Images of the Educational Future in Advanced Industrial Society: An Ontario Enquiry

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Dans leur tentative d'élaborer une politique sociale et éducative à long terme, les hommes politiques et les hommes de science ont accordé très peu d'attention aux attitudes de la population face à un projet de société. Après une brève présentation des éléments d'information dont dispose présentement la population sur l'avenir réservé à une société industrielle avancée, cette étude nous transmet les résultats d'une enquête importante portant sur les attentes et les espoirs de la population de l'Ontario concernant l'éducation. Ces résultats nous ont permis de tracer des modèles de préférence dont ne tiennent présentement pas compte les autorités qui décident de la politique éducative à suivre.

It is time to bring the people in to the making of the future. Over the past decade, professional futurists and other intellectuals, as well as many expert-dominated public and private commissions, have engaged in a wide variety of more-or-less systematic efforts to envision probable or preferable futures for advanced industrial societies.[1] Whether extrapolating present societal trends or stating a moral position on a particular sort of future, such efforts to construct long-term social policies have generally either ignored or presumed the actual orientations to the future existing among the general public. In our technologically rational society, one common justification for this exclusion is to point to the general public's limited technical and academic knowledge. But even if people are typically unable to recall many mathematical principles and historical details,[2] this is not a sufficient basis for inferring a similar incapacity to respond to social issues affecting everyday life. As Walter Hardwick, director of an intensive survey of the attitudes of Greater Vancouver citizens on urban issues, recently concluded:

> There is really a high level of understanding of the nature and complexity of the major problems which have to be faced . . . to ensure a livable environment. The so-called experts don't appear to be any more knowledgeable than the public-at-large. The language of the public may be less sophisticated, but its depth of understanding is equal to that of the decision-makers'. . . . In fact, when it comes to making policies for the future, I'm prepared to believe that almost any group of fifty citizens could do just as well as a group of experts in the fields of pollution, transportation and housing. After all, the citizen lives with these issues every day.[3]

In the realm of public schooling (as within all the major institutions of

advanced industrial society) policy-making is done largely within a milieu of experts, under highly technical criteria of ways and means; and while there may be shifts in the dominant educational philosophy of the associated intelligentsia, there is little disposition to comprehend mass public preferences that do not speak directly to such criteria. The numerous public opinion surveys on education have seldom been concerned with anything but reactions to institutionalized activities and school structures.[4] Hence, as in other areas of social policy making, the lay public is given a dependent reactive position. The few survey researchers who have asked have begun to discover significant differences in issues and preferences expressed by educational leadership and expressed by the general public.[5] But little effort has been made to determine whether such differences encompass intelligible alternative views of desirable future policies.

A few studies that have carefully compared the attitudes on current issues of policy-makers and the upper economic classes with those of the general public have recognized that the purported ignorance of social issues among the mass public is a misconception, much of the "ignorance" that does exist being attributable to the avoidance of major issues and use of distracting themes by policy-makers themselves; moreover, in spite of such obstacles, various segments of the mass public have been found under careful scrutiny to be both more liberal than political leaders and the upper economic classes and quite cogent on many current issues.[6]

In view of these facts, the conducting and undistorted dissemination of sensitive studies of public attitudes toward the societal future can be seen as a step toward increasing the lay public's collective self-awareness. Awareness of their own views of the future, is, in my view, *one* of the minimal conditions required for the general public to begin to play an authentic role in long-term social policy-making in advanced industrial societies.

The purpose of this paper is to provide information about basic patterns of public preferences and expectations regarding the future of education in Ontario, on the basis of my own recent investigation, and to suggest some possible uses and implications of such findings.

PREVIOUS STUDIES OF IMAGES OF THE FUTURE

A very small amount of research on the public's images of the societal future has been conducted. This scattering of largely "exploratory" studies over the past generation has dealt mainly with very diffuse and abstract orientations to the future, and partly for this reason has been very easy for policy makers and the public alike to ignore.

