The Role of Social Values in Information Policy: The Case of France and Japan

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ABSTRACT

Information, and information technology, has been increasingly perceived as playing a central role in future economic growth. As such, several nations have actively supported considerations of the impact of the growing "informationalization" of economies as well as research into the policies by which that process can be shaped to their benefit.

This paper examines the social values inherent in the public policy proposals for guiding the transition of two industrial nations into the Information Age. Basing this consideration upon Nora & Minc's proposals for France and Masuda's proposals for Japan, this study finds both sets of policy proposals fostering the growth of what Scott Flanagan has termed a "libertarian consciousness."
The Role of Social Values in Information Policy: The Case of France and Japan

Information is being recognized as an increasingly important factor in modern society. The rapid development and dissemination of various information technologies have seemingly opened the way for the development of what has been termed information societies (cf. Dizard, 1982; Porat, 1978). In recognition of the value of information and information technology both now and in the future, coherent and comprehensive systems of national information policies have been formulated and/or proposed in many of the industrial states of the East and West. In large measure, the stated purpose of these policies has been the development of these states into "information societies."  

While information policies have been under consideration in many states, the focus will be upon the public policy proposals for the formulation of "information societies" presented in two recent works: Nora and Mine's *Computerization of Society* (1980) and Masuda's *The Information Society as Post-Industrial Society* (1981). Each will be examined for its particular vision of the future as well as the social policies they and other sources have proposed to advance the development of that vision within France and Japan. These particular sets of policies were chosen in part due to their presence as coherent sets of information policies, and partly due to the tradition in those nations of direct governmental involvement in directing social change through social policies. As such, they provide a fine example of what Salvaggio (1983) has termed the "Public Utility" model for the transition to information societies. Though the focus on the policies of France and Japan provide only a limited convenience sample, their usefulness as a sample is expanded by the fact that French policies in this area reflect the basic approach taken towards information policy in much of Western Europe.

Social Policies and Social Values

Social policies are generally defined as those policies which are designed to guide the society which implements them to some particular socially desirable end-state. Social policy thus presents a vision of the future, drawn upon the foundations of the present culture. In the words of Richard Titmuss (1974, p.30), "social policy is all about 'what is and what might be.'" Yet embodied in both the future vision and the present concept are sets of cultural values. These social value systems are particularly visible in the determination and elucidation of the vision of "what might be." The current culture, or social system, can also be seen as a system of social values, which may or may not be identical to that embodied in the end-state implied in social policy. In fact, there are apt to be differences, for the presence of social policy implies a dissatisfaction with the status quo in some way. Through the specification of a more desirable end-state, social policies necessarily involve social change, through either evolution or revolution. Such social change, to be effective, must co-occur with a change in the social value system of the culture, a change that may in part be directed through social policy to the attainment of a specific value system reflected in the expressed "end-state."

The concept of social values will play an important role in this consideration of policy, as it does in both the general social system and the policy itself. The concept of social values and value systems will be used here as it has been defined by

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1 The concept of an "information society" is quite nebulous, and in fact has proven to be problematic. It is, however, a useful umbrella term for a vision of a future form of economy or society which has been applied to the particular end-states examined here. As such, the term "information society" will be used in this article to refer to the general vision of society presented by Masuda (1981) and Nora and Mine (1980).
Rokeach (1973, p.5, emphasis his):
"A value is an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence. A value-system is an enduring organization of beliefs concerning desirable modes of conduct or end-states of existence along a continuum of relative importance."

Such a value system can be seen as determining both attitudes and behavior within a culture (Rokeach, 1979), defining to a certain extent that culture or society. Social value systems also play a substantial role in the policy area, particularly with regard to the formulation and implementation of social policy.

The role which such value systems play in policy and the process of social change has been discussed in the literature. The most important impact of social value systems on social policy lies in the area of policy effectiveness. Society is a complex system of values, expressed through mores and culture, which will resist directed social change that runs counter to those values. As Ackermann (1981, p.451) stated, "values, then, must be considered in intimate connection with what could be called the collective interests of the very social groups that hold them . . . cultural values and beliefs have an historically acquired force to some extent independent of the current social structure." Thus, policies, particularly the broader social policies, must be seen by the public as being legitimate if they are to be effective. In addition, policies must be seen as emerging from legitimate sources. Lowenthal (1979) has argued that such legitimacy derives from the presence of a value consensus between the governed and the governing and a confidence that policies will reflect, or promote, the common social values.

