

INSTITUTIONS FOR THE OPTIMAL PLANNING/POLICY PROCESS:  
APPLICATION TO BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

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## ABSTRACT

(a) The Problem

As a student of planning, one is constantly seeking to define and solve the problem of planning: What is the planning process?; What should it be?; Is it what it should be ?; If not, how does one make it better? Such questions are what prompted the line of inquiry of this paper.

The problem thus has four dimensions: (1) defining the planning process; (2) defining the optimal planning process; (3) testing an existing planning process to see if it is the optimal process; (4) suggesting means of making the process optimal should it not be so.

However, a process cannot exist without substantive inputs and outputs. Moreover, the attempt to improve a social process such as the planning process on a continual basis involves the design of institutional structures. Institutions cannot exist apart from the context of the society for which they are designed. Thus the problem has both theoretical and empirical aspects.

The empirical setting for this paper is the Canadian province of British Columbia: the substantive inputs and outputs which highlight the planning process are taken from an actual case study - the Burns Lake Native Development Corporation. Although these empirical boundaries limit the scope of the study to British Columbian institutions, some general aspects of

institutional design emerge which have wider geographical significance in Canada.

(b) Method of Investigation

In defining the planning process (Chapter II) an attempt is made to distinguish between individual, organizational and public planning processes. It is the public planning process with which this paper is concerned. When the public planning process is viewed at the collective, societal level, rather than from the single perspective of an individual "planner," it is seen as a congruent process to the democratic policy process.

The set of norms which the optimal planning/policy process will meet is, therefore, the set of democratic norms of the pluralistic, Canadian society (Chapter III). When the public policy process is examined in light of its ability to satisfy the democratic norms, a series of thirteen assessment criteria emerge (Chapter IV). An actual policy process would be judged optimal if it reasonably met the assessment criteria, given the constraints which exist to achieving optimality (Chapter V).

In Chapter VI, the case of the Burns Lake Native Development Corporation is examined according to its ability to meet the assessment criteria and overcome the constraints to optimality. The Burns Lake process is chosen because it is judged to be a "good" process and therefore the given institutional framework is seen to be realizing its best performance. Certain key constraints are found to render the Burns Lake process less than optimal.



In Chapter VII a normative model of regional government is designed to meet the assessment criteria while minimizing the constraints to optimality. The normative framework is essentially a multi-purpose, decentralized regional government in which all executive decisions are made jointly by an Executive Council, and all legislative decisions are made jointly by the General Assembly of elected representatives. When the Burns Lake process is transposed to this new institutional context, those key constraints which inhibited optimality are shown to be eliminated or minimized.

(c) General Conclusions

Not only would the Burns Lake process have been improved had it been conducted within the institutional context of the regional government model, but so would the policy process in general. However, although the regional model would tend to improve provincial and municipal government performance, optimality of all policy processes would require institutional reform at all levels of government, federal government institutions included.

Nevertheless, the twelve aspects of institutional design which are summarized in Chapter VIII highlight the key factors of institutional design necessary to promote optimality in the policy process. These are: Decentralized; Regional; Multi-Purpose; Elected Local Representatives; Executive Council Linked to Cabinet; All Decisions Joint; Overlapping Jurisdictions;

Communications Web; Resources for Participation; Policy Analysis Secretariat; Committee Structure (non-hierarchical bureaucracy); Continuous Monitoring. Of these twelve aspects, only Aspect 2, "Regional" does not fit all provincial contexts, since the necessity of an intermediary government is dependent on physical and demographic size.

Although each of the aspects in isolation (except perhaps Aspect 2) may secure benefits if applied to institutional design, only when all the aspects are applied as a system will full benefits be realized. If the normative model of regional government for B.C. were adopted, not only would benefits be realized in terms of an improved process, but also benefits would be realized in terms of better policy output. Process and product are not discrete aspects of policy development. A distinguishing feature of democratic policy formation is the emphasis placed on "means" or process in order to determine the correct "ends" (product).

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION: PROBLEM, APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

### A. The Problem

As a "planner", one is constantly seeking to define problems and recommend solutions. The very nature of the task of suggesting solutions is related to the original perception of the problem and this in turn is related to the values of those who define the problem. Planning is, therefore, decidedly normative.

As a student of planning, one is constantly seeking to define and solve the problem of planning: What is the planning process?; What should it be?; Is it what it should be?; If it's not what it should be, how does one make it better? Again, the solution (how one gets there) will depend on the perception of the problem (what it should be minus what it is). This too is a normative task.

The problem of this paper, therefore, has four dimensions: (1) defining the planning process; (2) defining the optimal planning process; (3) testing an existing planning process to see if it is optimal; (4) suggesting means of making the process optimal should it not be so. All four of these dimensions are normative because they all depend on the acceptance of the set of norms of the democratic Canadian society.

However, a process cannot exist without substantive inputs and outputs. Moreover, the attempt to improve a social process



such as the planning process on a continual basis involves the design of institutional structures. Institutions cannot exist apart from the context of the society for which they are designed. Thus the problem has both theoretical and empirical aspects.

The empirical setting for this paper is the Canadian province of British Columbia; the substantive inputs and outputs which highlight the planning process are taken from an actual case study - the Burns Lake Native Development Corporation. Although these empirical boundaries limit the scope of the study to British Columbian institutions, some general principles of institutional design emerge which have wider geographical significance in Canada.

#### B. The Approach

In defining the planning process (Chapter II) an attempt is made to distinguish between individual, organizational and public planning processes. It becomes evident that what planning "should be" is related to whether one is speaking of the individual, organizational or public planning process. It is the latter process with which this paper is concerned.

A better perspective of the public planning process is gained if one steps back from the perception of the individual planner and views the process as a collective, social process. From this perspective, it becomes evident that it is the democratic policy process through which Canadian society has chosen to make its social choices. The optimal public planning

process should be synonymous with the optimal policy process. This policy/planning process will be defined by the set of Canadian democratic norms.

The link between the substantive policy outputs and the policy process is the whole system of institutions which coordinate societal decisions. If the actual process of policy formation were shown to be less than optimal when measured against the set of assessment criteria for the optimal process (which are derived from the democratic norms), then the normative task would involve designing a more appropriate institutional framework which would allow the realization of the set of goals.

The fact that these goals are process goals and not substantive (product) goals is significant because it means that the institutional design will not be constrained by objectives relating to specific functions. Thus the institutional framework which emerges is multi-dimensional<sup>1</sup> and dynamic. The integration of various sectoral policies is central to the functioning of the institution as a forum in which to make social choices and trade-offs.

In short, the improvement of the policy process is not only a desirable end in itself because it represents satisfaction of the democratic values, it is also a means to acquiring better policy outputs by way of improved integration of social

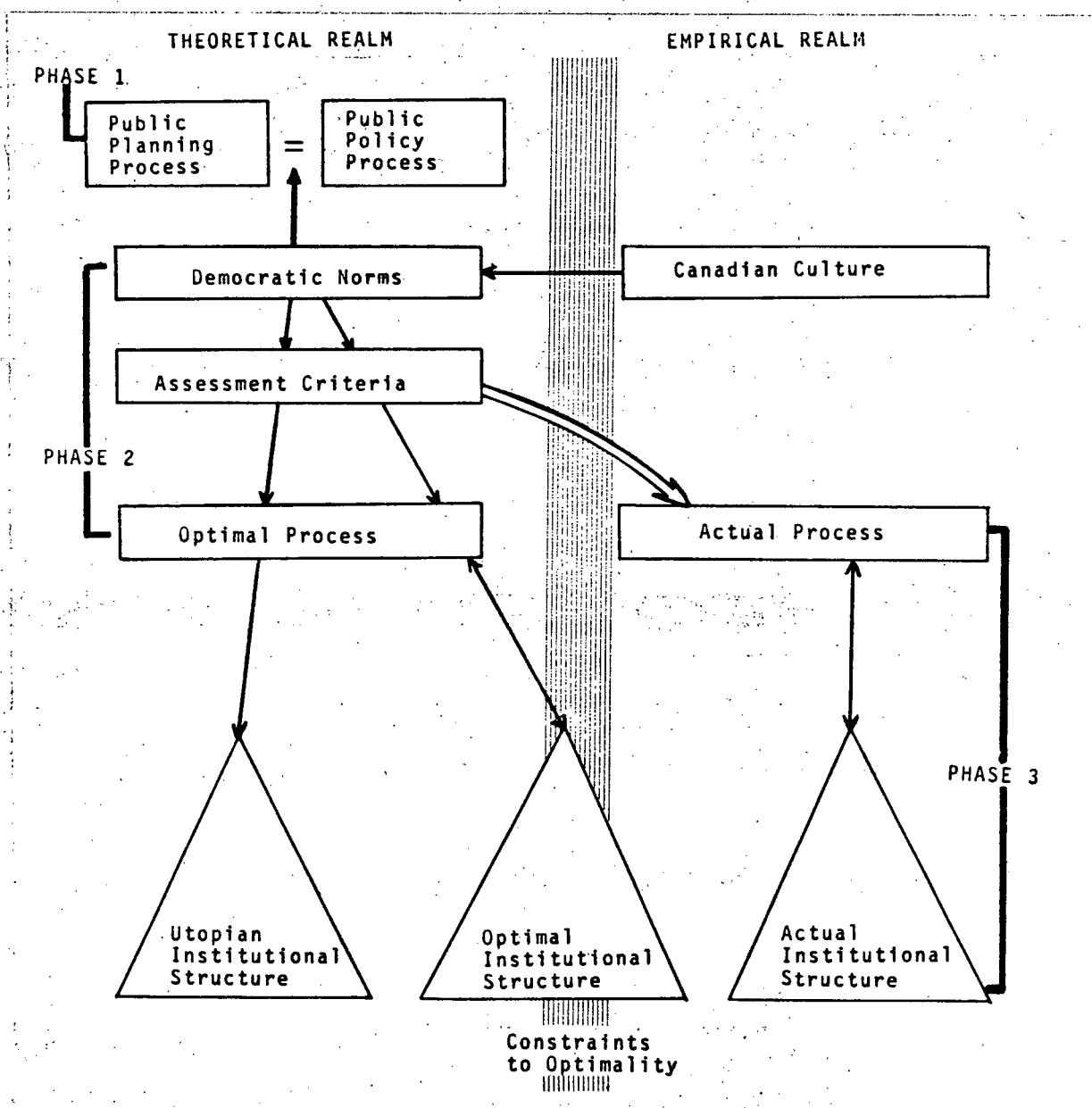
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<sup>1</sup> i.e., multi-sectoral and possessing many component "parts" or government organs.

preferences and policy choices.

### C. Methodology

FIGURE 1: Phase 1-Defining Planning; Phase 2-Defining The Optimal Process; Phase 3-Assessing The Planning/Policy Process



### Phase 1: Defining The Public Planning Process

Chapter II seeks to define the public planning process according to its societal context. This task is one of synthesizing procedural planning theory concepts according to the author's interpretation of planning theory and the nature of societal choices. The normative character of this task is made apparent. The public planning process is seen to be a parallel process to the democratic policy process at the societal level. (See Figure 1 - Phase 1.)

### Phase 2: Defining The Optimal Planning/Policy Process

Chapter III discusses in more detail the normative position on which each phase of the thesis inquiry is based. Again, the norms were derived through the author's interpretation of theoretical constructs. The acceptance or rejection of many of the points raised in this paper will depend upon the acceptance or rejection of these norms.

Chapter IV deals with the derivation of the assessment criteria for the optimal planning/policy process. In deriving these criteria, however, the optimal planning/policy process is depicted (i.e., defined). These criteria are a synthesis of the characteristics of the planning/policy process as defined in Chapter II, the democratic norms of the Canadian society as defined in Chapter III, theoretical literature on the process of policy formation, and the work of other researchers in the field of assessing policy processes.

Figure 1, Phase 2, illustrates how the assessment criteria are derived from the democratic norms, and how the optimal process is in turn defined by the assessment criteria.

### Phase 3: Assessing The Planning/Policy Process

As soon as one moves from the realm of the theoretical to the empirical, one must deal with the constraints that reality imposes on utopian concepts.

Figure 1 tries to depict the links between the theoretical and the empirical. The centre lines which represent the interface between the theoretical and the empirical are not fixed, but may move over time as constraints to optimality change. The pluralistic, Canadian culture is shown to supply input to the theoretical concepts through the democratic norms. The assessment criteria remain on the theoretical side, but their application to an actual planning process requires that constraints to optimality be acknowledged.

Notice that the optimal institutional design represents the synthesis of the theoretical and empirical realms: it is the link which makes normative constructs operational. Utopian institutional designs are not judged to be optimal because they are non-operational and therefore would be unable to produce a process which could meet the assessment criteria. The whole process is dynamic, however, and what may be utopian at one point in time, may be optimal at another, depending upon the changes in the cultural inputs to the democratic norms, and the shifting of the constraints boundary.

Because of the dynamics of the theoretical-empirical interface, constraints to the optimal planning/policy process must be addressed. Chapter V summarizes these constraints. The assessment of the actual policy process according to its ability to meet the assessment criteria (Chapter VI) is thus tempered by the acknowledgement of the particular constraints which influence the achievement of each assessment criterion. Since the institutional context can either be a constraint or a means to satisfying the assessment criteria, the assessment of the policy process is also an assessment of the operation of the institutional framework.

Figure 1 - Phase 3, illustrates the method of assessing an actual process for optimality. If the actual process were to be optimal, the "Actual Institutional Structure" would be the "Optimal Institutional Structure," and the arrow now connecting the "Actual Process" and the "Actual Institutional Structure" would connect the "Actual Process" with the "Optimal Institutional Structure" (see Figure 1).

Moving from the theoretical criteria to empirical assessment also poses another problem of methodology: there is an indefinite number of policy processes which exist, and not all are conducted through precisely the same institutional framework. Obviously, empirical boundaries must be drawn for the sake of manageability. The question is how, then, to best restrict the empirical investigation to pursue the purposes of this study.

Since this thesis inquiry grew out of the desire to acquire an understanding of the nature of the policy formation process and out of the normative (planning) concern to explore how the policy process could be improved, it is of little value to look at an example of a policy process which is obviously poor. That tells one little about the dynamics of a "good" process and therefore little about how the institutional framework contributed to the quality of the process.

Accordingly, the British Columbian policy process chosen for closer examination was the Burns Lake Native Development Corporation process. This process was chosen for more detailed study because it appeared to be, in general, or "at first glance," a good process: it was a process conducted by accountable political representatives; it involved minority interests and thus did not promote "tyranny of the majority"; it was multi-sectoral and involved goal trade-offs. It thus represented an example where the institutional framework was realizing its best performance. It also had the advantage of being a fairly contained process which could be examined in some depth within the time and data constraints of the study.

Much of the information regarding the Burns Lake process came from interviews with people involved in the process. There is a significant disadvantage to using personal interviews as data sources. Personal perceptions are essentially related to one's personal values. Therefore, many of the details of the Burns Lake process would tend to be filtered out and ignored by the interviewee according to his or her judgement of what was

relevant. The author tried to overcome this difficulty by interviewing persons with a wide range of perceptions. Nevertheless, a few of the key actors in the process were unavailable for interview.

Moreover, the Burns Lake process began five years ago, and some of the details about the process itself were simply forgotten by those interviewed. Some of these gaps were filled by the review of a personal correspondence file of the former NDP Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, but this file was incomplete. The Ministers of the Environment, Labour and Human Resources for the present Social Credit administration, who are in possession of the complete set of files, refused to allow access to them.

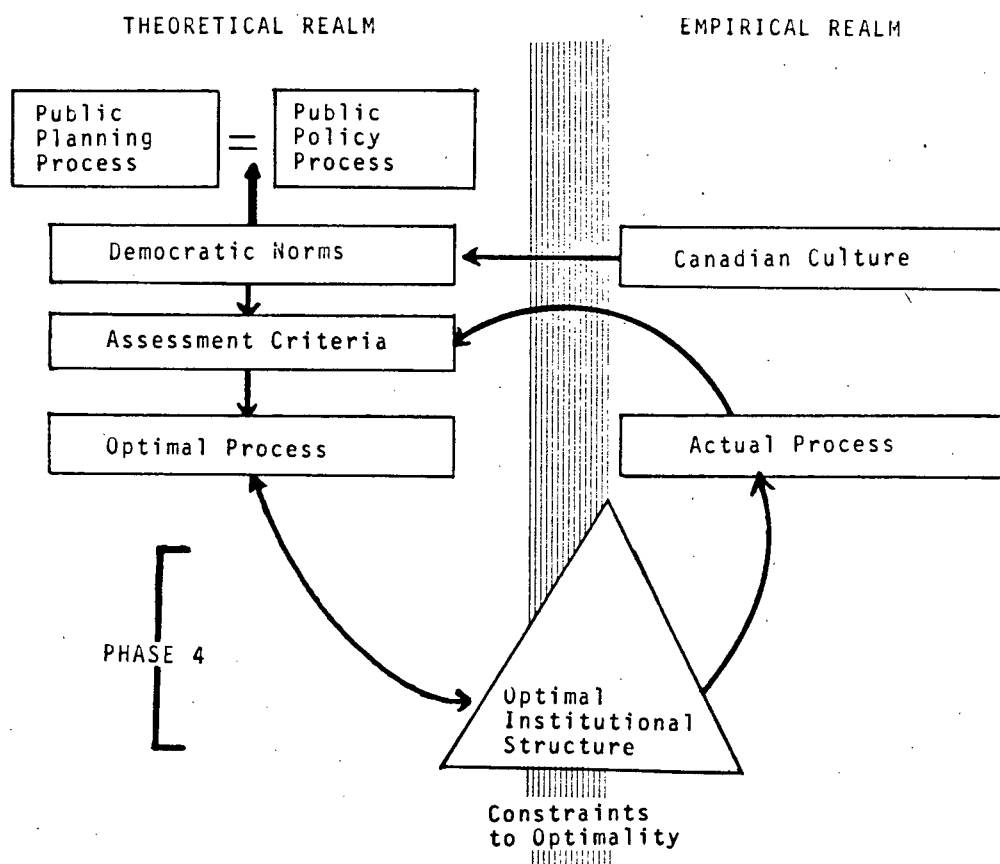
Other gaps in information were filled by a review of the local Burns Lake newspaper between January, 1972 and July, 1979. Also, copies of the overview of the Burns Lake process (descriptive portion, Chapter VI) were sent to two persons actively involved in the process for comment on the factual details. Still, the inability to view the set of government files relating to the process was a serious impediment to documenting the details of the process. There may still be certain inaccuracies of detail; hopefully these are inconsequential to the analysis of the Burns Lake process.

Because the Burns Lake process is considered to be an example of a "good" process, it meets the assessment criteria rather well, but not completely. Certain key constraints to optimality emerge as factors which inhibit the attainment of



assessment criteria. If no major constraints had inhibited optimal performance, the institutional framework would have been judged as "optimal" or "near optimal", and no adjustments would have been necessary. In terms of Figure 1, the "Optimal Institutional Structure" and the "Actual Institutional Structure" would have been the same (see Figure 2 below), and the study would have ended. However, since certain institutional changes could have promoted a better process, a normative model of regional government is developed and illustrated in Phase 4.

FIGURE 2: Phase 4-Promoting The Optimal Planning/Policy Process



#### Phase 4: Promoting The Optimal Planning/Policy Process

As Figure 2 illustrates, the substitution of the "Optimal Institutional Structure" for the "Actual Institutional Structure" would induce the actual policy process to meet the assessment criteria. This would attain a synthesis of the theoretical (normative) and the empirical.

Since the empirical testing of a normative model of regional government is beyond the control of the researcher, the operation of the model is illustrated rather than tested. Accordingly, in Chapter VII, the Burns Lake process is transposed to the new regional institutional context and the differences in the two processes are highlighted to emphasize the advantages of the regional government model.

The design of the model is based on the synthesis of theoretical literature and the application of the normative assessment criteria to the empirical reality of Canadian and in particular British Columbian cultural, institutional and physical environments. In this sense, the Burns Lake process and institutional context themselves contributed to the aspects of the design of the regional institution.

Because of the nature of and necessity for empirical input into institutional design if new institutions are to be "optimal" and not "utopian", there are also empirical constraints imposed to the scope of the design of the institutions. Thus the scope of this thesis is limited to provincial and regional institutions, while federal and

municipal institutional reforms are omitted. The empirical case studied also limited specific considerations to those of British Columbia, although the general aspects of institutional design, hopefully, are applicable to other provinces in Canada. Chapter VIII, therefore, makes the aspects of the institutional design, rather than the Burns Lake process, the central theme.

## CHAPTER II: THE NATURE OF THE PUBLIC PLANNING PROCESS AND IT'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL PROCESS

There is no complete theory of planning.<sup>1</sup> The bits and pieces of theory which do exist do not fit into a comprehensive whole, but instead reflect both the diversity of opinion of those who are called to the planning profession, and the diversity of roles which the 'planner' has been called to fill. All planning activities have both procedural and substantive aspects, and it is virtually impossible to favour one procedure over another, or one policy alternative over another without referring to one's set of personal values in order to make that choice.

In this sense, there can really never be any scientific or objective theory of planning.<sup>2</sup> Even Faludi's esteemed work Planning Theory begins with the premise that the purpose of planning is to promote human growth by the use of rational procedures of thought and action.<sup>3</sup> This value judgement on Faludi's part colours his concept of the optimal planning process and the role of the planner. Human growth is a substantive objective which implies that a "better" situation

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<sup>1</sup> i.e., procedural planning theory

<sup>2</sup> That is, one can talk about a theory of planning, but not without the introduction of values.

<sup>3</sup> Andreas Faludi, Planning Theory (Glasgow: Bell and Bain Ltd., 1973), p. 35.

should result from the planning/decision-making process, while the planner surfaces as a key figure in directing this process of human growth. No doubt, as the protector of the "public good" the planner in this role will feel he or she should have a significant influence on the alternative course of action chosen. On the other hand, if he had begun from the premise that the purpose of planning was to promote the development of human or social choices, Faludi would have depicted the planner in a background position operating to promote the optimal performance of the political process of social choice<sup>1</sup>

Faludi is not the only planning theorist who insists on beginning his discussion by a statement of the purpose of planning. However, other theorists advance other purposes. For example, some see the redistributive function as the main reason for planning (e.g., Davidoff),<sup>2</sup> while others believe the purpose of planning is to encourage the development of government policy as a context for better public decisions (e.g., Mann, Kaufmann, Krumholz).<sup>3</sup> In this latter role, the planner may work on the

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<sup>1</sup> John Friedman's "transactive planning" style is an example of the planning theory which may follow from such a premise. See also: Melvin M. Webber, "A Difference Paradigm for Planning, in Burchell and Sternlieb, eds., Planning Theory in The 1980's, (New Jersey: Rutgers U. Press, 1978), pp. 151-162.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Davidoff, "The Redistributive Function in Planning: Creating Greater Equity Among Citizens of Communities," in Burchell and Sternlieb, eds., p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> L. Mann, "Planning Behaviour and Professional Policymaking Activity," in Burchell and Sternlieb, eds., p. 113; J. Kaufmann, "The Planner As Interventionist in Public Policy Issues," in Burchell and Sternlieb, eds., p. 179; Krumholz, Cogger and Linner, "Make No Big Plans....Planning in Cleveland in The 1970's," in Burchell and Sternlieb, eds., p. 29.

"inside" of government as a policy analyst and advisor, or on the "outside" as an advocate for the adoption of specific policy alternatives. Whichever the role, the emphasis is on advancing the substantive aspects of policy rather than promoting the optimal policy formation process.

These examples represent only a few of the positions held concerning the purpose of planning: the number of possible positions is indefinite. The ultimate challenge for the student of planning faced with such diversity of opinion is to develop a personal philosophy of planning which complements his or her own goals and values. In this paper, many of the questions explored concerning the structure of regional government and its relationship to planning are rooted in the author's concept of planning. Although a comprehensive discussion of planning theory is beyond the scope of this report, the purpose of the thesis inquiry will be better understood if these theoretical roots are outlined for the reader.

Planning at the individual level is a process of applying forethought to action. In this sense, planning is a conscious activity which can be attributed to the intellectual capacity of the human species. Those who practise planning in their daily lives are presumed to be able to better control their environment,<sup>1</sup> and therefore to derive more benefits from their environment than those who act on impulse. This individual

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<sup>1</sup> Here the term environment is not restricted to the physical environment.

planning process can be understood in terms of six interrelated characteristics: planning is purposeful, future creative, systemic, judgemental, action-oriented and on-going.<sup>1</sup>

To say that planning is purposeful is akin to saying that planning is a conscious activity: the actor perceives that there is something to be gained by thinking through and choosing the decisions and actions which are perceived to deliver the most benefit. The changes which result from decisions and actions taken will be manifest only after the action is taken. Therefore, the planning process is future creative.

Moreover, the process of choosing the best decisions and actions requires the analysis of multiple and interrelated factors pertaining to the substantive aspects of the planning task. Because the actions taken concerning one aspect of an individual's life are not confined to impacting that particular area of the individual's environment, the analytical phases of the planning process include contemplation of the chain of events from a given decision, which also leads to the consideration of alternative decisions and actions as a matter of course. The planning process is, therefore, systemic by nature.

The emergence of choices results from the systemic nature

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the discussion of the characteristics of the planning process was based on the work of Gary Paget in his discussion paper Towards a Theory For Environmental Planning. (Student Discussion Paper, Number 2, Faculty of Environmental Studies, Toronto, York U. Press, 1976.) The number of characteristics has been expanded.

of the planning process, but the course of action chosen is not made apparent by the analytical process alone. The planning choice is judgemental since it requires the evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of alternative courses of action according to the value framework and the goals (purposes) of the individual. The uncertainties of the future and the risks involved in certain decisions are paramount to the judgemental quality of the planning process.

