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Psychology's Contribution to Socio-Cultural, Political, and Individual Emancipation

CARL RATNER

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Carl Ratner
Institute for Cultural Research and Education
Trinidad, CA, USA

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United States Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.

Marx:

Our motto must be: reform of consciousness not through dogmas, but by analyzing the mystical consciousness that is unintelligible to itself. The reform of consciousness consists only in making the world aware of its own consciousness, in awakening it out of its dream about itself, in explaining to it the meaning of its own actions.

We do not dogmatically anticipate the world, but only want to find the new world through criticism of the old one. We do not confront the world in a doctrinaire way with a new principle: Here is the truth, kneel down before it! We develop new principles for the world out of the world's own principles.

In order to secure remission of its sins, mankind has only to declare them for what they actually are.

Marx to Ruge, Sept. 1843; https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/letters/43_09.htm

To Jenny and Matthew, a wonderful couple
who make the world a better place.

Preface: Transforming psychology, Transforming Psychology, Transforming Society

This book seeks to make the discipline of Psychology—which includes academic Psychology, psychotherapy, educational psychology, special needs psychology—relevant to understanding and correcting urgent social and psychological problems of our era. I seek to make this understanding and practice (i.e., *praxis*) integral, or built into, Psychology. In other words, Psychology contains the tools for this praxis within its theories, methodologies, and interventions. Psychological theories, methodologies, and interventions *are* emancipatory. Social-psychological improvement then informs psychological work—psychological theory, methodology, interventions. Understanding and practicing social-psychological improvement will be performed in the course of doing Psychology.

Transforming Psychology requires reclaiming and reformulating its theories, methodologies, and interventions. Transforming the science of Psychology requires transforming its understanding of psychology. Psychological phenomena are reconceptualized as cultural phenomena.

An emancipatory Psychology is a cultural Psychology that researches cultural-psychological phenomena. This makes psychological phenomena into windows into culture/society. Psychological phenomena are formed in macro cultural factors by cultural processes which impart a cultural form to psychology. Formulated in this way by scientific, cultural

Psychology, psychological phenomena reflect and reveal culture; they critique culture; and they call for improving culture.

Emancipation becomes a component of psychological phenomena and scientific Psychology. Psychological science, psychological phenomena, and emancipation are integrated into a triple helix.

This will correct Psychology's historic errors of (a) ignoring social issues and (b) psychologizing social issues by reducing them to abstract, psychological principles. These complementary errors have stunted Psychology's scientific potential as well as its sociopolitical potential for improving social life and psychological functioning.

Explaining the vast extent of this reclaiming and reformulating of Psychology's elements shall occupy the first half of this book. The second half shall utilize refurbished Psychology to prove its mettle by analyzing and improving social movements that aim at social and psychological emancipation. This is one way that a refurbished Psychology can make important and distinctive contributions to social, political, and psychological enrichment.

Trinidad, CA, USA Carl Ratner

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Section I

Developing a Psychological Theory for Scientifically Understanding and Enriching Psychology and Society



1

Introduction: Defining Emancipation That Forms the Parameters of Emancipatory, Scientific Psychology

An emancipatory Psychology requires conceptualization of emancipation. While the content of emancipation is a matter of dispute in today's climate of political, social, and moral polarization, I believe agreement is possible on which elements (or structures or conditions) of society must be transformed in order to achieve emancipation, however we define it.

We may begin with articulating what emancipation requires in an obviously oppressive social system such as slavery. Which social elements, structures, or conditions of slave society must be transformed in order to achieve emancipation of slaves from slavery? A Platonic questioning will help us to arrive at an agreeable, adequate conclusion: If slave owners reduce the daily labor by an hour, does this constitute emancipation? If slave owners provide more food, does this constitute emancipation? If slave owners provide education to the slaves, does this constitute emancipation? If slave owners provide pain killers to the slaves, does this constitute emancipation? If slaves practice cognitive techniques such as meditation, would that emancipate them? If they prayed to have a better life after death, would this emancipate them from slavery? If they learned to respect and empathize with their masters, would this emancipate them? If slaves learned to perceive and interpret their world differently,

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through different meanings, would that emancipate them from slavery? If slaves communicated openly and expressed emotions to their fellow slaves, would this emancipate them? If they formed close relations with their families, would this emancipate them from slavery? If dark-skinned slaves became friendly with light-skinned slaves, would this emancipate them? If female slaves were treated the same as male slaves and given the same benefits, would that emancipate them from slavery? If homosexual slaves were treated equally with heterosexual slaves would that emancipate them?

Clearly none of these is sufficient. Why? Because they do not abolish the social relations of slavery. The people remain slaves throughout these proposed reforms. They are simply comfortable slaves. (It is arguable that comforting reforms actually strengthen slavery because they generate some acceptance from slaves—and outsiders—which reduces resistance to slavery.)

Emancipation from slavery requires eradicating the social relation of slavery, and the social structure, and social institutions, and politics and power of slavery. The political economy of slavery must be abolished so that there is no such thing as slavery; there are no slaves and slave owners. The socioeconomic roles of slaves and owners are abolished. Nobody can own another person. Marx expressed this aptly: "An oppressed class is the vital condition for every society founded on the antagonism of classes. The emancipation of the oppressed class thus implies necessarily the creation of a new society."

This is the first element of emancipation. The second element is constructing an alternative social system that consists of fulfilling, harmonious, democratic, cooperative, supportive social relations throughout its institutions, transactions, and ownership and distribution of resources and products.

The emancipatory future alternative can only be brought about if the oppressive, existing system of relationships is thoroughly dismantled. Emancipation from slavery cannot occur within a functioning slave system of slave owners, slaves, institutions, traditional rights, privileges, obligations, and power.

Micro levels of society, such as interpersonal relations or subjective thoughts and meanings, do not transform macro cultural factors of slavery. Slaves and slave owners can hope, wish, talk, pray, sing, respect, and love as much as they want, but these do not eradicate the objective social

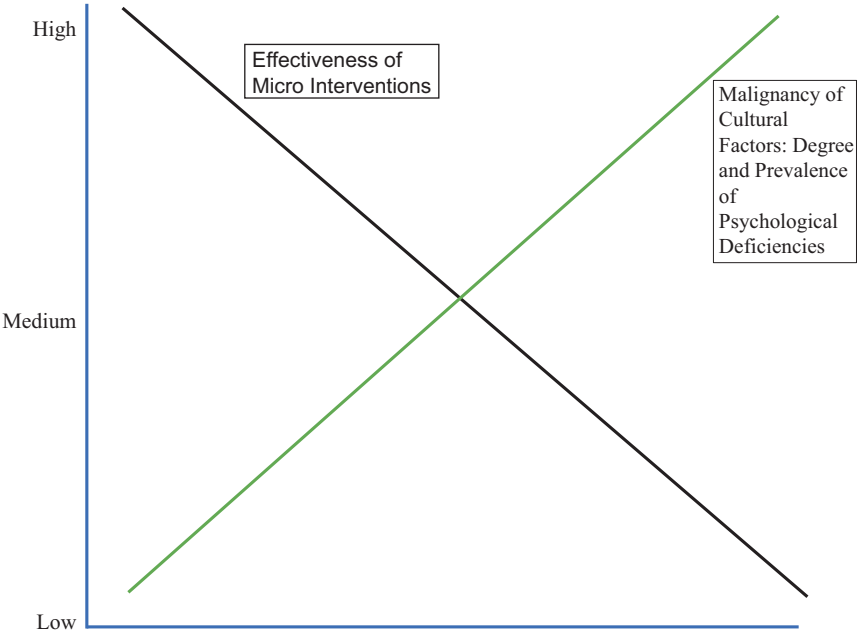


Fig. 1.1 The necessity of macro cultural transformation to solve malignant macro cultural problems

structures and powers—for example, to own another person—that constrain slaves to be slaves.

This can be depicted in Fig. 1.1.

Figure 1.1 illustrates that prevalent, malignant cultural factors require macro cultural transformation to eliminate cultural-psychological malignancy. Micro cultural reforms can only solve cultural problems when they are moderate in severity and prevalence. Because social and psychological emancipation requires radical social transformation, reforms such as pedagogical or psychological intervention can only achieve limited success. Our example of reforms to slavery exemplifies this. In oppressive societies, reforms make the oppressive system palatable. More perniciously, reforms distract from radical change; they are touted as real change when they actually support the status quo. I shall explain how civil rights fits this mold.

Specialized pedagogy for disadvantaged youth exemplifies this problem. It is touted as a means for overcoming impoverished social and material conditions. However, it can never overcome these conditions. And it is not intended, by the powers that be, to overcome conditions. Social-economic-political power in class societies depends upon oppression. It only accepts reforms that elevate a few individuals while consigning the majority to continued subaltern status. This is true of specialized pedagogy for disadvantaged students. The very existence of specialized pedagogy for literacy, language, and mathematics indicates the inadequacy of the normal social environment to support such competencies. Healthy, fulfilling environments would support these competencies, as they have done in many historical periods. For example, people have been learning language, literacy, and math for millennia without special techniques because the social environment supported these. It is only where the social environment is impoverished that artificial, specialized techniques for literacy and language are developed to substitute for broad support. However, these interventions can never overcome the impoverished environment—especially because that environment benefits from impoverished individuals who are adjusted to it and lack the skills for resisting it. This is why specialized pedagogical techniques to assist disadvantaged students rarely succeed in elevating their competencies to a high level that is necessary to succeed in high-level tasks and institutions.

All societies in the world today are oppressive in various ways (which does not mean they are totally oppressive or equally oppressive). Marx, in a letter to Annenkov, December 28, 1846, said, "Being an economic category, slavery has existed in all nations since the beginning of the world. All that modern nations have achieved is to disguise slavery at home and import it openly into the New World." Emancipation requires (1) comprehending the political economy, forms of ownership and control, class structure, institutions, artifacts, concepts, and ideology that oppress people and (2) transforming/reorganizing these sources of oppression in radical ways into a new social system that becomes the source of social and psychological fulfillment.

In other words, emancipation requires scientific knowledge about the sources of oppression and viable alternatives to them, as well as political

action that implements this knowledge in destructive acts and constructive acts, respectively.

Because the first element of emancipation—comprehending and dismantling the existing oppressive system—is prerequisite to the second element of comprehending and reconstructing an emancipatory alternative, this book shall utilize its limited space to concentrate on the first element. This focus is justified by the fact that many activists fall into false, incomplete critiques of the system that are powerless to comprehend it and dismantle it. As long as activists are stuck in this problem, they are incapable of providing the groundwork for transforming the system. Indeed, the transformation is only viable if it grows out of a radical critique of the status quo that reveals precisely what must be transformed and the direction that this can take. Future liberation is a dialectical outgrowth of the oppressive present. I shall indicate some ideas about an emancipatory alternative that emerge from my critique of the existing system.

1.1 Social-Psychological Emancipation and Macro Cultural-Psychological Science

The problematic of this book is to explain how psychological phenomena and the academic discipline that studies them—which I designate as Psychology—can contribute to social-political emancipation. In other words, how can psychology and Psychology contribute to (1) comprehending the macro cultural sources of oppression that are rooted in the political economy (such as the political economy of slavery), (2) critiquing these fundamental, central sources of oppression, and (3) transforming them into political-economic, macro cultural sources of fulfillment?

This question is problematical because emancipation is a macro, social-level phenomenon that analyzes, critiques, and transforms macro cultural formations, while Psychology studies psychological phenomena on the micro level of individuals' minds (psyches) and bodies and interpersonal interactions. The problematic is how the latter can contribute to understanding and transforming the former. How can the macro and micro levels be made relevant to each other?

This is a knotty problem that requires a sophisticated, radical solution. It is not solved by adding a few cultural variables to psychological phenomena and to the discipline of Psychology. The problem is that mainstream Psychology does not simply overlook culture, it actively obscures it. Consequently, Psychology is not patiently waiting to learn cultural aspects of psychology; it makes it difficult to learn these aspects. Psychology has accomplished this by drawing culture down to psychology which is conceived as micro-level bio-psychology or personal psychology that can be understood by principles of existing academic Psychology. This "psychologizing" of culture means that culture is improved via psychological principles and psychological processes that govern psychological phenomena. However, mainstream Psychology has few insights into culture after it has reduced culture to non-cultural factors and processes.

This problematic of mainstream Psychology for contributing to cultural understanding and improvement is illustrated by Psychology's conception of mental illness. Where mental illness is actually a by-product of social oppression, Psychology reduces oppression to "stressors," which are then conceived as triggering biological or personal vulnerabilities, and then generating biological or personal coping mechanisms to "stress." Psychological forms of intervention are then utilized to mitigate the reactions to "stress." This conversion of concrete issues to an abstract circuit of stressors and stress, that is the focus of treatment, effectively precludes mental illness from adding to our understanding of society or improving society. It also generates minimal psychological improvement because it has neither comprehended nor challenged the ultimate basis of mental illness in social oppression. This is the serious cultural problematic of mainstream Psychology. It is what we shall solve. We depict this problematic in Fig. 1.2.

It is important to emphasize that conventional Psychology does not only psychologize culture; it psychologizes psychological phenomena as well. This means that the field of Psychology *construes* its subject matter as micro-level phenomena that primarily originate in intra-individual mechanisms, as well as operate by intra-individual mechanisms, and serve individual needs and interests. This statement means that the discipline of Psychology imposes a certain way of thinking about psychology that is

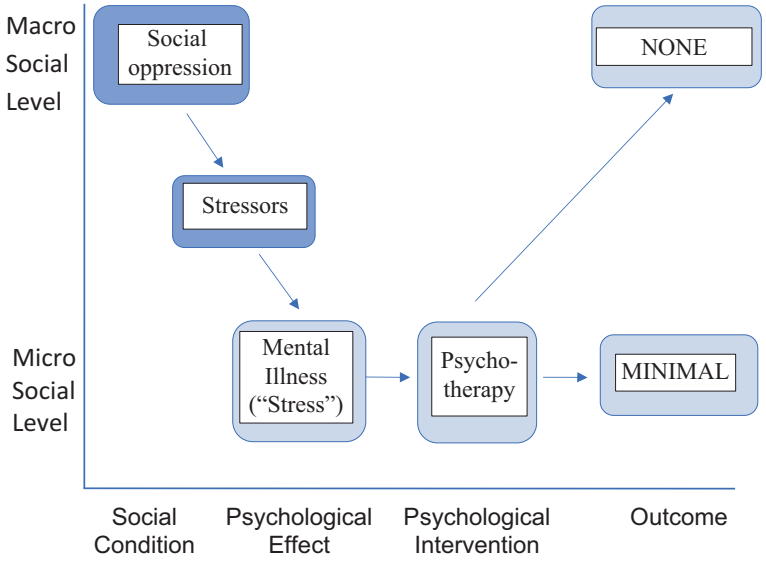


Fig. 1.2 Psychologizing psychological phenomena and society

not natural or universal. Psychology's approach to psychology is *theory driven*, that is, ideologically driven. This is what it means to say that Psychology *psychologizes* psychology.

Correcting these errors in mainstream Psychology obviously requires a major reconceptualization. We must reconceptualize psychology as formed by macro cultural factors. Then, psychological phenomena reflect their formative cultural factors; they are expressions of them and windows into them. Psychological science would then apprehend social problems in and through psychological phenomena. In this way, psychological phenomena are uplifted to the cultural level; psychology is "culturized." More precisely, the original, intrinsic, cultural character of psychology is recovered (recuperar) from its psychologization by mainstream Psychology.

After psychology has been recovered and "reculturized," it can indicate how social factors and systems should be improved so as to generate fulfilling psychological phenomena. Psychological phenomena and Psychology would thereby complement the social critiques that are made by other disciplines—for example, health critique, educational critique, economic critique, news critique, cultural critique, and so on. Psychology

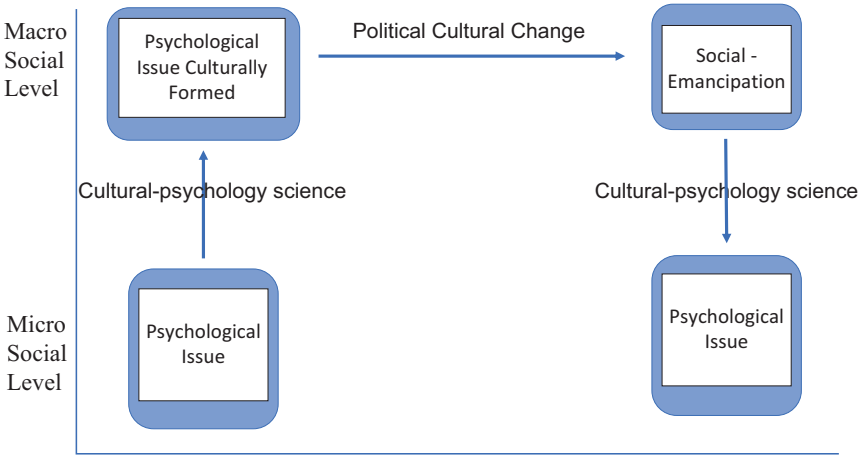


Fig. 1.3 Culturizing psychology and society

will also be improved by these cultural critiques and the social improvements they generate. This is schematically represented in Fig. 1.3.

This analysis of psychology and society is the theme of this book. This analysis "culturizes" both everyday psychological phenomena and the discipline of Psychology that researches psychological phenomena. Both subjects are made into windows into society that reveal society, critique society, and contribute to transforming society.

Psychological anthropologist, Lutz (1988, pp. 5–6, 152) explains how emotions have this macro cultural nature: "emotional meaning is fundamentally structured by particular cultural systems and particular social and material environments…The concepts of emotion can more profitably be viewed as serving complex communicative, moral, and cultural purposes rather than simply as labels for internal states whose nature or essence is presumed to be universal…Emotion is culturally defined, socially enacted, and personally articulated. Talk about emotions is simultaneously talk about society – about power and politics, about kinship and marriage, about normality and deviance." "A people's most basic assumptions about the nature of the self can be seen as the ideological products of particular social structures and political economies" (see Ratner 2000, 2007 for discussion). This means that emotions need to be culturized from their micro-level existence and brought up to the macro social level.

From there, emotions reveal political problems, and emotions generate cultural critique that combines with other critiques to politically improve society. This improved society then generates fulfilling emotional reactions.

The psychology of mental illness exemplifies this point. Guo (2019), a full-time psychological counselor at a factory in Dongguan, China, reports how mental illness reflects disruptions in the capitalist economy.

> Many Chinese millennials – including those from rural backgrounds – experienced traumatic upbringings separated from their parents, who had gone to cities in search of work. Others grew up rootless, drifting along with their families as their relatives bounced from job to job. A 2017 study shows that over 36% of Chinese migrant workers born after 1980 had experienced symptoms of psychological distress. Millennial migrant workers were 30% more likely to experience psychological distress than those born prior to 1980, and are more likely to show symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder, depression, and anxiety.

Mental illness thus reveals that contemporary work patterns in China are psychologically damaging. This exemplifies how psychological research can comprise a cultural critique that complements other social critiques.

Guo brings up an important point that the discipline of Psychology is as cultural as its subject matter (psychological processes) is, and a political analysis of the discipline similarly reveals macro cultural problems which call for social improvement. Guo says that factory management evidences little concern about workers' psychological problems. This reflects on broad socioeconomic policy that allows managers to ignore the mental health of their employees.

Guo is one of only five factory-affiliated psychological counselors in Dongguan that is home to more than 5 million industrial workers. "At my current job, I'm expected to provide psychological consulting services to a staff of over 10,000, and I spend every day talking to workers and managers one on one. It's a service provided by very few factories in China…And those that do are clearly more concerned with avoiding liability and mitigating risk than providing real treatment. Such services aren't designed with employee needs in mind, but with an eye toward monitoring them and preventing major incidents" (ibid.).

The (everyday) psychology of mental illness and the (academic) Psychology of mental illness both can be examined by a critical psychological perspective to contribute important, distinctive critiques of Chinese economic policies/practices and social policies, respectively. These critiques supplement educational, moral, and economic critiques. Psychological critiques of psychological phenomena (mental illness) and social policies that address mental illness combine with other critiques to suggest directions for transforming social relations. *Psychological science will thereby contribute to social emancipation, psychological emancipation, and Psychological emancipation (of the academic discipline)*. This cultural approach to psychology follows Fig. 1.3. (The term "psychological issue" in the figure encompasses psychology and Psychology.) It corrects the problems with mainstream Psychology in Fig. 1.2.

This book articulates a Psychology that conceptualizes psychology in these terms. This Psychology is called Macro Cultural Psychology. I have developed it over many decades. It is an extension of Vygotsky's cultural-historical Psychology. The book articulates the scientific and emancipatory principles of macro cultural psychology/cultural-historical psychology. It uses these principles to conceptualize the first stage of social-psychological-political emancipation, which is comprehending and critiquing the social system in order to know the causes of problems, and the societal level at which they must be eradicated. It also indicates a sense of what an emancipatory society would consist in. This theory of emancipation is then employed as a standard for evaluating emancipatory social-political movements and concepts. The objective is to ferret out mistakes and correct them, to enhance the struggle for emancipation. I focus upon populist social movements—that are devoted to improving the ecology, civil rights, justice, inequality, and oppression—because they are prominent and popular in this era. I explain that populist social movements, in general, contradict the scientific-emancipatory principles of macro cultural psychology/cultural-historical psychology. They seek change at a personal level and minimize the structural, macro, political level. This renders these important movements for progress ineffective and counterproductive. It renders them complicit with oppression instead of opposing oppression. This book is a constructive criticism that lays the foundation for an effective, viable emancipatory movement which is scientifically grounded in culture theory and psychological theory.

1.2 Marx's Emancipatory Social Science and Scientific Emancipation

Marx's study of the capitalist political economy is a model integration of science and emancipation. It exemplifies emancipatory social science that generates scientific emancipation. Marx's intellectual career was motivated from the outset by his revulsion at capitalist industrialization, exploitation, alienation, and poverty. It inspired Marx's deepening scientific explanation of the causes and solutions. His deep study of the capitalist political economy was aimed at comprehending the causes of social evils and the possibilities of correcting them. Marx's scientific political economics strove to build in critical, emancipatory constructs. He identified exploitation and alienation as the basis of capital/profit. His science of capitalism was an exposé of its exploitation and alienation that led to a socialist alternative. The search for alternatives to industrial capitalism led Marx to develop a dialectical ontology and epistemology as explaining contradictions that generate changes in social systems.

Rather than distracting from good science, Marx's emancipatory political interest led his scientific political economics to probe more deeply into capitalism than anyone had or has. It made Marxist political economics the most advanced, most comprehensive, most descriptive, and most predictive science of capitalism. Reciprocally, Marx's profound science of capitalism led to a profound, viable, concrete, comprehensive, negation of it in the form of socialism. Marxian socialist transformation is a logically deduced, concrete negation of capitalism's objective, scientific principles. Socialism is not an abstract dream of justice, respect, and equality.

1.3 Vygotsky's Marxist Cultural-Historical Psychology

Vygotsky modeled his emancipatory psychological science on Marx's. Vygotsky and his colleagues were serious Marxists (and Bolsheviks) during the Russian revolutionary period. They informed cultural-historical psychology with Marxist social scientific concepts and Marxist political

emancipatory concepts. Vygotsky said, "Psychology is in need of its own *Das Kapital* – its own concepts of class, base, value etc. – in which it might express, describe and study its object." "Marxist psychology is… the only genuine psychology as a science. A psychology other than this cannot exist. And the other way around, everything that was and is genuinely scientific belongs to Marxist psychology. This concept is broader than the concept of [scientific] school or even current. It coincides with the concept scientific, per se, no matter where and by whom it may have been developed" (Vygotsky 1997, pp. 330, 341).

Vygotsky's integration of Marxism and cultural psychology was called cultural-historical Psychology. He did what I suggested earlier, namely, he conceptualized psychological phenomena as formed by macro cultural factors so they reflected the problems of cultural factors, and indicated solutions to social problems. This framework led him to conclude that "the source of the degradation of the personality in the capitalist form of manufacturing…cannot be resolved without the destruction of the capitalist organization of industry…by the socialist revolution…Alongside this process, a change in the human personality and an alteration of man himself must inevitably take place" (Vygotsky 1994, pp. 180–181). The fact that personality reflects the deep capitalist social system embodies and reflects the degradation and oppression of capitalist industry. Personality informs us that enriched, fulfilling personality requires deep negation of capitalist industry into a concrete, socialist, political, economic system. (Of course, Vygotsky is speaking of Marxian socialism, not Stalinist socialism—which persecuted him—and not Chinese socialism, both of which pervert socialism and repel people from it.) Vygotsky continues his statement with: "New forms of labor will create the new man." "Collectivism, the unification of intellectual and physical labor, a change in the relationship between the sexes, the abolition of the gap between physical and intellectual development, these are the key aspects of that alteration of man which is the subject of our discussion" (ibid., pp. 183, 182). This is emancipatory psychological science. It is depicted in Fig. 1.4, which corrects Fig. 1.2 and completes Fig. 1.3.

Fulfilling social activity includes new forms of labor, gender relations, property ownership (collectivism), and physical and intellectual activities.

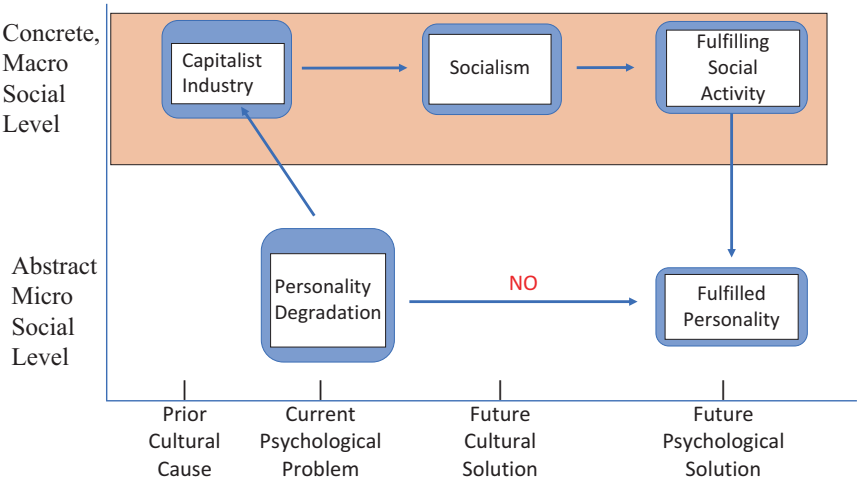


Fig. 1.4 Vygotsky's emancipatory cultural-historical psychology

This conception is emancipatory because it solves the psychological problem on the macro cultural level by reorganizing macro cultural factors. These macro improvements generate individual improvements in personality. Personality is not improved directly on the micro level. This would be unscientific because it ignores the macro determinations of personality, and it would be un-emancipatory because it would not improve macro cultural factors (which, we have seen, are necessary for emancipation).

Due to Vygotsky's early death at 37 years of age, and Stalinist repression of Marxist thought, his group of colleagues was unable to elaborate its articulation and application of Marxist, cultural-historical psychology. Vygotsky's followers (inside and outside USSR-Russia) have generally (with few exceptions such as Lantolf's group on language development) maintained their own silencing of the Marxist science and politics of Vygotsky's theory by ignoring them (Ratner 2012, 2015, 2016, 2018a, b, c; Ratner and Nunes 2017).

For example, Valsiner and van der Veer state, "The horizon is *precisely indeterminate* – it looks as if it is a contour, but it is only our ego-centered construction." "The objective of human development is the establishment of autonomy as an acting person." Gonzalez-Rey similarly declares, "the

subject is *always singular and grounded in his or her own subjective configurations*" (cited in Ratner 2018c, pp. 410–411, my emphasis). Tateo similarly dissolves culture into an abstraction that is devoid of meaning, intelligibility, and substance: "Culture can be understood as *a system of systems*, in which everyone is at the same time a whole and a part, a center and a periphery in a becoming" (ibid., p. 411). Additional examples of "post-Vygotskyian" degradation of Vygotsky and Marxism shall be analyzed in detail in Chap. 6.

Elaborating Vygotsky's Marxist, cultural-historical psychology is thus a project that needs to be organized. Because the Vygotskyian mainstream (Cultural-Historical Activity Theory, International Society for Cultural Activity Research, *Mind, Culture and Activity*, and *Culture & Psychology*) has rejected this project—by ignoring Vygotsky's explicit call for it, and by marginalizing efforts that have begun to work on it (e.g., Ratner and Nunes 2017; Ratner 2012, 2018b, c)—Marxist cultural psychology will have to be developed outside the Vygotskyian mainstream. It will have to be developed in the field of Marxist scholarship. It is easier to bring psychology into Marxism than it is to bring Marxism into Psychology. The reason is that psychology is a phenomenon that can be accommodated into Marxism by stretching and refining its principles. In contrast, Psychology has difficulty accommodating Marxism and Marxist Psychology, which requires transforming the entire point of view and its politics of existing Psychological approaches.

Cultural psychology's relation to Marxism is like a dying patient's relation to a potentially life-saving organ transplant. The dying body's immune system rejects a potentially life-saving organ transplant under the misdirection that it is dangerous to the body's health. The protective immune system actually causes the body to die by rejecting the transplant that could save it. The only way to survive is to suppress its protective immune system, which is actually more fatal than the organ transplant. Similarly, cultural psychologists would rather intellectually wither by insisting on their established, and socially rewarded, cognitive and political habits (habitus) which reject a Marxist, life-saving, conceptual transplant than intellectually flourish by suppressing their resistance and accepting Marxism.

This book undertakes the task of recuperating and extending Vygotsky's Marxism as the foundation for an emancipatory psychological science. Vygotsky's Marxist Psychology is emancipatory because it emphasizes that psychological phenomena are concrete cultural phenomena that

reflect and critique concrete social systems such as capitalism. (This includes capitalism that is ideologically disguised by deceptive terms such as "socialism with Chinese characteristics.") Vygotsky's Marxist Psychology encompasses Bourdieu's and Foucault's important linking of psychology/subjectivity with cultural politics. Foucault's concept of "biopolitics," for example, brought "phenomena peculiar to the life of the human species into the order of knowledge and power, into the sphere of political techniques" (cited in Lemke 2011, p. 5). This makes human activities into cultural specimens which reflect, critique, and transform power and political techniques. It avoids psychological and cultural abstractions that ignore concrete social systems and their transformation.

1.4 Cultural-Historical/Macro Cultural-Psychological Manifesto for Understanding and Emancipating Psychology

Psychological change cannot occur by changing psychology. The more you focus on psychology, per se, the less you can understand and enrich it—for you are ignoring its cultural constituents.

Psychological understanding is a centrifugal activity that directs attention beyond psychology to comprehend it as a cultural phenomenon. Psychology has cultural origins, cultural organization, cultural support, cultural socialization, cultural administration (regulation), and cultural functions. Psychological understanding works from outside the individual to inside, from the macro level to the micro level.

Psychological improvement is similarly a centrifugal activity that makes cultural factors more enriching and fulfilling, as they stimulate and organize psychological phenomena. Psychological improvement works from outside the individual to inside; from the macro level to the micro level.

We do not treat psychology (consciousness, subjectivity, agency) centripetally, as reflecting and revealing the individual; nor do we enhance psychology by centripetally assisting the individual to accomplish individual desires and expression.

Psychology reveals individuals as cultural beings, cultural members, who bear their culture in their individuality. Since culture is shared amongst members (punctuated by notable differences in social class and particular cultural factors such as race and religion), culturally organized psychology is shared.

Culturally formed, culturally shared psychology unifies people, it is not idiosyncratic.

When Psychology construes psychology as idiosyncratic and individualistic, it ideologically atomizes peoples' cultural-psychological unity. Idiosyncratic psychology is not an objective reflection of psychology; it is an ideological distortion of psychology.

Idiosyncratic psychology is also an ideological obstruction to social transformation. For it directs people to believe that their psychology is made by themselves and is therefore remade by themselves. Cultural transformation is then not necessary for fulfillment.

Macro cultural factors that constitute psychological phenomena are supra-individual, massive, macro cultural factors and systems such as schools, factories, health care systems, the news media, ideology, government agencies, transnational corporations, and international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Macro cultural factors unify our individual psychologies. They also comprise the common basis of our diverse psychological and social problems.

Macro cultural factors form the common target of what diverse individuals must transform in order to solve their particular social and psychological problems and achieve social and psychological fulfillment. In other words, macro cultural factors and systems endow the bulk of the population with common interests in transforming society in a certain direction.

The culture that forms our psychology is a human enterprise. We may say that macro cultural factors are objectified subjectivity; they are obviously designed and maintained by humans with needs, intentions, plans, perceptions, motivations, thoughts, and communication; however, these are not free-floating individuals who invent and express personal subjectivities. Macro cultural factors are "gestalts," or emergent combinations, or wholes, that are qualitatively different from their individual, subjective elements. This is exemplified in the phenomenon of water that is qualitatively different from its elements—which are atoms of hydrogen and oxygen gas. To say that cultural factors are human should not be construed

as reducing them to individual, subjective acts. For "human" is essentially a collective phenomenon that supersedes individual subjectivity and has qualitatively different properties.

Finally, to say that macro cultural factors are human does not mean that they are democratically controlled by all the individuals who participate in them. Human cultural factors have historically been controlled by a small elite of powerful, wealthy individuals. Their interests are embedded in the psychology of utilizing these cultural factors. Psychology is political.

This means that social-psychological emancipation requires confronting the power and politics of cultural factors, and transforming them.

Luria explained this as follows: "There is no hope of finding the sources of free action in the lofty realms of the mind or in the depths of the brain. The idealist approach of the phenomenologists is as hopeless as the positive approach of the naturalists. To discover the sources of free action it is necessary to go outside the limits of the organism, not into the intimate sphere of the mind, but into the objective forms of social life; it is necessary to seek the sources of human consciousness and freedom in the social history of humanity. To find the soul it is necessary to lose it" [i.e., go beyond it to society] (https://www.marxists.org/archive/luria/index.htm). Ideals about individuals, such as individual dignity, equality, and freedom, must be developed through practical social-political organization. They are not inherent in individuals, they do not naturally flower in individuals. Individuals are not created equal. Inequality permeates the conditions in which individuals are conceived, gestate, and are born. Vast socioeconomic differences exist in infant mortality (and maternal mortality). Individual equality and dignity cannot be developed on the individual level through treating every single individual individually; they must be developed on the macro social level for individuals in common, collectively. Believing that individual dignity and equality and value exist on the level of human "agency," or in the embryo and fetus, ideologically distracts from the need to develop these virtues in concrete social organization. Ensuring individual expression of agency and ensuring the birth of the fetus satisfy this conception of individual equality, dignity, and freedom. Advocates of agency and "pro-life" (anti-abortion) do not equalize and dignify and free the social conditions in which the individuals actually live, and which obviate real individual equality, dignity, and freedom.

1.5 The Book's Theory and Practice

The first part of this book presents cultural-historical/macro cultural psychology as the emancipatory psychological science that we require to comprehend and improve society and psychology. The objective is to develop a theory *for* psychological science and *for* social-psychological emancipation that is capable of advancing both. This conceptual understanding of cultural-psychological science and liberation will then be put to practical application to advance the social-political struggle for emancipation.

The second part of this book will utilize the emancipatory science of cultural-historical/macro cultural psychology to evaluate current emancipatory movements, especially populist movements. My aim is to assist these movements and policies to become more viable and effective to achieve their emancipatory objectives.

In order to orient the reader to the specific ideas I will be articulating, I would like to introduce the central theoretical and practical positions of this book. The theoretical position is that culture, properly understood, is the germ cell of the psychology-psychological science-emancipation dialectic. This is because:

a) culture is the basis of psychology
b) culture is the basis of emancipation
c) psychological science must thus be cultural psychology
d) cultural psychology is the emancipatory psychological science because it explicates culture which is the basis of human psychology and also the basis of human emancipation.

I shall introduce these theoretical and practical positions here.

1.5.1 Culture Is the Germ Cell of the Psychology-Psychological Science-Emancipation Dialectic; Cultural Psychology Is the Germ Cell of Emancipatory Psychological Science

Psychological science and social-psychological emancipation are integrated and advanced through the construct of culture that is the germ cell of both. This integration is achieved as follows.

As cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology demonstrates, culture is the basis of psychological formation and organization; this makes culture the basis of social-psychological reformation or emancipation. Social emancipators reform culture in order to emancipate people by reforming the formative determinations of psychology. Cultural reformation (emancipation) presumes cultural formation (science). Cultural reformation is only warranted if psychology/subjectivity is formed by macro cultural factors. If psychology were not formed by culture, then there would be no need to reform culture in order to enhance psychological functioning. Reforming culture would not improve psychological functioning and enhance fulfillment/emancipation. Postulating non-cultural bases and organization of psychology thus *discounts* social transformation in relation to psychology. It stops academic Psychology from calling for social transformation in relation to psychological issues. Psychology calls for apolitical means to enrich psychology.

Thus, psychological science and psychological emancipation are two sides of the same cultural coin, or Mobius strip. The scientific and emancipatory dimensions of cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology complement and enrich each other as elements of an organic spiral of culture. The scientific role of culture in forming psychology is the transformative political role of culture reforming/enriching psychology, and vice versa.

Psychology's scientific pursuit of cultural determinations of psychology generates deeper comprehension of society and the need for, and possibilities of, emancipatory social change. Conversely, the emancipatory concern for social-psychological enrichment generates scientific comprehension of the cultural formation of psychology. Psychology's interest in cultural-political aspects of emancipating psychological phenomena pries it open to reformulating psychological theories, concepts, methodologies, principles, interventions, and predictions that can incorporate cultural-political aspects of phenomena.

We have mentioned how Marx's emancipatory political vision led him to ferret out the deep social causes of social-psychological impoverishment. Vygotsky followed the same path from liberation to science.

Reciprocally, Psychology is not emancipatory by becoming a political lap dog that laps up political currents while abandoning its scientific discipline. It is emancipatory by utilizing scientific psychological principles, theories, methodologies, constructs, research findings, and predictions to critique and advance emancipatory social ideas and actions. Reformulated psychological science that encompasses cultural-political issues always remains wedded to general scientific principles, scientific analysis, scientific logic, scientific empirical research, scientific extrapolation, and scientific prediction which are applied to guide changes in society and politics. Cultural-psychological science is an element (moment) of society that mediates, or refracts, society via its cultural understanding of psychological phenomena.

An additional, important, determining aspect of the psychology-culture-psychological science-emancipation dialectic is the "mass," or massiveness of cultural factors. The more massive the cultural factors are, the more deeply they determine psychology, and the more deeply they determine the need to transform society. For example, if cultural factors are "lightweight" issues that individuals can voluntarily define and utilize, then their determination of psychology is light and slight. And their determination of the need for and direction for political-cultural transformation is equally light and slight. For example, if education is conducted informally in the form of presenting numerous options for students to consider as they wish, their education will not have a definite, powerful form and force to strictly determine/organize psychology. On the other hand, if education is a formal pedagogical process in a formal infrastructure that is highly organized in definite ways which are tested and enforced by school authorities, then education will be a heavy, definite, determination of the cognitions, perceptions, emotionality, attention, memory, and self-concept of the students. Psychological problems that are caused by this "heavy weight," massive, cultural factor will then necessitate that psychological improvement occur by massive, definite transformation of education in ways that concretely negate its harmful psychological effects.

Thus, the weight of cultural factors on psychology/behavior is proportional to the breadth and depth of transformation they require for change.

Importantly, the weight of macro cultural factors on psychology provides support for the emancipatory struggle and change. Marx observed that each social system provides the means of production that exploited

people can use as their weapon for combatting the class structure and system of production that exploits them. The system of oppression simultaneously generates the conditions and tools for transforming it.

It is then a crucial issue to correctly ascertain the weight/mass of culture on psychology in order to design a program of emancipation that is adequate to confronting this weight/mass. Global social changes complement sociological research and macro cultural psychology in proving that macro cultural factors are primary, powerful, organizers of psychological functions. The government-organized and -funded Head Start program of education in the USA propelled American students to the highest level of educational attainment. As government funding for education receded under the rise of neoliberalism, American educational proficiency has receded. In 2015, only 4% of Detroit public school eighth graders were proficient in math and only 7% were proficient in reading. In all, 67% of all American public school eighth graders were *not* proficient in math or reading. The figure rises to over 80% for black students (http://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2015/12/10/michigans-black-students-academic-performance/77099294/).

China has accomplished a meteoric political-economic development in just 30 years that has generated enormous, visible psychological changes—from self-concept, to sexuality, to educational psychology, to child psychology, to culinary and sartorial desires, to sensuous needs for products. These indisputable facts prove without doubt that macro cultural factors are the major determinations of human psychology. Cultural-historical psychology and macro cultural psychology utilize this point to demand social transformation as fundamental to enriching all psychology.

Underestimating the weight of macro cultural factors on psychology/behavior prevents adequate emancipatory programs. This is the political consequence of inadequate psychological science. All the psychological science that underestimates the massive power of macro cultural factors on psychology/behavior, becomes a political prop for undermining needed cultural-political transformation, and therefore for preserving the status quo. This has been Psychology's historical role. The history of Psychology—including all of its academic theories and methodologies, as well as interventions—throughout all countries of the world, is essentially the underestimation of cultural determinations of human

psychological phenomena. This insulates culture from critique and transformation. In other words, the entire history of Psychology has been the legitimation of the status quo.

This book seeks to correct this abomination and to recuperate the scientific-emancipatory power of Vygotsky's Marxist, cultural-historical Psychology.

1.5.2 Liberation Psychology

While cultural-historical/macro cultural psychology is the richest theory and methodology for an emancipatory, psychological science, it has a close ally in one other psychological approach, called Liberation Psychology. It was developed by Ignacio Martin-Baro who was a University of Chicago-trained social psychologist who fashioned an emancipatory, psychological science that he employed in community work, such as education, in El Salvador. The brutal dictatorship that ruled this impoverished country compelled Martin-Baro to emphasize macro cultural-political factors as key determinations of psychology. Psychology was heavily the psychology of oppression (Ratner 2011), and social and psychological improvement required social-political transformation toward emancipation. As I have observed, social oppression, macro cultural formation of psychological phenomena, and social emancipation are an unmistakable triple helix. Martin-Baro's Liberation Psychology contains the elements of an emancipatory, scientific, cultural psychology.

I will use Liberation Psychology's vivid everyday descriptions of culture, oppression, cultural psychology, and social-psychological liberation to introduce corresponding elements of macro cultural psychology/cultural-historical psychology.

Cultural-historical/macro cultural psychology is the more theoretically sophisticated of the two because it was institutionalized in Soviet Academia and drew on European intellectual developments in philosophy, social science, and biology. Salvadoran academia had few of these resources with which to formulate a sophisticated psychological theory. Moreover, the immediate political and economic brutality of Salvadoran society made theoretical questions less pressing than practical identification, circumvention, and change of political and economic issues.

Liberation Psychology was more politically detailed than cultural-historical psychology because it addressed daily political-economic-military oppression and organizational strategies against it. Martin-Baro also discussed community building and resistance to brutality as vital to emancipation. This is an important contribution to cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology, especially for evaluating contemporary social movements in Part II.

1.5.3 Practical Application of Cultural-Historical/Macro Cultural Psychology to Assess and Improve Emancipatory Movements

I will utilize cultural-historical/macro cultural psychology along with Liberation Psychology to evaluate current political movements, philosophies, and policies. My goal is to make them more viable to achieve emancipatory objectives. I will focus primarily upon populist social movements, philosophies, and policies. These are widely popular today. Accordingly, flaws in their constructs, philosophy, culture theory, ideals, political agenda, and political organization retard emancipation in the diverse movements that they lead. Improving their elements will help emancipate the many cultural and psychological realms that they dominate.

1.6 My Critique of Populism

My critique of populist social emancipation explains that it does not include fundamental cultural transformation—emancipation—which is necessary for social and psychological fulfillment.

My critique is counter to the conservative critique. The conservative critique is that liberalism disturbs the status quo. My criticism of populism is that it leaves the status quo largely intact, which perpetuates the problems that they seek to correct. Populist reforms are akin to providing better food to slaves (as I discussed in the opening pages of this Introduction). In this sense, populists are closer to conservatives than both of them recognize. Both of them exaggerate the reforms that liberals can produce (and even desire to produce). Conservatives fear liberal

reforms are transforming their system, while populists pride themselves on transforming the system. However, both of these assessments and their emotional reactions are incorrect. The truth is that populism does not transform the social-political system. Consequently, conservative and populist reactions are misplaced: Conservatives can rejoice over liberal reforms, for they are minor changes to the status quo that actually make it more acceptable. Populists should be the ones who are disconcerted by reforms because they are weak and ineffective in correcting problems, and they are closer to the conservative position than they expected.

Populists are closer to conservatives than they are to radicals. This does not mean that they are equal to conservatives. Stalin made this absurd equation in calling liberals "social democratic fascists." I simply mean that liberals remain within the system as the conservatives do, despite their progressive reforms that conservatives oppose. A few examples will illustrate this point which I shall develop in Section II.

Occupy Wall Street exemplifies political failure by populism. It was a spontaneous uprising of discontent with "the richest 1%" after the Great Recession of 2008. After a short appearance in makeshift tents, with spontaneous discussions from all comers (including FBI informants), and no specific analysis of the recession, or a specific program of a solution, and no leadership or defense, the New York City police announced that the participants were a public nuisance and must find some other place to play. A barrage of city garbage trucks arrived, and the police threw all the tents and paraphernalia into the trucks, and that was the end of Occupy Wall Street. There was no resistance, no regrouping, no development, no internal critique. It vanished overnight.

This failure was replicated around the country. Occupy Greensboro (North Carolina) arose quickly and spontaneously from the ranks of longtime activists along with youthful newcomers to political struggle. Hundreds of residents—young and old; white, black, and Latino; straight and gay, middle and working class, the poor and the homeless—attended its initial rally downtown. In the weeks and months that followed,

> Occupiers held sizeable meetings in the cavernous, back room of a local bookstore situated in the middle of a working-class neighborhood, while a core group physically occupied a site in the middle of downtown. From

> thrice weekly General Assembly meetings emerged a host of committees and subcommittees that began addressing the city's most pressing problems; unemployment, foreclosures, economic development, local energy issues, misconduct by the Greensboro Police Department, gender and race, and others…But for all its vitality and promise, the movement quickly fragmented, especially as some older, more experienced members tried unsuccessfully to urge their younger counterparts to recognize how objective conditions cried out for strategic and programmatic politics. Beyond the generational divide, socialists, communists, armchair Marxists, anarchists, liberal Democrats, and progressives of many stripes could not reach common ground. …Younger idealists in their unbridled optimism, defended spontaneity against all attempts to forge concrete political objectives, organization, and strategy. More significantly, the inability of Occupy Greensboro to attract and sustain participation from neighborhoods in East Greensboro, where longstanding sufferings were exacerbated by the recent downturn, but whose mistrust of white radicals seemed greater than ever, contributed to its undoing. Within a year, the movement had imploded. (https://monthlyreview.org/2014/05/01/crisis-recovery-transitional-economy/)

Clearly this kind of humanistic movement has no sustainability, future, or ability to understand or attack the macro cultural factors that oppress people.

An example of populist conservativism is the new populist president of Mexico, Obrador. He is a founder of the new populist political party, the Morena Party (Movimiento Regeneración Nacional, founded in 2014). He supports political-economic reforms to advance the socioeconomic position of the populace. However, during his previous two failed presidential runs, Obrador faced opposition from a united business class. This time he made sure to highlight his pro-capitalist credentials in the proper forums. He guaranteed that he would not challenge privatization of petroleum or the construction of a new airport. He has also appointed Monterrey industrialist Alfonso Romo as his Chief of Staff.

In addition, many reactionary politicians from the PAN party switched over to join the Morena Party and serve as Morena candidates for electoral positions (https://socialistproject.ca/2018/10/what-does-lopez-obradors-cabinet-say-about-his-upcoming-presidency/#more-2390).

Clearly, this populist party and president have hampered themselves from the start from producing social transformation.

The populist Greek political party SYRIZA was elected to form a government in January 2015 on a program that opposed neoliberalism and austerity, and less than six months later, it was forced by the European Union (EU) and IMF to succumb to a further austerity bailout package, despite a referendum that had rejected a similar creditor proposal by over 60%. SYRIZA's failure has plunged Greece into poverty and has opened the door to extremist right-wing political parties, such as the New Democracy party.

