

A POLICY-ORIENTED SURVEY OF THE FUTURE

Part one: An Attempt to Challenge

April 1981

## PREFACE

The Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) has a special responsibility to execute and promote studies in the sphere of future research.

Accordingly, the first Council published at the end of its term in 1977 a study entitled: "The next twenty-five years: a survey of future developments in The Netherlands". This study is available in English translation. It is an attempt to describe likely developments within the boundaries of either a low or a high economic growth scenario. It contains a wealth of information and is still an authoritative text on developments in The Netherlands.

Because of this, a similar study on the sphere of future research is of little use at this moment. Instead the second Council attempts a more policy oriented-approach. The underlying text is an English translation of the main parts of the first report on this new study.

In this report, several so called characteristic views are elaborated in a comparable systematic fashion. These views are based on ideological and normative notions that may be recognized in society and compete at present in the political discussions.

In a second report some future developments that may be the consequence of some of these characteristic views will be given. As an example and a challenge, a development is sketched that could result if the views of influential political leaders in the Western hemisphere gain also dominance in The Netherlands. This sketch is based on the well-known INTERFUTURES study of the OECD, so that a summarizing presentation suffices here.

C.T. de Wit  
(chairman working group)

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A POLICY-ORIENTED SURVEY OF THE FUTURE

Part one: An attempt to challenge

1. AIM AND INTENTION

If you can look into the seeds of time,  
And say which grain will grow and which will  
not,  
Speak then to me .....

Macbeth

1.1. Introduction

Looking into the future is not the prerogative of a small group, whether it be Macbeth's witches or contemporary experts. On the contrary, it is an adventure common to all those who consciously wish to mould society and it is in this conviction that the Scientific Council for Government Policy (W.R.R.) submits this report. The Council believes that the future of society is not only the result of forces that are not susceptible to influence, but that it is also shaped by the result of public discussion, debate and political action.

The Council wishes to contribute to that debate with this report entitled "A policy-oriented survey of the future" (BTV), in which it contrasts a number of different future-perspectives, which are explicitly based on normative ideas and can claim demonstrable backing in society. This approach may profit considerably from the cooperation of individuals and social groups. This first report is intended to mobilize this cooperation at a juncture when influence can still be brought to bear upon the final outcome.

This approach was prompted in part by the experience gained with the study of the Council, published in 1977 under the title: "The next 25 years, a survey of future developments in the Netherlands" or for short "ATV".

The Scientific Council for Government Policy was founded provisionally in 1972. The Council was established in its definitive form by the Act of June 30, 1976.

The Council's responsibilities are described in the Act of Establishment as follows:

- a. to supply in behalf of government policy scientifically sound information on developments which may effect society in the long term and draw timely attention to anomalies and bottlenecks to be anticipated, to define major policy problems and indicate policy alternatives;
- b. to provide a scientific structure which the Government can use when establishing priorities and which may ensure that a consistent policy is pursued;
- c. with respect to studies in the sphere of research on future developments and longterm planning in both public and private sectors, to make recommendations on the improvement of communication and coordination.

The address of the Council is:

Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid:  
2, Plein 1813  
P.O. Box 20004  
2500 EA the Hague  
The Netherlands  
Tel. (070)614031

1.2. A retrospective glance at the ATV

The ATV was an attempt to describe plausible developments in various spheres, bringing them into line with one another. The Committee that carried out the main body of the work was unable to draw on the experience of others and was forced to the conclusion that in some areas scarcely any thinking at all had been done about long-term prospects. It also emerged that the knowledge required to integrate the different areas was lacking.

Nevertheless the Committee was successful in retaining the tenor of the report as a general survey and in producing a document which prompted considerable debate, witness the many conferences and meetings organized in diverse fields as a result of it. Moreover, it appears that all kinds of institutions make extensive use of the tables and other data in the report, a point which was again emphasized at a conference held by the Dutch Institute of Land Use Planning and Housing in 1979. The candid admission in the report and in the foreword of the problems which has posed difficulties, led others to focus on these in their critical comments. This criticism in fact helped to determine the plan for the new study.

The intention of the ATV Committee was to carry out an objective and general study of the future, freed of value judgements and assuming that in principle the future can be known. Thus it was possible to focus on outlining an acceptable development and to leave aside the question of who might consider this to be a desirable development and why. To retain the general nature of the study it was assumed that certain phenomena would not dominate events, e.g. there would be no sudden energy crisis and no major unemployment problem. Where there was uncertainty about developments, the continuance of existing structures was assumed for the sake of continuity. As a result, expectations were modified in order to incorporate solutions for a number of problems which would otherwise have occupied too dominant a position..

Whether or not each problem has a solution, the solutions are not a necessary consequence of the development, so that the making of choices turned out to be unavoidable. As a guiding principle, it was assumed that there would be no rapid or major changes in values and norms. Some of these values and norms are referred to in the study but others have to be deduced from the developments outlined. This is no simple matter, however, since an analysis of the different chapters does not always produce the same results.

And yet an image of man emerges which more or less fits in with the high growth or A-variant of the ATV study: he is an individualist and a materialist, who is strongly oriented towards satisfying needs, acts instrumentally, is confident of the capacity to solve problems by science and technology and believes economic growth to be necessary in order to solve social problems.

But how predominant was this image of man in the mid-seventies and how tenable is the hypothesis that it is not subject to rapid and major change? This was a question which the ATV Committee also asked itself, as emerges from the addition of a low growth or B-variant, which appears to be based on a less materialist and anthropocentric image of mankind. Whatever kind of variant one introduces though, the question arises of which political and social forces will underpin it. No answer is given to this.

In the study, virtually no attention is paid to social, political and ideological antitheses, although reactions from that side were expected. And when the government is referred to, it is not as an authoritative body but as one social institution among many. The possibility of shaping the future in general and by means of government action in particular is not discussed.

This point emerges again in the treatment of the influence of the outside world. It is accepted that the developments outlined can only occur in the Netherlands if there are analogous developments in neighbouring countries, but neither the scope for action that remains nor the opportunities for shaping international developments from within the

Netherlands are dealt with. The striking absence of prime movers means that the ATV is too non-committal. Nobody, not even the groups that have a major influence on the course of events as a result of their position of power, need identify themselves with the results.

1.3. Towards a more policy-oriented look at the future

The above comments in themselves indicate that the Council does not wish to confine itself to updating and improving the ATV, but wants to devote more attention to the underlying social and political processes through which attempts are being made to solve problems and shape the future. The fact that the study is policy-oriented indicates that in analysing this complex social situation the Council intends to focus on the role of the government. It involves a scrutiny of the political and administrative topography.

In the former case, this means clarifying the political options regarding future developments and instigating a discussion on the basis of explicitly normative ideas. This is in itself a choice. In Dutch politics there has traditionally been a tendency to treat social questions as apolitical and this tradition is reinforced by the stress on the scientific and technical nature of government policy and the shifting of the emphasis within practically all the political parties from ideological principles to the promotion of specific ends. In the last few years, by contrast, there has been growing interest in reformulating fundamentals, and principles. This future survey is designed to back this countermovement and thus act as a force to stem the tendency towards a pressure group democracy.

As regards public administration it is the function of the state, the position of the government in the social arena and the level of government activities that are to be highlighted. The mainstream political groups hold different opinions on these issues, coloured partly by the political



options regarding future developments. In the final analysis, both the content and the instruments of government policy are at issue.

What has been said above about the study's orientation towards policy, means that it cannot lead up to an outline of developments that may be accorded a certain degree of plausibility or value as a forecast. On the contrary, there is a juxtaposition of a number of concepts of the future which are deliberately based on explicitly normative ideas and can claim demonstrable support in the community. An perspective of the future in this sense presents a development in society when the actors are guided by a coherent set of principles and guide-lines.

The juxtapositioning of these perspectives of the future in the study will, it is hoped, enable major problems in Dutch society to be identified and defined. Here lies the study's potential value as a forecasting instrument.

The ultimate object of the entire exercise, in accordance with the Council's brief, is to place contradictions and problems in developments in the longer term in such a context that they play a role in the forming of contemporary political opinion, in the formulation of current policy and in thinking about the essence and the function of the polity. In brief, the Council considers it its task to reduce potential problems of tomorrow to political conflicts of today.

#### 1.4. The approach

##### 1.4.1. Characteristic views

It was partly the lack of a normative basis for the ATV that prompted the Council to start a project entitled "Values and Norms" some years ago. The study resulted in an analysis of the political parties' manifestoes and related documents, with the aim of clarifying the underlying values and norms.

It suffices to say at this stage that at a high level of abstraction the values and norms largely accord while at a lower level of abstraction there are considerable differences in ideas about the direction in which society should be moving. However, there is often a wide range of norms and values within the parties as well, so that the views of a particular group do not constitute a unified, ordered and consistent whole. Nor can one expect that they should, given a state of affairs marked by uncertainty as a result of continually arising problems and of social and cultural changes. Commentaries on the Council's work make the point that elements of various systems of ideas are encountered within the parties themselves. Consequently, it is impossible to formulate consistent perspectives of the future which can be clearly ascribed to particular groups.

Nevertheless to enable some basis to be formed for perspectives of the future which are both consistent and relevant to policy the following stepwise approach has been chosen. At first so called characteristic views are formulated: consistent sets of normative global principles and opinions on the interrelations, which are used as focal points for the recognition and solution of problems. In a second phase, a perspective of the future is attached to each view. This perspective presents the development in society, under the assumption that the characteristic view guides the actors. This in its turn may lead again to a reconsideration of principles and opinions on the interrelations. It is not the question what will occur in future, that is anybody's guess, but what one thinks that will happen.

The starting point is formed by two spheres of distinction that frame the ideological and normative principles and after merging lead to the above mentioned characteristic views. The first sphere of distinction is political and ideological, because a link with the field of political forces is required. The question here is the extent to which human action is based on the development of the individual will, the extent to which it is determined by social structures and the extent to which there is an external inspiration for human action.

These three points of view lie at the root of the political mainstreams as they can be identified in their liberal, socialist and denominational mantle.

But now, the second sphere of distinction. It need scarcely be argued that there are very substantial differences between perspectives of the future which cannot be attributed to differences in political and ideological premises. Many are normative not so much in the traditional political sense as in their selection of the major problem areas and the directions in which solutions are sought. Thus it emerges that different viewpoints adopted in the most diverse areas may be characterized by an underlying attitude towards technocratic or sociocratic inspired initiatives. The term "technocratic" refers to technical processes and developments and to the possibilities of planning and management in a hierarchical setting. The analogous term "sociocratic" refers to social processes and developments and the possibilities of social control by mutual interference on basis of equivalence. This permits definition of different views of social processes and provides a way of getting to grips with the second sphere of distinction, which can be shown in a diagram as follows.

		Trust in	Distrust in
		sociocratic inspired	technocratic inspired
Trust in		1	2
Distrust in		3	4

In position 2 the problems are in the sociocratic sphere and the solutions in the technocratic one, while in position 3 the reverse is the case. A solution from the angle of one position often means a problems for the other. Examples that spring readily to mind are the nuclear power stations and the democratization of functional organizations. Some trust that possible energy-shortages may be met by the use of nuclear energy under guidance of experts and distrust the claims of voluntary energy-saving, whereas the reverse is true for others.

A similar juxtaposition, but then with respect to administration exists at the Dutch universities. Position 1 is a reflection of the idea that all problems sooner or later bring their own solution in their wake. A need then exists not so much for a normative perspective of the future but for a society arranged in such a way that it is capable of coping with unexpected set-backs so that it can face the future with reasonable confidence. Position 4 represents the view that there is a progressive deterioration and that initiatives based on continuity - whether technocratically or sociocratically inspired - will not make much difference either way.

It will be obvious that it is mainly positions 2 and 3 which are important for the purposes of this study. On basis of an analysis of statement and declarations of intent from political parties, it will be made clear that the same party expresses opinions that may be associated with position 2 or 3 of the second sphere of distinction. The second sphere of distinction is therefore sufficiently independent of the first political/ideological distinction. Thus it is in principle possible to formulate six characteristic views by combining them as follows:

	Liberal	Socialist	Denominational
Trust in technocratic inspired initiatives and distrust in sociocratic inspired ones	L2	S2	D2
Trust in sociocratic inspired initiatives and distrust in technocratic inspired ones	L3	S3	D3

#### 1.4.2. A provoking example

The characteristic views are timeless and utopic and there exists the danger that the associated perspectives of the future have too much of a blue-print and are too little connected to existing developments in society. The point of the entire exercise is then put in jeopardy.

One way of avoiding this is to adopt as a challenging framework a future scenario which is rooted in developments in reality, whose content makes it imperative to take a stand and whose form elicits the formulation of coherent alternatives. A challenging scenario of this kind cannot be ideologically neutral and relates always to important elements of characteristic views that contributed towards the developments in the past. Futures based on other typical views are thus inevitably seen as deviations. Whilst this reflects the real situation, it can lead to their receiving inadequate attention. This is guarded against as much as possible by presenting the provoking example in the most explicit terms possible and thus in its most vulnerable form.

Given that the Council does not want to spend too much time on this, an existing future study will have to be used as a basis. There are three possible alternatives: the Club of Rome's model "The Limits to Growth", the high growth or A-variant of the ATV and the same variant of "INTERFUTURES". The latter is the result of a research project which was originally set up by the OECD to provide its members with alternative scenarios for economic development in the world, but which was by no means confined to economic issues.

Insofar as these future studies can be roughly classified, the A-variant of the ATV contains elements of position 1 and is thus not provocative enough. "The Limits to Growth" model displays a great lack of confidence in technological possibilities and looks for solutions in the social sphere. Thus it reflects position 3. The challenging nature of this scenario is beyond dispute, but its level of abstraction is rather high and cannot be set in a political or ideological context.