The general importance of images of the future as mediating factors in social action has been postulated by several contemporary scholars.[7] Such theoretical work has not distinguished very clearly between hopes (what people want to see) and expectations (what they think will probably

happen), or between people's attitudes regarding their personal future and their views on the societal future. There has been a substantial amount of empirical research on personal hopes and expectations. Such studies typically show no interest in discerning the societal contexts people hope or expect to live in, but rather take the continuation of the present institutional context for granted. The resulting impression – that the ways of life individuals foresee for themselves seldom differ from the ways of life lived in the present – is therefore pre-ordained by the research design. It is at least questionable that all attitudes about personal futures are confined within such narrow extrapolative views of future society.[8] Careful understanding of personal attitudes toward the future, and of the relationship between personal and societal futures, requires more explicit attention to attitudes concerning the *societal* future.

There have been a few studies of the most general future expectations or hopes of particular groups,[9] and several studies that have related people's future aspirations or expectations to their social backgrounds.[10] Two major empirical studies, by Cantril and by Ornauer et al.,[11] have begun to examine the interplay between societal hopes and expectations and to relate both to a range of respondents' background characteristics. But, with the partial exceptions of Ornauer et al. and Willener's[12] study of the image of the future emerging in France during May 1968, none of these enquiries have used sensitive enough methods or sufficient policy-specific questions to say anything substantive about the societal future.

Both the Willener and the Ornauer et al. studies suggest that there may be substantial differences in the preferred images of future society held by ruling groups and mass publics in a number of advanced industrial societies. It has also recently been concluded, on the basis of ample evidence, that an underlying value consensus does not exist to any significant extent with regard to images of *present* society in advanced western countries. Michael Mann[13] has argued on the basis of survey evidence that the societal cohesion of advanced western societies depends primarily on the lack of consistent commitment to any general values in relation to present social structures, and on the pragmatic compliance of the subordinate classes with their limited roles in society. While we should avoid assuming a priori a close identity between peoples' images of present society and their images of future society, these recent findings regarding public attitudes toward both present and future society should dissuade forecasters, who have characteristically presumed a general underlying value consensus in advanced industrial society, from merely extrapolating present societal structures as a consensual image of the future. Indeed, the demonstrable dissensus regarding present social structures suggests that the determination of the future course of such structures depends mainly on who controls them and the operating criteria of the controllers.[14] Our concern in

this paper is with expected and preferred future operating criteria for education in one advanced industrial population – Ontario's.

THE CURRENT STUDY

The Alternative Educational and Social Futures Project[15] is an effort to engage a cross-section of the people of Ontario in the creation of widely-acceptable, realizable images of the future. During 1973, a mail questionnaire survey was conducted to discern the attitudes toward the future of the population as a whole. Throughout the previous year, intensive, open-ended interviews had been conducted with several hundred people of widely divergent experience, as well as a series of workshops with community groups. The subsequent hundred-item questionnaire encouraged specific comments throughout, but it obviously could not capture the full personal meaning of anyone's view of the future. It did serve, however, to characterize people's attitudes on many substantive concerns that the preliminary interviews had indicated to be of wide relevance in thinking about the future.

The questionnaire dealt with hopes and expectations with regard to personal and societal possibilities on political, economic, ecological, socio-cultural, and educational matters. Conventional background information was also asked for. A province-wide random sample of about 3500 people was drawn from the population of eligible Ontario voters. In comparison with similarly lengthy questionnaire surveys, the response rate of just under 50% is quite high. It might be argued that non-respondents are less interested in the future; but the respondents are representative of the entire voting population on all available background characteristics (age, sex, occupation, schooling, income, religion, and ethnicity), as well as in their voting attitudes.

Public Attitudes toward the Educational Future

The chief purposes of the part of the survey focussing on educational futures were: (1) to ascertain the hopes and expectations people held concerning educational goals, structures, and processes, and to discern any pattern of general orientations to the educational future; (2) to explore relationships between attitudes toward the educational future and attitudes toward other aspects of the societal future; and (3) to explore the influences of selected background variables on people's images of the educational future. In this paper the focus is on (1) above, public educational images per se.