If the process ends at the point of choice of the preferred alternative, the process is not a planning process, but merely a speculative process. A planning process requires that action be taken, and therefore, that the alternative choices considered be realistic choices which can be implemented without an unreasonable amount of risk for the individual affected, and which can be implemented within the constraints of the individual's resources. Plans which are impossible to implement, or which one has no intention of implementing, are merely dreams.

Even after action is taken by the individual, the process of planning does not stop. Because of the future orientation, or the systemic and judgemental aspects of the planning process, chances are that the manifested outcomes of the chosen action can be improved, especially since what were before uncertainties now become knowns. The individual therefore continues to monitor, evaluate, modify or change the course of his or her decisions and actions. Planning is then a continuous, on-going process.



The six characteristics of the planning process thus far have been discussed as they pertain to the individual who makes his or her own choices and decisions. As soon as the planning process becomes an external activity, that is, as soon as an individual (or group) is charged with conducting the planning process on behalf of someone else, there is a seventh characteristic which must be added to the list: planning is transactive.<sup>1</sup>

This transactive characteristic of the planning process is interrelated with the other six characteristics described. Thus transactions take place at all phases of the process: the definition of purpose, the discussion of alternative futures and the consequences of alternative choices, the decision, the implementation, and the monitoring. For example, in the situation where a business person has hired a consultant to analyse certain investment possibilities, communications between the client and planner plus any outside actors (e.g., development or construction firms) will be frequent. The client may be called on to contribute more to defining purpose, or making the final choice (with advice) while the consultant may play a larger role in the analytical phase of the process. However, whatever the specific role of the consultant, that role alone does not constitute the planning process. The whole

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<sup>1</sup> Note: An individual planning process may be transactive if the individual chooses to seek advice or information. However, this is not a necessary or required characteristic of the individual planning process as it is in the collective planning situation.

planning process includes all the transactions undertaken, while the planning system includes all those people or firms involved in the process.

The same is true of any planning process undertaken within the governmental structure. That is, the planning system is comprised of numerous government and private agencies and individuals, and the planning process constitutes all those transactions undertaken. No one person or agency controls the entire planning process. Undoubtedly, both government agencies and private firms have always made conscious and calculated decisions and therefore planning has always been undertaken - even before the advent of planning as a profession. It would be restricting to explore planning theory in terms of what professional planners do, since planning as a profession is not developed to its full potential.

Since planning is so universal an undertaking, it would seem that planning is considered a desirable undertaking, that is, that the process of reflective and purposeful decision-making is a desirable process, not that what professional planners currently do is always desirable. However, the development of a planning profession itself indicates that there exists a perceived need to improve the planning process (particularly the public planning process), which in turn implies that many of the decisions taken or programs advanced have had outcomes which were less than optimal. Means and ends are not separate, but interrelated aspects of a planning process. The logical extension of these observations is that an

improvement in the planning process should lead to an improvement in the substantive outcome of the process. The optimal planning process should result in the best decisions possible for a particular circumstance. An important planning task<sup>1</sup> is therefore to seek means of improving the planning process.

As was previously noted, the public planning process is transactive and therefore the planning system constitutes all those groups and individuals concerned in a particular planning situation.<sup>2</sup> The optimal planning process would be characterized by the proper integration of the interests and contributions of each of the individuals and groups in the planning system. But the recognition of an "optimal" process requires that value judgements be made, and the question is: Which set of values could legitimately be used to evaluate the public planning process?

Since the public planning process<sup>3</sup> is unavoidably linked to the socio-political processes of a particular region, this cultural context, which is itself value laden, cannot be ignored by the investigator. The values with which this study is

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<sup>1</sup> This would be a "meta-planning" task in the terminology of the planning theorists.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter IV will further elaborate how the seven principles of planning are related in the public planning process.

<sup>3</sup> i.e., public as opposed to private sector planning.

concerned are therefore those of a democratic, pluralistic and Canadian society.<sup>1</sup>

In the final analysis, because the public planning system is contained by the socio-political context in which the planning process is being conducted, the public planning system and the public policy development system are the same. The optimal planning process and the optimal policy development process are also congruent. Project and program planning are not distinct from policy development but are rather spatial and sectoral manifestations of the policy development/planning process. Essentially, the only "means" that exist to improve the planning/policy process on any kind of systematic and regular basis are institutions.

An institutional framework is defined as an "interrelated set of rules (laws, regulations, customs) and entities (organizations and individuals) which determine what decisions are made and actions taken in a specified area of human activity."<sup>2</sup> If institutions are means and not ends in themselves, they can only be judged either by how well satisfied people are with the services they produce, or by how well the process "through which decisions are made and actions taken" meet certain assessment criteria. Since this study is concerned with the means of improving the planning/policy process, it is

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<sup>1</sup> These values will be defined in the subsequent chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Irving K. Fox, "The Institutional Framework for Regional Environmental Management," unpublished manuscript, July, 1972, p.1.

the later method of assessment which is relevant.

The first step in designing an institutional framework which would promote the optimal planning/policy process is to examine the values of the democratic, pluralistic, B.C. society and from them derive assessment criteria for the optimal planning/policy process.

### CHAPTER III: THE DEMOCRATIC NORMS OF THE PLURALISTIC, CANADIAN SOCIETY

In Chapter II it was concluded that the optimal public planning process, because of its containment by the socio-political context, was a parallel process to the process of public policy development. In order to be able to judge one process better than another, it was also noted that the application of a value system to the process was inevitable. The most legitimate set of values to adopt when assessing a public planning process is thus derived from the democratic, pluralistic, Canadian culture.

For each operating principle of a democracy, there is an underlying ideal or value to justify it. H.B. Mayo, in An Introduction to Democratic Theory<sup>1</sup> identifies four interrelated operating principles of a democratic system. These principles can be explained both in operational and normative forms, so that the operating principle itself reflects the democratic value when expressed in terms of what should be.<sup>2</sup>

The first of these interrelated principles is the popular control of policy-makers. This refers to the electorate's ability to remove the policy-maker from office if he or she does

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<sup>1</sup> See H. B. Mayo, An Introduction to Democratic Theory (U.S.A.: Oxford U. Press, 1960), pp. 60-244.

<sup>2</sup> Mayo, pp. 67.

not adequately represent or advance those policies of priority to the electorate. In a country such as Canada which is large both in geographic and demographic terms, this representative form of democracy necessarily replaces the direct form of democracy in which citizens vote on actual policy issues. In normative terms, there should be popular control of policy-makers: decision-makers should be accountable to the electorate.

The second principle of democracy is political equality. Each adult citizen is entitled to one vote which counts equally, that is, votes are not weighted according to one's social or economic significance. This process allows the popular control of policy-makers. Again, in the Canadian context of representative democracy, it is often impossible to ensure that each vote counts equally. However, continual adjustment and reform of government institutions would be characteristic of a democratic society seeking to attain the goal of political equality.

The third interrelated principle of democracy is political freedom or effectiveness of popular control. This principle refers to the ability of a democracy to maintain popular control over policy-makers and to ensure political equality. It refers to the tolerance within a democracy for other political viewpoints but it also refers to the maintenance of institutions in the system which operate to deter minority control of policy decisions. Such institutions include the freedom to vote without coercion via secret ballot, the choice of at least two candidates for varying policy choices, etc. In normative terms,

therefore, a democracy should be able to maintain open debate and diversity of opinion, while continuing to maintain the support or observance of convention of those who lose out or are compromised in specific policy choice situations.

The fourth principle of democracy states that when the representatives are divided, the decision of the majority prevails. The majority rule principle can be defended on efficiency grounds in the name of expedience, but it is better defended ideologically on the grounds that if each vote counts equally, the majority of the votes must be worth more than the minority. If the majority does not rule, then some sort of minority interest must prevail.

However, the majority rule principle does not operate in isolation from the other three principles of a democracy, and it is thus tempered by its interrelationship with other democratic values. Since policy-makers must rely on the popular vote for support, the diverse opinions tolerated by the system must be not only heard but considered if the democratic institutions are to maintain the support of the electorate. In normative terms, therefore, majority rule should be the preferred decision rule to minority rule, but this should not permit the tyranny of the majority over minority interests. In a representative government, majority interests may or may not manage to elect the majority of the legislature and therefore it is particularly important that specific policy debates do not remain solely within the government legislature.

Apart from the values associated specifically with the four



principles of democracy, there are other values associated with the whole of the democratic system and which follow logically from its operation. The values referred to here are those inherent in the system itself, those which make democracy preferred over any other system of government even when substantive benefits from alternative political processes are perceived to be the same. Mayo has advanced one general and several specific values as being inherent in the democratic system. These values include:

Democracy is for the people, (general value);  
 Democracy allows the peaceful adjustment of disputes;  
 Democracy assures peaceful change in a changing society;  
 Democracy provides the orderly succession of rulers;  
 Democracy utilizes a minimum of coercion;  
 Democracy promotes diversity;  
 Democracy attains justice;  
 etc.<sup>1</sup>

These values, although present within a democratic culture are, for the most part, not of specific concern to the purpose of this thesis, since they are manifested only when a democratic system is in operation. For example, that government is "for the people" in a democracy can only be justified on the grounds that there should be popular control over policy-makers, since any dictator could claim that he or she was governing on behalf of the people.

There is, of course, another very important aspect to the intermingling of means and ends in a democratic system: the political system is only a part of the larger cultural

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<sup>1</sup> For more discussion of this topic refer to pages 211-243 of Mayo's book.

environment in which it operates. For this reason the principles of popular control, political equality, political freedom, and majority rule, although present in all democracies, will find unique expression in various cultures.<sup>1</sup> The principle of popular control, for instance, refers to control of the government by those persons whom the cultural system identifies as possessing such a mandate. Thus it was possible for democracy to operate prior to the franchise for women, but having made the cultural change in ideology, it would be impossible for Canadians to retract the vote from half the population without considering such a move to be somehow undemocratic. Countries which have a narrower franchise are also considered "less democratic" by Canadian standards.

The point to be made here is that, when advancing the values behind the four principles of democracy as those which can legitimately be used to develop assessment criteria for the public planning/policy development process in British Columbia, these values must be interpreted and stated in light of the Canadian culture. We are interested here in those cultural aspects which are sufficiently "universal" to be held across democratic political parties and to have influenced the procedural aspects of the democratic system. There are three, again interrelated, dimensions of the Canadian culture which cannot be ignored: the importance of the individual; the pluralism (diversity) of the Canadian social system; and the

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<sup>1</sup> Although the presence of democracy does in turn mean that there will be some cultural similarities between democratic nations.

unique Canadian history.

The origin of our emphasis on the importance of the individual is unclear. It could be argued that the importance of the individual in Canadian culture is rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition, in the common law tradition, or in one or more other traditions of which democracy is only one. Whatever the origin of this value, it remains prevalent today. This value is expressed politically by the extension of the belief in political equality and political freedom to include the belief that the individual has a set of personal freedoms and human rights which must be observed by other individuals as well as by government institutions themselves. This value is expressed in the concept of natural justice - that all persons have the right to be heard and are entitled to due process of law, and in British Columbia it has been expressed in the Human Rights Code. The expression of this value in a provincial statute does not isolate the consideration of the importance of the individual to those specific instances alone, but it is a value which permeates all substantive policy debate and all institutional design in this province.

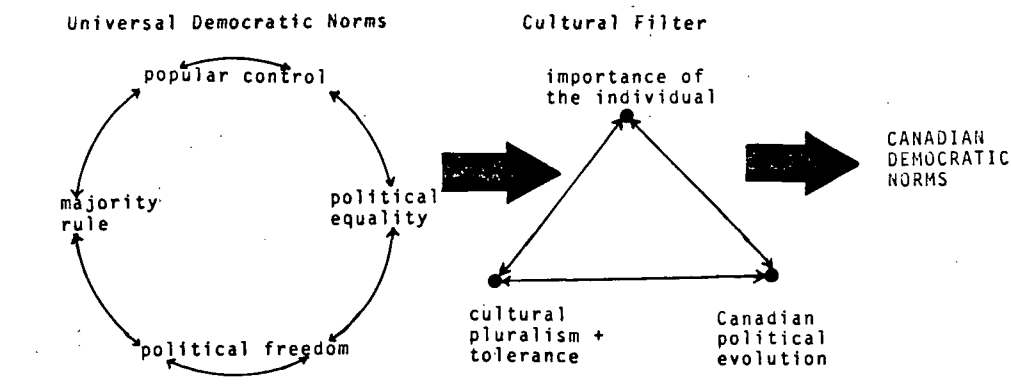
The cultural pluralism which exists in Canada is a product of the European subjugation of the North American native culture, of our amalgamation of French and English into one Canada, and our encouragement of immigration to build this country. Although racial prejudice undoubtedly still exists privately, publicly Canadians support the cultural development and cultural expression of various groups of people. The

inherent value is that a diversity of culture and opinion adds richness to the Canadian culture. This value is expressed politically through many policies and programs which recognize the special needs of various groups, but procedurally, the cultural minorities are considered to have rights of expression equal to those of English and French Canadians. Unfortunately, the procedural and institutional aspects of the democratic system are culture bound and require that the participants in the system have adequate knowledge and skill in using the system before their minority position will be heard. Therefore, although cultural diversity is recognized as a Canadian value which has influenced the political ideology, there are as yet institutional deficiencies which inhibit the full realization of this Canadian democratic norm.

Finally, one cannot ignore the unique Canadian history when discussing the way the normative aspects of the democratic principles are expressed. History here refers not only to the roots of the Canadian culture and its evolution over time, but it also refers to the interaction of the people with their total environment, physical and human, and the evolution of that system over time. The dynamism of this process has meant that Canadian political institutions are different in many ways from institutions in other democratic nations. The sum total of Canadian federalism and regional decentralization, the marriage of the legislative, executive and judicial powers (via an increasing emphasis on statute law), the notion of parliamentary supremacy in an increasingly complex representative democracy, combined with the belief in the importance of the individual,

cultural pluralism, and popular control of that legislature, have led to popular demand for public participation in specific policy issues and a resentment of administrative regulation where the policy-maker is insulated from popular control.<sup>1</sup>

With this cultural filter held before the four democratic principles outlined at the beginning of this chapter, the values or norms behind the functioning of the Canadian, pluralistic, democratic system can be identified.



<sup>1</sup> In this paper it is asserted that the demand for public participation in the policy process is increasing, and therefore that the correct set of Canadian democratic norms should include values associated with participation in the policy process. Because of many factors (e.g., the increasing number and complexity of policy problems; the conflict of resource uses; a higher level of education in general; improved communications and informations systems) the process of electing political representatives is an inadequate means of expressing preferences for various public policies. The democratic institutions (including conventions) must adapt to meet the demands of this new social environment so that public participation is incorporated into the policy process between elections as well. This transition has not been completed yet.

Because of the lag between the public demand for participation and the institutional adaptation necessary to accommodate it, many policy processes in Canada may be shown to fall short of this norm. One could also say that there are politicians who have not as yet accepted the inevitability of this transition, but even those politicians would be hesitant to admit to a public demanding an audience that they did not hold this value. In short, the demand for public participation can still be considered a norm (what should be) central to the design of new planning/policy institutions.

These democratic norms may be stated as follows:

1. There should be popular control over policy makers.
2. Public participation of all affected groups should be encouraged in each policy issue.
3. There should be political equality of each vote.
4. Total participation of all eligible voters including minority groups should be encouraged.
5. The effectiveness of popular control and public participation should be ensured.
6. The individual's rights should be respected and guarded.
7. Majority rule should be tempered by minority participation in elections and in the policy development process.

If these norms are held as the ultimate goals of the democratic political system in British Columbia, the design and performance of the B.C. government institutions should meet them to as great an extent as possible given realistic temporal, financial and technical constraints on their attainment. These are also the norms which if fully met, should produce the optimal planning/policy development process.

CHAPTER IV: THE OPTIMAL PLANNING/POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS:  
DERIVATION OF ASSESSMENT CRITERIA.

Having extrapolated the democratic norms relevant to the Canadian context, the assessment criteria of the optimal planning/policy development process can now be derived. This can be done by translating each of the six characteristics of the individual planning process to a collective process (according to the transactive nature of public planning) and interpreting the quality of each aspect of the process as it would be if all the democratic norms were met. The outcome will be a series of statements about what the public planning process should be like. Turning the positive statements to interrogative ones will give a set of assessment criteria.

Interrelated Characteristics of The Individual Planning Process	Interrelated Characteristics of The Public Planning Process	Interrelated Set of Democratic Norms	Optimal Public Planning/Policy Development Process
1. Purposeful	× Transactions	× Democratic Norms	= Optimal Derivation of Purpose
2. Future Creative	× Transactions	× Democratic Norms	= Optimal Derivation of Future Choices
3. Systematic	× Transactions	× Democratic Norms	= Optimal Analysis of Future Choices
4. Judgemental	× Transactions	× Democratic Norms	= Optimal Decision
5. Action-oriented	× Transactions	× Democratic Norms	= Optimal Implementa- tion Procedure
6. On-going	× Transactions	× Democratic Norms	= Optimal Monitoring+ Reassessment Procedure

# A. The Optimal Derivation of Purpose in a Democratic Planning/Policy System

The purpose of an individual's planning is clear to him or her and requires no justification to anyone else.<sup>1</sup> In a democratic society, however, each individual, group, government agency or firm has its own set of goals or purposes which it seeks to satisfy. The problem for the whole planning/policy system is obvious: Whose goals should be satisfied?

New policies may develop from political campaign promises, or from a problem<sup>2</sup> or issue which has impressed the politicians in office as being of sufficient magnitude to warrant attention. In either case, politicians will act on those issues and problems which they perceive will secure them most political support. Thus goal priorities are set as a result of a political process. In a democratic system, this is a legitimate means of establishing planning priorities since elected officials have been given their mandate directly from the electorate.

The present system of establishing purpose in a planning/policy context, however, is not operating at an optimal level. Under our current system, a problem or an issue may be brought into the realm of political perception only if a group

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<sup>1</sup> This statement endorses the concept that planning is a conscious, goal seeking, and therefore rational process. This is not to say, however, that all human actions are conscious and rational. Those human processes which are not conscious, goal seeking processes are not considered in this paper to be planning processes.

<sup>2</sup> A problem is seen as a negative manifestation of a goal.



is large enough or organized well enough to demand political attention. In such a system, many issues are never responded to until they become grave problems and cannot be ignored. For this reason, the political system is often accused of only "reacting" to problems rather than actually "planning" in the sense of acting so as to avoid the development of certain problems.

In the optimal public planning/policy situation, the elected representatives would still be charged with the responsibility of establishing priority of purpose, but resources and avenues for the participation of all interested groups and individuals in expressing their problems and needs should be made available. In order to ensure the effectiveness of participation of all groups, including minority groups, these avenues for expressing various grievances and needs should be institutionalized (that is, they should not be ad hoc or discontinuous) and they should be publicized so that people know the opportunity is available and so that the procedure for participation is clear. Thus the politician, in the optimal situation, should be aware of the problems and issues of various groups of people, in various regions of the province. The severest problems might still dictate the priorities, but the severe problems of minority groups could not be so easily overlooked as they can be in a situation where the planning/policy development process is less than optimal. Also, the monitoring of public grievances and needs will allow more efficient channeling of government resources on lower priority items into those policy areas which seem to have most support or which seem to be potential future problem areas should

government resources fail to be channeled in their direction.

The first assessment criteria of the optimal planning process can therefore be expressed as: Are there sufficient channels and other resources available for all individuals and groups to communicate their problems and needs to accountable political officials?

Once the priority problem area has been identified politically, however, action cannot be taken to resolve the problem until it has been defined in more specific terms, and from the viewpoint of all individuals and groups who will be affected by the policy action taken. The specific definition of the problem will affect the means chosen to overcome it, and in a democratic society, the problem definition should result from an interactive (transactive) process. The second assessment criteria of the optimal planning/policy process is therefore: Do the varying perceptions of all immediately affected groups and individuals enter into the definition of the problem?<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Several of these assessment criteria were also part of an unpublished paper written and circulated by Irving K. Fox to his Policy Planning class at U.B.C.

B. The Optimal Derivation of Future Choices in a Democratic Planning/Policy System

The planning/policy development process is future creative in the sense that the decisions and actions taken are intended to change a policy existing at the time of the decision. The development of the policy content, or the "means" of enacting the change, also requires the imaging of the desired future, which is of course related to the original conception of what the present problem is.

In a democratic policy system, there will not be consensus on what the ideal future should be, again because of the diversity of priority goals held by individuals, groups and agencies. In a system which respects the opinions of all individuals, there is no justifiable non-political way to examine alternative futures, since the political process is the means by which the electorate has chosen to resolve the conflicts in social choices.

In the existing planning/policy process, because government responsibilities are so dispersed, government agencies are obliged to consult and interact with numerous other government as well as private agencies with overlapping jurisdictions or conflicting objectives. The policy content and alternatives, therefore, develop only after a process of negotiation.

Because the planning/policy development process is and should be transactive, this process of interaction should not be replaced with pat technical solutions to problems which, in any

case, will often be opposed when they are about to be implemented. The optimal planning/policy process should instead be characterized by openness and by an attempt to get as many alternative viewpoints on a situation as possible. This open process would also be the type of process most conducive to fostering innovation and creativity in the process of molding the future. Assessment criteria three of the optimal planning process can then be posed as: Do the varying perceptions of all affected and interested groups and individuals determine the alternative policies that are considered? If this criteria is met, it should be assured that a wide variety of alternatives are considered.

However, simply to welcome alternative proposals is not sufficient. There may be many minority (and also innovative) solutions overlooked because various groups are not sufficiently organized or do not have sufficient financial and other resources to undertake a study and submit a proposal. Since the democratic values insist that the effectiveness of popular control and public participation should be ensured, and that majority rule should be tempered by minority participation, there should be ample provision to ensure that such wide spread participation is secured. The fourth assessment criteria is thus: Are resources allocated to ensure that all groups with differing perceptions have had the opportunity to participate in the formulation of alternative proposals?

C. The Optimal Analysis of Future Choices in a Democratic Planning/Policy System

Once the alternatives have been posed in the planning process, there must be an evaluation of each alternative before the choice of the preferred alternative can be made. Of course, the individual usually evaluates the alternatives in light of his or her objectives or goals and chooses the alternative which he or she perceives to best meet those goals. This is a systemic process which involves considering the ramifications each of the alternative choices will have on other aspects of the individual's life in the future. There will also be some uncertain aspects to the analysis because the future cannot be perfectly known before it happens.

In a transactive, public planning/policy process, the task of evaluation is not so simple. Each of the proposals have been submitted by individuals, groups or coalitions which have different goal sets. Each proposal will be somewhat biased in favour of the values held by the group submitting the proposal. In a sense, each of the groups has "pre-evaluated" the proposal for themselves, and has thus supposedly considered all the systemic repercussions of adopting the proposal. However, this evaluation will be somewhat narrowed by the bias of the group.

Inevitably, in a policy development situation there will be a concerted effort on the part of each group submitting its proposal to advance its proposal by discrediting others. Indeed, there will undoubtedly be negative or positive ramifications of each proposal which have been overlooked because of the biases

of each group, and because of the systemic and complex nature of the policy development process. The optimal policy/planning process would therefore take full advantage of this interactive process of policy analysis. Comments on each proposal should be welcome from every interested group or individual, but also, opportunity for dialogue between the groups is essential. From this dialogue a short set or a modified set of proposals should emerge. The fifth assessment criteria of the optimal planning/policy development process would then be: Are the varying perceptions of all affected and interested groups, agencies, and individuals incorporated into the evaluation process?

And again, because our democratic values insist that the system of institutional arrangements ensure that maximum participation be secured, including participation of minority groups, resources should be available to those who are unable to participate otherwise. Some groups may become involved in the planning/policy process at this later stage because they are opposed to a particular alternative, whereas before they were indifferent when the problem definition and the call for proposals was being made. The sixth assessment criteria is thus: Are resources allocated to ensure that all groups with differing perceptions have in fact had the opportunity to participate in the evaluation of alternative proposals?

Within the government structure itself, agency biases may inadvertently dominate the process of generating and evaluating alternatives. Therefore, the institutional arrangement itself

should provide checks and balances on bias to ensure the optimal democratic process. The seventh assessment criteria might therefore be: Are there checks on government agency biases which might otherwise inadvertently dominate the planning/policy process?

#### D. The Optimal Decision in a Democratic Planning/Policy System

In an individual planning process, final choice remains with the individual. This choice will be made in the face of a number of possible uncertainties and risks which will be weighed and balanced against the individual's goal set, which means that the final decision is a matter of individual judgement.

In the collective, societal context, there are also uncertainties and risks to be taken. The process of involving as many groups as possible will minimize the number of uncertainties and risks, but there is no possible way to eliminate all of them. In fact, the various groups involved in the process may often differ in their opinion of which risks are worth taking and which are not.

The final decision or choice remains a governmental one and to this extent, it may be made by an individual or committee which may have its own preferences in the matter. In a complex representative democracy, there has been a tendency for more and more responsibility to be delegated to the administrative agencies of government. Although it is understandable that the legislature representatives cannot possibly make all decisions which affect the electorate, the optimal situation is for the

decision to be taken by an elected representative who is subject to popular control. An eighth criteria of the optimal planning/policy process is therefore: Are final choices made by accountable representatives or by the public generally?

E. The Optimal Implementation Procedure in a Democratic Planning/Policy System

Once a decision has been made, action must follow or else the process is not a planning process, merely a speculative one. Since the whole point of consciously thinking ahead, or planning, is to secure more benefits by doing so, the individual must also think carefully about how to implement his or her decisions. The consideration of alternatives, this time of alternative ways to take action on the decision, again becomes an important aspect in the planning process.