Similarly, Goulet (1979, pp. 93-4), in speaking specifically of policy regarding the adoption of technology, stated
"National policy is best formulated and implemented when planners (link) their nation's priority social values to its development strategy, and to practical criteria for making technological choices."

**Social Value Systems**

These values form a social value system which must be addressed in any consideration of social policy; a system which is perhaps best expressed as a series of continua, each providing a set of alternative values along some aspect or dimension of value. A number of such value systems have been derived, most notably that of Bales and Couch (1969). They identified four basic value dimensions: acceptance of authority, need-determined expression, egalitarianism, and individualism. Each dimension provided a continuum along which specific values could be placed, and compared, or shifts and trends in values delimited.

Other schemes for the determination of value systems are likely to be situational, formulated for the consideration of systems from a certain perspective, or developed to elicit certain key values from the system or to focus on specific features. One scheme for the eliciting of values was developed by Tropman and McClure (1980) for the consideration of social policies affecting the elderly. Their schema included the following continua: secular/religious; self-reliance/dependence; individual/family; public/private; work/leisure; and struggle/entitlement.

A similar schema was developed by Flanagan (1979) in an article examining social change in Japan. Flanagan looked at the Japanese social value system along four basic dimensions:

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two concerning the individual, and two concerning social interaction. These four basic continua are: frugality/self-indulgence; piety/secularism; conformity-dependency/independence; and devotion to authority/self-assertiveness and cynicism. These he derived as basic indicators for a society in transition. As his value dualisms were designed to trace social changes in one of the cultures under consideration, they will form the basis for this examination.

Social policy, by and large, promotes social change towards the attainment of some specific goal. As discussed earlier, for such policy to be effective, the change promoted by the policy should reflect changes in social value systems. At least, one should not run counter to such trends, if they exist. The consideration of the direction of value change, if any, is essential in a consideration of social policy.

There does appear to be a shifting in social values among the industrialized nations of the East and West. In large part, these value shifts have been seen in the literature as a result of the transition from an industrial to a post-industrial society of some sort. Rockefeller (1973) reported wholesale changes in social values resulting from such transitions, largely in the direction of increased social responsibility and individuality, as well as increased cooperation and acceptance of alternative lifestyles. Lowenthal (1979) speculated on the dynamic nature of social values while reporting a current shifting of values towards the weakening of family ties, a growth in cynicism and hedonism, and an increase in individualism through the lessened import or availability of role models.

In an American Academy of Arts and Sciences conference on the future, Kahn made note of a value shift in Europe from the traditional work roles to an emphasis on leisure and avocational activities. Bell (1967) also discussed the key values of the postindustrial age at the same conference, noting a shift in basic values towards more communal efforts in problem solving, participatory democracy, and away from the emphasis on work and the "possession of things." Cherns (1980), in examining shifting value patterns, argued that a new set of "post-materialist" values was emerging in industrial societies, a pattern linked to "quality of work life" issues.

Flanagan (1979) argued that the changes in social conditions brought about in the emergence of certain nations from the industrial age should bring about a new "libertarian" consciousness, a liberating of the individual from moral and social constraints, a focus on the goals of self-realization rather than the fulfillment of social roles and norms. Furthermore, he found specific evidence of this in the shift towards individualism and away from authoritarianism present in modern Japanese society. In the West, Nora and Minc (1980) have reported a similar long term movement in social values in France towards the ideals of emancipation and equality. More recently, shifts in political values favoring democratization have been noted by Smith (1983) and Radojkovic (1984).

Thus, there is evidence of a general shift in the basic social values of industrial societies. For whatever reason, it appears that individualism and egalitarianism are becoming

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3 In particular, he cited the emerging "new values" as: a positive view of nature; a positive view of human nature; a sense of community; individuality; freedom; equality; democracy; social responsibility; the placement of materialism and authority in perspective; a positive view of work; a positive view of sexuality; the interdependence of man; and the rise of a metaphysical or religious consciousness. J. D. Rockefeller, 3rd, The Second American Revolution, New York: Perennial Library, 1973 pp.36-53

increasingly valued. Concurrently, authority appears to be valued less. The general restructuring of social value systems argues for the transition of these industrial societies into something else: perhaps information societies.