The questionnaire contained items about the goal priorities the respondents expected and would like education to have in the future, about the extent of change expected and desired in educational institutions, and numerous questions about the future of the learning process, educa-

tional legislation, certification, financing, and decision-making.

The basic distributions concerning goal priorities are displayed in Table 1. The tendencies indicated there have been confirmed by detailed thematic analysis of respondents' comments. While the majority of respondents expect job training to have the highest priority in the future, there are a number of purposes of education to which they would like to give a higher priority – specifically the fostering of ethical sensibility, developing the ability to get along with other people, learning to be self-directing and independent, and learning basic reading and number skills.

Table 1 / Future Goal Priorities for Education, as Desired and Expected by a Province-wide Sample of Ontario Voters ($N = 1635$)

Goal	Priority Indicated by Respondents (%)					
	High	Medium	Low	No import	Can't say	No response
	Desired					
Sense of right and wrong	*75.5*	14.0	3.2	1.5	0.9	4.9
Basic reading and number skills	*72.8*	19.8	2.7	0.2	0.5	4.0
Getting along with other people	*72.4*	18.3	3.5	0.9	0.7	4.2
Personal independence and initiative	65.2	24.6	3.6	0.7	1.2	4.7
Job training	64.9	21.7	6.9	1.5	1.0	4.1
How to think critically	59.3	26.6	6.0	1.9	1.3	4.9
Creativity	53.0	32.0	6.5	1.1	1.0	6.3
Appreciation of art	26.0	40.0	21.1	4.8	2.9	5.3
	Expected					
Job training	*57.4*	25.9	9.5	1.5	2.3	3.4
Basic reading and number skills	52.1	31.6	9.4	1.2	2.3	3.4
Personal independence and initiative	44.5	27.6	16.9	4.3	2.9	3.8
How to think critically	44.2	31.8	12.5	3.2	4.6	3.7
Creativity	43.1	33.4	12.2	2.9	3.1	5.3
Getting along with other people	42.9	32.1	15.0	3.9	2.5	3.6
Sense of right and wrong	36.9	26.7	21.7	6.5	3.9	4.3
Appreciation of art	16.6	35.4	30.6	7.6	5.6	4.1

Respondents generally both want and expect basic skills to receive high priority in future education, but expect a much more narrowly technical context for such learning than they would like. Indeed, they tend to expect that inter-personal skills, and especially the development of ethical sensibility, will receive a great deal less emphasis than they consider desirable. It appears that expectations about future educational priorities correspond closely to those implied by the technological extrapolations that pervade both policy-making bodies and the public media today.[16] Conversely, the sort of future educational system most people would like to see would place primary emphasis on personal and social concerns, with the provision of technical skills integrated into that context.

The pattern of relations between educational hopes and expectations is seen more clearly in the responses to questions on the extent of change wanted and expected in educational institutions. The public-at-large tends to *expect* that education will be changed greatly with the inevitable continuation of currently perceived, though not necessarily approved, trends; whereas the education they would *like* involves more gradual rates of change in the direction of the respondents' own evaluation bases. As Table 2 indicates, nearly two-thirds of the respondents expect a great deal of change, whereas the majority would like to see no more than a moderate amount of change. When hopes and expectations concerning change in educational institutions are cross-tabulated, over 40% of the respondents expect to see more change than they hope for, while only 12% hope for more institutional change than they expect. Therefore, there appears to be a very substantial number who expect to see changes in educational institutions being imposed against their preferences. Responses to questions on educational planning, which show that nearly two-thirds of the respondents would like the general public to have more say in planning education in the future while a similar proportion expect no greater voice than at present, also support this conclusion.

