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ISEP ANNOUNCEMENTS

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

With issue 6.4 of *Educational Planning*, we have three quite different but, nonetheless, interesting articles. Allan Guy from the University of Saskatchewan brings to our attention a case study which chronicles educational planning and its relation to politics and policy in Saskatchewan. Belle Ruth Witkin with Witkin Associates and J. Nicholls Eastmond, Jr. from Utah State University provide a solid discussion about the pre-assessment phase of needs assessments. Laura Weintraub, who is a student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, provides a unique and certainly provocative discussion of educational planning and its basic assumptions.

With the next issue of the Journal, we will be adding two columns which, if submissions allow, will appear each quarter. The first of these will present letters to the editor which we hope will yield a forum for those wishing to express a position vis-a-vis either the material appearing in the journal or issues of potential interest to the readership. Our second column will present our readers with short pieces which describe and, to some extent, evaluate computer programs that are of interest to the planner. We thoroughly encourage your participation in both of these columns. The former will not be reviewed except for the normal staff editorial review. The latter will be reviewed or submitted for review to individuals with a knowledge of planning and computer applications. Where possible, we will attempt to use our existing editorial review board.

Guy, A.

POLITICS, POLICY AND EDUCATIONAL PLANNING:
A CASE STUDY IN THE PROVINCE OF SASKATCHEWAN

Introduction

Within a democracy, the planning of public services depends considerably on policy making and, in turn, the latter is assumed to depend on political will, that is, on the will of the people. When policy changes more rapidly and more radically than the public can follow, it becomes difficult to distinguish whether its course is following the will of the people or merely the will of the politicians. Under such circumstances, the degree of uncertainty is so high that effective planning may become futile because the work of the planners may be disrupted and the values of the policy makers may change faster and more radically than the planners can accommodate.

Hans Weiler (1980) has written that "The history of educational planning has not yet been written . . . such an analysis would begin to tell us a great deal about not only educational planning but the dynamics of the decision making process in education under a variety of socio-economic and political conditions."

This insightful comment provided the writer with the idea and initiative to examine rapid policy changes in Saskatchewan education during a period so short that socio-economic conditions remained virtually the same. In fact, the formalization process is still happening at the present time, October, 1987.

In this paper an attempt will be made to analyze recent changes in educational policy and the dilemmas they pose for educational planners and administrators within the Province of Saskatchewan, Canada, with particular emphasis on its political context and unique features. This will be done in the context of the province's political history so that both the kind and degree of change can be fully appreciated. Finally, the author will then attempt coping strategies for planners in other states and provinces that may be experiencing rapid and radical change.

Historical Background and Recent Policy Changes Affecting Education in Saskatchewan

The Province of Saskatchewan, as well as the Province of Alberta, was carved out of the Prairie and Canadian Shield regions of the North West Territories in 1905. By this time, the aborigines had been confined to reserves, the herds of roaming bison slaughtered, the fertile lands surveyed

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for homesteading, the North West Mounted Police (later the Royal Canadian Mounted Police) organized, telegraph lines constructed to trading posts and early settlements and, most critically, railway lines had been laid from Eastern Canada, across the prairie region and on to the Pacific coast of British Columbia. The whole prairie region was in the midst of a rush of settlers from Eastern Canada, especially Ontario; Europe, especially Eastern Europe; and the United States, especially the central bordering states, and more particularly Minnesota and North Dakota. Population in the area that now makes up the Province of Saskatchewan increased from 91,279 in 1901 to 492,453 in 1911, an average increase of 43.9 percent per year for the ten year period. The settlement of the Prairies established Canada as one of the major grain exporting countries of the world. Although oil, potash, uranium and some other minerals have become important Saskatchewan commodities in the last three decades, to many Canadians the name Saskatchewan still evokes the image of wheatfields, "prairie gold."

From the earliest provincial and federal elections after provincial status was granted, two recurrent and concomitant issues have always been in the background: insecure economic conditions, especially for farmers, and unfavorable federal policies issued from Ottawa. This seems to have been due first to the fact that Saskatchewan and Alberta had not initially been given the same degree of control over revenues from their natural resources as the older, eastern provinces had been given, and secondly to the perception that federal policies had favoured the older and especially the more densely populated provinces in Eastern Canada at the expense of "The West." The political framework for Confederation, the British North America Act (since 1982 renamed the Constitutional Act of 1867), had been put together 40 years before provincial status had been granted to Saskatchewan and without any representation from what are now the prairie provinces. It was a scheme put together by eastern politicians to organize and control all of North America above the international boundary with the United States, except Alaska, which at that time belonged to Russia. Saskatchewan's economy is still heavily dependent on the export of primary products based on natural resources: grains, petroleum, potash and a few other minerals. It is not surprising then that the official opposition party in the Saskatchewan Legislature after the first provincial election was the Provincial Rights Party, which was led by the most ardent petitioner for Provincial Status, Frederick Haultain, the former premier of the North West Territories.

For most of its political history, the Saskatchewan vote has been a survival vote. Changes in provincial governments have usually occurred over economic issues, especially when some of the population were threatened. The Saskatchewan vote has almost always been against the party in power at Ottawa. Furthermore, as evidenced by the fact that the Provincial Rights Party never gained office and disappeared from the Legislature in 1911, economic concerns of the people have outweighed ideology, constitutional concerns of politicians and the issues of specific interest groups. From 1905 to 1944, the Liberal Party, the prime sponsor of immigration at the national level, remained in office except for a brief period from 1926 to 1931. In 1944, the Liberals were defeated by a democratic socialist party called the Canadian Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and remained undefeated until 1964 when the Liberals reclaimed the province once again. The CCF party, which was largely a farm party, reorganized with the help of labour to form the New Democratic Party (N.D.P.), regained office in 1971 and held it until 1982 when it was defeated by the Progressive Conservative Party (P.C.).

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In spite of the legend of radical socialism that was spread by the privately owned media, the Saskatchewan voter has almost always cast an agrarian, conservative, protest vote and not a radical one. In discussing Saskatchewan voters, Evelyn Eager (1968) pointed out nearly two decades ago,

> "they have shown less inclination to favour new political systems than to induce the existing system to work more directly to their advantage, and have paid less attention to principle than to practical results" (p. 1).

How can this be reconciled with the fact that the people of Saskatchewan have elected a democratic socialist party or social democratic party on so many occasions? The answer appears to lie in the tradition that the farm vote has been a vote for survival and whenever a party forgets that principle it is defeated.

During the 43 years since the CCF Party was first elected and through three other political parties (N.D.P., CCF and P.C.), Saskatchewan has led the way in many social policies, the most notable of which has been socialized medicine, which soon became a national scheme. Education has almost always been a high priority of all political parties from Territorial times to the current year. There was a period during the "Great Depression" of the "Dirty Thirties" when drought, wind blown soil, insects, and low grain prices made Saskatchewan one of the most destitute areas of North America. During these years teachers' salaries decreased almost to a vanishing point and many schools were neglected or even closed, but only temporarily; public education has been a way to get off the farm and thus a growing enterprise throughout most of Saskatchewan's history.

In the spring of 1982, Allan Blakeney, the N.D.P premier of Saskatchewan, looking for a new mandate in prosperous economic times, called on the Lieutenant Governor to request a provincial election. When it occurred, he lost in a landslide vote to the untried Progressive Conservative Party led by university economist-farmer, Grant Devine. Both parties seemed to be astonished by the results and the new government made no drastic changes to education or other public services immediately, preferring instead to expand and diversify the economy with its "open for business" policy, which included considerable concessions to the private sector in various forms of subsidiaries to attract industries. Education received less attention except to streamline some institutions at the post-secondary level to serve employment needs. The name of the Department dealing with this level was changed from the "Department of Continuing Education" to the "Department of Advanced Education and Manpower" to reflect the new government's emphasis, which included a four-year plan that would increase the capacity of the technical institutes by 60%.

The two provincial universities which are largely funded by public funds that originate with the Federal Government but are channelled through the provincial government, as in other Canadian provinces, received increased funding in terms of current dollars, but not on a scale that kept up with the combined effect of inflation, inbuilt escalation, and increasing enrollments. New buildings were also planned and built. The basic legislation also remained unchanged. The only significant difference appeared to be the abolition of the Universities Commission in 1983; thereafter the two universities dealt separately and directly with the Provincial Government.

Of the three types of post-secondary institutions, only the community colleges appear to have suffered. As the Annual Reports of the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower show, provincial grants increased slightly until 1985-86 when they virtually remained unchanged; however, course enrollments decreased from 100,661 in 1982-83 to 79,449 in 1984-85, a decrease of 21.1%, and then increased to 86,014 in 1985-86, a gain of 8.3%.

Elementary and secondary education, which were administered by a separate department, the Department of Education, remained much the same as under the previous government. Even the task force appointed by the NDP government to examine programs continued without change of direction, impetus or membership and the new "Core Curriculum" that developed from its final report, *Directions*, is currently being implemented. An Educational Development Fund was also established to provide boards of education with greater flexibility in planning and development.

By 1985-86, the strain of maintaining public services, generous concessions and subsidies to attract entrepreneurs and declining revenues from its major industries began to show. The P.C. Government had built up a deficit of $3 billion, the full extent of which was not revealed until after the October provincial election. Budget speeches and other documents showed a deficit for each year that the P.C.s had been in office. After a keenly fought election campaign during which the Federal P.C. government came through with deficiency payments to farmers, the P.C.s were reelected by a comfortable margin of seats that were mostly rural, but with less of the popular vote than the N.D.P., which captured almost all of the seats in the urban constituencies. Premier Devine did not call the legislature together in the fall of 1986, nor the winter of 1987, and no significant policy initiatives were apparent. It was widely felt that the Government was reluctant to meet a larger, more experienced opposition than it faced before the election.