The A-variant of INTERFUTURES has clearly been compiled on the basis of a great deal of trust in technocratic initiatives and against the background of the fear that developments will be frustrated by social inflexibility or too rapid changes in the pattern of values and norms. This study therefore contains many elements of position 2 and can thus be seen as provocative for position 3. If it is to be useful, it is crucial that the

the study should cover a wide area, form an integral whole, pay ample attention to international dependence and start from identifiable political and ideological premises.

In more economic terms it is expected that entrepreneurs will minimize their costs, that individuals will take decisions on consumption and savings with a view to maximizing the benefits and that the government will curb unemployment, inflation and imbalances in the balance of payments without jeopardizing economic growth as this is necessary to meet ever increasing needs, the demand for social security and for a livable environment.

These premises closely accord with predominant post-war values and ideas on social and economic processes. The INTERFUTURES team repeatedly illustrates that they consider it desirable for these values and ideas to prevail in the future too and they drew up the A-variant on that basis, while indicating that many conditions have to be met if this future is to be realized.

The INTERFUTURES team does not stand alone in this, but reflects the ideas of major policy-makers in the international arena. This does not make the probability of the scenario any greater but it becomes clear that a great deal of effort will be launched to give shape to a scenario of this kind, even in the face of numerous difficulties. The A-scenario of INTERFUTURES derives its importance for this study from this effort on the part of the policy-makers: people and groups who desire something else would be well advised to realize how the chips are down.

An objection to a future study with a decidedly international slant is that relatively little attention can be paid to aspects which differ a great deal from country to country. Consequently, to arrive at a provocative scenario for this study, a specialized version for the Netherlands is needed. In this version generalized statements are made more concrete, making due allowance for the areas in which the situation deviates from the general picture, and, where necessary, amplifying the basic premises of INTERFUTURES-A. As has been said, should the high growth of the scenario develop, it would be necessary to meet many conditions. Therefore not only the desired high growth of the INTERFUTURES-A scenario will be worked out, but also

a feared lower growth, which could result from obstruction or impotence. All this is formulated within the perspective of INTERFUTURES-A; it has nothing to do with the outlook of the Council.

Three subjects will be dealt with which to a large extent characterize the position of the Netherlands and which one can in any event be fairly specific about. These are demographic developments and employment, raw materials and energy supplies, and the geographic situation of and use of land and resources in the Netherlands. Next, the subject matter will be arranged under four headings: technical and economic, social and cultural, environmental, and political and administrative. Since the scenario is moulded on the basis of INTERFUTURES adequate attention is accorded to international relations. However, a separate section will be devoted to the scope which remains for policy-making within this scenario and to the power that the Netherlands is able to exert in the international area.

A first impression of the further course of the study will be given in the last chapter of this first report. It is hoped that individuals and social groups are efficiently challenged by this to contribute to the characteristic views and to provide building stones for the perspectives of the future, perspectives which can stand scrutiny in comparison with the provocative example.

2. CHARACTERISTIC VIEWS

2.1 Introduction

Politics may be the conscious moulding of society, but this is often overshadowed by catering for special interests within the political and administrative bodies. One is so busy bartering on behalf of so many lobbies that the political arena has become like a market place and this has led towards a state of immobility which is paralyzing politics. Feelings of indifference and egoism dominate the electorate under such conditions. But there are counterforces. Especially in recent years, there is a renewed interest in reformulating basic concepts. The problem is to combine principal political thesis and existing structures in such a way that a realistic view results on the possibilities and the consequences for society. The Council hopes to contribute to this with this policy-oriented survey of the future.

To this end, different images of the future are developed alongside one another. By comparing and contrasting these images, it will perhaps be possible to indicate contradictions and expected bottlenecks at an early stage, to define problems regarding major policy questions and to indicate policy alternatives. Intended and unintended consequences of certain characteristic views may thus be revealed. Such characteristic view is a set of normative, global premises and opinions regarding the interrelations between phenomena which is used as a guide-line to identify problems and ways of solving them. And this in spite of set-backs and of the observation that the actual development differs from the image associated with the characteristic views.

One could try to develop images of the future which may be attributed to identifiable social or political groups. However, these groups are not obliged to shun internal contradictions; this would in many cases even lead to their disintegration and collapse. For this reason alone it is impossible to tailor the future images to fit in directly with certain groups. This apart from the practical objection that the Council, which would inevitably have to be selective, could quite rightly be accused of taking sides.



This is why an ideal-type approach was chosen in constructing images of the future which can be compared with one another and which are in principle free of internal contradictions but with which political or social groups can to some extent identify. It is the intention to give shape to these future images and the characteristic views on which they are based in a gradual fashion. To obtain comparable future images, and in consultation with the interested parties, these characteristic views must also be of the same depth and also comparable with one another. To ensure that this is the case they in turn are constructed from two so-called distinctions which each on its own is relevant in giving shape to images of the future.

Society and social developments are so complex that it is impossible to formulate a characteristic view which can be used as a guideline to choose between all options and for this reason alone, the image of the future ascribable to each view can be no more than a general one. This gives rise to the question whether it is possible to detail the characteristic views to such an extent that the images of the future which are partly to be derived from them are not much too general. Equally, there is the question whether social groups will identify sufficiently with one or more of the characteristic views. A categorical statement cannot yet be made on this point although it is clear that much depends on the choice of the distinctions. Are they adequately differentiated and in such a way that they are sufficiently relevant to the political and social debate?

We are dealing with the deliberate moulding of society and thus it is an obvious step for the first distinction to relate to the main political and ideological lines of thought. Though at the end of the '50s there were proponents of the idea that the traditional opposing political and ideological opinions were obsolete, this has proved not to be the case at all. In fact, the unexpected developments of the '60s led many groups in society, including political parties, to rethink their ideological basis. During this period, fundamental manifestoes, etc. were formulated, though without any certainty that these would suffice for a long time to come.

This leads to the political and ideological distinction which is outlined in section 2.2 but in a way which does not do justice to the many in-depth commentaries on this subject. However, for the present, it is sufficient to lay an identifiable basis which can be elaborate as required at a later stage.

The second distinction relates to the attitude adopted towards either technologically or socially inspired initiatives. This is a less mandatory distinction. Others were considered but abandoned - sometimes on methodological grounds, sometimes as a result of practical considerations. The only thing that can really be said in favour of the chosen distinction is that it has proved useful up to now. That is to say, together with the political and ideological distinction it has produced a workable number of characteristic views which tie in with recent developments, help to identify problems and provide a guideline in giving shape to images of the future. An attempt will be made in this chapter, insofar as it is possible at this stage, to justify the claim that the distinction is useful.

For this purpose, this second distinction is first elaborated by considering various aspects of society in section 2.3. It is then shown in the next section by analysing points of view, opinions and statements in the seventies that this distinction can be recognised within the main traditional political parties. Thus it appears that the two distinctions that are made are reasonably independent of each other. That the second distinction plays an important role within each of the political and ideological bases shows that the traditional ideologies are not obsolete, but evolve continuously. At last the two distinctions are combined to formulate the characteristic views. In this way, the origin of these views ensure that they are comparable. The purpose of all this is a characterisation of concepts and opinions and not an explanation why different persons in different situations develop different views.

2.2.                   The first distinction: political-  
                          ideological philosophies

In this section, the three main political-ideological philosophies are identified: the liberal, the socialist and the denominational.

These cannot automatically be equated with the way in which they manifest themselves in the political parties. They are more fundamental in the sense that the three of them represent the most influential patterns of thought in Dutch public life and are firmly rooted in it; they constitute an important part of the Dutch cultural heritage. The three philosophies are opposed in a great many respects and to a large extent arose as a reaction to one another. They hold to conflicting values, which, coupled with differing definitions of social problems, have been formed in a continual battle for political and economic power.

In this section, the three philosophies are briefly outlined at a high level of abstraction and subsequently made more concrete by ascertaining to what extent they are identifiable in society as it stands. Lastly, an important inherent conflict within each of them will be explored. This manner of treating the subject means that not all the political views existing in the Netherlands are done justice, but this is not necessary. The aim is to provide an outline of the interplay of ideological forces in the sphere within which the decision-making in society takes place.

The premise behind the liberal ideal is that everyone's convictions are equally valuable: tolerance is a prerequisite. Each individual is expected to respect in principle the actions and views of others. To set limits to these is in the first place a matter for the individual; the government should interfere as little as possible. Differences in thinking and in acting are seen as positive because this is the only way in which personal freedom can express itself and because society derives its dynamism from this. Thus freedom is something that society should not tamper with rather than something that has to be created.

The premise of socialism is that the actions of man are determined to a large degree by the social structure and that he can only develop in concert with others. The structure in turn is considered to be determined primarily by the economic order. A capitalist situation allows the individual little freedom to exercise his will, but nevertheless enough to subordinate the economic order to the political order by acting in solidarity and thus creating the scope for freedom of action. Thus freedom is something that is created rather than something that society does not tamper with.

The premise of denominationalism is that the ultimate goal of mankind is not in this life and that his duty here on earth is to develop into a complete person through his relations with other people. The mutual dependence which is part and parcel of this, can best be given substance in surveyable social ties: society should be organized to ensure that no contradictions are permitted to develop within and between these ties. The contradictions must be ironed out by means of a concerted approach and in a way which is acceptable to all involved. Thus, freedom is a gift which can be all too easily abused.

The following remarkt may be usefull for natural scientists. The liberal idea correlates with the scientific idea that the phenotypical difference between people are not so much connected with their living environment as with differences in hereditary characteristics. Given this genotypical inequality, wishes, needs and feelings are not comparable and, in principle, the concept of "the common good" is fairly meaningless. It can only be seen as the common denominator of situations which have come into being freely and which are viewed as good by all individuals concerned. The socialist train of thought stems from the scientific view that genotypical differences are unimportant and that phenotypical differences are especially related to differences in living conditions. Thus people's wishes, needs and feelings are comparable and, in principle, the concept of "the common good" can be given substance. This means that there are living conditions (social structures) in which the social welfare function is about the same for everybody.

The denominational train of thought follows from the belief that the phenotypical differences between people are not only connected with inborn differences and living conditions, but also with an independent external life force. Whether such a force can be experimentally proven are not is immaterial. Thus the meaning of "the common good" can be partly revealed, but it finds in any case its limits, where it stands in the way of experiencing this external revelation.

In the Netherlands, the three political and ideological currents of thought has made a visible contribution to the form society now takes. Liberalism can be seen primarily in the freedom that is allowed by accepting the system of free enterprise and the restraint exercised by the government as regards interference in matters affecting the private individual; socialism can be discerned in the freedom which is created by a democratic system of government responsibility, geared to public services, the redistribution of incomes and the spreading of knowledge; denominationalism can be identified in the use to which the freedom is put by means of relatively autonomous intermediary structures within which solidarity and cooperation can take shape. These three features require further elaboration.

The first feature fits in with the traditional liberal premise of individual freedom, in which no sharp distinction is generally made between personal freedom on the one hand and economic free enterprise on the other. It is coupled with large confidence in the effects of the market mechanism. Extension of the public sector and active government intervention are, however, accepted within certain limits. Prime considerations here are the continuity of economic development and the maintenance of a minimum standard of living, important motives being to maintain effective demand and a minimum of equal opportunities for the individual citizen. In addition, making use of public goods is seen as it were as an alternative to the consumption of goods and services produced on the free market.

The second feature fits in with the socialist premise in which solidarity has priority; the promotion of economic development is an aim which is primarily derived from this. A demand

imposed on production is that it also be geared to satisfying social needs which are determined by democratic means, that is to public well-being. This point of view means that the existence of a large public sector is seen in a positive light: a certain level of well-being can be achieved both in employment and by the goods and services produced.

A great deal of confidence is placed in the role of the government and the market mechanism is not considered to be automatically superior. This view is therefore not averse to central steering of the economy and government intervention is advocated to compensate for social effects which lead to inequality.

The third feature is closely allied to denominational thinking, which holds that the promotion of economic development and the realization of well-being are complementary objectives of equal value. This equality of footing derives from the idea that opposing interests can be reconciled. It is assumed with respect to both economic affairs and matters concerning well-being that decisions must come about by means of harmonious consultation and that there must be joint responsibility for them. A large part of the implementation of social security policy has been organized along these lines, but outside this sphere one finds also intermediary structures which are involved in government policy but which are relatively autonomous. These are often organizations which have developed on a voluntary basis and whose members share the same spiritual convictions.

The absence of social problems requiring a radical choice and satisfaction with their own efforts may mean that the contrast between the three political-ideological streams of thought is not particularly obvious, but the conflict remains for all that. This emerges in the rethinking of ideological fundamentals which has been taking place in recent years and is still taking place in response to developments connected with the changing pattern of scarcity and the increasing level of knowledge among broad sections of the population. Nor do these conflicts exist only between the different ideological streams of thought; they occur within them as well.

Within the liberal ideology there are different opinions on the limit to individual freedom. One may assume that individual freedom flourishes best if it is given as much scope as possible to pursue its own interests. It is only natural that differences should result from this since people are not all born with equal abilities. Of course, rational considerations mean that common limits are set via the government. Thus the government is accorded an important role in establishing the limits within which social processes take place, without taking further action to steer them. Also social factors can be an obstacle to the individual's development and it is the government's responsibility to create a minimum of equal conditions in the initial situation. But preference is then given to methods of redistribution in which the government does not assume a paternalistic role.

On the other hand it may be emphasized much more that the freedom of one may mean a restriction on the freedom of the other. The exercise of power has to be structured and subject to control. The view of government policy tends towards the pragmatic and a radical democratic approach and is based on the assumption that conflicts such as that arising between the freedom of the individual and social equality are a given fact; the struggle that arises must be engaged upon in the fairest terms possible. Great store is set by politics functioning in a proper and identifiable way because there is a desire to achieve many things as a community, not least to protect the weaker members of society.

Within the socialist ideology more reform-oriented and more radical platform may be chosen. In the first case, the government is accorded an ordering, planning and redistributing role, but one where the basic structure of free enterprise still remains intact. The state is the framework within which solidarity must be given substance, and this is expressed in a system of mutual care and protection of the weak. Great emphasis is placed on parliamentary democracy as the level at which reforms should be effected.