Table 2 / Amount of Change in Educational Institutions Desired and Expected by a Sample of Ontario Voters ($N = 1635$)

Amount of change	Desired change (% of respondents)	Expected change (% of respondents)
None at all	2.1	0.7
Very little	8.1	5.7
Moderate amount	41.4	25.1
A great deal	35.0	54.5
Total reform/abolition	5.4	9.8
Other	1.2	1.0
Can't say	4.9	2.6
No response	2.1	0.5

Thematic analysis of the respondents' comments reveals a variety of specific views on both expected and desired educational change. With regard to expectations, the most common theme is that education – along with society in general – is perceived to have been changing rapidly and will continue to do so in the future. This general attitude conditions most of the responses, but especially among those who expect "a great deal" of educational change (54.5%). The comment of a retired minister is typical: "There will be a great deal of educational change if we can go by the rate of change in just the last decade." Similarly, a young machine operator notes: "Because they have changed a great deal already."

Within this extrapolation to the educational future three substantive concerns are evident among those anticipating a great deal of change. Many of this group perceive increasing specialization and expect education to become much more molded to society's technological needs. As a young tool-and-die apprentice puts it: "Technology is accelerating rapidly and education must keep up." Others emphasize an increasing person-centeredness in education. They cite a decreasing stress on such external criteria as centrally structured curricula and degrees, and see an increasing extension of personal choice along with such related trends as the growth of lifelong learning to meet individual needs. As a middle-aged salesman observes: "Students have more and more to say about their education."
A third major concern is expressed by those who have a more cyclical view of educational trends. They see a current wave of permissiveness to be followed by a return to more traditional discipline in schooling. A retired middle-level manager comments: "I would expect that the pendulum will swing back to more traditional forms of education – higher standards, less freedom in choice of curriculums, greater stress on higher education, better qualified teachers."

The anticipations of those who expect total reform or abolition of present forms of schooling (9.8%) are also based on extrapolation of perceived rapid changes, but also on a view of educational institutions as currently lagging in the generally pervasive change toward a more technologically oriented or a more person-centered society. The technological orientation is well expressed by a young lathe operator who says: "Educational institutions will need to be drastically reorganized to accommodate increased need for the increase in technological knowledge and longer years spent in school." A young electrician exemplifies the person-centered view: "Future school will be orientated more towards what the student wishes to learn since the school's main purpose will not be to get people ready to work in industry." Among those who foresee total reform or abolition of existing institutions there are some who, while they expect the established roles of schooling to continue, see a necessity for more economical modes of organization. As an elderly housewife puts it:

"There will have to be much less waste of public tax money. Taxpayers are getting fed up with providing plush nurseries without seeing better results."

The 25% of respondents who expect only a moderate degree of educational change seem to be more aware of obstacles to change in today's schools. A middle-aged civil servant says: "I think there will be an increasing trend toward mediocre education but the structure of the educational institution will not change. It's too entrenched to change radically." Among the moderates the same three general sorts of concrete issues again emerge – expectations of more emphasis on practical, job-oriented curricula, an increasing degree of choice among courses for students, or a re-emerging priority for the "3R's."

The small numbers who expect little or no change (6.4%) are more preoccupied with the immutability of schools than are the moderates. The general perspective is expressed by a secondary teacher in her early thirties: "Education has never really changed much from Socrates or Plato to Rousseau, Dewey, and now Hall-Dennis!" Reasons cited for the expected stability range from the view that trustees are rigid and slow to implement change to the general attitude that educational institutions are always the last to change in any society. And the familiar concrete concerns with job-oriented education, student choice, or traditional discipline are once more apparent. But the tone of these comments differs markedly from that of respondents who expect greater educational change. For example, an aging prospector foresees distinct limits to expanding educational opportunities: "We'll always need workers, and U.S. couldn't get soldiers from their educated masses. We'd be in big trouble if education makes you feel above a pick and shovel, or fighting for your country." And a salesman in his late fifties expresses a common belief of those with a traditionalist orientation when he comments that: "No significant change in schools is possible if teachers have not got a better way of teaching discipline."

