

**POLITICAL APPEALS TO NARROW AND BROAD GROUPS:  
BIKO ON BLACKS, WOOLF ON WOMEN, MANNHEIM ON MOBILIZATIONS...**

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Steve Biko led South Africa's "Black Consciousness Movement" late in the apartheid era – and for this activism, the state "banned" and killed him. The title of his essay "Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity" (1978) expresses a hope of many political campaigns: that two simultaneous appeals – one to a violently or institutionally coerced group, but also another to a broader audience that may hold more universal values – raises the likelihood of success in mobilization. These appeals are often combined with an option (seldom implemented) not to reject the use of countervailing violence if the campaign fails.

The goals of such movements vary: for racial justice, for poor people, for equality of women with men, for freedom, for nationalist or other causes. Campaigns often seek to empower people with diverse identities – but they also can seek to exclude groups. They sometimes do both in different ways. The logics or strategies of mobilization vary less than the aims of crusades.

Biko wrote that self-confidence among South African Blacks was prerequisite to their quest for a universal humanity. He built a "racialized" ideology for Black South Africans – but also invoked a broader, different ideology for everybody. State police arrested and murdered Biko; so he became a martyr for racial justice. Nelson Mandela's discourse was comparable and similarly dual: for Blacks, but for others too. It eventually led to negotiations with President F.W. de Klerk and a new presidential election that Mandela won, with de Klerk staying on for two years as "first deputy president." This led to the legal end of apartheid, albeit not of the continuing social effects of racism. Movements can succeed when the mobilizers are savvy and the conditions right.

Success in a mobilization often depends on trying to gather support from the people most hurt by the structure it resists, while making clear to others – who at first are less directly involved in political struggle – that they will eventually benefit from trying to fix the problem that incited the movement. Campaigners can be effective if they arouse an oppressed constituency (usually a minority, sometimes a majority as in the South African case) while at the same time showing that their aims conform to the ultimate values of everyone.

But mobilizers who want to exclude groups from power may also be effective, at least temporarily, by using direct or institutionalized violence and denying modern "Enlightenment" claims of equality. A general account of mobilizations would consider whether an oppressed group is small or large in comparison with the whole polity. It would also reflect whether the mobilizers' appeals are particularist or universalist – or both at the same time. It would ask whether campaigners reserve the option of violence. This short essay describes a typology of movements in terms of both their strategies and their causes. It should interest analysts and activists alike.

**Recruiting the Uninvolved**

Democracy, in which elections are recurrent campaign mobilizations, has often been seen as a tradition that encourages fairness. E.E. Schattschneider's book *The Semi-Sovereign People*

(1960) treats democracy as a utopian ideal of popular sovereignty, which is desirable but never fully realized. Struggles for democratization, a process that can be distinguished from democracy, have been frequent. Their goal can be seen as worthy, even if unattainable. The dynamic of democracy is arguably its own end. Contests, either violent or civil, have in many countries given citizens slightly more control over their rulers, as Schattschneider argues. Mobilizations depend on attracting audiences; they are like theater (Tilly 2008). Fairness for a greater variety of people can be either encouraged or discouraged by movements that are populist. Practically all changes of regime type result from political fights that start with leaders on each side but then engage onlookers, who are involved by the spectacle of conflict in elections or other public engagements. Bystanders wonder what the outcome of the fight will mean for themselves.

Some analysts stress the role of the elites. For example, Dankwart Rustow (1970) suggests that any democratization occurs in four stages: first an agreement among leaders on the scope of a platform (usually national) for political competition, then a sharp “family feud” that separates elites on the extent if any to which non-elites should get rights, then leaders’ consensus to accept constitutional change that might reduce the feuding, and later ‘habituation’ to the new structure. Earlier than Rustow, analysts had stressed broader socioeconomic or cultural influences on regime-type change (e.g., Lipset 1960, or Almond and Verba 1963). These factors are still seen by most analysts to act over long periods in a probabilistic rather than surely determinative way. Schattschneider, who focuses on immediate politics but holds views that are compatible with both the longer-term socioeconomic/cultural or the elite accounts, mainly asks whether mobilization campaigns successfully enroll support from new recruits who join struggles for change.