Ex-president of Brazil, Dilma Rousseff, further exemplifies the failures of populists to even maintain their own principles in the face of corporate resistance. Rousseff was a liberal who had fought against the military dictatorship during the 1960s–1980s and had the support of the Workers' Party. Yet she was a friend of capitalist industry, even during her presidential campaign. The government's health surveillance agency, widely known by the Portuguese acronym Anvisa, sought to improve food diets which were causing massive obesity. The director of Anvisa, Raposo de Mello, supported the agency's 2010 proposal requiring that food ads include a warning about unhealthy food and beverages.

> In 2010, in the midst of the battle against the agency's proposed regulations, a group of 156 business executives took its grievances to the campaign of Dilma Rousseff, who was running for president. Marcello Fragano Baird, a political scientist in São Paulo who has studied the food lobby's campaign against the nutrition regulations, said Ms. Rousseff assured the executives she would shake up Anvisa. "She promised them she would 'clean house' once elected," he said, adding that he learned about the encounter through interviews with participants. Ms. Rousseff won, and soon after her inauguration, she replaced Mr. Raposo de Mello with Jaime César de Moura Oliveira, a longtime political ally and a former lawyer for the Brazilian subsidiary of the food giant Unilever. (Collier and DeKornfeld 2017; Jacobs and Richtel 2017)

Rousseff's complicity with industrialists strengthened their economic and political power, which they then used to impeach her because they wanted even more laissez-faire policies. She also made the absurd mistake

of engaging as her vice president, an arch conservative, Temmer, who became a leader in impeaching her! Rousseff did not support the large worker strike movements in 2011 and 2012, which demanded higher wages in construction and the public sector, which she saw as being at odds with her neo-developmentalist agenda; thus, she could not use the popular drive of those strikes as support for her own projects. Finally, public financial support for large agribusiness rose much faster than public support for smaller scale family agriculture. In 2003, when Lula came to power, support for agribusiness was five times higher than that for family agriculture. By 2015, one year before Rousseff left office, it rose to an amount that was six times higher. In addition, agrarian reform stalled completely during the first mandate of Rousseff from 2011 on (https://socialistproject.ca/2018/12/brazil-fascism-on-the-verge-of-power/#more-2423; in addition, Melin and Serrano 2017).

Rousseff was complicit in her own downfall, which was the downfall of the Brazilian people. Rousseff helped arrange for the defeat of sociopolitical emancipation, under the banner of populism, which she undermined. She now acts as a deceived victim of tyrannical industrialists. American liberals and populists sympathize with her and yearn for her return to power. They never condemn her collaboration with capitalists. Yet when Brazilians had a chance to resurrect her as a legislator in the 2018 election, she only garnered 15% of her district's votes!

These are examples of how populists hamstring their own efforts at social reform, while claiming to be liberators from oppression. They prove their proximity to the status quo and their distance from radical emancipation.

The problems of liberal, humanistic, populist, cooperative movements (organizations) are not entirely imposed by the status quo, nor are they accidental mistakes. They are the result of inadequacies in populist's own erroneous principles and political philosophy. These must be critiqued and altered. This radical critique may be a soft, sympathetic, critique, or a hard, antagonistic critique.

These critiques are depicted in Fig. 1.5 in contrast to liberal-populists' self-conception of their movements.

Figure 1.5a shows liberalism's self-conception as moving to reform the system and then emancipate the system.

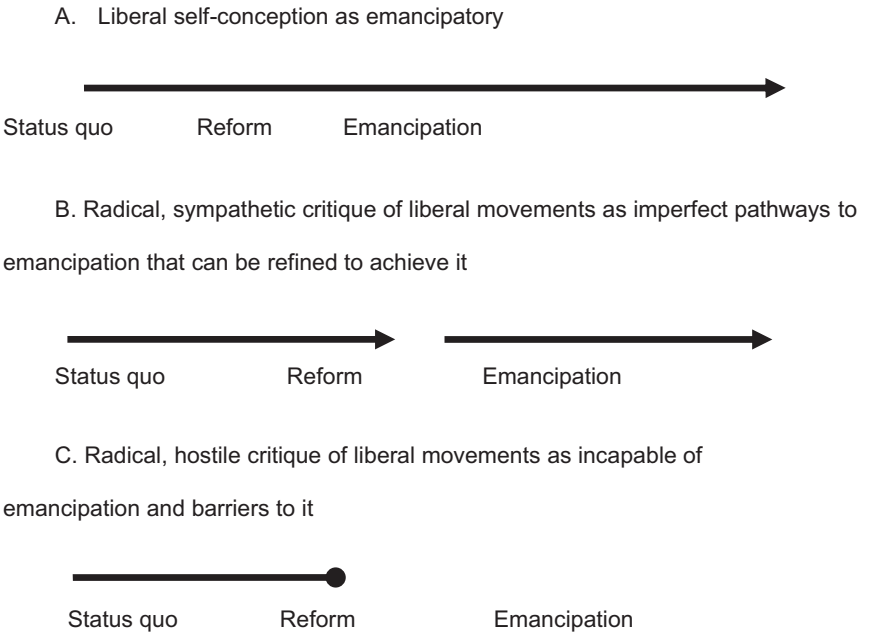


Fig. 1.5 Liberal vs. radical perceptions of liberal movements and emancipation

Figure 1.5b shows sympathetic radical critique that liberal movements are oriented toward emancipation but make mistakes and they get stuck in reform of the status quo. However, their concern for emancipation can be developed into emancipation. A *quantitative extension* of reformist political philosophy is sufficient. For example, if the minimum wage is too low, raise it higher. If civil rights legislation is not producing justice and equality, then intensify enforcement of the laws, do better training, and keep better records which are made transparent to the public.

Figure 1.5c is a hostile, radical critique that liberal movements are only built to achieve reform. Their reform orientation helps people feel more comfortable, but it does not lead to emancipation. It actually blocks emancipation by being restricted to reform. Liberalism is not simply a failure to achieve liberation; it *prevents* liberation by promoting policies that are inherently incapable of achieving liberation. It does not simply fall short of emancipation, it short-circuits liberation. Liberalism is not simply ignorant about genuine emancipation, for ignorance is a void that

is easily filled by learning the necessary knowledge. Ignorance implies an openness to learning and correction. It is a void waiting to be filled. However, this does not describe populism. Its limitations are due to a plethora of knowledge which is misleading away from genuine knowledge. It is not open to new, genuine knowledge of emancipation. It resists genuine knowledge. Thus, populism cannot be corrected by simple presentation of genuine knowledge. It requires *qualitative change* in its existing political philosophy.

This is the argument that I shall develop.

Populism can only be corrected by first explaining its errors and then superseding these by genuine knowledge.

Populism must subordinate itself within radicalism. Radicalism does *not* regard emancipation as a quantitative extension of reform. On the contrary, radicalism is primarily concerned with radical emancipation by transforming class structure, ownership of resources, and principles of social relations such as work and family. These deep transformations frame the strategies of working for temporary, incomplete reforms. This makes emancipation the basis and telos of reforms; it builds emancipation into reform strategies so that they are always ultimately geared toward deeper transformation. The future emancipation defines and propels present reforms.

For radicals, reform is a strategy for uniting people around small issues to augment their morale, understanding, and collective strength to take on deeper issues. For example, fighting for higher wages helps workers understand the nature of wages and the political-economic interests that govern wages, so that workers can attack these larger issues. Gun violence and sexual harassment are specific issues that are traced to broad, deep, normative, neoliberal violence, which are then shown to require radical, political transformation/emancipation. To prepare for this emancipation, immediate, narrow, incomplete reforms are proposed to start the process of emancipation. However, these reforms are acknowledged to require deeper emancipation from fundamental sociopolitical relations. This is the real purpose of reforms. They are not proposed as real solutions.

In contrast, populism presents reforms as sufficient, and simply requiring extension to fully solve problems. Present reforms are regarded as the basis and *telos* of future emancipation. Reforms do not aim at any deeper,



Fig. 1.6 The radical conception of reform and emancipation

systemic changes to produce emancipation. The gun control movement has a narrow, single-issue, reformist focus. Gun violence is not regarded as a symptom of broader violence of the neoliberal political-economic system which must be transformed.

Nor do civil rights reforms aim at transformation of the political economy. They simply seek greater extension to encompass more groups of people. The women's "Me Too Movement" similarly is confined to mitigating sexual harassment that prevents women from exercising their human right to work on equal terms with men for given jobs. It has no design to transform the political-economic system of capitalist work, or the class structure. The same holds for movements for gender identity/sexual orientation. They have a single, reformist agenda for the right to define their gender. Racial rights similarly demand equal treatment within the given political-economic system.

The cooperative movement similarly confines itself to establishing local, democratic cooperatives in niches of capitalist society. It has no inkling of taking state power or challenging the existing capitalist system. Emancipation is defined as quantitatively increasing the number of cooperatives in their current form.

In contrast, genuine emancipation requires concrete negation/reorganization of the status quo. Reforms must be designed to culminate in this transformation. Transformation is built into the tactical reforms and advances them from the inside. It does not require external redirection. This contrasts the reform movement that focuses on tactical reforms and has no trajectory or substance that could culminate in social transformation (Fig. 1.6).

Of course, in practice, reform precedes emancipation; however, radicalism makes the practice of reform inexorably produce emancipation by building the latter into the former as its *telos*.

Populist movements *resist/oppose* moving toward genuine emancipation, because they believe that their reforms constitute emancipation.

Most populists believe that genuine, radical approaches to emancipation are unsatisfactory because they advocate tight social organizations with strong leadership, discipline, and self-defense; and because radical emancipation adheres to a rigorous political analysis and agenda that focuses on controlling structural macro cultural factors such as the state and political economy.

"Occupy" supporters continue to insist that the movement was a great beginning that affords the possibility of development into emancipation. They continue to denounce strong organizations with strong leadership and defenses, and with articulate agendas for transformation.

Palmer (1990, pp. 128, 137) points out that "Feminist histories are now more strongly hostile to Marxism and historical materialism than at any point in the post-1960 development of attention to gender. The extent to which poststructuralism has captivated the "theoretical" side of feminist social histories is undoubtedly a significant factor in this newly-consolidating hostility to historical materialism and its insistence on material determination and the importance of class." "For much of feminism, Marxism is a burden that it no longer wants even to try to carry. It welcomes the eclipse of materialism as a liberation at the same time as it founders in the analytic and political darkness of current fashion." "The 1980s has been a decade in which much has been eclipsed, and in the developing darkness much necessarily lost sight of. Receding from view, essential processes, especially those of determinative causalities and the relationship of the past, present, and future, have been not just forgotten, but delegitimized."

The opposition between particularistic reformism and general emancipation is revealed in the career of Martin Luther King. When he confined his politics to populist civil rights (equality) for black people, he was widely supported by whites as well as blacks. However, when he broadened his political critique to encompass poverty, imperialism (the Vietnam War), and capitalism, which required transformation into socialism, he was immediately abandoned by blacks as well as whites. This demonstrates that liberal, populist reformism among the populace does not smoothly lead to radical emancipation, as Figs. 1.5a and b depict. Once reformism becomes institutionalized, it is difficult to modify and extend into radicalism. Reformism must be critiqued during its formation. It

cannot be accepted as the first step in emancipation. It must be subordinated to radical emancipation at the outset, as Fig. 1.5 depicts.

Reform cannot culminate in emancipation because reform is circumscribed to modifying a particular social domain. As such, it cannot generate comprehensive, deep social and psychological change. Rather, the latter must frame circumscribed reform.

The superior, broader social level determines inferior, narrower levels. This is true for reform and emancipation, just as it is true for macro cultural psychology and micro-level psychology/behavior. The converse is not possible. For the whole is not the sum of its parts; the whole has "emergent," Gestalt, "compound," complex properties which transform individual elements—just as water is a compound that changes the gaseous properties of hydrogen and oxygen. Individual elements, per se, do not have complex features that Gestalt forms have. This is why individual reforms cannot rise to the level of general emancipation, just as individual psychology cannot generate cultural psychology.

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2

Martin-Baro's Liberation Psychology

The importance of macro cultural psychology for a socially emancipatory, scientific Psychology is illustrated in Ignacio Martin-Baro's "Liberation Psychology." Liberation Psychology is thus an excellent introduction to cultural-historical/macro cultural psychology which occupies the subsequent two chapters.

Liberation Psychology describes oppressed psychology/behavior that incapacitates marginalized people, and it traces these deleterious psychological functions to macro cultural factors—social institutions, cultural artifacts, and cultural concepts/symbols/ideologies/collective representations (Ratner 2011). Martin-Baro said, "Colonization reaches into the very psychosomatic structure of the colonized" (Martin-Baro 1994, p. 214). This connection reveals the oppressive character of macro cultural factors, and it calls for their transformation. Connecting deleterious psychological functioning to deleterious macro cultural factors is thus a scientific undertaking about the causes of psychology and the character of society, and it is a social critique that is socially emancipatory. This is the scientific and emancipatory essence of cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology that shall be explained in the following chapters.

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Martin-Baro's description of fatalism exemplifies his Liberation Psychology:

> Fatalism is a way for people to make sense of a world they have found closed and beyond their control; it is an attitude caused and continually reinforced by the oppressive functioning of overall social structures. Marginalized children in favelas, or champas, or other shantytowns of Latin America internalize fatalism not so much because they inherit it from their parents as because it is the fruit of their own experience with society. Day by day they learn that their efforts in school get them nowhere; the street does not reward them well for their premature efforts at selling newspapers, taking care of cars, or shining shoes; and therefore it is better not to dream or set goals they will never be able to reach. They learn to be resigned and submissive not so much as the result of the transmission of values through a closed subculture as through the everyday demonstration of how impossible and useless it is to strive to change their situation, when that environment itself forms part of an overall oppressive social system.
>
> Though fatalism is a personal syndrome, it correlates psychologically with particular social structures…We do not to assume a mechanical cause-and-effect relationship or to postulate a "basic personality." We are simply noting the obvious fact that the organization and functioning of each social system favors some attitudes while impeding others and rewards some kinds of behavior while prohibiting and punishing others…Fatalism is a behavioral pattern that the social order prevailing in Latin America encourages and reinforces in certain strata of the population. In order for the Latin American masses to do away with their fatalism, not only must they change their beliefs about the nature of the world and life, they must also have a real experience of changing their world and determining their own future. (Martin-Baro 1994, pp. 210–211, 213, 218)[1]

2.1 Objective Epistemology-Methodology

Martin-Baro's Liberation Psychology employs a particular epistemology-methodology. He describes every element of this model in objective terms. This objectivism is crucial for our scientific, emancipatory, cultural psychology. Karel Kosik (1976) explained that humans cannot directly

know reality as they sense it; instead, they must *detour* around this superficial, incomplete, mystified, familiar, practical, sensible appearance to comprehend the essential features of reality.

1) Martin-Baro *objectively analyzes psychology* of the people to conclude that it includes elements of fatalism. He realized that fatalism is an oppressed, oppressive, debilitating cultural psychology. This psychology of oppression (Ratner 2011, 2014a, b) interferes with people's capacity to comprehend their social world and to challenge it. His psychological conclusion does not emanate from people's self-reports as fatalistic. Fatalism is his social scientific *construct* that totalizes various interdependent expressions. Fatalism is not the peoples' indigenous construct.
2) Martin-Baro employs a sociological explanation of fatalistic psychology. He traces it to *objective sociological factors of oppression*. He did not derive his sociological conclusions from self-reports of people about what they believed were the social determinants of their fatalism.
3) Martin-Baro employed his objective sociological explanation of fatalism to deduce the necessity to transform the oppressive, causal social factors into new concrete social structures (see Ratner 2014c, 2016, chap. 3 for development of this idea). He did not derive this conclusion about social transformation from the opinions of the people (e.g., "what do you think should be done to alleviate your psychological distress?"), or from metaphysical ideals about justice and respect.
4) His objective sociological analysis was *didactic*. It was intended to teach oppressed people the true nature of their psychology, as well as its causes and the ways to transform it into a fulfilling psychology (via social transformation of a particular kind).
5) Martin-Baro's analysis of psychology, culture, and social transformation were informed by classic Marxist concepts such as social class, politics, false consciousness, socioeconomics, and socialism. For example, he said, in his unpublished book *The Social-psychological Causes of The War in El Salvador*, "The social-psychological consequence of class domination consists in false consciousness ('la falsa consciencia') in which the dominant class interests override the people's own (true) interests" (pp. 35, 17). [La consequencia de este

dominio a nivel psicosocial consiste en la falsa consciencia quo sobre sus propios intereses tiene el sector dominado.] This entire book develops a powerful, classical, Marxist class analysis of Salvadoran society, and a discussion of the class struggle necessary for the subordinate classes to overcome the oppression caused by the dominant class. Martin-Baro outlines criteria necessary for viable, effective working-class formation and action. These include class identity, and the oppressed people taking control of social resources. He also observes the importance of cultivating appropriate psychological emotions to animating the class struggle. One of the most important is *hatred* of the ruling class and all forms of oppression it generates (ibid., p. 186).

6) Martin-Baro objectively defined the oppressed and the oppression. He probed into the demographic composition of the populace (popular majorities) to identify their oppression and mystification, and the remediation necessary to overcome these.

In his 1974 essay, "Quien Es El Pueblo: Reflexiones Para Una Definicion del Concepto de Pueblo" [Who Is "The People"? Reflections for A Definition of the Concept], he decried the nebulous use of abstract terms such as "the people." He said, "It is important to clarify as much as possible the determining characteristics of this entity called 'the people,' so as to be able to recognize when the term is being used objectively (and sincerely) and when it is not. Or, what is the same thing, to know who are the people and who are not, and to be able to judge when an endeavor that wants and claims populism is really populist and when it is not" (Martin-Baro 1994, p. 175).

Martin-Baro calls for an external, objective, critical questioning of what constitutes "the people," and what is really in their populist interest. He does not leave it up to the people themselves to define these issues: "Plainly, the mere fact of suffering exploitation does not automatically make an individual or a group a part of the people" (1994, p. 181).

Martin-Baro proposes an objective, tripartite definition of "the people" that is Marxist. "It is fitting to assert that 'the people' has a historical meaning, a political meaning, and a socioeconomic meaning, and that each of these meanings is simply an aspect [moment] of the concept,

trying to define *the reality of the people* from its particular perspective… The entity 'the people' is therefore real only to the extent that it integrates (at least implicitly) all three aspects of its meaning" (ibid., p. 176, my emphasis). Martin-Baro does not discover the aspects and structure of peoples' reality in their subjective definitions and opinions. In fact, he says that if "the people" does not integrate these three objective aspects of their oppressive/oppressed reality, then "the people" is not real and not construed around their real oppression or their real (objective) interests for liberation.

Oppression is not an opinion or feeling, but an objective fact, rooted in objective political-economic social systems, and it is essential for oppressed people to have a correct, objective understanding of the determinants and nature of their oppression. This is pivotal for their ability to overcome oppression. If their subjective idea of oppression does not match objective oppression, they will be ignorant of what they must oppose; they will oppose the wrong social factors and utilize the wrong methods. They will not possess the social consciousness necessary to organize themselves as an oppressed people and a revolutionary force.

Martin-Baro developed a typology of the Salvadorian peasant that identified the revolutionary potential of various strata. His typology included psychological obstacles (psychology of oppression) that impeded the potential of various strata (Martin-Baro, "Psychologia del Campesino Salvadoreno" *Estudios Centroamericanos*, 1973, 28, #297–298, 476–485).[2]

7) Martin-Baro objectively identified the existing, concrete consciousness of the popular majorities.

He emphasized that oppressed people are complicit in their oppression through oppressed/oppressive psychology. "Through their fatalistic attitude and their submissive behavior, the oppressed contribute to maintaining the conditions of oppression" (Martin-Baro 1994, p. 216). They actually worsen their oppression by relying upon oppressive cultural concepts and practices to guide their mundane understandings, values, morals, self-concept, desires, fears, and interpersonal relations. This is exactly what I explained in the case of indigenous psychological constructs in Chap. 1.

All this means that the popular majorities are limited in their ability to comprehend, circumvent, and challenge social oppression.

Of course, this is cultivated by social leaders of oppressive societies, cultivating psychology of oppression as a means of preserving their control.

Martin-Baro (1994, p. 188) described this acutely:

> In El Salvador the established power structure has concealed reality and systematically distorted events, producing a Collective Lie. Further aggravated by the civil war, the schizophrenia of everyday life becomes more acute, with the population living a daily experience that differs greatly from the "official" definition of what their lives are about.
>
> The social lie is part of the ordinary structural order of the country. It consists in constructing a reality that is ideologically compatible with the interests of the dominant class. It sets limits on how far the collective consciousness can move in any given situation, thus putting a ceiling on the growth of social consciousness. In the concrete case of El Salvador, this includes at least three aspects: a) the systematic obfuscation of the most serious social problems; b) the distortion of the interests and social forces at play, and c) the assimilation (internalization) of the alienated discourse as part of their personal and social identity.
>
> The problem is that this impedes a reflective knowledge of oneself and one's circumstances. It blocks the construction of a realistic personal and collective identity that would empower growth and progress. Problems can hardly be overcome when their causes are relegated to the Will of God and the demands of human nature (fatalism). Or when the behaviors of the leadership are attributed to their personal peculiarities, or when the reality of what is happening is denied plain and simple.

This is a classic Marxist analysis of ideology that distorts reality and self-consciousness in line with the interests of the ruling class (Ratner 2019, chap. 4). This prevents understanding oppression or effectively challenging it.

The depth of psychological oppression must be elucidated and worked through as much as social and material oppression must be. This is why Martin-Baro did not shrink from criticizing the people's fatalism. He also researched the machismo of Salvadorians. He acknowledged that "the working class consistently demonstrates more machismo on every measure than the professional class" (Martin-Baro 1987, p. 121).

Martin-Baro additionally criticized "infantile intellectualism" and "infantile personalization." These denote the wish that politics can be changed by appealing to a country's president. They include "quasi-magical" thinking, impulsive thinking, and illogical thinking (Martin-Baro, 1973, "Cartas Al Presidente: Reflexiones Psicosociales Sobre Un Caso de Personalismo Politico en El Salvador," 345–357; http://www.catedralibremartinbaro.org/html/imb.php).

Mao Zedung similarly worried about the culturally based backward thinking among the Chinese peasantry with whom he worked for decades. He said: "given the various kinds of deep-rooted feudal relationships in the countryside, it will not be an easy task to raise the class-consciousness of the peasants to the extent that they all realize that, in the end, it will be essential to eliminate the feudal remnants" (cited in Knight 2007, p. 98).

In 1929, Fromm, working as the social psychology director at the Frankfurt School, researched the pathology of normalcy (psychology of oppression) in the psychology/character of Weimar workers (Ratner 2017). He concluded that it included elements of authoritarianism that were congruent with the emerging fascist state (Fromm 1984).[3] Interestingly, workers' psychological responses concerning gender relations, corporal punishment, and the role of children were typically more conservative than their political opinions which endorsed socialism. Their psychological character thus undermined their revolutionary interests.[4]

8) Martin-Baro defined liberation.

Martin-Baro initiated a programmatic discussion of what constitutes emancipation. He stated, "The objective of any healthy polity is the attainment of a communal structure…which makes possible an integral development for all its members through a harmonious and creative interaction…It follows that the person who favors dissociation is *not* of the people…[e.g.,] the competitor for whom getting ahead necessarily involves leaving others behind" (1994, pp. 179–180).

Martin-Baro enunciated necessary—mandatory—directions for challenging and transforming the status quo into a viable, fulfilling sociocul-

tural system: "One cannot speak of 'the people' while ignoring the fact that acquisitive and individualist economic power (capitalism) *necessarily entails* its denial" (ibid., p. 181, my emphasis). Since capitalism necessarily denies community, solidarity, the people, and fulfillment, liberation movements must necessarily oppose the capitalist political-economic system.

Again we see that Martin-Baro formulated an objective, scholarly, programmatic definition of the people/the populace/the popular majority, and what qualifies as emancipation. He did not include everyone who was oppressed because many of these individuals

- are not conscious of their oppression
- are even less conscious of the concrete causes of oppression
- often unwittingly internalize and identify with oppression, thereby opposing and impeding solidarity and liberation, "healthy polity"

Martin-Baro did not accept peasants' self-definition as comprising "the people" or "the popular majority." Nor did he accept their understanding of oppression or liberation. It is only when people comprehend the objective determinants of their oppression that they develop the subjectivity, consciousness, and agency of an oppressed group (class) that is a revolutionary force for negating the status quo.

2.1.1 Conscientization

A key concept in overcoming the psychology of oppression, and ultimately social, material, military, and political oppression, is "conscientization." Conscientization was coined by Franz Fanon. It was prominently used by Friere, and later by Martin-Baro. "In the first place, conscientization responds to the situation of injustice by promoting a critical consciousness of the objective and subjective roots of social alienation" (Martin-Baro 1994, p. 42).

In a 1974 article entitled "Elements of Socio-Political Conscientization in the Curricula of Universities" (http://www.catedralibremartinbaro.org/html/imb.php), Martin-Baro states that conscientization "demands a

serious examination of consciousness" (1974, p. 783). Martin-Baro acknowledges that conscientization is fundamental to Marxism (p. 770). He emphasizes that "conscientization is political or it is not conscientization" (p. 770). "Ignorance of politics is the negation [antithesis] of the process of conscientization" (p. 771, my translations throughout). Conscientization that abstracts from concrete politics insidiously perpetuates dependency and oppression (p. 771). A new political, social consciousness is necessary to envision a new historical future that is liberation.

Conscientization is not a construction of personal meanings that emanate from within consciousness. It is a deeper awareness of the political nature of culture and subjectivity. Martin-Baro explained that conscientization is a *praxis* that is necessary for appropriating social conditions intellectually (cognitively) and politically (practically): "People must take hold of their fate, take the reins of their lives, a move that demands overcoming false consciousness and achieving a critical understanding of themselves as well as of their world and where they stand in it" (1994, p. 40).

Conscientization implies that understanding the present, past, and future requires new forms of consciousness. This is true for understanding external social, political, and economic events as well as internal psychological, subjective phenomena. None of these understandings is naturally, spontaneously, or normally given. They depend upon particular social values, principles, and concepts, and they depend upon new social relations wherein people control, plan, and administer their social institutions, artifacts, and concepts.

2.1.2 Conscientization of Historical Memory

Historical memory is an important cultural-psychological phenomenon that must be conscientized for social transformation. For the way a people remember their past bears on the way they interpret their present and envision their future. If they understand how they were historically oppressed, this will illuminate current oppression and what must be done to eradicate it in the future. If a people can tap into heroic events that their ancestors accomplished in their struggles for emancipation, for

example, revolutions against colonial powers, they may draw inspiration from these acts to energize contemporary, heroic, revolutionary actions.

Historical memory is difficult to achieve. Being disenfranchised, dispossessed, and alienated blunted peoples' ability to know the intricacies of their society—just as it does now. Moreover, ruling powers *strive* to falsify memories about the nature of oppression, the reasons for oppression, and the successful resistances to oppression. For example, ruling powers have constricted Americans' memory of Martin Luther King's civil rights struggle. They have reduced it to dreaming about racial equality and polite protesting to achieve it. They have eliminated from public discourse in the media (that they own) and the schools, the fact that King had begun to denounce capitalism and militarism, and called for democratic socialism. Similarly, social leaders have obfuscated from public view Nelson Mandela's youthful militant activities to eradicate apartheid (as well as the US role in opposing those activities). Similarly, origins of the Great Recession of 2007 are obfuscated. They are attributed to financers' greed, with no reference to the stagnation of the capitalist political economy that had reduced "productive" sources of profit and speculative, specious, financial devices the most lucrative source of profit.

Consequently, people's memory of past eras was and is limited and distorted. This impedes liberation. A telling example is the way that the Guatemalan people elected Otto Perez Molina as their president in 2012. Earlier in his career, Perez was a right-wing special force soldier who graduated from the notorious US School of the Americas. He was instrumental in several coup d'état against sitting presidents; he joined the military governments, where he was involved in torturing the popular majorities. Yet, in 2012, the Guatemalan popular majorities did not possess an adequate historical memory of this man's political and military history. The popular majorities—who held majority electoral power—allowed him to be elected president when he was running against a populist candidate! Their historical memory failed to inform them of what Perez really stood for.

People's *mundane memory of their history is not necessarily historical memory* of what historically occurred. Just as all consciousness must be reconstructed on the basis of political awareness, so memory of history needs to be *conscientized. It must become historicized—made historical*—through serious, critical *historiography*.

This is illustrated by the case of memories of childhood abuse. Clinical psychologists recognize that children do not clearly understand the process of abuse. They often blame themselves for what adults do to them, and they often believe that sexual abuse was a sign of affection. When psychologists treat victims of abuse when they are adults, the objective is not to recover the memory from childhood experience because that memory is distorted. The objective is to *correct the distorted memory*, to explain how the patient's memory was invalid, how the abuse was neither a sign of affection nor was it initiated by the child. The point is to remake the memory into a valid perception of the abuse. Only this reorganized, corrected memory can help the victim understand his or her social roots and extant behavior, and only this new memory can help a person change oppressive behavior into fulfilling behavior. True memory of what actually transpired during the abuse was not *repressed*; it was *unknown*. The victim's memory had been distorted by the abuser's lies. This is why it had to be *remade and reorganized*, not retrieved from repression where it lay waiting in its truth.

This is Martin-Baro's sense of recovering, or recuperating, memory. It is remaking or reorganizing of memory, not recovering something that was already known.

There is an ambiguity about the prefix "re" that explains the confusion about the term "recover." "Re" denotes doing something again—as in repeat, return, retrieve, reclaim, restore—and it also denotes doing something anew—as in revise, recreate, restructure, reshape, reform, and reorganize. Martin-Baro—and dialectical, progressive, revolutionary thinking—emphasizes the second meaning with regard to recover and recuperar: "The truth of the popular majority is not to be found but made" (Martin-Baro 1994, p. 27). "People's new (conscientized) knowledge of their surrounding reality carries them to a new understanding of themselves, and, most important of their social identity…All this allows them to discover not only the roots of what they are but also the horizon, what they can become. Thus, the recovery of their historical memory offers a base for a more autonomous determination of their future" (1994, pp. 42, 40). In this passage, Martin-Baro clearly defines recovery of historical memory in terms of a new conscientized social-political knowledge of their historical roots that had escaped them.

He says, "The prevailing discourse puts forth an apparently natural and ahistorical [social] reality; structuring it in such a way as to cause it to be accepted without question. This makes it impossible to find the roots of one's own identity." "To de-ideologize means to retrieve the original experience of groups and persons and return it to them as objective data. People can then use the data to formally articulate a consciousness of their own reality" (Martin-Baro 1994, pp. 30–31).

Recovering or returning historical memory is *not* reminding oppressed people of forgotten memories and subjectivity that they had already acquired and known. For subjective memories were mystified and were not the self-creations of the people that recognized their social reality. It is rather objective data about experience that must be provided to people to help them articulate a new, true consciousness of social life.

True, valid, historical memory must be created as a historical project. Memory must *become historicized* and de-ideologized in order to *become historical consciousness* of original social life. Historical memory of past social reality must be created now, in the present, belatedly.

When Martin-Baro uses the term "recover"/"recuperar," he means to take it away from its ruling class form and reform it. This is what *conscientization* denotes. (The same is true of the material basis of memory: the means and mode of production. Production must be *expropriated* from the capitalists and taken over by the people to reform it in light of contemporary requirements and conditions. Production is not to be "returned" to people as they formerly practiced it, replete with indigenous forms of oppression and ignorance.)

2.2 Liberation Psychology Is Macro Cultural Psychology

Martin-Baro's Liberation Psychology is close to macro cultural psychology. He argues that subjectivity is shaped by macro cultural factors: "micro processes must always be understood as connected in their essence to more fundamental macro processes" (Martin-Baro 1994, p. 69). He emphasizes that macro cultural factors are the cornerstones of social transformation, and the cornerstones of social and psychological libera-

tion. Conversely, psychology/consciousness sustains particular macro cultural factors. In the status quo, psychology sustains oppression. Existing psychology is a conservative social force that reproduces existing society. Martin-Baro (1994, p. 77) said that "political revolutions have found upon taking power that one of their staunchest enemies is the cognitive-evaluative structure – the personal reference scheme internalized by large sectors of the population during their socialization under the 'old regime.'"

Martin-Baro articulated this in observations about memory. He explained that oppressive social structures and political ideology have been the operating mechanisms of memory. They have generated mystified, incomplete, erroneous, alienated memory of history. Accurate memory of history requires new mnemonic mechanisms that are cultural. Critical, politically informed consciousness (conscientization) is the necessary cultural mechanism to generate historicized, historical memory. This conscientized historical memory is aware of not only the macro cultural influences on it but also a concrete cultural negation of the status quo. The struggle to implement this political negation is necessary for conscientization and for preventing further forms of oppressive psychology that are necessitated and generated by oppressive political economy.

Liberation Psychology shares the aim of macro cultural psychology of becoming an emancipatory psychological science. Martin-Baro's political insights led to a deep understanding of memory, self-concept, motivation, and other psychological processes. Good politics entails good science, and good science entails good politics. The reason is that both of them engage the dialectics of the concrete.

We may apprehend Liberation Psychology as a form of macro cultural psychology by analyzing the cultural-psychological phenomenon of fatalism that Martin-Baro analyzes. His analysis traces it back to the social system that generates it. This is an inductive epistemology; it gathers formative factors of fatalism together in a system (Fig. 2.1).

Fatalism draws out the objective conditions of the working class in a subjective, emotional form with emotional characteristics.

Because fatalism is a concrete, historical, materialist emotion, it reflects social systems that form it; it is a barometer of those systems. Psychological phenomena are indicators of the system just as much as sociological

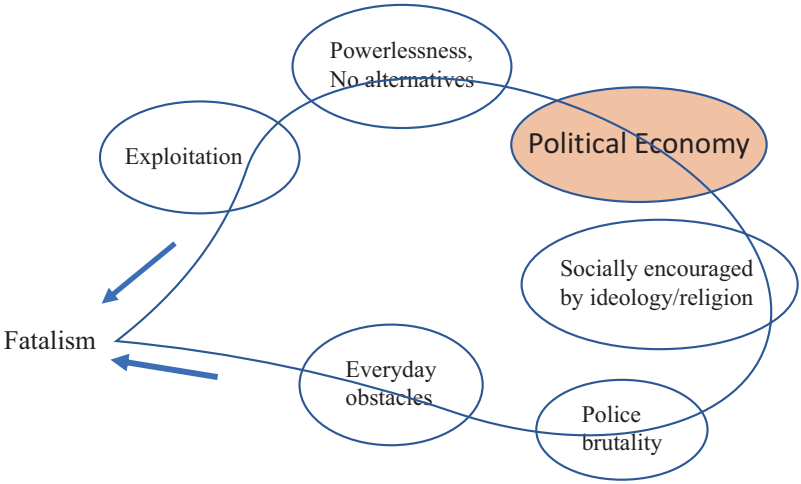


Fig. 2.1 Structural parameters of fatalism: Fatalism as totalization/crystallization of conditions

structures are. In fact, phenomena such as fatalism direct us to identify structural factors of oppression that are not immediately obvious and are disguised by ideologies. This is depicted in Fig. 2.2.

Notes

1. A contemporary, American example of fatalism is the apathy of super-oppressed minorities to vote in elections where they comprise the majority of the population and could elect politicians from among their own ranks who would serve their needs. This is the case in Ferguson, Missouri, site of mass protests against police brutality in 2014. At the time, black people composed 67% of the population; yet at the time of riots over Michael Brown's killing by police, 5/6 of city council members were white and 6/7 school board members were white, and the police force was predominantly white. Black people did not exercise their majority strength and declined to vote in elections for city council, school board, and police chief. Even worse, eight months after the rioters and citizens had urgently called for more representative city politics and black control, the city council election in April 2015 drew only 29% of all eligible voters to vote.

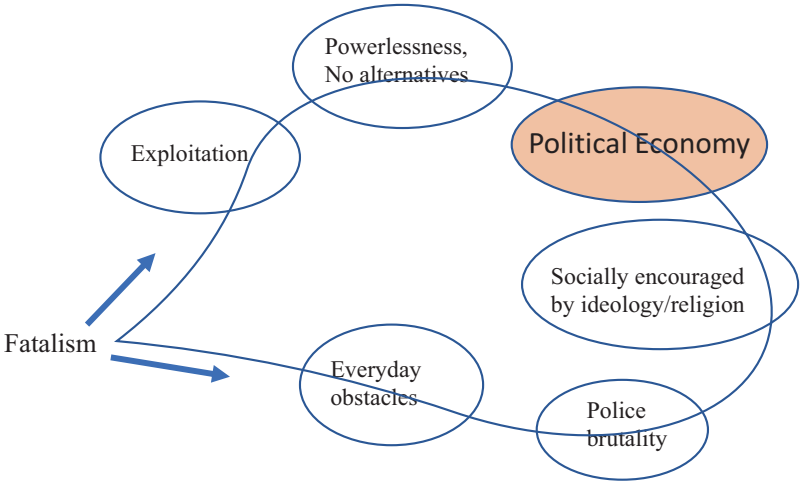


Fig. 2.2 Fatalism reveals society

This is fatalism which operated from inside black peoples' consciousness to prevent them from easily controlling their social institutions. Even more fatalistic is the fact that "In the Ward 3 race, which includes the area Brown was from, and where many business were destroyed and looted in the unrest, only 19% of voters cast ballots…[This, despite the fact that] In Ferguson, a coalition of protesters, a liberal political group and a labor union – which included activists from the Organization for Black Struggle, the Working Families Party and the Service Employees International Union Missouri/Kansas state council – poured into the city in the final weeks to help get out the vote. Only one out of their three preferred [local] candidates won" (https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2015/04/09/voter-turnout-ferguson-chicago/25527397/).

Thus, even when blacks had an overwhelming majority and were also encouraged to vote by progressive political organizations, they declined to vote for candidates who could have fulfilled their interests.

2. Mao similarly made a precise class analysis of different interests among the peasantry during the Chinese Revolution. He defined rich peasant, poor peasant, landlord, and merchant. This allowed him to identify the different "levels" of class consciousness, social critique, and allegiance to the revolutionary struggle that currently existed. It also helped Mao to understand different kinds of education that needed to be addressed to the different groups in order to help them understand the sources of their

problems, and to understand the kinds of solutions that were viable (Schram and Hodes 1997).

3. Bettelheim (1979) identified a similar syndrome among Jews in Nazi Germany. He called it ghetto thinking, or the internal ghetto in consciousness. It denotes how interned Jews identified with their captors. Some Jewish leaders helped the Nazis deport and exterminate Jews.
4. This is an important social-psychological phenomenon (which surfaces in the study of political psychology) that requires concerted political-psychological intervention. It demonstrates that (a) personal activities are not more compassionate and egalitarian and free from social organization than politics are and (b) a people's psychology is not homogeneous, consistent, or continuous. Particular psychological issues are discrepant; they must be addressed individually to comprehend and alter their specific causes and characteristics. Progressive politics does not necessarily transfer to progressive personal activities.

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3

Vygotsky's Marxist Psychology Is the Scientific Psychology for Advancing Social-Psychological Emancipation

In the Introduction and in Chap. 2, we have explained that emancipation consists of transforming the social relations of oppression. We discussed slave social relations that consisted of slave owners owning slaves and brutally controlling every aspect of their lives. Emancipation of slaves requires transforming the political economy of slavery. No reforms can negate slave social relations.

How can psychological science contribute to this kind of emancipation? For a psychological science to be emancipatory, it must contribute to understanding and improving social relations of oppression, such as the political economy of slavery. Psychology cannot overcome oppression at the psychological level, that is, through psychological interventions based upon psychological principles.

Instead, psychology must utilize its subject matter—psychological phenomena such as emotions, perception, self, attention, cognition, mental illness—to reveal the nature of the political economy (e.g., slave owners owning slaves). The nature of political economy is revealed through its psychological effects. The nature of a particular society can then be transformed through political action on macro cultural factors.

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Psychology works indirectly to transform society and individuals. It delivers its understanding of society (via the social character of psychological phenomena) to social activists who work on macro cultural factors. Psychology does not deliver society to psychologists who seek to improve society via psychological interventions, as Fig. 1.2 illustrates. Psychological research is centrifugal in directing its theories, methods, and results toward society and social emancipation. Psychological research has a higher purpose (beyond itself), which is to understand and improve society, for society is the basis of human survival and fulfillment. Society is also the basis of psychology.

Martin-Baro's psychological research used this approach. It revealed social relationships that generate fatalism, are embedded in fatalism, constitute its operating mechanisms, and are expressed by fatalistic behavior and psychology. Martin-Baro's cultural psychology contributes its social analysis and social critique to those from other disciplines such as health critique, educational critique, economic critique, news critique, and cultural critique. This comprehensive social critique then generated insights about the need for, and direction for, comprehensive social transformation that eliminates the systemic causes of social and psychological problems.

Accomplishing all of this cannot be done within the existing conceptual framework of psychology. It requires reconceptualizing the entire nature of psychological phenomena as essentially cultural in their origins, features, operating mechanisms, and objectives. Only if psychological phenomena originate in slavery, alienation, commodification, and wage labor; are organized and operated by these macro cultural factors; and function to strengthen and reproduce these cultural factors can they reveal society, critique it, and contribute to transforming it.

For psychology to reflect and elucidate society—so that society can be critiqued and transformed—psychology must be saturated with culture; it must be cultural psychology. Psychology is not a separate domain that has "points of contact" with culture and correlates with culture to some degree. That kind of relationship—which is assumed by traditional psychology—makes psychology incapable of revealing full culture.

3.1 Vygotsky's Emancipatory, Cultural-Historical Psychological Science

The most powerful, comprehensive, coherent, and revolutionary formulation of cultural psychology is Vygotsky's cultural-historical psychology. His cultural-historical psychology is a theoretical and empirical science that rigorously explains human psychology as cultural in the ways that are required of an emancipatory, scientific psychology. I have extended Vygotsky's cultural-historical psychology under the name "macro-cultural psychology" (see Ratner, 1991). I will develop this extended approach herewith under the name "cultural-historical/macro-cultural psychology."

Vygotsky's cultural psychology is emancipatory because:

1) it crystalizes macro culture, particularly the political economy, in psychological phenomena where culture can be revealed and critiqued,
2) it utilizes its scientific social-psychological critique to call for deep, comprehensive change of the social system in order to emancipate social and psychological activity. For example, Vygotsky (1997b, p. 236) stated that "Questions of education will be fully solved only when questions of social order have been fully solved. Every attempt at constructing educational ideals in a society with social contradictions is a utopian dream. The social environment is the only educational factor that can establish new reactions in the child, and so long as it harbors unresolved contradictions [e.g., contradictions among social classes], these contradictions will create cracks in the most well thought-out and most inspired educational system."

   Vygotsky also stated that thorough social change is necessary for advancing scientific psychology. The reason is that contemporary society is mystified by many ideologies which interfere with comprehending it (see Ratner 2019, chapter 5). Consequently, Vygotsky stated, "Our science could not and cannot develop in the old society. We cannot master the truth about personality and personality itself so long as mankind has not mastered the truth about society and society itself" (Vygotsky 1997a, p. 342).

Vygotsky adopted the interdependent objectives of social science and social emancipation from Marx. The Introduction cited Vygotsky's commitment to Marxist psychology. Marx's revolutionary commitment to social emancipation was the key to his scientific critique of capitalism and class society. His scientific critique of capitalism was reciprocally necessary to provide emancipatory constructs. I shall demonstrate that Vygotsky's scientific theory of cultural-historical psychology was equally driven by his commitment to radical, revolutionary emancipation. His scientific concepts facilitated social transformation.

This dialectical relationship between psychological science and emancipation is illustrated in the form of a Mobius strip in Fig. 3.1.

The Mobius strip or Mobius band is a surface with only one side and only one boundary. Science and emancipation are continuous on the single side of the strip. Emancipation at the arrow is on the "outside" of the strip; as we follow it back and around, it becomes science near the science arrow. The Mobius band is an exemplary dialectical figure of the unity of different moments (elements).

Cultural-historical/macro cultural psychology is especially emancipatory because it draws upon Marxist philosophy and politics. This chapter shall explain that Vygotsky was a devoted Marxist in his scientific work and in his politics of emancipation. I will argue that political emancipation was the inspiration of his cultural-psychological science. It was also the

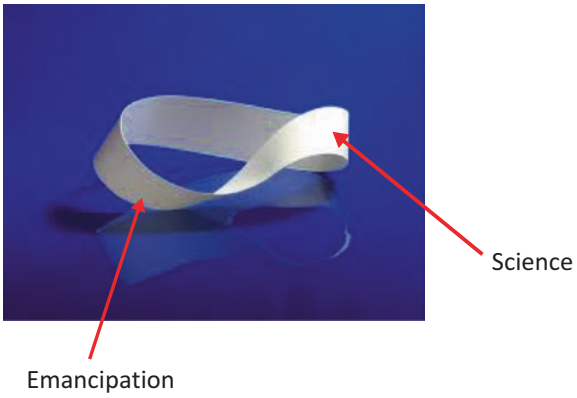


Fig. 3.1 The scientific-emancipatory dialectic of cultural-historical psychology

telos of his scientific psychology. This proves the continuity of the two in the Mobius strip. Emancipation depends upon (requires) psychology being cultural, and Vygotsky's entire career was devoted to developing a comprehensive, thorough, cultural understanding of psychology that would require social transformation as the primary "intervention" for enhancing psychological functioning.

3.2 Vygotsky's Marxist, Revolutionary Politics

Vygotsky's approach to cultural-historical psychology as emancipatory science was inspired by the revolutionary ethos that was burgeoning in Russian psychology and all intellectual life during Vygotsky's youth.

> The decade of the 1920s can without any exaggeration be described as a period of intensive growth – even flourishing – for Russian psychology. It was then that the new generation of young intellectuals and activists emerged, inspired by Nietzschean ideas of radical revaluation of the entire social structure including the promise of a new science of man and its decisive role in revolutionary transformation of the world. Thus, one of the key tasks of the post-revolutionary era was utopian "remolding of man," the creation of a new type of people, who will master their nature and uncover the yet unknown potential of human beings. These ideas were grounded in the pervasive post-revolutionary belief in the possibility of virtually unlimited personal growth and an active, creative attitude to the world. This is why the public discourse of Soviet science, fiction, and media often returns to the topics of the specifically human characteristics that distinguish homo sapiens from other species, the nature of humans and the ways to overcome it, and the specific non-natural, i.e. cultural, laws of human development that are not inherited and genetically predetermined, but are formed by means of society, art, and culture.
>
> *The role psychology was to play in this social transformation was very special and highly important. Psychology was to find the means for the normative remolding of the "old man" of the capitalist past and educating the "new man" of Communism. These methods would be subsequently implemented in large-scale social projects and would lead to the creation of the improved and advanced people of the future.*

> The agency of the Soviet psychologists in the 1920s, therefore, was not confined within the borders of psychology as an isolated discipline. (Yasnitsky and Van der Veer 2016, pp. 19–21, emphasis added)

This is a powerful statement that must be taken seriously by anyone seeking to understand Vygotsky's work. Psychology was not purely science; it was emancipatory science laden with political motives and consequences.

Vygotsky's commitment to Marxian socialism was noted by Van der Veer and Valsiner (1991, p. 374): "he sincerely believed in the utopian ideas of the communist world-view, he was actively involved in the organizations linked with the Communist Party, and he attempted to incorporate the communist world-view in his research." Vygotsky was inspired by the Russian Revolution, realizing that massive, comprehensive, fundamental, social transformation was the means for uplifting humanity materially, socially, and psychologically. Yasnitsky and Van der Veer (2016, pp. 228, 374) state, "After his graduation in Moscow, Vygotsky moved back to Gomel and became a Bolshevik activist." Thus, Vygotsky was a revolutionary Bolshevik before he became a cultural psychologist.

Renowned Vygotskyian scholar James Wertsch (1985) emphasized that "Vygotsky and his followers devoted every hour of their lives to making certain that the new socialist state, the first grand experiment based on Marxist-Leninist principles, would succeed" (p. 10). Levant (2011) explains how Vygotsky fits into a line of anti-Stalinist, Soviet Marxist thinking that runs from Lenin (Lenin's Philosophical Notebooks) to Lukacs to Vygotsky to Ilyenkov.

