public examination and Legrand (1977) suggests that far from there being a reduction in formal assessment at the present time, there is currently an incredible proliferation as new modes of assessment are introduced and the old retained.

These sorts of debates between the necessity for public examinations in order to maintain national standards, syllabus coverage and a fair basis for selection as against their undesirable effects on learning and the problems of comparability are not confined to France but are equally familiar in England - and indeed other countries. The significant difference between France and England is rather the standing of the qualification itself. Whereas, the tendency in England in recent years has been for public concern over educational standards and unemployment to manifest itself in, if anything, more support for formal public tests and examinations, in France the situation is exactly the opposite. The increasing tendency for the elite institutions of higher education to base their judgements on school records and for teachers to regulate the key points of selection between nominally equal courses and orientations which in practice vary enormously in their prospects, has paved the way for continuous assessment to assume a more explicit role even at Baccalauréat level. The spirit of this movement closely resembles that informing changes during the compulsory stage of schooling in its emphasis on pupil guidance. Once again, the assumption is that if pupils have more knowledge about the opportunities
available and of their own strengths and weaknesses, they will be able to make a positive and suitable educational and career choice, all such choices being equally desirable, despite the very evident disparities in status and prospects. The evidence suggests that popular opinion has not been taken in by the 'orientation' rhetoric, that parents still recognise some 'orientations' as 'echecs' (failures) and that, as Pautler (1981b) expressed it in rather a nice understatement,

"it would, of course, be somewhat exaggerated to talk about a deliberate guidance policy since the students' subject choice is largely influenced by selection in secondary education."

Arguably, then, 'orientation' is a euphemism which is equivalent to the rhetoric of 'choice', the meaning of which is already familiar in educational discourse; for the lower achievers there is often no choice.

Contemporary policy developments in French education concerning the assessment of individuals thus provide a very good example of the general trends identified in Chapter Two. The postponement of selection, the comprehensivisation of assessment and the increasing delegation of responsibility to teachers are central themes at the present time. In Chapter Two it was argued that the principal cause of such developments is changes in the social and economic context which have given rise to the need for new legitimating ideologies which will justify selection and hence provide for both individual and systemic control. Thus for the individual, the legitimating ideology of equality of opportunity and fair competition is being replaced by a new legitimating ideology of positive choice in which, rather than being competitors for selection, individuals are 'helped' to choose what the school decides is in their best interest. The difficulty of refuting such well-meaning advice in practice or of criticising the assumptions on which it is founded makes this a very powerful basis for control. The second part of this chapter,
which now follows, explores how this same ideology is currently replacing
the more traditional bases of control at systemic level.

Assessment and System Control

Central Control

From the earliest days of the nineteenth century, French educational
provision was recognisably a system. In particular the early establishment
of a range of national qualifications was significant in making a reality
of one of the major principles of the Université - supreme central control.
The decree of 1808 stated that no-one could teach without a qualification
from the université or without being a member or graduate of one of its
faculties. No other institution could deliver valid diplomas since
'diplômes réservées à l'État' was one of the 'grands principes' of French
education. 79

Until well into this century, the Baccalauréat performed the dual
functions of maintaining the social bias of the education system in favour
of the bourgeoisie (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1976) and of preserving the
ideal of equality in education by subjecting all candidates to a common
educational experience (Rothera, 1968), a communality that was only made
a reality in practice, given the size and complexity of the educational
system, by the existence of national examinations, despite the provision
of detailed curricular objectives (Fraser, 1963; Anderson, 1975).
Armytage (1968) goes as far as to argue that an examination as uniform
as the Baccalauréat was only possible in a highly centralised system.

In higher education, too, although it enjoyed considerably more
curricular freedom, the same assumption that national certificates were
necessary to ensure national equality of provision has traditionally been
in evidence:
"The French, it has often been noted, have a passion for diplomas and equality; they believe that the former, because it is awarded according to uniform rules, ensure the latter" (Patterson, 1972).

Historically, despite radically different administrative traditions and associated ideologies, public examinations have played a surprisingly similar role in France and England as a means of ensuring a considerable degree of national homogeneity in educational standards and practice. In both countries too, public examinations have been of central importance in legitimating the pre-eminent position of a liberal-classical, academic curriculum (Eggleston, 1984); and in regulating access to different levels of employment.

In reality, of course, the schools were not the same either geographically or socially. Differences between one lycée and the next, and especially those lycées which had the best 'classes préparatoires' for the post Baccalauréat entrance exam for the Grandes Écoles, were marked. If "monopoly was the first law of the system" (Crozier, 1970), of its rhetoric and its organisation, it cannot be taken from this that uniformity of practice ensued as a result or that where uniformity was apparent, this was its source. If there was "a grotesque uniformity" (Aron, 1969) this is more likely to have been the result of the common educational experience of teachers and administrators (Aristide and Zolberg, 1971), the importance of which was clearly recognised by Napoleon in the emphasis he placed on teacher-training. Secondly, the persistently marginal economic and social status of most teachers (except for some highly-qualified lycée professeurs) was probably also an incentive for them to look to the state system as the basis of identity and support. But it was arguably the state monopoly over public examinations and certification that was most instrumental to the maintenance of homogeneity (Patterson, 1972) as indeed it was explicitly intended to be, for such a monopoly could readily
be justified in the enduring French passion for diplomas as a reflection of meritocratic equality.

The French education system today is "still recognisably that which we inherited from Napoleon" (Instituteur, Calvados). Its extreme centralisation is criticised for inhibiting local innovation by fostering a fear of failure and institutional irresponsibility and inertia. There is criticism of the sterile, abstract, class-biased nature of many subjects and the lack of local relevance in the curriculum. Above all, centralisation is blamed for the enduring and often ill-founded respect for a hierarchy based on seniority and qualifications.

But perhaps the most significant, if least apparent, effect is the gap between theory and practice in the operation of the education system and the lack of accountability and control which teachers enjoy in practice. Although planning may be 'rational', decision-making frequently is not. In the words of one teacher, "We're like a factory and from this vantage point it's difficult to distinguish the intentions of the system from what happens by accident - we only see the results". There is an inevitable compromise between "the ideal and the practicable" (Fraser, 1963) which, as Balzac noted some long time ago, "puisque événements nous dépasse, feignons d'en être l'organisateur".

The more sensitive academic and professional commentaries recognise this illusion of centralisation for what it is (Fraser, 1963; Anderson, 1975):

"The schools might once have been expected to study the same Latin passage at the same time, in every classroom throughout the country, but in practice there was infinite variation created by the eccentricities of the teachers and the pressures of local conditions. Centralisation gave them status; but human weakness made them what they were. No ministerial order could be enforced until it had travelled through the hierarchy; but officials, headmasters and teachers often hated, despised or feared each other, and these animosities stirred up resistance which could completely transform the spirit in which the orders were applied" (Zeldin, 1971, p. 271).
"The state found that, with the school system, it had brought into being a monster it could not control. The schools developed values of their own, which were not in harmony with those of society at large. They preached admiration of the great minds of the past and rejected the commercial, industrial world as corrupting and base. Like the church, they saw their role as the protection of children against adult temptations; they felt unappreciated and therefore fell on the defensive. Like the bureaucracy, they did not just serve the state but made their own preservation and expansion a primary goal. They were moreover divided amongst themselves and so instead of producing pupils with equal chances in life or ones who accepted the same values, they created a series of elites, separating secondary and primary pupils into two distinct worlds" (Zeldin, 1971, p. 1161).

The homogeneity inherent in the bureaucratic, financial and administrative provision of education could not, of itself, ensure an equivalent homogeneity of practice. The provision of detailed performance criteria of the expected outcomes of each stage of schooling, the close control of educational publishing (Becher and Maclure, 1978), the central provision of detailed timetables and syllabuses and manuals on pedagogy do not of themselves represent control. The system of inspection on which depends teachers' promotion provides a good example of the difference between theory and practice, since regardless of the assessment, all teachers will progress, more or less quickly, to the maximum salary point their qualifications allow, and only extreme moral corruption can overcome their security of employment as civil servants. The control exerted by an inspector who can only possibly visit once every three years and often less cannot be significant in practice. Hence Latourte could write in 1961, "One is no longer in the country of Descartes, one is nearer to the pragmatism of the English". Or, as de Ferriti (1979) has it:

"The application of identical rules at identical levels (between academies, departments, institutions) supports the illusion of equality of treatment at a time when very great heterogeneity whether of initial differences, whether simply the size of each of these things would require adaptations in the light of an in-depth study of such differences"

To these structural and political factors are added linked
technical problems "if the immensity and the inertia of the education system provides a measure of stability ... they also bring with them a considerable slowing down of the diffusion of innovation, whatever the size of the resources provided ... it cannot be simply a question of a proportional reduction of national problems to the local level". 84

These quotations imply that central control in its pure sense is and always has been a logical impossibility given that the chain of command involves a whole series of personal interpretations, mediations, actions and relations which will 'flesh' the bones of the original order. 85

Many French educational officials are aware that despite the theory of centralisation going back to Richlieu and Louis XIV, "the system is so centralised it doesn't control things very well". 86 Within the administrative bureaucracy itself there are "ways and means of following policy" ('Le façon de suivre les reformes'). 87 Some French educationists believe the French Minister of Education has little more power than his opposite number in Britain since "French central planning can influence everything except teachers" (Noel, 1972). "There is both the letter and the spirit of the syllabus". 88

The 'instructions ministerielles' give very precise suggestions on what and how to teach. In reality the true picture of teacher control is one in which teachers have far more autonomy over method than they do over content, in which they do not exercise all the freedom they potentially have but in which the extent that they do depends on their ideology, their personality and their definition of the needs of the particular children in their care and their school situation - A teacher may adopt Freinet methods in a one-teacher school for example, 89 but not where he must work with colleagues unless they all agree. Relatively few French teachers can even conceive of the possibility of no central syllabus, let alone seek it and many feel that there is now too much
curricular freedom.

The significance of the centralisation of French education rests not in its effect on practice as such, but in the fact that an instrumental order which should in theory be highly responsive to the demands of capital is constantly put at risk by the internal tensions so created. The necessity for practice to be directly responsive to both local and institutional needs and constraints conflicts with both the expressive and the instrumental ideology of bureaucratic standardisation prevalent in society as a whole. Centralisation in the French context may more realistically be taken as the point at which decisions are made - the formal accountability of the Minister of Education to Parliament for the functioning of the whole system (Halls, 1976) - than the degree of power any one such Minister as the head of the hierarchy can effectively exercise (Duclaud-Williams, 1980).

The ambiguity here is partly a result of the imprecision of the term centralisation. Brickman (1979) suggests that there is a need to study the actual distribution of power between hierarchical levels and whether centralisation applies equally at each level. Pressure for and against centralisation may not be uniform but vary according to the nature and implications of different decisional powers. Increasing decentralisation may not mean an equivalent decrease in central control as in a zero-sum equation.

As well as levels of control, it is necessary to distinguish vertically between the separate hierarchies of finance, organisation and educational content. Indeed the twin hierarchies of control over the content of education (la pédagogie et le contenu) and the administration of education (la gestion) are entirely separate below ministerial level, the Minister being the only 'colossus' with a foot in both camps. This distinction is recognised in one of the most recent ministerial
statements on autonomy which distinguishes between pedagogical autonomy, which appears to exist to a considerable extent already, autonomy of means - a measure of which is already being implemented financially - and administrative autonomy giving the school and the local authority greater power over such things such as staffing.  

A third related set of distinctions is that between 'decentralisation', 'deconcentration' and 'democratisation', where decentralisation is defined as ceding a greater degree of decision-making autonomy to the lower rungs of the bureaucracy, 'deconcentration' is defined as providing longer and more local 'arms' of the central bureaucracy and 'democratisation' is defined as the provision for more public knowledge, debate and influence at either local or national levels. But as a paper by Syndicat National d'Inspecteurs Départementaux de l'Éducation (SNIDEN) points out, not only is it difficult to separate the educational bureaucracy from more general government activity in this respect, it is tempting to confuse simple 'deconcentration' with real 'decentralisation'. The latter requires that each level of the system be protected from both too much central control and too much local interference, each level of the system being given power to decide educational priorities appropriate to that level. Thus at school level a representative council might decide objectives and syllabuses whereas the central authorities would decide overall curriculum objectives and available resources. (Rowbottom and Billis, 1977).

Over the last few decades there has been explicit central recognition of the reality of local variation and the need for an increasing 'souplesse' in administration and democratisation. As early as 1946, the Langevin-Wallon Commission recognised centralisation as a barrier to progress, as have many government statements since, notably the Sarrailh Commission of 1956. In 1957 a Ministry of Education paper stated:
"The present French education system and the ordering of its administration represents a compromise between the historical structure which still imposes its mould and its vocabulary and the new ordinance which social and economic evolution calls for but which the law has not yet consecrated" (quoted by Garrigue, 1980).

In practice, apparent moves to increase total control have been regarded by many as 'une grosse affaire', because no administrative machinery has been provided to make them a reality. The Recteur d'Académie, for example, himself a central, political appointee, has had no corresponding increase in autonomy to deal with those issues for which he is increasingly held responsible (Saint-Sernin, 1980). Indeed, one teacher suggested that "autonomy is a means of making us responsible for the economic crisis and financial malaise of the country". In fact, the movements towards decentralisation and deconcentration can actually be interpreted as an increase in central control in decongesting local administration by making local budgetary personnel - who are nevertheless in the direct control of the Ministry - more powerful. To the extent that autonomy exists, it is only in the form of 'une souplesse' - of pedagogy, of administration with central prescription of curricula, of finance, of personnel and of policy - ensuring this flexibility is limited. As the traditional inefficiencies inherent in such multiple bureaucratic structures are increasingly overcome by 'deconcentration' and the application of information science and cybernetics, it seems that the traditional leeway that existed in practice may actually be decreasing, whilst ostensibly, grass-roots pressure for more local autonomy is meeting with a positive response.

Apparently significant changes in educational control in recent decades have included the setting up of new administrative and advisory councils at various levels of the system in which parents, teachers and communities frequently have a say. There has been greater commitment by government
to 'deconcentration' in decision-making and more 'grass-roots' innovation (Becher and Maclure, 1978). The official recognition that "situations vary a lot between one collège and another and what is valued here is not necessarily valued elsewhere" represents a fundamental change of ethos in the French education system.  

Given at best half-hearted support for change among teachers, the public and possibly many administrators, a major source of these recent changes must be the growth in size of the French educational bureaucracy which has made a degree of deconcentration a practical necessity. Jessel (1980) describes the new devolution programme of Minister Pelletier, the aim of which is "to unblock a rigid system whose huge size has made it a monster and which centralism has made particularly difficult to reform". During the Fourth Republic (1944 to 1958) the Ministry of Education grew to be the largest national enterprise and now employs half of all civil servants and a quarter of the national budget. In 1973 France spent twice what the UK spent for each citizen on education. In 1976 the figure was 23.77% as opposed to 14.4% in the UK. In 1978 there were 957,072 teachers and officials whose activities cost 69,718.4 million francs - 17.5% of the state budget. Since the 1959 Loi Debré costs have escalated rapidly with the partial or total funding of private Catholic schools as the price of much closer control. In 1977 this charge was an extra 800 million francs. Thus the sheer size of the machine is an enormous administrative problem and one which grows bigger each year as the length and diversification of educational provision means more students and increasing difficulty in liaising between administrative and educational concerns (Sapin, 1980). To make it work, the system now requires 4,000 administrators in Paris and 20,000 nationally. Given that, in addition, the relative amount of money available for education over recent years has decreased at the very
time when it was most needed to boost public confidence in a system reeling from the effects of a major restructuring and it is not hard to divine the source of contemporary pressures for decentralisation.\textsuperscript{101}

But the difficulty of reconciling the conflicting views which are virtually bound to be provoked by any proposed innovation has largely served to reinforce the inertia of central government in this respect, so that more often than not its search for compromise makes it a brake on any radical development. As in England this tendency is exacerbated at the present time by the current shortage of resources for education. This has been and remains one of the major impediments to making proposed innovations a reality. At the most obvious level these are 'platitudes without resources'\textsuperscript{102} but at a deeper level too, the anger of parents and teachers resulting from larger classes, fewer teaching jobs and poorer school conditions is manifest not only in frequent public demonstrations and strikes but also in a hostility towards new and extra demands and a general unwillingness to think positively about educational change. Many teachers and local officials see 'democratisation' as purely political rhetoric with no real growth in either equality or local power.

At a deeper level, however, there is a sense in which policy initiatives in French education are always 'à la marge', for even if government can succeed in pushing through legislation 'without waiting for the necessary consensus to develop'\textsuperscript{103} - which is necessarily rare given the strength, diversity and political nature of the national pressure groups which are themselves a product of centralisation - they must still change the attitudes of the teaching profession. The widely recognised failure of the theoretically unstreamed collèges is just one example of the difficulty of imposing innovation. Many commentators would agree with Sartre's assertion that "France is the true home of
humanism". "I conceive myself", Sartre wrote, "both as totally free and as unable to prevent the fact that the meaning of the world comes to it from myself" (Bree and Guiton, 1959, cited in Armytage, 1968). In this respect, France is very different from England, where innovation necessarily begins with the premise that teachers must be convinced since they cannot be coerced. Again, unlike England, where the tradition of considerable local and institutional autonomy leaves considerable power and responsibility to senior school level management, schools in France are relatively free of internal bureaucratic control, their internal working being something of an oasis between "the hierarchy of horizontal layers insulated from each other" (Crozier, 1964, see also Pautler, 1981a), which is the central bureaucracy, and the freedom this nominal central control gives them from public accountability.

Traditionally the impossible rigidity of the central bureaucracy was overcome by informal strategies. Within the hierarchy of impersonal roles there existed a parallel network of informal personal connections (Brickman, 1979), which was "an 'oiling' of a rather rigid system" (Le Clerq, 1975).  

Berger's experience in the French education system is referred to by Geminard (1979); he says he has learnt two things: "the first is that one can consider every educational situation as a system ... the second being exactly the opposite" (p. 10). Writing of their own situation at various levels of the bureaucracy, French administrators seem to agree on the considerable scope there is for the individual and particularly the 'chef d'établissement' to make his own decisions and developments (Crozier, 1980; Toussant, 1980; Gentzbittel, 1980). This is what Minot (1979) refers to as "le fait d'être maître de ses décisions dans le respect de la réglementation générale qui s'impose".
à tous ..." (p. 37). For administrators as for teachers, 'l'autonomie, c'est d'abord un état d'esprit' (p. 69).

Local Control

Thus, as far as education is concerned, it is hard to define the power of local authorities in France. There is considerable administrative responsibility for the allocation of centrally decided resources and for the general provision and maintenance of educational services. By contrast local authorities have virtually no say in the content of schooling in terms of curriculum, examinations, teacher training and the majority of staff appointments. Within these formal ordinances, however, power is very much a personal quality. Despite the nominally feeble power of the elected departmental councils (Conseils-Généraux), and those of the smallest administrative unit, the commune, in practice "their power of veto both formal and by studied inactivity seems to ensure exactly the same uneasy and creaking partnership between central and local government as we enjoy" suggests Turpie (1980, p. 24). If a complete and logical local government system was one of the legacies of the Revolution (Anderson, 1975), these formal arrangements are only a part of the subtle, ambiguous and, in particular, reciprocal dependence of the bureaucratic official on the Mayor and 'notables' he is supposed to govern and their ability to by-pass him (Sharpe, 1979).

What this balance of power means in practice thus depends upon inevitable personal variations and other variables in the policy-making process (Bolam, 1982). The important formal difference remains however that the French education system lacks the local political dimension, so significant in regulating provision in England. The Prefect is a central government political appointment 106 roughly equivalent to the
Leader of the Council in England and the Recteur, equivalent to the Chief Education Officer— is also a central government appointment. Since accredited teachers are also centrally employed and appointed and since the experienced and well qualified have the most chance of choosing to which schools they will be appointed, there are many obstacles to either a chef d'établissement or a local authority building up that specifically local consciousness or institutional ethos which has been so much a feature in England. Wright (1979) suggests that because regional institutions are framed and function in a centralist mould, they are only palliatives to local democracy. This indeed is one of the strongest traditional distinctions between the two systems, the French against the inequalities that such freedom must allow, the English prepared to sacrifice formal equality for the benefits of individual vision and charisma.

The issue of innovation provides a good example of the ambiguous and often incestuous nature of French educational control and administration. Ministry documentation suggests that research and innovation is carefully planned and controlled, pilot exercises being evaluated prior to policy decisions being made with teachers not in the 'experimental' schools having little role to play (Sumner, 1977). One reason for teachers' reluctance to initiate or to respond to initiatives for change is this tradition of innovation which is centrally determined, an imposition on them for which they are not prepared ideologically or practically. The new 10-12 curriculum for example, was drawn up, like every other curriculum innovation, in the central Ministry with little or no consultation with either teachers directly or their representative unions. It was then presented to the profession as a 'fait accompli' (Noel, 1972). Once again, however, this formal and rhetorical picture disguises a reality in which the situation is much more open with the 'Centres de Recherche
et de Documentation Pédagogique' in each Académie playing an important responsive role to teacher developments and using their substantial budgets for simultaneous curriculum development and teacher training (Pratt, 1976).

This situation is well described by Bolam (1982) as follows: "In the centralised French system, innovations and reforms have been introduced compulsorily from the centre, sometimes preceded by experiment and teacher information and training and sometimes not. The possibility of locally initiated change also exists". Feneuille (1981) lists some of the problems of this dual approach:

"the overwhelming predominance of the centralised approach relegates the local to a marginal role. The centralised power-coercive approach has employed weak implementation strategies. The attitudes of teachers and parents are frequently inimical to the innovations; teachers and parents sometimes oppose innovations because of the politics of the national government rather than the features of the innovation. These problems and related ones have prompted the French government to reappraise its research and innovation policies and to study methods of decentralising such work" (p. 43).