Debates between advocates of the approaches described above have often neglected that, although all these scholars write about democratization, their paradigms can be applied to any structural regime change. The processes they describe can expand the scope of popular choice – or can reduce it by strengthening those who are already privileged. Their paradigms are adaptable to the creation or entrenchment of any kind of government. Efforts to refine the socioeconomic, cultural, or elite factors of regime change have been many, but apparently none have wholly overturned these social, traditional, or leadership discourses. (Partial revisions or limitations of these theories, for example, are Przeworski and Limongi 1997, Boix 2003, or Teorell 2010.)

Mobilizations depend for success on using the display of conflict to recruit support from previously uninvolved onlookers, whose sense of justice may be roused by the mobilizers.

### **Campaigns about Racial Justice for Minorities**

Mobilizations for and against ethnic equality have deeply affected politics in many countries where (unlike South Africa) the “race” facing discrimination was not a majority. This article is too short to cover the rich histories of many such mobilizations, but it can highlight parallels that frequently appear in them. Campaigners often start by shaming opponents of change. For better or for worse, mobilizers may challenge the integrity of their opponents, trying to sway bystanders by persuading them that the basic principles underlying a political structure require an extension of rights to people who are oppressed. “Utopian” ideas-for-change challenge ideas-for-stasis by showing ways in which the latter are in the long run unworkable.

Mobilization discourses may be absolute about the need to condemn an injustice and the violence that explicitly or implicitly bolsters it, while also being active in outreach to the perpetrators of that injustice. Mobilizers can decide to respect many of the latter as potentially reasonable, rather than deplorable. Campaigns can address people who are like an oppressing group in some ways but are still concerned about a problem of injustice that is widely perceived.

Former slave Frederick Douglass on July 4, 1852, gave famous speech to the Rochester Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society (which also espoused political equality for women). His title, like Biko's, mixed particular with broader appeals: "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?"

Fellow-citizens, pardon me, allow me to ask, why am I called upon to speak here today? What have I, or those I represent, to do with your national independence? Are the great principles of political freedom and of natural justice, embodied in the Declaration of Independence, extended to us?... At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. O! had I the ability, and could I reach the nation's ear, I would, today, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. The feeling of the nation must be quickened; the conscience of the nation must be roused; the propriety of the nation must be startled; the hypocrisy of the nation must be exposed; and its crimes against God and man must be proclaimed and denounced (Douglass 1852).

This combines outraged enthusiasm with strategic rationality, damning America for sins while addressing the nation on the basis of universalist values expressed in its founding declaration.

W.E.B. Du Bois, writing in 1903 long after a Civil War had failed to bring equality, was disenchanted. "Today the young Negro of the South who would succeed cannot be frank and outspoken, honest and self-assertive, but rather is daily tempted to be silent and wary, politic and sly; he must flatter and be pleasant." According to Du Bois, pervasive social coercion induced different psyches, or "souls" among "black folk." He saw the first of these personalities in Booker T. Washington, who asked for interracial peace and prosperity – but not near-term political or educational full equality. "The black man's turning hither and thither in hesitant and doubtful striving has often made his very strength lose effectiveness, to seem like an absence of power, like a weakness" (Du Bois: 6). People who doubt their own efficacy incapacitate themselves. A second psychological reaction to the continuance of social repression was the alternative of violent revenge-seeking and separatism. Leaders with this personality have ranged from Nat Turner in the 1830s to Huey Newton in the 1960s. But Du Bois was sure that approach, making strident particularist claims with intents of violence and without broader outreach, would be ineffective.

He wrote that the American Negro was "longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity close roughly in his face" (Du Bois: 364-365, quoted in Baehr 2019b). His hope lay in a third personality that could make a "determined effort at self-realization and self-development despite environing opinion." Black

churches, as Du Bois saw, were already making a distinctive contributions to American society toward this goal. Seven decades later, leaders such as Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., assembled on this basis a multi-ethnic political coalition for more civil rights. Peaceful approaches somewhat improved the situation of American Blacks.

Other activists, including Franz Fanon (1961), have opposed nonviolence as such. Fanon stressed that colonization is inherently violent, and colonizers would not give up until endangered. Du Bois proposed, as Biko and Douglass did, that campaigns for racial justice are most likely to help the oppressed if a firm sense of their particular identity is combined with a wide appeal to people who do not share that identity. Fanon threatened force, although he did not actually use it.