The turning point came suddenly in the spring of 1987. Without calling the Legislature and presenting a budget, the government ministers began a series of announcements that were inconsistent with Saskatchewan's past political history and the P.C.'s own election platform of a few months earlier. On March 26, the Minister of Finance, Gary Lane, announced "reorganizations that will reduce the number of government departments, and provide for improved cooperation among related program areas" (Finance 87-136). Among the reorganizations was the consolidation of the Department of Education, the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower, and the Saskatchewan Library into a new department of education. On April 28, the Minister of Education, Lorne Hepworth, revealed a document entitled *Preparing for the Year 2000: Adult Education in Saskatchewan*. According to this document, the four provincial technical institutes and larger urban community colleges, which were located in the same cities, would be merged to form one institution with four campuses to be called "The Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology." It would be controlled by a government appointed board of directors. Furthermore, eight of the remaining community colleges, which were located in small towns in Southern Saskatchewan, were to be 'restructured" to become regional colleges, and the three northern community colleges were to be combined to form a new institution to be called "Northlands Career College." On May 12, since labelled as "Black Tuesday" by instructors at the technical institutes, Hepworth further announced that 216 of the

province's instructors at technical institutes were to be fired because of the amalgamation of the four institutes. At some institutes the number amounted to as much as 30% of the permanent staff. Other aspects of Saskatchewan education, the two universities and the school boards remained untouched, except through memoranda of advice and budget measures which came later.

The opposition appeared outraged. Nothing like this had been promised or even predicted. The premier had still not announced an opening date for the Legislature even when the end of the fiscal year arrived and the Provincial Government began to operate public services with funds authorized under lieutenant governor's warrants, a measure normally reserved for emergencies. The official opposition, the N.D.P., and the lone Liberal opposition member cried "fowl," but nothing happened. The Leader of the official opposition and former premier, Allan Blakeney, requested the legal counsel of the Legislature for an opinion and she responded that the government's position appeared to be unconstitutional. However, the premier took no action except to note that she had been appointed while the N.D.P. were in office. Finally, when the N.D.P. caucus met and decided to take the Government to court, Premier Devine announced immediately that he would recall the Legislature on June 17, and that a budget would be presented.

There were layoffs and cutbacks in other programs besides education and public feeling ran high. On June 20, an estimated 7,000 angry citizens representing many diverse groups marched on the Legislature claiming that the government had lied to the people (*Globe and Mail*, June 30, 1987. Even the churches made representation to the provincial government pleading that their obligations not be forgotten.

The budget speech provided few surprises because most of its content had been either hinted or announced before. On the revenue side affecting education, The Education and Health Tax, a direct sales tax on most consumer items except books, food and clothing, increased from 5 percent to 7 percent. On the expenditure side the budget added an extra $14.5 million to the Educational Development fund; grants of $330 million for school operations, and $31 million for school construction. For the universities, $13 million was committed to the University Renewal and Development Fund but the operating grants were frozen at the 1986-87 level of $144 million. For post-secondary students' needs assistance, there was $14 million committed to direct assistance and $32 million for loans at a subsidized rate of 6 percent. Other less expensive subsidies for work programs were also offered to students. Some comments were made on past expenditures on technical institutes and regional community colleges but no additional funds were promised for the current fiscal year (Budget Speech 15-17). To the present time, the reality has been less than adequate funding for schools because of contract bound salary scales, the EDF contribution committed for one year has been extended over a three year period, and the University of Saskatchewan has imposed a quota on Arts and Science entries for the first time in its history.

By now it was quite evident that the Provincial Government had not been dormant during the past winter. It had embraced the principles of a neo-conservative movement led by the Fraser Institute that emphasizes the "downsizing" of government and the "privatization" of crown corporations and many public services. Policies and even promotional documents had been

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developed through the winter of 1987. When the president-founder of a British think tank operation called the "Adam Smith Institute" spoke recently at Regina, Saskatchewan, to a group of businessmen and government officials, he claimed that "Every crown operation is a potential candidate for privatization, including parts of education and health care" (*Leader Post*, October 3, 1987, p. A3). The Provincial Government seems to have developed a Janus complex and the stunned population has not yet learned how to deal with it.

In summary, government policy, especially as it applies to education, has radically changed in Saskatchewan during the past six months. Some changes, such as equity and accessibility improvements in student loans, can hardly be questioned in principle, even though it is too early to assess their application. Others raise some ominous portents. Asking the citizens for one mandate and acting as if it had been given another seems to be an affront and even a mockery of constitutional government. It may not be unique in general political history but it seems doubtful if government policy change has happened before on such a scale in Canadian history. Parliamentary democracy and its tradition of not spending public funds unless they have been authorized by legislature have been stretched to questionable constitutional limits. Massive reorganization without public consultation is offensive to those accustomed to social democracy. But the trend continues. When the Provincial Government presented bills to the Legislature for acts to create the new technical institute and the regional colleges, Peter Prebble, the N.D.P. critic for education, claimed that the documents were seriously flawed and asked that the Education Committees of the Legislature hold public hearings on proposed changes to the province's advanced education system, the Minister of Education retorted "We can't run this government by paralysis through analysis." (*Regina Leader Post*, October 12, 1987, p. A4).

The changes in Saskatchewan's education policies were not merely changes in degree, but changes in kind. Most importantly, though perhaps not widely recognized, is the change from a social demand approach to a manpower planning approach for providing public education. The first assumes that one can not have too much education at private and public expense; the second assumes that if there is no job apparent in the province by the end of the program, there is no justification for public expense. Consequently, enrollments at the technical institute have been restricted far below demand. Even further than that some types of post-secondary training are to be subsidized while other types of training are not, except that students of both programs may qualify for student loans. This will mean that those who cannot find a place in the new Saskatchewan Institute will be handicapped for they will have less training than those who originate from elsewhere. This puts some Saskatchewan students behind even immigrants because Canadian immigration officials have a high preference for applicants who are educated. This is unfortunate since the bulk of the funds for some types of education, particularly for that acquired at university and technical institutions, originates as federal funds that are transferred to the provinces.

There has also been a change of style. For more than 40 years at least, and through governments led by all three major political parties, there had existed a tradition of public discussion on most issues affecting education before they became law. Even the 1982-83 Devine P.C. Government, which tried to match and even surpass Blakney's N.D.P. government on some educational needs, especially technical education, development funds and the construction of educational facilities, allowed discussion of policy prior to adoption, as indicated by the Curriculum Review Committee and their widely discussed final report, *Directions*. The Devine Government that renewed its mandate in 1986 seems to be quite different. Its policy options appear to be developed in secret, without regard to its mandate, and then dropped on citizens suddenly. In fact, the effects seem to be similar to those of a country that has just gone through a revolution.

Dilemmas and Coping Strategies for Educational Planning

For educational planners, dealing with uncertainty is always part of the planning process. Usually this revolves around changing enrollments or considerations that relate to them such as planning for financial, staff and accommodation needs. Policy variables are most difficult to predict because a wider range of antecedent variables affect them, such as a wide range of socio-economic conditions (including some of those which affect enrollments), personal ambitions, ideology and sudden misfortunes. Fortunately, changes in policy variables remain fairly manageable in most democracies, except when one political party succeeds another in governing and even then may not change radically, as in the case of Saskatchewan's last Blakeney government and the first Devine government. When policies change rapidly in terms of degree and kind, as in the second Devine government, the level of uncertainty appears to get out of control.

The educational planners in different public institutions within Saskatchewan and other jurisdictions where such rapid policy changes occur have different sets of options, depending on how the policy changes affect them. In some instances the options were severely limited because institutions were reorganized, positions were abolished and some new ones created. In a few instances opportunities for creative alternatives appeared because of integration, new resources and economies of scale. And still others found that they had to make only specific adjustments that did not significantly alter the nature of the institutions themselves.

Before reorganization the Department of Education and the Department of Advanced Education and Manpower each had a division called "Planning and Evaluation" and each was headed by an executive director, but in the new amalgamated department of education still called "The Department of Education," there is a super division called Policy, Planning and University Affairs which is under an assistant deputy minister; a division of Planning and Information Services under an executive director; and several divisions and subdivisions, one of which is called "Policy and Planning." There is another super division of the Department, labelled Financial Services and Program Administration; a division called Finance and Administration headed by an executive director; and four subdivisions, two of which deal with planning and are labelled "Financial Planning" and "Facilities Planning," each of which is headed by a director.

In the integration of the two departments of education at the provincial level, some positions were abolished and others underwent a change of function. Obviously, there were more job seekers than jobs. This dilemma was solved by the new Deputy Minister, Laurie McFarlane, who apparently made a simple choice in making recommendations to the Minister. Such a procedure is unusual in Canadian public administration at all levels of government and particularly in education. It has been fairly common practice that when appointments are made below the level of assistant deputy minister, including when they are made as a result of reorganization, there is a competition for them. In 1969, this happened in Ontario when school districts were consolidated to form larger ones whose boundaries were made coterminal with county and regional boundaries. Former employees of the smaller boards in the country competed with each other, with employees of other boards and with outsiders for the newly created positions at the county or regional level. In that same year a much more complete reorganization occurred

in Newfoundland where 1500 small school districts were consolidated to form just over 30 larger ones, new school boards were elected for the first time and provided with an administrative staff, a new provincial department of education was formed at the provincial level and the representatives of religious denominations moved out of the old department to form an organization of their own elsewhere. But in each case competitions were held.

What happened in Saskatchewan may change the nature of civil service careers. Can one afford to train for any specific profession, such as chartered public accountant or educational planner, if employment in public administration is to become so volatile? If the current Saskatchewan style of making transitions becomes widespread across Canada, then professionals in public service careers may need to re-evaluate their options and act according to their own priorities rather than long term commitments to public institutions.