Overall, the public's *expected* images of the educational future appear to be based on anticipation of quite unrestrained, largely unguided societal change. While the expected images vary considerably in both concrete and thematic concerns, few people are as overwhelmed by such perceived and expected rates of change as "future shock" hypotheses[17] suggest. Indeed, even expectations of "drastic reorganization" of education seem to assume the familiar institutional structure of public schooling and advanced industrial society.

In view of the general expectation of unrestrained change it is not surprising that many people would *prefer* more gradual educational changes guided by particular human values. The desire for incremental value-based change is, of course, most evident among the largest group (41.4%), who want "moderate" educational change. A university student, for instance,

feels that: "Schools should move with the future personal needs; and children should be learning more at an earlier age but without having too much forced on them too early." The specific changes the moderates would like to see range from "more personal attention in smaller classes," and increased emphasis on learning how to learn, to greater emphasis on basic skills and more discipline. But the changes suggested are typically limited to gradual modifications within existing educational programs, as this comment of a middle-aged housewife indicates: "I sincerely wish that we will be able to control the situation. What we need is more personal attention, smaller classes, more teachers."

In contrast, those who want "a great deal" of educational change (35.0%) usually show a greater concern for discrepancies between human needs and educational services. There is a notable polarity between those who desire freer, more flexible forms of education and those who prefer more highly structured specialized forms. The preference for greater freedom is clearly stated by a middle-aged semi-professional: "I would like to see a system that is more stimulating intellectually, more exciting, and much less regimented." The desire for more structured education is commonly expressed in terms of either basic skills or vocational training. An elderly housewife says: "There should be much more emphasis on spelling and reading. I think the small schools were much better and gave the child a feeling of security." And a young management trainee asserts: "There should be a much greater emphasis on job specialization and training in trades. Today's young people are ill-equipped to fit specific jobs and have little or no skills to offer in the job market." Generally speaking, those who want a great deal of educational change are much more likely than the moderates to suggest specific changes that would make a discernible difference in forms and content of schooling, such as extensive work-study programs, a purely Canadian curriculum, or rigorous moral training. The underlying sentiment of those who want a great deal of educational change is perhaps best expressed by a middle-aged bureaucrat: "Since the present system is an unqualified disaster it is a great temptation to opt for abolition. But it isn't wise to throw out the baby with the bathwater."

The small group (5.4%) who want abolition of the present form of schooling are more occupied than other respondents with links between education and other aspects of life, and they seriously question the social, economic, and political relevance of contemporary schooling. For example, a middle-aged mechanic argues: "Schools are obsolete. They're run by an establishment who have spent their lifetime in a school atmosphere and know little of what's going on in the real world." The freedom–discipline polarity is most prominent within this group's preferences. A young artist feels that: "Something drastic should happen. We need a very flexible

lifelong learning system, because as it's set up now there aren't enough returns to justify the imaginations and creativity that are being stunted." Conversely, a university student states:

> Schools are now worse than ever. The high school student choosing his own subject is a false concept. At those ages most students will choose subjects which require less work and initiative. They are allowed too much freedom, therefore constantly revolting against the system. Computerized schools should be allowed.

At the other extreme, those who would like to see little or no change in schools (10.2%) usually offer no elaboration of their position. There are some general comments on "continuing to keep up to date," but the basic attitude is probably best reflected by an elderly housewife who states: "Schools are so wonderful compared to the little red schoolhouse."

The respondents' concerns with either freedom or discipline emerge from the general questions on preferred extent of change as a central dimension of people's thinking about desirable educational futures. We also asked a specific question about the freedom of choice respondents would prefer to see in future education, particularly for youngsters in deciding what they want to learn. As Table 3 indicates, more people want increased freedom of choice in learning than want decreased freedom. But there are substantial proportions of the population all along the learning–freedom continuum.