In the public planning/policy process the transactive and pluralistic aspects of the democratic system are again an important factor to consider. As are the advantages of encouraging alternative policy proposals, encouraging alternative views on how to best implement a policy would encourage creative and innovative ideas. Sometimes the suggestions on how to implement a policy might be included in the proposals and the interaction on implementation may take place simultaneously with the evaluation of alternative proposals, while at other times, especially if the alternatives evaluated are modifications of those proposed, the dialogue over how best to implement the policy may be reserved till after the



policy has been decided. In either case, the optimal process includes as many alternatives as can be suggested by the many groups and agencies involved, some of which may even incorporate the principle of public participation in the actual implementation process. The final decision on implementing arrangements, again, rests with the accountable representative. A ninth evaluation criteria for the optimal planning/policy process is therefore: Are alternative implementation arrangements proposed and analysed by the various groups, individuals and agencies involved in the process?

Since the optimal process of public planning/policy development is transactive and encourages creative and innovative solutions for problems, the innovative solutions should not have to be rejected in favour of more conventional solutions which may not yield as many benefits, but which are better known and are perceived to involve less risk. By taking an experimental approach to the implementation of policies, many of the uncertainties about a particular course of action can be uncovered with a minimum risk factor. If the policy alternative with higher risk yet greater benefit proves to be unsuccessful in an experimental setting, the the next best alternative can still be implemented. A tenth criteria for assessing the optimality of the planning/policy process might then be: Is the implementation process subject to experimentation where uncertainties are fairly numerous?

F. The Optimal Monitoring and Reassessment Procedure in a Democratic Planning/Policy System

A planning process does not end after the chosen course of action is underway, since the individual will want to assess the success of a decision so that mistakes made can be avoided in the future, and so that the good aspects of the decision can be reproduced.

Too often in the public policy process it is assumed that planning is over when the policy alternative chosen has been implemented. Because of the interactive character of the policy/planning process it is inevitable that some feedback will occur, but this will usually be negative feedback in the form of complaints. Moreover, policies which are mediocre or even inefficient may be judged successful just on the basis of the absence of complaints from the public. Such policies may continue to exist without change until the negative aspects of them are sufficiently large to create a public outcry. Only then does the policy undergo revision and updating. Such a policy/planning process is certainly far from being optimal, or even "good" planning. The lack of continual monitoring and policy revision undoubtedly leads to the inefficient use of scarce financial and other resources.

The optimal policy/planning process is characterized by continual monitoring and revision of policies. The design of the monitoring system should also be coupled with explicit provision for adapting policies to conditions revealed through experience and experimentation. This means that the design of the

implementation arrangements as well as the design of the chosen policy alternative should indicate the recognition that the process of planning/policy development is continuous. There are two assessment criteria which are related to this aspect of the optimal planning process: Is there explicit provision for the continuous assessment of results and the effectiveness of implementing arrangements?; Is there explicit provision for utilizing these assessments to adapt policies and implementing arrangements accordingly?

However, the monitoring phase of the planning process, like the other phases, should be transactive and include the perceptions of all those persons and agencies affected by the policy. If implementing arrangements are conducted through government offices, there may be a tendency for agency bias to dominate not only the type of information monitored, but also the adjustments to policy content and procedure. Part of this bias will be overcome in the optimal process by institutional checks on agency bias which are a condition of assessment criteria seven. However, these intergovernmental checks must also be supplemented with non-governmental viewpoints on the problems and successes of the policy, and on how to modify the policy. The design of the monitoring procedure should therefore include provision for input from all interested groups. Where the results of monitoring are technical, such reports should be readily available to private groups and their comments should be a required component of the monitoring phase of planning. The final assessment criteria of the optimal planning/policy process is therefore: Are the varying perceptions of all affected and

interested individuals and groups included as inputs to the assessment and modification procedure?

G. Assessment Criteria of the Optimal Planning/Policy Process

According to our set of democratic norms, the optimal planning/policy development process can be judged according to its ability to meet thirteen assessment criteria. These criteria, which are expressed as interrogatives of the normative statement of what "should be", are:

1. Are there sufficient channels and other resources available for all individuals and groups to communicate their problems and needs to accountable political officials?
2. Do the varying perceptions of all immediately affected groups and individuals enter into the definition of the problem?
3. Do the varying perceptions of all affected groups and individuals determine the alternative policies that are considered?
4. Are resources allocated to ensure that all groups with differing perceptions have the opportunity to participate in the formation of alternative proposals?
5. Are the varying perceptions of all affected and interested groups, agencies and individuals incorporated into the evaluation process?
6. Are resources allocated to ensure that all groups with differing perceptions have in fact had the opportunity to participate in the evaluation of alternative proposals?
7. Are there checks on government agency bias which might otherwise inadvertently dominate the process?
8. Are final choices made by accountable representatives or by the public generally?
9. Are alternative implementation arrangements proposed and analysed by the various groups, individ-

uals and agencies involved in the process?

10. Is the implementation process subject to experimentation where uncertainties are fairly numerous?

11. Is there explicit provision for the continuous assessment of results and the effectiveness of the implementation arrangements?

12. Is there explicit provision for utilizing these assessments to adapt policies and implementation arrangements accordingly?

13. Are the varying perceptions of all affected and interested groups and individuals included as inputs to the assessment and modification procedure?

These criteria, if perfectly met, represent the absolute or ideal conditions which must prevail if the planning/policy process is to be considered optimal. Of course, a complex and representative form of democracy such as we have in Canada does not always operate at the "optimal" level. Indeed, from an empirical point of view, there are several significant constraints to the achievement of optimality which eliminate the possibility of any planning/policy process meeting all these evaluation criteria completely. These constraints, which are outlined in Chapter V, are very real problems which must be confronted and either eliminated or minimized in the pursuit of the optimal policy/planning process.

However, the constraints themselves, although significant parameters of the policy/planning process, should not be built into the normative assessment criteria of the optimal process. The set of assessment criteria represents the goals of the ideal planning/policy process which may be met or missed to varying degrees. If the constraints were to be incorporated into these

assessment criteria, the normative concept of optimality would be undermined, and positive change (reform) would be inhibited. For this reason, the constraints to the optimal performance of the planning/policy system are considered separately as adjustable parameters to the planning/policy process, rather than as elements of the assessment criteria set (goals).

## CHAPTER V: THE CONSTRAINTS TO ACHIEVING OPTIMALITY IN THE PLANNING/POLICY PROCESS

For each substantive aspect of the planning/policy task there will be constraints specific to the substantive aspects of the policy alternatives considered, as well as general constraints related to the procedural aspects of the planning process. It is the set of constraints related to the procedural aspects of the planning/policy process with which this paper is concerned. There are five categories into which these constraints to achieving optimality in the planning/policy process may be classified: financial; temporal; human; technical; and institutional.

The financial constraints to achieving the optimal planning process include all those direct costs to government of completing negotiations and other transactions. These costs will include the salaries of both permanent and temporary staff (e.g., consultants); the costs of generating information for and processing communications from various individuals and groups as well as the public at large; the costs of supporting various participating groups. These costs are constraints because government financial resources are not unlimited.

The temporal constraints to achieving the optimal planning/policy process include not only direct but indirect transaction costs. For instance, the number of policy transactions in which politicians (especially Cabinet ministers)

can participate is limited by time. Also, the time required for policy development increases with the number of individuals and groups included in the transactions of each phase of the policy/planning process. Both of these factors contribute to delays in policy decisions and implementation, and thus to increased direct costs of transactions as well as increased indirect costs in the form of foregone benefits from delays in policy implementation.

The constraints of time and money are relatively easy to anticipate and minimize compared to the human constraints which can inhibit optimality in the planning/policy process. These are the behavioural aspects of individuals and groups which as well as being more difficult to anticipate and minimize, are also less precisely defined.

For instance, one could view as a constraint to the optimal planning process the expectation that individuals and groups will act to maximize personal utility. Granted, the planning process by definition is a rational process, and those governmental and non-governmental groups and agencies organized around common objectives may be viewed as acting in a rational manner if they proceed to meet those objectives. Even the individuals who do not participate in a "rational" manner in the process, but who instead react in a negative or positive manner to situations which enhance or threaten their lifestyle or environment are seen to react in their own self-interest. However, the best solution at an individual or group level may not be best at the societal level. The human constraint to



achieving the optimal planning/policy process is not the diversity of "rational" groups and/or "non-rational" groups: such a diversity of viewpoints, if utilized, can lead to the development of better and more innovative policies. The human constraint to achieving the optimal policy process is rather the expectation that groups and individuals will always try to "maximize their personal utility", since it assumes that people are unable and unwilling to look beyond their own self-interested context. If this expectation is a dominant constraint to the planning process, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy: groups and individuals do become defensive and sometimes unreasonable because they have come to view other groups and individuals as rivals, rather than as partners in what is, at the collective, societal level, a common process.

On the other hand, it is possible that some groups or individuals involved in the planning/policy process will refuse to compromise. It is also possible for one group to have comparatively more influence in the process if it possesses strong leadership. In fact, the reaction of an entire group may depend on the persuasive abilities of one or more respected individuals within a particular group. The specific dynamics of any given planning/policy process will be different, and while some behavioural constraints may be anticipated, others remain unforeseen.

Two of the most important human constraints which inhibit public participation in the planning/policy process can be anticipated. These are a shortage of community level leadership

and limited community energy to participate in the policy process. The dynamics of these two factors can mean, for instance, that the same individuals at the community level may be the principal participants in all community policy development processes. If these individuals become the community spokespersons by self appointment, or by default, there is no guarantee that their opinions will be supported by the community at large. At the same time, involving the mass participation of the community will in most instances be impractical from a temporal and financial perspective. However, despite the difficulty of incorporating public participation in the public planning/policy process, it is an aspect of policy development which demands consideration: community groups will become involved in the policy process if only in a negative manner to block unpopular policies.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The constraints discussed in this chapter are taken from the point of view of the "government." From the "public's" point of view, all these constraints are present, but from a quite different perspective.

For instance, from the "public's " point of view, there are two major constraints to participation: (1) the high transaction costs of participation, and (2) lack of analytical resources for participation. Transaction costs are so high that any one individual can participate in only a small fraction of the issues that affect him or her. Thus an individual limits participation to high priority issues. From the "government's" point of view, this limiting of participation to priority issues is seen as a human constraint to optimality in the form of "limited community energy for participation." In the final analysis, however, if the constraints to optimality from the government's point of view are eliminated or minimized, the public's constraints of high transaction costs and lack of resources would be minimized as well. The net result should be more public participation on more issues.

The problems of incorporating public participation in the planning/policy process is also related to the technical constraints to achieving the optimal planning/policy process. Because we have a complex and highly specialized society, participation in the planning process concerned with specific policy issues can require a level of technical expertise which local leaders may not possess. As the size of the community or region defined to participate in specific policy issues increases, the possibility of finding these technical specialists within the community increases, but the possibility of involving all community members in the planning process decreases.

Within the governmental structure there also exists a problem of ensuring that social choices remain within the realm of the political process and do not become technical choices made by technical experts.<sup>1</sup> The complexity of our social system has made specialization necessary. It would be impossible for

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<sup>1</sup> The desirability of ensuring that elected representatives are actively involved in the policy process is also related to the necessity of accommodating public participation. Since public participation in specific policy issues involves only those groups and individuals who have designated that issue a personal priority, at no time will every affected individual become involved in a particular policy process. Because one function of the elected representative is to keep in touch with the preferences of his or her constituency members, he or she is responsible for taking these preferences into account and for acting on a policy issue in view of the balance of interests which exist. For this reason, it is the elected representative and not the technical expert or even the participating groups who should make final decisions. Thus an optimal system is open to public participation, helps defray transaction costs and technical resource costs for those who give high priority to an issue (i.e., those participating) but assures final decisions are made by accountable individuals.

every politician (or every public participant) in the planning/policy process to have complete understanding of all policy issues. The necessity of the technical advisor is therefore undisputed; the amount of control exerted by any one advisor will be limited by the number of technical opinions which are considered in the course of the transactive policy/planning process.

Both of these dimensions of the technical constraints to achieving the optimal planning/policy process are in turn related to the problem of integration of the participation of groups and individuals at various phases in the policy process. As the number of participants increases, as the scale and complexity of the policy issue increases, the problem of coordination can become a constraint to achieving the optimal process since its achievement is thwarted by lack of policy action or implementation. The crucial aspect of dealing with the technical constraint to optimality is to find the best scale on which to deal with specific policy issues.

Institutional constraints to optimality of the planning/policy process can also exist if institutions have not been adapted or changed to fit the needs of the B.C. society of 1979. Because institutions are the means of attaining the optimal policy process, the institutional constraints will be directly (but inversely) related to the assessment criteria devised for the optimal planning process (Chapter IV).

For instance, agency bias would be considered an institutional constraint. There is a natural tendency for an

individual (public servant or otherwise) to be loyal to the goals of the agency for which he or she is employed. This may be a desirable aspect of the planning process of private agencies, but in the public planning sphere where the planning/policy system crosses single purpose agencies and involves the political forum for trade-offs in social choices, agency bias can inhibit these trade-offs by limiting access to the forum and in doing so, distorting the weighting of social goals in favour of certain clientele groups. This bias is transferred to the decision-making level as well.

Because institutional constraints are inversely related to the goal set for the optimal process discussed in Chapter IV, there is no need to elaborate each of the possible constraints which might arise. They can be significant constraints, however, to the policy-maker who tries to conduct a policy process different than that process normally associated with the design and therefore the goal set of the existing institutional framework. In such situations, the institutional framework cannot only frustrate the policy process, but in doing so can also lower the quality of policy output.

These constraints outlined in Chapter V will be present to a variable extent in each specific policy process and they will tend to frustrate the achievement of process goals (i.e., assessment criteria). However, they are treated separately from the normative assessment criteria because they are not fixed but are adjustable parameters of the planning/policy process.

The challenge to a society which seeks to achieve

optimality in every policy/planning process is to design an institutional context for policy formation which permits the achievement of the goal set by minimizing the constraints to optimality. The first task in addressing this challenge is to assess the given institutional framework via assessing a process of policy formation which is considered to be a "good" process.

CHAPTER VI: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE PLANNING/POLICY PROCESS IN  
THE B.C. INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT: THE CASE OF BURNS  
LAKE NATIVE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

A. Institutions for Planning/Policy Development in B.C.

FIGURE 3: Overview of The Institutional Framework

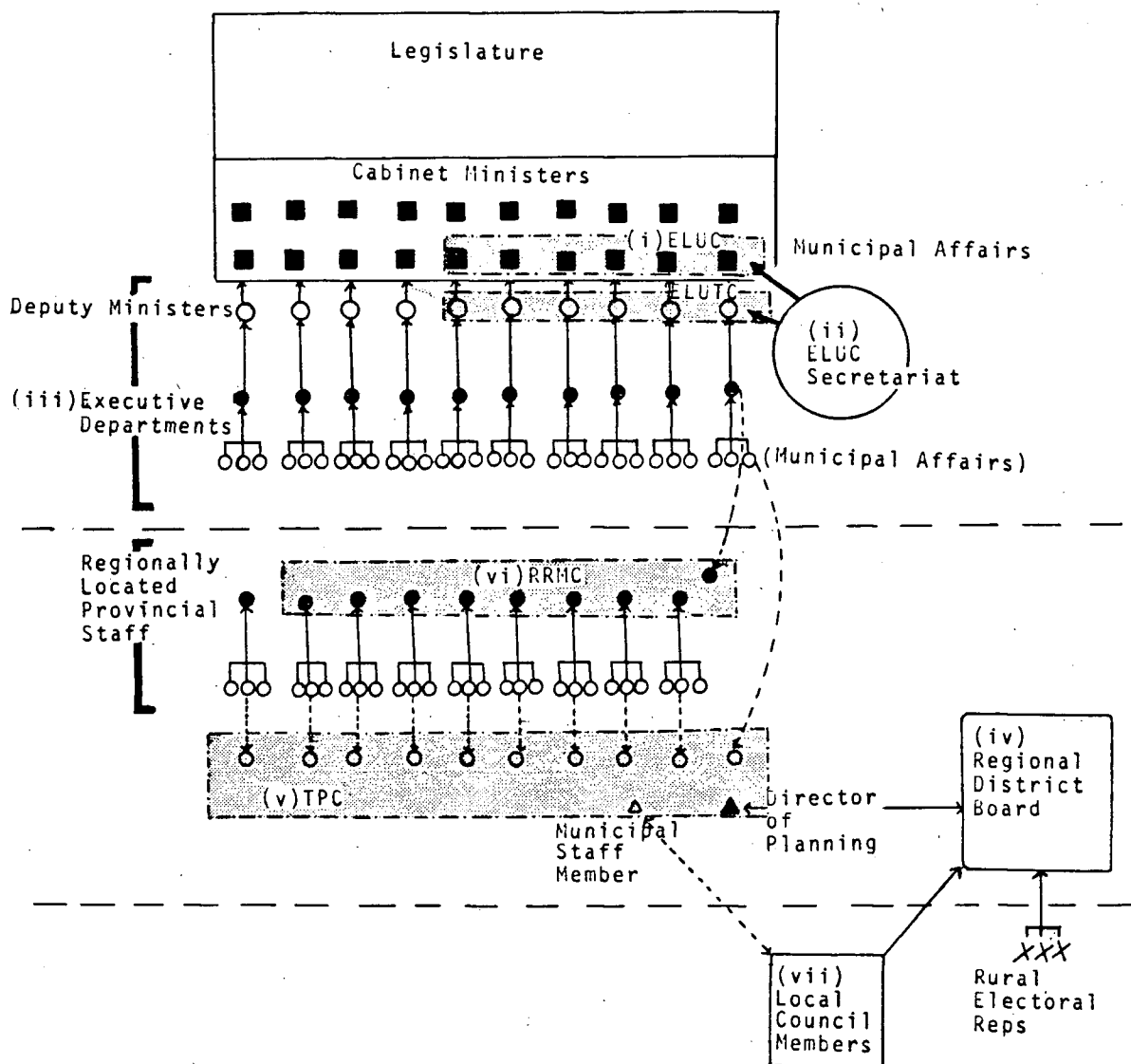
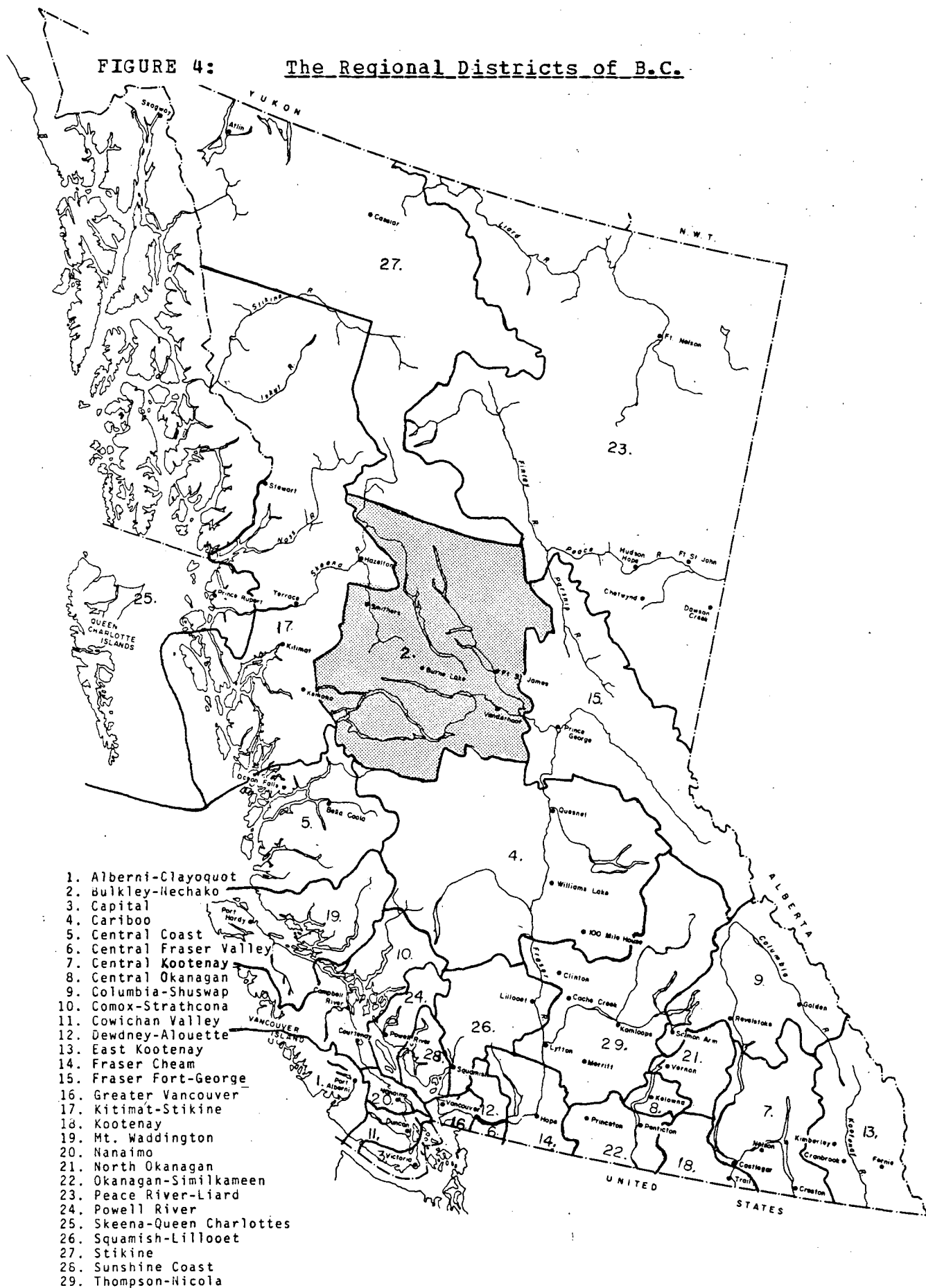


FIGURE 4: The Regional Districts of B.C.







(i) The Environment and Land Use Committee

The Environment and Land Use Committee (ELUC) is a Cabinet committee created formally under the 1971 B.C. Environment and Land Use Act as a forum to resolve interagency conflicts over resource use. It succeeded the unofficial Land Use Committee (1969) which was composed of the same ministers (Municipal Affairs; Health; Mineral and Petroleum Resources; Lands, Forests and Water Resources; Industry, Trade and Commerce; Agriculture) minus the Minister of Health. The Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources chaired the committee until 1976 when the department was split into Forestry and Environment by the new Social Credit administration, whereupon the Minister of the Environment became chairperson.

The 1971 Act also provided for the establishment of an Environment and Land Use Technical Committee (ELUTC) comprised of the deputy ministers of the same departments. However, this committee was not used extensively by the New Democratic (NDP) government in office at the time when the Burns Lake Native Development Corporation was being established, and is therefore of no concern to the planning process to be discussed.

(ii) The Environment and Land Use Committee Secretariat

The Environment and Land Use Committee Secretariat was established by the NDP government in 1973, pursuant to the Environment and Land Use Act. It was to be the support staff for the Environment and Land Use Committee. The Secretariat has no responsibilities to the line departments, but is directly

accountable to ELUC.

(iii) Government Departments

Each of the ministers oversees an hierarchically structured administrative department, including those ministers who are members of ELUC. Many of the departments have some regionally located staff, and especially the resource departments have found it necessary, in a province as large as British Columbia, to employ regional staff. A notable exception is Municipal Affairs, which had no staff located in the regions until recently when one planner was given an office in Prince George. The Ministry does employ other staff with regional responsibilities, but these staff members are located in Victoria.

(iv) Regional Districts

There are twenty-eight functioning (one non-functioning) Regional Districts in B.C., each of which has a Regional District Board as the prime decision-making body. Although these districts are loosely referred to as "regional governments", they are technically functional units established to coordinate the delivery of services to municipalities, unincorporated settlements, and the surrounding rural population. In the Honourable Dan Campbell's<sup>1</sup> own words, the Regional District

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<sup>1</sup> The minister in office at the time the Regional District concept was adopted.

concept is "a device for combining functions. It is not a political amalgamation. It is a functional amalgamation in which a board is established to undertake services and administer them jointly."<sup>1</sup>

The Regional District Board is composed of Directors appointed by and from the Councils of incorporated municipalities in the district, plus elected representatives from electoral areas which encompass rural and other unincorporated populations. The number of directors on each Regional District Board and the number of votes each carries is based on population.

Regional Districts are children of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, having been created under the B.C. Municipal Act in 1965. Because they were created under the Ministry of Municipal Affairs alone, Regional District powers are restricted to those powers available to local governments. The only obligatory function of every Regional District is the land use planning function; other functions are voluntary and created pursuant to the letters patent of the Regional District. Hence, the functions of no two Regional Districts are identical, yet all functions are limited to functions of local government.

Generally speaking, therefore, Regional Districts are exempt from participation in resource management and can be excluded from input into resource policy development.

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<sup>1</sup> B.C., Minister of Municipal Affairs, The Regional District Concept (Victoria, 1968).

Technically, however, there is some ambiguity in the statutes as to whether or not Regional Districts have responsibility for land use planning of crown lands in the district. There is a tendency for the various government agencies to presume that regional land use policies are subordinate to provincial interests or policies, where "interests" could mean purely administrative matters as well as legislative changes. For instance, planners employed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs have the ability to reject or require modifications of settlement (and community) plans, or to withhold various grants from the Regional Districts if they do not agree with some aspect of the District's plan. In such instances, the District planner may have professional qualifications equal to those of the provincial employee, yet the provincial planner has the veto power. Similarly, the provincial agency representatives on the Technical Planning Committee (discussed below) have the responsibility of ensuring that regional rezoning applications which are counter to "provincial policy" are not approved.

The point to be made is that Regional Districts are very weak institutions which often play a minor role in the provincial policy development process. They are likely to be included in the process only when locational or zoning decisions which affect district territory must be made in the course of policy development. Participation within a given region is more likely to take place through Municipal Councils or other local groups. The Regional District Board is rarely the focus of regional interests.