In the more radical line of thinking, a situation in which the government is burdened with the negative repercussions of the free play of social forces is not tolerated. The government should actively direct the economic process and as economic

activities produce greater profits than are necessary for the purposes of continuity and social repercussions become less desirable, so a greater part of the benefits must accrue to the community. Democracy is more than parliamentary power on the central level: attempts at reform are only effective if they go together with social action.

Proponents of denominational ideology can assure a smaller or larger human responsibility for the realisation of the plan of God.

In the first case, heavy emphasis is laid on the organization of society. Representatives of those who are linked together in the same sociale sector must give substance to their joint responsibility by forming associations for the purpose of cooperation. Within this framework harmonious consultation and spiritual affinity with one's neighbours rather than seeking conflict are the means by which decisions must be reached which can be supported by all the parties involved. The state, as the "umbrella organization" for all these associations, can only be accorded a supplementary function, the role of creating conditions, It must respect the autonomy of the intermediary structures. The government does, however, have a responsibility of its own regarding social questions whose significance extends beyond the realms of these cooperation groups. In this it should be guided by the principles of justice, compassion where possible, and sternness where it is needed to fight evil.

However, if a greater degree of human responsibility is assumed, the world is seen not so much as a fact but rather as an assignment. Social problems be tackled in accordance with the precepts of the gospel. Particularly in cases calling for direct action, the need for organization based on common religious principles is felt less urgently and there will be an open-minded attitude towards others with whom cooperation is possible.



Finally, a few remarks to round off this section. The ideological arena in our society may be typified by the three watchwords of the French Revolution: freedom, equality and brotherhood. The three ideological streams of thought can be viewed as functioning in a commonly accepted and expanded democracy founded on a concept of freedom embracing those three watchwords: a political system of permanent debate in which nobody is automatically right but in which sometimes, for a brief while and on certain questions, it may be possible to carry one's point. This complicated triangular arrangement does not lend itself to a simple left and right construction. Liberalism of the more individualistic variety and socialism with stronger collectivist leanings are so opposed in the socio-economic field as virtually to justify each other's existence. Denominationalism would seem to be set on breaking through this polarization. The situation is different when it comes to ethical questions when confidence in the responsibility of the individual is at stake: here the ideas based on religion are seen to be diametrically opposed to a sense of individual freedom in which liberalism and socialism find each other.

2.3.                   The second sphere of distinction: the choice of problems and their solutions.

Social problems constitute the basis of political debate. The main issues in that debate are the nature of the problems and the ways in which they have to be solved. These are not technical questions but matters suffused with differences of opinion as regards their substance. What are the major problems and how must they be interpreted or elucidated? And if, as is often said, a problem represents the difference between a desired state of affairs and an existing one and a solution is the reconciliation of the two, one is still left with the question of whether the existing situation should be adapted to the desired one or vice versa. As long as people continue to differ in their opinions on such issues there will be disagreement about the direction in which solutions should be sought.

There are situations in which a definite hierarchy of problems and ways of solving them forces itself upon us; The dike is broken and has to be closed. Some specific problems come then so much to the fore and their solution requires so much effort that other desiderata are not formulated. In such cases the problem of choosing between problems scarcely arises - the urgency of the matter forces a consensus. This, however, is more the exception than the rule. In the majority of cases, no obvious hierarchy exists and this leads not only to the formulation of more problems competing for attention, but also to a smaller measure of agreement about the nature of the problems. And even when particular problems such as economic stagnation, energy shortage, environmental pollution or unemployment strongly predominate, there are many different explanations at hand and a rich array of supposed solutions.

The political and ideological attitudes discussed in the previous section reduce the problem of choice to more manageable proportions but they do not solve it, because they provide guidelines for only some of the choices. This emerges from the nature of the differences of opinion that have existed within parties with a definite political or ideological slant since the mid-sixties.

The course of the debate surrounding the report entitled "The Limits to Growth" of the club of Rome is another salient example. The study was partly the result of the anxiety felt by industrialists with a more liberal ideology about future developments but in the Netherlands, paradoxically, it met with an enthusiastic response from those with other ideological orientations.

It is likely that under such circumstances strategies develop which provide some foothold in choosing the problem areas and the way in which problems should be solved and which are at least in part independent of political and ideological viewpoints. More future-oriented research in particular is keen on identifying such strategies and their underlying premises and on formalizing them so as to have some sort of guide for the work.

For this purpose, the futurologist Kahn<sup>1)</sup> makes a distinction between the "neomalthusian" view that the world is finite and the growth potential therefore limited and the "post-industrial" view that growth is both possible and desirable. According to Harman<sup>2)</sup>, there is a conflict between proponents of the dominant "industrial paradigm" and the new "trans-industrial paradigm", while Cornish<sup>3)</sup> speaks of "technological optimists" and "technological pessimists". The former argue that further technological development is a prerequisite for maintaining the quality of life, the latter that further development is the very thing that will impair the quality of life.

Inglehart<sup>4)</sup> dismisses these somewhat simplistic divisions by means of a more thorough analysis of future studies. He points out that the "Limits of Growth" study of the Club of Rome is at once technologically pessimistic - "there is little more to discover" - and socially optimistic - but we can still improve our lives". The INTERFUTURES study, by contrast, tends towards technological optimism and social pessimism.

Further analyses shows that the used terminology does not discriminate sufficiently and thus leads to confusion.

Social optimism and technological pessimism appear to go together with the expectation that there is a wide scope for technological adaptation. For instance, the possibilities of nuclear energy are frowned upon, whereas one is easy-going on those of solar energy. The reverse combination of optimism and pessimism goes together with the expectation that social adjustments do not pose much problems. For instance, the problem of moving the family may be easily brushed aside by planners.

This confusion is avoided if trust or distrust in technocratic or sociocratic initiatives is also associated with scope for adaptation in the technical or social sphere. The term "technocratic" refers then not only to technological processes and developments, but also to the possibilities of steering and planning within hierarchical structures, and the analogous term "sociocratic" not only to social processes

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- 1) H. Kahn and J.B. Phelps, The Economic Present and Future. The Futurist, (June 1979), page 202-222.
- 2) W.W. Harman, An Incomplete Guide to the Future, Stanford (1976).
- 3) E. Cornish, The Study of the Future, Washington (1977).
- 4) R. Inglehart, The Silent Revolution, Princeton N.J. (1977).

and developments, but also to the possibilities of social control through mutual interference. On this basis, it is possible to describe the positions 2 and 3 in the scheme of chapter 1 much better and to elaborate on them.

In position 2, there is trust in technocratic inspired initiatives and distrust in sociocratic inspired initiatives but scope is thought to exist for adjustments in the social sphere. Position 3 by contrast represents trust in sociocratic inspired initiatives and distrust in technocratic inspired ones but assumes scope for adjustments in the technological sphere.

The polarity involved here is an old one and has been frequently expressed in different ways. The question is how the social order or the steering of it can best be served: by greater differentiation and categorization of production activities and the strengthening of ties on the grounds of their usefulness or by allowing more scope for the complexity of motivations and the strengthening of ties on the basis of social considerations. Position 2 favours the former solution and position 3 the latter.

Position 2 leads to value being attached to professionalization and specialization and to opportunities for exchange. The concomitant interwoven nature of regions and groups, the diversity of opportunities for consumption and the variety in the production structure are seen in a positive light. Initiatives geared to increasing social and cultural diversity are viewed with distrust insofar as they reduce the scope for the division of labour. Economic considerations take priority in considering the desired scale of operations. By contrast, position 3 values versatility and opportunities for the development of an identity. The concomitant independence of regions and groups and social and cultural diversity are viewed in a positive light. Initiatives which are geared to increasing the diversity of opportunities for consumption and of the production structure are viewed with distrust insofar as they in any way limit the scope existing for action with responsibility for the whole. Social considerations take priority in deciding on the desired scale of operations.

While these descriptions are still rather abstract, they do give adequate points of reference for explaining how the

two positions described have ramifications in all kinds of areas and that the one may gradually pass over into the other.

The two positions differ markedly in their outlook on administration, both in terms of nature and the content of policy. From the second position the state is seen as the organization of a political community who has a value of its own: political action should also express the importance of the state (raison d'etat).

Society is seen as a system to be steered by the government. The government must try to evaluate the situation objectively and unambiguously with its knowledge of affairs and on this basis to apply a systematic set of objectives and instruments to achieve its political objectives.

The relative degree of confidence in technologically inspired initiatives and in the scope for social adaption is expressed in the arrangements of the objectives and the choice of instruments. The administrators and the public remain separate entities up to a high level. In the political sphere the public indicates the objectives and in the implementary sphere they are the customers. In the relationship between state and citizen the latter is seen mainly in various specific roles as an employee, consumer, voter, recreationist, patient, resident of a neighbourhood, etc..

Democratization is focused on the acceptance of the policy which has been legitimized in the political sphere, by means of access to information, participation and opportunity for control. This is the case because a reasonable degree of consensus is required to execute the necessary technocratic initiatives.

From the third position, the state is seen as an organized political community whose purpose is to order social initiatives which are an expression of a responsibility for society as a whole. The responsibility cannot be evaluated in an objective or unequivocal way. Social pluriformity extends not only to the aims to be set but also to the assessment of the circumstances in which those aims can be achieved as well as to the choice of instruments. As the administrative machinery of the political community, the government's primary task is

to create a social framework within which political freedom of choice is maintained and social initiatives can be allowed full rein without this leading to the promotion of vested interests. Democracy is viewed as self-determination and political debate and decision-making acquire their legitimacy through their own steering function. The content of policy is focused on providing a variety of groups that each have their own patterns of values with the opportunity to develop, without excluding the possibility of interaction. Utilitarian considerations in a technical and economic sense are secondary and flexibility and reversibility are aims in themselves.

The two approaches also differ on the point of solving conflicts. With the second position, a reasonable degree of consensus is required if the initiatives which are thought to be needed are to be achieved. This consensus should also be within reach when the objective are clearly defined, because it is considered possible in principle for policy to be optimized. In the third position, it is postulated that there may be differences of opinion which cannot be bridged, not only regarding objectives but also regarding instruments and even rules for solving conflicts. It is, however, thought to be possible and necessary to reach agreement on the main rules for solving conflicts on the basis of the will to cooperate which the public is deemed to possess. Minimizing the need for unanimity is, however, the primary objective.

Position 2 takes mutual dependence as a premise in international relations. The optimal international division of labour can be established and it is assumed that the social structures of the different countries will adjust in line with this or can be persuaded to do so. In position 3, the political responsibility of individual countries forms the point of departure in the international context as well. An internationally coordinated production system is not assumed in advance. Links can be created where they are beneficial, but one must be constantly aware of the risk of becoming trapped by mutual dependence.

When it comes to peace and security, both positions are aiming at an international legal order which minimizes the likelihood of violent solutions to conflicts. Position 2 assumes the existence of balances of power between blocks which can only be maintained in the current state of affairs by a balanced use of technical potential. Political initiatives emanating outside the established centres of power are seen as disturbing the balance and therefore as dangerous. In position 3, balances of power which are based on a high technical potential are considered to be so uncontrollable that initiatives for disarmament and détente outside the established centres of power are thought necessary to increase stability.

Welfare policy, as viewed from position 2, is supported by concern for the smooth, untroubled functioning of society and by feelings of solidarity with fellow human beings who are in difficulties, and is geared to enabling them to fulfil normal rôles as far as possible. Welfare problems can be determined and ordered in an objective way by means of social indicators and can be solved by social management techniques. Position 3 considers that it is precisely the normal functioning in a standard rôle that can be seen as a problem and lays emphasis on promoting the individual's awareness of his own situation and the opportunities for developing a new identity. Encouragement is given to schemes which have this aim and professional expertise can be called upon if necessary.

As to education policy in position 2, it is a matter of teaching mental and manual skills, besides imparting knowledge. This contributes to the forming of the personality and feelings of self-respect because it is a precondition for playing a useful rôle in a society characterized by the division of labour. Position 3 will lay emphasis on training for active and creative citizenship in addition to imparting knowledge; the former involves the development and awareness of responsibility for the whole.

In position 2, the motivation to work will also be promoted by improving working conditions, participation, work rotation and the quality of work as well as by making individuals responsible for organizing their own work. In position 3, the division of labour also plays a rôle but the form it takes is the outcome of all aspects of the production process. Emphasis is put on the responsibility of those involved for the whole in the production process; the technical, economic and environmental aspects, direct preferences with regard to the work itself, and the social utility of the goods or services produced.

Science policy rests on the cultural and social significance accorded to science and research and becomes a matter of debate above all when research provides a negative or inadequate contribution to solving problems as these are experienced from the different positions. This is the case in position 2 if shortcomings in fundamental knowledge present obstacles to the desired technological developments or if the social adjustments aimed at are not satisfactorily carried out. Priority is accorded to the natural sciences and to the social sciences insofar as they contribute to social control. It goes without saying that the more research the better, within the limits imposed by the available funds. A strict distinction should be made between the responsibility of the scientific researcher and that of those who apply scientific knowledge and techniques. Scientific integrity is a prerequisite for the researcher, and this is a matter which in principle is for his professional colleagues to judge. In position 3 science is directed towards providing scope for social initiatives and on controlling technological developments for the benefit of social and cultural developments. The more research the better by no means goes without saying, even if funds do permit. The researcher can be called to account for social repercussions of his work which could have been anticipated. He or she should therefore be aware of the significance of the application of the scientific knowledge and techniques for society and should be willing to have his or her work discussed outside the circles of fellow scientists as well.



At last something about economic goals. Certainly, position 2 cannot be identified directly with economic growth and position 3 with zero growth.

However, there is more confidence in formulating objective goals in terms of growth of employment, balance of trade, degree of inflation, environmental control and nature conservancy.

