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

Thesis

How to cite:


For guidance on citations see FAQs.

© 1984 The Author

Version: Version of Record

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.

oro.open.ac.uk
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 symbolics" 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 legitimation 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
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 - notably, 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-thetical 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 bureaucratise 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).


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.


(1980c) 'Bureaucracy, professionalisation and the control of knowledge', paper presented to the National Conference of Professors of Educational Administration, Norfolk, Virginia, August.


_____ (eds.) (1979) 'Accountability in education', NFER, Slough.


____ (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 Eells 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' Prentice Hall, New York.


Esland, 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.


Geminard, L. (1979) 'À propos d'autonomie', Administration et Éducation, no. 4.


Green, T.F., Ericson, D.P. and Seidman, R. (1980) 'Predicting the behaviour of the educational system', Syracuse University Press, Syracuse USA.


B.O. no 29 (24.7.75), Paris.


(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.


(1979) 'Really useful knowledge: radical education and working class culture 1790-1848), in Clarke, J., Critcher, C. and


(1979) 'Proposal to SSRC Accountability in Education panel', restricted.


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.


(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.


Noel, G. (1972) 'The factors (positive or negative) of educational innovation at secondary level in the French system', OECD, CERI, Paris. CS/72/10.


Nowell-Smith, G. (1979) 'In a state', Screen Education, no. 30.


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'


______ (1951) 'The social system', Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois.


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.


——— (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.


Sheridan, A. (198) 'Michel Foucault: the will to truth', Tavistock, London.


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?', THES 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 devil's 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.
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 Dutoit, Assistant to Recteur d'Académie de Créteil.

M Jacques Dehaussy, Recteur d'Académie de Créteil.


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 Supérieur 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 Heafford, 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.
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, auxillaire
Mme Rabaey, instituteur

College d'Isigny

Mlle Fery, auxillaire, 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. Dare, Head
Mr. Starkey, Deputy Head
Mr. Phillip

EXETER COLLEGE

Mr. Steer
Mrs. Taylor
Mr. Cushing
Mr. Shaw
Dr. Sampson
DEVON : NON-TEACHING RESPONDENTS

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

Published 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