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako is the district affecting the community of Burns Lake (see Figure 4). At the time of the development of the Burns Lake Native Development Corporation, a regional plan did exist and therefore there was some notion of regional land use policy. The Regional District was involved in the discussion over the new mill site in Burns Lake, but had no influence on the mill's location. Because of the restricted nature of the Regional District's powers, it had no focus as a "regional government" which should be intimately involved in the policy process concerning either the mill or the Burns Lake Native Development Corporation.

(v) Technical Planning Committees

The Technical Planning Committees (TPCs) are composed of the Director of Planning for the Regional District, the Medical Health Officer, one municipal employee, representatives from Lands Service, Water Resources Service, Agriculture, Highways and Public Works, Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife, Parks, Municipal Affairs and Housing, Mines and Petroleum Resources, designated provincial and/or federal crown agencies. Their purpose is to coordinate Regional District land use planning policies with other provincial and municipal level policies. As was mentioned, the provincial policies tend to form a restrictive context for regional land use policy.

The members of the TPC tend to be junior staff members except for the Regional Planning Director. The resource agency members are often regional staff, but the participant from the

Ministry of Municipal Affairs is located in Victoria and must often travel great distances to attend meetings. Recently, the representative for northern British Columbia has been located in Prince George.

Most meetings are routine meetings to process rezoning applications. Provincial resource agency representatives comment on whether rezoning applications conform to or conflict with departmental policy.

#### (vi) Regional Resource Management Committees

Regional Resource Management Committees (RRMCs) are comprised of senior level officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Health, Highways and Public Works, Mines and Petroleum Resources, Municipal Affairs and Housing and from the Land Management Branch, Pollution Control Branch, Water Rights Branch, Fish and Wildlife Branch, Parks Branch and Forest Service. (The participants are essentially the same now as they were in 1974 although several of the branches have been moved around between ministries with various governmental reorganizations.)

There are seven Regional Resource Management Committees (RRMCs) and Regions (see Figure 5) whose function it is to resolve resource conflicts and to eventually formulate "integrated resource management plans" at the administrative level (ELUC being the legislative level of integration). These committees were being formed, and common boundaries for the various resource agencies were being delineated in 1974

simultaneous to the Burns Lake project. The RRMCS are bureaucratic committees which would not have the mandate to engage in the kinds of negotiations which were central to the Burns Lake planning/policy process.

No representative from the Regional District is a member of the RRMC and regional planning directors may attend meetings of the committees by invitation only. RRMC boundaries do not conform to Regional District boundaries, and, as can be seen in Figure 5, the RRMC boundary cuts through the middle of Bulkley-Nechako Regional District in a north-south direction. There appears to be, therefore, poor integration of provincial resource policy with provincial land use policy. If the Municipal Affairs representative is supposed to be the liason person between the RRMCS and the Regional District, it is no wonder there is little communication. Municipal Affairs representatives were and are (except for one person recently hired in Prince George), located in Victoria; they have to travel great distances to attend RRMC meetings, and it is often difficult enough for these people to attend Technical Planning Committee meetings plus attend to the overload of administrative work they are required to do in Victoria. Moreover, since the regional land use policy responsibilities have been semi-decentralized to the regions,<sup>1</sup> there is no logic in requiring the provincial employee to represent the voice of land use policy for the Regional District. Clearly, where, as in the

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<sup>1</sup> "Semi" because provincial representatives must approve settlement plans before they become "official".



Regional Districts, land use planning has been extended to non-urban areas, establishing land use policy must involve trade-offs in resource uses for certain areas. It is difficult to comprehend how any administrative institution such as the RRMC or the Regional District via a planning staff can be expected to assume the responsibility for these societal choices which belong in the political forum, not in an administrative committee.

(vii) Municipal Institutions

The municipal government of interest to this study is, of course, the Village of Burns Lake which had a population of roughly 1300 in 1971. However, the estimated population of Burns Lake and the surrounding area was 4,000-5,000.<sup>1</sup> It is unlikely that this population grew much between 1971 and 1974 since there were severe economic and unemployment problems in the area prior to the construction of the Babine Forest Products mill and the development of Burns Lake Native Development Corporation in 1974.

A significant factor to note is that the Native Indian people in the Burns Lake area represent about 40 percent of the population, and a disproportionate number of these people were unemployed in 1974. There are four bands of Indians in the area, and three reserves within the boundaries of the village. Each of

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<sup>1</sup> AVG Management Science Ltd, Socio-Economic Impact on The Burns Lake Area of The Babine Forest Products Mill (September 16, 1974), p.3.

the bands has an elected council and a management staff, and because of the special status of native people under the national Indian Act, the municipality of Burns Lake has neither the power to regulate the use of reserve lands, nor to tax these lands. The municipal government is therefore a corporation created pursuant to the provincial Municipal Act whose membership does not include the native population. Those native people who live on reserves had, therefore, no formal legal association with the provincial government prior to the establishment of the Burns Lake Native Development Corporation. It is possible, however, for native peoples to incorporate under the Municipal Act.

(viii) Temporary Planning Committees

The preceding are the major formalized provincial government institutions through which the Burns Lake development project either was or might have been conducted. There was an additional temporary "intergovernmental task force" which was established to coordinate the administration of spin-off developments (e.g., community planning) as a result of the Babine-Burns Lake Native Development Corporation project, and to ensure that other departments were well informed of the details of the project's development. This task force included representatives from the Departments of Housing, Education, Municipal Affairs, Human Resources, Economic Development, Labour, Health, Northern Affairs, as well as a representative from B.C.H.I.S. and from Canada Manpower. The link between this task force and the Burns Lake project was through the

Secretariat.

B. Overview of The Establishment of The Burns Lake Native Development Corporation (BLNDC)

As was mentioned during the discussion of institutions for planning in British Columbia, the Burns Lake area was in severe economic depression in 1972 when the NDP government won the provincial election. Unemployment rates were very high, particularly among the native people, and the subsequent low morale which accompanies all such desparate conditions had led to the compounding of alcoholism and other social problems. In fact, the northwestern portion of B.C. in general had been considered a "depressed region" by the federal Department of Regional Economic Expansion (DREE), and a provincial study of the spatial distribution of socio-economic conditions in the northwest indicated to the government that Burns Lake should be a priority area.

Since the economy of the northwest is dependent on the forest industry, the NDP government reevaluated the forestry production potential in the region and examined Timber Sale Harvesting Licences which were about to expire to determine whether companies in possession of these licences had kept timber harvesting up to quota levels. It became apparent that the timber supply was being underutilized, and that additional Timber Harvesting Sale Licences could be issued. 180,000 cunits of timber were in the Burns Lake area. However, the notice of sale of crown timber which appeared officially on August 10,

1973 was not the traditional sort of notice, but instead indicated that the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources intended to take an innovative approach to development in the forest sector in the northwest.

The notice of sale of the Burns Lake timber (a 12 year licence) specified that tenders must include a proposal for the establishment of a manufacturing plant in the Burns Lake area, and that proposals "must meet provincial requirements pertaining to environmental protection, and water, soil and timber management." Preference was to be given to proposals "offering the best combination of employment, social benefits, wood utilization and revenue" (emphasis added). In short, economic criteria were to be balanced with social considerations for the evaluation of proposals.

Six proposals were submitted by the deadline (Nov. 2, 1973): Carrier Lumber Co. Ltd. of Prince George; Wiere's Sawmill Ltd. of Quesnel; Fraser Lake Sawmills Ltd. of Fraser Lake; West Fraser Timber Co. of Quesnel; Babine Forest Products Ltd. of Vancouver; and B.C. Association of Non-Status Indians (BCANSI). Three of the proposals were immediately rejected (Carrier Lumber Co. Ltd., Wiere's Sawmill Ltd., Fraser Lake Sawmill Ltd.) because they failed to adequately meet the set of specified objectives. The remaining three proposals required somewhat more detailed evaluation before a choice could be made.

The Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources asked for a final opinion from a forest management expert at the University of Washington before arriving at a final decision.

Both the West Fraser and the Babine proposal leaned more heavily towards emphasizing the economic benefits Burns Lake and the province would gain if their proposal were adopted. In fact, Babine stated clearly that it considered its responsibility should be economic while the government's should be social. However, the design of the Babine mill included provision for the initial utilization of less sophisticated equipment to accommodate a local, unskilled workforce, and the overall number to be employed as well as the revenue to the province was greater under the Babine proposal than under the West Fraser bid.

An acceptance of Babine's proposal would also have the positive spin-off effect of contributing to the overall economic stability of the northwest. Eurocan and Cancel, each of which would own 26 percent of Babine Forest Products Ltd., (Weldwood would hold the other 48 percent), were experiencing extreme economic difficulties. If the consortium's proposal were to be accepted, Eurocan and Cancel's chip shortage problem would be solved and they would be able to improve the economic performance of their other mills.

The proposal submitted by the B.C. Association of Non-Status Indians (BCANSI) met social objectives better than economic ones. Their proposal would have involved all native people in the area (including the status Indians whose cooperation BCANSI had already secured) in a major economic undertaking. Profits from the mill would provide the financial resources for the further social and economic development of the

native peoples in B.C. through BCANSI. However, the native proposal relied heavily on federal funds for its realization, and there was less confidence in this group's ability to find and assemble a competent management team. Moreover, the proposed mill was smaller than either the West Fraser or the Babine mill, and employment and provincial revenues would have been appreciably less.

When it became evident that the Babine consortium's proposal was the preferred one, the native group, in alliance with West Fraser, made a joint proposal to the provincial government. The two were to share 50-50 in the undertaking. BCANSI argued that this would eliminate any objections the province might have about management problems. However, the proposal was technically the same as West Fraser's initial proposal which had been evaluated as less beneficial than Babine's proposal. Also, this joint proposal had come rather too late, since it is likely that the government had indicated its preference to Babine and was negotiating some sort of agreement with the consortium to allow for native participation in the mill.<sup>1</sup>

On April 4, 1974, the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources announced the acceptance of the Babine consortium's proposal and said that the native group could have an 8 percent share in the mill "if they wished". In the same press release,

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<sup>1</sup> Babine agreed to native participation subject to several conditions. Some of these points required negotiation before an agreement amenable to both parties could be made.

the minister indicated that, in cooperation with the Department of Labour and Human Resources, he was also anxious to see native involvement in sub-contract and independent logging operations as well as in arranging special training programs for new jobs that would emerge in the region. The native group was given until April 23 to decide.

On April 9, 1974, nine representatives of the status and non-status Indians met with the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources in Victoria. Leaders for the native group demanded that a social package be part of the the 8 percent economic participation. If certain conditions were not met, they threatened to frustrate or block any attempts to harvest the timber in the Burns Lake Public Sustained Yield Unit. It was agreed at this meeting that a local committee which included representatives from all bands should meet in approximately a weeks time with a government interdepartmental task force of representatives from all relevant government departments, to discuss the dimensions of native participation in more detail. Following this meeting, the native group met with the Minister of Human Resources who agreed to fund the expenses of the two committees.

The "Conditions Precedent to The Construction and Operation of A Sawmill Complex At Burns Lake, B.C., By Babine Forest Products Ltd. " were presented to the interdepartmental task force on April 17, 1974. This was just the beginning of the intensive negotiations to follow between the native people and the government.

There were ten "Conditions Precedent" which were elemental to the design of the native participation project. These were that the government should:

1. Provide core funding for a Burns Lake Community Development Project;
2. Provide the initial funding to the proposed Burns Lake Native Development Corporation;
3. Provide for the establishment of a Native Economic Fund;
4. Provide for the right of first refusal to present Burns Lake area residents regarding all employment opportunities during both the construction and operational phase of the proposed sawmill;
5. Provide for the establishment and operation of the proposed Burns Lake all-purpose training centre;
6. Provide for the designation of the Burns Lake area as a priority area under the National Housing Act sections concerning the neighbourhood improvement program, renovation assistance program and Section 40 concerning loans;
7. Provide for purchase, on behalf of the native people of Burns Lake, the initial 8 percent equity and debt security position offered by Babine;
8. Provide for a reopening of the shareholder's agreement among the members of Babine to provide for the on-the-job training programs the content of which was to be determined by Babine; and for the sale of chips to Babine members;
9. Provide for the sale of the assets of Babine for the sum of one dollar to the proposed Burns Lake Native Development Corporation at the end of the 12 year TSHL licence;
10. Provide for the underwriting of all costs incurred by and on behalf of the native people in their activities related to negotiations.

On April 29, the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, the Minister of Highways, and the Minister of



Industry, Trade and Commerce met with the Burns Lake Council to discuss various matters, one of which was the native participation in the sawmill. In the evening, a public meeting was held to inform the community members of the government's concept of northern development and of the negotiations which were taking place between the province and the natives. The plans for the mill were proceeding during negotiations.

At the meeting, the resentment of some of the non-native population towards "government handouts" surfaced. Undoubtedly, some who disliked the program could be classified as racists, and furthermore, those who would be so vocal at the public meeting about the financial aid the native people were receiving are likely to have been among the prejudiced. However, the dislike of generous government spending is shared by many Burns Lake residents who are not racist.

Other than the Minister of Lands, Forest and Water Resources' visit to Burns Lake on April 29, the details of the legal and financial design of the Burns Lake Native Development Corporation (BLNDC) and the final provincial-native agreement were conducted by the Director of the Secretariat. These various procedures and communications were spread over approximately two and one-half months (the rest of April through to the beginning of July).

Although the native negotiating group was acting on behalf of the four status Indian bands as well as BCANSI, BCANSI dominated the negotiation process. In fact, at some crucial meetings, no representatives from the status Indians were

present and the proceedings of the meeting were communicated to the Burns Lake Indian bands via the Burns Lake representative who was himself a member of BCANSI.

Of the ten "Conditions Precedent" negotiated, condition 9 (rights of first refusal to TSHL and sale of Babine to Burns Lake Native Development Corporation (BLNDC) for \$1.00 after TSHL expiry date) was totally unacceptable to the minister. The Indians did not push this point.

Condition 4 was also unacceptable to the minister (right of first refusal to Burns Lake residents of employment opportunities), although the minister agreed in principle that a policy of employing local residents as much as possible should be pursued. This concept was in fact introduced to Babine who agreed to pursue it. There was discussion also about the fact that it would be desirable to keep the non-native-native employment ratio at least 60-40, which was the ratio of the composition of the two groups in the community.

Condition 10 (funding for negotiation costs) had essentially been satisfied by the previous (April 17) commitment of the Minister of Human Resources.

Essentially, conditions 2 (funding of BLNDC), 3 (Native Economic Development Fund), 7 (purchase of the 8 percent share) and 8 (on-the-job training, chip agreement) were the main points of negotiation between the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water resources and the native group. The minister had agreed to meet these conditions: it was the details of amounts, repayment

schemes, etc. which had to be settled. The government had assembled its own ideas on what the relationship between the province and BLNDC should be. Except on a couple of points, this arrangement was not challenged.

The Director of the Secretariat, on behalf of the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, insisted that the Community Development Project (condition 1), the training centre (condition 5) and the housing aspect (condition 6) were matters to be dealt with directly with the ministers and departments concerned. Neither of these ministers were members of the Environment and Land Use Committee and therefore the Secretariat staff was not responsible to these ministers. The details of setting up such programs would be the responsibility of the department staff of these ministers. There was also the feeling on the part of the Director that the economic aspects of the project (BLNDC) and the social development aspects should remain distinguishably separate.

While the native group made little objection to the Director's point with respect to the housing and training centre, they insisted that the Community Development Project was the most important of their priorities, even more important than BLNDC. They threatened to reject all other elements of the package if this Community Development Project was not provided. They wanted the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources to press on the Minister of Human Resources the importance and key nature of the proposal. It was the opinion of the Director of the Secretariat that the chairman of the native committee was

in fact prepared to reject BLNDC if the social package was not delivered.

The Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources upheld the stance that the native group should negotiate with the Minister of Human Resources directly, although undoubtedly the native stance must have been discussed at some point between the ministers. Indeed, not only was the Minister of Human Resources already aware of the Burns Lake project, but so were the Ministers of Housing, Labour, the various ministers in ELUC, and other ministers who may have become involved in the process because of the need for their cooperation with the Department of Municipal Affairs' community planning activities (e.g., Highways). Therefore, when the native group approached the Minister of Human Resources for funding for the Community Development Project, the minister would not have been making an isolated decision to fund a community development project. By funding the project, he was also ensuring the time and money spent on negotiations and planning up to that point had not been for nothing, as well as providing funds for programs which would reinforce native participation on a continued basis.

The native group, at a June 10, 1974 meeting with the Director of the Secretariat had been given three weeks (until July 2) to arrive at a "mutually satisfactory agreement." The agreement of the Minister of Human Resources to fund the Community Development Project was not secured formally until July 2, and on July 4, an "Agreement in Principle" was signed between the native group and the Cabinet ministers involved.

Although an "Agreement in Principle" had been reached, the details of the legal documents remained to be drawn up, and the programs and implementing arrangements for the Community Development Project remained to be designed. Three Contracts with each of Weldwood, Eurocan and Cancel and BLNDC also had to be finalized regarding the nature and extent of native participation. A press release of September 16, 1974 announced the final details of the project, as well as outlined the complementary government programs which were being launched in support of the Burns Lake Native Development Corporation (BLNDC). Under the final agreements:

The Indian people were to participate in the \$14 million sawmill project being developed by Babine Forest Products Ltd.

The native group, incorporated under the title of Burns Lake Native Development Corporation, were in partnership with Weldwood of Canada, Eurocan and Cancel, and were to participate in the activities of Babine Forest products at every level, up to and including membership on the Board of Directors.

The BLNDC by way of a forgivable loan (estimated at \$425,000) from the Provincial Government (funded through the Department of Economic Development) was to purchase an 8 percent interest in Babine. This loan was to be interest free for five years, was to bear interest at 3 percent thereafter, and was to be forgivable or repayable at a rate of 12 1/2 percent each year starting in 1980.

BLNDC was to receive by way of grants from the province (Economic Development), operating funds for five years (estimated maximum \$514,000).

The province, on behalf of BLNDC, was to provide a bank guarantee (estimated at \$720,000) for 8 percent of Babine's bank indebtedness together with 8 percent of Babine's cost overruns.

BLNDC was to appoint one director to Babine's ten person Board of Directors.

BLNDC was apportioned 8 percent of the chip production to sell when and where it saw fit. The Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources had arranged for an export permit to be provided so that these chips could be sold on the world market.

BLNDC was to receive, by way of loan from the province (again, through the Department of Economic Development), an economic development fund of \$500,000. This loan was to be interest free for five years, was to bear 3 percent interest thereafter, and was to be repayable out of income, over ten years, commencing in 1980. This was essentially an advance against profits which would enable BLNDC to fund and develop subsidiary and support industries in the Burns Lake area.

The Babine consortium supported the principle of preferential hiring of local residents prior to sawmill start-up. Babine also agreed to employ a local Native Assistant Personnel Officer for a period of one year during the sawmill start-up period. The cost of this officer was to be borne by the provincial government through BLNDC.

A second legal entity called the Burns Lake Community Development Association (BLCDA) was created under the Societies Act to implement the forthcoming social programs funded by the Department of Human Resources. BLCDA was to be funded for five years, and the programs it offered were to be for the benefit of the whole community, not just the native people. Programs were initially expected to be geared towards providing support programs (e.g., training programs) to promote local participation in the mill labour force.

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Aside from these more formal agreements, a number of complementary support programs were promised.

The Minister of Labour indicated his support for the principle of preferential hiring of Burns Lake residents in the sawmill and promised to develop whatever education and training programs were necessary to fulfill this objective. On-the-job

training programs in cooperation with Weldwood, Cancel and Eurocan were to be a central feature of the minister's support. These were in addition to the regular programs available through Canada Manpower.

The Minister of Housing designated Burns Lake as a priority area under Section 40 of the National Housing Act in order to provide 75-25 federal-provincial cost sharing of the capital cost of acquisition and construction of rural and native housing projects in the Burns Lake area.

The Forest Service provided assurance that logging plans for the area would be approved in such a way as to minimize environmental impact on traplines managed by the native people.

Finally, the provincial government agreed to underwrite the negotiating and organizing expenses of BLNDC and BLCDA.

Although BLNDC and BLCDA were separate legal entities, they were, in another sense, "siamese twins", since several of the directors on the BLNDC board were also on the board for BLCDA, and the president of BLNDC has been on the CDA board from time to time. This is, perhaps, inevitable in a small community. A certain group of people possessing leadership and community organization skills emerge as the key players in many community matters. Both BLNDC and CDA maintained a small support staff which operated out of the same office.

Between the time of the signing of agreements (September 1974) and the mill's opening in June 1975, BLNDC and BLCDA had much to accomplish. BLCDA activities included the establishment

of a Basic Training and Skills Development Program and a Logging Skills Program. BLNDC set up two subsidiary companies: Burns Lake Native Logging Ltd. and Burns Lake Native Trucking. The loans advanced by the provincial government provided seed funding with which BLNDC could obtain additional money through the federal Department of Regional Economic Expansion, ARDA, and the Department of Indian Affairs. Funds were also made available to three native people to enable them to purchase logging trucks.

Later in 1975, the Burns Lake Native Construction Ltd. was formed to build native houses with the aid of CMHC's AHOP funding.

There appears to have been a continued resentment on the part of some individuals in the community concerning the amount of funds which BLNDC and BLCDA were receiving. Moreover, the fact that some of the subsidiary companies of BLNDC (Logging and Construction) were experiencing financial difficulties added to the concern. Resentment was also expressed by local businessmen who disliked having to compete with various native businessmen who had recieved their money as low interest government loans.<sup>1</sup>

Because of financial difficulties, plus a number of poor managerial decisions with respect to the logging subsidiary, BLNDC itself was dissatisfied with its performance. The result

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<sup>1</sup> This resentment was expressed to the manager of BLNDC during the local meeting of the Chamber of Commerce at which the manager had been guest speaker. This was reported in the Lakes District News, the local newspaper (February 26, 1975).



of this dissatisfaction was the resignation of three BLNDC staff members in December, 1975, including the manager and the head of Burns Lake Native Construction Ltd.

Despite the "growing pains" experienced by BLNDC, the entire project, that is, the native participation-BLNDC-CDA support function, produced a high and sustained level of native interest and participation in the sawmill. During the first months of the mill's operation, 148 of the 300 persons employed by Babine were native people. Over a nine month period, there was a 40 percent labour turnover rate in general, but the rate was lower amongst the native people than it was amongst the non-native workers. (Other local sawmills had experienced labour turnover rates of up to 300 percent in the first year.)<sup>1</sup>

In December, 1975, there was a provincial election and the New Democratic Party lost. This left the future of BLNDC and CDA to be determined by a Social Credit administration.

#### C. The Evolution of the Burns Lake Project January 1976 - July 1979

In March 1976, when the annual report of BLNDC-CDA was tabled before the new Social Credit administration, there was some concern over the future of the project, particularly CDA which had no economic assets of its own, but which depended entirely on grants from the Minister of Human Resources. The

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<sup>1</sup> BLCDA, Second Annual Report, p.3.

president of BLNDC reported to the local newspaper that "CDA will probably continue" and that the minister was "impressed" with CDA's work.

However, in July, 1976, the Minister of Human Resources was reported to have been critical of CDA. The Lakes District News wrote that the minister had "major concerns over the management of millions of dollars in BLNDC and CDA."<sup>1</sup> The minister promised continued support subject to three conditions:

- that additional members be added to the board of directors of CDA to ensure a broader representation than existed;

- that members of the department's evaluation team examine CDAs financial records at least four times per year;

- that the minutes of all board meetings be forwarded to the minister.

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There were meetings and exchanges between the minister and the native people who were not at all pleased with the conditions. The native people gained no compromise from the minister and the three conditions were reluctantly accepted. Four non-native board members were added to the 6 member native board, one of which was a government appointed representative. This decision was announced in November, 1976. Upon implementation of the new conditions, several native people resigned as board members and withdrew from participation in CDA because they resented the government's interference in an

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<sup>1</sup> The Lakes District News (July 28, 1976), p. 1.

organization which they had come to view as their own.

During 1977, 1978, there were no major changes in the structure of BLNDC, CDA. The construction subsidiary of BLNDC was liquidated, and although the logging company continued to sustain losses during 1978 as a result of decisions made in 1975, it is currently (1979) "marginal", and cutting quotas are being met. BLNDC has approached the Municipal Council about jointly applying for the municipal tree farm licence which the Council had been promised by the NDP government but which the Social Credit Minister of Forests is opposed to granting.

CDA is still operating with the joint board, and the memory of the forced board expansion is fading in the minds of most native people. The association is concentrating most of its resources on education, counselling and employment services. There are also a few Outreach workers (a federally funded service) working out of the same office. On any single day, both native and non-native persons are seen coming and going.

The native participation in the mill employment is now up to 70 percent and participation is at all levels except foreman, but this is an objective which the management expects to obtain in the near future. The Native Employment Officer has been retained by Babine because this officer proved extremely useful in communicating with native employees.

All except one of the persons interviewed said that they felt the whole project had been a good one, despite the fact that many of these people initially did not approve of the

amount of government funds which was being spent on BLNDC-CDA.

The present Social Credit administration must agree with this position since the initial BLNDC five year contract was renewed in March 1979 for 13 years. The Social Credit ministers responsible for funding BLNDC (Labour, Economic Development, Finance) have a different concept, however, of how the corporation-provincial relationship should be structured. The new agreement brings BLNDC under close supervision of the government. A committee of three appointees (one from each of the three ministries involved) will review how the government money is managed and spent.