In position 3, the pluriformity of considerations and responsibilities is stressed and this makes the definition of such goal much more problematic and difficult. However, this does not exclude that economic growth, full employment and such may exist as the result of a number of weighing processes and activities. It is also not a matter of course that the environment ends up with a lower priority in position 2 and a high one in position 3.

Although the above is not an exhaustive account, it is clear that the two positions determine the strategy adopted in selecting the problems and ways of solving them. In the area where the one prefers to seek solutions, the other often encounters its problems. This leads to the polarization being injected with a heavy emotional bias and this is why the distinction is so useful in future studies in which great attention is paid to normative premises. If a puritan line is followed and the first - political and ideological - distinction is ignored, both positions produce images of the future which are rather caricatured. The risk of this is reduced by using the future study that will be discussed below as a challenging example. Moreover, one is not forced to make a choice for there are two other basic positions, as indicated in the first diagram of chapter 1.

Position 1 assumes confidence in sociocratic and technocratic inspired initiatives together with scope for both social and technological adjustments. This leads to the view that sooner or later all problems bring their own solutions in their wake; they are thus reduced to temporary problems though this does not, of course, prevent them from being serious.

In this position there is no need for a normative image of the future by which one is guided, in taking decisions in spite of set-backs. The importance of continuity is postulated and because the idea of continuity is one adhered to by those acting on the basis of the two positions discussed above as well, it is considered to be in the general interest to arrange society in such a way that the consequences of unforeseen events can be coped with as flexibly as possible. It matters little whether these unforeseen disturbances come from an external source or are a consequence of technocratic or sociocratic inspired initiatives which have got somewhat out of hand.

Of course, identifying events of this kind at an early stage is considered important and this is why there is a willingness to cooperate, albeit in a somewhat distant fashion, in giving shape to images of the future on the basis of the first two positions. One might contend that it is precisely the existence of these two positions and above all the emotional implications of the polarization that is seen as a central problem.

Position 4 reflects lack of confidence in both technocratic and sociocratic inspired initiatives while the scope for social and technological adjustments is considered slight. Changes are viewed with distrust unless they bring obvious improvements. Formulated in this way, it is not so much an independent position as the conservative element of the other three. It is an attitude which derives more than anything else from a vivid historical awareness and is aptly expressed by the Dutch poet Bloem in the phrase "every change is for the worse, even if it is an improvement". The position can result in a qualified confidence in an elite and a lack of confidence in the workings of a mass democracy which is considered to be conducive to mediocrity. It matters little whether initiatives are technologically or socially inspired; it is a question of who, which class, which social group or which party, has the right to take the initiative. This position, too, can lead to the conviction that there is a process of constant deterioration where no initiative whatsoever can help any longer. Any thoughts of continuity are thus abandoned.

Hope can only be derived from the advent of a new society built upon the ruins of the old one. Consequently, there is scarcely any need for concepts of the future which can be used as guidelines in making choices because there are no solutions anyway for society in its present form. Ironically enough, both the conservative and revolutionary elements meet each other in this position of double distrust.

The identity of the different positions has changed in the course of time. Immediately after the war there was one problem, reconstruction, and there was but one solution - to work hard and economize. And despite a brief discussion which flared up, problems to do with the ordering of political and social life were prevented from surfacing with remarkable ease: following on from the immediate pre-war situation was the easiest way. The whole problem of choosing between problems and the ways in which they should be solved did not arise and the distinction elaborated in this section strikes one as rather unreal when viewed in the context of that period. The unexpected rapidity of the reconstruction created confidence in the prospects for continuing growth and in the possibility to control technical and social developments: a harmonious development seemed to be within reach. Ideologies became less sharply contrasted and there was scarcely any need for images of the future. Long-term analyses were confined to assessments which made it clear that a reasonable growth in production was possible, with the maintenance of full employment, a reasonably positive balance of payments and stable prices, provided that an adequate fiscal and wages policy was pursued.

The confidence in the controllability of social developments is reflected in the form in which social legislation was cast. Parliament insisted in the proceedings relating to the 1952 Act coordinating social security, that the government should confine itself to creating the legal framework. Its implementation, including the fixing of benefits and contributions, was left to independent administrative bodies formed on a parity basis by labour- and employersorganisation and the government. This line was kept to with the exception

of the 1965 National Assistance Act, for those without the means to help themselves. This Act reflected a striking confidence in the initiative of the individual citizen and civil servant. It was no longer a question of poor relief, but a right to assistance which would enable the citizen to provide for his needs when the necessary financial resources, for whatever reason, were temporarily lacking. Scarcely any regulations on the amount and the nature of the assistance required to meet those needs were laid down; these were to be determined ad hoc. A bureaucratic machinery was not the appropriate means for implementing the Act. Instead confidence had to be placed in civil servants who were capable of acting on their own authority in proper consultation with responsible citizens exercising their right to claim assistance. One may well ask what has become of this system, but this does not detract from the intention of the original Act.

A more unexpected and surprising token of confidence in social initiatives was the submission of the University Administration (Reform) Act at the end of the '60s. At one fell swoop a dozen or so major organizations were internally democratized to a radical degree. One might dismiss this example by claiming it was mere force of circumstances, but the force was no more manifest here than in other countries where things remained much as they were before.

In retrospect, it is almost surprising that, in one and the same period, parliament and government should have been responsible both for this Act and for ambitious technological projects such as international cooperation in the building of the Kalkar nuclear breeder station. After all, as early as 1968 the so-called Progil affair (opposing a carbon disulphide factory in Amsterdam) was the first, misread writing on the wall of a growing mistrust of technological initiatives which impaired people's faith in the possibilities to control technical and social developments. From that time onwards the strategic positions described in this section have become ever more sharply defined, as will emerge from the analysis in the following section.

- 2.4.                   The second sphere of distinction:  
                          Recognizability in the public and political  
                          debate.

Within the frame-work of this future study, reflections on trust or distrust in technocratic or sociocratic inspired initiatives are especially of importance if differences in opinion are little related to the political and ideological views, as described before. To obtain some impression of this, a limited amount of written material has been analysed, partly originating within and around political debates and partly from individuals who consider themselves well informed on special subjects and contribute to the public debate from this position.

Citations out of this material are ordered in a usefull and therefore subjective manner. The debate does of course not run according to the positions that are distinguished here with the consequence that only elements of these are recognisable. This does not become better when more and more subjects are considered and therefore the present analyses is restricted to three policy areas: health, technology and energy. These are subjects, not considered in the previous section.

Within the framework of the energy-problem attention has been given to the discussion how the debates on the energy-policy should be structured. In this way, the problem of organization of the public administration which is of central importance for this future study, is touched upon. The thoughts on this organization problem are, however, so little developed that a thorough discussion is impossible within this section.

(The following text is so much oriented towards the Dutch political scene, that the translation is omitted).

2.5. Characteristic views.

What has been said above has shown that groups bearing a clear political or ideological stamp are in fact internally split by the second sphere of distinction. It is therefore true to assert that the first sphere of distinction does not provide an adequate basis for demarcating characteristic views, or can no longer serve this purpose. The second distinction, however, will not suffice on its own either, the reason being that representatives of positions two and three may well agree about the problems that are raised but continue to differ about the basic political or ideological tenets. The differences of opinion within the "Grüne Partei" (the Ecology Party) in West Germany provide a telling example. There is therefore every reason for distinguishing six characteristic views instead of two or three; these can be grouped in the manner shown in the diagram in Chapter 1, which we repeat here.

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	Liberal	Socialist	Denominational
Trust in technocratically inspired initiatives			
and distrust in sociocratically inspired ones	L2	S2	O2

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Trust in sociocratically inspired initiatives			
and distrust in technocratically inspired ones	L3	S3	O3

---

As things stand at present, these are the characteristic views in the upper section of the table that have crystallized most clearly, both in theory and practice. At the same time such emphasis has been placed on the political differences that the common confidence in technocratic initiatives has gone somewhat by the board. The situation is different with the

three views in the lower section: here it is the common basis that predominates, for the views are formulated as a common reaction to the principles behind the views in the upper section.

To revert to the political and ideological differences: they are much less the subject of written and spoken debate and discussion, but it would be going too far to conclude from this that they are not important; that is something that remains to be seen.

Despite these differences in the degree to which the views are articulated, it is crucial to our analysis that each grouping be given equal treatment. In principle, this can be done by combining the two spheres of distinction six ways and then in various combination. This could deteriorate into a rather trivial and repetitious exercise, however, and we shall avoid this by concentrating on basic tenets in the two distinctions that either mesh or are diametrically opposed, on the social order and on a number of associated aspects of the division of power..

The latter requires further explanation. Each view entails a certain division of power but those who fare worst under it can console themselves with the thought that what is viewed as the most appropriate division is ultimately in the best interest of all, including themselves; power is then felt to be just and commands respect. The same division of power as seen from a different view is, however, felt to be not only painful but also unjust: power is then in peril of losing its authority. Each characteristic view therefore contains a plea for a specific division of power which enjoys intellectual authority among proponents of the view but not beyond; consequently, when the views are described separately, the real power struggle is concealed and much would seem possible. There are other reasons, however, which make it inevitable that a description at this stage necessarily remains at a fairly high level of abstraction: the detail cannot be filled in until the problems have been exposed more clearly with the aid of the exemplary scenario and this becomes an easier matter once the contributions from outside the

Council have been received. The description of the separate views that follows is therefore no more than a initial step and should not be regarded as definitive.

Liberals who think along the lines of position 2 (L2) are convinced that new technocratic initiatives are constantly needed to maintain and expand the individual's freedom of choice. The direction of technological progress and the associated adjustments in society may well be unpredictable but the confrontation of rival theories and inventions in an arena of free competition on a world-wide scale will guarantee optimal results. Free market forces and production by free enterprise must therefore be protected as much as possible from interference by sociocratic initiatives or a censorious government.

The government must, however, be left sufficient scope to pursue a macro-economic policy so that it can manage the economy, and maintain competition in the economic, social and intellectual fields and thus protect the public from manipulation by monopolies and blatant coercion. As prosperity has increased, the traditional responsibilities of government have expanded and become more onerous, but this still does not excuse it for having succumbed to the temptation to assume too many duties at the implementary level. Even where 'new' problems are concerned, for example in providing sound management of the environment, raw materials and energy, the most appropriate policy is one which sets conditions, their costs being reflected in prices. A point to be borne in mind, however, is that the enlargement of scale and pace of adjustment - inevitable from the technical and economic points of view - may well impose too great a strain on individual companies, particularly when national interests are also involved. In such cases the government may have no option but to make an active contribution towards marshalling technical knowledge, risk-bearing capital and managerial experience for the purpose of giving new developments at home a reasonable chance. After assuring itself that the national interests are safeguarded, the government must withdraw at the appropriate moment, thus ensuring that it does no abuse its position and that the situation does



not ossify. The pursuit of a sound policy will remain a difficult matter, however, as long as there are socialists around who think along different lines.

The latter inordinately overestimate the role that the government can play in promoting well-being. Poverty must of course be eradicated and every individual should be given a reasonable opportunity to make something of his life. An incomes policy that creates conditions, backed by a nonpaternalistic system of income transfers - provided this does not unduly smother initiative - is one of the means of achieving these goals.

For the rest, the government does well to confine itself to creating supplementary public amenities and provisions, preferably by way of a contribution to the costs of using them. It is then left to the individual himself what use he makes of the opportunities offered: sociocratic intervention results in an unacceptable curtailment of freedom.

Liberals who adhere to position 3 (L3) are convinced that a blend of technocratic know-how and free enterprise leads to developments which in the course of time will restrict the freedom of the individual and rob him of the opportunity to make his own contribution to society, the reason being that the demands made on social adaptability and on natural resources are too great. Liberals of a different persuasion fail to recognise adequately that this produces a concentration of power in organizations where the issues are not weighed up in a manner which reflects responsibility for society as a whole before decisions are made. Socialists are rightly concerned about this but their solution of central control and planning jeopardizes the pluriformity of society. However difficult it may be, it falls to the political system to create a society in which both these dangers are avoided. This objective can be achieved by making it clear how power is exercised and making it democratic in all its aspects. This demands a central government which gives shape to a structured, democratic system of decision-making but which at the same time refrains as much as possible from interfering in the content of any decisions. Avenues leading in the right direction should be found, with ample scope allowed

for sociocratic initiatives: to allow oneself to be guided by a final goal betrays undue self-confidence. There is a willingness to place great reliance on the articulateness and reasonableness of the individual. The market remains the major instrument for allocating resources but it is felt that all the parties involved should have a greater say in the decisions on production: the furnishers of the capital, the employees, the lower tiers of government and the consumers. The various pools of knowledge which enjoy equal standing are therefore incorporated into the decision itself, which prevents any narrow considerations of utility predominating. The nature of technological progress and of the goods and services to be produced, as well as the scale of enterprise and market activity, are then matters decided by all the interested parties.

A similar pattern is desired for other areas of life in society and in the long run this leads to a blurring of the distinction between public and private services.

Democratising the world of enterprise and services along these lines must lead to less complexity, since clarity is a prerequisite. This in turn means that complex technological innovations can only come about at the initiative of central government. And rightly so, for these are the very matters that ought to be the subject of central, democratic decision-making. Breakthroughs in the technical field will then undoubtedly be more difficult than under the present social order but this is a price that is willingly paid for better control of advances in technology and the creation of room for individual development.

One should have a healthy distrust of individuals becoming identified in such roles as capitalist, worker or inhabitant of a district, for this can easily lead to the formation of power centres which mainly exist to represent specific interests. Moreover, it opens up too many opportunities for manipulation from above by playing off the various interests against one another.

Socialists whose thinking is rooted in position 2 (S2) are convinced that new technocratic initiatives are constantly needed to mould the physical and social environment more closely to what is desired and to manage society. Little

comes of this in a capitalist society such as the present one because too many initiatives emanate from positions of privilege and are geared to maintaining the status quo. Constant mistrust of the established, private powers is called for.

