

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE DYNAMICS OF THE NATIONAL
CURRICULUM GEOGRAPHY WORKING GROUP (1989-1990)**

by

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Abstract

An investigation into the dynamics of the National Curriculum Geography Working Group from its establishment in May 1989 until June 1990 when it was disbanded.

The thesis is primarily concerned with the ways in which the Geography Working Group approached its task of devising a National Curriculum for geography. As such it explores the terms of reference and supplementary guidance given to the Group, the working relationships established both within and beyond the immediate membership of the Group, and their visualisation of the task before them.

Inevitably the focus is widened to set the context for the work of the Group. The place of geography as a school subject this century is examined, as well as events immediately following the creation of the Geography National Curriculum by the Group.

Consideration is given to the composition and functioning of the Group, the production of an Interim Report (DES 1989) and Final Report (DES 1990) for geography, and the resultant implementation problems caused by the politically altered Statutory Orders (1991), over which the Group had no influence or control.

The thesis ends with an analysis of the possible futures for geographical education within state schools in the context of recent developments within academic geography.

Synopsis.

This thesis investigates the creation of the Geography National Curriculum for England and Wales between May 1989, the time of the establishment of the Geography Working Group, and June 1990 when the Group disbanded after the publication of its Final Report (DES 1990).

Its primary focus is to consider the dynamics of how the Geography Working Group functioned - how it visualised its task, the effects of its terms of reference and supplementary guidance, the internal and external working relationships of the Group, and the influence of the DES, Education Ministers and the Secretary of State for Education. However, this focus is widened to include an essential examination of the events immediately prior to the convening of the Group, which partly set an agenda for its work, and those after its disbandment such as the Dearing Review (1994).

Consideration is initially given to the development of geography as a school subject since 1885, and the parallel creation of curriculum policy for approximately the same period. This provides a context to the Geography Working Group's approach to its task of devising the Geography National Curriculum. The establishment of a 'deficit model' of geography in schools is seen, as well as the de-coupling of school and university geography, and the influence on the curriculum of the centralising tendency of Conservative policy makers in the 1980s and 1990s.

Full consideration is given to the composition and functioning of the Geography Working Group with much original research data gathered from interviews with Group members. These greatly enhance the individual accounts of the work of the Group already published by some members. The stages through which the Geography Working Group passed from the production of its Interim Report (DES 1989a), to the eventual publication of its Final Report (DES 1990a) are analysed, as are the resultant implementation problems created by the form and content of the politically altered Statutory Orders, over which the Group had no influence or control.

The thesis ends with a review of how the Group worked in relation to established theories of group working and leadership, and a projection into the continuity and change that may in future occur within school geography.

A full account of the research methodology applied is given in Chapter 3.

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Special mention should also be made of the Geography Working Group members, the majority of whom gave freely of their time in agreeing to be interviewed about their part in the creation of the Geography National Curriculum.

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Chapter 1.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF GEOGRAPHY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS 1885-1989

'What is taught in the schools, in a sense, codifies our accepted knowledge and, in a large degree, the teacher is thus the custodian of the truth'

D.R.Stoddart (1988 p.58).

The teaching of geography in schools, like the teaching of all other subjects, has traditionally been influenced by a wide variety of factors. The prevailing philosophies of education, the existing paradigm of geography in higher education, the economic climate, and the political complexion of the government of the day are arguably the major variables at any given time. This chapter will seek to introduce developments within geography in secondary schools in England and Wales since 1885 in the context of the above, as a precursor to an analysis of the creation of the Geography National Curriculum (GNC). An appreciation of the changes in geographical thought, curricula and teaching are essential to an understanding of the educational significance of the GNC devised by the Geography Working Group (GWG).

In their commentaries on the development of geography as an academic subject both Gregory (1978) and Goodson (1983) highlight the primary concern of geographers as being their subject's survival, rather than its intellectual progression, during much of this century.

Gregory (1978) cites both Smith (1973) and Harvey (1973) who go so far as to state that this desire for survival has often necessitated an abandonment of principle and 'a degree of pragmatism.... (which) was uncomfortably close to opportunity' (Smith quoted in Harvey 1973 p. 325). This pragmatism clearly sits somewhat uneasily with the need for any subject to achieve intellectual respectability and to prove its academic merit.

At the beginning of the 20th century geography was still a comparatively 'youthful' school subject, most elementary schools having introduced it into the curriculum around 1870. Grammar schools followed this trend at the turn of the century, although it is interesting to note that within higher education geography had not yet established a secure foothold. The first university School of Geography was created only in 1900 at Oxford, and the lowly status of geography in many schools was sometimes blamed upon the subject's absence from higher education at this time (Graves 1975). This continuing link between university and school geography is an important one which will be referred to subsequently within this thesis (see Chapters 5 and 8).

There is much evidence that standards of geographical education in schools at this time were less than impressive. Such criticism prompted the Royal Geographical Society to commission Dr. John Scott Keltie to investigate the aims and rationale of geography teaching in schools in the early 1880s. His report (in 1886) stated that until a system for training geography teachers was introduced the future for the subject in schools was bleak, and that head teachers of 'public schools' believed that their pupils would not improve their chances of gaining access to higher education through studying geography.

The Geographical Association, founded in 1893 at Christchurch College, Oxford, was also concerned about the nature of geographical education in schools. The very first issue of its journal 'The Geographical Teacher' (published in October 1901) highlighted the uninteresting form of geography learnt by children in schools and criticised teaching styles which relied largely on rote memorisation of facts. Rooper (1901), an HMI, stated in the journal that the

geography lessons often became 'a dreary recitation of names and statistics, of no interest to the learner, and of little use' (p.4); whilst Bird (1901) noted that the masters who taught geography generally had 'no special interest in it and had no special knowledge of it, or of the methods of teaching it' (p.10).

Despite this concurrence of opinion about the poor quality of geography education the Bryce Commission (1895) recognised geography as an important secondary school subject in a report which helped define the shape of the secondary curriculum and later influenced the 1902 Education Act. The subsequent 1904 secondary regulations, which listed the subjects to be included in school timetables, featured geography as a separate discipline, thus establishing its curriculum position amongst other examination subjects (Goodson 1983). Even so, as school curricula expanded geography, like other new subjects, had problems in securing adequate timetable space.

Interestingly contemporary writers have focused particular attention on the congruence between the 1904 school curriculum and that of the National Curriculum introduced following the passing of the Education Reform Act in 1988. Parallels have similarly been drawn with respect to the GNC and the geography curriculum introduced into schools in the early 1900s.

Mackinder, Herbertson and the development of Geography.

The development of geography in schools and universities owed much to a small number of influential individuals at the turn of the century (Boardman and MacPartland 1993a). Halford Mackinder, who had been appointed reader in geography at Oxford in 1887 after the Royal

Geographical Society had been successful in persuading the university to establish the post, certainly played a significant role. He decried geography's perceived role of merely accumulating facts - a process of limited educational value - simply being a 'burden to be borne by the memory. It is like throwing another pebble onto a heap of gravel' (Mackinder 1887 p.144). Mackinder believed that geography was a bridging subject for the sciences and humanities and used a regional framework to explore and promote his ideas. As he reflected in later life, geography at the turn of the century was still a subject searching for a unifying sense of enquiry and purpose: 'our aim was to put the answer to the question 'where' in the foreground, and then to answer the question 'how' in the form of 'why there?'' (Mackinder 1938 p.178). Many would argue that the search is still not concluded (Johnston 1986, Jackson 1993, Driver 1994, Bale 1996a, Edwards 1996, Haggett 1996).

Mackinder realised that to improve the standards of geography teaching in schools geography teachers would have to be trained in universities. His strategies for promoting the subject, outlined at the British Association in 1903, noted the importance of getting universities to establish Schools of Geography, of encouraging secondary schools to place the teaching of geography in the hands of trained geographers, and of using progressive teaching methods. He also believed that examination papers should be set by practising geography teachers to ensure their reliability and validity.

Herbertson succeeded Mackinder as director of the School of Geography in Oxford in 1905. His paper on the division of the world into major natural regions (Herbertson 1905) was to have a profound influence on geography education at all academic levels. The concept of the natural (in fact climatic) region was included in a series of school textbooks written by

Herbertson and his wife and became the major conceptual focus for geography education in schools at the time. Human responses to the environment were studied within the context of natural regions and Herbertson felt that by studying some 15 to 20 different types of regions the main features of most of the world could be covered by children (Herbertson 1905).

The regional approach began the move away from studying 'capes and bays' to a rather more analytical form of geography education. As Biddle (1985) states 'both Mackinder and Herbertson were convinced that geography had to be changed from uncritical description and memorisation of facts to a discipline that emphasised analytical methods' (p.13), an established principle with which the GNC seemed curiously out of step some eighty years later (Butt 1992).

The development of Geography courses within Universities.

After the First World War Mackinder's desire for university geography courses to increase in number such that geographers 'could be made' began to come to fruition. Degree courses in Geography were established at London, and then Liverpool, University spreading to other universities in the 1920s and 30s (Fleure 1953). However as Goodson (1983) states the growth of geography courses in universities was 'severely limited due to the fierce opposition of other subject groups' (p.64).

Garnett (1969) ascribes the difficulties faced by emergent geography departments to the fact that the new geographers in universities were largely idiosyncratic entrepreneurs who adopted different styles and promoted different content for the subject they taught. Honeybone (1954)

concur, and in addition states that progress in establishing geography courses in the 1920s was slow because fieldwork, large scale maps and research facilities for geographers were almost non-existent. Even Cambridge University, which was then in the unrivalled position of producing half the geography chair holders in British universities, did not actually examine geography courses at degree level until 1920. Geography did not fit easily into the examination systems in the Faculties of Arts or Sciences and therefore a niche for the subject was not clearly established.

Geography in schools in the inter war years.

By 1919 the Geographical Association was confident that the aims and objectives of geography were clear and it proceeded to issue a manifesto on the subject which, it claimed, 'met with practically universal acceptance'. This stated that:

'the mind of the citizen must have a topographical background if he (sic) is to keep order in the mass of information which he accumulates in the course of his life, and in these days the background must extend over the whole world' (p.1).

The basis for geography education in schools and universities was being outlined for the first time.

Graves (1975) contends that the 'growth of geography teaching in the twentieth century in the schools of England and Wales was little short of spectacular' (p.55). The impediment created by a lack of trained geography specialists to teach in schools was being overcome and more schools were establishing geography as a separate subject on their timetables. Certain geography methods lecturers were also becoming influential; such as Archer who co-wrote

'The Teaching of Geography in Elementary Schools' (1910), and Fairgrieve, whose 'Geography in Schools' (1926) became the most influential geography methods book of the period.

Regional geography, which found favour amongst both teachers and administrators in schools, was establishing itself as the accepted paradigm being straightforward to teach and cheap to resource (Butt 1992). Herbertson's influence on the structure of what was taught in British schools should not be underestimated, for as Graves (1975) states his impact 'was enormous and has since been unsurpassed' (p.28). The regional concept was soon adopted by other textbook writers such as Stamp (1927), Stenbridge (1927), Brooks and Barker (1930), Thurston (1930), and Pickles (1932), as well as by those concerned with geography methods work (Barnard 1933).

Secondary schools continued to teach and examine geography as a discrete subject on an increasing scale. The Hadow Report (1926) noted that learning geography now required an attitude of mind and a mode of thought rather than an ability to engage solely in rote factual learning. The report stated mainly utilitarian and vocational aims for the subject's inclusion in school curricula (travel, correspondence, and influence of the British empire) but also recognised the need to excite the interest of pupils with stimulating and rewarding teaching methods.

By the late 1920s geography had become an expanding secondary school subject although the 'capes and bays' approach used in the previous century still existed in some schools. By the 1930s the regional approach had taken a firm hold in schools.

The regional framework was adopted by most school textbooks and the approach was therefore reflected in the majority of geography courses devised by teachers, but 'tended to be handed down to pupils as though it were a kind of geographical gospel, to be absorbed but not questioned' (Graves 1975 p.31). Textbooks usually followed a set formula of addressing relief, structure, climate and vegetation within a region; and then focusing on agriculture, industry, settlement and communications. There were many inherent dangers in this approach - it not only implied a crude and simplistic method of interpreting unique and different places, but also lent itself to an extension of environmental determinism where the physical geography of an area was largely seen to determine human responses. This, by extension, developed into a tendency for pupils to be handed deterministic explanations for the superiority of the British nation and its culture.

There was, however, a developing concern related to the whole paradigm of regional geography that had been adopted by schools. As Biddle (1985) states:

'a further problem created by teachers who lacked qualifications in geography and geographical education, was that pupils changed from memorising the names of capes, bays, rivers and towns, to memorising facts and figures about each of the elements of the environment for as many regions as the teacher could cover in the time available' (p.15).

An approach to geography that had in its initial phase begun to develop thinking skills, rather than rote memorisation, had reverted to more limiting criteria for indicating geographical ability. Years earlier Fairgrieve (1936) had been of a similar mind:

'All of these regions and maps are the most amazing examples of adult systematising, and we present them gaily to immature children to be memorised, quite oblivious of the fact that what

they memorised, though it be expressed in pretty and neat diagrams, can mean mighty little of geography' (p.13).

The period of the Second World War marked a time of major change for education in schools. In 1943 the Norwood Report stated 'that geography is an essential part of education whatever forms education may take, and that there can be no question of dropping it in any considered course of study' (p.26). The report also highlighted some of geography's shortcomings, notably that other subjects also adopted a 'man and environment' approach which could not be claimed by geographers alone as being uniquely 'geographical'. Criticism of geography's 'expansiveness' and the fact that it could 'widen its boundaries so vaguely that definition of purpose is lost' (p.27) was noted. Similarly Honeybone (1954) argued that in the 1930's geography had expanded itself to become more like a 'world citizenship' (p.93) subject, but detached itself from the physical environment. He claimed that by 1939 geography had become 'out of balance' and that the 'unique educational value of the subject (was) lost in a flurry of social and economic generalisations' (Honeybone 1954 p.93). Interestingly each of these criticisms would arise again during the life of the GWG.

It is significant that the nature of geographical education in schools in the first half of this century should be so frequently referred to in contemporary accounts of the structure and content of the GNC (see for example Daugherty 1990, Tidswell 1990, Butt 1992). Such references are often critical of a 'backwards' step towards a form of geography that was rightly criticised, and changed, because of its intellectual and educational weaknesses.

Post World War 2.

The period after 1945 was crucial to geography's acceptance and consolidation within universities and schools (Boardman and MacPartland 1993b). It was only at this stage that geography departments in higher education were directed by geographers who had themselves trained in the discipline. Honeybone (1954) commented that the reputation of geography graduates was improving and that increasingly 'geographers are welcomed into commerce, industries and the professions, because they are well educated men and women' (p.96). The apparently secure place of geography in universities helped its acceptance in schools as a subject worthy of the most able pupils, although many examples exist in the 1950s of its use as an option for the less able. Indeed as late as 1976 the then GA president noted that in some public schools geography was still regarded as 'an inferior academic subject'. The inadequacies of school geography became more apparent during this post war period; a factor cited for the division of the GA which predominantly became the forum of school geographers, whilst the newly formed Institute for British Geographers (IBG) becoming the forum of university geographers.

The 1950's saw the introduction of comprehensivisation, a movement that gathered pace in the 1960s following the publication of Circular 10/65 which stated that it would be national policy to adopt comprehensive secondary schooling. These changes had a profound effect on the geography taught in schools. The regional framework for studying geography in the 1960's was most strongly supported by the grammar schools, but was subject to question in some of the new comprehensives. Regional geography still served convenient educational purposes - it was readily understood by teachers and pupils, could be redefined at a variety of scales from

local to global and taught at varying levels of academic sophistication. The main drawback of the approach was that it created a rigid conceptual framework and a stereotypical mechanism for gathering and displaying geographical information. Textbooks continued to reflect and maintain the regional approach. Preece and Wood's (1938) publication 'The Foundations of Geography' was still being used widely in schools and remained in print until the late 1980's, whilst the more able pupil was served by Honeybone's (1956) 'Geography for Schools' series.

Geography survived increasingly frequent attempts for its replacement by Social Studies courses in the 1950s and 1960s due largely to resistance from the GA. There had been a rise in the emphasis, particularly within secondary modern and comprehensive schools, on education for democracy and citizenship. To this end a combination of history, geography and civics in non selective schools became the focus for what were increasingly called Social Studies, or later Humanities, courses. Many geographers did not like this erosion of their subject's position and the Royal Geographical Society and Geographical Association reacted by publicly rejecting the rise of Social Studies (RGS pamphlet 1950, GA article by Scarfe 1950).

Professor Wooldridge (1949), at this time one of the most influential geographers in the UK, also attacked the rise of Social Studies and the limited teaching of physical geography in secondary schools. As Burston (1962) stated most geographers and historians had no wish to lose their identity as subject specialists, a factor reiterated both by politicians and most members of the GWG in the creation of the GNC thirty years later (see Chapter 5).

Case Studies.

The adoption of case study materials in the teaching of geography in the 1960s helped to replace the regional approach with one which gave teachers more flexibility and choice. Case studies could now be carefully selected to illustrate set geographical principles, concepts and ideas, reflecting sound educational principles such as starting from the 'particular' and progressing to the 'general'. One of the first textbook series to adopt a case studies approach suited to a wide ability range was Fairgrieve and Young's 'Real Geography' (1939), although its contemporary impact can be dated from 1967 when Rushby, Bell and Dybeck published 'Study Geography', a textbook which contained solely case study material.

The use of case studies in geography teaching by many non selective schools helped to dismantle regional geography. Its replacement of large area studies with those based on specific locations was a bonus, but these could lead to a rather too detailed, specific, and idiographic focus to children's work. There was also a danger that case studies could be overused and become quickly dated.

Meanwhile changes to the examination system forced revisions of existing geography curricula. In 1950 the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate were replaced by the General Certificate of Education at Ordinary and Advanced level. The secondary modern schools now offered 'O' levels to their ablest pupils, as well as vocational qualifications such as RSA and London Chamber of Commerce. In 1965 the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) was introduced to assess children considered to be below 'O' level standard, although it was not suited to children of the lowest ability. Teachers now had much greater control in the setting,

marking, and moderating of geography examination courses. Examination papers included data response and structured questions, whilst coursework was set and assessed by teachers.

Geography had become a popular subject in secondary schools by the mid 1960s. Most children still studied regional geography with a heavy bias towards human, rather than physical, themes. In the grammar and independent schools geomorphology was considered appropriate for more able pupils; in less narrowly 'academic' schools concentric syllabus were often favoured (Briault and Shave 1960). Both fieldwork and the use of audio visual aids were considered important at this stage (Graves 1968, Hogan 1962). However, as Graves (1975) noted, geography in many secondary schools still created a 'burden on the memory rather than a light in the mind' (p.58), an echo of Mackinder's statement in 1887.

1965 onwards -'The crisis in geographical education in Britain' (Graves 1975 p.61)

Three major factors influenced geographical education from the mid 1960s in Britain: developments within academic geography itself, advances in educational theory, and changes to the structure of secondary schooling. The 1960s and 70s were, however, a period when confusion existed about the philosophy and direction of geographical education. No clear consensus about the nature of geography as a subject was apparent either in schools or universities at this time, which created inevitable dangers for its study and continued growth within both sectors.

In the early 1960s a paradigm shift occurred within geographical thought in higher education establishments in Britain. This was largely the result of the dissemination of work of certain

geographers in the United States and Sweden (chiefly from Chicago and Lund Universities respectively). The traditional, hitherto accepted, view of geography as the 'explanatory description of landscapes' (Graves 1975 p.61) was placed under enormous pressure to change. The use of theoretical models, quantitative techniques, conceptual frameworks and spatial analysis began to concentrate the study of geography away from the unique (as typified by the regional concept) towards the generalisable. Geographers were now being asked to abandon the subjective and descriptive regional geography paradigm and adopt the roles of analytical, objective scientists. This 'new' geography sought to create laws and theories, and examine patterns and processes, rather than merely produce descriptions of uniqueness. A major question naturally arose concerning how much of this pioneering work being undertaken in university geography departments should (or could) be transferred into schools.

By the late 1960s some of the ideas and methodologies of this 'conceptual revolution', had begun to filter down into schools by a variety of different routes. Many teachers were naturally resistant to change, having themselves successfully learned, and subsequently taught, within the regional paradigm. Many saw 'reality' being removed from geography by ambitious young geographers who had little respect for the 'traditions' of the subject. The impacts were dramatic (see Newby 1980, Robinson 1981), especially since the drive towards introducing new quantitative methods and theories within schools was also combined with increasing comprehensivisation, the growth of integrated curricula, greater concept based learning and the influence of curriculum development projects such as the American High School Geography Project (HSGP) (see Appendix 1).

Geography teachers had become aware of the changes that were happening in university geography departments largely through publications emerging from conferences held at Madingley Hall in Cambridge in 1965, and Charney Manor in 1970. The Madingley conferences were organised by Richard Chorley and Peter Haggett, two university based geographers, whose publication of edited conference papers titled 'Frontiers in Geographical Teaching' (Chorley and Haggett 1965) was highly influential in disseminating the 'new' geography. An indication of the importance of these conferences is witnessed by the fact that they still have an impact on contemporary thought (see Rawling and Daugherty 1996a).

Chorley and Haggett (1967) declared that they thought it was 'better that geography should explode in an excess of reform than bask in the watery sunset of its former glories' (p.377). A further result of these conferences was the publication of 'Models in Geography' (1967), a work that both excited and confused its readership in almost equal proportions! Walford (1973a) noted that such outcomes from the Madingley conferences were not universally accepted by teachers, even though Wrigley (1965) had commented that regional geography was now a concept overtaken by the course of historical change. This wide division of opinion amongst geographers created by the emerging conceptual revolution is illustrated well by Goodson (1983). He cites Slaymaker's (1970) supportive review of 'Frontiers in Geographical Teaching' in which the reviewer states that 'a turning point in the development of geographical methodology in Britain' (p.75) has been reached; whilst by contrast the anonymous P.R.C's review of Chorley and Haggett's (1967) offering from the second Madingley conference refers to the book as being written by the authors 'for one another' and containing 'barbarous and repulsive jargon' (p.423)!

A tension was apparent between those university based academics who were pushing back the frontiers of the discipline, and geography teachers in schools for whom there appeared a real danger that the 'core' of geography was being fragmented. Emergent specialisms within university geography departments began to threaten the destruction of the entire discipline and fears about the 'expansiveness' of geography first expressed in the 1930s began to resurface. Both of these factors influenced the development of geography, and the form of the GNC, thirty years later (see Chapters 5 and 8). There were criticisms that the new geography lacked relevance, that oversimplified models were facile and stereotypical reflections of the real world, and that new forms of determinism were replacing the increasingly discredited regional paradigm. The lack of central purpose required to bind geography together as a coherent discipline became apparent and Fisher (1970) commented that geography was now in danger of 'over-extending its periphery at the expense of its base' (p.374), a claim which has subsequently re-emerged on frequent occasions since (see Johnston 1985a, 1986, 1991). Garnett (1969) had already recognised the problem, as witnessed by her statement one year earlier that 'sooner or later the question must arise as to how much longer the subject can be effectively held together!' (p.388). However, Bailey (1992) reflects upon these changes positively:

'The reforms in academic and school geography began in the mid 1960s and which have continued ever since enable modern geography to make distinctive and substantial contributions to the education of young people, which it certainly could not have made in its unreformed state' (p.65).

The regional approach was under enormous pressure, but despite this a number of geographers were resistant to the new ideas emerging from universities; Long and Roberson (1966) for example 'nailed (their) flag to the regional mast', whilst Graves (1975) perceived that the

regional approach was not necessarily irrelevant having had problems of definition rather than content. He argued that the functional region was still an important organisation concept and that the formal region was useful in classifying areas. The DES publication 'New Thinking in School Geography' (DES 1972) tended to support this view, but heavily criticised regional geography for its overemphasis on the uniqueness of areas, its lack of general concepts and its reliance on rote memorisation. The irrelevancies and omissions of many factors pertinent to human geography (such as behaviour and perception) were also attacked. Overall the failure of the regional geography paradigm to illustrate similarities between wide areas, and its presupposition that valid boundaries could be drawn around all regions, were perhaps seen to be its major limitations. Geography teachers were now urged by the DES to encourage children to think more analytically and logically in geography. (However the lack of reference to curriculum models in this particular DES (DES 1972) pamphlet was disappointing, especially given the contemporary work of the Schools Council, and educationalists such as Kerr (1968), Skilbeck (1969), and Walton (1971).

Mainstream geography teachers began to become involved in the process of introducing the 'new' geography to schools. John Everson and Brian FitzGerald set up the London Schools Geographical Group in 1966 after the Madingley conference whose suggestions for change in part led the GA to set a 'Committee on the Role of Models and Quantitative Techniques in Geography' and to devote a whole edition of '*Geography*' (in January 1969) to the impact of quantification. This was the first time that secondary geography teachers had been introduced to the new techniques used within university geography departments on a national scale. The overall value of models of spatial analysis was readily understood by many teachers, but the use of quantitative techniques and statistical analysis was often resisted. Everson and

FitzGerald's sixth form text 'Settlement Patterns' (1969a) gave guidance to those teachers who felt themselves isolated and confused - by combining the 'new' and the 'old' geographies to some extent. Other publications such as 'New Ways in Geography' (Cole and Benyon 1968) and 'Living in Cities' (Everson and FitzGerald 1969b) reflected the increasing influence of the 'new' geography (but see Bale 1996b in Chapter 8).

Hore (1973) investigated the effects of 'new' geography on the classroom and found that the conservatism of geography teachers provided a major barrier to the acceptance of these innovations. Schools had been placed in a position where they were still teaching a form of regionalism that university academics had now largely rejected; this forced a growing divide between certain school and universities. Geography teachers were increasingly 'suspicious of persons in ivory towered universities and colleges of education, who throw out wonderful suggestions, without testing them in the white heat of a classroom composed of, say, thirty aggressive youths from a twilight urban area' (Hore 1973 p.132). Teachers had to be the link promoting the conceptual revolution in the classroom, but many found the developments either incomprehensible or unacceptable (see Cooke 1969) and therefore favoured the continuation of the regional approach.

There are interesting, but significantly different, parallels with the introduction of the GNC. In the case of the GNC change was statutory and looked backwards to a more traditional form of geography, rather than being genuinely innovative and determined by changes created by the introduction of a new paradigm in geography.

The first schools that were to change significantly by adopting the concepts and methods developing in university geography departments were largely the public schools, mainly because the Oxford and Cambridge Examination Board changed its 'A' level Geography syllabus. This now included system aspects of geography, urban analysis, and investigative techniques using quantitative and statistical methods.

Naish (1987), like Graves (1975), believes that the year 1965 represents a significant turning point in the fortunes of geography education within schools and universities, marking the beginning of a series of curriculum crises which can now be traced as far as the introduction of the GNC into schools in 1991 (Butt 1992). Naish highlights curriculum questions about the timetable provision made for teaching geography, the instrumental value of geography, its aims and objectives, and the nature and quality of teaching and learning that geography students experienced at the time.

The first crisis Naish (1987) identifies as the conceptual revolution in geography, whose impact on schools he dates from the publication in 1965 of Chorley and Haggett's 'Frontiers in Geographical Teaching'; the second is the so called 'Great Debate' initiated by Callaghan's Ruskin College speech in 1976; whilst the third and fourth are the increased trend towards centralisation of the curriculum and the move towards vocationalism and instrumentalism (witnessed by the increased emphasis on technology, CPVE and TVEI). Chitty (1987a) sees the latter becoming more prevalent in the following decade, and refers to the 'peculiar unity' of the developments which can be 'collected together under four main headings; differentiation, vocationalization, centralization and privatization' (p.14). These issues are explored in depth in Chapter 2 where the nature of curriculum policy making, the influence of the emerging New

Right in the 1980s and the drive towards vocational education from the Conservative Modernisers to the Dearing report (1994) are considered.

Naish (1987) commented that 'those of us who believe in education for its own sake, in an open, liberal and cultured curriculum, sensitive to the needs of people and of their environments, now have much work to do if such values are to be saved, cherished and implemented' (p.105). He considers that geographers have traditionally responded to such challenges in a 'prompt and promising' way, either through individual piecemeal initiatives, or funded curriculum projects. The former are typified by the Madingley conferences - which led to quantitative exercises, role plays, games and simulations being used more widely in schools; the development of new text books such as the Oxford Geography Project (Rolfe et al 1974); examination changes beginning with the new techniques paper introduced by the Oxford and Cambridge Board in 1969; and the emergence of CAL. The latter relate to curriculum development projects such as Geography for the Young School Leaver (GYSL) and Geography 14-18 which started in 1970, and Geography 16-19 in 1976 (see Appendix 2). Each of these projects started by considering the needs of the pupil rather than the subject, which was seen as a *medium* for education rather than being studied 'in its own right'. Concern for social and environmental issues dominated each of the three projects and there was a real desire to provide children with useful and transferable skills, as well as developing their political literacy and values. Advances in educational theory such as Bruner's (1960, 1967) work on concepts in thinking and learning, when linked to the desire to isolate geographical concepts and introduce enquiry into the classroom, had a profound effect on geography education in the 1970s and 80s. It was becoming clear that exposition, as opposed to enquiry, served separate educational purposes and therefore teachers needed to be clear about the ways

in which they organised their pedagogy (Peel 1968, Lunnon 1969, Rhys 1972). By 1972 many teachers were becoming aware of the ideas of educational psychologists such as Bruner, but continued to teach within a geographical paradigm that was becoming rapidly discredited.

Geography curriculum theory 1970-1982.

Walford's (1991a) reflections on the Charney Manor conference of 1970 noted that at the time 'Geography's place in the school curriculum was taken as assured and its rationale self evident' (p.3). The driving force behind much of the discussion at the conference had been the 'belief that the subject could grow in influence', attracting 'more and better quality pupils' (p.3) by incorporating new scientific developments and novel teaching methods. This may, however, present a somewhat distorted and optimistic view of the times - indeed Walford himself wrote in 'New Directions in Geography Teaching' (Walford 1973a) that 'if geography is to survive in the school curriculum it will have to be more than a convenient examination pass for those who seek only to memorise a jumble of facts and sketch maps' (p.2).

As Goodson (1983) comments the continued existence of fact dominated regional geography, often now as a result of the conservatism of examination syllabuses, threatened the survival of the subject as some children and teachers could not now perceive its relevance, resulting in poor motivation and correspondingly low levels of understanding.

'New Directions in Geography Teaching' (Walford 1973b) contained a variety of contributions considering the geography curriculum in schools should be changed. Ambrose (1973) concentrated on the move away from facts to concepts, from regional to systematic

approaches, from qualitative to quantitative and the increasing emphasis on the affective development of children. The importance of recognising spatial organisation systems and the existence of a number of conceptual structures on which to base the geography curriculum were increasingly realised. Beddis (1973) argued for the maintenance of geography as a single subject and the creation of a curriculum built upon fundamental concepts organised into area based studies. (This is counter to Everson's (1973) ideas of a systematic, rather than area based, geography curriculum. His chief fears concerning curriculum models for geography were that they fragmented the subject, because a paradigm is not merely an amalgam of concepts, methods and values). Others, such as Lewis (1973), also noted that geography was not a study of individual features outside a locational and spatial framework. Bennetts (1972) based his views on geography curriculum construction on three conceptual frameworks: areal studies, systematic studies and spatial concepts, effectively combining the work of Ambrose, Everson and Beddis. As a result he created a distinct curriculum framework, with a full appreciation of the contemporary discipline of geography.

Contributors to an emerging debate on geography curriculum structure were equally persuasive. Hall (1976) discussed the conceptual revolution in 'Geography and the Geography Teacher', whilst changes in curriculum theory were addressed by Marsden's (1976) 'Evaluating the Geography Curriculum', and Graves's (1979) 'Curriculum Planning in Geography' which both used models of curriculum process to suggest the content and structure of secondary geography courses.

In the early 1970s geography teaching was expanding. Comprehensive schools were now established in most areas of England and Wales, newly trained geography teachers with a background in

quantitative techniques were beginning to teach in schools, and pupil numbers in secondary education were steadily increasing. In the majority of secondary schools geography was being taught to pupils up to the age of 14 either as a single subject, or within a humanities framework. Geography was also an increasingly popular option for examination at 16, both at 'O' level and at CSE. CSE examination courses in geography, which had been introduced in 1965, attracted large entries, especially following the raising of the school leaving age (ROSLA) in 1972 which helped to encourage the creation of new experimental geography courses. Evidence of this expansion of geography teaching and examining is illustrated by Table 1.1 which shows examination entry statistics for CSE and 'O' level geography for selected years during the 1960s and 1970s. Comparisons with certain other subjects are made, as well as total numbers of children educated in comprehensive schools:

Table 1.1

1960	'O' level entries	Geography	125,236
		English Language	250,071
		English Literature	158,820
		History	118,671
1961 (January)		Comprehensive school pupils	141,899
		Total secondary school pupils	2,828,975
1965	'O' level entries	Geography	160,765
		English Language	348,688
		English Literature	199,173
		History	145,633
1965	CSE entries	Geography	21,177
		English Language	41,487
		History	16,743
1965 (January)		Comprehensive school pupils	239,619
		Total secondary school pupils	2,819,054
1970	'O' level entries	Geography	161,010
		English Language	337,812
		English Literature	213,042
		History	128,548
1970	CSE entries	Geography	86,566
		English Language	187,384
		History	73,832
1970 (January)		Comprehensive school pupils	937,152
		Total secondary school pupils	3,045,974
1975	'O' level entries	Geography	183,132
		English Language	425,020
		English Literature	241,861

1975	CSE entries	History	142,511
		Geography	166,164
		English Language	440,045
1975 (January)		History	140,246
		Comprehensive school pupils	2,459,648
		Total secondary school pupils	3,619,302

(Source: Statistics of Education 1961 parts I and 2; 1965 parts I and 3; 1970 Volume I and 2; 1975).

Demand grew for practical classroom examples of games, simulations and role plays related to the 'new' geography. Two teachers, Richard Aylmer of Bloxham School and Neil Sealey of Luton College, published 'Setwork' and 'Classroom Geographer' which carried items on teaching methods and techniques and acted as a focus for discussion of trends. Their success prompted the GA to launch a specialist magazine in April 1975 called '*Teaching Geography*'. In schools the Oxford Geography Project (Rolfe et al 1974) provided the ideal textbook for the time. Its three books for 11 to 14 year olds were full of geographical content and teaching ideas appropriate to the new methods, theories and techniques of academic geography. The Project textbooks were accompanied by a teachers' guide and Banda masters to reproduce class sets of worksheets. Also at this time the texts by Dinkele et al (1976) in the Harrap's 'Reformed Geography' series followed a similar approach.

Meanwhile on the broader educational canvas, major curricular changes were being mooted. Under the new Conservative administration of 1979-1983 the idea of a core curriculum became widely debated, following the so called 'Great Debate' started by Callaghan in 1976 (see Chapter 2). DES papers led to the publication of 'The School Curriculum' in 1981 (DES 1981a); nonetheless the potential of geography in the curriculum was seriously underplayed, despite Geography HMI publishing 'Geography in the 11 to 16 Curriculum' (DES 1978). Geography was undervalued in the debate which included 'very little reference to spatial and

environmental awareness and understanding' (Naish 1987 p.103); or graphicacy skills. The placing of geography solely in the humanities also showed an ignorance of its contributions to earth sciences and climatology, as a bridge between humanities sciences, and as an important contributor to environmental education. Each of these issues the GWG sought to address in their creation of the GNC at the end of the 1980s (see Chapters 4 and 5).

'New' Geography begins to change.

By 1976 some academic geographers believed that the conceptual revolution had already 'run its course'. Wolforth (1976) stated that:

'In some respects Harvey's 'Explanation in Geography', the definitive statement on the philosophical underpinnings of theoretical geography, may well be last such statement to be made, much in the way that Hartshorne's 'The Nature of Geography' was the last important statement of the older school' (p. 143).

The major problem with the 'modelling' approaches linked to the 'new' geography was that these models were becoming more than just tools to advance the understanding of concepts. They contained implicit assumptions that could not be fundamentally questioned if the models were to function correctly. In effect they confused what actually existed with what their creators perceived *should* exist. A growing school of behavioural geography began to question the positivistic structure that had been created and to illustrate that the differences between models and reality were not due to chance background 'noise', but to the complexity of reality compared to the over-simplicity of the models. Prescriptive models that told us what ought to happen, rather than what would happen under given conditions, were of questionable usefulness in the real world.

Opposition grew to the widespread acceptance of the scientific approach as the only avenue of enquiry that possessed rigour and substance within geography. Zelinsky (1975) highlighted the pitfalls of the scientific method questioning its claims of causality, its assumptions that all questions are answerable, and belief that final perfect knowledge with universal validity is achievable. The influence of logical positivism, which believes that the only valid knowledge is that which is scientifically verifiable, permeated much of the work carried out within the paradigm of 'new' geography and was now under pressure to change (Guelke 1974).

Not surprisingly a variety of alternative approaches developed (see Marsden 1995, Boardman and MacPartland 1993c). One that strongly contrasted with the whole arena of scientific method was that of phenomenology, which Relph (1970) describes as being based on insight and description rather than analysis in the scientific mode. Human motivation was considered to be a major factor in geography that theoreticians and model builders had previously conveniently ignored. Inductive methods of explaining, with their link to a priori assumptions of reality, were strongly criticised, as were deductive methods that inferred advanced rationality of human action. Scientific approaches obviously had value in illustrating systematic ways of tackling difficult questions (and their contribution to geography are still acknowledged), they were not however to be considered as the 'end point' of all geographical thought.

Teachers and university academics were increasingly realising that many of the important questions in geography involved subjective, personal, perceptual and experiential factors, rather than tangible objective and scientific facts. From such a standpoint an existential movement in geography arose. The late seventies witnessed a return to attempts at understanding a 'sense of place', primarily through the work of Tuan, Lowenthal, Relph, and

Buttimer. The existential and phenomenological approaches had much to offer school geography for they encompassed studies of the development of the individual person. 'Private geographies', children's perceptions, mental maps, spatial preferences, and a sense of place could all be incorporated within the geography curriculum in schools (Slater 1982).

In addition geographers such as Harvey (1969), and contributors to the radical journal *Antipode* showed how the optimum location and profit maximising models would work only within a capitalist framework; Marxian societies would require completely different assumptions and variables. It was increasingly clear that the positivistic framework of the 'new' geography could not be universally applied throughout the discipline and contained serious conceptual flaws. Radical geography, promoted by geographers with Marxist beliefs such as Peet and Bunge, advocated the reformation of society itself partially through the work of academic disciplines. In viewing the world from perspectives which challenged the established social norms they could not perhaps expect schools to follow their lead. The role of schools in reflecting the predominant values of society therefore inhibited the growth of a radical approach in geography education; although the writings of left wing educationalists such as Huckle (1983) have had an important influence .

The Projects.

As Naish (1987) suggests all three Schools Council Geography Projects 'began with consideration of the needs of the students rather than the needs of the subject' (p.108-9), with geography being seen as a medium for education rather than as a discipline in its own right. Social and environmental issues were concerns of each of the projects, whilst the acquisition of concepts and the understanding of principles - rather than learning facts for their own sake - was considered important.

In her reflections on school geography curricula at this time Rawling (1991a) asks a series of important questions about the influence of the geography projects. Firstly why did such large scale innovations suddenly 'take off' in the early 1970s? Secondly, is innovation in the 1990s different from that of the 1980s, or is it a continuum? Thirdly, what was the overall contribution of the projects to geography education? And lastly how does the National Curriculum fit into this picture? Attention is drawn by Rawling to the general rethinking and reorganisation of education in the early 1970s, citing both Circular 10/65 and the influence of the need for widespread curriculum development in the USA. Importantly the Schools Council, established in 1964, also provided money for curriculum development by teachers, often led by project teams consisting of professional educationalists and curriculum experts. Projects were planned on the grand scale because of the stability both of funding and project teams in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Each team took the opportunity it was given to 'completely rethink the kind of geography appropriate to a specific age group rather than merely amending or adding to existing offerings' (Rawling 1991a p.34). As Graves noted (1975) this was a period when geography curriculum development could occur with teams of teachers 'actively experimenting with new curricula to find out whether they are capable of being usefully introduced into the majority of schools' (p.62). Academic geography and the conceptual revolution were both agents of change for schools, but many clung to the regional approach fearful that the study of 'real places' might be sidelined by an over-concentration on theoretical models.

By the 1980s the projects had effected a major influence on the geography taught in schools. Extension funding and a group of committed teachers was now associated with each project, whilst the publication of curriculum materials, examination recognition, and the dissemination of ideas each helped the growth and influence of their works (see Boardman 1988). However as the eighties progressed funding became problematic, teacher release from schools was more difficult to organise, and the Conservative Government began its drive to return education back to the 'basics'. In 1984 the Schools Council was disbanded to be replaced by the School

Curriculum Development Committee (SCDC) and Secondary Examinations Council (SEC). The money and enthusiasm that had gone with it largely disappeared resulting in far fewer geography curriculum innovations (but see GSIP, GYSL/TRIST and Project HIT).

Each of the projects had strongly emphasised enquiry teaching and learning approaches, and the affective development of children. The incorporation of affective themes in the GCSE National Criteria for Geography (DES 1985a) was perhaps a reflection of how far the influence of the projects had now spread. It is notable that the School Council Geography Projects were regularly mentioned, not necessarily in a favourable light, by the GWG in its deliberations on the form and content of the GNC. The group contained a 16-19 Project founder, Eleanor Rawling, and a lay member who had previously taught the 16-19 syllabus, Rachel Thomas. It is an important point that they differed markedly in their appreciation of the merits of the content, and implied pedagogy, of the 16-19 approach (see Chapters 5 and 6).

The 1970s ended with a confident statement by Patrick Bailey (1979), then editor of *Teaching Geography*, that a new maturity could be witnessed in geographical education in schools inasmuch that 'the shape of the new geography in schools is clear, as are the appropriate methods of teaching it. All we have to do now is to make the best practice general' (p.31). His seven justifications for this statement were explored by Kirby and Lambert (1981) who found reason to contend each of them. The first statement, that theoretical foundations were now apparent in most geography courses taught in schools, was found to be the least satisfactory. Both Kirby and Lambert (1981) concluded that 'contemporary geography is not the only geography' (p.116), and that evolution would still be necessary for the subject to survive and grow. The gap between the research frontier of the subject and school geography

was of concern, for a vacuum was being caused by the decline in the use of quantitative methods in schools. Bale (1978) also noted this and saw that the time was ripe for an 'anti quantitative putsch' installing a revolution of greater impact and importance than that of quantification. As Kirby and Lambert (1981) stated 'half the discipline has moved on and is now looking over its shoulder at the other half - with, it must be said, some disquiet' (p.118). A similar situation can perhaps currently be witnessed developing within contemporary school geography (see Chapter 8).

By the time of the Charney Manor conference in 1980 Walford (1991a) saw a 'perceptible difference in atmosphere' (p.4) about the philosophy, strategy and attitude of geography education in schools and of the wider educational world. There was a real desire to return 'humaneness' to geography, less agreement than had been apparent at the 1970 conference, a need to maintain enquiry learning, and a continued focus on the philosophical structure of geography. The wider role of geography in the school curriculum was explored by Daugherty (1981) - who at the time visualised curriculum development as being school based rather than being created through governmental moves towards a centrally administered National Curriculum.

Of increasing concern by the late 1980s was the 'place ignorance', of many children. This became a focus for curriculum commentators in the 1990s who held a 'deficit' view of school geography and its content. A strong emphasis on place and vocational knowledge was seen in the Interim Report of the Geography Working Group (DES 1989a), with little credence given to curriculum advances over the previous twenty years (see Chapters 5 and 6).

Towards a National Curriculum 1983-1989.

The 1980s marked a decade of increasing government involvement in curriculum matters, reflected by the numerous publications emerging from the DES. The drive towards centralisation was partly realised through assessment - the National Criteria for all GCSE examinations (which were first publicly examined in 1988), the assessment led Education Reform Act (1988), and the subsequent National Curriculum (see Boardman and MacPartland 1993d).

The intention to merge GCE and CSE into a new combined General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) was announced by Sir Keith Joseph on 20 June 1984. The need for a set of general and subject specific National Criteria was apparent, and these were published in March 1985 by the DES. The Geography National Criteria (DES 1985a) emphasised understanding as well as knowledge, the development of skills and enquiry methods, the study of issues and viewpoints, and the influence of values and attitudes in decision making. Flexibility in the interpretation of the Criteria by examination boards led to much diversity in syllabus design, such that sixteen mode I Geography GCSE syllabuses were approved by SEC by 1986.

From September 1986 GCSE geography courses were taught to all children who opted for geography at the age of 14. The response from teachers, parents and pupils was generally positive, although there were still problems in that the less able were not fully catered for. The difficulties of implementation were not so much linked to necessary changes in teaching styles, but to financing, resourcing, providing timetable space for geography, and establishing an entitlement to fieldwork. All pupils taking GCSE geography now had to undertake

compulsory fieldwork for a minimum of 20% of coursework marks (out of a possible total of 40%). Although this was widely received as a positive change there were dangers that the emphasis on fieldwork had begun to distort the balance of the geography curriculum. Because virtually all the fieldwork undertaken by schools was within the UK, and at least 20% of children's assessment was based upon this, the syllabus 'space' for themes related to, say, the developing world was restricted producing a somewhat distorted geography curriculum (Robinson 1987).

The GCSE also effected a huge step towards the centralisation of education. All syllabuses and assessments in England and Wales were now controlled by government dictated National Criteria, a move that would make the later introduction of a nationally administered and assessed curriculum via the Education Reform Act (1988) easier. However, the GCSE was a success because its implementation was built upon features that had gradually evolved for many years. Its national framework also allowed for considerable latitude in syllabus choice and course design. Nonetheless some concerns about the form and content of GCSE examinations began to be voiced almost immediately - these concerns would eventually resurface during the life of the GWG, and had an influential effect on the resurgence of place and locational knowledge in the GNC (see Chapters 5 and 6).

Conclusions.

How far had geography developed as a school subject in just over 100 years, and what were the challenges facing it with the implementation of the National Curriculum? Was the academic base of the discipline secure enough in universities, schools and the public's perception for it to

survive in the form that academics, teachers and geography educationalists desired? Or was the legitimate influence of politicians and parents to have a major impact on its future form?

During the early part of the twentieth century it has been seen that university based geography had been dogged by the impression that it was intellectually suspect - a subject for school children rather than university academics. This impression was obviously not helped by the wide variety of interpretations given to the subject by different individuals and university departments. The status of the subject in schools might have been raised by its acceptance within universities early in the twentieth century, however at this stage its stature in higher education remained low. Only in the 1960s with the onset of the conceptual revolution and 'new' geography with its scientific methodology can we see a definite shift in both the perception and acceptance of the subject's academic respectability.

In the period following 1970 there were a number of improvements to geography teaching in secondary schools, although the adoption of these changes was by no means universal.

Geographical aims and objectives in syllabus design became clearer and the contributions of geographical knowledge, understanding and skills to the process of learning were more widely understood by geography teachers. The application of concepts, models, and theories were appreciated whilst a wider range of skills was introduced to the classroom through enquiry based work. Affective learning as well as economic, social, environmental and political relevance were introduced by many teachers who had followed the development of new geography to its 'post revolutionary' phase.

The geography curriculum in many schools was better planned, teaching strategies and learning activities were more diverse and the use of fieldwork, encouraged by changes in examination syllabuses, increased. Assessment techniques varied and cross curricular contributions were considered within many geography departments. Many of these advances relied in part on the parallel advances which were occurring in educational and curriculum theories.

Almost all pupils studied geography in some form in years 7 to 9 immediately before the advent of the GNC. Although optional in years 10 and 11 some 45% of children took a geography GCSE course making it the fourth most popular GCSE (behind mathematics, English Language and English Literature) in 1988 and 1989. However geography was still combined with other subjects - often history and RE - to form Humanities in a substantial minority of schools. Indeed some 30% of English secondary schools in year 7, 15% in year 8, and 8% in year 9 operated such schemes (see 'Geography for ages 5-16' DES 1990a p.5). Some argued that integrated Humanities, rather than separate geography and history, should become the core of the National Curriculum. The justification for this was that contemporary societal issues do not divide easily into traditional subject boundaries, and that the skills developed within an integrated study would not be narrowly subject specific, thus benefiting students in later life (Haslam 1985).

The content and teaching methods used in geography teaching in the late 1980s varied greatly from school to school. Most schools adopted a framework of systematic themes and topics illustrated by case studies taken from around the world, whilst in others systematic and regional approaches were combined. The selection of places, topics and teaching styles varied

considerably depending on the subject's organisation, teacher preferences, geography GCSE syllabus studied and levels of resourcing in the particular school.

At the time of its formation in 1989 the GWG already had a growing list of concerns about geography teaching in schools, partly provided by its official terms of reference. In essence these concerns were as follows: the apparent neglect of geography teaching in primary schools, the limited exposure of some pupils to geography by the age of 16, and the uneven geographical knowledge about locations, places and environments possessed by some children. In addition the overuse of systematic themes as a learning framework (which reduced the opportunity of pupils to develop a coherent understanding of what places are like), and the general quality of Physical Geography courses in schools were also mentioned. Unfortunately such a negative appreciation of the subject's contribution to education was to form a strong 'deficit model' which was quickly adopted by some members of the GWG when it started its work (see Chapters 4 and 5).

In many ways the period from the Ruskin College speech in 1976, until the Education Reform Act of 1988, can be seen as a continuum within education. The emergent themes of the 1970s, namely ideas of developing a core curriculum, the growth of vocationalism and the increasing centralisation of decision making, continued up to (and indeed beyond) the 1980s. Within the growing debate on the form and function of the school curriculum, and the subjects from which it should be comprised, geography fought both for recognition and position. By 1988 some commentators believed that geography had gained a 'place in the sun' (Bailey 1988), whilst others were less confident (Hall 1990, Lambert 1991, Rawling 1991b, Roberts 1991, Butt 1992). The debate about the curriculum had gained centre stage and geography, like

other foundation subjects, was becoming caught up within larger curriculum arguments over which geographers had very little, if any, control. Whatever discussions were occurring *within* the discipline about the type of geography that should be taught within schools and universities during the 1970s and 1980s, these were increasingly subordinated by debates *elsewhere* about whether geography should be taught at all.

Major reviews of geography education in the UK (Bennett and Thornes 1988, Gardner and Hay 1992) have concluded that the late 1980s and early 1990s were increasingly a 'period of major upheaval' and 'turbulent years'. However the subject revealed many successes in teaching at all levels:

'This great strength of Geography at school level is reflected in large numbers of good quality students applying for admission to Geography and related courses in Higher Education' (Gardner and Hay 1992 p.13)

and it was also seen as an interesting, well taught and vocationally relevant subject in universities (Walford 1991b). The advent of the National Curriculum was not viewed so positively by Gardner and Hay (1992):

'The period 1986-1992 has seen major threats to the school base of Geography in England and Wales which arose from a central government policy to establish a National Curriculum for school education (5-16 years) in which the place of Geography was by no means assured' (p.13).

Each of the major themes introduced in this chapter are expanded upon later within this thesis. Chapters 4 and 5 consider the issues surrounding the development of the GNC, whilst the next two Chapters explore the nature of curriculum making policy within the second half of this century and the methodology adopted within this research.

Chapter 2.

CURRICULUM POLICY MAKING 1870 - 1993.

‘It seems to me that the Government has not worked out a satisfactory relationship between itself, local communities and schools; it holds too much of the power, and at times that tempts Ministers and their political advisers to interfere in the details of the curriculum rather than restrict themselves to broader matters of policy’

T.H.Bennetts. (1994 p.6)

An investigation into the dynamics of any governmentally appointed National Curriculum Working Group must consider the context of curriculum policy making in which it functioned. This Chapter seeks to provide such a context by tracing the nature of curriculum policy making since 1870, although concentrating primarily on the past twenty years. Controlling influences and tensions which became apparent during the life of the GWG, such as the strained relationship between HMI and DES, are often witnessed on a larger scale within this analysis.

1870-1944

Forster's Education Act of 1870 is memorable in that it established state provision and maintenance of elementary schooling in Britain. Under its powers 2,500 school boards were created and the school leaving age was fixed at 10 (in 1880), and later raised to 12 (in 1899). Recent reflection upon this legislation by the Far Right has equated Forster's reforms with the creation of a huge and unnecessary burden - namely a state system of education. Indeed Sir Keith Joseph (1990 p.62) referred to the advent of compulsory education as 'a responsibility of hideous importance'.

The laissez faire attitude that subsequently developed towards education from 1870 until 1944 was partly the result of a fear of full state involvement, and partly due to complacency about Britain's early industrial pre eminence (Barnett 1986). Britain was a successful industrial nation - a position achieved without the benefit of 'state education', and a situation which many believed would remain unchanged. However, during the latter half of the nineteenth century other European states were rapidly moving towards state systems of education. Germany and France, for example, developed state schooling (often using elements borrowed from the existing British educational system) and their reforms 'paid off' in the shape of new industrial markets gained at the turn of the century.

It became increasingly obvious that the British system of educating a privileged few young men to lead the Empire was outdated and unjust in the early 20th century, such that by 1944 there was a real need to introduce new education legislation.