The contract is, in financial terms, generous, and the government has decided to advance grants instead of forgivable loans. In brief, the agreement involves:

- doubling the capital loan fund to a total of more than \$1 million;
- annual grants of \$360,000 per year for 13 years (grants are equivalent to 9 percent interest on a loan of \$4 million);
- training grants for 5 years starting at \$25,000 in 1979 and increasing to \$40,500 in 1984.

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At the end of 13 years, BLNDC should be a self-sufficient corporation, completely separate from the government.

#### D. The Burns Lake Process Within The Provincial Policy Context

Policy development is a complex process which can exist on many levels, each level influencing the other. Thus the implementing phase of the policy process may have necessitated the development of a number of specified decision criteria which are themselves the policies of administrators. Over time, if the decision criteria of one administrator appear to be particularly instrumental to the achievement of the desired policy output of the legislated level of policy, these criteria may be written into the statute and therefore become policy on the legislated level (i.e., provincial level). The existence of "levels of policy" also points out the fact that the policy development process is not always associated with the introduction of a statute.

Moreover, the policy process is dynamic and evolves over time. At any particular point in time there will exist mature policies, nascent policies, and policies at various stages of development between, but even mature policies are not closed to modification. The point to be made here is that the researcher who seeks to find "the completed policy process" before attempting to study and assess the policy process will be waiting indefinitely.

From one perspective, the Burns Lake process can be viewed as simply one isolated incident in the implementation of B.C. forest policy. From another perspective, the development of the forest sector in B.C. was itself the implementation phase of yet a higher level of policy - that of socio-economic development

for northwest B.C. And from yet another perspective, the precedent setting participation of native people as partners of a corporate giant and the provincial government was the beginning of new provincial policy towards socio-economic development of native peoples in B.C. The NDP government had intended to expand this concept in other B.C. communities. Since these processes are so dynamic and so complex, how does one isolate the particular policy process to be assessed?

Essentially, in order to isolate a specific policy process, one must be able to identify the essential aspects of the process: establishment of purpose (or definition of problem); identification and assessment of mechanisms to satisfy the purpose or rectify the problem; a choice of mechanism and its subsequent implementation.<sup>1</sup>

The Burns Lake process, despite its localized nature,<sup>2</sup> possesses all of these characteristics.

The original selection of a case study through which to explore the theoretical concepts of this thesis had to be "first glance" or generalized, since there was insufficient time to examine numerous examples in detail before selecting one. The

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<sup>1</sup> Or, in Ranney's terminology, the policy process can be identified as having the following elements: an object to be affected; a desired course of events; a selected line of action; a declaration of intent; an implementation of intent. See: Austin Ranney, ed., Political Science and Public Policy (Chicago: Markham Pub. Co., 1968), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> The term "localized" is preferred to "decentralized" in this instance, since the final decisions were taken by authorities from the province.

author was specifically looking for what might be considered a "good" planning/policy process, since the intent was to examine the planning institutions in British Columbia when they were realizing their best performance. The Burns Lake process had several characteristics which favoured its selection for more detailed examination.

First of all, because the policy process was localized, it could be examined in fair detail within the time constraints of the research. The constraints of access to information (discussed in Chapter I) were reduced.

Secondly, the process represented a multi-dimensional or "integrated" approach to development, since social, economic and environmental considerations guided the whole approach of the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources. This provides for the examination of policy coordination in the face of high temporal and transaction cost constraints to optimality of the planning/policy process.

Thirdly, the native people, who often are a neglected minority group in many policy processes, were actively involved in Burns Lake. The process could not, therefore, be criticized as allowing for the "tyranny of the majority".

Fourthly, there was a high degree of accountability of decision-makers who were, in most cases, Cabinet ministers, as well as, what appeared to be a high level of local participation in the policy process.

In short, the Burns Lake process appeared "at first glance"

to meet many of the criteria of the optimal planning/policy process outlined in Chapter IV. However, since these norms represent "absolutes", and since there are constraints to their attainment, it is more likely that any planning/policy process will be assessed as falling somewhere between absolutely failing to meet any of the norms and succeeding to achieve all of them absolutely. When the assessment criteria developed in this paper are applied in their interrogative form, the answers fluctuate between "yes", "no" and "somewhat", with the majority of answers falling in the "somewhat" category and requiring more detailed discussion.

Such an assessment of the policy process is non-quantifiable and comparative in nature, that is, one process is said to be better than another. The thirteen assessment criteria developed in Chapter IV provide the rationale for preferring one process to another. Where, as in this paper, the approach is normative (i.e., an improved process is sought), the comparison exists between an actual policy process<sup>1</sup> and the optimal process. The optimal process is an "imaged" process where all thirteen assessment criteria are met.

The assessment of the Burns Lake planning/policy process which follows attempts to identify the key elements of the process which failed to meet the optimal process as defined by the criteria and elaborated in Chapter IV. The constraints to meeting the norms are also discussed. In the subsequent chapter,

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<sup>1</sup> -or among actual policy processes



attention is then given to promoting a better process by the adjustment of constraint parameters and introducing a new institutional framework for policy formation.

#### E. Assessment of The Burns Lake Planning/Policy Process

- (1) Were there sufficient channels and other resources available for all individuals and groups to communicate their problems and needs to accountable political representatives?

Somewhat. Because the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources was himself interested in socio-economic development in the various lagging regions of the province, he had been undertaking various studies to determine more specifically what the needs of the regions were. One of the regions which emerged as a priority region even before the more detailed consultant's study was begun was the northwest. Because this minister took the first step towards trying to determine the needs of the people, many groups and municipalities stepped forward to articulate their problems. The B.C. Association of Non-Status Indians (BCANSI) was one of these groups.

To a certain extent, however, there were numerous institutional constraints which limited this process of provincial-local communication, not the least of which was the traditional bureaucratic model of policy development which kept the politicians relatively removed from their electorate between elections. Moreover, much of the bureaucratic decision-making

was centralized in Victoria, even when the department had personnel located regionally. As a result, the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources was not really faced with the task of assessing and ordering these communicated problems: the priorities had already been determined because the magnitude of certain problems demanded attention.

Moreover, although Burns Lake had been cited as one of the priority regions, the special nature of native socio-economic development needs might have acquired less attention from the minister if BCANSI had not been organized and militant, and if Burns Lake had not had the advantage of competent leadership via the local BCANSI representative. Without these exceptional resources, the institutional constraints to the communication of problems and needs might have led to the oversight of native problems as is so often the case. Burns Lake is therefore the exception, rather than the rule.

- (2) Did the varying perceptions of all immediately affected groups and individuals enter into the definition of the problem?

Somewhat. The BCANSI proposal to build the sawmill represents the communication of a problem or need in a very general sense. How that problem was defined in more specific terms depended on the interactions (transactions) between the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources on behalf of the province, the native representatives, and the Babine consortium.

Generally speaking, the natives wanted the sawmill, the

minister did not want to award the TSHL competition to the natives but thought they should participate in the mill development. The natives next vied for 50 percent participation with West Fraser, but the West Fraser proposal was not favourable to the minister. The minister's concept was for the native people to participate with the Babine consortium, but his concept of what percentage this participation should be was somewhat more than Babine would accept, thus the 8 percent figure was a compromise to all three parties. However, although the natives had modified their position and were prepared to accept somewhat less participation in the mill, they were concerned that the nature of native development should be social as well as economic in keeping with their holistic perception of development. Thus the "Conditions Precedent" to sawmill development advanced by the native group expressed the need for this social dimension in the definition of the problem.

There was, however, one critical group left out of the definition of the problem and that was the community of Burns Lake in general. Although the plans for native participation were communicated to the Council and to the general public via a public meeting and press releases, these communications were one way exchanges. The perceptions of the 60 percent non-native population never entered into the definition of the problem, yet these were the people who lived side by side with the native people in Burns Lake.

From the ministerial level of perception, the agreement between the native people and the province represented a

contract between the Indian and non-Indian populations. This perception assumes that the provincial government represents the voice of the general non-Indian population, and that because of the particular nature of the constitutional status of native peoples, they do not see the provincial government as being representative of their interests. Both aspects of this statement are, of course, correct to a degree. However, in our representative form of democracy, native people do have the right to vote, and there is no guarantee that the policy of a specific minister will represent either the position of native or non-native populations on such issues. Therefore, it is not politically expedient for the government to ignore public opinion between elections.<sup>1</sup>

At the level of provincial forest policy where the native participation could be viewed as an innovative way to implement forest policy, there was a parallel gesture to evoke local non-native participation on the part of the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources by way of offering the municipality of Burns Lake a municipal tree farm licence. The mayor applied for the licence, paid a consultant to do the necessary planning, but had not finished satisfying the Forest Act's red tape requirements before there was a change in governments and subsequently a change in philosophy about municipalities becoming involved in business ventures.

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<sup>1</sup> The MLA for Burns Lake in 1972-75 was NDP, but he had won his seat because the Social Credit vote had been split with the Conservatives.

Dealing with economic development problems in a small community by involving native and non-native sectors in separate processes is encouraging the rift between the two cultures to grow wider.<sup>1</sup> The problem has to be defined at the community level since part of the problem which needs to be expressed is how the native-non-native cultures do and should relate to each other.

Of course, there are constraints to involving the general public in the planning process. One of the major constraints to involving a wide number of people in the Burns Lake process was time: Babine had to wait until the first phase of negotiations was completed with the native group before the TSHL would be granted and plans for mill construction could continue; the Village of Burns Lake had to wait while all negotiations proceeded before the much needed local employment would be made available. There was a sense of urgency which permeated the process.

The minister's time was also very valuable in the provincial context. Even though he had the Director of the Secretariat conduct some of the negotiations with the native group, he had to keep abreast of the situation and be prepared to make decisions when necessary. From an efficiency and equity point of view, his time could not be dominated by the Burns Lake project, nor should it have been. As it was, negotiations were

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<sup>1</sup> Burns Lake has a local society called the "Bridge the Gap Society" which tries to promote communication between the cultures.

spread over about nine months from the beginning of the process to the signing of the agreements in September, 1974.

There was also a possible behavioural constraint to involving non-native participation. According to participants in the Burns Lake process, the native-non-native situation was extremely strained in 1974. It may be possible, however, that some of the stress noted by these persons was aggravated by unilateral negotiations between the government and the native group. Furthermore, this stress should have been predictable. The point to be made is that native-non-native relations were a constraint to involving non-native participation. It should not follow that a constraint should be viewed as an insurmountable obstacle.

- (3) Did the varying perceptions of all affected and interested groups and individuals determine the alternative policies that were considered?

Somewhat. Although the specifics of native participation in the local socio-economic development were determined by the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, the Director of the Secretariat, the Minister of Human Resources, the Minister of Labour, Babine and the native group, the process fails to meet the normative assessment criterion, again because of the exclusion of non-native local groups from the process.

Because of the localized aspect of the policy process, and because of the non-technical nature of the policy, no lengthy studies and proposals were necessary to inform all negotiating

parties of the proposals and counter-proposals. Hence, there is no clearly defined set of alternatives identifiable - just a series of negotiations and compromises on a point by point basis, and finally legal agreements drawn to cement the partnerships. Even policy processes which do require more technical input may not produce a clearly discernable list of alternatives if the process is characterized by a high level of interaction as an optimal process would be. The alternatives which can emerge from the process may also be a shorter set of a wider range of alternatives explored during the exchange between participants in the process.

For the sake of illustration, some of the alternatives generated from the Burns Lake process might be conceptualized as:

- native participation via 8 percent ownership plus comprehensive training programs to ensure participation on all levels of employment;
- the above plus an added BLNDC economic arm capable of beginning subsidiary companies;
- the above plus a Community Development Project support function.

Within these broad categories of alternatives, there exist numerous points for negotiation. These points determine the details of the policy output. For instance, Babine would agree to encourage native participation in the mill only if the Indians would agree that native workers would receive no special privileges over non-native workers. The second alternative was the initial alternative preferred by the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources on the advice of the Director of the Secretariat. It was only because of the high level of

participation of the native group that the third concept even entered into the range of possibilities.

In short, the correct assessment of the optimal planning process should not simply involve counting the number of alternatives documented, but instead it should involve listing the number of groups contributing to the generation of alternatives. The Burns Lake process falls short of being the optimal process because no non-native local groups participated in the definition of the problem and the generation of alternatives. If local groups had been included, the problem may not have been defined purely from a native socio-economic development perspective, but from a broader community based perspective, and the range of alternatives generated would have included aspects of native and non-native socio-economic development.

Of course, there were again the constraints of time and of human behaviour discussed previously which worked against broad participation. In some policy situations (although it did not appear to be a factor in Burns Lake), financial constraints by way of transaction costs could also limit the amount of participation which could be accommodated.

- (4) Were resources allocated to ensure that all groups with differing perceptions have the opportunity to participate in the formation of alternative proposals?

Somewhat. This criterion is related to the institutional aspect of ensuring an optimal planning/policy process, and it is



related directly to the combined cultural-democratic norm of ensuring effectiveness of public participation (see Chapter II). As such, there was no formalized procedure of making available funds or technical staff to enable the participation of groups or individuals unable to finance themselves.

However, the Minister of Human Resources agreed to support the expenses of native participation which included travelling expenses, consulting expenses, and legal expenses. No doubt funds would have been extended to other groups had they been included. However, in order to become a participant in this process, a group would have had to be organized and militant: no invitations for opinions were extended.

There are obvious financial constraints which limit the amount of funds and other resources which can be extended to enable participation in the policy process. Obviously, some limits must be set. On the other hand, one must remember that many participants will not need to be supported to the extent that the native group was since they may have access to resources from other sources.

Clearly, the largest constraint to encouraging participation is outmoded government institutions which neither encourage nor provide the channels for participation.

- (5) Were the varying perceptions of all affected and interested groups, agencies and individuals incorporated into the evaluation process?

Somewhat. Again, the process of evaluation of policy alternatives is not discrete from the process of generating alternatives. The fact that each negotiating party has specific personal reasons (objectives) for desiring a certain alternative implies that some form of personal evaluation has occurred. A rigorous evaluation of various alternatives, therefore, requires that the process be open and interactive so that other participants in the planning/policy process can evaluate the proposals from differing perspectives.

In policy processes which require expert technical knowledge, evaluation may have to be done by hired experts and a report circulated among participants. Even then, the number of formal evaluation reports should not constitute the total number of evaluative points of view if the process is truly open and interactive.

In Burns Lake, the evaluation of the alternative forms of native participation was done simultaneous to the generation of alternatives. Each group had its legal counsel which was present at negotiations. Each group would present their points; discussion amongst the groups would occur; the meeting would adjourn for a set time period (e.g., three weeks). There would then be intragroup discussion on the compromise points which would be accepted, on the points which would not be compromised, and on the points which would be compromised subject to certain

conditions or concessions. At a new meeting, some agreement would be reached and new factors would enter the discussion which would subsequently need to be discussed, again, in group, apart, then in group.

This form of evaluation process ensured that the varying perceptions of the participating parties were incorporated into the evaluation process. Again, however, the Burns Lake process cannot be considered to have completely met the assessment criterion because of the lack of non-native participation which limited the number of perceptions entering the process.

The major constraint to the optimal evaluation process, because it is associated with the amount of participation which was necessary, again was time - especially the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources' time. On the technical side of participation, if groups need to hire experts, financial constraints could be a factor prohibiting a wide range of evaluations. However, if the interaction process is seen itself as a device first to generate and then to evaluate alternatives, the negotiation approach is an efficient and less costly way to multiply alternatives than is hiring outside consulting experts.

- (6) Were resources allocated to ensure that all groups with differing perceptions have in fact had the opportunity to participate in the evaluation of alternative proposals?

Somewhat. This, like criterion four, relates to the institutional aspects of ensuring that varying perceptions become part of the evaluation process. In the case of Burns Lake

where the same participants generated and evaluated alternatives, the degree to which the process meets criterion six is identical to the degree to which it meets criterion four.

The reason for distinguishing between allocating funds to generate alternatives and allocating funds to evaluate alternatives would be more apparent in a higher level of policy development which could be expected to last longer and to require more technical studies. If funds were closed off after the initial stage of the process, the entry of groups later in the process would be blocked. In an interactive policy process where the nature of the problem and the proposals change as negotiations progress and participants adjust their expectations, it is entirely conceivable that some group may wish to become involved only after they see a change in the policy direction which has now touched on their sphere of interest.

One important constraint to meeting this criterion is, again, that financial resources are not unlimited. As was mentioned before, there is no reason to believe that the resources have to be unlimited, since not every one will require them.

The second, and most important constraint is institutional. A closed bureaucratic model of policy development does not supply many points of entry for participation in the policy process, and these channels of communication are, after all, the most important resources that could be allocated to various groups and individuals who seek to participate.

- (7) Were there checks on government agency bias which might otherwise have inadvertently dominated the process?

Somewhat. This criterion relates to criteria three and five which maintain that intergroup participation should determine the alternatives generated and evaluated. The democratic-cultural value which states that participation in policy development should be ensured requires that the institutional arrangements of the democratic system have channels for widely based participation. This means preventing the domination of the policy process by one specialized agency with a limited perspective of the range of social choices involved. In Burns Lake, where the process of policy development remained, for the most part in the political arena rather than the bureaucratic arena, there was not much problem with avoiding agency bias. The major bureaucratic participant was the Director of the Secretariat, and the Secretariat itself was a special type of bureaucratic agency.

The Environment and Land Use Committee Secretariat is the staff arm of the Environment and Land Use Committee (ELUC) of Cabinet. Because they are responsible directly to ELUC and not to any one minister, the staff of the Secretariat have no loyalty to the objectives of any one line agency. They are, therefore, unbiased with respect to the preference for the development of one resource over another. This is why the Secretariat is seen as the agency which should coordinate the process of resolving resource conflicts at the administrative level, and which should supply policy advice on resource

conflict issues to the committee of Cabinet. Theoretically, then, the Director of the Secretariat was directly responsible to the ministers of the committee and not to any one minister individually.

In practice, however, the Director was interacting more with the chairman of ELUC, the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, since the Burns Lake process was initiated through implementation of forest policy. However, the Director was responsible for interagency and interministerial communications on the points of progress in the Burns Lake process. Municipal Affairs, which was part of ELUC, worked closely with the Secretariat and the intergovernmental task force, but the concern was more in accommodating growth as a result of the sawmill construction and operation, than it was in defining native participation. The Minister of Economic Development was involved in the financing of BLNDC, but again, he did not participate in the policy development process.

In short, so far as the ELUC-Secretariat involvement was concerned, the process was biased slightly in favour of the Department of Lands, Forests and Water Resources. Insofar as the mandate of ELUC and the Secretariat deals with natural resource-economic concerns, the late entry of the Minister of Human Resources and the failure to either involve the senior level staff or the minister in the negotiations biased the policy development process slightly in favour of economic concerns. As a result, more careful consideration was given to the design of the economic arm than to the social arm of the project.

The major cause of agency bias domination, that is, depoliticizing the policy process, had been avoided. Still there were institutional constraints to avoiding all agency bias: there was no Cabinet committee on which social and economic resource development problems came together;<sup>1</sup> the Secretariat had a physical-economic orientation.<sup>2</sup>

(8) Were final choices made by accountable representatives or by the public in general?

Yes. The Burns Lake process perhaps represents the ultimate in securing accountability of policy-makers in a parliamentary system because the Cabinet ministers themselves were involved directly in the process.

Usually there are severe constraints on the ministers' time which inhibit their intimate involvement in localized policy issues, and usually some decision-making responsibilities must be delegated to others. The NDP government, and especially the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, was committed to ensuring B.C. citizens had access to their political representatives. The minister subsequently became involved in a

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<sup>1</sup> Although an ad hoc intergovernmental task force had been established, this was not the major decision arena.

<sup>2</sup> This is not to say that ELUC and the Secretariat were not concerned with social issues. Indeed, the nature of the TSHL add and the willingness to involve a group concerned with social problems in an economic pursuit is proof to the contrary. However, ELUC and the Secretariat simply did not have the mandate to act in some of the areas of development which entered into the definition of the problem through the native group.

number of localized policy processes.

Despite the minister's willingness to be involved in the details of the process, the constraints on his time manifested themselves through the non-involvement of other Burns Lake groups in the policy process associated with native participation.<sup>1</sup>

9. Were alternative implementation arrangements proposed and analysed by the various groups, individuals and agencies involved in the process?

No. Most of the design of the implementation arrangements for the economic aspect (BLNDC) of native participation was the result of interactions between the Director of the Secretariat and a legal counsultant. Only one form of implementing institution to be entirely native owned was actually considered although a few of the details of the provincial-native relationship were debated and either compromised or conceded. For example, the province had initially decided that the one BLNDC member on the Board of Directors of Babine should be

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<sup>1</sup> The minister did have various meetings with the mayor and Council members of Burns Lake concerning the location of a sawmill in or near Burns Lake (this was an aspect of using forest policy to satisfy regional development policy problems) and concerning the municipal tree farm licence (another localized policy question which grew out of implementing forest policy). However, at no time was the municipal tree farm licence project and the BLNDC project integrated at the local level via wider citizen group participation in either of these processes. Furthermore, the time constraints on the minister's participation were even more apparent in the municipal tree farm licence process: this was something offered to the Council, but left to regular channels of approval through Forest Service.



appointed by the government while it still controlled 5 percent or more interest in BLNDC, but the native group was able to insist that BLNDC should appoint the nominee. Although the native group did have a financial consultant, there was no disagreement with the general structure of BLNDC.

The native participation was, however, a key factor in the development of the Community Development Association (CDA), but this too was set up essentially at the last minute and with little debate as to what alternatives might have been considered.

Because CDA was added at the end, and because the Minister of Human Resources and the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources never met to debate the socio-economic aspects of the project as a unity, no combinations of the social and economic aspects were considered. And finally, because of restricted participation in the generation and evaluation of alternatives stages, all disagreements had essentially been dealt with, and the result was an implementing institution which could not fail to be acceptable to both parties.

The constraints to including various groups in determining alternative implementing arrangements are those financial, behavioural and time constraints associated with negotiating processes. These were discussed previously and require no further elaboration at this point. The implementation phase of the Burns Lake process again emphasizes, constraints aside, the need for numerous and diverse inputs into the policy process if a full range of relevant alternatives is to be considered.

(10) Was the implementation process subject to experimentation where uncertainties were fairly numerous?

Yes. The BLNDC-CDA structures were themselves experiments which emerged from a new concept of native socio-economic development. Furthermore, the structures themselves, being semi-autonomous, had the capacity to experiment and adapt to unforeseen problems which may arise with respect to the details of native socio-economic development projects. This structure also tolerated mistakes since they were seen as part of the learning process regarding native development. Delivery of programs through the departmental structure would have been far less flexible.

The fact that the Burns Lake process meets this criterion indicates that the institutional constraints on the generation of innovative policies was overcome. There is a tendency to require a certain amount of uniformity in administration procedures within departments and other government agencies for administrative management purposes. Keeping the Burns Lake project outside the departmental structure avoided this. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It might have occurred as a matter of course, because the necessity for the development of a legal entity (BLNDC), that the economic aspect of the process would remain semi-autonomous. However, this would have been far less probable in the case of CDA.

(11) Was there explicit provision for the continuous assessment of results and the effectiveness of implementation arrangements?

Somewhat. The entire concept of BLNDC was set up so as to provide a series of checks and balances which would in effect provide internal regulation with a minimum of paternalistic government interference. CDA was less carefully designed.

To begin with, the original BLNDC contract which was for five years was to be reviewed in 1979. All loans advanced by BLNDC were restricted to a certain geographic radius to ensure that monies would be used for local self-help projects. No amount over \$25,000 could be advanced from the loan fund until it was evaluated and approved by the B.C. Development Corporation.

The money advanced to BLNDC was not by way of grant, but forgivable loans. The first five years were interest free, but in the years thereafter, interest of 3 percent was to be charged. No payments of either interest or principal was therefore required before 1979. The principal sum and interest owing would be forgiven at a rate of 12 1/2 percent per year after 1979 if BLNDC had maintained a certain level of performance. That level of performance was to be defined by a three person monitoring board made up of one provincial appointee, one native appointee, and one agreed upon appointee. This arrangement was intended to provide the incentive to keep BLNDC economically efficient without requiring constant

government supervision.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, CDA was a more dependent structure because it did not have the capacity to generate revenue. The Minister of Human Resources required no form of monitoring of programs other than the annual report of the association. There was a tremendous capacity for CDA to learn from its mistakes, but very little capacity for the Department of Human Resources, despite its lack of negative input, to provide any positive guidance should the need arise.

Because most of the monitoring of policy implementation was internal, depending on the structure of BLNDC, CDA and the checks and balances written into the financial arrangements of BLNDC, the institutional constraints which tend to promote uniformity of programs was avoided. Thus the BLNDC-CDA programs could be designed specifically in response to native needs, and thus, should be more effective in the longer run.

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that this innovative approach to monitoring the continuous development of the policy output has been abandoned by the Social Credit ministers responsible (Labour, Economic Development, Finance) in favour of the more paternalistic approach of extending grants instead of forgivable loans, and of keeping direct and close government supervision over policy development of the corporation.

(12) Was there explicit provision for utilizing these assessments to adapt policies and implementation arrangements accordingly?

Somewhat. Again, the BLNDC arrangement meets the criterion, the CDA arrangement fall short of meeting it.

Both institutions, because of their semi-autonomous nature, provided for adaptation to local needs. This meant relevant programs could be developed and irrelevant programs could be phased out as community needs changed. The BLNDC arrangement, by providing for a three person monitoring team after 1979, a team with both native and provincial members, provided for a working-learning arrangement to exist between the native corporation and and the province.<sup>1</sup> This meant that not only could the province learn and change its ideas on the design of policies and implementing arrangements with respect to BLNDC, but also the province would be gathering useful information and experience on which to base future native development projects. CDA provided only implicit provision (i.e., annual reports) for the utilization of program assessments as a basis on which to adapt policies and implementating arrangements.