The liberating potential of labour and its dignity can only be given full rein in a society in which politics has the decisive say in the economy and which has as its objective the distribution of power, knowledge and incomes, if necessary by altering the existing system of ownership. The increasing understanding of planning and control means that the government need no longer confine itself to a general policy which merely creates conditions. Instead, by adopting a differentiated approach in its interventions in the market (which is still regarded as indispensable) it can socialise production, consumption, the management of the environment and the use of raw materials. Large-scale developments and technological initiatives geared to them are both useful and necessary. These transgress the national boundaries, however, and can only be controlled by international cooperation between governments which are prepared to transfer powers to supra-national, democratic bodies.

Parliamentary democracy should provide the legitimation for these reform activities by the government and will indeed do so in proportion to the confidence that the government, by its actions, inspires in the potential for planning and control. This is a self-reinforcing process. The growing knowledge in the field of planning and control means that the numerous instruments of democratic government can be increasingly refined.

The democratization of enterprises and organizations in society is required to break down the power of capital and to improve internal labour relations and the wages structure, as well as being in the interests of a policy which counts among its aims the preservation of employment. The limits to this internal democratization are set by the extent to which external effects thwart central government's control and planning.

The social and cultural adjustment that is required can be achieved by creating a juster society. This, too, is self-reinforcing for people are more willing to act in the common

interest if they feel the system is fair. The government then has a freer hand to set collective objectives of well-being and has less need to act as nursemaid to the under-privileged, precisely because the system is seen to be fair. The unattainable ideal remains the state where duty merges with free will and where power is no longer in evidence.

Socialists who hold to the precepts of positions 3 (S3) distance themselves from the traditional socialist notion that people are equal to such an extent that a society is attainable in which everyone enjoys the same social well-being. Government policy based on this gainsays the virtue of groups with other ideas.

It was the traditional concept that gave rise to the notion of Utopia and thus brought the socialist emancipation movement into discredit. Liberal thinkers are right to emphasize the freedom to be different and to entertain fears of monolithic bureaucracy insusceptible to democratic control. The solutions they propose are not feasible, however, because they fail to recognize the curtailment of freedom that results from the value added of the labour that is accumulated in the capital.

Self-realisation demands an awareness that actions only have any point if undertaken in concert with others and is therefore something to be expressed through work and thus in all areas of daily life. National identity and solidarity should be maintained but expansionist nationalism should be mistrusted. Ample scope must be created for initiatives from the grass-roots upwards and one should maintain a sceptical stance towards decisions by central bodies, even if these have been legitimized by parliamentary democracy. If their decisions no longer accord with the wishes of the public at large, it is irresponsible to accept them unquestioningly. Tension between the authorities and the grassroots, occasionally erupting into conflicts, is not only inevitable but indispensable. Awareness of one's actions is expressed in a high regard for a wide range of achievement at work: work according to ability income according to need. This principle relies on the influence that the government and the public at large can bring to bear on each other to prevent the opportunities that are created being used for mere hedonistic ends.

Cooperatives of small and medium-sized companies are the most desirable organisational form for production. Multi-national undertakings are impenetrable, unmanageable concentrations of power and the battle against them must be joined at both international and company level.

The role of central government ought to comprise support for initiatives from the grassroots and the creation of the legal framework for developments which have come to fruition at that level. In the economic field, it falls to the government to conduct a restrictive policy on mergers and to create the means to support new industry emanating from the population at large. The government is also responsible for controlling and planning industrial and other activities which are indispensable but are only feasible on a large scale: nationalisation is often the most appropriate path to follow here.

There is a clear distrust of technocratic initiatives which initiate developments that determine man's behaviour and lead to the imposition of structure creating new inequalities and new factors of status and prestige. When the benefits and burdens are fairly distributed, the level of material provisions is, within certain limits, regarded as less relevant and more account can then be taken of the limits set by nature. Many socialists still have to learn this lesson.

Denominational thinkers who are based on position 2 (D2) view the development of technocratic initiatives as taking up the opportunities presented by the Creation. They are particularly concerned about the limited possibility to control of developments within the existing social order. They feel that there are too many conflicts of interests, e.g. between capital and labour, and that the flames are unnecessarily fanned by the polarisation between liberal and socialist thinking. Such conflicts cannot be resolved at the level of central government because the government itself becomes too readily involved in the conflict. Solutions are, however, to be found in public organisations which act in an intermediary capacity and enable all the parties involved in a particular sector of society to bear responsibility for planning and control. If the configuration of these bodies is then brought into line with the division of labour in social life

and the economic field, their joint responsibility and their mutual dependence will increase and thus transcend the conflicts of interest. Society will then resemble an organism and develop in a harmonious fashion.

It falls to the government to foster the creation of such public organisations and to institutionalise them by giving them a legal basis and prescribed powers. In this it stands above the parties, which endows it with the authority to conduct a policy of creating conditions in numerous areas. The government shares in the responsibility for coordinating matters and giving the public interest full play, and discharges this responsibility by such means as delegating representatives to the organisations.

Under such a highly structured economic order, employers and employees are compelled to collaborate in numerous fields and at various levels; failure to do so will be to their mutual disadvantage. It is for this reason that production in accordance with market forces can be allowed without any fears of this degenerating into the mere pursuit of self-interests. A sound basis is then created for new technological developments which will remain susceptible to control even if embarked upon on a large scale.

In the social sphere, cooperative organisations acting as intermediaries are also the best guarantee that society will develop harmoniously and that an often extensive range of duties will be discharged in a responsible manner. Numerous examples can be cited to show that this is the case.

The mistrust is mainly directed against the pursuit of self-interests and the independent setting of standards by individual citizens. This leads to hedonistic behaviour, the fragmentation of society and the undermining of the Christian values on which the will to cooperate rests. The public organisations therefore need to be protected against influence being brought to bear by individuals outside the normal channels. We are a long way towards achieving this if Family, Church and Kingdom continue to be honoured; they are a guarantee of continuity.

Denominationalists in positions 3 (D3) assert that undue confidence in technocratic initiatives overlooks the fact that man's mortal nature is also a gift. Technocratic initiatives mainly lead to problems simply being shifted and

too often create opportunities for foisting the necessary sacrifices on to those unable to defend themselves: the solution is then the problem. The risk of robotism looms largely, depriving people of the opportunity to carry full responsibility for their actions and to live up to their principles in daily life. The message of the Gospel is that people can rely on sociocratic initiatives which meet the standards of faith. This means a change in mentality which will assert itself in changing structures, just as the Word had to become flesh in order to be an effective force in the world. The personal experience of faith is the essential point rather than the institutional form it takes and one should therefore not look to one's own organisation for strength and inspiration but instead should seek direct contact with one's fellow men who adhere to a different ideology and philosophy of life. Denominationalist of a different persuasion often forget this in their otherwise praiseworthy efforts to create the fabric of a harmonious society. Radical structural changes are needed. There must be more small-scale forms of production as well as internal changes in participation and consultation. Certain responsibilities which at present are almost exclusively borne by society as a whole and by its institutions must be restored to the motley fabric of manageable human communities. One is entitled to hope that such radical changes in the structures will come about, because power structures are themselves cooperative ventures between responsible people who are open to influence and who will respond to an ethical appeal; this will often need to be vigorously sounded however. Boycotts, non-violent resistance, civil disobedience and moral pressure on one's brothers in faith are permissible political means and indeed often more effective than power vested in institutions as this too readily erodes personal moral standards. Conflicts of interest are the product of putting self-interest first and of deceptive ideologies which appeal to material desires and base motives. Prosperity at home has been achieved, both now and in the past, at the expense of prosperity in the Third World and there is a glaring contrast between the two. The economic order must be changed in such a way that our own prosperity diminishes: the duty to love and help one's neighbour demands

this. A change in thinking is the prerequisite; the structural changes will then follow. If the plundering of nature is to stop, we must acquire a better understanding of the finitude and value of what we have and be willing to sacrifice our prosperity for it.

Position 1 and 4 in the second sphere of distinction - double confidence and double mistrust - have already been discussed in section 2.3, but the political and ideological aspects were not touched upon. We shall now rectify this. Adherents of position 1 (confidence in technocratic and sociocratic initiatives alike) are not mistrustful of other views in the way staunch believers in a particular ideology or political line are. Instead, they adopt a pragmatic approach in working towards a society which offers a reasonable life to all and which is not dominated by political or other power factions. This is a prerequisite in order to be able to respond as flexibly as possible to the effects of unforeseen events. This consciously non-ideological stance can be translated into political terms in both the existing social order and those envisaged by the six views we have discussed. Leaving aside the revolutionary and reactionary stances, position 4 (distrust of technocratic and sociocratic initiatives alike) does not display any explicit interest in the social order and is rather lacking in ideological dynamism as well. This leads to a tacit acceptance of the existing order, typified by an attitude which makes numerous demands but disdains to weigh them against one another. In political terms, this attitude can only be expressed in a populist manner because the ranks are too divided by conflicts of interest.



### 3. INTERFUTURES AS AN EXAMPLE

All men dream ... but not equally.  
Those who dream by night  
in the dusty recesses of their minds  
wake in the day to find that it is  
vanity;  
but the dreamers of the day are  
dangerous men, for they act their  
dream with open eyes, to make it  
possible.

T.E. Lawrence

#### 3.1. Function

The typical views that have been elaborated in the foregoing reflect modes of thinking about society. They could result in utopian blueprints of societies occupying markedly different points in time. Such depictions of different worlds are virtually devoid of significance, for all mutual comparisons and verification against the existing social order are avoided. In order to overcome this objection, this study creates images of the future by comparing the characteristic view with an example in which the existing situation and the possible future trend are extrapolated and thought out in detail. The example is intended to act as a stimulus, in other words its content must compel one to adopt a position and its form must invite one to formulate alternatives which are comparable in their coherence, scope and theoretical underpinning.

Any model which sets out to provoke a response will inevitably itself be a party in the struggle between ideologies and strategies. This is an argument in favour of the Council not designing an example in its own right, for this would make it difficult to elaborate the various views on equal terms and might thus defeat the object of the whole exercise.

Given the function of a challenging example, a number of desiderata can be formulated. These will be discussed in the following under four headings.

Coherence. The basic premises should display some logical, or at least plausible, relationship. If the results and repercussions of these premises reveal inconsistencies, they must be corrected in accordance with a coherent philosophy; this will help to make the individual images more discernible and clearly delineated.

In practice, this precludes a method which involves independent calculations of trends or a separate elaboration of particular fields. In most cases, the requirement of coherence will mean opting for the scenario method. This entails analysis of the consequences of a coherent set of assumptions which may perhaps also be compared with a number of independently assumed developments. The essential point here is to maintain a clear distinction between assumptions, consequences and policy options.

Scope. No areas were excluded in advance from the Policy-oriented survey of the Future. Obviously, essentials must be distinguished from secondary matters in the analysis and limits have to be imposed, but that does not alter the fact that the preference is for the widest possible basis initially. This offers the attendant advantage that any constriction or selection will have to be explicit.

Relevance. The extent to which an example provokes a response is connected with the relative power of those who regard the image as worth pursuing and who act accordingly. Some power base is required in order to elicit approval or disapproval. Any example fashioned by the Council according to its own lights would lack any power base and there would therefore be a strong risk of it not being regarded as a challenge.

Continuity. The example must tie in with the current situation and outline a future time path. It is therefore not sufficient simply to present the final picture.

Plausibility is not an explicit feature but it undeniably has some bearing on relevance and continuity. One cannot expect major social

forces to put their full weight behind efforts to achieve objectives which are totally unrealistic. The rooting of the images in the present will help ensure that they incorporate gradual changes and make allowance for the fact that the existing structure causes the wheels of change to turn slowly and may put obstacles in the way.

These considerations lead to a preference for a scenario in which the basic principles rest on a broad social base and thus are firmly anchored in the structure of society.

Such a scenario will, after all, most readily satisfy the conditions of coherence, scope and continuity. Anchoring in the social structure will, moreover, go further towards meeting the criterion of relevance. The mere presence of these attributes does not, however, reflect any decided preference on the part of the Council.

The desired characteristics listed above are incorporated if the example of the INTERFUTURES report is followed. This recent publication by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has as its subtitle: Facing the Future: Mastering the Probable and Managing the Unpredictable (Paris, 1979<sup>1</sup>). Following this example offers the major advantage that the international aspect is drawn into the Policy-oriented survey of the Future at an early stage.

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1) The project was launched in early 1976 at the initiative of the Japanese Government. The work was carried out by a team of more than twenty staff members under Prof. J. Lesourne, assisted by a steering committee including representatives from each of the member states contributing to the project and by an advisory panel comprising ten eminent personalities. In addition, there was extensive consultation with outside experts. Apart from the OECD members and the Commission of the European Community, the Toyota Foundation, the Ford Foundation and the German Marshall Fund of the United States made funds available. The study was published under the auspices of the Secretary General of the OECD and runs to 425 pages.

The INTERFUTURES project had the following objective: "to provide OECD member Governments with an assessment of alternative patterns of longer-term world economic development in order to clarify their implications for the strategic policy choices open to them in the management of their own economies, in relationships among them, and in their relationships with developing countries."

The following aspects of this objective argue in favour of using INTERFUTURES:

- alternative scenarios are presented;
- international relations are an important area of concern;
- the angle of approach may well be economic in the first instance but it emerges that this is to be interpreted very broadly: ample attention is also paid to technological, administrative and political aspects, social developments and the physical environment;
- the implications of policy are made clear;
- the survey is a long-term one.

Considering the aforementioned characteristics formulated for a challenging example it is evident that the method adopted in INTERFUTURES to a large extent guarantees a large scope of the study as well as continuity. Coherence is adequately assured by taking one of the INTERFUTURES' scenarios as starting point. The choice will then have to be made partly on the basis of relevance, a point we shall revert to later on.