1944-1980

The Education Act (Butler Act) of 1944 dominated the education system within the schools of England and Wales until the late 1980's. Its structure and constitution, particularly compared to the recent educational reforms, now appears somewhat strange. The Act makes only one mention of the word 'curriculum', and provides no statutory requirement for the teaching of any subject other than Religious Education. The word 'curriculum' appears on page 20 of the Act, but only in passing, and at the end of a section (Section 23) giving responsibility for

secular instruction in schools to the LEAs. Butler wanted to create equal educational opportunities for all, and believed that the effects of his Act would be as much social as they were educational, helping to create 'one nation'. Reform was certainly long overdue - church schools educated one third of all pupils and were often poorly funded, free secondary schooling was virtually non-existent and elementary schools taught the majority of children up to the age of 14. The Butler Act brought church schools into the state system and created separate primary and secondary schools, with the promise of a raised leaving age to 15. Grammar, secondary modern and technical schools were subsequently established - although the stigma of children not gaining a grammar school place and being sent to a secondary modern school, which often occupied the buildings of the previous elementary schools, was keenly felt by many parents and children. Technical schools also failed to achieve Butler's vision of 'different but equal' schools, for educational opportunities were often gained only by those children who achieved a grammar school place.

For 30 years after the Second World War the major political parties were committed to the principles underpinning the welfare state, which Benn (1987) refers to as 'the welfare capitalist consensus' (p.303), and differences between the parties were encompassed within a structure of generally accepted values and assumptions about how the state, and the system of education within it, should function. Lawton (1980) refers to this as the 'Golden Age' of teacher control (or non control) of the curriculum where the state did not directly intervene in curriculum matters, following the lapse of the Secondary Regulations after the 1944 Act.

The 1944 Education Act , establishing a 'national system, locally administered', indicated the necessity for a partnership between central government, local government and individual schools where no individual institution held a monopoly of power. It effectively promoted a 'diffused structure of decision making.....(which) led to better decision making , because it ensured a wide basis of agreement before changes were made' (Bogdanor 1979 p.157). Briault (1976) saw the administrative system which this created in English and Welsh schools as a 'triangle of tension' (p.429), whereby schools, local government and central government often sustained a largely constructive competition for resources and power.

The post war period was one of expansion and vision with regard to education; a system of secondary education was established for all, the school leaving age was raised from 14 to 15 (in 1947) and some degree of educational continuity was achieved from primary schools up to higher education (HE). The number of schools nation-wide was increasing, as was the number of both teachers and HE students. Consensus over educational issues was relatively easily obtained between the political parties, especially so because only a small number of interest groups existed who wished to influence education policy (Bogdanor 1979).

Thus there was little political conflict about education during the 1950's and 1960's. Despite Conservative opposition to comprehensivisation most educational policy was largely non partisan, or indeed bi-partisan. During the period between 1962 and 1964, when Sir Edward Boyle was Conservative Minister for Education, there was very little difference between the policy of any of the major political parties towards education.

In 1965 the ruling Labour government introduced its drive towards comprehensivisation through Circular 10/65. Some LEAs had already experimented with comprehensive schools over the preceding 20 years, such that by 1964 they were already educating 10% of secondary aged children in England and Wales. Sir Edward Boyle had even commented in the 1963 pamphlet 'Educational Opportunity':

'I certainly would not wish to advance the view that the tripartite system (of grammar, technical and secondary modern schools).... should be regarded as the right and normal way of organising secondary education'.

Opposition to this largely bi-partisan approach grew in the late 1960's (see the 1968 Conservative Party conference's challenge to Boyle on secondary education, grammar schools and reorganisation), although there was no coherent rival educational philosophy with which to replace it (Corbett 1969). A split occurred between the 'preservationists', who dominated the Right Wing of the Conservative educational lobby until the 1970's, and the 'voucher men' who wanted to experiment more radically with the means of providing education. The preservationists desire to propound their conservative beliefs about education can be witnessed with reference to the first three of the five Black Papers published from 1969 -1977. Chitty (1992a,1992b) reflects that the 1960's appear to have been a time not only of internal party changes on education, but also a period when the ground was being prepared for a more bitter ideological struggle between the main political parties.

The 1960's were broadly:

'a time of optimism, (containing) a spirit of shared concerns, and the beginnings of an articulation of an education system which would offer the greatest possible opportunities to everyone as an entitlement, not a privilege' (Plaskow 1990 p.90).

However, by the mid 1970's the politics of reaction to educational issues had largely been replaced by the politics of reconstruction, especially since a New Right within the Conservative Party was emerging to replace their traditionally held views on education.

It is significant that the economic base for the 'welfare consensus' also collapsed in the 1970's. The recession of 1973 -5 created a suitable climate for Right Wing ideas, which then led to the destruction of the consensus approach which had largely thrived on economic prosperity and stability. The Conservatives now mostly reverted to market liberalism for inspiration, whilst an important and vocal section of the Labour Party turned to 1920s and 1930s style socialism, or a form of neo Marxism (Marquand 1988).

The Great Debate 1976 - 1977.

It is often assumed that the move towards developing a National Curriculum in England and Wales began with Prime Minister Callaghan's speech at Ruskin College, Oxford in October 1976 in which he launched the, so called, 'Great Debate' on education. The speech, which was largely written by Bernard Donoughue and the Downing Street Policy Unit (Callaghan 1987, Donoughue 1987), shared many of the assumptions about a core curriculum first expressed in the Yellow Book (DES 1976). The Yellow Book was a confidential document compiled by DES civil servants which addressed Callaghan's concerns about discipline, curriculum variations, the need for a core curriculum, vocational education and the right of central

government (rather than teachers alone) to determine the curriculum. It also focused on the role of the Schools Council and on examination reforms.

The Ruskin Speech was viewed by the Left as a disappointment, for it failed to celebrate the achievements already made by the state education system. As Hunter (1984) points out:

'paradoxically the comprehensive system came under greater pressure from the Labour administration of 1974-79 than from the previous Conservative Government' (quoted in Chitty 1989 p.55).

The speech was an attempt to gain populist support by taking the debate away from the Conservatives and concentrating on the public's concern about educational standards. It came at a time when Labour Secretaries of State for Education were half hearted in their defence of comprehensive ideals, and of advances made in primary education due to the demise of the 11+. The Ruskin Speech made mention of a 'core curriculum' as a possible precursor to a National Curriculum, whilst DES memos at the time also reveal a desire to establish a common curriculum for secondary schools. Some argue that the National Curriculum should therefore be seen as the culmination of a centralising policy in education which first started back in 1976 (O'Connor 1987a, Maclure 1987). Certainly the Yellow Book and Ruskin Speech had heralded a core curriculum as an attractive option to ensure uniformity and accountability within the education system; however as Chitty (1989) states 'it was not considered necessary to define the concept in detail or to provide any intellectual justification for its adoption' (p.116). There is indeed little evidence that the period immediately following Callaghan's Ruskin College Speech saw any real consensus of approach towards centralisation or curriculum structure by either of the major political parties.

The so - called Great Debate actually consisted of eight regional one day conferences held in 1977 - which the DES maintained control over, and a series of meetings with industrial and educational organisations at which a paper 'Schools in England and Wales: Current Issues - An Annotated Agenda for Discussion' (November 1976) was considered. The debate culminated in July 1977 with the publication of a Green Paper 'Education in Schools: A Consultative Document'. This paper was not un-controversial for the Downing Street Policy Unit was dissatisfied with early DES drafts of this document as they failed to focus on teacher accountability, standards and discipline. Shirley Williams, Education Secretary from September 1976 to May 1979, put many of the Labour party's curriculum ideas into the 1977 Green Paper with an overt aim to reduce the overcrowded curriculum. She talked of 'a 'protected ' or 'core' element of the curriculum common to all schools (DES 1977 p.11) but did not elaborate further on the range of subjects to be offered within this core.

In retrospect both Donoghue and Callaghan claim to have been pleased with the progress and outcome of the Great Debate, but teachers and educationalists have not mirrored this satisfaction. Lawton (1980), Wragg (1986) and Maclure (1987) all have reservations about its impact, with Maclure referring to the whole 'debate' as a 'damp squib'.

The Ruskin Speech highlighted the need to raise educational standards, and for education to support the country's industrial and economic base; as such it gave 'political recognition to the importance of new curriculum developments ' (Chitty 1989 p.48). Its origins almost certainly

came from disillusionment with education, and the comprehensive system in particular, which began to surface in the late 1960's, accelerating following the economic crisis of 1973.

HMI 'versus' DES - the core curriculum debate.

HMI interest in a core or common curriculum for 11 to 16 year olds began much earlier than the Ruskin College Speech of 1976. We know that the Schools Council's piecemeal approach to curriculum planning was questioned by an HMI representative at an important conference held in Scarborough in June 1969 (Schools Council 1971).

At this stage the HMI were beginning to feel that their policy making role was diminishing, due partly to the work of LEA advisors and inspectors and partly to the lack of consultation requested of the HMI by the Department of Education and Science. Therefore, in an effort to re establish their importance, they published 'HMI Today and Tomorrow' (1971), followed by a number of documents making the case for curriculum reform. These ideas were developed in parallel to DES ideas on a 'core curriculum' for schools. Debate about the possible merits of a common or core curriculum, and about curriculum structure in general, can be traced back even further than the late 1960's though. During the 1940s and 1950s many secondary modern schools had introduced a curriculum based on a 'core' of social studies - a measure which found only limited success due to increasing pressures on schools to identify clearly measurable standards through their examination results. In the 1960's educationalists such as Lawton (1969) formulated theories about the 'integrated curriculum', whilst White (1973) outlined a version of a 'compulsory curriculum' for schools in the early 1970s.

HMI views were exemplified in their series of 'Red Books' (DES 1977, 1981b, 1983) which focused on curriculum structure, teaching processes and the educational needs of individual children. In Red Book 1 (1977) HMI outlined their ideas for a common curriculum covering at least two thirds of timetabled time for 11-16 year old pupils. They removed traditional subject boundaries as these were seen as only being useful in achieving higher level educational aims. Teachers would be central to the maintenance of sound educational processes and would therefore need to be positive, well motivated, suitably trained, and skilled at recognising specific learning problems. The ideas of the HMI were later expressed in a more concrete fashion in the publication 'Curriculum 5-16' (DES 1985b). The HMI now developed a matrix for the school curriculum with 'content' (or 'areas of experience') being balanced by 'elements of learning' (such as 'knowledge, concepts, skills, and attitudes'). The overall educational experience was to occur against a backdrop of principles for breadth, balance, relevance, coherence, progression and differentiation.

The HMI initially feared that a 'core curriculum' would lead to greater governmental control over education, and stated that they were not interested in advocating 'a centrally controlled or dictated curriculum' (DES 1977 p.1) They were also highly critical of what they called the 'bureaucratic curriculum' which was too narrowly restricted by its desire to demonstrate efficiency. The rigid control of what was taught in schools, and the desire for greater teacher accountability measured against a closely specified curriculum, were both strongly challenged. Similarly the concentration on testing, traditional subject boundaries, and the 'statistically normal child' were all exposed as weaknesses. In view of the subsequent development of the

National Curriculum following the Education Reform Act 1988 these thoughts were remarkably prescient.

HMI did not view a subject based curriculum as a finished product and wanted to look beyond a curriculum composed of individual subjects towards one consisting of 'areas of experience and knowledge to which it may provide access, and the skills and attitudes which it may assist to develop' (DES 1977 p.6). Building upon these views Red Book 3 introduced the concept of the so - called 'entitlement curriculum' with a broad framework which combined aspects of vocational, technical and academic education. The thoughts and actions of the HMI are, of course, in contrast to the Conservative government's plans for a National Curriculum outlined in the late 1980s.

DES models of the curriculum at this stage were very different in form and function to those envisaged by the HMI. The DES believed in a traditional curriculum of separate subjects, with pupils having a choice of optional subjects based around an obligatory core. Publications such as 'A Framework for the School Curriculum' (DES 1980) and 'The School Curriculum' (DES 1981a) encouraged further debate on the relative merits of such a core curriculum, but any discussion of educational principles had by now become enmeshed with concepts of central control of the curriculum and the role of vocational education. 'The School Curriculum' (DES 1981a) is interesting because it reveals that there existed many ideological differences concerning the curriculum both within the DES, and between the DES and HMI, in the early 1980's. Amongst the somewhat mixed messages contained within the publication there are points of agreement about the needs for centrality of curriculum control and the need to bring

the school curriculum up to date with wider changes in economics and technology. 'The School Curriculum' (DES 1981a) also articulated a belief that LEAs and central government should not intervene, or dominate, curriculum matters in schools and that genuine partnership should exist: 'Neither the government nor local authorities should specify in detail what schools should teach' (DES 1981a p.14). This partnership concept was also clear in circular 6/81 (DES October 1981) and 8/83 (DES December 1983) which noted the Secretary of State's reliance on LEAs to carry out his policies, and the necessity for a joint process of consultation, development and publication of curriculum policies. Meanwhile the DES was gradually developing indirect control of the process of education by way of its influence over resource allocation, teacher education (via CATE), curriculum sponsorship, examination reforms (National Criteria for GCSE), and the abolition of the Schools Council. Each of these measures acted to constrain the curriculum and focus greater power on the DES. The production of a large number of curriculum documents from the DES and HMI stopped temporarily in 1981. DES bureaucrats had tired of trying to change educational practice through persuasion and found other means, such as examination reforms, to fulfil their aims (Maw 1985, Nuttall 1984). There was also the beginnings of a rise of interest in vocational education which some saw as an important route to curriculum change.

'Better Schools' (DES 1985c) marked a brief 'wind of change' in DES thinking, for it revealed a greater willingness amongst members of the DES and HMI to negotiate, giving the latter a stronger role in curriculum development. However it is evident that there was a rapidly increasing governmental drive towards centralisation in the mid 1980's. After 1985, HMI and DES went their separate ways, arguing for different policies. 'Better Schools' (DES 1985c)

claimed to be against centralisation and talks of 'broad agreement about the objectives and content of the school curriculum' (p.11). It reacted against 'the determination of national syllabuses' (p.11) and gave the impression that the old partnership between schools, LEAs and central government was set to continue. Such an impression proved to be entirely false.

As Chitty (1989) argues:

'for at least the first seven years of its existence, the new Conservative government was prepared to operate largely within the terms of the educational consensus constructed by the Labour leadership in 1976' (p.194).

He points out that education was accorded little space in the 1979 and 1983 Conservative election manifestos, although by 1987 the Conservative Party election Manifesto afforded over four pages to 'raising standards in education'. Under Carlisle (1979-81) and Joseph (1981-6) some attempts were made to create selection and differentiation within education, but these schemes were far short of what the Far Right were suggesting. Private sector involvement in education was allowed to develop rapidly in the 1980s with schools having to purchase services that they had previously obtained free. By the mid decade PTAs supplied over £40 million to schools (National Confederation of PTAs figures verified by HMI), whilst initiatives such as the Assisted Places scheme introduced in 1980 siphoned off state money into private schools for 33,000 pupils each year. Governmental support for privatisation, such as the Parent's Charter (1991) effectively offering free publicity to the independent sector, was also noticeable. Pring argues (1983,1986,1987a and 1987b) that in the 1980's there was purchasing of educational services at private expense which should have been free in the public system, and purchasing at public expense of educational services in the private system.

Margaret Thatcher, on the eve of the 1987 election, gave an interview to the editor of the Daily Mail (13.5.87), amplifying the Right's concern that the Party had not gone far enough with its educational reforms. She stated:

'we are going much further with education than we ever thought of doing before. When we've spent all that money per pupil , and with more teachers, there is still so much wrong, so we are going to do something determined about it... There is going to be a revolution in the running of schools'.

This break with educational tradition was to come in 1987/8 in the third Thatcher administration - a government which had the confidence and determination to take radical action to break the power of the LEAs and reinforce hierarchical systems of schooling.

In December 1986 the new Education Secretary, Kenneth Baker, who had replaced Joseph in May of that year, had announced the desire of a future Conservative Government to introduce a National Core Curriculum. By this stage England was the last European country to introduce such a curriculum and division of feeling about it within the Conservative party was clearly evident. On 'Weekend World' (LWT) on 7 December 1986 Baker unveiled his forthcoming reforms consisting of educational legislation larger than anything seen in the last 40 years to enable the introduction of a National Core Curriculum with benchmark testing initially at 9,11 and 14. Only a year earlier Sir Keith Joseph had declared himself to be against a centralised curriculum, additionally stating that the Secretary of State for Education should not be given the powers necessary to impose one. His unwillingness to bring back grammar schools and secondary moderns, or to introduce voucher systems, were at odds with Right



Wing thought within the party which Baker now appeared willing to placate. Joseph never changed his views, indeed in April 1988, in a speech to the House of Lords, he stated:

'I wonder..... whether the National Curriculum might not impose too tight a strait jacket ...(because) it is too prescriptive' and 'that if all the foundation subjects were tested we would impose too large a testing industry on our schools and squeeze out some relatively widespread, non academic, vocationally geared subjects'.

As a way of encouraging the party and public to back his reforms Baker continued his attacks on the English education system at the North of England Conference in January 1987. He compared it unfavourably to, what he understood to be, the more successful systems of centralisation and standardisation of education within Europe. It was clear from Baker's speech that education, and the structure of the school curriculum, were no longer to be left to individual LEAs and schools, but were in future to be determined centrally .

During the same month Baker addressed the Society of Education Officers Conference and restated the government's determination not to be diverted from the task of moving quickly towards a National Curriculum. This curriculum was to be based on National Criteria for each subject and be 'sufficiently flexible to allow schools and teachers to use professional expertise and judgement in applying them to individual pupils in their particular schools' (Baker 1987). Within the same package of educational policies was also included measures for the creation of Grant Maintained Status for schools, financial devolution and open enrolment.

The radical and far reaching changes that Baker envisaged were begun in April 1987 with the establishment of Working Groups for creating the core subject curricula in Maths and Science.

Although Baker claimed that he was not stampeded by the New Right, and that the creation of a National Curriculum followed the consensus of both major political parties over the past ten years, tensions were clearly evident. The attempt to make the National Curriculum appear to be a natural progression of policy (a line also followed by Angela Rumbold at the SCDC conference in Leeds 1987) implied a consensus that certainly never actually existed. It is true that a core curriculum had been tacitly supported by both parties for some time; indeed a confidential memo to Callaghan from the DES before the Ruskin College speech in 1976 states; 'the time has probably come to try to establish generally accepted principles for the composition of the secondary curriculum for all pupils, that is to say a 'core' curriculum' (DES 1976), but not the type of core, or additional reforms, that Baker was now suggesting.

The National Curriculum Consultation document (DES 1987a) listed seven foundation and three core subjects with 'themes', such as Information Technology and Health Education, to be delivered through the main subjects. The core subjects were English, Maths and Science; the foundation subjects art, geography, history, music, modern foreign language (not in primary), technology, and PE. White (1988) remarks on the apparent simplicity of process by which the Conservatives conceived of the National Curriculum ; 'You pick ten foundation subjects to fill 80 - 90 % of the school timetable, highlight three as of particular importance and arrange for tests at different ages' (p.113). He also points out that the justification and criteria for this choice of subjects were unclear, and that the aims of the National Curriculum were never expressed beyond a reference to the aims outlined in the White Paper 'Better Schools' (DES 1985c). No explanation was ever advanced concerning why these subjects, or why subjects at all, were chosen.

Reaction against the DES (1987b) document was expressed within the educational world. The disapproval and disbelief of educationalists and teachers alike was widespread (see Lawton 1987, Lawton and Chitty 1988) It heralded a curriculum based entirely upon traditional subjects with little, or no, acknowledgement of the previous DES and HMI curriculum debate of the 1970's and 1980's. As Lawton (1987) commented 'no justification is put forward for the selection of the foundation subjects; no argument put forward to give priority to the core subjects; no attempt made to relate subjects to wider objectives'. There was no place for integrated subjects, or a 'pastoral' curriculum, and 'newer' subjects (such as Sociology or Economics) gained no recognition. The curriculum was also not truly 'national' as it did not apply to independent schools and only loosely to City Technology Colleges. With regard to procedural matters many educationalists were angry that full consultation with the teaching profession had not been carried out.

The Government took no notice of these criticisms as it steered the Bill through parliament. The philosophy of the National Curriculum contained in the consultation document was that of a narrow, subject based, instrumental curriculum similar to the earlier DES drafts of a core curriculum in the 1980 'Framework' document. The subjects themselves were not necessarily a problem, but as Lawton (1987) believed, they had to be viewed as a 'means and not as (an) end'. He also questioned why the Government had not justified its choice of core and foundation subjects. Additional concerns centred on the difficulties of fitting TVEI into the National Curriculum, especially at Key Stage 4, as well as the lack of consideration of curricular needs of the 18% of SEN children in state schools.

Aldrich (1992) also recognised marked similarities between the 1987 curriculum framework and that of earlier curriculum structures, namely the 1904 Board of Education's Secondary Regulations. The 'new' National Curriculum appeared to be merely a re-assertion of the grammar school curriculum devised at the start of the 20th century by Morant and Headlam which was designed to give centrality of control over subjects studied and values promoted.

The National Curriculum Consultation Document (1987) was so strongly criticised by teachers and educationalists that the government misled the public by understating the strength of the criticism it received. The actual principle of establishing a National Curriculum was not widely criticised; however the structure that had been proposed was universally disliked, as was the speed and covert nature of change. The 'partnership years' of educational policy making now appeared to be over - it was clear that the HMI, teachers and advisers were to be largely excluded from the creation of any new educational policy by the Conservative Party.

How had such a change occurred, both in Conservative thinking and action on education within the space of less than a decade? In the early 1980s there had been little real coherence within the Conservative Party with respect to educational policy. Baker produced confident statements about the necessity and direction for curriculum change in 1987 and 1988, but if schools were to be made to respond to market forces and parental choice it was not clear why it was also necessary to introduce a National Curriculum? Baker was, however, keen to promote radical change (despite the opposition of teachers, parents, LEAs, and three former Conservative Ministers of Education) and to show that the Government was willing to initiate

policy in an aggressive way. Ideology rather than actual need therefore began to drive the process of change. During the 1980's the Conservative Government increasingly turned to legislation to bring about its educational reforms. Practice in schools was to become much more closely determined by central government legislation rather than by professional practice and decision making at the local level. As Brighouse (1987) pointed out much of the legislation produced towards the end of the decade was in fact contradictory in nature, and actually undermined proposals formulated by the Conservatives themselves in the early 1980's. As late as March 1985 the second Thatcher Government produced a White Paper (DES 1985b) that stated 'The Government does not propose to introduce legislation affecting the powers of the Secretary of State for Education in relation to the curriculum' (p.12), a position they had radically altered by 1987.

Why was such a dramatic curriculum change initiated in 1987? Firstly, with a general election on the horizon, it was politically expedient for the Conservatives to have an educational issue to rally its support around. The clarion calls of declining standards in Labour controlled LEAs and the disastrous effects of teacher union action led to straightforward Conservative campaigns about declining 'standards', and the need for greater parental choice in education. The proposed National Curriculum was to be used as an indication of the Conservatives' real concern for education and their desire to take effective action. The speed of change was also seen to be important - this partially explains the minimum levels of consultation which ensued, and the embarrassing ignorance of many Conservative MPs about their education policies! The Education Reform Bill of 1987 actually reveals the extent of conflict within the political Right of the Conservative party, and is in no degree a finely honed result of debate between HMI,

DES and politicians. The Bill was also a reflection of the lack of effective action on education taken by the Conservatives during the previous eight years. Education remained an area where Thatcherite principles of the market had not yet been applied ; however this was soon to change as Thatcher herself made clear on a number of occasions.

1988 Education Reform Act.

The Education Reform Act of 1988 rendered much of the earlier 1986 Education Act redundant. Previous concepts of partnership within education became obsolete as LEAs were viewed merely as organisations for the administration of centrally devised policy. This was 'balanced' by a dramatic new focus of power within the person of the Secretary of State for Education - virtually all decision making on educational policies was to be directed through him, and even the National Curriculum Council (NCC) had no effective decision making voice, for the Secretary of State was legally obliged only to 'take note' of its advice. With 175 new powers the Secretary of State could now single handedly redirect the future of education in England and Wales. The Government justified this massive extension of its powers by claiming that consultation, clarification, persuasion and partnership in education had not worked in the past (Rumbold 1987).

The 1988 Act was in fact the first substantial change to be applied to the education system since 1944, introducing as it did the National Curriculum, its associated national system of assessment, local management of schools (LMS), grant maintained (GM) status and City Technology Colleges (CTCs) . LMS reinstated many of the features of the previously

unsuccessful voucher system, with funds delegated to schools on a *per capita* formula, whilst the conferring of grant maintained status enabled schools to become funded directly from central government. The breadth of change encompassed by this single Act is a significant indication of its uniqueness.

The Act also reveals a variety of tensions between control and devolution of power, nationalisation and privatisation of education, and uniformity and differentiation. The influence of the Far Right Hillgate Group, Centre for Policy Studies and Institute for Economic Affairs (which had established an education section under Stuart Sexton in 1986) is clearly apparent throughout its whole structure. Their desire for efficiency bred of competition, and the promotion of 'market forces' within education, are equally obvious. Themes of privatisation and selection similarly permeate the Act. However, it is clear that the resulting legislation was not the result of a unified view of education held by both Baker and Thatcher, being more far-reaching than Baker had initially envisaged. The influence of the Far Right within the Act can indeed be traced from the Education Bill of 1987 back to their previous publications and pamphlets in the early 1980's. This link was in fact so strong that Baker commented (of members of the Centre for Policy Studies) that 'these are the people who are setting the educational agenda'.

The legislation clearly does not represent a rational or logical progression from Conservative educational policies of the early 1980's. Indeed Maw (1988) refers to it as 'a severe rupture in policy on both content and control, confusing and demoralising to what were previously considered 'partners' in the education service' (p.51). She considers it to be a radical change of

policy, rather than a continuation, such that the control of education was no longer shared with limited and balanced powers between LEAs, schools and the government. Most notable is the complete omission of any of the HMI's thoughts on curriculum structure since 1977. This failure of HMI ideas on 'areas of experience' to influence the Government may be due to a lack of real rationale and reference to such 'areas' in their subject specific publication 'Curriculum Matters'.

The 1988 Act can also be seen as an attempt to destroy LEAs - as Peter Wilby of the *Independent* wrote on Election Day 1987 (11th June) 'the return of a Conservative government today will mean the break up of the state education system that has existed since 1944'.

Evidence for this exists in the form of Baker's insistence that CTCs would be independent of LEA control, that Thatcher wanted the creation of 'independent state schools' (quoted in the *Independent* 14.9.87), and that the Hillgate Group called for all schools to be run as independent trusts.

Peter Cornall, the then Senior County Inspector for Cornwall, at the SCDC National Conference in Leeds in September 1987 described the whole process of the National Curriculum's creation in the following manner:

'we have the gravely flawed product of amateurs, a hasty, shallow, simplistic sketch of a curriculum, reductionalist in one direction, marginalizing in another, paying only a dismissive lip service to the professional enterprise and initiative on which all progress depends' (in O'Connor 1987b p.34)

In retrospect the Education Reform Act of 1988 will probably be regarded as the most important piece of educational legislation ever introduced in England and Wales. The reason for this might not be because of its success, but due to the nature and reasons for its failure. No such legislation of its scope and magnitude will probably ever be tried again, for its scale and complexity have been instrumental in its ineffectiveness. The breadth of its influence was vast - it tried to introduce a National Curriculum and national assessment, LMS, and open enrolment in schools, whilst also changing the funding of universities and polytechnics, abolishing academic tenure and removing the award of unrecognised degrees in higher education.

The Act received royal assent on 29th July 1988, instantly increasing the Education Secretary's powers dramatically and placing control of the school curriculum in the hands of central government. It was significantly larger than the Bill (238 clauses and 13 schedules, compared to 147 clauses and 11 schedules in the Bill) and had emerged virtually untouched after 370 hours of debate in the Commons and Lords - the only changes being to the status of RE and to conditions schools had to meet to successfully opt out of state control. Unlike the 1944 Act it was not the result of lengthy consultation and debate, for no consensus was ever gained amongst teachers and educationalists about its form and function. In short it can be argued that it was an act that met short term political, rather than educational, aims. It espoused quality education for a few, at the expense of a decent education for the majority.

We can thus see that there were at least three distinct approaches to curriculum planning in the 1970's and 1980's:

- 1.) HMI 'entitlement curriculum'.
- 2.) Modernising vocational model (MSC).
- 3.) Neo - Conservative model with its emphasis on traditional subjects (though technology is included in the National Curriculum).

The New Right.

The influence of the New Right in the creation of the 1988 act was dramatic and bears closer inspection. As a group their initial ideas had partly developed from the speeches of Sir Keith Joseph, who articulated the views of Right Wing radicals when Margaret Thatcher took over leadership of the Conservative Party from Edward Heath in February 1975. Joseph espoused the concepts of what we now call 'Thatcherism' - these are clearly evident from his contributions to the Oxford Union debate of December 1975 where he talked of reversing the 'left wing ratchet' on both British society and the education system. The creation of various educational study groups within the emergent New Right from the mid 1970's had a profound influence on Conservative educational policy making up until the 1988 Education Reform Act. Indeed in August 1974 Thatcher and Joseph themselves set up the Centre for Policy Studies, an influential and powerful think tank which spawned sub groups such as the Education Study Group.

In December 1974 radical Right Wing thought on education is clear through the action of the 'Friends of the Education Voucher Experiment in Representative Regions' (FEVER) which

sought the privatisation of the education system through the use of vouchers. These vouchers represented a unit of the average cost of schooling within an LEA and could be used by parents to choose a school for their child. Rhodes Boyson strongly supported such vouchers and as a member of the National Council for Educational Standards he sought to transform Right Wing educational ideology, like the voucher scheme, into practice. The NCES published booklets such as 'Battle Lines for Education'(1973), 'Parental Choice' (1975), and 'The Crisis in Education' (1975) which all highlighted the areas of education which were to be targeted by the New Right in the 1980's. Progressivism of every type was to be countered, traditional educational standards upheld, and methods of measuring and 'levering up' standards sought. The overall conclusion of Right Wing thinking was that a nationally enforced curriculum was needed to measure standards and that parental choice had to be increased. By the end of 1983 the unsuccessful voucher idea had been dropped; as Joseph stated to the Conservative Party Conference; 'the voucher, at least in the foreseeable future, is dead' due mainly to its cost, administrative, institutional, and legislative difficulties. As Chitty (1989) argues the privatisation of education at one go was, perhaps, too much for politicians and the public to accept:

‘What was needed was a more subtle way of incorporating the principle of the voucher, 'possibly under a different name', into education policy. The Baker Education Bill would appear to fit this strategy perfectly' (p.188).

During the late 1980s the DES and Secretary of State for Education increasingly came under the influence of the extreme Right within the Conservative party. The Hillgate Group in particular inevitably saw the creation of a National Curriculum as a convenient cover through which to exact radical changes on educational policy. There is much truth in the contention

that the Conservative Government at the time was not actually very interested in creating a National Curriculum per se, but that such a curriculum would provide a vehicle for the introduction of massive national testing, selection and streaming and provide evidence for parents of the desirability of schools in their areas.

Educational planning meetings at Downing Street were held in 1986-7 with the increasingly powerful New Right groups to decide how to reverse the comprehensivization of schools and destroy the 'national system, locally administered' which had been introduced by the 1944 Act. The Hillgate Group advised the establishment of individual school trusts, but indicated that movement towards such privatised schooling would be difficult. Sexton believed that change would take at least five years and that it could not be achieved in 'one giant stride'; therefore per capita funding was suggested as an interim stage to the eventual introduction of an educational voucher scheme.

New Right thinking about the introduction of a National Curriculum was typical of a curious amalgam of traditional liberal ideals of free education and traditional conservative ideals of state authority. For example Joseph, Sexton and Sherman tended to follow a neo liberal line advocating freedom of choice, individuality, the market, minimal government and laissez faire; whereas the neo conservatives (as typified by Scruton and the Hillgate Group) advocated social authoritarianism, disciplined society, hierarchy, subordination, nation and strong government. This combination of views amongst the Institute for Economic Affairs, the Hillgate Group and the Centre for Policy Studies Chitty (1989) sees as having 'contradictory policy implications' (p.212) .

Many right-wing philosophers saw the promotion of English, Maths and Science as being essential to the future economic growth of Britain. Children were equated with their instrumental value to the economy, but without any individual or collective need to develop attitudes critical of their society or questioning of authority. Parents, it was believed, would broadly support utilitarian educational aims and the possibilities of their reaction against a curriculum that both denied personal empowerment, and indicated subservience to the economy, were barely considered. As White (1988) states the New Right had rejected the idea that 'a National Curriculum should reflect the social ideal of personal and political self determination' (p.120), and that it ought to be a curriculum to help individuals develop moral courage, confidence, judgement and self determination, rather than merely fulfilling utilitarian aims.

The Hillgate Group were indeed the only Right Wing group that fully advocated the creation of a National Curriculum, and only then as a means of social control. They were strong enough to impose their views by the end of the 1980's, such that old established orthodoxies in education were fought over on the Right's terms. The New Right's somewhat incoherent philosophy - mediating clumsily between the individual and the state - fostered beliefs that society no longer existed and that nations were composed of sets of self interested individuals. Without the influence of the Hillgate Group, and a significant section of DES officials, the National Curriculum would almost certainly never have been a major component of the 1988 Education Reform Act. Amongst those individuals who actually ended up drafting the 1988

Act there was only half hearted support for the National Curriculum ; there is indeed some truth in the contention that it now exists as something of an embarrassment for the Far Right.

The overall mistrust and dissatisfaction with all elements of the educational establishment is clear in the publications of the New Right at this time. In December 1986 the Hillgate Group published 'Whose Schools? A radical Manifesto' which called for a full scale investigation of HMI; criticisms were later extended (in September 1987 in 'The Reform of British Education') to DES civil servants who similarly were not to be trusted to oversee the implementation of reforms.

The National Curriculum was thus the brainchild of a section of the New Right who sought to move quickly towards a fully market oriented system of state education. They expounded philosophies that were culturally supremacist and anti egalitarian (Chitty 1992c) in their belief that the British culture should be saved from 'alien influences' they stood against the perceived undermining of traditional values and hierarchical structures by seeking to diminish equal opportunities, multiculturalism, anti racism and relevant education for working class children. Additionally they sought to destroy LEAs, which they believed had the power to 'corrupt the minds and souls of the young' (Hillgate Group 1986 p.18). Chitty (1987b) concludes that the New Right wanted children to 'be educated once more to 'know their place' in the social hierarchy' (p.88), a view that Ranson (1984) also found prevalent amongst DES officials. This, the supporters of the New Right believed, could be achieved through the unfettered workings of the market.

Conservative Modernisers.

In contrast to the New Right the Conservative party also contained a group of politicians in the 1980's whose views on education were also utilitarian, but opposed to those of the Far Right. During his period as chair of the MSC (1982-4) Lord Young led a group of Conservatives who did not fit easily into the New Right mould, but who became influential during Joseph's period of office at the DES (see Jones 1989). Their actions helped to delay the privatising measures promoted by the various Right Wing think tanks. The 'Conservative Modernisers' wanted secondary education to prepare children for life in an enterprise economy and therefore based their educational philosophy on a strong vocational component to the curriculum. The curriculum was to be differentiated to prepare children for the tasks they would later perform in the capitalist economy; Lord Young (1985) summarised this into crude percentage terms with approximately 15% of children advancing to higher education, 30-35% staying on at school post 16 to take vocational and academic qualifications, and 50% going on to two years of YTS.

The main achievement of the modernisers was the introduction of the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) in Autumn 1983. Fourteen pilot schools were established in 1983, growing to a total of 600 institutions by 1986. The modernisers had no time for the reintroduction of grammar schools, a view which contrasted strongly with that of the Hillgate Group, considering them to be a major cause of Britain's current industrial decline, and resisted the introduction of a National Curriculum which they believed to be both narrowly academic and irrelevant. Privatisation of the education system was also rejected.

They espoused ideals of introducing a much broader vocational curriculum than had previously existed in British schools; interestingly these views have recently regained prominence, and indeed governmental acceptance, through the Dearing Final Report (1994). The influence of the Conservative Modernisers declined in the late 1980's due to a brief improvement in the labour market and signs of economic recovery. The MSC itself lost influence once Sir Keith Joseph was removed from the post of Education Secretary in May 1986, whilst the DES fell under the influence of the Downing Street Policy Unit led by Professor Brian Griffiths until 1990.

Interpretations of the 1988 Education Reform Act.

In December 1987 one of Baker's speeches to the House of Commons referred to our education system as being 'too producer dominated' and in need of greater differentiation, accountability and choice. As Nick Stuart, Deputy Secretary of the DES at the time and the man largely responsible for the final draft of the Education Reform Act 1988 stated, 'accountability has been regarded by the Conservative government as the linchpin of its educational reforms'. Sexton, however, saw better management of schools as the vital component. In the *Sunday Times* (22nd April 1990) he stated 'The core of the 1988 act is those measures giving schools within the state system both the freedom and the incentive to manage more effectively'.

Both the focus on accountability and management of schools can be seen as an attempt to undermine the comprehensive ideal. Interestingly earlier pressure in the Thatcher

administration to destroy comprehensives directly by the reintroduction of the 11+ had failed, for the parents of Solihull and Redbridge who Conservatives thought would support selection actually objected to it. The Education Reform Act was therefore introduced partly to provide alternative means of parental selection via another route. Thatcher herself referred to the Conservative Party's desire to introduce 'independent state schools' during an interview with the *Independent* (14th September 1987). Thus the failed voucher schemes of the 1980's, which were an attempt to restart the selection process in education, by a means other than crude 11+ testing were replaced by systems of 'pupils as vouchers' (Thomas 1988).

Why did the 1988 Act appear to many observers and educationalists to be flawed, anti democratic and doomed to failure from its inception? If we consider previous educational legislation that also failed to fulfil its aims there are some definite parallel theme in their shared lack of success. For example failure often occurs because of a lack of money and resources, or insufficient political will, both of which has subsequently dogged the 1988 Act. The drive towards centralisation, consistent with Conservative desires to bring the market place into education as well as increasing bureaucratic control and management, is seen by Harland (1988) as a part of the 'legitimation crisis' facing many industrialised Western Nations. These theories, partly developed from the neo Marxist theories of State expounded by Jurgen Habermas (1975), argue that the state has begun to replace the market as the steering force behind the capitalist system. People lose confidence in the welfare state's ability to deliver their minimum demands and expectations and therefore tend to favour governments who produce radical responses to problems. The National Curriculum may be seen as such a response, for politicians who feel that they have to 'deliver' more, therefore have to 'control' more, within

the education sector. Governments also seek to legitimise their rights to control education; thus Harland (1988), commenting on Weiler's (1983) analysis of the German educational system, finds parallels between the two overtly dominant national approaches.

Major points of concern surround the manner in which educational change has been forced to occur, and the motivation behind these changes. For many in the Conservative government and DES it appears that having power and control over education was more important than what was actually done with this power for the education sector. Weiler (1983) notes that to legitimise its involvement in education the state often introduces the notion of 'public participation'. This establishes the means by which citizens 'participate' within the system and introduces a degree of choice, but as Harland (1988) states;

'consultation, like experimentation, is often no more than a device for defusing conflict : the views offered are frequently self cancelling and the initial policy survives intact except that a few practical pit-falls may have been averted' (p.98).

She sees the National Curriculum as a 'knee jerk' reaction to crisis, with a government justifying its' interference by saying that public confidence in the state's ability to perform its duties has been eroded.

The belief that a National Curriculum can be put in place without the advisers, inspectors and support services can be said to be naive and 'attempts at legitimation which do not recognise the need to carry professional opinion are foolhardy, to say the least' (Harland 1988 p.99). She concludes:

'unless the Government can convince us that their intentions are not only legitimate but also acceptable to professional opinion, then the chance that they will be subverted on the ground remains high' (p.101).

There was some evidence in the late 1980's that the Government would not continue to have things all its own way with respect to implementing the 1988 Act. Growing teacher dissatisfaction with the National Curriculum, the TGAT Report (1988) and the publication of Curriculum Guidance 3 'The Whole Curriculum' (March 1990) by the NCC, which argued that the National Curriculum alone could not provide a broad and balanced education for children, seemed to suggest a lack of overall governmental control. Other publicly embarrassing evidence of this came in December 1991 when the 'Three Wise Men' presented their Report to the Government on primary education. The Education Secretary at the time, Kenneth Clarke, expected this Report to criticise child centred learning, call for a return to traditional methods of whole class teaching and endorse the process of streaming children. However it failed to recommend any single teaching method, rejected the idea of streaming and broadly supported much of current practice in primary schools. Professor Robin Alexander of Leeds University in the *Independent on Sunday* (2nd February 1992) later complained that Clarke had 'hijacked' and 'misinterpreted' their Report for political purposes.

Later Developments.

At two key points in the last thirty years, namely 1976/7 and 1987/8, politicians, and their political advisers, have taken the lead in determining educational policy. Following the imposition of the Education Reform Act in 1988 the Conservative Government has been

unwilling to relinquish the tight hold it has on education. The increasingly radical form of Conservative education policy produced in the 1980s under the sway of the New Right has largely been maintained since 1990 by John Major. In February 1992 Major sent a letter to Fred Jarvis, former general secretary of the NUT, stating 'I ask you not to doubt my sincerity and determination to reverse the failings of the comprehensive system and the cycle of low expectations and low standards it has fostered' (reported in the *Guardian* 28th February 1992).

Conservative Secretaries of State for Education under Major, such as Kenneth Clarke, John Patten and Gillian Shepherd, have effectively continued the party's support for the ideas of the Right. Patten, for example, heralded the 1992 Education White Paper 'Choice and Diversity: A New Framework for Schools' as 'a blueprint for the state system for the next 25 years' focusing as it did on themes of quality, diversity, parental choice, school autonomy and accountability which had become so prevalent in the late 1980s. The continuing pressure for schools to opt out, the establishment of a Funding Agency for Schools in 1994 to replace LEAs, increased specialisation in certain schools, the creation of 'Education Associations' to act as 'hit squads' to close ineffectual schools, the review of Religious Education, and the merging of SEAC and NCC to form SCAA in October 1993 all bear witness to the Government's continuing zeal in reforming education from a Right Wing perspective. However the simple fact that the 1988 Act has required another huge piece of educational legislation in 1992, whilst the 1944 Act remained largely intact for over forty years, reveals something of the confusion in Government thinking.

The radical line on testing in the National Curriculum has been largely upheld, despite defeat at the hands of English teachers over Key Stage 3 testing in 1993 which has threatened the very core of the Government's drive towards creating league tables of schools. The School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) has been charged with the duty of carrying on the process of implementation of the National Curriculum and its assessment under direct government control. Its creation in October 1993 followed the removal of both Duncan Graham of NCC and Philip Halsey of SEAC in July 1991, and their replacement by David Pascall and Brian Griffiths, both formerly of the Downing Street Policy Unit. SCAA has taken responsibility for revising GCSEs (which were introduced only in 1988), introducing A/AS level cores into new syllabuses in September 1995, and maintaining Dearing's (1994) suggested drive towards creating clear pathways for academic and vocational education from 14-19.

The assessment question is intricately tied to the issue of the structure of key stage 4 within the National Curriculum. Early in the National Curriculum's development the government realised that Key Stage 4 would need to be reformed for it would not 'fit' into the timetabled time available in schools. The inclusion of cross curricular studies were problematic, whilst a lobby of support for increased vocational options at Key Stage 4 was again developing following the deepening of the economic recession. In January 1990 the Education Secretary John MacGregor (at the Conference of the Society of Education Officers in London) stated that the government was already reviewing Key Stage 4, the suggestion that some pupils might drop certain subjects at 14 came at the PAT conference in Nottingham in July 1990. Art, PE, geography, history, and music were all now considered as possible 'opt out' subjects, only leaving five compulsory National Curriculum subjects for 14-16 year olds to study. Just how

far the Government had now moved away from its original ideas on the curriculum was made clear in October 1990 when the Education Minister Tim Eggar revealed in the *Daily Telegraph* that secondary schools might in future be encouraged to develop parallel 'academic' and 'vocational' courses for children. Moves towards greater provision of vocational education were increased in the May 1992 and 1994 White Papers on 'Education for the 21st Century' and 'Competitiveness', with the establishment of GNVQs and NVQs as course qualifications developed by BTEC, City and Guilds and RSA .

In January 1991 Clarke effectively abandoned Key Stage 4 by ignoring the NCC's advice that all ten National Curriculum subjects should be compulsory until 16. In his speech to the North of England Education Conference in Leeds he stated that only Maths, English and Science would be sacrosanct, and that pupils at 14 could now drop art, music, history or geography, with PE treated 'flexibly'. Additionally the Government appeared to be contemplating abandoning the GCSE examination, introduced in 1988, by allowing competing qualifications and dividing GCSEs into tiered papers for pupils of different abilities - effectively a reintroduction of 'O' levels by the 'back door'. Such examinations would remove two fundamental principles of the GCSEs, namely that they were for all pupils and that coursework would be awarded high percentage marks. Chitty (1992a) concludes that 'the story of Key Stage 4 is undeniably one of amendment, confusion and eventual abandonment' (p.52).

The planned destruction of the LEAs and the covert reintroduction of selection, partly through the process of schools 'opting out', has also not occurred smoothly. Although opting out has been encouraged by the introduction of legislation to promote grant maintained status the

progress of this aspect of the 1988 Act has proved problematic. The numbers of schools opting out has now slowed to almost a trickle. At the time of the 1992 election only 219 schools had done so, by the end of 1992 this figure had risen to only 287 out of some 25,000 schools. The introduction of City Technology Colleges has been equally fraught. By September 1993, 15 CTCs were operational, although sponsors have proved extremely difficult to attract, and the plans for new CTCs in their original form have now been abandoned.

Other aspects of recent legislation which have been imposed are the appraisal of all teachers (from 1994-5), the removal of all FE, sixth form and tertiary colleges from LEAs control (April 1993), changes to A/AS levels and the introduction of new vocational qualifications. Beyond schools the HMI have been severely cutback by the Government and their roles redefined, whilst ITT has faced radical funding switches from higher education institutions to schools. The power of the centre has continually increased; the *Observer* (2nd August 1992) has referred to the Government's action upon education as creating 'one of the most centralised, undemocratic and bureaucratic education systems in the Western world'.

The amount of educational legislation passed throughout the 1980s was indeed substantial, only being paralleled by the three education acts published between 1868 and 1870. The 1980's saw the partial victory of New Right educational policies, both as a reaction to the disillusionment of post war social democratic ideals and due to the general world recession which had begun in the 1970s. This greatly undermined the policies of the prosperous 1960s and caused a re-alignment of the Left and Right. Thus the removal of Edward Heath as

Conservative leader in 1975 set in motion the dismantling of the welfare capitalist consensus at the hands of Right Wing 'think tanks'.

The New Right philosophies, in education as in many other fields, are not coherent though.

The alliance between the values of the state, the family and the individual are tenuous and there seems to be a 'marked hostility to all institutions which mediate between the individual and the state, so that the state emerges as the only collectivity in a society of individuals' (Chitty 1992a p.99). Within the text of this thesis many of the trends which have affected policy making during the recent Conservative administrations will be referred to, especially if they directly imposed upon the action of the GWG.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

'It is clear that techniques must be selected to meet clearly identified research needs. Being an expert research 'technician' in particular methods, while commendable in itself, must be balanced by a clear understanding of the social, political and philosophical contexts in which the techniques are located'

M. Williams (1996 p.10).

Naish (1993) states that educational research undertaken in the UK in recent years has often received a 'bad press', or has been 'deliberately ignored by some politicians and their advisers as part of an attempt to exclude the professional educator from decision making in the field of education' (p.64). He also highlights how such research is disregarded by teachers as having little relevance to the day-to-day problems of classroom practice, and tends to be generally small scale and under-funded. As such educational research is caricatured as being based on unsatisfactory samples, idiosyncratic in character, and lacking in reliability and validity.

In an attempt to rectify this image Naish invited colleagues in a variety of countries to outline their thoughts on what constituted *quality* in research in geographical and environmental education (see *International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education Vol 2, No1 p 66-88*). In responding to this invitation, McElroy (1993) suggested that before specific criteria for judging research quality could be instituted, a set of principles on which the research was based should be established. Whilst not attempting to list these criteria McElroy focused on the need to 'create knowledge within the particular paradigm of a specific community of scholars' (p.66). Importantly he believed that 'the enquiry procedures used and

the knowledge discoveries claimed must be congruent with the contextual research paradigm' (p.67). This is why it is important to clearly state the research paradigm in which a piece of research is set for it may not stand scrutiny within another paradigm and therefore suffer unfair criticisms; as McElroy states 'A chair is not a bad chair because it does not satisfy the specifications of a table' (p.67).

The term 'methodological congruence' (Watts and Bentley 1985) highlights the need for consistency or compatibility between the methods used to analyse research data and those used to collect it. For example the methods, approaches and philosophy of ethnographic research sit uneasily with the use of certain statistical analysis. As Powney and Watts (1987) state:

'The traditional ethos of educational research has, in the past, been based on the notion that if a sufficient number of relevant facts are assembled the laws governing these facts will then be revealed (Pope, Watts and Gilbert 1983). It is a tradition which places emphasis on the conduct of research according to the common picture of 'scientific principles'. When applied to studies of human enterprise the tendency is to succumb to a mechanistic model of people, a model which lends support to the reductionism inherent in any form of scientific research where clearly defined components (dependent and independent variables) are essential units. Reductionism is a tendency towards analysing complex arrangements into simple constituents or, more insidiously, that complex systems can be fully understood in terms of such simple components' (p.160-1)

In the paper cited earlier, McElroy (1993) believed that any critic of a piece of research should know *what* the researcher intended, and *why* and *how* the research was undertaken. In consideration of the latter the following elements should appear within any piece of research writing :

- (i) a statement of the research problem
- (ii) an explanation and justification of the study approach taken

- (iii) a location for the investigation - within the current body of knowledge and research paradigm.
- (iv) a plain portrayal of the context.
- (v) a report and justification of the research design, methodology, instruments and means of analysis.
- (vi) a statement of the limitations of the research
- (viii) acknowledgement of the amount and kind of researcher involvement
- (ix) a concession of the interests inherent in the study
- (x) a statement of how the ethical considerations were handled.

Such a list is broadly similar to that of others who have attempted to define what constitutes quality in educational research, often with particular reference to geographical education (Carr and Kemmis 1986, Phillips and Pugh 1987, Delamont 1992, Benejam 1993, Boardman 1993, Schrettenbrunner 1993). In addition to McElroy's criteria for quality other researchers highlight the necessity of dealing with 'a meaningful issue in an educational context', where the research addresses 'significant problems', and uses research and statistical techniques correctly (Schrettenbrunner 1993 p.73). Considerations of whether the research could be replicated by another researcher (Boardman 1993), and whether it addresses the basic question of 'how geography teaching can be improved' (Benejam 1993 p.81) are also important.

Within this thesis the principles for quality research, outlined predominantly by McElroy (1993), have been applied.

The quantitative and qualitative research traditions.

Methodologies of educational and social scientific research divide into two broad categories - namely quantitative and qualitative research - although it is perhaps more useful to view different methodologies as contributing to a continuum, rather than as two extremes.

Nonetheless some researchers have indeed chosen to describe the approaches as polar opposites (see Bryman 1988, Patton 1980). The distinction between quantitative and qualitative methodologies is somewhat masked by the use of terms such as 'positivist' and 'empiricist' for quantitative; and 'naturalistic', 'ethnographic', 'constructivist', and 'interpretative' for qualitative approaches.

Quantitative research methods are usually associated with the natural sciences (including the social and behavioural sciences) and are typified by hard edged, positivistic research which uses 'objective' data and relies on scientific methods such as hypothesis testing. As Boardman (1993) states :

'Quantitative research is usually described as 'hard' research which uses 'rigorous' methods of data collection and analysis, resulting in 'objective' findings. Research of this kind tests preconceived hypotheses already deduced from a known body of theory. The data collected are normally analysed for statistical significance in order to verify, modify or reject the hypothesis'
(p.85)

The methods are often preoccupied with questions concerning definitions, objectivity, replicability and causality. They are usually based on the idea that a single objective and observable reality exists which can be measured and ultimately understood. Experimental research, structured interviews and questionnaires are favoured techniques. The studying of

events in an 'objective and 'value free' way' (Vulliamy, Lewin and Stephens 1990), in principle at least, is therefore central. Such positivistic approaches, being heavily reliant on observation and measurement, regularly aim to produce laws or generalisations that are observable under similar conditions elsewhere. They have also earned themselves the prestige of being considered rigorous, even though the applicability of these techniques to the diverse range of research questions within education is not always straightforward.

Qualitative research techniques are clearly different. By contrast Boardman (1993) classifies such research as being:

'variously described as 'soft', 'subjective' or 'less rigorous'. Instead of testing hypotheses it aims to explore situations with a view to describing, explaining or illuminating them. It believes in giving people the maximum flexibility when they agree to participate in research. Questionnaires, for example, will be largely free-response, and interviews will be semi structured or unstructured, giving respondents plenty of scope to answer questions in their own way' (p.85)

With their assumptions of multiple realities, which are a function of personal perceptions and interactions, such research techniques deny the existence of a single objective world that can be measured. Unlike quantitative approaches the qualitative methods are not interested in isolating set laws of behaviour, but in describing the world in which behaviours occur. These are explained from the perspective of those who occupy this world. Qualitative research methods include illuminative and ethnographic approaches which can be holistic, subjective and impressionistic. Their quest for insight, rather than statistical and empirical certainty, has led them to be criticised for their perceived lack of rigour. However, it is widely acknowledged that objective facts rarely exist within research that focuses primarily on the actions of people.

Therefore narrow scientific approaches to data collection are usually inappropriate when dealing with people's behaviour.

Qualitative research methods are generally more flexible than those of quantitative research because they do not rely upon the testing of preconceived hypotheses, such that the research approach and direction can be tailored to the changing research questions (Glazer and Strauss 1967, Bogdan and Biklen 1982). Such research is also holistic and attempts to provide a contextual understanding of both causes and consequences of peoples' actions, thus often requiring the use of a wide range of research techniques. It is worth remembering, as Douglas (1976) does, that since all research methods differ greatly in their particular costs and benefits 'a researcher generally finds it best to use some combination or mixture of methods' (p.94).