But this raises a question of professional ethics: how can the educational planner or any other professional fulfill his commitment to the public if there is continuous or even periodic uncertainty about job security? One strategy might be to build multiple repositories into the job function so that whoever succeeds in the function, even if it partially or completely disappears for a few years, will have access to all completed and partially completed projects. This involves more than a complete filing system which might be dumped or erased. It includes having copies of completed studies in departmental, legislative, university and public libraries. It might also include a directory of who worked on which projects and a permanent, forwarding or most recent address. One facility planning project on which this writer worked during the initial stages was completed almost ten years later; fortunately there was continuity of some planning personnel and maintenance of initial documents.

This strategy might have been useful in Saskatchewan and to some degree it might have been undertaken by conscientious individuals even though their positions in government departments, technical institutes and community colleges were being abolished. However, within three months after being terminated, some professionals had moved to jobs in other cities of Saskatchewan, other provinces of Canada or even to the United States of America.

As noted earlier, the elementary schools, high schools and universities were virtually untouched by the Provincial Government's reorganization attempts of the last few months, but it would be unwise to assume that changes already made and future changes would not affect them. At the same time it might be equally unwise to invoke stock market panic and abruptly switch from a goal oriented strategic planning approach to a complete contingency or directional approach. It might be more effective, though not more efficient, to maintain a variety of both approaches. More precisely, in addition to the usual strategic planning with tactical adjustments that have to be made to accommodate minor variations in the environment, such as changes in enrollments and government growths, it may be more effective in the long run to put more effort into the "what if...?" types of questions, such as "what if the provincial government decided to further consolidate school divisions (districts)" or "what if the government decided to place both universities under one board of governors?" Some may argue that the provincial government would never go that far, but a year ago people of "Delphi" status would have argued that it would not have significantly interfered with the organization of education as it existed at that time.

There may be some lessons to be learned from what has happened in Saskatchewan. At the present time they appear to be lessons that will be learned from bad experience. However, it is too early to conclude with confidence that this will happen. Many intervening variables, especially international markets and another provincial election, may determine the wisdom of what has happened in the last seven months. Let the educational planners take note that everything is uncertain, including uncertainty itself.

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BRINGING FOCUS TO THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT STUDY:
THE PRE-ASSESSMENT PHASE

Needs assessment is a procedure designed to set priorities among competing needs of various degrees of criticality, and to provide a basis for equitable allocation of resources (Witkin, 1984; Kaufman, 1982). It has become axiomatic among planners that a needs assessment is (or should be) the first step in systematic planning. But before plunging into the task of gathering information and opinions about needs, the planner/needs assessor would do well to undertake pre-assessment activities.

Both the scale and the methodology of a needs assessment should be based upon the decisions to be made by those using the results of the assessment, and the effort should be commensurate with the importance of those decisions, as well as with the resources available. The utilization of results must also be planned for. Some questions to be answered are: What should be the scope and boundaries of the assessment? What do decision makers need to know that they don't already? Will the methods used give you valid data to make the necessary decisions, both as to the actual needs and the priorities for action planning? What are the political and organizational constraints that must be considered in planning for the assessment and the later use of the data in a meaningful way?

To answer these questions, some preliminary investigations should be undertaken prior to the actual assessment. An effective approach is to divide the work into three phases: I, pre-assessment activities; II, the formal assessment, including data gathering, analysis, and setting of priorities; and III, post-assessment activities—evaluation of the assessment and utilization of the results. This paper is limited to describing some procedures appropriate to Phase I, in which at least two aspects of the assessment should be considered: the contractual/political factors, and the definition of scope and limits.

Contractual Consideration

The matter of setting limits for a needs assessment is commonly negotiated between a contractor and a client in setting up contractual obligations, between an interviewer and an interviewee in gathering data, and between a needs assessor and an oversight committee in analyzing and utilizing results. When one party feels that the other has not gone far enough (or has gone too far), the concerned party renegotiates a position until both can be satisfied. The use of focusing strategies in a pre-assessment phase helps the needs assessor avoid the pressure to go to excesses: to gather more data than needed, to analyze beyond the level of fruitful results, or to maintain an all-inclusive character to the study when sharply-defined outcomes are more useful. Pre-assessment strategies are valuable precisely because they focus efforts, thus conserving resources.

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Although limitations may be clear to the needs assessor, they are often much less so to contractors or oversight committees. The use of written contracts clarifies ambiguities and documents limitations. The intents, methods, and anticipated products ("deliverables") should be stated clearly in writing. What makes this process somewhat difficult is that some questions of the needs assessment are often uncovered only as the study proceeds. A successful strategy for Phase I uses a fourfold approach: (1) specify the role of the needs assessor, (2) outline the steps to be followed in all three phases of the assessment, (3) provide for approval of design modifications in Phase II, contingent upon the Phase I findings, and (4) state evidence of successful completion of the assessment.

Unfortunately, as anyone experienced in contracts knows, it is virtually impossible to foresee all contingencies and to specify contractual obligations sufficiently to preclude all misunderstandings. Nevertheless, the occasion provided by the contractual specification is crucial for defining and limiting the scope of the assessment.

By structuring the needs assessment into phases, the needs assessor can control the types and levels of data input in the second, formal assessment phase without being tied to an unworkable contract. The assessor can request that certain tasks in the later phases be contingent upon the results of the pre-assessment inquiries. Thus, the contract can be written to provide for alternative data collection strategies based upon the factors discovered in the pre-assessment phase.

Figure 1 is an abbreviated example of a contract for conducting an educational needs assessment in a public school system. A complete contract would include the specification of roles and responsibilities of the contracting parties. There would be a section on contingencies, another on the responsibilities of the contractor, and one on the responsibilities of the client. The budget would specify both direct and indirect costs.

Figure 1

SAMPLE CONTRACT FOR CONDUCTING AN EDUCATIONAL
NEEDS ASSESSMENT*

I. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

Purpose of the Needs Assessment. This assessment is undertaken with the express purpose of providing ways to improve the educational program for the boys and girls of this jurisdiction. Furthermore, it is assumed that this assessment effort can serve not only as a basis for long-range planning but also as a kind of prototype for all schools throughout the region. This assessment will be conducted by professional educators of sufficient stature such that it will lend credibility, meaning, and confidence to the results obtained.

Figure 1 - Continued.

Objectives. At the completion of this needs assessment effort, the following objectives will be attained with a 90%/90% standard (i.e., 90% of the elements will be accomplished at a level of 90% attainment):

I. The critical needs will be identified in conformance with the criteria established by the funding agency (See Attachment A).

II. The Quality Assurance Committee will be broadly representative of the citizens, teachers, pupils, and parents of the jurisdiction and will function with efficiency (as measured by their responses) to:

    1. identify the critical educational needs of the regions;

    2. categorize these needs in terms of their priority (or criticality);

    3. express relevant values—or statements of belief—that the committee can agree upon.

III. Each validated need—of which there will be not less than twenty (20)—will exhibit the following characteristics:

    1. Focus on learner needs—not on institutional needs which are dealt with when planning solutions.

    2. Identify target groups of learners—include the identifying characteristics of the learner with the need, how many, and where located, etc.

    3. Include a criterion—explicit criteria for judging where the jurisdiction currently is in relation to
        a. progress toward resolving the need,
        b. eventual satisfaction of need.

    4. Show the criticality of the need—in order to set priorities, an index of importance is required. This must stem from values placed on eliminating the need or at least reducing it.

    5. Indicate the maximum time allowable—specify the target date when the need will be satisfied.

IV. At least 50 copies of the final report of 25 or more pages each will be published in format and content that will conform to high professional standards.

Figure 1 - Continued.

II. PROCEDURES

A description of the procedures to be carried out in this project is presented in Attachment B, with activities shown in flow-chart form as they will occur sequentially. In a very real sense, each activity shown in the flow chart may be seen as a project objective. It is helpful to refer to the box numbers shown in the plan-activity diagram and relate these to the performance budget which is presented as Part IV of this proposal. It is recognized that in the pre-assessment phase of the needs assessment, conditions may arise that would necessitate a change in the terms of this agreement. In such cases, subsequent procedures and modifications will be discussed and agreed upon by both parties to the contract.

III. EVALUATION

The study will conform to standards of professional excellence to meet the above stated criteria. In addition, the process will be conducted to the satisfaction of the project's Quality Assurance Committee.

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*Adapted from Worldwide Education and Research Institute, Salt Lake City, Utah. The attachments referred to in the contract, as well as the budget section, are omitted for the sake of brevity.

Political Considerations

Careful planning in the pre-assessment phase enables the needs assessor to deal with political considerations. Needs assessments clearly require a democratic process, but ultimately the decision must be made: whose needs as identified by whom? The search for an "objective," non-political approach may be doomed. By its nature, needs assessment requires a weighing of political factors, either overt or covert. Such a process is best handled in the pre-assessment phase, to control the amounts and kinds of data input, consistent with the objectives of the assessment, and to maintain a position of fairness toward various interest groups.

Prominent writers on the subject suggest that, while political forces are powerful in the research setting, they are knowable and controllable with conscious effort. Cohen (1973) maintains that "to the extent that information is an instrument, basis, or excuse for changing power relationships within or among institutions, evaluation [or needs assessment] is a political activity" (p. 97). He also points out that as the number of people served by a particular program increases,

so also do the number of political jurisdictions and the complexity of the political process. "... the bigger [the program] is, the greater the likelihood for the overt appearance of political competition" (p. 97).

The criteria for dealing with political factors are straightforward. Maintaining support, testing opinion, keeping people informed, and modifying one's approach based upon feedback are recognized as conditions of doing acceptable research.

Kleinfeld and McDiarmid (1986) note the temptation faced by researchers to short-change the social and political aspects of a study, partly because many researchers have the proclivity to "retreat to [their] office and commune with methodological and statistical texts" (p. 397). This temptation must be resisted, they feel, and they offer three specific suggestions for the "explorator phase of research" (the topic of the article):

1. *Identify the decision makers and stakeholders.* Identify the key decisionmakers, gatekeepers, and stakeholders and determine what their worries, fears, and interests are.