The continuous adaptation of policies to ensure relevance requires a continuous two-way information flow which, in a large

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that this three person board has been set up by the Social Credit Ministers of Labour, Economic Development and Finance, but that this board is now entirely formed of government appointed overseers (one from each ministry) and the mutual exchange aspect is lost.

and complex society may be a very costly undertaking if required on a policy by policy basis within the present institutional context. Technical constraints of generating, gathering and analysing the sheer volume of information which would be generated within each government department could be a serious constraint. The BLNDC-CDA models manage to be adaptive without such problems because of their decentralized and semi-autonomous nature.

(13) Were the varying perceptions of all affected and interested individuals and groups included as inputs to the assessment and modification procedure?

Somewhat. The Board of Directors for both BLNDC and CDA came from the native community at large,<sup>1</sup> and as the board which decides the policy of the organization, the BLNDC and CDA keep in touch with community sentiment. But it was essentially the native community whose perceptions were tapped. This may result in an adequate range of community perceptions entering the assessment and modification procedure if the entire policy process has allowed for the participation of interested groups from the start. In Burns Lake there were some community members whose lives were impacted from the policies of BLNDC-CDA but whose perceptions did not enter into the process at all, let

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<sup>1</sup> The Social Credit administration expanded the board of CDA by four non-native members in 1976. The board now represents native and non-native perceptions in policy. Although initially, the native people recoiled at the forced intrusion of the government, they have now gotten over some of that resentment.

alone the assessment procedure.

To a certain extent, non-native perceptions did enter CDA via the various programs offered to both native and non-native populations. This was not a formal assessment process at first, but as the organization matured, it began to keep its own records and evaluations of programs.

Although on a higher level of policy development there may be financial constraints of transaction costs or financial and temporal constraints of extensive surveys operating to limit the number of perspectives from which evaluation is done, at the local level such costs are not great. Behavioural constraints may be more relevant if members of the board do not cooperate with one another. Usually, this would be a very particular constraint, depending on specific individuals and personalities, but in Burns Lake, where tensions between native and non-native populations existed, the cooperation of native and non-native members on the same board is a predictable difficulty which must be considered when designing implementing arrangements. The cultural differences between the two groups with respect to decision rules (e.g., consensus vs majority) and time (e.g., deadlines) could also cause misunderstandings. This may have been why the NDP Minister of Human Resources opted for an all native board despite the fact that CDA was technically supposed to be for the community in general.

CHAPTER VII: A NORMATIVE MODEL OF REGIONAL GOVERNMENT FOR B.C.:  
TOWARDS PROMOTING THE OPTIMAL PLANNING/POLICY  
PROCESS

A. The Pursuit of The Optimal Process

Although evaluations of the substantive aspects of policies are useful for determining the efficiency of use of government resources (financial and otherwise), they can be very misleading if the evaluator and the reviewer are not fully aware of their limitations and their inherent value assumptions. With respect to the Burns Lake project, for example, it would be shortsighted to evaluate success of the project in terms of the economic performance of Burns Lake Native Development Corporation (BLNDC). It is the total participation in the mill-BLNDC-CDA which constitutes the "policy output" of the Burns Lake process, and evaluating that presents a myriad of methodological problems. In any case, who is to judge who should have benefited and who should have lost, if anyone? It is not the purpose of this paper to undertake such a task.

Much less attention is given to assessing the process of policy formation than is given to assessing the substantive outputs of the process. However, in assessing a planning/policy process one is referring to the set of democratic norms (see Chapter III) on which there is almost consensus in Canada. Assessing a policy process, like assessing policy output, is done with a view to improving the future planning/policy process.



There are two reasons why one would want to improve the planning/policy process:

- a better process should result in better policy outputs,<sup>1</sup>
- a better process is an end itself in the sense that it satisfies the values inherent in a democratic system of government (see Chapter III).<sup>2</sup>

As was discussed earlier, the "means" of improving the policy process is through institutional reform. While the institutional framework should be designed to meet the thirteen assessment criteria if it is to be optimal, it must simultaneously be designed to minimize the empirical constraints to optimality if it is to be "optimal" and not "utopian." Thus the key constraints or problems with the Burns Lake process will be elemental to suggesting the aspects of institutional design necessary to promote optimality of the policy process.

For instance, one of the key constraints to the optimal Burns Lake process was the strict limitations on the ministers' time. Because of the myriad of local policy issues in various provincial locations with which the ministers had to deal, no one process could receive as much attention as it should. The result was the tendency to limit the policy process to as few

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<sup>1</sup> It does not follow, however, that a policy which is agreed by most to be "good" in substantive terms is necessarily the result of a good process. It may just happen that there is so much public consensus that a policy succeeds despite a lack of debate. However, a good process reduces political risks that a policy will be unpopular when uncertainties are great and there is lack of consensus - which is most of the time.

<sup>2</sup> Obviously, however, a process can never exist without substantive policies.

participants as possible in order to render the process manageable within the constraints on the ministers' time. This prevented the Burns Lake process from meeting participation goals. This suggests also that provincial policy processes in British Columbia will never be able to meet participation goals as long as Cabinet ministers continue to have such a volume of responsibilities. Decision-makers must therefore have fewer responsibilities if an optimal policy process is to be achieved.

Decreasing the number of decision responsibilities of each Cabinet minister means increasing the total number of executive decision-makers. Either the number of specialized ministers and departments could be increased, or the responsibility for regionalized or local policy issues could be delegated to regionally elected representatives. If the number of Cabinet ministers were expanded, participation goals would still be frustrated (as they were in Burns Lake) because of the high transaction costs of negotiation and the technical problems of coordinating participation from such a distance. Moreover, the Cabinet itself would have to be expanded to such an extent as to render it unwieldy. The mode of division of decision responsibilities which would promote the optimal policy process would therefore be the decentralized option.

If the decision responsibilities were decentralized to the local level in British Columbia, participation goals could be met, but other problems associated with this scale of decision-making would prevent optimality of the planning/policy process.

In the first place, local governments do not have

sufficient areal perspective to warrant their making many of the natural resource decisions which have to be made on the basis of the interaction of ecological systems as well as from the point of view of social preferences. For instance, local governments in the northwest could not have decided among themselves where the sawmill should be located. Many of the municipalities would have wanted it. Therefore, many of the decision-making responsibilities of Cabinet ministers could not be decentralized to local governments.

Secondly, local governments in general do not have sufficient financial and technical resources to handle the volume of decision responsibilities which must be decentralized, nor could the province ever hope to duplicate the necessary resources in so many locations. These factors suggest that the decision responsibilities are best decentralized to a regional instead of a local level.

There are, again, two institutional design options associated with decentralization of decision responsibilities to the regions: either decision-making capabilities could be delegated to regional bureaucratic agencies; or decision-making responsibilities could be delegated to regionally elected agencies. Since the bureaucratic option does not satisfy the accountability criteria, the optimal institutional design would be structured around elected local representatives.

As the Burns Lake process illustrated, at various phases in the policy process the participants were required to make trade-offs in social choices. For instance, the native group had to

accept a more modest economic role than they had at first hoped, but they were willing to do so only if their perceived social program needs were met. In fact, during negotiations, it became clear to the Director of the Secretariat (whose priorities were economic development) that the native people were more concerned with acquiring social development programs than with securing economic participation. However, the Secretariat and ELUC's mandate did not include social program development, and the Minister of Human Resources had to become involved in the policy process. His late entry resulted in a hastily designed Community Development Association. Had he been involved from the beginning, the BLNDC-CDA relationship might have been designed differently.

The dynamics of the process of making trade-offs among social choices requires that the optimal institutional design facilitate and integrate these choices. This also means that, ideally, decision-makers in all public sectors should be jointly involved in the process from the beginning if policy development is not to be "lopsided." Thus the optimal regional institution charged with decision-making responsibilities would be multi-purpose rather than single-purpose, and all decisions would be joint decisions rather than made by the individual executive representatives.

The presence of elected regional governments in British Columbia would alter the provincial government's relationship to the citizens of the regions. No longer would the province be bringing a provincial perspective to the regions via the

regionally based bureaucracy, but instead, regional and provincial perspectives would be integrated. Policy integration would require close communications links between the executive of the region and Cabinet. With respect to jurisdictional responsibilities, jurisdictions can be either discrete or overlapping between regional and provincial governments. Since maximum participation requires maximum access to resources, overlapping jurisdictions are more conducive to promoting the optimal policy process.

Other aspects of the Burns Lake process suggest the need to pay close attention to the details of operation of the regional government model itself. For instance, it was seen that a clear definition of social preferences as well as the generation of a wide range of alternatives depends on the number of groups participating and the amount of interaction among groups participating in the policy process. However, it was also noted that the institutional and resource constraints (financial, technical, and informational) of the existing institutional framework in B.C. blocked the participation of all except the most organized groups (i.e., BCANSI), and rendered the Burns Lake process less than optimal. Therefore, the optimal institutional design will include provision for resources for participation, and a communications web to ensure access to information as well as channels to participation.

Moreover, in order to eliminate the physical-economic bias present in the Burns Lake process at the bureaucratic level of

government,<sup>1</sup> the Secretariat aspect of the regional government should be a Policy Analysis Secretariat responsible to the executive as a whole, rather than an Environment and Land Use Committee Secretariat responsible to a Cabinet Committee with a narrower mandate than Cabinet. This aspect of the regional government design borrows from and builds upon the best aspects of the existing institutional design, thus providing a policy analysis unit and further ensuring against agency bias in the regional policy process.

Similarly, a complementary aspect of design intended to avoid agency bias would be the non-hierarchical, committee structure of regional bureaucracy. This design feature would minimize the influence that one key individual, such as the Director of the Secretariat in the Burns Lake process, could have on the direction of the process. Clearly, the Director's preference for keeping the economic and social aspects of native development separate did not encourage the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources to include the Minister of Human Resources in all aspects of negotiation in Burns Lake. A committee structure of bureaucracy, especially where members on the committee are from various disciplines, would increase the probability of many perceptions and opinions entering the policy process from the bureaucratic side. This aspect builds upon existing interdepartmental committee structure (task force) in Burns Lake, and extends it to include the regular use of

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<sup>1</sup> The joint decisions of the executive eliminate bias at the political level.

committees within the Policy Secretariat itself.

Finally, it was seen that the continuous assessment and reevaluation of policy and implementation arrangements in Burns Lake depended upon the institutional design of the implementation process. Since continual assessment and policy adjustment are specific assessment criteria which the optimal policy process must meet, the optimal institutional design for policy formation must incorporate the principle of continuous monitoring.

To summarize, one could say that in order to minimize the constraints to optimality of the policy process while meeting the thirteen assessment criteria, the institutional framework designed should be based on the following twelve design principles: decentralized; regional; elected local representatives; multi-purpose; all decisions joint; executive linked to Cabinet; overlapping jurisdictions; resources for participation; communications web; Policy Analysis Secretariat; committee structure; continuous monitoring. These principles lead to the design of a decentralized, regional government model as the optimal institutional framework for British Columbia.

In the remainder of this chapter, the regional government model will first be described and then illustrated according to the changes in the Burns Lake process which may have occurred if the regional model had been in place. Although the Burns Lake example is used to illustrate the points made, the normative aspects of the regional government are intended to promote an improved policy process in general. The process manifested as a

result of the regional government's being in place is specifically imaged to meet all thirteen assessment criteria and is therefore the optimal process. The constraints to the optimal process are also discussed in order to indicate how the model would minimize their interference with the achievement of assessment criteria.

#### B. A Normative Model of Regional Government For British Columbia

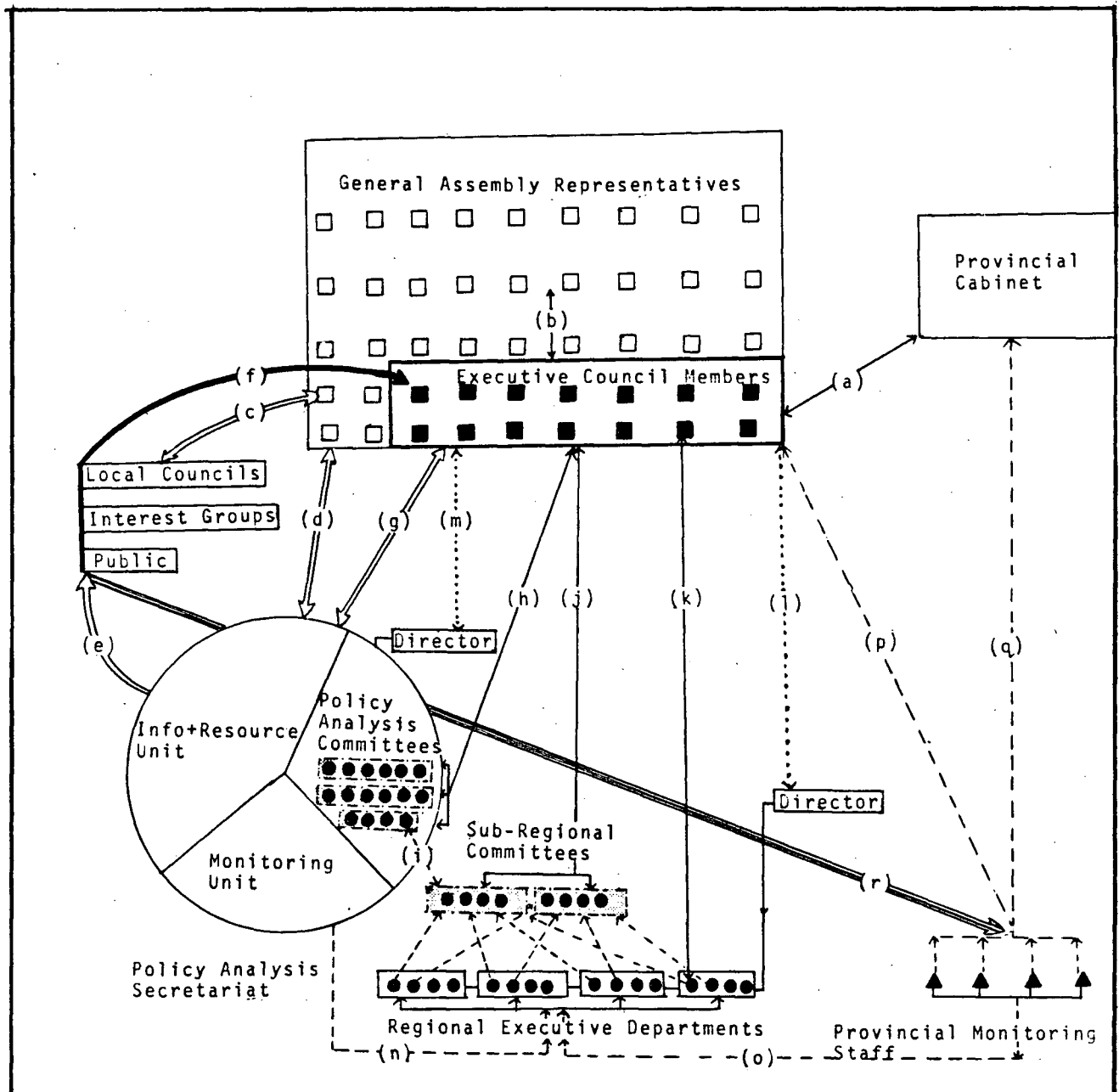
The normative model of regional government for B.C. is designed according to the twelve aspects of institutional design outlined in the previous section. The model is essentially a decentralized, multi-purpose, regional government which would be capable not only of formulating regional policy within all sectors of government, but also of participating actively in provincial level policy processes. The regional government model would replace current regional institutions (e.g., Regional Districts, RRMCS), rather than be added to them.

The model is also designed to be as open and sensitive to public participation as possible given the constraints which limit mass participation in all policy issues. The combination of resources and channels for participation coupled with the active involvement of the elected representative in policy processes render this model sensitive to the preferences of its electorate. The numerous communications links between the government officials, agencies, and the public make this model flexible and dynamic, and therefore capable of evolving with changes in public attitudes and preferences, or with changes in



the constraints to the optimal policy process.

In this section, the structure of the regional government will be first outlined, while the discussion of the operation of the model according to each of the twelve aspects of institutional design will be reserved until the reader has become familiar with the organs of the model.

(1) StructureFIGURE 6: A Normative Model of Regional Government For B.C.

(i) General Assembly

The regional government's General Assembly would be a legislative body of elected officials from constituencies designated on a representation by population basis. There would be some minimum (e.g., five year) regional residency requirement before eligibility to sit in the Assembly could be established. Burns Lake and the immediate area would have an elected representative sitting in the General Assembly.

This body would be charged with regional policy formation within areas of regional jurisdiction, which would include the implementation of provincial policies according to regional priorities. The Assembly would debate and pass by-laws which formalized regional policy in the various areas of its jurisdiction.

(ii) The Executive Council

Whether or not the Assembly should be organized on a party political basis is a point for further consideration. If it were, the party leader would then be chairperson of the General Assembly and be charged with forming the Executive Council. If not, the Executive Council could be elected by the General Assembly, and the chairperson by the Executive Council members.

Executive Council members would be paid, full-time officials. Much like the Cabinet, each member of the Executive Council would head a department, but, all major decisions would be taken jointly. This is possible because the number of

decisions which executive members would have to make would be substantially less than the number facing Cabinet ministers responsible for the whole province.

(iii) The Executive Departments

The departments would provide the staff for the implementation of the policy advanced by the General Assembly. They would replace provincial regional staff members (the provincial employees could become employees of the region), except for a few provincial field staff left as a monitoring unit to check regional agency bias from dominating a particular policy process. The increase in regional staff members (including membership in the General Assembly itself) should be equal to or less than the decrease in provincial employees. The cost of maintaining government bureaucracy would not increase.<sup>1</sup>

Interdepartmental committees would be used on a regular basis to coordinate the implementation of regional policy. Membership on the committee would be defined on a sub-regional basis. Major resource conflicts (where "resource" is defined in its broadest terms) would be referred to and dealt with by the Executive Council. Of course, many resource conflicts classified as "minor" at the provincial level of perception would be

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<sup>1</sup> This is not to suggest that the provincial staff functions would be replaced on a one to one basis in the region. Quite the contrary, some regional departments may have more or fewer staff members than the comparable provincial department. This point is made only to point out that the regional government model does not call for the duplication of provincial staff, but instead the replacement of them.

"major" at the regional level. The regional departmental committees would report directly to the Executive Council when resource conflicts arose.

(iv) The Policy Analysis Secretariat

This body would be responsible for policy analysis and coordination and would report directly to the Executive Council. All policy analysis and research would be on a committee basis, with some participants on the committee sometimes being persons outside the policy analysis unit (e.g., consultants, provincial officials, regional department staff, etc.). Members of this Secretariat might also participate on regional departmental committees in the implementation of policy. The Secretariat participant on the departmental committee would be someone who had been involved in the policy development process. This would keep the Secretariat staff in touch with field operations, just as including some department staff on policy committees would keep the field operators in touch with changes in policy direction. In both cases, however, the committees serve as aids to the Executive Council, advising and informing. They do not make policy decisions on their own.

The Secretariat would also be charged with monitoring the implementation of policy by the line agencies (e.g., by conducting periodic studies) and reporting the findings to the Executive Council to ensure that elected representatives remain responsible for the process of policy formation and implementation.

Finally, the Secretariat (or unit thereof) would be charged with communications and information transactions with the elected representatives of the General Assembly. Each public representative would have an office, through which citizens would communicate problems, needs and ideas. The information generated through these communication links for the whole region would be analysed, organized, processed and reported to each member of the General Assembly and Executive Council on a regular basis in order to keep them informed of the major problems of the region and the pattern of distribution of problems. This would help avoid crisis situations and enable the generation of more relevant policies. This unit of the Secretariat would also be charged with administering the funds and other resources available on a regular basis to encourage creative participation in the policy process.

## (2) Operation

### (i) Regional

As discussed previously, local governments would be unable to take on the number and range of responsibilities necessary to substantially reduce the burden of responsibilities on Cabinet ministers. Therefore, a regional government model is preferred.

The regional government model outlined here could not be duplicated twenty-nine times (the current number of Regional Districts) because financial and staff requirements would necessitate larger populations to support such governments. The

boundaries chosen for regional governments would have some physical and multi-functional rationale<sup>1</sup> so as to ensure that the area is in fact a "region". The region would be large enough to include a heterogeneous population to ensure that the policy process is characterized by lively debate. Both urban and rural environments would be included in the region, since the urban-rural dialectic is central to the concept of the functional region.

Although establishing the boundaries of the regional government is beyond the scope of this thesis, the areal extent of the northwest regional government would have to correspond more to the size of the Regional Resource Management Region rather than to the Regional District boundaries.<sup>2</sup> Smithers is the best centre for the "capital" of the region. This means that Burns Lake would be approximately 100 miles from the centre of regional government.

#### (ii) Decentralized, Multi-Purpose

The regional government model is decentralized from the provincial perspective and multi-purpose in the sense that its jurisdiction extends through all government sectors. It is essential that the actual decision-making capabilities within

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<sup>1</sup> i.e., boundaries would not be drawn on the basis of one function (e.g., water resources management).

<sup>2</sup> This is not to imply that RRMC districts should be the boundaries of this or any other regional government. Other more populated regions could be smaller in areal extent.

regional jurisdictions be decentralized so as to relieve provincial Cabinet ministers from the myriad of local issues they must resolve and to promote expedient regional policy development, unhindered by excessive "red tape" delays. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to itemize every power which would be delegated to regional governments, in general, those powers would be quite broad and include areas of resource, social, education, economic, etc. policy.

For instance, in the Burns Lake example, although the responsibility for province wide forest policy would still have been a provincial responsibility, the regional government would have been charged with implementing forest policy. The allotment of the 180,000 cunits of timber in the northwest region would still have been a provincial undertaking (but in consultation with the regional government), while the advertisement for bids, the review and choice of proposals, would have been within regional jurisdiction. Moreover, because the regional government would have jurisdiction in economic and human resource areas as well, it would have been able to develop and fund regional economic and social development agencies or programs such as were associated with the development of BLNDC and BLCDA.

(iii) All Decisions Joint

The Executive Council of the regional government model is designed to act as a unit and therefore all important regional decisions would be joint ones. This provides for the integration



of policies and the accommodation of trade-offs in social choices at the political level.

In the Burns Lake example, had the regional government model been in place, the Executive Council member in charge of Human Resources would have been as involved in the process as the Executive Council member in charge of Forest Resources right from the beginning of the process. Thus the social aspects of the policy output would have acquired as much attention as the economic development aspect of the project.

(iv) Executive Council Linked to Cabinet

The regional governments, although possessing substantial decision-making powers, could not be completely autonomous since they would still be "creatures of the province." The province would concern itself more with setting the broader provincial level policies which might often be a set of goals or standards, while letting the regional governments determine the best means of meeting the provincial standards according to regional preferences and priorities. In a sense, the regional government would be implementing provincial policy, but on the regional level, it would be formulating regional policy. Although there is an hierarchical power structure in the broadest sense, it is unlikely that the provincial government would choose to ignore or override regional policies if the regional government had the support of the people in the region.

This model also provides for regional government participation as a representative of the non-participating

regional groups and constituent members in the formation of provincial level policies. Because the regional government model is a political institution, the communication and participation links between region and province would be through the direct interaction of the Executive Council and Cabinet (see Figure 6 - link (a)).

In the Burns Lake process, for instance, although it would have been provincial responsibility to set the standard or quota of timber which could be harvested in the northwest region, the regional government would have been involved in the process of setting the quota offered. Because most of the forestry staff are employed by the region, the regional staff would need to participate in the technical surveys and analysis preceding the setting of the 180,000 cunit TSHL quota. However, regional staff would report to the Executive Council who would then communicate directly with Cabinet ministers. The final choice of quota remains with Cabinet. The task of accepting, evaluating and choosing proposals to harvest the timber would be a regional responsibility.

The provincial-regional government relationship is therefore a complementary one. It would be in the province's best interest to ensure that regional governments are functioning well, and therefore to offer regional governments as much support as they need to function well.

Financially, the regional governments would be supported by a percentage of the income tax collected, much as the province is. It is not desirable to keep regional governments financially

weak since this would hinder their policy-making abilities. The regional governments would also be given the ability to increase income taxes (within a limit) to allow for flexibility in policy development.

Besides these arrangements, the province would also provide equalization grants so that the more remote or less populated areas of B.C. could have opportunities equal to the more populated areas. This need is recognized within some of the ministries now (e.g., Municipal Affairs) in their administration of grants. These ministerial grants would no longer be necessary or desirable.

Every attempt would be taken to keep bureaucracies small. Additional technical staff can be employed when needed. The provincial government would also keep a small technical staff of experts on payroll to be employed by the more remote and less populated regions. Over time, population redistribution to the regions may be sufficient to warrant this program unnecessary.

#### (v) Elected Local Representative

The elected local representative sits in the General Assembly and may or may not be chosen to fill an Executive Council position. The duties of the Executive Council have already been discussed; the function of the elected representative as a general purpose representative is dealt with here.

The most important role that the elected representative

plays is to debate and vote on new policy by-laws or on changes in existing policy by-laws. In this function the representative is presumed to have knowledge of and to have balanced the preferences of his or her constituent members before taking a stance on an issue. New policies and changes in existing policies would be passed by majority vote of the General Assembly. However, it is not simply at the legislative stage which the representative has occasion to participate. Monthly meetings of the whole General Assembly would provide opportunities for the Executive Council members to post the Assembly on the policy issues, and for the general purpose representatives to express their views at an early stage in policy formation. In addition, general purpose representatives would be kept posted on the development of policy issues through the local office of the representative, and they would be invited to participate on behalf of their constituent members at any point in the process. In very localized policy processes, only the immediately affected representative would be likely to participate directly, while policies of regional extent may require more frequent meetings of the General Assembly to accommodate such wide participation. (Link (b) in Figure 6 represents this Executive-General Assembly relationship.)