The major research paradigms which shape current educational research can also be explored by applying Kuhn's (1970) critique of research within the 1960s, although it is also essential to be aware of the political and ideological basis of each piece of research with respect to its findings and recommendations. As such Habermas (1974) classifies research broadly into *empiricist*, *interpretative* and *critical* approaches - empiricist approaches are quantitative and assume that knowledge is objective, can be generalised into laws and theories, and is based upon evidence gained through observation. Such knowledge can then be used to predict or control events. Here the observer is assumed to be able to adopt a detached standing from the data being observed.

Interpretative approaches are qualitative and assume the subjectivity of knowledge which is constructed only through mutual arbitration. Research within the interpretative paradigm seeks to establish an understanding of events, rather than aiming to predict or control them. The participant observation approach is often adopted by the researcher who uses interpretative methods in an attempt to understand more fully the beliefs, views and opinions of those involved.

Critical approaches often overlap with those of interpretative research, however they assume that knowledge is never value-free and is often distorted and problematic. The interests of different social groups is bound up within what is being researched which distorts the picture received by the researcher. The desirable outcome of such research, as seen by Habermas (1974), is some form of action to improve people's lives - although it is acknowledged that all knowledge has the potential to either oppress or liberate.

The research problem under investigation properly dictates the methods of investigation used and may call for a combination of methods across the continuum of qualitative and quantitative techniques. Although eclecticism must be guarded against, as well as the combination of inconsistent methods, findings from numerous data collection methods often increases the credibility of research findings. With regard to any research methods adopted within a piece of educational research Broadfoot's (1988) words should be heeded:

'It is clear that educational research, like the other so called social sciences, occupies an uneasy conceptual and methodological middle ground between naturalistic science on the one hand and interpretative disciplines such as history and literature on the other. Indeed it can, and should, build on the strengths of both' (p.92).

The aims and objectives of the research.

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate the ways in which the Geography Working Group, established by the Conservative government in May 1989, addressed its task of devising the Geography National Curriculum.

The major theme within the research was to analyse how the GWG was established, the task it perceived it had been ascribed, and the processes by which it executed its task. Consideration of the Working Group's ideas about the aims of geography education in schools, their view of the state of geography education in England and Wales, and their interpretation of the scope of their brief was also important. Of particular interest to the researcher was establishing a critique of the ways in which the GWG chose, or were persuaded, to work. This implied a study of group dynamics which constitutes much of the content of Chapter 7. The guidance provided for the Group by its terms of reference, by the Chair, by the membership of the Group itself, and through external agencies and events during its life, were all considered to be extremely significant (see Chapters 4, 5 and 6).

The work of the GWG was analysed from the initial stages of its operation, through to the production of its Interim Report (November 1989), Final Report (June 1990), the NCC Consultation Report (November 1990) and Statutory Orders (March 1991). The effectiveness of public consultation was investigated and the modus operandi of the Group during its year of office was highlighted. The thesis ends with a consideration of continuity, change and the

future of geographical education based upon the contemporary influences on the subject both within schools and universities (Chapter 8).

Background to the research.

In order to provide an appropriate context to the research it was necessary to present an overview of the historical development and role of geography education in secondary schools from the 1870s, with particular attention to the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s when the Schools Council geography projects were initiated and utilised in the classroom (see Chapter 1). Background information on the pedagogy of geography education before the implementation of the GNC - with particular reference to enquiry and active learning, issues approaches, affective learning and thematic studies - was also necessary. The situation in primary and secondary schools with respect to the teaching of geography before the GNC, and the GWG's stated 'matters of concern' about geography education, were considered important.

Paralleling the analysis of the place of geography education in schools before the implementation of the GNC was a study of the development of curriculum policy making, with an emphasis on the period immediately up to the publication of the Education Reform Act in 1988 (see Chapter 2). HMI and DES documentation indicate an increasingly centralising influence on education from the Conservative governments of the 1980s resulting in, amongst other things, the creation of a single subject based national curriculum. The foundations for change towards such a curriculum were traced back to the Ruskin College Speech of 1976 and

the political background to this change highlighted. This involved a study of the thinking of the 'New Right' within the educational debates of the 1980s.

This thesis is therefore a contribution to the study both of the nature of working within a governmentally appointed group in education, and of the contemporary history of change within geography curricula in schools. The former implied a study of government policy towards education, the attitudes of the DES, NCC and HMI towards the National Curriculum Working Groups, the views of teachers towards change, and the dynamics of working within the GWG. The latter necessitated an investigation of the impact of curriculum change within geography education in the recent past and an appreciation of the thoughts of curriculum developers, educationalists, subject associations, the general public and teachers. Naturally the two themes regularly intertwined, and are often inseparable if one is to achieve a full understanding of events.

The main research methodology applied was to interview members of the Geography Working Group. The interviewing of such 'elites' is obviously fraught with problems. Gaining access to the people one wants to interview is not always easy - in this respect the GWG members were almost all accommodating once the terms and parameters of the interviews were made clear to them by the researcher. All except one interviewee agreed that their interview could be taped. The only member of the GWG who did not consent to be interviewed was its Chair, Sir Leslie Fielding. Despite receiving a series of letters asking him to clarify why he did not wish to be interviewed, he continued to withhold his consent, stating merely that he believed the work of the GWG to have been 'confidential' and therefore inappropriate for him to comment upon.

Specific questions arose which provided a focus for the research. These became the basis for the semi structured interviews of each of the GWG members (fig 3.1):

Fig 3.1

About the way in which the Group worked together:

1. Do you feel that the GWG worked effectively as a Group in devising a Geography National Curriculum?
2. Was consensus easily gained amongst the members of the Group? Alternatively were there areas of contention that were difficult to resolve?
3. Did you at any time feel there were pressures either from within, or outside, the Group to arrive at certain set decisions about the nature of geography and the way it should be taught?
4. Do you feel that the Group was 'led' by any particular individual, or Group, in its decision making? If so was this a positive or negative influence?

About the nature of the geography the Group was promoting:

1. What do you feel were the key issues that were discussed regarding the type of geography that should be taught within the National Curriculum? Were there definite aspects of geography teaching and learning that the Group thought the National Curriculum should aim to improve?
2. How far do you think the Group was influenced by 'professional geographers' (teachers, advisers, teacher trainers, university lecturers, members of professional associations, etc) in its decision making and ideas regarding geography?
3. How far do you think the Group was influenced by 'others' (politicians, parents, etc) in its decision making and ideas regarding geography?

4. What influence did public consultation have on the nature of the Group's work following the publication of the Interim Report (November 1989) and Final Report (June 1990).

Additional questions were asked of Working Group members, as appropriate, according to their responses to the questions above. Of particular concern to the researcher was to establish whether there was an inevitability about the nature and content of the report which the GWG produced given the political context in which it was working. Indications of whether Group members felt such pressures, or whether they believed they had a free rein to develop whatever style of curriculum they chose, were important.

The question of whether 'government' Working Groups inevitably produce the kind of reports a government wants, or whether the framework of an assessment and single subject based national curriculum had already largely pre determined the outcome of the Working Groups, was considered apposite. The views of the HMI, DES, GA and government of the time were also pertinent in providing a frame of reference for the subsequent analysis of the development of the GNC.

The direct influence of ministers and secretaries of state for education on the GNC (which finally became statutory after the GWG was disbanded) was of particular concern, as was the role of civil servants and the Chair assigned to the GWG.

As the research progressed it was possible to directly test the hypotheses put forward in recent commentaries on the creation of the National Curriculum, most notably Duncan Graham's account of the work of the NCC in 'A Lesson for Us All' (1993). A letter, highlighting sections

of his version of the creation of the GNC, was sent to Graham and subsequently followed up by an interview (see Chapter 7).

Research methods applied within this thesis.

It is perhaps a truism, as Reid (1978) states, that the style of research one adopts must be appropriate to the nature of the research question under investigation. Additionally detailed and full observation must precede any attempts at interpretation. Thus the adoption of a rigid theoretical or methodological structure often means that one's research fails to detect important evidence, and can lead to the reinforcement of previously held beliefs. To avoid such problems Reid (1978) suggests the re-focusing of research questions and methodologies as new data is collected. Bell (1987) reiterates this point when she states that 'no approach prescribes, nor automatically rejects any particular method' (p.34) and therefore pre-judgement of research techniques must be guarded against. As with all research methods one has to avoid what Bryman (1988) refers to as 'methodological parochialism', that is the process of extolling 'the virtues of a particular method, while directly or inferentially denigrating the alternatives'.

Interviews

The major research technique used when gathering information from GWG members was the semi structured interview. Cohen and Manion (1981), citing the work of Cannel and Kahn, define interviews as being:

'initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research relevant information and focused by him (sic) on content specified by research objectives of systematic descriptions, prediction or explanation' (p.47)

It is therefore the specific intention of the researcher to illicit data from the respondent which determines whether an interview, as such, is taking place.

Interviewing styles have variously been described as 'structured', 'semi structured' or 'unstructured', 'focused' or 'unfocussed', 'limited' or 'in-depth'. In the case of unstructured and unfocussed interviews the analysis of responses often become complicated due to their greater breadth of scope. Perhaps a less tidy but more meaningful way of thinking about interviews is to consider them existing along a continuum extending from what Powney and Watts (1987) describe as 'respondent interviews' to 'informant interviews'.

In the 'respondent interview' the interviewer maintains control of the process with the interview being structured in such a way as to deliver his or her intentions. The structure can be loose or tight, either following a general set of ideas, or a pre-ordained and planned pathway. Two important aspects are detailed:

'Firstly, they (respondent interviews) carry the connotation that there are a set of questions that are to be answered, even if they are not in a prescribed order, so that the interviewer can arrive at some point at the major issues involved. Secondly, and more importantly, it is the interviewer's 'issues' that matter. The purpose of the interview is to satisfy the researcher's questions; it is he or she who overtly directs the proceedings' (Powney and Watts, 1987 p.18)

Informant interviews are more loosely structured around the interests and views of the interviewee, who has considerable scope in defining the direction and composition of the

interview process. Being less restrictive than respondent interviews the resulting text may prove more difficult to analyse, but will be an expression of what the interviewee, rather than the interviewer, feels is important to reveal.

There are considerable benefits to using interview techniques, perhaps the major ones being their adaptability. They provide the researcher with the opportunity to gather complex data and information and can allow more detailed probing and prompting than questionnaires. This allows the interviewer to control the data collection, and being more personal than questionnaires often helps him or her obtain a better quality and depth of response. The way in which such responses are made by the interviewee can also provide additional information that written answers often conceal. Importantly the interviewer can instantly correct any misunderstandings, or rephrase questions if they are ambiguous.

It was felt that a closely structured questionnaire would be inappropriate to the task of gathering interview data in this case. Each of the Working Group members received a set of eight questions before the interview (see fig 3.1) and were informed that they could choose not to answer any of these, could answer them in any order they wished, and that a small number of supplementary questions might be asked by the researcher in response to some of their answers. All those interviewed agreed to these conditions, did not refuse to answer any of the questions, and accepted the order in which they were presented. The aim was not to limit the responses to the questions set, but to allow the interviewees to 'tell their own story' using a semi-structured format for response. As such the majority of interviews were neither of the heavily structured 'questionnaire' type, nor of the ethnographic type where the boundaries of

researcher and participant, or interviewer and respondent, are totally blurred. In the majority of cases the interviews lasted about one and a half hours - although the shortest was about one hour and the longest almost three hours.

For the purpose of this research it was important that each of the interviewees agreed that their comments could be quoted, although it was at the discretion of the interviewee as to whether specific quotations appeared within the text of the thesis. Each interviewee whose responses were to be included was shown a transcript of their comments and was at liberty to censor, or amend, the text. However, the interpretation and explication surrounding each of the quotations are entirely those of the researcher. As with any use of interview material inclusion of certain quotations implies exclusion of others. The reasons for inclusion are hopefully clear given the context of the text, such that the reader is confident that if the whole transcript was included the sense and tone revealed by the quotation would remain virtually the same.

Having defined the conditions of the interview and the eventual use of the material collected the respondents achieve greater 'ownership' of the process. On occasions this meant that certain interviewees were perhaps initially more frank and open with their views than they would normally have been. Inevitably, in the event of subsequent editing by the interviewee, the researcher is left in a position of having more information than can be revealed - this may influence the tenor of the writing without being directly attributable to a particular source.

Thus, as Chitty (1991) states, 'one may be tempted to put forward interpretations and conclusions more authoritatively than the evidence presented to the reader may warrant' (p13-4).

As a research technique interviewing does present certain problems. Interviews are time consuming and subjective and therefore there is a danger of bias, both in the selection of people to be interviewed and the interpretations of what they say. Wording questions for semi-structured or structured interviews is as difficult as wording those for questionnaires. The information collected can be tricky to analyse and is certainly more time-consuming to collect than using a simple questionnaire survey. The respondent may not tell the truth about their practice (although this is certainly also true of questionnaires), or may not wish to be interviewed. Meanings that are clear to the interviewer or interviewee may actually be unclear to the other party, whilst if the questioning is too direct avoidance tactics may be employed by the interviewee.

Preparation for the interviews.

By ensuring that the aims of the research were known to the interviewees the possibilities of sliding into areas which were largely irrelevant to the research were reduced. A formal letter was sent to each interviewee (see Appendix 3) which specified that the place, and within limits the time, of the interview were at the discretion of the interviewee. The letter outlined the aims of the research and the questions to be asked, giving some background information on the interviewer himself. It was important to eliminate any preliminary misunderstandings about the aims and objectives of the research. Before each interview a verbal explanation of the research was given and the interviewees asked if they had any questions or queries. The same

information, as far as possible, was given to each interviewee. It was important not to mislead or trick the interviewee:

'Besides being morally questionable, information gathering from misleading explanations has limited meanings for the research community, unless the analysis has been subsequently discussed with the interviewee' (Powney and Watts. 1987 p.123)

In some cases respondents had prepared notes to refer to during the interview.

The difficulties of interviewing 'elites'.

Gathering, recording, transcribing and analysing interview response data is often problematic.

In all cases the interview data cannot be regarded as objective fact, the interview process may not yield all (or indeed any) relevant information, and the interviewee may wish to conceal or gloss over certain issues. As Powney and Watts (1987) observe:

'Interviews, necessarily of course, involve people talking and listening to people. People are delightfully varied in their abilities and willingness to talk, or listen, to provide accurate information, abide by what they have previously said or thought, said they thought or thought they said. The research interview, then, is a very particular type of data collection method and deserves due caution and expertise in its use' (p.vii).

There are also additional concerns if the researcher is interviewing 'elites' who may have considerable constrictions on what they are prepared to say 'on the record', or if the interviewer knows the interviewee and expects to continue a professional relationship with them afterwards (see Seldon and Pappworth 1983, Walford.G 1994). In this case the researcher had previously met five of the GWG members in preceding years, some on more than one occasion, but did not consider that the relationship he had established with any of them was particularly close.

Interviewing 'elites' only provides the researcher with a particular version of events. At a distance of some five years from when the original work was carried out by the GWG the memories of some of the Working Group members were incomplete, particularly perhaps in the case of certain lay members who had subsequently had little or no involvement with the world of education. Additionally the version of events given by others may have been slanted to give a specific impression of their involvement in the process, the way in which work was carried out, or the reasons why certain decisions were taken. In the light of the subsequent controversy surrounding the reports produced by the GWG this may be significant. Where possible the accounts of other interviewees and literary sources have been used to triangulate such comments. This, as Chitty (1991) states, is a form of dialectic interaction :

'Having used the interviews to confirm the conclusions reached from the textual analysis, one can return to the documents to confirm the accuracy of what one has been told in the interviews' (p. 14)

but one must be aware that the accumulation of evidence is not the whole story. Reid (1978) states:

'research has never been only about the collection of data, and it is always about interpretation, presentation and communication' (p.28).

A hard core of objective facts do not exist 'out there' to be discovered, nor would such 'facts' ever be independent of the interpretations the researcher (or the reader) places upon them. One is also constantly aware of the revelation of new information that may question the findings of a thesis such as this. On more than one occasion the interpretations given by the researcher were revised in the light of new evidence which subsequently emerged.

Interviewing and recording methods.

McDonald and Sanger (1982) believe that the means of recording what occurs in an interview generates different kinds of encounters and outcomes. Tape-recorders free the interviewer to concentrate upon what the interviewee is saying and gives him or her the opportunity to frame appropriate questions. However, such recordings under- represent the totality of communication by only capturing sound, whilst losing non- verbal communications such as facial expressions. Such interviews are also skewed in favour of the articulate and confident respondent.

Scott (1985) believes that tape-recordings can lead to a reification of data - namely that 'objective truth' exists on the tape and achieves status through transcription, whilst the interviewer's perceptions about what was happening during the interview are destined to be relegated as unreliable data. One means of countering this problem is for the interviewer to keep a brief written record of events during the interview, as indeed happened in the case of this research.

Possible causes of bias in interviewing.

All interviewers exhibit some degree of bias, or 'personal perspective', during the course of an interview. Both interviewer and interviewee influence each other and therefore interviews are never totally objective, standardised nor structured. The sources of interviewer bias are usually

recognised as being his or her background characteristics (age, education, socio - economic status, race, and religion), psychological factors (perceptions, attitudes, expectations, and motives), and behavioural factors (reading, recording and probing of the questions). However, 'to want to interview without interviewer influence is a contradiction in terms' (Brenner 1981 p.93).

Interviewers also have to guard against adopting set expectations about the responses that will be forthcoming from their questions. At first the interview process is new and revealing but in later interviews, as the same questions are again repeated, there is a danger that similar answers are anticipated. Expectations of receiving a different perspective may fade and be compounded by the interviewer wishing to gather a coherent and structured picture which corresponds to the research data already collected. Thus, as Powney and Watts (1987) state, 'The interviewer may only hear responses compatible with the picture which is taking shape' (p.37).

Any inconsistency in the framing of questions by the interviewer raises the issue of interviewer reliability - if the style of interviewing is allowed to vary within the interview, or between interviewees over time, the reliability of responses is doubtful. Additionally the researcher may try to fit responses into pre-determined categories or theories. As Logan (1984) states we need 'constant self-monitoring to reveal to what extent we are still guilty of importing into, and imposing our categories on to, interviewees' (p.24)

The interviewee's confidence in the interviewer is important. He or she must trust the interviewer - for the confidential information revealed puts the interviewer into a very powerful position. Trust is established not only by personality, but also from the situation in which the interview takes place, the organisation the interviewer represents, the reasons for undertaking the interview, and the kinds of questions asked. The researcher's alignments and loyalties, known or perceived, are important - for the interviewee then decides which layers of truth will be revealed to the researcher during the interview. Co-operation does not always mean that suspicions have been allayed, for the perceived audience for the research findings may be a key factor in interviewee reticence. Being close to the informant's perceptions, understanding and knowledge is obviously an advantage, although also perceiving other possibilities, outcomes, and approaches is valuable in questioning. Being drawn into too much agreement with the interviewee can create problems, for sharing attitudes, tastes, experiences and stances with the informant can create a bond, which biases the interview outcome.

It is very easy for interviewees to lose face, realise their inconsistencies or ignorance, and start to question their own beliefs, perceptions and actions during the course of an interview.

Respondents may lie, or present a not wholly truthful picture of events, a factor revealed in Watts and Bentley's (1985) research where interviewees either grossly exaggerated, or totally omitted, information to mislead the interviewer. Hoinville, Jowell et al (1977), cited in Powney and Watts (1987), also note the dangers of interviewers becoming too 'conversational' :

'in normal conversation, people often bias what they tell another person towards what they think he or she wants or expects to hear. Such responses do much to smooth ordinary social relationships, but have great dangers in an interview' (p100)

and the convenience of minimising, or eliminating, the necessity for the interviewee to travel. Interviews were conducted 'face to face', sometimes across a table, so that eye contact was possible and the interviewer could pick up non-verbal signals. This created a somewhat formal, but not oppressive, atmosphere. In longer interviews the interviewer asked at later stages if the interviewee was still happy to proceed, all were.

The aim of the interviewer was to be a responsive listener, but without dominating the interview, or admitting what the interviewer himself felt, or what others had said. Walker and Adelman (1975), with reference to interviewing children, note that effective interviewing requires the interviewer to be an attentive and sympathetic listener, but without taking an 'active conservative role'. Valuing and appreciating opinions, without losing one's apparent neutrality over subject matter, or betraying feelings of surprise or disapproval, are essential. The importance of the interviewer being relaxed, phrasing questions similarly, having the interview questions at hand and rewording questions if they are not understood, or if the answer is vague or general, was noted. The necessity to guard against answering a question in one's efforts to word it more clearly was also realised.

Transcribing, analysing and interpreting interviews

The difficulties of the researcher analysing and interpreting the taped interview data are numerous. As Powney and Watts (1987) state:

'The basis for analysis is seldom made explicit and yet the grounds on which some data is omitted, some included, not only reflect the theoretical pre-dispositions of the researcher. They also convince the reader whether the research story is true or false ...

analysis is every bit as much an act of constructing interpretations as is the interview session itself, and the analyst will bring to it some interpretations of the data, if only by a process of selection'. (p.10)

With some interviews full, elaborate and extensive transcription is unnecessary, with others - particularly where linguistic features are paramount - extremely detailed transcription has to be attempted. In this research transcription of key areas of response was important, but little attempt was made to transcribe linguistic features such as intonation or pitch. Full transcription is, after all, highly time-consuming with ratios of 'discussion' to 'transcription' time of 1:6 or 1:10 being common. Woods (1985) advice was followed in so much that transcription often occurred in two stages. The first stage soon after the interview, when the researcher listened to the tape and made an index of content and noted key points; the second stage involved a fuller transcription of key areas of text. The index remained as a record of the interview, with transcription of parts depending upon the selection of relevant sections.

It is very difficult to transcribe the full 'meaning' of everything said. Even with only one speaker the conveying of emphasis is always difficult. Any change in intonation, gestures, pauses, facial expressions, are all lost. Powney and Watts (1987) comment:

'Given that a transcription cannot represent everything featured in the original spoken language, it follows that any transcription is an *interpretation* (their emphasis) by the transcriber of what is being said. What is written down is invariably selective. As such it is just one of the many acts of selection that the researcher has to undertake in the research - but nonetheless it needs to be recognised as such. Where transcripts form part of the database it is important to remember that they are not 'raw' data, but represent a transcriber's eye view of the event. ' (p147-8).

Use of literary sources.

During the initial stages of the research a major literature review was conducted both to gather information and to inform the process of subsequently interviewing the members of the Geography Working Group. The interviews sought to verify, or question, what had been written both by observers and Working Group members at the time of the publication of the Interim and Final Reports for Geography. They also helped the researcher to appreciate the reaction of GWG members to the significant events which occurred after the Group's disbandment in July 1990; specifically during the phase when the Statutory Orders for Geography were created prior to publication in March 1991. Inevitably much of this research involved comparisons of interviews with text, or the responses of one interviewee with another. The main research methods were therefore analysis of literary sources, documentary analysis, and interviews with GWG members.

Selective use was also made of contemporary newspaper articles, editorial comments and of certain television and radio interviews with Secretaries of State for Education. The difficulty with using interview material collected by others is that the researcher is a non-participant and must rely on the questions, agenda and skills of another interviewer, often within a very public medium such as radio or television. The opportunity to ask supplementary questions to responses is also denied to the researcher, who must rely on the interviewer to direct questions as he or she sees fit.

Some of the literary sources used in this thesis have not entered the public domain, and remain unlikely to do so. These are in the form of briefing documents given to GWG members, personal notes made by members of the Group before and after meetings, and papers either produced for the Group, or subsequently presented to small gatherings of, say, UDE geography tutors. Some of these sources provide interesting background data, or confirm beliefs of past events, whilst others provide a fascinating insight into the thoughts of working Group members at the different stages of the GWG's work.

Literary sources such as the educational press (predominantly the Times Educational Supplement and Times Higher Educational Supplement) and national newspapers are neither wholly objective, nor indeed factual. Each of these sources has therefore to be treated with a degree of circumspection and caution, particularly if a particular ideological standpoint has been adopted. As Chitty (1991) states of his use of the Times Educational Supplement and national newspapers as sources :

'The TES is not only a chronicler of contemporary events: it also tries to shape those events by the stand it takes on controversial issues of the day. All newspapers look at events from a particular ideological standpoint. At the same time, their version of events is not always a reliable or accurate one'
(p.15)

Conclusions.

The research methodology adopted within this thesis falls broadly within the field of qualitative approaches. However, it should be noted that the researcher did not have a predilection to use one particular research paradigm from the outset - the research questions determined the

approaches taken. The necessity of recognising a continuum of research methods across the quantitative and qualitative 'divide', and the futility of favouring a particular research method to the exclusion of any other, is hopefully made clear within the preceding section.

What makes this thesis unique as an original contribution to the growing body of work on the creation of the National Curriculum in general, and Geography National Curriculum in particular, is its attempt to interview all of the members of the GWG. To the knowledge of the researcher nobody has previously attempted to garner the views of each of the Working Group members about the processes by which they devised the GNC, although a similar attempt to interview members of the Physical Education National Curriculum Working Group has subsequently come to light (see Evans and Penney 1995). The GWG member's accounts of the main debates and arguments within the Group, and importantly of the ways in which the Group chose or were persuaded to work, add to the originality of the thesis. The outcomes not only reveal something of the interactions between individuals working within a governmentally appointed Working Group, but also of the larger scale pressures on such Groups to meet the needs of the Secretary of State for Education and the government. The implications of trying to serve a diverse range of audiences - pupils, teachers, parents, advisers, inspectors, academics, educationalists, civil servants, and ministers - are hopefully made clear within the body of the thesis.

THE COMPOSITION AND FUNCTIONING OF THE GEOGRAPHY WORKING GROUP.

'The inclusion of any subject in the compulsory curriculum is a *political* matter'.

(Opening line of an article by Simon Catling in the Curriculum Journal 1990 p.77)

On 30th June 1987 Kenneth Baker, the recently appointed Secretary of State for Education, met a delegation from the Geographical Association and informed them that geography was to be a foundation subject within the National Curriculum. Baker had previously won a cabinet victory over Margaret Thatcher in establishing agreement for the development of a National Curriculum which was significantly broader than just the core subjects (Baker 1993). For some (Bailey 1988, Storm 1989, Walford 1992) the Geographical Association's pressure to obtain recognition for geography, dating back to Sir Keith Joseph's address to the association in 1985 and the subsequent publication of 'A Case for Geography' (Bailey and Binns 1987), had achieved a major victory through geography's inclusion within the Education Reform Act of 1988. However, it must be remembered that Joseph did not make a 'special case' of addressing the GA, having previously spoken to the Historical Association in the previous year (Joseph 1984). Walford (1992) later stated that 'the Geographical Association's active political work was undoubtedly a factor in achieving National Curriculum status for geography' (p.90). Whilst not denying this early success, others were later to question the continuing effectiveness of the action taken by the Association during the creation of the GNC (Rawling 1992a, Robinson 1992).

Long before the inclusion of geography in the National Curriculum Walford (1981a) had observed that the creation of such a curriculum would be centrally directed. With respect to geography this might mean governmental insistence, for example, on the teaching of specific place knowledge, geographical content, and map skills. Of much greater initial concern though had been the securing of a curriculum place for geography, the status of which was generally perceived to be below that of history which had a 'longer academic pedigree and more friends in high places' (Walford 1992 p.90); however:

'Under Baker's patronage, geography became part of the wider foundation subject formulation. Its presence was never seriously challenged in the debates surrounding the Education Reform Bill (apart from one dangerous corner in the House of Lords late night debate, averted by a mixture of vigilance from supporters and apathy from possible opponents). A possible amendment to give advantage to history was never debated because its proposer had either fallen asleep or gone home and did not answer the call to put his proposition' (Walford 1992 p.91).

Geographers were initially optimistic about the prospects for their subject once it had become part of the National Curriculum. The previous record of curriculum development in geography, the active involvement of the Geographical Association offering advice on all aspects of geography education, and the popularity of the subject within secondary schools were all encouraging.

The Geographical Association's annual conference 1989.

The imminent establishment of the GWG, and the future role of geography within the National Curriculum, were uppermost in the minds of many attending the Geographical Association's annual conference in 1989. Michael Storm, who subsequently became a member of the GWG, reflected upon the 'State of the Art' of geography in schools in his presidential address of 30th

March 1989. As an LEA inspector he believed geography to be in a 'gratifyingly healthy state' (Storm 1989 p.290), citing as evidence buoyant candidate entries for Geography GCSEs and 'A' levels, as well as significant numbers of geographers graduating from higher education. He supported his assertion with reference to the quality of geography teaching which most children experienced in schools - 'As an inspector, one becomes aware that head teachers commonly perceive geography departments as front runners in educational change' (p.290). The enterprise of educational publishers working with innovative authors to produce geography text books, the growth of environmental awareness, and the continuation of curriculum development projects in geography were also recognised. However, during GWG meetings later that year Storm would reveal an attitude which was less supportive or appreciative of geography's status than that publicly displayed to the GA.

A number of issues were already beginning to dominate the emerging debate about the structure and content of the future GNC in 1989. The role and function of locational knowledge, where Storm (1989) saw 'mutual misconceptions' between 'forceful lay perceptions and the entrenched views of educators' (p.294), was perhaps one of the major concerns. Geographers had come to visualise their subject as extending beyond the mere accumulation of locational knowledge - a return to 'the horrors of an era when a school geography course consisted entirely of massive injections of austere descriptive regional information' (Storm 1989 p.294) was therefore to be avoided.

Daugherty's (1989a) contribution to the same conference similarly focused upon the future development of the GNC, highlighting various opportunities and challenges that this process could afford. He was concerned that teachers should become fully involved in the debate about

the geographical experience children would receive, and not simply 'surrender the initiative' (p.299) with respect to the design of the GNC. Daugherty reminded delegates that any geography curriculum is subject to different interpretations by every child and teacher, and that 'we would be unwise to overstate the extent to which national requirements will dictate individual experiences' (p.301). However, he believed that there were very real advantages in devising a common framework for geographical learning from 5 to 16 given the previous history of geographical education within schools. The chance to clarify the educational purpose of geography and to describe its progression was to be welcomed, whilst the geographer's role in developing cross curricular links and good quality teaching resources was also to be embraced. Even at this stage Daugherty highlighted the political nature of curriculum change and restated criticisms that the Secretary of State for Education had received for modifying the subject Orders produced by previous Working Groups (although he concluded that it was perfectly proper for elected representatives to give some direction to the school curriculum). A major concern was the pace at which these changes were being effected. With foresight Daugherty (1989a) stated 'We must hope that politicians can be persuaded of the damage that can be done to the education of a generation of children by over-hasty implementation of change' (p.303). In referring to the phased development of the National Curriculum he concluded that the dangers of fragmentation of planning and implementation were also very real :

'Have we not learned from the experience of the three excellent Schools Council Projects? Though responsibility for the curriculum may necessarily be divided among curriculum designers, assessors, pupils and their teachers, the most effective curriculum planning process is one in which all angles are considered at the same time' (p.307).

Many of Daugherty's pertinent comments, made at the very start of the process of devising the GNC, were to become prophetic as the Interim (DES 1989a) and Final Reports (DES 1990a) of the GWG were published.

'Geography in the National Curriculum' - a report from the Geographical Association.

Daugherty's views at this time have an added importance in that he had recently finished chairing a Geographical Association Working Group, established in November 1987, whose aim was to produce a report on 'Geography in the National Curriculum' (Daugherty 1989b). Interestingly the contributors to this report included five GA members who later served on the Geography Working Group, although the stances adopted by certain individuals seemed to change somewhat once they joined the 'official' Working Group.

The report was published shortly before the GWG was convened and represented a first attempt to think through what a National Curriculum could mean for the subject (Daugherty 1989a). It stated the belief of its contributors that :

'the National Curriculum is not about politics, educational theory or in service strategy. It is about classrooms not committee rooms, about how children learn as well as what they learn. The point may be so obvious as to be hardly worth stating. And yet, to follow the developing National Curriculum debate it often seems the central concerns of teaching and learning are hardly being considered at all. The talk is of targets and programmes not of active learning nor of that essential precondition, pupil motivation' (Daugherty 1989b p.3)

'Geography in the National Curriculum' (Daugherty 1989b) attempted to place into the context of the emerging National Curriculum debate the contribution that geography could make 'to a general education (and) the diverse curriculum patterns found at present in schools' (p.3). In

its consideration of the TGAT report, and the broader National Curriculum framework, it certainly raised pertinent questions which the GWG either did not consider, or simply could not resolve. For example, it noted 'the odd process of curriculum planning which allows a science and a geography Group each, without an overview of the curriculum, separately to propose attainment targets concerning understanding of the earth's surface' (p.4), and also questioned 'Which of the several purposes of assessment referred to in the TGAT report will become dominant as the assessment arrangements are given effect?' (p.4). Both of these issues were to feature strongly amongst the later difficulties faced by the GWG (see Chapters 5 and 6).

In retrospect the GA report largely failed to influence wider *public* debate about the GNC (which did not materialise to any great extent), but did have some impact on the initial meetings of the Geography Working Group (Storm 1995, Ward 1995, Thomas.D 1995, Morgan 1995, Edwards 1995, Rawling 1995). However, the importance of this impact should not be overstated, for many of the later reports and papers sent to the GWG by the Geographical Association which built upon themes explored in 'Geography in the National Curriculum' (Daugherty 1989b) were treated with some suspicion and circumspection (Rawling 1995). A possible reason for this was that certain submissions actually contradicted the advice previously received from the association. The 14 attainment targets suggested in 'Geography in the National Curriculum' (Daugherty 1989b) now seem excessive, although the core subject Working Groups had each indicated that they would lay claim to expansive fields of content to help ensure acceptability to the government. It was nevertheless a publication notably free from the restrictions faced by the GWG and could afford to be both discursive and philosophical, without having to state definitive attainment targets or programmes of study.

Schofield (1990) comments that 'at the time it was written (it) seemed unexceptional', but that in the light of subsequent events 'It may go down in the history of curriculum development in geography as the last word of real sanity' (p.33). Copies of the report were made available to the GWG at its first meeting on 18th May 1989, whilst a copy had already been handed to the (then) Minister of State for Education, Angela Rumbold, by Wendy Morgan at her interview for membership of the Group (see Morgan 1994. p.27)

Walford (1995) now considers that the GA's report represented an interesting starting point for the GWG, but perhaps little more than that. Paterson (1995) agrees that its contribution to the Group's work was initially significant, but that 'if we'd fully taken on board the GA submission then it (the GNC) would probably have been three times the length of the one we actually produced!'

In marked contrast the Vice Chair of the GWG, David Thomas (1995), held the view that the report constituted 'the single most important document we read from outside the Group, because it represented 8,000 or so teachers', whilst Edwards (1995) asserts that for those who were not, at the time, central to the debate about geography curriculum design it was an extremely valuable contribution.

In retrospect any idea that the GWG would simply adopt the structure and content of the GA's report was misguided. It was soon realised that 14 ATs were excessive and the GWG gradually moved away from the GA in its thinking on this and a variety of other issues, a point which the GA found hard to accept as the country's leading professional association for

geography teachers. The GWG was keen to assert that it was not merely an extension of the GA, or indeed any other Group, despite a coincidence of many of its members.

The Geography Working Group.

The original idea of the government was to set up Working Groups in each National Curriculum subject simultaneously so that they could consult with each other as they worked. However, the DES did not have sufficient secretarial assistance for the Groups to operate in this way. They were therefore set up sequentially, starting with the three core subject Groups. Although not conspiratorial in intent this had a major effect on the Working Groups which were established later, for the government was reluctant to change anything which had been devised by Groups which had already reported.

Hall (1990) succinctly illustrates the difficulties of creating a National Curriculum using the Working Group model adopted in England and Wales :

'The specification of a curriculum in terms of conventional subjects, and the use of working parties, gathered to work in limited spaces of free time within the exercise of their normal professional duties, and under pressure of a demanding delivery schedule, inevitably creates results which are uneven, irregular and even contradictory. The whole curriculum is then an aggregation of discrete parts, harmonised only by the requirements of the Education Reform Act to identify programmes of study and attainment targets over the key stages set down across the 5-16 age range of compulsory schooling'.(p.317)

The GWG was established on 5 May 1989 by the Secretary of State for Education 'to advise, by 30 April 1990, on attainment targets, programmes of study and associated assessment arrangements for geography in the National Curriculum' (DES 1990b p.1). It originally

consisted of 13 individuals appointed by the government, which was keen to have a powerful 'lay' presence of employers represented on the Group to balance that of the educators, inspectors, advisers and teachers. Indeed there was a fear within both the government and DES that Working Groups composed entirely of educators would not produce a curriculum effectively. The belief that the 'professionals' were not to be trusted is witnessed by the DES's desire to appoint non subject specialists to chair Working Groups - Sir Leslie Fielding's appointment being a case in point. It was clearly felt that Groups of educationalists might be wedded to the past in their thinking and would act to protect their narrow professional interests.

DES officials, advised by HMI, had previously drawn up short lists of potential Working Group members to be interviewed, choosing them as individuals rather than as representatives of any particular Groups (Morgan 1994 p.26). Walford (1992), commenting on his experience of the interviews, states that:

'These ... were conducted by one of the Ministers for State in Education in informal style; probing questions on curriculum issues were posed among the inconsequential conversation and atmosphere that surrounded a typically English afternoon tea party' (p.91).

Any question of the membership of the Group being selected for political purposes is refuted by Edwards (1995), who informed Angela Rumbold at interview that she would not be interested in joining a Group that expected her merely to agree with pre determined political decisions. Rumbold's response indicated to Edwards (1995) that:

'she didn't seem to be interested in my politics; what I was asked was about my commitment to geography, my interest in geography, and my involvement with geography. It was definitely a 'subject' interview and if anyone introduced politics it was me to make sure there weren't any, and that my

appointment did not tie me to any particular line of thought, or way of doing things'.

Edwards also found John MacGregor equally reassuring over the question of possible politically motivated selection of the Group's membership.

It was made apparent to all Group members at the interview stage that the *status quo* within geography education was to be challenged, and that acceptance of a place on the Group implied a desire to illicit change. Unfortunately this, along with the official terms of reference, rapidly created a 'deficit model' for geography which was accepted into the structure of the early work of the Group. This, as Kenneth Baker (1993) suggests, was a reflection of a bigger debate on educational change which was prevalent at the time.

Eight of the thirteen people eventually selected to join the GWG were members of the Geographical Association (three being past or future presidents) with Sir Leslie Fielding, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Sussex and an historian, as the Chair. There were also civil servants, a secretary (Leslie Webb), an HMI observer (Trevor Bennetts), a DES adviser (Andrew Wye) and other DES officials present at each of the Working Group's meetings. (For full membership of the Geography Working Group see Appendix 4).

It is interesting to note that the number of full time practising teachers on the Group was extremely small, a situation repeated on other Working Groups (see Evans and Penney 1995). Kay Edwards, as the head of department of a Welsh comprehensive school, was the only member who filled this role, although Rachel Thomas had taught 16-19 A level Geography part time and Wendy Morgan was an ex primary head who still worked periodically in schools. Other members obviously had a wealth of experience of geography education, but discussion

of the current practicalities of classroom teaching was very much reliant on the views and opinions of just one or two members.

Somewhat surprisingly, given the previous media excitement about the poor levels of geographical knowledge amongst young people, the establishment of the GWG had little impact on the national press. This may have been the result of growing National Curriculum 'fatigue' in public circles, or because:

'apart from the occasional 'shock/horror' headlining of a survey showing how few people know their capital cities, geography is perceived as neither important enough (compared with say maths) nor controversial enough (compared perhaps with history) to prompt much public debate' (Daugherty 1989a p146.).

Even so, contributions from the leader writers of the *Times*, and its editor Simon Jenkins (1988,1992), did serve to publicise the debate on the future of geography education to a degree.

From its inception the GWG had to operate within a very tight time schedule provided by the DES, following strict terms of reference, observing the confidentiality of meetings and bounded in its thinking by the limits of the TGAT (DES 1988) structure. Within one year (effectively twenty meetings, some of which lasted two or three days as residential sessions) the Group had to produce a complete Geography National Curriculum. Not surprisingly pressure of time is mentioned by virtually all Group members as a major restriction on their work. This pressure was heightened because the Group initially made a 'fairly leisurely start' (Morgan 1995) as Trevor Bennetts had to clear his previous workload before he could attend its meetings. In addition geography, unlike other National Curriculum subjects like English and

maths, had not recently experienced a national enquiry into its aims and methods such as the Kingman or Cockcroft reports. Hence the GWG had to create a basis for its attainment targets, programmes of study and assessment criteria without the benefit of previously debated, or agreed, foundations.

Terms of Reference and Supplementary Guidance.

The terms of reference and supplementary guidance given to the Chair of the Working Group (DES 1990b) were predictable given those that each of the other Groups had previously received. Within the guidance materials there were specific references to the production of a geography curriculum which included place knowledge, the pupil's 'home area', places within Britain, and Britain's role in the wider world. This, some Working Group members believe, provided the Group with a 'definite steer from politicians' (Thomas.R 1995) about the type of geography they should devise, with an implicit emphasis on place. Consideration was also to be given to 'quality of life', the progressive development of skills and enquiry, the costs and benefits of environmental activities, and the role of geography in developing political literacy, environmental education and economic awareness. Exactly how the geographical knowledge was to be placed within the attainment targets, or programmes of study, was ostensibly to be left to the Group to decide - a decision which was to cause considerable problems later following the Group's acceptance of further DES guidance (DES 1989b). In retrospect the terms of reference and supplementary guidance appear to have offered a reasonably open and liberating brief, with the potential for developing an exciting geography curriculum. Fielding made all the GWG members state that they personally agreed with the terms of reference at the GWG's first meeting in an early move towards eventually producing a unanimous report.

The largest technical constraint expressed by Group members was that of the 10 level scale imposed on all National Curriculum subjects by the TGAT (DES 1988) report. Many GWG members felt that the levels did not easily 'fit' geography and that from an educational perspective simply providing a PoS for the subject, rather than constraining its content into SoAs and ATs, would have been preferable (Thomas.D, Paterson, Rawling, Morgan 1995). However, the clear advice from the government was to focus on content and concepts, which obviously led the Group into an early consideration of ATs, SoAs and geographical facts. It must be remembered that during these initial stages of their work even the terminology of the National Curriculum was new to the GWG, and that their visualisation of what the National Curriculum model actually implied for teaching and learning was somewhat uncertain. In the first few months members of the Working Group were coming to terms with the meaning and implications of the curriculum model within which they were working.

In retrospect the official guidance given to the geography, and other, Working Groups appears not to have been fully thought through. Certainly the whole structure of PoS, ATs and SoAs had been hurriedly devised by TGAT at a time when two of the Working Groups (Science and Maths) had already started their deliberations. There is evidence of a semi finished product, especially with reference to assessment. One also suspects an element of hope that the Groups would find solutions to emerging technical problems for the DES and ministers, rather than vice versa. The absence of clear curriculum thinking relating to the new National Curriculum, from either the DES or HMI, meant that each subject Working Group inevitably created a curriculum which raised basic questions that had not been discussed centrally. Reaction to these questions as they arose would be both piecemeal and hasty. More importantly the earlier

reporting of the core subject Working Groups placed restrictions on what the GWG could include within its curriculum. Realising this the Group expressed its desire to talk to other Working Groups, however this was seen by the DES as a potentially complicating and unnecessary activity and so the GWG was given 'no opportunity, nor any particular encouragement' (Edwards 1995) to do so.

The ways in which the Geography Working Group functioned.

The majority of the members of the Geography Working Group believe that the Group worked reasonably effectively given the onerous time and structural constraints which were imposed upon it. However, most concede that individuals approached the tasks before them with particular concerns, interests and unique previous experiences in, or beyond, geography education. There is also, as Walford (1995) points out, a difference between working 'effectively' and working 'harmoniously', and that those not in the mainstream of particular discussions might view effectiveness differently to those who were.

Many of the geographers within the Group already knew each other and had, in certain cases, worked together previously. Nevertheless the experience of working within a centrally directed DES Working Group, or even within a formal 'committee' structure, was alien to many of the Group and initially quite intimidating or unfamiliar (Morgan 1995, Edwards 1995, Paterson 1995). Virtually all of the Group members make reference to the harshness of the time constraints, which often necessitated weekend long meetings lasting into the early hours. They additionally note the degree of stress placed upon one's personal and family life from attending numerous meetings around England and Wales, whilst also attempting to maintain a career

from which secondment had not been provided. Bennetts (1995a) essentially combines many of the comments of Group members when he considers that the Group worked effectively only in part, and that although some meetings were extremely fruitful others were largely unproductive. This, he believes, is due to three factors - the political timescale dictated for the Group's work, the official guidance given to the Group, and the membership of the GWG.

Although individuals had different expectations of what the Group could do, and certainly varied in their perspectives on geography and education, most state that the process of reaching amicable consensus on *certain* issues was reasonably straightforward. For example, there appears to have been general agreement that place and locational knowledge in geography education needed to be strengthened, that thematic approaches to geography often led to unstructured or incomplete knowledge of place, that physical geography was under represented and that primary geography required a fillip in the new geography curriculum (DES 1990a p.5). The influence of Humanities courses on the integrity of geography, particularly in lower secondary years, was also considered by many members to be an area of concern (Ward 1995, Storm 1995, Walford 1995, Edwards 1995, Paterson 1995, Thomas.R 1995). Rawling, who was later to be identified as one of the members who fought strongly for a more rigorous consideration of curriculum, assessment and enquiry learning issues also broadly recognised these needs. She certainly agreed with a strengthening of place knowledge in geography, but importantly questioned the curriculum model that was being created to achieve it.

The complexity of each member's particular interests with regard to geography and education is well illustrated by Storm (1995), who cites his own diversity of involvement in geographical

education as an illustration of the range of possible viewpoints within the Group. Having taught in schools, followed by a period working in teacher training, and later as an ILEA inspector, he noted how his own perceptions about geography education had changed. From being 'like minded', enthusiastic, and liberal about the curriculum development experienced during the era of the Schools Council, he notes how his views altered when he became involved in ITT and inspectoral work. His desire to see more equality of experience for children in the 5-16 geography curriculum persuaded him that thematic approaches in geography had certainly 'gone too far' (Storm 1995). Interestingly Walford (1995) reveals a similar change in attitude.

It is notable that although the Group agreed on *many* facets of the content of geographical education, they nevertheless found effective decision making, particularly with relation to curriculum structure and development, a difficulty. This was to become acutely apparent later, when the curriculum model adopted created numerous problems for teachers. Indeed in retrospect at least one member of the Group believes that the GWG 'almost never agreed entirely about anything' (Morgan 1995).

Walford's (1995) reflection on the efforts of the GWG bring into focus the nature of working within such a Group. He states that although consensus was not always easily achieved, and none of the work completed by the Group could be considered truly 'unanimous', they did finally gain a clear majority decision on most issues (also see Paterson 1995). He believes that the Chair operated quite properly in stressing the collective responsibilities of the Group, which should have been recognised at the start of their work if one accepted a position as a Group

member. It was thus made apparent at times that members had to stand by the Group's collective decisions, or consider leaving the Group .

The main polarising tension *within* the Working Group appears not to have been political - although for some there were definite political pressures apparent - but between members who either believed that past geography education in schools was responsible for the problems that currently existed, or those who saw the past as representing a positive model for the future. The former largely supported the creation of a 'deficit model' of geography education, which focused the attention of the GWG by emphasising what they thought was going wrong in geography teaching; whilst the latter generally celebrated its advances and successes. It is worthy of note that the government - through the DES and the interviews it conducted for Group membership, the terms of reference, and subsequent supplementary guidance - also seemed to stress the first position. In essence this situation parallels Bernstein's (1990) analysis of the tensions between exponents of 'cultural restoration' and supporters of 'progressivism' (see also Ball 1989, Bowe et al 1992, and Evans and Penney 1995). In addition Thomas.R (1995) felt that a division occurred between those who were mainly concerned with the 'educational' arguments and debates, and those who were primarily focused on the 'subject of geography' itself.

Storm (1995) highlights a fundamental difference in how members of the GWG may have visualised their task:

'was it to produce a sort of pedagogical handbook with an emphasis on classroom activities and learning styles, or was it a more modest task - which is how I would interpret a National Curriculum - which was simply to specify outcomes and experiences you wanted children to have. I'm sceptical about how far you can legislate for teaching styles' (Storm 1995).

This point is taken further by Walford (1995) :

'I took the line that we should not be prescribing pedagogy, and one of the precious things that the government said was 'we are not going to tell you how to teach' '

These statements help us to understand the diversity of stances adopted by different GWG members. They also introduce considerations of the GWG's debate on enquiry learning which, however valid an educational approach, Walford and Storm believed was a mode of learning not unique to geography and one which could be applied in many other curriculum areas (see Chapter 6). They also felt that to ally geography too closely with one style of learning was both dangerous and unnecessary for this would not accurately define, in curriculum terms, what was distinctive about the subject for the government.

It appears that the GWG members believed that they were not unduly led by any one individual, although the Chair obviously had a profound influence on the reports which subsequently emerged. Many of the Group (Ward 1995, Morgan 1995, Storm 1995, Rawling 1995, Edwards 1995) additionally note the important contribution of Trevor Bennetts who had the difficult job of balancing disparate views and opinions when writing sections of the GNC reports. Group members naturally expressed their own strong views on certain issues, but no one individual within the Group appears to have been a constant and dominant force in either its decision making or philosophy. However, it is clear that loose sub Groups formed quite early on, specifically with respect to views on geographical content, curriculum development, the function of place knowledge, and teaching and learning methods.

Certain members (particularly Rawling and Morgan) feel that they were 'singled out' on specific occasions if their views did not concur with that of the majority, and directly told to 'fall into line' by either the Chair, DES officials, or indeed other members of the Working Group. They certainly felt intimidated, or pressurised, by the ways in which the Group operated and the directions in which they were steered. Many respondents acknowledge that the Chair regularly deferred to the opinion of one or two individuals (see Storm 1995, Ward 1995, Morgan 1995, Rawling 1995) and that he had a very firm view of the direction in which the work of the Group should go. Morgan (1995), Rawling (1995), Edwards (1995), Lethbridge (1995) and Thomas (1995) state that Walford and Storm were often perceived as being the most influential members of the Group in terms of their 'geographical' arguments, and that Fielding supported them strongly when he agreed with what they were saying. Indeed Morgan (1995) believes that 'this triumvirate took over from the end of July (1989) onwards, and it was difficult then to undermine anything that was being promoted by those three' (Morgan 1995). Such 'leadership' was never openly confronted by the whole Group, but caused at least two of the Group's members to strongly consider their involvement with the Working Group.

Walford (1995) takes a somewhat different view of the Group's dynamics. He is surprised to have been seen as a part of an influential 'sub group' for he believes that all members of the Working Group played an equal role. In Walford's perception the only subGroup that formed was that of the Chair, Vice Chair, civil servants, DES and HMI officials with the purpose of agenda setting and administration. He also finds the idea that specific individuals led the Group questionable - with respect to the Chair he found Fielding a 'good listener' and believed that no one could run such a Group wholly by consensus, given the nature of the task and the time

constraints. Storm, he acknowledges, produced some influential papers early on which set the agenda for initial discussions on the possibilities of a more area based focus for the subject. Indeed it appears that both Walford and Storm concentrated their contributions to the GWG around place and locational knowledge, rather than curriculum theory and assessment, at this stage.

We are therefore left with a rather divided impression of whether the Group was either led, or indeed dominated, by individuals or small organised group(s) within it. Some members state strongly that such leadership was always the case (Morgan 1995, Rawling 1995), others perceive that on set points certain individuals and/or sub groups took a firm line (Thomas.D 1995), whilst others claim that everyone had an equal say throughout the life of the Group (Paterson 1995). This is perhaps not surprising. Groups often function in a diverse and complex fashion and one's perception of this functioning is individualistic and reliant on the role each person adopts within the Group (see Chapter 7 for a fuller discussion of Group dynamics within the GWG).

In conclusion Rawling (1992a) highlights the difficulties of working within any group of contrasting and conflicting personalities such as existed within the GWG:

'Imagine if you can the pressures of working in such a group with the tight schedule of deadlines, the many residential sessions, the long working meetings, late nights and the extra workload added on top of your normal duties. Consider the fact that, for each of us there were great expectations from the world outside, new tensions, stresses and arguments within , and an overriding cloak of 'confidentiality' drawn around the whole proceedings.... In addition to all this , there are always the dominant personalities who impose their might on any group: there are the relationships that create conflict and aggression, there are the compromisers, the negotiators and the peacemakers' (p.303).

The role of the Chair.

With regard to Fielding's style of chairing the Group some of the GWG members express strong opinions. Rawling (1995) believes that:

'after about two meetings it became apparent that there was a 'hidden agenda' and that there was a quite strong steering by the Chairman in a given direction. What happened was that different people within the Group then reacted in different ways'.

Broadly, she believes that the Group divided into two - those who would agree with the direction taken by the Chair and those who would attempt to suggest other approaches and pathways. The second Group were always to be in the minority during the life of the Working Group.

The process and method by which Fielding chaired the Group was a particular concern for Rawling. She believed that he was 'populist' in his approach to certain issues, gaining support from Working Group members by requesting agreement on particular aspects of geographical learning where any disagreement would appear radical. For example Rawling (1995) states that when discussions centred around the inclusion of more place knowledge in the GNC Fielding would appeal to the teachers within the Group by stating 'Don't you think that the children you teach should know that?' using this question to counter the apparent 'irrelevance' of Rawling's more theoretical curriculum based arguments.