### **Mobilizations for Women's Rights**

Most large campaigns have been consistently nonviolent, while protesting what their leaders knew was institutionalized injustice. The contemporary movement for women's rights arguably began during the Enlightenment, and specifically because of the French Revolution. Distant precursors existed, such as Sappho of Lesbos (c. 500 BCE) or Christine de Pizan (c. 1400 CE) – but 1789 started the modern campaign. Edmund Burke (1790) scolded France for turning against traditions, and he included patriarchal traditions among those he wanted to conserve. Talleyrand likewise advised, in a 1791 report to French National Assembly:

Let us bring up women, not to aspire to advantages which the Constitution denies them, but to know and appreciate those which it guarantees them... Men are destined to live on the stage of the world. A public education suits them...The paternal home is better for the education of women; they have less need to learn to deal with the interests of others, than to accustom themselves to a calm and secluded life (quoted in Wollstonecraft 1997: 394-5).

Mary Wollstonecraft sardonically dedicated to Talleyrand her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: With Strictures on Moral and Political Subjects* (1792). The second half of her title refers to a universalist expansion of the particularist first half (as in Biko's and Douglass's titles). Wollstonecraft was disgusted by the ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who insisted on the natural equality of men – but (in *Emile: On Education*, 1763) he had written that women only need to be taught household skills. Many Enlightenment thinkers of various kinds advocated equality – for men, not women – and Wollstonecraft rebuked them as duplicitous. “Rational” learning for women was at this stage the prime demand of the feminist movement. It soon became obvious that progress toward that educational aim would be furthered by political suffrage for all adults.

American feminists of the nineteenth century, such as Susan B. Anthony, Lucretia Mott, Sojourner Truth, or Elizabeth Cady Stanton, all eventually demanded votes for women (and each of these campaigned for the abolition of slavery too). Several, whose rhetorical skills were formidable, regularly attended Quaker meeting houses where women could preach as often as men. There is no need here to record their full histories. On religious and/or “rational” grounds, for educations and for votes, they appealed to the consciences of men.

Virginia Woolf in *Three Guineas* (1938, 87) reports that a British “educated man” asked her to contribute money to a society that would protect “culture and intellectual liberty.” She hesitated to make the donation. She noted that Oxford, Cambridge, Eaton, and Harrow all had large endowments – and for centuries, females were not admitted. (In Eaton and Harrow, they still are not.) As Woolf writes, women paid indirectly with their household labor so that men could be educated. She quotes another campaigner for women’s equality, Josephine Butler: “Our claim was no claim of woman’s rights only; it was larger and deeper; it was a claim for the rights of all – all men and women – to the respect in their persons of the great principles of Justice and Equality and Liberty” (Woolf: 102). Woolf contributes one guinea – but the educated man also asks her and other women to “fill up a form and become members of our society.” This she refuses, because of a need she sees for women to retain a particular separateness until the broad social pressures that restrain them are lifted.

The very word “society” sets tolling in memory the dismal bells of a harsh music: shall not, shall not, shall not. You shall not learn; you shall not earn; you shall not own; you shall not – such was the society relationship of brother to sister for many centuries.... For such reasons... it seems both wrong for us rationally and impossible for us emotionally to fill up your form and join your society. For by so doing we should merge our identity with yours (Woolf: 105).

She suggests, for women, a particularist “Outsiders’ Society” that works creatively, even in private, to promote justice, equality, and education for all.

Economist Marilyn Waring takes up the “you shall not earn; you shall not own” part of Woolf’s complaint, showing that the language of economic theory undercompensates women. “Words that we think we all understand (such as *value, work, labor, production, reproduction, and economic activity*) have been hijacked into the service of this [economic] science” (Waring 1988: 20). Wars or oil spills generate activity that counts in gross national product, whereas raising children generally does not – and Waring castigates such accounting as ridiculous and unfair. Every adult was once a baby, requiring care. Waring’s logic appeals universally, even though the benefit of better accounting would particularly go to women.

### **Mobilizations for the Poor**

Some mobilizations are based on ill-specified unrest among deprived people who sense injustice in their situations. Such mobilizations seldom begin in any philosophically presentable set of “rational” ideas, but their leaders (if any emerge) develop stock methods of activism. Saul Alinsky advises “realistic radicals” to learn from experiences in local battles, rather than being mesmerized by any ideology or theory. They are effective if they “shake up” normal politics and induce conflict. He suggests they cannot reorganize a community until they have first disorganized it – and he posits that, “Change comes from power, and power comes from organization” (Alinsky 1971: 113). His main interest is pragmatic and American. Like feminists, he treats the issue of violence in terms of established institutional power. He quite abstractly treats the processes more than the purposes of mobilization, which he describes in very general terms: to confront the “Haves” with the neediness of the “Have Nots,” and to do so persistently.