A good example of this problem is provided in the recent radical reform of initial teacher education in France in which it is proposed that teachers be trained to adopt an 'action-research' mode in order to change schools from within. But as Feneuille (1981) suggests, "this objective is very far from being achieved or even put in hand as both teachers and administrators and educationists still stick to their traditional normative habits and models ..." (p. 9).

**Teacher Accountability**

Clearly the issue of central control and homogeneity of practice in French education is extremely complex, not to say confused. It is apparent that it can no longer be assumed, if it ever could, that every
pupil in 'sixième' will be studying the same page of the same text at
the same hour. Indeed, in any country the classroom situation in which
an individual teacher finds him or herself will be determined by the
interaction of a number of consistent factors. These are likely to
include the age, ability, previous experience and expectations of the
particular group of pupils concerned. Also relevant is the physical
layout of the classroom, the available resources and equipment, and the
size of the class. The time of day and the length of lessons are
significant features, as is the extent to which the teacher is free to
determine his or her own pedagogy and curriculum content. Teachers are
likely to experience various forms of influence and control and impose
on themselves various definitions of 'moral' accountability— from
training received, from colleagues, from the management hierarchy in
the school, from advisers and inspectors, subject associations, examination
syllabuses, from national pronouncements on priorities and desirable
practice and from the local community, notably school governors— where
they exist— parents and employers.

This constellation of influences will not be the same for any two
teachers anywhere, but clearly one of the main sources of the similarities
that do exist is their common situation within a particular national
education system. Thus, the way in which the provision of education is
organised in France including such things as school buildings and
equipment, school curriculum provision, teacher-training and community
participation will influence how teachers see their role. To this long,
but by no means exhaustive, list must be added the more amorphous but
very powerful influence of ideology and national educational tradition
which gives rise in France, for example, to strong teacher support for
centralised control as the basis for equality of opportunity and in
England, by contrast, to strong teacher support for 'grass-roots' autonomy
in order that the maximum scope may be given to teachers' professional judgement. Thus for French teachers, unlike their English counterparts, their civil servant status leads them to a perception of their professional accountability and hence, their self-imposed control, which includes the national organisation in the person of the inspector, rather than to the school as an institution, the head and colleagues, although in both countries moral accountability to pupils figures strongly. Unlike English teachers too, French teachers' criteria for such professional accountability is more typically whether they have followed the centrally prescribed curriculum rather than, as for English teachers, what their pupils achieve.

But systematic similarity in the objective conditions which surround teaching or the subjective perspectives which condition it, may be swamped by variations in the personal characteristics of teachers in terms of, for example, career stage, age, sex, class background, geographical location, race or qualifications. It is quite possible to find nearly as much diversity between teachers within any one national education system as between teachers in different national education systems. One teacher in France may say,

"the teacher is absolutely free in his class ... it's the results that matter, not how they are achieved"
(primary school directrice, France)

or

"everybody teaches what he is in the final analysis"
(primary school teacher, France)

whereas, another, at a higher level, may say,

"a teacher in France has no right to teach according to his own ideas ...."
(Lycée teacher, France)

or

"a teacher is a civil servant and his job is to adapt to the level of his class what he has to teach them"
(former Lycée teacher, now in local administration of education)
The different levels of the teachers quoted above are significant, however. The potential freedom available to the high status lycée teacher with either Agrégation or Capes is likely to be greater than that available to the more humble instituteur whose work is closely supervised by the IDEN. On the other hand, since the learning of skills is gradually replaced by the learning of subject content as a pupil progresses through the school system, the instituteur has more pedagogic scope than her more senior colleagues. The extent to which any French teacher will seek to exploit the potential freedom however depends on personality and ideology. Many do not desire to depart from the security of detailed prescription. Those that do so wish must bear in mind that their colleagues are also a source of professional judgement. Indeed, the continual process of review and guidance of each individual pupil's progress which the principle of orientation requires has made teachers more exposed to such collegial judgement. Parental pressure and the cost of frequent changes of textbook are other sources of constraint. But whilst French and English teachers differ in their professional accountability - the former in terms of what has been covered, the latter in terms of what their pupils have achieved - it is for both of them their membership of a professional community which constitutes one of the most significant sources of control. But whereas English teachers must use a variety of strategies to legitimate their status against popular pressure at the present time for it to be restricted, the fact that professionalism for the French teacher involves civil servant status and a role in the central bureaucracy has traditionally allowed them considerable immunity from accountability based on 'product evaluation'.

According to the usual definitions of professionalism (see, for example, Hoyle, 1974), teachers are not a profession but a corporate
body trying to assert itself through "an act of self-mystification and delusion"[109] in much the same way as in England. In France, however, teachers' ability to defend themselves from all kinds of non-professional interference is much greater than their English counterparts since their claim to professional status is arguably the formalised, contemporary, secular expression of their clerical predecessors right of immunity to canon law. Just as the church was accountable only to God, the teacher too is accountable only in professional terms. Although it has always been true in France as elsewhere, that "a school is judged by its exam results",[110] individual teachers and schools who are assumed to be closely following central curriculum and pedagogic objectives, are not held accountable for these results in the way that they are in a system, such as the English, where there is almost total statutory freedom for schools themselves to determine what and how to teach.

**Modes of Accountability**

It is this context of centralised bureaucratic control and, perhaps more importantly, the ideology it reflects, which provides for a considerable consensus that accountability in French education is 'ante-hoc'. If in England, evaluation is principally applied to learning activity and the individual pupil, in France it is applied to teaching activity and the system itself rather than indirectly through pupil assessment. If the idea of a national norm is alien to anglo-saxon countries, its existence precludes the need for overt or formal accountability in the more romano-gallic, centralised tradition of countries such as France where it is the 'manièrem' and the 'matière' of teaching that is the principal unit of professional accountability, not the general outcomes of the school.[111]
Within this general norm, there are several different systems of control however. On the one hand there is control within the administrative system including activities such as research. Control here is ensured in France by the structure of the Ministry itself whose power is such that any questioning of its activities, even at parliamentary level, is inconceivable in a way it is not in England.\(^{112}\) It is important to recognise, however, that the lack of any explicit accountability procedures is largely due to the pervasive ideology which underpins the system rather than any structural feature. "Somehow or other, the education system has convinced the public and parents that they have not got a right to claim accountability from the system".\(^{113}\) Indeed French educators would find considerable difficulty in identifying to whom they should give an account in a system preoccupied with ante-hoc control. The tradition of centralisation operates directly against even the formulation of this kind of grass-roots or administrative pressure. Indeed the idea of there not being even a minimal central control of curriculum and administration was almost universally inconceivable among those consulted in the French education system.

The other, related source of control is that of the teachers themselves. If they are more nominally than truly constrained by the ostensibly powerful inspection system on which depends their promotion (recognised by most inspectors), their practice is influenced by a common educational background, standardised teacher training and, frequently, shared social origins in the 'reactionary petite bourgeoisie'.\(^{114}\) More important though is the power of the pervasive ideology which prevents most teachers even conceiving of themselves as anything but professional interpreters - pedagogic translators of common, central objectives.

Here, once again, is revealed the paradox of French educational provision and practice and of its associated accountability procedures.
A firm belief (not unaccompanied by frequent irritation with the inevitable 'red tape') in the necessity and the reality of centralisation to provide for pupils' geographical mobility, equality of provision everywhere and protection from local pressure disguises "a reality of idiosyncrasy as divergent as any in England".\textsuperscript{115}

This paradox is growing increasingly acute as the ideology of 'la démocratisation' means teachers with no preparation for the new demands being made on them such as mixed-ability teaching, or vocational training, find themselves increasingly torn between their theoretical belief in egalitarianism, and the practical problems it brings in the classroom. "There is a gap between the political ideology of teachers and the constraints of the teaching situation which is huge in France since they are, in a sense, contradictory".\textsuperscript{116} This contradiction is further exacerbated for teachers by a conflict of loyalties between that as civil servants, held to the state, that held by many to a political party, and that to the pupils themselves. This last, however, is probably the least significant, given the fact that "la situation française est toujours caractérisée par une très forte idéolization de débats entre les associations"\textsuperscript{117} which situates controversies primarily at the level of educational structure and provision with issues to do with pupils scarcely figuring.

The contradictions of the teaching situation at the present time are indeed legion and centre particularly around issues of control and accountability. On the one hand teachers cling to the traditional protection of their direct relationship with the central or regional and essentially, impersonal, authority of the bureaucracy, against what they currently perceive to be the growing power of the headteacher (traditionally minimal) and parents. The demise of almost all external assessment (a traditional protection for teachers) in favour of
'orientation' by teachers makes this vulnerability particularly acute at the present time. If, on the other hand, teachers want to be free from the irritations of bureaucracy and to be free to respond pedagogically to the varying needs of particular groups of pupils, they do not want the responsibility for curricular decisions, nor do they want to lose that considerable freedom which was traditionally a feature of centralised control. This is a particularly interesting paradox, since it is normally assumed in England that freedom and centralisation are opposites whereas in both theory and practice, many French teachers see them as complementary. Centralisation provides a support structure and a protection which, given the impossibility of close day to day supervision, leaves the individual teacher free from the sort of manifold public and professional pressures a teacher in a decentralised system is subject to. But if French teachers are currently confused about what they want, their role crisis is being further exacerbated by a significant decline in status, a worsening of conditions of service for many, large-scale financial cuts and a significant change in the traditional commitment of many parents and pupils to the value of education. Thus teachers do not typically test the limits of their freedom since they have been 'caged' (Giddens, 1971) for so long. The objective situation of participants and the subjective situation they perceive and act upon are often very different. This chapter is written in the light of this dual perspective seeking to identify some of the 'micropolitical' gaps (Hoyle, 1982) between theory and practice as they relate to the traditional and continuing idiosyncrasies of French provision for the control and organisation of the education system and thus to the overall subject of this thesis.
Inspection

The inherent contradictions as well as the contemporary pressures on the structure and process of French education have not passed by one of the major instruments of system control - the Inspectorate. From the earliest, post Napoleonic days of state educational provision, the 'Inspecteurs Généraux' have played the principal role in the central determination and local implementation of the curriculum. Later their limited numbers were supplemented by the addition of Inspecteurs Departementaux (IDEN) first instituted in 1835 and mainly responsible for primary education. The role of the inspector reflects once again the consistent paradox of French educational organisation. Teachers resent and fear them and yet accept and welcome their authority as subject experts and as protection against the power of the chef d'établissement. They are alternately 'inspecteur-flic' and 'inspecteur protecteur'. Their formal bureaucratic inspection role is directed towards individual teachers and not, as in England, towards the school as a whole. Thus, inspection of individual teachers militates against the development or 'animation' role with which inspectors are increasingly being charged.

"The concept of 'animation' is seen by many teachers as incompatible with the annual mark and the continuation of the traditional pattern of hierarchical relationships. After 1968 teacher attitudes seem to have swung towards a desire for a change in the nature of the relationships within the system while the Ministry was largely concerned with more effective management than that offered by the annual visit." 119

At all events, the result is a particularly acute dilemma for the IDEN whose local role means they are more explicitly caught between central bureaucracy and classroom reality. For teachers, the inspector may be the only contact with the educational hierarchy and hence, the principal
focus for professional accountability. But whilst understanding and responding to diverse local problems and frustrations, the IDEN must also be the arm of central authority. One effect of the present legitimisation crisis in central authority is increasing pressure on the autonomy of local inspectors which has the effect of making their job even more difficult.

"If this degree of freedom, this margin of autonomy is being eroded by pressures from the top, it is being eroded also by the effect of certain irresponsible actions at grass-roots level which, as we know, are not anticipated by SNJ. In the advanced guard, accessible to everyone, in contact with real, and concrete problems, the IDEN is vulnerable. It is only too easy to threaten him, to hide things from him or to expose him to public view. In caricaturing him, it is possible to make the IDEN a symbol of all the authoritarianisms, the mouth-piece of all the frustrations and in so doing, one creates, if one is not careful, what one is claiming to fight ... we refuse to become simply the agents of authority, since that would be to refuse, more or less, 'animation'."

120

Or, in the words of a regional inspector in Calvados, the inspector is increasingly "a prisoner of administrative regulations and of the manifold activities of a corporate management structure".

Thus for the IDEN too, like for the teachers themselves, the responsibility to implement ministerial policy whilst responding to the specific demands of local circumstances produces a contradiction between relative administrative freedom and considerable ideological constraints. In practice the objectives are fixed but the methods are relatively free. Unlike the English situation where the authority of the Inspector has been largely personal, in France it is typically bureaucratic, resting particularly on the role inspectors traditionally have played in teachers' promotion. In practice the inspectors themselves are the first to recognise that this power is now severely limited. There is the practical problem of getting round a huge number of schools. Many teachers have not been inspected for ten years and most not for three or more.

Inspectors must, unlike formerly, forewarn the teacher so that "we know
their habits and when they come we arrange things in order to please them" (college teacher, Calvados). Even with the lowest 'note' a teacher will still progress up the salary scale - albeit at a slower pace, and once on the top, is in an unassailable position. Very few inspectors now wish to cause the nervous breakdowns which sometimes still result from the knowledge of an impending visit, the style is 'taper à un côté du clou', to persuade and inspire. It is this very emphasis on 'animation' which is one of the strongest indications that there is considerable scope for individual teacher choice as far as pedagogy at least is concerned. Not only do teachers have a wide choice of textbooks, many of them have never seen the official curricular programmes which were, until recently, only supplied to inspectors.

Problems of Process-based Accountability

The contemporary inadequacy of inspection to fulfil its traditional role of system control is one factor in the particularly acute nature of the contemporary French educational crisis, which is more or less directly due to the various contradictions inherent in central control. Although France is not alone in facing the educational problems caused by economic recession, falling rolls and public disillusionment, its curricular and organisational traditions have tended to inhibit attempts to make the system more responsive to changing national and individual needs and demands for more democratic control. Teacher training, for example, which traditionally has been crucial in making a reality of centralisation, through subjecting teachers to a common 'formation' experience, far from preparing teachers to adapt to change, continues as one of the principal sources of stasis and homogeneity in French classroom practice. As one Inspecteur put it: "the system is involved with the reproduction of
educational models which the present people in authority learned when they were kids". This is one of the principal themes of Bourdieu and Passeron's (1976) analysis of educational reproduction.

Teachers' reluctance or inability to change is further reinforced by public opinion and by the fact that the central administration, since it is expected to provide statutory, rather than simply 'exhortatory' guidance, as in, for example, England, and for the political reasons already discussed, can only depart marginally from the prevailing, tradition-based consensus. For similar reasons, this tendency is reinforced by the habit of text book editors to 'play safe' and to be out of touch with reality (librarian, college). Such freedom that exists with regard to text books is further limited by the time lag in putting them into use. This is a significant point for it is arguable that it is the out of date nature of syllabuses and texts, rather than centralised prescription per se, that produces the visible strains in French education, given the widespread support for centralisation among teachers on traditional, professional or egalitarian grounds. 123

Despite the Ministry's efforts since the Haby reform of 1976 to make education more concerned with the development of the 'whole' person 124 they seem unable to relinquish the traditional academic requirements. Haby's booklet published in 1977 stating what the 'average' French school leaver should be able to do is an odd mixture of practical skills and competence together with knowledge of Voltaire and Racine.

There is undoubtedly an element of truth in one teacher's remark that the Ministry is itself unwilling to consider fundamental change since "more than a token gesture of modernity and enlightenment would be an admittal of faults in the existing system" (lycée proviseur, Calvados).

Clearly then, centralism remains directly and indirectly a barrier to change. Directly in the lumbering inefficiency of a huge bureaucracy
PAGINATION AS IN ORIGINAL
which cannot adequately provide the training and resources necessary to implement policy changes at the level of classroom practice. Indirectly in the attitudes it encourages in which defensiveness, passivity and traditionalism predominate over initiative and self-reliance. The foregoing analysis has suggested that recent, essentially half-hearted attempts on the part of government to replace this extreme centralism with a system better geared to respond to the very significant changes currently taking place in the demands being made on the education system, have so far had little real impact. Not only have they made little progress in relieving the tensions in the education system, they have at times 'fallen between two stools', arousing the hostility rather than the enthusiasm of the lower levels of the bureaucracy. The alternating and confused rhetoric of decentralisation is a manifestation of the power struggles inherent in such a reform and a general lack of clarity of purpose. The contradictions inherent in the notion of increased regional or local autonomy are well expressed by Wright (1980), who suggests regionalism is seen as a means

"of both strengthening and weakening the unity of the nation; of regenerating the State and rejuvenating the province, of improving the global performance of the French economy and of ironing-out disparities between the provinces; of increasing public participation and improving administrative efficiency. In short it is seen as an expression of democratic pluralism, as a technocratic need and as the search for national identity" (p. 50).

At the heart of the problem in France is the reality that whereas from the time of Napoleon until recently a centralised system was able to provide the legitimating ideology of national efficiency, professionalism and democratic equality, the maintenance of these ideologies now requires practices which are divergent. The desire of central government to be able to direct educational activity towards more vocational and
industrially oriented goals conflicts with the teaching profession's unpreparedness to respond to such new demands and, partly in consequence, their demoralisation and recourse to more traditional educational activities and the protection of their centrally-based professional status. At the same time, society as a whole has become increasingly sophisticated and politically aware and is no longer willing to tolerate the autocracy of either government or the teaching profession in deciding the nature or quality of its educational provision.

Democratisation: The Pressure for 'Moral' Accountability

Thus alongside the issues of decentralisation and deconcentration of formal authority is another form of pressure for the devolution of a measure of educational control which may be loosely subsumed within the term 'democratisation'. This pressure reflects on the one hand, a sense of frustration and powerlessness among parents in particular and, on the other, a desire on the part of both educational personnel and many pressure groups for a radical restructuring of educational provision to make it more 'democratic' in availability and content.

The pressure for more lay participation is associated with the more general climate of decentralisation since formerly state schools could not readily have responded to parents' wishes even if they had wished to - having little autonomy of their own (Bligh, 1982). In a highly centralised state, local issues and local politics have tended to be insignificant, their place being taken by national-level organisations and pressure groups. The "lure of power made possible by a centralised system" (Corbett, 1979) has produced for example four national federations of parents' associations, plus several for private schools with nearly two million members representing 25% of parents overall and covering the whole of the political spectrum.
At this level parents have frequently been a significant force as in, for example, the recent protests over class closures and the loss of many primary and auxiliary jobs because of a drop of 70,000 children in 1980-81 from the 1979-80 level, despite an increase in nursery school provision (Jessel, 1980a, b, c).

By contrast, parents can make little impression at the local level. Despite their formal role in the 'Conseil d'Établissement', given the control of teachers over pedagogy and the administration over finance, there is little real role for parents to play. Their part in the 'Conseil de Classe' also, which discusses the careers of individual pupils, may be over-rulled by the decisions of the 'Conseil des Professeurs' (Corbett, 1979). Only occasionally do parents make a notable impact at this level as in the recent two year suspension of a Parisian teacher for giving a class on sex education and at l'Étatt primary school in Bayeux, the kidnapping of the headteacher to force the authorities to provide an extra teacher.

Parents' traditional lack of interest in educational issues may be the result in part at least of their almost total powerlessness to influence teachers. Although parents are legally responsible for their children's behaviour at school, teachers complain of the apathy of parents and their lack of respect. In general, only about 40% of parents ever consult teachers and the figure is only just half that in more specialist schools such as the lycées d'enseignement professionnels. Such involvement as there has been has normally been about questions of pupil progress rather than pedagogy - the jealously guarded professional preserve of teachers.

One manifestation of the pressure for democratisation in recent years, however, has been the beginnings of what could be a fundamental change in this traditional relationship. At the local level, parents are now
formally involved in the Conseil d'Administration, and in the Comité des Parents as well as the Conseil d'École (primary) and the Conseil d'Établissement (secondary). 129

"One [of the consequences] has been to make parents aware that they have a right to speak, to information, and even a right to oversee what is done at the school. From now on it will be more and more impossible to say to parents, 'That is not your business'." 130

Parents' commitment to these new procedures is reflected in the attendance rate of just over a third of the elected parents at an average of 40% of the meetings. Their significance is likely to be as much negative as positive, institutionalising and formalising dialogue and making increasingly explicit the demarcation between lay and professional interests. Ironically, as teachers feel this increasing pressure, they are pushing for the traditional protection of increased centralisation and professionalism so that in a real sense teachers' autonomy is likely to be curtailed, not increased, and constructive contact between teachers and parents lessened.

The recent yielding of a measure of 'souplesse' to teachers in response to their demands to be allowed to reflect local needs in their teaching is now associated with the idea that if teachers are to have more flexibility, parents must have more choice too. Nothing could be more alien to the cherished ideal of national equality of provision in France. There is a growing tendency, particularly in urban areas, for parents and teachers even to unite against the administration. Although these instances are still relatively rare, and depend on particular local circumstances and personalities they illustrate the necessarily dynamic nature of educational control which forces rival interests to group and re-group as central government loosens and tightens the reins of control in response to its own political situation and its need to legitimate and implement particular policies at any one time. As
Brickman (1979) suggests,

"decentralisation rarely proceeded from a state of complete central authority to one of unconditional local autonomy; where local institutions gained access to new areas of decision-making competence their margin of manoeuvre was restricted by indirect central controls" (p. 289).

The same could of course be said for England (Kogan, 1980).