Vygotsky, like Marx and Martin-Baro, was repulsed by the evils of capitalism. These evils were the basis of psychological stultification/degradation. Cultural-historical psychology was designed to explain why and how macro cultural, political-economic factors stultify psychology, so that they could be transformed. This is the science-emancipation dialectic that is central to Vygotsky's entire work. Cultural-historical psychology was not designed for scientific reasons alone, to simply understand psychology. It was designed for scientific reasons that could situate psychology in social-political processes that could emancipate/fulfill it. Vygotsky already knew that emancipatory social-political processes were revolutionary transformations such as the Bolshevik revolution. His task was to develop

scientific psychological constructs that could internally link up psychology to social revolution. This meant psychological constructs had social-political form and content which could be transformed and improved through social-political revolution. If psychological constructs had form and content that was unrelated to social politics, then social-political revolution could not emancipate psychological phenomena; they would make no contribution to revolution, such as requiring revolution to fulfill psychological functioning.

This is evident in Vygotsky's statement that I cited in the Introduction, "the source of the degradation of the personality in the capitalist form of manufacturing…cannot be resolved without the destruction of the capitalist system organization of industry…by the socialist revolution… Alongside this process, a change in the human personality and an alteration of man himself must inevitably take place" (Vygotsky 1994a, pp. 180–181). "New forms of labor will create the new man" (ibid., p. 183). "Collectivism, the unification of intellectual and physical labor, a change in the relationship between the sexes, the abolition of the gap between physical and intellectual development, these are the key aspects of that alteration of man which is the subject of our discussion" (ibid., p. 182). Figure 1.4 depicts cultural-psychological science as discovering macro-level cultural factors which can explain micro-level personality degradation, and can also transform personality in fulfilling, socialist activities.

Leontiev explains this as follows: "Our general method consists in finding *the structure of men's activity that is engendered by given concrete, historical conditions*, and *starting from that structure to bring out the essential psychological features of the structure of their consciousness*" (Leontiev 2009, p. 207, my emphasis).

Relating micro psychological phenomena to the macro level is extremely difficult. It is resisted by the "gravitational field" of the micro level which has been the focus of psychology since its foundation. Psychology has proclaimed the micro social level to be the primary level of explanation of human psychology. Vygotsky achieved a Copernican shift in psychology from the microsphere to the macrosphere. He expressed this conceptual as follows: "In contrast to the maturation of instincts or innate tendencies, the motive force that sets in action the maturational mechanism of behavior impelling it forward along the path

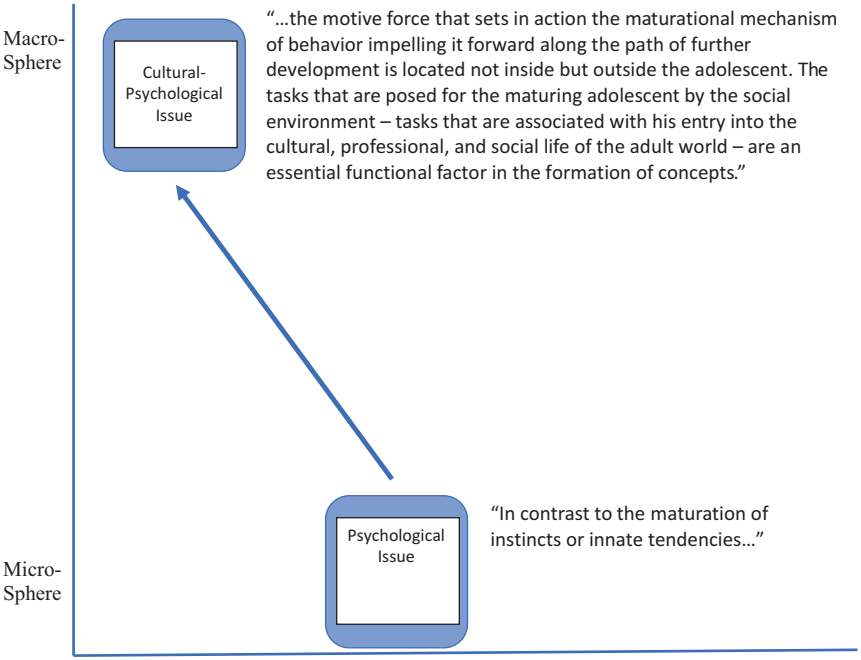


Fig. 3.2 Vygotsky's psychological Copernican shift from microsphere to macrosphere

of further development is located not inside but outside the adolescent. The tasks that are posed for the maturing adolescent by the social environment – tasks that are associated with his entry into the cultural, professional, and social life of the adult world – are an essential functional factor in the formation of concepts" (Vygotsky 1987, p. 132). It is helpful to diagram this phrase to emphasize the transition of social levels that I utilize in my diagrams of cultural-historical/macro cultural psychology (Fig. 3.2).

Vygotsky was able to achieve this Copernican shift to the macrosphere because he utilized the power of Marx's historical-materialist conceptual system which comprised an entire ontology, epistemology, anthropology, and politics of the macrosphere.

It is vital to explain this doctrine of historical materialism because it is central to Vygotsky's cultural-historical psychological theory.

3.3 Cultural-Historical/Macro Cultural Psychology, and Historical Materialism

The historical-materialist macrosphere is the "jet stream" that (1) provides cultural-political, scientific analysis of psychology and also (2) carries psychological phenomena along historical, political processes such as political revolution where they become enriched and emancipated.

Vygotsky describes the centrality of historical materialism to cultural-historical psychology as follows:

> Verbal thinking is not a natural but a socio-historical form of behavior. It is therefore characterized by a whole series of features and laws that do not apply to natural forms of thinking and speech and intellect as it occurs in the animal world and the earliest states of childhood. The most important point, however, is that *this recognition of the historical nature of verbal thinking requires that in analyzing it we apply the same methodological theses that historical materialism applies to the other historical phenomena of human society*. We can anticipate that *the basic features of the historical development of behavior in this domain will be directly dependent on the general laws that govern the historical development of human society.* (Vygotsky 1987, p. 120, my emphasis)

This is a key statement for it explains what culture and history mean to Vygotsky. They are not indefinite, shared customs or meanings that humans create over time. On the contrary, history and culture evolve lawfully, according to principles of historical materialism, from one particular political-economic social system to another, such as from feudalism to capitalism, to socialism, to future societies. This lawful development of political economies encompasses culture and psychology. It is the key to social and psychological emancipation.

I have diagrammed this in Fig. 3.3. It adds historical materialism to Fig. 1.4. This makes Marxism central to culture and psychology in Vygotsky's cultural-historical psychology. It concretizes culture and psychology in Marxist forms and dynamics. Vygotsky defines culture as historical materialism. This advances his cultural-historical psychology beyond general cultural psychology to concrete, Marxist, emancipatory psychology. Cultural psychology emphasizes cultural differences without their formative processes and transformation; emancipatory psychology

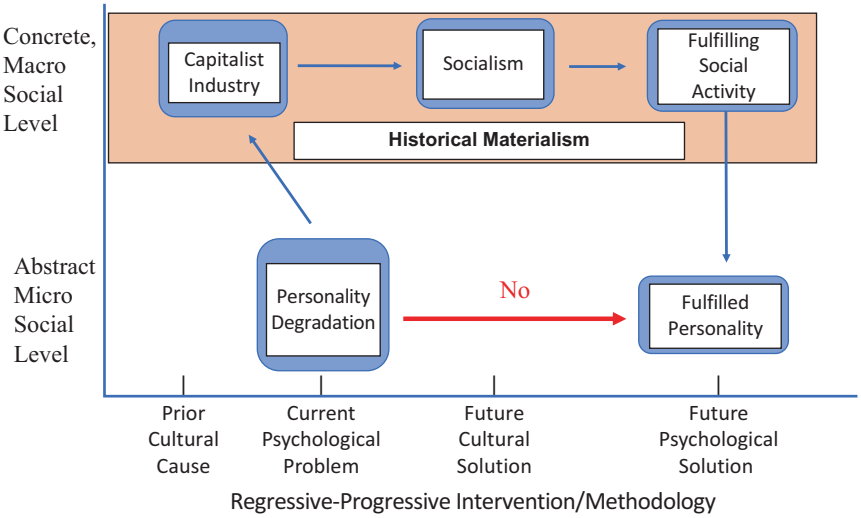


Fig. 3.3 Vygotsky's macro-level analysis of and solution to psychology

emphasizes formative political processes, and political transformation of problematical cultures and psychology into fulfilling forms.

This model may be called Regressive-Progressive Intervention/Methodology. For it

I. begins with a current psychological problem which it
II. traces back and up to a prior, macro cultural-historical-political cause, and
III. utilizes a historical-materialist analysis of the dynamics of this stultifying cause to explain a viable, progressive negation of it that
IV. will generate fulfilling social activity, and
V. fulfilled psychological phenomena
VI. rejects the idea that the current psychological problem can be solved on the micro social level. That would be to short-circuit the historical-materialist circuit of scientific explanation and political liberation.

In order to comprehend Vygotsky's radical, historical-materialist conception of psychology and culture, we must review Marx's concept of historical materialism. Marx explained it in his *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859):

> *I was led by my studies to the conclusion that legal relations as well as forms of state could neither be understood by themselves, nor explained by the so-called general progress of the human mind, but that they are rooted in the material conditions of life, which are summed up by Hegel after the fashion of the English and French of the eighteenth century under the name "civic society;" the anatomy of that civic society is to be sought in political economy… [*This political economy] constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. *The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life.*

Marx went so far as to state that "the whole internal structure of the nation itself depends on the stage of development reached by its production" (Marx and Engels 1964, p. 32). "Religion, family, state, law, morality, science, art, etc. are only *particular modes of production, and fall under its general law*" (Marx and Engels 1975, p. 297).

Engels explained this in a letter to Borgius, dated January 25, 1894:

> What we understand by the economic conditions, which we regard as the determining basis of the history of society, are the methods by which human beings in a given society produce their means of subsistence and exchange the products among themselves (in so far as division of labour exists)…Under economic conditions are further included the geographical basis on which they operate and those remnants of earlier stages of economic development which have actually been transmitted and have survived – often only through tradition or the force of inertia; also of course the external milieu which surrounds this form of society.
>
> We regard economic conditions as the factor which ultimately determines historical development. But race is itself an economic factor.
>
> Political, juridical, philosophical, religious, literary, artistic, etc., development is based on economic development. But all these react upon one another and also upon the economic base. It is not that the economic position is the cause and alone active, while everything else only has a passive effect. There is, rather, interaction on the basis of the economic necessity, which ultimately always asserts itself. The state, for instance, exercises an influence by tariffs, free trade, good or bad fiscal system.
>
> So, it is not, as people try here and there conveniently to imagine, that the economic position produces an automatic effect. Men make their history themselves, only in given surroundings which condition it and on the

> basis of actual relations already existing, among which the economic relations, however much they may be influenced by the other political and ideological ones, are still ultimately the decisive ones, forming the red thread which runs through them and alone leads to understanding.

Marx's and Vygotsky's historical-materialist theory of culture may be summarized as follows: society consists of diverse macro cultural factors such as legal relations and the state. These do not come into existence on their own; they are extensions of material conditions. Material conditions are essentially the political economy of society, or its "mode of production." Marx means that the principles and social relations of producing goods and services are central for structuring diverse macro cultural factors such as legal, social, educational, familial, medical, and spiritual processes of life.

This is depicted as a cone, in Fig. 3.4.

This conical model highlights organic flow, integration, and contradiction among the components in a vibrant complex system (see Ratner 2018a, 2019).

Macro cultural factors such as education, religion, science, and healthcare are really subsystems within the conical cultural system. The term "macro cultural factor" is more accurately expressed as "macro cultural

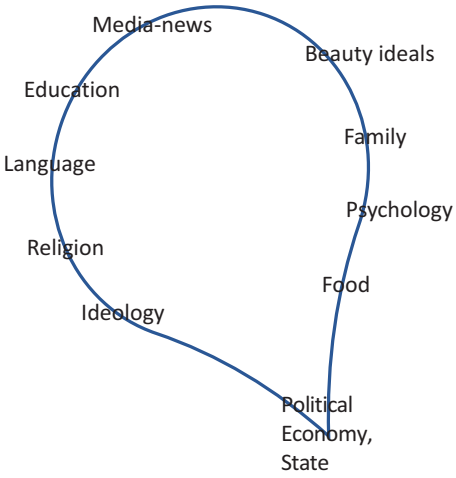


Fig. 3.4 Historical-materialist model of culture

subsystems." Enstad (2018) explains how cigarette production, distribution, and consumption is a cultural subsystem. This provides tremendous support and stability to cigarette smoking.

Figure 3.4 depicts a total system, which is a totalizing system that encompasses the totality of social activities and forms and unites them together under the rubric of the political economy. Recent books by Rappaport (2017) and Specht (2019) document how food is "metabolized" by and absorbed into the capitalist system where it becomes "food capital." The books declare that tea and beef changed the world; however, they actually demonstrate how capitalism permeated them and transformed their features. Once they become "capitalized" into food capital, they bring their capitalist form into the homes, kitchens, restaurants, stomachs, and body types of consumers. As cultural-political specimens (and agents), they change countries and people. This historical-materialist analysis of food reveals that improving food requires transforming its capitalist character. This brings food improvement and health improvement within the political struggle for transforming the capitalist political economy. (In contrast, different responses to capitalized food, or food capital—such as ethical stances that refuse to eat animals—transform the political-economic problem with food into an abstract ethical one; this makes food a single issue that is divorced from the general problem of capitalism, and is divorced from emancipatory struggles against capitalism.)

Marx's conception of culture also includes contradictory elements which lead to change, much as the earth contains contradictory elements (tectonic plates) which eventually cause earthquakes that transform the earth that generated them.

Figure 3.4 provides a political understanding of cultural factors. It corrects "the cultural turn" which glorifies indigenous cultural factors as expressing the agencies and identities of the people. Figure 3.4 explains that cultural factors are generally not creations of cultural members; rather, they are imposed "top-down" from social authorities onto the populace. Cultural factors thus express the politics of society, especially the class structure of oppression. Wahhabi religion exemplifies this fact (Ratner 2014; Ratner and El-Badwi 2011). This Islamic religion is extremely reactionary, brutal, bleak, and despotic. It is currently employed to support the Saudi state dictatorship. All of Wahhabi's accoutrements,

such as forced prayer, clothing which shrouds women's bodies and faces in black, gender relations, renunciation of Darwinian evolution, and absence of public movie theaters, are subsumed within this despotism and reinforce it. This political basis, character, and function of women's clothing, for example, is vital to emphasize in contrast to the "cultural turn" which glorifies it as Saudi women's chosen identity. This interpretation obfuscates the brutal oppression of Saudi women that is carried out through their imposed cultural dress. The cultural turn is ideological obfuscation of despotic oppression by imaginary notions of cultural agency. The monopolization of the neoliberal capitalist economy by a few, dominant firms and their oligarchs, means that the economic character of society is ever more centralized and concentrated and homogeneous.

Some macro cultural factors are invented by members of the populace, rather than social authorities. In order to become macro factors that are disseminated throughout the society, these "populist" factors are co-opted by social authorities such as investors, technicians, or consultants. This is true in the culture industry, for example.

Vygotsky (1997b) adopted Marx's conical cultural model in explaining education. "Every epoch has its own form of education" because educational activity has always corresponded to "those particular economic and social structures of society that defined the whole history of the epoch." "Pedagogics…has always adopted a particular social pattern, i.e., political line, in accordance with the dominant social class that has guided its interests" (pp. 55, 56, 348). Vygotsky is presenting education as a macro cultural subsystem that is rooted in the political economy. It recapitulates Marx's model of culture.

Vygotsky adopted this dialectical notion of the status quo as changeable along historical lines. He recognized that education was truncated and oppressive in capitalist society, and that it required a wholesale transformation of the system in order to make education enriching and emancipatory. He said, "Questions of education will be fully solved only when questions of social order have been fully solved. Every attempt at constructing educational ideals in a society with social contradictions is a utopian dream. The social environment is the only educational factor that can establish new reactions in the child, and so long as it harbors unresolved contradictions [e.g., contradictions among social classes], these contradictions will create cracks in the most well thought-out and most inspired

educational system." "The crucial questions of education can be solved in no other way than through the resolution of the social question in all its entirety" Vygotsky (1997b, pp. 236, 210). This exemplifies the science-emancipation dialectic. If education were not determined by the entire cultural system, then it would not call for transforming the entire system.

The same holds for intellectual disciplines. Figure 3.4 places the discipline of psychology in the cultural cone, along with education. Vygotsky recognized that the system truncates the discipline of psychology just as it does the educational institution; it therefore requires the same drastic social transformation in order to enrich it. He said, "Our science could not and cannot develop in the old society. We cannot master the truth about personality and personality itself so long as mankind has not mastered the truth about society and society itself" (Vygotsky 1997a, p. 342).

Cultural-historical/macro cultural psychology situates psychological phenomena in the macro cultural factors of the conical social system. For example, the neoliberal, capitalist self is depicted in Fig. 3.5.

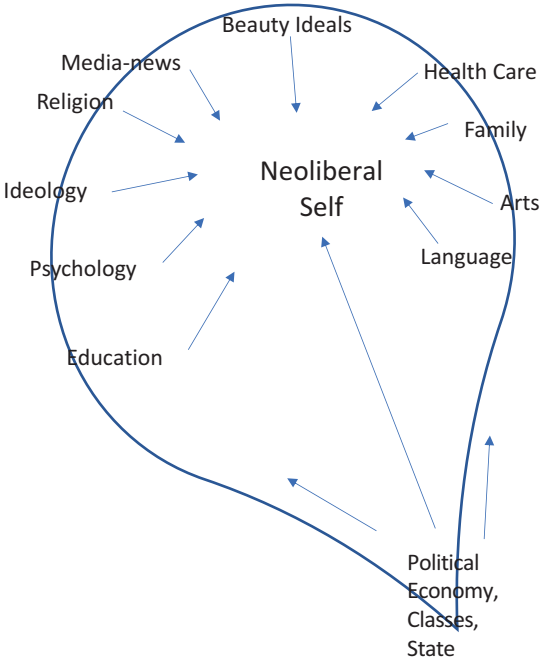


Fig. 3.5 The historical-materialist formation of psychological phenomena

The neoliberal self is impacted directly by the political economy and also by the macro cultural factors which it organizes. The neoliberal self is overdetermined in this sense. This is true for all psychological phenomena.

Erich Fromm (1978) traces desires and motivation ("instincts") to the political economy and family mediation of the political economy: "Analytical social psychology seeks to understand the instinctual apparatus of a group…in terms of its socio-economic structure….The family, all its internal emotional relationships and the educational ideals it embodies, are conditioned by the social and class background of the family… The family is the psychological agency of society" (p. 483).

Vygotsky expressed this often. For example, "Already in primitive societies…the entire psychological makeup of individuals can be seen to depend directly on the development, the degree of development of the production forces, and on the structure of that social group to which the individual belongs…Both of these factors, whose intrinsic interdependence has been established by the theory of historical materialism, are the decisive factors of the whole psychology of primitive man" (Vygotsky 1994a, p. 176).

Vygotsky goes on to formulate psychology in terms of Marx's historical-materialist model. He emphasizes that social class is a fundamental feature of the political economy/mode of production which bears heavily on psychology: "Each person is to some degree a measure of the society, or rather class, to which he belongs, for the whole totality of social relationships is reflected in him. We must reconquer the right for psychology to examine *what is special, the individual as a social microcosm, as a type, as an expression or measure of the society*" (Vygotsky 1997a, p. 317, my emphasis).

"Since we know that each person's individual experience is conditioned by the role he plays in his environment, and that it is the class membership which also defines this role, it is clear that class membership defines man's psychology and man's behavior" (Vygotsky 1997b, p. 212). "The history of the school-age child and the youth is the history of very intensive development and formulation of class psychology and ideology" (Vygotsky 1998, p. 43).

Luria (1934, p. 255) explained how historical materialism was the hypothesis that was confirmed in the cultural-historical psychology of different populations in Uzbekistan in 1932.

> The fundamental aim was to study those *peculiarities of the psyche which are the result of various historical [i.e., historical-materialist] conditions* and to trace out the fundamental laws of development of psychological processes. In this respect, central Asia is of exceptional interest on account of the residuals of *primitive economic conditions which are now undergoing tremendous industrial, political, and cultural transformation. This change gives opportunity for studying not only the peculiarities of psychological processes under various conditions, but, what is more important, the very dynamics of the transition from the more elementary psychological laws to the more complex processes.*
>
> The aim was in pointing out those *changes which thinking undergoes in social and cultural transformation connected with socialistic growth*.
>
> *With the change of economic conditions, situational thinking very quickly becomes changed, giving place to other more complex forms of thought*. It was the aim of the second expedition to study in more detail the characteristics of the structure of the 'situational' thinking and its various functions as well as to study those paths along which the transformation of the situational thinking takes place by *the development of thought into concepts under the influence of such new molding forces as collectivization, cultural development, literature, etc*. (my emphasis)

This is a rich statement of historical-materialist, emancipatory, psychological science. It demonstrates that the revolutionary, historical-materialist, political factors, which transformed capitalism to socialism, are the macro cultural factors that organized and advanced the peasants' psychological functions. Political-economic macro factors are the core of psychological development as well as societal development. Political-economic factors are not simply a general context on which individuals can draw; they are the constituents and dynamics of psychological phenomena.

Engels made this exact point in his essay Principles of Communism. "Just as the peasants and manufacturing workers of the last century changed their whole way of life and became quite different people when they were drawn into big industry, in the same way, communal control over production by society as a whole, and the resulting new development, will require an entirely different kind of human material." "Industry controlled by society as a whole, and operated according to a plan, presupposes well-rounded human beings, their faculties developed in bal-

anced fashion, able to see the system of production in its entirety" (in Marx and Engels 1976, pp. 353–354, my emphasis).

This is the perfect synergy between political liberation and psychological development. Psychological development depends upon social development-fulfillment-transformation. Therefore, psychological development is maximized by being dependent upon historical-materialist factors which are capable of revolutionizing society. This makes psychology directly implicated in social emancipation. For the same cultural factors that produce social emancipation are the constituents of psychological phenomena. Once these factors are galvanized for social transformation, they will automatically produce psychological transformation, and conversely, once the factors that produce psychological transformation have been identified and activated, they will simultaneously galvanize social transformation. (This model—Fig. 3.3—also holds for medicine. Cancer, for example, is caused by environmental pollutants. These macro cultural factors are more powerful causes of disease than micro, individual-level causes. This means that preventing cancer requires working to eliminate pollutants, which requires transforming the capitalist mode of production on the historical materialist level. This makes medicine dependent upon historical materialist factors and processes.)

This is exactly the course that Vygotsky laid out in his analysis of personality degradation. He pinned this on capitalist industrial work. He made this political-economic macro factor the major constituent of personality degradation. This makes it the target of psychological research into explaining, describing, and also eradicating personality degradation. To achieve personality fulfillment, psychologists must work to eliminate capitalist work! They must share their research with social activists to add another reason for transforming the mode of production. Making historical-materialist social factors the basis of psychology, makes society directly relevant to psychology; it also makes psychology directly relevant to society; it makes social transformation directly relevant to psychological development; and it makes psychological development directly relevant to social transformation.

Social class exemplifies this point. Vygotsky, Luria, and Leontiev made psychology dependent upon social class because social class is the most fundamental and radical political-economic phenomenon. Social class is capable of destroying the entire capitalist mode of production! Once the class struggle is galvanized in revolutionary terms, all the lower class con-

stituents of psychology (habitus) will be rejected and replaced by emancipatory constituents of fulfilling, democratic, cooperative praxis. Conversely, once the populace is made aware of the lower class constituents that restrict their psychological functions, they will critique and transform these in society which is where they originate and what they reproduce. Psychological development will thus lead to social development/liberation.

This means that psychologists must engage in historical-materialist analysis of psychological phenomena in order to elucidate their political-economic social constituents. This is exactly what Vygotsky did in his analysis of personality degradation; it is what Luria and Vygotsky did in the Uzbekistan psychological research. It is exactly what macro cultural psychology calls for. Once the political-economic constituents of psychology are scientifically elucidated, they can be targeted for transformation according to historical-materialist dynamics, which will simultaneously produce psychological and social emancipation. This reiterates my point that psychologists deliver their psychological research to social activists for social emancipation; they do not deliver their psychological research to psychologists for psychological intervention.

Vygotsky's work is replete with historical-materialist foundations of psychology. "The various internal contradictions which are to be found in different social systems find their expression both in the type of personality and in the structure of human psychology in that historical period" (1994a, p. 176). This is perfect for radicals because the contradictory macro cultural factors of the social system are the very factors that can transform the system to enhance psychological and social functioning.

"Higher mental functions [are] the *product* of the *historical development of humanity*." "*The structures of higher mental functions represent a cast of collective social relations between people*. These [mental] structures are nothing other than a transfer into the personality of an inward relation of *a social order that constitutes the basis of the social structure of the human personality*" (Vygotsky 1998, pp. 34, 169–170, emphasis added).

"The 'cultural' aspect of Vygotsky's theory involved the socially structured ways in which *society organizes* the kinds of tasks that the growing child faces and the kinds of tools, both mental and physical, that the young child is provided to master those tasks…*It is through this interiorization of historically determined and culturally organized ways of operating on information that the social nature of people comes to be their psychological*

nature as well" (Luria: https://www.marxists.org/archive/luria/works/1979/mind/ch03.htm, my emphasis).

"Essential is not that the social role can be deduced from the character, but that *the social role creates a number of characterological connections. The social and social class type of the person are formed from the systems that are brought into the person from the outside*. They are systems of social relationships between people, transferred into the personality…Each profession requires a certain system of these connections" (Vygotsky 1997a, p. 106, my emphasis).

Social conditions and their subjective psychologies are finely differentiated. Jack (2019) explains that poverty is finely differentiated into conditions that organize different psychologies. He identified two categories of poor students who managed to attend elite colleges (e.g., Stanford, Columbia, Princeton, Harvard, Yale, where just 14% of undergraduates come from the bottom half of the country's income distribution, while 63% come from the top 25% of income bracket; elite universities have more students from families in the top 1% than from families in the bottom 60%). One subgroup of 50% of these poor students had the opportunity to attend elite private high schools on scholarship before college ("the privileged poor"); another subgroup came from neighborhood public high schools ("doubly disadvantaged"). The privileged poor fit right into elite universities because they have acquired the requisite cultural capital in high school. The doubly disadvantaged struggle to learn the social rules and to acquire cultural capital. Poverty is not a monolithic, general cultural condition/variable; it is differentiated by specific mediations/conditions—for example, high schools—that differentiate the psychology of poor children. This is what Vygotsky meant by his forgoing statements about social class, social mediations, and social contradictions being reflected in psychology. Psychology must be precisely calibrated with macro cultural factors.

This historical-materialist basis of psychology must be understood dialectically. That means it is the basis for liberating psychology. The historical-materialist factors that oppress our psychology are dialectically capable of being transformed into factors that emancipate us. This is why historical-materialist analysis and explanation of psychology is not mechanistic or dehumanizing. For oppressive factors contain contradictions that can be developed into fulfilling factors. Marx had the genius to comprehend this. He comprehended that capitalism contains the seeds of

socialism that can be developed for human emancipation. A dialectical ontology reveals that the more deeply we comprehend the roots and constituents of oppression, the more deeply we comprehend the potential roots and constituents of emancipation. Conversely, the more we minimize and circumvent oppression, the more we allow it to fester, and the less capable we are of achieving social and psychological emancipation.

3.4 Macro Cultural Factors Are Psychological Tools Which Constitute Psychological Processes and Draw Them into Societal Conditions

Vygotsky developed a specific psychological construct for building cultural-historical/historical-materialist factors into psychological phenomena. He said that these factors are "psychological tools." Macro cultural factors organize the psyche and impart their cultural form and content to psychological phenomena. Psychological tools denote the fact that macro cultural factors are the operating mechanisms of psychology. Vygotsky explains this as follows: "Psychological tools are artificial formations. By their nature they are social and not organic or individual devices. *They are directed toward the mastery of [mental] processes – one's own or someone else's* – just as technical devices are directed toward the mastery of processes of nature…The following may serve as examples of psychological tools and their complex systems: language, different forms of numeration and counting, mnemotechnic techniques, algebraic symbolism, works of art, writing, schemes, diagrams, maps, blueprints, all sorts of conventional signs, etc." (Vygotsky 1997a, p. 85).

Macro cultural factors are the operating mechanisms of psychological functioning: "*social means become the means of individual behavior*" (Vygotsky 1998, p. 170, my emphasis). Individuals do not create their own personal, psychological organization.

Psychological tools include macro cultural norms of emotions. William Reddy (2001) calls these "emotional regimes." Reddy posits a direct relationship between a society's cultural configurations for emotional expression and the actual emotions experienced. Cultural norms and

expectations—emotional regimes—play a role in shaping one's inner emotional experiences. The cultural psychologist's task is to explore how.

Working conditions, ideology, news media, entertainment activities, religion, advertisements, psychological constructs, commodification, and alienation are additional psychological tools that become the means of individual behavior. Cultural-psychological phenomena such as romantic love become psychological tools of emotions, needs, motives, and sex, which are directed by cultural-historical romantic love (Ratner 2007, pp. 96–98). Luria described collectivization and socialist growth as a psychological tool of Uzbeki's psychological development. Private property is a psychological tool. Its legal-economic form mandates rights, privileges, protections, opportunities, exclusions, risks, and procedures for acquiring and disposing of property. These generate expectations, motives, emotions, perceptions, and cognitions about the property, yourself, and other people. Your private property makes you feel personally successful, intelligent, wealthy, secure, free, and inviolate. If someone trespasses onto your property you become alarmed and angry and antagonistic. You have the legal right to become psychologically defensive as well as legally and morally defensive. Property thus generates your social relations with other people. The legal form of property is the psychological tool that generates an individualistic, private form to these psychological reactions and social relations. Your happiness, security, wealth, self-esteem, and freedom are individualistic—due to your privately owned property—not communal. The legal form of property also generates a materialistic form to individuals. Individuals are admired or derogated according to the value of the property they own. Private property is a capitalist "life form" or cultural capital, just as its associated happiness, self-concept, success, and alarm are (Macfarlane 2019). Maman and Rosenhek (2019) explain how financial practices and concepts organize participants' particular cognitive, emotional and moral attributes and dispositions. "Notions and practices of financial literacy and education entail much more than the provision of information and technical knowledge about financial matters. This is a broad political project engaged in the definition of particular cognitive, emotional and moral attributes and dispositions that are construed as underpinning individuals' proper financial conduct…Rendering individuals' current and future financial well-being and security as largely resulting

from their moral attributes and own choices, the moralization of personal finance contributes to the normalization and depoliticization of the financialization of everyday life" (see also Shamir 2008). George H. Mead and Talcott Parsons explained how a social role in a social division of labor is a psychological tool and structures the psychology of the role player.

Psychological tools are "Social stimuli that have been established in the course of historical development…They are permeated through and through with the class structure of society that generated them and serve as the class organization of production. *They are responsible for all of human behavior, and in this sense we are justified in speaking of man's class behavior*" (Vygotsky 1997b, p. 211).[1]

This statement proves how central class is to society and psychology; according to Vygotsky, "the history of the school-age child and the youth is the history of very intensive development and formulation of class psychology and ideology" (Vygotsky 1998, p. 43).

Vast, indisputable evidence proves that all psychological functions in all class societies are primarily formed, organized, and structured by social class stimuli in accordance with social class social requirements. Social class differences in psychological functioning are the greatest and most decisive of any influence on psychology. Social class differentiates other social influences, including family, school, Internet access, academic/intellectual resources, and so forth. This produces obvious, corresponding differences in psychological competencies such as reading and speaking.

Hitlin and Harkness (2017) demonstrate that class structure is a psychological tool: "level of inequality in a society molds fundamental societal beliefs about the nature of the world, represented in the moral emotions we experience while interacting with others. More specifically, the cultural environments of more unequal societies shape people to have harsher [and more divisive] negative moral judgments. Members of more equal societies, instead, often experience positive, community-uplifting, empathetic moral reactions." "Inequality at the societal level filters into everyday interaction and individual emotional experience" (pp. 2, 7). Negative moral judgments/sanctions then maintain, or reproduce, social hierarchy. The connection between inequality and moral emotions is so strong that the character of moral emotions observed in a given society is a powerful indicator of the nature of that society and the way it is organized (ibid., p. 12).

None of the psychological tools that Vygotsky mentions is an idiosyncratic, personal construct. They are all cultural formations that reflect the conical cultural system.

3.4.1 Sociogenesis of Psychology

Vygotsky, Luria, and their colleague Nikolai Bernstein (who was born the same year as Vygotsky and who worked with Vygotsky and Luria in the Institute of Psychology, from 1925 to 1927) astutely explained how macro cultural, cultural-historical, historical-materialist forms are transferred to individual psychology—or, stated otherwise, how interpersonal socialization draws the psychology of the individual child into macro cultural, cultural-historical, historical-materialist forms. Vygotsky (1998, p. 169) termed this "the law of sociogenesis of higher forms of behavior."

This occurs temporally and teleologically: adult activities "bridge" the current state of the child's abilities with a future, required state, which is known by the adult. This future state of behavior is stipulated by broader historical and societal systems. The adult is always holding out future states of behavior for the child to achieve, which are implicitly historical materialist. The teleology of child development that is incited by the adult is thus historical materialist. The interpersonal process of development is implicitly historical materialist; it is not purely interpersonal in its form. "It is the preceding anticipation of the future by the adult that contingently influences the ongoing activity in a true cooperation with the child's emerging abilities. This has been referred to as prolepsis. The prolepsis, or anticipation of the future… finds its stable solution within the functionally anticipated outcome from broader historical and societal systems" (Shvarts and Bakker 2019, p. 12).

It is instructive to examine a few psychological tools and how they organize psychology in historical-materialist forms and contents.

3.4.2 Words and Meanings

Vygotsky explained how words, which are products of cultural interaction and communication, are an important psychological tool. This cultural product becomes the means of stimulating and organizing psychology in general, or consciousness. Vygotsky said that we think with

words, and the cultural significance of words becomes our psychological meanings about things.

> The formation of meanings is the basic function of the sign, i.e., the formation of sense in consciousness…The thought is not expressed in the word but completed in the word…We might speak about the becoming of the thought in the word.
>
> Consciousness creates meaning with the help of the word…The movement of meanings is a very simple thing: It is the internal dynamic of the sign [word] operations.
>
> *The word is a sign, i.e., a means and method to mediate psychological processes and master them on the basis of their communication (their influence).* (in Zavershneva and van der Veer 2018, pp. 258–260, my emphases and insertions)

Vygotsky states that burgeoning thoughts are inchoate. Only when you apply a word to it, does the cultural meaning of the word define and complete the thought. Conversely, "I forgot the word that I wanted to say; and thought, unembodied, returns to the hall of shadows" (Vygotsky 1987, p. 243). "Thinking in pure meanings [without words] is a dynamic, unstable, fluid phenomenon that appears momentarily between the more clearly formed and stable poles of verbal thinking" (ibid., p. 280).

Vygotsky explained this thoroughly in his chapter "Thought and Word" (in Vygotsky 1987). This chapter was his last publication. Vygotsky repeatedly emphasizes the formative, organizing role of cultural, artifactual words on thought, and consciousness as a whole: "Speech does not merely serve as the expression of developed thought. Thought is restructured as it is transformed into speech." "We can, therefore, speak of the establishment of thought in the word." "External speech is a process that involves the transformation of thought into word, that involves the *materialization and objectivation of thought.*" "Word meaning is a phenomenon of speech. Generalization and word meaning are synonyms… Word meaning is also a phenomenon of thinking." "It is not only the development of thought but the development of consciousness as a whole that is connected with the development of the word. Studies consistently demonstrate that the word plays a central role not in the isolated functions but the whole of consciousness." "The new use of the word as a signifier, that is, its use as a means of concept formation, is the proximal

psychological cause of this intellectual revolution that occurs in the threshold between childhood and the transitional age" (ibid., pp. 251, 250, 280, 282, 244, 285, 132).

Vygotsky (1994c, p. 281) encompassed imagination within the formative power of linguistic concepts: "Just like all the other functions, the adolescent imagination experiences basic changes and it becomes transformed with the aid of a new [mental] infrastructure under the influence of thinking in concepts."

Words and language are not "tool kits" which individuals utilize for their own purposes and meanings; on the contrary, words and language stimulate, structure, and support consciousness and psychological meanings. Of course, individuals may introduce slight variations around these themes. However, the idiosyncrasies must revolve around the common cultural meaning in order for them to be comprehended by others. A.N. Leontiev (1978, p. 3) explained this: "Despite all its diversity, all its special features, the activity [*Tatigkeit*] of the human [adult] individual is a system that obeys the system of relations of society."[2]

3.4.3 Linguistic Codes

Basil Bernstein, a British educational sociologist in the 1970s, extended and concretized Vygotsky's fundamental ideas about words and consciousness. He recognized concrete, cultural-political features of words in addition to their general relationship to stimulating, structuring, and supporting consciousness that Vygotsky emphasized. Bernstein explained that words are products of social class activities. Words reflect the nature of these activities, and they reinforce the activities of the class structure. Lower class individuals, whose work activity, for example, is simplified and mechanical, develop concrete forms of communication that are suited to expressing the simplified, circumscribed interactions on an assembly line, for example. Work managers, on the other hand, are arrogated complex tasks of (a) designing and planning work, (b) procurement of resources, (c) communication over global distances that relate to the global nature of the modern enterprise, and (d) political action to get laws and regulations passed that favor their work activity. Managers nec-

essarily develop forms of communication that are suited to conduct these types of activities.

These are exemplified in two discourses between a middle-class white girl, Mindy, and a lower-class black girl, Deena, with their teacher in a first-grade classroom:

1)

Mindy: When I was in day camp we made these candles.
T: You made them?
M: And I tried it with different colors, with both of them but one just came out; this one just came out blue, and I don't know what this color is.
T: That's neat-o. Tell the kids how you do it from the very start. Pretend we don't know a thing about candles. OK, What did you do first? What did you use? Flour?
M: Um, here's some hot wax, some real hot wax that you just take a string and tie a know in it and dip the string in the um wax.
T: What makes it have a shape?
M: Um, you just shape it.
T: Oh, you shaped it with your hand, mmm.
M: But you have, first you have to stick it into the wax and then water, and then keep doing that until it gets to the size you want it.
T: OK. Who knows what the string is for?

2)

Deena: Um, I went to the beach Sunday and to McDonalds, and to the park,
and I got this for my birthday. My mother bought it for me, and um I had um two dollars for my birthday and I put it in here,
and I went to where my friend named Gigi
I went over to my grandmother's house with her and um she was on my back
and I and we was walkin around, by my house
and um she was heavy.
She was in the sixth or seventh grade.
T: OK I'm going to stop you. I want to talk about things that are really really very important. That's important to you but tell us things that are sort of different. Can you do that? And tell us what beach you went to.

Bernstein called these communication styles "linguistic codes" (Ratner 2015, 2019, pp. 20–25). They conform to different kinds of work activities that I have described earlier. Bernstein developed a sophisticated, useful, cultural-historical analysis of linguistic codes that properly elucidate their political-economic conditions and requirements. His work elucidates "the process where a given distribution of power and principles of control is translated into specialized principles of communication, differentially, and often unequally, distributed to social groups/classes…and how…these shape the formation of consciousness of members of these groups/classes" (Bernstein quoted in Daniels 2012, p. 44). His explanation fits within our historical-materialist model of Vygotsky's statement on personality degradation.

This is depicted in Fig. 3.6. We commence with naïve, micro-level, taken-for-granted language (in the bottom, left corner) and we identify its macro cultural, cultural-historical, historical-materialist constituents/determinations, which culminate in comprehending the political-cultural origins, character, organization, and function of language.

Bernstein emphasizes the ways in which linguistic codes are generated by power and control. In addition, linguistic codes define individuals as from particular classes and suitable for that particular kind of social activity and interaction. Linguistic codes thus stamp and entrap individuals in

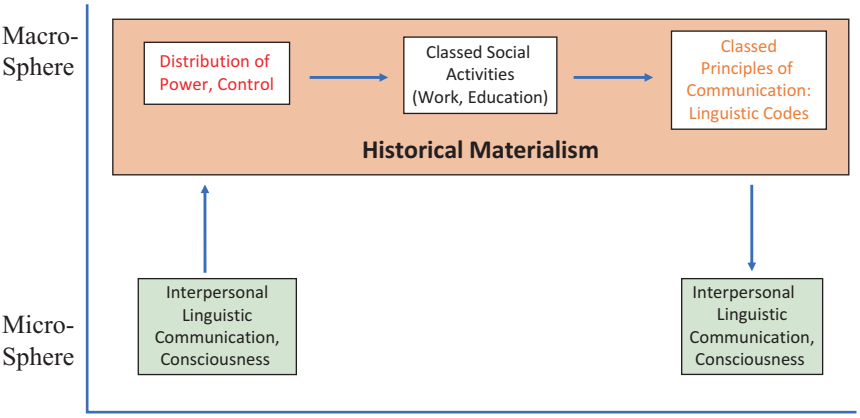


Fig. 3.6 Bernstein's historical-materialist analysis of language: from personal words to social class codes

class roles. They are political in this sense of reinforcing the class system. The upper class desires that workers are habituated to use restricted linguistic codes, for this disqualifies them from upward mobility. It also serves an ideological function of justifying workers' lower class position because they are unqualified for higher class activity. The workers, themselves, feel out of place contemplating upward social mobility because they can understand how difficult those social relations would be for them to navigate linguistically and conceptually. In other words, there are socially necessary and socially useful consequences of linguistic codes. These are politically enforced by the upper class.

Bernstein's analysis of linguistic codes as historical-materialist psychological tools dialectically endows them with emancipatory potential. Linguistic codes offer insights into the structures of power and oppression. They expand how power and oppression work through psychological phenomena such as language. Codes are thus potential tools for conscientization, or de-ideologizing consciousness, that makes it aware of social and psychological oppression. Psychology of oppression illuminates social oppression; it also critiques social oppression and transforms it through political struggle. The cultural-historical/macro cultural, historical-materialist analysis of linguistic codes supplements other critiques of society. Codes call for social transformation in order to eradicate class-based linguistic deficiencies.

This emancipatory potential of macro cultural/cultural-historical psychology is depicted in Fig. 3.7.

Figure 3.7 indicates an important role for cultural psychology in linguistic science. Cultural psychology of language emphasizes that macro cultural, historical-materialist constituents of language, for example, linguistic codes, are the important components that are the focus of linguistic science. Linguists should research how these codes are formed on the macro level, how they are transmitted to individuals in various classes, what are their social and psychological effects, and how codes structure the grammar, semantics, and other properties of everyday language. Social codes are not secondary elements of language that may or may not be researched. Social codes are the basic elements of language. Technical features of language are not the most basic or important. "*External development takes the place of inner development*…The historical development

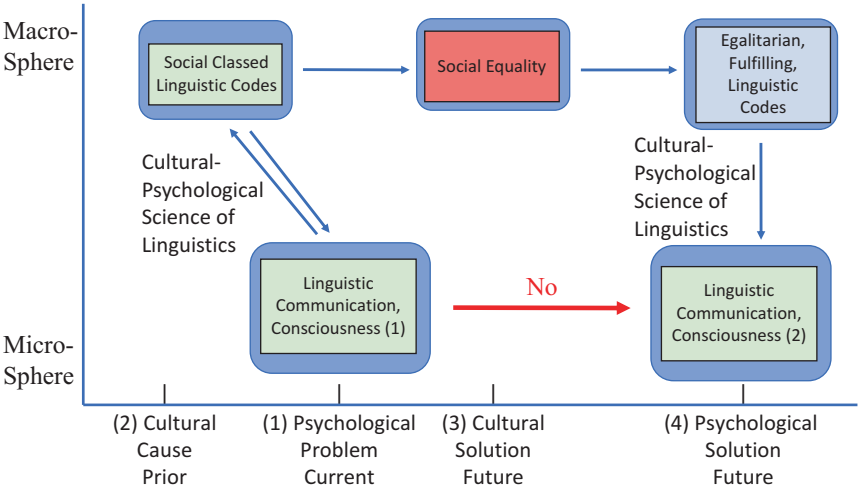


Fig. 3.7 Bernstein's historical-materialist emancipation of linguistic codes and consciousness

of human memory can basically and primarily be summed up as *the development and perfection of those auxiliary means that social humans have worked out in the process of their cultural life*." "Inner development and perfection of memory are no longer an independent process, but are dependent upon, subordinated to, and defined by the course of these changes originating from outside – from man's social environment" (Vygotsky and Luria 1993, p. 105, my emphasis). Thus, grammatical deficiencies are not caused by some technical or biological mechanism of language. They are caused by social oppression.

Moreover, grammatical deficiencies are not caused by social oppression stifling the development of technical-biological linguistic mechanisms; instead, social oppression provides truncated social, linguistic codes. Linguistic deficits are not a matter of undeveloped, natural capacities. They are a matter of socially provided, deficient social codes. Oppression is socially developed; it is not undeveloped nature; it is social development of a bad kind; it is not lack of natural development; it is a "bad positive," not a "bad negative." Every social oppression is concrete; it provides people with its own, concrete forms of deficiency that adjust people to its concrete kind of oppression. Slave oppression is different from wage labor

oppression and from Wahhabi Islam oppression of women. Linguistic forms reflect concrete forms of oppression; they do so because linguistic codes have concrete social form. Regarding linguistic deficiencies as due to undeveloped natural capacities, construes all deficiencies as having a universal form. The solution would then be to simply provide the individuals with opportunities to develop their natural, universal grammars through a universal linguistic intervention, for example, stimulation of natural capacities. This ignores cultural constituents of linguistic deficits, and it ignores cultural solutions.

3.4.4 Self-Esteem

Another example of a psychological tool is psychological constructs that have been developed by professional psychologists. These constructs become templates that individuals employ to construct their psychology appropriately. Entrepreneurial self of neoliberal ideology is a case in point. "Through recent reforms, Milltown Academy now houses an 'entrepreneurship specialty'. At the school, 'entrepreneurship' is embedded in the school's core ethos and curriculum and as part of this, the 'entrepreneurial character' is sold as necessary and progressive and is regularly deployed in narratives of attachment to and detachment from success and failure, respectively" (Morrin 2018, p. 459).

Cruikshank (1996) similarly explains how self-esteem is a culturally induced and culturally functional form of self-governance (in Foucault's terms). "There is nothing personal about self-esteem" (ibid., p. 231). "The self-esteem movement was spearheaded by the California Task Force to Promote Self-esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility in 1983, to deliver a technology of subjectivity that will solve social problems from crime and poverty to gender inequality" (p. 231). "Self-esteem is a practical and productive technology for the production of certain kinds of [culturally necessary] selves…, a specialized knowledge [competency] of how to esteem our selves, to estimate, calculate, measure, evaluate, discipline, and to judge our selves" so as to be socially responsible and socially functional (ibid., p. 233). "Self-esteem is a [culturally provided] technology of citizenship and self-government for evaluating and acting upon ourselves so that the police, the guards, and the doctors do not have to" (p. 234).

3.4.5 Resilience

The construct of psychological "resilience" is another cultural-psychological tool. It is a macro cultural factor that imparts cultural politics and ideology into individual self-concepts. Gill and Orgad (2018, p. 477) explain:

> 'resilience' as a quality demanded and promoted by public policy in the context of austerity and worsening inequality, we argue that resilience has also emerged as a central term in popular culture in genres such as self-help literature, lifestyle magazines, and reality television, as well as in a burgeoning social media culture focused on positive thinking, affirmations, and gratitude. It calls on people to be adaptable and positive, bouncing back from adversity and embracing a mind-set in which negative experiences can–and must–be reframed in upbeat terms. The article examines three case studies–women's magazines, self-help books, and smartphone apps–to explore how resilience is [culturally] constituted, how it operates, and how it materialises across different sites. We explore how notions of elasticity, inspiration, and affirmation are deployed in ways that systematically outlaw critique or any need for social transformation while inciting a vast range of physical, social and, above all, psychological labours on the part of 'resilient' subjects.

Felli (2016) further explains the cultural-political character of resiliency as a psychological tool. Neoliberal resilience appears to be supportive and life-affirming; however, it is really a conservative adjusting to neoliberalism that eschews negativity, criticism, and radical transformation. This is why the leader of neoliberalism, the World Bank, promotes resilience. The World Bank defines resilience as "Flexibility in adjusting to new circumstances is essential to promoting resilience and making the most of opportunities. Prime examples include household migration in response to shifting economic trends, rural communities' adaptation to climate change, and enterprise renewal in the face of technological and demand shocks." "Resilience is characterized by the ability of people, societies, and countries to recover from negative shocks, while retaining or improving their ability to function" (Felli, pp. 3–4). The key concept is retaining their ability to function within the debilitating pressures of

the status quo. These pressures of competition, austerity, instability, exploitation, and alienation should never be blamed for individual problems, nor should they ever be transformed. Individuals make do with the status quo, warts and all.