2. *Gain the confidence of stakeholders by personally asking for their advice.* They suggest extensive use of the telephone to obtain opinions and check perceptions. One ingenious idea, when large numbers of people are involved, is to use a microcomputer filing system program, with important information entered as the conversation proceeds, potentially retrievable in any subsequent telephone conversation.

3. *Set up a steering committee.* Organize and retain an oversight committee that "represents major stakeholders and the range of political opinion," whose members "enjoy the personal respect and confidence of stakeholding groups." This committee should be viewed as "a microcosm of the political world into which you will launch your research results" (Kleinfeld and McDiarmid, 1986, pp. 395-396).

The importance of the steering committee in the needs assessment study has been stressed elsewhere (Eastmond, 1980-81; Witkin, 1984). The group is sometimes called a Quality Assurance Committee or an Oversight Committee (taking care in the latter case that the group "oversees" rather than "overlooks" important details). The committee need not be large—six to eight persons is the optimum number for a small jurisdiction. For a metropolitan service area, 15-18 might be needed for adequate representativeness. Too large a group may preclude good decision making. The group must be oriented to its task, must be consulted at periodic intervals throughout the study, and finally must be prepared to vouch for the validity of results obtained. Kleinfeld and McDiarmid (1986) suggest including "critics or opponents of the policy or program in question" (p. 396). While applauding the ecumenical character of the suggestion, we suggest exercising some caution in that regard. It is possible to hamstring a committee and to polarize the members into irreconcilable positions, thus blocking further progress. Our advice is to seek out contrasting opinions but to select open-minded people capable of conflict resolution.

The evidence of the usefulness of a steering committee is overwhelming. In our experience, where time or resource constraints have seemed to preclude forming one, afterwards we invari-

ably regretted that we had not included this essential step. We found either (1) that the study's direction was somehow off target, or (2) that the findings later went unused due to lack of commitment by relevant stakeholders and decisionmakers. Of all the steps available to the needs assessor to deal successfully with the political factors of a study, the formation and proper use of a steering committee is the most powerful.

It should be noted, however, that the mere use of a steering committee will not ensure that the focus and results of the study are valid and on target. It is up to the needs assessor to be aware of technical and methodological pitfalls that might arise, and in Phase I to appraise the likelihood of their occurrence and to design the Phase II assessment accordingly. This information can, of course, be shared with the steering committee as additional factors to be considered in their recommendations.

Strategies for Defining Scope and Limits In the Pre-Assessment Phase

Failure to define the limits of a needs assessment can result in one of two major types of errors: either the scope is too broad or too narrow. If too broad, the assessment may encounter problems of unwieldy data collection, over-expenditure of time and other resources at the risk of curtailing subsequent action to alleviate the needs, and difficulty of establishing priorities and a focus for later action planning on the needs. If too narrow, the study may fail to uncover significant needs. The scope must provide a balance of breadth and depth of assessment.

The pre-assessment phase provides the opportunity to develop a conceptual base for the formal needs assessment. A conceptual framework and well-defined exploratory activities lead to the delineation of the focus and scope of the assessment. If the scope is too broad, the assessment may attempt to deal with too many concerns in too superficial a manner, thus failing to analyze any area in sufficient depth to be meaningful. The data collection may become unwieldy, and, without a sufficiently powerful conceptual basis, the mass of data presents a problem in establishing priorities among needs and a focus for action planning.

On the other hand, narrowing the scope without an adequate conceptual base leads to another set of problems. Experienced needs assessors have found that managers or decision makers who request the needs assessment often have preconceived ideas about the identity of critical need areas and the magnitude of needs, based on inadequate or outmoded data. Limiting the scope to the most obvious areas of need can result in wasted effort and in failure to go beyond the conventional wisdom of what is already known or perceived to be true.

Based upon the specification of the focus and scope of the assessment in the first phase, the data-gathering tasks of Phase II are limited to areas of concern high lighted by the Phase I results. The pre-assessment phase is typically conducted by the needs assessor and small numbers of key informants. The formal assessment phase extends to an adequate sampling of a larger population.

The actual determination of needs and their magnitude in the formal assessment is generally found by identifying the gaps between what is desirable (in terms of outcomes, not programs

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or solutions), and what currently exists. This process involves the gathering of selected data from, for example, social indicators, and the summarizing of value positions from an appropriate mix of service providers, service receivers, and other stakeholders. It is not an infinite study of all the factual information about a community or service, nor is it an infinite sampling of opinions held by all parties interested in expressing value positions. To prevent the needs assessment from being merely descriptive or of taking on the characteristics of research divorced from practical decisions, the outputs from the informal processes of Phase I are used to specify what kinds of decisions will be made, and by whom, on the basis of what types of data. This decision-based approach is kept in mind as the needs assessor selects a strategy for focusing and delimiting the scope of the needs assessment.

Defining the scope of the Phase II study

The subsequent sections of the paper describe two strategies for delineating the scope and boundaries: (1) identifying critical issues for a Management Information System (MIS), and (2) defining limits through analyses of existing data. The methods were developed and field-tested in various settings as elements of different system approaches to needs assessment. They both use small group processes prior to more formal data collection strategies. An illustration of the combined use of the two strategies is provided through a brief example of some pre-assessment activities in an interagency needs assessment.

Identifying Issues for a Management Information System

The MIS approach is intended to identify issues that will form the basis for ongoing, cyclical needs assessments. The process provides managers with information for decision making regarding existing programs or services, and the ability to spot trends that indicate the need for changes or for new programs or services. The approach incorporates a type of qualitative evaluation as a preliminary to identifying major issues. The issues then become the framework for gathering data that will show the magnitude of the gaps between existing and desired states, and thus indicate the presence of unmet needs. The method uses strategies for setting priorities on issues in order to limit the scope of the assessment to manageable proportions.

The approach can be initiated at the organizational or at the departmental level. In large and highly departmentalized schools or organizations, it is often preferable to begin at the departmental level. When the first stages of the inquiry have been completed, the participants then identify issues that are held in common by several departments. After intra- and inter-departmental issues have been identified, the next step is to identify organization-wide issues that relate to the overall goals of the organization.

Of course, it is important to assess how well the mission and goals of the organization are being met. This can be done either at the beginning, by relating unit needs areas to organizational goals, or by comparing organization-wide issues to organizational goals at a later stage. In loosely-coupled systems, such as many secondary schools that are highly departmentalized, there may be little conscious awareness of the organization's stated goals, except in the most general terms. The pre-assessment phase provides an opportunity for bringing the organization's mission and goals to awareness at the unit level.

A key concept to be kept in mind is the difference between primary and secondary level needs and the issues and data related to them. Primary needs are those of clients—those who receive services, such as students or trainees. Secondary needs are those of the organization—those who serve the clients, such as administrators, teachers, and those who provide support services. Issues regarding primary needs should be dealt with first; secondary need issues become apparent after the primary ones are defined.

The process starts with brainstorming sessions with small groups of key informants—top administrators, department heads, supervisors, and others acquainted with the organizational and departmental objectives as well as with what is being done to accomplish those objectives. The output from the sessions is a list of success and failure indicators from the program or service levels under consideration. Key questions for a high school might include the following: "If you were an outsider observing your classes, how would you recognize a successful program? How would you recognize an unsuccessful program?" The indicators should be related to student outcomes as much as possible and based on observable behaviors. In a community college, key questions might be used to probe indicators of successful and unsuccessful services to students in both degree and non-degree programs.

Success and failure indicators can be organized into outcomes, processes, and inputs. In a foreign language department in a university or high school, for example, an outcome indicator for students might be the ability of students to use the language in travel; process indicators might be the amount of assigned homework and oral practice; and input indicators might be the ability of teachers to speak the language fluently as well as read and write it, and the quality of materials available for instruction. An indicator at the organizational level might be enrollment. For example, an indicator of an unsuccessful program could be a decline in the percentage of first-year students who later enroll in advanced-level courses.

During the brainstorming sessions, notes are made of concerns regarding satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the programs or services. This information is synthesized with the success and failure indicators to formulate issues statements.

After the brainstorming sessions, the success and failure indicators are related to the goals and objectives of the organization and the department. It may be found that few or no indicators have been suggested for some of the objectives, and conversely, that some indicators apparently relate to concerns that go beyond stated objectives. If so, this finding should be discussed to see whether the indicators point to issues that are of sufficient importance to necessitate review of the adequacy of existing goals and objectives. Perhaps the work of the organization has changed over the years and it is time for an appraisal of the adequacy of the goals and objectives. Or perhaps a department has taken on responsibilities beyond its mandated scope, or has slighted necessary services, or client needs require reconsideration and efforts at organizational renewal.

Once the indicators have been organized in relation to the goals and objectives (at both the unit and organizational levels), the next step is to identify major areas of concern and to draft statements of issues. Issues can be framed as questions—e.g., for a physical education program, "Do students take responsibility for their own health and physical fitness?" Priorities can then be

placed on the issues as a basis for defining the limits of the needs assessments, using judgments of the key informants. The issue questions also act as a guide to the types of data that should be collected to delineate the needs in the area. (For a more complete description of the issues approach in an MIS and how the data may be used in a discrepancy analysis to set priorities on needs, see Witkin, 1984, pp. 55-62).

If the organization has a computerized data base for any of its management functions, the needs assessment data can be stored for analysis in the future to identify trends and changes in areas or magnitude of needs. The issues then form a conceptual basis for updating the needs assessment on a periodic basis, without having to mount a completely new effort.