**Policy and Values in Japan**

A key source of information regarding the Japanese conceptualization of an information society is *The Information Society as Post-Industrial Society*. The author, Yoneji Masuda, was project manager for a national policy plan developed by the Japan Computer Usage Development Institute in 1972, and being currently implemented in part by the Japanese government. The goal of this national plan was "the realization of a society that brings about a general flourishing state of human intellectual creativity, instead of material consumption." (Masuda, 1981, p.3) As such, this national plan clearly constitutes social policy.

**Policies**

The plan as presented called for both intermediate and long term policies, largely in the area of development. The plan as implemented by the Japanese government through national policies resulted in the establishment of interconnected regional medical information centers, the creation of an administrative data base, development of integrated national research centers, the establishment of viewdata and teletext systems (and other information systems) on a national basis, the introduction of information systems into smaller firms through the provision of information and consulting centers, and the expansion of computer education.

In addition, in recognition of Japan's continuing status as a major exporter, the plan called for the establishment and development of a "Computer Peace Corps," which would provide technical and systems support to developing nations, spreading the development of computerization on a global basis. Of course, the proliferation of electronics and computers, it was acknowledged, would also open up markets for what was seen as an increasingly important export sector. By 1980, such a policy had "developed to the stage of practical application." (Masuda, 1981, p.14)

Specifically, the Japanese have developed national policies designed to encourage the development of the Japanese computer industry, through both protective trade restrictions and substantial financial investment. Substantial support has also been given to research and development in computer technology, particularly in the area of intelligent computers (Salvaggio, 1982). Research in other telecommunications technologies such as fiber optic transmission systems has also been heavily subsidized by the Japanese government (Dizard, 1982).

The Japan Science and Technology Agency (1979) had also made several policy proposals designed to promote information activities in Japan. This promotion, they argued, should be carried out in four basic areas: the expansion and creation of data bases; the speeding up of information distribution; the improvement of current information distribution services; and the expansion of such services throughout the nation and the world. In essence, the agency seemed to be calling for the formulation and expansion of interactive information services that would be widely accessible both within and without Japan, i.e., the creation of what Sackman (1971) called "mass information utilities."

These policy emphases were reinforced by a report issued in 1981 by a joint industry/academia/government study group under the auspices of the Bureau of Telecommunications Policy (Yokoi, 1982). In addition to several specific recommendations

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5 The amount of financial investment has been estimated at $70 billion over 10 years (Salvaggio, 1982).
the Group proposed a series of principles and guidelines for the settling of policy issues. These principles called for the encouragement of private enterprise in telecommunications industries, the generation of comprehensive policy, a recognition of national concerns and values in the setting of policy, and the promotion of public telecommunication networks.

Several large scale experiments with such information services have been conducted (or are being conducted) in Japan along these lines. Two social experiments have dealt with interactive cable systems sponsored by the government: the Tama CCIS (Coaxial Cable Information System) and the Higashi-Ikoma Hi-OVIS. In addition, a Japanese teletext system, called CAPTAIN, has been instituted and is currently the basis of another large scale experiment involving 3000 terminals. In a similar vein, the Japanese Postal, Telegraph and Telephone Authority, the Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Public Corporation (NTT), announced in 1981 the development of the "Information Network System (INS)," an integrated, digital, information transmission and processing system (Komatsuzaki, 1982). In addition, the NTT has been conducting a long-distance videophone experiment, to determine the social needs and desirability of such service for both the business and consumer sectors (Watanabe, 1983).

Inherent Social Values

While a major part of these policies can be seen as protecting and encouraging what has been perceived as a major growth industry, certain specific policies do seem to embody certain social values. Various policies call for the dissemination of information throughout Japanese society, making information more accessible. As control of information is increasingly seen as a source of power and economic value (O'Brien & Helleiner, 1980; Wilsnack, 1980), such efforts at dissemination seem to embody egalitarian values. Further, such a policy emphasis upon enhancing information, information services, and information technology as is embodied in the social policies addressed above can only serve to enhance the perceived value of information, clearly a non-material good. These policies, therefore, embody the value shift away from materialism.