Certainly Rawling, of all the Working Group members, believes that her views were less well received by the Chair. This, she feels, may have been because others in the Group did not have

the same curriculum development and assessment background and concerns as her, and were therefore either unwilling or unable to support her arguments. Support was, however, forthcoming from the HMI observer, Trevor Bennetts, although he was in a difficult official position and was directly instructed by Fielding that an HMI influence on the Group was not going to be pervasive (Rawling 1995). Bennetts may have wished to support Rawling's arguments more fully, had he not already been directly restrained by the Chair - the advice which came from the HMI, to Rawling in particular, would therefore occasionally have to be covert. In retrospect Rawling believed that this situation, controlled by Fielding, damaged the development of the GNC. With the HMI kept at arm's length, and the deferment of key questions, the detailed discussions about curriculum structure in geography education were curtailed, even though a full debate was initially promised by the Chair.

Different 'coping strategies' were adopted by Group members to respond to the Chair's stewardship. Most, including in particular Walford, Storm, Paterson, Lethbridge, Thomas.R and Ward, were largely content to follow the lead of the Chair and to introduce suggestions for changes as they saw appropriate, perhaps fearful that if general consent was not given by the Group to the direction in which it was being led this might have dire and irreversible consequences for geography education. Their complicity with this model was also perhaps partly motivated by their tacit agreement that a 'stronger' line had to be taken with respect to geography education, or because their particular concerns would probably be addressed adequately by working in the way the Chair was advocating.

Interestingly David Thomas (1995), the Vice Chair of the Group, believes that Fielding did not hold a particularly strong view of academic geography and that he largely responded to ideas

about the subject as he felt appropriate. Hence Thomas's belief that most of Fielding's appreciation of geography was either a result of travel or of living abroad. Since Thomas was the only member of the 'pre meeting' briefing group (which met before every session) with an academic geography background the ideas Fielding had about the subject may have been heavily influenced by Thomas's input. He found Fielding reasonably easy to work with, but comments: 'He's a diplomat, he knows how to handle people, he's a smoothie - but he had his own ideas and was prepared to listen' (Thomas 1995). Thomas also reveals that he had, at an early stage, been approached by the DES as a possible Chair for the Group when difficulties had arisen over whether Fielding would accept. Kenneth Baker had summoned Thomas to Westminster to discuss other possible Chairs if Fielding declined, and suggested that he 'was thinking of possibly having an explorer', which reveals something of Baker's view of what qualities constituted a proficiency in geography. Thomas admits that he was disinclined to accept the position of Chair given the time commitment and onerous nature of the task before the Group.

The dynamics of how the Chair and Vice Chair conducted meetings was, according to Thomas.D (1995), reasonably straightforward. Before each meeting they would meet with two senior civil servants to discuss the forthcoming agenda, Fielding being briefed on possible contentious issues and matters to be resolved. Walford (1992) refers to this procedure as follows:

'A small agenda committee of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, DES Assessor and HMI Assessor often met before the main meetings, ostensibly to determine the order of business; some of us came to wonder if the ultimate decision making might not rest in that enclave. It was a Group notably light on the 'professional' element of the Working Group, perhaps it was designed to be so'(p.98).

David Thomas, like Walford and Paterson, found Fielding to be 'a good listener' and believes that he worked very effectively within the harsh time constraints which the Group had been placed under.

A few, particularly Rawling (1995), felt that the whole approach adopted by the Chair towards the creation of the GNC was flawed and that it should be countered strongly from the start. This related to her belief that essential curriculum questions had initially not been considered seriously enough, and that by sidelining them the Group was merely creating weak foundations for its future work. However, her strategy of adopting a position of almost constant opposition to the Chair later changed as she realised that different curriculum models would not be trailed, and that her suggestions would always be met by a sceptical, or indeed hostile, response (see Chapter 7). In later meetings, after the publication of the Interim Report, Rawling felt it prudent merely to push for the inclusion of aspects of geography as 'flags' for future curriculum reviewers to notice.

Rawling (1995) believes that Fielding held a very tight rein on the Group and had a clear view of what would be considered by ministers, and the DES, as having completed his task well. This included the promotion of specific views on geography education, such as the inclusion of more geographical facts, basic skills, and place knowledge. She feels that she was seen as a 'trouble maker' after the first couple of Group meetings, primarily because she criticised the model of curriculum development that was being adopted. At times any such criticism was turned back on the individual by the Chair in a way which implied disloyalty to the Group through restricting its progress. Having routinely kept notes after each Working Group

meeting Rawling (1995) recalls how, during the second meeting of the Group, she had raised the curricular implications of creating the geography ATs first without a fuller consideration of the PoS. Such an approach was countered strongly by both the Chair and the DES officials who later took Rawling aside to warn her that this was 'not what this (task of making a GNC) is all about!' (Rawling 1995). Indeed in subsequent meetings the Chair would direct Rawling not to submit any more papers for consideration as he believed them to be diverting the Working Group from its primary intentions.

On the centrality of the Chair's influence on geography Rawling recorded in January 1990:

'so much depends on Fielding, don't upset him or he will dig his heels in. So much on the personal whims and temperament of one man when all of the geography for school pupils is at stake, and 10 to 15 years of my professional life and of many others' (Rawling 1995).

The experience of being branded a 'trouble maker' and constantly being identified as resisting the direction taken by the Chair she found 'traumatic', but believes that such actions were important in an attempt to (unsuccessfully) avoid huge mistakes being made concerning the geography curriculum.

Tellingly Rawling (1995) concludes:

'If I'd appreciated how political all this was at an earlier stage and got to grips with it better I might have been ready with some really key questions which would have helped to draw things out, but I suspect they would have been ignored; they (the DES officials and the Chair) didn't want to have any evidence that contradicted the line they were taking. And the consultation on the Interim Report was exactly the same - anything that didn't tie up, that was critical, was written off as 'trendy lefty', or too much curriculum, or not solid enough in terms of factual basis ... now that we've decided on this model we can't go back on it'.

Morgan (1995) concurs that during the Working Group meetings 'we had to toe the line and do as we were told!' and recalls that the Chair openly took against certain individuals, such as Rawling, who held different views to his own. He was also not averse to individual 'counselling' of certain Group members outside the official meetings (Rawling 1995, Walford 1995, Morgan 1995).

Other Working Group members, whilst not necessarily always condoning Fielding's style of chairmanship, consider that he was - in respect of his given brief - an extremely effective Chair. Indeed Lethbridge (1995) considers the Group to have been 'exceedingly well chaired by both Sir Leslie Fielding and David Thomas', whilst Paterson (1995) notes that Fielding:

'was totally open, a pluralistic man - he wasn't inclined to give 'the line', he put forward strong views that might have given that impression at times, but he was also prepared to listen'.

Fielding's main concern was to get the task of completing a GNC within the timescale outlined by the DES and government ministers, and also to 'avoid the rancour experienced in other Groups' (Ward 1995). Storm (1995) felt that although the Chair was 'a pretty forceful character' members of the Working Group actually managed to get their views listened to, with Fielding usually deferring to the geographical expertise of its members. However, it was soon apparent that he would not be pushed into making decisions he did not personally agree with.

As the only full time practising teacher on the Working Group Edward's views about the Chair's style of leadership are perhaps important. She found him:

'fairly intimidating at first, not an easy man to get to know, and I think he was fairly suspicious of me as a teacher at the beginning - though less so as the work of the Group progressed' (Edwards 1995).

However, she believes that he fought some important battles with ministers on behalf of the GWG, had an open mind and a strong personality.

In conclusion it appears that Fielding was a very astute and accomplished Chair, and that he could not have functioned without the support of the Group he was empowered to lead. The process by which he worked clearly did not suit all members of the Group. He had a rather confrontational and direct style, quite opposed to an approach which favoured moving towards consensus and then final agreement. One's arguments and thoughts had to be well structured, clear and fully formed to achieve acceptance, rather than exploratory and tentative. Openly thinking through ideas within the Group was not encouraged. Fielding therefore steered decisions the way he wanted, had a clear view of the direction the Group should take, and managed submissions to the Group effectively. As a 'geographer' he had no professional training, but was extremely well travelled, intelligent and held interesting views about what children should know - although some of these views were obviously not open to debate. This may have led him to favour a place oriented geography, and certainly motivated his belief that studies of Japan and the Falkland Islands should be represented within the GNC. Morgan (1995) states that Fielding, as an historian, had a definite influence on the content of the GNC:

'he was not a geographer and his interest in geography was, well, different from other people's; so he pressurised us to quite an extent about what the geography should be like'

Additionally his understanding of curriculum processes at times appears to have been somewhat weak (Rawling 1995).

The role of the Vice Chair.

Professor David Thomas, the Vice Chair of the Group, played a significant and previously largely unreported role in the development of the GNC. He considers that the Group worked as effectively as it could, given the diverse nature of its composition, and that although it had numerous debates about the nature of geography, geographical content and education it was unanimous about the need to re establish 'place' within school geography (Thomas.D 1995). Of equal significance for Thomas was the necessity to keep geography within the National Curriculum, where he believed the subject was under threat from politicians:

'I think this may have made us a little more conventional than we might otherwise have been, because we knew we had to satisfy a minister - who wasn't a geographer at that time of course - and to satisfy Mrs Thatcher and her gurus who had very distinct ideas on what geography was all about' (Thomas.D 1995).

Although this point is raised by a variety of Group members, and had some validity in the 1980s, it is perhaps hard to visualise a situation whereby geography would be removed from the structure of the National Curriculum once it had been established through the Education Reform Act (1988). The loss of face for a government that decided to dismantle a Working Group and rearrange the National Curriculum appear too great for geography to have been in any real danger. However, Thomas.D (1995) is clear on this point:

'My fear, which was shared by others, was that there was too much in the National Curriculum and that something would have to go. Geography was a prime candidate. They couldn't take out the core subjects, or foreign languages, and then you're getting towards the end of the list!'

However, he does point out that much of this pressure was not overt, but put upon the Group itself by its expectations of what the politicians wanted. This may have been heightened by civil servants and government officials acting as advisers to the Group. Thus the desire to keep geography within the curriculum, and its perceived weakness of position compared to history, provided its own constraints and influences on how the Group worked.

With regard to who were the major influences within the Group Thomas regards all of the members as valuable contributors and individuals in their own right, but mentions Walford and Storm as 'front runners' because of their unanimity over many of the important issues being discussed. He particularly mentions their beliefs about the necessity for a 'solid core of place' to be resurrected within geography, and states 'I think they were quite influential in that, and I went along with them' (Thomas.D 1995).

Others speak of Thomas's chairing of the Group, when Sir Leslie Fielding was absent, as being competent and effective. It may also be significant that one of the tasks that the Group undertook quickly and successfully under Thomas's chairmanship was the writing of the aims for geography education (see DES 1990a), which have already been commended by certain writers (Butt 1992).

The role of civil servants, DES officials and the HMI.

A filter on the pronouncements of the GWG was created by the civil servants and DES officials who served the Group. Both were effectively 'gatekeepers' of the Education Reform Act

(1988) and TGAT report (DES 1988) and advised the Group both on the ways in which it could work, and the extent to which it could make certain decisions. Civil servants occasionally took an active part in meetings, 'stepping in' to remind members of the parameters that had previously been set for their work, or indicating the content that the English, Science or Mathematics Working Groups had already included in their subject reports. Following the publication of the National Curriculum Orders for the core subjects the civil servants appeared to have a strong desire to make the content of subsequent subject Orders much more apparent (Walford 1995, Ward 1995, Edwards 1995). Hence the directioning of the GWG to include more geographical content in a tighter curriculum document. Although the civil servants were usually 'incredibly effective' (Ward 1995) they sometimes appeared to have little consideration or perception of the practicalities of teaching. Amongst those that served the Group there did seem to be shared suspicion of the 'educational establishment', but a warmth of regard for the teachers. According to Ward (1995):

'I think outsiders would be surprised at the influence that the teachers in the Group did actually have'.

The DES official assessor Andrew Wye appears to have had a significant effect on the Group. He is mentioned by many Group members (Rawling 1995, Walford 1995, Bennetts 1995a, Storm 1995, Lethbridge 1995, Edwards 1995) as having a direct influence on their work, commenting on whether the geographical content or approaches suggested would be acceptable under the ERA (1988). The position he could adopt was an extremely powerful one - representing the DES, and as a guardian of the ERA, he not only clarified the Working Group's brief and reported back to the DES, but had direct political influence as well. He reminded the Group on occasions of his position as representative of the Secretary of State for

Education, and therefore indirectly of the people who had elected the government and its ministers. Importantly the DES Assessor:

'Sometimes intervened to question the prevailing lingua franca of curriculum theory and its supposed insights. In seeking to expose jargon and rhetoric he also called into question the views of most of the professionals on the Group on many issues. Such confrontations were stimulating but abrasive; they led to as much entrenchment of positions as reassessments of them' (Walford 1992 p.97)

By briefing the Chair with the DES perspective Wye effectively controlled, or acted as a gatekeeper for, the reports which were finally produced. Importantly by closing down discussions (sometimes on the grounds of lack of time availability) he could have a negative effect. Rawling (1995) considers that essential discussions on curriculum and assessment were restricted in this way, which then led to problems later on. Wye's role was therefore pivotal in that he personally assessed what would, or would not, be accepted by Thatcherite ministers and interpreted the political messages coming from Whitehall. In effect he 'acted as the eyes and ears of the Secretary of State' (Walford 1992 p.92). He was also in a strong position to transfer his own views, attitudes and opinions to the whole process of geography curriculum creation if he so wished.

Wye was an interesting and complex character. In Walford's (1995) eyes he was intelligent, sharp witted, well disposed to the Group's work and always ready to hear an argument. Walford also considered him to have been 'something of a barometer of the discussions' who could be observed for signs of whether the Group's efforts were to be well received. He was career minded and keen for the Group to be seen to have succeeded in its task, being comfortable with solutions as long as they advanced the work of the Group. However most Group members comment that he was also extremely exacting on weak arguments, vacillation

or inconsistency and somewhat difficult socially. This sometimes proved testing for educationalists who were used to teachers, say, normally accepting their arguments somewhat deferentially. Although not in cahoots with Fielding he may have advised him strongly at times to ignore discussions, or disregard the 'progress' made in certain meetings. Both Fielding and Wye were, in many ways, similar characters who knew well the political nature of the job they were undertaking and the processes by which decisions could be made.

A 'power play' was apparent between the HMI and DES at the time, with Trevor Bennetts as the HMI Observer being drawn into the centre of this. His position within the Group was made clear from the start by both Wye and Fielding, namely that he could inform the Group about matters within schools, but not directly lead the GWG's work. In the 1980s HMI documentation had defined the arena for discussion about many educational matters; it was perhaps something of a shock to be told by the DES officials that the HMI provided only one perspective on geography education, and that other voices were now equally, or indeed more, valid. The scenario of the tension between the roles adopted by DES officials and that of the HMI Trevor Bennetts was therefore something of a microcosm of what was happening elsewhere on a larger scale.

Bennetts influence on the Group was considerable (Lethbridge, Morgan, Rawling, Edwards, Thomas.R 1995), but constantly under the surveillance of DES officials and the Chair. As a former Staff Inspector for Geography his broad experience of geography education stretched back into the 1970s and 1980s - indeed when Sir Keith Joseph spoke to the GA on June 19th 1985 about geography's role within a centrally determined curriculum, Bennetts speech, which preceded Joseph's, made the educational case for geography. Following the publication of the

Geography Statutory Orders (DES 1991a) Bennetts (1994) spoke frankly about the process by which the GNC had been devised at Charney Manor. He made clear his view about the National Curriculum and the way in which it was devised :

'I was from the beginning, ambivalent about the supposed benefits of the National Curriculum and I remain so. I am not convinced that it is necessarily the best way to improve standards' (p.6).

The role of politicians.

The GWG, like all other National Curriculum Working Groups, was constructed by a political act and as a result had politically determined structures and guidelines for its work. The timescale for the Group's work was a political one inasmuch that governments desire the completion of their projects within their term of office. It was also apparent from the terms of reference that the GWG received that ministers wanted a geography curriculum based upon facts and content which, they believed, would be easily assessable.

To guard the Education Reform Act (1988) and TGAT report (DES 1988) the government directed DES officials and civil servants to oversee the work of the Group and remind its membership of what was within their remit. The DES enjoyed a high profile position following the introduction of the National Curriculum, which it had not always experienced during the life of previous Conservative administrations. To an extent the DES, in its ascendancy, used this new influence to help centralise its position politically. This may have been to the detriment of the HMI whose long running differences with the DES, as witnessed through the 1980s, now began to surface more clearly and were indeed reflected by tensions within the GWG itself.

For some Group members there were both political influences and pressures applied to the Group to reach certain decisions - as Rawling (1992a) later explained she felt that there was 'a 'hidden agenda' of political pressure forcing members to move in certain directions' (p.296) during the life of the Group. Observers beyond the Group such as Catling (1990), Hopkin (1991), and others, noted the 'impossible task' that faced the GWG because of the framework of strong external constraints and 'deficit' view of geography which existed following:

‘a series of surveys and media reports that suggested a lamentable level of locational knowledge amongst young people, and a public perception that this should be a major component of Geography courses' (p.53).

The resultant 'conservative' view of geography which developed from the Working Group's deliberations was 'fearful, perhaps, that anything more 'radical' would be rejected by the government' (Hopkin 1991 p.53).

Nevertheless virtually all the Working Group members find the idea that politicians and bureaucrats covertly 'led' the Group along a particular pre ordained pathway fanciful. Indeed Walford (1992), specifically referring to the writings of Robinson (1992), states that outsiders believe that the Group was manipulated by the Chair and were 'putty in the hands of a Machiavellian set of Ministers' (p.97) were 'melodramatic'. The agenda for the Working Group was in fact always extremely clear - many politicians and their advisers believed that geography education within schools had lost its way and needed a firm hand to redirect it. Even the Secretary of State expressed his view that geography and history had been 'fading in importance' and that 'our young people (should) learn some geography, not just vague

concepts and attitudes that relate to various subjects' The study of geography was therefore to include as a strong central tenet 'learning about places and where they are' (Hansard 29 April 1991. p 123-4).

Rawling (1995) believes that although political influence on the Group was therefore not overt an underlying political pressure was apparent:

'Obviously the government ministers had broad views about a simpler, more utilitarian, kind of geography which was required. DES officials were instrumental in interpreting this, and when Sir Leslie Fielding was briefed they made sure that a more traditional view of geography and a much greater input of place knowledge and basic skills came through'.

Many GWG members felt that politicians believed the school curriculum in general had got 'out of control' and that it was being manipulated to ill effect by both teachers and educationalists, who had previously 'enjoyed unrestricted freedom' (Walford 1992) in curriculum matters. The belief that teachers should get back to teaching 'the basics', avoid affective education, reduce pupil centred teaching and introduce more rigid assessment systems was common amongst Conservative education policy makers. However, notions of direct conspiracy between politicians and any members of the Working Group are almost certainly untrue. As Edwards (1995) states: 'I didn't feel that this was a political Group in any sense of the word; it was definitely a subject Group'. Paterson (1995) agrees:

'There was no hidden agenda. On no occasion was there anything explicitly said that you could attribute as being 'political' and although some elements of the discussions might have appeared to be politically motivated the Group was always a very open and liberal forum for discussion'.

Whilst Thomas.R (1995) notes:

'I think the composition of the Working Group was very interesting. A lot of people have said 'Oh, these things are just politically made up', but in fact I'm

quite surprised it was not more political. I think it was very fair in that there was a balance between the educational establishment - and there was a greater weighting that way - and geographers, as opposed to lay people'.

The major political influence had been firmly established *before* the Working Group had convened:

'Many of the members of the Working Group understood the political nature of the exercise in which we were involved. Certain major principles underlay the composition of the Group; work in schools was not satisfactory, geography's *distinctive* contributions must be focused, the curriculum model was assessment led. These principles were unlikely to be overturned' (Walford 1992. p.98)

Or was to come later when Kenneth Clarke 'cut through things we would have debated for days' (Paterson 1995).

Particular contributions of the GWG members.

On specific points, where there was obvious expertise within the Group, certain individual's opinions were often given precedence. Storm (1995), for example, believes that due to the relative scarcity of primary expertise amongst Group members Wendy Morgan's views achieved prominence on matters of the primary curriculum (a point not entirely collaborated by Morgan (1995) herself!), that Paterson was central to decisions made about Physical Geography, and Rawling about curriculum development. Morgan (1995) states that she was alarmed and angry to find herself as the only primary teacher on the Working Group, and was anxious about the immediate responsibilities given to her for geography in two key stages. The general lack of primary representation was, in Morgan's view, 'a very bad mistake', for although other members could lay claim to some primary expertise from an advisory,

inspectoral or training background none had taught recently at primary level. A similar lack of primary representation was seen on other Working Groups (see Evans and Penney 1995 p.31). Morgan notes her own position as a non specialist geographer (she had trained as a primary teacher without a particular geography specialism) with little experience of curriculum development work, despite a keen interest in primary geography and the GA since the early 1960s. (The later addition of Hugh Ward to the Group to strengthen the primary expertise within the GWG Morgan believes to have been motivated partly by need, but also because she was 'seen to be being difficult in the Group, and awkward by the chair. At that stage it was suggested that someone else ought to come in to strengthen the primary part of the Group' (Morgan 1995). The result, in Morgan's view, was that the primary message became confused rather than strengthened.) Despite her selection for membership of the Group because of her curriculum development experience Rawling found an unwillingness in the GWG to consider her contributions on these matters. At one stage she was instructed by a DES official that 'we don't want to hear about your curriculum ideas' (Rawling 1995).

The lay representatives, despite some initial scepticism amongst the geographers, were universally supported for their contributions to GWG. They were each well informed and interested in the future of geography education, seeking essential clarifications or justifications for the inclusion of content which the geographical 'experts' believed was either un controversial, or self evident. Again a similar situation was repeated on other Working Groups (see Evans and Penney 1995). There were obviously times when the lay members were confused by the different stances taken by the geography 'professionals'. Rawling (1995) recounts such a situation when she tried to get the Group to consider an alternative model of curriculum development which the Chair had previously opposed. The lay representatives were

confused and somewhat frustrated by the lack of support Rawling received from the other geographers who had curriculum development experience. In some respects this created a damaging impression that geographers could not agree on certain fundamentals about geographical education. The lay members' lack of appreciation of geography as a discipline could sometimes be seen as an impediment to the work of the Group, nonetheless Walford (1992) concludes:

'Dismissive comments about their presence, from some professional educators outside the Working Group, were very wide of the mark. The lay members took none of the current wisdom at face value, questioned every issue on its merits, and often pointed to particular weaknesses that professionals had been too close to see properly. They acted as a valuable antidote to prevailing orthodoxies' (p.96).

From the perspective of the laity the process was somewhat perplexing at times. Lethbridge (1995) states:

'I'd never really been exposed to academics before. I never realised how much academics talk, and argue, and feel passionately about their particular corner and I dare say that if there hadn't been a time limit we'd still be at it!'

Submissions to the GWG.

The GWG received presentations, papers and reports from different professional and subject associations, SEAC, NCC and the Curriculum Council for Wales (CCW). Amongst the associations that were invited to meet the GWG were the GA, CEE, Economics Association, Humanities advisers, and Environmental Association. European Union directives on Environmental Education, and teaching about the EU, had some influence on the content of the GNC, but these were only 'flagged up and not constantly waved around during deliberations' (Storm 1995).

Some of the presentations made by Groups did not communicate their beliefs well to the GWG because of their aggressive, or set stance. An example often mentioned by GWG members is that of the Humanities advisers whose presentation was extremely robust, and countered equally strongly (Morgan 1995, Paterson 1995). The nature of their action may have been somewhat directed by desperation given the subject based nature of Baker's pronouncements on the National Curriculum within the Education Reform Act (1988). Lethbridge (1995) recalls that Fielding was strongly against 'pressure groups' of any kind seeking to influence the GWG, favouring the opinions of geographers first and foremost. In addition members of the Working Group regularly presented their own papers to the rest of the Group for consideration, although these submissions were sometimes resisted by the Chair (Rawling 1995).

Often Fielding and Thomas would ask GWG members to justify or provide evidence for statements that they made. This resulted in members researching such evidence before providing a paper, or oral statement, to the Group. Effectively this questioned whether educationalists and geographers were working by tradition and convention, or whether what they proclaimed represented tried and tested principle and empirical evidence. This led to a certain amount of reassessment of previously long adopted thoughts and principles by certain members : 'Some of us on the Group really did genuinely re examine some positions at the time' (Walford 1995).

Conclusions.

The composition of the GWG, and the ways in which it functioned, obviously had a large influence on the GNC that it produced.

The Group experienced a series of external constraints that were unwelcome and detrimental to its work. Amongst these the major impositions were those of the limited time available to complete their reports, and the restrictiveness of the TGAT recommendations on attainment targets, programmes of study, levels and assessment. The terms of reference and supplementary guidance also provided, for some, a constraint which when strictly applied acted as a strait jacket to the process of constructing the GNC. Others within the Working Group who tacitly, or indeed openly, agreed with the approach suggested naturally found no difficulties with their influence.

The whole nature of being a part of a government appointed official Working Group, serviced by civil servants, overseen by governmental officials and responsible to a minister of state, was alien to most of the GWG members and intimidating to some. The process and methods by which the Group operated were unique. Learning how to operate effectively within this structure was a requirement of all the Group members - some now believe that they successfully achieved such learning, others only in part, and one or two not at all. The dynamics of the ways in which the Group worked are both complex and fascinating and provide a key to understanding the GNC which was eventually produced (see Chapter 7). It is apparent that certain Group members believe that the functioning of the Group did not occur

on a 'level playing field' and that the steer applied to the Group's work, both internally and externally, ensured the creation of a particularly kind of Final Report (DES 1990a).

In addition the guidance to follow the working patterns and styles of reporting of previously well received reports from the core subjects, the leadership style of the Chair, the influence of the GA and the impact of consultation, visits (both domestic and foreign) and submissions all complicate the picture. Apparent changes in the thoughts and beliefs of Group members whilst serving on the GWG, as well as an over riding fear amongst many of the Working Group members that an 'unfavourable' report would see the removal of geography from the National Curriculum, are also major considerations.

The next Chapter serves to outline the content and conduct of the meetings of the GWG, the reports they produced and the major issues of debate within the Working Group.

Notes:

Bennetts.T.H (1995a) - Interview with Trevor Bennetts 20 July 1995

Edwards.K (1995) - Interview with Kay Edwards 3 March 1995

Lethbridge.R (1995) - Interview with Richard Lethbridge 21 April 1995

Morgan.W (1995) - Interview with Wendy Morgan 20 February 1995.

Paterson.K (1995) - Interview with Keith Paterson 3 May 1995.

Rawling.E (1995) - Interview with Eleanor Rawling 4 March 1995.

Storm.M (1995) - Interview with Michael Storm 13 February 1995.

Thomas.D (1995) - Interview with David Thomas 13 March 1995.

Thomas.R (1995) - Interview with Rachel Thomas 27 April 1995.

Walford.R (1995) - Interview with Rex Walford 31 March 1995.

Ward.H (1995) - Interview with Hugh Ward 9 February 1995.

Chapter 5.

THE CREATION OF THE GEOGRAPHY NATIONAL CURRICULUM.

'We might ask as a criterion for any subject, whether when fully developed, it is worth an adult's knowing, and whether having known it as a child, it makes a better adult. If the answer to both questions is negative or dubious, then the material is cluttering the curriculum'.

J. Bruner (1960 p.52)

'It is much more likely that a gradualist approach will succeed in making curriculum changes, when an attempted revolution may cause chaos and little else'

N.J. Graves (1979 p.19)

This chapter seeks to explore the creation, and eventual publication, of the Geography National Curriculum by the Geography Working Group. It considers the life of the Group from its initial selection and composition, through its various meetings, to its dissolution after the publication of the Final Report in June 1990. The ways in which the Group chose, or were persuaded, to work are highlighted. The NCC Consultation Report for Geography (1990), as well as the Draft (DES 1991b) and Statutory Orders (DES 1991a) are analysed, although it must be remembered that the GWG had no active influence on the development of these publications having been disbanded in the summer of 1990. Details of specific content, structural and process issues concerning the GNC and its implementation are considered in greater depth in Chapter 6 and are mentioned here only to help illustrate aspects of how the GWG operated.

The GWG meetings.

When recalling the process by which the GWG undertook its work different members of the Group, not surprisingly, have contrasting views both concerning its *modus operandi* and the techniques they believed would be successful in influencing its decisions. Importantly, Walford (1992) noted that at the start of their work none of the members had been briefed about how the GWG would function :

'when the Group was summoned for its first meeting on May 18, 1989 - significantly held in the Secretary of State's own conference room at the DES's unprepossessing headquarters backing on to Waterloo Railway Station - none of its members was sure how it would operate and how the ultimate objectives would be achieved' (p.89)

Subsequently Walford (1995) placed great emphasis on the dynamics of how the GWG actually *worked as a Group*, noting the approaches one had to adopt to achieve influence within this governmentally appointed body (see Chapter 7). At times he found it necessary to 'hold back' his opinion, or to prompt others to make points which would support his views. Eventually Walford decided that the most successful approach was to make a maximum of two or three major interventions each day, considering before each meeting which were the main issues he wanted to influence. The counter-productivity of, say, questioning minutes or reopening debates that had already been 'resolved' are noted by Walford (1992, 1995). Significantly Thomas.R (1995) felt that Fielding 'would not respond to open confrontation, you had to be more subtle and talk to him individually later', an approach which not all members would either appreciate or consider appropriate to the working of an official Group such as this.

By contrast Rawling (1995) tried to adopt a strong, critical approach in questioning the structure, form and content of the GNC that was being devised. This often involved opposing the curriculum model adopted, and the working procedures suggested by the Chair. The lack of support she received both from the Chair, and from some of the Group's members, may not detract from the veracity of Rawling's arguments. However, one might question the effectiveness of her approach within such a body. Rawling eventually decided to alter her mode of working during the latter part of the Group's life, having realised her previous lack of success. As Goodson's (1988) account of the development of school geography notes the study of the motives of personalities and organisations in the development of any discipline are as important as any recounting of the sequence of events.

The approach to planning the GNC.

At the first major working meeting of the Group on 15 June 1989 Fielding steered the membership into considering the 'definition and number of attainment targets' (Rawling 1992a), based upon the contents of a briefing paper (DES 1989b see figure 5.1) which outlined eight stages towards the creation of a Geography National Curriculum. The GWG therefore did not begin its work by openly considering the aims for geography education, the TGAT report (DES 1988), or the curriculum development model to which they should be working. Indeed Rawling (1995) believes that the whole question of whether to include geographical content either in the ATs or in the PoS 'was never ever discussed', having already been subsumed by the adoption of the DES (1989b) model. The structural problems this created for the GNC were immediately apparent to many teachers after the publication of the Interim Report, but are perhaps still not realised by some of the Working Group members themselves.

Figure 5.1

Suggested Approach to Planning NC geography (DES 1989b).

1. Decide on definition and number of ATs (in light of perceived structure of geography)
2. Consider how ATs Group into profile components.
3. Develop 10 levels for each AT and appropriate SoAs.
4. Give examples to illustrate each level where appropriate.
5. Consider weightings of elements in SoAs at each level.
6. Provide arguments in support of range of levels chosen for pupils at each reporting age.
7. Consider how PoS should be constructed to enable level requirements to be met.
8. Indicate which aspects of performance on each level would be best assessed by SATS.

from DES GWG Paper (89) 2.

The order of the stages outlined in the DES paper (1989b) was very important. With the creation of ATs and SoAs dominating the first six steps, the PoS and SATs were left as something of an afterthought to be considered at stages 7 and 8. The failure to attempt an integration of each of these related elements at the initial stages meant that there would be little chance of combining them easily into a workable system later on. The implication was that assessment (and the creation of geography SATs) could safely be considered once the geography curriculum content was in place.

In this respect it appears that the DES tried to avoid wasting time, as they perceived it, by immediately 'side-stepping' educational and curriculum arguments. By making the GWG consider the major issue of geographical content at a very early stage it was possibly felt that the rapid production of an unproblematic geography curriculum would result. The inference was that the political task of creating a GNC within a fixed time period had effectively removed the 'luxury' of affording time for extended discussion of educational matters. This was partly coupled with a belief, held by the Chair and certain other Working Group members, that geography was lucky to be included within the National Curriculum, and that a delay in delivering the Final Report might ultimately jeopardise its curriculum position (Walford 1992).

Somewhat surprisingly the majority of educationalists on the GWG did not react strongly against this proposed working model. In retrospect many GWG members may not have fully appreciated the dangers of launching straight into creating the ATs before determining the curriculum and assessment structures into which this would have to be fitted. When Rawling raised these concerns she was told that she was 'worrying over trivial points', or 'making a fuss over nothing' (Rawling 1995).

Some Working Group members now consider that the creation of the ATs should have been a later part of the curriculum planning process, rather than the first stage of its development (Rawling 1995, Morgan 1995, Thomas.R 1995, Paterson 1995). Only at the sixth and seventh meetings were any suggestions made about how the PoS might complement the ATs. Worryingly, as Rawling (1992a) pointed out, 'There was never any discussion of the TGAT framework as a whole, or of how it might relate to the structure and characteristics of

geography as a school subject' (p.301), itself a major reason for the assessment difficulties faced by teachers once the GNC Orders became statutory. Others (Walford 1992, 1995, Storm 1995, Paterson 1995) would partly counter this by stating that a consideration of assessment issues was largely beyond the aims of the Group (see Final Report DES 1990a p. 88).

It therefore became clear at a very early stage in the life of the GWG that the development model for the GNC was to be created simply by accepting the guidance supplied by the DES (1989b). This predominantly considered the content of the ATs, not the curriculum structure. The procedures by which the work of the Group was completed were also significant. In the interests of time efficiency tasks were often divided into individual, sub Group or plenary activities. This meant that not everybody could be fully involved in each of the decisions initially made.

Divisions within the Group.

The early polarisation of the work of the Group into a consideration of the geographical content of the ATs naturally highlighted certain divisions within its membership. These were essentially threefold - between those members who wished place and locational knowledge to underpin the geography curriculum; those who preferred thematic approaches; and those who wished to give preference to enquiry skills.

Two months after the creation of the GWG, in July 1989, the Group had still not fully resolved whether places, skills or themes should dominate the ATs. This decision was finally made in August 1989, when some of the Working Group were on holiday, in favour of a place centred

approach. Morgan (1995) believes that this was a crucial turning point for the future prominence of place knowledge within the geography curriculum - an outcome which she feels might not have occurred had all the Group been available to debate the decision.

The importance of locational knowledge influenced much of the early discussion of the Working Group, and also the wider debate which occurred after the publication of the Interim Report. According to Walford (1991c) a common belief prevailed that 'place' was under-emphasised in school geography. This led, at one stage, to no fewer than five 'place' ATs being considered, including one titled 'Global Systems'. This was balanced, he felt, by a commonly held view that theoretical, conceptual and thematic geography had gained an unhealthy hold, which frequently meant that much of the geography being taught had no place orientation whatever. Walford (1991c) therefore believes that 'the need for a locational knowledge base turned out not to be the controversial issue which some had supposed it would be' (p.52), although many commentators outside the Working Group were later to counter this assertion.

The influence of the Science Working Group Report on the earliest work of the GWG is noted by many Group members. The procedures followed at the SWG meetings were upheld by the DES as a successful model to emulate and all GWG members were given copies of their Report to consider. The progress the SWG had made, its report content, and its overall acceptability both to the DES and the government, certainly made a strong impression on Fielding and others. By contrast the Mathematics Order was not so influential for it was perceived that its Working Group had experienced internal difficulties during its life, some resulting from discussions of varying philosophies of Maths education, which led to the creation of a more disjointed Report. This was perhaps one reason for Wye's intolerance of

'philosophical' argument within the GWG, which he believed wasted time and deflected the Group from successfully completing its task. Unfortunately the rapid and unsatisfactory resolution of problems in the early days of the GWG, without recourse to full discussion, may have resulted in more time consuming debates (and substantially greater problems for teachers) later on. It must also be remembered that Science and Geography should be regarded as two very different disciplines, both in terms of their content and concepts. Merely superimposing one model of curriculum development from one subject onto another is very rarely successful.

The A and B syllabuses.

For Rawling the lack of debate at the start of the Working Group's life about the curriculum structure to adopt was a fundamental concern, which she would continue to raise up to the Interim Report's publication. Rawling (1995) recalls that at one point Fielding allowed her to make the case for an alternative syllabus structure, which became known in the Group as Syllabus B. Although she believes her ideas had some influence on the Group, and definitely found favour with Bennetts, it was apparent that Fielding wished to steer the Group's attentions towards an acceptance of Syllabus A - an essentially 'content driven' curriculum. He eventually stated that although the Group was divided on whether one model was better than the other they would *try* working with Syllabus A first, and come back to consider Syllabus B later. Interestingly this later consideration effectively never happened. Walford (1995) believes that this was a very clever piece of chairing by Fielding, in that he may have initially intended to trial Syllabus B but soon realised that the majority of the Group could work successfully with Syllabus A. As a result of this 'support' he rejected the possibility of re-opening the debate. This is partly borne out by Thomas.R (1995) who believed that 'we could not keep

going back', and that the History Working Group had already provided evidence of unsuccessfully trying to adopt such a model.

Even so, Fielding was unsure about how the Group would divide over the issue and asked David Thomas for advice. Thomas.D (1995) believed that almost all of the Group, except Rawling, would support the A syllabus, but felt it unnecessary to bring the issue to a formal vote. It is now apparent that Fielding wanted to produce a unanimous report and therefore put off decisions about the A and B syllabuses as long as possible, perhaps knowing that if Rawling gained support the whole direction of the Group's work would need to change. This would delay the Interim Report and indicate publicly that the GWG was divided. By the time a real decision had to be made about which syllabus design to choose it was already apparent that it was too late to change - much of the work of devising the geography curriculum around syllabus A had already been done. This tactic of putting off such a major decision is, in effect, a decision in itself - in the knowledge that the option of change is effectively removed by the pressure of time.

It is important to note that Syllabus B was never a physical entity around which Group members could unite, but a concept. It was never written down and therefore somewhat intangible, in direct contrast to the steadily developing Syllabus A. David Thomas (1995) recalls that he was in the Chair when the final decision was made about the syllabus, and that by this time it was uncontroversial for the majority of the Group.

The nature of 'geography' in the Geography National Curriculum.

Sir Leslie Fielding's view of the role of geography within the National Curriculum appeared to emphasise the subject's previous failings and contribute to the 'deficit model' mentioned by many Group members and commentators. During the third meeting of the GWG he stated his belief that geography was lucky to have been included as a foundation subject and that a 'debt' had to be paid for its good fortune. It was to become increasingly clear in subsequent meetings that he believed educationalists, 'theorists' and school teachers had had enough influence on the development of geography curricula in the past, and that it was now the turn of the pragmatists to have their say. Unfortunately such a negative view of the teaching and learning of geography was, to some extent, easily sustainable; the HMI (1989) report on history and geography in primary schools highlighted inadequacies in the delivery of both subjects, whilst practice within the geography departments of secondary schools often varied widely (see the Geography National Curriculum Final Report June DES 1990a p.5). This proved to be a damaging perspective from which to construct a Geography National Curriculum, for the successes of previous curriculum developments in geography were perhaps wrongly identified as being responsible for some of the problems that the subject currently faced in schools.

The wider influences on the nature of the geography to be represented in the GNC were apparent to certain Group members. Rawling (1996a) states:

'There is evidence that on the GWG, members were subjected to considerable pressure to ensure that geography addressed the utilitarian concerns for hard facts, place knowledge and traditional skills. For those minimalist thinkers in the Conservative Party, these were the main and only justification of geography's place in the curriculum, and I have referred elsewhere (Rawling 1992a) to the way in which the Working Group was steered by its chairman

to a simple formula which placed these aspects 'up front' in the attainment targets' (p112).

Walford (1995) states that he enjoyed the first three meetings of the GWG because they re-focused debate onto what the discipline of geography was really all about. He felt that in the 1980s there had been a lack of real debate about the nature of geography, especially compared to the 1960s when there was high excitement about quantification and how the subject was changing both in schools and universities. By the 1980s the debate had dissipated, the dialectic about the nature of geography becoming 'curiously inert' (Walford 1995). Walford considers that the opening discussions, which centred on circulated readings selected by GWG members, were some of the most stimulating and rewarding the Group held. From these meetings the starting agenda of a re-assertion of place knowledge, Physical Geography and a focus on environmentalism was established. In essence Walford (1991c) contends that the 'Early sessions of the Working Group focused on coming to an understanding of the subject itself in modern form, as well as relating it to the needs of children' (p.52).

Morgan (1994) also recalls that at one of the initial sessions:

'members were given an opportunity to offer to colleagues a personal view of geography. In the first instance this was through the selection of a significant chapter or article which was circulated for all to read' (p.27).

Similarly Walford (1992), notes that:

'from the first day that the Group assembled, the question of what exactly geography *was* emerged as a concurrent theme of conversation The Chairman (sic) accepted a suggestion that members should circulate - for the education of others - one or two pieces of writing they considered the epitome of geography. Almost everybody took the opportunity to do so' (p.94).

Different Group members selected readings which they believed would either support their own beliefs, or influence the GWG in the direction of a particular concern. For example Storm selected a piece relating to Sir Keith Joseph's speech to the GA in 1985, Edwards an article by Stoddart (1987) on geography reclaiming 'the high ground', and Morgan chose Sybil Marshall's account of her village primary school in Cambridgeshire. Other selections included work by both Mackinder (1887) and Goudie (1987), a children's story by Roald Dahl, a Philip Larkin poem and paragraphs from a Cambridge University admissions prospectus. Interestingly Thomas.R (1995) believes that few GWG members moved significantly from the views their readings exemplified during the life of the Working Group!

In the early meetings of the GWG there was also:

'a more fundamental discussion about whether, at its heart, school geography was a way of learning about things or whether its ultimate *raison d'etre* was content. This opened up deep philosophical crevasses about the nature of the subject in higher education, and the desirability, or otherwise, of 'academic' and 'school' geography dancing to the same tune' (Walford 1992 p.94).

Unfortunately discussion of the aims of geography education appear to have been developed as a 'sideline' exercise with little regard to their essential linkages to assessment, content and skills.

'The result was that the model of attainment targets on which the Group agreed to focus for the Interim Report contained everything which had been discussed and which seemed tangible enough to please the minister - specific places, specific topics and themes in human, physical and environmental geography, particular skills and techniques' (Rawling 1992a p301).

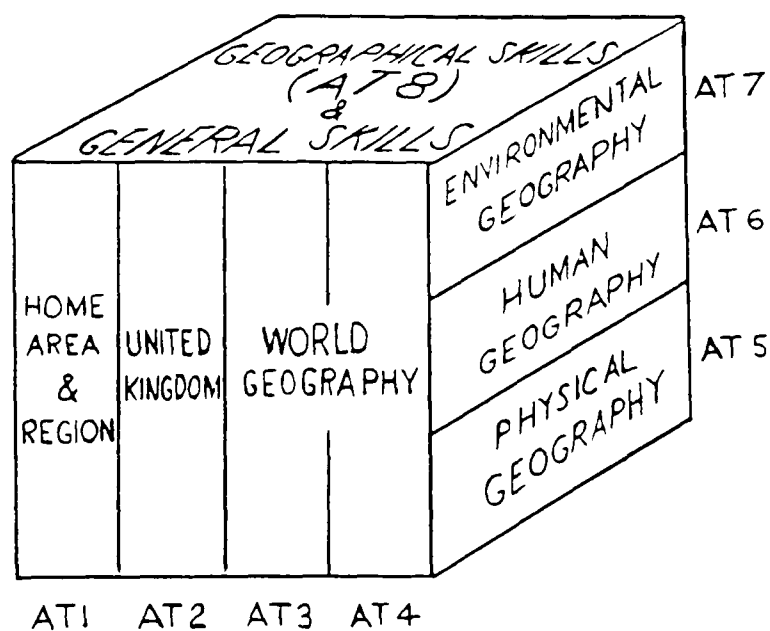
Equally important issues such as the role of geographical enquiry and the importance of progression were effectively ignored, although the eventual aims devised were successful and well received.

Walford, and others, hoped that the GWG would also succeed in getting people talking about geography again, both within and outside the discipline. He wished that more GA members, lecturers, advisers, academics and teachers would debate the subject over the next five years and that one of the GWG's roles would be to provide a benchmark for this - 'I'd say that this was almost more important than anything else, and I'm pleased to have been part of that if it re-establishes principles and leads to discussion' (Walford 1995).

The Interim Report.

As we have seen the GWG started its task of constructing the GNC by identifying ATs for geography. The relationship between these was successfully summarised by a cube diagram devised by Bennetts which illustrated how all geography teaching and learning would ideally be composed of places, themes and geographical skills (fig 5.2)

fig 5.2 (from Interim Report 1989)



The first cube, relating to the eight attainment targets of the Interim Report (DES 1989a), was later revised and simplified for the Final Report (DES 1990a) (fig 5.3)

fig 5.3.



The Interim Report for geography was published in November 1989 (DES 1989a) and gained a very mixed reception from teachers and educationalists. The eight attainment targets it contained, reduced from nine originally considered by the Working Group, were content driven with half of them focusing on specific areas of study (AT1 Home Area and Region, AT2 United Kingdom, AT3 World Geography 1, AT4 World Geography 2). Locational knowledge had achieved a particularly strong emphasis within the report.

As Marsden (1995) commented:

'In general the *Interim Report* of the Geography Working Group received a bad press from the professionals. Psychologically, this may in part have reflected the fact that, unlike the History Interim Report, it was so well received by the Secretary of State, and was also tendentiously presented to

the media by its Chairman (sic) as marking a return to fact-learning geography' (p.159).

Criticisms of the Interim Report.

Some geographers viewed the content of the Interim Report positively. Tidswell (1990) referred, without apparent irony, to the ATs having 'a long and impeccable pedigree' (p.302) reaching back to Mackinder's 'Seven Lamps of Geography'. His analysis of change in geography curricula noted a move 'from knowledge per se to understanding and the development of a system of attitudes and values', qualities which he also ascribes to the Interim Report. He saw the Report as 'not the strait jacket that it may appear', and claimed 'it facilitates more opportunities than it imposes limitations' (p.312).

The major omissions from the Report were generally recognised as being a clear enquiry approach to learning; opportunities for affective development emphasising the exploration of values, attitudes and issues; a range of geographical skills; and a distinctive programme of study. The overburdening content was criticised both by representatives of the primary (for example Catling 1989) and secondary sectors (for example Carr 1989, Graves et al 1990, Schofield 1990) whilst certain members of the Working Group itself condemned their own proposals. Morgan wrote to the Group prior to the publication of the Interim Report stating that :

'Our proposals for Key Stages 1 and 2 do not add up to a coherent, child-related curriculum which stands any chance of being delivered satisfactorily by general teachers to ordinary children. In seeking to be politically and academically respectable we have designed a structure which is inappropriate at this level' (quoted in Morgan 1994. p29-30).

Roberts (1990) neatly summarised many of the wider criticisms of the Interim Report within a *Times Educational Supplement* article highlighting the 'Sir Leslie Fielding View of the World' in map form. This graphically revealed the extremely unbalanced and distorted picture of the world the GWG had created, where teacher choice was limited and topical events difficult to include. Such a heavily prescribed curriculum was not, in Roberts' mind, easy to assess and revealed a uniquely British image of the world. The division between 'World One' and 'World Two', or the 'rich' and 'poor' worlds, was artificial and damaging as it discouraged the study of interdependence between nations. The inclusion of 200 hundred place names which effectively had to be rote learned was also criticised. Roberts (1990) concluded:

'The Working Group is making geography a less rigorous subject by emphasising facts rather than understanding and by basing its framework on content rather than concepts and processes' (p.35).

As Butt (1992) commented the Interim Report therefore represented:

'a worrying indication of the way in which the Working Group was operating Perhaps the most disturbing aspect was that much of the content (of the report) was of debatable relevance to children's learning' (p.162).

Acknowledging the constraints under which the GWG had laboured Catling (1989) congratulated them for setting out so fully their thoughts on the progression of geographical attainment in the limited time available. However, like others, he criticised the Group's sense of direction, criteria for selection of places to be studied, the extent of locational knowledge expected of children, and the lack of scope for teachers to chose topical places, or places *they* knew, for study.

'The basis for world cover is trading partners, powerful nations, historic links and a balanced spread; these are important in themselves but they ignore the vitality of criteria that are school focused' (Catling 1989).

In essence Catling wished the GWG would follow the lead of the SWG and MWG in basing its ATs on enquiry. In conclusion he warned the GWG against adopting a 'top down, secondary' model of teaching and curriculum development that had traditionally affected primary education, and still appeared to be favoured within the creation of the National Curriculum.

Focusing on the secondary perspective Carr (1989) recognised the 'gritty issue' of locational knowledge in the Interim Report, noting that 50% of the geography curriculum was area based leading to potential 'place overload'. Along with difficulties over continuity, progression and assessment Carr stated that:

'in attempting to reconcile area studies, themes and skills through different types of attainment target, the Group seemed to have blurred the distinction between an attainment target and a programme of study'.

Reflecting on the Working Group's composition of recognised and respected geography educationalists Schofield (1990) was amazed at the nature of the interim report they had eventually produced :

'Given the past history of curriculum development in geography one would have expected a really enlightened Report which was a cohesive force within the curriculum. Instead we have a reactionary document which threatens to wipe out much of the progressive geography of recent years' (p.33).

He also questioned whether the Report was actually an 'interim' report at all:

'The Group has " provide[d] draft statements of attainment at all applicable levels"(p.1) when , according to its terms of reference, it should have been ".... outlining and exemplifyingits provisional thinking about.....defined levels of attainmentand the profile components into which attainment targets should be Grouped". In other words, the Group chose to ignore large areas of its terms of reference and supplementary guidance'. (p.33)

Like other commentators Schofield (1990) noted the overloading of content and weighting of the curriculum in terms of knowledge, where he saw the GNC 'encouraging a quaint sort of gazetteer geography, as a massive over-reaction to the weaknesses in locational knowledge among school leavers highlighted by the media' (p.33). He concluded that the Group has raced to meet its deadlines, but had produced a Report that erroneously purported to be assessable, and destroyed the growth of Humanities courses in schools:

'It is simply not good enough for the Group to devise a curriculum in a vacuum and then sit back to leave the National Curriculum Council, the School Examination and Assessment Council and schools to sort out how to fit it all together. ... Perhaps they feel it advantageous to be over-prescriptive, to overload with content and to lay claim to a distinct area of knowledge for themselves, thereby making it very difficult for schools to make any links between geography and other subjects. The aim of all this presumably is to ensure the survival of the word "geography" on timetables as well as its introduction as a separate subject below the age of 11' (Schofield.1990 p.33).

Walford (1995) recalls a submission from the UDE tutors co ordinated by Margaret Roberts which was not well received by all members of the GWG because of the somewhat polemical nature of her recent *Times Educational Supplement* article (Roberts 1990). In Walford's eyes care was needed in the way in which individuals, or groups, attempted to influence the GWG. He believed that public statements of disaffection could not be combined with private responses - one had to adopt one approach or the other. This effectively concerns the etiquette of how to address an officially appointed Working Group; indeed the whole nature of the GWG's work often appears to have been influenced by form and process, rather than substance.

The Interim Report and educational ideologies.

In terms of its analysis of the Interim Report Butt (1992) highlighted the significant contribution to an emerging debate about the educational ideology of the GNC by Hall's (1990) paper 'The National Curriculum and the Two Cultures: Towards a Humanistic Perspective'. Here Hall noted that the National Curriculum was only a first step in the process of curriculum development in which geography education was finding itself torn between two dominant cultural ideologies - the Enterprise and Ecological Cultures.

The key role of the skills attainment target (AT1) in uniting all other ATs in geography was in danger of creating a sink of useless skills such as:

'the mind emptying exercises of the study of contours in order to recognise an outlier or conical hill on an ordnance survey map, or to sanctify the status of cross sections through their function to prove or demonstrate a cause/effect relationship between topography and life' (Hall 1990 p.318).

Hall (1990) argued that skills in geography should not be reduced to trivia, but used to support first hand geographical enquiries and 'to generate qualities of mind and of action deemed important in the future life world of the individual' (p.318). The Interim Report also reflected populist, elitist and environmental features. Vocationalist and instrumental influences within an Enterprise Culture were all clearly seen within the Report according to Hall (1990), whilst the promotion of skills through Technical Vocational and Educational Extension (TVEE), The Further Education Curriculum and Development Unit (FEU) and the Mansell Report emphasised a utilitarian and 'hard nosed' philosophy that deviated from geography's traditional link with higher education. The GNC had therefore become:

'suffused by the thinking of the Enterprise Culture' where 'elitism is the dominant ideology, skills are the handmaiden of formal conceptual understanding and merely feed the appetite of a closed intellectual culture' (Hall 1990 p.320).

By contrast Hall's (1990) Ecological Culture model is based on a society where power is diffused and supportive, and change occurs through evolutionary rather than competitive means. The curriculum is not 'corseted', but open to redefinition and expansion, such that the pupils 'own' the curriculum they study to a greater extent. He notes the possible influences of 'green' geography, reflection and action, political literacy, economic awareness, numeracy and IT where pupil achievements are not seen as occurring on a hierarchical ladder, but upon a profile of their achievements. Here the enquiry is ' "wet nosed" because its objectives are qualitative and evolving , negotiable, contingent , and open to democratic review'.(p.322) - in short a humanistic curriculum.

The prevailing pressures were away from this conception of the curriculum:

‘what emerged (from both the DES and the lay influences) was pressure to shift the curriculum ethos from child-centred and reconstructivist emphases (often strongly apparent in the 1970s and still powerful in the 1980s) to more conservative emphases of vocational relevance and necessary transition of cultural heritage exemplified in geography’s case by a concern for the useful world of knowledge to be learned’ (Walford 1992 p.97)

GA reaction to the Interim Report.