It is the duty of the general purpose representative to inform constituent members, local government bodies, and local groups, on policy development or pending policy changes as well as to listen to their problems, needs and ideas and to communicate these (1) to the information processing centre of the Secretariat, and (2) to Executive Council members when

complaints are specific to a current policy debate. Links (c) and (d) in Figure 6 illustrate these relationships.

(vi) Resources For Participation

In order to invite the participation of local groups in specific policy issues, financial, technical and staff resources would be made available to residents of the region on a regular basis. In other words, the constituent members know there are resources available for participation; resources are not simply allotted when a new policy is being formulated. Local governments are also considered a specialized group which would be invited to participate directly in the policy process. Links (e) and (f) illustrate this relationship in Figure 6.

(vii) Communications Web, Overlapping Jurisdictions

Aside from financial and technical resource needs, access to information and channels for participation are considered to be essential elements in meeting participation assessment criteria. The communications web and overlapping jurisdictions between provincial and regional governments ensure that the regional government model provides these opportunities on a regular basis.

Local government bodies, local groups and local constituent members may receive or communicate information through the local general purpose representative (link (c) in Figure 6). Some of the information they receive would be concerned with the progress of regional policy processes (links (g) and (d)), while

some of the information would be information about the pattern of general needs, preferences and problems in the whole region. The latter type of information is available after the constituency office information has been gathered and processed by the information unit of the regional Secretariat (see links (d) and (c) in Figure 6).

Overlapping jurisdictions are an aspect of design which maximizes the number of avenues open to the citizen seeking access to public resources and policy processes, and which provides checks on the mistakes which one or the other government (or agency thereof) might make.<sup>1</sup>

(viii) Policy Analysis Secretariat

The regional Policy Analysis Secretariat is a multi-purpose bureaucratic agency responsible directly to the Executive Council (link (h)). Staff members would be specialists in various fields and would work on a committee basis on policy analysis in specific policy processes. Members on the committees would also represent a range of disciplines and therefore a range of perceptions of policy problems. Non-secretariat members might also be included on the policy committees. One purpose of this approach is to avoid agency, or in this case "discipline" bias in policy analysis.

A unit of the Secretariat would also be responsible for

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<sup>1</sup> See: Mark Sproule-Jones, "An Analysis of Canadian Federalism," Publius, Vol. 4, Fall, 1974.

processing and transferring information through the Communications Web (relationships (c), (d) and (g) in Figure 6), and for dispensing financial, technical and staff resources to applicants (link (e)).

Finally, a unit of the regional Secretariat would be responsible for gathering and analysing data on policy outputs according to directives from the Executive Council and for reporting the findings to the Executive Council (links (h) and (n) in Figure 6). This would also be a multi-discipline unit which would work closely with the departmental agencies who would be responsible for the actual collection of the data.

#### (ix) Committee Structure

The committee structure aspect of the regional institutional design is the chosen alternative to the hierarchical bureaucratic design characteristic of provincial and federal bureaucracies. It is a design feature which allows for the coordination of policy implementation without domination of the process by the perception of any one department, and for the injection of numerous perceptions and innovative ideas into the policy process. This aspect of institutional design could be viewed as the means of accommodating maximum participation in the policy process within the government structure itself.

Both the Policy Analysis Secretariat and the executive departments of the regional government would operate according to the committee principle. Staff members would thus be assigned various committee responsibilities associated with either the

analysis or implementation of regional policies. The committees of the Secretariat would not be fixed but would be formed as the policy issues arose. These committees would report directly to the Executive Council (link (h) in Figure 6). The departmental committees would be organized on a sub-regional basis. Any conflict which arose in policy implementation would be referred to and dealt with directly by the Executive Council (relationship (j) in Figure 6). At times, departmental committee staff members would be invited to sit with Secretariat committees during the development of new policies, and Secretariat staff may sit with sub-regional departmental committees when new policies are being implemented (relationship (i) of Figure 6).

Although the departmental staff members are regularly involved in sub-regional committees functions, they are employed as "foresters", "socialworkers", "economists", etc. and therefore each person has a simultaneous specialized professional responsibility which is associated with the departmental responsibilities of a single Executive Council Member. Thus any minor procedural change, or any major policy change suggestions which might emerge from the professional judgement of the staff member would be reported directly to the Executive Council member in charge (relationship (k) in Figure 6). Minor procedural changes could be decided by the Executive Council member alone, but policy changes would be a matter for discussion with the whole Executive Council.

Only one Director of the Secretariat and one Director of



the executive departments is necessary. These positions would be purely administrative: directors would not be responsible for reviewing staff work before forwarding it to the political level. The role of the Directors would include hiring staff, assigning staff responsibilities, informing the Executive Council of staff requirements, etc. (relationship (l) and (m) of Figure 6).

(x) Continuous Monitoring

There are two parts to the continuous monitoring aspect of regional government design: provincial monitoring of regional government policy (relationship (o) in Figure 6); regional monitoring of policy output by a monitoring unit of the Policy Analysis Secretariat (relationship (n)).

Although the regional government model would replace most provincial field staff, a single provincial staff member from each provincial ministry would be located in the region to keep informed of the regional policy developments. Information would be freely available to provincial staff, and sometimes provincial staff would be invited to participate on one of the regional Secretariat or departmental committees. Although the regional provincial staff would report information to provincial staff in Victoria, they would report any major conflicts between regional and provincial policy directly to the Executive Council and to the Cabinet for resolution (links (p), (q) and (a) in Figure 6). Provincial field staff would not have veto power over regional staff administrative decisions. The provincial staff

offices would also be important centres for public access to provincial resources (see link (r), Figure 6).

The monitoring unit of the regional Secretariat would be responsible for gathering and analysing data on policy outputs according to directives from the Executive Council, and for reporting the findings to the Executive Council. This would not only provide for checks on agency bias in policy implementation, but it would also allow for the continuous adjustment of policies according to changes in societal preferences or in constraints to optimality of the policy process.

#### C. The Normative Model in Operation: An Improved Burns Lake Process

Since the regional government model has been designed to maximize the satisfaction of the assessment criteria and minimize the constraints to optimality, the Burns Lake process transposed to the new institutional context is the optimal process. For illustration purposes, it is more useful to comment on the transposed process as it compares to the original process.

For illustration purposes also, possible changes in policy output as (a result of changes in the policy process) might be mentioned. The reader should note that it is not the intention to suggest how the policy output should have been changed.

Changes in policy output reflect the values and goals of the participants in the process; no one can judge what should have happened, least of all an outsider to the process.

The reader should also note that when suggesting how the policy process and policy outputs would have changed, one is only suggesting that the probability of achieving a specified result will be increased. Clearly, within a different institutional context, more individuals and groups would have participated in defining the policy process than are indicated by a study of the actual process. Since the character of such individuals and groups cannot be predicted, neither can their specific contribution to the policy process.

Finally, the reader should note that the exceptional leadership and visionary capabilities of several participants in the Burns Lake process removes the possibility of the process' being less than optimal because of the lack of leadership, motivation and other related human constraints to optimality of the policy process.<sup>1</sup> Other policy processes may be subject to these constraints, and the optimal process could be frustrated. However, the design of the optimal institutional framework should minimize the necessity of relying too heavily on one individual's leadership capabilities (e.g., via joint decisions, committee structures), and maximize leadership opportunities so that leaders step forward to meet the challenge (e.g., communications web, resources for participation).

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<sup>1</sup> The principal actors in the transposed process are held constant. Provincial officials are assumed then to be regional officials.

- (1) Would there be sufficient channels and other resources available for all individuals and groups to communicate their problems and needs to accountable political officials?

Improved. The model of regional government provides for the systematic monitoring of public opinion through the office of the General Assembly representative, and for the dissemination of information to provincial, municipal and the various arms of regional government. The formalized institutional aspect of the communications channels is intended to minimize the human and existing institutional constraints to the optimal derivation of purpose in the planning/policy process. Such human constraints which might exist range from ignorance to apathy on the part of any specific politician. Existing institutional constraints overcome include the bureaucratic buffer to elected representatives and the accompanying defeatist attitude on the part of a public which has tired of expending so much energy to participate to receive so little in return.

For example, the communications channel between the regional representative's office and the band office in Burns Lake would have encouraged the native population to participate, and the existence of the organized B.C. Association of Non-Status Indians would not have been so important a factor in attracting attention to the special socio-economic problems of the Burns Lake Indians. In short, the whole question of native participation in economic development would not have depended so completely on the existence of a minister open to innovative

policies and the existence of BCANSI to overcome the conditioned inertia of the native population.<sup>1</sup>

- (2) Would the varying perceptions of all immediately affected groups and individuals enter into the definition of the problem?

Improved. There are three aspects of the regional government which would ensure the participation of interested groups and individuals: the existence of the "communications web" which would keep the public informed of government undertakings as well as communicate public needs to government; the existence of financial and other resources to ensure that those who wish to can participate formally; the existence of a local General Assembly representative through which the opinions of those not wishing to participate formally can be communicated.

In Burns Lake, the local MP was only peripherally involved in the process, and it can not be said that at any time did he participate as a representative of the views of his constituents. Although part of the reason for his lack of involvement was political incompetence,<sup>2</sup> it is no small factor

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<sup>1</sup> However, provincial institutional structures cannot overcome all policy problems associated with native participation. The matter of revising the federal Indian Act has to be dealt with at the federal policy level.

<sup>2</sup> This is not to say that this individual was incompetent in other matters. He simply did not possess political leadership capabilities.

that he lived 40 miles or so from Burns Lake. If the model of regional government had been in place, Burns Lake would have had its own General Assembly representative. On this smaller scale there is almost no way that the representative could avoid becoming involved in public opinion, especially since he or she, as a member of the community, would also be personally involved. For political support, the elected representative would depend upon the whole of the Burns Lake population, 40 percent of which is native Indian.

Assuming that the BCANSI proposal to build the sawmill was still the initiating action for native participation in the mill, the initial phase of negotiations might have remained much the same: the natives bid for the mill; the Executive Council (not just one member) refused the bid but offered an equity share on the recommendation of the Executive Council member responsible for the Department of Forest Resources. The percent share would also have had to have been negotiated with Babine (the preferred proposal) prior to the offer of 8 percent. The real difference in the process to this point is that the non-native population of Burns Lake would be aware of (a) the BCANSI bid and (b) the government's offer, by way of the communications web and the close contact with the local General Assembly representative, who, as a matter of course, would be kept informed on all aspects of development in his (her) constituency. At this point, other local groups might have joined the process and demanded either an equal share in the mill or a part of what the native population was receiving. They would only have had to approach the local representative to

become involved , they would not have had to approach a Cabinet minister. On the other hand, other groups might not have done anything but observe the situation with interest. The point is that the opportunities which invite participation are there should any individual or group wish to contribute to the definition of the problem. If non-native groups had joined in and demanded an equal share in the mill, the problem might have been defined as community socio-economic development rather than as native socio-economic development.

The fact that human (behavioural) constraints might have existed in 1974 to limit native-non-native joint participation does not negate the possibility of such joint participation. It might have required more intensive and longer negotiations than dealing only with native demands, but in view of the fact that the Executive Council would have more time free to deal with such matters, and that distances which would have to be travelled are less, there would be fewer constraints to involving more groups in the policy process. There also existed the possibility of dealing separately with each group, but communicating the ideas of one group to the other.

The major constraint, that of the minister's time, would be removed by the regional government model. The Executive Council would have fewer demands on its time than did the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, who had three province wide departments to oversee. Certainly, negotiations could not go on forever, but with the possibility for weekly, or even daily, communications, negotiations could be condensed into a much

reduced time span. In the Burns Lake process, the existence of the regional government model would have allowed more frequent, more intensive, and less drawn-out negotiations.

- (3) Would the varying perceptions of all affected and interested groups and individuals determine the alternative policies that are considered?

Improved. Because the process under the regional government is "opened up", there would have been an extended cast of actors in the Burns Lake process, although certainly, the number of participants could not have been indefinite. Depending on who stepped forward and for what reason, the groups could have been asked (or coaxed via the dispensation of funds for participation) to form coalitions when it appeared as if purposes were aligned, or, if there was only a demand for the participation of the local non-native population, the Burns Lake residents could have been asked to elect a small group of representatives. The General Assembly representative would have been a key actor in organizing this activity, although he or she would always maintain the stance that he(she) was the public servant of both native and non-native constituents.

The number of alternatives which would have been considered in Burns Lake would have depended upon the number of perceptions brought to the process by the participants plus the number of alternatives which might emerge from the interaction of groups with varying perceptions.

If the process had been open in Burns Lake, four additional



groups might have stepped forward at various points in the process to participate and change the alternatives considered:

- a local non-native group which demanded a share in the mill as well;

- a local native group which would not have insisted so rigidly on a strictly native Community Development Project if it meant losing the BLNDC offer;

- a local business association group concerned about the native competition not being "equal" in the sense that Indians would receive low interest loans through BLNDC;

- the board members of the newly created Burns Lake Community Resources Society who had been trying to establish it as the official community-wide society with the mandate to organize, acquire funding for, and coordinate various community development programs. (The formation of these societies had been encouraged by a policy of decentralization within the Department of Human Resources.)

If these groups had stepped forward, the number of alternatives considered would have been greatly expanded. They might have included, for example:

- (1) -native participation via x percent, parallel non-native participation via x percent,<sup>1</sup> plus comprehensive training programs on all levels of employment;

- (2) -native and non-native partnership in participation via x percent, plus comprehensive training programs to ensure participation on all levels of employment;

- (3) -(1) plus an added BLNDC economic arm to begin subsidiary companies, and a parallel structure for non-natives;

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<sup>1</sup> Non-native participation could have been secured either by enabling local Burns Lake residents to form a separate corporate body, or by allowing the municipality to hold the shares.

(4) - (2) plus an economic arm of the corporation to allow the formation of subsidiary companies;

(5) - either (1), (2), (3), or (4) but with higher interest rates;

(6) - either (1), (2), (3), (4), but with provincial support being on a strictly loan (not forgivable loan) basis, but at below market interest rates;

(7) - either (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), or (6) plus financial support for the community-wide Human Resources Society;

(8) - either (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), or (6) plus financial support for a community-wide Community Development Project<sup>1</sup> to be formed from the native and non-native populations.

These alternatives are strictly hypothetical, but the reader can see how the perceptions of the various groups would have affected and expanded the alternative policies that were considered in the Burns Lake process.

Again, the constraints of time and human behaviour discussed previously are overcome because of the decentralized structure of the regional government. Transaction costs associated with travel for both government and non-government groups, and financial costs of staff salaries are minimized because of the proximity of the regional government and because of the decreased length of the total time required to complete negotiations.

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<sup>1</sup> i.e., a social program, but one which is defined differently and has different or more functions than would a Community Resources Society.

- (4) Would resources be allocated to ensure all groups with differing perceptions have the opportunity to participate in the formation of alternative proposals?

Improved. The inclusion of the availability of financial and other resources in the model of regional government ensures that the participation of unorganized or poorly funded groups is secured. This is to avoid either the tyranny of the majority or the domination of the planning/policy process by any one group, since this would limit the number of alternative policies seriously considered.

In Burns Lake, funds would have been made available to groups other than the native alliance who wished to participate. This would not have involved such a high expense as one might at first expect. The distance between government headquarters and Burns Lake is greatly reduced and overnight lodging costs would have been unnecessary. Although some groups may still have had to employ expert advice, some of that advice could have been obtained locally, especially by the non-native groups who had a greater pool of local expertise resources from which to draw. The utilization of local resources whenever possible (and often at no cost if the individual possessing the expertise happens to belong to the negotiating group) reduces the necessity of employing consultants and lawyers from Vancouver, and, of paying not only for their hourly fees, but for their travel expenses and forgone fees as well.

This was the case in Burns Lake. Had the regional government model been in place, it might have insisted that

legal and consulting resources be obtained in the region to minimize transaction costs. If such resources were unavailable in Burns Lake, the communities of Smithers, Terrace, Prince Rupert, or even Prince George would have been the next best alternatives. The regional government would also have had a certain number of experts in its employ which could be made available in certain instances. As it was, BCANSI was a Vancouver based organization which obtained its legal and consulting advice in Vancouver. This might have been the better choice if one considers that government officials were in Victoria, but it would have made no sense at all if the government conducting the process were a regional one.

The most important difference in the Burns Lake process which would have been manifest under the regional government institutional structure is that participation would have been encouraged by the resources allotted to participating groups. Public participation is thus harnessed as a positive input, rather than endured as a constraint to swift decision-making.

- (5) Would the varying perceptions of all affected and interested groups, agencies and individuals be incorporated into the evaluation process?

Improved. As was mentioned previously, the process of evaluation of policy alternatives is not discrete from the process of generating alternatives. Since, in the presence of the model of regional government, the number of groups entering the process would have been greater, then the process of

evaluation of alternatives would have been much more thorough and rigorous. This is because each alternative would have been subject to the scrutiny of several groups, each of whom approached the alternative from a different perspective. The preferred alternative would probably have been a hybrid one, resulting from the series of compromises, trade-offs, and concessions granted.

In a sense, the alternatives suggested previously as possible choices themselves reflect this "hybrid" nature which emerges from the evaluation process. However, if one considers all the details and terms to be worked out under each of these alternatives (e.g., what percentage participation, what interest rate to be charged), one can see that the actual number of alternatives is too great to list. Therefore, the accepted policy is not likely to be strictly identified as either alternative (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7), or (8), but it is rather likely to be composed of a series of aspects from one or several of those alternatives on which all the groups have either agreed, conceded or traded-off for another concession.

The constraints of transaction time and costs are again those likely to inhibit the optimal evaluation of alternatives. Again, the regional government has more time to devote specifically to processes such as the Burns Lake process. The Burns Lake process would have been more the usual business of the Executive Council, whereas it was an exceptional case in the realm of duties occupying the concern of the provincial Cabinet minister. Financial transaction costs, as explained, are reduced

because of reduced distances travelled and the use of local or regional resources. Despite the increase in the actual number of groups participating, these aspects of the design of the regional government would still have enabled a decrease in total time from the beginning to the end of negotiations.

The fact that the process would have been open and impartial to any one group would also have done much to relieve the native-non-native tensions so frequently cited as human constraints to cooperation between the two populations. In one sense, the partisan province-native process actually aggravated the rift between the two cultures, initially at least. This points out the fact that certain types of behaviour amongst groups can actually be produced from the expectation that they will behave in a certain manner.

- (6) Would resources be allocated to ensure that all groups with differing perceptions would in fact have the opportunity to participate in the evaluation of alternative proposals?

Improved. Although it was evident in the Burns Lake process that no distinct dividing line could be drawn between the generation of alternatives phase and the evaluation of alternatives phase, the important aspect of the provision of financial and other resources for participation is that those resources are continuously available. This provides for entry into the process at any point, which is essential because the nature and direction of the policy process could shift any time as a result of negotiations, and in so doing cross the sphere of

interest of some other group.

For instance, in Burns Lake, it is more likely that the Human Resources Society group would have entered only when it became apparent that the native group was likely to secure approval for the Community Development Project. This would have been apparent because the local General Assembly representative, who was fully informed on the progress of the process would have been responsible for informing newspapers and posting in his or her office summary reports of the progress of the process. A review of the "Conditions Precedent" alone would have been enough to involve the Resources Society since it had been experiencing great difficulty obtaining funding through the Department of Human Resources. In this instance, the type of participation required of the Human Resources Society would not have depended on the provision of funds, although it could have, for instance, if an aspect of their participation had required an evaluation of a particular Community Development Program proposed by the native group. As it was, the native group's proposal for money involved primarily the employment of trained staff (community development workers, employment and education counsellors, housing coordinator, economic development coordinator).

The limit to the financial constraints of extending resources for participation is also illustrated by this example. Not all groups will need funds to participate - sometimes it is lack of access to information and political audience which constitute the resources necessary to stimulate participation.

In less localized policy processes where technical input is more likely to be a requirement of participation, those costs would be borne by the region in general, and on a per capita basis would not constitute a barrier to extending resources for public participation.

- (7) Would there be checks on government agency bias which might otherwise inadvertently dominate the process?

Improved. The model of regional government would have a Policy Analysis Secretariat responsible to the whole Executive Council rather than a Secretariat responsible only to ministers concerned with environmental and land use departments. This would mean that, not only would regional Secretariat members not be biased in favour of any one resource department, they should not be biased in favour of any department at all. Moreover, the possibility of staff members' being biased in favour of their discipline or areas of interest is removed from the design of the regional government by ensuring that staff members work in committees as much as possible. This would remove the physical-economic bias which the ELUC Secretariat brought to the Burns Lake process.

With respect to line agency staff who are administering the details of political decisions taken, the objective of the regional institutional design is to ensure that one agency cannot supersede the other in areas of overlap. These conflicts are explored on a committee basis and then reported to the Executive Council for resolution by accountable representatives.



Monitoring of line agencies by the Secretariat and by provincial field staff doubly ensures that the administering of policy decisions does not result in distorted policy outputs.

In the Burns Lake process, this advantage of institutional design would have been less obvious than the others, since the actual establishment of the type and form of local participation in socio-economic development was essentially a localized political process. Administrative agency bias becomes a more significant variable when policies with a regional extent require more participation of the bureaucracy in the process of implementation. In any case, the problem of agency bias at the administrative level in Burns Lake was overcome: (a) by the establishment of an intergovernmental task force including non-ELUC departments; (b) by keeping the process in the political arena, thereby removing opportunities for bureaucratic "empire building". The advantage of the regional government design is that this interdepartmental approach would be standard instead of exceptional as it is in the provincial situation.<sup>1</sup>

At the legislative level, the Executive Council is small and has fewer actual decisions to make because of its restricted geographical and demographic extent. This means that all policy decisions can be made jointly, and there is no need for any one minister to act in isolation. New policy would be initiated

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<sup>1</sup> i.e., These intergovernmental task forces are part of the Secretariat's "conflict resolution" approach which is reserved for situations which cannot be handled through the usual channels.

jointly; administrative matters may be dealt with by one Executive Council member unless some conflict should arise, in which case, it becomes a matter for the whole council to consider. The Burns Lake process was sufficiently multi-dimensional to require the attention of the whole Executive Council. Therefore, the physical-economic bias which existed as a result of the ELUC-Secretariat domination of the Burns Lake process would have been removed if the regional government model had been in place.

Another problem of the Burns Lake project design would probably have been avoided if the Executive Council had been conducting the process: the CDA aspect of the project would not have just been "tacked on" at the end. Instead, with the Executive Council member responsible for the Human Resources Department involved from the beginning of the policy process, the design of and implementation arrangements for the Community Development Project would have been carefully, negotiated, evaluated, and implemented according to agreements arrived at by the negotiating groups.

With the whole Executive Council in general given more time to devote to conducting policy processes, the council members more directly involved in negotiations (e.g., Forests, Human Resources Labour) could have been present during all of the negotiation sessions. It would not have been necessary for the Secretariat to conduct various phases of the process in their absence. This would have meant, that in terms of staff input, a committee of the Policy Analysis Secretariat would have been

employed to analyse the various proposals and synthesize them into counterproposals. This also would have meant the injection of more viewpoints to the generation of alternative policy proposals and implementing arrangements, since the process would not have been dominated by any one person's perceptions. This arrangement constitutes a very efficient way of tapping the creative resources of the staff while maintaining political control over the policy process.

Since agency bias is an institutional constraint in itself, the removal of agency bias requires an institutional solution. The only possible constraint to ensuring that this institutional checks and balance system can operate efficiently is possibly the size of bureaucracy and the decision-making bodies themselves. This constraint is minimized by the fact that the government designed is a regional one with a rather small bureaucracy. The regional extent means that the volume of cases to be considered is manageable without a great deal of red tape, and the limited size of the bureaucracy means that it cannot become detached from the purposes of the political aspects of policy formation and acquire life unto itself.

- (8) Would final choices be made by accountable representatives or by the public generally?

Unchanged. Within the context of the regional government, all important decisions in Burns Lake would have been taken by accountable political representatives, since the members of the General Assembly and the Executive Council are elected by the

regional population.

Moreover, the constraints on provincial ministers' time which usually prevent their involvement in such localized, specific policy issues is removed in a decentralized regional government. The Executive Council members have more time to become intimate with all aspects of regional policy formation, including the implementation phases, because they are not bogged down with (a) the administration of a huge department and (b) all aspects of policy formation in every corner of B.C.

- (9) Would alternative implementation arrangements be proposed and analysed by the various groups, individuals and agencies involved in the process?

Improved. Again, because of the high access to information and channels for participation, the problem of generation and evaluation of alternative implementing arrangements would have been overcome. This was not the case in the actual Burns Lake Process.

The one alternative implementing arrangement for the economic arm of the project, although carefully designed, was essentially the product of two men - the Director of the Secretariat and the lawyer for the province. Only one alternative was examined because it was essentially designed to accommodate native demands. It was therefore accepted without dispute.

The one alternative implementating arrangement for the

social arm of the project was not debated either, and because it was "tacked on" at the end, it was not so carefully designed.

With access to participation channels and other resources to encourage the input of a wide range of perceptions into the planning/policy process, the regional government model would have ensured that a wider range of alternative implementing arrangements were considered in the Burns Lake process. Furthermore, the early and continued participation of the Executive Council member in charge of the Human Resources Department would have rendered the recommendation of the Director of the ELUC Secretariat that the economic and social arms of the project remain separate a less significant factor in the design of the BLNDC-CDA arrangement. Alternatives might have ranged from completely fusing to completely separating the socio-economic aspects of the project, to considering some form of cooperative rather than corporate ownership arrangement. On the other hand, the economic aspect of the project might have been implemented through two separate corporations, one native, one non-native, while the social aspect might have been a joint venture from the start. The whole range of possibilities was restricted by limited access to participation.