The long term effect of social policies, however, lies clearly in the transformation of Japanese society into a full-fledged information society, with all of the social values implied therein. Thus, the role played by values in such social policies likely lies less in the values embodied in individual policies than in the social value system inferred in those policies' ultimate goal: the attainment of a particular end-state. The bulk of The Information Society as Post-Industrial Society is a consideration of the end-state envisioned by Masuda and other Japanese policy planners as the final goal of Japanese information policy.

This vision is largely based upon the presumption of two basic social changes, a shift in emphasis from materialism and material goods to information as a good and the transition from competition to cooperation as a driving force throughout society. The importance of these two changes becomes apparent when considering a table in which Masuda provided a pattern comparison of industrial and information societies. Of the fifteen aspects of socioeconomic structure which he addressed, six dealt with a shift in emphasis from the material to the informational or ideational, while seven others called for an increase (or shift) in cooperative, as opposed to competitive, effort in social situations.

In the same table, Masuda offered a comparison of the values held in the industrial and information societies. The basis of the information society, he argued, would be that instead of seeking

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6 The shift in Japanese value systems, attaching greater importance to information and communication, has been noted by Komatsuzaki (1982).
to acquire and consume material goods, for man, "seeking the satisfaction of achieved goals will become the universal standard of values." (Masuda 1981, p.33) Masuda went on to propose that the spirit of these new times will be one of cooperation between man and nature, based upon the ethics of social contribution and self-discipline.

In specific, Masuda proposed that the rise of information societies would create a new concept of value, which he termed "time value." Time value is "the value which man creates in the purposeful use of future time." (Masuda, 1981, p.71) The rationale for this shift in major concepts of value lies in several of the projected effects of the increase in information productivity resulting from the "Information Revolution." By increasing the effectiveness of purposeful action, emphasis is placed upon the effective utilization of time. By increasing automation, more leisure time is created, fostering a sense of time value outside of the traditional boundaries of the work-place. And by shifting emphasis from materialism, value is therefore placed upon the time used for the satisfaction of wants or goals. In sum, time is valued more and more.

It is, in particular, the rise of a goal-directed consciousness (as opposed to consumerism) which gives time value its unique position as "value created by the expenditure of free time in an objective,-oriented way." (Masuda, 1981, p.73) Thus, from an economic perspective, the abstract concept of time can be seen as accruing value. Indeed, Masuda argued that such a shift is evolutionary:

"This time value is on a higher plane in human life than material values as the basic value of economic activity. This is because time value corresponds to the satisfaction of human and intellectual wants, whereas material values correspond to the satisfaction of physiological and material wants." (Masuda, 1981, p. 74)

Another aspect of the shift from materialism in the information society is likely to be in the behavior patterns of the members of that society. Masuda (1981, p.101, emphasis his) stated that, in the information society, people "will be even less satisfied with mere material wants than they are now: their chief desire will be for self realization." This implies a shift from consumption of material goods, which is viewed as an individualistic, non-social act, to synergistic effort in the production and utilization of information, a pro-social behavior. This change in behavior towards self realization and pro-social activities is one of the driving forces Masuda saw for the development of participatory democracy as the governing force in information societies. This is reflected by a report on the impact of certain of the social policies implemented as experiments in Japan. Komatsuzaki (1982, pp.272-3) reported that the Japanese people were "looking for an alternative way of life, a community-oriented lifestyle," and that the major findings of these experiments was that "electronic media could promote community activities very effectively"

This growing force also embodies the social values of individualism, synergism, and equality. The goal of self realization is predicated upon an underlying respect for (or value placed upon) individualism as an emancipation of the individual from determinate roles within society. It envisions man as a unique individual rather than as a member of a class or other social role. The value of egalitarianism is also directly implied in the valuing of individualism and self realization, as

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7 Information as a good can not be consumed in the traditional sense. While it is used, it is never "used up," it remains available for additional use. In addition, in many cases, utilization of information can contribute to the value of that information, leaving even more available after it has been "consumed."
self realization comes only within a society, arising in large part from the reflection of self in others. This requires a reciprocity in the valuation of individualism, a granting of basic equality to others. In addition, the social nature of self realization is likely to be coincident with a shift towards the social, towards the place of the individual within society, and thus towards the realization of social as well as individual goals, requiring increased cooperative, synergistic, efforts.