Defining limits through analyses of available data

A second means of narrowing the scope of a needs assessment is to use a focus group process in three sessions, and interim fact-gathering activities, in order to: (a) identify what is already known or believed to be true about primary and secondary needs, and (b) discover what kinds of additional data should be gathered later in Phase II. Participants identify and examine available data and discover gaps that should be filled by means of surveys or social indicators.

The basic method, which can be adapted to organizational requirements, uses three small-group sessions and interim data-gathering activites, all directed by the needs assessor. The focus group is composed of 12 to 20 key informants who are familiar with the objectives and work of the agency or organization. In a school district, these might be representative teachers, administrators, parents, support staff, and students. A state agency might include assistant superintendents and department heads, and representatives of external stakeholders from school districts and counties or intermediate units.

In *Session I* there are four stages. (For further details of the process, see Wickens, 1980, or Witkin, 1984, pp. 142-144).

a. *Examine the organizational goals,* and cluster them into a small number of categories to form the basis for data gathering in Phase II.

b. *Generate concerns for each goal category,* using a nominal group process. When from 60 to 75 concerns are generated, then the statements are sorted, synthesized, and reduced to five for each goal category. These are posted on wall charts and reviewed for group consensus on criticality of the concerns for the needs assessment.

c. *Reach agreement on the major concerns.* A brief advocacy period is followed by voting to set priorities on which concerns should be pursued in the formal needs assessment. The ten most important concerns are selected for the next step.

d. *List what is known about each concern.* The goal categories with their concerns are assigned to teams of two or three persons, who list all that they presently know of (1) facts and opinions currently available for the concern areas, and (2) types of facts and opinions that are not known and that would have to be gathered in order to analyze the needs.

For example, in one school district a curriculum goal elicited concerns that declining enrollment was causing program cuts and that budget reductions were affecting programs and extracurricular activities. The team assigned to that goal had to decide what was actually known about enrollments and budget reductions, and what data would have to be gathered in order to clarify the concerns.

At the end of Session 1, each team takes an assignment to gather specific information before the next session. This information should come from readily available sources within the district, such as case summaries, enrollment records, budget reports, and program evaluation reports. As soon as possible following the session, the needs assessor organizes the outputs from Session 1 into separate charts, each containing a statement of a high-priority concern for a specific goal, and items listed in four parallel columns: facts available, opinions available, facts to be gathered, and opinions to be gathered.

In *Session 2*, the teams review the charts and add items to the fact and opinion columns. Charts are annotated for additional information to be gathered, such as definitions, statistics, present efforts to meet a need through existing programs or services, results from previous evaluation activities, and reasons why the concerns have not yet been met. Each team member takes assignments to gather specific data from available sources before the next meeting. During Session 2 there can be a discussion of resources available and resources required to meet probable needs in specific areas of concern.

Before Session 3, the needs assessor (perhaps with assistance from staff planners or evaluators) produces a draft design for Phase II (the formal needs assessments), which will focus on gathering information and opinions, within high priority concern areas, that are not presently available. Thus, the formal needs assessment is limited to filling in the gaps in knowledge in selected priority areas of concern, by means of surveys of targeted groups, the gathering of additional data from social indicators, and/or interactive processes with key groups.

In *Session 3*, the needs assessor presents the draft design to the focus group, which acts in a consultant capacity to advise on the adequacy of the scope of the needs assessment and the general design.

We have found that the analysis of existing data not only succeeds in setting the boundaries and limiting the scope of the formal needs assessment to critical areas where insufficient data exist, but also that the focus of the assessment often turns out to be quite different from what management (or the needs assessor) believes it should be.

Application to a joint venture: An illustration.

In the past decade there has been a trend for interagency cooperation in assessing needs and providing for community services (Curtis, 1981; Taylor and Vineberg, 1977; Terrill, 1982). A combination of focus group process and analysis of existing data was used successfully to delimit and focus a joint venture needs assessment by a school district and the city in which it is located (Witkin, 1984; Witkin, Richardson, and Wickens, 1979). School districts and cities usually have many common concerns of considerable importance, yet needs assessments done

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independently by each entity would not typically identify priorities in need areas that could best be met by joint action.

In community studies conducted by more than one agency, the pre-assessment activities can be accomplished successfully in joint work sessions of the two governing bodies—for example, the school board and the city council. In these work sessions, the two groups identify areas of critical need in the city and the school district which are of mutual concern, and select a limited number of targets as priorities for joint needs assessment. Typical areas might be transportation, health, child care, land use, recreation, and vocational-technical training. The pre-assessment activities consist of individual key informant interviews, followed by joint work sessions in which brainstorming and decision-making strategies are used to help the group select the most critical areas for study. Follow-up interviews with elected officials and their staffs can pinpoint types of data already available to substantiate needs in the different areas, as well as data that should be gathered in the course of the second or formal phase of the needs assessment.

In joint venture studies, the importance of taking contractual and political factors into consideration cannot be overemphasized. A steering committee representative of the community and of the cooperating agencies is essential. In the interagency study cited above (Witkin, 1984), it was also found advisable to appoint a small interagency management team to assist the needs assessor. The team members, who had technical expertise and considerable experience in conducting needs assessments in a variety of contexts, helped design the study, which was then presented to the steering committee for approval.

Summary

The foregoing strategies have several features in common, and elements from each could be combined to meet the requirements of a given context. The main feature of the Phase I (pre-assessment) activities described above is the use of small group sessions of key informants to delineate what is already known, what issues or areas of concern arise from the group knowledge and what data are already available to elucidate the needs. The focus and scope of the formal assessment in Phase II is then contingent upon the pre-assessment findings. A possible drawback is that some important, but not readily recognizable, need area might be overlooked. But with a sufficient diversity of informants and a broad look at the existing data base, the likelihood of overlooking an important need is reduced.

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"WE DON'T NEED NO EJIKAYSHUN": NEEDS ASSESSMENT RE-ASSESSED

"It appears," argues Kimmel (1977, p. 8), "that needs assessment can be almost anything: a change-oriented process, a method for enumeration and description, an analytic procedure, a decision-making process, a process for the 'resolution of many viewpoints', etc." I will argue here that needs assessment is not "almost anything." Lodged as it is within the systems belief structure, needs assessment obscures important debates about our social orderings and reflects the tenacious dominance of technocracy in educational planning. In this paper I will: (1) consider the "location" of needs assessment in relation to the wider field of planning; (2) compare two variants of the discrepancy model, specifically the "classical" and social welfare approaches to needs assessment; and (3) reflect on the assumptions and implications imbedded in needs assessment technocracy.

While there are many cartographers who map the hesitant development of planning as an emergent and legitimate field, Psacharopoulos (1978) offers an iconoclastic ("It all started with the discovery of the 'residual' in the late 1950s," p. 135) taxonomy of planning. Following the genesis of the residual, Psacharopoulos sketches five additional planning eras, each of which also demonstrates facets of the needs assessment problem.

The first of these eras, the Stone Age, is characterized by GNP and human resource development comparisons, wherein a unidirectional chain link from education to national income is forged. Parallel to this linear reasoning is the work of Kaufman and English (1977), who posit the following as significant indices of student "outcomes":

the independent survival point or beyond as measured by their consumption at least equaling their production; no bankruptcy . . . no commitment to mental institutions, no persons arrested and found guilty . . . .(p. 95)

This prototypical description is offered by Kaufman and English as an exemplar for identifying the gap between "what is" and "what should be." Consumption, production, and successful avoidance of bankruptcy, insanity and criminality, together with other attributes of clean living that the authors continue to list, are assumed to be causally linked to education. Various sub-measures of the individual's own GNP can be summed and then aggregated, thus providing us with the means for assessing the discrepancy between current and potential educational provision.

Psacharopoulos next describes planning's Middle Ages, the epoch of man[sic]power forecasting that again assumes "a rigid relationship between education (let alone occupation) and the economy" (p. 138), an assumption contributing to an order of error that "is not trivial, as in some

cases it exceeds 100 per cent" (p. 139). That order of error is not, however, sufficiently high to persuade such countries as Canada to abandon its usage. And we realize that the Middle Ages lives on elsewhere, located, for example, in Florida's community college planning cycle.[3] Witkin (1984) reports that this particular "needs assessment model is an illustration of how to operationalize the relationship between educational needs of students and requirements and opportunities in the external world" (pp. 49-50). The basis of operationalization is the regular electronic transfer of information from the state's job registry data base to a consortium of seven community colleges. The ongoing provision of updated occupational data allegedly permits ever-flexible program and curricular modifications. This approach to information management is clearly labelled a cyclical assessment of students' educational needs. While we may reject marxist structuralist arguments that schools exist only to feed their young to the voracious capitalist master, we must also note that no questions are raised in the needs assessment litera-ture about the "rigid relationship" Psacharopoulos has identified, a relationship whereby the current economic order is not only serviced by the compliant education industry but also maintains the power to name such servitude "the meeting of student needs."

The field of planning is next, according to Psacharopoulos, distracted by The Great Bubble, a technocratic era of mathematical and econometric modelling that sacrifices practical usage to "painstaking analytic detail" (p. 139). The arithmetically-driven depopulation of the universe reflected in the needs assessment reports betrays a particular affinity to The Great Bubble, although the needs-related literature attempts to alleviate mathematical mystery by using formulae more suited to the mere educator. Thus our equations are translated into such terms as desire, attainment, importance, responsibility and, of course, need. More will be said about the pseudo maths models of needs assessment shortly.

Oddly named, the planning Renaissance is typified by rate-of-return approaches. Psacharopou-los states that planning priorities in this era are granted to those education levels exhibiting "the highest social benefit-cost ratio" (p. 140). Assuming that "true" social benefits are identifiable and measurable, the Renaissance has exacerbated, on the international level, monetary rewards supporting higher education at the expense of even rudimentary attempts at garden variety literacy. Even the most cursory review of the needs assessment literature demonstrates the "bottom line" business of needs assessment, its purpose being the allocation of funds based on priorities assigned to costs and benefits of meeting or ignoring needs. The allocations also take place in the context of high stakes, of intra- and inter-agency competitions for the oft-blamed shrinking slice, a bad guy that the needs assessment literature rarely fails to name.