There is no need to elaborate the constraints of time, money and human behaviour which, again, inhibit the goal of ensuring participation. This aspect has been discussed previously.

(10) Would the implementation process be subject to experimentation where uncertainties were fairly numerous?

Unchanged. The optimal planning/policy process takes into account the fact that there will always be uncertainties. Nothing can be known until it happens and the challenge in policy-making is to make educated guesses (predictions) about what might happen. A great deal of judgement, therefore, goes into the decision-making aspect of the policy process.

A tactical way of minimizing risks associated with uncertainties is to implement new policies on an experimental basis. This can be done irrespective of institutional structure, and the Burns Lake project itself can be considered an experiment.

However, another tactical way of minimizing risks associated with uncertainties is to avoid changing policies and starting new ones. If the Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources had not been an individual open to suggestions for new ways of doing things, the BLNDC process would never have begun.

Although no one particular institutional arrangement is required in order that policy implementation be subject to experimentation, the regional government model exemplifies an institutional arrangement which maximizes the possibility that policies will be implemented on an experimental basis.

For instance, under the regional government institutional structure, provincial policies would be very broadly framed, and implementation of provincial policy is regional policy. The

process of implementing provincial policy does not become a matter for uniform implementation province wide by provincial bureaucracy. Instead, implementation of provincial policy becomes the regional policy process.

The regional policy process through the regional government model as described in this paper would be an open, participatory, region-wide process. The dynamics of this process would vary from region to region in the province, with the ultimate result that no two regions would have identical policies. These regional policy processes can thus be seen as experimental implementing arrangements from the provincial level.

For instance, suppose that both the provincial forest policy and the northwest regional forest policy are in place. Suppose also that it is the general policy of the northwest when allotting Timber Sale Harvesting Licences that proposals should be evaluated on the basis of their ability to meet multiple socio-economic and environmental objectives. If this were the case, then BCANSI and like organizations would be prompted to enter proposals. New ideas would be constantly entering the process because of access to information and channels to participation. Decisions are kept in the Executive Council, and the bureaucracy is structured in such a way as to be under the control of accountable representatives. In short, the regional policy implementation process is part of the policy process itself. Each time a new sawmill is built, the actors will be different (except perhaps Executive Council members) and the

output of the process will be different. Thus, since each process of implementing policy is itself a part of the policy process, it is unique, and and therefore experimental. BLNDC would have been only one of many such experiments .

The only constraint to achieving this assessment criterion is the institutional structure itself.

(11) Would there be explicit provision for the continuous assessment of results and the effectiveness of the implementation arrangements?

Improved. Again, the lack of regional government institutions does not prevent the establishment of implementing arrangements which provide continuous assessments of results. Indeed, it was shown that BLNDC managed to meet this criterion.<sup>1</sup>

What is significant, however, is that BLNDC is itself an institution. In order for assessment to be continuous, it must be institutionalized in some way. Even when monitoring is a technical task, the gathering and processing of monitored information must still be accommodated in some institutional manner if it is to be continuous. A project which would have been implemented without the creation of a new institution would have had to provide for a monitoring center within the regular bureaucracy, and for the processing of monitored information

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<sup>1</sup> It was the design of CDA which was less than optimal and prevented the Burns Lake process from meeting this assessment criterion completely.



through the appropriate channels, in order to maintain continuous assessment. The dynamism must therefore exist within the institutions.

It is significant also that BLNDC was planned to be "plugged into" provincial government institutions via a three person monitoring board. This board would be responsible for deciding what constituted "satisfactory performance" of BLNDC and for assessing performance according to standards set. This arrangement allows for the continuous monitoring of the performance of the implementing arrangements of the project.

Most government policies are not implemented through a semi-autonomous corporate institution, but instead through the regular bureaucracy. This means that in order for all policy results to be continuously monitored, and in order for the institutions to monitor themselves, these objectives must be built into the principles of operation of the institutional structure.

This is essentially what the design of the regional government model accomplishes. The agencies are hooked up via overlapping committee structures and the performance of agencies is monitored by other regional agencies as well as by provincial agencies. This essentially amounts to assessing the output of policies delivered through the agencies on a continuous basis.

The open and participatory aspect of the regional government, in conjunction with the "communications web" aspect of its design, provide for not only the continuous informal

assessment of the success of government policies, but also for the continuous assessment of the effectiveness of the implementing arrangements - government institutions themselves. When it is apparent that the collective needs of the society are not being met through a given institutional structure, that institution itself becomes an impediment to the realization of the democratic norms of Canadian society.

These two aspects of regional government design, in terms of the Burns Lake process, would link CDA more closely into the government institutional structure insofar as the Department of Human Resources would have been keeping track of the output of programs of CDA, while public opinion monitored through the General Assembly representative's office would have indicated, at least informally, whether or not the implementing arrangement for the project was satisfactory.

The only constraint to meeting this assessment criteria is, again, the existing institutional framework itself.

(12) Would there be explicit provision for utilizing these assessments to adapt policies and implementing arrangements accordingly?

Improved. In order for assessments to be utilized to adapt policies, there must be some mechanism in the institutional design to ensure that the information gathered and processed is used in a productive manner. BLNDC, because it is a semi-autonomous institution, has a self-regulating mechanism which ensures that it will adapt its policies accordingly. This

mechanism is economic incentives: if BLNDC does not perform well, it will cease to exist.

This self-regulating mechanism is overstated somewhat, however, since BLNDC is only semi-autonomous, and not an autonomous corporation as yet. Because it was set up to achieve goals associated with native socio-economic development, a certain number of financial mistakes would not be assessed as failure if the corporation learned a valuable lesson from making those mistakes. Nevertheless, the institutional arrangements provide (a) for BLNDC to adapt its policies according to economic success and failure and (b) for the government to change or dissolve the corporate structure by withdrawing financial backing, should the corporation fail to show at least improvement in its economic performance.

The essential point is this, however: because BLNDC was the output of a government policy process, the decision to change the policy must be a political one. Therefore, in the public policy system, while the provision for continuous assessment of results of policies and the effectiveness of implementing arrangements is a matter of designing "dynamic institutions", the explicit provision for utilizing these assessments to adapt not only policies but also implementing arrangements is a matter of designing politically responsive institutions.

It would furthermore, seem that one advantage of choosing semi-autonomous implementing institutions (e.g., corporations, societies, regulatory agencies) is that such structures, rather than hierarchically organized government bureaucracies, are more

capable of and likely to adapt their policies to new circumstances because they are self-regulating. However, it would also seem that such structures can be less politically responsive than hierarchical bureaucracies if the correct government-agency (corporation) links are not established. In essence, it is because semi-autonomous implementing agencies are "half government" and "half private" that a conflict of interest arises. The semi-autonomous nature of the implementing institutions gives them the mandate to set their own policies, but inasmuch as these policies should be in agreement with and adapt to higher level government policy, one can see how the two sets of purposes could lead in opposite directions.

The adoption of the regional government model would overcome this problem. While the regional government is semi-autonomous, it is still "government", and as such (a) is multi-purpose rather than single purpose (such as BLNDC) and is therefore more able to adapt the total set of regional policies to changing conditions, and (b) is representative of and politically responsible to its whole electorate (not just a select client group) and is therefore more likely to modify its implementing structures (institutions) to meet changing conditions. The design of the regional government also ensures that it is responsive to provincial level policies as well. The checks and balances on agency bias, the communications web, and the open participatory nature of the regional government ensures that it remains politically responsive, dynamic, and therefore adaptable.

It is true, however, that even a regional government might want to implement some policies in such a way that local conditions become an input into the policy process. The communications web aspect of the regional government would not constitute a sufficient institutional response to meet this objective. In the absence of the power to delegate some responsibilities to local governments, the regional government would have to resort to BLNDC-CDA type institutions. Even these institutions would be, nevertheless, more politically responsive than they are in the present context since the regional political process itself would be more knowledgeable of and sensitive to the socio-economic and cultural environment in which it operates. Nevertheless, the optimal situation would be one in which local governments as well would operate on a multi-sectoral level (instead of from within the Ministry of Municipal Affairs alone). If such a situation had existed in Burns Lake, under the regional government model, other alternative implementing arrangements, such as implementing CDA policies through municipal governments (where it might be possible to incorporate native groups as well) would have been considered.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The native situation is a unique one, however. Some amenable agreement needs to be worked out amongst federal and provincial governments and the native peoples which will allow for the integration of the policy processes for the two cultures without further subjugating the native culture to white culture.

(13) Would the varying perceptions of all affected and interested individuals and groups be included as inputs to the assessment and modification procedure?

Improved. The number of perceptions which go into the monitoring and modification of policies and implementing institutions is usually restricted according to the number of clientele groups served by the institution. Special agencies such as BLNDC incorporate the varying perceptions of their native clientele groups. CDA, in its 1976 form can incorporate native and non-native perceptions into its monitoring and modification process. Although, theoretically, there is an opportunity for all native and non-native groups to influence the policies and structure of implementing agencies such as CDA, because CDA is single-purpose, that is, it provides social services for "the needy", the number of perceptions which actually enter into the modification of policies tends to be restricted to those perceptions of the clientele and the people working with the clientele. Policies change according to the perception of problems as defined by these groups, but a limited perception of problems could restrict solutions and modifications.

Again, a multi-purpose regional government set up to be politically and socially sensitive serves as a multi-purpose implementing agency for provincial policies. Perceptions which contribute to the assessment and modification of policies would not be restricted to the perceptions of those clientele directly receiving benefits or dealing with the government agency.

Therefore, the issuing of timber licences, for instance, would not be a closed administrative procedure involving negotiations between provincial bureaucracy and industry, (the clientele group), but instead an open political process which would involve the whole range of social trade-offs associated with a single licencing decision. It is more likely that policies would be modified to balance these numerous social goals rather than to serve the purposes of the clientele group.

Of course, again the regional government model could not have permitted a substantially different choice of implementing institutions in Burns Lake unless the municipal governments had wider powers, and unless a whole range of questions associated with native-non-native constitutional matters were settled formally. However, a more sensitive regional government might do much not only to ensure that the local institutions (BLNDC-CDA) were well designed and adaptable, but also to show that native-non-native cultures could cooperate and join together in their efforts to promote regional socio-economic development.

CHAPTER VIII: ASPECTS OF INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN REQUIRED TO  
PROMOTE OPTIMALITY OF THE PLANNING/POLICY PROCESS:  
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In Chapter VII, the process of policy formation in Burns Lake was examined in terms of how it might have met the goals of the optimal planning/policy process if it had been conducted within an institutional context which featured a normative model of regional government for B.C. Insofar as the process is imaged to meet the assessment criteria, it is the optimal process.

However, limitations on the ability of regional governments to realize the optimal policy process exist because of the systemic nature of the whole Canadian institutional context. The policies and policy processes of federal government institutions remain unintegrated with the regional government framework, at least in a formal manner. The federal government might be persuaded to implement its programs through the regional government, but it is under no obligation to cooperate. Also, various federal statutes (e.g., the Indian Act) distinctly limit the way in which regional and provincial policies are designed and implemented irrespective of what might be considered optimal. However, these constraints, like all constraints to the optimal policy process, should not be accepted as obstacles. Rather they are matters to be negotiated and adjusted.

Somewhat less limiting from the provincial perspective, but beyond the scope of this thesis inquiry is the whole question of



adjusting provincial and local institutions so that they realize the goals of the optimal planning/policy process. Adjusting local institutions might involve broadening the scope of municipal jurisdiction and reforming their taxing powers. Adjusting provincial institutions might involve reforming the system of legislative committees and adjusting the bureaucratic institutions to meet the relevant assessment criteria. The Cabinet ministers, freed from much of their previous workload, could devote most of their time to participating in the process of provincial level policy formation.

Despite the fact that these federal and local aspects of the Canadian institutional framework restrict the ability of the regional government to promote optimality in all planning/policy processes, a substantial improvement in the policy formation process and therefore in many policy outputs can be achieved if the regional model is adopted in British Columbia. Moreover, a closer look, first at the individual aspects of the regional government in terms of which assessment criteria each aspect satisfies, and which constraints each aspect overcomes, and then at the synergistic effects which are manifested as a result of the operation of the system as a whole, will indicate something about the general applicability of the aspects of institutional design.

**A. Aspects of Institutional Design Required to Meet The Goal Set and Minimize Constraints**

Goals Met	Aspect of Design	Constraints Minimized
Accountability Goal (8) Participation Goals (2,3,5,9,13) Implementation+Monitoring (10,11,12) Resource Goals (4,6)	1. DECENTRALIZED	<u>Technical</u> : Difficulty Integrating Policies <u>Technical</u> : Difficulty Handling Information Volume <u>Technical</u> : Difficulty Coping with Participation <u>Financial</u> : Transaction Costs <u>Temporal</u> : Decision Delays
Resource Goals (4,6)	2. REGIONAL (vs local)	<u>Technical</u> : Scarcity of Resources (human, financial, etc.)
Participation Goals (2,3,5,9,13) Agency Bias Goal (7) Implementation+Monitoring (10,11,12)	3. MULTI-PURPOSE	<u>Technical</u> : Difficulty Integrating Policies
Accountability Goal (8) Communications Goal (1)	4. ELECTED LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE	<u>Technical</u> : Difficulty Coping with Participation
Implementation+Monitoring (10,11,12) Accountability Goal (8) Communications Goal (1)	5. EXECUTIVE COUNCIL LINKED TO CABINET	<u>Technical</u> : Difficulty Integrating Policies
Accountability Goal (8) Agency Bias Goal (7) Implementation+Monitoring (10,11,12)	6. ALL DECISIONS JOINT (Through Executive Council)	<u>Technical</u> : Difficulty Integrating Policies <u>Human</u> : Efforts to Control Policy by More Aggressive
Communications Goal (1) Agency Bias Goal (7)	7. OVERLAPPING JURISDICTIONS	<u>Technical</u> : Risk of Error <u>Technical</u> : Lack of Resources (i.e., prov. can help)
Communications Goal (1) Resource Goals (4,6) Participation Goals (2,3,5,9,13)	8. COMMUNICATIONS WEB	<u>Technical</u> : Difficulty Integrating Policies <u>Technical</u> : Difficulty Handling Participation <u>Human</u> : Apathy, Resentment of Public
Communications Goal (1) Resource Goals (2,4) Participation Goals (2,3,5,9,13)	9. RESOURCES FOR PARTICIPATION (financial, technical, etc.)	<u>Technical</u> : Lack of Resources for Participation <u>Human</u> : Resentment, Refusal to Cooperate on part of Public
Communications Goal (1) Agency Bias Goal (7)	10. POLICY ANALYSIS SECRETARIAT	<u>Technical</u> : Accountability vs Expert Dilemma
Communications Goal (1) Agency Bias Goal (7) Implementation+Monitoring (10,11,12)	11. COMMITTEE STRUCTURE (non-hierarchical bureaucracy)	<u>Technical</u> : Difficulty Integrating Policies <u>Human</u> : Bureaucratic In-fighting, Personal Stagnation
Communications Goal (1) Agency Bias Goal (7) Implementation+Monitoring (10,11,12)	12. CONTINUOUS MONITORING (Prov. and regional inter-agency links)	<u>Technical</u> : Difficulty Integrating Policies <u>Human</u> : Empire Building in Bureaucracy

## B. Systemic Aspects of The Regional Institutional Design

As can be seen from the preceding summary of the aspects of the regional government design, each aspect, except aspect number two (Regional vs Local), meets more than one goal, and many aspects overcome more than one constraint in doing so. Moreover, no one aspect meets all the goals, and even when several aspects are taken together, they do not meet all the goals plus overcome all the constraints to optimality. In short, the aspects of the design of the regional government model are interrelated and make up an institutional system.

For instance, decentralization as an aspect of the normative model of regional government is seen to meet the accountability goal because decision-makers are more visible and accessible to the public. But strictly speaking, accessibility and visibility alone are not sufficient conditions for accountability. However, the decentralized quality of the normative model does serve to help ensure accountability because the government is simultaneously elected and decentralized. The various aspects of the model are interdependent: one cannot isolate one or more aspects of institutional design and expect to promote the optimal process.

The present regional planning institutions in B.C. do not and could not meet the entire set of assessment criteria because certain essential aspects of the optimal institutional design are ignored. The Regional Districts, for example, although semi-decentralized institutions, are not really multi-purpose; they are delegated powers only within the jurisdiction of the

Ministry of Municipal Affairs. This is a major drawback since they are incapable of representing the interests of the regional population in any policy questions associated with natural resource use or allocation. Again, the single purpose nature of Regional District jurisdiction means that the committee structure, the Technical Planning Committee (TPC), serves the province and not the region. The region must coordinate its policies with those of the resource agencies; there is no concept of integrating provincial policies with those of the region. The narrow jurisdiction of the Regional District thus frustrates the attainment of goals associated with decentralization and the use of committee structures to coordinate policies. Aside from their utility in partially meeting "Implementation and Monitoring Goals" 10, 11 and 12, it is obvious that Regional District institutions fall very short of satisfying the procedural goals of a democratic Canadian society.

The Regional Resource Management Committees (RRMCs) should not be viewed in isolation from the provincial government structure since they merely represent the administrative arm of Cabinet. They are somewhat comparable to the "Committee Structure" aspect of the regional government model, except that the committee aspect of the regional government is the rule; the RRMCs are the exception, that is, they meet only to resolve major resource conflicts. Furthermore, the regional government model provides for representation of social concerns on the committees as well: the membership is not restricted to resource and economic considerations as it is for RRMCs.

Even if the RRMC in the northwest had been well established in 1974, it could not have conducted the type of interactive policy process which took place in Burns Lake, for it has no mandate to begin new projects on its own, or to allocate provincial funds to projects such as the BLNDC-CDA project. RRMCs are, after all, not accountable governments, but merely provincial bureaucratic structures.

However, this is not to say that RRMCs and similar bureaucratic agencies do not significantly influence policy development. Although they are unlikely to conduct new provincial level policy processes, they could<sup>1</sup> make or influence regional level policy insofar as they do have certain decision-making as well as advisory capacities. Nevertheless, RRMCs have less decision-making capacity than the model of regional government, they have a physical-economic bias which the regional governments would not have, and they are not comprised of accountable, elected representatives as the regional government would be. The net effect is that regional level policies generated by RRMCs would tend to be less innovative, less responsive to public needs, and more biased toward the interests of the agencies' clientele. Thus, although decentralization of some decision-making capabilities to a RRMC may overcome, to some extent, the technical constraint of

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<sup>1</sup> "Could" if RRMCs met frequently. Most of the "regional policy" is made by agencies operating singly, not as part of the RRMC. Most regional level policy development is uncoordinated.

coordinating policies, decentralization on its own is not a sufficient condition of institutional design to meet the goals of the optimal planning/policy process.

### C. Synergistic Effects of The Regional Government Design

Because the regional government model is a system, the parts (aspects of design) of the system are interrelated, and the total benefit gained from the adoption of the model would be greater than the sum of the parts. These are the positive cumulative effects of the system's operation which could be termed the synergistic effects. In terms of the performance of the regional government, the synergistic effects essentially mean that the constraints to the optimal process are further reduced, and the achievement of the normative criteria is enhanced.

For instance, because the regional government model is decentralized, many government employees would be relocated to the regions and approval procedures now focused on Victoria would be refocused on the regions. This creates a demand in the region for skilled personnel and the increased regional activity would tend to attract more population. Over time, the disparities in population and resources between the various regions of the province would be reduced. The net effect of this aspect of development would be to enhance the regional policy process by further reducing resource constraints to the achievement of the optimal process. As more resources (personnel and otherwise) become available, the quality of the policy

output from regional processes would also be further enhanced.

Not only would there be a quantitative increase in resources because of the migration of resources to the region, but there would also be an increase in the quantity and quality of human resources available to the policy process as a result of increased participation, job satisfaction and leadership opportunities.

Once the regional government was operating, it would gain the confidence of the regional population and encourage cooperation, rather than conflict in citizen participation. When regional residents realize that the energy they expend will not be wasted and that their views will in fact be seriously incorporated into policy design, they will become less apathetic about attending public meetings and preparing briefs.

Similarly, once the opportunity for participation is presented (not only through access to the policy process, but also through the establishment of the elected General Assembly itself), the leadership capabilities of individuals in the region will become available to the public policy process. In the absence of these opportunities, such individuals will direct their energies elsewhere.

Likewise, much of the petty bickering and empire building, often considered as inevitable bureaucratic behaviour, would disappear if the oppressive and militaristic hierarchy in bureaucracy were substituted by the non-hierarchical, committee approach central to the model of regional government. This

aspect, coupled with the "Communications Web" aspect would encourage new and innovative ideas to surface within the bureaucracy itself. Regional government bureaucratic positions would become challenging and satisfying career opportunities, even at the junior staff level.

In short, one of the most significant synergistic effects which could be expected from the operation of the regional government model would be the disappearance of many of the human or behavioural constraints which are often accepted as givens by the more deterministic. In Burns Lake, the leadership, creativity and enthusiasm were present because of an exceptional combination of personalities and opportunities which emerged at that moment in time. Although it is possible that some policy processes conducted within the regional government institutional framework might be less successful because of shortage of such human resources, it is more likely that the opportunities for self expression and personal satisfaction offered during the course of the policy process would attract the human resources necessary to meet the demand.

Although the general approach to regional development in Burns Lake had to be retained for illustration purposes, the net effect of the operation of the regional government model might have produced an entirely different strategy. For instance, if the regional government had been in place, the near crisis economic conditions of the native people in Burns Lake might have been avoided. If Burns Lake had, nevertheless, been slated for some kind of development, the policy might have taken a



direction other than enabling local participation in the mill. There might also have been some more general regional policies to guide the process of native development, or the output of the Burns Lake project may have contributed to the establishment of a region wide policy.

#### D. General Applicability of The Aspects of Institutional Design

What is becoming increasingly clear as the operation of the regional government model is explored is that neither are the problems nor can the solutions be simplistic, linear and uni-dimensional. Too often in policy analysis the tendency is to concentrate on the substantive aspects of policy and ignore the procedural and therefore the institutional aspects which are so important to the success of a given substantive policy solution. Not only does the advocacy of a regional government model express the concern that policies should be evolved in an open and interactive way, but it also maintains that policy output should be tailored to the particular environment for which it is being evolved.

The same is true of new institutions: they should be tailored to fit the socio-political environment in which they will operate. The regional government model is designed to meet Canadian democratic norms and to overcome constraints particular to the British Columbian human and physical environments.

Most of the constraints to the optimal policy process, like the norms, will be common to all provinces, except the technical constraints relating to the size of the province, the topography

and the distribution and size of the population. However, this is a very significant factor in determining whether regional government institutions are necessary to promote the optimal planning/policy process (Aspect 2 - "Regional vs Local"). British Columbia is a very large, geographically diverse, yet a modestly and unevenly populated province. As the Burns Lake example illustrated, the constraints on the ministers' time plus the long distances which had to be travelled to conduct an interactive policy process severely limited the number of groups which could be involved in the process. At the same time, there is a limit to the number of increased responsibilities which can be decentralized to municipal governments which have very limited geographical perspectives. The need for a regional institution as an intermediary emerges. In the larger Canadian provinces, such intermediary or regional government institutions would also be appropriate although geographical size plus population density will still determine what the specific boundaries and sizes of regions should be.

However, if one were to seek to improve the policy process in small provinces such as New Brunswick or Prince Edward Island, it is unlikely that intermediary government institutions would be appropriate. These provinces are geographically smaller in size than most B.C. regional governments would be. Nevertheless, if one considers the provincial governments of N.B. and P.E.I. to be the "regional" government, then all the normative aspects of the regional government model could be applied to the provincial institutional framework in order to

improve the policy process.<sup>1</sup>

#### E. Concluding Remarks

The increased environmental awareness of the late 1960's and early 1970's was manifested in an ecological or systems approach in social science theory. The applied form of this "holistic approach" has resulted in the popularization of such concepts as "integrated resource management" and "coordinated river basin planning." The Regional Resource Management Committees in British Columbia are manifestations of this approach.

Early planners who compiled comprehensive master plans instinctively recognized the merit of an holistic approach, but their emphasis on product instead of process subjected their professional efforts to much criticism. The current emphasis on coordination and on the formation of institutions or committees required to facilitate coordination recognizes the essential interactive nature of the planning/policy process. The purpose of the committee approach is to integrate, or at least coordinate,<sup>1</sup> management decisions.

However, both the old and the new approach to integration

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<sup>1</sup> The federal government would then be the reference point with respect to such aspects as "Decentralized" and "Overlapping Jurisdictions".

<sup>1</sup> "Integrate" implies that there exists "a whole" into which the various elements can be integrated. Coordination can occur without a view to "the whole".

silently tolerate the political aspects of the policy formation process. Efforts to improve institutional design are focused on administrative or bureaucratic institutions and thus ignore some of the most basic democratic principles, such as election of decision-making bodies, which could lead to the true integration of social choices.

This paper has taken the position that the planning process for the Canadian society as a whole is the democratic policy formation process. It is through this process that society has chosen to make its trade-offs in resource use, and it is therefore only through this process that true integration of policies can be achieved. The obvious lack of policy integration can only mean that the democratic policy process is not operating as it should. Any change in institutional design necessary to improve the policy process would therefore be geared towards meeting the norms of the optimal democratic policy process, not towards the objective of overcoming integration constraints alone. The pursuit of the optimal policy process in British Columbia led to the design of a decentralized, multi-purpose, regional government as the institutional framework necessary for integrated regional policy development rather than the administrative Regional Resource Management Committees.

Only when the set of culturally defined democratic norms or the set of constraints changes will the institutional framework require adjustment in order to continue to integrate social choices. The incongruence of the present B.C. policy

institutions with the set of democratic norms indicates that such an adjustment is overdue.

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