### 3.2. Scenarios

In order to put the scenarios of the INTERFUTURES project in context, we present below a brief synopsis of the method and structure adopted.

The subject area is defined INTERFUTURES team as follows: a future-oriented study of economic phenomena which takes account of political and social conflicts, changes in values and institutional developments. This entails an analysis of such areas as the natural environment, the exhaustion of resources and the likelihood of radical technological breakthroughs.

With regard to the economic order, it is assumed that the workings of the world economy can best be described in neo-classical terms. Entrepreneurs engage in productive activity with the aim of minimising costs and decisions on consumption and savings are taken by individuals on the basis of maximising benefits. The Government confines itself to macro-economic policy geared to the traditional objectives of growth, employment, controlling inflation and achieving equilibrium in the balance of payments. In addition, it may play an active role in fostering the smooth functioning of markets. A number of alternatives are outlined with regard to international relations and trends in the social and cultural field in the advanced industrial countries.

The scenarios are described on the basis of a small number of related assumptions concerning the following individual areas:

1. Relations between the advanced industrial countries;
2. Relations between the advanced industrial countries and the Third World;
3. Internal processes in the advanced industrial countries  
e.g.:
  - 3.1. the cultural phenomenon of the emergence of new patterns of values which are supported more or less by the community as a whole;

- 3.2. the social phenomenon of the communal capacity to organise the growth of production by means of innovation, redistribution, accumulation of capital and the modification of institutions.

The various assumptions on which the scenarios are based are as follows.

With regard to the first area:

a)

A relatively high degree of openness and economic stability.

or b)

Conflicts in specific areas such as energy, raw materials, capital flows and the like which result in a restricted pattern of trade, the parties being the United States, Japan and the European Community.

or c)

Growing tension between the countries of the European Community (a and b are based on growing European integration).

With regard to the second area:

a)

The gradual establishment of closer relations through negotiations, accompanied by increasing trade.

or b)

Less close relations as a result of many countries of the Third World giving priority to a policy of self-reliance.

or c)

Regional division in the Third World. Grouping around power centres (e.g. Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia). Preferential treatment in trade, investments etc. within these groups, but still relatively open to the other countries.

or d)

Vertical division into groups of countries with representatives of both developed and developing countries and within which there is a considerable volume of trade (e.g. Comecon-Vietnam-Cuba; United States-Philippines-Latin America).

With regard to the third area:

a)

Dominant post-war values continue to prevail, with priority being given to economic growth. The growth of productivity will be roughly the same as in the past.

or b)

In broad terms the pattern of values remains unchanged, but conflicts between social groups hold up adjustments and economic growth is only modest.

or c)

A rapidly changing pattern of values, particularly with regard to work and the desired consumption package, leads to low growth and a changed composition of the national income.

or d)

On the hypothesis that lasting growth creates a new demand, a consistently high growth rate will occasion a gradual change in values which sustains this growth.

Six long-term scenarios are dealt with in the INTERFUTURES study:

- A A high-growth scenario.
- B1 A new-growth scenario.
- B2 Convergent-moderate-growth scenario.
- B3 Divergent-moderate-growth scenario.
- C North-South alienation scenario.
- D Protectionism scenario.

In terms of the three areas listed above with the relevant possible assumptions, the scenarios can be represented as follows:

$$A = 1a + 2a + 3a$$

$$B = 1a + 2a$$

$$B1 = B + 3c$$

$$B2 = B + 3b + \text{convergence in productivity of industrial countries}$$

$$B3 = B + 3b + \text{divergence in productivity of industrial countries}$$

$$C = 1a + 2b + 3b$$

$$D = 1b + 2d + 3b$$

The differences between the scenarios lie mainly in the rate of economic growth, the extent of international cooperation, whether or not a social consensus on socio-economic objectives is maintained or achieved, and the convergence or divergence of productivity in the various countries.

### 3.3. The base premises of scenario A

As will emerge in the following section, the A-scenario of INTERFUTURES is of particular importance. It is based on the assumptions given at a) for each of the areas. These are as follows:

- a relatively high degree of openness and economic stability between and within the advanced industrial countries;
- a gradual drawing together through negotiations, accompanied by increasing trade, between advanced industrial countries and the Third World;
- the dominant post-war values continue to prevail in the advanced industrial countries, with priority being given to economic growth. Growth in productivity will follow the trends of the past.

If these assumptions are followed up in more detail the following picture is produced.

#### International relations

West-West. Relations between the advanced industrial countries will move towards ever greater mutual dependence. In practice, this means a relatively high degree of openness and economic stability guaranteed by the European Community, Japan and the United States. This will be accompanied by increasing economic homogeneity of the aforementioned poles of the OECD countries and will be reflected in a long-term convergence of productivity as regards both level and rate of growth.



The major centres of the Western world - the United States, Japan and the European Community - will arrive at a coordinated policy in such potentially contentious areas as trade, monetary control, industry, energy and raw materials. Cooperation will curb economic fluctuations and help assure a certain measure of stability in exchange rates. Moreover, it will lead to an active policy on energy, as regards both conservation and the development of nuclear energy and coal. Free trade will be expanded and this will have a beneficial effect on the long-term prospects for investment.

#### North-South

Relations between the industrialised countries and the developing countries will gradually become closer as a result of negotiations and increasing economic exchange. Given the heterogeneous nature of the Third World, this increasing crossflow will by no means preclude differentiation in relations reflecting the developing countries' varying capacities for industrialisation and other specific features. There will be a considerable increase in development aid and transfers of capital and technology and a gradual dismantling of trade barriers between developed and developing countries. This will lead to the links between the rich and poor countries becoming increasingly interwoven on the world market, although the speed at which this occurs will vary considerably for different countries and regions.

#### Internal development of the Western countries

Cultural. The prevailing post-war values will for the most part retain their cogency. Priority will be given to economic growth in the traditional sense (i.e. expanding the Gross National Product) and the adjustments that this requires

will be accepted. There will be no rapid radical change (with widespread support) in the pattern of norms and values. Priority will continue to be given to such values as security and strength. There will also be a rejection of radical changes which affect the significance and purpose of human existence, changes of the kind that in former times coincided with the emergence of the great religions.

Notwithstanding the continuation of the prevailing pattern of post-war norms and values there will, however, be scope for shifts of preference resulting from new technologies, changes in taste, relative prices, demographic structure, level of income, etc. Nor will changes be excluded in the relationships between the ultimate demand (e.g. clean laundry) and the demand in the formal sector (e.g. washing machines).

Social. Given the legitimacy of economic growth as a social objective, there will be permanent structural changes (in the labour market, energy policy, the relationship between the market and the public sector) to enable this growth to take place. This means that any ossification of institutional structures will be successfully tackled or avoided if it hampers growth. With the backing of international cooperation, the national governments will have greater policy scope to control conflicting demands regarding income distribution and to carry out the requisite adjustments to industry. The policy of the advanced industrial countries will be geared to permanent growth and to eliminating all unemployment other than frictional.

These assumptions are of course insufficient on their own to enable a complete scenario to be constructed. They do no

more than indicate contours within which this image of the future can assume some form; continuity, cooperation and optimism regarding management and control are the key concepts here.

The point must be made that this scenario is not a mere continuation of the 'pre-1980' world. For instance, it is assumed among other things that the advanced industrial countries will pursue an active policy in such matters as development cooperation and the transfer of technology to developing countries. The large measure of cooperation and the careful coordination of policy by the industrialised countries are phenomena which have sometimes been lacking in the past.

#### 3.4. The relevance of scenario A

The drafters write that the position of the A scenario in INTERFUTURES is no more than that of one scenario among the others:

"They (the scenarios) are placed in four groups, and the order of presentation implies neither a value judgement nor any decreasing or increasing order of plausibility" (p.289).

The report does, however, clearly favour the A scenario, notably as a solution to the problems in the medium term. This emerges from the recommended strategies in which re-establishing a steady and high rate of economic growth is regarded perhaps not as a goal in itself but certainly as a prerequisite for advancing towards the quantitative and qualitative social objectives. (p. 411). Controlling mutual dependence on a world scale and guiding it along the right lines is a predominant theme (see for example page 394).

In the light of the INTERFUTURES analysis it is concluded that active cooperation between the major OECD countries and an open attitude towards the Third World is the only real answer to the challenges of the future (p.399).

It is observed that moderate growth rapidly leads to various forms of protectionism (p.395), a development which must be avoided as far as possible (e.g. p.414). With regard to the EC too it is concluded that there is virtually no other option than to have open frontiers (p.400) as assumed in the A scenario. The central position accorded to the market as an efficient allocation mechanism (pp.414 and 418) is most compatible with a future as outlined in the A scenario. The tacit preference for the high-growth scenario can also be deduced from the labelling of moves towards fragmentation, protectionism and divergence as "disquieting", 'far from satisfactory' etc. (pp.396-397, 409 ). The following is thus recommended as the first of six guidelines for the OECD countries:

"To restore economic growth and acknowledge clearly that its continuation constitutes a legitimate goal of the governments of developed countries. It conforms to the aspirations of a large proportion of the population in those countries, it should not encounter long-term physical limits and it should not compromise the development of the Third World" (p.193).

Closer study reveals that the other scenarios must essentially be regarded as deviations from A. They are not based on any philosophy or logic of their own; they are to be regarded more as forms of deviant behaviour. A possible exception is the new-growth scenario (B1), but this is so lacking in underpinning and elaborated to such a limited extent that it is in no way an equivalent alternative to scenario A.

The INTERFUTURES team is rather gloomy about the prospects for realising the A scenario. It is stated on page 395 of the final report:

"High growth in the developed countries will, in the absence of vigorous and coordinated government policies, encounter severe national and international constraints. Taking into account internal conflicts over the distribution of national income and social fragmentation due to changes in values, the success of such policies is moreover not guaranteed. We may thus be sceptical about the chances of their being adopted simultaneously by the governments of all the major developed countries (...) It has to be admitted that the moderate-growth scenario has some plausibility (...)"

This scepticism does not detract from the relevance of the A scenario as a provoking example. This would be the case if the desirability of bringing it about were to be doubted, but this is beyond question, even when considered in the broader context. The fact is that the INTERFUTURES group was commissioned by the OECD and the conclusions of the study correspond so closely with the objectives of that organisation<sup>2)</sup> originally formulated in 1960 and unchanged since then, that they can be regarded as having OECD backing. And the OECD as an organisation represents political and economic forces which carry sufficient weight to satisfy the criterion of relevance for scenario A.

However, the OECD is not alone in being demonstrably guided by such a vision of the future, for the same is true of the policy-makers of the Western industrialised world, as is evident from the final communiqués issued at the six most

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- 2) These are:
- to achieve the highest sustainable economic growth and employment and a rising standard of living in Member countries, while maintaining financial stability, and thus to contribute to the development of the world economy;
  - to contribute to sound economic expansion in Member as well as non-member countries in the process of economic development;
  - to contribute to the expansion of world trade on a multi-lateral, non-discriminatory basis in accordance with international obligations.

recent summit conferences of heads of state and government<sup>3)</sup>. This is made clear in the following pages where a number of topics are dealt with. This can be regarded as a depiction of the general ambience of both the A scenario of INTERFUTURES and the thinking of the politicians in the major industrialised countries of the West on the slightly longer-term future.

INTERFUTURES assumes that the democratic structure will be maintained within the Western world, an assumption also made at the summit conference: 'We have come together because we share the same convictions and the same responsibilities. Each of us is responsible for governing an open, democratic society which is dedicated to individual freedom and social progress. Our success will strengthen democratic society throughout the world' (Rambouillet, 1975). Neither INTERFUTURES nor the communiqués from the summits anticipate any major changes in East-West relations, except in terms of increases or decreases in trade.

The A scenario of INTERFUTURES accords particular priority to the attainment of economic growth: 'Priority is given to economic growth in the traditional sense - growth of the Gross National Product - and the adjustments this entails will be accepted.'

Growth was discussed in the same terms at the summit conferences: 'The growth and stability of our economies will contribute to the prosperity of all industrialized countries.' (Rambouillet, 1975). The heads of state and government, like the INTERFUTURES team, view economic growth as the most important means of achieving social and economic objectives. At the various summit conferences growth was credited with having a beneficial effect on efforts to combat unemployment and inflation.

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3) The participants were the heads of state and government from West Germany, Canada (as from the Puerto Rico summit in 1976), France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Japan and the United States; the EC was also represented as such as from 1978. The summits were held on 15-17 November 1975 (Rambouillet), 27 and 28 June 1976 (Puerto Rico), 7 and 8 May 1977 (London 16 and 17 July 1978 (Bonn), 28 and 29 June 1979 (Tokyo) and 22 and 23 June 1980 (Venice).

At the conferences in Bonn (1978) and Tokyo (1979), closely defined growth targets and the appropriate instruments for achieving them were put forward. There was a desire to reduce public spending, to stimulate investment and research and development, to reduce the barriers to trade and the movement of capital and to promote mobility. The net effect envisaged is a rise in productivity in the long term and an improvement in the adaptability of the economies.

It can be inferred from the London (1977) and Bonn (1978) communiqués that the leaders concerned wish their growth targets to converge, though nowhere is this stated explicitly.

The trade policy that the A scenario desires is clear: vigorous efforts to liberalise trade, promotion of a smoothly functioning international market, minimisation of the adverse effects on other countries and little or no government intervention which might limit the maximising of profits by individual, national or multinational undertakings.

The summit conferences all yield a similar picture. In general, the participants come out in favour of an open, liberal system of trade and voice their opposition to protectionism because it hampers economic growth in the slightly longer term and thus serves to undermine employment and foster inflation. In particular, they talk of reducing customs tariffs and other barriers to trade, increasing agricultural trade in order to increase security, of the availability of world food stocks and of implementing the agreement reached through the GATT<sup>4)</sup> at the 1973 Tokyo Round. Pronouncements from such international bodies as the OECD Council of Ministers (1978), promising to maintain a market-oriented system, are welcomed. Strong political leadership is advocated as a means of expanding the opportunities for trade. At the Venice meeting in 1980 the more developed countries of the Third World were also called upon to open up their frontiers more.