Piven and Cloward (1977: 5) have similar aims but write that “the effect of equating movements with movement organizations – thus requiring that protests have a leader, a constitution, a legislative program, or at least a banner before they are recognized as such – is to divert attention from many forms of political unrest and to consign them by definition to the more shadowy realms of social problems and deviant behavior.” Many movements are organized, but some begin in unstructured strife. Discontent of this kind seldom arises suddenly, although it can later become revolutionary or violent. It is sometimes effective if it scares established elites into remedial policies before rival leaders arise to demand change. If insurgents appear, they develop repertoires of protest that may become effective after recurring uses over extended periods of time (Tarrow 2011). Memories of earlier protests can raise the demands of later campaigners, raising the bar that regimes have to jump before they gain more legitimacy (Truex 2014).

Poverty, and deficits of popular sovereignty so severe that governments do not need to help the poor, create wounds that movements may reduce – but they seldom do so with quick effect. Institutional impediments to such politics, especially rich elites’ control of police and ability to veto new taxes, can prolong rather than end mobilizations against poverty. Effective strategies “escalate the momentum and impact of disruptive protest at each stage,” in the hope – sometimes the vain hope – that eventually persistence might bring change (Piven and Cloward: 37).

Hong Kong’s protest of 2019, for example, had no powerful leaders. Its organization was impromptu, assisted by new-tech social media. Police violence inspired similar resistance among youths; and the government arrested many but found few with whom to negotiate. It could only shadow-box fleeting non-organizations. Reduction of freedom for citizens, combined with high rents and food prices caused by Beijing’s franchise to tycoons of official power, spurred a mass movement that had to operate ‘under the radar’ of the state. Unofficial institutions popped up in fields that ranged from traffic reporting to emergency medicine. A clear majority of citizens wanted the government to restrain use of its monopoly of force. A regulation against wearing masks at protests deterred peaceful demonstrators wary of facial recognition software, whose numbers embarrassed officials – but this rule did nothing to deter violent demonstrators who broke laws by throwing petrol bombs toward police, who tear-gassed them (Cheng 2019, White 2016 and 2020 forthcoming). This Hong Kong movement partially resembled simultaneous protests in cities as diverse as Paris, Santiago, and Beirut. But those other cities’ difference with Hong Kong underlines the importance of overall context for mobilization, because that Chinese city is not the center of national power. Beijing is, as even the protesters know. The appeal in their case was not narrow; it was both to a local majority and to universalist principles – albeit of a ‘Western’ Enlightenment rather than a ‘Chinese’ type as defined by officials.

Universalist claims in campaigns have sometimes been taken to idealistic extremes by activists such as Vinoba Bhave. He wandered around India, almost ignoring the political power of the poor but asking landowners to treat him as one of their sons, bequeathing him fields he could then give to the landless: “If there are five sons [he omitted daughters] in the family, I want to be considered the sixth; if four, the fifth.” He wrote this was “service not only of the poor but also of the rich.... In the course of my begging if I happen to get less land at some place, I do not feel that I have received only a little.... The present work is only the preparation of a psychological

atmosphere” (mainly among landlords, not mobilized peasants). “I was not confident of the result... How can a few drops of nectar sweeten the sea?” (Bhave 1955: 194, 200, 202). In objective terms, he did not change asset distribution in India. He preferred protest that was mind-expanding rather than disruptive in any other sense. His quest for true humanity (to use Biko’s phrase) was broad, but he was an unusual mobilizer for not trying to rouse the oppressed.

China’s best-known social scientist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Fei Xiaotong, also knew the peasantry’s oppression well because he researched it – and he too was excessively hopeful. “Fei’s proposal that the privileged class divest itself of its privileges is not only unrealistic, it is revolutionary: its intent is to expropriate the rich and privileged. All the proposal lacks is violence – which would have made it realizable, but which this gentle man was incapable of recommending” (Bianco 1971: 137). Mao Zedong, a very different kind of mobilizer, gloried in listing his exploits of violence against factional rivals and against large social groups (Mao 1975: 231-99).