Some of this emphasis on the individual, acting both alone and in concert with others, as a controlling force can be seen as a social response to the need to counter the capacity for centralization and/or authoritarian control inherent in many of the information technologies. The vision of participatory democracy and a citizen managed global information utility as information policy goals can be seen as an attempt to restrict centralization and control by disseminating the information and policy-making control from which power derives. Policies encouraging citizen participation thus reinforce the values of independence and self-assertiveness, while also conferring value on the concept of social responsibility. The sharing of information and the power it confers gives incentive to share in the responsibility it confers as well.

**Policy and Values in France**

The primary document addressing information policy in France, and the document upon which this consideration is based, is the study prepared for the French government by Simon Nora and Alain Minc, later published as *Computerization of Society*. Nora and Minc's emphasis in this report was on the development of short term policies addressing "telematics," rather than the vision of the future presented by Masuda. In part, this difference in emphasis reflects a basic difference in the rationale behind the two studies: Masuda's primary concern was the role which Japan would assume in a future of information, whereas Nora and Minc state that their primary concern was the resolution of the current cultural and economic crisis facing France.

According to Nora and Minc, the crisis facing France was partially economic, and partially a result of changes in traditional social values. In the short term, they perceived a need to deal in a coherent manner with "threats to (France's) economic stability, the 'social consensus,' and national independence." (Nora & Minc, 1980, p.1). Further, as they perceived the key issue of the arising crisis to be the computerization of society, the solution to the crisis lies in the setting of appropriate directive policies in that area. However, they warned that the setting of such policy should not ignore the long term social movement towards the values of emancipation and equality, trends which run somewhat counter to the French tradition of bureaucracies and centralization.

While they focused upon short term solutions, there is an underlying implication in this volume that the development of such directive policies would in fact lead to the development of a new type of society. In acknowledging the social policy role of their proposals, Nora and Minc stated:

"Only a deliberate policy of social change can both solve the problems raised by telematics and utilize its potential. Such a policy implies a strategy based on the balance of powers and counter-powers and on the capacity of the government to favor development rather than impose it. Telematics can facilitate the coming of a new society . . ."  

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8 "Telematics" refers to the growing synthesis of computers and telecommunications, primary areas of information technology.

9 These threats were perceived to derive in large part from IBM's domination of the information industries (Dizard, 1982).
Such policy, they argued, must enhance both the positive impact of information technologies upon productivity while compensating for the same technologies' negative impact on employment; it must prohibit domination by a single entity, public or private. And any such policy or regulation must also fit with the overall conception of society.

Such a philosophy appears to have carried through to the current government in France. Current attempts at the stimulation of the French "telematics" industry are based upon the perception, recently described by President Mitterand, that "electronic technology provides the 'space' for a new, Socialist description of liberty."\(^{10}\)

**Policies**

In their work, Nora and Minc made several policy proposals regarding the development of telematics in France. They stated that it was the government's responsibility to give both legal and financial support to the creation of all sorts of data banks, particularly those accessible, and containing information of interest, to everyone. Further, they proposed the continuation of policies promoting the enhancement of data transmission capabilities, both over land lines and via satellite. Such directive policies were designed to facilitate the development of information networks through an integration of efforts, while ensuring that the network is not dominated or controlled by foreign groups. As such, they reflect what seems to be a basic pattern in Western European information policies.\(^{12}\)


11 For example, France has committed nearly $2 billion to the development of a large fiber-optic cable system (Bass, 1983).

12 For example, policies promoting the development of communication networks have been noted in Ireland (Bowes, Sullivan, and Wheeler, on the development of these systems as a heterogeneous cluster of networks is evident in their proposal to grant control of key segments of the networks, such as the satellite transmission systems, to the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone Authorities.

Thus, as in Japan, a primary focus of information policy lies in the development of information utilities, in the form of both national and international data networks. However, Nora and Minc did not carry the formulation of such systems to what Masuda envisioned as the third stage: rather than instituting policies to facilitate development of a citizen-managed utility, they seemed to be concerned only with the prevention of (nongovernmental) monopoly in networks. As such, the social value of equality embodied by information networks or utilities with unrestricted accessibility is tempered by the French tradition of centralism (particularly as supporting authoritarianism) in policies directing the management of such networks in large part by governmental agencies. While they expressed concern for the increased control these networks could give to central authorities, their policy proposals stop somewhat short of preventing such a shift in control.