The pressure for greater democracy in the organisation and content of the system has been related to the yielding of a greater say in the education system to parents but goes far beyond this. The dominant political rhetoric of the last two decades, even under the right wing, laissez-faire government of Giscard d'Estaing, has been 'democratisation'. This has meant on the one hand, attempts to set up a more democratic policy-making machinery and, on the other, a commitment to more equal and relevant educational provision in which traditional forms of selection and apparent elitism are replaced by equal, if different, provision for all. Under this latter heading come the 'comprehensive' reforms of first the streamed common lower secondary 'collège', later to be completely unstreamed - at least in theory - and shortly to be followed by the 'comprehensive' i.e. non-selective lycée. Fraser (1967) identifies the two stages of this process as first the removal of barriers for the bright - the institution of a meritocracy - and second, systemic change to provide for a mass improvement of standards.

But the proportion of working class children who reach university has not increased. Nor has the proportion of working class children who are two years behind in the second year of collège (Dundas-Grant, 1982). Some teachers argue that the reforms to date such as the provision of 'classes préparatoires de niveau' for the lowest achievers who can then tacitly leave school at 14 or the 'orientation' procedure which gives a spurious legitimation to failure, have increased the degree of inequality
in the system when they were ostensibly designed to reduce it. Schools
still vary according to the covert selection of their catchment area.
Many teachers are cynical: "to put them all in the same class and call
it 'democratisation' is merely using the word, because there they all
are in the class with their differences" (directrice de collège, Calvados).
Many teachers feel the real purpose, as with many other 'reformettes',
was to make education cost less. In the words of one pundit "the French
are expert at wrapping up convenient and often efficient policies under
labels of 'democratisation'." 132

The idea of the common school is however long-standing. As in
other European countries it first emerged after the First World War when
egalitarian teachers who had been in the army emerged to form 'les
Compagnons de l'Université Nouvelle'. In France, as elsewhere,
experience has now shown this long-standing commitment to equality of
opportunity to be ill-founded. Simply putting all children in the same
education setting cannot overcome the disadvantages of home background.
This is particularly so in France where the combined strength of
centralisation and tradition militates against either adequate preparation
for mixed ability or vocationally-oriented teaching or sufficient
flexibility for that relatively small proportion of teachers willing to
change their approach to develop suitable courses. Teachers appear to
be conscious of a widening gulf between home and school, particularly
with regard to working class families in which the reality of a school
system designed for those inhabiting a very different social world can
no longer be concealed beneath a traditional respect for learning and
belief in equality. They argue that the reality of unemployment for
many young school leavers has only served to exacerbate an existing
decline in family life and a rise in consumerism. This perspective,
frequently voiced by teachers, is also expressed by a leading French
educationist Louis Le Grand, now a government advisor on education, in his book, 'Pour une politique démocratique de l'éducation' subtitled 'quinze ans d'innovations pédagogiques' or 'le compte des illusions perdues'. As demographic, social and economic developments lead to new pupil problems, teacher morale declines: "the authorities try to face up to these transformations in the infrastructure by innovations which are immediately eroded and marginalised owing to the lack of a real stocktaking of their aims and their resources".133

This malaise is similarly expressed in the more graphic words of one teacher union official -

"It's as if this huge school's been built to accumulate and enclose children, just as the district of Authie has been built to accumulate and enclose working people and then the likelihood is that they'll be accumulated in some factory or commercial enterprise - one almost has the impression that in a suburb like this there exists no other horizon than to end up gathered in a factory or the like." 134

As Le Grand suggests, the desire for reform on the part of central government seems to be a genuine attempt to respond to the growing crisis in French education. The themes of the reform are a mixture of 'new industrialist', 'old humanist' and 'public educator' values albeit difficult to disentangle from the activities of conflicting pressure groups and political interests. The principal problem is to develop a curriculum more in step with industrial needs which will at the same time be publicly legitimated both by its perceived relevance and opportunities and by the greater measure of democratic decision making within it. These issues are essentially similar to those that came to a head for higher education in 1968. Although less dramatic than the process of far-reaching reform and rapid return to tradition which followed those events, the major organisational reforms of schooling have arguably had as little impact. Le Grand suggests that this is due
to the inability of policy makers and practitioners alike to engage in a radical critique of existing institutions and attitudes. Thus, for example, although 'redoublement' is now no longer a formal policy, it is still practiced.

The perpetuation of a system in which many continue to be doomed to endless repetition of an irrelevant curriculum (Dundas-Grant, 1975) is reflected in, among other things, the level of petty crime and drug taking. A recent survey of 47 colleges and lycées in Paris and its suburbs revealed that pilfering was universal, vandalism was found in four fifths of the schools, half had extortion rackets and a third serious fights (Jessel, 1981). Corbett (1980) attributes a good deal of this problem to the inability or unwillingness of teachers to abandon their traditional and coercive approach, thus emasculating the structural and curriculum reforms of the previous decade. It may be that ultimately the government's dilemma will be solved by the pupils themselves in their opting for different, more vocationally-oriented and technical courses. This would go some way to meeting the 'new industrialists' needs for new skills and at the same time help to dispel the disaffection and resentment which is the concern of the 'public educator' lobby. Thirdly it would help to force the hand of government in recognising the impossibility of "leaving alone a secondary school system which has become archaically academic and of backing off every time proposals for change run into criticism with the self-appointed custodians of academic standards" (Stevens, 1980).

As this quotation implies, faced with the reality of continuing selection despite the persistent democratic rhetoric and a massive unease about how to cope with these far-reaching organisational changes, teachers' unions have largely been hostile to recent democratic reforms. As increasing demands are being made on teachers at all levels with no real
decrease in the frustrations emanating from bureaucratic control, teachers are facing an increasingly profound ideological crisis between 'une thése élitiste et une thése démocratique' - a theoretical belief in egalitarianism and the practical problems it brings in the classroom. "There is a gap between the political ideology of teachers and the constraints of the teaching situation which is huge in France, and they are, in a sense, contradictory". 136

Although part of this difficulty is attributable to teachers' own conservatism a great deal is due to the impossibility of putting the reforms into practice without on the one hand, a degree of syllabus flexibility to allow for 'qualitative democratisation' and mixed ability teaching and, on the other, adequate teacher training. Given that until very recently, the government appeared to be taking no steps to build a framework for innovation, teachers are cynical about the genuineness of its intentions. Only recently have there begun to be experiments with 'groupes de niveaux' (setting) and a major commitment to in-service training although the proposed £156 million, five year programme is restricted so far to 'second degree' (lycée) teachers.

There is however a more fundamental division between teachers and their political and administrative masters. What at first sight appears to be conservatism is, in the view of many teachers, their opposition to 'new industrialist' utilitarianism and their championship of traditional 'old humanist' values. The words of one teacher are representative of this view. "For the last 22 years we've had a very conservative government which is not very interested in changing things and young people are prepared according to the way the state construes this situation. But we teachers are trying to form individuals, not technicians responding to the need to manufacture more cars, guns or whatever" (Directeur de collège, Calvados). Thus teachers' traditional practice is being
attacked from all sides from the Ministry who want innovation, the parents who want participation and the pupils who want relevance.

**Freedom versus Responsibility: Teachers' Professional Accountability**

A further related source of declining morale is teachers' loss of status. This is being experienced by instituteurs in particular. Instituteurs no longer enjoy the pre-eminent position in the community founded on their esoteric knowledge they once did. 75% are now women with poor career prospects. In the profession overall, an increasing number of teachers want to leave because of the often poor working conditions, lack of room for initiative and the isolation from professional contact which is an inevitable consequence of there frequently being no staffroom in a school and teachers being allowed home when they have done their set number of hours work. Innovations such as the 'équipe educative' which might have helped to overcome some of these problems of morale are typically doomed by the lack of any kind of tradition of collegial or school loyalty or ethos where employment has always been beyond the jurisdiction of an individual school.

This central control of employment is yet another source of dissatisfaction for many teachers since they cannot choose where they will work. The degree of dissatisfaction may be gauged by the fact that in 1979 only 39% of those agrégés and certifiés (CAPES) who applied for a change of post were successful - the decision depending on an elaborate points system in which qualifications, inspectorial assessment, length of service and family circumstances are the chief determinants. There have been a number of teachers' strikes in recent years over the increasing difficulty of gaining those qualifications - Agrégation or CAPES - which are the basis of a permanent, as opposed to a temporary
auxiliary post in collège or lycée. The number of such posts has dropped by more than fifty per cent in many subjects in recent years.  

Teachers' strikes are relatively common in France - a phenomenon which is indirectly yet another effect of central control. Whereas in a decentralised country such as England, teachers battles have been predominantly over pay and conditions of service, the centralised organisation of the French system has led to an equally centralised opposition on the part of teachers in which educational issues are inextricably tied up with political struggle.

King (1981) suggests that in most societies teachers have well merited the title 'your obedient servant' whether to state, church, community or parents but nowhere have teachers held a more anomalous position than in France at once part of the growing of the state and, at the same time, an increasingly self-conscious profession often implacably opposed to government policy on principle and regardless of its direction. To understand the development of this hostility and its implications for contemporary practice, it is necessary to look back once again to the nineteenth century and the marginal social status which characterised teaching, particularly in the elementary school. Impoverished, but aspiring and articulate, teachers tended to support those very conservative values which helped to keep them subjugated - "The state did not know how to handle them. It allowed this idealism, which reflected a sense of unease and isolation in the world, to develop into political opposition" (Zeldin, vol. 1, p. 481).

"In effect, they became a caste, administering themselves and controlling promotions through their powerful unions with which no Minister chose to tangle" (Moody, 1978)

After the initial, bitter struggle for teachers as civil servants, to be allowed to join trade unions was won in 1925, the divergence in
the interests of the different sectors of the profession began to be apparent. The elite of the profession - the lycée teachers - were predominantly conservative, middle class and republicans. They formed the 'Syndicat National des Professeurs de Lycée' which refused to join the left wing Confédération Générale de Travailleurs which had the allegiance of the elementary school Instituteurs.

The two most powerful unions today, SNI (Syndicat National des Instituteurs) and SNES (Syndicat National des Enseignants Secondaires) (Duclaud-Williams, 1980) continue to be deeply divided, a fact which reflects the very different status, pay and conditions of the two levels. Over the past ten years the government has apparently been seeking to redress this inequality by raising the qualifications and hence, status and credibility of instituteurs. The first stage in this process was to require the Baccalauréat, then later, extending teacher-training from two to three years and finally involving the universities in the requirements that all teachers have both the Certificat d'Aptitude Pédagogique and the Diplôme d'Études Universitaires Générales. 138

Although they have been loosely grouped together within the Fédération d'Enseignement National since 1928 (Clark, 1967), the internal divisions of the teaching force have remained explicit. It is these divisions which have been the major cause of the relative failure of the teacher unions to make any impact on the structures within which they work, despite a generally militant orientation. 139 This militancy has among other things led to their inclusion at least nominally in the process of policy making through, for example, their monthly meeting with ministry representatives in the Conseil de l'Enseignement Générale et Technique. But it has also lost them the goodwill of parents and the public at large. 140

Many ordinary classroom teachers too complain that their unions
are too political and idealistic - particularly in the case of the far
left and communist party-dominated SNI - the primary teachers' union.
By contrast, Syndicat interest in pedagogical issues is relatively
insignificant.\textsuperscript{141}

In some ways, the thrall in which teachers unions hold educational
policy-making coupled with their deep internal divisions have served
the profession badly. Even those ministers like Haby, who are brave
even to risk innovation can be sure that they will be most unlikely to
take with them all branches of the profession. This has a dual effect
of, on the one hand, inhibiting reform at policy level and, on the other,
of making central government wary of ceding any more formal power to the
teachers. Paradoxically at the national level where teachers seem most
powerful, they are most ineffective. At classroom level, where they
seem most controlled, they are most free. This paradox is not at all
obvious since the tradition of central control remains strong and indeed
is embraced with enthusiasm by many teachers.

Napoleon's policy of relying first and foremost on \textit{normative}
control, particularly loyalty, rather than the \textit{coercive} control of
inspection and sanctions is thus still an effective basis of control
despite the activities of the 'enfant terrible' which is the French
teaching profession. The disadvantage of this policy is that at times
when there is strong pressure for formal decentralisation of control -
such as in 1968 or since the advent of the socialist government in 1981 -
teachers to tend to want freedom without being prepared to shoulder the
responsibility which must go with it.\textsuperscript{142} That teachers should strive
after increased formal autonomy despite their traditional and not
inconsiderable support for centralisation is yet another contradiction
in the provision of French education. Given the delay, the inflexibility
in response to local needs and the sense of powerlessness which tend to
go with central control, it is not surprising that teachers wish to
get rid of some of the real consequences of centralisation whilst
maintaining the benefits of it as an ideology.

New Management Strategies

It is clear that at the present time there is something of a
crisis in French education. At the root of the problem is the inadequacy
of the traditional basis for system control - central prescription and
monitoring - to provide for a sufficient degree of flexibility and public
acceptability in the rapidly changing social context in which it now
operates. The knowledge explosion, the upsurge in democratic attitudes,
employment protection and the power of the teacher unions, the sheer
size of the operation have all in their own way helped to bring about
this situation, and the need for normative rather than coercive control.
Thus the place of overt control is increasingly being taken by a
procedure more in keeping with the spirit of the age, namely corporate
management, where this is taken to mean a technocratic, rational, problem-
solving approach to planning and administration which effectively excludes
explicit discussion of different policy options in terms of competing
values.

Robin (1980) suggests that educational provision has been through
four stages since the time of Jules Ferry in the mid 19th century. Up
to the end of the First World War, philosophical questions were dominant;
secondly, between the wars, came psychotechnical questions concerned with
individual learning problems. This was replaced during the 1950s by
didactical questions about how to teach and curriculum development.
Finally, during the 1970s, has come the predominance of administrative
questions about how to understand and control the increasingly diversified
educational system on a scientific basis (les scientifiques):
"In the future the increasingly important needs at the level of system control are without doubt going to make scientists play a mediating role between the pedagogues and the educational authorities" (Robin, 1980).143

The current popularity of 'administration and management' courses in many countries including Britain suggests that the reasons which underlie this development are not concerned solely with the idiosyncratic anachronisms of French educational administration however, but reflect the common and more fundamental social changes currently affecting education. The growing scale of state activity together with the availability of computer-based administrative systems are not in themselves adequate explanations for this development. More fundamental is the change in attitude it reflects in which policy-issues which are in essence political are re-defined as managerial, or technical problems to which the answer is simply a question of logical, scientific enquiry or analysis. Given the deep crises of educational objectives which has been one of the main themes of this chapter, and the breakdown of traditional areas of consensus, a 'managerial' approach can help to disguise the strains caused by the different ideologies of the 'old humanists', the 'new industrialists' and the 'public educators', especially since the relationship between these different priorities and different kinds of educational practice is itself no longer clear.

The ramifications of this tendency extend into every aspect of the educational system in that individual or group interests find it increasingly difficult to make themselves heard against the apparently impartial judgements of science. Teachers' explicitly normative stance can more easily be dismissed as sectarian so that many professional issues can be taken out of such debate and re-defined simply as technical questions.144 Pupils find it hard to find grounds for contradicting the apparently rational 'orientation' that their superiors have agreed to be
in their best interests. Roles are increasingly depersonalised with a corresponding increase in the formal (i.e. rational) allocation of responsibilities. In one lycée of 1,800 pupils, for example, there might be a head, a deputy head, four educational advisers to organise pastoral and social activities, a school manager and his five or six staff.

At local and national administrative levels, the ascendancy of a managerial approach is resulting in an increasing emphasis on cost-accounting, information science and administrative paperwork. One Inspecteur d'Académie suggested he was now "a prisoner of administrative regulations" and instead of spending three quarters of his time on pedagogical matters and one quarter on administration - as hitherto - the proportions are now reversed. Apart from its practical utility, the growth of corporate management has been hastened by those more general strains affecting education already discussed. Paradoxically once again, as the upsurge in democratic consciousness means education is increasingly being defined as a political issue, the Ministry defence is to re-define issues in terms of a managerial emphasis on 'technical' problems.

Kidd provides a good illustration of this pressure in his discussion of the rénovation pédagogique in 1970 in which he suggests that the ideological differences between traditionalists, progressives and technocrats limited the scale of the proposed reforms such as 'modern maths' to a stable, carefully controlled pace. In the event,

"it fell to an agency, unrelated except possibly dialectically to the original springs of the rénovation pédagogique, to implement the reform ... The rénovation pédagogique, largely a product of the utopian tendency (the 1968 rénovation commission in fact quoted directly from Langevin-Wallon) depended for its implementation on the representative of the technocratic model, which thus turned apparently common educational measures to radically different ends." 145
It may be argued, then, that the effect of the deep ideological divisions between traditional and progressive elements within the education system is often, ironically enough, the provision of a major source of support for the technocrats. This is basically the problem of finding a sufficient degree of consensus over the criteria of professional accountability. As Neave suggests, the problem of accountability is at root a question of the legitimacy of the state and is thus subject to variation as the role of the state is "defined, confined and redefined - usually at times of conflict and legitimation ..". In place of the egalitarian, centralist ideology that has until recently provided the legitimation for both professional accountability and ministerial activity since the earliest days of the Université, have emerged the several different ideologies as separate entities - traditionalism and standards, democratisation, and administrative efficiency, which it once combined. As a result, policy-making and implementation become increasingly difficult and the technocratic basis for legitimation which takes issues out of the realm of values into that of mere pragmatism, correspondingly appealing.¹⁴⁶

It would be wrong, however, not to look for the roots of this movement in a much older tradition in French education. Ever since the 'Grandes Écoles' were introduced during the Revolution while the universities were closed, with the idea of providing for high level, applied training for a specific number of specialist posts, this technocratic tradition has been identifiable. In recent decades, government services have been staffed by an elite corps of carefully selected professional administrators trained at the École Nationale d'Administration (ENA) which has also supplied many political and industrial leaders. Within the Ministry of Education, many of the senior officials are graduates of the École Normale Supérieure. Thus together these two
groups provide a level of specialist input which is in direct contrast to English styles of civil service and government which have been generally resistant to the idea of specialists in government. One result of the French approach is the creation of an 'old-boy network' of Grandes Écoles graduates that considerably facilitates policy-making - albeit informally. As specialists, it is the civil servants that provide the administrative stability and continuity in contrast to ministerial instability. From this 'culte d'administration'\textsuperscript{147} this 'cleracy'\textsuperscript{148} of administrators comes a typically French tendency to create administrative structures even where these no longer serve any definite purpose (Smith, 1980). But if "la planification et la centralisation sont des mammelles de l'éducation française... elles sont sèches" (Malan, 1974), for, as has been suggested, traditional modes of administration are now inadequate to cope with the size and value diversity of the educational enterprise. Thus one stimulus to the institution of a more corporate management style is the need for a new legitimating ideology which can both conceal this value diversity and justify a more mechanistic approach to administration. Part of this ascendancy of a managerial approach in the Ministry is "because education is only now becoming identified as a political phenomenon ... there is less pedagogical and more managerial emphasis in the Ministry ... its problems are becoming more technical".\textsuperscript{149}

Neave\textsuperscript{150} has suggested that it is significant that this more technocratic approach to educational management developed at precisely the time when education itself was becoming less of a concern of framework planning. The development of a new, technocratic style of administration geared to producing greater efficiency began to develop in the early seventies just at the time time education could no longer rely on either the political support or the resources and priority it
had enjoyed in the four year plans of the previous decade. In this respect, the growth of corporate management strategies in France shares many points in common with similar developments taking place in England at the same time, reflecting an increasing, if still covert, concern with tightening the lines of bureaucratic accountability. In other aspects of the increasing rationalisation of management such as successive reorganisation of the Ministry of Education along more specialist lines; the tendency to reduce the amount of teacher participation in advisory bodies and the increasing number of inter-ministerial decisions, the trend may be traced back through the whole history of the Fifth Republic.

The contemporary crisis in confidence in education, the value vacuum created by the demise of the liberal egalitarian consensus and the need for new modes of social control brought about by associated developments in the industrial and social order are themes which are common to both Chapters Five and Six. They are taken up explicitly, if more theoretically, in Chapter Seven.

Along with the ideological context for change however there has gone the associated development of administrative techniques which has made a more 'technicist' approach to management possible. In a paper which traces the developing role of government statistics as part of the growth of corporate management, Seibel (1980) suggests:

"If one compares the current characteristics of educational statistics to those which prevailed before 1930, the most striking aspect is the integration and centralisation of this function for all types of teaching". 151

Significant in this respect has been the setting up of the Département de Statistiques et de Sondages within the Ministry of Education and, since 1970, the splitting of 'Directions d'Objectifs par Grand Domaines' into 'la Direction de la Prévision' and 'Les
Directions Chargées des Moyens. Thus under one director comes "the
tasks of planning and formulating the political objectives of education
while the responsibility for the management of the provision of
information systems and innovation in methods of administration was
given to a department whose technicist character thus found itself
sharply defined" (Seibel, 1980). Malan (1974) reinforces this point:

"the institution in March 1970 of a structure called
'management by objectives' within the central
administration, carried with it the idea that all the
activities of state education must be considered as a
system of activities which could be categorised
hierarchically, against each other, in terms of the
outcomes that could be achieved for a given cost". 152

The activities of the Département de l'Organisation et de la
Gestion Déconcentrée have meant that the limited amount of administrative,
pedagogical and financial decentralisation which has been instituted in
recent years has been more than compensated for by the increased
efficiency of the local administration of the education service through
the widespread use of centrally-provided computer packages which both
collect detailed data on individual schools and help in the various
administrative tasks of finance, staffing and school organisation. In
addition, the availability of such detailed and standardised information
on a local basis provides the central Ministry with a clearer picture
than ever before of the education system in the country as a whole.

A significant part of this new picture is provided by 'Une Mission
Nouvelle d'Évaluation des Résultats du Système Éducatif' whose task is
similar to that traditionally performed subjectively by the Inspecteurs
Generaux (IGEN). Arguably, the institution of this new 'mission'
represents a very significant change from a qualitative to a quantitative
emphasis in the evaluation of systemic performance and can be taken as
a very clear illustration of the prevailing technical ideology. It may
well have profound implications for the way in which control of the
operation of the education system is likely to develop in the near
future.