### **Patriotic and Exclusivist Mobilizations**

Some mobilizations create the spectacle of conflict aiming exclude people from political communities, rather than to include them. Many nationalist and all racist campaigns are examples. Like movements that increase inclusion, exclusivist mobilizations can become politically powerful if they recur cyclically, using strategies that are described abstractly by theorist-advocates of inclusive movements (e.g., Tarrow or Alinsky in their separate ways). Political rhetoric toward people to be ostracized can be openly malicious. Such mobilizations toward conflict may unify a group by defining others as alien (cf. Coser 1964).

Contemporary and historical examples are too many. One began among South Slavs (Yugoslavs), who speak closely related tongues that center on the Serbo-Croatian language. The main difference between the dialects of the three largest groups is minor: Serbian is normally written in Cyrillic letters, Croatian in Roman ones, and Bosnian in either. Yugoslavia was united after World War I because the three dialects are mutually comprehensible, presuming language would be the proper basis for a nation. Hitler’s violent invasion in 1941 split it politically until Josip Broz Tito’s resistance forces centralized it. But Yugoslav speakers are divided among the Orthodox, Catholic, and Muslim religions. After Tito’s death, Serb leaders replaced language with religious history as the supposedly proper norm for a state. Slobodan Milošević took mournful memories of Orthodoxy Serbia’s epic defeat by Muslims on the Field of Blackbirds (Kosovo polje) in 1389 – as a way to ‘weaponize’ that ardent chip-on-the-shoulder history against all aliens. Milošević and Ratko Mladić, entrepreneurs of violence against Bosnians and Croats, invoked ethnicity; they ‘made it up’ into a potent fiction, trying to justify among their followers a genocidal massacre of 8,000 Bosniak men and boys at Srebrenica in 1995 (Mueller, 2000).

Origins of nasty parochialism are not all at the national degree of zoom. Sheri Berman shows that Nazism emerged not just from Hitler, but also from local “civil societies” in quaint Bavarian villages whose traditions were patriarchal, illiberal, and racist (Berman 1997). The techniques of exclusivist mobilizations are similar to the strategies Alinsky describes, despite his opposite purposes. As Schattschneider or Tilly suggest, public fighting sets agendas in politics.

The results may ostracize some or welcome others. But it is conflict that attracts attention and creates politics.

War is the most powerful mobilizer, and its usual rationale is nationalist. George Kateb, a political philosopher, opposes other theorists as various as Socrates, Machiavelli, and William James, who all praise patriotism. He argues that if citizens love a country as if it were a parent, deaths tend to follow, especially in wars. He sees patriotism as a mistake (Kateb 2008a). “The pity is that men lend their energies to a state that sooner or later embarks on an inherently unjust imperialist career and thus gets constantly engaged in policies that are deliberated in secrecy, and sustained by secrecy and propaganda, and removed from meaningful public deliberation. Patriotism is indispensable for sustaining this career of anti-democracy” (Kateb 2008b).

Nationalism is a resource for state bureaucracies, including Leninist or rightist parties. It can serve rulers in countries that hold elections without actually extending power to more people. It normally excludes aliens, and it pressures citizens to become more homogenous. A standard criterion for “just” violence is as a proportionate reaction to a suffered wrong; but patriotic war is so difficult to limit after it starts, it seldom if ever meets this test. Wars also can be serial, as after Versailles 1919. Nationalist mobilizations help state elites (if they win) but harm others. They often make universal claims, e.g., for freedom or order, but they appeal to the national groups they unite – usually against minorities and/or foreigners. They are inherently anti-universalist.

### **Mobilizations in General**

The classic sociologist of knowledge, Karl Mannheim (1936), distinguishes social ideas according to whether they are based on interests, or instead on visions of what the world might be but is not. The first type, “ideologies,” serve the interests of groups or leaderships. The second type, “utopias,” are dreams of fictional better worlds that are “nowhere” (the Greek meaning of ‘utopia’). “Utopian” politics can demand radical social change or revolution – but they can also be nostalgic and backward-looking, asking for ideal restorations of imagined past glories. Utopian ideals for change are chosen existentially, beyond interests that can be evidenced objectively.