> The dominant understanding of resilience offers the added benefit, from the perspective of international organisations, of delineating solutions which are not threatening the existing structures of capitalist societies. In fact it might even offer an ideological justification (a neoliberal "flanking mechanism") for the withdrawal of public solidarity organised through the State in the name of austerity. A social policy based on "building the resilience" of the poor (or of the "most vulnerable") is certainly less challenging to capital's accumulation than one based on the defence or the extension of the universal public provision of social security and the public services needed to satisfy human needs." (ibid., pp. 4–5)

Resiliency is a psychological construct that has conservative social-political behavioral effects (see Barany 2018, for outstanding analysis of the ideological, political, and social uses of this construct in social policy such as welfare).

3.4.6 Sex, Orgasm, and Psychological Tools

Other psychological tools include social values (scripts) for sexual intercourse. Foucault explained that the most intimate, personal features of our bodies and biology are organized by macro cultural tools. He calls this "biopolitics." Fascinating research has revealed the biopolitics of the female orgasm. This is a profound example of how the most personal, intimate, and biological functions are cultural-historical.

Fahs (2011, pp. 9, 53, 57–61, my emphasis) interviewed 40 American women about sex and reported that "when speaking with women about their sexualities, *women disclosed all sorts of [social] performances, many of which reinscribed rather than unsettled traditional gender roles*. Women discussed performing [sex] as a means to make their partners happy, to satisfy ideas of what women *should* do or *should* be, to mesh with cultural expectations that they felt they could not meet." "When talking with

women directly about orgasm, a prominent theme of feeling pressure to orgasm emerged, as women struggled both to *feel* pleasure and to demonstrate their pleasure to sexual partners." Kate, 25 years old, said, "Putting pressure on myself to orgasm feels strange. For something that's supposed to happen spontaneously, it feels like there's a lot of thought put into this and a lot of anxiety around it, like this is some kind of benchmark of not only the sex, but who this person is as a lover, or how I am as a lover, or how I am as a woman." A 46-year-old said, "During times where I have not been able to orgasm, I felt worthless and angry at myself." A 25-year-old said, "I feel pressure from myself to orgasm because I just feel like there's all that energy, like *work* that's being done that doesn't go anywhere…He wants to know that he can bring this about for me, and I want to show him that." "Since [my orgasm] is such a big factor in how guys value themselves, if I care about the person, I'll [fake] it…I'm not going to fake it if I don't really care."

These comments reveal that orgasms are cultural acts, fraught with cultural language and meanings, ideals, pressures, objectives, identity, emotions, benchmarks of normal functioning, social appearances, and striving. Women use orgasms to live up to cultural ideals, to validate their partners and themselves, to express care for their partners, and to gain a productive return on their investment in sexual work (so all that work isn't wasted); they feel angry and worthless when they do not achieve culturally valued orgasms; they put pressure on themselves to try to achieve orgasms, and many women fake orgasms for cultural-psychological reasons (to make their partners orgasm, to end the sexual encounter, to make their lover feel virile). Orgasms are cultural performances of cultural standards; they involve conscious psychological processes, thinking, effort, self-consciousness, self-praise, and self-criticism (Camoletto 2011).

Sex is, therefore, historical materialist; it obeys the characteristics and laws of society, as Vygotsky stated all psychology does.

Women's sexual phantasies are similarly fraught with cultural (historical-materialist) content (ibid., p. 246ff.): group sex and threesomes; romance; inaccessible people with status (such as celebrities, men in uniform, married men, athletes, mysterious strangers); sex in taboo, risky places; dominating others; and submitting to others (e.g., rape, prostitution, and sexual objectification). Submission was the most com-

mon sexual fantasy, reported by one-third to one-half of women in various surveys. Even women who have been abused and raped have these kinds of erotic fantasies. (It is a key finding of cultural-historical/macro cultural psychology that cultural stereotypes of women's subordination to men overpower negative personal experiences with this gender relation.)

Cultural ideals, pressures, agency, validation, concerns, and social relations are what lead women to have, not have, or pretend to have an orgasm—only about one-half of American women regularly experience orgasms during intercourse. They are the operating mechanisms of the organism. The orgasm is a "technology of the self," which Foucault defined as a cultural means for constructing the self.

Pham (2019) provides additional insights into sex as a cultural-psychological phenomenon, nay a macro cultural, institutionalized factor. Sex is institutionalized along with the institutional parameters of a college.

> The broader body of research on the student experience at the American university finds organizational cultures and accompanying rituals are powerful influencers of individual behavior. Universities share similar structures, often ceremoniously adopted and rationalized as the way organizations should operate. The formalized structures of higher education (e.g., curriculum, forms of institution, or assessment) become connected to shared ideologies of this institution, such as accountability, success, or multiculturalism. … At any given university, the institutional memory and developed reputation of a campus over time *produce* collective understanding among its students, and actors come to "inhabit" these institutions as they *construct multiple and competing meanings through daily interactions in ways that enact the institutional environment*. Applying the tenets of inhabited institutionalism to the study of campus sexual life, I explain undergraduate women's *decisions regarding sexual partnerships on their campus as a reflection of the unique organizational environments they occupy.* (Pham 2019, p. 149)

At an elite, private, Ivy League university, institutional academic and occupational pressures are so intense that students do not have the time or energy to engage in serious, personal, romantic relationships. They resort to hookup sex as an alternative. Their "choice" is fully structured by institutional parameters. One girl said, "Most people at Ivy are interested

in hookups. Including girls looking for girls. I know one person who doesn't date because she literally has no time. She will hook up with someone for three minutes and then kick them out, saying she has to study organic chemistry now." Pham summarizes this institutional shaping of sexual "choices." "These narratives suggest noncommitted casual sex to be the most practical avenue to sexual relationships on a campus where intense focus on one's studies is expected" (ibid., p. 148).

At a state university with different class background and institutional structure, "The predominant narrative of college as a time for fun creates a shared understanding of what the 'standard' State experience is, with subsequent influence on decisions around sexual partnering" (p. 150). Talia explained how the casual, sexual environment at the state interfered with her serious relationship, "We were really, really good for each other, we were best friends and our relationship worked. It was just being in Palm Park—Palm Park culture does not foster an environment where you can be in a healthy relationship. There is always jealousy; here is always distrust." Talia mentioned that the environment has coercive power over romantic/sexual relationships which overpower individual desires. Talia did not negotiate or transform the university's sexual culture. She succumbed to it.

The same was true for Marie: "State's broader organizational emphasis on fun informed Marie's decision to engage in hookups after her breakup" (p. 151).

Some girls who wanted a serious relationship felt compelled to flee from the disruptive pressure of the campus environment and established a long-distance relationship with boys from a different university.

Sex is thus institutionalized; it is a macro cultural factor that organizes individual sexuality.

With sex and orgasm being a cultural-historical phenomenon, or a historical-materialist phenomenon, it is subject to the laws of social life; this means that sex is enriched via enrichment of macro cultural factors in the social system. This feature will transform the social relations, communication, comfort, and psychological strategies that comprise the psychological tools of orgasms. This makes socialist sex more satisfying than neoliberal sex (Ratner 2019, 161–176).

3.4.7 Ideology as a Major Psychological Tool

A major psychological tool is ideology (Ratner 2019). It is included in the conical cultural model in Figs. 3.4 and 3.5. Whereas other psychological tools directly reflect the reality of macro cultural factors, ideology distorts and disguises the reality of macro cultural factors. I mean that psychological tools such as linguistic codes, words, art forms, and social roles are macro cultural products and expressions. These psychological tools transmit the features of macro cultural factors to psychology, and they make psychology reflect these features. Ideology is a complex, paradoxical macro cultural factor that distorts and disguises the character of macro culture. Ideology is a cultural mechanism that distorts culture! For example, American ideology claims that American capitalism is democratic, when the reality is that it is controlled by capitalists. Chinese ideology claims that China is a people's republic that follows Marxian, socialist principles, when the reality is that it is largely capitalist that is managed by the Communist Party (Ratner 2019). (The Communist Party is managing the selling off of state-owned enterprises to capitalist investors: "Private sector entities are allowed to hold *a controlling interest* in state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in certain highly competitive industries as a part of mixed-ownership reform, and they are also welcomed to invest in SOEs in certain 'key' industries, according to an official at China's top economic planner" [*Caixin*, March 6, 2019].)

A clear example is the ideology of individualism, or entrepreneurialism in capitalist society. This ideology states that peoples' social positions and psychological attributes are created by each individual and reflect the individual, and not culture as Vygotsky emphasized. Individualistic ideology denies and disguises the formative influence of social class and macro cultural factors on individuals' social positions and psychological attributes. Individualistic ideology is a cultural factor of capitalism that disguises the coercive character of capitalism. It attributes social problems to individual agency, competence, and choices instead of attributing them to their real causes in the character of capitalist macro cultural factors. This ideology infuses everyday cognition, perception, and emotions in a way that leads to misunderstanding the character of society and psychology. Ideology is thus a major obstacle to emancipation because it

directs attention at encouraging individuals to emancipate themselves by expressing their agency as they wish; it does not direct people to comprehend and critique social structures (see Krugman 2019, for a clear debunking of Trump's ideology).

Populism exemplifies individualistic ideology, as we shall see in subsequent chapters. This makes individualism an important psychological tool to illustrate here.

A striking example of this individualistic, entrepreneurial ideology appears in the capitalist class in China, to justify its wealth and power. A Chinese freshman in Stanford University, Yusi Zhao, says in a video posted on social media "Some people think, 'Didn't you get into Stanford because your family is rich?'" It wasn't like that, she says. "I tested into Stanford through my own hard work." "Based on my experience of study, I want to tell you that really anyone can do it" (Taylor et al. 2019). Zhao states the meritocratic ideology that her success was due to her individual strength. Hers is an ideological falsification of her own success, and the wealth and power of the capitalist class. "A visit to the Zhao family home outside Beijing and a review of online records pointed to the world of luxury and privilege that Ms. Zhao had grown up in. A Ferrari, Tesla, Bentley and Land Rover sat parked outside the house, a California-style mansion surrounded by trees and a large hedge, in a gated development called Yosemite Villas" (ibid.)

Yusi's father is the president and co-founder of Shandong Buchang Pharmaceuticals. He is a billionaire. He was found by prosecutors to have paid $10,000 in 2002 to a senior official in China's food and drug administration, who was sentenced to death for corruption in 2007. In other words, Mr. Zhao's business success was partly achieved by corrupting health officials. His main success was achieved by exploiting the workers in his company. This family wealth was used to groom Yusi for elite education, and later social success: she went to England for the latter part of middle school and for high school, where she attended a prestigious boarding school. Then her parents hired an American college consultant to assist Yusi in gaining admittance to Stanford. They paid him $6.5 million that they said was mostly for a donation to Stanford. Donating to Stanford while their daughter was applying for admission is, of course, only done under the assumption that the donation will facilitate acceptance.

This billionaire, privileged family covers up its ill-gotten wealth, which it used to prepare Yusi for elite education, by proclaiming the individualistic, meritocratic ideology: "the family publicly espoused an ethic of hard work and not falling back on inherited wealth" (Taylor et al. 2019).[3]

A vast sociological literature refutes this deceptive, hypocritical ideology of the capitalist class, which nominally transforms society from a rigid class structure that diligently preserves itself at the expense of the people, to a free, democratic, equal-opportunity medium in which individuals make their own lives. Friedman and Laurison (2019) summarize this literature. Only about 10% of people from working-class backgrounds (3.3% of people overall) get upper-middle-class jobs. "Put another way, people from upper-middle-class origins have about 6.5 times the chance of landing an elite job compared to people from working-class backgrounds. Origins, in other words, remain strongly associated with destinations in contemporary Britain." "Class is something beneath your clothes, under your skin, in your reflexes, your psyche, at the very core of your being" (ibid., location 453, 510). The class structure of Chinese state-managed capitalism is also hardening, and upward social mobility is shrinking. "Zhou & Xie find a decline in social fluidity following China's transition from state socialism to a market economy, as the link between origin and destination in vertical social status has significantly strengthened" (Zhou and Xie 2019, p. 1810). Not everyone can make it by hard work in China.

Individualistic, meritocratic ideology is a macro cultural factor of capitalist society which obscures the workings of capitalist society. It is institutionalized and propagated in numerous macro cultural factors: news media, political and financial propaganda, "think tanks," religion, entertainment, social science, psychiatry, political philosophy, and education (Ratner 2019). To the extent that people believe this ideology, they will strive to succeed by working hard on their own, which is futile because it is not how success is achieved (in any society), as Vygotsky emphasized.

3.4.8 Individualism Is a Cultural-Psychological Tool That Paradoxically Reproduces Social Structures

Because individualism disguises the cultural, structural formation, organization, and function of psychology/behavior, the more that individual-

ism is espoused and practiced, the more it allows for cultural structures to organize psychology/behavior. This is the real reason that capitalist leaders promote individualism.

This is the motive and objective of neoliberal privatization. It is not really privatization; it is capitalization of social life—that is, imposing the capitalist form on social life, not imposing scattered, individual forms on social life. Privatization allows capitalists to strengthen their political-economic, institutional, and symbolic control over society. Every legal and conceptual (symbolic) move to make behavior dependent upon individual decisions ultimately results in behavior becoming more dominated by political-economic class factors and taking on class features. This is the ideological motive and result of terms such as "choice," "agency," and "responsibility." Whenever school attendance is left to individual family choice, schools quickly become differentiated by social class.

This is exemplified in school choice policy in San Francisco.

> San Francisco allows parents to apply to any elementary school in the district, having done away with traditional school zoning 18 years ago in an effort to desegregate its classrooms. Give parents more choices, the thinking was, and low-income and working-class students of color like Cinthya would fill more seats at the city's most coveted schools. Your ZIP code should not determine the quality of your school. But last month, Cinthya's parents, who are Hispanic, found out she had been admitted to their second-to-last choice, a school where less than a third of students met standards on state reading and math tests last year. Only 3 percent were white. Results like these have soured many on the city's school enrollment plan, which is known here as "the lottery" and was once considered a national model.
>
> "Our current system is broken," said Stevon Cook, president of the district Board of Education, which, late last year, passed a resolution to overhaul the process. "We've inadvertently made the schools more segregated."
>
> Parental choice has not been the leveler of educational opportunity it was made out to be. Affluent parents are able to take advantage of the system in ways low-income parents cannot, or they opt out of public schools altogether. What happened in San Francisco suggests that without [structural] remedies like wide-scale busing, or school zones drawn deliberately to integrate, school desegregation will remain out of reach.
>
> The district's schools were more racially segregated in 2015 than they were in 1990, even though the city's neighborhoods have become more integrated,

> research shows. That pattern holds true in many of the nation's largest cities, according to an analysis by Ryan W. Coughlan, an assistant professor of sociology at Guttman Community College in New York. (Goldstein 2019)

Individualism is the quintessential ideology in that it produces the exact opposite of what it professes to produce. Individualism makes people believe that individual achievement is a function of individual attributes (competencies, inclinations, perseverance); however, the more freedom that is granted to individuals, the more powerful and coercive their cultural backgrounds and environments become. These culturally determined behaviors are then ideologically misconstrued as being the product of individual competencies. Ideology is a major macro cultural factor that acts as a psychological tool for mystifying people about the nature of society, psychology, and success and failure within society.

Ideology changes the whole nature of ignorance and stupification. These are culturally produced deficiencies that are culturally necessary for maintaining oppressive macro cultural factors. Ignorance is not a simple absence of information because of insufficient knowledge. Ignorance is caused by the presence of cultural distortions.

3.4.9 Agency Is Macro Cultural-Psychological

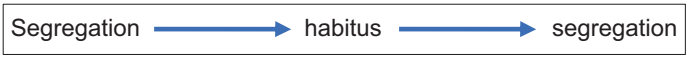
Cultural-historical/macro cultural psychology elucidates how active subjectivity, or agency, is macro cultural-psychological. It has features of macro cultural factors that reproduce those factors. Agency/subjectivity is not a personal construction and expression. It does not intersect with, or negotiate with, macro cultural factors. It reflects and reinforces them. Agency is a cultural agent; it is cultural subjectivity.

Krysan and Crowder (2017) brilliantly demonstrate the cultural character of agency in relation to the search for housing. They demonstrate that the agency which motivates and directs housing searches is culturally formed by social class. This agency/subjectivity therefore acts as a mechanism that maintains the existing class structure through the housing that individuals find and occupy. This is an important element of the residential segregation that we discussed in the previous section. Segregation is maintained not simply by structural constraints such as pricing and dis-

crimination; is it also maintained by the class "habituses" that guide the search for housing. This is why leaving action up to individual decisions is a sure strategy for maintaining social structures, not individual freedom.

Krysan and Crowder outline the importance of several social processes in a housing search—social networks, limited information, and extended family influences on residential location decisions. Families learn about neighborhoods from their segregated network of social contacts. These form the heuristics, or parameters, which limit a housing search to reproduce existing housing patterns.

(Of course, material factors such as housing prices also maintain segregation.)



Another brilliant demonstration of this is Calarco's 2018 ethnographic research on children's social negotiation with teachers in elementary school. Calarco compares middle-class and working-class students' negotiations. She found middle-class students are able to push teachers for accommodations, exceptional treatment, and additional help, while working-class students are deferential to teachers and struggle to complete work without special consideration. Calarco shows that middle-class children are coached by their parents to request this additional support and that teachers are highly persuadable in the face of student pressure. Calarco demonstrates that children's agency in solving problems is thus culturally formed by their social class that operates via their families (as cultural-historical culture theory maintains). Children's purposive agency complements their material, social, and psychological conditions. Agency subjectively crystallizes, or totalizes, these conditions in interpersonal interactions with teachers. Culture does not negate agency; it forms it to implement cultural requirements.

Calarco observes that much of pedagogy allows for, or requires, students to figure out educational rules and procedures. This setting conforms to middle-class jobs which require innovation and negotiation with upper management. An architect must creatively work with her manager or client to design an appropriate structure that fits within, but also creatively concretizes, the general idea. Middle-class negotiation

skills in school prepare this competency. Teachers are open to middle-class students learning this skill. Working-class children have little opportunity for this competency at work, and they do not develop it in their families or classrooms. Working-class children are usually segregated in their own educational tracks within school, or segregated in different schools, which I shall document in Chap. 6. The treatment of Mindy and Deena in the same classroom, which we presented earlier, exemplifies this classed nature of the habitus that is socialized in students. Working-class students actually disapprove of individual negotiating with teachers because they are being trained to defer to authority, according to Calarco. Agentive competency thus perpetuates social-economic inequality that forms it; it does not transcend culture to promote egalitarian individual subjectivity. This is why individualistic notions of agency—that construe it as individual, democratic, equality—are ideological.

When people use the term agency, they implicitly use its middle-class, bourgeois, cultural form. They naturalize and universalize this form as the essence of agency. They ignore the fact that it is, in fact, a particular cultural form that only applies to a certain class of people. Lower-class and working-class people do not employ this form of agency. They are thus excluded from the mainstream concept of agency. Agency does not apply to massive, organized actions such as strikes and revolutionary political parties. Agency is a cultural-political concept that denotes middle-class, individual negotiations within a social condition. This implicit, political connotation of the concept "agency" reduces acts that it denotes to individual reforms. This is the ideological power that terminology has.

3.5 Marxist, Scientific, Cultural-Historical Psychology Is the Telos of Vygotsky's Entire Oeuvre

Vygotsky's Marxist, historical-materialist, cultural-historical psychological theory was the telos, ethos, and eidos of his entire oeuvre. All his particular constructs and principles (even regarding reflexology, instincts, comparative psychology, and child psychology) ultimately cleared the

way for his Marxist, historical-materialist, cultural-historical psychology that was scientific and emancipatory. He sought a coherent, logical, parsimonious scientific system in the classic mode of Newton, Darwin, and Einstein. "The juxtaposition of ideas plucked from absolutely different contexts distorts their meaning" (Vygotsky 1997a, pp. 314, 259, 262–263; Ratner 2017).

Vygotsky critiqued all elements of academic psychology (constructs, principles, methods, epistemology, and ontology) that contradicted and impeded the development of a Marxist, historical-materialist, emancipatory, scientific psychology. He did so because contrary constructs are unscientific as well as politically oppressive.

This is why Vygotsky argued that biological mechanisms and infantile processes are not the basis of cultural psychology.

We can see his historical-materialist thinking in two of his prominent psychological topics.

3.5.1 Conceptual Thinking

"Development of thinking has a central, key, decisive significance for all the other [psychological] functions and processes…All other special functions are intellectualized, reformed, and reconstructed under the influence of these crucial successes that thinking achieves." This appears to be a circumscribed, technical, scholastic statement about the internal architecture of psychology. However, it tacitly connects to, and supports, historical materialism. For Vygotsky grounds conceptual thinking in historical-materialist social activities. Vygotsky made this connection in the following passage: "The tasks that are posed for the maturing adolescent by the social environment – tasks that are associated with his entry into the cultural, professional, and social life of the adult world – are an essential functional factor in the formation of concepts" (Vygotsky 1934/1987, p. 132). Social activities are historical-materialist, as depicted in Fig. 3.4. Thinking that is formed by these activities transmits its historical-materialist features to all the psychological functions that it organizes. The intellectual/conceptual forming of psychological phenomena is therefore tantamount to the historical-materialist forming of psychology.

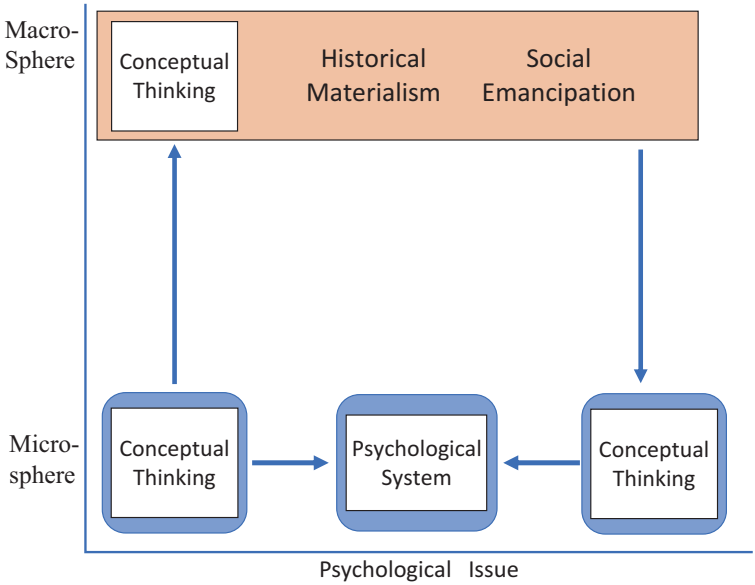


Fig. 3.8 Concepts of psychological systems, and culture

This can be diagrammed in Fig. 3.8. We begin in the lower left area where micro-level conceptual thinking organizes the psychological system; we trace conceptual thinking up and around to social emancipation and then down the right side to an enriched conceptual thinking that enriches all psychological phenomena in the psychological system.

It is because concepts—conceptual thinking—are formed by the cultural, professional, social life of the adult world, that Vygotsky regards concepts as the capstone of all psychological functions and processes. Concepts are the bridge between historical materialism and conscious processes. Conceptual thinking is not a technical process for forming psychology, it is a historical-materialist, cultural-historical process for forming psychology. It brings psychology into the dynamics ("laws") of macro cultural systems. "Higher mental functions [are] the *product* of the *historical development of humanity*" (1998, pp. 34, emphasis added).

3.5.2 Language and Thought

Another example from Vygotsky's technical, micro-level work illustrates its link to historical materialism of the macrosphere. This example is Vygotsky's major work on the relation of words and thought. We have sampled his technical writings in which he explains that words are psychological tools, or signs, that contain meanings which form the meanings of individuals' thoughts. Words organize thought. We must ask why Vygotsky arrives at this formulation; how does it accord with his explicit quest of Marxist psychology that is based upon historical materialism? Vygotsky's conception of words as cultural-psychological tools locates them on the historical-materialist plane of social phenomena. As such, words import their historical-materialist character to consciousness, or psychology, which they organize. Words are the psychological tools that make consciousness/psychology historical-materialist in nature! He says, "*The word is the most direct manifestation of the historical nature of human consciousness*" (Vygotsky 1987, p. 285, my emphasis). This is important for scientifically comprehending psychology, and also for fulfilling it via social emancipation.

Vygotsky supports this statement with a passage from Marx and Engel's The German Ideology: "Language is as old as consciousness, language is practical consciousness that exists also for other men, and for that reason alone it really exists for me personally as well; language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity, of intercourse with other men… Consciousness is, therefore, from the very beginning a social product, and remains so as long as men exist at all" (in Zavershneva and van der Veer 2018, p. 264). Marx states that language is a historical-materialist phenomenon—practical consciousness formed in social intercourse—which organizes consciousness and imbues it with social character. Vygotsky's linguistic theory of thinking and meaning is explicitly Marxist!

His linguistic theory may be diagrammed within Marxist historical materialism, as in Fig. 3.9. We begin in the lower left, micro-level word and its organizing of thought, and we trace it up and around to social emancipation which generates enriched language and thought in the lower right section.

Vygotsky articulated an active process by which historical factors such as words organize the subjectivity of individual users of these factors.

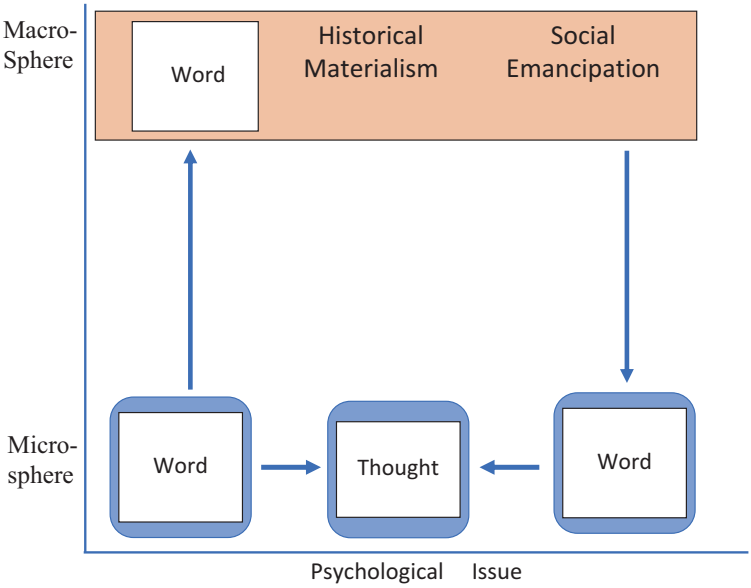


Fig. 3.9 Word, thought, and culture

He said that young children draw historical-materialist language into themselves by speaking to themselves the speech they hear in their social environment. He calls this private speech. Using social words and concepts to articulate one's own behavior to oneself, organizes distinctive human subjectivity-conceptualization-self-reflection. Peter Feigenbaum's current research explains this in detail. This linguistic theory of psychology has been developed and confirmed in the Sapir–Whorf theory. Sapir–Whorf explains how symbolic forms of language are the constituents of psychological operations. Language is the framing, organizing, and operating mechanism of psychology.

Luria says this perfectly clearly: "The 'cultural' aspect of Vygotsky's theory involved the socially structured ways in which *society organizes the kinds of tasks that the growing child faces and the kinds of tools, both mental and physical, that the young child is provided to master those tasks…It is through this interiorization of historically determined and culturally organized ways of operating on information that the social nature of people comes to be their psychological nature as well*" (https://www.marxists.org/archive/luria/works/1979/mind/ch03.htm, my emphasis).

Vygotsky developed a comprehensive, unified cultural-historical psychology because this was the only way to make it scientific. He held a deep sense of scientific theory as a magnificent, coherent, logical, encompassing system. He was a grand theoretician in the awe-inspiring sense of Newton, Darwin, Einstein, and Marx. Einstein summed up the systemic grandeur of scientific theory when he said, "The grand aim of all science is to cover the greatest possible number of empirical facts by logical deduction from the smallest possible number of hypotheses or axioms" (Einstein 1954, p. 282). Einstein admired the "logical completeness" of Newton's theory which was "a deductive achievement of unique magnificence" (p. 256). "The chief attraction of the theory lies in its logical completeness. If a single one of the conclusions drawn from it proves wrong, it must be given up; to modify it without destroying the whole structure seems to be impossible" (p. 232). This form of great science is what Vygotsky sought to bring to psychology. He worked persistently to encompass the totality of psychological phenomena within a precise, coherent, comprehensive cultural-historical psychological theory consisting of parsimonious, fundamental principles.

Notes

1. Cultural-historical psychology is a strong environmental theory. It makes psychology dependent on the environment for its source, basis, operating mechanisms, form and content, socialization, and support. It is a stronger environmentalism than Darwinism is. For culture forms the form and content of psychological phenomena, whereas the Darwinian environment only selects among organisms which have been genetically formed, not environmentally formed.
2. Contemporary Vygotskyians draw subjectivity inward into complex nuances of subjectivity itself, rather than drawing it outward, as Vygotsky did, to cultural-historical, historical-materialist factors, processes, and forms. For example, Vygotskyians are fascinated with analyzing the specific features of one of Vygotsky's terms, perezhivanie, which roughly means "an emotional experience [consisting of] an indivisible unity of personal characteristics and situational characteristics." "The influence of environment on child development will, along with other types of

influences, also have to be assessed by taking the degree of understanding, awareness, and insight of what is going in the environment into account" (Vygotsky 1994b, pp. 342, 343). Populist Vygotskyians embrace this kind of statement because it places individual activity at the heart of subjectivity, for example, emotions. However, such passages from Vygotsky describe the psychophysiologically developing child, not the adult. Developing children obviously are bound by the state of their cortical development, which determines how much of their environment they comprehend. Obviously, a 2-year-old cannot comprehend her environment in the same ways a 12-year-old can. However, once psychophysiological mechanisms are mature (around adolescence), individual biological differences in development do not have a strong influence on psychology. Vygotsky consistently emphasizes that social-cultural influences become dominant. This generates cultural patterns of psychology/behavior among individuals who occupy social roles that are vital for the social system.

3. Zhao's case proves that capitalist practice and capitalist ideology are the reality of "socialism with Chinese characteristics." That phrase is the ideology of the Chinese Communist Party. Zhao's case is a fascinating case of compound ideology:

    1) Chinese capitalists use capitalist individualistic ideology to disguise their capitalist, institutional, political-economic practices of gaining wealth and power, and maintaining them generationally through the education of their children.
    2) Then, the Chinese Communist Party employs Chinese socialist ideology to cover up the capitalist practices and ideology of the Chinese capitalists (and the people in general)—that the Party originated and has institutionalized from the late 1970s through today—by pretending that the capitalists (and the Party) are really socialist (See Ratner 2019, pp. 129–144). The capitalist reality of Chinese society and the ruling Party is mystified in compound ideologies (capitalist individualism, and socialism), which are both fictitious. The reality of capitalists' practices, and Party practices, is only perceptible to those who comprehend the existence of ideological propaganda and can penetrate beneath its false, disorienting appearance to apprehend the real nature of practice.

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4

Social-Psychological-Political Emancipation According to Cultural-Historical/Macro Cultural Psychology

Our objective has been to develop an emancipatory, scientific Psychology. I have explained in the Introduction and the previous chapter that science and emancipation are internally related and interdependent. They are two surfaces of the same Mobius strip. The preceding chapters have explained the scientific side of our Cultural-historical/Macro cultural Psychology. We now formulate its emancipatory side.

Emancipatory practice and the political strategy for realizing it must derive from the problems that necessitate emancipatory practice. Emancipation only exists if it thoroughly and deeply eradicates the causes of those problems. Emancipation thus depends upon a valid analysis of problems that can generate a radical negation of them. This is the Mobius strip of scientific analysis and emancipatory practice. Incorrect, incomplete analyses of the causes of problems inexorably lead to equally incorrect, incomplete solutions to them.

We have explained how Vygotsky's Marxist, historical-materialist, cultural-historical psychology situates psychology within macro cultural factors organized into a conical system based in a political economy. Given that psychology is formed by historical-materialist, cultural processes and factors, psychological change requires reorganizing cultural

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processes and factors in accordance with these historical-materialist, cultural processes and dynamics. Vygotsky said this explicitly in his article *The Socialist Alteration of Man* (1994b, p. 180). "The source of the degradation of the personality in the capitalist form of manufacturing also contains within itself the potential for an infinite growth of personality." This requires a political-economic revolution: "the source of the degradation of the personality in the capitalist form of manufacturing…cannot be resolved without the destruction of the capitalist system organization of industry…by the socialist revolution…*Alongside this process, a change in the human personality and an alteration of man himself must inevitably take place*" (Vygotsky 1994b, pp. 180–181). Clearly, psychological improvement is derivative of social improvement; it cannot occur on the psychological level of self-understanding or self-expression. "Not in the narrow confines of his own personal life and his own personal affairs will one become a true creator in the future" (Vygotsky 1997, p. 350).

Vygotsky echoed Marx and Engels' cultural psychology of emancipation: "Industry controlled by society as a whole, and operated according to a plan, presupposes well-rounded human beings, their faculties developed in balanced fashion, able to see the system of production in its entirety" (https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/11/prin-com.htm).

Fromm (1978, p. 495) explains the psychological consequences of social transformation: "With the growth of objective contradictions and conflicts within the society, certain changes in the society's libidinal structure also take place. We see the disappearance of traditional ties that maintained the stability of the society; there is a change in traditional attitudes. Libidinal energies are freed for new uses and thus change their social function."

4.1 The Regressive-Progressive Method

We must explain a methodology that can transition from our scientific explanation of cultural psychology to social-psychological emancipation. This methodology basically involves retracing the historical-materialist process that forms psychology, and then understanding historical-materialist

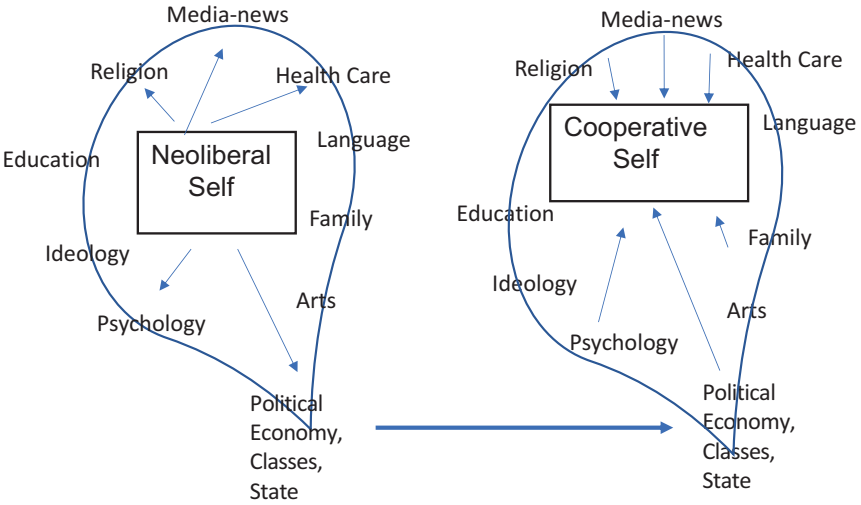


Fig. 4.1 The historical-materialist transformation of psychological phenomena

processes that transform psychology. For example, the neoliberal self in Fig. 4.1 can be retraced to its formative macro cultural factors, which are then subject to historical-materialist forces which transform these cultural factors into fulfilling, emancipating ones. This is called the "Regressive-Progressive Method." It was articulated by Sartre in his book *Search for a Method* (1963).

4.1.1 The Emancipatory Model

Our emancipatory model is diagrammed in Fig. 4.1. It reverses our explanatory model of cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology in Chap. 3.

This emancipatory transformation can be redrawn more schematically to illustrate the levels of psychology, macro cultural factors, and the political economy. This appears in Fig. 4.2.

The left column reverses the arrows in Fig. 3.4 to identify the macro cultural causes of psychology (e.g., neoliberal self). The right column then reconstructs the formative influences into an emancipated psychology (e.g., cooperative self).

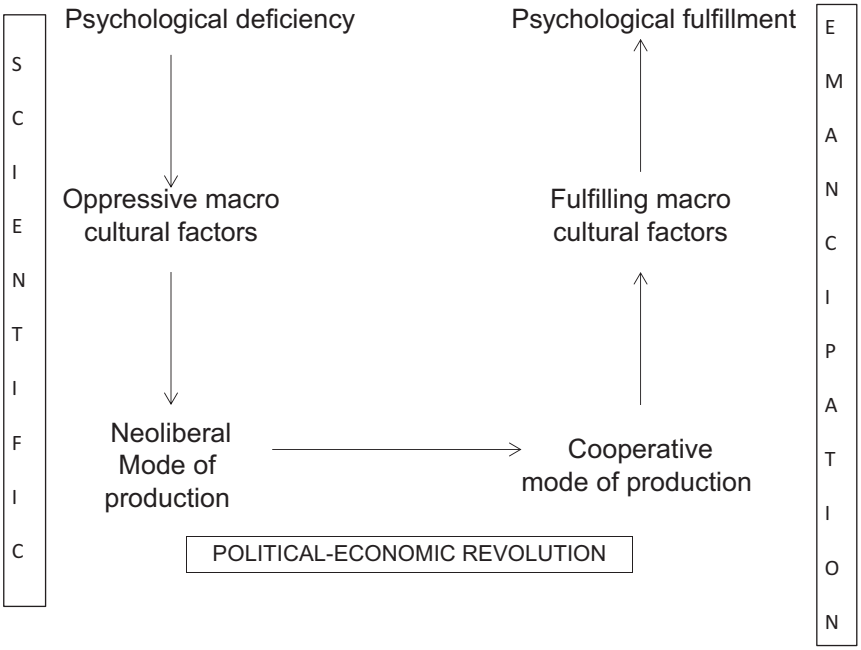


Fig. 4.2 Emancipatory, scientific methodology for analyzing and emancipating psychology and culture

Marx makes an important psychological point about this process. He says that transforming the mode of production to socialism generates fulfilled psychology through the macro cultural conditions it produces; in addition to these conditions, the act of participating in revolutionary change also generated fulfilling psychology. "Both for the production on a mass scale of this communist consciousness, and for the success of the cause itself, the alteration of men on a mass scale is, necessary, an alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, a revolution; this revolution is necessary, therefore, not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because *the class overthrowing it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew*" (https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/ch01d.htm). Thus, the revolutionary movement is a condition for galvanizing social-psychological trans-

formation, in addition to the particular macro cultural factors that the revolution establishes.

With political-economic transformation being key to social and psychological emancipation, we must use it as the criterion, or metric, of emancipation. Marx says this in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*: "The positive transcendence of *private property* as the appropriation of *human* life, is therefore the positive transcendence of all estrangement – that is to say, the return of man from religion, family, state, etc., to his *human*, i.e., *social,* existence."

We may measure proposals and practices for emancipation in terms of how closely they promote political-economic transformation, such as the positive transcendence of private property. The more they do so, the more emancipatory they are, that is, the more they transcend all estrangement. Their distance from political-economic reference and transformation is proportional to their lack of emancipatory power. (Our discussion of emancipation from slavery, in the Introduction, was based upon this conceptualization. Emancipation requires transforming the fundamental social relations of slavery; changes in food and working hours are not emancipatory.)

When emancipation is limited to intervening on particular macro cultural factors (e.g., schools) within the conical system, without transforming the political-economic core (as the middle, horizontal arrow indicates), this is reform that cannot be adequate because it leaves the oppressive political economy intact to permeate or oppose particular reforms. For example, "if you take any standardized test score, a teacher actually influences somewhere between 18 to 25 percent, depending on the study you're looking at, and everything else is actually external factors. There's all this stuff outside of schools that account for 75 percent of a test score. [This includes] things like food security, housing security, access to adequate healthcare, dental care, livable wages for their parents; these are the things that actually impact test scores" (https://truthout.org/audio/theyve-been-doing-this-massive-anti-democratic-model-of-education-reform/).

When intervention is limited to the psychological level, to enrich psychology on its own, as indicated in the top, horizontal arrow of Fig. 4.2 (e.g., via memory techniques, attention techniques, expressing or con-

trolling emotions, self-presentation techniques, communication techniques, interpersonal techniques such as respect or tolerance, or medication) without reforming oppressive cultural factors or the political economy, fulfillment is even more minimal. For it lacks material conditions to support fulfillment and to counter the powerful, material conditions of the status quo that oppose fulfillment. This makes typical psychology and psychiatry, as well as all forms of subjectivism (e.g., postmodernism, social constructionism), conservative and oppressive.

4.1.2 The Emancipatory Metric

We are thus in a position to outline a hierarchy of cultural-psychological levels of intervention that are ranked in terms of their capacity to generate fulfillment/enrichment. This may be depicted in Fig. 4.3. The relative power to effect emancipation is indicated by the strength or weakness of

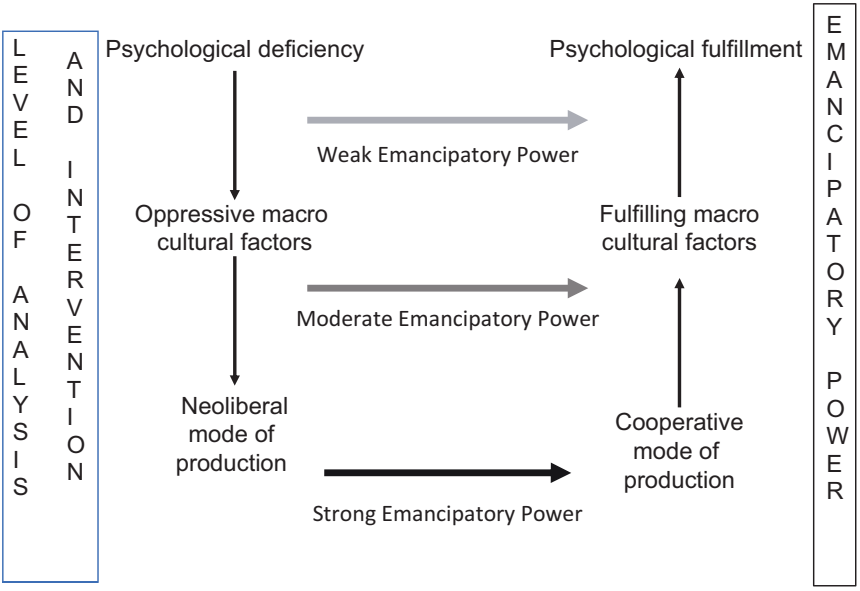


Fig. 4.3 Emancipation metric: level of analysis and intervention and power of emancipation

the shading on the horizontal arrows. This is also an indicator of whether the intervention is a reform or revolutionary. Effecting deep political-economic transformation is revolutionary, while all acts above this are various degrees of reform and ineffectiveness.

Marx presented an example of this analysis with regard to religious illusions: "The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness. To call on them to give up their illusions about their condition is to call on them to give up a condition that requires illusions" (A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/intro.htm).

According to Marx, people believe in illusory, supernatural forms of happiness—such as an afterlife in heaven—because they do not find happiness in life conditions. This materialist analysis of religion calls for improving real-life conditions (e.g., work, government), so that they generate happiness/fulfillment and people do not require illusory happiness.

Simply arguing against the ideology of religion and its illusory happiness is not emancipatory because it does not eradicate the oppressive conditions that generate illusory happiness. Marx is not criticizing people for believing in illusions. He criticizes oppressive conditions that allow for illusory happiness rather than genuine fulfillment.

This example can be mapped onto on regressive-progressive methodology in Fig. 4.3. Illusions of happiness are the psychological deficiency; this is traced to the proximal cause of religion in oppressive macro cultural factors, namely, religion; religion is traced to the oppressive political economy that debases, enslaves, and abandons people. Criticizing illusions must ultimately criticize its proximal and distal conditions and transform them.

In fact, illusions and religion are barometers of an oppressive political economy. They inform us about oppression, because they are products of oppression.

The emancipatory power of Marx's point of view is highlighted by replacing religious illusions with other social problems. Thus, "To call on people to give up their selfishness is to call on them to give up a condition that requires selfishness." "To call on people to give up poverty is to call on them to give up a condition that requires poverty." "To call on people

to give up racism is to call on them to give up a condition that requires racism." "To call on people to give up war is to call on them to give up a condition that requires war." "To call on people to give up pollution is to call on them to give up a condition that requires pollution."

Vygotsky clearly followed Marx in relation to psychology of oppression. This is why he said, "the source of the degradation of the personality in the capitalist form of manufacturing…cannot be resolved without the destruction of the capitalist system organization of industry…by the socialist revolution…Alongside this process, a change in the human personality and an alteration of man himself must inevitably take place." Martin-Baro expressed this idea in his critique of fatalism in Chap. 2. These authors confirm what is shown in Fig. 4.3.

4.1.3 A Caveat of the Model

This model explains the formation and enrichment of socially prevalent, psychological phenomena that are formed in (and formed by) macro cultural factors, which are objective, enduring, cohesive, macro cultural subsystems. This conical, cultural model does not claim that every single psychological phenomenon in every individual is deeply rooted in macro cultural subsystems that are ultimately tied to the political economy. Some phenomena are individual, interpersonal, or anomalous, and some are biological. The details of our model in Fig. 4.3 do not apply to these kinds of issues. These non-macro cultural issues do not require tracing to the political economy in order to be comprehended, critiqued, and reformed. They can be comprehended, critiqued, and reformed at lesser social levels, such as interpersonal interactions or anomalous individual conditions.

The level of formation and improvement of any psychological phenomenon is an empirical question. Because most social-psychological phenomena *are* macro cultural, and are therefore grounded in the political-economic core of macro culture, it is most scientific to initially investigate all social-psychological phenomena under this hypothesis. Only after this hypothesis is refuted by the failure to find macro cultural sources and features and demographics of social-psychological phenomena, can attention shift to alternative sources and features.

Let us now map various forms of emancipation onto Fig. 4.3 so that we can evaluate them. This is a vital contribution that cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology makes to social and psychological emancipation.

4.2 Pseudo-Emancipation

4.2.1 Individual, Psychological Level: Masculinity

Intervening at the individual, psychological level, via counseling, communication, linguistic changes, respectfulness, medicalization, punishment, conditioning, or retraining, is the least effective in enriching psychology. The reason is that it treats individual symptoms of social problems without eradicating their social causes. Since cultural factors/subsystems are the major source of psychology, they continue to maintain psychological oppression/debilitation in contradiction to the interventions that strive to enrich psychology. Thus, individual forms of emancipation actually reproduce oppression.

For example, changing the individual-interpersonal treatment of disadvantaged people, by using respectful language and body posture, feels good momentarily; however, it does nothing to improve their material conditions. Firing a workforce by using respectful language, and an apologetic tone, does nothing to save their jobs. On the contrary, it disguises the violence of the economic act with superficial language of kindness.

This means that when oppressed people treat their oppression in interpersonal terms of lack of dignity and respect, and frame their demands for improvement in these humanistic, populist terms for more dignity and respect, they are consigning themselves to continued oppression. For their demands sidestep the major elements of their oppression, which are political-economic conditions.

The American Psychological Association (APA) exemplifies the characteristics and weaknesses of individual, psychological reform. In August, 2018, it issued guidelines for rethinking and reforming "masculinity." "The beneficiaries of these guidelines include all consumers of psychological practice including clients, students, supervisees, research participants, consultees, and other health professionals. Although the guidelines

and supporting literature place substantial emphasis on psychotherapy practice, the general guidelines are applicable to all psychological practice (e.g., individual, couples and family work, group work, psychoeducational programming, consultation, prevention, teaching, career counseling) across multiple helping professions (e.g., nursing, social work, counseling, school counseling, psychiatry)" (https://www.apa.org/monitor/2019/01/ce-corner.aspx; https://www.apa.org/about/policy/boys-men-practice-guidelines.pdf).