Conclusion

Little has been said explicitly about assessment procedures in
this second part of the chapter which has been concerned with identifying
some of the defining characteristics of French educational provision and
how these national traditions influence the translation of changing
social imperatives into educational practice. The purpose of this
analysis however has been quite specific namely to illuminate the part
that evaluation procedures play in making the system as a whole responsive
to the changing socio-economic context. It was argued in Chapter Four
that such evaluation procedures may be conceptualised in terms of
accountability (i.e. control) relations which in some countries
emphasise the 'post-hoc' evaluation of educational products and in others,
the 'ante-hoc' evaluation of educational processes. The foregoing analysis
of the French situation provides a detailed substantiation of this argument,
depicting as it does a country in which traditional modes of accountability
emphasising control of the educational process have become steadily more
ineffective in the face of the system's increasing size and a growing
diversity of social values. In outlining some of the recent policy
developments in French education, Chapter Five has attempted to show how
such traditional modes of control are gradually being complemented by
the institution of various product-based accountability procedures. Of
particular significance in this respect has been the growing strength
of a technicist orientation to educational provision which both makes
possible and legitimates an increasingly quantitative and impersonal,
even mechanistic, approach to educational accountability.

Thus France has been moving towards the traditional English reliance on the collection and dissemination of information about educational processes and outcomes to provide the criteria for the powerful normative control inherent in self-imposed professional accountability. As will be argued in Chapter Six, whilst England is seeking to strengthen central control of the education system by the establishment - in a number of different ways - of central norms of performance, France is translating its long-standing tradition of the central prescription of curricular objectives into similar norms of performance in which various newly-instituted forms of evaluation and assessment provide for professional accountability. Whilst it is the central identification of norms which is uncharacteristic in England, it is the emphasis on evaluation rather than prescription as the basis for control which is novel in France.
Footnotes to Chapter Five

1. See, for example, the special issue of Comparative Education on this subject, Vol. 13, no. 2, 1977.

2. Copies of the draft final report on the project for SSRC were sent to all English and French interviewees for comment.

3. The parallel with the 1862 Revised Code in England is explicit here.

4. Although a national system of education that was both free and lay was not finally established until the Loi Ferry of 1881 and despite the impetus that the Loi Falloux of 1850 gave to the growth of church schools, the commitment to providing mass state education continued to gain strength in subsequent years.

5. 'Liberté' was originally conceived in the later half of the eighteenth century as freeing the labouring classes from the tyranny of the aristocracy. Thus historically, it was not in conflict with 'égalité' and 'fraternité' (V. Dundas-Grant).

6. Charles Fourier (1772-1837) was a major socialist reformer and one of the first pioneers of women's education.

7. This point is made by Archer (1980) who suggests that apparently major reforms, such as those attempted by Debré and Berthoin were essentially 'à la marge' since as Fouchet suggested French education was one of the biggest enterprises in the world and about as responsive to the expression of social interests and local demands as the Red Army!

8. Though it is now science as in for example the Bac 'C' (maths and physics) rather than arts, as in the Bac 'A' (lettres) which is the most prestigious, philosophy is still a compulsory subject in the final year of non-technical lycées.


10. French education statutes show this contradiction as clearly as the curriculum does. See for example, Education Act no. 75:620 (11/7/75).


13. "Mais comme la société, absorbée par le souci de sa croissance, se refuse à dire clairement sur quel système de valeurs doit réposer l'éducation, ce qui est un choix politique et philosophique, l'éducation elle-même devient impossible. Le drame est que ces systèmes qui tombent en ruines ne peuvent être remplacées par les conceptions trop pragmatiques et trop fonctionnelles que la société industrielle suggère à l'école : préparer les travailleurs, apprendre à apprendre, etc. La croissance économique et l'intégration sociale ne peuvent longtemps dissimuler ce qu'elles sont : des moyens, auxquels la société doit assigner leur fin; et elles ne peuvent
22. It is interesting to note the English parallel here that as White (1975) argues, was one of the main reasons for the Tory party measures to decentralise English education in the 1920s.

23. "Par l'instruction morale et religieuse, il pourvoit déjà à un autre ordre de besoins tout aussi réels que les autres, et que la Providence a mis dans le coeur du pauvre, comme dans celui des heureux de ce monde, pour la dignité de la vie humaine et la protection d l'ordre sociale" (Monteur Universel 3.1.1833).

24. Part of the source of the Catholic church's determination not to lose its traditional hold on the education system is that Rule 2 of Canon Law states that the church must have oversight of education (Neave, 1981, personal communication).

25. Napoleon 'Pensées Politiques et Sociales', p. 213

26. It is interesting to note once again the comparison here with England in the nearly simultaneous setting up of a national educational inspectorate (HMI) despite a very different administrative tradition. This is testimony to both the growing size of educational provision and an increasingly widespread belief in both countries that such provision should be a charge upon the state.

27. The Université was set up by Napoleon in 1808 as a national system of education. It embodied the two central principles of supreme central control and a state monopoly of instruction although non-elite, elementary education which had a very different purpose and was almost totally separate in its provision, was only tenuously included (see for example, Archer, 1979, pp. 201-3).

28. "Comme au moyen âge, toute la société se réjouit sur la hiérarchie féodale, on assimila au jeune chevalier tous ceux qui débutaient dans une carrière. On appela bachelier un moine qui n'était pas encore prêtre, un jeune homme non marié, un apprenti soumis aux gardes du métier, enfin un théologien et un étudiant qui avait obtenu le premier des grades universitaires. Le mot 'bachelier' ne se prend plus que dans cette acception" (Fremy and Fremy, 1978).

29. "Un acte passé par-devant notaire par lequel un apprenti et un maître s'engagent réciproquement, l'apprenti à apprendre un act ou un métier, et le maître à lui montrer pendant un certain temps, moyennant des conditions déterminées." (Chervel, 1874, Dictionnaire Historique des Institutions moeurs et coutumes de la France, Librairie Hachette, Paris, p. 5).

30. Thus, for example, Bourdieu and Passeron found that working class students were the highest achievers in the Latin sub-group of the lycée because, they suggest, these students have had to exhibit exceptional qualities in order to be selected for and persist in a channel so unlikely for students of their background. Such students compare badly, however, against the most talented middle-class students who 'invest' their cultural capital in those high status subjects on which there is most return.

31. Creation of the 'Baccalauréat ès Sciences' was in 1852.
tenir lieu du système de valeurs et de normes que requiert toute éducation et philosophique "sans lequel l'éducation elle-même devient impossible" (Prost). It is interesting to note that Prost has recently been charged with chairing a major review of the lycée stage of French education. The report, published in November 1983 and entitled 'Les Lycées et Leur Études au seuil du XXIème Siècle' (Rapport au Directeur des lycées présenté par le Groupe de Travail National sur les Seconds Cycles. Service d'information, Paris.). See also 'Déclaration de Monsieur Alain Savary, Ministre de l'Éducation Nationale, sur les Lycées, Paris, 14/2/1984, in which he gives his reactions to the Prost report. Reaction in the press suggests that the report is fairly uncontroversial and is unlikely to result in major changes - which is surprising in the light of the above quotation.

14. "Quand une société ne peut pas enseigner c'est que cette société ne peut pas s'enseigner; c'est qu'elle a honte, c'est qu'elle a peur d'enseigner elle-même; pour toute humanité, enseigner, au fond, c'est s'enseigner; une société qui n'enseigne pas est une société que ne s'aime pas; que ne s'estime pas et tel est précisément le cas de la société moderne".

15. See also Jean Zay 1936. After the Second World War the Langevin-Vallon Commission (1944-46) well expressed the new spirit of meritocracy which has been the dominant legitimating ideology within French education since that time.

16. Hayward (1974) suggests that Pompidou had more power than any head of state since Napoleon III, the fact that this was not immediately apparent being due to the strict political discipline of the Gaullists and the disarray of their opponents.

17. Parker (1984), personal communication. This point is well-evidenced by the recent experiences of the Mitterand Government.

18. At the time of writing M. Savary has instituted a major review of each stage of education -primary, collège, lycée and university and has grasped the nettle of attempting to reform private school legislation. The fact that little practical change has so far resulted from these reviews is a good example of the relative weakness of socialist governments, despite their popular mandate to introduce radical reform.

19. This legislation, designed to bring private and state systems closer together, provoked a number of massive (500,000+) demonstrations of parents during March 1984 on the theme of freedom in education and it seems likely that on this issue too, as on the controversial Le Grand proposals for collège reform, M. Savary will have to back down. See Follain, M. 'A thousand days of Mitterand rule', TES 16.3.1984, p. 18.

20. "De nos débats il est sortie surtout un procès - celui de l'administration" (Agblemagnon)

21. "Le problème de l'administration est peut-être d'avoir à gérer la contradiction, or la logique de l'administration est exclusive de toute contradiction" (Ardoino).
32. See, for example, The Education Secretary's speech at the North of England conference, January 1984, Sheffield.

33. It is important to stress, however, that these are largely policy changes, the degree of real change in the ethos and institutional organisation of schooling varying from school to school, since the common school and the common course could not, of themselves, democratisse a system in which none of the fundamental controls or ideology were changed (Broadfoot, 1980).

34. For a study of the way in which different establishments contribute to 'Bac' success, see Le Monde de l'Éducation no. 81, March 1982. Also, Le Monde de l'Éducation November 1983, 'Faut-il supprimer le bac' and February 1984, 'Rapport Prost, diagnostic nuancé'.


37. Instituteur, Calvados, France.

38. For a recent official discussion of this phenomenon, see 'Le Courrier de l'Éducation', no. 44.

39. "Ce qu'il faut éviter, avant tout c'est l'orientation par l'échec ... Il n'y a pas de métier qui corresponde a un échec, mais il y a des métiers qui correspondent à des dispositions diverse ... l'orientation ne peut cependant être le fait de l'école seule. Elle doit être le résultat d'une collaboration entre les enfants - concernés au premier chef, les parents qui sont responsables d'eux, et l'école" (Christian Beullac interview in Le Monde de l'Education, March 1981).

40. Notably the 'Compagnons de la Nouvelle Université' (1917-1924).

41. See, for example, Le Courrier de l'Éducation no. 82, September 1979. Also, Le Monde de l'Éducation, March 1981.


44. This is very much the argument of Michel Foucault, discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis, as set out in his 'Surveiller et Punir'. Paris, Gallimard. Also, I am drawing on an interview with M. Guy Berger, Département des Sciences de l'Éducation, Université De Paris-Vincennes.
45. See, for example, Bourdieu and Passeron's French data in this respect in 'La Reproduction'. More generally, see Nash, R. (1976) 'Teacher Expectations and Pupil Learning' RKP, and Sharp, R. and Green, A. (1976) Education and Social Control, RKP. From his own research, Jim Kidd reports that the abolition of a formal 'entrée en sixième' assessment has provoked complaints that there is no guarantee of objectivity in the new procedures but rather, accumulating evidence that pupils' socio-economic background may influence teachers' assessments, especially as it is expressed in differential linguistic competence (personal communication, 1980).

46. See note 43.


48. This attitude is well paralleled in the more recent opposition by teachers to the Le Grand Report on collège reform. As a recent article in Le Monde expressed it, "It was crying 'No to the Le Grand Report or Reform the Collèges; Yes : on the backs of the teachers, no' that the participants afterwards demonstrated in Paris" (C'est en criant 'Non au rapport Le Grand ou Rénover les Collèges oui : sur le dos des Professeurs, non' que les participants ont en suite manifesté dans Paris). Le Monde, 25.1.83.

49. "Tout au long de sa scolarité il sera l'objet de la part de ses éducateurs d'une observation continue qui permettra de mieux adapter l'enseignement à ses besoins, l'aidera à se connaître et à bien préparer son orientation scolaire et professionnelle ultérieure" (ONISEP, 1979)


51. "L'orientation fonctionne ainsi en grand partie comme un mécanisme d'exclusions successive, au détriment des catégories sociales moins favorisées ... – on dit ce qu'on veut: ils disent si on peut .." Le Monde de l'Éducation, April 1980.

52. Fifteen per cent of pupils do not go to college at all according to Mme. B. Nonon of 'École et Famille'.

53. See, for example, Ministère de l'Éducation, Service des Études informatiques et statistiques : Département des techniques et études d'évaluation (1979), 'Observation psychopédagogique des élèves de cinquième'. This body has some elements in common with the English APU as an organ of central government concerned with the evaluation of standards, but differs in that it is principally concerned with cohort studies.

54. As Cicourel, A. and Kitsuse, J. (1968) suggest in 'The Social organisation of the High School and deviant adolescent careers' in Rubington, E. and Weinberg, M. (eds.), 'Deviance : the Interactionist Perspective', New York, Macmillan, the choice process in guidance and counselling of this type is not nearly as open and voluntarist as the rhetoric tends to suggest. See also Rosenbaum, J.E. (1976), 'Making Inequality, the Hidden Curriculum of High School Tracking', New York, Wiley.

55. See note 44.


57. Interview with Mme. T. Catz-Trevenin, Université de Paris-Vincennes, 1980.

58. See Le Monde de l'Éducation, no. 81, March 1982, and no. 92, March 1983.


61. Although "le nombre de sujets très brillants n'a pas augmenté". Frémy and Frémy (1978).

62. Between 1962 and 1966 Baccalauréat entries doubled and totalled 223,384 in 1967 (TES, 7.7.78). In 1967 59.8% of candidates were successful (Rothera, 1968). In 1979 65.8% of candidates passed the general Baccalauréat. In 1980 the figure was 66.1%. In 1979 58.6% passed the Baccalauréat de Technicien and 59.4% in 1980 (these figures break down into percentages of 72 Bac C, 67.9 Bac E, 64.5 Bac B, 65 Bac A and 63.4 Bac D.) Le Monde de l'Éducation, 1980.

63. Notably by means of the Propédétique exam held at the end of the first year of university.

64. Haby (1975), 'Pour la modernisation du système éducatif', Paris, La Documentation Française, Chapter 3.
65. After the Second World War there were several attempts to raise the number and status of technical qualifications — such as the Bac Technique in 1946, but these came to nothing with the continuing domination of the 'old humanist' influence of university professors (Archer, 1979).

66. Among school-leavers going on to higher education, 85.4% of Bac 'C' holders went on to long course higher education as against 54.3% of Bac 'B' holders. Service d'Études et d'Informations Statistiques (1978). Accession à l'Enseignement Supérieur des Bacheliers 1976 selon le Série du Baccalauréat. Paris, Ministère de l'Éducation.

67. Seven out of eight medical students are failed at this point (Pautler, 1981b).


69. Interview with M. G. Belbenoit, Inspecteur Générale.

70. "Quand, l'année suivante, ils sont publiés, tous les professeurs les traitent ou les font traiter par leurs élèves" (Le Courrier, no. 80, May 1979).

71. See the discussion by Louis Le Grand in Le Monde de l'Éducation, February 1981.

72. This is recognised even by the principal guardians of central control and academic standards, the Inspecteurs Généraux. See also the 1983 Prost Report and Le Monde de l'Éducation, March 1982, March 1983.

73. Le Courrier de l'Éducation, no. 80, May 1979 describes the operation for the Académie de Reims in which, for example, there are 205,000 question papers for the Bac de Technicien alone. In 1978 there were 336,991 candidates for the Bac, 63,000 for Agrégation and Capes (secondary teaching qualification), 560,000 for various brevets and certificates professionnels (CAP, BEP, BP, BT, BTS) including, in 1976, prior to the Haby reforms, 550,000 candidates for the Brevet d'Études du Prémier Cycle — a total of more than one million every year.

74. "Il est malheureusement à craindre que les différences observées entre examinateurs ne soient pas entièrement explicables par les caractères propres à la situation d'examen".

75. Criticism of examinations in this respect is long-standing. 'La docimologie' has been an active branch of scholarship since the 1930s. Interview with M. Lucien Geminard, Doyen de l'Inspection Generale de l'Education Nationale.

76. Interview with M. Grandbois, IGEN and M. Teynier, Directeur adjoint des lycées; also Mme. Feneuille, now Directeur du Centre International de Recherche Pédagogique at Sèvres.

78. Jessel, in an article entitled 'Strike threat recedes as new year gets under way' in TES 19.9.1980 describes how as teachers discovered the Haby reforms were not being implemented in practice, hostility declined. It is worth noting, however, that Duclaud-Williams (1982) attributes teacher union hostility to the Haby reforms as an essentially political struggle in which the specifically educational issues are relatively unimportant.

79. Indeed so strong is the tradition that the measure of autonomy hard won as a result of the student riots of 1968 which were partly a response to the reactionary effects of tight national control was very short lived. The increased freedom nominally granted to universities under the 1968 Loi d'Orientation ceded a measure of budgetary and curriculum control, thus apparently responding to demands for increased participation and autonomy. In practice, while the national system of accreditation, selection procedures and teaching conditions remained unchanged, central control also remained substantially unchanged (Brickman, 1979; Premfors, 1979). Even this limited freedom was short lived however, since an amendment to the law in June 1971 extended the Ministry's power under article 20 with regard to 'habilitation' - the way in which local programmes of study are accredited for state qualifications. Henceforth the Ministry was to determine for each discipline and each category of establishment and student, the method of grading, a step which put the Ministry back into the business of "prescribing curriculum, examinations and methods of teaching for the entire university system" (Patterson, 1972). The power of national certificates to control curricula is also well illustrated by the experience of the substantial minority of private schools who, as an OECD report of 1970 pointed out, had to conform to national curricula because of the state monopoly of public examinations and certification.

80. t 10, instituteur, Calvados.

81. Quoted by Malan, 1974, p. 25.

82. See, for example, Le Courrier de l'Éducation, 11.4.77 and 25.4.77.

83. "L'application de règles identiques à des niveaux identiques (entre académies, départements, établissements) entretient l'illusion d'égalité de traitement alors que la très grande hétérogénéité soit des situations de départ, soit simplement de taille de chacune de ces unités demanderait des adaptations en fonction d'un examen approfondi de ces différences".

84. "Si l'immensité et l'inertie du système éducatif constituent un facteur de stabilité ... elles entraînent une lenteur considérable de diffusion de toute action rénovatrice malgré l'ampleur des moyens mis en œuvre ... il ne peut s'agir que d'une simple réduction des problèmes nationaux à l'échelle locale".

85. This analysis of practice is supported theoretically by Habermas (1976, p. 12) in his critique of systems theory in which he suggests that it is within the processes of interaction that participants find the meaning for events, call for legitimation of political actions and constitute their own ego and group identities in ways which motivate them to act within specific social situations.
86. Interview with lycée teacher, Calvados, France.

87. Interview with V. Isambert-Jamati, UER de Sciences de l'Éducation, Université Rene Descartes, Paris. See also Pautler, 1981a.

88. Interview with Mme. Feneuille, op. cit.

89. Interview with chef d'établissement, small primary school, Calvados.

90. Interview with M. D. Girard, IGÉN. The only exception to this is the teachers 'nôte' in which two thirds of the mark is given by the inspector (representing the pedagogic hierarchy) and one third is given by the chef d'établissement in the name of the Recteur and the administrative hierarchy. This distinction was referred to by M. Basté, le Directeur Adjoint du Cabinet, Ministère de l'Éducation.


93. Interview with J. Dehaussy. Interview with Mme. Simone Dutoit, assistant to the Recteur d'Académie du Creteil.

94. Lycée Provisieur, Calvados. Interesting, this view is partly echoed from the very different perspective of one of the leading Recteurs - Jacques Dehaussy of Creteil. See also Dehaussy, J. 'L'expérience du Pouvoir dans le Système Éducatif: le témoignage d'un recteur', Administration et Éducation 1980, no. 2, pp. 37-41.

95. 64% of a school's budget comes from central government, but schools are now free to spend this how they wish. Given the level of fixed costs and fixed staffing this concession is more apparent than real.


97. "Les situations varient beaucoup d'un collège à l'autre et ce qui vaut ici ne vaut pas nécessairement ailleurs". Le Courrier de l'Éducation, 16.10.78.

98. For example one major teacher union - SGEN - is in favour of decentralisation as the basis for democracy whereas another major union for secondary school teachers - the SNES - is against decentralisation in its championship of the traditional idea of equality. One of Haby's proposals was a greater measure of autonomy for the Directeur de l'école. Teachers were against this proposal, however, since they feared what would often in practice be the institution of yet another level of hierarchy (Kidd, 1979, personal communication).

99. By 1971 90% Catholic primary schools have the 'contrat simple', 94% Catholic secondary schools the 'contrat d'association'. By the end of 1983 the number of teachers alone had risen to 613,202 in the state sector and 123,158 in the private sector. Note d'Information, 13 December 1983, Ministère de l'Éducation, Paris.
100. Interview with M. Buzet, Financial Controller at the Ministère de l'Éducation, Paris. M.D. Robin, Directeur de Programme de Recherche, l'Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique refers to it as "the largest enterprise in Europe" which may not be strictly correct but the belief is significant in itself.

101. See, for example, Le Courrier no. 84, November 1979, which sets out the budget for 1980.

102. V. Isambert-Jamati, op. cit.


104. Wallace, Miller and Ginsberg (1983, p. 114) emphasise the same point as a traditional feature of the English education system and suggest that contemporary trends towards corporate management leading to a decline in such 'informal networks' may have important consequences in terms of necessitating a different basis of administration and control. Current trends in this respect and their implications are discussed in relation to both England and France in Chapter Seven.

105. "La première c'est que l'on peut considérer toute situation éducative comme un système ... la deuxième étant exactement le contraire".