A second major area of information policy addressed by Nora and Minc was the promotion of information industries within France. They proposed to support this development through the implementation of three sets of policies, each addressed to a separate sector of the computer industry. First, they proposed to support and develop the French service sector, which largely consists of software providers, through active expansion into, and thus development of, foreign markets. A
second area of policy was designed to stimulate the French computer hardware industry directly, through coordinated policies supporting both the major and small hardware providers. Nora and Minc also proposed that the French government support and foster research in computer science, especially basic research.

A secondary goal expressed in the formulation of these policies was the assurance of heterogeneity in all aspects of computerization, while ensuring the "national sovereignty" and "independence" of France. Behind the rhetoric of heterogeneity and selfless humanitarianism, however, there seems to be lurking evidence of the French obsession with maintaining the purity of their culture, and their fear that outside forces (in this case embodied by the multinational giant IBM) will somehow intrude into that culture. With this impression comes the feeling that what Nora and Minc proposed was the development of a uniquely French giant, which will once and forever stifle any disruptive influences, and maintain the sanctity of French culture.

This dualism was also evidenced in one aspect of the proposed policies which has been implemented by the French government, through the creation and funding of the centre mondiale pour la micro-informatique. The stated purpose and goal of this international center was to research the social applications of computers in assisting both development in the Third World and modernization in France and other industrial nations. While ostensibly emphasizing international activities and committing the center to be "as respectful of other cultures as possible," there has been doubt expressed as to the current purpose as evidenced in the center's actions. Misgivings over the direction in which the center was developing prompted the resignation of a large portion of the original non-French research staff, including the recent resignation of the center's chief scientist, Seymour Papert. Such actions have lent credence to the suggestions of skeptics that the center was actually intended to enlist foreign expertise on behalf of the French computer industry and "win a foothold for France in Third World computer markets."

While generally promoting the development of information industries, Nora and Minc did caution that such development must be guided, preferably by policy. To this end, they proposed the establishment of a Ministry of Communication to oversee and coordinate information policies. The need for such a Ministry was felt to be great, as policymaking faced the challenge of balancing the positive and negative effects of computerization and informationalization upon employment, while simultaneously weighing these impacts against foreign trade and social concerns. In addition, Nora and Minc perceived a unique role for public authorities in supporting the social forces counteracting the traditional tendency towards centralization. The balancing of the countervailing forces and influences calls for a constant monitoring and possible modifying of information policies, a job which they argued could only be handled by the creation of a specific agency with control over

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13 As put by Andre Giraud in his address to the High Level Conference of the OECD on Information, Computers, and Communication Policy in the 1980's, "the French effort is solely bent on creating a computer technology such as to promote well-being rather than subservience."
14 Herbert Schiller (1982), for example, has characterized the Nora Report as being based on the belief that IBM enjoys near monopoly status in the "telematiques" field and is "moving swiftly to extend it's domination."
16 Comments by the departing scientists included concern over the politicalization of the center, the use of the center's programs as "marketing devices for French computers," and a growing feeling that in development research "French colonialism came through." Ibid.
all aspects of national information policy.

This call has been answered in part by the establishment of the French Institute for Economic and Social Research in Telecommunication (IREST). IREST research efforts will reportedly (Dondoux, 1977) emphasize the role of telecommunication in both national and international economies in addition to the relationship between developments in communication and the social milieu.

In the meantime, Nora and Minc (1980, p.46) argued that this challenge of balancing the effects of computerization on employment could be best addressed by instituting policies which would shift demand towards "collective services or 'new amenities,'" whether spontaneous or directed, (promoting) the creation of a maximum of employment for a minimum of imports." Yet they warned that such policy has both physical and political limits, and its effectiveness "rests on a broad social consensus."

**Inherent Social Values**

Such a policy of balance and the creation of a new area of demand appear to be encouraging a shifting of social values in French society. In particular, the "new demand" embodies a shifting from the traditional material values of the industrial society to the time and information values which Masuda had attributed to the information society. Even more, the shift to "collective" values and services embodied the valuation of socialization and the necessity of cooperation. In this policy, therefore, appear forces of directed social change embodying a shift to time value and the social values inherent in that concept: individualism, equality, and synergism.