During the initial phase of meetings of the GWG the GA acted in three ways (Daugherty 1989a). Firstly commenting on the government's general approach to the National Curriculum (for example with respect to national assessment, resource provision, pace of change, etc), secondly reinforcing geography's cross curricular links, and lastly informing the debate pro-

actively by producing briefing papers for the GWG and journal articles for GA members. In this way the GA hoped it would stay central to the National Curriculum debate. However, Daugherty (1989a) tellingly stated:

'It is tempting to be cynical about a procedure which leaves ministers in a position where they could choose to over ride both the advice of their own appointees and the majority opinions voiced in a consultation process'

Hall (1990) and Rawling (1995) noted the concern expressed by teachers attending meetings set up by the GA to discuss the Interim Report (DES 1989a) between January and March 1990. Working Group members were often present at these meetings, but were briefed by the DES not to make presentations, and only to answer questions that came from the floor. These conferences, and those established by the DES, were not always pleasant for the Working Group members who attended - Rachel Thomas (1995) recalls that the Bristol conference was the 'most vitriolic and hostile I've ever attended', whilst David Thomas (1995) states of a Coventry meeting:

'I didn't think I was going to get away with my skin intact at one stage; it was really furious. They took the view that we were selling geography down the river, and we thought we were doing the very opposite'.

A second set of regional INSET seminars was also established by the GA in 1991 and 1992 as a reaction to the demise in the support agencies for teachers at a time when they were required most. The 'market led' support of educational consultants had not yet materialised and so teachers were left in something of a vacuum. The GA also established a regional support network led initially by two pilot regions before full coverage was achieved in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The GA's subsequent submission in 1990 to the NCC resulting from their consultation process stated that its membership believed the Interim Report to be fundamentally flawed. It concluded that although many geography teachers welcomed the inclusion of a 'sense of place', environmental geography and a commitment to children's enjoyment of the subject, there were difficulties concerning the emphasis given to the learning of geographical facts as an end in themselves. The prescription of factual content within the SoAs (rather than PoS) meant that the geography curriculum could easily 'stagnate' and would have difficulties in responding to current, or even recent, events. This point was dramatically illustrated by events occurring at the time, such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and the creation of the CIS - both of which would perhaps be difficult to include into geographical study given the nature of the Interim Report.

In effect the GA reaction to the Interim Report is summarised by Rawling (1996a) as follows:

'The Geographical Association explicitly recognised the(se) structural faults but took the line that constructive support to geography teachers on making the most of the National Curriculum (Rawling 1991b) was the best way to promote high quality geography, at the same time continuing to campaign for change behind the scenes' (p. 113).

It was apparent that the GA had lost the initiative that it had previously demonstrated in helping to win a place for geography on the National Curriculum (see Bailey 1988) and found its new role more problematic and diffuse.

Teacher Union and Newspaper reaction to the Interim Report.

Although the History National Curriculum initially appeared to be in a more perilous state than the GNC, and the 'process versus content' debate of the HWG certainly attracted more press

coverage in 1989 and 1990, the controversial nature of the geography Interim Report attracted some response from the newspapers and teacher unions. For example in their May 1990 edition of *Report AMMA* devoted seven articles to geography and the National Curriculum, referring to the Report in their editorial as 'being greeted with fairly universal scepticism by geographers'. *Report* also reproduced a comment from David Hume, Senior Adviser for Northumberland, that the GWG had written 'the worst curriculum report so far'. Interestingly the national newspapers also found some space to explore the controversy. The *Independent* (22.2.90) stated:

'testing children on whether they can point to Japan on a globe of the world will turn the clock back 20 years. When the GA held its regional meetings to discuss the report it found almost unanimous hostility towards the kind of geography being proposed'.

The paper also carried a rather ironic quote from Sir Leslie Fielding that 'It does not appear there is any need for radical changes in the selection of countries or in the structure of the underlying plan' - an indication that the official consultation process would perhaps illicit few changes.

The leader comment of the *Times Educational Supplement* on 24 November 1989 expressed a very different position. The dangers of trying to establish a National Curriculum from the separate subject reports of Working Groups, each of which were producing their documentation at different times, was creating a 'jigsaw' effect. The GWG's Interim Report was therefore seen to overlap with statements made in the previously published Science Working Group Report, which had expanded its boundaries to encompass content which geographers traditionally thought of as being within their own discipline. The lack of timetable space at Key Stage four for the increasing number of content laden subjects on the curriculum,

and the significance of the GWG's statement that they could not see 'any fully satisfactory way' of incorporating a short course for non GCSE geography students, was also noted by the leader writers. The subtle changes of directions given to the HWG and GWG in their recent additional terms of reference given by MacGregor also caused speculation about the possibilities of a Humanities solution to the key stage 4 timetabling dilemma, although this would prove to be anathema to the Far Right of the Conservative party, the Working Groups themselves and SEAC.

The role of Humanities.

The decisive blow which ERA (1988), and the subsequent work of the GWG and HWG, dealt to Humanities courses is apparent both through the content of the geography Interim Report and the comments of the Working Group members. Many within the GWG saw a part of their role as ensuring the continuance of geography on school timetables and the diminution of the 'threat' for recognition and timetable space from Humanities courses (Storm 1995, Walford 1995, Ward 1995, Edwards 1995, Thomas.R 1995). Fears that Humanities might subsume and dissipate geography, even though the National Curriculum was already built upon a subject base, were prevalent. Bailey (1992) for example stated that Humanities:

'posed the greatest threat to both history and geography in the lower secondary, and some extent in primary schools' (p.67).

Additionally Walford noted that history and geography were not 'twins', except 'in the eyes of hard pressed timetablers and some teachers who favour integrated Humanities courses' (Walford 1991c p.52). The influence on the GWG's thinking of a recent HMI report criticising both the content and teaching of Humanities courses; visits to schools where geography was

badly taught within a Humanities framework; Baker's original definition of the National Curriculum in single subjects; and the vitriolic nature of the Humanities advisers response to the GWG, were also considerable.

The GWG's reaction to criticisms and consultation.

The GWG never publicly acknowledged that it would have to change direction as a result of the findings emerging from the consultation on the Interim Report, indeed its Chair believed that the report needed few radical changes in its areal coverage and structure (*Independent* 22.2.90). It therefore went straight on to the second phase of its work, even though according to one Group member:

'there was never an admission from any member that our original plans were badly awry, significant changes began to occur as attainment targets were reduced to 7, statements of attainment were rejected and rephrased and attempts to create coherent programmes of study were made' (Morgan 1994. p.30-31).

The point is reiterated by Rawling (1995) who states that most of the concerns evident from consultation were 'played down' with statements such as 'well, these comments come from LEA advisers - they would say that wouldn't they!'

Both the GWG, and the civil servants who serviced it, were impressed by the volume and diversity of public consultation responses to the Interim Report (Ward 1995, Storm 1995, Rawling 1995, Walford 1995, Morgan 1995). The 800, or so, responses were said, by Ward (1995) to have had an 'emphatic effect' on the subsequent Final Report (DES 1990) - especially with respect to its command terms and content. However, many of the consultation responses

were either contradictory or inaccurate. In the case of the primary responses the total numbers of letters was small and often somewhat naive in their consideration of the role and function of geography education at primary level. This led certain Group members to believe that the eventual impact of the responses was negligible (Lethbridge 1995, Bennetts 1995, Thomas.D 1995) possibly because the GWG already contained a diversity of strongly held views within its membership.

Civil servants initially tried to summarise the responses, with the Group's secretary Leslie Webb attempting to create a lengthy tabulated document. However, this proved to be too large a task. The Group members therefore each read separate collections of responses and brought what they believed to be significant submissions to the attention of other members. The process by which the GWG considered these responses, over the course of a weekend, was not ideal according to Walford (1995). With members in the same room phrases and comments were read out aloud, which may have biased or distracted members. It would perhaps have been better to consider batches of responses in isolation before conducting a plenary session. Michael Storm recalls visiting Elizabeth House to read all the responses, as indeed could anyone who wished to within the Group. Findings were reported back informally, but meetings convened expressly to present findings, discuss issues and agree action on the responses were *not* held. Results therefore 'permeated' the future action of the Group, rather than fundamentally changing the direction of its work. Only one meeting was held to formally discuss the consultation. Additionally with pressing time demands the Group had already moved on with its thinking and development of the GNC. In effect the Interim Report was an archive document by the time the consultation responses were discussed.

In contrast to the views of some on the Group Rawling (1995) believes that although real concerns were raised by the consultation the GWG only paid lip service to addressing them. An apparently open discussion after the consultation exercise resulted in about six major concerns being voiced, but none of these led to radical changes - such change had effectively already been ruled out by the Chair, in Rawling's view. She believes that consultation did have some positive results - for example enquiry learning, although marginalised and lacking integration into the GNC, was at least assured of some place on the curriculum because of the large number of supportive comments received about it.

For others the most disappointing aspect of the responses was the lack of involvement and concern showed by academics in geography departments in higher education (Ward 1995, Storm 1995, Morgan 1995, Thomas.D 1995). This is in stark contrast to their reaction to other Working Groups, such as the History Working Group, where the level of academic response was far greater. Storm (1995) recalls attending an Institute of British Geographers (IBG) conference with Walford in Coventry during the consultation period where many of the academic geographers had little, if any, knowledge of the development of the GNC. Similarly the Royal Geographical Society appeared to show a lack of interest in the future geography curriculum that was to be developed for schools, perhaps leaving matters to the GA to deal with. In this respect the subsequent creation of the Council for British Geographers (CoBRIG), with Eleanor Rawling and Rex Walford as founding members, came too late to inform debate, as did its first joint conference of school and university geographers in Oxford in July 1994.

This lack of involvement of academic geographers in the consultation process had a notable exception with regard to the geography tutors at the University of Cambridge. Partly through the connections of Walford, who was a Lecturer in Geography Education at the University's Department of Education, the GWG visited the School of Geography to discuss the contribution that geography could make to the school curriculum. Walford (1995) in fact gives a very different impression about the involvement of university academics to that received from other GWG members. Certainly the 'Cambridge geographers' - David Keeble, Alan Baker, Robin Glasscock, and Derek Gregory - had discussions with Walford about the structure and content of the GNC. The connection of Fielding, an ex Emmanuel college student, with the Senior Tutor of the college and Head of the Geography department, Alan Baker, is also noted by Walford. A consistent view received from higher education, and also expressed by the Vice Chair David Thomas, was that geography in schools had gone rather 'soft', and that more geographical knowledge was therefore required.

The GWG undoubtedly had a difficult task in mediating between the opinions expressed by respondents after the publication of the Interim Report. Interestingly Working Group members comment that some of the institutions that might have been expected to have produced thoughtful and considered responses, such as the GA, were actually guilty of sending contradictory messages (Ward 1995, Storm 1995). Ward (1995) goes further in stating that some respondents from the GA were using the Association as a base for 'attacking the National Curriculum as a matter of principle'. Morgan (1995) notes that the Working Group received 'almost too much', material from the GA, and that they therefore invited the then GA President Richard Daugherty, various GA Working Group representatives and the Education Standing Committee (ESC) to give presentations to the GWG. Fielding believed the GA, as a teacher's

representative body, to be 'a little suspect' (Morgan 1995) and therefore appeared to be unwilling to take its advice and protestations too seriously.

In general responses to the Interim Report, and subsequently to the Final Report, Draft Orders and Statutory Orders, were motivated by individual's or Group's happiness (or otherwise) with the recent developments in geography education in schools:

'The way you feel about the whole thing relates to how happy you were with the pre National Curriculum situation. If you were happy with that then you were not happy with the initial proposals - if you felt there were some things that the National Curriculum could improve then you are a little disappointed at where we are now' (Storm 1995).

This perhaps partly explains the way in which some of the negative statements were dismissed as being merely a predictable response from one interest Group or another.

Effectiveness of the consultation process.

On the question of the effectiveness of public consultation on changing the GWG Walford (1995) states that it was worth writing, but that one had to know *how* to write to illicit a response. Letters 'dipped in acid or full of vitriol' rarely received a very sympathetic hearing, whereas others that were thoughtful or sensitive to the issues would have been more favourably received. Personal letters from prominent geography educators seemed to receive a more sensitive hearing, although there were obvious dangers of individual Group members merely selecting letters that accorded with their own views. Walford mentions significant points from impressive single submissions from Bill Marsden, for example, who had the

interesting idea of also dividing the world into Muslim areas for separate study as this, he considered, would be important for future generations in the 21st century.

In conclusion the effect of the public consultation was limited. The Interim Report was a 'good' one from the perspective of the NCC and Duncan Graham (who did not always perceive what was happening at the time), government ministers, and DES officials and it was therefore apparent that little would change radically. From this point on the nature of the Final Report (DES 1990a) was something of a 'fait accompli'. GWG member's views on the significance and importance of the consultation vary - although individuals such as Paterson (1995), and Edwards (1995) believe that it was 'taken very seriously' the overall impact it had was minimal. David Thomas' (1995) conclusion is perhaps reflective of the feelings of most GWG members:

'consultation was not going to alter the overall shape and structure of things, what it was going to do was to change some of the detail'.

From Interim Report to Final Report.

After the Interim Report was published certain members of the Working Group changed their approach to meetings in order to attempt to effect change. Rawling's original tactic had been to try to influence anything she believed to be wrong about the process by which the Group was working, or the content it was proposing. Following the publication of the Interim Report she decided that she should either have to leave the Group, or 'go along' with many of the decisions it made whilst also aiming to include 'markers' somewhere in the Final Report. These would hopefully then be included within any rewrite - which she believed was inevitable - at a later stage. The importance of having some statement on, say, enquiry learning or cross

curricularity was therefore paramount. She decided upon the latter course of action and consciously adopted a 'less abrasive and confrontational' (Rawling 1995) approach to at least protect some elements of good practice. Indeed certain battles were already lost: 'it was absolutely obvious that despite the consultation (on the Interim Report) they were not going to change models' (Rawling 1995).

Walford (1995) contends that the Interim Report was a 'brave document' because the Working Group had decided to include a number of partly worked ideas about geography education which were certain to provoke reactions. One of the principles was that it was better to include things that would eventually need to be taken out or revised, rather than to leave them out. He also felt that the Report was 'woefully misunderstood in some places' (Walford 1995)

Final report.

The GWG submitted their Final Report to the Secretary of State for Education on 27 April 1990, and this was subsequently published by the DES in June 1990. Unlike the Interim Report it contained valuable sections of Non Statutory Guidance which helped teachers understand some of the rationale behind the Group's thinking. Interestingly the report of the History Working Group, which was also published at this time, was not fully accepted by the Secretary of State for Education following prolonged disputes about the nature of its content.

The GWG had addressed the immediate problems of content overload by either cutting, or amalgamating, certain ATs. However, the need for pupils to learn a substantial amount of

specific geographical content and achieve greater place knowledge was still prevalent with the Final Report.

The aims for geography contained within the Interim Report were largely retained. These were welcomed by most geographers who shared the view that their subject should:

a) stimulate pupil's interest in their surroundings and in the variety of physical and human conditions on the Earth's surface.

b) foster their sense of wonder at the beauty of the world around them.

c) help them to develop an informed concern about the quality of the environment and the future of the human habitat; and

d) thereby enhance their sense of responsibility for the care of the Earth and its peoples.

(Final Report DES 1990a p.6)

The Final Report (DES 1990a) reduced the 8 ATs previously established by the GWG to 7, although at this stage the Science National Curriculum still had 17 attainment targets and Maths 14. This reduction was achieved by combining the artificially divided 'World Geography Part 1' and 'World Geography Part 2' ATs which covered the 'Developed' and 'Developing' worlds respectively.

A diagram titled 'The Curriculum System for Geography 5-16' appears on page 9 of the Final Report which attempts to draw together 'The way in which the elements of the National Curriculum system will lead to the school curriculum for geography' (p.8). Interestingly assessment is placed at virtually the end point of the system and not considered earlier within the process of planning. Rawling (1996a) comments that:

'In fact the diagram was an afterthought included to justify the Group's proposals and to suggest that the curriculum issues raised by the Interim Report consultation had been addressed' (p.127).

Reactions to the Final Report.

Although the Final Report (DES 1990a) was generally acknowledged by geographers to be a better document than the Interim Report there were still a variety of issues of concern for teachers. Primary schools were increasingly realising, as the whole National Curriculum steadily unfolded, that they had a monumental task ahead of them in delivering all the ATs in both the core and foundation subjects. Recommendations for increased IT and fieldwork provision by geography departments raised resourcing problems; assessment, recording and reporting mechanisms were still confused; and the whole of Key Stage 4 was overloading, hampered by recent suggestions for both short and full course geography to be provided by schools. The increasingly obvious mismatch between the geography and history National Curriculum presented a very pessimistic picture with respect to the future survival of integrated Humanities courses.

In response to the Final Report the geography education tutors at the Institute of Education, London University published a long lead article in *Teaching Geography* in October 1990 (Graves et al 1990). This systematically highlighted the major concerns of both geography teachers and educationalists about the way in which the GNC was developing. Walford (1991d), in a letter to the editor of *Teaching Geography*, took the opportunity to respond to the criticisms which had been voiced about the Final Report by Graves (et al) in October 1990. He commented on the 'heavy magisterial tone' of the article and rebuffed the criticism

that the GWG had lacked a clear definition of geography. A major concern of Walford (1991d) appeared to be that the Institute lecturers assumed that curriculum development was, in his words, 'an unvarying march onwards towards the light'. He also noted that critics of both the Interim and Final Reports seemed to believe that the recent *status quo* in geography education was acceptable, and that enquiry learning could provide geography with both a suitable subject base and an exclusive approach to learning. He even goes so far as to criticise Graves et al (1990) for attempting to 'trivialise and misunderstand points in the Final Report'. Interestingly one GWG member believed that the Institute's criticisms may have been motivated partly through pique, none of its geographers having been invited to join the GWG! (Storm 1995).

Walford (1995) considers the Final Report to have been a better document than it was given credit for:

'disguised quite a lot of explosive stuff in very diplomatic language. The NCC did not understand the politics of that strategy and unpacked some of it saying it was mealy mouthed, or what we needed to say here (in the Report) was that children needed to look at 'anti government propaganda' when I saw the NCCs revisions I thought 'Oh, my god!' don't they understand that we're trying to sneak through things so that once on the statute book you can open it up. If you're looking at 'decision making in the city' - the neutral phrase we used in the Report - you're really talking about 'land ownership' and 'speculators' and so on. But it was politic not to use that sort of language in the document; you could explain nuances to teachers afterwards if it was needed'

Most other GWG members also felt that the Final Report was a good document. Paterson (1995) states:

'it was a very faithful reflection of the consensus that had to be achieved whether or not it was the 'best' geography, I mean for some people it wasn't,.... but as a reflection of the Working Group and as far as we could see what geography should be about at that stage, given the time constraints and the models we were working to, it was the best that we could produce '.

It was also a unanimously agreed Report, where agreement had been difficult amongst members of different backgrounds:

'The critical thing was to get geography 'in' there was always a threat - geography does not have a place automatically carved out for it on the curriculum, its not one of the core areas and even some schools do not see geography as that important' (Paterson 1995).

Rawling referred to the Final Report as a 'report within a report' (Rawling 1992a). It contained sections identifying the role of the teacher in curriculum planning which sat rather uneasily with the statutory elements of the Report, and its centrally directed structure. Many teachers interpreted it as an indication that they were no longer required to plan the curriculum, just to deliver it.

The GA was again active in trying to influence events, canvassing opinion from its members before responding to the NCC. It established a series of half day regional conferences (13 in England and 3 in Wales) on Saturday 8 September 1990 to discuss the Report before producing an official response. The 'flier' for the conferences noted that:

'unlike the responses to the Interim Report those to the Final Report take the form of a formal consultation in which the only Groups consulted are LEAs and professional bodies'.

Some 1,100 members of the GA attended these conferences leading to a draft report of findings being discussed by the GA's Education Standing Committee (ESC) before a letter of response, with a completed response form, was sent to Duncan Graham at NCC on 17 September 1990. The letter listed four key issues - firstly that the ATs and PoS should perform distinctive but complementary functions, secondly the number of ATs should be reduced to five, thirdly geographical enquiry should permeate the proposals more fully and lastly the

number of SoAs should be significantly reduced. Additional concerns over the coherence of Short Course Geography, the lack of resources, time and INSET provision for the introduction of the GNC, and the need for primary support were also stated.

The GWG were officially disbanded after the publication of the Final Report.

NCC Consultation Report.

The NCC Consultation Report (1990) revealed a reaction to the criticism that the GNC contained too many ATs, and too much duplication of information. The NCC responded by cutting the number of attainment targets from 7 to 5 by combining the 'place' ATs into one called 'Knowledge and Understanding of Place', successfully reducing the number of SoAs from 269 to 211. This reduced the overlap and cut the scale of the assessment problem somewhat. The geography curriculum now consisted of three profile components, Geographical Skills, Places and People, and Environment. The GWG was not invited to discuss its Final Report (DES 1990a), which was merely accepted and then altered - a situation Walford (1995) described as 'astonishing', and which inevitably led to misunderstandings of the GWG's aims.

In a *Times Educational Supplement* article Nash (1990) commented that Duncan Graham, the Chair of the NCC, referred to the NCC's alteration of the Final Report as 'fine tuning', but that it actually represented the most radical rewrite the Council had performed since the Science ATs were cut from 22 to 17 two years earlier. However, he did note that the NCC plans were designed to ease the burden on geography teachers who looked:

‘certain to welcome the advice to ministers which aims to simplify teaching and testing plans for their subject in the National Curriculum’

As Bailey (1992) concludes the NCC Consultation Report (1990):

‘convinced the then Secretary of State, Kenneth Clarke, that drastic pruning was required. The content of the Final Report was reduced by approximately one third and this abbreviated version became the basis for the Statutory Orders for geography issued in March 1991’ (p.71).

The NCC resisted the demands for Earth Science to be returned from Science to Geography and increased the role of economic understanding by getting pupils in Key Stage 3 to study an EDC rather than a 'tropical country'.

Draft Orders for Geography.

In an editorial piece entitled 'Cause for concern' (Boardman 1991a) the interference of the Secretary of State, Kenneth Clarke, in altering the recommendations made by both the Final Report (DES 1990a) and NCC Consultation Report (1990) when constructing the Draft Orders for Geography was highlighted. These Orders, published on 14 January 1991, followed some of the advice given, such as the reduction of 7 ATs to 5, but also made significant changes that were not recommended. The most dramatic alteration was the removal of the 'use of secondary sources and enquiry skills' from AT1, because in Clarke's view they were 'not specific to geography' Boardman (1991a) notes that the inclusion of enquiry skills in geography was 'one of the main developments in geography teaching during the past two decades'. Naturally this cutting served to over emphasise the two remaining skills (use of maps and diagrams and fieldwork techniques). In addition the removal of statements relating to values, attitudes and opinions by Clarke was at variance with NCC advice elsewhere (such as

on geography's role in the delivery of cross curricular Environmental Education). SoAs in Human Geography were also reordered to focus on knowledge and understanding, rather than political and economic issues.

The *Times Educational Supplement* editorial comment of 18 January 1991 reiterated, and expanded upon, some of Boardman's concerns. Noting that the geography curriculum had previously escaped the 'bitter wranglings' experienced by the History Working Group, even though both subjects are equally 'value laden and political', Clarke was seen to have significantly altered the recommendations of the NCC. The increased emphasis on knowledge and understanding in an already content dominated GNC, rather than considering the importance of geography highlighting different viewpoints, values and attitudes and decision making, was deplored:

'The rationale for these changes is as unclear as the standing now of the NCC's advice on environment and citizenship, cross curricular themes and the recent Department of Environment's White Paper exhorting schools to tackle environmental issues'.

The leader comment concluded that Kenneth Clarke had turned his back on the school's role in developing children's involvement in decision making in a democracy and that:

'the impact of people's attitudes and expectations is no less a geographical factor than the erosive effect of water on rock or the influence of climate on transport or trade. It is part of what distinguishes geography from the sciences and from the simplistic determinism Mr Clarke seems to want it to become'.

Nash (1991) believed that the changes made by Clarke were motivated by a fear that the door would be 'left open to ideological distortion in the classroom' and that he had been persuaded by 'close political advisers' to suspend the publication of the original Orders. Quoting 'sources

close to the DES' Nash (1991) notes that Clarke 'read the riot act to HMI and civil servants and said they should rewrite them and report back by January 3. He told them: 'You can rewrite geography over your Christmas lunch'

The final changes to the Order were effectively made by Clarke's chief civil service adviser, Tessa Keswick, who was later to become the director of the Right Wing 'think tank' the Centre for Policy Studies. Geographers were understandably dismayed - David Burtenshaw, then Secretary of the GA's Education Standing Committee (ESC) commented that geography had been 'absolutely pole-axed', whilst Simon Catling talked of Clarke's misinterpretation of what geographers were actually trying to do. Michael Hewitt was incensed by Clarke's mistrust of teachers and 'complete ignorance of what constitutes good geography in schools'.

The changes also roused some response from the national press. David Tytler, Education Editor of the *Times*, recognised that the Draft Orders for geography would result in 'significant changes to the way geography is taught in the National Curriculum' as it would now rely more fully on the teaching of 'facts not opinions'. Highlighting the changes which Clarke had made to the, generally accepted, NCC Consultation Report Tytler noted the removal of the 'geographical' skill of using secondary sources and knowing the best ways to investigate problems, as being 'not particular to geography'.

Statutory Order for Geography.

The Statutory Orders for Geography (DES 1991a), and History, were laid before Parliament on 25 March 1991. On their publication in June 1991 Walford noted that one or two more liberal statements had crept back into the Geography Order (such as AT4 'conflicts over land use'), but that the History Order had largely stolen the attention of the educational press because of the questions it had raised about the place of 'contemporary' history. Not one line appeared in the national newspapers about the progress of the Statutory Order for Geography, despite its own controversial changes. Walford (1995) believes that the GNC was unfortunate in the timing of its final preparation for publication, and its status amongst politicians. Kenneth Clarke had only recently arrived in post as the Secretary of State for Education and clearly wanted to make his mark:

'it was just bad luck that the geography report was at the top of his pile. It had nothing to do with the merit of it, it was just bad luck ... what he did was to wreck a carefully balanced report'.

The nature of Clarke's changes suggested to some GWG members how political the process of creating the GNC had now become. Edwards (1995) for example, who had previously perceived little or no direct political influence, subsequently stated 'It was only at the very end that I realised there was a very big political input'. Working Groups established later, such as the Physical Education Working Group, experienced similar political interference from Clarke and realigned themselves to act in overtly political ways to counteract this (see Evans and Penney 1995).

Clarke's defence of the changes he had made to the Geography Orders was characteristically vigorous. In an interview on Radio 4's 'World at One' (11.2.91) he made his stance clear.

Rejecting the contention that the creation of the Geography Orders had been a political process he questioned whether commentators on the Orders had actually even read them at all, and implied that much of their criticism was generated from simply gainsaying what others had previously stated! He also claimed that the return to a fact laden geography curriculum was actually creating a 'very modern geography syllabus' and that there was now 'a proper balance between facts and analysis' (see Appendix 5).

Despite having been disbanded after the production of the Final Report the GWG subject specialists were briefly reconvened after the publication of the Statutory Orders. This unofficial meeting was called by Walford (Fielding having declined to become involved) to discuss the radical changes made by Kenneth Clarke to the Orders - changes which had 'incensed everyone' (Morgan 1995). Not only was the content of the Order now questioned by the GWG, but also its overall style. The feelings were that the NCC, and Clarke himself, had either not understood the intentions of the Working Group or had deliberately subverted their message, particularly with respect to enquiry learning. However, the meeting resulted in little effective action being taken by the geographers.

All pupils entering year 7 in September 1991 would be taught geography based upon these Statutory Orders, although there were fears that 'the distinction between what the pupils are to be taught *during* each key stage, and what they are expected to have achieved *by the end* of each key stage' (Boardman 1991b p.98), would be unclear. These sentiments were supported by at least one Working Group member who felt that the 'end of key stage checklists' (Storm

1995) would have been more helpful to teachers than numerous SoAs. Boardman (1991c), and others (Rawling 1995, Schofield 1990, etc), pointed out that the Orders were a 'minimum requirement' and that if teachers wanted their pupils to discuss values, attitudes and opinions, or engage in political or issues-based work, this was acceptable. However, Clarke was clearly not encouraging this approach and the lack of compulsory status of these elements meant that they would not be assessed and were therefore not generally seen as being important by teachers. Given the lack of time most geographers felt they had for delivering the GNC the option of adding to its geographical content was not an encouraging one.

Clarke's Speech to the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) - 24 September 1991.

The GNC was officially launched by Kenneth Clarke on 24 September 1991 at the RGS. In his speech, the drafts of which had been written by Trevor Bennetts, Clarke acknowledged some of the controversy that had arisen during the development of the GNC and defended his actions in altering its content. Despite his reference to geography as an 'indispensable part of the process of equipping pupils with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need for adult life' he remained unrepentant about the heavy handed selection of places and countries within the Orders, and the static view of the world which this presented to children. Noting again the importance of atlas, map and globe work within the GNC - 'if they do not (use these) I would have thought it open to debate whether they are really studying geography' - Clarke re-emphasised the importance that would be placed on the testing of geographical facts rather than skills. He also criticised those schools which had adopted a Humanities teaching approach to geography and history commenting that 'the rigour and integrity of the contributing disciplines have often been weakened. Such schools will need to consider how their provision

should be changed' (Clarke 1991a). This largely reconfirmed the steer which the GWG had been given by civil servants and ministers to avoid creating possible links with history. At certain points within his speech Clarke offered concessionary comments about the importance of controversial issues in geography, referring to them as a 'part of the substance of political life and a proper and necessary part of geographical understanding' However, as Robinson (1992) rightly concluded, these concessions were being offered only after the damage had already been done, coming too late to change the Order.

The two main areas of controversy which Clarke highlighted from the consultation period were the role of issues, values and attitudes, and the place of enquiry skills. He acknowledged that geography must deal with issues where there were conflicting view points, but stated that he had removed the 'study and assessment of' opinions, values and attitudes in isolation from other factors such as the physical location in which the issues arise or the economic pressures which have a bearing'. With regard to enquiry he could 'see no point in their being tested over and over again in the curriculum' - a reference to the fact that they were already represented in the core subjects. He was surely disingenuous in his statement that 'we have been concerned to avoid overloading the curriculum and being over prescriptive'.

At the time of Clarke's launch of the GNC the confusion over Key Stage 4 provision of geography through either its Full or Short Courses (published on 18 November 1991), had not been fully resolved. Although Clarke stated that provision was to be made by the NCC for all children to study geography up to 16 if they wished to, the mechanism for doing so was still far from clear. In addition he made an overt admission that the current subject Orders were greatly increasing curriculum overcrowding such that:

'A 10 subject NC for all pupils from ages 5 to 16 leaves little scope for choice. It is essential that there is some flexibility in the curriculum for older pupils so that those who want to follow a more specialised route have the opportunity to do so'.

After Clarke's speech four speakers, each GA members, were given the opportunity to place the Statutory Orders into context. Three of these speakers were ex-GWG members: Kay Edwards, Wendy Morgan, and Eleanor Rawling. Richard Daugherty also spoke with reference to assessment within the GNC. Commenting upon the launch Jenkins (1992) referred to Clarke's speech as making sure that geography was value free and that the process of 'putting places back into geography might have been paraphrased as putting geography back in its place' (p.197). He also noted that geography 'might encourage pupils to question the world about them. Small wonder politicians should appeal to those most conservative of educationalists, parents, for support for their curriculum archaism' (p.197). A *Times* leader entitled 'Pushed off the Map' outlined the political interference by Clarke the following day, whilst correspondence in the letters columns of the paper two days later included rejoinder comments from both Clarke (1991b), and Rawling and Burtenshaw (1991).

With respect to the Statutory Orders Walford (1995) perhaps still misjudges the strength of negative feeling amongst rank and file teachers. He believes that teachers who were not involved with the development of the National Curriculum 'have remained relatively sanguine about the final shape of the proposals' and that 'values and attitudes' were always going to be problematic in assessment terms as much for their 'unreliability as for (their) undesireability' (Walford 1991c p.52). In essence he felt that the 'art of developing 'the possible', given the original brief, was always going to be a sobering experience' (p.52). Walford (1991c) believed that the GNC could not just call for a replication of the status quo as the government would

not allow it, and that too much optimism had existed amongst curriculum theorists and teacher educators about the nature of geography teaching in schools. After HMI reports, international surveys, visits and viewpoints of lay members of the GWG:

'The need to KNOW more about the world in general (not merely to think geographically or enquire rationally) was a point persistently and persuasively put by the original Working Group and led them to a content - based formulation and into a number of technical difficulties...' (p.52)

Geography National Curriculum and Curriculum Development.

Many of the criticisms of the GNC were closely related both to its function as a curriculum document, and to its implications on curriculum development in geography education. During the 1950s many teachers had an incomplete understanding of how curriculum development occurred, 'except perhaps through an interplay of ideas between subject teachers and colleagues in higher education' (Graves, 1996, p.72). By the time the National Curriculum was being devised thinking had advanced. Graves (1996) outlines these changes with reference to Tyler's (1949) linear model of curriculum development, Wheeler's (1967) circular model which involves explicit feedback, and Kerr's (1968) questions about who decides on the aims, objectives and content for a curriculum. Referring to his own model of curriculum development in geography Graves (1996) (fig 5.3) sees the need to select the aims for the curriculum, *then* the paradigm of geography and to achieve an input from higher education. The selection of appropriate content to achieve the aims is stressed:

'By content I mean the concepts, principles, theories and skills contained in the appropriate paradigm of geography *not* the facts or areas which provide the context within which the content may be taught. This content needs to be structured in a progressive fashion throughout the school course.' (p.76)

The role of the teacher in helping to achieve curriculum development is seen as crucial, as is the input of ideas from educational research into concept hierarchies, progression and the relative difficulty of different ideas. Citing the work of Schon (1971) Graves (1996) notes the dangers of 'dynamic conservatism' whereby new initiatives are upset by sticking with what has worked in the past. In a brief overview of curriculum development in geography since the 1960s Graves (1996) highlights the continuum from centrally planned and administered curricula, to those which are teacher directed and controlled. The replacement of the Schools Council in 1984 by the School Curriculum Development Committee (SCDC) and the School Examination Council (SEC) is seen as being ideologically driven such that the government had a more direct control of curriculum recommendations. The foolishness of dividing organisations administering the curriculum and assessment was not realised, and was again repeated at the beginning of the National Curriculum with the creation of a separate NCC and SEAC. The return of curriculum development to central, political control was completed with the Education Reform Act (1988) which effectively took it away from teachers in schools:

'The ideological context is one that must be placed under the slogan 'back to basics', which encompasses the idea that education in Britain has been led astray both by the misguided romantics who practised so-called progressive education, and by left-wing revolutionaries whose purpose was to undermine established authority; there was a need to return to the didactic teaching of basic fundamentals' (Graves 1996 p.80).

In a retrospective view of the creation of the GNC Rawling (1996a) refocuses her arguments, partly formulated through a wealth of previous articles, about the effects the Orders had on curriculum development in schools. Curriculum planning is described as occurring on three levels - the general level where broad curriculum frameworks or guidelines are established, the school level where plans are implemented, and the classroom level where the implications for actual teaching and learning become most apparent. The School Council Projects in geography

saw the importance of all three levels being balanced, whilst Rawling (1996a) believes that a centrally prescribed and implemented GNC pushes such planning and development out of balance.

In Rawling's (1996a) view true curriculum development can flourish only when the control of the curriculum is a shared responsibility between the centre (or government), the school and the teacher. School based curriculum development is also characterised as an evolutionary rather than revolutionary process, building upon reviews of previous work rather than being imposed from above. The central importance of assessment within the curriculum is also stressed, as witnessed by the Project's enthusiasm for getting involved in assessment through examination boards. As Rawling (1996a) concludes:

'school based curriculum development with all its perceived benefits flourishes best in an atmosphere of professional trust and confidence on all sides. Professional trust is not a bad foundation on which to build a National Curriculum' (p.111).

In effect the 'deficit view of geography' held by Clarke, his advisers and some of the GWG had therefore 'negated and effectively disowned all the thinking and experimentation that had been undertaken by curriculum workers both at the theoretical level and in the practice of curriculum development' (Graves 1996 p.85). This had brought the model of curriculum development back to the simple linear model espoused by Tyler (1949) which included no feedback, but left teachers to infer that if pupils did not reach their expected levels then the teaching methods, rather than the curriculum itself, were inappropriate. The content and objectives of the GNC are seen by Graves (1996) as immutable :

'A set of attainment targets (objectives) determined by the state are placed before teachers, who have to teach these to pupils using the PoS (content) - also determined by the state; teachers may use their own teaching strategies

(methods) and then have to evaluate the learning of their pupils, again using instruments - Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) - decided by the state' (p.86).

Naish (1990) had carried out an international survey of the effects of centralised curriculum development in geography for the IGU in a number of countries. The general findings were that a centralised education system led to the teaching and learning of a common body of knowledge, that teachers were clear what was expected of them and that monitoring the curriculum was straightforward. Such a curriculum was economic to use for developing countries, but forced teacher creativity into decline and often led to too much assessment.

Conclusions.

Walford's (1991e) article 'What say you Simon Catling?' A commentary on 'Subjecting geography to the National Curriculum' provides a fascinating contemporary insight into the workings of the GWG. Comparing Catling to a spectator at a major sporting event Walford considers how any bystander can correctly describe the play and the score, but has no knowledge of the private conversations between the players and the manager. This, Walford believes, is dangerous for:

'It is possible to make inferences about the 'private conversations' all too easily; and the matter becomes more serious if assumptions about the inferences then become the basis of assertion and judgement. In this way an interpretation of events becomes accepted truth' (p.80)

Offering a view from a 'participant', rather than an 'observer', Walford (1991e) reflects on Catling's concern about the 'hidden agenda lying behind the production and direction of the Report.' where Walford (1991e) comments:

'In this case it is not clear whether Catling believes the 'hidden agenda' to be concealed from everybody - Group members and innocent readers alike - or whether he is suggesting that the Group has somehow colluded to hide its real intentions, only to have them unmasked by the eagle-eye of the commentator' (p.80)

The six pointers which Catling raises as evidence for such a hidden agenda are briefly considered by Walford (1991e) who counters the assertion that some of them were actually 'hidden' at all. The first of these - that the Interim Report was written with ministerial approval in mind, resulting in the emphasis on a locational framework - Walford defends by stating that any Group 'which did not seek to make its report ultimately acceptable would be politically inept' (p.81). He believes that the GWG tried to include what was in the best interest of pupils, teachers and 'consumers' in a 'politically acceptable way' (p.81). However, the conjecture that 'political arm twisting' resulted in the creation of a locational framework in the GNC is countered by a statement there was no 'ministerial pressure... the nature of geography and the needs of pupils (were) the dominant influences' (p.81).

Catling's second point, that the GWG was driven by a timetable it was determined to keep to despite the cost to the subject, Walford (1991e) answers as follows:

'It is true that the Working Group would have wished, in an ideal world, for full-time secondment, paying more-than-just expenses, longer meetings and time for reflection, and the chance to conduct full school trials of material. In practice, the work was accomplished (and deadlines met) in about forty days of meetings, linked by much reading of bulky briefing and summary papers as 'homework'. But if the work had *not* been completed on time the 'cost to the subject' might have been infinitely greater. Geography might have slipped

form its allotted place in the implementation programme of the National Curriculum' (p.81)

In reference to Catling's third point, about too much detail being placed within the ATs, Walford notes how the History Working Group's Interim Report, published a few months earlier, had failed to produce any detail, thus leaving itself little opportunity for change. The GWG therefore 'sought to place as much out in the open as possible, even though some of the work was tentative' (Walford 1991e. p.82).

The criticisms that the GWG shied away from face-to-face debate, did not make many school visits, and failed to consult are dismissed by Walford (1991e) as an inaccurate understanding of the events, whilst his final point that the Report was imbued by a 'deficit model' fails to recognise that the GWG was 'unwilling to sanctify the status quo in schools as an acceptable state of affairs' (p.83).

Of equal interest are the 'insider' comments of another Working Group member, Eleanor Rawling, at a Geography UDE tutors' conference in Oxford in March of the same year. She produced a paper which highlighted her key concerns about the working of the GWG (Rawling 1991c). A section from this paper is reproduced:

3. Key concerns about the Geography Working Group

I should like to draw attention to some key concerns about the way the GWG went about its work and to the implications for National Curriculum geography.

(a) the lack of curriculum thinking.

- the failure to set out any overarching framework for the selection of knowledge, skills and understanding appropriate to 5-16 year olds
- the over-concentration on attainment targets during much of the life of the Group at the expense of other parts of the curriculum

Result - the choice of an unwieldy 'model' for National Curriculum geography, which first appeared in the Interim Report and which caused problems ever since.

(b) the dominance of a deficit view of geography

- the assumption that the Group was starting from the problem that geographical education was inadequate in schools
- the failure to recognise and incorporate good practice as well as to highlight inadequacies
- the way in which certain legitimate public concerns (eg about places, about factual knowledge) were allowed to over-dominate the early thinking of the Group.

Result - the content dominated ATs, whose very labels were a bow in the direction of public and political concerns, but whose ill-thought out character in curriculum and assessment terms still bedevils the situation today.

(c) confusion of arguments about place and locational knowledge

- the importance of place and locational knowledge falsely put forward as *the* key issue about geography in the National Curriculum
- failure to appreciate that the really significant issue concerned how place and locational knowledge were best embedded within the curriculum system to provide support and guidance to teachers in the selection of content

Result - some good ideas about the sequencing of place studies and about places appropriate for children to study were rendered unhelpful by being tied to the wrong part of the curriculum system (to ATs and to levels) in a way that appeared over-prescriptive and even detrimental to good teaching practice.

(d) problems arising from the wider National Curriculum context.

-very different interpretations of the TGAT model taken by other subjects whose Working Groups reported before Geography

-process-led or skills-led ATS were seen to be as a result of educationalists subverting the TGAT model and the GWG was directed to take on a 'simpler' interpretation

Result - The Geography Report produced an interpretation of the TGAT structure different from that found in the History Report (despite their many similarities as subjects); the problem remains of trying to relate content based ATs to ten levels, and the spurious debate continues about whether general enquiry skills are essential to geography or not.

Rawling 1991 UDE Oxford.

Within the paper she explored the motives behind the GWG's action, stating predominantly the 'political' nature of the exercise. Referring to Lawton's (1989) reasons for centralised curriculum planning Rawling (1991c) outlines political and educational justifications for such actions. The former relating to political control, accountability and influence on the kinds of knowledge, skills and understanding that children develop in schools; the latter to bringing the curriculum into line with technical and pedagogical change. She believes the mixing of these, and resultant tensions, surfaced in the GWG predominantly as: different interpretations of the TGAT structure, confusion over the role of place studies and locational knowledge, and conflicts over highlighting good practice as well as problems.

This resulted in the Interim Report reflecting a strong political control with a 'simple' and 'popular' view of geography, and the Final Report becoming a 'report within a report' where professional educational influences came through despite the model's straitjacket. The NCC Consultation Report is seen as a bureaucratic attempt (by DES, NCC and SEAC) to tidy up

and respond to professional educational concerns, whilst the Draft and Statutory Orders reveal a re-assertion of political controls.

Reflecting upon the GWG's efforts to produce the GNC. Rawling (1992a) concludes that: 'The mismatch between the intentions of the Working Group and the reality of how these intentions were translated into the Order is a key to understanding the situation'. (p.294).

On reflection Rawling (1993) believes that many geographers lost both focus and direction in response to the creation of the GNC. Before this, and throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, Rawling believes that the Geographical Association had become 'streetwise' (see figure 5.4) in its efforts to ensure that politicians realised *why* geography should be afforded a curriculum place. However, geographers were already beginning to lose sight of the curriculum debate at the start of the 1980s, such that when the National Curriculum Working Groups were being formed most geographers were unprepared. This, Rawling contends, resulted in a crucial failure by geographers to play the 'curriculum card'. Having failed to raise the status of curriculum discussion within the GWG itself, she confined herself to publicising the need for geography teachers to use the GNC as a focus for curriculum development. It is interesting to reconsider Rawling's (1993) reflection and projection on geography education from the period 1970 to 2000 (see figure 5.4), the subject of a lecture to the Geographical Association in April 1992. These thirty years encompass the influx of 'scientific' approaches to geography, the Charney Manor conference of 1970, with its attempt to come to terms with the 'new' geography, the growth of models and simulations, the Schools Council Geography Projects and the development of the GNC and its aftermath.

figure 5.4

Period	Key Characteristics
1970–77 The 'Seven Fat Years'	Innovation 'New Geography' Curriculum Projects Confidence <i>Geography as 'a medium for education'</i>
1977–80 Transition (made successfully)	<i>Readjustment –</i> The Great Debate Core Curriculum Basic Skills and Useful Knowledge <i>Geographers become 'streetwise'</i>
1980–87 The 'Seven Lean Years'	Campaigning Responding to official documents Putting the case for geography <i>Geographers 'play the utilitarian card'</i>
1987–93 Transition (made less successfully)	<i>Readjustment –</i> Committees and confrontations (GWG, NCC, SEAC, DES, S. of State) Decline of professionalism <i>Geography 'straitjacketed' in the National Curriculum</i>
1993–2000 The 'Seven Years of Balanced Diet'	Making sense of the Order Combining professional competence and political awareness Consolidation and consensus Reopening exchange with academic geography <i>Geographers make it work</i>
2000–2010? Transition to new period of innovation and greater public understanding	Breaking down barriers between all levels of geographical education Renewed innovation in school geography Public acceptance of geography as key discipline <i>Geographers reassert professionalism ...?</i>

The reference to 'seven fat years' (1970-77) and 'seven lean years' (1980-87), alternatively as periods of innovation and growth in professional confidence, and years when geographers campaigned to convince politicians of the necessity of a curriculum place for their subject, create an interesting framework. Rawling (1993) also refers to these periods as years of 'over indulgent confidence' (1970-77) and 'narrow political emphasis and impoverished curriculum thinking' (1980-87) (p.116). Rawling (1993) is left hoping for a future of 'balanced diet years' (1993-2000) where the geographical and curriculum innovations of the 1970s and the political awareness of the 1980s could be combined.

Robinson (1992), in a small but much referenced article, voiced his opinion that both geography and geographers had been 'completely out-manoeuvred' during the creation of the GNC because 'the government had clear objectives from the start, from the briefing of Sir Leslie Fielding to the final censorship by Kenneth Clarke. The results of democratic consultation processes were not allowed to interfere' (p.31). These views find a similar expression through Serf (1994) who believed that 'the public consultation process was largely a public relations exercise. At least that satisfied the wishes of Kenneth Baker who did not want to see the process hindered too much by consultation' (p.52). The main failure of the GA, according to Robinson (1992), was to make the mistake of acting as though it was part of a democratic process. Fielding, he believed, was intent on ensuring that a power base would not be established by the geographers within the GWG, thus creating a GNC by a process of 'manipulation and authoritarian decree'. The resultant shape of the curriculum - with its emphasis on form rather than process, and didactic rather than active teaching and learning - encouraged Robinson to call for the establishment of an alternative 'Not the National

Curriculum' based on critical enquiry, values, attitudes and opinions, decision making and the investigation of power structures.

Notes:

Bennetts.T.H (1995) - Interview with Trevor Bennetts

Edwards.K (1995) - Interview with Kay Edwards

Lethbridge.R (1995) - Interview with Richard Lethbridge

Morgan.W (1995) - Interview with Wendy Morgan.

Paterson.K (1995) - Interview with Keith Paterson.

Rawling.E (1995) - Interview with Eleanor Rawling.

Storm.M (1995) - Interview with Michael Storm.

Thomas.D (1995) - Interview with David Thomas.

Thomas.R (1995) - Interview with Rachel Thomas.

Walford.R (1995) - Interview with Rex Walford.

Ward.H (1995) - Interview with Hugh Ward.

PROBLEMS SURROUNDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GNC.

'A description of geography in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills is still incomplete. Given my position it may not surprise you when I say that geography is in many ways a political subject; and it is of course a value laden subject'

Sir Keith Joseph. Speech to the Geographical Association 1985

'There's got to be more mental discipline : facts, argument, evidence, rather than philosophy and opinion'

Sir Leslie Fielding. *Daily Telegraph* article 6 June 1989.

This chapter aims to expand upon some of the issues raised in Chapter 5, which focused upon the development of the GNC from the creation of the GWG to the launching of the Statutory Orders by Kenneth Clarke on 24 September 1991. It is divided into approximately two halves - the first half illustrates the *content* and *structural* issues of the GNC (namely in its treatment of 'place', geographical content, the influence of 'cultural literacy', the role of enquiry learning, primary geography, and cross curricular links); whilst the second half is concerned with *process* issues (the general problems surrounding implementation, assessment, progression and Short and Full courses). Inevitably both sections contains areas of essential overlap.

It is perhaps sensible to start with the results of a small questionnaire survey (n=148) on the GNC carried out by the Geographical Association, and reported in the October 1992 edition of *Teaching Geography*. The points raised by Association members help to place the content, structural and process issues of the GNC into context. The responses to the ten questions posed showed that the five AT structure of the GNC was largely felt to be satisfactory (53%),

but that the content based nature of the ATs was disliked. The guidance received for planning the geography curriculum from the PoS was believed to be 'poor' (60%), whilst the number of SoAs was widely perceived to be 'too high' (80%).

The educational demands made on pupils were deemed to be 'too high' by 47% of respondents and 'about right' by 52% - although these demands were also often seen to be either inconsistent, or uneven. The breadth of geographical skills was 'about right' (78%), the amount of knowledge required of pupils 'too high' (68%), whilst the amount of understanding was broadly considered to be 'about right' (62%). Interestingly the stress on enquiry learning was considered to be 'about right' by 45% of respondents, with some 52% feeling that the emphasis was too small. By contrast 68% believed that the promotion of values and attitudes was not sufficient. Implementation difficulties were considered to be related to a lack of time and resources, the amount of geographical content within the curriculum, and uncertainties over assessment.

However, it is important to note, as Rawling (1996a) does, that :

‘the NCC and CCW surveys showed that geography teachers overwhelmingly welcomed the existence of a National Curriculum in the changed socio-political context of the 1990s’ (p.129).

Content and Structural Issues.

Place.

Marsden (1995) believes that.

'In its choice of personnel, and in the terms of reference laid down to the Geography Working Group (GWG), it was clear from the start that the

Secretary of State's intention was that Geography should fairly and squarely be defined as the study of places' (p.159).

Locational knowledge and the study of place within the GNC were certainly major points for debate both within and beyond the GWG during the creation of the Orders. Each seemed to focus public and media opinion, were central to many politicians' views on geography, and had featured prominently within DES (1989b) guidance about the possible content of the geography curriculum. In 1988 reports from the National Geographical Society in the United States had highlighted the spectacular locational ignorance of many young Americans, a situation which was similarly revealed by later surveys within the United Kingdom. Geography teachers were blamed for this state of affairs - particularly those who taught geography from a strongly thematic or issues perspective. The GWG decided to remedy this problem by focusing their attention on defining the locational knowledge that should be expected of children.

In his speech to the Royal Geographical Society to launch the GNC Clarke (1991a) stated:

'I hope you will join with me in welcoming the attention which the National Curriculum gives to the study of places. It has been described as a return to the roots of the subject. It is, of course, what parents and the public believe that geography is mainly about'

This overtly populist view of the subject, although correct in that the 'core' of geography is spatial and therefore concerned with 'place', did not satisfy the geographers' understanding of the function of place within the subject. The study of place from the perspective of merely gaining increasing locational knowledge, in effect rote learning where places are, is not in itself a sufficient basis for becoming a geographer.

Rawling (1991d) captures the essence of this concern in her consideration of the lack of development of a 'sense of place' by the GWG. As a result a geography curriculum was created through which pupils would effectively learn where places were, but would not understand the significance of these places. Each of the Key Stages simply listed the places to be studied in the PoS linked to specific topics (e.g. sources of energy in the USA, USSR (sic), and Japan).

However, there appeared to be little entitlement for children to reach deeper understandings about places and their functions. This difficulty was exacerbated by the linking of levels of attainment to geographical content, which effectively meant that children perceived to be at different levels within a class would actually need to be taught about different places. This had an unwanted influence both on the implied educational progression of children and the ways in which they could be taught.

Commenting on the places chosen for study Graves (1989, cited in Rawling 1992a) had no quarrel with the selection made by the GWG. However, he criticised both the inclusion of places within the statutory ATs and their treatment as items to be studied in their own right, for he believed that:

'it is the ideas, concepts, principles and skills of the subject which matter. The areal coverage provides the context within which the concepts and skills are illustrated and applied' (p.296).

What were the subsequent problems of including such a large number of places within the ATs, whilst not addressing directly the question of trying to develop in children a 'sense of place'? Teachers found the planning of schemes of work difficult, especially for mixed ability classes, whilst publishers faced similar dilemmas concerning the inclusion of place knowledge within geographical texts. In essence textbook writers either decided to take the geographical themes

(AT 3, 4 and 5) and place them in the context of the prescribed places (taken from AT2), or to choose a prescribed region/country (AT2) and cover some of the themes from ATs 3,4 and 5 'along the way'. This failed to give pupils either a real appreciation of the similarities between places, or to realise the distinct 'personalities' of particular places. Graham Ranger (1995) subsequently noted the dangers of teachers relying on one series of textbooks, and asked them the rhetorical question 'Are you in a strait jacket where what the publisher has selected has determined your place coverage entirely?' (p.67). The way forward, as previously seen by Johnson (1985b), was the promotion of a regional geography:

'in which the influence of general processes affecting places is recognised, but the individual personality and particular responses are also identified and described' (p114).