Before leaving the Renaissance, it should also be noted that despite the frequent acknowledge-ment of "values" in the needs assessment literature, the term is most often used as a book-end, tucked into introductory prefaces and matched, after the textual silence, with its mate, "ethics," typically an add-on postscript. Since we can numerically measure and valuate social benefits, it is not surprising to see values and ethics relegated to the wings, parenthetical afterthoughts to technology.

The final Psacharopoulos era brings us to the present, marked by a shift from sole focus on national income to such notions as equity and distribution. In a transfer from descriptive to normative summary, Psacharopoulos concludes his history with a call for the re-examination

of the objectives of planning, its "ultimate challenge" stated thus: "to create flexible easily trained men to fit an ever changing world" (p. 142).

Those whose imaginations of the future include women as well as men, and those who remain nostalgically interested in the planning of an education not considered interchangeable with training, may reject the implication of "fit." But if we are willing to take Psacharoupolos as descriptive of the present state of planning, then needs assessment also finds a home today. We thus see the needs assessment arsenal now aimed at addressing the stigmata of ethnic disa-chievement[2] or of mental illness[3], ills to be healed by twentieth century equity.

In this brief comparison, then, we can see approaches to planning reflected in needs assessment: the Stone Age writ small; the Middle Ages equation of education and economy; the numerology of the Great Bubble; the Renaissant costing of social worth; and finally the harnessing of equity to current planning directions. Must we then agree with Kimmel that needs assessment is "almost anything"? Since Psacharopoulas's western history of planning has bypassed several historical phenomena--the political and industrial revolutions of the past few centuries, the wedding feast celebrating technology's marriage to European supremacist state ideology, and presumption of human futurity--such a conclusion may be premature, at least until we take a closer look at two variants of needs assessment.

Within the cyclical "planning-implementation-evaluation" process widely accepted in the educational change business, needs assessment is distinguished from evaluation on two bases (Witkin, 1984). Firstly, needs assessment is ascribed a forward-looking planning posture in contrast to summative evaluation that, like Idith, Lot's wife, "looks backward" (p. 26). Sec-ondly, needs assessment is more accessible to the planner's wider awareness of the "broad organizational context rather than just . . . the program level" (p. 26). These claims will be debated shortly.

Another and perhaps the most distinguishing feature is the needs assessment emphasis on discrepancy. According to Kaufman (1983), needs assessment is a "process for identifying gaps between What Is and What Should Be for results (Products, Outputs, Outcomes), placing the gaps in priority order for closure, and selecting the most critical gaps for closure" (p. 189). Education has thus presumably learned its special education lesson on the importance of avoiding the medical model, with all its bad press on labeling, that simply added more fuel to the smoldering accountability fire. As a corrective, the real action in needs assessment may be likened to the progressive dentist's challenge: identifying the cavities, ascertaining the worst gaps, sharing these data on decay with the patient, and using professional expertise to guide decision-making on what fillings the patient will first be billed for. And yet there remains that nagging patient suspicion that "many self or agency interests are translated into client need," and that on occasion, it is possible that "conflict of interest is flagrant" (Siirala, n.d., p. 2).

Kaufman (1977) suggests what might be considered a preliminary taxonomy of dental interven-tion, primarily differentiated according to "where" one enters the system. Using Greek letters instead of nomenclature, six types of needs assessment are identified. They vary from "alpha" policy formulation, the only type that fosters deep change through its external referent to "survival and contribution," to "zeta," an "en-route" evaluation. While "alpha" permits "no

sacred cows," the remaining five reflect the various stages we commonly associate with policy execution. The "zeta" level triggers very explicit decision-making. On the basis of the evaluative results, three options are presented: "continuing whatever is happening, modifying action or stopping it" (p. 62). At no point does the orthodontist suggest that the patient do without a mouth which is, after all, a structural necessity safely beyond the reach of deep change.

And since we are quite happy to retain our mouthdom, this observation may seem peculiar. But although Kaufman states that "almost anything may be changed and questioned" (p. 63), we must ask how deep the change may be when fostered by needs assessment. After all, from both sides of the Atlantic we are presented with mounting evidence of deep educational malaise if not crisis, and both the radical right (e.g. Sizer, 1984) and the radical left (e.g. Barton and Walker, 1984) seem to be inadvertently conspiring in an effort to "free" the compulsory student. Kaufman states that "even laws can be added, deleted, modified" as a result of needs assessment. But what kinds of laws?

The question presents itself perhaps more strikingly to a Canadian surveyor of the needs assessment literature. In glancing through the 1977 special issue of *Educational Technology* devoted to needs assessment, I was struck by the cheek-by-jowl camaraderie of education and industry, albeit not a phenomenon unknown in the chilly north, but also more particularly by the easy interchange between needs assessment for school systems and needs assessment for the military. While Canada is not notorious for its insistence on disarmament, or for its call to beat our munitions factories into ploughshares, we do not evoke the more easy familiarity between schools and armies that one notes in some USA literature. Thus such a reader pauses and wonders whether Kaufman's reference to "no sacred cows" can apply, for example, to the army's needs assessment. Would anything from "alpha" to "zeta" permit a determination that we have no "need" of armies?

Apparently not, since the authors of just such a needs assessment state:

The derivation of responsible national defense plans begins with a study of both current and future requirements. By comparing these requirements and the present capabilities, discrepancies between "what should be" and "what is" are realized (Roberts, Daubek and Johnston, 1977, p. 41).

This project uses needs assessment to ascertain training needs of the U.S. army, particularly those associated with "combat readiness" and "efficiency." Neither unwillingness to kill nor inefficiency to the point of peace was identified as a gap in desperate need of a filling that might preclude the most final of solutions. As Beer (1983) remarks, "the 'will of the people' is a function of who wants to know" (p. 801).

It would appear that Kaufman (1977) rejects Beer's premise. Thus, ends are to be separated from means, and the latter possess "no 'right' or 'wrong' modes" (1977, p. 60). In fact, means are of such primacy that they obviate concern for polity. Thus Kaufman (1985) concludes:

Technology has the knowledge and tools to increasingly make politics obsolete as an alternative to rational decision-making ... Technologists, *at least our brand*, do possess a useful alternative to politics and its let's-do-it-the-way-we-all-agree syndrome (p. 35, emphasis added).

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Syndrome? Imagine! Or if we cannot imagine, let us review a fragment of an exchange between a journalist and a planner (Lanzmann, 1985):

Lanzmann: You never saw a train?

Stier: No, never. We had so much work, I never left my desk. We worked day and night ... "Gedob" means ... "Head Office of Eastbound Traffic." In January 1940 I was assigned to Gedob Krakow. In mid-1943 I was moved to Warsaw. I was made chief traffic planner, Chief of the Planning Office ... The work was barely different from the work in Germany: preparing timetables, coordinating the movement of special trains with regular trains ... A regular train may be used by anyone who purchases a ticket ... A special train is specially put together and people pay group fares.

Lanzmann: Are there still special trains now?

Stier: Of course. Just as there were then.

Lanzmann: ... but why were there more special trains during the war than before or after?

Stier: I see what you're getting at. You're referring to the so-called re-settlement trains ... Those trains were ordered by the Ministry of Transport of the Reich. You needed an order from the Ministry.

Lanzmann: In Berlin?

Stier: Correct. And as for the implementation of those orders, the Head Office of East-bound Traffic in Berlin dealt with it.

Lanzmann: ... but mostly, at that time, who was being "resettled"?

Stier: No! We didn't know that. Only when we were fleeing from Warsaw ourselves, did we learn that they could have been Jews, or criminals, or similar people.

Lanzmann: Jews, criminals?

Stier: Criminals. All kinds.

Lanzmann: Special trains for criminals?

Stier: No that was just an expression. You couldn't talk about that. Unless you were tired of life, it was best not to mention that.

Lanzmann: But you knew that the trains to Treblinka or Aushwitz were-

Stier: Of course we knew. I was the last district. Without me these trains couldn't reach

their destination . . . .

Lanzmann: Did you know that Treblinka meant extermination?

Stier: Of course not!

Lanzmann: You didn't know?

Stier: Good God, no! How could we know? I never went to Treblinka. I stayed in Krakow, in Warsaw, glued to my desk.

Lanzmann: You were a -

Stier: I was strictly a bureaucrat!

Within the field of educational administration, Hodgkinson is one of the few voices calling for a re-assessment of our purposeful splitting of means from ends, of values from facts. He argues (1986) that such philosophical fissions have seduced our contentment with "educational leaders who are themselves neither philosophers nor schooled in philosophy but worse yet are anti-philosophical and anti-intellectual" (p. 13). But it is perhaps Greenfield's elegant argument about the field of educational administration that demarcates moral judgment from depravity. Greenfield (1986) thus warns:

Administrative Science has too often yielded to the temptation of power and desired to wield it, not just to study it. Those who stand close to sovereign powers readily find reason to assist them . . . . The new science of administration must be free to talk about the values that power serves, but free it cannot be if it is closely dependent upon the Sovereign . . . . To escape that dependency, the new science should abjure those activities that are most likely to endear it to the Sovereign-- recognizing that the Sovereign, like the Devil, can take many forms (p. 74).

This warning, I would argue, is of relevance not only to the field of educational administration, but also to the field of planning, and indeed provides elucidation about the career successes of one Walter Stier, ex-member of the Nazi party and former head of Reich Railways Department 33.

I do not claim that those who propound the utility, efficacy and efficiency of needs assessment technology are to be equated with Stiers, but I do confess to alarm when proponents of particular planning techniques uncritically celebrate the alliance of technology and rationality in the name of rendering the syndrome of politics obsolete.