Once again, however, the shifts do not appear to be as large as those embodied in comparable Japanese policy areas, while they seem to incorporate the traditional French xenophobia and concern with culture. The cautious, limited, approach which Nora and Minc took in policy issues is reflected in their vision of France as an information society. In essence, they perceived only shifts in emphasis, not revolutionary changes; their vision called for a less structured social scene, a shift in the value of work, relations no longer dependent on production, and a displacement of conflict to other areas of society.

In sum, while both Masuda and Nora and Minc foresaw social evolution and change as proceeding in essentially the same direction, Masuda could be termed visionary whereas Nora and Minc were restrained, even conservative, in their approach. In part, this could have resulted from the Nora and Mine focus on short term policies rather than long term goals.

**Conclusions**

In the above sections, the various information policies proposed and/or implemented by two industrial nations have been examined. These policies, whether proposed or implemented, are in large measure directed towards the development of information technologies and information services. Thus, such policy as has been implemented has been seen to be serving the goal of economic development as much as the goal of social development. There has also been a limited discussion of the social values embodied in such policies. While the two approaches vary somewhat in scope, and are admittedly a quite limited sample, there are a number of inferences which can be drawn from this analysis.

The impact of such policy, as Ackermann (1981, p.463) has noted, "is mediated by the changes it may bring about in social relations." Social relations are themselves intertwined with social values and social value systems. Thus, this summary will address the likely direction and effects of the changes resulting

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17 Collective services include transportation, education, health, culture, leisure, and other amenities. (Nora and Minc, 1980, p.46)
from the implementation of the kind of information policies being developed in Japan and France. I will also briefly consider the potential implications of the failure of the U.S. to adopt a coherent information policy along similar lines.

**The Trend in Information Policies**

First, a key aspect of both sets of policies is the value placed upon information. While the notion that information has value is not new, the focus of these policies places a new emphasis on information as a distinctive economic good in its own right. The assignment of specific economic value to abstract notions such as information or time (other than as a direct factor in the production of physical goods) has only recently been addressed or accepted in the industrial nations of the world.

This emphasis shift might be a result of the growth of industrial society to the point where the basic material needs of society are (for the most part) met, allowing a shift in concern to "higher order" needs. Such a shift is envisioned by Masuda in his elaboration of the concept of "time value," as well as in Nora and Mine's concept of "new amenities." Such non-material goods as information and time are seen as transplanting baser material goods in these visions of "Information Society."

A second common feature of these social policies is the value placed on what can be termed "independence." Independence as individualism is a fundamental value expressed in these policies, resulting in large part from the emphasis placed upon access to information systems as well as the goal of self-realization. Independence in this sense is a denial of the need for conformity, a denial of strict class structures in social systems. As such, individualism, or independence, also embodies the values of emancipation and equality. Yet this equality is not a strict equality of individuals for there is, inherent in the concepts of individuals and self-actualization, a recognition of individuality, of the fact that no two people can ever be strictly equal. Rather, it is an equality of opportunity that is envisioned.

On the other hand, independence in a socio-political sense is a denial of authority. The rise of the individual requires the fall of authority as a source of social power and control. In the pre-eminence of the individual, the vision of information society expressed in these policies embodies the process of democratization: the replacement of central authority by social consciousness and consensus and the replacement of class, social norms and roles, and conformity by egalitarian independence and individualism.

A coincident implication of these policy formulations is the recognition of the growth of interdependence in the modern world. On the social level such interdependence is noted largely in terms of the international nature of the information economy. On a more individual level the rise of interdependence is expressed by the emphasis placed upon synergism and consensus as opposed to competition. While the concurrent growth of interdependence and independence may seem contradictory, they are in fact complementary. Recognition of the fact that individuals, or societies, do not exist in isolation in fact requires that any shift in values towards individualism (or independence) presumes, perhaps mandates, an awareness and concern over the effects of one's actions on others. In other words, the goal of individualism infers a recognition of interdependence within society; a valuing of others as individuals as well as one's self.

Thus, one could well conclude that the institution of information policy as envisioned in both France and Japan

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reinforces, if not purposively directs, social change which places an emphasis upon individualism and the provision of services. Silbermann (1977, p.341, emphasis his) has noted that "if we combine the trend towards individualism and the new preoccupation with service as two aspects of a single phenomenon, we are obliged to recognize the existence of a movement towards individualization." This is precisely what Flanagan (1979) had labeled the "libertarian consciousness:" the transcendence of the individual within society.