A further solution, again strongly supported by Rawling (1991e, 1991f), would be to adopt an enquiry led approach where teachers could be given criteria by which to select their own places to study. Ranger (1995), a member of the later SCAA Advisory Group on Geography, subsequently echoed Rawling's feelings:

'if this futile exercise (the development of the original geography Order) has taught us anything it should be that place knowledge is important when it is gained along with understanding in the context of geographical investigation' (p.67).

The dilemma unwittingly devised by the GWG with respect to place was the creation either of a 'singularity trap', which has always existed within the paradigm of regional geography - where every region is considered unique and general principles and comparisons are not applied - or of a 'generalisation trap', where regions are seen as the consequences of the operation of certain positivistic laws, often creating an 'arid placelessness' (Rawling 1991d).

Here the places are used only to explore examples of issues or themes in geography. Both situations were undesirable, but increasingly likely given the nature of the geography Order.

The GWG was united about the importance of place within the geography curriculum during the life of the Group. David Thomas (1995), as the head of a university geography department, reflected upon teaching undergraduates who had achieved top grades in geography A level, but whose place knowledge was extremely weak; whilst Walford (1995) and Storm (1995) made similar statements regarding pupil performance at GCSE level in geography. As Edwards (1995) states :

‘he (Storm) really did shock many of us by actually showing us how poor was the quality of knowledge and understanding required by those papers. Almost everything could have been done if you were just reasonably bright and had never been to a geography lesson in your life. Now that meant that geography was not necessary in the Curriculum’.

Here a major concern was that children could achieve high examination grades without actually having 'appropriate' levels of either locational or place knowledge. These issues were reinforced, for Thomas.R (1995), Lethbridge (1995) and others, by visits to schools during the life of the Working Group where much of the teaching observed gave little regard to improving children's appreciation of either location or place. It also appeared that some Humanities teachers who were delivering elements of the geography curriculum had an incomplete place knowledge about the areas they were studying with children.

The division of places into separate sections on the Developed and Developing world in the Interim Report was attacked, quite rightly in Walford's (1995) view, during its consultation phase. In addition Fielding presented a well worded paper to the Group stating that such divisions were meaningless, indeed dangerous, given the complex development status of

countries such as South Korea, the Philippines, and Taiwan. The GWG was therefore persuaded to rewrite their curriculum before the Final Report to combine the two place ATs, although the division between the developed and developing worlds later became re-established as 'List A' and 'List B' countries following the Dearing review of the GNC (January 1995).

In conclusion Marsden (1995) believes that the return of place to the 'centre stage' of the geography curriculum was an advantageous and distinctive feature of the GNC which still focuses:

'on detailed localities and other scales of place, and on spatial studies into which geographical themes and skills must be permeated. It thus binds the physical and human aspects of the subject into place in an authentically geographical way' (p.169)

The Secretary of State for Education certainly seemed pleased about this in his statement to the House of Commons on 29 April 1991:

'In geography we have restored learning about places and where they are ... I think that the Order has a lot of content, far more than there has been in geography for many years' (Hansard 29/4/91 p 123-4) (cited in Lambert 1994a).

Content.

The GNC Order (DES 1991a) reflected a content dominated structure which contrasted strongly with those geography curricula developed since the mid 1970s under the auspices of the Schools Council. The reasons for the 'overloading' of content within the GNC are clear. Thomas.D (1995), and others, expressed the belief that geography had to 'fill it's slot' on the National Curriculum so that it could not be easily eroded away. Other Working Groups, such as Science, had been particularly expansionist and had even laid claim to content previously

taught by geographers. It was therefore felt that geography could not afford to leave any possibilities for other subjects to lay claim to its content. The GWG was almost certainly bolstered by claims from Kay Edwards that geography teachers *could* deliver such a content laden curriculum. However, as some GWG members admit (Thomas.D 1995, Rawling 1995, Ward 1995, Walford 1995) she was a very effective and efficient teacher, perhaps somewhat unrepresentative of the norm. Edwards herself became increasingly aware of the overload problems as the life of the GWG progressed.

Subsequent to the publication of the Orders Rawling (1992a) concentrated again on the contribution of geography to the wider school curriculum. She believed that the Orders focused geography education onto its subject content, knowledge and a relatively narrow range of skills, rather than onto a process of learning 'through' geography (p.293). This, according to Rawling, fundamentally changed the purpose of geography education for it tended to force it away from acting as a 'medium for education'.

The Schools Council Geography Projects considered school geography from an *educational* rather than an *academic* perspective - highlighting the question of what role geography could play in educating children, rather than of what geographical content should be handed to children. Graves (1982) saw this educational perspective as the final stage in the development of any school subject, whereas the GNC had taken geographical education back to the instrumentalism and utilitarianism of the 'information about the world' phase that school geography valued during the first half of the twentieth century (see Chapter 1).

The expansive content of the Orders also led to major problems for teachers in their attempts to interpret the GNC. The lack of Key Stage entitlement in geography (with respect to content, places and skills) made planning difficult, with teachers not knowing how to integrate the document into a scheme of work

'How much better to have outlined criteria for the selection of places as contexts for learning, at local, regional and global levels, and trusted teachers to choose appropriate case studies based on their own and their pupils experience, enthusiasm and resources' (Hopkin 1991 p.54)

Walford (1995) believes that the Working Group placed geographical content into the ATs for two main reasons. Firstly, the Science Working Group had done so, and since their report had been well received this model seemed an acceptable one to adopt. He also believed that the GWG hoped that the links between geography and science would be strengthened. Secondly, the accumulation of knowledge could be legitimately viewed as forming a part of educational progression - although there was division within the Group here, with Bennetts in particular stating that progression of knowledge is largely conceptual. Walford considered that by knowing more about the world you must have some progression of knowledge, the additional content being part of that progression. This debate became somewhat oversimplified in geography education circles with progression being merely equated to simply amassing knowledge (see this Chapter 'Continuity and Progression').

The influences of Hirsh's Cultural Literacy.

The writings of Hirsch (1987), which have been discussed in the United States at the end of the 1980s, were debated at one stage by the GWG and may have been influential on some of its

members (see Dowgill and Lambert 1992 , Walford 1992, 1995 Lambert 1994a, 1994b).

Hirsch's contention is that a core of knowledge that 'culturally literate' children should possess can be fashioned to ensure that they are capable of taking an active part in the culture to which they belong. This knowledge can be reduced to lists of content - some elements of which are geographical. There are obviously certain inherent dangers in reducing geography, or any other discipline, into a list of facts - not least in the process of their selection. However, Hirsch (1987) states that the debate about which content to include is an important one and he believes that a 'fact based' curriculum does not necessarily have to override one with a skills base.

Hirsch's list of content contains about 4,800 items. It is dynamic (as new items are added, redundant ones are removed), and contains approximately 10% of what might be termed geographical content (largely place names and features of the earth's surface) - he claims that these are best learned by the age of 13. The list describes a national culture within which local cultures (be they ethnic, class based or relating to other groupings) may flourish. Cultural literacy is seen as a vital concept requiring more prominence in education by its supporters who claim that individuals can progress in society only if they possess certain basic knowledge as a framework to interact with other information they receive. If they do not they will, according to Hirsch (1987), suffer 'the powerlessness of incomprehension' (p.133).

Dowgill and Lambert (1992) pursued the question of whether cultural literacy was an influential concept within the GWG during the creation of the GNC. They believed that 'ideas emanating from recent US work on 'cultural literacy' may have been influential in the early decision of the GWG (steered by the DES) to name content in the ATs' (p.145). Previously

within curriculum development geographical content had been a 'dependent variable' and could be selected according to educational aims. According to Dowgill and Lambert (1992) geography in the National Curriculum breaks this tradition.

Utilising a 'cultural analysis' of the GNC Lambert (1994a) looked at the:

' 'setting' in which the GNC was established as well as the likely ways in which the Order might impact on teaching and learning' (p.88).

Like others he rejects any theory of an orchestrated 'conspiracy' against teachers, children or geography in the GWG's work because 'the whole story is simply far too complex for such a theory to be sustained' (Lambert 1994b p.68). He also dismisses what he refers to as the 'cock up theory' for similar reasons, believing that the policies created and implemented by certain education ministers directed events, but did not constitute a coherent educational ideology. Here Lambert's framework for analysis of the concept of 'cultural literacy' is expounded under three overlapping headings which explore *educational ideology*, *views on education* and *teachers' work*. He identifies three basic educational ideologies (classical humanism, progressivism and reconstructionism) which he concludes:

'go far deeper than 'party politics' and may well relate to more fundamental beliefs about the way children should be treated Nevertheless we have to accept the government of the day can be influential in setting the practical limits of ideological debates - at least in the short term' (Lambert 1994a p.89).

In a discussion on educational standards linked to an exploration of the concepts of cultural literacy, Lambert (1994b) states that Baker's Education Reform Act (1988) is not necessarily concerned with 'levering up standards', but with redefining the nature of these standards.

'If the Education Reform Act (1988) is about redefining standards ... it is equally about imposing a unitary and particular view of culture which requires close critical scrutiny' (Lambert 1994b p73).

Here Lambert reaffirms the influence of notions of cultural literacy, where effective communication relies upon the possession of certain basic knowledge to which all people in a country need access. He states that the GNC.

'seems better designed to contribute to an education system geared to the pursuit of academic excellence for the few and a commitment to ensuring a form of 'cultural continuity' for the many. Not, I emphasise, a commitment to providing an introduction to the best of western cultural values (e.g. its ability to shift, accommodate, adopt or listen) which is in itself a prerequisite for a critical understanding of any other cultural tradition' (p.74).

Significantly Hirsch has little faith in child centred learning, which he believes places too much confidence in the child's ability to learn being largely 'content neutral', and also rejects vocational and utilitarian forms of education. Dowgill and Lambert (1992) note the attractions of cultural literacy for some geographers as a panacea for improving the lack of locational knowledge of children. This may have been the subtext of the GWG statement that 'the names of places are embedded in everyday conversation and discourse, in newspaper, radio and TV items, and are part of the general culture which people need immediately to hand if they are to make any sense of the world around them' (DES 1990a p.47). This makes place, and other elements of geographical knowledge, part of our general culture and creates a link between Hirsch and the GNC. There may also be some truth in Lambert's (1996a) assertion that:

' 'trendy' curriculum developers of the 1970s were deemed at fault for the apparent failure of geography to teach its share of what has been termed 'cultural literacy' (Hirsch 1987). Whether or not one has sympathy for these views is beside the point. The resultant (short lived) geography National Curriculum Order came to resemble little more than a list of certified knowledge to be learned, and the meaning of the word 'curriculum' and the role of assessment were left in severely reduced condition' (p.265).

The GWG produced a list of places based on criteria including size of major cities, frequency of mention (DES 1990a) as a minimum basis of factual knowledge of places to build upon. Dowgill and Lambert (1992) conclude that despite its attractions such an application of the concepts of cultural literacy creates difficulties in underpinning curriculum design. In the end such a curriculum may just become someone's list of content, much of it arbitrary. The importance of the selected content is debatable, not least because of considerations about who makes these decisions, what makes the content important and to whom? The influence of such thinking on the GNC is that it created a curriculum that was largely closed to interpretation by teachers. By leading the GWG to place content in the ATs at an early stage this became 'an impulse to solve by elaborate means a perceived problem which may have become grossly overstated' (Dowgill and Lambert 1992 p.150).

Walford (1991c), who was perhaps most directly associated with the concepts of cultural literacy, stated at the time of his involvement with the GWG:

'If education is accepted as induction into knowledge (and the provision of necessary cultural literacy as a basis for survival in society) as well as self development, the two things are not juxtaposed against each other. Such thinking was in the subtext of the GWG's Final Report and survived in essence throughout the Final Orders' (p.52).

Subsequently Walford (1995) revealed that he had read Hirsh's book whilst he worked with the GWG, and had produced a paper for the Group's consideration, but that this was particularly related to the debate on locational knowledge. He was concerned with how factual knowledge within geography education could be 'brought back' without re-introducing rote memorisation, but also wished to consider deeper questions about the 'base knowledge' of geography that children possessed. He recognises the concerns Lambert and Dowgill (1992) raise but

considers that : 'Its no good having wonderful sets of clothes if you don't have the coat hangers for them!' meaning that the 'coat hangers' are the essential knowledge that children must attain before they can engage constructively with their geographical education. The dangers Walford (1995) identifies are that children do not acquire such knowledge at an early stage of their learning, and that there are dangers when teachers confuse 'what's interesting to do, with what's vital to know'. The optimism that geography teachers have had in the past that children would naturally acquire the 'dull but important' aspects of geography somehow along the way was a dangerous fallacy that Walford (1995) wished to challenge. In conclusion Walford (1995) and Storm (1995) believe that one can make 'too much' of the cultural literacy arguments in the context of the GNC and that the point of the cube diagram was to balance the approach to teaching and learning between skills, themes and places, not to simply rote learn lists of geographical content.

Enquiry.

The Final Report (DES 1990a) stated in its PoS that enquiry learning would be central to the study of geography, although it failed to exemplify upon this within the ATs. The GWG had felt that within the framework of the geography curriculum teachers would 'have the opportunity to determine the finer details of the content and teaching methods which they consider appropriate'. This was stated more forcibly within the 1991 Statutory Orders which affirmed 'An enquiry approach should be adopted for classroom activities ' (Programmes of Study for Key Stage 3 DES 1991a).

However, despite this acceptance of the role of enquiry learning, the actions of Kenneth Clarke in 1991, showed the government's desire to reduce an enquiry led approach as far as possible. Having previously commented that enquiry skills were not 'uniquely geographical', and therefore not suitable for inclusion within the geography ATs, he nevertheless launched the GNC at the RGS by saying that 'both enquiry and exploration of values were essential to geographical study' (Clarke 1991a). However, by this late stage the damage had already been done, for the Statutory Orders effectively reduced enquiry to a marginal aspect of geographical work.

Indeed Rawling (1991e) believed that the Draft and Statutory Orders essentially created a geography in which pupils were 'not encouraged to handle evidence, to consider alternative views, to evaluate material from different sources, or to develop their own values in environmental matters'. Whilst recognising that enquiry skills are not the sole preserve of geographers, she believed that without them 'geography is an arid and lifeless subject making few demands on its learners and providing little of transferable value in the real world' (Rawling 1991a). Similarly values and attitudes were seen to form a part of geography that could not be ignored if rigorous analysis were to take place. The mixed messages from a government whose White Paper 'This Common Inheritance' wanted children to become more aware of environmental matters and participate in them more fully, but whose Secretary of State for Education wished to eradicate such involvement from the GNC, appeared paradoxical. As Rawling (1991e) commented:

'The Draft Orders for Geography seem to have brought us to a situation strangely out of line with current concerns and with best educational practice and, equally inexplicably, to a situation in which its potential to enhance the quality of education will be constrained'.

Walford (1995) believes that the whole enquiry debate became somewhat 'inflated' because during the initial stages of the Working Group's life enquiry became associated with the 16-19 Geography 'route to enquiry' model. Interestingly one of the lay members of the Group, Rachel Thomas, had taught 16-19 Geography and had not liked it. Support for enquiry within the whole Group was also somewhat muted because others saw it as not being distinctly 'geographical' - a pedagogical approach, rather than a distinctive aspect of geography. These members, and indeed the Chair and civil servants, therefore believed that it could be stressed within non statutory guidance but *not* within the statutory GNC ATs themselves. Paterson (1995) concludes that the whole enquiry issue was eventually resolved on a 'majority basis' and that there was no intention to direct teachers strongly over this essentially pedagogical question (see also Walford 1995, Storm 1995, Edwards 1995). Other Working Group members felt that the whole enquiry question had become 'overblown out of all proportion as being something so mystical and so special to geography. I could never see how it could replace a proper scientific approach' Thomas.R (1995).

In conclusion Bennetts (1994) believed that the Working Group had encountered great problems in attempting to fit a meaningful expression of enquiry into the skills AT (AT1), and that there was already some confusion amongst the group about enquiry learning as a *process*, enquiry *skills* and carrying out *an* enquiry linked to assessment. The original attempts were also rejected as they made the AT look too much like that for Science, which the DES believed would be difficult to assess. The compromise solution was to place enquiry into the PoS where 'only minor changes were made by NCC, but at a late stage the DES greatly reduced the length of the description, for no other reason than to lower the profile of enquiry in order to meet ministerial preferences' (Bennetts 1994 p.9). The whole theme of enquiry was also

subsequently ignored in the English and Welsh NSG. Ultimately it was apparent that Clarke disliked the notion of enquiry being linked to geography, and that political sensibilities ensured that they would not be assessed either in geography or any other subject.

Primary Geography and the National Curriculum.

The Working Group's concern about the place of geography in primary education was always apparent (see p.5 Final Report DES 1990a), arising partly from anxieties widely felt amongst the HMI (HMI 1989). Nonetheless although the GNC caused something of a revolution in the teaching of geography from age 5 -11, the Orders and the process of their creation cannot be said to have always emphasised the importance of geography at the primary level despite the efforts of members with a particular primary focus such as Wendy Morgan and Hugh Ward. Both Morgan (1994) and Dixon (1991) recognised the failings of the GWG in its process of creating a primary geography curriculum, not least because only one of the 12 members originally appointed could claim a primary specialism and there was no representative of ITT in the primary phase. As Dixon (1991) stated:

'recent and relevant experience in the classroom of junior, let alone infant age children, did not appear to be a requirement of membership as it seems to be in other areas of the educational establishment' (p.51).

Bearing in mind that the primary geography curriculum was to be almost one half of the GNC this was perhaps an oversight.

Some believed that the GWG failed, as had other Working Groups, in their 'inability or unwillingness to accept that the thinking of young children is qualitatively different from that of adults' (Dixon 1991) and that an approach to primary geography dominated by a 'top down'

secondary perspective was inappropriate (Catling 1990). Thus an incapability to understand the intellectual development needs of the young may permeate the original Orders which Morgan (1995) believes failed to reassess the primary curriculum from first principles. Dixon (1991) was also concerned that young children would have to 'tackle concepts they're not ready to understand' (p.52) and that in their effort to maintain geography's respectability the GWG members sought to 'pack in as much matter as geographers think should be covered. Not, it seems, what is practical for primary teachers to cover or a realistic programme for children to undertake. The needs of the subject have been put first and its what will prove its undoing with regard to primary schools' (p.52).

Clarke (1991a) himself recognised the weakness of primary geography in his speech to the RGS on 24 September 1991.

'The challenge posed by geography in the National Curriculum is greater in the primary schools than in secondary schools in many schools geography has been sadly neglected in the primary school curriculum'.

Morgan (1990) was aware of the negative reports on primary geography such as the 1989 HMI report, and the HM Senior Chief Inspector of Schools 'Standards in Education', but claimed that a 'thread of gold' (p.36) ran through primary schools delivery of geography education. Despite a previous lack of support from central government the status achieved by primary geography's inclusion within the National Curriculum had meant that demands for INSET were rising dramatically, attendance at primary geography conferences had similarly risen, and that the new GA journal *Primary Geographer* was thriving. Commenting on how geography and history could be united in joint topic work, and on the possible links geography could create with other subjects, Morgan (1990) believed that 'geography becomes the

integrative force uniting the humanities and sciences, technology and the arts' (p.36). However, by 1996 Morgan admitted that due to the high priority given to the Science National Curriculum in primary schools the geography (and history) Orders, when subsequently introduced, were often taught by simply 'tack(ing) onto the science topics those parts of geography which fitted'(Morgan.W 1996 p.4). This perhaps exacerbated a problem identified by Ward (1995) and Walford (1991c) who had previously noted that 'The popularity of the all embracing 'topic work' espoused through the Plowden Report and educational movements of the 1960s had gradually edged geographical study out of many primary schools..what remained was usually centred around studies of the environment of the immediate locality' (p.53).

Interestingly the OFSTED (1993a) report into the first full year of implementation of the GNC (1991-2), based partly on 114 visits to primary schools, revealed that two thirds of the geography teaching observed was 'satisfactory or better'. The GNC had obviously presented most primary schools with considerable challenges, evidenced in the fact that although more geography was now being taught at Key Stages 1 and 2 it was still not strongly represented. Worryingly the report noted that 'in primary schools standards of work in geography often suffered when the subject was taught as part of a broad topic which attempted to integrate aspects of several subjects under a common theme' (p.3). Here there were real dangers that geography could become 'marginal or incidental'. The necessity for primary teachers to increase their geographical expertise through INSET, the training of geography co-ordinators for schools, and the need to resource the two thirds of primary schools who were seen to be lacking in geographical teaching resources, were strongly stated by OFSTED (1993a). In its subsequent report on the second year of National Curriculum implementation (OFSTED 1993b) the inspectors saw primary geography teaching standards drop slightly, partly due to a

lack of balance between ATs and an under-representation of human geography, place and environmental themes. The problems of limited teacher expertise, shortages of resources, assessment problems and a lack of progression between primary and secondary schools in the geography taught were also apparent, although it should be remembered, as Morgan (1996) does, that half the current teaching force in primary schools stopped studying geography at the age of 14. Thus primary teachers should be acknowledged as specialists, but 'their specialism is in the pedagogical practices related to an age Group, as opposed to a subject' (Morgan 1996 p.3).

Geography and Cross Curricular themes.

Each of the five cross curricular themes within the National Curriculum faced a difficult genesis and an uncertain future. At the very earliest stages of the NCC's existence the Council ran into conflict with Kenneth Baker over expanding its focus to the creation of cross curricular themes. Graham and Tytler (1993) recall that 'civil servants said ministers believed that work on the whole curriculum could result in a major distraction that might allow the (education) establishment to fight back' (p.20). Nonetheless the NCC set up thematic Working Groups and stated its intention to publish guidance on each of the five areas. This resulted in Baker writing to the NCC in May 1989 to express his concerns about this work, which he believed should cease immediately - a letter which when presented back to Baker he 'could not believe he had signed' (Graham 1993. p.21). The question of the independence of the NCC and the interference of civil servants was immediately raised by this event, as well as 'the growing belief of some in the Education Department that they knew best what should be in the curriculum even though they had never been near a state school' (p.22)

In a chapter highlighting the GNC and its cross-curricular context Marsden (1995) notes the intentions of the NCC to provide cross curricular themes and guidance, only to be thwarted by the actions of the DES which at this stage was 'ambivalent in its attitudes towards cross-curricular activity' (p.155). Illustrating the political influences historically directed towards cross curricular themes Marsden makes the case for their continued importance within the National Curriculum in general, and their promotion within geography education in particular. His commentary upon Curriculum Guidance 4, 5, 7 and 8 (Economic and Industrial Understanding (EIU), Health, Environmental and Citizenship) also makes strong reference to the education for international understanding possible through geography, citing the IGU charter. Carter and Bailey (1996) note that the NCC guidance publications varied in quality, style and the demands they made of teachers and pupils, such that:

‘given the pressure that teachers were under at the time it is small wonder that the documents were often consigned to the top shelf whilst teachers set about developing the statutory programmes’ (p.14).

Education for Economic and Industrial Understanding : Curriculum Guidance 4 (1990) benefits from the various projects on EIU that predate it and is referred to by Marsden (1995) as the most intellectually impressive of the series. There are implicit dangers in linking the economic with the industrial, the latter giving such study a more vocational and political slant, and Carter (1991) recognises the free market and consumerist views expounded within this document. The Citizenship document (Citizenship Education: Curriculum Guidance 8 (1990) is arguably the least successful of the series and reveals a concern that left wing peace studies, world studies and development education would receive a fillip. The implied modes of learning, and role of the 'subject' who obeys the laws, rather than the 'citizen' who may question them, are clearly apparent. Here geography education is seen as having some place in

delivering a global perspective, but one where the British situation is held up as one worthy of glowing international comparison, rather than a case for debate and questioning.

Perhaps the strongest links stated between geography and the cross curricular themes were those with Environmental Education. In his submission accompanying the Interim Report Fielding had written 'Environmental education is essential for today's children and geography should be the prime vehicle for it' Nevertheless despite governmental support for environmental education, and a tacit welcoming of the geography AT on 'environmental geography', behind the scenes Fielding was being told to 'soften the tone' with respect to the environment (Graham 1993 p.71). Publicly MacGregor and the NCC voiced a concern that the environment should not become the sole preserve of geographers. However, some geographers took heart from Clarke's (1991a) comment at the GNC launch that 'Geography itself is a great vehicle for environmental education', seeing this as recognition for the theme's inclusion within geography's domain.

Although the cross curricular themes were eventually destined to fall by the wayside within the National Curriculum the GA kept up a regular appreciation of the role which geography could play in their delivery. Editions of *Teaching Geography* in 1991 carried articles on each of the themes and their relevance to geography teaching.

Despite the subsequent virtual ignoring of cross curricular themes after the implementation of the National Curriculum they are still seen as important to many geography teachers, and indeed OFSTED.

Implementation issues.

During the early stages of the implementation of the GNC a variety of practising teachers and advisers produced accounts of their initial difficulties in trying to plan, resource, staff, and timetable the GNC (Brown et al 1991, Burden 1992, Hewitt 1991, Rawling 1992a, 1992b, Herrington 1994, Devlin 1994, Harrison and Croft 1994). The editorial comments of *Teaching Geography* also kept its readership informed of implementation practice (Boardman 1991a, 1991b, 1991c, 1992a, 1992b). The earliest attempts at implementation that were reported (such as Brown et al 1991) highlighted the dilemma of either trying to 'update' an original geography curriculum and fill in the 'gaps', or of waiting for LEA or school guidance, or of 'going it alone' in devising a completely new curriculum suited to the particular resources, staff and children within the school. In addition there were problems concerning the lack of time to plan, teach and assess; an overlap between Key Stages and with other National Curriculum subjects; the dilemma concerning teaching either a regional or a thematic course; problems of levelling pupils; and the difficulty of including contemporary events into the geography curriculum.

Hewitt (1991) saw the implementation process in three stages - a review of the subject's existing infrastructure within the school, followed by curriculum planning for Key Stage 3, and the construction of schemes of work for year 7. The necessity for forward planning, discussing changes with the SMT and auditing current practice were stressed, although the official guidance available on the teaching time to be allocated to foundation subjects he found largely unhelpful. The suggested 3 to 4 periods in a 40 period week (or 7.5 % of curriculum time) at

Key Stage 3 Hewitt found unworkable in the majority of schools, whilst the guidance that geography should be taught for a 'reasonable time' was banal. Hewitt's advice to heads of department was that if such time was not available the SMT should be told that delivery of the GNC and the achievement of 'appropriate levels of attainment for reporting at the end of the Key Stage' could not be guaranteed.

Rawling (1991b, 1992b) was one of the few ex GWG members to offer practical advice to teachers about implementation. In a *Teaching Geography* article titled 'Making the Most of the National Curriculum' (Rawling 1991b) she laid great store on the fact that the GNC was only a 'basic requirement', although this may not have been well received by teachers who saw overload, rather than minimum entitlement, as their main curricular problem. In her 'guide to what the Statutory Order doesn't tell you' she reiterated much sound advice circulating at the time, but could do little to solve the structural problems inherent in the new curriculum.

In the initial implementation phase of the GNC official guidance from both the NCC and SEAC was sparse. The Non Statutory Guidance (NSG) published in England in May 1991 was largely unhelpful and had suffered from unsympathetic last minute editing by the NCC - 'some of the more interesting material was removed under internal pressure before publication' (Boardman 1991c p.146). The resultant space was filled by the virtual repetition of 15 pages of SoAs which occurred within the Orders. There was little practical advice or support in problem solving, with exemplar units of work provided for Key Stage 4 instead of 3. This was not particularly helpful as teachers struggled with the implementation of year 7 at the time! By contrast the NSG for Wales (July 1991) gave much more practical advice and guidance on a wide range of implementation questions, and was thought by Boardman (1991c) to 'shine like a

beacon', partly because 'primary and secondary school teachers and advisers were involved in writing it' (p.146).

At the same time Roberts (1991, 1995, 1996) influential research amongst 70 South Yorkshire secondary schools, both before and after the implementation of the GNC, suggested possible far reaching effects of the new Orders on practice. Roberts looked at four LEAs to estimate the possible impact of the GNC, and to consider whether this might be illustrative of a national picture. She noted that previously most secondary schools had virtually assumed that the geography curriculum started at the age of 11, and that few made any effort to co ordinate the contributions made by their feeder schools. There were also problems where the admission ages to secondary schools and Key Stages did not coincide. This naturally leads to an assessment issue as upper schools (13-18) would be assessing Key Stage 3 pupils based upon their own year 9 teaching, but on another school's teaching of years 7 and 8. With the publication of league tables of results the upper schools would be publicly judged upon just one year's work with the children.

The linkage of content to levels in the GNC, with children of the same age studying different content, caused obvious problems for schools that favoured mixed ability teaching, which for Key Stage 3 included the majority of schools in Robert's (1991) survey. In addition the fact that the GNC was content led, and the history process led, caused difficulties for those schools teaching *Integrated Humanities*. This would force some schools into separate subject teaching for the first time.

Time allocation for geography lessons was another contentious issue highlighted by Roberts (1991) initial research. The GWG assumed that 120 to 160 minutes would be given to geography per week in years 1 to 9, but Robert's survey showed that in the vast majority of schools in South Yorkshire this was an overestimate - indeed only one school surveyed allocated more than 120 minutes to geography per week, with the average being around 90 minutes. Many schools allocated barely half the advised time for geography. Walford (1991c) noted that the GWG's Key Stage 3 proposals were based on 60-65 hours of geography each year and that:

'if a school is unable or unwilling to provide this time Geography departments can scarcely be blamed if achievement scores (eventually to be published) are not up to expectations' (p.53).

This had led to many adverse comments about curriculum overload following the publication of the Interim Report and the subsequent reduction in SoAs in the NCC (1990) report and Statutory Orders. OFSTED (1993a), reporting on the first year of implementation of the GNC, believed that 'many of the secondary schools allocated the same amount of time, about 5% in Key Stage 3, as they did before the introduction of geography as a National Curriculum subject', but that 'in humanities courses, time given to geography was often severely curtailed' (p.4). Even so their subsequent report (OFSTED 1993b) witnessed that at Key Stage 3 'standards of achievement and the quality of teaching (were) satisfactory or better in over 80% of the lessons, with 33% being good or very good'. (para. 17-19, 23-25).

In Roberts (1991) questionnaire survey (n=12 schools) she was interested to see the extent to which schools already covered GNC themes within Key Stage 3 before the implementation of the GNC. She noted the unique combinations of areas, themes, topics and skills covered by each school, but also discovered certain trends. For example before the introduction of the

National Curriculum the majority of schools taught OS map skills, although very few used satellite imagery. Case studies were incorporated to illustrate themes, but not in the detail now required by the GNC. Physical Geography was under represented and there were some worrying omissions from human and environmental geography. Perhaps of greatest concern was the fact that Humanities courses in upper schools often inadequately covered the GNC content.

In addition many teachers Roberts interviewed thought that the GNC would encourage more 'narrative delivery', rather than enquiry or active learning, and that the influence of national testing would also change teaching methods. Roberts (1991) concluded that the GNC 'may have implications for education far beyond the brief given to the GWG in 1989' (p.341).

In the follow up research which constituted the latter stages of this longitudinal study Roberts (1995) focused on three school's teaching of geography at Key Stage 3 up until 1994. Each school was selected for its different philosophy of geography education and Roberts discovered that the nature of their implementation of the GNC was related directly to their pre National Curriculum style of teaching. Despite the particular view of education encapsulated by the GNC the schools all attempted to maintain their distinctive approach to teaching geography. Deeply held beliefs about teaching and learning persisted, and there was evidence that school-based curriculum development was surviving despite the poorly structured and prescriptive GNC.

Official monitoring of the implementation was carried out by the NCC (1992), CCW (1994), OFSTED (1993a, 1993b) and HMI Wales (1993). The OFSTED (1993a) report in particular

identified the dangers of teachers basing their geography courses on a narrow conception of the content the GNC contained. This became especially problematic when geography departments used just one textbook to deliver the curriculum, a point pursued by Lambert (1996a) with respect to assessment. The predominant impression of the implementation was that practice in schools was extremely diverse. In general teachers accepted the Orders as a basis for developing courses and schemes of work, but found the content rather traditional. Many teachers were attempting to devise geography courses, but struggled with the structural and assessment difficulties of the new curriculum. Here the ATs and PoS did not complement each other, there was no content entitlement related to each Key Stage, and a lack of integrated enquiry. However the subsequent OFSTED report (1993b) witnessed that at Key Stage 3 'standards of achievement and quality of teaching (were) satisfactory or better in 80% of lessons, with 33% being good or very good (para 17-19, 23-25). Evidence from small scale research projects (Roberts 1991,1995), questionnaire surveys (GA 1993a, 1993b) and reports (Fry and Schofield 1993) was that many teachers were superimposing their own philosophies of education and classroom practice on top of the geography Orders.

Assessment.

Arguably the most serious implementation problems teachers faced concerning the GNC, and indeed all other National Curriculum subjects, related to assessment. Having introduced the National Curriculum before the means for its assessment were fully understood by teachers, or adequately trialled in schools, there were almost inevitably going to be substantial difficulties. There is little debate over the point that the National Curriculum was, from its inception, assessment led. Baker's 1988 Education Reform Act clearly stated that ATs were to provide a

sound basis for assessment and testing at the ages of 7, 11, 14 and 16. It has long been understood that assessment has a strong controlling influence on the curriculum, but this was not given sufficient attention during the early years of the National Curriculum's establishment.

Professor Black's Task Group on Assessment and Testing Report (DES 1988) provided the assessment model for the National Curriculum, but Daugherty (1989a) was sceptical about its promise of an 'all-purpose, all-embracing framework for assessment' (p.304). Although Kenneth Baker had accepted the TGAT report others politicians, including Margaret Thatcher, were sceptical and revealed that in the government there was now:

‘a less than uniform approach ... to the root and branch educational reforms being pursued. Several ideologies and political viewpoints vied with each other, and it is tempting to suggest that the educational principles, and the implications, of the TGAT report were never really understood, let alone widely endorsed’ (Lambert 1996a p.269).

The guiding criteria of TGAT (DES 1988) were that assessment should be *criteria referenced*, *formative*, *moderated* and relate to *progression*. The criterion-referenced model was well tried elsewhere (Brown 1982, Popham 1978), although there was little evidence that it could work on a national scale within the context of state education in England and Wales. Daugherty (1989a) clearly outlined what a nationally administered assessment system could and could not do - he concluded that 'formal assessment, especially that which leads to public reporting of results, is a limited and limiting set of procedures' (p.304). The TGAT report (DES 1988) provided problems for all the Working Groups, although in essence its belief that assessment should be the servant, rather than the master, of the curriculum was sound.

The belief in the centrality of assessment within the process of education is witnessed by the TGAT report's statement that:

'Promoting children's learning is the principal aim of schools. Assessment is at the heart of the process. It can provide a framework in which educational objectives may be set and pupil's progress charted and expressed. It can yield a basis for planning the next educational steps in response to children's needs.' (paragraph 3).

Thus TGAT heralded:

'a national assessment system for all children in compulsory schooling, which would involve *teachers* making criterion referenced judgements of attainment for each distinctive domain (or 'AT') of the National Curriculum subjects, as well as administering externally produced 'standard assessment tests' (SATs). Thus was born the National Curriculum Assessment (NCA) system based upon the ten-level scale, itself predicated on the notion that progress in learning in geography could be described in terms of progressive levels of attainment' (Lambert 1996a p268).

Daugherty (1990), in a review of assessment practices in geography this century, speculated on how far the emphasis on assessment within the National Curriculum to support learning could be taken. Highlighting the development of examinations Daugherty (1990) concluded that most geography exams this century served the purpose of formal assessment through public examinations, both to confirm the subject's status (Proctor 1986) and to focus debate on educational priorities. According to those who sought to guide good practice in geography teaching (such as Geikie 1887, and Fairgreive 1926) the skills of the geography teacher were comprised of knowing what and how to teach, rather than assessing what had been learned. Examinations, usually taken at the end of a course of study, were to identify who were the high achievers, although even at the turn of the century some were questioning their purpose, validity and reliability (see Chapter 1). Interestingly Marsden (1995) utilises Daugherty's (1990) historical perspective to illustrate some of the similarities between assessment within the National Curriculum and the Revised Code of the 1860s, although he is careful to point out that such links are not always straightforward.

By focusing on the last 30 years of assessment within geography education Daugherty (1990) places the emergent National Curriculum assessment system into context. He records how the GCE 'O' level aimed to assess the top 20%, whilst the CSE was designed to test the next 40% of the ability range. In the 1970s the raising of the school leaving age increased the number of candidates taking these examinations, whilst the 1980s saw a further broadening of the examination target Group with the introduction of the GCSE - 'an exemplary case of positive, assessment-led, curriculum innovation' (Lambert 1996a p.267). Interestingly it took 16 years to combine two norm referenced public exams at 16 into one, although the more radical change to a National Curriculum criterion-referenced assessment system for 5 to 16 year olds was introduced 'almost overnight without adequate consideration of its validity, reliability, or, above all, its utility' (Daugherty 1990 p.299). The means of assessment were becoming geared to a much broader range of attainments and abilities during a period when the aims of geography education, and the nature of learning itself, were being rethought. The 1970s Schools Council geography projects had had a great influence on assessment thinking in geography as:

'the examination was perceived not as an add-on feature, designed separately and unable to take responsibility for the curriculum over which it exerted such a strong influence; it was to be a vehicle for influencing change in curriculum content and teaching methods, reflecting curriculum priorities rather than unwittingly determining them'. (Daugherty 1990 p.295).

Both Daugherty (1990, 1992a, 1992b) and Lambert (1996a) have drawn attention to the dominant considerations in assessment recently (by both government and SCAA) as being : national standards, selection for future educational and employment opportunities, and comparisons of teacher and school performance.

The question of using SoAs as assessment criteria, and their role in defining what was important in the geography curriculum, was raised by Daugherty (1990), and others (Butt and Lambert 1993). The SoAs were related closely to attainment of content, rather than identifying the abilities or behaviours required to achieve them. Additionally their progression, continuity, and ability to describe attainment were all questionable. Most importantly the assessment of knowledge of place could not be built into a hierarchical model of progressively more demanding levels, whereas depth of understanding and increasing development of skills could. These assessment issues essentially paralleled the ill fated attempts to devise grade related criteria for GCSE (SEC 1985) - 'no one argued then for specific items of knowledge being attached to each level of attainment' (Daugherty 1990). In addition the form of record keeping was not nationally prescribed, but a matter for school policy. The HMI Senior Chief Inspector of Schools warned that 'there is a danger that some of the more elaborate forms of assessment and some recording schemes developed in schools will swamp teaching and learning' ('Standards in Education' DES Feb 1991).

In addition Butt and Lambert (1993) denounced the lack of official guidance teachers were receiving at this stage about both teacher assessment and SATs. They commented that:

'If we really are to be held fully (and publicly) accountable for pupils' test results, we have the right to substantial and full guidance before such tests are undertaken' (p.82).

It was significant that the body appointed to develop SATs for geography - the Centre for Formative Assessment Studies (CFAS) at the University of Manchester - turned down at the eleventh hour an invitation from *Teaching Geography* to publish such guidance, after initially agreeing to do so. Teachers were therefore to receive no feedback on the geography SATs

trials held in November 1992 before pupils were to take the tests in June 1994. It had already been admitted that the tests could 'cover' only half the SoAs at Key Stage 3, whilst the status of 'non tested' SoAs and their impact on the eventual levels awarded to children was unknown.

Members of the GNC were not entirely surprised that they did not manage to fully consider the assessment issues of the GNC they were creating - indeed Paterson (1995) comments:

‘we weren’t given assessment as part of our terms of reference - you need go no further. We were asked to think about it, but we were given no specific direction with regard to assessment’.

Rawling (1996a) concurs :

‘The first five months of the Group’s work were spent entirely on AT emphases, as an exercise in selecting content and in complete isolation from any consideration of their role in, and likely influence on, assessment’.
(p.127)

The advice the Group received from their DES advisers was that SEAC would address the major assessment issues and the GWG should merely concentrate on producing the geography curriculum itself. In this way the belief that the curriculum and assessment were not to be closely related was enhanced. Indeed Walford (1992) stated:

‘It’s probably true that the full impact of assessment on the curriculum was never fully considered; but that was mostly because of a consistent steering away from the issue by the Secretariat who told us that it was not our business’(p.99).

This lessening of the GWG’s workload was welcomed, especially given the time constraints the Group faced - 'At the time I don't think that many of us wanted to take on the issues, or we were optimistic and thought that a way would be devised' (Walford 1995). Even Richard Daugherty’s advice to the GWG, as Chair of SEAC’s Geography Committee, was ignored for

fear that if implemented it would slow the timetable of the Group's work. The feeling was that TGAT had already devised the assessment model, which could not be changed although the Group did not like the 10 levels, and that the GWG therefore had little effective influence on the means of assessment. At this level the government's use of the TGAT report was significant:

'the feeling of most practitioners as well as theorists in the world of education (was) that the intentions and interpretations of the TGAT recommendations by government were both reactionary and punitive in intent. The government as a policy priority introduced a high-stakes element into the proceedings, which meant that teachers' commitment to their pupils would be compromised by an understandable need to narrow their horizons and play for their own safety.' (Marsden 1995 p.101-102).

Importantly both the political status and influence of SEAC was changing. Walford (1995) and Bennetts (1995a) recall that the DES had a somewhat detached view of SEAC, that its Chairperson Philip Halsey was about to resign (as had Duncan Graham from the NCC a few days earlier), and the whole SEAC organisation was about to merge with NCC. The advice emanating from SEAC - in its usual, rather dogmatic, fashion - was therefore treated somewhat circumspectly by the GWG. In addition change in assessment advice was so rapid that:

'not even a group of expert psychics could have guessed the future pattern that was eventually going to emerge' (Walford 1992 p.95)

The whole TGAT formula had been publicly questioned by SEAC having witnessed the difficulties Working Groups were experiencing with it and this was perhaps seen as evidence for some license by Working Groups in their attempts at meeting the assessment criteria. The government was to some extent culpable, having established SEAC and NCC as separate entities, expressly against one of TGAT's key principles that assessment and the curriculum should be considered together.

As Bennetts (1994) concludes:

‘There is little doubt that the main attraction of assessment in the National Curriculum for the government is that it can be used to make schools and LEAs accountable and thereby subject to parental pressure and market forces’ (p.8).

But as Goldstein (1991) warns :

‘if we wish to see how well the curriculum is working we should directly observe its operation, rather than indirectly trying to infer its effect by measuring the achievement of its students’ (cited in Lambert 1996a p.266).

Teacher Assessment.

Teacher assessment achieved a recognition that it had not previously been afforded before the advent of the National Curriculum at the beginning of the 1990s. There had always existed two distinct cultures in educational assessment - that of the ‘assessment industry’, and that of daily teacher marking (Lambert 1996a, 1996b) - but National Curriculum assessment effectively blurred the division between the two. Geography teachers were now responsible for making assessments of their pupils which would have national significance, rather than being solely for the consumption of pupils, teachers and parents locally.

In the early stages of the implementation of the GNC Daugherty and Lambert (1993) attempted to provide a snapshot of teacher assessment in geography at Key Stage 3 based upon a small survey of schools in six LEAs in London, and two in South Wales. They noted the confusion that existed amongst teachers about SATs, and commented that heads of department found the Key Stage 3 PoS too full (83%), with the GNC forcing an increase in formal testing (89%). Bureaucratic rather than educational gains were seen by geography

teachers (70%) as being the most significant outcomes of assessment, with general feelings of scepticism about 'level reporting' being stated. Overall Daugherty and Lambert (1993) concluded that National Curriculum assessments were not matching children's needs. Some differences were noted between the Welsh and London schools - such as the belief that teacher assessment could improve the methods of assessment used - but a general concern about the balance and status of teacher assessment compared to testing was noted. As in other studies (Roberts 1991,1995, Fry and Schofield 1993) evidence suggested that differences in assessment practice were linked to the ways in which departments visualised their role in implementing the GNC. Additionally OFSTED reports (1993a, 1993b) noted that assessment, recording and reporting were proving difficult for geography departments and causing HODs anxiety. The overuse of tests, ticklists and lack of assessment policies were of concern to inspectors who generally witnessed somewhat sporadic practice between geography departments.

Many geography departments correctly saw assessment as an integral part of the learning process and therefore closely related to the curriculum. It was difficult for them to implement a meaningful system of assessment using the SoAs and levels model provided by TGAT and incorporated into the GNC. This led to some departments attempting to aggregate levels on flimsy evidence, whilst others painstakingly recorded results for each pupil relating to every single SoA. HMI Wales (1993) referred to these as the 'extremes of indifference and over-complexity' in meeting the statutory National Curriculum requirements.

Government criticisms of, and reductions in, teacher assessment at GCSE level in the early 1990s occurred at a time when geography teachers were being expected to embrace greater teacher assessment within the National Curriculum. Nonetheless:

‘very few resources were directed to developing what was becoming known as *teacher assessment* in comparison with the very large sums directed to the commissioning of ‘standard assessment tasks’ (SATs) (Lambert 1996a p.269-70).

A growing concern amongst teachers at the time was how much flexibility they would have in devising their own means of course assessment, and what the relationship would be between teacher assessment and the new externally marked SATs. The SoAs certainly implied a particular type, and timing, of teacher assessment and many saw the dangers of McNamara's fallacy, namely of 'making the measurable important rather than attempting to make the important measurable' (Rowntree 1987 p.68), becoming increasingly apparent.

Daugherty (1990) feared that the assessment of geography might become 'high stakes', namely that 'the charting of individual pupil's progress becomes secondary to using the results as a measure of the performance of the pupil, teacher and school' (p.298-9). The responsibility for teacher assessment was clear, but no written rules existed for it, only minimal and general guidance from SEAC (Daugherty 1992a). Whilst noting the limitations of 'pencil and paper' tests which could only assess half the SoAs at any point in a child's educational development, Daugherty guided teachers into not relying too heavily on the sanctity of SoAs. Daugherty admitted that his guidance was 'tentative and partial' due to the work still officially going on at this stage by CFAS and Manchester University to produce Key Stage 3 SATs for the summer of 1994. Digby (1994), formerly on the staff of CFAS, offers an interesting insider's perspective on the frustration of trying to produce such tests. He states:

'Steers which originate from political quangos (referring to SEAC) are rarely untainted by political agendas, and both the volatility of the political climate and the sensitivity of an issue such as national testing meant that interference was rife. Suffice it to say that there were several occasions when both advice and steers from SEAC were contradictory'. (p.80).

As Lambert (1996a) concludes:

'What is especially significant is the acceptance by the government that the only alternative to a prohibitively expensive and damagingly bureaucratic assessment system is to entrust teachers with the task of assessing level attainment of children in geography, which, unlike the core subjects of mathematics, science and English, will not be encumbered with external tests at the end of Key Stage 1, 2 or 3' (p.273).

Continuity and Progression.

The debate about progression both within and beyond the GWG was a crucial one, central to the question of National Curriculum levels, assessment and the conceptual understanding of the subject itself. Some interpreted Fielding's comment that 'There are always difficulties of progression in a content - rich subject like geography; it is more difficult than in a reasoning subject like Mathematics' (Fielding TES 8 June 1990) as an excuse for geography to simply become the receptacle for a mass of facts about the world, rather than a subject in which reasoning about what was happening in the world. The questions of whether progression could be solely based on the accumulation of content, about which geographical content was 'harder' to learn, and whether progression could be tied to assessed levels were also raised. The link to conceptual understanding of the subject itself was soon revealed, although:

'without sufficient evidence to suggest whether or not it was possible, let alone desirable, the ten- level scale has now forced us to describe progression in distinctive levels; what concentrates the mind further is the assumption that this should acquire national acceptance and agreement' (Lambert 1996a p.269).

It is apparent that the Working Group started their deliberations about progression from a base of some uncertainty. Storm (1995) believed that 'progression has always been a great weakness intellectually with geography in schools' and that the attempt to 'fine tune' it to ten agreed levels was therefore almost impossible (see also Ward 1995, Walford 1995, Thomas.D 1995). The lack of research evidence hampered the Group's attempts to arrive at confident conclusions. It also opened a larger conceptual debate which the strict time constraints on the Working Group meant could not be pursued fully. Some aspects of progression within the geography National Curriculum were therefore confidently stated (such as the study of air photographs starting with oblique images and progressing to vertical images), whereas others on, say, area were less certain. According to Storm (1995) the Group regularly deliberated about progression, but could not come to a unanimous view. In addition many of the opinions expressed by Group members were based largely on personal experience, expectations and beliefs rather than on harder edged research findings.

The GWG was nervous before the publication of the Interim Report about the responses it would receive on the issue of progression, especially with regard to geographical content. Teachers interpreted levels of ability and progression differently according to their individual teaching situations and experience. It was, however, a source of some annoyance to the Working Group that many respondents believed that the Group had failed even to debate the issues, or that they had simply visualised progression in terms of gaining more geographical knowledge (Storm 1995, Walford 1995).

Storm (1995) highlights the response from ITT lecturers who categorically denied that any area based studies in geography could include elements of progression beyond the mere

'heaping up' of content year after year. This he found 'both depressing and worrying' as it ignored possibilities of intellectual development as teachers introduced, and then reintroduced, areas of study. This Brunerian idea of an essentially spiral curriculum involves the revisiting of concepts as the child progresses, but without the repetition of content. He believed that the negative response to such ideas was partly motivated by fears concerning the possible reintroduction of regional geography. By extension it was also implied that area based progression hinted at a didactic teaching style and an 'encyclopaedic' approach to geography; whilst thematic approaches implied interactive and enquiry based learning.

Following the first Dearing Review (1994), and the subsequent production of a new geography curriculum in January 1995, Trevor Bennetts (1995b, 1996) again offered his views on curriculum planning with respect to ensuring continuity and progression (see Bennetts 1981). These articles provided a valuable retrospective on the problems faced by the GWG, and resultant in the Order which they produced, but also notes that the Dearing led revision was a 'mixed blessing, weakening some aspects of continuity while in other respects making it much easier to plan for progression in pupils' learning' (Bennetts 1995b p.75). The complementary roles of continuity ('the persistence of significant features of geographical education as pupils move through their school system' p.75) and progression ('which focuses on how pupils' learning advances' p.75) are highlighted by Bennetts (1995b), along with the key role of assessment to monitor them.

Short and Full courses at Key Stage 4.

The confusion and muddle concerning the geography Short Courses, and the larger curricular uncertainties within Key Stage 4, are well documented. Graham (1993) refers to the welter of problems faced by the subject Working Groups within a chapter titled 'The Nightmare of Key Stage 4' - a not insignificant choice of heading.

Even before the NCC had officially begun to operate Peter Watkins, the NCC's deputy chief, had spotted the looming difficulties of Key Stage 4. In June 1988 he had told Graham that a ten subject National Curriculum could not work for all children from 14-16 simply because the timetable space for it did not exist in state schools. The legally enforceable 'breadth and balance' of the National Curriculum was thus impossible within the final Key Stage. However, when the NCC brought this to the attention of SEAC, the civil servants and HMI Graham and Watkins met with a 'most discourteous reception' (Graham 1993. p.83). The vexed question of how to deal with the final Key Stage was officially pushed further into the background, under the short-sighted view that its implementation was still some way off. Part of the reason for this was that 'throughout Baker's time no minister would contemplate a National Curriculum which did not cover all the subjects until 16' (Graham 1993. p 84-5).

Another source of anxiety within Key Stage 4 was the relationship between the National Curriculum and the GCSE. The assessment systems of both would not easily combine and there were profound organisational, structural and philosophical differences between their approaches. The government was not keen on dismantling the relatively new, and generally

popular, GCSE but could see few alternatives if it were to maintain a ten subject, ten level National Curriculum for all. SEAC and the GCSE boards soon announced that full GCSE courses in all ten subjects were insupportable - SEAC proposed half courses in some subjects and combination GCSEs in others, both of which were suggested for geography. Graham (1993) recalls that a range of combinations and permutations of courses were argued for on behalf of history and geography, but that the NCC felt that giving children the option at 14 to study one or the other 'would be turning our backs on the benefits of the National Curriculum' (Graham 1993 p.88).

In the end 'State education in England and Wales was in danger of going full circle; a government that had introduced the National Curriculum to ensure that there was a uniform curriculum across the country was now being told by its own inspectors that it was over-prescriptive, too detailed and too complex.' (Graham 1993 p.89). In his speech to the Society of Education Officers in January 1990 MacGregor stated that some pupils would be permitted to drop certain subjects, that new GCSEs would be introduced which combined some subjects, and that half GCSEs would also be offered. The NCC and MacGregor continued to debate the substance of this until the Secretary of State for Education was replaced by Clarke in November 1990. Clarke kept the NCC at arms length, and did not listen to its requests to prioritise work on Key Stage 4.

The confusing muddle that existed at Key Stage 4 was only officially clarified early in 1992 by a statement from NCC that children could either study full history and no geography, or full geography and no history, or a Short Course in each. Although this was the statutory position, the NCC encouraged schools to offer full history and geography, or full history and short

geography, or vice versa, as alternative approaches. However there was no suggestion of how to fit these options into a timetable.

The Short Course in geography was doomed from the start. As Boardman (1992a) stated 'the main question is whether a Short Course in each subject can present a sufficiently rigorous and balanced view of the subject' (p.50). The expense in terms of staff time, resources and timetable space were glossed over by the government. Many teachers and examination boards, who were to provide the assessment of these courses, were confused and frustrated. The combination of history and geography into a joint GCSE was almost impossible (as one was process and one content based), whilst the combination of geography with other subjects, or with vocational courses, appeared equally problematic. The necessity for some form of certification of these courses to increase their credibility was an additional headache.

The GNC PoS had been designed for all children to take geography up to the age of 16. The removal of a key stage 4 component therefore left a very unbalanced course for many children who would not opt to pursue the subject beyond 14. This therefore had implications for restructuring the geography courses which existed at Key Stage 3.

Conclusions.