How did educational planners ever reach such an impasse? According to Witkin (1977) who synthesizes the "classical" (Kaufman's) discrepancy model of needs assessment, there are four basic steps, which in summary form are as follows:

1. Determine desires, thereby generating and ranking goals.

2. Ascertain existing conditions, or the current status of each goal.

3. Identify and analyze the discrepancies between the first two steps.

4. Assign priorities to current or future (anticipated) gaps.

The four phase process is, of course, more complex than it appears, and Witkin surveys and organizes the various techniques and remarkable "fast food" kits available for schools that are loathe to develop their own mission statements. At last, the testing industry appears to have a profit rival in the field of education, as publishers apparently vie with each other to produce ready-made goal lists, consensus tricks, objectives statements and philosophical renderings. Thus if Battelle's assertion that "Desire Minus Attainment Equals Need" does not appeal, one can go further afield, perhaps to Westinghouse, with its more sophisticated equation: "Importance Multiplied By Responsibility Divided by Attainment Equals Need." While I respect refrigerators and light bulbs as much as the next planner, I must ask what have we done with our sense of humor? And where is Edmund White (1980) when we need him? Westinghouse on Need, indeed. At least the corporation had the grace to leave desire out of the equation.

Perhaps we can approach a critical reading of needs assessment if we examine the underlying assumptions of Witkin's four-step analysis. First, is the claim about desires/goals determination. Most of the techniques that fall under this heading are of the "forced choice"[4] variety. Here the assumptions are that goals equal desires, that both can be arithmetically stated, and that forced choice is not only legitimate but also preferable. Second, the existing conditions investigation is reliant upon both "soft" perception surveys and "hard" performance data with its mixture of test scores, SES data, transient rates, library holdings indices and so forth. Here the most problematic underlying assumption is the failure to explain why "hard" data are hard, or "soft" data are soft, although these conditions may be artifacts of the study of desire. Equally problematic is the assumption that discrepancies between "hard" and "soft" data can be blended into a satisfactory or meaningful average.

The actual discrepancy identification is plagued by assumptions already alluded to, but is further queried for its acceptance of instant mission (justified since schools apparently seldom make use of the few blank lines left by the kit-makers so that schools can formulate a few of their own goals), and the assumption that the formulae, standardized testing and data bases are meaningful. There is also little questioning of the "validity" of forced or "free" consensus. Indeed, as Hodgkinson (1978) reminds us, conservation "can be strongly influenced by any overriding democratic ideology although this may manifest less as an Aristotelian faith in the wisdom of the masses than as a deep-seated lack of confidence or trust in the wisdom of a single administrator." And finally, the fourth step, or assignation of priorities, is one that can be aided by various devices to assist those who dislike decision-making. An array of Delphi scenarios, market survey approaches or fault tree analyses are offered. Here there are two underlying assumptions. The first is a fundamental one, and is imbedded in systems dentistry: find those gaps and fill 'em. The second is also fundamental, in that in our acceptance of the fragmentation between means and ends, the fracturing of values and therefore also of facts, we appear to have sold our "birthright of liberty for a mess of packaged breakfast cereals, all fundamentally alike though marginally differentiated to provide the illusion of choice" (Friedenberg, 1976, p. 3).

Nor does this critique remain unechoed. In her review of Witkin's 1984 compendium on needs assessment approaches and models, Lincoln (1986) is also alarmed by the assumptions that remain obscured. Lincoln is unhesitating in lauding Witkin's volume on needs assessment as "the most complete treatment to date. The bibliography, in particular, is probably the most thoroughly assembled in print, and serves as a classic introduction to the scope and variety of sources from several disciplines and service arenas" (p. 115).

Nonetheless, Lincoln is concerned that Witkin's needs assessment

objectification bent, based on pre-suppositions of value singularity and linear causality, forces the needs assessor to . . . treat groups and individuals as monolithic in their needs, preferences and cultural implicatives. Her distrust of the ability of adults to articulate their own needs is condescending to the point of arrogance . . . . The implications of believing people are too child-like or too ignorant to know their own needs is socially and ethically repugnant (p. 116).

How does the "classical" needs assessment model, based primarily on Kaufman's and others' work in educational planning, compare to the social welfare approach? In Canada, our constitutional legacy has assigned responsibility for education and social services primarily to the provinces, although various funding agreements exist to transfer tax monies between the various levels of government. The transference has not been accompanied, as was the case until very recently in the United States, by legislated or regulated demands for needs assessments and evaluations in exchange for such monies, and Canada has not, therefore, witnessed the same two decades of industry in producing a mandatory needs assessment technology. Nonetheless, their quasi-voluntary production has occurred with guidance, in some cases, from provincial authorities on how to proceed.

The social welfare approach considered here (McKen, 1982) is one such product, developed under the aegis of Ontario's Ministry of Community and Social Services to reflect the work of the experimental Local Children's Services Committees established across the province in a nervous attempt to decentralize social service planning for children and to speak to the allocation of resources. Needs assessment was--and is--seen as an important process tool not only with reference to the "what is" and the "what should be," but also in engaging the participatory trust of the consuming community.

Witkin (1977) has defined needs assessment as "a process for ranking goals for importance and setting priorities on them for program development and attainment" (p. 6). McKen's definition differs only in its reference to social services, rather than education: "the research tool that makes it possible to identify and prioritize the needs of a community" (p. 1), ultimately contributing to allocative decisions. She too identifies discrete steps for conducting a needs assessment, developed from a retrospective review of how Ontario's Local Children's Services Committees had proceeded with this component of their mandate:

1. Develop a needs framework, a classification system appropriate for the capture of information relevant to the problems-needs-services spectrum.

2. Collect data from multiple sources.

3. Aggregate, quantify and rank the needs in accord with community priority.

4. Conduct ongoing validation, attending to commonalities and disparities.

5. Allocate funds as part of an integrated strategy reflecting principles of service.

6. Ensure the regular updating of needs, and the "community's"[5] capability to meet those needs.

While education has been weaned from public adherence to the medical model, social work has suffered no such fate, with the exception of temporarily radical excursions in the early to mid 1970s, notably in several university-based professional schools in Canada, and leaving its mark on isolated practitioners marooned in mainline agencies, or on small groups of social policy folk intrepidly staffing the advocacy networks. There is, therefore, little apologia for the pathology assumptions imbedded in McKen's approach. It is here that we encounter what the dentistry model only implies: them gaps not only gape, but cry out for treatment. The new-fangled remedy conscripts the consumer into self-diagnosis and responsibility for cure, but pathology is pathology and the medical model knows sick when it sees it.

Thus the explicit assumption emerging from McKen's analysis is that people have problems that create needs for service. The implicit assumption, that systems solve but do not generate human need, remains unstated. Like Everyarmy, the curative social services network is here to stay.

Other assumptions flow from the quantifiable study of need born of pathology. One of the reasons prompting a recommendation to look to multiple data sources is the careful analysis of the problems inherent in the various data sources available for social policy analysis. McKen warns, for example, that tapping the knowledge of service providers and "key informants" smacks of elitism and paternalism, and service loyalty or identifiable bias interferes with the development of a generic framework for assessing need. On the other hand, investigating current and potential client need also has its hazards. Case counts may not be accurate, waiting lists are notorious for under- and over-estimates, and client response may be hindered by reluctance to request or speak about services associated with stigma or even by ignorance that relevant services exist and can be waited for.

McKen provides a respectable itemization of these and other "data" problems, a factor wanting in much of the education needs assessment literature. However, the proffered solution, multiple source data, can lead to the assumption that a great deal of problematic information is better than a little. The potential compounding of quantified error does not offer a convincing case for social welfare needs assessment, although it is admittedly tempered by emphasis on continual double-checking, thought about discrepant data[6], and attention to currency of data, again not always apparent in the cumbersome education studies.

The data collection methods summarized by McKen are based on a typology of need[7], divided into four categories. "Normative" need, defined by "experts or professionals . . . requires the setting of desirable standards which, if unmet, indicate that an individual is in need" (p. 2). "Felt" need is the equivalent of a "want," and is the "an individual's *subjective* assessment of

his [sic] own requirements" (p. 3, emphasis added). Here it is wise to pause long enough to consider Siirala's (n.d.) observation:

> The participants in that need system (usually rather quickly) assume roles on either side of the recipient/provider equation. The recipient assumes the role of being the problem, being in need and the provider of being the solution to the problem, a resolution of the need of the recipient.
>
> This constellation of relationships has lead to the development of an entire "profession" of helpers and a "subculture" of the needy. This role juxtaposition tends to influence the perceptions of needs and the processes of problem solving greatly if not irrevocably (p. 2).

We are thus reminded that McKen appears to assume that if the need owner's assessment is "subjective," by contrast, the expert's is "objective," and that these terms have come to assume particular and powerful connotations.

But to return to McKen's typology, the third component is the translation of want, called "expressed" need, or more simply a "service demand" (p. 3) thus made comprehensible to intake workers who guard the gates of social service agencies. And fourth, "comparative" need is defined by the assumption that "if people with certain characteristics are receiving a service, and others with similar characteristics are not, the latter are in need" (p. 3), a statement with notable implications if it were to be applied on an international basis.

McKen's typology is not markedly different from Witkin's 1984 review of needs classification[8], premised upon Witkin's claim that "need assessment involves a partnership among three groups-- service providers, service receivers and stakeholders." (p. 3) The partners are differentiated, despite Witkin's emphasis on "the centrality of obtaining community consensus on goals and needs" (p. 1), on the basis of who does the doing, and who gets done. The receivers, or "beneficiaries," are those "whose needs are being assessed," unlike the providers "who offer services . . . or sponsor the needs assessment" (p. 3). Stakeholders are a slightly different kettle of fish, simply defined as "all other people, agencies . . . or organizations having an interest in the assessment and in those whose needs are being assessed" (p. 4).[9]

It is Willis, in a 1981 Appendix to *Learning to Labour*, who remarks that ethnography is "patronising and condescending--is it possible to imagine the ethnographic account upwards in a class society?" (p. 194) In a like fashion, it is important to acknowledge the condescension imbedded in the needs study literature. Is it possible to imagine a surfeit assessment? Perhaps just such a research implement might be well adapted for use on those whose expertise and professional status grants immunity from such irrationalities as need or desire.