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4) GATT: General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

With regard to relations with the developing countries, the INTERFUTURES A scenario assumes a drawing together by means of negotiations, accompanied by an expansion of trade flows. The basic principles and agreements of the leaders of the Western industrialised countries regarding relations with the Third World point in the same direction as those in the A scenario. West-South confrontations must be avoided; it is in the interests of the West and the South alike that a course of cooperation be followed, for the two are to some extent interwoven. The point is usually made that the opportunities for the developing countries to share in Western prosperity depend to a significant extent on the success of such conferences as UNCTAD and CIEC <sup>5)</sup>.

It can be deduced from this that the process of establishing closer relations between West and South must be pursued around the negotiating table as well as by other means. It was contended in London (1977) that economic growth is only possible and legitimate if the developing countries can participate and that the two groups of countries both have an interest in stable and continuous growth in the world economy. In Tokyo (1979) the emphasis was shifted when it was posited that constructive relations between the developing and the industrialised countries are needed to solve the present worldwide problems; poor and rich are jointly responsible for the solutions. In Venice (1980) this point was again emphasized and the OPEC countries <sup>6)</sup> were also encouraged to make a greater contribution in providing assistance to the

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- 5) CIEC: Conference on International Economic Cooperation.  
UNCTAD: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development  
6) OPEC: Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries.



other countries of the Third World.

Relations in terms of development aid are closely defined: increasing the flow and the effectiveness of the aid, giving trade preferences to developing countries, facilitating finance on soft terms, etc. The aid will mainly have to be channelled through international institutions (IMF, the World Bank and IDA<sup>7)</sup>). In 1979 special reference was also made to agricultural research.

INTERFUTURES postulates that there are sufficient energy sources available for a world consumption some 10 to 15 times higher than the 1975 level to be met in the long term, but that the transition from one energy system to another will span a very uncertain period of approximately half a century and involve high costs. Energy systems happen to be particularly slow to change. Nuclear energy will be a major energy source in the future, and particular problems are anticipated from the slowness of the change, the consequences for the natural environment, disruption of its development and the wide scope for crises that it brings with it.

Energy is an issue which has received increasing attention at the last four conferences. In fact, the Tokyo summit in 1979 was almost wholly devoted to the subject, prompted by the oil price rises announced by OPEC shortly beforehand. The aim of the heads of state and government is to achieve stability on the energy market and to reduce their dependence on oil for energy supplies by curbing consumption on the one hand and developing alternative energy sources - whether conventional or 'new' - on the other. Thus, in 1978 it was emphasized for the first time that coal must again come to play an important role in energy supplies in the long term and that there should be joint and coordinated research into alternative energy sources.

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7) IMF: International Monetary Fund

IDA: International Development Association

Targets for energy conservation were formulated in detailed terms at the Tokyo conference. The overall endeavour is to ensure that energy consumption up to 1985 does not exceed the 1978 level, or that imports are kept to their 1978 level. If, however, these restrictions on consumption and imports adversely affect economic growth, adjustments to the targets set will be permitted. The results of the Venice conference were more loosely formulated: the leaders undertook to break the link between economic growth and oil consumption over the next ten years. To this end objectives designed to reduce oil consumption were formulated.

It was assumed in Tokyo and Venice that nuclear energy will inevitably become one of the more important energy sources of the future and that this is acceptable, subject to the strictest possible guarantees on safety and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

It was also established at Tokyo that technological developments in energy policy are vital and indeed offer the only real means of averting the risk of a fuel crisis in the future. Large volumes of both public and private capital will have to be released for this purpose. The case was also argued for establishing an International Group on Energy Technology. In Venice the World Bank was requested to facilitate borrowing to finance new energy programmes.

The conclusion on the energy question is clear: there are no problems in terms of absolute supplies but there is one of political and economic availability. It is recognised that the transition from a system based on oil to one based on other energy sources will mean a difficult period.

According to the underlying thinking of the A scenario, monetary policy has a stabilising role to play and monetary stability is a precondition for sustained economic growth. Here again the A scenario and the Western leaders have much in common. Government intervention is permitted to maintain or achieve the desired stability. However, the present industrial countries are also oil importers and will remain so for the time being, resulting in deficits on the balance of payments. In order to prevent this, it is argued that the International Monetary Fund should be accorded a stronger role and the import capacity of the OPEC countries increased. The problems resulting from monetary stability being disrupted by too rapid a rise in oil prices were also discussed at length at the Venice summit.

The conclusion is that at the summit conferences the political leaders of the major western industrial countries have expressed their intention of endeavouring to create a future similar to that described in the A scenario. A striking point is that the changes in domestic political affairs in the countries of the government leaders attending the summit conferences are hardly reflected, if at all, in the final communiqués. In other words, there is a certain continuity in the pursuit of these aims by the international powers.

### 3.5. Two growth variants

As already observed, an example which by its content compels one to adopt a stance and by its form invites the formulation of alternatives is required in order to construct images of the future based on the typical views. The example must meet the criteria of coherence, scope and relevance and must lie in with existing policy. These conditions can be met by adopting the 'high-growth' or A scenario of INTERFUTURES as the basis for describing the Dutch situation.

In developing the A scenario it was assumed in the INTER-FUTURES study that problems that can be anticipated will be spotted sufficiently early and that effective action will be taken; 'mastering the probable' as it is termed in the subtitle. According to the authors of the report, annual economic growth averaging 4.9% will be possible in the OECD countries up to the year 1990, and averaging 3.4% per annum in the period 1990-2000. The corresponding figures for the Netherlands are 5.1% and 2.5%. These rates of growth can be regarded as targets but at the same time the fear is voiced in INTERFUTURES that serious problems or obstacles to growth will arise through obstinacy or impotence resulting in scenarios with a substantially lower growth rate. Thus the annual growth in the OECD calculated for the period 1975-2000 with the convergence-moderate-growth scenario (B2) and the protectionism scenario (D) is less than 3.5%, while the corresponding figure for the same period with the North-South alienation scenario (C) is a mere 2.3%. As far as the purely economic aspect is concerned, together with its consequences for employment, energy requirements and the pressure on the environment, one must therefore calculate the effects not only of the high growth target of scenario A but also of the moderate rate of growth that is feared. This serves to illuminate differences in the benefits as well as the drawbacks of high growth as compared with moderate growth. It is an essential feature of the example outlined here that economic growth will continue in the longer term; the precise level of that growth is of secondary importance.

#### 4. THE CASE OF HOLLAND (summary)

This analysis of the Netherlands deals with the very matters which pull this scenario into focus on the basis of the characteristic views we have developed. We begin by examining some

of the more or less immutable factors that help to determine the country's position (geographical location, population, domestic energy supplies, minerals) and then proceed to amplify the technical and economic aspect, the socio-cultural aspect, the environmental issues and political administration. These are the pegs on which the elaboration of the scenario for the Dutch situation is hung.

a) Technical and economic aspects

Scenario A assumes a growth rate of an average of 5.1% per annum in the Netherlands' Gross National Product in the period from 1980-1990 and 2.5% p.a. from 1990 to 2000;

unemployment is reduced until only frictional unemployment remains (1.3% of the labour supply) in 1990; there is a clear recovery in private investment; an active energy conservation policy will be pursued. The compilers of scenario

A have fully grasped the point that economic growth is a problem in the current situation. Their prime concern is not so much a growth percentage as an assumed willingness to create the conditions for the re-establishment of growth.

According to this line of thinking, failure to restore the familiar cycle of economic forces need only lead to the scenario being postponed, not to its being abandoned. In order to emphasise this point, the Council has worked out the lower growth variant for the nineteen eighties alongside the growth target from scenario A ; the general principles of policy remain the same.

If the high growth variant is realised, the national income will have more than doubled by the year 2000 thanks to a further rise in productivity and higher employment, the latter notably in the next ten years. There are no physical limits that automatically preclude growth on this scale. Nor need there be any fears of a slowing down in the rate of

technological innovation. In order to achieve this high growth, the proportion of income from interest and profit in the GNP will have to be doubled from 1/8 to 1/4. The rise in wages will have to lag behind that in productivity for a while but the high growth scenario nevertheless provides scope for the rising consumer demand for domestic services to be satisfied.

Employment in agriculture will continue to decline, in industry it will stabilise and in the services sector it will expand. A pronounced growth in the number of public service staff is not a feature of scenario A, nor will it be needed to reduce unemployment to mere frictional level, provided the growth target in the companies sector is achieved. It is assumed in this scenario that groundless opposition to nuclear energy will gradually subside, which means that the option of maximum nuclear energy can be adopted.

#### b. Socio-cultural aspect

Since the A scenario assumes a consensus on the dominant post-war values - priority accorded to economic growth, economic stability, strong national defence and the like - it also implies that the population will exhibit an individual behaviour pattern which fosters this growth. The scenario does not preclude a gradual shift in the dominant values and norms but this will not be a fundamental issue.

There is great concern in the scenario about social ossification and about the public sector making too great a claim on the national income. The burden of tax and social security contributions in the Netherlands is currently 54% of the net national income, 20 percentage points more than twenty years ago. Scenario A certainly allows no scope for any further increase; even a figure of 40% is quoted with concern. With regard to taxation, there is a decided preference for distasteful levying which allow the costs and benefits to be consciously weighed. The scenario argues against a marked progression in direct taxation because this widens the

gap between people's own interest and their contribution to productivity.

In principle, this scenario prefers the government to have the least possible involvement in social security, but at the same time it is recognised that this is an important achievement which may require government intervention. It is not so much the government contribution in itself that does not fit in with the scenario but the fact that it is not accompanied by a government hold on policy on the volume of expenditure, designed to avert uncontrolled developments.

In view of the fact that individual utility maximisation is legitimised, the cutting of the direct link between benefit and sacrifice must lead to a situation in which it is difficult to control the volume of welfare provisions. This is illustrated in the study by the developments in the health service.

This scenario endorses the view that good-quality housing comes to those who are willing and able to pay for it. There is great reluctance to give the right of adequate housing to every citizen so that the government is then obliged to provide it.

The Council asserts in its analysis that conditions in the Netherlands are relatively conducive to the rise of new 'post-materialist' values. This makes it likely that it will be a fairly radical operation to realise scenario A in this country.

This point is immediately apparent with regard to nuclear energy, but the Netherlands is also one of the last countries to have eased the controls on recombinant DNA research for example. Moreover, unlike the other EC countries, we operate a restrictive policy on the introduction of new chemicals.

c. The environment

The A scenario assumes that the protection of the physical environment will not be a barrier to further economic growth. This in fact amounts to a pronouncement on the value of conserving the environment. National governments must curb pollution but expenditure of the order of 1.5% of the national income and 5% of investment is considered sufficient for this purpose.

Where pollution constitutes a threat to public health, the government will intervene to control matters. But to protect flora and fauna for the sake of their own intrinsic value will demand too great a sacrifice. Consequently, various species of plant and animal life will continue to die out, the acidification of the ground and surface waters will continue and the accumulation of chemicals in food chains will remain a threat to birds of prey, rodents, predatory fish etc. The eutrophication of surface waters - notably owing to phosphates - will, however, be halted because this is not a very expensive operation.

The A scenario does not envisage any fundamental change in the pattern of urbanisation in the Netherlands. The exodus from the towns will continue, the old city centres will become even more the domain of the young, the aged, single people, poor families and ethnic minorities. Redevelopment will increasingly take the form of demolition, there will be less emphasis on 'building for the neighbourhood', and only the construction of expensive dwellings on plots of land that become vacant will form some counterweight to the tendency towards suburbanisation. More money will become available for the protection of historic buildings and conservation work, for the interest in historic townscapes will grow and the higher level of prosperity will enable more funds to be released for this purpose.

The logic of scenario A dictates that Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport should be developed to its maximum capacity. The Markerwaard lake will be reclaimed and the peripheral lakes developed for recreational purposes.



d. Political administration

Scenario A assumes that the public wants vigorous economic growth and will therefore accept as legitimate government action designed to achieve it. The government should ensure that growth is not hampered by rigidities in the social structure, by uncontrollable factors in the public sector or by measures designed to contain imagined risks which prove difficult to rescind.

National policy in such areas as the economy, technology, energy and defence will be in line with international developments and commitments. In its organisation and functioning the government must be marked by adaptability, displaying a flexible response to events in society. This implies a large measure of confidence in the free market as an instrument for rapidly effecting adjustments. The emphasis in political decision-making is more on sensible government than on ideological choices. The tendency to allow Parliament to have a strong say in government is checked; the position of the government becomes stronger, and parliament becomes primarily the power base for the cabinet in office. The importance in the formation of parties of organisations based on religious or philosophical principles will decline. Such things as the requirement of a minimum percentage of the vote before a party can be represented in Parliament, all-party government and non-political caretaker government are favourably regarded.

The government is viewed as a good paterfamilias who leaves as much as possible to the independent citizen while ensuring harmony, totality and continuity. In the Dutch context this means a shift towards strengthening the government's authority as well as setting limits to its range of action. It will lead to greater independence for the Council of Ministers and the ministers individually.

One of the government's major responsibilities is to instil into the public the importance of economic growth and to make people aware of the fact that it is not possible to do everything at once, in other words that choices have to be made. The

effective dissemination of information by the government is therefore very important.

According to the pragmatic consensus thinking of scenario A, the political web of advisory councils and lobbies around every ministry should be better controlled and reduced where necessary. Important advisory councils with broad terms of reference do figure in the scenario, but the government will wish to tighten the reins of control, for example by giving more influence to crown-appointed members.