Mannheim is a flexible functionalist (for ‘the fruitful development of science’; 1936: 16). He says all social ideas have uses and are not created separately from their political contexts. He writes about “particular” conceptions of ideology that pertain when

...we are skeptical of the ideas and representations advanced by our opponent. They are regarded as more or less conscious disguises of the real nature of a situation, the true recognition of which would not be in accord with his interests. These distortions range all the way from conscious lies to half-conscious and unwitting disguises; from calculated attempts to dupe others, to self-deceptions. This conception of ideology, which has only gradually become differentiated from the commonsense notion of the lie, is particular in several senses. Its particularity becomes evident when it is contrasted with the more inclusive total conception of ideology. Here we refer to the ideology of an age or of a concrete historico-social group, e.g. of a class, when we are concerned with the characteristics and



composition of the total structure of the mind of this epoch or of this group (Mannheim, 1936: 49-50).

“Particular” concerns and “total” worldviews can usefully be conceived as ends of a continuous spectrum about interests. Mannheim’s shaded rhetoric often presents concepts as contrastive – but with subtypes in each that share traits with the other. Franz Schurmann (1966), a scholar of Mao Zedong’s mobilizations in China, uses Mannheim’s categories to contrast ideas that foster change with ideas that foster stability.

The most idealistic social thinking is inspirational as well as calculative, total in comprehensiveness but also for particular or larger groups – becoming utopian for the long run. Example mobilizations affirm both these categories strongly: Biko’s “Black Consciousness” or the motive for establishing Woolf’s “Outsiders Society” of women – *together* with Biko’s “True Humanity,” or Du Bois’s self-confident frank “soul,” or Wollstonecraft’s or Woolf’s goals of education. Mannheim’s paradigm includes both categories. He was a rationalistic scientist, moderate in politics. He recommended mobilization to support conflicting groups by persuading them without unmasking their ideologies as disingenuous (Baehr 2019a).

Ideologies first appear, however, from the viewpoints of their opponents rather than their believers. They are perceived relatively. Mannheim repeats this point in many ways (1936: 54).

We begin to treat our adversary’s views as ideologies only when we no longer consider them as calculated lies and when we sense in his total behavior an unreliability which we regard as a function of the social situation in which he finds himself. The particular conception of ideology... refers to a sphere of errors, psychological in nature, which, unlike deliberate deception, are not intentional, but follow inevitably and unwittingly from certain causal determinants.

Many of Mannheim’s words are carefully ambiguous. Are those “certain” causal determinants just ‘some,’ or are they ‘sure’? The “social situation” may that of the oppressed, but equally it might be that of oppressors. Do “psychological” “errors” always arise “unwittingly”? Why stress adversaries as the only actors who have “ideologies,” when from another viewpoint friends have them too? But Mannheim’s main object is to reconcile his science (‘the sociology of knowledge’) with action that will help rather than hurt people:

Man attains objectivity and acquires a self with reference to his conception of his world, not by giving up his will to action and holding his evaluations in abeyance but in confronting and examining himself.... We [thus] become visible to ourselves.... the paradox underlying these experiences, namely the opportunity for relative emancipation from social determination, increases proportionately with insight into this determination. Those persons who talk most about human freedom are those who are actually most blindly subject to social determination (1936: 43).

He hopes the sociology of knowledge can rationalize and tame conflicts that lead to violence. Such optimism may seem naïve, but it echoes hopeful aspects of thinking by activists such as Biko, Douglass, Du Bois, Wollstonecraft, or Woolf. Ideas for storms of change, based on either practical

interests or existential principles, co-exist with “cultures” for settled times (Swidler 1986; or Geertz 1973 on violent cockfights and peaceful ordination ceremonies as both ‘like Bali’). Cultures that people use have naturally become inconsistent, as they have altered to help people under changing historical conditions.

In Mannheim’s view, thoughts emerge from active adaptations to environments; his theory is quasi-Darwinian. Epistemologists or natural scientists might appreciate the consistency of Mannheim’s approach with an intention to study the evolution of primates’ abilities to think (Bateson 1972, Plotkin 1982). His notions also mesh with the current century’s interests in human links to other animals, even reefs and the health of the planet. This sociologist of minds is not just Platonist or Cartesian; material resources available to groups are crucial to what they collectively do. Mannheim borrows from Marx, linking groups’ concrete means to their varied consciences. Mannheim tries to balance material and ideal factors of action, as Weber did, although his emphasis on the sociology of knowledge tends to tip the scale down on the side of ideas.