APA's message is that "Traditional masculinity is psychologically harmful." APA recognizes masculinity as a cultural schema of psychological expressions, such as emotional control, self-sufficiency, success oriented, violent, and tough. However, APA does not trace these stereotyped schemas to concrete, macro cultural factors such as the demands of work and competition in neoliberal capitalism. It does not utilize the masculine cultural schema to critique and change the cultural system as a way to reduce problematical masculine psychology. On the contrary, APA *psychologizes* masculine psychology. It *removes* it from its macro base, and it moves up (Fig. 4.3) to reduce it to a purely psychological phenomenon. "Researchers in the psychology of men and masculinity have identified that insecurities stemming from early childhood experiences (such as attachment insecurities) are linked to adherence to traditional masculinity ideology [and practices, e.g., violence]" (ibid., p. 10). The cultural stereotype is thus mediated by attachment insecurity. If this can be minimized, then the stereotype will be ignored and is harmless. We can minimize cultural problems through psychological interventions.

APA renounces its initial cultural observation that male masculinity is a cultural psychology, not individual psychology. APA intervenes to directly modify men's individual psychological expressions in a humanistic direction.

APA's strategy leaves the masculine cultural schema in place, along with the macro cultural system that generates it. APA simply works on the psychology of individual men. "Although the cultural and societal pressures to endorse, conform to, and perform dominant masculinity are considerable, men still have agency and can part from dominant ideals." "Psychologists aspire to help boys and men over their lifetimes navigate restrictive definitions of masculinity and create their own concepts of what it means to be

male." "Research suggests that helping men understand the negative consequences of sexism for themselves and their relationships with others reduces endorsement of sexist attitudes" (ibid., pp. 6, 7, 10).

This is agency-as-escapism. Agency circumvents the system while leaving it in place. This is an ineffective methodology for psychological and cultural enrichment. These ineffective changes are then touted as improving society, because individual men treat themselves and others more expressively and caringly. "Getting that message out to men—that they're adaptable, emotional and capable of engaging fully outside of rigid norms—is what the new guidelines are designed to do. And if psychologists can focus on supporting men in breaking free of masculinity rules that don't help them, the effects could spread beyond just mental health for men. If we can change men [i.e., men's emotionality apart from structures and dominant ideals] we can change the world."

APA seeks to change masculine emotions to become softer, more adaptable, more expressive, and more open to non-normative acts. There is no reason given for these alternatives. They are simply the opposite of the debilitating masculinity that is normative. If psychology X is debilitating, then let's try its opposite, psychology Q. This is an internal psychological inversion. It operates as shown at the top of Fig. 4.3. It seeks to alter emotions on the individual, psychological level. No cultural-political-economic change in macro cultural factors is envisioned. The final APA guideline about masculinity concerns striving to change institutional problems affecting boys and men; however, the only suggested change is education/awareness about gender stereotypes and introducing non-traditional masculine values. There is no mention of political-economic social relations that are cooperative, collective, egalitarian, democratic, and peaceful in order to change masculine emotionality. There is no need to eradicate economic competition, private property, the profit motive, and militarism.

APA imagines that contentless, abstract, isolated, self-contained, psychological change in individual men will change the world. This is sheer fantasy.

APA's methodology is depicted in Fig. 4.4.

Of course, this is not viable. It makes the solution to cultural problems imaginary. It violates the principles of cultural-historical/macro cultural

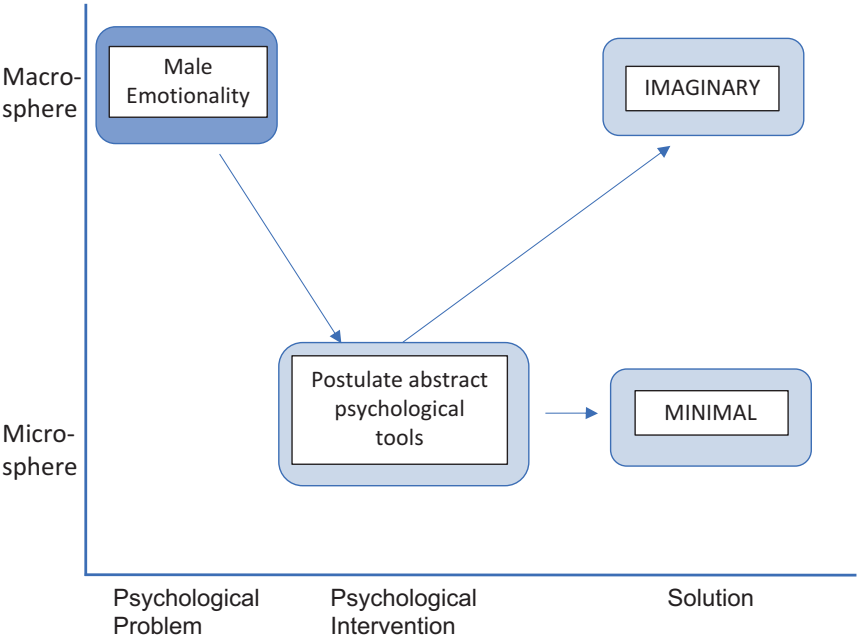


Fig. 4.4 American Psychological Association's psychological intervention to improve psychology and society

Psychology in three ways. (1) Psychology cannot be improved on the psychological level; it requires macro cultural change; (2) social change must occur on the macro cultural level via political change; social change is not possible from individual psychological changes. That would be reductionistic; (3) psychological and social change cannot be generated by abstract psychological and social processes.

The APA's intervention also produces minimal improvement for the individual as the cultural-psychological tools that generate the psychological problem are overlooked. Instead, minor interpersonal relations are emphasized in abstract terms.

4.2.2 Patriarchy: An Inadequate Construct for Explaining Masculinity and Sexism

"Patriarchy" is an inadequate construct for explaining the reality of masculinity. It simply means that men control more wealth and power in

society than women do. However, this does not account for the concrete details of masculinity which are identified as individualistic, uncaring, unemotional, estranged, competitive, arrogant, controlling, and tough. These are attributes of capitalism, not patriarchy. In patriarchy, men *could* organize their *relatively* greater wealth and power in any number of ways that have nothing to do with the qualities that are identified as patriarchal. It is conceivable that men could organize their enterprises in a cooperative system with other men. This is akin to the way in which many private businesses belong to a cooperative system of capitalists. In the US, Ace Hardware stores are private businesses run by capitalist owners who collectively support the common Ace brand, follow common standards, and use common wholesale suppliers. Men could follow this lead in organizing their wealth and power. This would introduce a cooperative, considerate psychology into men. They would not be aggressive and competitive and egocentric (at least not in their relations with men), although they would still be patriarchal in their relative power vis-à-vis women. There is nothing about patriarchy that would prevent this. Patriarchy has few inherent, necessary characteristics. Male patriarchs could even practice noblesse oblige in relation to women; they would not necessarily act as how men stereotypically act today. In other words, the problems of masculinity are not captured by patriarchy and are not solved by simply readjusting the wealth and power of the genders.

Eliminating patriarchy would not necessarily produce amicable social relations between men and women or between men and men. Patriarchy could be eliminated by introducing competition between the genders which might reduce inequality in the wealth and power that is owned more by men relative to women. This competitive solution to patriarchy would only intensify competition among people; it would not promote harmony, caring, support, or intimacy. These can only be achieved through a concrete, political-economic transformation in social relations toward cooperation and collectivism. Merely adjusting the relative wealth and power of individuals or groups is not a transformation in the quality of their social relations. This is the problem with abstractions such as patriarchy: it has little definite content and generates few definite alternatives regarding social relations among people. Capitalism, in contrast, is laden with concrete social content and calls for concrete alternative con-

tent that is cooperative, collective, and amicable. Capitalism is what makes patriarchy/masculinity individualistic, distant, unemotional, and non-communicative.

Marx brilliantly realized that the general problems of exploitation, class, inequality, alienation, sexism, and racism cannot be solved as such on the general, abstract level. They can only be solved on concrete level by transforming capitalism into socialism. Capitalism provides the potential solution to all of these historical, general problems by generating the conditions that can eradicate all of them. Marx said (in *The Poverty of Philosophy*) "The condition for the emancipation of the [capitalist] working class is the abolition of every class." This is capitalism's contribution to humanity. It is the only social system that contains the seeds of emancipation. Socialism realizes all the great abstract attributes of humans, such as their species-being and their ability to collectively, harmoniously, and democratically control their common social life. Emancipation depends upon realizing the emancipatory potential that is contained in capitalist conditions. Emancipation cannot be achieved by people discussing wishful ideals that are not grounded in the concrete conditions for emancipation in capitalism.

The model in Fig. 4.4 represents most reform strategies. They commence with an interest in concrete, macro cultural factors; however, instead of deepening this relationship through analysis and intervention, they detour away from it in their analyses and interventions. This takes an ingenious diversity of maneuvers. Advocates of these detouring maneuvers regard them as successful reforms. APA believes that men have become emotionally liberated and fulfilled if they display abstract qualities of softness, adaptability, care, and respectfulness. Advocates reduce emancipation to their reformist interventions; they reduce the ideal to the fact.

Individual psychological interventions distract attention from macro cultural factors/subsystems. They create the appearance that these factors are not blameworthy for psychological problems. Thus, individual-level intervention not only ignores the social roots of social-psychological problems but also obfuscates them, increases them, and prevents emancipation from them.

4.2.3 Punishment

Punishment is another intervention that exemplifies the individual treatment of social problems, as shown at the top of Fig. 4.3. It makes crime appear to be a violation of social norms, rather than an extension of social norms; crime is made a pathology rather than normalcy. This is ideological nature and function of punishment.

Punishment is far more than a control of bad behavior. It is an episteme about the nature of crime, society, and psychology. Punishment is a political, ideological episteme. It locates the source of bad behavior in individual miscreants, where it exists as exceptional and abnormal. This treatment of bad behavior casts society as normal and good. Social leaders who defend society against abnormal, exceptional miscreants are similarly paragons of social virtue. This is the political, ideological character of punishment (Ratner 2017b, 2019, pp. 103–141).

Punishment inverts the social architecture of crime. Crime is the result of exploitive social relations that empower and enrich the social elite (Ratner 2019). Crime thus has a basis in normal society. The leaders of normal society are therefore the real criminals and miscreants who promote and engage in bad behavior. Corporate and political crimes are far worse than individual crimes of the populace. Shifting the focus to individual crimes of the populace ideologically inverts the causes of crime and the criminal character of normal society. Punishment creates a straw man, a red herring, for people to focus on, while ignoring the actual, normative causes. Ironically, this strategy proliferates crime, while the social leaders who generated it appear to be virtuous protectors of the social good.

Corruption in China illustrates this pattern. After many years of anti-corruption policies that include universal surveillance, corruption continues to increase and to be punished. In all, 256,000 cases of official graft (in party and government departments, state-owned enterprises, institutes, and universities) were filed from January to June, 2017, compared with 193,000 cases in the same period in 2016 (*China Daily*, Sept. 8, 2017). These annual figures aggregate to more than 1.5 million officials (ranging from village committee members to some of the country's most powerful bureaucrats) over the past six years having been sanctioned as part of the crackdown. "Some 526,000 Chinese Communist Party

members received punishment from the Party for corruption in 2018, according to a new report by the Party's corruption watchdog, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection" (Caixin, Feb. 21, 2019; https://www.caixinglobal.com/2019-02-21/half-a-million-party-members-penalized-for-corruption-in-2018-101382151.html).

Similarly, "Recent Environmental Ministry inspections found that one-third of manufacturers in northern China had tampered with emissions data to avoid heavy penalties. To clamp down on the widespread tampering of pollution monitoring equipment, the country's top court and prosecutor's office in December made it a criminal offense on par with destroying computer data, a crime that is punishable by up to 25 years in jail" (*Caixin*, Feb. 2, 2018; https://www.caixinglobal.com/2017-04-06/northern-china-chokes-on-fake-emissions-data-101075101.html).

The massive failure of punishment testifies to the historical-materialist explanation of crime as rooted in the political-economic base of society. This common base of the conical social system accounts for the simultaneous diversity of expressions of that base. It is the neoliberal capitalist policies, which the communist party originated and promotes, that foster self-gain and profit at all costs. This is the cause of the enormous magnitude and diversity of these kinds of activities by the people. These include ingenious forms of corruption such as peasants using poisonous chemicals to grow food that looks good and has a long shelf life and peasants illegally planting genetically altered seeds to reduce production costs of farming. "A Greenpeace report in 2016 said that **93% of corn** produced in the northeastern province of Liaoning was genetically modified" (Zhou and Teng 2019). The Chinese billionaire class sequesters corporate profits in off-shore tax havens, thereby depriving the government and society of tax revenue. Some public school teachers teach poorly so that their students will require supplementary private tutelage after school, which the teachers provide for higher wages than their salaries. The government sought to prevent this poor teaching by prohibiting (punishing) teachers from teaching their students privately after school.

These ingenious forms of self-serving corruption are not coincidental occurrences. They occur simultaneously throughout China which proves they have a common, active basis. Party leaders refuse to recognize this structural cause of corruption. They invert this pattern and blame and

punish individuals for their "deviant" behavior. In fact, corruption is not deviant; it recapitulates in ingenious but essential forms, the capitalist practices and values promoted by party leaders.

Crimes and punishment always indicate social policies which instigate the crimes. Every new form of punishment to control crime testifies to the deeper presence of more powerful social policies that promote crime. This explains why in China, "As the anti-corruption campaign enters its seventh year, it shows few signs of letting up" (*Caixin*, Dec. 8, 2018; https://www.caixinglobal.com/2018-12-08/in-chinese-corruption-cases-whos-taking-what-101356912.html).

The anti-corruption campaign is a form of ideology. It appears to be government controlling corruption; however, this is really a ritual that disguises the government's promoting of corruption through its own capitalist practices.

Draconian controls and punishments can intimidate people into abandoning criminal activities. This "success" is actually failure because it is achieved through brute force rather than by popular acceptance of social and ethical issues.

4.2.4 Macro Cultural Factors

Moving away from intervening on the individual psychological level to reforming macro cultural factors—such as schools, hospitals, media, churches, family, and political parties—offers more promise for solving social-psychological problems. The reason is that these macro cultural factors are powerful organizers of psychology. They are not the central core of society; however, they are important elements. Improving them has potential for enriching psychology that is associated with them. However, this potential is limited because it leaves the most central, powerful cultural intact, namely, the political economy. This leaves oppressive features of this most powerful social factor intact to contradict reforms in the institutions.

I shall illustrate this point with four cases: pollution, mental illness, education, and civil rights for race and gender. These interventions seek to reform specific cultural factors while ignoring the political economy.

a) Pollution

Global agreements to reduce pollution via institutional and technological means have been ineffective. According to UK's national meteorological service, the Met Office, despite the Paris Agreement in 2015, fossil fuel usage had its largest increase in seven years in 2018. In 2019, Met Office climate scientists expect that atmospheric carbon-dioxide concentration will be greater than that in 2018. This annual increase is one of the largest rises in atmospheric carbon-dioxide concentration in 62 years. World temperature has increased apace. The year 2019 will be close to the hottest year in recorded history (which was 2016).

The reason for the institutional and technological failures is that the capitalist mode of production remains intact. This is obscured with terms such as "green jobs" that are ecologically positive. Green jobs remain green *capitalist* jobs; they are *capitalist* green jobs. The ecology movement thus expands the capitalist political economy; it does not contradict it. Capitalism's competitive drive for expansion and profit generates increased production at the cheapest price. Fossil fuels are cheaper for producing units of energy for production than renewable fuels are. The largest economies are dominated by political and business leaders who expand capitalist production and profit. This produces pollution and global warming. No technological agreement will stop this drive from the political-economic core. China, for example, has slowed its fight against pollution in order to boost economic growth. Chinese news, *Caixin*, acknowledges that "Carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuel burning – the primary cause of climate change – will grow for a second consecutive year in 2018, according to a new report which predicts China's emissions will increase by 4.7%. (U.S. emissions will increase 2.5%). In 2017 and 2018, China's coal consumption increased – mainly due to its increased use in steel and chemical production and other industries." "More than $6.64 billion worth of new coal-mining projects were approved in 2018, a great deal more than in 2017" (https://www.caixinglobal.com/2018-12-06/chinas-carbon-footprint-swells-to-record-size-101356360.html; https://www.caixinglobal.com/2019-01-31/chinas-coal-plants-continue-to-pump-millions-of-tons-of-methane-into-the-atmosphere-101376846.html).

China has also expanded worldwide pollution by becoming a world leader in building coal-energy plants outside of China (Ratner 2019,

p. 84). This global drive for market share and capital accumulation offsets much of the domestic ecological protections.

Pollution will only be controlled if the capitalist mode of production is transformed. This requires a massive change in social organization, urban planning, living and working communities, and consumption-production.

b) Mental Illness

A news report in China acknowledges a rising prevalence of mental illness (*Caixin*, Feb. 22, 2019; https://www.caixinglobal.com/2019-02-22/depression-and-anxiety-on-the-rise-in-china-study-shows-101382764.html). In all, 17% of the population has experienced mental illness during their lifetime, according to the China Mental Health Survey. Chinese psychiatrists and public health officials attribute the increase to a greater willingness of people to acknowledge mental symptoms, and also to "rapid social change." Rapid social change is a macro cultural factor. It is therefore more informative than individual explanations such as genetic predisposition or hormonal abnormalities. However, this cultural explanation is inadequate.

It is an abstraction devoid of content. It does not specify what "rapid" means. It could mean within one year or within three decades. It could mean gradual rapid change or sudden change. These would generate different experiences.

The speed of social change is a pseudo macro cultural factor. Speed alone does not determine people's experiences and affects. It is always concrete content of social change that determines the prevalence of hardship and mental problems. It depends upon the motive for social change, the *kind* of social change that occurs, and the manner in which change is managed. If the society supported people financially, socially, and psychologically during rapid change, it could be pleasant. If starving people were rapidly provided with food and jobs, or if there were rapid change toward democratic socialism, where the working people were empowered to control their society, this would bring joy to people, not disturbance. It is only when rapid social change entails the opposite content and management that it generates mental illness.

The increased prevalence of mental illness in China is rooted in the motive for rapid change (which is the capitalist motive of accumulating profit through exploitive labor), the content of the change, and the manner in which it is managed. Rapid social change is a euphemism for capitalism which obfuscates the motive, the form, and the content of social change. Mental illness is a reflection of fundamental social problems that are caused by official social policies (Ratner 2019). Social leaders do not want to change their policies because they bring wealth and status to the leaders and to the capitalist class. Consequently, social leaders shift the cause of mental illness away from specific social policies (that promote capitalist social relations and stresses), to abstract, impersonal factors such as speed of change. These are not the real problems and will never be slowed under the neo-capitalist regime. All of this social critique that suicide offers is blocked out in the phrasing of the *Caixin* article. This incapacitates solving the psychological problems.

c) Education

Educational reforms cannot solve educational problems in the form of education and its unequal distribution. The reason is that these problems are generated by the political economy and are functional for the political economy (Ratner 2019, pp. 87–102; Erickson 2017). For example, in 2015, only 4% of Detroit public school eighth graders were proficient in math and only 7% were proficient in reading.

Reay (2017, pp. 11, 175–176) explains the problem succinctly:

> In 1970 Basil Bernstein wrote that 'education cannot compensate for society'. This chapter argues that the main reason why is that we have an educational system that is enmeshed in, and increasingly driven by, the economy, rather than one that is capable of redressing economic inequalities. It is a system that both mirrors and reproduces the hierarchical class relationships in wider society.
>
> Despite myriad educational policy changes, the English educational system is still one that educates individuals according to their class background. It remains a segregated system where different social classes are largely educated apart rather than together. Also, the ways in which social

> mobility operates to dislocate the educationally successful working classes from their communities of origin is just as pervasive as it was in the 1950s.

Clearly, education can only be improved in an emancipatory manner if its neoliberal political roots are transformed. Attempting to reform education within itself can never succeed because its neoliberal roots anchor it in oppressive needs and objectives of the capitalist class structure. Reform efforts are as futile as trying to cure diseases of people living on a toxic waste site. Their ineffectiveness makes them oppressive, for it consigns people to the toxic environment under the illusion of improvement. Reforms misdirect people to false solutions, which sustain their oppression. Reforms are not incomplete solutions; they are impediments to solutions because they obfuscate the need for deep, viable, necessary solutions.

Rooks (2017, pp. xiii–xiv) provides an excellent example of the insufficiency of educational reforms. The American School Improvement Grants program awarded billions of dollars to struggling schools between 2010 and 2013. "The money went directly to states to distribute to the poorest-performing schools…At the end of 2016, a federal analysis showed that test scores, graduation rates, and college enrollment were no different in schools that received money than in schools that did not." Black and poor students did not close the class-race gap in education. In fact, the deficit accumulated: in 2013, only 13.8% of black fourth graders in South Carolina scored proficiently in math, compared to 48% of white fourth graders. By eighth grade, the math-proficiency rate for black students dropped to 10.5% compared to 44.6% for whites.

This exemplifies my point about reforms impeding emancipation, not pointing the way for emancipation.

Racial solutions to education suffer from this same inadequacy because they do not reach the political-economic core of education. "While the standardized testing gap between people of color and whites and Asian Americans is bad, it's nothing compared to the gap between the poor and the wealthy. A 2014 study by the Annie E. Casey Foundation found that the gap for achievement test scores between rich and poor had grown by almost 60 percent between the 1960s and 2014 to be almost twice as large as the gap between white students and children of other races"

(Rooks 2017, p. 76). This is the result of half a century of civil rights laws. Attempts at equalizing intellectual competencies by focusing on race or gender apart from social class are futile and also misleading for identifying viable, necessary emancipation.

In addition, equalization strategies are deficient because of the problem I mentioned earlier, namely, they equalize neoliberal forms of knowledge. They fail to comprehend the capitalist form of intelligence that is inherently stultifying even when its quantitative distribution is increased.

A 2018 article on cognitive abilities of school children confirms decades of solid research in concluding cognitive competencies are formed by social class long before children have a chance to invest in their own development: "We observe a large parental social class effect, net of parental education and gender in both cohorts. The overall finding is that large social class divisions in cognitive ability can be observed when children are still at primary school, and similar patterns are observed in each cohort" (Connelly and Gayle 2018).

Education cannot solve this class problem because it operates with the class system and is a tool for preserving the class system and its problems, which are profitable for the upper class (Ratner 2019, pp. 87–102).

Social class determines education, not the converse. Two of the three major international tests—the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study and the Trends in International Math and Science Study—break down student scores according to the poverty rate in each school. The tests are given every five years. The 2006 results showed that students in US schools where the poverty rate was less than 10% ranked first in reading, first in science, and third in math. When the poverty rate ranged from 10% to 25%, US students still ranked first in reading and science. But as the poverty rate rose still higher, students ranked lower and lower. Twenty percent of all US schools have poverty rates over 75%. The average ranking of American students reflects this (Barkan, 2011; https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/got-dough-how-billionaires-rule-our-schools).

The historical-materialist nature of education was emphasized by Vygotsky. He explained the deep social transformation of the political-economic class structure that is necessary to improve the educational macro cultural factor. "Questions of education will be fully solved only when questions of social order have been fully solved. Every attempt at constructing

educational ideals in a society with social contradictions is a utopian dream. *The social environment is the only educational factor that can establish new reactions in the child*, and so long as it harbors unresolved contradictions [e.g., contradictions among social classes], these contradictions will create cracks in the most well thought-out and most inspired educational system." "The crucial questions of education can be solved in no other way than through the resolution of the social question in all its entirety" Vygotsky (1997b, pp. 236, 210, my emphasis). Here, Vygotsky tells us that society is the main educational factor, and school is only one component of educational activity. This full, historical-materialist conception of education reveals that resolving the social question in its entirety means transforming the capitalist political economy into socialism. Education calls for social transformation because it is a total social fact that crystalizes the political-economic system.

This is evident in the case of attributing students' low test scores to teachers' incompetence. "if you take any standardized test score, a teacher actually influences somewhere between 18 to 25 percent, depending on the study you're looking at, and everything else is actually external factors. There's all this stuff outside of schools that account for 75 percent of a test score. [This includes] things like food security, housing security, access to adequate healthcare, dental care, livable wages for their parents; these are the things that actually impact test scores" (https://truthout.org/audio/theyve-been-doing-this-massive-anti-democratic-model-of-education-reform/).

4.2.5 Civil Rights for Race and Gender

Civil rights seek to reform macro cultural factors by equalizing the treatment of individuals within them. This inclusive equality of opportunity for diverse, marginalized peoples, is the definition of justice. This rejection of discrimination in institutions is a positive kind of reform. However, it remains extremely limited.

Its limitation is that it seeks to bring marginalized into the mainstream society without questioning this society. It does not challenge exploitation, alienation, commodification, egotism, materialism, the profit motive, pollution, corruption, or social class. It simply integrates margin-

alized people into this system. It applauds institutions for integrating women and minorities into the military, corporations, and athletics. And it applauds women and minorities for succeeding in these institutions. It never criticizes the social relations of these institutions. Equalizing gender and racial participation in them is its only concern. For example, the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 7, proclaims, "All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law." If the law allows capitalists to relocate a factory to China, that is acceptable as long as all the employees are fired equally.

Civil rights is the right to fully participate in mainstream society without discrimination against personal or cultural differences. It accepts and accommodates those differences within mainstream society. Civil rights does not transform mainstream society. On the contrary, it extends the mainstream to more people.

Accepting women and minorities into corporations or the military settles them into the existing structures. It settles most women and minorities into worker roles, along with white males, and it accepts a few women and minorities into the upper class, along with the elite few white males. Civil rights accepts existing structures and social relations. It simply adds marginalized people to them.

This is a conservative strategy that simply expands all the problematical institutions and artifacts to more individuals. And it obfuscates the problems by extolling the institutional openness, tolerance, and respect for marginalized people. The fact that the military accepts blacks and women into its ranks obscures the content of what those ranks entail. Civil rights never question the imperialist politics of the American military, they never question the vast destruction of countries that this institution carries out. They simply press for women and minorities to participate in this destruction. And they applaud this participation in destruction as somehow liberating.

Women are now the CEOs of four out of the country's five biggest military contractors. The Pentagon's top weapons buyer and the chief overseer of the nation's nuclear stockpile now join other women in some of the most influential national security posts. Weapons contractors are working hard to sell a progressive, pro-women brand to the public.

Raytheon and other firms spend millions on public relations painting themselves as noble empowerers of women and girls in the sciences. Gina Haspel, who once oversaw torture at a black site in Thailand, now runs the CIA, and the Trump administration defended her from critics of torture by pointing out the fact that she is a woman.

This result follows from the flawed notion of feminist civil rights that seeks social change by greater inclusiveness for women, and equal rights with men, within society. With the feminist focus on including women in the leadership of mainstream society, and the feminist insistence on accepting and respecting and trusting and believing women in what they say and do, women's choices to lead defense companies and the CIA must be respected and trusted and embraced within the feminist framework. Defending Haspel as a woman making choices to define and empower herself, and to break the glass ceiling of male leadership is perfect feminism. It is exactly the reason that liberal, feminist, Democrat, Hilary Clinton gave for deserving to be elected President.

The feminist focus on gender inclusiveness, devoid of concrete politics, is powerless to repudiate conservative politics – just as the liberal, abstract, civil rights notion of free speech is powerless to repudiate reactionary speech from being espoused.

Equal content for all participants includes equal exploitation of all people. Civil rights only prohibits unequal oppression. It does not prohibit equal, oppression. As long as men and women workers are oppressed equally, civil rights advocates are silent. They only complain when women are oppressed more than men.

Civil rights prohibits exclusion but not exploitation. It only opposes particular oppression of particular groups, it does not oppose general oppression of all groups. It only uplifts super-oppression to general oppression. It does not uplift general oppression to general emancipation.

Assisting the super-exploited to join the generally exploited proletariat is not at all emancipatory. It certainly does nothing to emancipate the exploited proletariat. This is why it can never attract the sincere involvement of the generally exploited. It never forms the basis of a common struggle for emancipation. It is always confined to the super-exploited minority. This often stirs resentment among the exploited majority. Poor whites are left out of the benefits of civil rights. Their general exploitation

is never addressed. They are correct in exposing and opposing the limited focus of civil rights. Civil rights is deeply flawed in not attacking the nature of mainstream, normal society that marginalized people enter. It leaves society under the control of capitalism. Civil rights does nothing to alter the occupational system; it does not call for expanding occupations, which would require different political-economic policies. Civil rights thus forces marginalized groups to compete within the restricted occupational system that is designed to generate profit, not employment. White men who lose their jobs and benefits to competition from women and minorities defend their benefits by vilifying the progressive politicians who passed civil rights laws, or by vilifying the women and minorities who are competing for their jobs and benefits. White, working men do not perceive the real solution to their precarity, which would entail reorganizing the political economy. This is the solution that civil rights activists should raise, as the means for achieving true, full equality of all working people. It is the solution that cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology, and historical materialism, propose.

Civil rights advocates oppose general emancipation. When poor white people complain that they are excluded from civil rights benefits – such as admission to universities – and that civil rights for minorities is unfair, civil rights advocates denounce them as racist bigots! Civil rights claim that white, working men are preserving their privileged status as racists and sexists. Civil rights advocates transform oppressed working men into the power elite who must give up their privileges and share them with marginalized people. Incredible, these advocates do not attack the privileges that capitalists have! In reality, civil rights is selfish because it supports particular, marginalized groups. It does not support all exploited people.

Civil rights equality and justice only pertain to race and gender, not to class! Civil rights accept the hierarchical class structure of capitalists owning and controlling institutions and resources, as long as they treat minorities and majorities equally. They seek equality within inequality; dignity within exploitation; rights within autocracy. Civil rights is horizontal equality not vertical equality. It is equality within rank/class but not between classes.

Karl Marx always insisted that civil rights for equality must rest upon transforming the class system. He condemned isolated civil rights that

demand equality without transforming the class system. In 1870, in a "Confidential Communication on Bakunin," he criticized French distortions of his principles that had been adopted into the International Working Men's Association General Assembly Statutes: "the naive doctrines of *L'Égalité* and *Progres* about the … nonexistence of any connection between the social and political movements … run counter to our Statutes, which state: … 'The struggle for the emancipation of the working classes means… a struggle… for equal rights and duties, and the abolition of all class rule.' The Paris translation speaks of 'equal rights and duties;' that is, it reproduces general phrases found virtually in all democratic manifestoes of the hundred years and differently interpreted by different classes, but omits the concrete demand: *The abolition of all class rule*" (https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1870/03/28.htm).

The conservative, pernicious orientation of the civil rights perspective culminates in its repudiating movements for radical, comprehensive transformation. When Martin Luther King made this connection between civil rights and broad, anti-capitalist issues such as anti-imperialism (e.g., opposing the US invasion of Vietnam), anti-poverty, and anti-materialism (anti-profit motive), he was condemned, marginalized, and murdered for it. He was condemned not only by the power elite of politicians, industrialists, and the media but also by the vast majority of black people who believed that his radicalism distracted from the narrow issue of racism. The truth was that his radicalism was the only effective correction to racism, while the popular belief in civil rights distracted from correcting it.

4.2.6 Gender

Gender inequalities have been seriously addressed in various institutional reforms. However, these reforms never transform the inequality of the class structure, nor do they transform the political-economic basis of gender inequalities.

Capitalist managers are criticized for *gender inequality* on boards of directors and proportion of CEOs. Civil rights never criticize capitalists for *class inequality* that results from exploiting workers. They never criti-

cize CEOs for excluding masses of women workers from decision-making and profit sharing. Gender inequality at the executive level is solved by recruiting capitalist women, who have gone through capitalist social-economic training, on board. This solution leaves class inequality intact.

Civil rights criticize a CEO for denying a few women seats on the board of directors; however, they are silent when CEOs pay all the women workers wages that are far lower than the value of what they produce. Civil rights complains when women workers earn 15–20% less than men's salaries for the same job, that is, within the same class position; however, they accept women workers earning 286 times less than corporate management in different classes. Feminists never complain about the *class divide among women/"sisters*" that allows women executives to discriminate against women workers.

This proves the conservatism of civil rights. It protects and preserves class inequality. Feminism can never support sisterhood and *women's rights* because *feminism accepts (capitalist) women exploiting (working) women, while promoting women's solidarity*! Feminism cannot oppose "classism" because its sole focus is on intra-class inequality. This *accepts classism*, or inter-class differences, among women. Feminists' claims about women's sisterhood/solidarity and women's psychology (which is supposed to be more caring and peaceable than men's) are belied by its acceptance of social class which divides women.

Feminism claims that it is working to eradicate all gender oppression, when it only works to eradicate horizontal gender discrimination. It proclaims general victory over sexism when only a small part of it is reduced. This disguises the continued oppression of women through social class. Feminism is limited reformism; it is not general emancipation for women. It never says, "after we have reduced intra-class sexism, we are moving to eradicate the far more serious inter-class sexism."

It is crucial to differentiate the two forms of sexism in order to analyze them and eradicate both of them. We begin by linguistically differentiating them as *class sexism* and *gender sexism*. Feminists only recognize the latter, although the former is more oppressive. This can be demonstrated by comparing the gender inequality among various gender and class positions. Figure 4.5 identifies gender relations within and between social classes. We can then assess where gender inequality is greater or lesser.

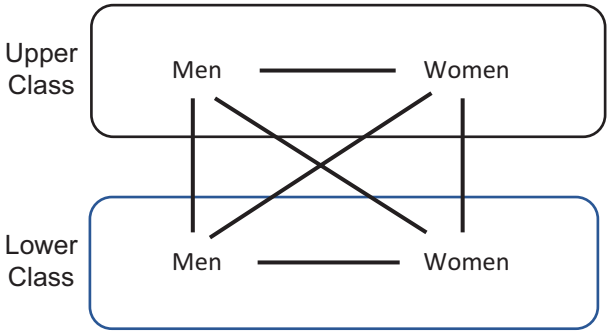


Fig. 4.5 Class, gender, and inequality

I have mentioned that gender inequality in wealth is much greater in gender relations between classes (*class sexism*) than in gender relations within classes (*gender sexism*). Male executives earn 286 times more than female workers, whereas male workers only earn 20% more than female workers. The reason is that capitalism is one of the most exploitive and unequal economic systems in human existence (Ratner 2019). This carries men and women of the capitalist class to heights of wealth and power far above men and women of the working class. For instance, 26 capitalists own as much wealth as the poorest one-half of the world's population (3.6 billion people). Three capitalists—Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, and Warren Buffett—own more wealth than the bottom half of the American population. No purely gender inequality—within social classes, that is independent of class differences—compares with this class inequality. Within the working class, there are not three men who control more wealth than half the women control.

Women workers are exploited more on account of being *workers* than being *women*. Yet feminists emphasize the *female gender dimension* of exploitation rather than the *female worker dimension*.

Figure 4.5 reveals that

- Horizontal wage differences between men and women within the upper class are much smaller than vertical, gender wage inequality. Bill Gates' income is closer to his wife's than it is to a waitress's. Class sexism is greater than gender sexism.

- Women of the upper class have much more wealth and power than lower class women. Class differences overpower gender.
- Upper class women have more income and wealth than lower class *men*. Class supersedes gender as a determinant of gender inequality. This is reverse sexism that is caused by class.
- Upper class men have a larger wealth gap with lower class men than with upper class women. Bill Gates' income is closer to his wife's than it is to a waiter's. This demonstrates that class inequality is greater than gender inequality. The high male-male wage/wealth inequality between the two classes proves the "normal" exploitation that we have discussed. Capitalists do not require super-exploitation of women and minorities in order to make a profit. In fact, inter-class male-male inequality is much greater than within-class male-female inequality.
- The horizontal gender inequality in the upper class is much greater than in the lower class. (Billionaire men have billions more money than their wives. Lower class men have only a little more money than their wives.) Degree of sexism is determined by social class; it is not a constant variable of gender.
- There is no occurrence of gender inequality larger than class inequality.

The same is true for class and race. The white-black racial wealth gap is 15 times. The intra-race class difference between richest blacks and the average black family is 200 times. Black inequality far exceeds white-black inequality. Emancipation for the average black family requires attacking wealthy blacks more than average whites (Taylor 2016). These comparisons demonstrate that class sexism is far more unequal than gender sexism. Class is so powerful that it completely overrides gender. Upper class women are richer than lower class men; upper class men are richer than working men of the same gender; and upper class women are richer than working-class women of the same gender.

Feminists choose to emphasize the lesser problem of gender sexism, and they ignore the greater problem of class sexism. Class sexism is the greater problem not only because of the quantitative difference in income, but also because class sexism is foundational to gender sexism. Class sexism is the economic exploitation of women that is the root of social and cultural gender sexism. Marx and Engels (1964, p. 33) explain that "the

slavery latent in the family only develops gradually with…the extension of external relations, both of war and barter."

Feminists do not comprehend the most important determinants of sexism and gender inequality. This makes feminists un-equipped to solve gender inequality and sexism. *Feminists are not champions of genuine feminism*—just as Democrats are not champions of genuine democracy, and just as Chinese communists are not champions of genuine communism, and just as neoliberals are not champions of genuine individual freedom. Feminists are moderate reformers who leave the major problem of sexism unexplained and unsolvable.

There is yet another inequality regarding women's income; which is the racial inequality among women. Latina women in the US earn 52% of what white men earn, which is 28% less than white women's gender gap. This racial-gender gap of 28% is greater than intra-racial gender (white women earn 20% that of white men). Racial sexism is greater than gender sexism. For Latinas, their *wage disparity with white men is more due to their race than to their gender*. (Just like all working women's wage disparity with capitalist men is more due to their class than their gender.) If their gender were the only factor in their wage disparity with white men, they would only earn 20% less than men. Employers generate more profit from discriminating between Latina and white women (racial sexism) than they do from discriminating all women from men (gender sexism). Focusing upon gender sexism (male vs. female) leaves the greater components of sexism—racial sexism and class sexism—untouched. This undermines feminists' claim to support "women" and "sisterhood."

A final fact about gender inequality further reveals that it is due more to systemic social causes than to prejudice. In the 1960s, gender inequality in income was 40%. Today it is 20%. This increased equality is primarily attributable to women's greater participation in higher education and higher paying jobs. Reduction in discrimination and prejudice accounts for a small degree of increased income equality. Again we see that gender, per se, is a less powerful macro cultural factor than class and even race.

The feminist overemphasis on misogyny as the basis of women's problems obfuscates the capitalist politics that is at work. It takes women's problems out of the capitalist political realm and moves them into misog-

yny against women. All attention is then focused on resisting misogynist males, and capitalist oppression is obfuscated and untouched. Feminism is reductionism of politics to misogyny. It is also divisive as it turns women against men, instead of drawing women and men together to confront their common problem which is capitalism.

The feminist tendency to replace capitalist explanations of gender with male misogyny is illustrated in the case of Jeffrey Epstein, a billionaire who was arrested in July 2019 for having sexually exploited and raped teenage girls in the 1990s, many of whom were 14–17 years old. His criminal modus operandi was to make contact with economically destitute girls, invite them to his mansion, pay them large sums of money to sexually entertain him in various ways, and then pay them to recruit additional girls for him to exploit. These female, teen recruiters solicited their friends in school and in parties. Epstein's extensive exploits depended upon the economic destitution of the girls. Wealthy girls would not have voluntarily gone to his mansion to be exploited by him. Nor would they have recruited their classmates and friends for this macabre, criminal enterprise which the recruiters had participated in. Economic destitution led the girls to give up their moral and social scruples and to agree to enter Epstein's world—and expand it by recruiting their friends into it, knowing full well that they would be victimized as they had been. Yet the entire focus of the case is on Epstein, the individual, sick man. The economic destitution of the lower class is left intact, to make future girls susceptible to the same sexual exploitation that Epstein's victims suffered. These are the limitations of feminist, gender-centric ignoring of capitalism.

Defending female gender apart from politics and political economy blocks progressive action against oppressive female actors. Consider the feminist, social justice slogan, "Sisterhood is refusing to wage/support war on other women and their loved ones." When the "other women" are Nazi women, or women terrorists (e.g., the all-female al-Khansaa Isis police brigade in Syria), this slogan prevents feminist women from waging war on them or their loved ones (male terrorists) because all women are sisters, regardless of their politics. Working-class women would be deterred from fighting against capitalist, reactionary women such as Betsy DeVos; they would also be deterred from fighting against DeVos' beloved brother, Eric Prinz, who is a reactionary, imperialist capitalist who

founded the notorious Blackwater mercenary company that committed massacres in Iraq in 2007. Sisterhood also deters oppressed women from fighting against male oppressors, because these men have women in their lives who would be hurt by seeing their men hurt. In this way, sisterhood prevents fighting against all oppressors.

Sisterhood assumes that all women are essentially united in some gender bond that transcends all political and economic differences. It denies class differences and class struggle against the oppressor class. For feminists to pretend that some feminine gender bond transcends class, and that the bond must never be broken by fighting against "sisters" and their male loved ones who oppress the majority population, is to enforce the extant class structure.

It is arrogant and egocentric to think that social leaders and institutions will somehow respect black people or women, when the neoliberal political-economic system does not respect majority workers. (Anderson 2017, pp. xii, xix explains "Employers' authority over workers, outside of collective bargaining and a few other contexts … is sweeping, arbitrary, and unaccountable—not subject to notice, process, or appeal." "Millions of workers in the United States labor under humiliating and abusive conditions. Walmart prohibits employees from exchanging casual remarks while on duty, calling this time theft. Apple inspects the personal belongs of their retail workers, who lose up to a half-hour of unpaid time every day as they wait in line to be searched. Tyson prevents its poultry workers from using the bathroom during their shift, [and are told to wear diapers to work]." Managers scream at warehouse workers when they can't keep up with the grueling pace, or when they get injured on the job. They search workers' bodies and personal property, and listen in on their conversations with co-workers.). Respect and dignity and justice and equality can only be achieved by transforming the concrete political-economic system. And since that is not the agenda of civil rights, respect and dignity remain empty, abstract slogans, with no concrete content or viability. As long as emancipation is conceptualized apart from socialism, it will always be abstract, ethereal, and unrealizable (see Ghodsee 2018; Ghodsee and Mead 2018; Blanc 2019, for socialist changes that have advanced women).

Civil rights often assume rights will not only equalize conditions for all genders and races, but will improve society through increasing leadership positions for formerly marginalized genders and races. The idea is that these groups have distinctive attributes that can solve many problems if they are allowed to display them. This is the thinking behind feminist calls for more women to enter politics/government. They can use their leadership positions to put their superior skills to work in correcting social problems that male politicians have created.

But this thinking assumes that

a) Women and minorities and marginalized people are radically different from the mainstream and can introduce qualitatively new values and practices to it.
b) Cultural subsystems are democratic and open to all comers. It allows marginalized genders and races to enter the mainstream and humanize it. This assumes that social problems are primarily racial and gender based. Improving the gender and racial balance will correct this cause of problems.

Both of these assumptions are wrong. Women, blacks, and Latinos have no greater insights into social problems than white men, no better ideas for solving the causes of social problems, and no more interest in solving. They simply wish to join the mainstream and partake of its benefits. In addition, the upper class that controls most of society will not accept any reforms that threaten them. They will crush or coopt reformers, regardless of their gender or race. Let us validate these contentions.

Women and minority leaders have historically done nothing to change corporate capitalist culture, military culture, surveillance culture, class culture, commodity culture, consumer culture, entertainment culture, or news culture.

Of course, "women" is an empty abstraction. There are all kinds of women, some of whom are executives of the capitalist class. These women exploit and discriminate against working-class people; they are not supportive, caring, honest, and respectful of working-class women and men.

German women supported the Third Reich and committed atrocities. Some were executed for this at the Nuremberg trials. (https://www.daily-

mail.co.uk/news/article-2432620/Hitlers-Furies-The-Nazi-women-bit-evil-men.html).

A majority of white women voted for Trump in 2016 presidential election. Are they a force for emancipation? How about Alabama women, Mississippi women, and Kentucky women, 60% of whom oppose abortion in most cases (Brownstein 2019)? And the female Alabama state representatives who overwhelmingly voted to pass the Alabama Human Life Protection Act in 2019? The Alabama House includes 20 women representatives; the bill was passed by a 74-3 majority in the House. Obviously, virtually all the women voted for it. And the woman Governor, Kay Ivey, signed the bill into law (saying "every baby is a gift from god"). This law not only prohibits abortion, but criminalizes abortion and attempted abortion as felony offenses for which physicians can be imprisoned for 10–99 years. Are these women emancipatory figures?[1]

There are compelling historical examples of women rulers being more violent than men. Between the years 1480 and 1913, Europe's queens were 27% more likely than its kings to wage war, according to a National Bureau of Economics working paper (https://qz.com/967895/throughout-history-women-rulers-were-more-likely-to-wage-war-than-men/).

The Patriot Act, 2001, which established the US surveillance state, was endorsed by every woman senator. Male senator, Russ Feingold, was the only senator to vote against the Patriot Act when it was first introduced in 2001.

Women engage in domestic violence in their personal relationships (Ratner 2017a, p. 98). According to a 2011 Center for Disease Control report, there are an estimated 4,403,010 female victims of sexual violence that had a female-only perpetrator (source The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey). The 2000 American Association of University Women data indicate that 57.2% of all students report a male offender and ***42.4% report a female offender.*** More women (58%) than men (42%) are perpetrators of all forms of child maltreatment. One in six adult men reported being sexually molested as children, and nearly 40% of the perpetrators were female. There is an alarmingly *high rate of sexual abuse by females* in the backgrounds of rapists, sex offenders, and sexually aggressive men—59%, 66%, and 80%, respectively (http://www.femalesexoffenders.org/resources).

The Center for Disease Control National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 2010, Findings on Victimization by Sexual Orientation found that 55% of heterosexual men who experienced sexual violence other than rape in their lifetime reported only female perpetrators, 28.6% reported having only male perpetrators, and 16.6% reported both male and female perpetrators. Two-thirds of lesbian women (67.4%) reported having only female perpetrators of intimate partner violence (https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_sofindings.pdf, pp. 1, 2).

According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, in 2018, 44% of lesbian women have experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner (female) as opposed to 35% of heterosexual women (by a male partner) (https://ncadv.org/blog/posts/domestic-violence-and-the-lgbtq-community). Violence is not a masculine attribute; it is a political-economic attribute. It is fostered by the political economy, it bears the character of the political economy, it is functional to the political economy, and it is only eradicated by transforming the political economy. Confining violence to masculinity misunderstands it, mischaracterizes it, and prevents eradicating it. It is scientifically wrong and politically wrong. Gender reductionism obfuscates violence and preserves it; it does not eradicate violence. Feminist gender reductionism should be criticized for its limitations, not praised for its combatting violence. Feminism raises the issue of violence but it obfuscates its causes, character, demographic distribution, and solution. Feminist notions of gendered violence distract from capitalism and protect capitalism. The myth of masculinizing violence is perpetuated by focusing on mass violence which is committed primarily by men. However, mass violence is a minuscule form of violence. Only 25 men commit mass killings (of 4 or more people) annually in the US, which kill 123 victims. The overrepresentation of men in mass violence says nothing about violence in general. The more common and more socially destructive domestic violence is more representative of societal violence, and it is just as feminine as it is masculine. Women are capitalist subjects as much as men are, and they do not offer an alternative to capitalism by virtue of their gender. There is no homogeneous, essential "woman" that can change an institution in a given, homogeneous direction. Womanhood does not transcend class, religion, and country to constitute a universal variable of humanistic caring. Pretending that there is such a thing as

feminist sisterhood pretends that capitalism can be reformed by simply elevating women to leadership positions, without transforming the political economy. This ideology must be strongly rejected.

4.2.7 Race

Civil rights for racial minorities is also incapable of guiding emancipation because it fails to comprehend the historical-materialist character of inequality/racism and its basis in the political economy.

Racism does not originate as a psychological antipathy to racial minorities. It only emerges from economic exploitation of minorities by the political economy. Paul Street (2017) explains this.

> As historian Edward Baptist (2014) has suggested, contrary to what many abolitionists thought in the 19th century, the savagery and torture perpetrated against slaves in the South was about much more than sadism and psychopathy on the part of slave traders, owners and drivers.
>
> Slavery was an incredibly cost-efficient method for extracting surplus value from human beings, far superior in that regard to "free" (wage) labor in the onerous work of planting, tending and harvesting cotton. It was an especially brutal form of capitalism, driven by ruthless yet economically "rational" torture, along with a dehumanizing ideology of racism.
>
> It wasn't just the South, home to the four wealthiest U.S. states on the eve of the Civil War, where investors profited handsomely from the forced cotton labor of black slaves. By the 1840s, Baptist shows, the "free labor North" had "built a complex industrialized economy on the backs of enslaved people and their highly profitable cotton labor." Cotton picked by Southern slaves provided the critical cheap raw material for early Northern industrialization and the formation of a new Northern wage-earning populace with money to purchase new and basic commodities.