Table 3 / Desired Freedom of Choice in Learning

Amount of individual freedom	% of respondents ($n = 1635$)
Much less	9.1
Somewhat less	17.4
About the same as now	24.4
Somewhat more	28.7
Much more	14.7
Other	2.5
Can't say	2.4
No response	0.8

While all those who chose the same pre-coded response cannot be said to hold exactly the same conception of freedom, cross-tabulations indicate that the degree of freedom desired in future learning processes is associated with other specific educational preferences.[18] The desire for greater freedom in the learning process is associated with a lower evaluation of compulsory education, a greater interest in ensuring the rights of private groups to set up their own educational programs, and preference for a much greater say in the educational planning process. The associations of

these other dimensions of preferred educational futures with each other are less notable than the association of each with educational freedom. Thus, the degree of freedom for learners gains further support as a central organizing dimension in most people's preferred images of the educational future, at least in this particular advanced industrial society.

People's views on the nature and extent of change they would like to see in educational institutions encompass a multiplicity of issues, only a few of which we have been able to ask respondents about directly in our survey. Knowing the degree of freedom for learners that people desire does not tell us about the extensiveness of organizational change they generally want to see in educational institutions. Persons who desire less individual freedom for learners in the future are just as likely to want a great deal of institutional change as are those who want much more learning freedom. In order to attempt the clearest possible summary of people's general normative orientations to the educational future from this survey, we have combined people's hopes concerning the individual learner's freedom of choice and the extent of change they desire in educational institutions. The results appear in Table 4.

Table 4 / General Preferred Educational Futures

Amount of individual freedom desired	Amount of institutional change desired	General orientation	% of respondents ($n = 1635$)
Less	Much	"Authoritarian restructuring"	13.5
Less	Moderate/little	"Restoration of authority"	13.6
Same	Much	"Restructuring for efficiency"	6.2
Same	Moderate/little	"Status quo"	18.6
Same	Moderate/little	"More individual choice within existing structure"	16.9
Somewhat more	Much	"New structures to enhance free choice"	12.3
Much more	Moderate/little	"Individualistic"	5.1
Much more	Much	"Radical humanist restructuring"	10.0
Other		Other	3.8

In spite of the fact that over half of the respondents indicated that they expect education to develop in opposition to their own preferences in the future, less than 20% appear to favor the retention of the current orientation of education. The other preferred images of the educational future chosen by at least 10% of the respondents include: (1) an educational system completely restructured along authoritarian lines (13.5%); (2) a restoration of teachers' authority within present structures (13.6%); (3) an increased exercise of individual choice within institutions similar to present ones (16.9%); (4) a somewhat modified system with new structural

arrangements to encourage individual freedom (12.3%); and (5) a system radically restructured along humanist lines to facilitate the realization of varied human potentials (10.0%). A smaller group would like to see individual freedom in education remain as it is now, but with substantial organizational change in line with efficiency criteria (6.2%); and some others are preoccupied with individualistic choice while ignoring structural constraints (5.1%).

Obviously, these constructed characterizations are crude and tentative. The evidence from our studies does seem sufficient, however, to indicate that the citizens of Ontario hold a variety of different preferred images of the educational future exhibiting considerable internal consistency, and that such consistency derives primarily from people's concern for the individual freedom of learners in the future.

Related Societal Imagery and Background Factors

Within the confines of this paper I can only briefly mention several findings from the other education-related aspects of the survey: first, some prominent patterns of association between the public's educational images and other images of societal futures; and secondly, relationships between educational images and selected background characteristics of respondents.

The clearest finding is that optimistic expectations about the future of Canadian society in general, and specifically increased national unity, are positively associated with higher expected priority for the educational goals of ethical sensibility and the development of ability to get along with other people. This finding supports the earlier indication of the predominance of personal and social aspects over technical skills in people's concern about the educational future. The related finding of a clearly negative association between expected rate of societal change and degree of optimism about future Canadian society also supports the interpretation that education is expected to change in a more rapid, technological manner than is generally preferred.