106. "Poo-Bah is alive and well and living in France in the form of the Prefect" suggests Turpie, 1980, p. 24.

107. It is arguable that the whole system of recruitment of teachers in France is geared to making good schools better. This system does not apply to the lower-paid, lower-status 'auxiliaires' on temporary contracts, whose increasing numbers are not only a source of great dissatisfaction to themselves and the profession as a whole, but are also another factor inhibiting professional development and lowering morale as a whole.

108. About one million pounds for each of the 26 Académies as compared to the two million pounds in toto allocated to the Schools Council in its heyday.


110. Lycée teacher, Calvados, France.

111. Interview with P. Laderrière, OECD, Paris.


114. Interview with Dr. John Lowe, 1980, op. cit.


117. Laderrière, op. cit.

118. In 1860 there were only 12 IGEN. Sous-Inspecteurs départementaires were instituted in 1837. The number of regional inspectors has increased from 15 in 1968 to 588 in 1980 whilst numbers in the other two branches (IGEN & IDEN) have remained static. See also Minot (1979).

119. 'Animation' is something quite different from exhortation, although the latter, at the annual pedagogic conference for elementary teachers, was an important part of the inspector's functions. 'Animation' rather sums up the post-1969 values of the 'Rénovation Pédagogique', in which, for example, the inspector became the leader of the departmental or district team which stimulated development throughout the school year. J. Kidd, op. cit.

120. "Si cette intervalle de liberté, cette marge d'autonomie tend à se réduire par une pression venue d'en haut, elle se réduit aussi par l'effet de certaines actions irresponsables venues du terrain qui, nous le savons, ne sont pas suscitées par le SNI-pâge. Place aux avant-postes, accessible à tous, en contact avec les difficultés réelles et concrètes, l'IDEN est vulnérable. Il n'est que trop facile de le menacer, voire de le sequestrer ou de le prendre en stage. En caricaturant, on peut faire de l'IDEN le symbole de tous les autoritarismes et le bouc-émissaire de toutes les frustrations: et l'on créé alors, sans y prendre garde, ce que l'on pretend combattre ... nous refusons de devenir de purs fonctionnaires d'autorité, ce que serait refuser, plus ou moins, l'animation". IDEN Commission Pédagogique Étude 1977-1978.

121. Géménard, op. cit.

122. Programmes are now available from the Service d'Édition et de Vente des Publications Nationales with new instructions being published in the Ministry 'Bulletin officiel'.

123. This can only get worse as the provision of free text books (1970 primary, 1977 secondary) largely removed the former element of choice available to teachers in this respect in realising Haby's ideal of all teachers in the same year group, the same subject, in the same school, having the same textbooks (Corbett, 1980).


125. The legal requirement for parents to be consulted about educational policy are facilitated by the existence of these organisations which are frequently allied with a teachers' federation of similar complexion. The four major federations are:

1) Fédération Nationale des Associations de Parents d'Élèves de l'Enseignement Public (FNA)
2) Union Nationale des Association Autonomes des Parents d'Élèves (UNAPE)
3) Fédération des Parents d'Élèves de l'Enseignement Public (PEEP)
4) Fédération des Conseils de Parents d'Élèves des Écoles Publiques (FCPE)
The political complexion of these associations depends very much on their permanent secretaries by whose names they are frequently known.

126. The 1975 Education Act rules that family allowances will be lost if pupils are consistently badly behaved.

127. Le Courrier no. 76, 1979, 28% against 40% 1977; 25% against 38% 1978; such involvement as there has been has normally been about questions of pupil progress rather than pedagogy - the jealously guarded professional preserve of teachers.

128. Part of this pressure is the product of the rapid and relatively recent urbanisation of French society since the old informal contacts and exchanges of small scale village life must now formally be provided for in democratic institutions, a process exacerbated once again by the ever increasing size of the educational bureaucracy.

129. Le Courrier no. 82, September 1979. Le Monde de l'Éducation, March 1981. Le 'Conseil d'Administration' includes representatives of the Ministry of Education - usually the Inspecteur d'Académie, elected representatives of the teaching and administrative staff, parents, pupils and local authorities; subjects cover moral, financial and material matters. The 'Conseil de Classe' consists of the head, the guidance counsellor, school doctor and welfare officer, the teachers and two elected representatives each of parents and pupils of the class in question. The Council deals with the progress of the class and has a key role to play in the 'orientation' process. More recently still the socialist education Minister, Alain Savary, concerned with the lack of cohesion between home and school, has written to regional officials demanding the institution of parent-teacher meetings where all aspects of schooling, including the curriculum, can be discussed. TES 23.10.81.

130. "L'une des conséquences a été de donner consciences aux parents qu'ils ont un droit à la parole, à l'information, et même un droit de regard sur ce qui se fait à l'école. Désormais il sera de plus en plus impossible de dire aux parents ça ne vous regarde pas" (Le Courrier, no. 82, September 1979).

131. Interview with M. J. Teynier, op. cit.

132. Interview with Dr. J. Lowe, op. cit.

133. "Les responsables essayent de faire face à ses transformations d'infrastructure par des innovations immédiatement érodées et marginalisées faute d'une prise en compte réelle de leurs objectifs et de leur moyens" (Le Grand, 1977, p. 272).

134. Interview with M. Carniol, deputy secretary, SNI (collège) and M. Ichmoukametoff, secretary SNI (primaire), Caen.

135. One of the largest teachers unions, the 'Syndicat National des Instituteurs' (SNI) opposed the Haby reforms, the principles of which had long been their policy, on the grounds that they would not fulfil their intentions of abolishing selection (Hanley et al., 1980, TES 4.3.77).
The importance of this issue was reflected in the remarkably peaceful 'rentree' of September 1981 after the new socialist government had created a further 4,600 posts than the 2,400 already planned (5,443 primary, 5,000 secondary) and planned a further 17,000 for 1983 despite a drop of 39,300 in pupil numbers whilst the position of the 40,000 auxiliaries is to be made more secure (Cassassus, 1981).

In a typically French paradox, this plan has run into trouble since staff from the école normale which provides teacher-training, and those from the Université are not allowed to enter each others' institutions.

The scale of the difficulties faced by this umbrella association - originally 28 and now comprising 47 groups - is thrown into relief when it is borne in mind that there are only 6 teacher unions in England.

See, for example, Dreyfus 'Un Syndicalisme Écartelé par la politique', Le Figaro, 25.4.80 - which argues that the internal divisions of FEN militated against the teacher strikes of April 1980 having any effect.

This point is discussed by Dreyfus in an interview with Raymond Barre in Le Figaro, 25.4.80. Thus, for example, the position of the 'socialist' Société Générale des Enseignants Nationals which is part of the Confédération Générale de Travailleurs (the French equivalent of the TUC) as set out in a recent pamphlet 'Propositions pour l'école de Base' starts off from the premise of the school being an agent of social reproduction and sets out its policy in terms of an increasingly differentiated communitarian pedagogy to which the idea of 'autogestion' (institutional autonomy) is central.

"Dans l'avenir les besoins de plus en plus important au niveau de la regulation du systeme vont sans doute faire jouer aux scientifiques un role mediateur entre les pedagogues et les responsables de l'éducation" (Robin, 1980).

The recent battle within the Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique is significant in this respect as the ascendant 'scientism' supports applied, government research at the expense of more open-ended, autonomous enquiry. See G. Neave, 'Research staff fight to save controversial national institute', TES 5.9.80. The similarities with the recent review by Lord Rothschild of the SSRC in England are significant.

Kidd, J. op. cit.

Neave, G., op. cit.

Interview with M. Emmanuel de Calan, Attaché Culturel, the French Embassy, London, 1981.

Dr. J. Lowe, op. cit.
149. M.D. Robin, op. cit.

150. Personal communication, 1981.

151. "Si ... on compare les caracteristiques actuelles de fonction statistique su l'education a celles qui prevalaient avant 1930, l'element le plus frappant est celui de l'integration et de la centralisation de cette fonction pour tous les ordres d'enseignement".

152. "Les taches de programmation et de mise au point des objectifs de politique educative tandis que les responsabilites de la Direction de la Prevision en materie de systemes d'informations et de renovation des methodes de gestion etait confie a un service dont la caracter technique se trouvait nettement marque" (Seibel, 1980).

153. "L'application en Mars 1970 d'une structure dite de 'direction par objectifs a l'administration centrale traduit l'idée que l'ensemble des activites de l'education nationale doit etre considere comme un systeme d'actions qui peuvent etre hierarchisees les unes par rapport aux autres en fonction des resultats qu'elles permettent d'escompter pour un cout donne" (Malan, 1974, p. 5). At the local level, the move to adopt similar strategies was spontaneous. As early as 1970, for example, the recteurs of Grenoble and Toulouse asked for help from the new Departement de la Gestion Deconcentre on how to modernise their Academie's administration using the new economic and rational means and especially the new 'techniques informatiques'.
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, Vicesimus 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 ungenteeel), 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.2

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.⁵

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.⁶ 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 (e.g. 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. 10

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 Examing 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".  

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 wholehearted 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 example, 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 28 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)\(^36\) 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 yardstick 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.\(^{37}\) 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. 39 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.41 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.42 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.43

"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 bureau-
cratic nature of civil service activity as the complexity of its functions
increased, meant this utilitarian ideology was reinforced by an uncharacter-
istic 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 laissez-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. 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\textsuperscript{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
post 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"
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 to 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 there 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. 65 "... 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. 66 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.

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, 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, Advisory Committees, 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".\textsuperscript{84} 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",\textsuperscript{85} 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. 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. 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 LEASIB90 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. Concern within the DES about the lack of information about educational standards more generally was explicit as far back as 1968 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 Scoail 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. 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 'apiece of political furniture in the waiting
room, and it has been of major significance in its legitimation 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 legitimisation. But as Hextall suggests "They [educational policies and practices] may be expressed and presented as issues to be formulated and resolved in objective, technically natural 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 Nuttall 109 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'. 
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 2', 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 'highers 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 Troyina, 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.


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 Troyina (1982). Comprehensivisation provides a good example of this.

57. Interview with HMI J. Graham, former head of the APU. See also Broadfoot, 1982, p. 12.
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 Baccalauréat 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.
CHAPTER SEVEN

OVERVIEW, PROSPECTS AND COMMON TRENDS

One of the principal themes of this thesis has been the need to maintain a perspective which can encompass both the common trends and pressures of capitalist societies and the specific outworking of these pressures in the educational policy and practice of any particular nation state. It is necessary in this final chapter to make some attempt to bring these two levels of analysis together, partly for the sake of completeness and partly because the economic, political and social problems facing advanced capitalist societies at the present time are sufficiently fundamental as to render problematic the kind of traditional analytic distinction in the organisation and control of education systems such as centralised and decentralised which have been used up to this point. In particular it will be argued that these common problems are likely to be met by a move away from overtly political judgements about educational policy in favour of a technocratic ideology which legitimates policy decisions in terms of an objective, rational process of decision-making. Such a move postpones the potential legitimation crisis of state institutions implicit in the erosion of traditional values and in the growing powerlessness of the individual to resist the effects of an increasingly intrusive state machinery.

Thus whilst two countries starting from radically different administrative traditions must of necessity be very different in their approach to policy-innovations brought about by such pressures, it is increasingly possible to pick out similar trends in the two countries. Particularly notable in this respect is the basis for educational control which in both England and France finds at the present time a common legitimating ideology in the language of corporate management and
technological efficiency. In curriculum, management and finance, but above all in the nature and application of educational assessment procedures, the power of the norm is increasingly characteristic. Although these general observations leave unresolved more specific policy issues of power-relations and innovation strategies, the purpose and character of such innovations in both countries, despite superficial differences, is increasingly similar.

It has been suggested that educational activity in both England and France is closely controlled by prevailing assessment procedures although these have traditionally taken and continue to take different forms in the two countries. In England there has been something of an oscillation between a more 'free market', decentralised approach to assessment control mediated by the semi-autonomous Exam Boards and the links they in turn have with the universities at times of plenty, and more directive, centralised strategies based on the tighter control of public examining and institutional accountability when economic and social problems dictate a more utilitarian direction for educational activity.

In France, by contrast, the development has been from what was in fact the relative freedom of a highly centralised system in which assessment control was vested in national, government-run selective examinations and personal teacher inspection. This has been replaced by a nominally more decentralised, positive control based on a reflexive relationship between teacher-conducted continuous assessment according to nationally prescribed norms, and an increasingly corporate management approach to educational administration, provision and control. The information thereby generated provides an increasingly powerful means of both directing the careers of individual pupils and of directing the education system as a whole. By the same token, the institution of continuous assessment based on national norms now not only exhorts
teachers - as the system has always done - but arguably makes that exhortation more effective as these norms relate directly to the assessment of pupil progress and simultaneously provide for the national statistical monitoring of educational standards within the system.

Typically, the trends in England are less clear-cut. The activities of the APU are similar to some aspects of the French initiative. The search for national norms as assessment criteria at the present time in England is also a comparable development. A currently less developed but potentially very significant trend in England is the increasing government as well as popular support for the idea of 'profiles' based on continuous assessment and culminating in a 'positive' statement or certificate for all pupils.\(^1\) Whilst this initiative, like that in France, has much to recommend it educationally, it nevertheless has the potential to provide for the very effective imposition of curricular norms since it requires the extension of formal assessment into much wider areas of the curriculum than hitherto, and involves agreement between teachers. If in some ways such a development can be seen as a step towards greater equality of educational provision, it is arguably also a step towards the kind of invisible control Bernstein describes (see Chapter Three). In the past, too, English teachers' autonomy was safeguarded by the lack of central curricular prescriptions which meant that, despite the very powerful control exerted by the emphasis on 'product evaluation', there was considerable room for individual teachers, pressure groups and semi-autonomous bodies such as the Exam Boards to influence the content of that control. In the same way, in the past, French teachers' autonomy was safeguarded by the relatively minor role of 'product evaluation' despite their location within a highly centralised, bureaucratic education system in which every aspect of pedagogic activity, and especially curricular objectives, was tightly controlled. The increasing similarity
at the present time between the two systems reflects the fact that each is tending to institute the aspect hitherto lacking to ensure effective control.

Perhaps even more important than these attempts to make control more effective, however, is the growing association of educational administration in both countries with a corporate management approach. Such an approach is likely to disguise the essentially political nature of educational goals - in an ideology of scientific rationality. In this event, value-judgements appear as merely administrative decisions dictated by rationality and the goal of maximising efficiency. This development underlines the argument set out in Chapter Three that assessment procedures have an important role to play at the level of the expressive ideology of education in helping to determine the very ways in which educational discourse is structured as well as having a more obvious role in legitimating the directly instrumental role of assessment procedures in allocating opportunity. Indeed the way in which assessment procedures help to bring about a social order which finds itself concurring in a particular definition of educational goals and in so doing, make a major contribution to social control, is ultimately more significant than the role of such procedures in enforcing such goals. It has been one of the principal arguments of this thesis that it is the ideological work done by assessment procedures which has been of fundamental significance in shaping the provision and organisation of mass education although the associated role of such procedures in implementing that organisation has clearly also been critical. This last chapter represents an attempt to balance these two levels of analysis in a theoretical discussion of the implications of some of the contemporary trends in assessment procedures identified in Chapters Five and Six.

It is already clear from this summary of some of the more significant
contemporary initiatives in assessment procedures in the two countries that there is no simple, derived relationship between broader social pressures and national institutional responses. The precise configuration of these will depend on the constraints on policy-making provided by existing forms of structuration together with the on-going struggle between a variety of vested interests within that society. This was argued in detail in Chapter Four.

Nevertheless, it is clear from the case-study material of Chapters Five and Six that there are some common features in the contemporary role of evaluation procedures in the two countries under study. Thus it is appropriate to conclude this thesis with an analysis of such general trends couched at the same level of theoretical generality as that of Part I. Any attempt to extrapolate from contemporary events is necessarily more speculative than the sort of historical analysis that has characterised this thesis so far, but the implications suggested by such an analysis are potentially so profound, that it must be attempted.

Developments in Capitalism and Associated Forms of Accountability

The far-reaching changes currently visible in both English and French education can at one level be taken as oscillations of policy caused by changes in the legitimating context. The change in England from the Plowden era to the prevailing climate of utilitarianism and overt accountability may be seen in this light as equivalent to the shift of emphasis from expressive to instrumental goals, from an egalitarian, integrative ideology to an elitist competitive ideology which took place in French education between the French revolution and Napoleon's advent. There are, however, good grounds for believing that current changes in educational provision are responses to a more profound,
change in the nature of the state demands being made
upon education in response to the broader but equally fundamental
pressures being experienced at the present time in the social order as
a whole. On the one hand, this change is attributable to the fact that
the 'interest rate' of social service expenditure to legitimate capitalist
production is self-inflating; producing a situation in which not only does

"The ever increasing level of state expenditure in
absolute terms becomes ever less tolerable to
capital, but also where the proportion of occupational
activity involved in surplus value creation (from
which state spending is financed) is falling to a
point where it will be impossible to maintain existing
levels of state expenditure" (Dale, 1980, p. 17).

Or, as Weiler (1981) put it,

"common to most conceptions of the legitimacy issue is
the notion that, as the range and scope of the state's
activities increase, there is a corresponding, or,
indeed, disproportionate increase in the need for
legitimation - a need which the state tends to satisfy
by even further expanding its activities, thus
perpetuating the spiral of increasing legitimacy
needs which are forever harder to satisfy" (p. 2).

Thus, as Habermas (1975) in particular suggests, the increasing complexity,
diversity and indeed contradictions inherent in contemporary social
formations, require more, rather than less, such expenditure in
providing for the control by government of those elements in society
which pose an increasing threat to the economic order. As autonomy
is eroded, the price for legitimation becomes ever higher at the same
time as the currency is progressively devalued and in short supply.

Another facet of this crisis, however, is the breakdown of the
normative consensus underpinning the state. The cultural 'roots' of
education policy - like other areas of social life - are increasingly
unstable. Affluence, rising expectations, the media, technical innovation
and modern forms of communication, the decline of religion and the
success of modern science, have all broken up the traditional life-world
of more strictly constrained life choices. As the horizons of self-identity are pushed out to embrace a broadening range of alternative forms of life and a myriad of possible futures, traditions are robbed of their authority. They lose their normative force. As culturally-rooted world views are thrown into juxtaposition, 'relativised and manipulatively manipulated', there is a corresponding weakening of normative consensus and of what Rieff (1966) calls the "controlling symbolic" of Western society. This is both a political and a psychological crisis - the psychological dimension concerned with the erosion of the culturally grounded "interpretive systems" (Habermas, 1975) which produced the "controlling symbols" and were the basis of "creedally authoritative institutions" (Rieff) such as schools. The result, as Offe (1975) suggests, is that the state has lost the ability to legitimate itself on normative grounds. It must have recourse to alternative legitimating strategies such as material gratification or coercive repression, each of which tend only to further exacerbate the real legitimacy problem.

The erosion of the traditional normative order also erodes the credibility of the state apparatus as a benign machine acting in the interests of the majority. As Habermas argues, "because the reproduction of class societies is based on the privileged appropriation of socially produced wealth, all such societies must resolve the problem of distributing the surplus product inequitably and yet legitimately" (1975, p. 96). In educational terms, this 'Tocquevillean dilemma', this tension between liberalism and democracy, between the democratic demand for levelling and the continuing existence of inequalities (Aron, 1980, p. 285, Bockock et al., 1980) tends to generate expectations and needs which the education system is necessarily unable to meet. The instrumental order of education is based on hierarchical control whilst
the legitimating ideology, the expressive order, is that of the liberal
discourse of the state, according to which rights are vested
equally in all members of the community. This contradictory position of
education explains its dual progressive/reproductive role - promoting
equality, democracy, toleration, rationality, inalienable rights on the
one hand, while legitimising inequality, authoritarianism, fragmentation,
prejudice and submission on the other (Gintis, 1980, p. 3).

Thus, Bacon (1981) suggests "welfare bureaucracies" such as in the
education system are forced to adopt a 'quasi-political' role in which
they are vigilant over their relations with competing groups and forces
in society and especially over their need to maintain their authority,
to maintain the stability and security of the organisation and the need
to justify their continued claim on the wider resources of society.
Thus very often legitimisation is achieved by the appearance of democratic
participation which conceals a 'discrete manipulative cooption' - in
which a semblance of democracy conceals the limitation of the agenda
and potential decisions which is necessary to the support of the existing
power structure.

Thus education systems, along with other state bureaucracies, are
increasingly faced with the problem of carrying out and, to that extent,
legitimating, the politics and practices of an ever more expensive and
intrusive state machinery which must continue to perpetuate inequality
at a time when the traditional normative order is being deeply eroded.
Weiler's empirical analyses suggest three modes of 'compensatory'
legitimation are currently being employed - legitimation by participation -
as discussed above, 'legitimation by legalisation' and 'legitimation by
expertise' (Weiler, 1981). These three modes of legitimation are readily
matched to the three forms of accountability identified in Chapter Two -
'moral' accountability - the responsiveness of the system to clients,
'bureaucratic' accountability - the responsiveness of the system to the formal bureaucratic hierarchy, and 'professional' accountability to self and colleagues for maintaining self-imposed standards. The continued functioning of the education system in the interest of the state requires therefore the creation of a common language of accountability which will provide for the consensual expression of public, bureaucratic and professional goals within the education system.

In recent years there have been moves in England to increase the degree of bureaucratic accountability to which teachers are subject, to move, in Dale's terms, from a situation of licensed (i.e. professional) autonomy to a more 'regulated' autonomy (Dale, 1980). In France, where 'regulated autonomy' has traditionally been the norm, movement has principally been towards increasing the amount of 'moral' accountability through increased 'participation'. But although the changing balance between different forms of legitimation or accountability is one indication that there are these strains in both countries, it is the content rather than the form of accountability which is critical. That is to say, it is in the ideological assumptions which provide the basis for a common language of accountability that the potential for legitimation, and thus control, really lies. Thus notions of accountability reflect a hegemony which refers both to the ultimate goals and values pursued by groups or individuals and to the processes of attaining them.