Rawling (1992a) saw three major drawbacks with the GNC Statutory Order. Firstly that it failed to provide a clear 'vision' of geographical education for the 5 to 16 age range; secondly that it did not provide a 'pathway' to develop courses, schemes of work, and lessons; and lastly that the ways in which children learn geography best - namely through the process of

geographical enquiry - were not significantly acknowledged. The educational purpose for the study of geography was therefore masked, despite its widely accepted aims, or concentrated too narrowly on subject content in both the geography ATs and PoS. Here the repetition of content and skills was confusing and unnecessary - essentially a problem created by the GWG whose interpretation of the purpose of the ATs and POS was faulty, and did not make curriculum sense.

Following the implementation problems experienced by all National Curriculum subjects in the early in the 1990s the first Dearing Review (1994), which was commissioned by the then Secretary of State for Education John Patten, established new SCAA subject advisory Groups to carry out the essential revisions. Although beyond the immediate scope of this thesis the effect of the Dearing Review (1994) on the GNC bears some comment. The necessary changes to the GNC were recognised as being a need to slim down the curriculum, improve the manageability of assessment, and enhance the role of teacher assessment. Each of these problems were certainly recognisable within the original geography Orders and are reflected in the advice given to the SCAA Geography Advisory Group that it should focus on the following key questions:

1. What amount of geography knowledge, understanding and skills can reasonably be taught in the time allocation (135 hours at Key Stage 3 representing 1.25 hours per week or 5% of curriculum time)?
2. How should the geography Order be slimmed down?
 - should the five components (skills, places, physical, human and environmental geography) be retained? If so, should they remain as identifiable components?
 - How should the Order specify place knowledge requirements?

3. How should choice be incorporated within the statutory core content?

- How might an appropriate range of 'place studies' be maintained in a less prescriptive Order?
- How might the balance between the three geographical themes (physical, human and environmental) be maintained?

4. What should be the distinctive features of the geography PoS (PoS) in each Key Stage?

- How can the knowledge, understanding and skills and their application be defined in a coherent manner?
- How should progression be defined in National Curriculum geography?

5. If there is no statutory Order for geography at Key Stage 4, what are the implications for

- the PoS in Key Stages 1-3?
- the development of level descriptions?

6. Are there any areas of geography in which the application of information technology is intrinsic to the development of the subject?

Battersby (1995 p.57)

Consideration was also given to the fact that Key Stage 3 represented the last experience of geography for many pupils and that as a result it should offer breadth, balance and a wide range of geographical themes. The SCAA Geography Advisory Group achieved a slimming of the Order, and its restructuring into a minimum entitlement rather than an implied list of 'things to be taught'. They also successfully reduced its prescribed content, created a discrete PoS, and a single 'Geography' AT instead of the previous 5. The removal of SoAs in favour of level descriptions was a feature of all National Curriculum subject revisions. This meant that

from the original geography Order the balance of places, themes and skills was hopefully maintained, as was an enquiry approach and the framework of locational knowledge.

Notes :

Bennetts.T.H (1995a) Interview with Trevor Bennetts 20 July 1995.

Edwards.K (1995) Interview with Kay Edwards 3 March 1995

Lethbridge.R (1995) Interview with Richard Lethbridge 21 April 1995

Morgan.W (1995) Interview with Wendy Morgan 20 February 1995

Paterson.K (1995) Interview with Keith Paterson 3 May 1995

Rawling.E (1995) Interview with Eleanor Rawling 4 March 1995

Storm.M (1995) Interview with Michael Storm 13 February 1995

Thomas.D (1995) Interview with David Thomas 13 March 1995

Thomas.R (1995) Interview with Rachel Thomas 27 April 1995

Walford.R (1995) Interview with Rex Walford 31 March 1995

Ward.H (1995) Interview with Hugh Ward 9 February 1995.

THE DYNAMICS OF THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM WORKING GROUPS.

'The behaviour of MacGregor and particularly Clarke over history and geography raises the serious question of the role of ministers in the curriculum and the dilemmas caused when politics clash with educational needs'.

D.Graham and D.Tytler (1993 p.74).

The dynamics of how the GWG, and other National Curriculum Working groups, functioned has already been briefly mentioned in this thesis (see Chapters 4, 5 and 6). However, these accounts rely almost exclusively on the memories or previously published records of Group members which provide an important, but essentially *internal*, view of how the GWG operated. This chapter aims to provide *external* views of the process from a variety of perspectives, not least those of the NCC and its chair, and will conclude by suggesting possible ways in which the GWG could have operated as a more successful Group (or more correctly as a team). The experience of other Working Groups will also be called upon to serve as a comparison to that of the GWG. Inevitably the accounts of those internal and external to the workings of any Group will differ (see Catling 1990, Walford 1991e, 1992 and Rawling 1992a). With this in mind we start by considering the views of Duncan Graham.

Graham, the chair and chief executive of the National Curriculum Council from its inception in 1988 until his resignation in July 1991, provides an interesting overview of the ways in which

he believed the GWG operated. In 'A Lesson For Us All: The making of the National Curriculum' he states that:

'Members of the Group worked well together under the doughty chairmanship of Sir Leslie Fielding, vice-chancellor of Sussex University, and as far as one could see there were no internal tensions. They saw their remit as being perfectly clear: their task was to win the curriculum battle for geography. All that one heard was good news' (Graham and Tytler 1993 p.71).

This impression of the Group's dynamics is certainly at odds with the views of some GWG members. When asked for the sources of this information Graham (1996) admitted that due to the restricted access he was given to each of the Working Groups he could not say definitely whether the GWG worked together harmoniously or not, and that his previous comments might have been 'overstated'. He believes that his impression of conformity within the GWG was a reaction to the more obvious tensions witnessed within the History Working Group, and because of the Group's perceived united opposition to the Science Orders.

Graham (1996) still visualises Fielding as 'a good chair who led them (the GWG) well', mainly because Fielding was keen to follow the advice of civil servants and not replicate the problems experienced by other Working Groups. As such Fielding appears to have been more 'compliant and conformist' than the chair of the HWG, Saunders Watson, who was clearly under more political pressure and stronger in the defence of his subject. Interestingly the two chairs were kept isolated from each other, and from Graham, and were not encouraged to talk about their respective work. To Graham (1996) Fielding appeared to have his own views on geography (although see D.Thomas 1995) and, on occasions, a personal agenda to follow. His diplomatic background helped him to give the impression of not being under the control of civil servants

and operating as 'his own man', effectively creating an illusion of unity and accord which might not always have been present within the Group.

Some doubt can also be cast upon Graham and Tytler's (1993) impressions of the kind of reports the GWG produced. They state that:

'When the Interim Report was published in October 1989 it was a good one. The Working Group was buoyant but MacGregor was concerned that the seven ATs were well over the norm and against the trend of simplifying the Statutory Orders. His other misgiving was a mirror image of what was happening in history. The ATs were skill-based and not fact-based'. (p.71).

Statements from Working Group members contained in previous chapters counter the view that they were 'buoyant' after the Interim Report's publication, and that the geography ATs were 'skill based'. Such basic factual errors may be better understood when one realises that Graham only formally attended one meeting of the GWG, although he had been present for parts of other meetings, or had been contacted for advice on certain technical questions about how the ATs could be made to work (Graham 1996). Rawling (1995), Morgan (1995) and others certainly attest to the internal tensions within the GWG which almost resulted in resignations, and that their task was not clear to all members - if 'good news' was heard by Graham from the GWG it would certainly not have come from all of its membership! Interestingly Graham (1996) was never made aware of the disagreements which, at one stage, threatened the loss of members from the GWG.

Perhaps of greatest concern is Graham and Tytler's (1993) belief that the geography Interim Report was a 'good one', in direct contrast to the views of many teachers, educationalists and some GWG members. In response Graham (1996) feels that *all* Interim Reports from Working

Groups were bound to illicit negative responses from professional bodies, but that the geographers had generally 'got the balance right'. From the NCC's view the achievement of structural balance was more important than the geography contained in the report. The workability of the report in practical terms was more significant than its content, although even here the GNC had inherent operational problems which Graham (1993, 1996) fails to recognise. Thus this *external* view, both of the workings of the GWG and of the Reports it produced, was positive from the perspective of the chair of the NCC and its civil servants. The latter were pleased because they believed the GWG's work would be instantly acceptable to their political masters - again the geographical content of the report was of little or no interest.

It is with this point in mind that the numerous misconceptions both Graham (1993, 1996), and ministers, reveal about the Interim Report can be countered. Graham and Tytler (1993) state that :

'a very important issue that surfaced with the Interim Report was the precise nature of geography, which was going to cause the greatest problems later on. It appeared to ministers that having lost earth sciences, the geographers were pushed into finding something else to put in its place' (p 71).

Whilst it is true that the geographers found the achievement of an accurate definition of geography in its current form problematic, and were frustrated by the expansionist designs of the Science Order, the contention that they sought other content to fill perceived gaps is simply not true (see Thomas.D, Ward, Rawling, Storm, Walford 1995). Similarly the following statement is equally inaccurate:

'Partly because of the way geography teaching had moved in recent years and partly because the Working Group wanted to prove itself, the Interim Report turned out to be very heavily centred on political geography, economic geography, social geography and environmental

geography. MacGregor, perhaps because he was under enormous pressure to show that he could stand up to the education professionals, became alarmed and argued that geography had moved away from its real purpose. Children should study the geography of their own country carefully and systematically, followed by European and world geography. By emphasising the alternatives the Working Group was losing sight of the basics' (Graham and Tytler p.71).

This illustrates both Graham's and MacGregor's misconceptions about geography in its contemporary form. The parameters outlined by MacGregor are simply those for a regional paradigm of geographical study - they take no account of the widening boundaries of the subject since the 1960s and do not acknowledge the GWG's stated aims. The 'real purpose' of geography is not merely to systematically study the regional geographies of the UK, Europe and the world, but much wider and more diverse. The comment that the Interim Report was 'heavy centred on political geography' is also odd - here Graham is referring presumably to the abundance of political maps within the report, rather than political literacy or political geography per se, which is hardly even represented.

Graham and Tytler's (1993) earlier account of the work of the GWG concludes with a statement that:

'Geography and History are the best examples of what might have happened had the council been allowed to work alongside the subject Group from the moment they were set up. It is quite possible that the problems caused by the size and the political naivety of the Interim Reports could have been avoided' (p.72).

The phrase 'political naivety' is an interesting one. Graham (1996) later referred to this as indicating the growing expertise the NCC was developing through contact with all the Working Groups and with ministers. Initially the nature of the working relationship that had

been expected between himself, the NCC, the Working Groups and the civil servants had been a surprise to Graham - he had hoped that they would all work closely together, which was the last thing the ministers wanted! The NCC was therefore placed into a position of watching the Working Groups 'reinventing the wheel' and not being able to guide and direct their work in the early stages. This extends to Graham's own appreciation of what would be politically naive, or unacceptable to ministers, having witnessed what was initially rejected by them. The phrasing of reports was all important, indeed vital, if one was to get more contentious items 'past' the politicians. The GWG was actually 'no more or less naive than any other Working Group' (Graham 1996) but effectively had to 'do what it was told' by ministers via their civil servants.

With respect to the eventual reduction in the number of ATs in the geography Order Graham (1993) states that 'for the first and only time' (p.73) the NCC officers prepared three, five and seven ATs for geography, and that the debate was eventually settled 'on political lines', rather than educational ones. The professional, educational argument for the number of ATs was therefore never raised - the decision was ushered in by MacGregor to achieve political expedience, for to move 'from seven (ATs) to three would have caused too great a loss of face for the civil servants and ministers' (Graham 1996). This is confirmed by Bennetts (1995a) who reveals that because the DES and NCC had already welcomed the Interim Report and labelled it as a success they could not alter it too radically for fear of looking inconsistent..

Interestingly Graham and Tytler (1993) also comment that 'In addition to their political difficulties, the geography and history reports also showed that subject-based Working Groups were getting out of hand and if ever an opportunity to rein them in MacGregor lost it over

geography and history' (p.74). This is in direct contrast to Graham's (1993) view that the GWG 'worked well together'(p.71). Extending these comments Graham (1996) states that Working Groups could have benefited from 'more precise remits'- more specific guidance on ATs - and that there should have been 'different types of Working Groups with cross-subject representation and fewer members committed to subject lobbies'. He believes many of the subject Working Groups had been granted too much license to include exactly what they wanted in their subject orders. This had resulted in subjects taking a crude expansionist view of their content, perhaps with a view that extra curriculum time could be 'bought' by creating subject reports which could not be physically delivered within the timetabled space suggested originally by the NCC.

Graham and Tytler's (1993) view of the relationship between the history and GWGs is also an odd one:

'Clearly there were rivalries between history and geography as they both realised that the Working Groups were their chance to secure the position of the two subjects in the curriculum as two of the foundation subjects' (p.70).

No GWG member has explicitly mentioned such a rivalry

In conclusion it is clear that Graham and Tytler's (1993) earlier accounts of the workings of the GWG must be treated with a degree of circumspection and scepticism. They provide a telling indication of the way the chair and chief executive of the NCC viewed the development of the geography Order and perhaps go some way to understanding ministerial misconceptions about the subject.

The 'larger dynamics' - the workings of the NCC.

It is within his statements about the workings of the NCC and the effects that this organisation had on the subject Working Groups that Graham (1993, 1996) appears to be on safer ground. He is openly critical of the ways in which the government restricted the NCC's and the separate Working Groups' efforts, believing that both were dominated by civil servants and plagued by the interference of Education ministers and Secretaries of State for Education. In addition ministers would either not consult with Graham over important decisions, or made decisions which ran counter to the directions in which the Council was working, making him feel like 'a prisoner of the system' (Graham and Tytler 1993 p.19). With the Conservative administration in the ascendancy in the late 1980s and early 90s, and the establishment of a 'fear culture' as ministers and civil servants employed 'dubious methods' to undermine the confidence of individuals and Groups (see Notes 1a), progress in educational matters was often neither professional, nor ethical (Graham 1996). He notes that most of the small workforce at the NCC were not used to such practices:

'Because most of them were educational professionals, they did not fully understand the demands made by Baker and the requirements of the law for rapid and permanent change ... We were being forced along at an unreasonable pace and some pressures from ministers and officials should have been resisted' p.11 (Graham and Tytler 1993)

There are clear parallels with the ways in which the Working Groups were treated both by civil servants and ministers, and in respect of the lack of time available to complete their tasks properly. Walford (1995) notes that the nature of the task the Working Groups faced, as well as the types of discussions held, were significantly different to those experienced by the

majority of those who worked in educational circles. Indeed Rawling (1995) was shocked by the nature of the initial meetings of the GWG where she had expected open discussion and the acceptance of differing views.

The direct impact of the civil servants on the NCC thus echoes their controlling effect on the GWG, and other Working Groups. According to Graham the power and influence of civil service employees, whether working on behalf of ministers or on their own account, was startling :

'Civil servants were recorded on the minutes (of NCC meetings) as observers, but they were far more than that. Sometimes they would come in packs. They were at every meeting of the council, Working Groups and committees. They spoke at every meeting, frequently upsetting the council with what some saw as arrogance and a dictatorial manner if they believed someone was stepping out of line... They consistently took the line that nothing should be considered by the council that they had not seen and, by implication, approved' (Graham and Tytler 1993 p.15-16)

It became obvious that civil servants often abused their power in various ways and that when they used the term 'minister' they actually meant their own senior official. Thus if a civil servant claimed:

'the minister would not be happy with one of our proposals one could be fairly sure that the minister had never been consulted, or that he had displayed an unlikely or encyclopaedic grasp of detail..... (However) judging the influence of the civil servants and whether or not they were speaking for ministers has to be qualified by the knowledge that it is quite possible they were being used by the politicians' (Graham and Tytler 1993 p.18)

Graham (1993,1996) has always believed that a politically inspired National Curriculum had to be objectively monitored and evaluated, especially following his experience of working closely with civil servants and education ministers. The government would not permit this, effectively

removing one of the principle foundations for the NCC as agreed with Baker. By the autumn of 1990 the future of the NCC hung in the balance and its dealings with subject Working Groups was effected by the channelling of its efforts into its own survival, rather than into supporting and guiding the creation of subject reports.

David Pascall succeeded Duncan Graham as chairman of NCC in October 1991, following the resignation of the latter.

The parallel experiences of Working Groups.

Graham and Tytler (1993) always believed that the model established for the creation of the National Curriculum was a flawed one. Graham's nervousness concerning the staggered operation of separate subject Working Groups, beginning with the core subjects, was clear from the start:

'It was obvious to me even then that the subject by subject approach and the detail contained within each subject would inevitably lead to conflict between the various subjects and put pressure on the curriculum if other subjects were to be added' (p.10)

The nature of the impending political influence on the curriculum was similarly apparent:

'it had become clear that Conservative politicians, including Kenneth Baker, were deeply suspicious of the education professionals and were well aware that Groups of experts set up to consider a specific subject could get out of hand'. (p.7)

The experience of the first three Working Groups - Mathematics, English and Science - were to have a strong influence on the functioning of later Groups such as geography. Graham

believes that for certain Working Group members who were used to 'the more genteel committee work of an era that Kenneth Baker had turned his back on' (Graham and Tytler p.23-24) the culture shock proved too great. The membership of Working Groups, including geography, was largely determined by HMI rather than DES civil servants. This caused difficulties later as 'the officials surely must have known exactly what would be required while the inspectors did not' (p.25).

Mathematics.

The problems created for the government by the Mathematics Working Group failing to agree on a unanimous report may have influenced the selection of subsequent Working Group members and their chairs. There was foreboding in the failure of this first Working Group to come to collective decisions as Baker assumed that this was a conspiracy designed to sink his reforms. He was therefore sceptical of subsequent Groups which failed to function 'correctly' and civil servants were therefore instructed to 'direct' the efforts of Groups. It is also apparent, according to Graham and Tytler (1993), that Baker had a clear idea of the kind of report he wished to see and that he provided personal steers for the report to contain 'more traditional pencil and paper practice of important skills and techniques' (Baker 1988). Subsequent Working Groups gradually understood that what they produced would have to please ministers and placate the extreme Right Wing of the Conservative government.

English.

Just as the Mathematics Working Group had the Cockcroft report on which to base some of its ideas, the English Working Group could refer to the Kingman report. However, this was to prove something of an embarrassment to the government as the Kingman Committee was still sitting when Baker wished to set up the core subject Working Groups. The establishment of the English Working Group was therefore delayed. Worryingly for Baker the Kingman Report rejected a return to formal grammar teaching, he therefore appointed Professor Brian Cox - a member of the pressure Group which produced the Right Wing Black Papers in the 1980s - to chair the English Working Group. It was 'widely believed that Baker had chosen him to bring English teaching back to the more traditional approach. The unspoken brief was to undo Kingman' (Graham and Tytler p.46).

Due to its late start the Group did not produce an Interim Report, but initially presented a set of primary school proposals for English. These identified surprisingly closely with the Kingman Report, as Cox sought to distance himself from the Right Wing. 'He had also charmed the civil servants attached to the committee into delivering something that was not entirely within the script' (Graham and Tytler p.47)

The subsequent ministerial alterations suggested to the English report frustrated Cox who declared that his Working Group could not function as free agents and that their secondary report would be compromised. Again the influence of the civil servants was revealed in the creation of the English National Curriculum because before the final council meeting for its approval Graham received a phone call from a very agitated official who said the report was

totally unacceptable, even though 'the day before she had said the exact opposite'. (Graham and Tytler p.50). Having asked her to outline four or five of the most unacceptable passages to change he subsequently discovered that:

'there were no fundamental points she could raise There was never an acceptable explanation for this extraordinary incident but it appeared that the official, who had become close to the Working Group, had reacted before taking further advice' (p.50).

Cox's own version of events (Cox 1991), unique in the respect that it was written by a chair of a Working Group, reveals the political pressures which such governmentally appointed Groups were under. In his introductory chapter, significantly titled 'The Political Context', he starts to reveal experiences paralleled by those of the GWG. He was not 'encouraged' to meet any of the English Working Group members before their first official meeting, members who had been carefully chosen by Baker and Rumbold to reflect a more Conservative stance to the teaching of English (Cox 1991). Civil service interference and a degree of chicanery were apparent - Cox only met Baker once before his Report was finally made public, and was not invited to the media launch!

Science.

The Science Working Group appears to have functioned amiably and efficiently from the perspective of the NCC and was certainly held up as a model of process for following Groups, such as the GWG, to aspire towards. Ironically the expansionist view of science in the report, annexing earth science, physical geography and meteorology, had a direct effect on the GWG. There is also evidence that some of the GWG wanted to align geography as a discipline more

closely with science, and certainly that their content laden report was a result of following the SWG's lead. Both were later substantially cut into more manageable and realistic curricula.

As Graham and Tytler (1993) comment:

‘officials (from the DES) did not hesitate to tell us that the Science Working Group was proving successful and getting on well. It became clear later that what they were actually doing was annexing half the geography syllabus!’ (p.31)

To Graham (1993,1996) the SWG chair, Jeff Thompson, was ‘very able and affable’ (p.32) and realised quickly the parameters established for how his Group could function, but that there were no limits placed on the amount of content they could place into their report. Their aim was therefore to make science ‘king of the curriculum’ (p.33) by expanding it into other curricular areas. Unfortunately for geography the view of the chair of the NCC was that although the SWG had clearly stolen much geographical content ‘it did it so well it was hard to attack the proposals’ (p.33). The SWG report was well received by the scientific community on its publication on 16 August 1988, with the consultation exercise yielding many positive comments. The major dilemma concerned whether children should study separate sciences or balanced science. However, independent schools (who, one must remember, did not have to study the National Curriculum anyway) objected to the balanced science approach and persuaded MacGregor to change the orders so as to permit schools to adopt either a balanced science or single subject approach to the science National Curriculum. The willingness of MacGregor to comply quickly with the minority view of independent schools was a revelation. As Graham and Tytler (1993) state:

'His readiness to listen to independent schools was one of the few things about MacGregor which really shook and disappointed many in state education' (p.48)

History.

Duncan Graham holds the view that history, and the HWG, were always more directly prone to ministerial interference than geography:

'History proved what the critics of the legal status of the National Curriculum had always feared: a Secretary of State could change it to suit his own preferences When it came to history, the longest running saga in the National Curriculum, Kenneth Clarke simply cut the bits he did not like' (Graham and Tytler p.62).

Given Graham's (1993, 1996) already established lack of a full understanding of the workings of the GWG, and his apparent ignorance of Clarke's similarly radical alteration of the Geography Order (although he does recall that changes were made by Clarke to the Geography and History Orders without consultation with the NCC), this statement must be treated with a degree of circumspection. However, it is clear that both Orders projected the NCC into uncharted territory with regard to political interference and civil servant action. To an extent this was always predictable given the problems experienced with the core subject Working Groups, which the government clearly did not want repeated, and the very nature of the content of Humanities subjects. Indeed :

'Both history and geography had considerable political overtones, and if there was to be an invasion of the National Curriculum for political purposes history and geography were the natural targets. The battleground was set' (p.62)

The battle was polarised into debate about whether both history and geography were to be taught through facts or concepts, the place of empathy, enquiry learning and the structuring of

programmes of study and ATs with regard to the skills of critical awareness and interpretation. Although the purpose of the Working Groups was expressly *not* to determine the pedagogy for their subject this was inevitably implied by the structure of the curricula which they devised.

The choice of Michael Saunders Watson to chair the History Working Group appeared to some 'a peculiarly Tory choice' and 'the first overt political appointment' (Graham and Tytler 1993 p.64), but he actually supported the cause of history teachers and became something of a thorn in the side of Conservative education ministers. Replacing Baker a matter of days before the history Working Group Interim Report was published, MacGregor clearly stated a political preference for facts to be included within the ATs and subject Orders - 'I am not convinced that the case has been made for knowledge remaining only in the programmes of study' (MacGregor cited in Graham and Tytler 1993 p.65) - advice which the historians ignored, but which the GWG heeded with disastrous results.

The delayed publication of the history report led to a direct political row. Jack Straw, then Labour's education spokesperson, accused Thatcher of direct (but unsuccessful) political interference through the selection of like minded Working Group members, delaying tactics, and rejection of the HWG report for political reasons. The history report was eventually revised by the NCC's history officer Nick Tate, civil servants, the HMI and Graham himself in direct consultation with MacGregor. Having been passed to Clarke, who succeeded MacGregor shortly after the report's revision in December 1990, the unprecedented step was taken by the new Secretary of State to personally revise history and remove elements of 'current affairs'. His intervention into the debate over where history ended, without any consultation with the NCC, was in Graham's eyes 'the first major and quite political intrusion

into what was taught in the country's schools. And it should never have happened.' (Graham and Tytler p.70) (see also Note 1a).

Group dynamics, leadership and the workings of the GWG.

Many of the GWG members, when interviewed, mentioned different ways in which their Working Group functioned (see Chapter 5). The dynamics of Group work and leadership bear investigation as they have a definite influence on the process of decision making and, more importantly, on the *kinds* of decisions that are ultimately made. Here this research is at a disadvantage. The possibility of observing the GWG operating, was negated by the fact that it was a closed, confidential, governmentally appointed Group. It had also finished its work in 1990. However, interview accounts from Working Group members can be aligned with previously published accounts of their work and research into Group dynamics to suggest ways in which the Group succeeded, or failed, in achieving its task.

Within the GWG, and its hierarchical power structure of Chair, Vice Chair, DES Assessor, HMI Observer and members, the ways in which individuals influenced Group decisions are extremely important. An analysis of the various styles of both influencing and managing the group adopted by different members will be attempted - although it must be remembered that it is easy to stereotype the actions of individuals who may have successfully employed a variety of ways of exerting influence. Different styles of management, and their success, often rely heavily upon the situation faced; the recognition of the most successful style of management/influence to adopt, and how ready the individual, group or system is to be persuaded to change.

Research into Group dynamics.

The history of research into group dynamics over the past half century is not particularly impressive. A number of conflicting theories, often utilising different descriptors for similar phenomena, have been put forward - only to be lauded for a few years, and then rejected once meaningful empirical data has been collected to refute the original claims (Smith 1991a). Much of the quantitative, empirical research using experimental models is flawed in its methodology, the observational techniques applied, and the resultant conclusions gained. Poor assessments of behavioural characteristics have often been made through monitoring ambiguous tasks in artificial situations (see Stodgill 1948, Mann 1959). Research has also traditionally been geared towards the commercial sector (although see Belbin 1991 and House 1985) where Group effectiveness may be ultimately measured in terms of profit, rather than in public affairs and government where groups are often more complex, possibly less orderly and may contain more hidden agendas. What has now emerged is that there are no underlying, unalterable laws and that teams, groups or organisations cannot be studied with any degree of predictive certainty (Handy 1985). However, there are certain respected theories that may be applied to an analysis of the dynamics of the GWG.

Why do Groups succeed or fail?

Arguably the most influential work recently carried out on why groups (and teams) succeed or fail in successfully completing their tasks is that of Belbin (1991). Definitions of groups vary, but they may be understood as collections of people brought together for a common purpose,

who achieve a collective identity, and interact in given ways on selected tasks (see Barron 1986). It is usually the case that a group task can not be completed so effectively by one individual. Research into group dynamics has increased recently because of a contemporary shift by businesses, and other organisations, into managing by teams, aware perhaps that conferring power and authority on one person (the 'manager') is often fraught with dangers on moral, intellectual and democratic grounds. Unfortunately the dynamics of groups are more difficult to understand than those of the individual - the multiplicity of variables has also led some researchers to concentrate upon one or two variables in a reductionist way.

Belbin's (1991) research has focused on management games where various groups have attempted to solve complex problems whilst being observed. Initial findings suggested that groups composed entirely of intellectually very able individuals (so called 'Apollo' groups) perform surprisingly poorly. The flaws of such groups were that they:

- spent too much time in abortive debate
- resorted to intellectual rivalry, competitiveness and recriminations
- showed no coherence in decisions made
- neglected important tasks
- were difficult to manage, and poor at decision making
- were good at analysis, but poor at agreeing
- often found many more negative than positive things to say, due to the high numbers of critical thinkers.

This suggests that 'think tanks' of intellectuals have inherent problems, some of which may also have occurred within National Curriculum Working groups such as the GWG.

However, could the GWG be described as an Apollo team? It was certainly composed of very able and successful individuals in their own educational, diplomatic or commercial fields (indeed one member had appeared on *Mastermind*), although not all were experts ('able') in geography per se. There were definitely some Apollo characteristics reported by GWG members (Rawling 1995, Storm 1995, Walford 1995, Thomas 1995, etc) both in the ways they worked and the results they achieved - most notably perhaps the deficit view of geography, abortive debate over curriculum development, neglect of important tasks (the assessment issue), and certain mutual recriminations. However, these characteristics are also seen in other types of groups and do not necessarily define the GWG as having an Apollo composition.

Belbin's (1991) research suggests that successful Apollo teams have two important variables - firstly that the members are allowed to form a team of their own design, and secondly that they can agree tasks for themselves within it. This builds in essential elements of interdependence and control seen in the most effective groups, but which were often largely absent from the GWG (see Chapters 4,5 and 6). The personal characteristics of such groups are found to be vital, as they only function well if a balanced team is produced - that is if individuals understand and agree to methods of co ordination and control, and troublesome members are removed. Secondly the group must not contain highly dominant individuals, except perhaps for the chair. However, the nature of such dominance is crucial to the group's success. As Belbin (1991) states:

‘perhaps the main key to the successful Apollo team was the character of the Chairman (sic). But the good Apollo Chairman did not behave in the same way as the Chairman of other successful teams ... clever people seem to need leadership of a different type from people who are not so gifted’ (p.12)

The most marked lack of success was seen from groups with a chair who was highly intelligent, but a poor communicator who tried to enforce a rigid system of organisation and control. The group then reacts against authority, management, leadership and organisation: ‘teams containing the cleverest members show remarkable resistance to any form of imposed organisation’ (p.15)

Although the GWG may not have been a true ‘Apollo’ group in the sense of Belbin’s (1991) definitions, there are discrete similarities both in its composition and functioning. Highly intelligent and successful individuals, led by a dominant chair within a rigid system of organisation and control, appear to have problems in completing tasks successfully - especially if there are other restrictive variables such as lack of time. There may be parallels between Belbin’s model and the ways in which the civil servants, the DES assessor and chair organised the GWG.

Personalities and Leadership.

Belbin’s (1991) research thus provides us with a loose framework for further investigation, despite reservations about some of the GWG’s Apollo characteristics. However, it is clear that intelligence, as the defining factor within an Apollo group, is only one important characteristic

of group members. The second major characteristic is that of personality. Handy (1985) urges caution as research aiming to isolate the personal characteristics of the perfect leader, or group member, is fraught with difficulties. This has led to a decline (but later resurrection, see Smith 1991a) of so called 'trait theories' of group member's effectiveness.

Teams of similar personalities (defined by Belbin (1991) as combinations of introvert, extrovert, stable and anxious characteristics) are very rare, although many businesses attempt to recruit 'in their own image'. Such groups are often unsuccessful because they duplicate strengths and multiply weaknesses leading to a lack of new ideas, inflexibility and thus poor results. There are also dangers that groups containing a number of able individuals can indulge in 'group-think' (Janis 1972). Here group members aim at achieving harmony and high morale, but find that loyalty to the group becomes too strong, the desire for consensus rises, and conflict is not permitted as it will spoil the cosy 'we' feeling of the group. Rawling (1995) actually talks of being made to feel like an 'outsider' and 'traitor' within the group, which had tried to establish a strong bonhomie and group identity under the direction of the chair. This can lead clever, moral, high minded and well intentioned groups into making very poor decisions. Janis (1972) identifies eight characteristics of group think :

1. invulnerability - over optimism, willingness to make very risky decisions without listening to outside warning statements, lack of realisation of dangers of decision making.
2. rationale - quick to find rationalisations to explain away evidence that does not fit their beliefs.
3. morality - unaware of ethical or moral implications of policy.
4. stereotyping - of enemies and others, therefore unresponsive to discordant evidence.
5. pressure - expression of doubt is allowed, but quickly explained away or suppressed.
6. self censorship - members careful not to discuss feelings outside the group so as not to effect group cosiness.

7. unanimity - once a decision is made divergent views are screened out.
8. mind guards - collective responsibility established to stifle effects of dissent from outside the group.

The dangers of group-think are obvious. Such groups fail to suggest sufficient alternatives to their strategies, being insensitive to their deficiencies and scornful of others, thus finding reformulating their initial ideas difficult. They also tend to be highly selective of the evidence they feel they require. groups which reveal these characteristics are often high profile, important, pressurised groups that feel they have to 'keep things close' to succeed. Again some parallels with the GWG, and other Working Groups, present themselves. In general members of the GWG, Sir Leslie Fielding, the NCC, Duncan Graham, and ministers believed that the Interim Report was a 'good one', and that the Working Group should effectively carry on working as it had without fundamentally questioning its structure or content. Dissenting voices, both from within and outside the Group (as revealed by the consultation exercise), were largely ignored (see Chapter 5. The failure of certain members to adopt an open minded stance, and possibly move away from previously held beliefs, is mentioned by Thomas.R (1995) with respect to their selection of geographical extracts for one of the first meetings of the GWG. However, others - most notably Walford (1995) - claim to have altered some of their views quite substantially as a result of membership of the GWG.

Research has suggested that the most effective leaders (and chairs) are often *not* those chosen by the groups they lead and, somewhat surprisingly, that they are not necessarily of very high mental ability and creativity. The most successful chairs, according to Belbin (1991) and others (Coleman 1969, Handy 1985, Vroom and Yetton 1973, Stodgill 1948), are of similar, or slightly greater, intelligence to their group (vast differences in intelligence often create

communication problems), and have specific personality traits - namely, trusting rather than suspicious or jealous; dominant; committed to goals/objectives; calm and unflappable; practical; self disciplined; enthusiastic and slightly extrovert; positive and with a liking for dynamic problem solvers. They also have the ability to listen to others, but the strength to reject their advice when necessary. In addition not letting things get out of hand, gaining others' respect, and possessing a readiness to impart a sense of direction are all essential in an effective chair. If the chair does not appreciate the technical nature of what the group is discussing it can create communication and control problems, which may be the case with Fielding regarding aspects of the GNC. This may lead to a chair taking decisive, but incorrect, action in an effort to regain control, often basing decisions on inadequate or incomplete information. As Belbin (1991) states chairs sometimes;

‘hung on to control and conducted matters in a firm but over-simple fashion. Decisions would be taken without adequately exploring the options or following up either tentative objections of dissenters or their counter proposals. The Chairman (sic) looked for a majority view and was over-ready to turn that view into a decision at the first opportunity’
(p.55)

In the case of Fielding many Working Group members agreed that he was an effective chair, using his diplomatic skills to steer decisions, discussions and agendas in the directions he wanted (Rawling 1995, Storm 1995, Walford 1995, Morgan 1995, Thomas.D 1995). On occasions he appealed to populist feelings, on others he played one individual off against another, or restricted an individual's influence on the Group by requesting that they did not present further papers to the Group. He occasionally judged support for his views privately after meetings had ended, and was not averse to putting 'troublemakers' in their place either publicly, or privately (as occurred with both Rawling and Bennetts).

Although there appears to be little evidence that Fielding had a particular view of all aspects of the geography curriculum he expected the Group to devise, which he saw as the responsibility of the group itself, he had a very definite understanding of how he wanted the group to work, and was sensitive to the time scale it had been given to complete its task. As such :

‘He brought considerable skill to the Chairman’s role, providing an iron fist in a velvet glove, jockeying the Working Party along in its set tasks, and subtly setting its course. (He once pointed out in a moment of crisis : “Look, do you want to finish this job? If not, make no mistake, the government will get some others who will?”) In retrospect his skills of negotiation and manipulation of the group’s agenda were a decisive influence’ (Walford 1992 p.92)

It is also timely to remember the influence of Andrew Wye on the leadership of the group.

Although not formally recognised as a ‘leader’ within the group he had a major influence on both the form of the GNC produced, and on the functioning of the GWG. He is reported (by Walford 1995, Rawling 1995, Morgan 1995, D.Thomas 1995, R.Thomas 1995) to have been very intelligent, analytical, socially awkward, career minded, astute, powerful and unwilling to suffer fools. He was the group’s ‘intellectual goad’ (Walford 1995), who ‘sharply, if laconically, pointed out the political difficulties that might arise’ (Walford 1992) and whose position as aide to the minister and arbiter of what would be acceptable within the parameters of the 1988 Act (Lethbridge 1995), made him an extremely influential person.

It is also apparent that:

‘The Assessor (and the Secretariat) also had a trump card to play - would things be “acceptable” to the Minister in the last resort? The Assessor brought news of changes of government thinking almost weekly, and this complicated tasks already underway. His advice to the group was always clearly put, fundamentally pragmatic, and usually adopted in essence’ (Walford 1992 p.97).

Even Leslie Webb, the group's Senior Secretary, maintained a 'constant threat to write his own version of events if members of the Group could not agree amongst themselves (which) proved a remarkably effective goad to continue working in darker moments of disarray' (Walford 1992).

Handy (1985) criticises 'trait' theories of leadership, which were particularly popular in the 1940s and 1950s, and chronicles the rise of so called 'style', 'contingency' and 'best fit' theories. Style theories recognise that few, if any, chairs or managers possess all the necessary traits for 'perfect' leadership. They try to suggest less elitist, more democratic, ways of looking at leaders, implying that all can aspire to leadership if they adopt the right styles. Here the work of Likert (1961), Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1958), Vroom and Deci (1970), Cummings and Scott (1969) and Blake and Mouton (1964) are of relevance. However, style alone is rarely the answer to effective leadership, although it is revealing that more supportive styles lead to greater contentment and therefore greater work involvement.

Contingency theories approach the issue from the viewpoint of the task the group faces, the nature of the groups' visualisation of its task, and then the role of the chair (see Fiedler 1967). The need for either a more directive, or a more structuring, chair is seen to be determined by the task the group seeks to complete, the chair's characteristics and qualities, and those of other group members. Thus dependent on the contingencies faced by the group it may have to change its approach to ensure the task is completed effectively - this usually means a chair must clearly structure the task, impose some formal power over the group, and possibly change group.

The development of 'best fit' theories, which created matrices of leaders, subordinates, environment (organisational setting), and tasks along axes from tight (structured) to flexible (supportive) followed those of trait and contingency theories. Clashes of tight and flexible structures are seen to cause problems for group effectiveness. If a group of intelligent subordinates who value involvement, discussion, open decision making, and debate meet a chair who is more interested in restricting group involvement, increasing control, personal decision making, organisational efficiency, has little confidence in the group, and aims for personal success there will be problems. There are parallels here with the GWG. Other cultural factors such as previous involvement in group work, education, class, age of the group members also make a difference. They affect the 'degrees of freedom' that both the chair and members work within, and therefore can alter the nature of the task and dynamics of working.

The environmental factor of time is of key importance to how groups function. Both Wye and Fielding judged the effectiveness of the GWG, and of their role within it, on the delivery of a

GNC to the Secretary of State for Education on time. This inevitably led to certain styles of leadership and processes of working - debate was curtailed, progress was all, and issues could not be reinvestigated even if they were eventually recognised as being crucial, or unresolved. The fact that the GWG had already moved on before the results of the consultation exercise on the Interim Report had been gathered is a good example of such time pressure. In addition many Working Group members talk of the pressures from outside the group with 'lots of politiking with a small 'p', and a feeling that if what was put into the GNC was not recognisable to the public as geography it would not stand' (Morgan 1995). This political pressure was felt by some to become more overt through the influence of the civil servants. The environmental factors of establishing a cohesive group identity are mentioned by members who experienced problems with the functioning of the group. Many GWG members note the restrictiveness of the confidentiality rules under which all groups worked, the steers by civil servants away from talking to other Working Groups, and the use of residential sessions to encourage group cohesiveness, and the establishment of an atmosphere of a tightly united group ('us') "against" the outside world of education ('them'). The most significant environmental factor was the terms of reference which the members agreed to when they joined the GWG - 'if you accepted a place on the Working Group you also accepted the necessary constraints that such a position might offer' (Walford 1995), more specifically that the government had an agenda and view that it was perfectly entitled to hold on education. The pragmatic approach would often become essential, as opposed to that of the idealist - this sometimes involved entering into 'Faustian deals' where the acceptance of, say, increased place knowledge was traded off against increased inclusion of controversial issues.

Similar to Fiedler (1967), Adair (1983) addresses contingencies affecting groups and focuses upon the different group, individual and task needs, noting that only in very rare circumstances do they match, leading inevitably to conflict and lack of effectiveness. Here the chair's role is vital as a facilitator, ambassador and model for the group. An effective chair, according to Adair, has the flexibility (not just the personality or style) to deal with the various problems that will arise. He or she should be aware of the power and influence of their position and not abuse this, but also be vigilant to false consensus, compliance, and the use of coercive power.

Handy (1985) also recognises these determinants of group effectiveness classifying them into 'givens' (the task, environment, group itself), 'intervening factors' (leadership style, process, procedure, motivation) and 'outcomes' (productivity, satisfaction).

As Handy (1985) states:

'if groups or committees are convened or constructed for an inappropriate task, or with impossible constraints; if they are badly led or have ineffective procedures; if they have the wrong people, too many people, too little power or meet too infrequently; if, in short, any part of the model is badly out of line, frustration will set in and dissonance will be created. The result will either be an activation of negative power or a badly attended - non effective group, wasting people, time and space. The chances of this happening are, in fact, very high'. (p. 184).

Research into leadership styles (Lewin, Lippit and White 1939, Tannenbaum and Schmidt 1958, MacGregor 1966, Vroom and Yetton 1973) has also investigated the concept of continuums of authority and the extremes of leadership styles. This led to the creation of managerial grids (Blake and Mouton 1964) which pigeon holed managerial behaviour and style but did not explain it, an approach improved upon by Fiedler (1967). In the 1970's newer leadership theories, such as Path Goal theory (House and Bartz 1979), assumed leaders

would be successful if they helped followers achieve their goals. Vertical Dyad Linkage Theory (VDLT) (Danserau, Grean and Haga 1975) saw leaders in a power relationship (vertical) with a number of individuals (dyad) forming special relationships with some group members, but not others. Such leadership decisions were often based on judgements of competence and trust, whilst Transformational Leadership (Burns 1978) states that leaders change their followers in positive ways, eg through their vision, self esteem, inspiration, and charisma. Recent research has led to the resurrection of aspects of the original trait theories, whose ideas and empirical experiments have been re interpreted (see Lord, De Vader and Alliger 1986). Handy (1985) effectively combines each of these theories into a simplified model (figure 7 1)

Figure 7 1

	<i>The group</i>	<i>The task</i>	<i>The environment</i>
	size	nature	norms and expectations
<i>the givens</i>	member characteristics individual objectives stage of development	criteria for effectiveness salience of task clarity of task	leader position inter-group relations
<i>which all affect the intervening actors</i>		choice of leadership style processes and procedures motivation	
<i>which determine the outcomes</i>		productivity member satisfaction	

Which characteristics constitute successful groups?

Given the nature of leadership traits, styles and contingencies, as well as the variables of task, environment and group membership, which characteristics are generally seen within successful groups? More importantly can the GWG be described as such a group, and if not what changes would have been necessary to make it so?

Belbin (1991) believes that a 'winning' group (or team) should possess the following:

Type	Symbol	Typical Features	Positive Qualities	Allowable Weaknesses
Company Worker	CW	Conservative, dutiful, predictable.	Organizing ability, practical common sense, hard-working, self-discipline.	Lack of flexibility, unresponsiveness to unproven ideas.
Chairman	CH	Calm, self-confident controlled.	A capacity for treating and welcoming all potential contributors on their merits and without prejudice. A strong sense of objectives.	No more than ordinary in terms of intellect or creative ability.
Shaper	SH	Highly strung, outgoing, dynamic.	Drive and a readiness to challenge inertia, ineffectiveness, complacency or self-deception.	Proneness to provocation, irritation and impatience.
Plant	PL	Individualistic, serious-minded, unorthodox.	Genius, imagination, intellect, knowledge.	Up in the clouds, inclined to disregard practical details or protocol.
Resource Investigator	RI	Extroverted, enthusiastic, curious, communicative.	A capacity for contacting people and exploring anything new. An ability to respond to challenge.	Liable to lose interest once the initial fascination has passed.
Monitor-Evaluator	ME	Sober, unemotional, prudent	Judgement, discretion, hard-headedness.	Lacks inspiration or the ability to motivate others.
Team Worker	TW	Socially orientated, rather mild, sensitive.	An ability to respond to people and to situations, and to promote team spirit.	Indecisiveness at moments of crisis.
Completer-Finisher	CF	Painstaking, orderly, conscientious, anxious.	A capacity for follow-through. Perfectionism.	A tendency to worry about small things. A reluctance to "let go".

Nonetheless other types of successful groups and teams do exist. What is important is that consultative, participatory styles of leadership are exercised, that 'clever' people fulfil useful roles and use their expertise, and that no team member is left unoccupied or in direct conflict with another. The over-dependence of the group on the efforts of a single individual is also dangerous. Interestingly most Working group members state that Fielding and Wye allowed

individuals a chance to 'have their say', although their subsequent reaction to what was said might be subject to somewhat less altruistic treatment. As such no one person dominated what was said, although certain individuals held considerable power regarding what was done (see Chapters 4 and 5). Sub groups definitely formed, and reformed, as did friendship groups - however, the most influential and permanent group appeared to be that of the agenda setting group (see Walford 1995). Notably Morgan (1995) would also include Walford and Storm as being influential in this respect.

The definition of 'success' is also extremely important. In many ways the GWG was technically both successful and effective, especially if measured against the criteria adopted by the civil service and Fielding - it delivered a GNC on time, the report was acceptable to the DES and ministers, and complied with the original terms of reference. However, with regard to its educational acceptability, the nature of its product, its reception by teachers, its relevance, teachability and assessment the GWG was anything but successful.

Group size is significant, although the ideal size is partially determined by the task. Groups can also be dominated by one or two talkative members, or contain others who say nothing, thus altering their 'size'. Walford (1995) recalls that in this respect the GWG was a better group than the one convened by the GA to produce its initial report into 'Geography in the National Curriculum' (Daugherty 1989b), in that all members had a contribution to make. Belbin (1991) believes a group of 10 is too large for its members to confer, but relatively easy to manage being 'large enough to give adequate variety in the possible range of social permutations that can enrich life, but small enough to allow the syndicate to retain a sense of intimate group identity' (p.114). Such groups do not allow rapid decision making, perhaps a reason why the

GWG with 13 members did a lot of its work in subgroups, even though these may have the disadvantage of not allowing all members to have an influence on decisions (although Edwards (1995) reports that decisions always went to a plenary session). The best team size is often found to be six (Belbin 1991), or between five and seven (Handy 1985).

Being an effective Group member.

The question of the most effective ways to influence a group like the GWG once you are a member was raised by a number of GWG members (Walford 1995, Storm 1995, Rawling 1995, etc) groups often identify individuals who they recognise as being effective members, influencing the decisions and the work of the group on numerous occasions, or coming to the fore in a crisis. The characteristics of effective members often include knowing when to speak, and when to keep silent (see Walford 1995); possessing the flexibility to adopt other 'roles' in the group when necessary; exercising self restraint; realising that interdependence of effort is important; and maintaining team goals.

Armstrong (1990) adds that identifying the norms within the group, so that one can conform or consciously deviate from them, whilst knowing ones own strengths and weaknesses, as well as preparing well before each meeting is also important. Walford (1995) notes the advantages of being considered by the group as being in the 'mainstream' of discussions and decision making, and not as an 'outsider'. Here the use of interpersonal skills, diplomacy and realising the 'politics of discussion' are key. Early on some GWG members realised that openly confronting Fielding would have a detrimental effect, and that a 'quiet word' after the business of the meeting had been concluded might be more influential (see Thomas.R 1995).

Walford (1992), commenting on the importance of interpersonal relationships, noted that one had to 'win friends and influence other people' to ensure that one's well founded views were accepted, a factor almost more critical than 'the intellectual and practical issues' As such :

'It was possible to run out of goodwill and influence on the group by quibbling over matters of minor importance early in the sessions; some reserved major interventions for three or four occasions in a day and were very satisfied if at least a majority of their points were accepted in principle Long-term objectives could best be secured by making concessions on minor matters and in the knowledge that a final document was going to need the agreement of all the group. Staying in the mainstream was the passport to continuing to have an influence on the Final Report' (Walford 1992, p.98).

Civil servants in groups have been commented on by Belbin (1991) who are recognised as exerting power and influence. This was obviously the case with the GWG where they acted as gatekeepers of the discussions that could take place, the acceptability of suggestions in the eyes of ministers, the arbiters of who could address the group from outside and as agenda setters. Although they have roles of enacting the decisions of others power and responsibility often 'seeps back' to them, they are usually more au fait with states of affairs than ministers, are not as transient as ministers and have a greater day to day contact with issues. Tellingly:

'new developments seldom succeed unless those responsible for their execution have an active part to play in planning what is to be done' (p.152)

Group development and interaction.

Available research evidence suggests that effective groups form, rather than being created.

Tuckman (1965) identified the stages through which groups pass to become both mature and

effective. Typically these can be recognised as the stages of ‘forming’, ‘storming’, ‘norming’ and ‘performing’.

1. forming - from individuals into a group. Involves open discussion about the purpose, definition, composition, leadership, pattern, and life span of the group. Individuals often wish to make a strong initial impression at this stage.
2. storming - conflict, resulting in preliminary (often false) consensus on tasks, aims, etc. Norms of behaviour and work challenged and re established, some inter personal hostility. If handled well the group next moves onto new, more realistic agendas, procedures and norms. This is a particularly important stage which can either create or destroy trust amongst group members.
3. norming - norms and practices established. group establishes how it should work, make decisions, behave. Degrees of openness, trust, and confidence clarified.
4. performing - only after the first three stages have successfully passed will this stage occur. Productivity and maturity. Some performance is seen at other stages, but tends to be impeded by the process of growth and by individual agendas.

Similar stages are recognised by other researchers (Armstrong 1990, Martin 1991, Smith 1991b, Handy 1985) who acknowledge the importance of groups passing through developmental stages, and the inherent dangers if they become set within a stage prior to maturity. Group norms have also been explored by Feldman (1984) who notes that primacy behaviour within a group has a powerful influence on later behaviour and expectations. Here critical initial events in a group’s history can establish precedents for the future. Both Walford (1995), and Rawling (1995) herself, comment upon the latter’s ill judged forcefulness within the first three meetings of the GWG, when she was branded as a ‘troublemaker’ because of her actions. The influences of conformity (Asch 1951, Deutsch and Garrard 1955), authority (Milgram 1974) and power (French and Raven 1959) are also recognised as important to group development.

Within the developmental stages if major leadership, purpose and process issues keep recurring they will seriously hinder the work of the group. Thus when .

‘the issues are not dealt with specifically and the group’s maturing process is driven underground, particularly in the storming stage You have the backstage covert politicking, the hidden agendas, the abuse of negative power. In other words the storming, not culturally acceptable in the open, goes on all the same but often in a much more disruptive manner, concealed under the heading of performance, but subverting that performance’ (Handy 1985 p.172-3).

Schein (1969) emphasises the great importance of ‘maintenance’ - establishing and keeping good relations in a group, creating a sense of common purpose, compromising, establishing cohesion, and making sure that all group members have an input in a climate of acceptance. Openly solving process problems within the group is seen as being extremely important to the health of the group. This analysis is similar to Mac Gregor’s (1966), who sees successful groups in a self supportive and cohesive light. The important thing is that disagreement is not suppressed - it is resolved rather than dominated - and that no personal attacks are permitted, such that decision making is carried out by consensus. Bennetts (1995a) comments that those who tried to work towards consensus on the GWG soon discovered that an essentially confrontational model of working was favoured by the civil servants and chair.

The importance of the agenda set.

In any analysis of the group dynamics which underlay the creation of the GNC it is important not to forget the significance both of the agenda which was set for the Group, and who created this agenda. The terms of reference to which the Group worked were a given, and politically inspired, although the actual writing of these terms was carried out (under direction) by

Bennetts (Bennetts 1995a). They clearly outlined that the status quo within geography education had to change, and established a 'deficit model' from the start -one which we have seen was readily embraced by certain Group members. As Bailey (1992) states the:

'terms of reference were tightly drawn and were designed to consolidate existing good practice, also to produce a politically 'safe' geography with a strong emphasis on factual information. The GWG produced these desired ends through its Interim Report (DES 1989) and Final Report (DES 1990)' (p.71)

Fielding made all GWG members individually agree to the terms of reference at the first Working Group meeting, which created something of a *fait accompli* with respect to the eventual completion of the Reports on time and in line with the government's wishes. Initially Paterson, Morgan and Rawling did not agree with the agendas set for subsequent meetings; however Paterson gradually accepted the approaches taken, and Morgan and Rawling did not form a strong sub group due to their differences over the future form of the GNC. Although Morgan and Rawling were initially united in their opposition to the chair this only lasted openly for a few meetings. Many Group members were prepared to go along with the emerging structure as long as it served their needs, and geography was not completely compromised by being removed from the curriculum. Some were acutely aware of what governmental circles, and the public, would visualise as an acceptable geography curriculum, but were perhaps slow to appreciate how teachers would react (Walford 1995, Storm 1995).

Interestingly some GWG members make distinctions between those who were primarily 'educationalist and curriculum developers' on the Group, and those who were 'geographers'. Rachel Thomas (1995) recalls a taxi ride with Walford and Edwards, where Walford identified the three of them as a 'group of geographers' as opposed to Rawling and Bennetts who were

classified as educationalists and curriculum developers. This basic split between supporters of 'the subject' and of its 'pedagogy' is identifiable amongst the key concerns of Group members - Walford, Storm, Thomas.D, Edwards, Ward, and Paterson appear, first and foremost, to be strong subject supporters; Rawling and Bennetts appear more concerned about pedagogy. Tending towards the centre are Morgan and the lay members, although even here the subject concerns are often highlighted. Indeed the laity often could not understand why the geographers and educationalists could not agree and sided with the dominant within the Group (Lethbridge 1995, Rawling 1995). The terms of reference specifically did not want the pedagogical arguments to become central; therefore technically the Group was correct in its pursuit of subject based arguments - however in the real world geography did have to be taught in schools at the end of their deliberations! The government did not want educationalists 'taking over' again by determining the curriculum and its pedagogy.