The most evident link between desired educational futures and other societal preferences involves educational freedom and social equality. Most notably, those people with a stronger desire for freedom of choice in learning have a stronger preference for future economic equality. For example, about half of those with a "radical humanist" image of the preferred educational future would like to see much more equal incomes, as opposed to only 15% among those with a "restoration of authority" orientation. A similar pattern of association occurs with preferred extent of future sexual equality. Also, those who would like to see the greatest degree of public engagement in future government decision-making clearly tend to prefer a greater degree of educational freedom, with the "radical humanists" almost unanimously favoring total public involvement, and the "authoritarians" more likely to cede responsibility to professional

politicians and experts. After the associations with educational freedom, the most prominent societal–educational preferences link is a positive connection between repatriation of ownership of the Canadian economy and a greater extent of desired change in educational institutions. It should also be noted that there is a strong negative association between desired extent of automation and the preferred emphasis on vocational education.

Hence, it is apparent that educational images and other societal images of the future exhibit significant correspondences in the minds of the public. Whatever may be said about the general absence of coherent inspirational images of the future in advanced industrial societies,[19] it is at least clear that preferences regarding individual freedom are central dimensions in most people's general societal hopes as well as their educational hopes; and secondly, that people who either expect or desire substantial changes in the future of education typically envision such changes in relation to similar changes in the societal context of education.

People's images of the future may be considered to be derived to a large extent from their objective social conditions. If this is true, we should expect to find some apparent associations between even the most simplistic indicators of different objective conditions and some aspects of preferred educational futures. Such an analysis was made in this study and provides additional support for the centrality of concerns for freedom in preferred images of the educational future. The major finding is that the available measures of economic class (occupation, income, and schooling) all have strong overall associations with preferred freedom of choice in learning. The general pattern is that those in higher economic categories tend considerably more than others to have authoritarian educational preferences. For example, while 30% of unskilled workers express a preference for "much more" educational freedom, only 10% of corporate managers and classical professionals (e.g. doctors, lawyers) do so. Similarly, the majority of those respondents making under $10,000 would prefer more educational freedom in the future, while the common preference in upper-income categories is either for the status quo or for less freedom. It may be of particular interest to radical critics of schooling to observe the clear tendency for more highly schooled people to prefer more authoritarian images of future education. Among those who have completed university degrees, nearly half appear to have orientations toward either "authoritarian restructuring" (26%) or "restoration of authority" (21%), whereas those with less than high school completion are quite underrepresented (less than 10%) in both these orientations. In addition, I should emphasize the strong negative relation between the economic-class measures and desire for vocational training. That is, the subordinate economic classes appear to hold stronger preferences for both freedom of choice and *effective* vocational education than do the dominant groups.

Even at this very simple level of analysis, differing objective conditions

do appear to predispose people to prefer different degrees of educational freedom as well as different summary images of the educational future. (See Table 4.) While arguments about the encapsulating nature of ideology in advanced industrial societies are in some respects highly compelling,[20] the correspondence of the variable aspects of people's objective conditions with their preferred images of the future invites further investigation, rather than presumptions of homogeneity or non-existence of the general public's future imagery, or ignoring of its existence in narrowly technicist forecasting.

Uses and Implications

A large-scale opinion survey at a single point in time cannot offer deep insight into the stability or dynamics of people's images of the future. It is possible also that in spite of all efforts, a largely pre-coded questionnaire can impose overly-rationalistic, reified interpretations of images of the future. More sensitive, smaller-scale studies, using such methods as the oral history approach, are needed to deepen understanding of the cognitive and emotional issues involved in both dominant- and subordinate-group interpretations of the world, whether in recalling the past or imagining the future.[21] The relevance of large-scale surveys is in locating general patterns of orientations in large populations. Such extensive surveys can then offer an empirically-grounded base for the use of particular groups in undertaking analyses, proposals, and collective actions to create the future.