This analysis of, and solution to, racism may be depicted within our historical-materialist model, as Fig. 4.6.

Figure 4.6 shows that the most direct, immediate, proximal, personal level of intervention—in which racism is treated as a thing unto itself that is expressed by individuals—is the least effective. Racism is most effectively reduced by penetrating beneath its immediate, direct, personal

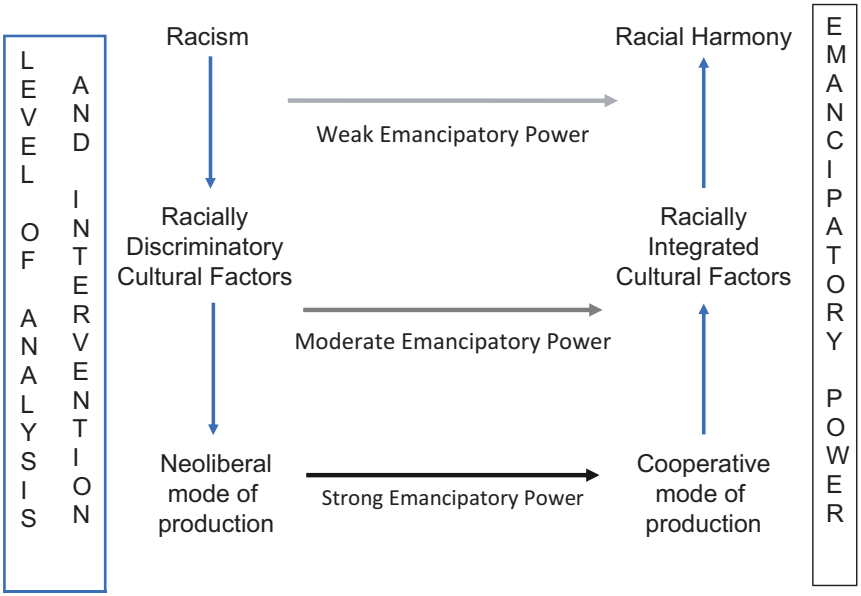


Fig. 4.6 Race as seen from macro cultural psychology

expressions and transforming their distal, structural origins, motives, operating mechanisms, and functions. This is what cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology emphasizes.

Civil rights abstracts race (and gender) from political economy. It treats racism as a psychological phenomenon of prejudice or ignorance and unfamiliarity. Civil rights takes the result of exploitation to be the explanation of exploitation. To its credit, civil rights does seek to mitigate racism by reforming cultural subsystems (institutions, artifacts, and concepts/values) by criticizing, outlawing, and punishing their racist practices, policies, concepts, and symbols. Civil rights goes beyond the individual level of kind, respectful interactions, and transforms procedures for hiring and managing minorities and women.

However, civil rights confines its attention to racism, per se. It seeks to directly reduce racism by prohibiting its practices and symbols in cultural institutions. And it seeks to correct racism by promoting abstract humanitarian values such as equality, respect, and justice. It seeks to promote these and to reduce racism within existing cultural institutions. It places

demands upon management, but it does not replace the socioeconomic relations of the institutions. It seeks horizontal equality within existing social relations, not vertical equality that would replace existing social relations. This approach can never eradicate special inequality and exploitation within this system of general exploitation. It is oxymoronic to expect that a manager who administers vertical exploitation and inequality will eradicate horizontal inequality and oppression.

Divorcing racism from economic exploitation leads to particular ways of thinking about it and responding to it. Abstracting race singles it out as an essential, salient feature of human life. It becomes a thing unto itself that must be addressed as such. It is *racism* that is the problem; we must confront *racism;* we must be sensitive to *racism;* we must be suspicious of *racism* that can erupt anywhere, at any time; we must control *racism;* we must punish *racists;* and we must validate and defend our own race. Race becomes a major focus because it is highlighted as such by isolating it. Other factors such as capitalism are denounced as attempts to distract attention from racism.

The same is true for gender as it is treated by civil rights. We have seen that gender discrimination is divorced from general exploitation, including the exploitation of women in the production process. Gender discrimination/violence is treated as a thing in itself, as rooted in gender itself, primarily in the male gender.

This conception of the origin of sexism and racism leads to a corresponding solution. The solution is to condemn and punish the perpetrators who are the source of these acts. There is no mention of general, capitalist exploitation as underpinning particular discrimination and violence against women and minorities. The solution moves toward the top, as shown in Fig. 4.6, not toward the bottom. We have seen that civil rights protects this general exploitation of all people. This is the reason that the capitalist class accepts civil rights campaigns against sexist men and racists. However, as soon as these restricted campaigns turn toward broader, capitalist exploitation and discrimination, they are immediately denounced. Martin L. King and Mohammed Ali were denounced as they spoke out against militarism and poverty.

Civil rights cannot eradicate racism. For it leaves capitalist production intact, with its drive to exploit minority groups in order to generate super profit. This basis of racist culture and psychology continues to generate

them. Abstract ideals of justice and humanism can never overcome this material basis of racism. The proof is in the pudding. American civil rights laws are only minimally effective in mitigating racism.

A concrete example of the superficiality of race as an explanation of oppression is police brutality against suspected criminals. When white cops kill a suspect, this is always attributed to their racism. However, black cops are just as likely as white cope to kill black suspects. "The killing of black suspects is a police problem, not a white police problem" (Jacobs 2018). White-black racism does not explain white police brutality against blacks! Racialist behavior is not a function of the perpetrator's race. It is a function of the social relations of policing in capitalist society. It is policing that must be transformed in order to reduce white police brutality against black suspects. The shocking scandal of American border guards' mistreatment of Latino asylum-seekers in June, 2019 is likewise due to political-economic-social factors rather than racial factors. Most of the border guards who abused Latino asylum-seekers were Latino, not white.

I have pointed out earlier that even if civil rights did manage to overcome racial discrimination and to integrate minorities and majority, this would only eradicate super-exploitation; it would maintain normal exploitation at the level of exploiting white workers.

To correct these problems, civil rights must be reframed as a strand of the socialist opposition to all oppression by eradicating class society and the capitalist cultural system. Fig. 1.6 depicts this. Civil rights must be an element of the greater struggle for general emancipation against exploitation and social class.

4.3 Introducing New Social Relations into Niches of Society

In contrast to civil rights, which merely include marginalized people into the mainstream social structure, cooperatives change the structure of ownership and control of institutions, and they change the social relations among the members. Cooperatives exemplify the deepest kind of social reform within the status quo. They replace capitalist principles of boss-worker exploitation, and competition. Cooperatives are thus an effort to

practically circumvent autocratic, capitalist organizations with concrete, cooperative, democratic structures. A promising example is the Cooperative Center in Uruguay. Its Federation of Mutual Aid Housing Cooperatives, founded in 1970, includes 500 cooperatives. They are grounded in the principle of collective property. The cooperative obtains land in a collective manner, and ownership remains that way—households have an indefinite contract for the use and enjoyment of their units, and a right to pass this down to heirs, but the housing and all communal areas remain property of the cooperative. If a family decides to leave the unit, they receive a payment for the hours of work they contributed plus the amount of the depreciated loan they paid into. All cooperative members contribute various forms of labor in constructing housing units. Completed units are assigned through a lottery system, according to household size. Cooperatives work together to construct entire neighborhoods. Cooperative members decide how much land is devoted to public education facilities that are used by the neighborhoods (Marielle and Sancho 2019).

Cooperatives do not seek to overthrow the capitalist *system* by conquering and transforming it. They leave it in place and operate cooperatively within its niches. Consequently, it is appropriate to situate cooperatives between the middle level and the bottom level of intervention. They do not reach the bottom level of political-economic transformation.

I will explore this problem in the next chapter under populist socialism (see Ratner 2009, 2013, 2016).

4.4 Deep-Structural Social-Psychological Analysis and Reform

We have explained the need for deep, structural, cultural analysis of society and psychology in order to eradicate causes of problems by transforming their political-economic base. This model is not confined to single problems; it goes much deeper to include all significant problems. All significant problems across society have a common root in the political economy. Consequently, all problems have a common solution; and all victims of problems have a common enemy which unifies their separate struggles for relief. All problems can be solved simultaneously in this

common effort. This makes social-psychological improvement eminently efficient and effective, because all associated problems can be eradicated together in one fell swoop.

A full model of this analysis can be depicted as shown in Fig. 4.7.

The conical structure means that diverse forms of oppression emanate from a common source of oppression (political-economic oppression). Particular oppression is not a thing unto itself. Particular oppression is a particular form of the general oppression that is brewed in the political economy of a society. Victims of diverse oppressions must realize their common enemy and unite against it.

This will be a dialectical unity of differences. Particular issues will inform the general unity, just as the unity informs the particular issues. Particular issues are not obliterated, although neither will they be autonomous, self-defining, and all-consuming. Just as education, health care, religion, and entertainment remain specialties within a cohesive social system, so will race and gender remain specific issues within a political-

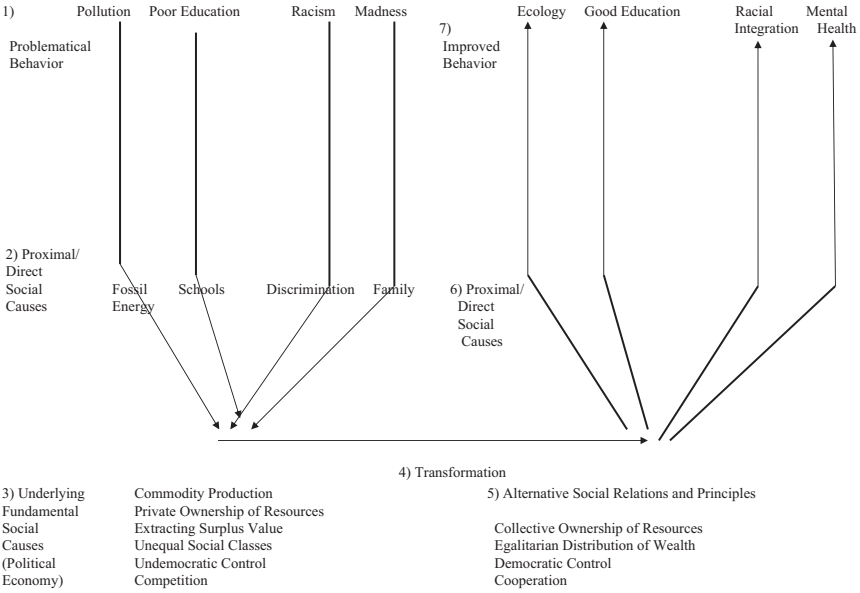


Fig. 4.7 Deep-structural social-psychological analysis & reform

economic transformation. The latter gives the former strength and support, and also depth beyond the single, isolated issue itself.

Martin Luther King recognized this truth (Gordon-Reed 2018). His words map exactly onto Fig. 4.7. "The black revolution is much more than a struggle for the rights of Negroes. It is forcing America to face all its interrelated flaws—racism, poverty, militarism, and materialism. It is exposing the evils that are rooted deeply in the whole structure of our society. It reveals systemic rather than superficial flaws and suggests that radical reconstruction of society itself is the real issue to be faced" (in Taylor 2016, Kindle Locations 122–126).

King criticized the slogan "Black Power" because it fragmented the broad struggle for common unity and emancipation into competing racial interests: "One unfortunate thing about [the slogan] Black Power is that it gives priority to race precisely at a time when the impact of automation and other forces have made the economic question fundamental for blacks and whites alike. In this context, a slogan of 'Power for Poor People' would be much more appropriate" (cited in Laurent 2019, p. 5). In 1965, King explained that "The unemployed, poverty-stricken white man must be made to realize that he is in the very same boat with the Negro. Together, they could exert massive pressure on the Government to get jobs for all. Together, they could form a grand alliance. Together, they could merge all people for the good of all" (ibid., p. 8).

King recognized that racism cannot be solved in its own terms, on the level of racial elements and behaviors (e.g., prejudice, hatred, degradation, intolerance, disrespect, exclusion, unfairness). It must be solved by contextualizing it in its concrete, political-economic determinations and transforming them.

Laurent articulated King's political philosophy as follows:

> The Poor People's Campaign was envisioned as an inclusive, class-based project that, to him, would transform the black liberation movement into the vanguard of a universal revolution on behalf of the dispossessed. Like most radicals of the struggle, he thought the abolition of racism would remain illusory unless a profound transformation of the economic structures occurred. By no mean a wholesale repudiation of black radicalism, the campaign sought to combine the nonviolent struggle for racial justice with the fight for universal economic equality, asserting their bound fates…

> King claimed this "other America" included Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans. And "millions" who were "Appalachian whites." The campaign's radical egalitarianism formulated a class framework in which exploitative socioeconomic relations were instrumental to the racial subordination of black Americans. (ibid., pp. 5, 6)

King invited Black Panther chapters to join his campaign.

This unifying of particular struggles into a critique of the capitalist, economic core, around an "Economic Bill of Rights for the Disadvantaged," was Marxist in its orientation, although it never called for a political revolution that would take state and economic power away from the capitalist class. Laurent says, "King was certainly 'Marxian' in most of his systemic analysis, which was predicated on the conviction that deep historical structures had shaped American history and both the black and the poor experience. King also thought that uniting the oppressed regardless of their racial and ethnic identities was imperative. This Marxian assumption was constantly mobilized by King to analyze race and oppression in America, and the Poor People's Campaign resulted from such creed" (ibid., p. 15).

Of course, the radical thrust of King's combining of civil rights into economic human rights was extremely threatening to the powers that be, and also to civil rights leaders and to the black masses as well. They condemned it as an error. They preferred to conceive and to remember King's legacy as a single, racial issue. "Mainstream media silenced the multiracial makeup of the campaign, ignoring its unprecedented militancy. To them, it was yet another civil rights march" (ibid., p. 10). The mainstream seeks to tame radical opposition to prevalent exploitation by pushing into the box of "racial injustice" which does not impugn general exploitation. This mainstream preference for civil rights proves just how limited and limiting civil rights is.

4.4.1 Historical Materialism vs. Intersectionality

Unifying particular forms of oppression in the capitalist political economy is different from the populist notion of "intersectionality." It emphasizes different oppressions and their separate struggles for emancipation and self-definition/validation. Intersectionality recognizes the occasional

overlaps, or intersections, that occur in diverse struggles. These are occasional alliances on particular issues. For example, black people may recognize that pollution in their neighborhood affects their health, so they may intersect their black liberation movement with environmental groups which oppose that local pollution. This is indicated at the top level of Fig. 4.7. Both groups will oppose the local ecological problem; however, their "intersection" will dissolve as soon as the particular common problem is resolved. Their immediate, superficial, disparate self-interests will separate them.

Intersectionalism values this as important for multicultural autonomy and self-validation. That is the default position of multicultural intersectionality. Unity is always secondary and occasional, in the few spaces that diverse, autonomous happen to coincide. Intersectionality preserves individual autonomy, voluntarism, and diversity above superordinate, essential, unity. Intersectionality is a bourgeois form of association. It is "autonomous" individuals voluntarily deciding how much they wish to intersect with other individuals, and when they wish to withdraw into their "autonomous" default position. Intersectionality is free market association. As Marx described it, the free market consists of inherently separate producers and consumers who work and live separately from each other; they only intersect during a brief market transaction of mutually agreeable, voluntary exchange of product for money. Upon consummation, both parties retreat to their default, separate existence.

Intersectionalism promotes social estrangement and fragmentation in the form of multicultural diversity, and occasional, temporary alliances of convenience (Wood 1986, 1990). Adding multiple superficial symptoms does not produce deep commonality. Depth is not equal to the sum of surface issues. Depth of common interests is not achieved by juxtaposing Indians who seek to preserve their tribal lands, with truckers who desire lower gas prices to reduce their expenses, with women who seek to prevent unwanted men from kissing them, with transgenders who want to use a particular gender bathroom. Juxtaposing these phenomena does not truly unify them in a common interest that can transform capitalism.[2]

Cultural-historical/macro cultural psychologists are poised to help overcome this populist fragmentation by deepening awareness of objective, common interests in the political economy that can provide the

combined strength to reorganize it. This is the regressive-progressive movement that is indicated in Fig. 4.6 (http://blackagendareport.com/intersectionality-marxist-critique).

4.4.2 Macro Cultural-Psychological Interventions with Individuals

Emancipation from oppression occurs on many levels. Figure 4.7 pertains to political social change. However, emancipation needs to be carried out on other planes as well. Emancipation needs to be built into psychological interventions with individuals—in schools, corporations, families, mental hospitals, and individual psychotherapy. These interventions are necessary to prepare damaged individuals, and their helpers, for the broad political struggle that is necessary for eradicating the source of problems in society. Figure 4.7 must be popularized throughout different social levels.

Cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology intervenes to correct psychological problems in a manner that promotes deep, structural reform in the cultural system. This is illustrated in a hypothetical psychological intervention regarding the foregoing example of masculine emotionality that was raised by the American Psychological Association. Our intervention culturizes psychology rather than psychologizes society as APA does. It develops a cultural critique of psychology (e.g., masculinity) that impugns its cultural constituents (the source, form, content, socializing mechanisms, and operating mechanisms). This is what Friere and Martin-Baro called "conscientization." This macro psychological critique maps debilitating, masculine emotionality onto the conical cultural system as we did with the neoliberal self in Fig. 3.5. This masculine emotionality stems in large part from the male role in the capitalist political economy. This male role is largely devoted to competing for monetary rewards. This activity entails (1) defensiveness and toughness to secure one's advantages, (2) aggression against competitors, (3) prioritizing material things over personal consideration, and (4) the private, exclusive enjoyment of wealth. These social elements lead to the psychology of emotions that APA identifies—emotional control, self-sufficiency, success oriented, violent, and tough.

Macro psychological intervention calls for enriching emotions by replacing the given cultural constituents of psychology (e.g., masculinity) with alternative macro cultural constituents that oppose neoliberal capitalism. These include collective, classless, supportive, altruistic social relations. These real social relations would correct neoliberal masculinity by drawing men's emotions to become cooperative, sharing, altruistic, and egalitarian.

This replacement of cultural elements of psychology must be developed in practical, social life. In other words, *macro cultural-psychological intervention makes demands on the social system to change*. Macro cultural factors and conditions must change in order to create new macro cultural tools for organizing masculine emotionality. *Macro cultural-psychological intervention draws people to become politically active in transforming the organization of social life in order to emancipate psychology*. Once psychology is recognized to be constituted and organized by macro cultural factors, the door is open to demanding macro cultural changes in order to enrich psychological phenomena. Psychology becomes an important player in social transformation, which is understood as vital for stimulating and supporting enriched emotionality in practice. This is diagrammed in Fig. 4.8a.

The macro cultural analysis, critique, and transformation of cultural-psychological tools and their formative conditions will be utilized in peoples' personal lives (as well as in their political activity). Individuals will utilize their macro cultural analysis of their psychology to circumvent debilitating cultural-psychological tools which have generated their psychological problems. Individuals will also adopt into their personal lives the enriching, fulfilling macro cultural tools that are being demanded through political activities on the macro cultural level. And individuals will utilize their macro cultural analysis of their personal psychology to gain insights into macro cultural factors that academic cultural psychologists may have overlooked.

This is depicted in Fig. 4.8b.

This analysis applies to all psychological phenomena. Research has indicated that one reason for men's greater success than women in assuming high-status positions at work may be self-confidence. Cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology accepts this kind of psychological explanation—as a proximal reason for the behavior—just as we accept male emotionality as a proximal reason. We do not dismiss psychological causes of behavior and replace them with purely economic causes. Rather, we ground psychological causes of behavior in distal macro cultural factors.

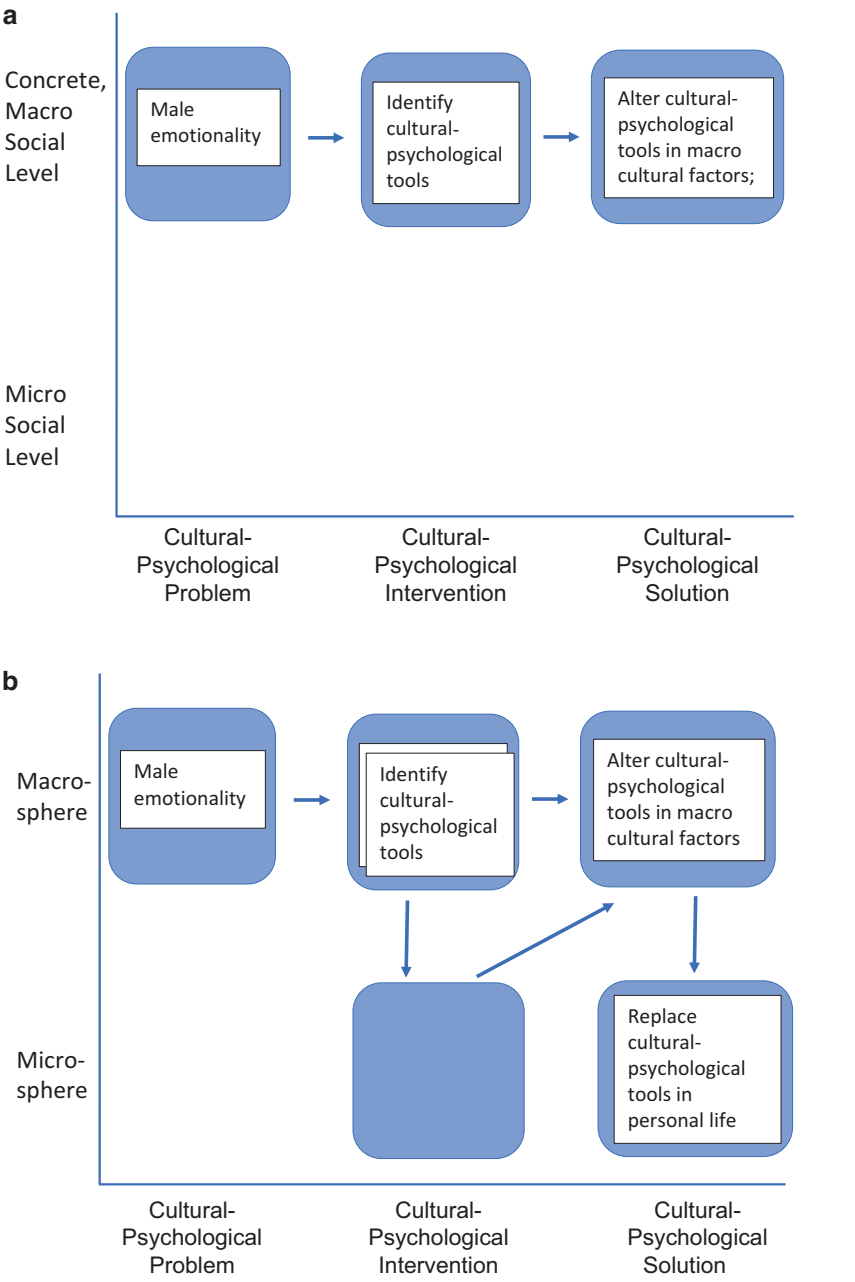


Fig. 4.8 Cultural-historical/macro cultural psychology's psychological intervention

If we place self-confidence in Fig. 4.8a, b (where male emotionality stands), we search for macro cultural factors, or psychological tools, which currently foster self-confidence in men and women. We then correct/transform these cultural factors in order to foster better, humane, cooperative self-confidence in women.

4.5 Conditions of Emancipation

Emancipation is grounded in social conditions of oppression. These conditions necessitate emancipation, prepare for it, and support it. In these ways, emancipation grows out of "the belly of the beast." Emancipation is a dialectical, internal, supersession of exploitive conditions. The conditions of oppression are the conditions of emancipation—that is, the conditions that require and support emancipation. This is why it is imperative to deeply understand the conditions of oppression in order to understand the basis and direction of viable emancipation.

It may sound paradoxical to state that emancipation depends upon conditions/factors. Our individualistic notion of freedom separates emancipation from conditions. Freedom is supposed to be independence from conditions so we can exercise our agency without restraint from external, alien structures. This is an individualistic fantasy. The reality is that emancipation is a social-cultural-political phenomenon that is rooted in social conditions/factors, as all behavior is.

The difference between oppression and emancipation lies in the qualitative differences in the conditions of behavior, not in the presence or absence of conditions of behavior. The difference is between bad and good conditions, not the difference between bad conditions and no conditions. No conditions produce no human behavior because human behavior requires macro cultural conditions for stimulation and support.

It is only as a massive social body that people can change their society, which is another massive social body. Both social bodies are material conditions of emancipation. Without the political unity of people to transform the concrete characteristics of the massive society, emancipation is impossible. This unity of emancipatory activity that can transform the unity of the social system must be grounded, supported, and congealed

in conditions that are as solid and organized as the conditions of the existing social system. Emancipatory unity/solidarity requires:

a) common problems that inspire and require change among masses of people
b) common solutions to common problems that will enhance masses of people
c) common analyses of the causes
d) common analyses of the solutions
e) common interests and competencies among the agents of change so they can take advantage of the possibilities of change.

Each of these elements must be grounded and supported in conditions which provide inspiration, direction, and competence to the activists of an emancipatory movement.

Marx explains two material conditions that make socialism necessary and possible (viable). These are (1) the material social-economic conditions that enable it and (2) the social-psychological conditions of the revolutionary agents that enable them to utilize the potentiating material social conditions. Identifying these conditions is both a scientific and emancipatory contribution of cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology.

4.5.1 Material Social Conditions of Emancipation

Conditions are the initiators, organizers, and supporters of radical social change. Conditions generate contradictory elements within themselves which are the inspiration and support of social transformation. Activists utilize nascent, rudimentary outgrowths of conditions as their support base and direction for substantive, organized change in conditions. Change is thus internal to conditions; it emanates from the internal dynamics of the conditions.

Revolutions are analogous to earthquakes. Earthquakes are eruptions within given geological conditions that transform those conditions. Earthquakes are neither the absence of change, nor are they external changes that are brought into the status quo in disregard of its conditions. It is the status quo, *itself*, that generates contradictions which erupt

from within it and along the fault lines of the current conditions (e.g., tectonic plates slowly move according to natural laws of the existing geological conditions, until the pressure accumulates to create a massive realignment of the plates in a new configuration that grows out of the old one according to the natural laws of the old one).

Marx explains revolutions in these materialistic, conditional terms. "The productive forces developing in the womb of bourgeois society create the material conditions for the solution of [its] antagonisms" (ibid.). "With all the miseries it imposes upon the proletariat, the present system simultaneously engenders the *material conditions* and the *social forms* necessary for an economic reconstruction of society" (https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1865/value-price-profit/ch03.htm#c13). New conditions grow out of the old ones along paths that were created by the old conditions.

In his book, *Critique of Political Economy*, Marx says that to advance the capitalist mode of production, capitalists introduce new political-economic forms. These include vertically and horizontally integrated global corporations that employ huge masses of workers. Walmart employs 1 million workers worldwide. These employees, resources, and the tremendous number of operations that are conducted, transported, and communicated in these massive, planned, administered, integrated, global enterprises form the framework of a cohesive, coherent, collective system. The internal administering and coordinating of the masses of people, things, and operations does not utilize market economics for individual transactions. Resources and personnel are shifted to diverse sectors of the company as determined by managers with an eye on the overall, integrated success of the company.

This planned, regulated, centralized, organized, integrated, holistic approach to production contradicts the private, narrow, self-centered, competitive interest of capitalist management. The collectivized, integrated position of employees who are required to shift around the vast company to achieve overall success on the world economy also contradicts the atomized division of labor in traditional capitalism.

Consequently, capitalism's methods for making the capitalist form of production more efficient and profitable introduce social relations that contradict the capitalist form. These internal, contradictory outgrowths of capitalism are material conditions for erecting a socialist political-economic system. This is a dialectical process of a system preparing the

elements of a different system from within itself (like an earthquake). These internal outgrowths have the potential for becoming developed in ways that are more fulfilling than their origins are. These internal outgrowths are viable because they have already been constructed by capitalists and are functional. People do not have to invent a viable alternative to capitalism from scratch. They need to appropriate the alternative rudimentary conditions that capitalism has prepared and develop their tendencies and potentialities into a fully collective, cooperative, planned, centralized, regulated, integrated socialist system. Engels (Marx and Engels 1976, vol. 6, p. 304, my emphasis) explained this as follows:

> Because large-scale industry, the development of machinery, communications and world trade are assuming such gigantic proportions that their exploitation by individual capitalists is becoming daily more impossible; because the mounting crises of the world market are the most striking proof of this; because the productive forces and the means of exchange which characterise the present mode of production and exchange are daily becoming increasingly more than individual exchange and private property can manage; because, in a word, the moment is approaching when communal management of industry, of agriculture and of exchange will become a *material necessity* for industry, agriculture and exchange themselves – for this reason private property will be abolished.
>
> "Hand in hand with this [capitalist] centralization… develops on an ever-extending scale the cooperative form of the labor process." (Marx 1961, p. 763)

"By heralding the dissolution of the hereto existing world order, the proletariat merely proclaims the secret of its own existence, for it is the factual dissolution of that world order. By demanding the negation of private property, the proletariat merely raises to the rank of a principle of society what society has raised to the rank of its principle, what is already incorporated in it as the negative result of society without its own participation" (*A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*; https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/intro.htm). Marx is saying that capitalism has already eroded private property in the form of integrated companies and socialized labor organization. The proletarian demand for eradicating private property reflects the existing con-

dition of actual capitalism. This economic condition is the substance of the proletariat's need and capacity to assume this economic condition.

This was the process by which feudalism evolved into capitalism. Feudalism created capitalist merchants to provide certain products that feudalism could not provide. Eventually, the capitalist merchants developed more capitalist practices within feudalism, and then took control of the political economy away from the feudal rulers, so they could establish a fully capitalist political economy.

Capitalism was not simply an opinion or a wish that some people held. It was the incipient material, functioning, reality of a sector of the feudal political economy. Capitalist rudiments were there to be developed. Capitalists took them over in a violent revolution which beheaded monarchs such as Marie Antoinette.

Emancipation is not a gathering of individual opinions, wishes, and ideals about how to proceed. It is a scientific comprehension of objective, materialist tendencies and possibilities that can be harnessed and developed after expropriating them from their rulers' control. That is what makes emancipation viable. It is also politically familiar and appealing to people because they have witnessed these tendencies in their existing, corporate workplaces. They have witnessed the ways in which capitalist management have retarded their incipient cooperation, collectivism, rational planning, holistic concerns, and social progress.

4.5.2 Social-Psychological Conditions of the Revolutionary Agents That Enable Them to Utilize the Potentiating Material Social Conditions

Marx explained that material conditions of emancipation require activists to implement them. Activists must have requisite competencies in order to do this. They must have the requisite interest in social transformation, the requisite need for social transformation, the requisite social position to carry out social transformation, and the requisite experience with the social relations that will comprise social transformation. Social emancipation is a job that requires requisite training as any job does.

Marx emphasizes the need for *class consciousness* to unite and galvanize the working class into a true class that comprehends its social position, and actively works to accomplish its objective, social-historical need to eradicate the oppressive class structure. In *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx says: "Economic conditions had first transformed the mass of the people of the country into workers. The combination of capital has created for this mass a common situation, common interests. This mass is thus already a *class as against capital,* but not yet for itself. *In the struggle*, *this mass becomes united, and constitutes itself as a class for itself*" (https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/poverty-philosophy/).

This subjective element of emancipation must be prepared for as a competence/skill. It must be conditioned by specific backgrounds, training, social positions, and forms of exploitation. Marx and Engels explained this in some detail:

> Things have now come to such a pass that the individuals must appropriate the existing totality of productive forces, not only to achieve self-activity, but, also, merely to safeguard their very existence. This appropriation is first determined by the object to be appropriated, the productive forces, which have been developed to a totality and which only exist within a universal intercourse. From this aspect alone, therefore, *this appropriation must have a universal character corresponding to the productive forces and the intercourse*.
>
> The appropriation of these forces is itself nothing more than the development of the individual capacities corresponding to the material instruments of production. The appropriation of a totality of instruments of production is, for this very reason, the development of a totality of capacities in the individuals themselves (https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/ch01d.htm).

Marx and Engels are saying that the socialized (coordinated, interconnected) means of production that capitalists have prepared for their own benefit afford workers who use them as the foundation of expanding their individual mental and physical capacities to comprehend and direct these massive objects of production. This gives workers the rudiments of competencies that they need to take over the complex capitalist machinery. These conditions that prepare subjectivity to utilize objective, material conditions of potential emancipation – the capitalist institutions and artifacts – are

not experienced by every individual of the populace. Only certain people happen to experience them by virtue of their social roles in society.

Not all marginalized people occupy these specific roles and develop revolutionary competencies and consciousness. Marx said workers in the means of production have the most direct and comprehensive background for acquiring class consciousness (Engels 1965, described the central importance of conditions for restricting and empowering emancipatory improvements).

Working-class individuals, who are economically exploited by the capitalist class to generate profit, have an objective interest in transforming the capitalist mode of production that exploits them. The working class's particular form of economic exploitation imbues it with the need for eradicating the profit motive, wage labor, and private property. The working class's exploitation in the belly of the capitalist beast also grants it experience with the contradictions of capitalism that generate competencies in working with coordination and planning. These are necessary for taking them over.

Many other groups in the populace lack this conditionality that provides emancipatory potential for a deep transformation of the core of society. Professional athletes, for example, occupy an exalted condition within the capitalist system, so that their desire for higher salaries does not require an economic transformation. Thus, we can say that the conditionality of professional athletes makes them incapable of developing a radical, political interest.

The same is true for members of the working class who occupy particular conditions (social relations) which do not facilitate revolution. Engels explained how the most downtrodden, exploited workers occupy this kind of position. This is a counterintuitive analysis because we think of the most downtrodden as the most revolutionary.

Engels (1847) explained that: "The slave frees himself by becoming a proletarian, abolishing from the totality of property relationships only the relationship of slavery. [In contrast] The proletarian can free himself only by abolishing property in general."

This is a pregnant statement because it says that overcoming particular super-oppression can be achieved by graduating to mainstream conditions of normal exploitation. This lesser exploitation is more comfortable

than super-exploitation, and it is far easier to achieve than eradicating all oppression in a social revolution.

It is only the mainstream proletariat that suffers general, "banal," exploitation that has nowhere to turn for relief except to oppose general exploitation of capitalism and classes. (And this is the mass that civil rights does not aid.)

Engels shows that super-exploitation, or extraordinary exploitation, militates against comprehending and challenging the ordinary, general exploitation that pervades society. This is what happened after the American Civil War. The ex-slaves felt free by entering the capitalist labor force and failed to comprehend that they were subject to the ordinary exploitation of wage labor (or wage slavery as Marx & Engels called it).

This analysis contradicts the theory of super-oppressed groups having the most potential for revolution. It means that super-exploited women and minorities have less potential for transformative consciousness and action than majority working-class people (*Critical Sociology*, 2011, vol. 37, issue 5). Marx explained this in a brilliant dialectical analysis of conditions of emancipation. The condition of general, normative, mundane exploitation provides the universal form of emancipation that the proletariat can develop:

> The *positive* possibility of a German emancipation…lies in the formulation of a class with *radical chains*, a class of civil society which is not a class of civil society, an estate which is the dissolution of all estates, a sphere which has a universal character by its universal suffering and claims no *particular right* because no *particular wrong*, but *wrong generally*, is perpetuated against it; which can invoke no *historical*, but only *human*, title; which does not stand in any one-sided antithesis to the consequences but in all-round antithesis to the premises of German statehood; a sphere, finally, which cannot emancipate itself without emancipating itself from all other spheres of society and thereby emancipating all other spheres of society, which, in a word, is the *complete loss* of man and hence can win itself only through the *complete re-winning of man*. This dissolution of society as a particular estate is the *proletariat* (Marx and Engels 1975 vol. 3, p. 186, my emphasis; Llorente 2013).

The term "radical chains" is brilliant for it emphasizes the existence of social chains which have the dialectical power to initiate emancipation

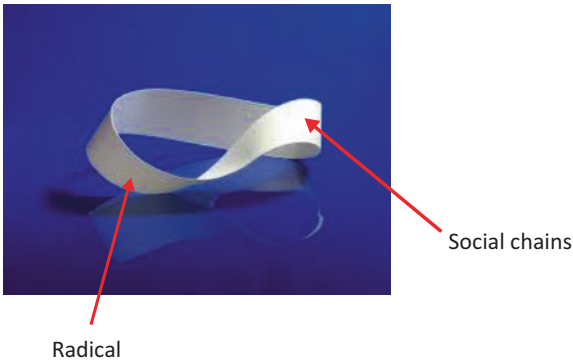


Fig. 4.9 The dialectic of oppression and emancipation

from themselves. It is the chains that are radical in potentiating a radical transformation of oppression. Radical chains is a dialectical construct that enables radical change to arise from within the chains of oppression in the only way possible to thoroughly destroy the chains. This can be depicted on the Mobius strip as in Fig. 4.9.

Marx's passage explains precisely what the features of radical chains are. It is these features of the radical chains that are the potentiating conditions for the deepest eradication of all oppression. These chains are potentiating only for the people who are bound by them. For only these people find the conditions in place to break their chains. To reiterate, emancipation is not a free-floating act that anyone and everyone is capable of. Emancipation is conditional on macro cultural factors, as all behavior is. Consequently, only people who occupy the conditions that characterize radical chains have the material, social, and psychological potential to achieve and lead emancipation.

Of course, people outside the concrete radical chains that Marx describes can join emancipatory movements that the radically chained members lead. However, it is necessary to be bound by those chains in order to derive the dialectical direction of emancipation from them that the chains provide. Those people who are bound in those chains develop the deepest sense of liberation because they occupy the material contradictions within oppression that provide the alternative to it.

This *emancipatory class* experiences general suffering, not a particular suffering or wrong in relation to the State. This class does not have a spe-

cific antithesis to the State; it stands in complete antithesis to the State. Because of this it does not claim any particular right of redress; it claims complete emancipation from the State. As a general, universal class of normal suffering, its antithesis is to all suffering, and its solution is emancipation from all suffering. It is this class, structured by a particular class dialectic that is empowered by its very position as an exploited class, that seeks emancipation of the entire society.

This is an extraordinary proposition from Marx.

It explains general suffering as originating in a particular class of the mode of production. It is the concrete suffering of a particular class that is capable of eradicating exploitation by eliminating the class structure. Emancipation is not a capability of every person who suffers. People outside this particular condition do not have the need, the interest, the material conditions, or the psychological competencies to lead the revolutionary movement. Only a particular class has the condition of general exploitation that can generate general emancipation.

This has tremendous importance for emancipatory social movements. It explains who their most committed recruits will likely be, and which populations will have the most to offer these movements. Certain populations are interested in these movements for selfish ends, not for achieving genuine emancipation for the population as a whole.

I have introduced this issue in the preceding discussion of civil rights. I have explained that civil rights applies to particular groups of people who have been excluded from general exploitation and suffer special exploitation, super-exploitation. Civil rights is confined to redressing their super-exploitation by integrating into general exploitation that the white majority experiences. I mentioned that these groups are primarily interested in this form of redress. They are not interested in eliminating the general, normative exploitation that is required by class society. Consequently, these groups have little potential for general emancipation. In other words, oppressed people seek civil rights for themselves to enter the mainstream, not to emancipate it and all the people in it. They seek freedom to own property, not freedom from private property; they seek liberty to engage in business, not freedom from capitalist business.

Marx explains that there are different forms of exploitation in a society, and not all forms contain conditions that meet his criterion of radical chains that galvanize radical opposition to the political economy.

Vygotsky illustrated Marx's conditions of emancipation in his discussion of psychological development. Without appropriate conditions in the environment, development does not occur:

> Development is achieved under particular conditions of interaction with the environment, where the ideal and final form of development is already there in the environment and actually exerts a real influence on the primary form, on the first steps of the child's development. Something which is only supposed to take shape at the very end of development somehow influences the very first steps in this development." "If…the development of the child, for whatever reasons, has to take place outside those specific conditions, i.e., without any interaction with the final form, then this proper form will fail to develop properly in the child. (Vygotsky 1994a, pp. 348–349)

Marginalized populations who are deprived of conditions and interactions that afford emancipatory *praxis* can overcome their condition by working with proletarian groups to learn the broader issues involved in social emancipation. Working within the leadership of proletarian groups, marginalized populations can come to see that their concerns are integrated within the problems and critiques of capitalism and class society. (This reverses the contemporary adulation of marginalized groups as leaders of emancipation.)

Of course, members of marginalized groups who are also part of the proletariat, gain revolutionary potential from their class position. This comes from recognizing themselves as proletarian women or proletarian minorities. It is their class position that radicalizes and politicizes their cultural (ethnic, gender) concerns. Marginalized groups may have insight into their special exploitation that they can contribute to the proletariat struggle. Within the proletariat, marginalized groups require special attention to their distinctive histories with oppression.

Marx did not ignore women and minorities; he knew their oppression and sought to overturn it. He had to do it through his scientific, historical-materialist analysis of political economy and class. Because political econ-

omy and class are the base of society, it is imperative to alter this base in order to achieve effective, comprehensive emancipation. The agent of this change must similarly be grounded in the political economy and class. The proletariat exclusively fits this requirement.

Other populations, such as women, ethnicities, and gender identities, do not occupy the political-economic conditions that Marx required of the agent of emancipatory movements. They are not classes and have no class interest. They transect classes. Woman, ethnicity, and gender identity all include capitalists whose economic interests are antagonistic to working-class women and races. Workers, in contrast, cannot, by definition, include capitalists. (Incredibly, the Chinese Communist Party has eradicated its own class position by welcoming billionaire capitalists into the party of the working class. This destroys socialist class consciousness of workers. That is the greatest impediment to Marxian socialist *praxis* in China and throughout the world.) Nor do marginalized populations as a whole bear radical chains to negate capitalism, since their capitalist members are not exploited, and indeed exploit workers. Nor do these populations seek the emancipation of humanity because their capitalist members oppress working people.

Women's liberation mutes the class struggle. For it allies working-class women with upper class women of the same gender or race; it does not ally working-class women with working-class men to oppose capitalist women and capitalist men. In addition, feminism breaks class solidarity to redirect poor women into alliance with capitalist women. Feminism protects capitalist women under the rubric of women's sisterhood and women's liberation. Capitalist women are sisters of poor women in this theory, while poor men are not their brothers or allies because men are outside the gender category (Ratner 2019).

Populist feminists have *de-politicized* social issues by converting them into abstract gender issues. They call for "women" to lead; they do not call for *progressive women* or *socialist women* to lead. This *strips* progressive politics from social issues and from feminism. It says, "it does not matter what politics you have as long as you are a woman." Progressive women such as Amy Goodman speak this language of abstract feminism (see DemocracyNow.org May 8, 2019). This is a dangerous, conservative viewpoint. It says that Betsy DeVos, Condi Rice, Margaret Thatcher,

Sarah Huckabee Sanders, and Sarah Palin are vaunted, valuable contributors to solving social problems because they are women.

The disparity between gender issues and class issues is starkly revealed in a recent action by Planned Parenthood, which is the quintessential "woman's" organization as it provides women's health and reproductive services. Feminist rhetoric about women's unity and sisterhood would lead one to assume that Planned Parenthood's progressive, gender services would carry over into progressive class politics and economics. However, this is false. Planned Parenthood is a bad employer. It pays low wages to its employees, it has an undemocratic management that excludes employees from decision-making, and it follows competitive capitalist practices of closing clinics to increase profit. It is so bad that in 2018, its employees tried to form a labor union to represent them. Planned Parenthood opposed the formation of a union! It hired a union-busting law firm, and it sought an injunction against the union from Trump's Labor Department (Burns 2018).

In this action, Planned Parenthood's feminist leadership is not only anti-worker, it is also anti-woman. For its employees are largely women. So, Planned Parenthood underpays women, oppresses women at work, alienates women from their labor activity, and prevents women from organizing together to advance their quality of life! Not only does feminism displace working-class solidarity with men but it also can displace gender solidarity with its own female employees.

This is the dangerous logic of abstract notions of liberation that laud apolitical attributes of people such as gender and gender identity.

The same is true for black liberation. It unites poor blacks with capitalist blacks in the category of black folk; it turns black working women away from alliance with white working women who are outside the black category. It fragments the proletariat by picking off gender and race proletarians and segregating them into their gender and racial categories. This leads to leaving white workers with no allies except white capitalists.

All of these conservative tendencies of marginalized populations must be curtailed and replaced by emancipatory interests. Joining proletarian movements which have emancipatory interests by virtue of their conditions in the political economy, is the best way of doing this.

Analyzing the emancipatory potential of marginalized groups in terms of their conditions leads to the conclusion that gender identity has the

least emancipatory potential. It has none of the conditions necessary to require or desire transformation in the political-economic base of society. None of the conditions that Marx described pertain to gender identities. They have no connection to mode of production, they do not comprise a social class, and they are not super-exploited by capital to accumulate surplus value the way that minority workers and women workers are. Gender identities are personal issues concerning the preferred physical gender of self and partner. Gender identities have no objective need to oppose capitalism and the class system. Gender identities can achieve gender freedom of gender choice within capitalism and the class structure. Most countries of the world accept diverse gender identities now. Gender identity is now one of the human rights. (Worker identity, e.g., as a union member, is not a human right.) Gender identities may be derided because of conservative cultural tendencies in certain countries, but they do not require redress through political-economic revolution in the way that the proletariat requires.

Gender identities' objective social situation is similar to that of interracial couples. One is non-normative race and another is non-normative gender. Interracial couples simply want the freedom to partner with any race they choose, just as gender identities simply want the freedom to partner with any gender they choose. There is nothing politically radical about either one. Interracial couples are not anti-capitalist, nor are non-normative gender identities. The only social demand either of these makes is for tolerance to practice their racial or gender choices of interpersonal partners. Interracial couples wish to participate in mainstream society, just as gender identities do. Interracial couples and gender diverse individuals/couples may suffer discrimination because of prejudices; however, they are not a social class with any particular function within the political economy; they are not economically exploited for profit; nor do they have any objective interest in revolting against the capitalist political economy of surplus value, private property, and wage labor.

Non-normative racial and gender interpersonal relations do not transform capitalist social relationships even on the micro level. They adopt them in new racial and gender situations. Interracial couples adopt normative family relationships to their racial situation. They do not create anti-capitalist social relationships. Non-normative genders similarly

adopt normative interpersonal relationships (Drucker 2011). For example, domestic violence is high in same-sex partnerships (Donovan et al. 2006, p. 8).

Beneath the non-normative appearance of diverse racial and gender interaction, conventional bourgeois society remains in command.

Racial and gender diversity are mainstream reforms that make capitalism appear to be more diverse than it is. Diversity is only operative within the confines of capitalism. It is not tolerated when it moves beyond capitalism to create a truly different system – which is real diversity. It is just like equality which only operates within class divisions, but never to override them. When civil rights cross the line from diversity to radical transformation to a new form of society, they are immediately shot down, as Martin Luther King and Malcolm X were. Capitalists are infallible guides to distinguishing minor social reform from major social transformation. They identify these through their acceptance or rejection of them. Whatever they accept is minor reform; what they reject is radical emancipation. The populace can learn from capitalists about this.

From *a political perspective of political-economic transformation*, racial and gender civil rights are conservative, not radical. Their struggles for social equality are important reforms because they should be respected and included. However, they are not aligned with radical, comprehensive emancipation in the sense of transforming the political-economic system. For this reason, they must be included within the radical movements that do work for political-economic emancipation (as diagrammed in Fig. 1.6).

The same is true for handicapped people and homeless people. They are marginalized and they demand respect and equality, yet they have minimal revolutionary potential for all the reasons I have enumerated above. They are more concerned with their marginalized identity and rights to join mainstream capitalism than they are with criticizing and transforming the political economy of capitalism. Marx explained that "Revolutionary energy and consciousness of its own power do not suffice" (Marx, *Contribution to Hegel's Philosophy of Law: Introduction*).

Unfortunately, most social movements for emancipation are hamstrung in this way. This makes them problematical rather than promising, as I have depicted in Fig. 1.5c. The following chapters document these problems.