"... This has been particularly clearly demonstrated by Michael Apple (1979) in his identification of the influence of common sense categories in making decisions about curriculum content, of the assumptions and consequences of the dominant modes of evaluation (both programme and individual) in education, and of the pervasiveness of a particular conception of accountability" (Dale, 1980, p. 43).

As the sheer size of the state machine makes it increasingly difficult for coercive or traditional bureaucratic modes of control to be effective
on their own, it becomes more than ever necessary that some way be found of ensuring a system of normative order, of self-regulating professionals who will nevertheless pursue goals identified by the state. Implicit in the idea of accountability - performance measured against goals and subsequent response - is the identification of criteria - what constitutes adequate curriculum provision for example, or when does a particular teacher or school's score on public examination passes cease to be acceptable? Recent events in England are revealing in this respect. As demands for accountability have become more explicit in the past few years, these criteria have become more apparent though, I would argue, they have not substantially changed. If anything the school self-evaluation movement has allowed teachers themselves a greater say in the identification of such criteria. Despite the fact that HMI now publish their reports, schools now publish their exam results and there is APU and local authority monitoring, the criteria for such evaluations have continued to be largely defined by professionals whether they be inspectors, teachers or testers. Because of this, it is still the professionals who are the major source of influence on the 'normative climate' perpetrated through professional discourse.

It is important to recognise, however, that there are also other, more bureaucratic channels of accountability pertaining to education associated with financial and legal sanctions. Whilst the existence of such accountability is a major source of formal authority within the system, it is often very hard to exercise in practice, as the William Tyndale case well demonstrated. Explicit challenges to the status quo which require the mobilisation of such formal sanctions are relatively rare, however, as the brouhaha over Tyndale testifies. This is because more often than not the informal, normative influence of professional accountability has been broadly in agreement with the policy goals of
the DES. Indeed the translation of general political objectives into explicitly educational policy within the DES has been recognised as being, typically, the taking up of 'ideas in good currency', the legitimation of a 'bandwagon' whose origin is obscure and probably irrelevant once it is supported by a sufficiently broad consensus of support. But with the progressive breakdown of consensus over educational goals which Thatcherism, economic recession and unemployment have brought about, there appears to have been a quite novel attempt by the DES to strengthen its framework of formal control (and accountability). Although there is plenty of evidence in recent policy initiatives in the field of finance, curriculum and assessment to support this point of view (Salter and Tapper, 1981; Ranson, 1983), recent, more process-oriented studies (e.g. Crispin, 1983) show the DES still lacks the "panoply of legal and financial weapons which can ensure immediate and unreserved compliance with a national policy, even where such a policy is clearly established" (Howell, 1980, quoted by Dale, 1983, p. 192).

Overt initiatives in the area of curriculum control have been even less effective than in the area of finance. Thus, as was argued in Chapter Six, it is perhaps better to see such explicit policy initiatives as a change of style and of rhetoric, as an attempt to use to the full existing powers, rather than a bid to increase control as such. (Dale, 1983). On the other hand, the more covert attempts to affect the criteria of professional accountability which were outlined in Chapter Six may well be much more significant. The Raynor Commission into the working of HMI, and the demise of the Schools Council in favour of two separate Councils made up of representatives nominated directly by the Secretary of State may both be read in this light. The current fate of the Examination Boards is perhaps most significant in this respect.

The precise institutional outcomes of the present initiatives with
regard to public examinations will be determined by micropolitical negotiation. It seems certain, however, that whatever happens, for the foreseeable future the DES will have achieved a significantly more powerful role in affecting the form and content of one of the main vehicles for professional accountability. To the extent that it can do this, it can avoid explicit recourse to power-coercive initiatives of control where there is value-conflict within the education system. Thus it will also avoid the opposition such initiatives would certainly provoke as they challenge the principal legitimating ideology of the system—local and professional autonomy.

There is always a tendency in discussing power relations to descend to the level of caricature. This is particularly likely to be the case when discussing central government's role in education since in England this tends to be seen as "a monstrous entity to be resisted at all costs". The reality is considerably more complex than any simple conspiracy theory would suggest with different sorts of interests and different levels of concern combining to produce a pattern of power-relations which is dominated by the informal processes of personal negotiation. But, it is the normative assumptions on which such interaction is based that are the real source of power, albeit unremarked and unopposed, since they carry the power to determine selectively the way in which issues are discussed and the solutions proposed. Thus in the 1960s policy initiatives took place against a largely implicit range of normative assumptions which included professional autonomy based on human capital investment, national growth and egalitarianism. In the 1980s, prevailing modes of discourse reflect a normative climate based on quite different assumptions—namely, laissez-faire elitism and utilitarianism. It is not the DES that creates this climate; the DES is rather the body charged with translating this change of political climate into a re-direction of
educational policies and practice. But, though formally accountable for this role, the DES largely lacks the bureaucratic apparatus to provide for such overt steering. Thus caught between the upper and nether millstones, the DES must depend on its informal channels of influence to affect policy debates. In particular it depends upon various forms of evaluation, most obviously Her Majesty's Inspectorate, to translate educational goals into criteria, the pursuit of which becomes for most educational personnel the focus of their self-imposed, professional accountability and thus a powerful source of influence and constraint.

Thus whilst one effect of the contemporary crisis is the attempts by the DES to exert more formal control, more important are the DES' attempts to impose its own normative criteria as the underlying structure of professional discourse. In both these initiatives, accountability and the evaluation on which it is based, has a central role to play. But whilst overt moves towards stronger DES control have provoked considerable opposition, the potentially much more significant ideological effect of the invasion of the Trojan horse of utilitarianism into the territory of professional discourse is as yet largely unremarked. Following Luke's (1974) analysis, this is to be expected. Thus, although in both England and France at the present time, there is vociferous and widespread hostility over issues such as teacher unemployment, class size, curriculum content, and new pedagogical demands, the crisis in France is arguably much more profound. To some extent, this may be attributed to the tradition of a more explicitly political stance among the French teacher associations, or the disillusionment of failed expectations after three years of Socialist government. It may also not be totally false to attribute it to the insatiable French desire for political drama. More fundamentally though, it must be explained by the absence of, and indeed
the absence of any real possibility of creating at the present time, procedures within the French education system that can provide for an increased government 'steering capacity'. Such a capacity depends on the creation of a network of reciprocal evaluation and communication systems, systems which can loosely be subsumed under the rubric of professional 'accountability' procedures and which alone can ensure appropriate forms of 'grass-roots' control.

The development of such systems requires a shift from bureaucracy - "the application of pre-determined rules through a hierarchical structure of 'neutral officials'" - to a more 'managerial technology' which emphasises outcomes as much if not more than processes (i.e. rule-following) (Therborn, 1978, quoted in Dale, 1980). The extent to which this transition to a 'post-hoc' control has taken place will determine both the policy questions and the policy answers that can be posited in any particular education system. Thus, it may be argued that France's traditional reliance on and commitment to an almost classically bureaucratic form of educational provision and control, in comparison with England's traditional emphasis on control through outcomes, may account for the fact that stresses in the capitalist mode of production and in the bases of social integration currently a feature of both countries, have not brought about in England the profound educational and social crises now evident in France. Certainly both countries are experiencing the effects of the contemporary crisis of the state. In both countries the normative certainties underpinning curricular, administrative and all other decisions about educational content, processes and organisation are being questioned. Similar structural and economic tensions in each society confront schools with quite incompatible demands - to integrate and to select; to teach creativity and conformity; to be vocationally oriented in an era of mass youth unemployment. Both French and English
teachers are presented with something of an identity crisis about the scope of their professional responsibility and their educational objectives.

But this is not only a legitimation crisis. It is just as fundamentally a crisis of control. Senior administrators and the government are still held formally accountable for activities - teaching in the classrooms - which value pluralism and the sheer size of the enterprise leaves them impotent to control. To avoid collapse, the French system had to move towards that mode of control traditional in English education from one based on direct instructions to one based on indirect ideological messages.

"The imposition of standardised curricula, the external examinations, and the inspector's report are no longer effective or acceptable means of governing the work of teachers ... control is reaffirmed indirectly through outside agencies i.e. the teacher training institutions, research organisations and specialists in the fields of curriculum development, educational administration and educational evaluation" (Pusey, 1980, p.47).

In general terms this involves a widening division between the conception and execution of education between 'managers' and class teachers, an emphasis on status, based on technical skills rather than 'mystique'; an increasing fragmentation and hierarchisation of individuals through a formal division of labour which erodes the scope for collective consciousness and action and a standardisation and routinisation of practices based on rational criteria such as cost-effectiveness. As a result it becomes increasingly possible to rely on 'responsible autonomy' as a management strategy, rather than 'direct control' (Sarup, 1982) since individuals are increasingly constrained within the formal management procedures of the school and the education system.

A more general analysis of the major changes taking place in advanced industrial societies at the present time points to the replacement
of social divisions based primarily on the ownership of property - entrepreneurial capitalism - by a social order in which new forms of technology - and hence production in the form of corporate capitalism - have led to a gradual re-shaping of the power bases in society and, associated with this, the basis for the control of education. Some of the more significant arguments in this respect focus on the 'new order of domination' (Weber) in which more covert, technologically-inspired forms of power, meaning and rationality are changing the basis for social order and control. It is the growth of 'scientism' which more than anything explains the increasing similarities in the educational arrangements of advanced industrial societies which have hitherto been characterised by major differences in the organisation of their educational systems.

The origins of this situation are described by Weiler (1971) and well summarised by Giddens:

"the bureaucratised division of labour which, with the further development of capitalism, becomes characteristic of all major social institutions, henceforth functions 'mechanically' and has no need of the religious ethic in which it was originally grounded. The further expansion of capitalism thus completes the disenchantment of the world (through a commitment to scientific 'progress') transmutes most forms of social relationship into conduct which approximates to the Zweck rational type (through the rational coordination of tasks in bureaucratic organisations) and advances the spread of norms of an abstract, legal type which, principally as embodied in the state, constitute the main form of modern 'legitimate order'" (Giddens, 1972, p. 45).

Thus, as was suggested in Chapter Three, the language of bureaucracy with its vocabulary of rational judgement, objectivity, fairness and efficiency, has characterised post-Enlightenment social organisations. The preoccupation with rules and normality which is the basis for bureaucratic rationality, necessarily involves the making of judgements on others in relation to prevailing norms. Evaluation of individual performance is legitimated in the language of scientific rationality so
that the criteria against which that evaluation is made - the goals of the organisation are implicitly taken to be neutral or self-evident whilst in reality they are arbitrary, reflecting the existing power relations of society. Thus the power relations inherent in educational judgements remain effectively hidden 'third order' power. Whilst challenges may be aimed at relatively superficial manifestations of the dominant instrumental order - curriculum content or school organisation, the bureaucratic structures of modern education systems largely conceal their value assumptions and thus protect them from fundamental opposition. A central value assumption is that of efficiency - the rational and optimum ordering of means to meet defined needs. Equally central then is evaluation - the means by which needs are identified and the success of particular strategies or personnel in meeting those needs. This is, of course, to use the term evaluation in the broadest sense as a means of appraisal. Nevertheless, the value commitment to rational judgement on the part of both administrators and practitioners is crucial. If such a commitment has always been a defining characteristic of mass schooling systems, it is the argument of this chapter that both the rhetoric and the reality of evaluation are becoming much more prominent at the present time, with highly significant effects.

Whilst the analyses of this thesis underline the central role of various types of evaluation procedure in educational systems, they also help to explain the growth of scientific rationality from being a means to an end into apparently being the end itself, from being the instrumental ideology to being the expressive ideology. It is important to stress, however, that the control provided by the new language of scientific rationality is a control which emanates from the multiplicity of interacting micro-powers. It is not per se the ideological expression of an increasingly centralised state nor a particular social
class. Nevertheless it is not neutral but must be seen rather, as Foucault suggests, as part of that on-going power struggle between individuals and groups which accumulates into structuration and the particular versions of truth which underpin political power. As Young (1980) argues, the pseudo-neutrality of technology disguises the significant power-relations behind who buys, who uses and who develops the new technology.

Thus, for example, the ideology of scientific rationality which increasingly provides the common language for accountability is not the 'cultural arbitrary' (to use Bourdieu and Passeron's term) of any identifiable group. Its pre-eminence however is the result of a protracted struggle between different interest groups and its growth as an ideology is reflexively related to the need and ability of dominant groups to retain that dominance.

One manifestation of this tendency of 'scientism' to become the legitimation of both the instrumental and the expressive order may be seen in the recent proliferation of curriculum packages - 'pre-packaged' learning material which is 'individualised' at appropriate levels of skill. Wallace (1981) argues that

"If British schools take up the use of these materials to the extent to which they have been adopted in the United States, then we too are about to move into an era of what Apple terms 'a rather sophisticated embodiment of technical control, one that is an attempt by the school to solve the contradictory pressures of accumulation and legitimation put upon it'" (1981, p. 33).

This sort of curriculum development is significant, not so much in terms of its content but in its effect of changing the general criteria of validation for the curriculum per se. This is partly a change in the criteria of professional discourse and partly an administratively-inspired, frame of reference. As Ranson (1983) suggests in discussing the increasing
vocational emphasis in post-16 provision, and the breaking down of traditional subject barriers, such developments are a manifestation of overt curriculum control passing out of the hands of the traditional educational establishment in favour of bureaucrats and managers.

"Training is preferred to education, practical skills are elevated above understanding, detailed profiles replace impersonal exams and external control of the curriculum by employers and administrators displaces the influence of the professional community of teachers" (Ranson, 1983).

Associated with the reinforcement among pupils and future citizens of a technocratic ideology in which moral and ethical perspectives find little place, is the 'deskilling' and proletarianisation of classroom teaching. Decision-making about priorities and goals is removed to the sphere of management where 'reskilling' in the arts of corporate rationalisation takes place for some. This removal helps solve the problem of uncertainty over norms, anxiety as to the bases of professional judgement and the perceived oppression of traditional bureaucratic procedures. The semantic gap between curriculum content and evaluation becomes increasingly irrelevant here for the content of various kinds of 'software', including new forms of assessment, will act very subtly to control the content of the curriculum, the scope for teachers' discretionary management and the basis for social relations and the establishment of priorities in schools.

One of the clearest manifestations of this trend is the emphasis contemporary education policy is typically putting on the priority of scientific study. In England, for example, the prevailing logic was recently well expressed by former Minister of State in the DES, William Shelton:

"It has long been our view that research and teaching in the natural sciences are likely to be particularly important to the country's economic future. I should certainly not want to argue that research and
scholarship in other areas are not important, only that it seems to us that the immediate need is to help to create the wealth and prosperity which is the only long-term guarantee of our social well-being".  

Hartley (1983) provides another example of the way in which the goal of productive efficiency has led to in-service training for teachers being dominated by bureaucratic considerations. The result, Hartley suggests, is that the 'coherence' and 'rationalisation' of the organisation of provision results in a similar structuring of thought so that "we become overly concerned with role-performance, not with the reasons why the role and its enveloping structure are there in the first place" (p.8).

But it is the manifestation of the scientist ideology in assessment procedures which most clearly reinforces contemporary developments in the mode of social control. Hitherto, Berger suggests, the dominant form of evaluation was a visible form of social power in which the teacher or the examiner was vested with the personal right to pass judgement on a pupil's performance. Although open to all the vagaries of arbitrary personal preference, this system did at least allow some comeback by the individual pupil if he disagreed with the assessment because the judgement was clearly, in the last resort, the inevitably personal judgement of an individual. It was a system clearly based on values. This system also allowed a good deal of diversity given the equally inevitable differences in the personal predilections of examiners within the broad limits laid down by the examination, often much to the candidate's chagrin.

The trend in recent years, however, has been to deplore the various injustices inherent in such an approach and to seek a more 'objective', scientific and thus fairer approach to assessment. This has led to the increasingly sophisticated identification of behavioural norms upon which to base both teaching - as in the 'behavioural objectives' movement and assessment - as in the current criterion-referenced approach to testing. Linked as this movement is, both practically and ideologically,
with the growth of corporate management strategies at every level of the educational bureaucracy, it is a short step from the replacement of the traditional subjective assessment, by the more 'objective', technically sophisticated 'monitoring' as a pedagogic strategy, to its use as an administrative strategy - a means of individual and, indeed, system control. As the assessment is increasingly oriented to explicit norms of performance, to centrally, or perhaps regionally, generated criteria rather than, as hitherto, to the largely implicit criteria of the individual assessor, the social power which the imposition of those norms represents becomes increasingly invisible, hidden in the disguise of a bland and neutral technology in just the same way that 'corporate planning' disguises value judgements as scientific, rational, objective solutions to problems.

This is not to suggest, however, that different interest groups in the education system - central government, local education authorities, inspectors, teachers and consumers - will not continue to dispute the policy priorities implicit in the more general goals they define for education. Their different location within the education system will continue to ensure that short-term resource disputes (Ranson, 1983) informed by a variety of professional and political concerns are still characteristic of systemic functioning. But increasingly, it is suggested, in the underlying ideological context for such debate, the criteria of what constitutes the nature of 'the good life' - the expressive ideology of society as a whole - become synonymous with what was hitherto merely one form of instrumental ideology - that of scientific rationalism. The language for discussing educational goals becomes, like that for discussing the more general goals of social life, progressively subsumed within the language for discussing educational and social government. In no sense can this be a uniform development, nor is it unresisted, since the
currency of power struggle makes it of differential utility to different groups. But it is arguably the most pervasive feature of contemporary educational discourse. If the implications are currently more visible at the more explicitly scientific end of the assessment scale, such as the psychological labelling of children with learning or behavioural difficulties or adults in mental institutions, examples of this trend, which will affect all teachers and pupils and which are likely to become increasingly significant, are not hard to find.

In England, for example, the current government requirement on the combined GCE/CSE Examination Boards to furnish standardised criteria of performance for each subject in the new 16+ public examination is a clear step in this direction, so is the powerful 'graded-tests' movement (Harrison, 1983). The government's Assessment of Performance Unit and similar moves towards monitoring school and system performance on the part of local authorities are equally manifestations of the same trend. Black, Harlen and Orgee (1983), for example, provide a useful illustration of the way in which the assessment procedures of the APU may come to define standards without the assumptions on which they are based being examined. The APU, they suggest, is emerging as a powerful 'middle agent' in the public formulation of standards.
"The extreme possibility is that knowledge of what is will anaesthetise our power to distinguish from what ought to be or could be. Whilst it is true in practice that criteria are always linked to knowledge of norms, it is also true that they cannot be derived from norms alone, and that where they appear to do so, some assumptions have slipped by without being required to identify and justify themselves" (Black, Harlen and Orgee, 1983, p. 10).

In France, as Chapter Five suggested, there are also significant developments in the field of national monitoring of standards. But it is the increasing responsibility being given to teachers at all levels of the school system to assess pupils' progress in relation to nationally-agreed objectives which is perhaps most significant. The system of 'orientation' informed by national standardised tests, in which a panel of teachers collectively decide on the recommended future courses for each pupil, has the dual effect of being very much harder for the pupil to dispute and of encouraging conformity of standards. There is less and less place for the vagaries of the individual teacher or for the pupil to resist the label in a way he might have done in the one-off attempt of a formal examination. Because standards and recommendations are collective, they are impersonal and 'objective', their arbitrary nature so well hidden as to be removed from the agenda of discussion (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962; Lukes, 1974).

The growing involvement of teachers in assessing pupils at lycée level in France represents an extension of this trend not yet evident in England. Its significance will depend on the extent to which the criteria for such assessments are influenced by the state or, to put it another way, how far the professional language of French teachers is influenced by the prevailing utilitarian, rationalist, technicist ideology at the expense of their 'traditional', 'humanist' orientation. The recent upheavals in French universities over government attempts to make courses more vocational suggest that the necessarily overt nature of such
moves is likely to result in a more stormy and explicit process of capitulation than in England where the overt strategies employed have been insignificant compared to the covert influences at work.

In both England and France, however, the legitimating rhetoric of such developments is their apparently benign purpose, the assumption that increased rationality is as much in the interest of the individual as it is in those of the organisation or the state. Thus the potentially divergent goals of administrators and professionals - the legitimation of hierarchy and of expertise become complementary. As Bates (1980) suggests,

"The two administrative principles operative in schools, the bureaucracy of administrators and the professionalism of teachers ... (far from being anti-theitical as has often been argued) ... have combined in contemporary schooling to structure both interpersonal relations and knowledge in ways which virtually eliminate the possibility of students or their parents exerting any control over the processes of schooling in which they are forcibly enmeshed ... The claim of bureaucracies to forms of rational organisations and planning and the claims of the professions to scientific knowledge and expertise combine in the contemporary world into a single model of technological rationality" (Bates, 1980c, p. 2).

The combination of the exclusive epistemology and the associated induced passivity of the client in a professional relationship with the simultaneous bureaucratisation of knowledge, teachers and pupils as the basis for rational administration results in the phenomenon of an 'expert bureaucracy'. The impact of this growth in bureaucracy, it is suggested, goes beyond merely increasing organisational efficiency. The school becomes increasingly dominated, not only by techno-scientific knowledge as the knowledge of most worth but in the ideological structuring of the school's activity as a whole, notably organisation and management which also become inspired with the 'scientific' canons of objectivity, impartiality, formality and standardisation.