There is hardly sufficient evidence in the present survey to presage the imminent emergence in advanced industrial society of multiple mature ideologies and political movements. But it indicates that different images of potentiality do exist, and may indeed have more diversity and vibrancy than the images promulgated at present in society. But we must open and explore them with each other if they are to have significant creative implications for society.

One clear implication of the survey regarding educational futures is that, in order for currently held public preferences to be met, the educational systems of the future must be organized on a thorough-going principle of pluralism. However, the economic-class-related preferences suggested by this survey largely reflect the familiar division of power in advanced capitalist societies. No alternative-future blueprint yet developed has suggested a viable way of overcoming entrenched class differences other than by pacification or violent overthrow.[22] That is not to deny the possibility of a more liberating alternative. Wide dissemination of undistorted information on the public's future preferences would provide an at least marginally more salutary condition than one in which the only legitimate "knowledge" about the future is created and controlled by an established elite and a small collection of assorted experts. Whether or not

such undistorted communication occurs, many other objective factors influence the shape of future society. But it should be clear, in light of the demonstrated diversity in the public's preferred images of the future, that the guiding question for researchers, politicians, and lay public alike should *not* be how to adapt to any simple range of predicted or prescribed types of future. Rather, how can we continually act to realize a future of alternative choices for all people?

NOTES

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1. For a broad illustrative selection of general forecasts see Huber (1971, pp. 388–415) and Stevenson (1975). Illustrative listings of educational forecasts may be found in Marien (1971) and Stevenson and Hamilton (1972).
2. See, for example, Hodgetts (1968); Hurtig (1975); and, in the United States, the various reports of the National Assessment of Educational Progress.
3. Quoted in Bantam (1974, p. 3).
4. See, for example, Gallup (1971), Environics Research Group (1972), Parker (1970), and Lauwerys (1973).
5. See, for example, Knoepfli and Saul (1973).
6. See especially Hamilton (1972), Harris (1973), and Luttbeg (1968, pp. 398–409).
7. Most notably Boulding (1956), Polak (1961), Boorstin (1964), and Bell and Mau (1971, pp. 6–44).
8. Alvin Toffler (1974, pp. 3–18) has conducted one of the few studies bearing on this issue. Toffler found that among a small group of high school students there was a lop-sided emphasis on non-personal matters in their various views of the future, while the respondents "made no provision for change in themselves, no provision for adaptation to a world exploding with change" (p. 11). But he also notes that he expects different groups to formulate quite different images of the future and to reflect different degrees of personal connectedness with societal change (p. 11).
9. For example, Vieille (1969, pp. 45–53), Yankelovich (1969), and Dillman and Christenson (1972).
10. Tumin and Feldman (1961), Gillespie and Allport (1955), Danziger (1963, pp. 59–76), and Mau (1968).
11. Cantril (1965), and Ornauer, Galtung, Wiberg, and Sicinski (1975).
12. Willener (1970).
13. Mann (1970, pp. 423–429).
14. As direct illustrations of the failure of the advocates of the "post-industrial society" image to grasp this point, see the exchanges between Daniel Bell and Stephen Berger (in *Contemporary Sociology*, 1974, *3* [2], 101–105, 107–109) and between John Porter and David Livingstone (in *Interchange*, 1972, *3* [4], 111–123).
15. This project has been supported by a research grant from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.
16. See Ellul (1964) and Stanley (1972, pp. 274–325).
17. See Toffler (1970).

18. The determination of important patterns of association has been based initially on detailed inspection of marginals and cross-tabulations in close conjunction with respondents' comments. All associations reported in this paper have also been subjected to correlation analysis (with unscalable coded responses removed) and are statistically significant at the .001 level.

19. See especially Polak (1961).

20. See especially Marcuse (1964) and Habermas (1970).

21. Oral history methods have been developed in the United States by Robert Coles and Studs Terkel and popularized in Canada by Barry Broadfoot. This approach has recently been applied to studying attitudes toward the future. See Maxwell (1975).

22. A nascent exception may be the work of Harman and Markley (1973).

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