Notes

1. Yet progressive women, such as Amy Goodman of DemocraryNow, constantly call for women politicians to replace men. The following editorial in Truthout, May 24, 2019 typifies this ideology: "In voting for such a coercive measure, 25 conservative male state senators effectively diminished the humanity, and denigrated the decision-making capacity, of women in Alabama"https://truthout.org/articles/alabama-doesnt-value-its-own-residents-sanctity-of-life/

   The editorial paints the Victorian stereotype of evil men denying women their basic rights. It obfuscates the fact that Alabama women, themselves, including virtually all female legislators, and the female governor, have used their decision-making capacity to prohibit this pro-woman, medical procedure. And it was women voters who voted for the male legislators who voted for the abortion ban. The editorial seeks to deny the fact that women are actively complicit in their own mystification and oppression. It falsely and knowingly shifts the blame to evil men and perpetuates the myth of "the progressive woman." U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, responding to the wave of anti-abortion laws sweeping the nation, propagated this ideology with her sexist, racist statement: "Guys, guys, guys, just white guys …."

   In fact, the majority of American men support abortion rights. Moreover, Southern women have long opposed "women's rights" for independence. In the decades-long fight for women's suffrage that ended with the 19th amendment in 1920, it was women who funded, staffed, and led anti-suffragist movements. Anti-suffragist women believed voting would compromise their traditional social role. The president of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, in 1916, was a woman, Josephine Dodge. "White women were fundamental to maintaining segregation before the US civil rights era, in grooming their children and family to racist ideology, and actively campaigning against equal rights. White women used baby strollers to block school buses integrating schools in their neighborhood, and encouraging their own children to harass former classmates who went to desegregated schools" (Merelli 2019; McRae 2018; Taranto 2017). White, racist women used their gender to legitimate themselves as defenders of children, morality, and the social good. Catholic Nuns, who are regarded as the purest of women, were slave owners: "nearly all of the orders of Catholic sisters established by the late 1820s owned slaves." They sold slaves to pay off Church debts (New York Times, Aug. 2, 2019 "Nuns Who Bought and Sold Human Beings"). Churches were

racially segregated in the nineteenth century. Neither gender nor moralistic religion overcomes or circumvents economic pressures. Chinese girls had their feet bound for 1000 years of Chinese history. This bent the toes under the foot and caused the foot to be deformed for the girls' entire lives. This incapacitated girls' physical activity. Foot binding was performed by mothers for 1000 years. Mothers did not transcend this oppressive and painful practice against females that was culturally mandated.

2. In this sense, the phenomenon of depth-radicality is quite different from strength. Strength is achieved by adding many weak individuals together. Many weak individuals together can generate a stronger unity that can lift a heavy object.

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Section II

Utilizing Vygotsky's Marxist Psychology/Macro Cultural Psychology to Assess and Advance Populist Emancipatory Movements

Lenin: "*Utopian* socialism criticized capitalist society, it condemned and damned it, it dreamed of its destruction, it had visions of a better order and endeavored to convince the rich of the immorality of exploitation. But utopian socialism could not indicate the real solution. It could not explain the real nature of wage-slavery under capitalism, it could not reveal the laws of capitalist development, or show what *social force* is capable of becoming the creator of a new society" (https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1913/mar/x01.htm).



5

Contemporary Populism

Contemporary populism is a distinct historical form of populism. It contrasts with American populism of the nineteenth century. That was an organized, political resistance to capitalism. Goodwyn (1978) explains that it originated as farmer alliances, such as the Grange, in the nineteenth century, which sought to protect poor, white, cotton farmers who were becoming impoverished from economic depressions. Populism was the agrarian complement of the industrial union and socialist movements. It opposed Democratic and Republican Parties which were controlled by bankers. It had a platform of political and economic demands. In 1892–1896, the Populist Party (or the Peoples' Party) was founded to demand an increase in the circulating currency (to be achieved by the unlimited coinage of silver), a graduated income tax, government ownership of utilities and the railroads, the eight-hour working day, the direct election of the US senators, and other measures designed to strengthen political democracy and give farmers economic parity with business and industry. They demanded the right to recall an elected official's term before it expired. They also called for the secret ballot and a one-term limit for the president.

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5.1 Confronting the Personal

Contemporary populism seeks an entirely different kind of emancipation. There is no official self-definition of populism from an international populist society. Identifying it requires a perceptive construction of its essential elements. Husserl made important contributions to this construction of essences. He asked, how do we know that instances of a table, despite many variations in shape, size, and color, are, in fact, instances of a coherent 'eidos' *table*? What is this deeper, structural essence – "eidos"? How do we know that something is not a table and does not possess this eidos? I ask the same question about instances of populism: what is the essence of populism that unifies the disparate appearances and allows us to call them populism, and to exclude other things from this typology?

My essential construction of populism emphasizes its abiding concern for the freedom of individual subjectivity. This is the freedom to define oneself and one's social and natural interactions and to express one's self-definitions through free actions. The contemporary populist solution is to open society to encourage individual self-definition and expression. Emancipation does not come from transforming the structure of society to another structure (e.g., a feudal structure to a capitalist structure or a capitalist structure to a socialist structure)—as we have described in the previous chapter, and as the Populist Party sought to do. Populists do engage in political work that is primarily oriented to supporting individual rights to freedom of expression and civil rights.

Populists are person-centric; that is, they regard the individual person as primary. Individuals hold the keys to their own fulfillment and society's fulfillment. Individual persons must be cherished, encouraged, stimulated, empowered, respected, and freed to develop their agency, choice, and fulfillment.

Populists contend that emancipation is essentially and ultimately fulfilled subjectivity; therefore, populists seek to achieve this fulfillment, directly and immediately, in interpersonal interactions where subjectivity is expressed. This is where people can expose injustice—in the treatment of individuals which is obvious in gestures, words, and symbols. Interpersonal interactions are also where people can most directly and

obviously be treated better via new gestures, words, and symbols. This is the most direct, visible, powerful, rapid, and democratic way to expose and improve mistreatment. It is much more direct, fast, easy, and participatory than changing the vast, impersonal political-economic character of society.

This perspective is why populists are primarily concerned with laws that protect personal interactions, as in sexual harassment laws. New York State defines sexual harassment as any unwelcome physical contact, including unwanted touching, unwanted personal questions about social life, unwelcome invitations to date, and referring to an adult as a girl. Harassment laws protect individual autonomy, privacy, and respect at the micro, interpersonal level. Harassment laws are thus populist in nature.

Society is delighted to give individuals control over their micro, interpersonal interactions so that they feel in control of their lives which the government protects. Populist laws are the perfect model of a government that protects individual autonomy and empowerment. However, if your employer changes your work schedule every week and changes your work hours and your wage as a result, this is not harassment of your personhood, autonomy, privacy, and respect! No macro kinds of political-economic-ecological acts are relevant to your freedom and identity and control.

Sexual harassment laws illustrate the populist demand for personal autonomy, privacy, respect, and justice NOW. This can and must be achieved in the directness and immediacy of personal interactions. Sensitivity training and communication are vital to achieving this respect for subjectivity and comfort for subjectivity. This can happen now, among individuals in real time, by changing their attitudes. This is not a matter of analyzing and transforming impersonal political-economic structures over eras.

Populism reaches into the impersonal, labyrinth structures of macro cultural factors and rescues the forgotten, or hidden, human issues (of abandonment and dignity) from their cultural-political-economic encumbrances. Populists then confront and improve them directly in the personal and interpersonal behaviors, attitudes, perceptions, and emotions of people involved. Populists believe that the personal level is where real, direct, immediate, tangible, unmistakable, rapid, empathic human

assistance can be delivered; it is also where people can use their agency, subjectivity, and creativity to develop themselves.

Michelle Obama articulates the populist notion of emancipation. Her standpoint has been critiqued by Taylor (2019) in line with my conception of oppression and liberation. Taylor says, "Michelle Obama's new book (*Becoming*) reduces racial inequality to a matter of psychological impairment that can be overcome through grit and grin. This is a dangerous proposition." Taylor quotes Obama as saying that emancipation is brought about by telling your life story, or some meaningful aspect of it. "Your story is what you have, what you will always have. It is something to own." Obama does not emphasize rigorous analysis of society and social alternatives. Instead, she advises us to tell stories about our personal lives. This affirms their space; it also creates "space for other stories and other voices, to widen the pathway for who belongs and why…. Maybe then we can begin to fear less, to make fewer wrong assumptions, to let go of biases and stereotypes that unnecessarily divide us." In other words, stories solve our problems through personal expression and interpersonal understanding of personal expression. ("Narrative" is a populist term that conveys populist political philosophy. Narrative assumes interpersonal interaction/communication. It is an individual phenomenon. It is not a structural notion. Applying this interpersonal construct and interaction to structural, impersonal formations such as social class reduces them to democratic, interpersonal interactions. The use of populist terminology is therefore an ideological disguise of capitalism; Ratner 2019).

This populist, interpersonal message is reinforced "when Obama tells us that local business owners later donated funds so that twenty-two kids could visit the White House, meet Barack Obama, and visit Howard University." These interpersonal interactions will supposedly inspire kids to study hard and work hard to realize themselves.

Taylor concludes: "In place of politics, Obama concocts a kind of hybrid of middle-class feminism—with its focus on self-actualization, empowerment, and personal fulfillment…By eschewing all 'policy solutions,' she sends a profoundly dangerous political message: that individuals alone can change their circumstance…When unmoored from the institutions of power and class domination, racism becomes impossible to address, combat, and dismantle."

Obama exemplifies the ideological obfuscation of populism. As the president's wife, she sits at the epicenter of geopolitics and political economy that run the entire world, yet she denies its relevance to social problems of individuals. She knowingly and deliberately obscures geopolitics in spouting individualistic, neoliberal ideology of self-help and inspiration. She is insulating the capitalist system, which she heads, from analysis, critique, and transformation, which are vital to improving the lives of people.

A typical example of this populist focus on subjective change rather than on structural change is a black artistic movement that called itself "Black Is Beautiful": Identity, Pride and the Photography of Kwame Brathwaite. Riefe (2019) explains its origins: "Kwame and Elombe went on to co-found the African Jazz Arts Society and Studios (AJASS), a collective of artists, playwrights, designers and dancers, giving African Americans a way to share and celebrate their culture unmolested by a monolithically white racist society. From AJASS they launched *Naturally '62*, a fashion event celebrating black women and the African American esthetic. Out of it came 'Black Is Beautiful,' a mantra for a generation." "They created a template on how to bring a community together around an anthem of positivity and inspire an entire generation to love themselves during a period of segregation." In other words, this artistic movement sought to circumvent the problems of segregation by subjectively (culturally) loving themselves! They wore their hair naturally and did not wear make-up. "He didn't take a violent approach, he didn't take a hateful approach, he took an approach about bringing everybody back to self-love."

This is quintessential populism. Don't worry about segregation, poverty, housing, obesity, lead poisoning, crumbling neighborhoods, inferior schools, high crime rate, police brutality, mass incarceration, voter suppression, or exploitation; instead, reject outsiders' view of you as inferior and flip it into an opposite *viewpoint* in which you love and take pride in yourself, especially your skin color and your hair.

This strategy was denounced as narcissistic by thinkers in earlier eras. Ovid described Narcissus as so entranced with his own reflection in a lake that he refused to drink the water because it made his reflection disappear. He therefore died of thirst right next to the water that could have

saved him. His self-adulation prevented him from acting practically in the world. Psychologists such as Freud and the Diagnostic and Statistics Manual defined narcissism as a personality disorder. It is marked by self-preoccupation, delusions of superiority, and a quest for shallow adulation from other people.

Populists ignore these critiques of self-love. They invert them into a positive view of self-love as generating self-confidence, self-pride, and self-love. This is proclaimed to constitute "cultural politics" of race and gender. However, it is the individualistic culture that bases social change in psychological processes of individuals, for example, self-love and self-confidence. The celebration of Black Is Beautiful offered no social, political, or economic program that is designed to advance and support the black or the working-class community as a whole, cohesive, social collective.

The self-pride/self-love of populism is dangerous because it accepts whatever the individuals want to express. In the Black Is Beautiful artistic movement, there is no critical evaluation of the agency that is the object of adulation. Blacks are encouraged to love themselves simply because they are black human beings. This allows pernicious psychology/behavior to be adulated. Sexist, selfish, self-protective, estranged, commodified, anti-social behavior may be valued by individuals and incorporated into their self-defined self-love that rejects external evaluations as ignorant and oppressive.

This is exactly what happens in right-wing populist movements.

This populist, narcissistic subjectivism is vulnerable to incorporating and reproducing social problems which are cloaked in superficial appeals to ethnic and gender subjectivity. Reactionary politics becomes accepted into mainstream politics in the form of women and blacks. After the riots of the 1960s, the federal government began promoting the growth of small businesses in minority neighborhoods as a way to ease racial tensions. "What we need is to get private enterprise into the ghetto, and put the people of the ghetto into private enterprises," President Richard Nixon said around the time he created the Office of Minority Business Enterprise, in 1969. As Chin Jou, a senior lecturer at the University of Sydney, describes in her book, *Supersizing Urban America*, fast-food companies were some of the most eager entrants into this "ghetto" market (Khazan 2018). Capitalists piggy-backed the movement for black com-

munity revival. They plied their capitalist political economics as a means of black community revival. Ethnic identity and consciousness is powerless to reject this strategy because it conforms to the abstract, apolitical criteria of black community revival.

"Fast-food restaurants spent the next few decades rushing into urban markets, seeking out these areas' untapped labor force and concentrated audience. In the 1990s, the federal government gave fast-food restaurants financial incentives to open locations in inner cities…Fast-food executives looked for ways to entice black customers. Burger King made ads featuring Shaft. KFC redecorated locations in cities like Baltimore to cater to stereotypically black tastes, and piped 'rap, rhythm and blues, and soul music' into the restaurants. Employees were given new Afrocentric uniforms consisting of kente cloth dashikis." A study from 2005 found that TV programs aimed at African Americans feature more fast-food advertisements than other shows do, as well as more commercials for soda and candy. "Black children today see twice as many soda and candy ads as white children do" (Khazan 2018).

The result of the apolitical quest for ethnic business and ethnic culture was that these became coopted by capitalists (black and white) and their political representatives to promote neoliberal, commodified, black identity. Abstract black identity gets filled in with concrete neoliberal, capitalist form and content. Black pride, black identity was easy fodder for neoliberalism because it is apolitical and accepts any political-economic activity that is ethnically black. It is just like contemporary feminism that takes pride in women who succeed in the capitalist political economy, despite its exploitive, alienating features.

Black pride and community ultimately generated black obesity by plying black individuals with unhealthy food under the auspices of minority business programs and cultural programs.

The solution is to inform abstract issues with progressive concrete politics that preempt status quo politics. This is what socialist feminism does.

5.1.1 Populist Politics Are Personal Expressions

Interactions of persons are the essence of social life for populists. Populists regard the personal realm as the political realm. Populists invert the

notion that the personal reflects the political into its opposite: the personal constitutes the political. Personal subjectivity is always at the center of social relations.

Populists personalize politics; they do not politicize the personal.

For example, populists denounce neoliberalism as a system intended to annihilate human dignity (Ratner 2018a). Neoliberalism is not presented as a political-economic system that exploits people in order to accumulate capital. Neoliberalism is a set of personal relations that destroys personal dignity. This makes it susceptible to personal intervention and solution. Neoliberals can be trained to respect individuals' dignity. That is how neoliberalism can be humanized. Political-economic analysis and transformation is beside the point.

Populists similarly define neoliberal dispossession and inequality in personalized terms such as "abandonment" (ibid.). This is designed to highlight the human quality of dispossession and inequality and to improve it directly by addressing abandonment as a crucial issue. The solution to this individual/interpersonal problem is more personal caring behavior that does not abandon workers. Social agencies must focus on making people feel wanted, valued, supported. This will solve the problem of abandonment which is the essential human problem of dispossession and inequality.

Populists also define fascism in psychological, interpersonal terms of being mean-spirited, vicious, intolerant, and verbally insulting. Trump is condemned more for his vitriolic, insulting speech and the kind of person he is than for his policies. Indeed, his policies are deemed to be expressions of his personality—as politics in general is reduced to individual attributes. His austerity policies are attributed to his dislike of women or minorities. His immigration policies are attributed to his ethnic prejudices and lack of compassion. His gender/reproductive politics is attributed to his hatred of women.

For instance, when conservatives/neoliberals cut social service programs for the poor, feminists denounce this as "a war on women." However, while the cuts do hurt women, they were not designed to hurt women, per se, because of a misogynistic animosity toward women. The cuts hurt poor men as well. They have a neoliberal, political-economic motivation and objective, not a gender motivation and objective (Ratner

2019). Neoliberals cut all social support programs for the populace, including national parks, education, health, and the arts—which do not hurt more women than men. This is the neoliberal public political philosophy for marketizing everything, and depressing the lower classes in order to accumulate more capital for the capitalists. To single out women as the primary target of cuts in services is to obfuscate the political economy of capitalism.

Similarly, the US bombing of mid-East countries has killed thousands of children; however, it is absurd to consider the bombing a war on children, as though the motivation was to kill children whom politicians or military leaders dislike or disrespect. Populists personalize political events. They misconstrue a political event such as invading a country to expropriate its resources, or to install a friendly government, as a personal attack upon the victims of the policy.

Construing the US killing of children as a war on children is not simply wrong, it is politically misleading, for it directs attention at social leaders' feelings about children instead of their political-economic interests which are the real cause of children's deaths.

Even conservative restrictions on abortion are not attacks on women. They are political strategies for recruiting conservative voters to conservative politics. In fact, conservatives have historically supported abortions. Nixon, Barry Goldwater, and George H.W. Bush were all pro-choice. Even the Protestant clergy supported abortion in the 1960s. Conservatives became anti-abortion in the 1970s for political reasons, not for anti-women reasons. Halpern (2018, p. 4) explains: "the Republican Party used control of women's bodies as political capital to shift the balance of power their way. We watch politicians like George H. W. Bush and Reagan disavow their earlier pro-choice positions during their presidential campaigns." Political strategists such as Paul Weyrich concocted this political strategy; it was not die-hard misogynists who concocted it. Weyrich said, "Abortion is going to work for us as a political issue" (ibid.). Concerted political organizing shifted popular opinion from 68% of Republican supporting women's right to choose in 1972 to 26% of Republicans supporting choice in 2009 (ibid.). Republicans, such as Bush and Reagan, did not suddenly hate women as the basis for their political change on abortion. They did not use abortion as a forum for

expressing hatred of women or distrust in women. Populists depoliticize abortion by ignoring its politics and replacing them with personal attacks on women. This exempts the truly dangerous politics from critique. This perpetuates oppression.

Populists make a similar mistake in supporting abortion as a woman's right to choose. Slogans say "Trust women to choose." The point is to validate women's subjectivity and personhood. Women are to be respected for their wisdom, responsibility, choices, and decisions. Opposition to abortion is framed as not trusting women to make the best choice. The issue of abortion is reduced to respecting or denying agency to women, which means individual choice. The content of the decision is not important; what is important is the person and her agency/autonomy. This is the essence of subjectivistic populism.

This political philosophy is wrong headed. It is absurd to validate people just because they are people and are active agents. This leads to validating destructive behavior in the name of humanism. Subjectivity should only be validated if it promotes fulfilling social behavior. Opponents of abortion take this position. They say that abortion is murder of a living person. Their argument cannot be countered by circumventing it and endorsing women's subjective choice to abort. It is preposterous to say that women's desire-choice-right to kill a human being must be respected. Objective reality of the choice trumps the abstract right to exercise agency and make any choice they wish. The only way to counter opposition to abortion is to address the objective issue of whether an embryo is a human being. It is only acceptable to choose to abort if the embryo is objectively not a person. The subjective choice is only valid if it is objectively valid. Populists refuse to descend from abstract agency and subjectivity to the objective question of what constitutes a human and whether an embryo fits that definition. This is a fatal failure. Subjective populism has no power to counter an argument about objective personhood. And this is as it should be. It is absurd to validate people for their subjectivity instead of for the objective results of their behavior. The only valid way to justify abortion is to demonstrate that it is objectively not killing a human person. In other words, to demonstrate that an embryo is not yet a human person. This is an objective argument about the real nature of a human person. It disproves the conservative's

objective argument that an embryo is a human person. It confronts a false objective argument with a true objective argument.

Another example of personalizing the political is the populist demand for apologies from perpetrators of historical atrocities. Populists feel better about the atrocities after they hear some personal feeling about them from the perpetrators. The apology adds a "human element" and a "personal feeling" to the atrocity that show that the people really do care about the misery they (their forbearers) had inflicted. However, apologies only change personal feelings, but not social reality of the atrocities. The only value to sympathetic statements from modern descendants of the perpetrators is if they say "we know why our forbearers committed this crime and we have made structural guarantees it will never happen again." This provides political, structural, institutional strength to personal statements. Unfortunately, populists do not require this guarantee; they are gratified by personal statements of atonement because they value personal expression over material, structural change. Apologies for political-economic events, such as slavery or invasions, create the false impression that these events are essentially personal issues that are rooted in individual cruelty, or power seeking, or intolerance, or inconsiderateness. Apologies imply that these causes can be rectified through individual efforts to overcome these tendencies. "We will never allow that to happen again," because we will become more compassionate, benevolent, tolerant individuals. Apologies reduce events to individual feelings. The victim decides whether or not to accept the perpetrator's apology. She will reject it if it does not sound to be sincere, and if it does not seem to indicate that the perpetrator will genuinely seek to change his behavior. This is all a matter of evaluating individual sincerity and motivation. This ignores the political-economic, structural causes of atrocities such as slavery or invasions. As we have seen in the Introduction, these causes lie in political, economic interests to generate wealth by exploiting peoples' labor and colonizing them. Eradicating atrocities requires eradicating these causes. The reason that American politicians and capitalists and generals invaded Iraq in 2003 was not because these individuals hated or misunderstood, or disrespected Iraqi people. They did so in order to control the mid-East politics and economics, especially surrounding oil. It would be ludicrous for American officials to apologize now for making "a

mistake" and vowing to be more thoughtful in the future, as though this was a simple personal choice of action. Apologies are not only useless, they are ideological in obfuscating the real causes and solutions of social problems, and in directing people to work for false solutions.

5.1.2 Immigrants' Rights

Populist depoliticizing of structural issues is evident in populist support for immigrants. They criticize official policy for disrespecting and dehumanizing individuals during official interactions, and in policies that restrict migrants' freedom of movement and residence. The solution is to respect their humanity in the form of rights—rights to free migration without borders. Border constraints, like all material conditions, are eliminated to allow individual free choice of migration. Systems are dissolved rather than analyzed and transformed, to facilitate individual choice of movement.

Populists do not consider a country's resources, needs, and desires to support masses of immigrants. Populists are similarly unconcerned about the conditions that immigrants face when they enter a country. The focus is on interpersonal respect for immigrants' choice to move into any existing condition they choose. (Just as civil rights never criticize the capitalist system and confine their attention to accepting marginalized people into them.) This is ultimately conservative by forcing people to accept extant conditions as their conditions of choice.

5.1.3 Humanitarian Crises

Populist emphasis on personal subjectivity leads to define material, political events as essentially acts of human behavior and subjectivity. This is expressed in populist interpreting of social-political disasters as "humanitarian crisis." This term tugs at our heartstrings because it describes the tragic personal experience of people: their wrenching hunger, fear, danger, and desperation; their family separation, malnutrition, and so on. This focus on the personal is populism. The solution is empathy and some fund raising to ease the pain. What else can you do about such overwhelming *personal tragedies*? This helplessness is only alleviated by discovering one person or family who was able to escape and find some success.

The personal resourcefulness, strength, and heroism of the individual is congratulated as though that is the solution that the masses can emulate.

Humanitarian crises are always the effects of political-economic practices. The human element must be contextualized, historicized, and politicized in order to make it intelligible and correctable. Humanitarianism obscures this reality. It takes intelligible events and makes them unintelligible by removing the human element from its intelligible cultural-historical-political conditions. Humanitarian crisis diverts effective, political-economic solutions into heroic, individual acts that are irrelevant to mass improvement. Humanitarianism is an ideology that insulates the political-economic system from examination, critique, and transformation. That is why humanitarian crises are the daily fare of news programs. Framing them in personal/populist terms makes them incomprehensible and insoluble. This renders people passive. "What can you do?" "We sure are lucky that didn't happen to us."

5.1.4 Populist Mass Movements

Even populist mass movements for social change are directed more at these abstracted human elements than at structural analysis and transformation. Naomi Klein advocates "moving to a culture of care, of radical care and consent, which begins with the original caretakers of the land, water and air." "We are all working within structures where there is a disincentive to do what we most need to do, which is come together. I don't know what the answer is, but I definitely think that that first stage is just being honest about it and trying to speak about it in a way that is not just accusatory."

(*Truthout, July 6, 2017;* http://www.truth-out.org/opinion/item/41175-trying-to-build-in-the-rubble-of-neoliberalism-michelle-alexander-and-naomi-klein-on-bringing-movements-together-in-the-trump-era). Thus, we must address our way of communicating to be less accusatory and more open. Then our common wishes can be heard and respected. And these wishes boil down to the common abstractions of solidarity, caring, and justice.

Michelle Alexander, whose research on the racism of mass incarceration is powerful, recently commented on her image of a social movement: "My own view – and I'm very open to hearing other perspectives – is that

this movement-building needs to begin at home, in local communities. It isn't about trying to launch a brand new national party overnight. It's about people in communities coming together across lines of difference, bringing with them their movements, their families, and coming together and saying, 'How can we together build a movement of movements here at home? What would that look like? What do we want to do right here in our communities?'" (*ibid.*). This is typical populism. Alexander is open to all perspectives, has no idea about how to improve things, offers no leadership, and wants to get together with all others to feel solidarity and begin to figure things out. This gives her hope! "What makes me hopeful in this moment is the incredible surge of energy and enthusiasm that we've seen from a wide range of people who were asleep for the past eight years, who are now paying attention." Again, empty energy and enthusiasm is praised as promising. This is pathetic and irresponsible. She is not the least bit embarrassed and disheartened that in the twenty-first century, she has not the faintest idea of how to improve things.

Populists relish this ignorance because it leaves them open to democratically constructing new ideas from discussion among the people. Any kind of pre-formed knowledge is suspicious because it usurps the democratic, creative process. And the content that is decided upon is not very important anyway, because it is really the process of interacting and supporting that is important. Any content that expresses the views of the participants is good by that definition. Social construction and social subjectivity trump concrete, political-economic conditions and necessities.

Meanwhile, neoliberals are systematically taking over every single social institution through clear-sighted, effective, structural, political action.

The focus on personal/interpersonal issues in social resistance and social change leads to overlooking real, structural, material conditions. For example, Michelle Lamont, who is professor of sociology at Harvard University and has been elected to serve as president of the American Sociological Association, asserts "Finding ways to rekindle their sense of self-worth among workers is an urgent task, especially at a time when xenophobia and social exclusion are generating a slew of new social conflicts" (cited in Cherlin 2019, p. 751). But how can we accomplish this challenging task? "Lamont suggests a cultural campaign based on the universal characteristics that people believe that everyone has in common: shared biology, human nature, cosmological insignificance, or the

belief that we are all children of god. This is the message of 'ordinary universalism' that she propounds" (ibid., p. 752). This eminent sociologist dissolves sociological issues into personalistic abstractions of getting respect by emphasizing universal concepts.

This populist orientation is exemplified in an Indonesian movement against housing evictions in Jakarta. The activists were more concerned with expressing themselves and being recognized than with real material improvements in housing:

> Although the direct confrontation conducted by the urban poor during the evictions did not necessarily result in victors or any tangible gain, their concrete experience of resisting state power influenced the political process that place in the city itself. There might be no major structural change within the city's formal process, but the combativeness of the urban poor when challenging measures that ran against their interest pressured the authorities to become more lenient. The city authorities, whether they want to or not, must take into account the demand of the urban poor to live humanely in the city. (Hess et al. 2017, p. 168)

Populists' vision, demands, and sense of success about social protest center on interpersonal "acknowledgements" of people. In this case, success is claimed when authorities agreed to "become more lenient" and to "take into account" poor people's demand to "live humanely." The activists are nonplussed by the absence of structural change within the city's formal process; they are nonplussed by the absence of any concrete, material benefits gained. The reason is that the populist focus is on interpersonal relationships (recognition, validation), as I have explained. The activists are satisfied that the poor people exercised combativeness and that authorities listened to them and promised to continue taking them into account. Human agency and interpersonal, human contact have been rescued and exercised, and this bodes well for the future.[1] Thus, even when populist groups manage to cobble together some ideas and demands, they abandon them in favor of the smallest nod to interpersonal process and "acknowledgment" of persons.

This populism is a form of self-mutilation. It deprives people of serious reasoning and real-world effectiveness that are necessary for true liberation.

From a cultural-materialist point of view, the Jakarta strike was a failure. It produced no material improvement in the peoples' lives. Vague promises from authorities are meaningless. Official promises from government or business leaders are routinely unfulfilled. For populists to accept the mere agency of promises and combativeness as valuable in themselves is to abdicate real social improvement. Populism is a "sell out" of the social struggle. It accepts defeat and continued real oppression as victory for human agency. In fact, social-political-material defeat is a defeat for human agency. The 2014 mass populist protests against police brutality in Ferguson, Missouri, that energized Black Lives Matter, have melted away into the same lack of improvement. Token, individual changes in the racial composition of the city council and police department have led to no structural improvement in standard of living or social policies. Violent crime is higher in 2019 than in 2014. Police brutality is also greater now. Federal investigations of police brutality were never implemented in Ferguson, or throughout the U.S. where white supremacists have infiltrated police departments, and the media and the public have supported police force and have criticized anti-police attitudes. Ferguson remains economically dilapidated (Healy and Bosman 2019; Hansford 2019). These failures prove my point that skin color and gender do not a politics make. Five years of black self-governance did nothing to improve the political economy of a black community, despite national attention and protest. Yet populist Black Lives Matter continues to be adulated as emancipatory because it "raised awareness of racial issues." The father of Michael Brown, whose murder by Ferguson police triggered the populist protests of 2014, continues to espouse the populist montra of emancipatory symbols, personal expression, and "awareness," devoid of political economic transformation. On the fifth anniversary of his son's death, Mr. Brown opined: "Just us making noise and standing together and getting in the right rooms and having these discussions, I can see it moving forward" (Alternet.com, Aug. 10, 2019; https://www.alternet.org/2019/08/were-still-seeking-justice-and-healing-5-years-after-the-ferguson-uprising/?utm_source=&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=1098&recip_id=14160&list_id=2). This is the constricting, depoliticizing, mystifying, pacifying, and pathetic world view that populism propagates. Decrying hate and racism is a psychological, universalistic demand, not a concrete, political one. It directs people to accept and love each other. Capitalism has disappeared.

5.2 The Pattern of Populist Emancipation

The foregoing examples of populism reveal its personalistic essence, or *eidos, ethos, and telos*. Macro cultural issues are ultimately reduced to interpersonal, subjective ones. This pattern is depicted in Fig. 5.1. It contrasts with Fig. 4.8b.

Figure 5.1 is identical to the bourgeois model of the American Psychological Association in Fig. 4.4. that demonstrates its conformist, anti-emancipatory character. It fails to undertake an objective analysis of the political-economic basis of social problems and to develop a campaign to change that basis. Of course this campaign must be accepted by the populace and refined by the populace; however, this is entirely different from soliciting diverse opinions, feelings, and wishes which are based upon little analysis and theory of the social structure, and trying to "work them out" in some agreeable plan. Martin-Baro opposed this populism by utilizing a cultural-political theory to objectively define who the people (i.e., the community) are, and which individuals do not belong to this cultural-political group. The people (community) is a defined political,

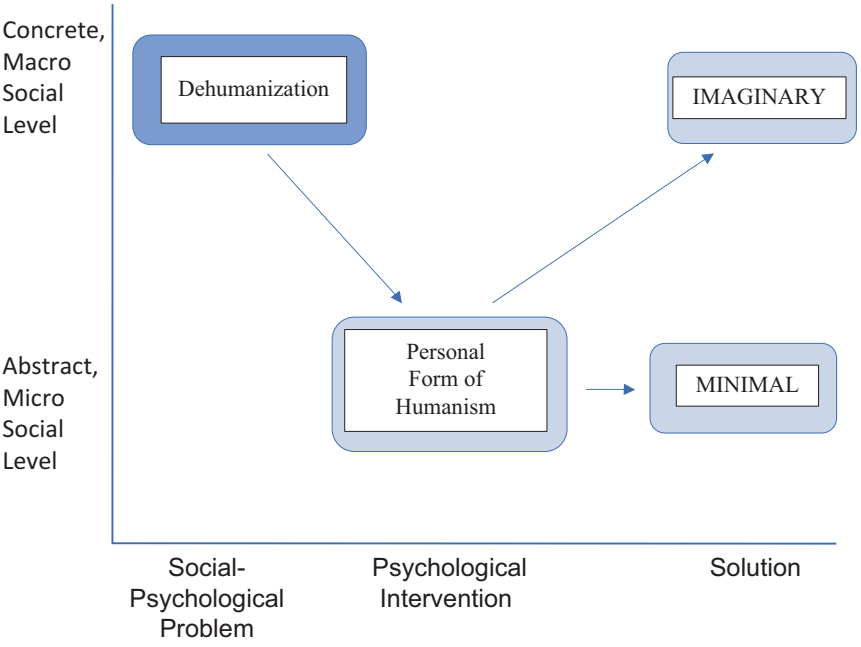


Fig. 5.1 The populist solution to capitalist dehumanization

socioeconomic, and historical group—akin to Marx's working class which occupies a defined position/role in the political economy. The people is not simply all individual humans, nor is it reducible to individuals who suffer—which is the populist definition. Rather than accepting all peoples' self-definition and opinions, as populists do, Martin-Baro stipulates objective criteria for who counts as belonging to "the people" and whose ideas should guide them to transform society.

5.3 The Emancipation Metric of Populism

This can be mapped onto our emancipatory metric, in Fig. 5.2.

Populist emancipation is far away from political-cultural emancipation at the bottom of Fig. 5.2.

The populist *eidos*, *ethos, and telos* are revealed in the following phenomena:

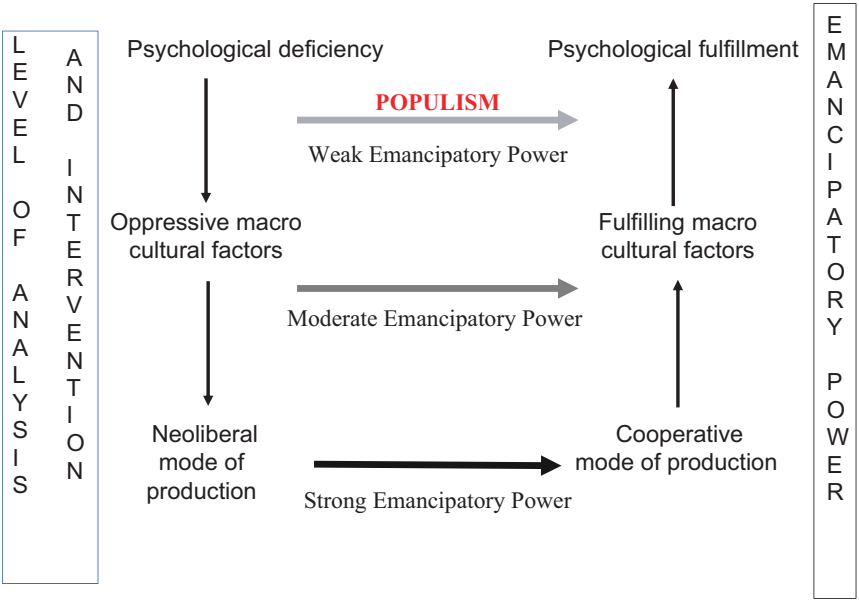


Fig. 5.2 Emancipation metric of populism

5.4 Flipping Subjectivity

Supporters of populist emancipation convert proximal (micro level) oppression into proximal emancipation on the interpersonal level.

Marginalized, disadvantaged groups are flipped into validated, privileged groups by changing concepts about them, changing communication with them, and allowing them to express their subjectivities. Harassed women redefine themselves from (weak) victim to (resilient) survivor to (agentive) "thriver." Redefining individuals does not entail political-economic transformation (Harrington 2018).

"Social change" is produced via personal confrontation over behavior and words. Oppressed women and minorities are treated interpersonally with respect, dignity, and validation. This is touted as immediately changing their "social context" and their self-concept. It shifts them from oppressed on the left side of Fig. 5.2 to emancipated on the right side of the figure. This occurs in their mundane interpersonal interactions at the top of Fig. 5.2 apart from social structures, politics, and economics.

For example, in June 2019, the San Francisco School Board voted to cover up a mural of George Washington from George Washington High School (*Los Angeles Times*, July 4, 2019). The 1600-square-foot mural presents Washington as a soldier, surveyor, and statesman, while also containing images of white pioneers standing over the body of a Native American, and slaves working at Washington's Mount Vernon estate in Virginia. The school board voted to cover up the mural upon the advice of a special committee composed on community members, minority figures, and students. They argued the mural's imagery is racist. Mark Sanchez, vice president of the school board and a third-grade teacher, said students who must walk past the mural during the school day don't have a choice about seeing the harmful images. "Painting it over represents not only a symbolic fresh start, but a real fresh start." "The starting point has to be from those who feel they are harmed and how that is unacceptable, especially given the history of this country. When we don't listen, we don't learn."

This is exemplary populism: A few individuals feel uncomfortable about a symbol, and their personal feelings are respected by directly eradicating the discomforting symbol from their presence. Populist emancipation consists of comforting subjective thoughts and feelings quickly

and directly in the immediate perceptual environment. This takes the form of removing a painting, or verbally apologizing for some past misdeed, or changing words people use.

Structural, political, economic, social changes in students' real lives were not included (and never are included) in "respecting subjectivity." Macro changes are outside the perceptual and conceptual universe of populism. For they do not immediately and directly transform (flip) the perceptible environment to generate comforting experience. Macro changes require extensive, time-consuming organization around political—not personal—issues.

The populist focus on protecting the individual's subjectivity (thoughts, feelings) is revealed in a statement by Joely Proudfit, director of the California Indian Culture and Sovereignty Center and chairwoman of the American Indian Studies department at California State University at San Marcos. She weighed in on the controversy with, "the murals are not worth saving if one native American student is triggered by that" (https://www.commondreams.org/views/2019/07/03/move-destroy-or-cover-mural-san-franciscos-progressive-school-board-embarrassing). This important administrator of minority social policy calls for social policy to be directed at immediately stopping the triggering of uncomfortable thoughts and feels of individuals. Even *one* individual's feelings are grounds for immediate extirpation of offensive stimuli!

This is an anti-democratic position because it ignores the thoughts and feelings of all the other people by privileging any single person who feels discomforted. And the question is, which individual's discomfort gets priority? What about the native American student who is "triggered" (discomforted) by removing the mural? Or what about the black student who finds enlightenment looking at the painting? Why does the native American's feeling trump the black student's, or the white student's? This is the incoherence of abstract populist political philosophy and social psychology that seeks to "protect personal subjectivity." (The fact that a minority administrator espouses vague, abstract, subjectivistic populism means that minority administrators, along with minority members of the San Francisco school board and advisory committee, cannot be assumed to espouse viable, emancipatory social policy. Their minority status is permeated by predominant political philosophies just as majority members are.)

Censoring the mural not only ignores improving real conditions of life. It opposes structural improvement. The "Life of Washington" depicts historical conditions that caused (explained) exploitation of slaves, and are the key to eradicating exploitation. The Washington mural portrays slavery as caused by exploitive, upper class conquerors. It directs viewers to oppose this system. The mural was a work in the anti-colonial genre of socialist artists such as Diego Rivera and his wife Frida Kahlo. The mural was painted by Victor Arnautoff, who was Rivera's assistant in Mexico. Arnautoff was a Russian-born communist and social critic. His mural was in the socialist genre in San Francisco in the 1930s that depicts exploitation and class struggle against it that culminates in human emancipation. Three of Rivera's murals are part of this genre. This genre of socially critical art is exemplary material for discussing structural oppression and liberation. This is all overlooked by populism's narrow focus upon the depiction of *individual experience and subjectivity*. The mission of flipping negative to positive/respectful portrayals of subjectivity supersedes the mission of transforming debilitating conditions. This leads to destroying the critical emancipatory content of the mural. (This example illustrates the populist position. The populist position is not always accepted by the population.) This dismissing of pejorative expressions about disadvantaged people, without transforming disadvantaging conditions, is additionally illustrated in the critique of psychological and educational tests of competencies. The critique is generally correct in elucidating flaws in the tests—for example, they are often biased by containing specific content that is unfamiliar to disadvantaged students, and which is extrapolated to general conclusions about inferior competencies such as cognitive reasoning or scientific reasoning. However, populists use this correct critique to draw an equally wrong general conclusion—that competencies of all students are essentially the same and they simply appear unequal because of biased tests. Throw out the tests and stop labeling people as incompetent, and recognize the equality of all individuals. This is populist flipping of designations about people from bad to good. This is incorrect; the fact that a flawed medical test indicates you are sick does not prove that you are really healthy. A valid test might also prove you are sick. Valid social science research proves that oppressive conditions oppress psychology. This serious social-psychological problem must be addressed and eradicated. Denying psychology of

oppression, and relabeling oppressed people as competent, denies this psychological and social reality, and it denies the need to transform society.

Oppressed groups utilize populist ideology to flip their marginalization into superiority and pride. They feel good about themselves as a way of countering external prejudices against them. Blacks come to pride themselves as beautiful. Fat people declare themselves to be beautiful. Illiterate individuals declare themselves to have "their own" forms of acquiring and communicating information. These are subjective flips without any structural, material change in conditions.

The MeToo campaign against gender harassment is populist in flipping women's social position on the personal level. Women are flipped from being victims of harassment to being survivors of harassment who are honest, ethical, sensitive, perceptive, and trustworthy. This is why virtually any accusation by a woman is immediately validated as truthful, honest, and believable. This is an instantaneous, automatic process that flips victims of oppression into emancipation by fiat. It is women, themselves, who decide they are good, just as it is blacks themselves who decide that they are beautiful.

The woman is glorified as a hero because she had the courage to individually speak up, that is, give voice to her agency, to raise awareness, by alleging some personal misconduct against her. This is an important stance; however, it must be kept in context. Her act sought to protect her personal-bodily space from intrusion. She fought for her right to control this space and make it express her agency, her choices, her desires. She decides whom to admit into her sexual world. No one can forcibly intrude into it. It must be consensual; that is all. "Keep your hands off my body" is the essence of fighting sexual harassment. It is similar to maintaining the privacy of your house. It is not about changing the kind of sexual activity in which a person engages. It is only about the freedom of the woman to make her own choice, whatever it may be. She may choose casual or serious sex, brutal or tender sex, sadistic or masochistic sex; it simply must be consensual, agreeable to her. The accuser is not praised for producing any substantive insight into society, or for understanding the reasons for problems, comprehending any commonality between the gender issue and other issues that could produce a broad, genuine, objective unity; nor is she touted for proposing any structural solution to any social problem, including harassment. The only change that harassment cases produce is

punitive laws to prevent and punish intrusive interpersonal interactions. Nor does opposing sexual intrusion extend to any other domain of society. It does not extend to opposing your boss monitoring your work computer, or monitoring your personal social media and firing you for personal comments you made to friends about your job or even non-job issue; or universities intruding into your personal life by monitoring your social media and rejecting you because you got drunk at a party years before—thereby demonstrating bad "character"; or corporate advertisers intruding into your personal computer and cell phone and monitoring your activity and sending you unwanted advertisements. Sexual harassment is a very limited issue that has no bearing on broad social improvement.

Flipping subjectivity by fiat also flips the alleged perpetrator of oppression in reverse direction, from powerful tyrant into a justly denounced criminal. This flip also occurs at the top of Fig. 5.2 by fiat. Flipping subjectivity is subjective flipping. Flipping is announced before any objective evidence for flips of either gender is available. This, of course, makes many of the flips purely rhetorical and fallacious. We do not know if the accused men are as bad as women say they are, nor do we know if the accusatory women are as virtuous and victimized as they say they are. Evidence demonstrates that both interdependent claims are often fallacious.

For example, virtually all the accusations against Judge Kavanaugh—during his confirmation hearings for the Supreme Court in 2018—for past sexual harassment when he was in high school, were discredited. Several accusers admitted they fabricated the complaints because they were angry at Republicans and at sexual harassment in general (Cummings and Jansen 2018). Consequently, the populist demand to believe victims, as in believe victims' memories and perceptions, is wrong and dangerous. Martin-Baro explained in Chap. 2 that memory (and perception) must be historically recovered and conscientized. It cannot be trusted in its current form that is biased by false consciousness and ideology.

Even when women's accusations against men are verified in a trial, the event remains fixed at the top of Fig. 5.2. For the individual woman wins a settlement for herself, and the harasser is punished, individually. The two genders switch sides on the issues of guilt and innocence, truth and falsity, and transfer of wealth (from men to women). However, in general, no institutional or structural change emerges from harassment lawsuits. Physical harassment may be reduced through specific rules on touching

or verbal interactions; however, the women remain exploited proletariat with no control over business practices. They remain subject to war, poverty, eviction, polluted air, polluted water, unemployment, economic exploitation, reductions in social services, contaminated medicines (Eban 2019), and becoming part-time instructors instead of full-time, tenured professors. Harassment victories free women from domination by men, but they retain women's domination by capitalists. Therefore, Mr. Weinstein cannot harass a female employee in his capacity as a man, vis-à-vis gender/sexual issues; but this same Mr. Weinstein can harass a female employee in his capacity as a capitalist, vis-à-vis working issues. He can make her working conditions difficult under the rationale that this is necessary for corporate financial and operational success.

Reducing dual oppression to one is an improvement. It is not emancipation (see Fig. 1.5c). Actually, capitalists can live with capitalist harassment devoid of gender harassment; they cannot live with gender harassment devoid of capitalist harassment, because this is where they derive the bulk of their wealth and political power. That is why capitalists express sympathy for victims of gender harassment, while they never express sympathy for victims of capitalist harassment (e.g., precarious, autocratic, injurious work; stagnant wages; exclusion from decision-making; and reduction in benefits). True emancipation of women requires integrating their struggle within the anti-capitalist struggle, as depicted in Fig. 1.6.

Men use populist strategies to overcome their patriarchal masculinity. They seek to change male consciousness, with no consideration about transforming core macro cultural factors. One interviewee said, "I think it's about vigilance and I think it's about constantly checking in with other people, communicating with other people, and taking self-inventories about who you are, and where you are, and whether or not you're living up to your priorities and principles." "If we could start talking about those things, life can get better" (Keane 2019). This is typical populist narrative. Everyone talks interpersonally, and somehow these dialoguing individuals will figure out a solution. The solution will be something psychological and interpersonal: "we can still have masculinity, but we need to get rid of the insecurity and the [negative] actions that happen because of the insecurity. The sooner we do that, I think, the better for culture in general" (ibid.). As always, populism dissolves concrete social reality into psychol-

ogy, subjectivity, and agency. Populism ignores and protects real political-economic sources of behavior. That is why it is situated at the top of Fig. 5.2. And that it is why it is acceptable to the status quo.

(Populist-style narratives about social issues are incapable of solving them because the discussions become bogged down in personal issues. These include the linguistic terms and gestures that interlocutors employ, their listening skills, their openness/tolerance, their respect for each other, and their attention to politically correct issues such as individuals' ethnicity and gender orientation. Interpersonal interactions are topics to be discussed; however, they cannot become the focus of every discussion about macro issues.)

Navarro (2019) brilliantly explains that this kind of populism has failed because it leaves the exploitive structure in place. He says, "Throughout the 20th century, the popular movements that most improved the quality of life and well-being of the working class and popular classes—which constitute the majority of the population—in the European democratic countries were those rooted in the socialist ideology, represented by the many sensitivities that such an ideology holds. These movements had as an electoral base the working class of each country, which (in alliance with other classes, particularly wide sectors of the middle classes) have constituted the axis of their social action." "It is not only the workers (of which many are women) but also women in general who have benefited most from the existence of such projects. The evidence shows that countries which have pursued the socialist project more successfully (such as Sweden, where parties of socialist sensibility have governed most of the time since World War II) have also made more progress for women (such as achieving abortion rights, maternity leave, increased support services for families, and an increased number of women in positions of power)…. It is important to emphasize that none of the left-leaning Scandinavian countries had a powerful feminist party that was decisive in the development of these advances for women. What did exist was a socialist movement with great feminist sensitivity, with the objective of eliminating exploitation, that took the feminist cause as its own, relating it to other forms of exploitation."