Some early studies in England and the United States (Likert, 1961;
Barker and Gump, 1964; Argyris, 1964; Ashley, 1974) identified a tendency for schools to be increasingly preoccupied with the pursuit of bureaucratic efficiency and rational management techniques. Although an increase in school size was one of the most evident and explicitly debated results of such policies it is possible with hindsight to argue that the issue of size was on its own relatively insignificant, a mere oscillation in policy. A less obvious but more enduring development associated with this emphasis on the rational management of schools is the introduction of multiple layers of supervision and fixed areas of responsibility, which bears a striking similarity to Foucault's 'panoptic' modes of hierarchical authority and disciplinary power.

Weber suggests that, with the advent of capitalism, the rational bureaucratic allocation of authority progressively replaced the authority of tradition and charisma and other more coercive, illegitimate forms of power. Now in the late capitalist era it is possible to trace the beginnings at least of a further stage in this development, a stage, as Bates (1980c) argues above, in which the rationality of bureaucratic organisations combines with the rationality of scientific logic into a single legitimating ideology of technological rationality.

The growth of this ideology in schools reflects and reinforces changes in the legitimating ideology more generally in which

"... the imperatives of scientific, technical progress [which] alone can guarantee economic growth and stability. Society must be run on rational lines by technical experts. The only problems are technical problems and the development of the social system must obey the logic of scientific progress" (Wilby, 1979)

At the level of the system as well as that of the school, the need for increased 'steering capacity' (Habermas, 1976) brought about by the growing scale, complexity and uncertainty in the context of state activities results in the extension of such activity into new areas of
social life, a phenomenon which in turn requires the emergence of new
modes of rationality and new techniques of management. In particular,
it has been suggested that there is a tendency for these new forms of
ideological control typically to be reflected in the more traditional
reliance on overt, bureaucratic structures to be reinforced by more
indirect control involving the control of policy objectives and outputs
through various evaluation techniques such as cost benefit analysis and
information technology (Ranson et al., 1980). The increasing emphasis
on rationalisation in educational management in both England and France
has had the effect of depersonalising it and of undermining informal
interaction networks. In emphasising the power of the formal
administration for getting things done, the emphasis on formal,
demarcated responsibility has served to bureaucratis the relations
between different interest groups such as trade unions, and local
authorities. These are both practical and ideological changes for
since administrative systems cannot themselves produce the meanings
which motivate individuals to act within specific social situations
(Habermas, 1975) - those being generated only through socio-cultural
interaction (praktisch) - the technical efficiency argument itself
becomes the goal as well as the means (Wallace, Miller and Ginsberg,
1983). But as Giddens (1972) points out, there is no way in which
scientific rationalism can provide a validation of one ethical ideal
compared to another. What is 'worth' knowing and hence every aspect of
educational policy is essentially a value question.

Thus as was suggested in Chapter Three, under the cloak of scientism,
value-decisions and the power-relations they reflect continue to be taken -
albeit unconsciously. This point is taken up by Giroux (1981) in stressing
the need to distinguish between ideology as a form of knowledge and practice
and ideology as a form of institutional hegemony. Thus Marcuse and Habermas, "in pointing to positivist rationality and modes of communication structured in domination as elements of hegemonic ideology, [they] have extended Marx's critique of political economy into a critique of the principles of domination that structure the socio-cultural realm itself" (my emphasis, Giroux, 1981, p. 21). The concern with what was 'humanly' possible in the 18th and 19th centuries has become, in the 20th century, a concern with the 'technically' possible, 'the culture of positivism in which truth is taken to be neutral, thereby robs history of its critical possibilities and provides uncritical support of the status quo' (Husserl, 1966, quoted in Giroux, 1981). Thus, as Giroux (1981) suggests, "critical thought has lost its contemplative character and has been debased to the level of technical intelligence, subordinate to meeting operational problems" (p. 56). Or, as Marriott (1983), puts it, rather more passionately,

"We have suffered in Western civilisation, the almost total disappearance of traditional Wisdom with the result that our knowledge - extensive though it is at a given, lop-sided level - has been completely decapitated. Human will is paralysed because we have lost any grounds on which to base a hierarchy of values. Hedonism implies a plurality of things as good in themselves; ends rather than means to an end, all of equal ranks. We worship a plurality of absolutes that would astound the polytheists of ancient Greece - evolution, growth, progress ... The list is endless. ... People treated as mechanisms by science, technology and the worlds of work and market, increasingly come to think of themselves as such and to act accordingly - just seeking pleasure and avoiding pain ... Psychology has largely failed to develop beyond the point where 'Plato and Aristotle would have little difficulty in following contemporary discussions on human behaviour' (Toates, 1983), because it failed to develop along the lines of traditional Wisdom and turned instead to the tools of rationalistic science which are adequate for understanding at the lowest levels only ..." (Marriott, 1983, p. 5).
Conclusion

The search for an explanation of contemporary developments in the educational assessment practices of England and France involves the identification of evolving frames of reference of the most fundamental kind. Overt assessment policies and practices are only one manifestation among many others in education and indeed outside it, of a changing basis for social control in which the lack of a shared set of cultural values and the rapid erosion of the apparatus through which such values and common interpretations are generated, is compensated for by the elevation of social and economic efficiency to be the meaning as well as the means of social life. Although evaluation plays a largely determined, rather than a determining, part in this process, it plays this part at many different levels for the notion of judgement and responsibility and hence of accountability is inherent in the concept of rationality itself.

In this thesis, it has been argued that, with the advent of industrialisation, the evaluation which is central to all interpersonal communication became progressively formalised to provide the rationale on which to base the organisation of mass educational provision. In Chapter Two, it was suggested that evaluation procedures were critical in providing for the formal organisation of curricula and in the identification of appropriate standards, functions which endured but became increasingly overshadowed by the ever more intense pressure on the school system to assume the responsibility of legitimating and to some extent, performing, the process of social selection. Why assessment procedures were, and still are, able to perform such a critical role in the perpetuation of educational control and hence, ultimately, social control, can only be explained with reference to the commitment to the ideology of individualism which more than anything separates modern from pre-industrial societies, as discussed in Chapter Three. On this
ideology rest the social forms which characterise contemporary society such as democracy, wage-labour employment and bureaucracy, in which it is both the right and the responsibility of the individual to judge and be judged. The commitment to the scientific and technical progress which is the other face of rationality not only provides for technology as the chief instrument of progress, it also provided for the proliferation of various kinds of administrative bureaucracy through which the burgeoning infrastructure of the state could be provided and controlled. One element of this was the state provision for mass education.

However, whilst the institution of such provision is common to all industrial societies, there is clearly a good deal of variation between societies in the way in which the national education system is organised. If elements of Weber's 'ideal type' of bureaucracy are necessarily manifest in every national education system, there are equally significant variations in bureaucratic style so that notions of hierarchy, general rules, continuous and impersonal offices and the separation between official and private life must be inter-related with historically specific social situations (Gouldner, 1948).

"No attempt has been made (by students of bureaucracy) to show the socio-psychological and institutional differences in the process of bureaucratisation insofar as it can be attributed to a retarded breakdown of feudal institutions and traditions. As a result, little attention has been given to the effect of noncontemporaneous industrialisation in different countries on the rise of their respective bureaucracies. It would be very important to investigate the effect of such factors on the pattern of obedience to authority and of the degree of spontaneous public co-operation which characterises the different 'bureaucratic cultures of the Western world'" (Bendix, 1952).

That there are different styles of bureaucratic provision just as there are significant differences in all the other social institutions in countries which nevertheless share a common capitalist and industrial
development was the argument of Chapter Four which set out the theoretical justification for the inclusion of the two separate case studies which form the empirical basis of this analysis. Any explanation of the way in which educational practices vary between societies which share a common capitalist order must be grounded in an historical analysis. Any one point in time witnesses the interaction between objectively changing social, political and economic conditions and the purposes and perceptions of individual and, hence, groups of actors, which are both structured by and in turn serve to structure the changing social reality. Thus, the precise form of national educational problems, how they are perceived and the range of potential solutions that may be considered, must be understood as the general problems of education within capitalist societies, mediated by the constraints of existing social forms - geographical, cultural, legal, economic, socio-political and religious - which together build up the patterns of meaning and perception at national, institutional and individual levels.

To understand sociologically the differences in assessment practice of two countries such as England and France - it is necessary to consider the whole fabric of their respective social orders. Clearly this is an enormous task and the empirical case studies of Chapters Five and Six are necessarily selective, designed to substantiate the theoretical arguments of Part I in terms of the common and of the idiosyncratic provision of assessment procedures in each society for the attestation of competence, the formalisation of content, the regulation of competition and the control of individuals and the system as a whole.

The necessarily dynamic nature of such an analysis reveals the quite fundamental developments currently affecting advanced capitalist societies such as England and France. In these, as in other such countries, there are the various social, political and administrative ingredients of a
legitimation crisis - the breakdown of traditional norms and values, a state locked into a vicious circle of justification through ever greater expenditure, the political dilemma of democratic equality and the need to perpetuate elitism, and the increasing impossibility of adequately running an edifice of such enormous size. That these developments have not yet had the destabilising effect on the social order which might have been expected is due not least to the elevation of a technicist ideology into all areas of social life. Not only does a benign scientism increasingly underpin the processes of individual selection so that the attestation of competence, curriculum organisation, and the processes of competition and control become redefined on the basis of new, positive, impersonal, and by the same token, uncontestable norms, the educational bureaucracy itself is increasingly dominated by the impersonal procedures of scientific management in place of the old, informal, personal and often irrational modes of organisation.

Because the commitment to technical efficiency is manifest at the level of meaning and volition, as well as that of practice, this provides for the non-bureaucratic, potentially contradictory languages of professionalism and democratic participation to define their own criteria of value and, hence, personal accountability, in the same terms. Thus from the evaluation of systemic performance, to the evaluation of individual schools, teachers and pupils, there is a common tendency to assume value can be quantified. The revolution in thinking which led to the institution of the first quantitatively marked degree examinations in the eighteenth century and the mass institution of school assessment that followed it in the nineteenth century has had a fundamental influence on the development of mass schooling over the last hundred years. It is the argument of Chapter Seven that the significance of that innovation may well in the end be matched by an equally significant extension of the
concept of scientific, quantitative evaluation into the educational bureaucracy itself.

On the other hand, there are small but nevertheless detectable signs that in true classical tradition, even at the very height of its domination, the assessment ideology already contains the seeds of its own destruction and the apotheosis of a new order. It may be that, as Habermas suggests, the assessment which was so instrumental to the formation of contemporary society, proves in the long run also to be its undoing, in a growing

"lack of understanding why despite the advanced stage of technological development the life of the individual is still determined by the dictates of professional careers, the ethics of status competition, and by values of possessive individualism and available substitute gratifications: why the institutionalised struggle for existence, the discipline of alienated labour, and the eradication of sensuality and aesthetic gratification are perpetuated. To this sensibility the structural elimination of practical problems from a depoliticised public realm must become unbearable. However, it will give rise to a political force only if this sensibility comes into contact with a problem that the system cannot solve. For the future I see one such problem. The amount of social wealth produced by industrially advanced capitalism and the technical and organisational conditions under which this wealth is produced make it ever more difficult to link status assignment in an even subjectively convincing manner to the mechanism for the evaluation of individual achievement" (Habermas, 1971, p.

The need for a sociological understanding of the role of assessment in industrial societies is increasingly pressing, as the tentacles of rational evaluation intrude ever further into the provision and process of mass schooling; equally soon such an understanding may be necessary to explain the progressive breaking down of the traditional methods of legitimation and social control provided by the institution of mass schooling.

If it has helped at all to further such an understanding, this thesis will have fulfilled its intention.
Footnotes to Chapter Seven

1. As set out, for example, in the 'DES Draft Policy Statement on Records of Achievement', November 1983.

2. For an account of this 'cause célèbre' which illustrated how limited the bureaucratic control of the local education authority is when put to the test by a headteacher and a group of staff who reject conventional norms of practice, see Gretton and Jackson (1976).

3. Education Officer, Devon.

4. Association of Learned Societies in the Social Sciences (ALSISS) Inaugural Conference 15.1.83. Reported in Research Intelligence, Spring, 1983. Even more recently, the UGC letter requesting university responses to various more specific proposals aimed at establishing such priorities is further testimony to this concern.

5. Interview with Guy Berger, Maître Assistant, Université de Paris-Vincennes, 1980.

6. See, for example, Mager, 1962.

7. Apart from the widespread attempts currently being made in England to design 'graded-tests', in, for example, maths, modern languages and science, DES policy is now to follow the SED's lead in instituting 'grade-related' criteria for the new 16+. Thus in England this move to criteria-referencing is taking a number of different forms. Given the detailed provision of syllabus objectives in France, criterion-referencing is less necessary as a way of providing information on what pupils have obtained, and has not, as yet, taken off there to the same extent.

8. See, for example, Patterson (1972), Duverger (1970, 1971a, b).

9. See, for example, Spencer (1970).
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Almond and Verba (1963) 'The Civic Culture: Political attitudes and democracy in five nations', Princeton University, Center of International Studies.


Archer, M.S. (1979) 'Social origins of educational systems', Sage, London/Beverley Hills.


_____ (1980) 'La lutte des classes' in Bocock et al. (eds.), 'Introduction to Sociology', Fontana, Glasgow.

Ashley, B. (1974) 'Sociology as a basis for social education in the secondary school', Paper given to the British Association for the Advancement of Science Annual Conference, Stirling.


Banks, O. (1955) 'Parity and prestige in English secondary education',
RKP, London.

_____ (1978) 'Macro and micro perspectives in the sociology of
education', in Barton, L. and Meighan, R. (eds.), 'Sociological
interpretations of schooling and classrooms', Nafferton,
Driffield.

Barker, R. and Gump, P. (1964) 'Big school; small school', Stanford
University Press, Stanford.

Barnard, H.C. (1961) 'A history of English Education from 1760',
University of Liverpool Press, Liverpool.


_____ (1970) 'The French tradition in education', Cambridge University

and teaching', Falmer Press, Sussex.

Bates, R. (1979) 'New developments in the sociology of education',
Cultural Studies, vol. 10.

_____ (1980a) 'Educational administration, the sociology of science
and the management of knowledge', Educational Administration

_____ (1980b) 'The function of educational administration in the
process of cultural transmission', Conference on the Origins
and Operations of Educational Systems, International Sociological
Association, Paris, August.

_____ (1980c) 'Bureaucracy, professionalisation and the control of
knowledge', paper presented to the National Conference of
Professors of Educational Administration, Norfolk, Virginia, August
(1980d) 'New directions in the new sociology of education',


______ (eds.) (1979) 'Accountability in education', NFER, Slough.


Boemm, A.E. (1973) 'Criterion-referenced assessment',
Teachers College Record, vol. 75, no. 1, Sept.

Units 4/5, Course E321, Open University Press, Milton Keynes.

OECD, Paris.


Bottomore, T. and Rubel, (eds.) (1976) 'Selected writings in sociology

and cultural inequalities', in Eggleston, J. (ed.), 'Contemporary


Bowe, R. and Whitty, G. (1982) 'A question of content and control:
recent conflicts over the nature of school examinations at
16+, policy and practice in public examinations 1976-1980, in
Hammersley, M. and Hargreaves, A. (eds.), Curriculum Practice:
some sociological case studies, Falmer Press, Sussex.

(1984) 'Teachers, boards and standards: the attack on school-
based assessment in English public examinations at 16+', in
Broadfoot, P.M. (ed.), 'Selection, certification and control',
Falmer Press, Lewes.

RKP, London.

(1977) 'IQ in the US class structure', in Gleeson, D. (ed.),
'Identity and structure', Nafferton Books, Driffield.

Bowring, M. (1983) 'A survey of enquiries received on the Personal
Achievement Record', Evesham High School, Evesham.


(1979) 'Assessment, schools and society', Methuen, London.

(1980a) 'Assessment, curriculum and control in the changing pattern of centre-local relations', in Local Government Studies, November.


(1980c) 'Rhetoric and reality in the context of innovation: an English case-study', Compare, November.


(1945) 'The reliability of teachers assessments of their pupils', British Journal of Educational Psychology, June.


Casassus, B. (1981a) 'New climate of peace as school year starts', TES 25.9.81.

______(1981b) 'Minister Rigout puts 'France first' in battle against unemployment', TES 9.10.81.


CERI (1973) 'Case studies of educational innovation at the regional level', OECD, Paris.


Church, C.H. (1979) 'A review of research and research opportunities on validation and validation procedures as forms of accountability paper to Social Science Research Council Accountability panel.


Corbett, A. (1977) 'Programme control French style', TES 4.2.77.
______ (1979) 'Vive la différence?' TES 30.11.79.
______ (1980a) 'Fausses gratuités', TES 3.10.80.
______ (1980b) 'Violence crosses the channel', TES 14.3.80.
______ (1982) 'A definable caste', TES 8.1.82.


(1978) 'Educational quality control and teacher autonomy: some implications of the great debate', The Open University, mimeo.


(1979b) 'From endorsement to disintegration: progressive education from the golden age to the Green Paper', British Journal of Educational Studies, vol. 28, no. 3, October.

(1980) 'The state and education', Open University, Milton Keynes.


(1981b) 'From expectations to outcomes in educational systems', The Open University, mimeo.


David, M. (1977) 'Reform, reaction and resources, the 3 Rs of educational planning', NFER, Slough.

David, P. (1981) 'Multiple choice under fire', TES 27.11.81.

Davis, A. (1951) 'What are some of the basic issues in the relation of intelligence tests to cultural background?', in Fells et al. (eds.), 'Intelligence and cultural differences', University of Chicago Press, Chicago.


Dungworth, D. (1977) 'Lottery may choose students', TES 4.3.77.


East Sussex LEA (1979) 'Accountability in the middle years of schooling', University of Sussex, mimeo.


_____ (1965) 'Measuring educational achievement' Préntice Hall, New York.


Eland, G. (1977) 'Diagnosis and testing', Unit 21, Course E202 School and Society, The Open University, Milton Keynes.


_____ (1967) 'Reform in France', Comparative Education Review, no. 11, pp. 300-310.


Green, T.F., Ericson, D.P. and Seidman, R. (1980) 'Predicting the behaviour of the educational system', Syracuse University Press, Syracuse USA.


Haby Law (1975) 'Loi no 75-620 de juillet 1975. Loi relative à l'éducation.
B.O. no 29 (24.7.75), Paris.

Hadow Committee (1926) 'Report of the Consultative Committee on the
education of the adolescent', HMSO, London.


Hall, S. (1977) 'Review of the course', Unit 32, E202 Schooling and
Society, Open University, Milton Keynes.

_____ (1980) 'The 'political' and the 'economic' in Marx's theory
of classes', in Bocock, R., Hamilton, P., Thompson K. and


_____ (1976) 'Education, culture and politics in modern France',
Pergamon, London.


Galton and Ronald Fisher', Department of Education, University
of Glasgow, mimeo.

Pergamon, Aberdeen.

of class teaching', Department of Education, University of
Glasgow, mimeo.

some sociological case studies', Falmer Press, Lewes.

politics and society since 1945', RKP, London.


(1983) 'Marxism revisited: resistance and relative autonomy theories', Unit 23, E205, Conflict and change in education, Open University, Milton Keynes.


Harrison, A. 'Review of graded tests', Schools Council exam bulletin 41, Methuen Educational, London.


Havighurst, R.J. (1951) 'What are the cultural differences which may affect performance in intelligence tests?', in Eells et al. (eds.), 'Intelligence and cultural differences', University of Chicago Press, Chicago.


Hoffman, B. (1964) 'The tyranny of testing', Crowell Collier Press.


(1972) 'Micropolitics of educational organisations', in Educational Management and Administration, vol. 10, pp. 87-98.


Jessel, J. (1980a) 'Protests over class closures', TES 14.3.80.

(1980b) 'Minister ignores wide support for Bac reform', TES 22.2.80.


(1980d) 'Reforms slowly eat away at 'monster' of central power', TES 20.6.80.

(1980e) 'Demos greet French work experience scheme', TES 15.2.80.

(1981a) 'Barre brings in crash scheme to meet rising unemployment', TES 16.1.81.


(1976) 'Notes on the schooling of the English working class 1780-1850', in Dale et al. (eds.),'Schooling and Capitalism', RKP, London.

(1979) 'Really useful knowledge : radical education and working class culture 1790-1848), in Clarke, J., Critcher, C. and


---


---

Kogan, M. (1979) 'Proposal to SSRC Accountability in Education panel', restricted.

---


Laqueur, T.W. (1973) 'English and French education in the nineteenth
century: review essay', History of Education Quarterly,
Spring, pp. 53-60.


Larson, M. (1981) 'Monopolies of competence and bourgeois ideology' in
Dale et al. (eds.), 'Education and the state', vol. 2,
Palmer Press/Open University.

Laska, J. (1979) 'A typology of schools systems', in Compare, vol. 9,
no. 2, pp. 97-119.

Latourte, M. (1961) 'Economic planning in France', P.E.P. Vol. XXVII,
no. 454, London.

Laurent, E. (1980) 'Sociologie' review of 'l'État Enseignant' by


of teachers', in Barton, L. and Walker, S. (eds.), 'Schools,
teachers and teaching', Falmer, Lewes.

Lawson, J. and Silver, H. (1973) 'A social history of education in

lecture, London University Institute of Education.


Leclercq, J.B. (1978) 'Rational power and systemic articulation in
French local polity', in Karpik, L. (ed.), 'Organisation and
Environment', Sage, London.

Le Grand, L. (1977) 'Pour une politique démocratique de l'éducation',


Lyons, R. (1983) 'Decentralised educational planning: is it a contradiction?', paper presented to Joint Annual Workshop of University of London Institute of Education Department of Developing Countries and Comparative Education.


Macfarlane, N. (Chairman) (1981) 'Education for 16-19 year olds'.
Review undertaken for Her Majesty's Government and the Local Authority Associations, HMSO, London.