Bennetts role in the whole development of the GWG was obviously central, but difficult to determine from the interviews conducted in this research. Lack of access to Fielding and Wye, the reticence of Bennetts himself, and the closed nature of agenda setting from the rest of the Group makes establishing a true picture problematic. However, many members are clear that Bennetts held a position of influence, despite the tensions between the HMI and DES. Morgan (1995) refers to him as 'absolutely critical to everything that happened, and in my opinion he saved the day at the end with the final re write', whilst Lethbridge (1995) comments: 'I would say he (Bennetts) was more key than the Chairman'. Bennetts position was certainly a delicate one - he had to be seen to 'toe the line' the government and GWG directed to some extent, even though he disagreed with the directions the Group was taking (see Rawling 1995). His support for the arguments of certain members had to be covert, perhaps with the knowledge

that he would personally write the Reports for the Group that became public and that he could attempt to emphasise aspects of geography education that became under-represented in the course of the GWG's work. There are reports of Bennetts being opposed to the agendas set at the beginning of the GWG's work and then 'coming round' (Lethbridge 1995) to the views of the majority, or of being 'persuaded' to do so by Wye and Fielding (Rawling 1995, Bennetts 1995). In conclusion

the comments of Ward (1995) are perhaps pertinent:

'The most influential member of the Group was the Staff Inspector who did an extremely difficult job, and balancing act, very well'.

Conclusion - the management of change.

Research into how Groups form and function effectively may suggest that the GWG was not as successful a group as it might have been, although it is important to establish on whose terms this assessment is made. The group *did* deliver a GNC on time, which was a major determinant of its success in terms of the government, the NCC and its chair's expectations. It appeared to certain key outsiders, such as Duncan Graham, not to have been fraught with divisions and disunity. Fielding saw the untroubled completion of the Group's task as being important for the future of the subject. However, the GWG failed to establish for itself some of the major constituents of commonly successful groups - its chair over-dominated proceedings, full discussion and debate was not possible within the time limits available, not all members perceived they occupied useful roles, and some discovered they would not be listened to sympathetically, with members talking of decision making by conflict rather than consensus. The outside, somewhat uncertain, influence of 'gatekeepers' from the civil service also

hindered group decision making. With such a 'high stakes' series of decisions to be made membership of the GWG was always going to be stressful.

The creation of the National Curriculum represented a huge experiment in the management of change. Within this framework the GWG, and all other National Curriculum Working groups, represented very small but ultimately extremely powerful, components. Change can be seen as a five stage process (Plant 1987) starting with the recognition of the need for change, mobilisation of a commitment to change, building a shared vision of change, diagnosing current reality and finally affecting change. When these stages are applied, even superficially, to the creation and implementation of the GNC the problems encountered soon become clear. Many geography teachers did not recognise the need for change, and saw this as part of a process over which they had no control or influence - a fact made apparent by their powerlessness during the consultation periods of the GNC's creation. Therefore any hope of building a shared vision, both of the need for change and the nature of that change, was extremely difficult to establish. The last stage of affecting change was always going to be problematic, especially when this was enacted by a 'divorced' and un-listening government. The situation of the GWG is not unique - virtually all Working Groups in the National Curriculum would have experienced similar pressures.

It might be felt that the creation and implementation of the National Curriculum illustrates a suitable case study of how *not* to handle change. Here the expensive repercussions of neither talking, nor listening, to the main body of people who were to implement the new curriculum (the teachers), or the 'experts' within the discipline (geography educationalists, HMI, advisers, subject associations, teachers, etc) are clearly apparent. An important element of this

mismanagement is the way in which these individuals and groups feel about the ways in which they have been treated. This, in many ways, essentially 'takes over' from the substance of the changes themselves - disenfranchised, disaffected and abused people are not responsive to initiatives once they have discovered that they are no longer valued within the process of change. Once teachers saw themselves faced with the acceptance of a fait accompli their sympathies evaporated.

'We are no longer prepared to accept being manipulated, influenced, pressured into accepting changes which we don't understand, or which we don't agree with whilst disliking and resenting being manipulated is not a new experience, the willingness to articulate the feeling is increasingly acceptable' (Plant 1987) p.13.

Within the teaching profession the stage when paternalistic governmental dictates were accepted by a largely unquestioning body of teachers had long gone by the 1990s. Teachers had begun to take responsibilities for themselves and were unwilling to casually defer to changes imposed by unrepresentative bodies for the 'good' of themselves, their subject discipline, the pupils and the state. Those bodies charged with the responsibilities of bringing about change - the government, DES and subject Working Groups - could not expect to effect such change merely by dictat. In essence this means that it would never be appropriate for the government and GWG simply to have an idea of *what* it wanted to change in geography education without a similarly cogent plan of *how* it was to effect this change. Teachers would have to be involved at every stage of the process in a variety of ways - the fact that they were not, merely highlights the inevitable behavioural or systematic resistance to change experienced by the GWG and DES. As Plant (1987) states in the early stages of resistance a 'change

manager' is required to turn feelings of threat and resistance into those of opportunity and benefit. Effectively this only belatedly happened with the arrival of the Dearing Review (1994).

To successfully introduce curriculum change on a large scale into primary and secondary schools teacher resistance had to be reduced. An influencing process therefore had to be linked to implementation - however, teachers were mostly informed about *what* to change, but were left largely ignorant of *how* this change was to be brought about. Successful implementation of the GNC would also depend on who were perceived to be the 'winners' and 'losers' in the change process. Geography teachers often saw themselves, and their pupils, to be losers in this respect which inevitably led to resistance - spurred by the closeted secretiveness of the work of the NC Working groups, lack of tangible information from the government, and general feelings that the GNC was not going to be of real benefit to geography education. Within this process the DES had influence but little real power, despite the fact that all state schools were legally required to deliver the GNC. The real power lay at the functional level of the HOD and classroom teacher, a situation in which radical change is obviously problematic. As Plant (1987) states:

'where the power source is the loser, it is wise to think again. Either determine to make smaller changes over a longer period or, even better, look for something else to change - unless you are able, or prepared, simply to use 'muscle'. If you do get ready for the backlash either in the short or long term'.(p.28)

Notes:

Bennetts.T.H (1995a) Interview with Trevor Bennetts 20 July 1995

Edwards.K (1995) Interview with Kay Edwards 3 March 1995.

Graham.D (1996) Interview with Duncan Graham 26 May 1996

Lethbridge.R (1995) Interview with Richard Lethbridge 21 April 1995

Morgan.W (1995) Interview with Wendy Morgan 20 February 1995

Paterson.K (1995) Interview with Keith Paterson 3 May 1995

Rawling.E (1995) Interview with Eleanor Rawling 4 March 1995

Storm.M (1995) Interview with Michael Storm 13 February 1995

Thomas.D (1995) Interview with David Thomas 13 March 1995

Thomas.R (1995) Interview with Rachel Thomas 27 April 1995

Walford.R (1995) Interview with Rex Walford 31 March 1995

Ward.H (1995) Interview with Hugh Ward 9 February 1995

Note 1a:

Graham (1996) recalls a meeting between himself, Philip Halsey of SEAC and Eric Bolton as Chief HMI and Clarke, and his junior ministers Eggar and Fallon. As matters were discussed Clarke rested his feet on the table and began reading a paper in open rejection of the views expressed. Halsey was referred to as a 'Marxist' and a 'Judas' and sworn at by Clarke, whilst substantive points were casually dismissed or ignored. This was the 'mood of the age' where senior educationalists were ignored or vilified. Privately Clarke revealed to Graham that he did

not believe in the educational reforms being implemented by his party, but wished to establish enough credibility with the Right Wing of the party to secure a chance of becoming party leader. Clarke stated that all MacGregor had done before was suspect and had boasted to Graham that 'he had not read any of MacGregor's papers'. He was also clearly against any cross curricular materials, and had a 'pathological fear of teachers'. His appointment to the post of Secretary of State for Education came at a very sensitive time for Geography when he wanted to make an impact. Clarke believed it was dangerous for children to be given the opportunity to have their own point of view and was cynical in his understanding that the GWG could do virtually nothing to reverse his decisions.

Chapter 8.

CONTINUITY, CHANGE AND THE FUTURE.

‘Implementing National Curriculum regulations and assessment procedures has been a monumental task which has focused the attention of the teaching profession on the letter of the law rather than its spirit, leaving little time and energy for thinking ahead’

Bailey.P and Fox.P (1996. p.vii).

‘There will come a time when it proves impossible to defend the indefensible, the existence of an academic discipline that has no intellectual rationale’

Johnston.R (1991. p.4)

This thesis has primarily been concerned with an investigation of ‘the ways in which the GWG, established by the Conservative government in May 1989, addressed its task of devising the GNC’ (Chapter 3 p.83). As such its major focus was to seek to analyse the establishment of the GWG, the task with which it perceived it had been ascribed, and the processes it adopted in executing this task. Inevitably the research has broadened into other areas, including consideration of the contemporary aims of geography education, the structure of the National Curriculum, the influence of individuals and groups on the thinking of the GWG and a wide variety of procedural and structural issues. Evaluating the effect which the Statutory Orders for geography (DES 1991a) had on the schools which attempted to implement them in the early 1990s was also considered important.

The conclusions to this research afford an opportunity both to review how successful it has been in answering the questions set and to provide a view of the possible future(s) for geography education within the emerging framework of the National Curriculum. This latter theme, in the light of the next millennium, has exercised a variety of writers recently (see Bale 1994, 1996a, Binns 1996, Rawling 1993, 1996b, 1996c, Marsden 1995, Walford and Haggett 1995, Edwards 1996, Ranger and Machon 1996, Walford 1996).

The creation of the GNC - Was there another way?

Given that the overall structure of the National Curriculum, and its assessment, had been pre-determined for each of the subject Working Groups there was, in a sense, 'no other way' of devising the GNC. The political beliefs which had helped to shape the original aims of the curriculum were established, and apparently not open to debate once the GWG began its work. Working Groups found themselves tied into an inflexible, politically determined, centralised structure, which was in turn effectively controlled and monitored by civil servants working by (and sometimes beyond) the direction of ministers. However, it is also apparent that not all the Working Groups functioned in a similar fashion, or produced reports of a similar ilk (see Cox 1991). The ways in which they were directed by their Chairs, or believed themselves to be directed, differed as did their visualisation of the task. The resultant curricula, despite common overarching strictures and controls, were different. In effect then there were possibilities for producing alternative forms of each subject's curriculum - the GNC which was received by the government in June 1990 was *not* the only version possible given the circumstances in which it was produced.

Interviews with GWG members verified some notable constants. All felt that the procedural conditions imposed upon them for producing the GNC could have been improved. Many spoke of their concerns about the lack of available time to complete their task properly, whilst simultaneously trying to fulfil work and family commitments. The speed and nature of educational policy changes was also highlighted by some group members. However, a fundamental question arises as to whether they would have executed their task better, or even differently, if they had been given more time (see Paterson 1995).

The question of political interference and/or influence on the work of the Group elicited less clear cut responses. This issue must be considered on a number of levels. The National Curriculum, its assessment structure, and the means for devising subject Orders through separate Working Groups, were all created as the result of overt political action by the Conservative Government, as represented within the Education Reform Act (1988). The terms and conditions by which the Working Groups functioned were therefore politically directed. In addition the selection of Working Group members was not democratic, having been decided upon by politicians, civil servants and HMI without recourse to elections and nominations. The constitution and membership of the Working Groups was therefore clearly politically determined to deliver the curricula the government wanted. The selection of personnel and choice of chair for the GWG may have always tended towards the production of the type of curriculum document, and view of geography, which resulted. In a sense if the Working Groups did not execute the bidding of the ministers and civil servants something had gone wrong with the process of selection, which might

indeed be one analysis of the appointment of Professor Cox to the Chair of the English Working Group, or even of Professor Black to chair TGAT.

At the level of the day-to-day meetings of the Working Groups political influence was executed by the Chair, civil servants and DES directives concerning how the Group should conduct its work. Here few Working Group members talked of direct political interference - however, such interference was perhaps either unseen or unnecessary as a climate had already been established whereby certain Working Groups, nervous of their curriculum position and standing, constantly 'looked over their shoulders' to second guess the ways in which they should act, and the curriculum directions they should take. What was made clear to group members was that they could not merely advocate reinforcing the status quo with respect to geography education - 'the DES (indirectly and directly) made it clear that the current situation in geography education was not something which they wished to be sanctioned' (Walford 1996. p.135). Add to this an uncertainty about the very nature, position and status of the subject in the National Curriculum, partly promulgated by the Chair, and the promotion of a reductionist view of the subject (dominated by place knowledge) became a possibility. Undoubtedly the most striking act of political interference came after the GWG had disbanded following the personal intervention of Kenneth Clarke in the drafting of the Statutory Orders for Geography.

One can therefore argue that a variety of factors are responsible for the less than satisfactory state of affairs represented by the new geography curriculum in schools before the first Dearing Review

(1994). Simplistically these may be classified into political, procedural, structural and paradigmatic factors, although some overlap between factors is inevitable.

Political factors

The selection of Sir Leslie Fielding as Chair of the GWG, and his interpretation and execution of the task of producing the GNC.

The lack of political autonomy of the NCC, which resulted in its advice and guidance either being mistrusted, ignored or treated as meaningless by Working Groups.

The creation of all subject Orders being the result of a political Act, and thereafter influenced by ongoing political action.

The securing of a curriculum place for geography within the National Curriculum being expressed politically, resulting in a continuing 'political' process by the GWG aimed at stabilising this position even when geography had been accepted as a National Curriculum foundation subject.

The daily political actions of civil servants, advisers and ministers in the functioning of the GWG, and their validation (or otherwise) of its proposals. This effectively became 'gatekeeping'.

The need to create a politically, rather than educationally, acceptable version of the GNC for the Conservative government of the day.

The day-to-day internal 'politics' of working together as a Group.

The creation of a 'self justifying rhetoric' (Edwards 1996 p.223) by the GWG and its chair to sanction its actions.

The aim of destroying Humanities in secondary schools.

The political over-concentration on subject content in the National Curriculum and resultant denigration of skills, enquiry process and affective learning.

Procedural factors.

The loss of initiative by the GA, having successfully championed the cause of geography for schools during the 1980s.

The impossibility of achieving an 'overview' of the emerging National Curriculum, and the subjects which constituted it, due to the staggered creation of each of the subject Orders.

The lack of opportunity offered to talk to, and to debate subject content with, other Working Groups.

The lack of a cross subject appreciation of levels.

The selection of few practising teachers as members of the GWG, especially from the primary sector.

The restrictions placed on consultation with outside 'experts', or dialogue with other interested parties.

The sham of official consultation after the Interim Report was published.

The separation of curriculum decision making from curriculum practice.

The restriction, and possible failure, of 'educational' debate within the GWG. The failure to successfully resolve whether successful geography education should predominantly be a process of critical enquiry, rote learning, or both?

Lack of discussion with university geographers about the future (possible) forms and functions of a GNC.

Structural factors.

The lack of attention to the role of assessment of the GNC, and its implications for the structure and content of the geography Order.

The problems of structuring the GWG in terms of attainment targets, profile components, strands and programmes of study following the TGAT model (DES 1988).

The need for classroom trialling time for the emergent GNC.

The role and function of geographical enquiry compared to place study/location knowledge.

The role of geography teachers acting only as interpreters and deliverers of a GNC which had been centrally determined.

The resultant diminution of broadly based professional subject expertise amongst geography teachers; to be replaced by classroom management, technical aspects of teaching, knowledge of subject and purveying state sanctioned content of single subjects (see also teacher training).

The misunderstanding of concepts such as progression and continuity within the GWG.

Paradigmatic factors.

The reinforcement of views on geography and education previously held by most GWG members. The reconfirmation of their beliefs with little significant realignment of previous views (although see Walford 1995, Storm 1995, and Edwards 1995).

The fear of the loss of geography from the National Curriculum if the GNC did not appear in a form which ministers would approve of. This effectively reshaped the *content* of the Orders, although the aims and objectives remained intact.

The creation of a 'geography education/curriculum development' faction versus a 'subject discipline/geography' faction within the GWG.

The failure to fully re examine geography - its history, concepts and practices - as a school subject *without* interference by political influences (i.e by ministers and civil servants).

The recreation of a geography curriculum for schools which was based on an eclectic range of philosophies, many tied to modernist assumptions.

The implicit rejection of the view that all subjects must change and develop, or face the prospect of ossification.

With a past as colourful as that which educationalists have witnessed over the last decade it is perhaps easy to be sanguine about the future. Nonetheless attempting to determine likely futures for geography in state schools based on the events of the recent past is not a straightforward process. Firstly it is clear that interpretations of past events differ - Rawling (1993 p.111) refers to 1987-1993 as 'transitional years' during which geography was 'straitjacketed'; whilst Walford and Haggett (1995) state that 'geography has had five good years (1988-93) in which its nature and values have had a good chance of re-expression and development' (p.9). One's views of history are clearly determined by personal values, opinions and beliefs, which also affect visions of the future. Interestingly a similar difference was highlighted by Kirby and Lambert

(1981) in response to Bailey's (1979) claims for a new maturity within school geography almost two decades earlier. Secondly we may at times wrongly assume that the immediate period of educational change is significantly different, and more complex, than any that has gone before - for example Graves, reflecting on contemporary educational change more than a decade ago, began an article with the following line:

‘I wonder whether you feel like me and believe the present time to be one of the most confusing periods in the recent history of education?’ (Graves 1985 p15)

The future role of politics in geography education.

With regard to political influences on geography education Marsden (1995) is hopeful for the future, particularly in the light of the somewhat depressing events of the past. In the concluding chapter of ‘Geography 11-16 : Rekindling Good Practice’ he discusses the approach of the millennium under the reflective subheading ‘Decades of Disillusion’. The first sentence of this chapter is significant :

‘It is difficult for those who have for a working lifetime been associated with the world of education, and who can remember the reflective liberality of the 1960s period, to look back over the last two decades in a positive spirit’ (p.206)

Political views about education had indeed radically altered during the 1970s as governments became increasingly interventionist, reaching a climax in the 1980s and 90s when:

‘Thatcherist ideology brought in its train instability, confrontation, buck-passing and a strident moralism, not least in the negative stereotyping of the educational professions by right-wing politicians and press. In the approach to the millennium, educational progress will undoubtedly be checked, not

least by a flight of teachers from the profession, if we do not return some stability (psychological as well as curricular), common-sense judgements and decent human relationships. It would be prudent in any case to accept Rawling's view that professional skills in future must encompass a higher degree of political sophistication (1993 p.111)' (Marsden 1995 p.206)

Others similarly recognise the extreme politicisation of education, and its effects on geography education, during this period (see Binns 1996, Bradford 1994, Rawling 1993).

Marsden (1995) also notes that geography educationalists in the 1980s were pulled into political confrontations with the government such that :

'more writing acquired a polemical rather than an intellectual thrust as geographical educationalists became protagonists against what they perceived as the negative features of the National Curriculum'. (p.213)

We can only hope for a more enlightened future where politicians, educationalists and others engage in a genuine partnership with a view to advancing education. It has become clear that neither within schools, nor universities, will the future of education be the sole preserve of the professional. The creation and delivery of curricula will no longer be permitted without some element of explanation to, and justification from, politicians, parents and the general public. The main decisions concerning geography curricula will not be left solely to geographers.

The future of geography curriculum development.

The whole process of devising the GNC was seen by the government as an exercise in simple curriculum construction and management, rather than development. Post Dearing (1994) the

immediate prospects for curriculum development in geography may not be so negative, and could actually benefit from the 'near minimalist' geography curriculum that eventually resulted (Marsden 1995, Carter 1994, Rawling 1996c).

Machon and Ranger (1996) compare the scale of change wrought on curriculum development in geography education by the National Curriculum with that caused by the 'conceptual revolution' within the discipline in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Notably there are some significant differences between the two processes - the latter was driven from within the discipline of geography itself by 'an invigorating dialogue between geographers in higher education and in schools'(p.40); the former was imposed by legislation as a result of government policy. A dialogue between higher education and schools did not occur to any significant extent before or during the construction of the GNC, indeed certain observers refer to a widespread 'de-coupling' of geography in schools from that within higher education causing a fragmentation of the geographic community (Goudie 1993, Unwin 1996, Bradford 1996, Rawling and Daugherty 1996a, Machon and Ranger 1996). This division may be somewhat overstated, but for some it raises a concern that:

'in the mid 1990s it is hard to imagine a repetition of the exchanges between different educational sectors that took place at the Madingley conferences in the 1960s and the 'underground press' that followed' (Machon and Ranger 1996. p.41)

This view may be somewhat pessimistic. The COBRIG seminars at Oxford University in 1994 and 1996, (see Rawling and Daugherty 1996a) have brought together the views of both academic and school geographers, would suggest that some form of dialogue still exists. Although there is still a

spirit of Madingley (see Rawling 1996b, Haggett 1996), happily academics now increasingly engage in two way discussions on equal terms with teachers from schools. The need to (re) establish a dialogue between schools and universities is clear to Daugherty and Rawling (1996) who list four key reasons why this is important - to continue the functional relationship between the two; to maintain coherence in the purpose and content of the subject; to share a commitment to the education of young people; and to deliver transferable skills through geography.

Interestingly the severing of links between universities and school geography departments may have, in part, been *caused* by the introduction of the National Curriculum. Teachers have been forced to focus on geography education from 5 to 14 (and initially 16) rather than concentrating upon the further development of A levels, which have traditionally been heavily influenced by the universities. A decline in the number of university geographers writing geography textbooks for schools, due perhaps to increasing demands on their time to produce 'higher status' research articles, and a drop in the number of A level geography examiners from the university sector is also apparent (Unwin 1996). More importantly, however, may be the shifts in thinking currently affecting the discipline within university geography departments, which do not appear to be transferring successfully into schools. As Marsden (1995) states 'much less attention has been paid by those in education to the important developments at the frontiers of the subject in the late 1980s and early 1990s' (p.283). It is upon this theme which the next section concentrates.

The future of geography- do we know what the discipline is any more?

Perhaps one of the greatest causes for concern, which could partly be laid at the feet of the GWG, is that there is an increasing insecurity about what geography actually *is* as a school subject.

Although certain members of the GWG were stimulated by their initial attempts to redefine the subject in modern form (Walford 1995) there is evidence that they did not achieve this (re)definition to the satisfaction either of geography teachers, or indeed the Group's membership. The link between geography education in schools and the university sector is an important one in this regard. The state of flux witnessed within academic geography should be reflected within, or at least have an influence upon, the form and content of school geography. Should the parent discipline becomes totally divorced from its school roots there are real fears for the long term future of the subject at all levels.

Evidence of this growing dislocation can be witnessed in a variety of forms. The fact that the conceptual content of geography 'A' level examination syllabuses has stayed largely unaltered since the mid 1970s, and that young geographers are not being invited to challenge models, laws and theories - which university departments have long since either rejected or extensively critiqued - can be regarded as evidence of dislocation (Machon and Ranger 1996). Importantly this raises a fundamental question about which strand of university geography schools should aim to pursue. A question which the GWG, perhaps not altogether surprisingly, could not answer to everyone's satisfaction.

The confusion in the school-university interface of geography may be a telling reflection of the state of affairs within geography departments in British universities, rather than a sign of any failing within such departments in schools. It must be remembered that for some time geography in further and higher education has not achieved a 'consensus over philosophical, methodological and ideological issues' (Johnston 1985a p.9) and that any belief that such a state of affairs has ever existed post 1965 is misplaced. Since the 'conceptual revolution' geography has continued to fragment and, not surprisingly, school teachers have struggled to keep pace with these academic changes. If the GWG had sought greater guidance from the university sector this would not have been relayed with a unified voice - indeed Johnston (1986) would claim that there is no natural necessity for a discipline of geography to exist at all.

Within this complicated framework where 'there is not one geography, but many geographies, created in response to circumstances specific to time and place' (Johnston 1986 p.449) the prospect of creating a single GNC, acceptable to all, was therefore impossible. 'Geography' as a discipline is not, and never has been, bound together into an absolute unified concept. For Johnston (1985a) the physical-human 'divide' is ultimately not the most important issue (although at school level Rawling (1996c) refers to the link politically as a 'survival strategy, aiming to maintain a coherence for school geography' (p.257)). More problematic for the unity of geography is the discipline's recent trend towards almost continual subdivision and fragmentation. Here human geography is seen as being divided 'conceptually and locationally' (Johnston 1986 p.450) into systematic sub divisions of specialisms and regions - this can only be acceptable when

followed by synthesis, which Johnston (1986) regards as being 'generally poor' within the study of geography. The essential problem for contemporary geography is that :

'Such abstraction, rational or chaotic conception, implies a system of neat compartments for our knowledge, bound together more by the analytical .. procedures employed than by the logical connections of the subject matter' (p.451)

The divisions and compartmentalisation of geography may be necessary for detailed analysis, but can be counter productive in terms of conception of the whole (Walford 1995, Massey 1984, McDowell and Massey 1984). This was a problem repeated by the GWG when they chose to follow the trend of previous subject reports by dividing geography into separate attainment targets, superficially 'unified' by the application of the cube diagram. This compartmentalisation was eventually removed by the creation of just one attainment target for geography by the Geography Advisory Group established following the Dearing Review (1994).

Marsden (1995) also highlights the 'major philosophical changes at the frontiers of the subject' (p.210) in the late 1980s and early 1990s and calls for a more coherent and distinctive geography to be created from the fragmentation of post quantitative and welfare geographies. He, and others (see Jackson and Penrose 1993, Johnston 1987, 1991, Unwin 1992, Stoddart 1987), have noted the revival of 'place' to the conceptual heart of geography. Here the GWG could be said to have taken a lead from higher education, although their conception of the role of place within the study of geography was somewhat awry. This place orientation should exist within a critical social and welfare geography framework, unlike in the original geography National Curriculum where locational knowledge achieved an unhealthy dominance. The future should perhaps, as Stoddard

(1987) claims, look towards geography both in schools and universities providing a balanced sense of the 'real' (relating to places), the 'unified' (linking physical and human geography) and the 'committed' (addressing large scale human issues).

In concluding this thesis it is important to consider the function and form of school geography, as originally conceived by the GWG and reworked post Dearing (1994), within the context of the most significant recent influences on geographical thinking at university level. Postmodernism is arguably the most major of these influences - and a force which ostensibly pushes geography towards greater fragmentation and disunity, rather than acting as an agent for stability and synthesis.

Post modernism.

The future influences of post modernism on various disciplines, including geography, are as yet unclear (see Gilbert 1992, Bale 1996a, Morgan.J 1996, Huckle (forthcoming)). As Marsden (1995) states 'the concept (of post modernity) is so ill defined and idiosyncratically used, it is difficult to offer guidance on how it might be accommodated in the school setting' (p.211). Bale (1996a) states 'post modernism is a term which refuses to be rigorously defined' (p.288), although others, such as Edwards (1996), appear to believe that more certain definitions are possible - claiming that postmodernism 'recognises the interdependence of language, thought and reality', 'asserts that knowledge is indissociable from power' and that it 'challenges the Western conception of self as unified and given' (p.218).

In everyday definition post modernism is a term 'routinely used to refer to a variety of changes in architecture, the arts, culture and social life' (Morgan.J 1996 p.52). Bowlby's (1992) delineations are perhaps the most useful when she describes post modernism as recognising that truth and meanings are relative to one's own standpoint, and that different groups and individuals have competing, yet equally valid, goals and interpretations of the world. Post modernism also recognises that the ideas within society are usually those of the powerful and often do not include the knowledge and experience of the powerless. In addition these ideas are, for postmodernists, regularly based on incorrect or unexplained assumptions.

As a concept post modernism is defined by the position it has assumed with respect to modernism. The modern period has its origins in eighteenth century Enlightenment thinking, typified by assumptions of a knowable world, essential truths, and universal laws which yield to scientific enquiry and the power of reason. Postmodernists would argue that these means of discovering and applying knowledge are flawed, and that the political and economic movements allied to them have lost both confidence and credibility having expressly failed to deliver a just society (Borgmann 1992). They would claim that disunity is inevitable, and that the search for unity and intellectual cohesion within any discipline is ultimately futile. Knowledge is thus related to a range of beliefs, rather than a body of certainties, leading to the ever branching adjectival geographies currently pursued in university departments (see Harvey 1989, Livingstone 1990). As a result the creation of 'false' boundaries around the discipline becomes problematic, and an activity to be resisted (Geertz 1983, Jackson 1993).

The 'challenge of post modernism', as expressed by Graham, Doherty and Malek (1992), is contained within the assumptions that the independent 'actor' is the basic component of society whose attitudes and behaviours can be adequately incorporated into models and laws in social science; that knowledge is an accurate representation of reality; and that the idea of progress in society is unquestioned. It is for them possible to achieve a post-modern expression of geography - where 'actors' are fluid, ambiguous and contradictory and do not naturally assume the characteristics of 'economic men' or role play figures; where a perfect knowledge of the world is unobtainable; and where society is not always seen to be making progress. This rejects a mimetic view of geography as represented by the GNC (namely a geography which assumes that it is possible to achieve an accurate reflection of the world) for post modernists believe that :

'there is no one true account but only many voices, each claiming its own validity' (Morgan.J 1996 p.62)

Post modernism in the school context.

Perhaps the most successful attempts to draw the debate concerning post modernism into the context of the geography classroom have been achieved by Morgan.J (1996), Bale (1994,1996a) and Huckle (forthcoming). Morgan.J (1996) indicates his personal shift from a faith in social realism and critical analysis to a less confident and more fragmented view of the social world. Citing the influence of Smith (1989), Harvey (1993) and Peet (1977) on his thinking Morgan.J (1996) shows how geography over the last twenty years has moved from the apolitical quantitative 'revolution', the individualism of classical economic models and behavioural science; through

critical geographies of welfare (Smith 1977, Knox 1989) and more radical approaches (Huckle 1983, 1987); to appreciations of environmental damage and management (Emel and Peet 1989). The most important contemporary influence on geography is identified by Morgan (1996) as being that of post modernism (see also Harvey 1989, Pred and Watts 1992), although its transfer into schools in a viable form is seen to be problematic.

In attempting to place post modernism into the context of the geography classroom Morgan (1996) recognises the need for:

‘a shift from a concern with general processes to a concern for the geographic and historical specifics of places; the recognition of the social constructedness of scale; the acceptance of relativism; the recognition of pluralism and diversity as features of social life; and the post-modern emphasis on culture and the associated view of regarding places as ‘text’ (p.63)

Taken together these could mark a fundamental shift in the way geography is taught in schools.

Morgan (1996) therefore believes that post modernism may in future prove to be an influential force in geography education, for:

‘post-modernism is a currently much contested cultural site which geographers and, eventually, geography teachers will find hard to ignore’ (p.68).

Bale (1996a) has joined the speculation about the relevance of post-modernity to geography education in schools, counterbalancing Skeggs (1991) scepticism about its possible role with Dear and Wassmandorf’s (1993) statement that post modernism ‘constitutes the most profound challenge to three hundred years of post-Enlightenment thinking’ (p.321). The diffusion of the debate from higher education to schools has been slow but, Bale (1996a) argues, ‘geography in

schools - as elsewhere - exhibits a 'post modern condition' and hence constitutes a valid subject for discussion among those involved in the geographical education of young people' (p.288)

Given the postulated failure of the 'modern' forms of geography in universities and schools it is therefore believed that post-modernism should be viewed as creating a series of possible alternatives for education. Within this framework the GNC presents itself as an eclectic mix of past geographies, including large elements of modernist influence which increasingly need to be critiqued. Bale (1996a) acknowledges, like Johnston (1987), that no one geography exists but many geographies each dependent on original sources of information and on the 'mediation' which this information receives. This is clearly seen within geographical textbooks used in schools, as evidenced by comparing books from the 1950s with those of the 1980s (see Bale 1996b). The 1960s are presented as a period of consensus of content and philosophy in school geography until the publication of 'New Ways in Geography' (Cole and Benyon 1968) and 'Settlement Patterns' (Everson and Fitzgerald 1969) (see Bale 1996a, 1996b). These texts represent geography as a spatial science, rather than within a regional paradigm, and engage the reader in a search for order and prediction, using models and statistical techniques. However, this approach was bolted onto the existing geography in schools, and did not replace more traditional approaches. This, according to Bale (1996a), helped to create a post modern geography in schools where the 'new' geography accompanied an older regional geography - in effect representing a superficial change of framework, rather than the creation of a new structure. The process continued into the 1970s and 1980s. Thus the 'quantitative revolution' did not fully take hold in school geography. Many teachers still taught regional geography, exam boards set both regional exams and more modern

versions (see ULEAC's marketing of both a '16-19' and a 'traditional' geography syllabus since the early 1980s) and curriculum developers actively encouraged a juxtaposition of different approaches. In some schools a range of approaches occurred within the same department. Additionally the 'new geography' was often badly, or inadequately, explained in school texts with respect to its purpose, norms, bias and validity not fully explained to children (Bale 1996b). The eclecticism of geographical methods and content was also reflected in the teaching of the subject:

'Such a *melange* of approaches to the content of school geography was matched by the diffuse state of affairs pedagogically. Didactic modes of teaching were adopted next door to the work of teachers as facilitators who employed games and simulations. Chalk and talk and dictated notes co-existed happily with role-plays and free drama. School geography became an enlarged mirror image of geography in higher education' (Bale 1996a p.293)

How might this change if geographical education embraced the challenge of post modernity?

Firstly the question of whether a viable post modern pedagogy for schools could ever exist needs to be considered. Bale (1996a) cites Soja (1989), Rosenau (1992) and Worth (1993) who visualise such teaching and learning accessing previously 'inadmissible questions and unheard voices', giving an 'interactive role to students' and looking to the relationship of subjects with their social and political contexts. This would reject the 'passive accumulation of 'knowledge' passed down by 'experts' and later regurgitated in examinations' (Worth 1993 p.5). A post modern approach to geography teaching would assume that all individuals' opinions and ideas should be explored, and that all are equally valid. It would be less academic in style compared to most contemporary classroom teaching and would suggest the necessity for the adoption of cross disciplinary

approaches. Thus conventional styles of academic teaching and learning would be rejected in preference of 'audacious and provocative forms of delivery' (Rosenau 1992, p.7).

In geography one would perhaps seek explanations for the meaning of everyday things, the world would be viewed as 'text' to be deconstructed, as would the action of the teacher and learner and the materials used in the geography classroom. Both Bale (1996a) and Edwards (1996) also claim that post modernism would be attractive to teachers who wished to adopt emancipatory styles of learning. There are basic difficulties though - if all views are equally valid how do pupils and teachers progress? How would one assess and validate the work of pupils? How can post modernism be styled into a geography curriculum engaging human, physical and environmental geography in a meaningful way? In curriculum terms would this mean more flexible 'matrix', rather than 'linear', forms of curricular organisation (see Hall 1990) out of favour with National Curriculum planning?

Post modernity and the GNC.

Bale (1996a) believes that geography in the mid 1990s presents itself as 'a paradigm for the post-modern school subject' (p.292). In analysing the original GNC he does not view its contents simply as 'retro' or 'modernist' geography (see Bale 1994), but as an expression of the post modern condition within geography education created during the past decades.

'I therefore see the National Curriculum as a simple continuation of geography's post - modern trajectory, its break with consensus, its go-as-

you-please ethos, launched in 1968 and successfully fuelled by the various curriculum developments since then' (Bale 1996a p.294-5).

The original Order certainly held no *consistent* view of geography, being an eclectic mix of concepts, approaches and ideas. The place attainment targets revealed a mix of 'capes and bays' and knowledge of regions (an ideographic approach); the urban and economic geography in the human geography attainment target sought generalisations, laws and models (nomothetic); whilst the environmental geography attainment target described a 'green' approach with lip service to welfare, and even radical, geographies. In short:

'The entire document could be read as a strange mixture of geographical paradigms and an equally eclectic mix of educational philosophies - from utilitarian to reconstructivist'. (Bale 1996a).

This analysis of the GNC leads Bale (1994, 1996a, 1996b) to assume that geography taught in most schools, *partly* as a result of the National Curriculum, now exhibits aspects of post modernity. However, it is also apparent that even without the implementation of the National Curriculum geography had already branched significantly towards an 'incongruous juxtapositionings of academic content' (Bale 1994 p.96). This situation was unwittingly reinforced by the GWG as they produced a GNC whose eclecticism tried to offer 'something for everyone', although ultimately disappointing many. The GWG appeared to balk at the task of producing a truly up to date geography for schools for the 21st century, either fearful of the job, or more importantly the reaction from teachers, politicians and parents. With a direct instruction not to replicate the status quo in school geography did it miss an opportunity to create a truly contemporary form of school geography by seeking the haven of a safer past?

Edwards (1996) supports the view of an eclectic GNC, but places the Order more firmly within a modernist perspective. Noting the claim that geography is an integrative and synthesising subject, and that it 'creates a bridge between the humanities and the physical sciences' (DES 1990a p74), he nonetheless supports those who are less confident about such assertions (see Norton 1989, Johnston 1991, Worsley 1985). The 'search for unity' within geography, in Edwards (1996) eyes, has not been, and shows no prospect of being, achieved in schools:

'the bridging claim of geography, even if justified on epistemological grounds, is seldom realised in actual classroom practice where physical geography is taught either discretely and largely through textbooks or in the context of highly contrived links with human issues' (Edwards 1996 p. 220)

As such:

'pupils' experience of geography often consists of little more than passive exposure to unrelated chunks of content held together by convention and habit rather than by any clearly articulated epistemological or pedagogical rationale'. (Edwards 1996 p.221)

When placed into the context of other views of the future of geography education in the National Curriculum (see Rawling 1993, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c, Walford 1996, Walford and Haggett 1995, Marsden 1995) post modern contentions sit rather uncomfortably. Postmodernism assesses the future of geography as a discipline very differently from all other movements within the subject. This is highlighted by considering the speculations offered by Walford and Haggett (1995), two apparently modernist geographers, with those of the post modernist Edwards (1996). Edwards (1996) contends that Walford and Haggett (1995) build their vision of the future upon a set of unquestioned modernist assumptions allied to the concepts and values of positivist geography, and

engage in 'parochialism' and 'aggrandisement' of the discipline. The influence of positivist assumptions, and the implicit rejection of integrated studies, are seen as major conservative elements within the geography curriculum of schools (see also Edwards 1991, 1995, Huckle 1987) such that it:

'came as no surprise, therefore, when the Final Report of the Geography Working Party (DES 1990) ... reflected and reinforced the aspiration of many geographers to align their subject substantially with science, rather than humanities' (Edwards 1996 p.219)

Bale (1996a) concludes:

'A modern reading of the geography Order sees it as prescriptive and inhibiting. A post modern reading of it is one of optimism geography in the mid 1990s can therefore be viewed as a paradigm for the post modern 'subject', continuing in Johnston's (1976) immortal phrase 'branching towards anarchy'. (p.295)

Perhaps for now it would be wise, using Bale's (1994) definitions, to see postmodernity as an *object* to be studied, rather than as *attitude* towards studying, or as a *period* in the evolution of geography as a subject. Its influence on school geography is still uncertain and it would be foolish to race towards embracing it, as some attempted when the 'new geography' was introduced by the conceptual revolution of the 1960s, without seeing where it might lead, or indeed what damage it might do. This does not reject the efforts of those geographers working on the frontiers of the subject, or seek the development of a 'single monolithic philosophy of the subject' (Walford 1996 p.138), but does call for the re-assertion of coherence and synthesis.

Geography within our future society.

Does the current GNC place geography in a healthy position to prepare children for the society they will face in the future? Does it take into account the major social changes wrought by economic restructuring, changing technologies, lack of international competitiveness and decline in employment prospects currently faced by the UK? The Conservative administrations of the 1980s and 1990s were very quick to criticise schools in this regard, and introduced both the National Curriculum and 'new vocationalism' (Bash and Colby 1989) into state education to help remedy perceived educational weaknesses.

The increase of governmental intervention in education, as witnessed by the reduction in influence of the LEAs, the imposition of a National Curriculum, revisions to GCSE and A levels, introduction of GNVQs, OFSTED inspections, demands for changing pedagogy, have all taken place with little public debate. Centralisation and consolidation has meant that control has become easier for the state whilst the growth of educational quangos has accelerated the pace of change and reduced accountability. State imposed targets and indicators, often based upon limited evidence, have meant that the professional and autonomous status of the teacher has been severely reduced. As Machon and Ranger (1996) tellingly observe 'if you wished to teach something different, could you?' (p.44). This places education at the service of a narrow, governmentally determined, view of society rather than within the remit of both the state *and* professional educators within a partnership.

In the words of Huckle (forthcoming):

‘Teachers are increasingly required to adopt the role of technicians who deliver prescribed and pre-packaged content, assess and stratify pupils by reference to standard norms, spend more and more time serving an educational bureaucracy, and cope with a growing minority of alienated and disruptive pupils’

In addition Morris (1992), citing the work of Apple (1990), suggests that the GNC represents a governmental view of society in which:

‘day to day life is uncritically accepted. This domination of daily life by a political ideology that suffuses all aspects of society, describes the concept of hegemony. Recent calls to implement the orders for geography by former members of the GWG can be regarded as a manifestation of the process by which hegemony becomes established’ (p.76).

The ‘dislocation’ of school and university geographies was unfortunately timed. When government educational policies were threatening the survival of geography as a school subject geographers in higher education were grappling with new theories, philosophies explanations of how space, place and society fitted into the immense contemporary social, economic and political changes.

Meanwhile geographers in schools were focused on curriculum change, and on re interpreting geography to fit into the government’s model of what a school subject should be. The GNC was thus constructed, and subsequently criticised, but the final product gives little indication of the relationship between geography and society and does little to advance teachers and pupils understanding of the threats and promises presented by disorganised capitalism (Morris 1992).

Importantly it offers little for the way in which geography might act to critique society, or explain

the social and spatial restructuring that has been enforced by change. The GNC has therefore been mainly a conservative influence on teachers and textbook writers.

Huckle believes that such conservatism has driven radical geographers to seek support from 'adjectival' educations (e.g. environmental education, peace education, development education, etc) which appeared better placed to enable pupils to explore how the world worked and how it might be changed. Through a democratic and empowering pedagogy these forms of education developed a wide range of curriculum materials which have positively influenced geography teaching. But Huckle (forthcoming) observes that:

'Many radical teachers continue to promote integrated humanities as a vehicle for linking these educations to cross-curricula themes but it can be argued that a proliferation of adjectival educations, often embracing competing liberal, radical and utopian agendas, has slowed the emergence of a genuinely radical social (and socialist) education which integrates all their concerns'

Huckle (forthcoming), citing the work of Marsden (1995) and Hargreaves (1994), thus believes:

'School geography is in urgent need of reform. After a decade or more of largely pragmatic development at the bidding of politicians and dominant interests within the subject community, it is now time to acknowledge that the subject has distanced itself from change in society and from those developments in academic geography and curriculum theory which could be used to enable us to better meet our ideals. We need to return to professionalism in geographical education and debate the new social, theoretical and pedagogical challenges with re-discovered energy and enthusiasm (Marsden 1995). New times have brought much de-skilling and de-professionalisation, but they also offer the prospect of developing more flexible and responsive curricula for schools with more empowering structures and cultures (Hargreaves 1994).'

So where does this leave geography education in schools, and what might be its future impact on society? Do we, as Hargreaves (1994) believes, now find ourselves in a paradox with regard to post modernity in schools? Is geography education - like all other subjects - expected to produce the redundant skills required by a society dissolving into disorganised capitalism? Are schools to continue at the mercy of parents, politicians and the market, with innovation overload constantly pressurising staff? Will de-professionalisation, superficiality, and loss of direction threaten the core values of education?

Or are there strengths in the current situation? Does the future encourage schools to reconstruct themselves in ways *they* consider appropriate? Has organisational flexibility been built into the equation, encouraging empowerment and collaboration? Will this essentially vital and spontaneous state of affairs lead to what Hargreaves (1994) refers to as a 'conserving radicalism'?

Evidence gleaned from recent events - not least the initially abortive attempts to devise an acceptable, contemporary and workable GNC- suggest that the development of geography education in many schools was restricted in the early 1990s. When linked with the 'quiet divorce' (Machon and Ranger 1996) of school geography departments from those in universities, and concerns about how an essentially stagnant geography curriculum can be encouraged to advance, there are tangible reasons for anxiety. If the result of curriculum change in the 1990s is the acceptance of an ossifying geography National Curriculum which reaffirms a previous status quo this anxiety is inevitably increased. What has become clear is that when teachers are continually expected to enforce major shifts in education policy, rather than being given space to concentrate

upon teaching and curriculum development, the future for any subject is bleak. The model of curriculum development introduced with the National Curriculum - with its tight time scales, lack of effective consultation, political tampering and dislocation from the classroom - must certainly never be repeated.

It is obvious that change will, and indeed should, occur in the future. Vocationalism is the new, possibly false, dawn for education in England and Wales in the 1990s and brings with it particular concerns for geography education (Butt 1994, 1996, Binns 1996, Walford 1996). It is essential that geography regains the 'high ground' in curricular and educational terms, seeking out its intellectual roots and finding stability in previously agreed aims and objectives. These discussions can not merely be left to 'others' who have influence upon state education, without further risk to the subject. School geography for the next millennium must be debated and restructured with geographers from higher education - the GNC will be seen as a missed opportunity in this regard - but we must always beware being led down possible intellectual 'cul de sacs'. Never again should an intellectually suspect geography curriculum be shored up by teachers, educationalists and curriculum developers.

In essence the future presents two key concerns for geography and education. Firstly with regard to teaching, learning and society :

'The crucial question for any developing pedagogy is: how can the way we teach geography help prepare our pupils to become responsible and reflective citizens and creative workers?' (Machon and Ranger 1996 p.45).

Secondly with respect to the future of the whole discipline we must all be aware that:

‘As geography in higher education on the one hand segments into more and more ‘adjectival geographies’ and, on the other, as disciplinary boundaries break down, the fossilisation of school geography in archaic conceptual and pedagogical moulds looks increasingly likely. Geography in higher education is becoming increasingly separated from the subject in schools’
(Bale 1996b p.5)

To echo Slater (1995):

‘Geography, I believe has a future. It will be a future determined not only by curriculum developers and teachers, not only by academics and environmentalists, not only by politicians and the public. It will be a future determined by the way children perceive our knowledge base and the sensitivity and utility it offers to a worthwhile understanding of the world...’
(p.6)

Appendix 1

The American High School Geography Project

The American High School Geography Project (HSGP) had been established in 1961 to provide a one year course for the 14-16 age range to focus primarily on Human Geography (Physical Geography and Earth Science being taught separately in the American school system). The idea was to establish critical enquiry related to a variety of key ideas and concepts in geography. Empirical data was to be used in geography lessons as well as hypothesis testing approaches, and the development of reasoning skills was a major goal. The inclusion of games, simulations, role plays and decision making exercises within the HSGP was new and had a profound influence on British geography curriculum designers. The Oxford Geography Project (1974), for example, drew heavily on these approaches.

The HSGP received publicity in the UK in the late 1960's and was to become influential not only in Britain but also in Australia, West Germany and New Zealand despite its lack of real impact in the States. Many academic geographers were excited by one of its underpinning ideas, namely that key concepts in geography could be isolated and then taught to children. This helped geographers sort out their subject's contributions to the curriculum and the influence of the key concept/idea approach is clearly seen in the Schools Council Geography Projects.

HSGP had a significant influence on teaching and learning styles, encouraging active and experiential approaches. The work of Walford (1969), Cole and Smith (1967), and Kasperson (1968) reflect the impact of HSGP at this time and the efforts that geography

educationalists made to introduce its approach to a wider audience. The use of hypothetical case studies and carefully designed simulations and decision making exercises to make geographical principles easier to grasp became a trademark of the HSGP approach. Naish (1974) noted that this often aided understanding compared with the use of complicated 'real life' examples.

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Appendix 2

Geography for the Young School Leaver (GYSL)

Geography for the Young School Leaver (GYSL) was based at Avery Hill College in London and was designed for average and below average ability children aged 14 to 16. Its main aim was to produce schemes of work with resources that could not only be used by geography teachers but also by teachers in other subject areas that might overlap with geography curricula. The materials were extensively trialled and three theme based packs with resource sheets, filmstrips, OHP transparencies, audiotapes and teachers' notes were created. The publishers Nelson produced and distributed these in 1974-5 as the 'Man, Land and Leisure'; 'Cities and people'; and 'People, Place and Work' packs. They were almost instantly successful, having been trialled in 45 schools in England and Wales between 1972 and 1974 (over 2,000 schools had brought at least one of the packs by 1980). Curriculum planning was made simple under the headings 'ideas', 'skills' and 'values and attitudes'. The underlying approach was to involve pupils in practical activities using a range of resources rather than textbooks.

The success of GYSL may be linked to its association with the Geography CSE examination. The mode 3 approach pioneered by some CSE syllabuses which incorporated partial teacher planning of both the syllabus and assessed coursework, was welcomed by the GYSL project team. This was followed later by an Avery Hill 'O' level which was based on the three themes plus a fourth (physical, regional or applied) devised by individual schools, or consortia of schools. This revolutionary 'O' level broadened the influence of GYSL and meant that a common core geography course could, for the first

time, be taught to all children in a school without the necessity to split into separate 'O' level and CSE groups.

GYSL was one of the most successful innovations produced by the Schools Council. Its dissemination is interesting for the growth and decline of GYSL teaching in school geography departments often relates to the movement of individual geography staff between schools (see Boardman 1988).

Criticism of GYSL occurred in the 1980s though (Gill 1982), particularly with regard to the racism of some of its materials: the lack of revision of the packs and the danger that teachers were not taking the lead in developing their own resources were also worrying.

Geography 14-18 Bristol Project

The Geography 14 to 18 project based at the University of Bristol was specifically designed for use with more able pupils.

The Project began in 1970 and maintained from its very beginning that there could be little change in geography teaching within the 14-18 age range until the public examination systems for geography assessment were changed. Examinations determined what was taught, and often more importantly how it was taught, encouraging the use of note taking, rote learning and the reproduction of memorised facts in the examination room. Believing that new materials alone would not change this system the project aimed to create a new 'O' level that would then set in motion curriculum development. Fifty percent of marks would be awarded through coursework assessment of units devised by teachers (often

around fieldwork based individual studies), with examination papers reliant on data response questions for the other 50%.

The influence of the 14-18 project tended to filter 'sideways' as most schools that adopted the 'O' level also negotiated similar mode 3 CSEs based upon its model of assessment. Due to a lack of time and funds available the project redesigned only the 14 to 16 geography curriculum and not the 14 to 18 curriculum as had been originally planned.

GYSL and Geography 14-18 had different ideas of curriculum development. GYSL examined children's educational needs and then sought where the discipline of geography could provide these whereas 14-18 looked at the discipline and the identified new ways of introducing geographical content to schools. GYSL provided teachers with materials and guides and encouraged the creation and consortia groups, whilst 14-18 wanted to help the professional development of teachers by getting them to produce their own curriculum plans and materials.

Both had an influence on geography teaching methods and innovations, but their influence in terms of total examination entries now appears modest. By 1982 they only accounted for 5% of 'O' level entries and 15% of CSEs. However their materials were widely used to supplement other geography courses in schools that had not wholly embraced the projects. There is also evidence that examination boards revised their geography syllabuses in the 14-16 age range influenced by these two projects.

Geography 16-19

The 'A' level boards redesigned their geography syllabuses in the early 1970s to incorporate the changes that had occurred in academic geography in the previous decade. The analysis and interpretation of data in examinations became popular as theoretical, quantitative and analytic work increased in schools. The 1976 Schools Council Geography 16-19 project asked what contribution geography could make to the development of young people and rethought the whole approach to teaching and learning geography at this level. One of its aims was that curriculum development in A level geography should not be too greatly influenced by university geography courses, but focus upon what 16-19 year old students required from a geography course. It was also realised that there were great benefits to be gained from considering the earlier work of the GYSL and Bristol 14-18 projects. The project team worked with teachers in nearly 100 schools to create a curriculum framework from which materials could be devised.

Teachers were encouraged to reconsider the aims, objectives, methods and content of their geography courses for all post 16 students (not just 'A' level), including those students staying on for just one year in the sixth form. The idea was that the 16-19 course should be flexible enough to meet the needs of pre vocational as well as 'academic' students.

The people environment concepts and enquiry approach methodology were fundamental to 16-19 Geography. Young geographers were asked to focus upon the questions, issues and problems that arose from people interacting with their environments and to enquire into their own and other people's values when solving geographical questions. They used active, enquiry based approaches to acquire key concepts in geography. Analysis and clarification of values and attitudes were essential to the way in which students worked.

Four themes (Challenge of Natural Environments, Use and Misuse of Natural Resources, Issues of Global Concern and Managing Human Environments), containing a variety of core and option modules, gave students the opportunities to study issues and problems arising from people environment relationships. Attitudes and values were considered important and students were encouraged to develop their own values position with regard to the content covered. The new course did not divide into physical and human geography as traditional 'A' levels had done before, but focussed on broader people environment issues and affective as well as cognitive development.

Curriculum development occurred through project schools and consortia supported by the central team. Units were trialled and then published with a set of booklets being supplied by Longmans, who acted as publisher for the project materials. Teaching began in trial schools and colleges in 1980 for first examination in 1982. The examination was innovative in that it contained a Decision Making Paper and that the two examination papers accounted for only 60% of the final marks awarded.

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