Examination of the values inferred or embodied in the proposed policies along the selected value continua, or dualisms, thus reveals a value shift mirroring those reported in industrial or post-industrial societies and reflecting the growth of "libertarian consciousness." In that the proposed social policies seem to embody current trends, they are seen as being valid, and likely to be effective in achieving their own vision of an "information society." In addition, while the shifts embodied in the two sets of social policy may differ in size, they do not vary in direction, a direction apparently inherent to the general conceptualization of an Information Society.

France and Japan may thus be seen as having implemented (or proposed) information policies which will further the social value shifts said to be associated with the development of an "information society." What of the U.S. or other industrial nations? According to one scholar (Branscomb, 1982, p.168), "the United States leads the world in information technology, yet it brings up the rear in planning for its information infrastructure." The lack of a coherent integrated policy towards information in the U.S. has been often noted in recent years. This lack of direction or purposiveness is in stark contrast to the approach examined above, and is likely to lead the U.S. in a direction other than that taken by France and Japan.

**Information Policy and Social Values in the U.S.**

While this analysis of the influence of information policy upon social values has been based upon a small sample, the basic policy approach taken by France (which seems to be typical of Western European information policy) and Japan does seem to foster common social value influences. As such, it seems to proffer a directed social value shift which can be compared to that which may result from the current state of U.S. information policies.

First, there is an emphasis in the directed policy approach of France and Japan upon continuing education, research, and development, particularly in the field of information. This is one area in which the lack of U.S. policy is likely to be detrimental; a problem heightened by the fact that most U.S. sponsored information research and development is military rather than commercial. Information is the primary good in the world envisioned by Masuda and Nora and Minc; its production and distribution becomes the driving force within the economy. In failing to fully promote its development and placing restrictions upon its dissemination, the current U.S. approach appears to be placing stumbling blocks on the road to the development of an "information society.

One ancillary proposal in both countries is the development of widespread information networks, with the goal of universal access. Again, this is an area in which the (absence of) U.S. policy, which leaves such development to commercial interests, may run counter to social values promoting the fullest

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19 See Rosenberg (1982) or Dizard (1982) for a discussion of various reports and studies addressing the issue of U.S. information policy. In addition, Smythe (1982) reports on one recent attempt to provide a central authority for information policy.
possible dissemination of information. This potential problem of access has been addressed by a number of scholars (e.g. Blake, 1978; O'Brien and Helleiner, 1980; Dervin, 1982; Salvaggio, 1983), who have raised serious concerns about the social impact of "information gaps." The emphasis placed by French and Japanese policy on assuring heterogeneity in the area of information has, on the other hand, been a long time concern of U.S. policy.

What seems to be missing from the underlying social values of U.S. (non-) policy is the recognition of interdependence; while the U.S. has traditionally placed high value on individualism, it has been in large part a focus of the individual in isolation, on his own. This emphasis on isolation has perhaps been aided by the size of the U.S., which has allowed a restriction of focus which is not possible in smaller nations such as Japan and France. There is some doubt, then, that without such an emphasis on interaction and synergism mandated by a recognition of the growing interdependence of the modern world, that the U.S. will be able to achieve the vision of "information society" developed by Masuda and Nora and Minc. Rather than the ideal of cooperative individualism which seems to form the heart of Flanagan's (1979) concept of a "libertarian consciousness," the influence of the current approach of the United States towards the development of information policy appears to be a continuation of the ideals of "rugged" individualism and competition.

The U.S. policy-makers thus appear to have recognized the importance of one of the social value shifts noted by various researchers from the 1960's onward. The fact that the U.S. has traditionally adopted policies favoring or promoting individualism may well have contributed to its current position at the leading edge of the race towards the development of an "information economy." It has even been suggested that the U.S. is already an information economy or "information society" (cf. Porat, 1978). As noted by Nanus (1982), however, it is questionable whether the current laissez-faire approach to information policy taken by the U.S., through its apparent failure to recognize the concurrent shift towards cooperative, synergistic efforts mandated by today's increasing interdependence, will be enough to sustain that position in the future envisioned by Masuda, and by Nora and Minc.
Democracy." Gazette, 33:1:51-58
Communication Association conference, Honolulu, HI, May 1985