In the example that Witkin provides to explicate the provider-receiver-stakeholder trinity, there is no rationale offered for the relegation of students to receiver status, in apparent but unexplained removal from stakeholder status, although other writers have traced such explanations admirably (e.g. McLaren, 1985). Perhaps we can find a clue hinting at the distinction between receiver and stakeholder in her later remark: "Degree of control over the target groups and

responsibility for meeting their needs differ greatly" (p. 30) in different contexts. And this clue is given further weight in another passage, wherein Witkin separates the boys from the men. She supports the distinction[10] between the "owner" of a (motivational) need, and the "authority" on (prescriptive) need. While the owner's "integrity is respected" in unspecified ways, it is the practitioner who "can then determine who are the owners and who are the authorities on need for any major goal domain or continuum" (p. 10). Her claim is analogous to the social welfare model's, with its assumption that the mystery of want requires transmutation into service system terminology before the need authorities can act upon the need's owner.

At approximately the same time that Witkin's recent (1984) overview of needs assessment was published, a different voice, that of pop culture, also pronounced on educational need. Immersed as we were in our education and social services needs study technologies, we became deaf to the import of what our walkman-sporting and ghetto-blasting children were singing on their way to school. While punk rock video[11] on the proverbial youth alienation supplied visual images of cruel and old-fashioned headmasters, canes in hand, overseeing the shuffling of schoolchildren through a surrealistic maze of grinding gears, a sweet voiced children's chorus repeated:

> We don't need no ejikayshun. We don't need no thought control. No dark sar-
> casm in the classroom. Teachers leave us kids alone.

Children-- not the video variety, but the ones we know--sang the song on the way to school, they knew of the song even if they had "illegally exited"[12] from schooling, they hummed it slouching recalcitrant in the helpers' waiting rooms, but we did not notice.

Friedenberg (1976) develops the notion of "the conscript clientele" as "persons to whom goods, services and hardware, if any are involved, are delivered; those on whom the praxis gets practiced, whatever its theoretical justification may be" (p. 9). In a wide-reaching discussion that considers the Indochinese client receiving bombs, the usually Black (in Canada add Native) and usually poor client of the justice system, the female and/or old recipient of the state welfare's largesse, those handicapped by age, physical marrings or craziness who must become the clients of partial and total institutions, Friedenberg illustrates the gestalt of conscription and of conscripts, "whose last vestige of dignity is lost . . . when he [sic] becomes defined as a passive member of a reified clientele" (p. 4). It is surely no accident that the very concept of client was developed by imperial Rome.

How can conscription and its attendant stripping away of dignity occur, when education's needs assessment process attends so carefully to its triptych of provider-receiver-stakeholder, when the social welfare model of needs assessment appears firmly ensconced in its newly found consumerism? The first hint of problem is located in the very different languages we speak, a towering Babel that divides feeling from expression, expression from hearing, need owner from need authority, fact from value, technocracy from human voice. It is the needs assessment planner-cum-evaluator who foretells that "There will be no significant difference between those legally exiting from the education system on the above indicators which are attributable to color, race, creed, sex, religion, or national origin at or beyond the .05 level of confidence."[13] It is the pop-cult needs assessor who responds, "We don't need no ejikayshun." It is pop

culture's need owner who insists, "I need a steam shovel, mamma, to keep away the dead."[14] It is social welfare who answers primly that "the designation of a need as a priority does not necessarily guarantee that a service will be provided" (McKen, p. 1).

If you can't get that steam shovel, what can you get? Perhaps an explanation, one that is lodged beneath systems ideology. Psacharopoulos is not the only planner to skip the impact of modern revolution, or to end an article with today's planning script, forfeiting the future. The systems model itself rests upon a religious faith in One Reality, and in fact "classic" needs assessment authors have penned an article unflinchingly entitled: "Needs Assessment and Reality, An Arriving Trend" (Kaufman and Stekanas, 1979). The title is striking. Is it needs assessment or reality that is about to arrive? And if the latter, then whose? And what will happen when the trend dissipates, as trends must? In the literature's separation of means from ends, argued in reductionist terms that insist on the quantification of desire, in the pernicious demarcation of owner and authority of need, and in a belief that reified system is cure, not cause, we relinquish, not create, our ability to plan.

The children are wrong: they do need education. But the children are also right. In our failure to plan for education, to consider the assumptions of systems belief, technology supplants human value, technocracy overshadows ethics, and the school teaches that need is the product of an equation sullying both desire and attainment. Needs assessment is not "almost anything," but rather the insistence on a basal, banal and uni-vocal monotone reality. The children need more than system's banal reality, a lesson we may well heed in our reflections about needs assessment, our conscript clientele, and a song's repudiation of education as system. If we fail to consider the song and our role in promoting its lyrics, we need not be surprised to learn about the adults who continue to staff Department 33.

NOTES

1. W.A. Kimmel. Needs assessment: A critical perspective. Washington, D.C.: Offices of Program Systems and of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1977, p. 8. Cited in Witkin (1984), pp. 14-15.

2. R. Kaufman and F. W. English. Needs assessment: Concept and application. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Educational Technology Publications, 1977, p. 195. Cited in Witkin (1984), pp 39-40.

3. K. D. Tucker. *A Model for Community Needs Assessment*. Report to the Central Florida Community Colleges' Consortium. Gainesville: Institute of Higher Education, University of Florida, 1974. Cited in Witkin, (1984). pp. 47-51.

4. See, for example, Witkin's (1984) discussion of the Native Hawaiian Educational Assessment Project, pp. 51-53.

5. For example, Witkin (1984) describes the Community Oriented Needs Assessment Project, a joint venture between a mental health agency and a university, and its focus on consumer participation, pp. 53-54.

6. With apologies to the author and publisher of the example below, taken from sources unknown, the illustration demonstrates one type of "forced choice" technique:

The author is reminded of the cartoon where cars traveling along an expressway are welcomed to the tri-city area and face forced choice options, defined by overhead destination signs, which direct them to: duplicity, mendacity, and atrocity.

7. Ontario initially promised to grant decentralized allocative power to the quasi-autonomous Local Children's Services Committees, but shortly after they were formed, the promise for this function was withdrawn by the Minister for Community and Social Services (1982). The ability of the community to determine its budgetary capability, as one of the tasks recommended by McKen, was therefore rendered gratuitous.

6. Closer reading of several reports produced in the course of conducting a social policy needs assessment by one o8 Ontario's Local Children's Services Committees demonstrates the chasms separating professional perspectives from "consumer" response. The service providers, divided into sector panels representing such groups as Corrections, Mental Health, Child Welfare and so forth frequently used social pathology language to identify need. The responding families who used such services were, however, noticeably lacking when it came to such terms as "disorganized family," "poor home management," "at-risk populations" and so forth. Instead, such phrases as "stability of providers over time," "the competence and willingness of the provider to complete certain tasks," and "the kind of support (or lack of it), especially emotional support from providers and others" appeared to be the consumer benchmarks within the needs assessment. It should be pointed out that such an observation was possible to make by virtue of the construct of this particular assessment process, one that was not ruled by a monolithic aggregation nor by spurious averaging techniques (Elson, 1982).

9. McKen acknowledges J. Bradshaw ("The concept of social need," *New Society*, March 1972) as her source on need typology.

10. Witkin (1984) lists the assorted adjective-generating typologies that permeate the discussions of "need":

. . . needs are described as basic, felt, expressed, normative, comparative, real educational, symptomatic, universal, integrative, goal discrepancy, social discrepancy, wants or desire discrepancy, and expectancy discrepancy, among others (p. 9).

11. The facile reliance of the stakeholding concept is widespread but problematic. Ackoff (1981), for example, defines the term thus:

Stakeholders are all those inside or outside an organization who are directly affected by what it does. Therefore, they include all those whom managers should take into account (p. 30).

Ackoff's accompanying diagram specifies the prototypical stakeholders as consumer (markets), government, investors and lenders, suppliers, employees (including management) and debtors, all positioned equidistantly from each other, and from the hub of the stakeholding wheel. The centre is, of course, the corporation itself.

But where, one is forced to ask, are all those excluded from the corporate world, those with no systems connection via business, law, employment or consumerism? Presumably the systems analyst argues that the excludees have no corporate connection and therefore need not be represented. But this is a spurious justification of current power distributions, one that insists that those too poor to consume, or those too marginal to gain access to power shall remain poor and marginal.

12. The owner/authority distinction was originally developed in P.T. Beatty's "The concept of need: Proposal for a working definition," *Journal of the Community Development Society, 12*(2), 1981, pp. 39-46. Cited in Witkin (1984), p. 10. For further elaboration on need constructs see Pinker (1971), especially Chapter 3, and Rein (1976).

13. Pink Floyd's *The Wall*, MGM/Bob Geldof, 1982. Lyrics by Roger Waters. New York: Avon, 1982.

14. Kaufman repeatedly devotes his attention to measuring educational outcomes from a population consisting of school graduates and those who have "legally exited" from schooling.

15. R. Kaufman and F. W. English. Needs Assessment: Concepts and Application. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Educational Technology Publications, 1977. Cited in Witkin (1984), p. 2.

16. From Bob Dylan's *Highway 61 Revisited*, an album that records another owner/authority needs typology: "Well, I know what I want, but my debutante, she knows what I need."

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