(1977) 'Savoirs et savoir-faire à l'issue de la scolarité obligatoire', Le Courrier de l'Éducation, no. 49, April.

(1979a) 'Les parents à l'école : dix ans de participation', Le Courrier de l'Éducation, no. 82, September.

(1979b) 'Le budget des collèges et des lycées', Le Courrier de l'Éducation', no. 77, Février.
Ministère de l'Éducation, Service d'Information (1979c) 'Quatres priorités pour l'éducation', Le Courrier de l'Éducation, no. 83, Octobre.

______

(1979d) 'Le mouvement des professeurs du second degré', Le Courrier de l'Éducation, no. 84, Novembre.

______


______

(1980b) 'La barème de mutation: permutation des instituteurs', Le Courrier de l'Éducation, no. 95, Décembre.


Minot, J. (1979a) 'Quatres paradoxes de l'autonomie', Administration et Éducation, no. 4.


______

(1979b) (ed.) 'The use of tests and interviews for selection to higher education: a European symposium', NFER, Windsor.


______


Murphy, R. (1982) 'A further report of investigations into the reliability of marking of GCE examinations', British Journal of Educational Psychology, no. 52.


Newsam, P. (1979) 'Financing change and mismanaging resources', 
Prisenews, December, pp. 8-9.

accountability', Grant McIntyre, Bury St. Edmunds.

1975-80 : a review and appraisal', paper given to the 
International Sociological Association bi-annual conference, 
Paris.

Nisbet, J. et al. (1974) 'Reading standards in Aberdeen', Educational 
Research, vol. 16, no. 3.

Nisbet, J. (1979) 'Procedures for assessment', in Becher, T. and Maclure, 
S. (eds.), op. cit.


Noel, G. (1972) 'The factors (positive or negative) of educational 
innovation at secondary level in the French system', OECD, 

Norwood Committee (1943) Report on the curriculum and examinations in 
secondary schools, HMSO London.

Nowell-Smith, G. (1979) 'In a state', Screen Education, no. 30.

of analysis', NFER, London.

of standards between subjects', Schools Council Examination 

paper to Social Science Research Council Accountability Panel, 
also in Becher, T. and Maclure, S. (1979), (eds.), op. cit.

(1982a) 'Accountability and evaluation', Block 1, E364, The 
Open University, Milton Keynes.


Offe, C. and Ronge, V. (1975) 'Thesis on the theory of the state', New German Critique, 6, Fall.


Oxtoby, R. (1973) 'Engineers, their jobs and training needs'

Parry, N. and Parry, J. (1981) 'The teachers and professionalism: the
failure of an occupational strategy', in Dale et al. (eds.),
'Education and the state, vol. III', Falmer, Lewes.

Parsons, C. (1981) 'A policy for educational evaluation', in Lacey, C.
and Lawton, D. (eds), 'Issues in evaluation and accountability',
Methuen, London.


(1951) 'The social system', Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois.

(1967) Review of Nisbet's 'The sociological tradition', in

(1968) 'Societies: evolutionary and comparative perspectives',


Partridge, J. (1968) 'Life in a secondary modern school', Pelican,
Harmondsworth.

Pateman, T. (1981) 'Accountability, values and schooling', in Dale et
al. (eds.), 'Education and the state, vol. 2', Falmer, Lewes.

Patterson, M. (1972) 'French university reform: renaissance or
restoration', Comparative Education Review, June.

Pattison, M. (1980) 'Intergovernmental relations and the limitations of
central control: reconstructing the politics of comprehensive

Pautler, E. (1981a) 'Links between secondary and higher education in

(1981b) 'Theory and practice: a comparison between the English
comprehensive school and the French College Unique', in Broadfoot,
P., Brock, C. and Tulasiewicz (eds.), op. cit.

Péguy, C. (1904) Préface du 2e cahier de la 6e série (11 Novembre 1904) p.XXIV-XXV.


(1977) 'Marx and education in Russia and China', Croom Helm, London.


(1979b) 'Some issues arising from a study of Scottish education policy making since 1942', paper presented to the annual conference of the Scottish Education Research Association, St. Andrews.


---

(1975) 'Some opinions of local teachers and students', Journal of Newcastle Institute of Education, no. 26, pp. 41-44.


---

(1980b) 'Domination and distribution in policy planning networks', SSRC conference on centre-local relations.


---

(1983) 'Centre-local policy planning in education', Report to SSRC.

---


---


---


Rowan, P. (1976) 'Slow, slow quick, quick slow', TES 1.9.76.


Scottish Education Department (1977) 'Assessment for all (the Dunning Report)', HMSO, Edinburgh.


Simon, B. (1953) 'Intelligence testing and the comprehensive school', Lawrence & Wishart, London.


Srivastava, H.S. (1979) 'Examination reforms in India', UNESCO.


Stevens, A. (1980) 'French children are switching to tech courses', Observer, 28.3.80.

___ (1982) 'O levels face a test', Observer, 14.2.82.


 (1979) 'Mental testing and education in England and Wales 1880-1940', Final Report to SSRC.


TES (1974) 'APU team leading way to common core', 8th September.

(1981) 'Pupil testing may be unsound', 27th February.


Thody, P. (1981) 'Vichy or Mitterand: which represents the real France?', TMES 5.6.81.


Thomas, L.F. and Harri-Augustein, E.S. (1978) 'The self-organised learner and the printed word', Report to SSRC.


Watson, D. (1966) 'The politics of educational reform in France during the Third Republic', Past and Present, no. 34.
Watson, K. (1978) 'Accountability in English education', Educational Administration, Summer.


______ (1947) 'The theory of social and economic organisation',

______ (1968) 'Economy and society' (3 vols), Bedminster Press,
New York.

______ (1971) 'The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism',
Unwin, London.

Webster, M. (1977) 'The classic essentials of average schooling',
TES 8.4.77.

Webster, D. (1981) 'Attitudes to the world of work : the relation of
theory to empirical data', paper presented to the 7th annual
conference of the British Educational Research Association,
Crewe and Alsager College, September.

of compensatory legitimation in educational policy', Council
for European Studies Conference for Europeanists, Washington
DC, October.

______ (1981) 'Compensatory legitimation in educational policy :
legalisation, expertise and participation in comparative
perspective', 10th European conference on Comparative Education,
Geneva, September.

West, W.G. (1980) 'Some implications of Canadian educational politics
for recent European theories of the state', Ontario Institute
for Studies in Education, mimeo.

Heinemann, London.

White, J.P. (1975) 'The end of the compulsory curriculum', Studies in
Education, New Series 2, The Curriculum, Doris Lee lectures,
University of London, Institute of Education.
White, J. (1979) 'Review of the philosophical implications of accountability in education', paper for the SSRC panel on Accountability in Education.


Wilby, P. (1979) 'Habermas and the language of the modern state', New Society, 22.3.79.


Williams, I.C. and Boreham, W.I. (1972) 'The predictive value of CSE grades for further education', Evans/Methuen, London.


(1977) 'French connection', New Society, 5.5.77.


Wilson, J. (1975) 'Assessment tail wags curriculum dog', TES Scotland 24.10.75.


APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

The research was designed to explore the extent to which educational assessment procedures are constant in any education system and to what extent they are idiosyncratic to the particular context of any one education system. Of particular importance was the concept of accountability which was taken to be a two-stage process involving first the identification of the performance of the education system and of individuals within it, according to certain criteria, and second, the response by individuals and institutions brought about through the mechanisms of system control in response to any shortfall between performance and goals. Although conceptually distinct, these two stages were recognised to be frequently synchronous in practice. Thus to the extent that it was concerned with the role of assessment procedures in system control, the study focused principally on the range of formal and informal accountability relations within the education system.

Through a comparative, empirical study of two very different systems - those of England and France - the study sought to test the hypothesis that assessment is a constant feature of educational systems, but that the mediation of that assessment, as expressed in the particular procedures used, is legitimated in different ways according to historical tradition and the changing socio-economic context. An initial assumption was made that the particular form taken by accountability procedures in any one system would be a balance between control of the 'production' of educational messages - notably curriculum and pedagogy - and of the 'consumption' of educational messages - assessment procedures. This distinction may also be expressed as that between integral or covert accountability through the control of elements of educational practice.
such as finance, curriculum, pedagogical methods or teaching materials, and more overt, 'post-hoc' methods of quality control, notably various kinds of 'quantitative accounting' or assessment.

One of the principal aims of the research was to 'map' the operation of assessment procedures in the two systems under study and thence to seek to explain areas of similarity and differences in such practices by identifying their societal determinants. It was envisaged that such determinants would be located in the interaction between historical tradition as expressed in both institutional procedures and ideology and the contemporary demands being made on the education system in response to the changing socio-economic climate. Thus the research was concerned with examining the historical origins and subsequent development of the two systems, in terms of the location of various kinds of control - financial, political, bureaucratic, professional and ideological and the way in which any of these formal or informal sources of constraint on the process of education might be seen to be changing in response to current pressures.

France and England were chosen because of their marked divergence on what was envisaged as likely to be a key variable in any study of assessment practices in system control, namely the issue of centralisation and decentralisation. The two national studies were situated in a broader theoretical analysis of the nature of assessment procedures in industrial society. The methodology employed reflected this dual task with the empirical study depending on the traditional methods of comparative study - informal interviews, observation, visits to educational institutions, documentary researches and the more theoretical work depending heavily on literature work. The focus of the contextual enquiry was threefold:

(1) a review of work already available on concepts and practice
pertaining to assessment and accountability;

(2) an overview of international trends in public assessment policy, with particular reference to the balance between overt and covert accountability procedures;

(3) an historical account of educational developments in France and England with specific reference to change in public assessment practice.

Empirically, the research was concerned to avoid the 'travellers' tales' type of limitation which frequently devalues comparative studies. The aim was rather to focus on differences between the two countries only insofar as they pertained to accountability, emphasising process rather than structure and seeking to analyse the operation of each system at the experiential, rather than the nominal level.

Nevertheless the methods employed were necessarily largely those traditional to comparative educational research - informal and structured interviews, observation, visits to institutions and documentary study. Thus the initial literature study encompassing both existing work on assessment and accountability and historical accounts of educational developments in France and England, was the precursor to a fairly substantial two-stage empirical programme in both countries. The first stage of data collection - largely through interview and documentary sources - was designed to identify mechanisms of control in each of the two systems, mechanisms which were fairly readily divided into central, local, institutional and personal constraints. This last distinction was not separately identified at the outset but proved particularly significant in France where the separate role of the institution is minimal. By the same token, the significance of LEA autonomy in England was taken to be such as to warrant a separate and explicit enquiry into their existing and envisaged accountability, particularly testing,
procedures.

In both England and France, a range of personnel was consulted including, in England, representatives of the Department of Education and Science, and, as part of this, the Assessment of Performance Unit, local authorities, HMI and local inspectors/advisers, pressure groups such as the Society of Education Officers, teacher unions, the Schools Council, and the Examination Boards. Also consulted were individuals not directly involved in the administrative structures of the system, but who were well placed to comment, such as journalists and academics. A similar range of respondents was consulted in France representing various branches of the national Ministry of Education, Académie and Départemental administration, the National, Regional and Départemental inspectorates, pressure groups of bodies such as parents, teacher unions, and relevant national bodies such as the Centre International d'Études Pédagogiques, the Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique, and once again, journalists and academics well-placed to give an independent and informed view.

This stage of the study included 47 interviews in France and 49 in England. The list of respondents given below shows the range of perspectives examined. In each case, the interviewees were subjected to very loosely-structured, open-ended interviews designed to explore the respondents' views of the working of the French or English education system as a whole and their own part within it. Whilst topics such as contemporary policy priorities, accountability procedures and power relations were raised in every interview, the content of discussion varied considerably, the overall aim being to build up a picture of the actual, as opposed to the official, working of each education system under study. Summaries of each interview were prepared from tape-recordings and written notes and translated in the case of French respondents.
The considerable volume of formal and informal insights generated in this part of the study was complemented after an initial analysis phase by more detailed case study data of a local area in each country - in England, Devon, and in France, Calvados. The possibility of building on existing links between these two areas was particularly useful since it enabled the researcher to observe personnel, notably local inspectors, from each of the two areas reacting to their impressions of the other, during the course of exchange study visits. In both Calvados and Devon, the research involved interviewing representative personnel at various points of local educational activity - teachers and headteachers, advisers and inspectors, administrators, politicians, and pressure groups (see list below). The aim of these case studies was to study possible differences in the reality of accountability procedures at the level of educational practice and in teachers' identification of the external and personal influences affecting their practice.

When both the interview and documentary data had been analysed, a draft report was submitted to all respondents for comment and the generation of further insights.
FRANCE

M Jean Auba, Directeur, Centre International d'études pédagogique, Sèvres.

Mme Gisèle Barbanneau, Inspectrice Départementale de l'Éducation Nationale, Cahors.


M Guy Berger, Université de Paris-Vincennes, Saint Denis, Paris.


Tanya Catz-Thevenin, Université de Paris-Vincennes, Saint Denis, Paris.

Anne Corbett, free-lance journalist, Paris.

Prof. Jacques Champion, Directeur de Recherches en Sciences de l'Éducation, Université des Sciences Sociales de Grenoble.


Mme Simone Dutot, Assistant to Recteur d'Académie de Créteil.

M Jacques Demailly, Recteur d'Académie de Créteil.


M René Guillemtou, l'Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique, Paris.


M Claude Guerre, membre du bureau national de Syndicat National des Inspecteurs Départementaux de l'Éducation Nationale (SNIDEN), Paris.


M Guy Herzlich, Editor, Le Monde de l'Éducation.
Prof. V. Isambert-Jamati, UER de Sciences de l'Éducation, Université René Descartes, Paris.

M. P. Laderriere, OECD, Paris.

Dr. John Lowe, OECD, Paris.

M Louis Le Grand, Professor of Education, Strasbourg University.


M Thierry Malan, Inspecteur Générale d'administration, Paris.


Mlle Maylan, Centre d'études et de recherches sur les qualifications, Paris.

Dr. Guy Neave, Maître de Recherche, Fondation Européenne de la Culture, Université de Paris IX-Dauphine.


Mme Emmanuelle Pautler, Paris.

M de Peretti, Directeur de Programme, INRP, Paris.

Philippe Passet, Chargé des relations extérieures, Centre d'Enseignement Superieur des Affaires, Paris.


M Sapin, Département de l'organisation et de la gestion déconcentrée, Paris.

Mlle Michelle Tournier, Assistant to M de Peretti, INRP, Paris.

Sophocles Theodoridis, Teacher, Department of Political Science, Université de Paris-Vincennes.


Mlle de Vallée, Service culturelle, French Embassy, London.
ENGLAND

Professor Margaret Archer, Department of Sociology, University of Warwick.

Mr B. Arthur, Staff Inspector, DES, London.

Dr. Ray Bolam, Bristol University.

Miss Sheila Browne, HMSCI, DES.

Mr Laurence Brandes, Deputy Secretary, Department of Arts and Libraries, DES.

Mr J.K. Brierley, Divisional Inspector, SW Division, Bristol.

Michael Birchenough, Inspector, ILEA.

Professor Tessa Blackstone, University of London Institute of Education.

Mr George Cook, General Secretary, Society of Education Officers.

Mr R. Christopher, Joint Matriculation Board, Manchester.

Miss Jean Dawson, Assessment of Performance Unit, DES.

Miss Valerie Evans, Divisional Inspector, DES, Birmingham.

John Everson, HMI, DES, Birmingham.

Mr A. Emmett, Assistant Secretary, Associated Examining Board.

Mr Geoffrey Edge, Researcher, ACC Project, Preston Polytechnic.

Mr Gerry Fowler, Deputy Director, Preston Polytechnic.

Professor Harvey Goldstein, Head of Dept. of Statistics and Computing, University of London Institute of Education.

Mr John Graham, Professional Head, Assessment of Performance Unit, DES.

Mr Don Hollingsworth, HMI, DES.

Mr Philip Halsey, Under Secretary, DES.

Miss B.J. Howe, Chief Adviser, Leeds City Council Dept. of Education.

Mr J. Hedger, Schools Branch III, DES.

Michael Heaafford, University of Cambridge Department of Education.

Trevor Jones, Chief Adviser, County of South Glamorgan.

Arthur Jarman, Education Official, National Union of Teachers.

Professor Maurice Kogan, Head of Department of Government, School of Social Sciences, Brunel University, Uxbridge.
J.M. Kingdon, Acting Head of Research Section, University of London School Examination Department.

Mr J. Kydd, Lecturer, Moray House College of Education, Edinburgh.

Dr. P. Mortimore, R & S Unit, Inner London Education Authority.

Mr John Mann, Secretary, Schools Council, London.

Mr H.G. Macintosh, Secretary, Southern Regional Examinations Board, Southampton.

Stuart Maclure, Editor, The Times Educational Supplement, London.

Professor D.L. Nuttall, Faculty of Educational Studies, Open University.

Jenny Ozga, Lecturer, Open University.

Mr Tony Orgee, Researcher, Chelsea College, University of London.

Mr Ian T. Parry, Chief Adviser, West Glamorgan County Council, Swansea.

Mr John Pearce, Education Secretary, National Association of Inspectors and Educational Advisers, Huntingdon.

Stewart Ranson, Institute of Local Government Studies (INLOGOV), University of Birmingham.

Dr. Charles Raab, Dept. of Politics, University of Edinburgh.

Mr N. Summers, Schools Branch III, DES.

Professor Brian Simon, University of Leicester School of Education.

Dr. Gillian Sutherland, Newnham College, Cambridge.

Mr Norman Thomas, HMCI, DES.

Mr Vickerman, Deputy Secretary, Joint Matriculation Board.

R. Duclaud-Williams, Department of Politics, University of Warwick.

D.J. Willmer, Senior Inspector of Schools, Warwickshire County Council Education Department.

Dr. R. Wood, Testing in Schools Project, University of London Institute of Education.

Dr. Geoff Whitty, King's College, London.

Professor Ted Wragg, Director, University of Exeter School of Education.
CALVADOS TEACHERS

Ecole d'Authie Nord, Caen

M. Gacoin, instituteur
M. Julien, instituteur
Mme Lelarge, directrice
M. Larralde, instituteur

College de Trevieres, Calvados

M. Bort, directeur
M. Davy, auxilliaire
Mme Bahaoy, instituteur

College d'Isigny

Mlle Fery, auxilliaire, librarian
M. Guerin, head
M. Albenjres, deputy head

College de Port en Bessin

Mme Bluet, directrice
M. Pignot, instituteur

Inspecteur Departementaux

D. Le Fur
Michel Varin

Lycee Malherbe, Caen (1800 pupils)

Mme Labrusse
M. Labrusse
M. Pierriti, Proviseur

----------------------
CALVADOS : NON-TEACHING RESPONDENTS

Administration

M. Kinnig, Insp. adjoint d'Académie

Unions

M. Carniol, deputy secretary, SNI (college)
M. Ichmoukametoff, secretary, SNI (primary)

SGEN instituteur (anon.) (part of CGT)

Parents de l'enseignement public du Calvados (PEP)
M. M. Guerard

USNEF M. P. Quiles (head primary school)

Conseil parents d'élèves, Calvados
M. Paul Gaillard
Mme G. Madic
DEVON TEACHERS

SCHOOL 1 : Exeter Central First School

Mrs. Robinson, Head
a part-time teacher
Ms Murchison
Ms Collier
Ms Revell, Deputy Head
Ms Burnsett

SCHOOL 2 : Coombeshead School, Newton Abbot

Mr Eynon, Head
Mrs. Beynon, Deputy Head
Mr Fouracre, Deputy Head
Mr Annetts
Ms Bray
Ms Haworth
Mr Cobbold
Mr Howe
Mrs. Robinson

SCHOOL 3 : Highweek Primary School, Newton Abbot

Mr Williams, Head
Ms Sorenson, Deputy Head
an infant teacher

SCHOOL 4 : Priory High School, Exeter

Mr Bacon, Head
Mrs Davies, Deputy Head
Deputy Head
Mr Coley
Ms Hawn
Ms Lloyd
Ms Westall
Mr Wilson
Mr Birt
Gabrielle Howard

SCHOOL 5 : Bideford School and Community College

Mr McEldon
Mrs Robinson
Ms Goodridge
Mr Argyle
Mr Bridge
Mrs Hillyer
Mr Tod
Devon teachers

SCHOOL 5 (continued)  Bideford School and Community College

Mr. Dares, Head
Mr Starkey, Deputy Head
Mr Phillip

EXETER COLLEGE

Mr Steer
Mrs Taylor
Mr Cushing
Mr Shaw
Dr Sampson
Trade Unions: V. Botterill, NUT
               M. Titball, NAS/UWT

Advisers: John Allen, Chief Adviser, Devon
          Tom Rolfe, Senior Adviser, secondary education
          Mark Lear, primary adviser

Administrators: Jocelyn Owen, Chief Education Officer
                Mr Pestell, Senior Assistant Education Officer,
                West Devon
                Mr A.K. Mowll, Area Education Officer, East Devon
                Mr A.R. Goddard, Senior Assistant Education
                Officer, East Devon

Education Committee: D. Morrish, Liberal County Councillor
                    Ted Wragg, ex officio member education committee
                    (and participation at meeting of committee)

Teachers' Centre: A. Dean, Warden
APPENDIX B

Public work pertaining to this thesis.

Assessment, Schools and Society

'Assessment, curriculum and control in
the changing pattern of centre-local relations'

'Towards a sociology of assessment'
in Barton, L. and Walker, S. (eds.),
Schools, Teachers and Teaching

'Assessment constraints on curriculum practice :
a comparative study',
in Hammersley, M. and Hargreaves, A. (eds.),
Curriculum Practice : Some Sociological Case Studies

'From public examinations to profile assessment :
the French experience',
in Broadfoot, P. (ed.),
Selection, Certification and Control