In the field of international relations, scenario A envisages closer links within the Western bloc. The economic power of the United States will continue to diminish in comparison with that of the European Community and Japan. The scenario sees the Netherlands remaining a loyal member of a strengthened NATO; defence expenditure will continue to rise in real terms. If the NATO governments agree on the need to update the nuclear weapons located on Dutch territory, then this will be done.

Within the expanded European Community, West Germany, France and perhaps the United Kingdom will acquire greater power. The Netherlands will endeavour to exert the maximum influence on this 'directoriate', if necessary by insisting on the rule that there must be unanimity on important decisions.

INTERFUTURES regards the development of stable relations with the countries of the Third World as a matter of great importance. A further element of scenario A is that the Netherlands will press for an increase in development aid, particularly from the countries of the Western bloc, i.e. the EC and the OECD. The Dutch position in relation to both the West and the Third World is seen to be strengthened by the fact that the head offices of a relatively large number of multinationals are located in the Netherlands.

5. Further work

Before going into the follow-up to the activities, let us summarize and clarify the method employed. The principle adopted by the Council for this study is that social debate and political action helps to mould the future of society. Developing a number of future scenarios deliberately based on normative ideas which enjoy demonstrable support in society will, it is hoped, reveal what role these two factors play and clarify the debate. Clarification of the repercussions of action based on political choices may then mean that the future comes to be considered more actively in current decision-making.

The study was geared to existing political orientations so as to throw political and social groups into clearer relief and increase their involvement. But this is not the only reason. The Council's work is oriented above all to the Government, which means an orientation towards politics, towards a deliberate shaping of society by government action. The comparison of future scenarios based on set political orientations is designed to be a tool which will help to pinpoint and clarify major problems in Dutch society. Exploring the future in this way is not so much a question of outlining a development which can be regarded as a barometer of the future, but rather of making visible the direction in which society is being pulled by political forces and where the developments will converge or diverge. The ultimate aim of this study of the future is to place contradictions and problems in developments in the long-term in such a context that they come to play a role in the shaping of current political opinion and in the formulation of current policy.

This report describes the first stage of the foray into the future. The basis has been laid for the second stage in which the future scenarios will be developed and compared. The formulation of the characteristic views was the first step: systems of normative general principles which relate to social phenomena and their interrelations and which we allow to guide us in identifying and solving problems despite unavoidable set-back.

The characteristic views constitute the normative basis for the future scenarios. We are dealing with points of departure arranged into a coherent whole. From a methodological point of view this is a prerequisite for the construction of future scenarios with a minimum of internal contradiction. If contradictions emerge in developing the basic principles, these must be susceptible to correction on the basis of the underlying cohesive interrelated view. Moreover, the normative principles must be of broad significance so that they can serve as a yardstick in many of the diverse aspects and problems that will come up for discussion in the future scenarios.

The characteristic views cannot be equated with the ideas of the various political parties, for these do not form a cohesive whole free of contradiction within a group. Nor can this be expected, because political parties always have to deal with situations which are uncertain as a result of new problems emerging and of social and cultural changes. This is why the ideal-type approach was chosen for giving substance to the typical views, on the basis of two distinctions which span the field of ideological and normative principles and which lead to the aforementioned characteristic views when combined. These characteristic views of society, which were set forth in section 2.5., are intended to give the spectrum of rival ideas in Dutch politics, at least insofar as they are connected with the deliberate moulding of the future initiatives based on continuity.

The six characteristic views constitute the normative bases for the future scenarios. A future scenario in this sense is a sketch of developments in society as viewed from the present-day and which derive from a characteristic view which is assumed to prevail and which is adopted as the basis for action. It indicates the intentional and unintentional consequences of a particular view. A future scenario of this kind must link up with the current situation, provide some idea of a future era and cover different aspects of society. It therefore has to meet criteria of continuity and scope.

This is also necessary for the purposes of comparing the scenarios. By making allowance for institutional barriers and for the fact that certain developments take a long time to come to fruition, the scenarios based on the views can be stripped of their static and utopian nature.

The main point is to assess the possibilities and the consequences of aspirations in one area for others. However, this also brings in its wake the risk that the normative implications will be watered down.

The dangers of failing to meet the requirements of continuity and scope and of being watered down can be avoided by challenging the characteristic views with an example that is based on the existing situation and in which a desired development is indicated and its repercussions thought out. This methodological aid must act as a stimulus: in terms of its content it must compel one to adopt a standpoint, in terms of its form invite one to construct alternatives comparable in their interrelatedness, breadth and underpinning.

Scenario A developed in the OECD Interfutures study will serve as an example. It reflects the political and ideological principles and views of major policy makers in the western world. This international scenario, discussed in chapter 3 naturally pays relatively little attention to aspects that differ markedly from country to country. It has therefore been specially adapted to Dutch circumstances in chapter 4. At the same time, generalized statements have been worked out in more detail, with due allowance for the Dutch differences and some additions have been made within the framework of the principles on which the scenario is based. This scenario invites controversy as regards both the international situation and the Dutch situation. That is also the idea: the explicit and straightforward embroidering on the normative points of departure must compel one to adopt a stance, so that in the construction of future scenarios the normative character emerges as clearly as possible.

The adaption to specifically Dutch conditions was arranged under certain headings: technical and economic, social and cultural, the environment and political and administrative aspects. Prior to this, however, some subjects were dealt with which particularly determine the position of the

Netherlands. These relate to energy resources and local raw materials, demographic development, geographical location, infrastructure and population density. These factors are not totally unsusceptible to influence, but even with major efforts the effect in the medium term will be slight. They are therefore regarded as parameters for all future scenarios. Besides these parameters, however, there are more similarities. Both Scenario A and the typical views regarded change in society as necessary in order to solve present problems. There is also agreement on the desirability of gradual change. Formulated in this abstract way, yet others can be quoted: both the international scenario and the characteristic views are based on the democratic state and endeavour to achieve social justice and well-being. This agreement on abstract values says little, however, because it disappears as soon as one tries to bring them into sharper focus. It is consequently more interesting to fix one's attention on the differences in the points of departure.

Scenario A of Interfutures would seem to have been set up on the basis of a great confidence in technocratic initiatives and a fear that developments will be hindered by social rigidity or too rapid changes in the pattern of values and norms. Adjustments in the social, cultural and political-administrative sphere are considered both necessary and possible to achieve the traditional economic objectives. As far as the social order is concerned, the scenario opts for greater differentiation in and ordering of production activities and a strengthening of ties on the basis of considerations of utility. The principles underlying this scenario are consequently deeply rooted in position 2 of the second distinction: confidence in technocratic initiatives (see definition in 2.3.).

Scenario A can be set in its ideological context by reviewing the connections between the four different aspects, for each ideology has its own view of them. The technical-economic aspect prevails in the Dutch transcription of Scenario A, because this opens the way to technical and economic developments with economic growth as aim and means. The market guarantees coordination of the technical-economic and socio-cultural systems in this scenario. Technical-economic initiatives

try to respond to needs and customers reward the right initiatives. The government stance must be one of reluctance to interfere with for instance e.g. setting conditions, so as to give scope to social and cultural developments. It is the main task of the government to remove factors which serve to thwart the market e.g. the structures of social rigidity. These principles are closer to the liberal rather than the socialist or denominational view in position 2.

According to the socialist scenario in position 2, the political and administration system is the main channel for the coordination of technical-economic and socio-cultural aspects. The goal is a society in which the political and administrative system is sovereign over the economy. The social and cultural aspect is given its due through this sovereignty.

It is only in this power constellation that the technical-economic and social and cultural aspects can be reconciled. Thus the market does not represent a value as such, but has a more instrumental significance; the creation of a fair system by spreading power, knowledge and incomes is much more of an independent value to which the operation of the market is essentially subordinate. In principle it is found to be no problem if adjustments to the market are constantly selective or protectionist, a stance which is anathema to Scenario A and the liberals in position 2. Many of what are termed rigidities in the challenging scenario will be regarded in the socialist typical view as acquired rights.

Inequality has a major allocative function for both the scenario and the liberals in position 2. Consequently, insufficient inequality can represent rigidity as viewed from the market. The aim of social equality is not a value as such in the A scenario but rather a derivative of other values such as stability. It is questionable whether this applies to liberals as well.

By contrast with the liberal and socialist typical view, the denominationalist in position 2 holds to an external inspiration for social acts, a responsibility for one's fellow man and the natural environment. This responsibility should be reflected in all one's acts. No conflict may arise

between social-cultural, technical-economic and political-administrative acts and acts relating to the natural environment. Consequently, these aspects are highly integrated in the social order envisaged; this also constitutes the safeguard against partial and thus irresponsible behaviour. For the denominational typical view, the social and cultural aspect has priority, the other being part of it and deriving from it. This means, for example, as was the case with the socialists but in contrast to the liberals and the A-scenario, that the market has no value in itself and the notion of identifying it with social and cultural needs is rejected. By contrast, the denominational groups along with the liberals are apprehensive of a political and administrative system that has supremacy over social life.

This concise political and ideological exposé of the principles of the A-scenario of INTERFUTURES indicate that the socialists and denominational groups are more likely to adapt a different stance in position 2 than the liberals, as least insofar the normative principles are concerned. That is not to say that the liberals in position 2 are prepared to assume sole responsibility for developing the principles nor that a socialist or denominational future scenario would be completely different. The scenario used as an example is particularly provocative to characteristic views deriving from position 3: confidence in sociocratic initiatives. All three are faced with the task of distancing themselves from an order in which society itself and its constituent institutions are seen as systems to be steered, and of shaping a society which accords priority to interactive relations based on equality.

Ideas on this have been formulated most lucidly for transparent small social systems, but this is not sufficient. The way in which inevitably complex and large-scale aspects are managed, both by the authorities and the technical and economic sphere, is of fundamental importance. However one imagines it, much will be required of the political and administrative system during the transition period and it will therefore have to be given a great deal of attention in the development of



future scenarios. If well-defined ideas on this are not available, serious difficulties may arise in giving shape to future scenarios on the basis of position 3.

Proponents of position 3 adopt a critical attitude towards the great emphasis that Scenario A places on physical scarcities in relation to the importance of protecting the natural environment for its own sake. However, this does not automatically mean that nature and the environment fare well at the hands of the advocates of position 3, for when these factors come to be weighed the result may prove to be quite different. Conversely, it is also possible for position 2 advocates to shape an image of the future in which concern for nature and the environment ranks considerably higher than it does in the provocative example; this is also independent of political or ideological basis.

This superficial comparison of the example we have developed and the characteristic views alone indicates that the latter are too general to specify all aspirations regarding the environment and all social and economic objectives. This is why it is necessary to formulate additional objectives when constructing future scenarios which follow on from the characteristic view on which the image is based but which cannot automatically be derived from it.

This brings us to the actual design of the future scenarios which will be dealt with in stage two of the project. These should be comparable to the example we have developed in their coherence, breadth and theoretical underpinning.

The criteria for arriving at cohesive images can be derived from the internally cohesive views. The requirement of continuity that was set for the example also means that it is intended to outline a development in time starting from the present. Areas for description have not been excluded in advance from the future scenarios. Although each view emphasizes particular aspects and has little interest in others, the future scenarios must be comparable.

The description will therefore be arranged under the four headings used for the example: technical-economic, social and cultural, political-administrative and environmental

aspects. The order will not be the same but will depend on the standpoints of the characteristic view. It is intended in the first instance to work out the future scenarios on the assumption that international factors will not block their realization. The validity of this assumption for the future scenarios can subsequently be examined.

The creation of future scenarios may in itself produce useful information for decision-making but the aim is to go further than this. It should be remembered that the typical view on which an image of the future is based is assumed to prevail for the period in which it is described so that its effects can be brought into sharp focus. Whilst such dominance is the goal that the supporters of any view doggedly pursue, it is certainly true that in the coming years our society will continue to have an abundance of rival views: different directions are being developed within society.

By going some way towards developing the individual future scenarios, greater clarity about these directions may be created, but not about their significance. For this it is necessary to explore the power structure to some extent. Opposing forces within each separate image of the future by definition play a minor role and for this reason major social conflicts are absent. However, certain views can be totally or partially ascribed to certain political parties, social institutions and government ministries for they all rest on traditions from which the characteristic views in their turn have been derived. These are institutions which each exercise some measure of power in their own field. It is not the intention to carry out a detailed analysis of the relative positions of power, but an attempt will be made on the basis of credible assumptions to compare the future scenarios. This, it is hoped, will produce a better idea of social conflicts, of points of agreement and of situations in which the forces perhaps unwittingly reinforce one another. It is not, however, just a question of recognizing social conflicts, but also of how to solve them when supporters of the different characteristic views cling to their own manner of decision-making. An exploratory foray into the future which is called policy-oriented cannot ignore this problem.

Politically normative choices play a role in any study of the future, but they often remained concealed. We have opted, however, for a method which is as explicit as possible and in which a heavy emphasis is placed on ideas which develop in the political system. We therefore shun any attempt to predict the future for the Netherlands. This is also done in the realization that in a democracy, discussion of the possibilities of social developments enlarges the choices and thus makes them that much less predictable. The Council hopes to pursue an approach which can contribute to a clearer awareness of the future effects of political and social action in the present and thus help it to fulfil its statutorily defined task.

However, this demands that the explicitly politically normative content of the characteristic views should accord with the ideas of political and social groups. Partly to achieve this end, the Council is throwing the study open to debate at this stage.

There are three questions:

- To what extent do the characteristic views based on the two distinctions reflect the spectrum of existing political and social views which are important for our purposes?
- What additional objectives that follow on from each of the views but which cannot be directly derived from them must in any event be included when building future scenarios?
- Are there any suggestions pertaining to the construction of scenarios as described here? We are concerned with proposals in different policy areas that can act as alternatives for the policies and developments illustrated in the example for the Dutch situation. It is hoped that this has not been formulated in provocative terms in vain.

By raising such questions for discussion in this report, the Council believes it is contributing to a fruitful interaction between science and politics, while allowing each to retain its own responsibility, and thus is presenting a better understanding of the options for the future.