People could not convince each other in mobilizations if they did not have languages for discourse together. They acquire these skills socially, in infancy and later. Mannheim rejects philosophical claims that “pure logical analysis” can be “readily detached either from the psychological roots of the emotional and vital impulses which underlie it or from the situation in which it arises and which it seeks to solve... Just as pure logical analysis has severed individual thought from its group situation, so it also separated thought from action.” He asserts that, “in certain spheres of knowledge, it is the impulse to act which first makes the objects of the world accessible to the acting subject, and it may be further that it is this factor which determines the selection of those elements of reality which enter into thought” (Mannheim: 2-4).

He rejects methodological individualism, a mode of analysis whose advocates have sought dominance in social science. Academics who like this norm prefer that ‘microfoundations’ be the basis of explanation (Little 1991). Analytic individualism has functions for the people who espouse it exclusively. These purposes may be merely careerist and unimportant for policies outside scholarly groves. Mannheim writes in comparative rather than superlative terms: “Strictly speaking it is incorrect to say that the single individual thinks. Rather it is more correct to insist that he [or she] participates in thinking further what other men have thought before him.... The sociology of knowledge... does not sever the concretely existing modes of thought from the context of collective action through which we first discover the world in an intellectual sense” (Mannheim: 3; his male-gendered discourse is typical of the era in which he wrote; it is an unintended confirmation of his paradigm). He says people “think” together, not just separately.

Political science then becomes the same as the sociology of knowledge, because “in politics the statement of a problem and the logical techniques involved vary with the political position of the observer” (Mannheim, 104). This sociologist has been discounted by scholars who give causal priority to individuals over the groups that socialize them. The best recent history of political philosophy, despite its comprehensive thousand-page length, does not mention him (Ryan 2012).

“Vision” in politics arises from theorizing alternatives to current structures (Wolin 1960). It can come from positing conditions, such as promises of paradise, that may be unreal even if

desirable. From the viewpoint of established elites, enthusiastic notions of this kind threaten upheavals. So old elites advocate nostalgic utopias to counter the force of revolutionary ideas. Only utopias are inspiring and strong enough to displace each other.

Such ideals are weapons in political conflicts. Mobilizers-for-change use them to right social wrongs they see. Conservatives propagate them in discourses for older hegemonies, which often have religious or “national characteristics” (e.g., Xi 2017, White 2018). “Particular” ideologies of either sort appeal to groups *as* particular, while “total” ideologies, verging toward utopias when they express values rather than negotiable interests, appeal to wider audiences. Mannheim wrote about chiliastic awakenings, Anabaptists, and communist revolutionaries – as well as conservatives seeking equally robust utopian enthusiasms to prevent being overthrown.

Mannheim’s personal politics were leftist and inclusivist, but careful. His ancestral background was Jewish-Hungarian, and he fled to Germany from Horthy’s reactionary regime in 1920, and then to England from Hitler’s in 1933. Oppression was a natural theme for him, although his own main response was emigration rather than mobilization. He admitted his interest in the “process of democratization [that] first makes it possible for the ways of thinking of the lower strata, which formerly had no public validity, to acquire validity and prestige” (Mannheim, 5-7; his word choices about classes may be as ‘politically incorrect’ as are his locutions about gender). He wanted thinking to be accessible and serviceable for people.

Mannheim improves accounts of “consciousness” that have divided other students of oppression and mobilization. Gramsci, Lukes, and Gaventa all argue that coerced people usually see scant practical way of improving their situations; so they may forget their subjugation and thus have “false consciousness.” They are said to have no full knowledge of their social reality. Scott, to the contrary, argues that people who are hopelessly oppressed are quite aware of their situations; they compose “hidden transcripts,” e.g. “B’rer Rabbit” stories about tricks to avoid repressors, subterfuges, and symbolic resistances. Yet these apparently opposite academic views do not exclude each other in practice. Mannheim in effect merges them, treating “false consciousness” as false only in the sense that it does not help people in their situations. Fit-for-purpose ideas change over time, and the consciousness of the oppressed admits of elites – so Mannheim gives “false consciousness” a “new meaning... knowledge is distorted [not fully falsified or eclipsed] and ideological when it fails to take account of new realities applying to a situation.” (Mannheim 1936: 86; Gramsci 1971; Lukes 1974; Gaventa 1971; Scott 1985). Popular defeats of authoritarian systems are “predictably unpredictable” (Kuran 1992). The oppressed are so keenly conscious of their situation, they know how hard it is to change. The costs of mobilizing to do that are high.

Stuart Hughes (1958: 426) shows that Mannheim’s paradigm invoked late-Enlightenment themes, in different ways following Marx, Freud, and Weber. Mannheim wrote about communities, including classes, as Marx or Gramsci did. He was intrigued by changes of consciousness, as Freud was. Like Weber, he realized that his theory implied more involvement than his practice showed. His personal ideology was a flexible socialism – but not of any national or revolutionary variety. He was the functionalist of consciousness. Like other functionalists, he was so intrigued by the possibility of “dynamic equilibrium” that – despite seeing frequent needs for change – he wanted to bridle it somewhat, remaining scientifically unattached (*freischwebend*),

hesitant about commitments lest they stand in the way of persuasion by reasons (Floud 1969; Baehr 2019a: 86). Like many others of his era, he favored planning. “The significance of social knowledge grows proportionately with the increasing necessity of regulatory intervention in the social process” (Mannheim: 1). His reliance on organization as a strategy reflected the hopes of many in the 1930s – and arguably, this dependence was not circumspect enough (Wolin: 365). His interest in revolutionary utopian visions was definitely academic, not practical. Some sociologists criticize all functionalists for having a conservative bias (Dahrendorf 1958), but studying factors that maintain political systems is like studying factors that make them collapse (Johnson 1982).

Scientists’ and politicians’ vocations differ (Weber 1919). Mannheim tried to distinguish, while also reconciling, a traditional conception of the circumspect scientist with an ethic of engagement, as Weber did. He built on the account of objectivity in Weber. He said he wanted to become aware of observers’ presumptions, while broadly imagining what such conscientiousness can achieve: “A new type of objectivity in the social sciences is attainable not through the exclusion of evaluations but through critical awareness and control of them.... The only form in which the future presents itself to us is that of possibility, while the imperative, the ‘should,’ tells us which of these possibilities we should choose.” (Mannheim: 234-36.)

Like many other writers of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Mannheim was existentialist. He argued for rational calculations of interests – and just as crucially for utopianism, for dreaming. “The complete elimination of reality-transcending elements from our world would lead us to a ‘matter-of-factness’ which would ultimately mean the decay of the human will.” He wanted to be an activist; but like most other social scientists, he remained at his writing desk. His careful rhetoric was sometimes opaque. This sociologist remained a scholar, but his paradigm on types of mobilization clarifies what activists do.

### **Mobilizations as Inequality Rises and Populism Restrains Democracy**

Many of the arguments presented above by Biko, Du Bois, Wollstonecraft, Woolf, Waring, Bhabe, Mannheim, and others take a parallel form. They all link “particular” to “total” appeals in politics, based either on objective interests or on subjective intentions. Except for authors who had similar particular goals, e.g. for justice among races or genders, few if any had apparently read each other (or read generalists on techniques of mobilization, such as Tarrow or Alinsky). Yet they gave their audiences similar advice: Claim justice for your group if it has been unfairly oppressed, while also making a broad appeal that can expand support for your cause.

Mobilizations have a pattern, and they begin when people are hurt. Their abstract form affects mobilizers’ tactics toward both friends and enemies, but presentation of that form does not explain the anguish that precedes mobilized politics. The current century shows two pervasive social wounds: First, increases of returns to capital, rather than work, exceed economic growth rates; so economic and political inequality soars (Piketty 2014). Second, the increasing power of hierarchal bureaucracies – in corporations, governments, militaries, liberal or Leninist parties, multinationals, and other institutions – stirs popular resentment but also lets organized elites constrain the political results of social angst, inhibiting change and reducing rather than enlarging institutional responsiveness (Bermeo 2016 on rich counties, or Rodan 2018 on poorer ones).

Writing about bureaucracies' power, Weber (1919: 128) warned, "Not summer's bloom lies ahead of us, but rather a polar night of icy darkness and hardness, no matter which group may triumph externally now." Democrats have hoped that recurrent elections could over time increase government accountability to most people and could reduce the frequency with which coercive bureaucracy can be bought by the rich. But it is increasingly evident that voting alone does not achieve democracy. Some mobilization may help. This current era of paid-for politics could eventually give way to a period of change that would be unsettling at least in the short run – and more hopeful for more people in the long run.

New social science comes not just from armchair theorists, but also from mobilizers who engage very actively in politics. Mannheim (1936: 236) concluded his complex book with these words: "with the relinquishment of utopias, man [he might have added woman!] would lose his will to shape history and therewith his ability to understand it."

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