In contrast, the US has active, large feminist movements which have achieved few successes. "NOW is a movement of millions of women that has existed for many years, and yet women in the United States have very few rights compared to the rights of women in most countries in the European Union. And they may lose some of the few rights they have,

such as the right to abortion (with the recent change in the composition of the U.S. Supreme Court)." Importantly, the success of feminism is proportional to its being incorporated within a broader socialist movement, and the success of feminism is inversely proportional to its being a single issue movement that focuses entirely on feminism, per se, without a socialist movement (see Ghodsee 2018; Ghodsee and Mead 2018; Blanc 2019).

Navarro concludes: "In fact, the great diversity of protest struggles, each going their own way and with their own particular demands, weakens them enormously…Moreover, the American business and conservative class, aware that the division of victims favors the victimizer, supports such division, hindering and impeding the transversality of such movements and showing great hostility toward the socialist project, which uses the concept of social class as the starting point of such transversality."

5.4.1 Gender Identity

Gender identity exemplifies the ideal of personal change of subjectivity that is central to populism. Homosexuality and transsexuality are said to be self-made "coming out" of a non-normative gender identity that occurs within the individual psyche and body. These identities exemplify the populist ideal of individual, self-produced, subjective change. Homosexuals and transgenders do not have to transform the political-economic system in order to change their identities.

This is the mainstream ideology of capitalism and neoliberalism. Personal change of identity seeks emancipation on the individual level of personal interactions. It does not require structural change in the political economics of capitalist capital, transnational corporations, profit, private property, wage labor, commodity markets, or financialization. (Social change in this domain is limited to opening existing institutions to non-normative gender identities. There is no change in the basic nature of capitalist institutions. This is the limitation of all civil rights.) Identity change does not require an anti-capitalist consciousness. It is confined to flipping gender identity or subjectivity to realize one's "true self." Gender identity is firmly ensconced within populist political philosophy and outside of historical-materialist analysis. Gender identity exemplifies strategies of personal change at the top of Fig. 5.2.

From our cultural-historical, historical-materialist point of view, it is important to analyze the social-political implications of populist gender identity. Because it is framed as individual, subjective change that does not involve macro cultural factors, it has no revolutionary effect on society's core structure. Gender identity is socially unconventional, but it is not politically radical in the sense of being anti-capitalist. We have discussed this in Chap. 4. There is nothing about coming out as gay or transgender that is anti-capitalist in a serious sense of opposing private property, wage labor, commodity production, or class structure. This is obvious in the case of billionaire capitalists who are gay or transgender, and who are welcomed as such within the capitalist class.

The apolitical flipping of gender as a strategy for emancipation also takes the form of replacing male social leaders with females. When social problems are mishandled by male leaders, the call is raised for them to be replaced with women who are more empathic, understanding, supportive, honest, peaceful, egalitarian, communicative, and progressive. This gambit assumes that simply flipping the gender of leaders will solve social problems. No political education is necessary, no political resistance is necessary, no political organizing of the masses is necessary, no reviving of labor unions is necessary; just elect "women" to political positions and they will solve the problems; just appoint women CEOs of corporations and they will solve problems. Somehow, women already "get it." Women are already endowed with the necessary competencies and subjectivities to do good. This fully accords with populist ideology of flipping identities for emancipation, rather than transforming political-economic structures.

We know from Chap. 4 that women are not a transcendent force within capitalism that can improve capitalism through their existing competencies. This follows from the laws of cultural psychology that all psychology and subjectivity are culturally formed. Emancipation requires radical transformation of the political-economic system and the subjectivity of working people. It cannot occur by elevating an existing element of capitalist society to leadership positions within existing capitalism. We know that women are not a cohesive group with an anti-capitalist consciousness. "Woman" is a trans-class category that transects class consciousness. Many women occupy the capitalist class and share class interests that oppose social transformation.

5.5 Populism Holds Individual Subjectivity Responsible for Prejudice

Populism's person-centric Psychology and political philosophy lead to (1) blaming bad behavior on the subjectivity of the perpetrator, (2) punishing individual perpetrators, (3) excluding/avoiding individual perpetrators, (4) educating against prejudice by promoting tolerance of diverse subjectivities.

Sexism and racism are reduced to intolerance, arrogance, disrespect, and lack of sympathy in the personhood of perpetrators. Sexism is due to "toxic masculinity." Racism is due to "white superiority."

Populists denounce political-economic explanations of racism and sexism for obscuring the subjectivity of racism and sexism. Populists confront individual acts directly, as expressions of individual agency. This is the basis and origin of society, and it is the level at which social problems must be attacked. No other explanations of the act are accepted. They are dismissed as excuses for individual intentional behavior. Populists utilize the term "zero tolerance" for malevolent acts. Nothing can explain them away, justify them, or compensate for them. It is indefensible for a white male to offer up ignorance, inattention, misunderstanding, different cultural context, or compensating beneficent acts as an "excuse" for his infraction. He did it, he is responsible for it, he must be punished for it. Nothing else matters. Someone who posted a single photo or statement in his high school year book, 30 years earlier (when the posting was culturally commonplace), and after which he engaged in many socially benevolent activities, is still condemned and denounced. This is the absolutist, vindictive, excoriating underside of liberal populism. (It is less compassionate than autocratic, dogmatic Christianity.) This is absolutist, vindictive neoliberal thinking/ideology that holds the individual absolutely responsible for his/her actions.

Blaming, attacking, or expelling sexists and racists is no different from the way in which racists blame and expel minorities, and sexists blame and expel women for creating their own problems. The populist solution employs the same Psychology as the problem! Blaming sexists and racists for their behavior is no different from blaming mental illness, crime, and poverty on the perpetrators' personalities. This is all neoliberal thinking/ideology, which is central to populist thinking (Ratner 2019).

Certain cities throughout the world have established "safe zones" for women to protect them from male harassment. Cities in China and Scandinavia have designated female-only railroad cars. Men are bad, so women must avoid them. (Of course, this legitimates divisiveness among any and all groups of people. It legitimates a possible demand for French people to have their own rail cars in which they can avoid Chinese people whom they find offensive.)

Populists' four approaches to reducing prejudice entail no structural change of the social system that roots out the core social causes of bad behavior. Populists denounce patriarchy and call for its elimination; however, they have weak definitions and analyses of patriarchy, and they have no solution for it beyond meek civil rights for women. We have explained that civil rights do not transform social structures. We have also explained that patriarchy can only be eliminated by eliminating its current capitalist iteration. Populists and feminists do not take this necessary step in their programs. They ignore socialist reforms that have advanced women (see Ghodsee 2018; Ghodsee and Mead 2018; Blanc 2019, for documentation of these advances). They focus far more attention on the four strategies I enumerated above.

5.6 A Cultural-Psychological Correction to the Populist Theory and Practice of Prejudice

Cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology argues that the populist approach is incapable of comprehending and preventing prejudice (racism and sexism) because it ignores the central cultural conditions that generate these. Vygotsky's scientific cultural psychology demonstrates that individual psychology/behavior is culturally formed. The individual is not solely responsible, or even primarily responsible, for his actions. This calls for structural change, not personal attacks on perpetrators.

Vygotsky's model in Chap. 3 (Figs. 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7) traces individual prejudice to macro cultural/historical-materialist factors and processes. These are the origins, constituents, supports, operating mechanisms, demands, and parameters of mass prejudice, which is the source of indi-

vidual prejudice. They are the psychological tools of prejudice. This is the level at which prejudice is scientifically understood (explained, described, and predicted) and also eradicated.

Individuals become prejudiced because they partake of mass, macro cultural-psychological tools that generate prejudice in masses of people. Focusing on individual expressions overlooks the cultural, historical-materialist basis and character of prejudice. Furious attacks on prejudiced, abusive individuals, which seem emancipatory because of their vehemence, actually impede emancipation because their vehemence diverts attention away from the macro cultural, historical-materialist causes of behavior. (The same is true in treating medical disasters. Focusing attention on eradicating a vitriolic enzyme or gene that causes cancer in individuals distracts from defeating cancer's political-economic causes in industrial pollution. In this sense, medicine has an ideological function of minimizing the societal causes of disease, just as populism has an ideological function of minimizing societal causes of destructive behavior. Ruefully, it is *because* these fail to cure the social causes of problems that they are acceptable to the status quo.)

Our conception of prejudice is exemplified in Nazi anti-Semitism, although other complex forms of prejudice exist which are not specifically organized by a powerful institution, but which draw upon macro cultural factors nevertheless. The rabid anti-Semitism of the Third Reich was coalesced rapidly by the Nazi Party; it was not a series of independent individual decisions by German people, based upon cognitive and perceptual mechanisms. Just a few years before anti-Semitism became rampant, Jews were well integrated into German society. Jews played an important role in the first Weimar cabinet in 1918, and the Weimar Constitution was drafted by a Jew named Hugo Pruess. As late as 1927, 54% of all marriages of Jews were contracted with non-Jews. Jewish religious and intellectual organizations flourished. At the same time, the Nazi Party formed in 1919 and advocated the extermination of the Jews and their removal from public life. However, the Nazis were a tiny minority at the time. It was only with the growth of the party and its electoral success in 1932, and the appointment of Hitler to Chancellor in 1933, that anti-Semitism became dominant in that era in Germany. (There were historical cases in earlier eras.) Nazis blamed Jews (who were mostly

middle class) for Germany's political and economic problems. This was a purely political act to gain popular support for Nazi totalitarian control of German society. Anti-Semitism was an *ideological* phenomenon that diverted attention from political-economic causes of social problems and onto a fictitious cause (Jews and communists). This fictitious cause could be eradicated by Nazi totalitarian methods (the Holocaust) that plundered the entire world. *Nazi anti-Semitic prejudice was a carefully crafted ideology that animated and justified political-economic objectives*.

German anti-Semitism was a macro cultural-psychological phenomenon that originated in macro cultural factors, was formed by them, embodied them, expressed them, and reproduced them. Fascism was the psychological tool of anti-Semitic prejudice (i.e., prejudicial perceptions, emotions, cognitions, motivations); fascism was the basis of it, the operating mechanism of it, the demand for it, and the support for it. Prejudice thus is a historical-materialist phenomenon as described in Chaps. 3 and 4. The psychological theory of prejudice as based on unfamiliarity with the outgroup, which allows uninformed stereotypes and rigid cognitive categories to be formed, is refuted by Nazi anti-Semitism which convinced Germans to believe that their close Jewish friends, neighbors, and respectable citizens were somehow evil monsters who caused Germany's political, economic problems. The same phenomenon occurred during the Chinese Cultural Revolution when leaders accused respectable individuals of being counter-revolutionary, and got these individuals' friends and family members to denounce them and even divorce them, despite their intimate knowledge of these good individuals. Students beat their own teachers to death on the accusation of some political leader. This kind of prejudice is a rapid, political reversal of normative social and personal interactions and knowledge; it is a *political-psychological putsch, or coup d'état*; it has never been explained because it has been obfuscated by personalistic psychological theories and interventions regarding prejudice.

Contemporary, right-wing prejudice has the same cultural origins and consequences. Political-economic dislocations of the white working class have generated an inchoate sense of dismay, fear, and anger in this population. Political leaders such as Trump need to re-direct this psychology away from comprehending and attacking its true cause. Trump skillfully blames external causes such as migrants and devious foreign governments

such as China (which, he claims, not only steals American jobs, but also is a major security threat through its electronic systems and devise), Iran ("sponsors terrorism"), and N. Korea (an "existential nuclear threat"), along with international organizations such as the International Criminal Court and the United Nations. Trump acknowledges and empathizes with workers' impoverishment, fear, suffering, anxiety, and hatred. He accepts this psychology as appropriate; he does not deny or criticize it. He thereby joins the workers' side. He simply redirects their psychology to illusory causes and enemies, away from the true villains who control the political economy.

Ideologists must concoct illusory, diversionary threats of sufficient magnitude that matches the magnitude of the real threat caused by the political economy. Only major threats will capture the full fear and anger that desperate people experience and divert it away from their real political-economic causes. The intensity of concocted threats is a measure of real, objective political-economic threat that people experience. Trump's bizarre concocted threats are not a measure of his evil or his madness; they are perfectly calibrated to falsely explain the intensity fear and anger that people feel from political-economic causes. Trump's concocted threats are testimony to his precise gauging of the intensity of threat that Americans feel, which must be acknowledged and redirected en toto. This is why desperate people accept his political message, because it resonates with their actual fear and fury. Trump appeals to their emotions and directs them to false causes and solutions. He also comforts the dispossessed working class with images of the better life they led 50 years ago when manufacturing production was strong and stable. Conservative social issues are part of this comforting.

The diversionary tactics of ideologists are beneficial to capitalists, both ideologically/politically as well as economically (Robin 2014). This is why German capitalists supported the Nazi holocaust, and why contemporary capitalists support all right-wing autocrats (including religious despots).

Working-class prejudice is a politically manipulated ideology by populist right-wing capitalists. Prejudice is not a personal, psychological tendency of white, working-class people. Understanding and eradicating prejudice requires understanding and eradicating its political motive and function. This motive and function are to intensify capitalist exploitation

of the populace, society, and natural environment. This is what must be attacked when violent prejudice is manifested in working-class people. Attacking the phenotypical, violent prejudice of working-class individuals distracts from this essential solution. This is the same issue involved in working-class criminality. Attacking, and incarcerating, the criminals ignores the cultural-political-economic causes of their behavior, which are the real social problems.

This macro cultural basis of prejudice has been captured in the phrase "*structural racism*." Structural racism is a system of public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms which work in various, often reinforcing, ways, to perpetuate racial (or gender) group inequality. These interrelated structures are motivated by political and economic interests; they are not motivated by emotional animosity. These conditions are the material basis of psychological prejudice.

Social class may be considered to be an element of structural racism because its hierarchy divides people into alien social lives that generate invidious comparisons of each other. Hitlin and Harkness (2017) document that income inequality underlies social distance among groups, and this induces harsh moral judgments and negative moral emotions such as scorn, anger, disgust, and disdain. "How can they live like that? What's wrong with them?" Egalitarian societies evidence less of this differentiation from, and criticism of, others.

Religious prejudices against religious faiths are generally engineered by clerical leaders for their political power/authority and territoriality. Holy wars such as the Christian Crusades against Muslims were initiated by Pope Urban II in 1095; they were not generated by psychological prejudices of ordinary people.

Cultural-historical Psychology explains that prejudice follows structural racism. Prejudice is the subjective form—the emotions, perceptions, motivations, cognitions, imagination—of structural racism that is created by the ruling class. This situates prejudice within Figs. 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7. The corresponding analysis of prejudice is depicted in Fig. 5.3. The figure commences with naive, taken-for-granted, individual prejudice in the lower-left corner, and it proceeds to identify the macro cultural, cultural-historical, historical-materialist determinations (psychological tools) which generate mass prejudice of masses of individuals in the lower-right corner.

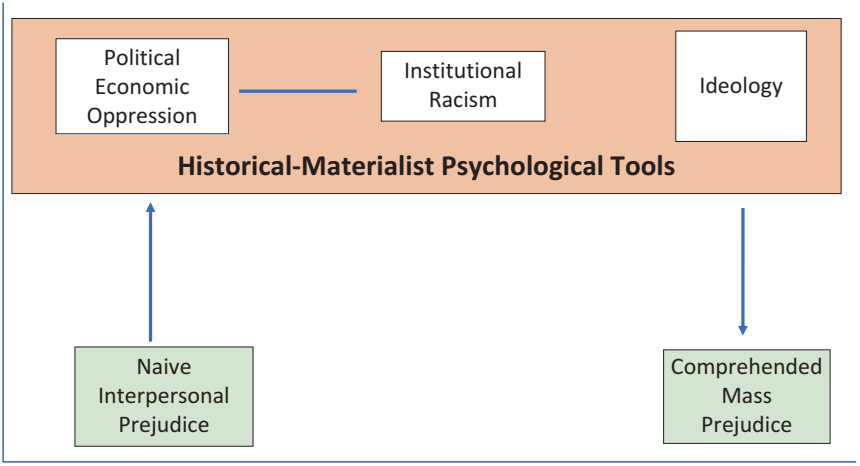


Fig. 5.3 Macro cultural/cultural-historical analysis of prejudice: From naive personal attitude to comprehended historical-materialist ideology

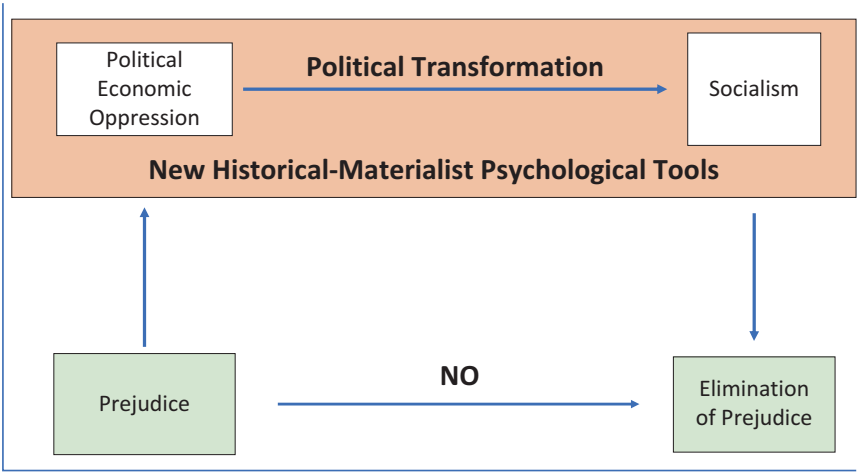


Fig. 5.4 Macro cultural/cultural-historical eradication of prejudice

The macro cultural, cultural-historical, and historical-materialist level is the social level at which prejudice must be eradicated. It cannot be eradicated on the micro level. This is depicted in Fig. 5.4.

Figures 5.3 and 5.4 show that comprehending the cultural-historical/macro cultural form of prejudice, and transforming this form, require the same structure or pattern of events. This is why science and emancipation co-exist in the form of a Mobius strip.

These figures correct the populist notion of prejudice as individual, psychological, subjective agency. Prejudice cannot be eliminated by altering its subjective forms in individual attitudes, emotions, perceptions, and words. It cannot be eliminated by populists' four interventions enumerated in the previous section. The structural-political-economic roots of prejudice must be transformed as part of the anti-capitalist struggle for socialism.

Individual members of prejudiced cultures who commit serious crimes in the process of reproducing culture, should certainly be punished. However, their crimes should always be referred back to their institutional, structural bases as the true source of crimes. This is where peoples' fury should be focused. Certainly, minor individual acts (such as single statements or photos), that occurred in the distant past, in different cultural conditions, and have been contradicted by socially beneficent acts, do not deserve virulent fury and punishment contemporaneously. Virulent attacks on individuals are ideological impediments to emancipation which require social critique and transformation.

5.7 Populism Is Ideology About Society and Psychology

Populism is ideology (Ratner 2019, pp. 103–144). It ignores the real, macro, distal fundaments of society and behavior that cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology explicates. It is important to emphasize that populism *distorts* the causes and cures of psychology/behavior. It *severs* them from their macro cultural constituents; it *depoliticizes* their true political character. These are acts of obfuscation and oppression, just as ignoring the cultural causes of mental illness and fabricating biological causes to replace them is obscurantist. These are not humanitarian acts of liberation.

Populists are so driven by their false political philosophy of individualism, postmodernism, and neoliberalism, that they offer it as an interpretation of behavior that is refuted by their own data. For example, Hagerman

(2018) denounces cultural formation of psychology as destroying the human individual. She states that "The word 'socialization' removes the role children play in their own lives. 'Socialization' implies are passive, blank slates to be written on by adults in a deterministic fashion, empty vessels to be filled with whatever adults determine, rather than active, creative social agents who produce their own unique children's cultures while simultaneously contributing to the production of adult societies" (location 245). "'Racial socialization' carries the same problems involving limits to children's agency or free will" (location 253). Hagerman prefers emphasizing "the process through which children negotiate, interpret, and make meaning of the various and conflicting messages they receive about race and ultimately form their own understanding of how race works in society and their lives" (location 271). "Pushing back against the notion that children lack agency or free will or power to shape adults around them, this book explores the power of white kids in their families, their schools, their peer groups, and public discourse" (location 207). This is the familiar populist notion of culture as a tool kit which individuals can utilize any way they wish to express their own agency.

Yet Hagerman's own data demonstrate that "the children in this book are growing up with upper-middle-class privilege in a society where *private wealth shapes the experiences, opportunities, and outcomes* that follow such childhoods of privilege" (location, 70). "Children's power is tied directly to the social structure of the society and to their position within the structural hierarchies" (location 207). The second sentence says that children's power is the result of the structure they did not create; it does not spring from their agency or free will. This is exactly what our cultural psychology emphasizes. Populism ignores this scientific, emancipatory perspective.

Emancipation is not found in children's free will and individual agency as human beings; it is only accomplished by children growing up to become social critics who collectively and politically transform the social system of social class and private wealth. Hagerman's populist idealization of individual agency as cultural makers in their individual, micro families and peer groups, distracts from this emancipation.[2]

The fact that populism is a neoliberal, capitalist ideology corrects populism's self-definition. Populism defines itself as subjective freedom for individuals to express their autonomous agency and subjectivity. The fact is that

individuals' agency and subjectivity are shaped by the political-economic system. Consequently, the ostensible autonomy of subjective agency is really a form of "governmentality" (Foucault) for reproducing capitalism. In other words, the vaunted autonomy of agency is only a way that capitalism has discovered for allowing agency to carry out the reproduction of capitalism "on its own" without brutal compulsion from authorities (Ratner 2019). We have seen that individual choice always recapitulates the class position. There is an objective, social logic to the seemingly random, spontaneous, idiosyncratic subjective expressions of agency. *Autonomous subjective agency is actually the autonomous reproduction of capitalism*.

Populism reproduces capitalism by simultaneously (1) incorporating it into individual acts and (2) obfuscating the objective social logic that it obeys. The latter is populism's ideological function: it pretends that there is no capitalism, but only autonomous individuals. The de facto capitalist form and capital of psychology/behavior thus appears to be individual, not societal. This insulates capitalist from critique because people only perceive agencies that appear to be, and claim to be, autonomous, idiosyncratic subjectivities.

5.8 Populist Cultural Psychology: (Over) Emphasizing the Importance of Personal Expression (Both Positive and Negative)

The populist emphasis on personal/interpersonal/subjective issues as the basis, motive, and goal of macro cultural issues is not confined to political philosophy. It additionally generates a cultural psychology of emotional, perceptual, cognitive, and motivational reactions. Populism is the psychological tool for psychological activities such as interpretations, perceptions, cognitions, and emotional reactions. Populist social psychology is a "psychological regime," to paraphrase Reddy.

The fact that populist political philosophy is also a cultural psychology follows from the cultural-historical fact that macro cultural factors are the psychological tools of psychological functions. Consequently, all political philosophies are simultaneously cultural psychologies. Neoliberalism is a cultural psychology (Ratner 2019), and Christianity, Wahhabi Islam, and

modern science are cultural psychologies in the sense that they organize perception, cognition, emotions, needs, motivation, sexuality, gender, personality, and imagination. These are all "psychological regimes."

Populist cultural psychology is important to present.

I. It reveals additional detailed information about populism, which we are engaged in understanding and critiquing. Populist cultural psychology performs populist political philosophy in action; it is more concrete and palpable than the political philosophy. Philosophers can deduce the social, political, and psychological effects of populism, but the actual psychological reactions and behaviors of individuals in everyday action are its real, palpable, lived effects. This is a great enrichment of our understanding/critique of populist political philosophy.
II. Populist cultural psychology is also an important contribution to cultural-historical/macro cultural-psychological theory. It reveals how culture organizes psychological processes in ways that reflect and extend cultural values, needs, requirements, and objectives.
III. Thirdly, populist cultural psychology contributes to our quest for emancipatory psychology. We shall analyze populist psychology to identify its failures to assist emancipation from the political-economic status quo. This will point out what changes are necessary in order to become emancipatory. We shall follow the lead of other critiques of other psychologies. These include feminist critiques of gender in patriarchal societies. (For example, "honor killings": certain Muslim sects oppose pre-marital sex, and if their daughters engage in it, cultural-psychological tools of religion, morality, and gender generate rage and embarrassment in parents which lead to killing their daughters with support from the community.) Martin-Baro keenly criticized the psychology of Latin American peasants that is fatalistic because of social-economic oppression. Critics of neoliberalism have criticized the psychology of self-blame that neoliberal political philosophy generates (under the assumption that individuals are responsible for their own failures). The American Psychological Association has criticized Western masculinity which reflects oppressive aspects of the male social role.

Populism's political philosophy that is reflected in its populist cultural psychology emphasizes individual agency and subjectivity as the basis of

freedom, the basis of society, and the basis of improving society. This sensitivity to subjective expressions informs psychological cognitions, perceptions, emotions, inferences, deductions, needs, and imaginations. Every gesture, every word, every tone of voice, every joke, every laugh, every symbol, and every image in interpersonal interactions are deemed fraught with political significance which must be monitored and humanized. Making each of these individual acts gratifying is the path to a more fulfilling personhood, social relations, and society. Therefore, we must be super-vigilant about individuals' subjective expressions toward us and toward others.

Because personal/interpersonal subjectivity is so basic and important, the more personal an expression is the more important and salient it is.

This philosophy ("philosophical imperative") gears our psychological functions to vigilantly attend to, perceive, feel, think about, and imagine all subjective expressions. Subjective expressions are endowed with the power to generate intense psychological reactions throughout the range of psychological functions. Populist psychology becomes upset over any personal insult, and it becomes gratified over any complimentary, personal act from others. Populist psychology is also deeply apologetic when it makes a personal mistake, such as forgetting or mispronouncing someone's name.

The more personal/intimate an act is, the more salient it is to our attention, perception, cognition, emotions, motivation, and imagination. Acts that touch upon the body are extremely personal because they enter our personal, physical space. This makes sexual interactions extremely salient to populists' attention, perception, emotions, cognitions, and imagination. They enter our physical space as well as our intimate social, and subjective space. As such, they affect our autonomy, agency, and safety.

Populist cultural psychology is far less vigilant about impersonal issues (political-economic, structural, bureaucratic issues) because the political philosophy accords them less significance to our lives than personal/subjective issues.

A full example of populist cultural psychology was recently displayed in the student body of Harvard University. Populist cultural psychology provoked a furious emotional, cognitive reaction to one of the student residence faculty deans. He was a Harvard law professor named Ronald Sullivan. He agreed, in January 2019, to join the defense team of Harvey Weinstein who had been accused of rape. Many Harvard students con-

demned Sullivan's defending Weinstein on sexual harassment charges. Many demanded he resign or be fired from his deanship of a campus dormitory. The editorial board of the newspaper, *Harvard Crimson*, condemned his decision: "We condemn Sullivan's decision to represent Weinstein," because of "the incongruity of defending Weinstein in his role as defense attorney, while simultaneously working to promote a safe and comfortable environment for victims of sexual misconduct and assault in his capacity of faculty dean."

Many students expressed strong psychological reactions against Sullivan. They said they felt unsafe and traumatized having one of their professors defending an accused rapist while living in their dormitory. A petition that was signed by about 300 individuals said Professor Sullivan does not value the safety of Harvard students and should be terminated from his position as residence dean. "Harvard dorms held 'listening sessions' attended by emissaries from the university's Office for Sexual Assault Prevention and Response, whose website urged traumatized students to seek mental-health services and other help from Harvard's massive Title IX bureaucracy." "The Association of Black Harvard Women complained that Mr. Sullivan (who is black) had 'failed' female African-Americans at Harvard and had compromised his ability to support 'survivors…as they deal with their trauma'" (*Wall Street Journal*, March 18, 2019).

The opposition to Sullivan was so vitriolic that the Harvard administration caved into student feelings and dismissed him from his position as dean of the student residence. The administration did not base its decision upon a rational, legal analysis of his action, that is, that defending an accused rapist in court is sufficient grounds for dismissing someone from a position in Harvard's residences or classrooms. Harvard conducted no formal hearing that included Sullivan's self-defense. Harvard based its decision on the divisive "climate" that had been created in the residence.

5.8.1 Problematizing the Protestors' Cultural Psychology

There are several aspects of the protestors' cultural psychology that call out for explanation.

1) This massive cultural-psychological reaction was a response to a law professor who had agreed to defend an accused person in court. Yet this perfectly legal and principled act, which is fundamental to legal justice which aims at *protecting* accused people from false, unfair punishment by establishing the truth or falsity of the charges, was interpreted to generate intense feelings, perceptions, and cognitions of danger, trauma, and betrayal.
2) This is a remarkable cultural psychology when one considers that German Nazis who had engaged in genocide of millions of people were afforded legal counsel at the Nuremberg trials. Yet contemporary populist feminists are "uncomfortable" with this core legal right when the case involves defendants accused of rape—as though charges of rape are worse than murdering millions of people.
3) This psychology is particularly interesting because Sullivan had defended alleged murderers without any protest from students. The students evidently feel that defending an alleged rapist is worse than defending an alleged murderer—which implies that rape is more offensive than murder!
4) Sullivan's protestors would also feel no animosity toward him if defended defendants who had been accused of pollution that sickens thousands of people, economic-financial crimes that impoverish millions of people and entire communities at one stroke, and setting forest fires that destroy tracts of the natural environment and homes
5) Sullivan has represented many victims of the state to ensure their rights and safety. He defended the family of Michael Brown who was killed by police in Ferguson, Missouri, which triggered mass protests in August 2014. Sullivan won a wrongful death verdict for the family against police brutality. Sullivan also designed a judicial review process for wrongfully convicted people in prison, to correct injustice against them (*The New York Times*, May 11, 2019). These good deeds should have been comforting to Harvard students in their quest for security and safety in society. However, their social psychology made them insecure and unsafe when it encountered his single action of defending an alleged rapist in the justice system.
6) Sullivan withdrew from Weinstein's defense team two days after Harvard announced his termination as residence dean. His with-

drawal did nothing to mollify the students' fear and hostility toward him. Their bad feelings, perceptions, thoughts, deductions, and expectations about him persisted, which led Harvard to sustain its decision to terminate him because of the bad climate that existed. This is another remarkable aspect of the students' cultural psychology, that it persisted after the cause of their discomfort (Sullivan's legal defending of Weinstein) had been removed. It demonstrates that their cultural psychology is absolute and unforgiving in the case of defending victims of rape allegations. There really is no defense that can counter these psychological reactions.

7) The key element in the students' discomfort with Sullivan is the issue of rape. They hate and fear him because he defended an alleged rapist. If it had been a different crime, no protest would have erupted. Therefore, our interrogation of the students' cultural psychology toward Sullivan centers on their cultural psychology of rape. We must ask why rape is the most sensitive topic in America? What are the biopolitics of sex and rape that make accusations of rape generate more vehement psychological reactions than any other issue—more vehement than accusations of war crimes, pollution that impairs the health of thousands of people and destroys our natural habitat, economic-financial crimes that impoverish millions of people and entire communities at one stroke, and setting forest fires that destroy tracts of the natural environment and thousands of homes. For example, *The New York Times* (May 19, 2019) printed an article entitled "Republican National Committee Accepts Money From Steve Wynn, Mogul Accused of Sexual Misconduct." The mere accusation of sexual misconduct makes for news, even though the justice system insists that people are innocent until proven guilty by trial. So, here is an innocent man who is nevertheless a suspect when he makes a political contribution to a political party. He is suspect, his money is suspect, and the recipients of his money in any domain of society are all suspect because of an unproven *allegation against him of sexual misconduct*. This is quite remarkable—terrifying, actually. We could easily see a skeptical *Times* article that questions "Starving Syrian Refugees Accept Money From Steve Wynn, Mogul *Accused* of Sexual Harassment." Or "John Smith Buys A Car From Steve Wynn, Mogul

Accused of Sexual Misconduct." These people are all disgraced because they have accepted something that belonged to Wynn.

In contrast, it is *not* conceivable that a *Times* article would appear about other accusations against Wynn. We would never see a skeptical article about "Republican National Committee Accepts Money From Steve Wynn, Mogul Accused of Using His Million Dollar Tax Cut to Repurchase Company Shares Instead of Investing in The Economy to Create Jobs." Nor would we ever see a skeptical headline "Republican National Committee Accepts Money From Steve Wynn, Mogul Accused of Firing Union Organizers in His Company." Breaking labor unions impoverishes thousands of employees in a company and makes their daily work more oppressive and precarious; yet neither accusations nor convictions about this ever taint the CEO, or his money, or people who accept his money. Indeed, the news rarely reports union-busting stories. The news always reports sexual *allegation* stories.

8) Another remarkable feature of this case is that students' reactions to unproven *allegations* of sexual misconduct are more immediate and more vehement than are their reactions to proven *convictions* for larger crimes of massive ecological and economic devastation (such as Wells Fargo's fraudulent consumer lending practices that precipitated the financial crisis of 2017).
9) Harvard administrators' psychology accepted students' feelings of discomfort, fear, and outrage at Sullivan as sufficient grounds for expelling him from their residence, despite his perfectly legal and socially beneficial defense work. Students did not have to justify their fear of Sullivan by pointing to objective facts that were threatening—he had verbally or physically assaulted them, or he had refused to assist them after they had been attacked by someone. It was sufficient for them to express their subjective fear to have Harvard respect it and use it as the sole basis for terminating Sullivan.

These elements of populist cultural psychology are explained in terms of the cultural mediations (psychological tools) that generate the protestors' emotions, perceptions, cognitions, and imagination. Cultural psychology explains that the students' ire, inferences, deductions, perceptions, and expectations are not caused by Sullivan's actions, per se. Their psy-

chology is the result of cultural-psychological tools that generate their psychological reaction to Sullivan's action. (In the same way, a romantically involved Muslim girl is not the cause of her parents' "honor killing" of her; the cause of the honor killing is the parents' cultural psychology that is formed by Muslim macro cultural factors. Their cultural-psychological cognitions/interpretations, emotions, perceptions, deductions, inferences, expectations, and imagination are what impel them to kill their daughter in her pre-marital sexual relationship.) This is explained in Chap. 3. (Of course, the term "neoliberal self" needs to be replaced with "honor killing" and "alleged rape.") Vygotsky explained this as follows, "in the instrumental act a new middle term is inserted between the object and the mental operation directed at it: the psychological tool, which becomes the structural center or focus, i.e., the aspect that functionally determines all the processes that form the instrumental act" (1997, p. 87). The cultural mediation, or psychological tool, of the students' mental operations is populist ideology about the nature of freedom, dignity, personal space, justice, gender, and sexuality. Populist ideology also governed Harvard administrators' perceptions and cognitions and reasoning about the students' feelings.

My contention draws upon anthropologist Lutz's compelling statement about psychological functions: "emotional meaning is fundamentally structured by particular cultural systems and particular social and material environments…The concepts of emotion can more profitably be viewed as serving complex communicative, moral, and cultural purposes rather than simply as labels for internal states whose nature or essence is presumed to be universal…Emotion is culturally defined, socially enacted, and personally articulated. Talk about emotions is simultaneously talk about society – about power and politics, about kinship and marriage, about normality and deviance" (1988, pp. 5–6).

Populism emphasizes the autonomy of personal agency as the essence of humanness and society. Personal agency is the individual's control over his/her subjectivity and body. Agency is maximally formed and exercised in interpersonal interactions where individual agency is maximally active in expressing and developing itself along with other individual agencies. Broader, more massive, complex, macro structures do not allow for maximal expression and effectiveness of individual agencies. Consequently,

populist political philosophy is less interested in them, and it minimizes their importance for individuals. Society is construed as the product of micro-level, interpersonal interactions of individual agencies. Populism makes its individualistic notion of freedom central to individual activity and to social construction. Society is construed as loosely organized to allow for continuous individual growth and change. Social change is easily accomplished by individuals changing their activities on the interpersonal level. Macro factors are reduced to personal, psychological phenomena, as when political-economic forces and policies are reduced to gender issues: "poverty is a war against women," "war is a macho masculine activity."

Populist political philosophy organizes psychology in a form and content that is congruent with this conception of individual agency, subjectivity, and freedom. It makes psychological perceptions, cognitive interpretations, inferences, deductions, imagination, and emotions extremely sensitive to individual, personal, subjective, bodily agency in interaction with other agencies—for these are the basic elements of humanity and society. These are the realms we can directly control through our agency; they are the realms of our autonomy, freedom, and development. Our bodies are particularly important to individualistic, populist, political theory because they are our own, private, physical space that no one can enter without our permission. The body is the physical objectification of individualistic agency, autonomy, control, choice, and expression. The body is the preserve of the individual. The populist-constructed body has a capitalist form. The populist body is analogous to our house; it is our private property to use as we wish; it is our personal freedom incarnate. We can exclude anyone we dislike and protect our freedom within its space.

Sex is the voluntary opening of our personal, physical space to others; akin to inviting someone into our private house. It represents our voluntary sharing of our physical selves that is strictly decided by us as we want it to be. Sex is the most private and personal form of social interaction which we control completely. Nobody can tell us how to act during sex. Sex is our agency interacting with others that expresses our wishes. This is the biopolitics of sex in capitalist society. It is individualistic, private, possessive biopolitics. It epitomizes populist, autonomous agency.

Obdurate, complex, macro cultural factors do not afford this kind of personal autonomy and voluntary interaction on the personal level that expresses our agency and is controlled by our agency. Populists pay little attention to macro cultural reasons for this reason.

Populist psychology is extremely sensitive to rape because it violates interpersonal, intimate interactions among individual agencies. This level must be extremely free in order to allow individuals to express themselves, change themselves, and fulfill themselves. Any interference or inequality in individual autonomy on the intimate, personal level is abhorrent because it prevents humanness from developing through individual choice and expression. Rape epitomizes this kind of interference and inequality in personal interactions of agencies. Rape imposes one person's agency on the other—socially, psychologically, and physically—in the most intimate, open, personal relationship. It destroys the most personal, intimate, free choice of behavior (sex) which is central to propagating humanness and society. Rape palpably destroys the necessary social, psychological, and physical relationship between individuals that is the foundation of humanity. This is why rape generates venomous psychological reactions. Rape is despicable not simply because it is physical violence, but because it violates the most basic elements of human nature, human autonomy, agency, and fulfillment, in intimate, open, shared, and bodily experience. Rape must be excoriated and prevented in order to preserve the building blocks of our humanity, namely, choice, self-expression, sharing, and fulfillment on the personal, bodily, and interpersonal domains.

In populist political philosophy, psychological reactions extend beyond alleged perpetrators of rape; they extend to anyone and anything associated with these destroyers of humanity. Populist society is comprised of personal interactions and contacts (rather than massive, complex, structured macro cultural factors). Personal interactions are open to the agencies of the participants, which is why they are valued in populist philosophy. This means that Weinstein's alleged "rapist disposition" is able to be transmitted to the agencies of his personal contacts such as Sullivan; in turn, Sullivan can transmit it to his contacts on the Harvard campus residences. (The Association of Black Harvard Women claimed that Sullivan's legal involvement in the Harvey Weinstein case "will only

work to embolden rape culture on this campus" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 28, 2019)! This recapitulates the way that Steve Wynn's money is associated with him personally, and also onward to recipients of his money. His psychology is personally transmitted across this sequence of personal contacts. Populist psychology is sensitive (perceptually, cognitively, emotionally, and imaginatively) to this pattern of populist social transmission, and the psychological functions react to generate fear and hostility across personal sequences from Weinstein-Sullivan-Harvard, and from Wynn-money-Republican Party.

Populist political philosophy and psychology both emanate from the populist overemphasis on interpersonal and sexual relations as the building blocks of humanity and society. Being so vital, they must be protected from any intimation of violation, no matter how remote or indefinite. A wide protective zone must be created to rebuff any enemy from approaching the sanctity of personal, bodily, and interpersonal space. This is why any appearance or allegation of a personal space violation triggers suspicion and defense; it is why any distant association with alleged assault, such as Wynn's money, or Sullivan's residence hall, triggers suspicion and defense.

This analysis of populist political theory and psychology is confirmed by the close qualitative homology between the characteristics of the two. The personal philosophy of populism is observable in the incomparable emotional fury that personal, bodily, sexual concerns command; far more vehement than military invasions, coups, economic exploitation, and so on. And anything remotely connected to a personal concern—such as an attorney who defends an alleged rapist, or an upstanding organization that accepts any money from an alleged rapist such as Wynn—generates the same vitriolic level of alarm as a proven violator does.

Populist political philosophy is the cultural-psychological tool that organizes the populist form of psychology, which accounts for its eight curious aspects in reaction to Sullivan.

Populist philosophy's scientific errors and political conservatism are recapitulated in populist psychology (that the philosophy forms). The psychological processes and reactions that have populist form are necessarily distorted by the distorted psychological tool that forms them. In particular, the importance of personal, subjective, sexual issues is exaggerated in

populist psychological processes (perception, cognition, emotion, imagination) as they are in the political philosophy.

The psychological and political errors of the students and administrators are obvious.

Populist philosophy and psychology contorted Harvard's students' perceptions, cognitions, emotions, expectations, and imagination. They made the students see, believe, feel, expect, and imagine that Sullivan was a threat to them in his work to ensure a fair, objective, truthful defense for an *alleged* criminal.

The students did not feel compelled to justify their emotional sense of danger from Sullivan's presence. Their subjective feeling was sufficient to call for his termination. Populism is all about validating subjective feelings by affirmation, not by rational argument based on logic or empirical facts.

Protestors got Harvard to terminate Sullivan's residence position on the basis of subjective feelings of danger and hostility, devoid of facts and reason. This is populist havoc—a chaos of individual subjectivity. It is also emotional totalitarianism! It was a small group of students who imposed their subjective discomfort on the administration to get personnel changed. There was no inclusive, rational, decision-making process among diverse sectors of the university to decide general policy that is consistent with intellectual and legal practice about this kind of issue. There was no democratic vote among the university students to determine majority opinion. It was mob rule based on subjective feelings—which I call a *subjective imperative*—which is the antithesis of university, intellectual, democratic process. It is also the antithesis of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 10: "Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him." The students and administrators violated this prescription for Sullivan, and they also effectively violated this human right for Weinstein, by condemning attorneys who defended him. Populism thus violates human rights under the guise of protecting them.[3]

The populist students' mob rule opens the door to Nazi students using their own subjective imperative—that is, they feel uncomfortable, unsafe, and angry at the presence of Jews (who are acting legally in accordance

with the highest social and ethical principles of society) in their dormitories, and then using this "toxic climate" (rather than any facts or principles) to demand that Harvard expel Jews from the residences. The Harvard students cannot reject this argument based upon subjective imperative because they used it to legitimate their political demands. (This is the same problem that free speech has. Once liberals demand free speech for their political views, Nazis can appeal to the same argument to obtain free speech for their political views. This is why abstractions are poor justification for liberal views. A better justification is the concrete political outcomes that result from concrete demands, e.g., laboring people will own the political-economic system that they work for.)

In addition, Harvard students believed they had done good, and they felt emotionally joyful when their protest successfully forced Sullivan to leave the residence, without any due process or democratic process.

Another populist fallacy of the students' behavior is that it did not call for any structural change in policies and practices that could be continued in the future. The students did not write up a policy that stated "law professors who defend alleged rapists cannot serve as residential deans, however defending alleged murderers is acceptable." We have seen that populists are not interested in structural change based upon rational argument. They are interested in expressing views and emotions and being "heard." They want to leave the content open to whatever views and emotions students in the future decide to vent. Harvard is improved not by specific structures, but by increased personal expression in general. This is exactly what the protestors did in their individual actions.

5.9 Populist Errors Are Functional for Maintaining Capitalist Oppression; They Are Dysfunctional for Achieving Emancipation

These populist errors demonstrate that populism is incapable of promoting emancipation, as we have outlined it in Chap. 4. On the contrary, populism's errors maintain the capitalist system and its oppressiveness.

Consequently, all of the energy that populists put into social reform, backfire and maintain the status quo. Yet populists do not see their failure because their populist psychology generates a sense of social improvement. The Harvard students mirrored the Indonesian strikers who walked away with nothing yet felt they had succeeded. Indonesian strikers who walked away with nothing felt they had succeeded because their psychology had been organized by populist values.

Although populism is disorganized and irrational in many ways we have discussed (Lukacs 1980; Wolin 2008, 2019) there is an underlying logic to them that is functional to capitalism.

I. The issue of sexual harassment, which we have seen is central to the Harvard protests, is ostensibly an issue of interpersonal interactions. It does not directly implicate the political system, nor does it galvanize reformers to negate the capitalist mode of production. Sexual harassment *can* be, and should be, linked to the mode of production through sophisticated historical-materialist analysis. However, populists never make this connection. They are not interested in social systems of macro cultural factors and forces. They are interested in rescuing subjectivity in its interpersonal interactions (which is far easier than rescuing subjectivity from a mode of production), as Fig. 5.2 depicts.

II. The entire tenor of the populist scenario is personal. It is about hunting down, isolating, punishing, and preventing bad guys. It is a lawyer who represents an accused rapist who is suspected of somehow increasing rape on campus (according to The Association of Black Harvard Women). It is an alleged rapist who gives his infected money to an organization that uses it for their own purposes which somehow creates a rape atmosphere.

    The populist analysis and solution to personal/sexual harassment resembles mainstream criminology. Criminology explains high crime rates as rooted in psyches/personalities. This leads to heightened surveillance of individuals; it also leads to individualistic punishment and isolation of criminals. Empathy for such criminally infected subjectivity is low. Vindictiveness is high.

    The populist conception of how harassment is propagated, is a sequence of personal contacts. It takes the form of sexual network

epidemiology to comprehend HIV/AIDS. This epidemiology employs a sociogram of an individual's network of sexual contacts. A sociogram is a line drawing of all of his (or her) personal contacts which extends to their other contacts. This is personalistic epidemiology that emphasizes personal transmission of infectious disease. An accused rapist transmits "rape syndrome" to his attorney who transmits it to his housemates in a dormitory. Or an alleged rapist transmits rape syndrome to his money which then infects the Republican Party. This model mandates tracking down the infected parties and quarantining them so the circuit cannot be maintained. The populist solution to rape is to cease accepting political contributions from alleged sex offenders or prevent lawyers of alleged rapists from living in college residences to prevent the rape culture.

This epidemiology ignores core macro elements of the conical, political-economic system which are the cause of gender problems. This epidemiology thus protects the system from criticism and transformation.

III. Populist philosophy and psychology maintain capitalism by allowing it to appear democratic by welcoming grass-roots efforts to improve it. Social leaders appear to be willing to accept disruptive, unruly, populist protests which transform the status quo. Yet the reality is that populist demands are harmless to the status quo. Therefore, social leaders can have their cake and eat it. They can accept "radical demands to change" while not really changing at all!

This is exactly what the Harvard administration did. They made Harvard appear to be a deeply democratic institution for allowing protests against its faculty and even meeting their demands to change. Yet the protesters only expressed themselves, "raised issues," and expelled one professor from his position as residence dean. They did not make any lasting change to Harvard policy, as I have pointed out.

Populist activists feel recognized and successful in improving society, because their psychology of perception, cognition, emotion, and imagination has populist form that emphasizes change to personal, interpersonal activities. Thus, populist psychology limits students' feelings, perceptions, and ideas about success. (In contrast, cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology draws psychological functions

to emphasize the system. This cultural psychology feels disappointed in personal, interpersonal change. It only feels pleasure when macro cultural factors and systems are transformed.)

This pattern was evident in Occupy Wall Street. After the initial excitement had calmed down, the New York City police threw the entire encampment into some garbage dumpsters and told the occupiers "time to go home, kids." OWS disappeared forever, without a whimper and having accomplished absolutely nothing. After all the criticisms that OWS had made about the richest 1% of the population, a reactionary, billionaire capitalist was elected president of the USA in 2016. Yet populists regard OWS as a model for social change.

Harvard administrators appeared to weakly succumb to mob rule. But they really outsmarted students by acceding to their demands. Administrators preserved the system by acceding to wild demands that were no threat at all. Banishing Sullivan from the dormitory did not undermine administrators' power one iota. Nor will it reduce sexual harassment one iota, because Sullivan did not contribute to it. (And that is my point. The status quo is happy with irrational ideas from protesters *because* they are non-threatening yet lead to subjective feelings in protestors of social reform. The fact that populists operate outside established systems and procedures—e.g., through direct, personal confrontation—limits their effect to individual changes, as in the case of victims such as Sullivan, but it does not change Harvard or the legal system whatsoever. Thus, populism's extrajudicial effectiveness vis-à-vis individuals is proportional to its ineffectiveness vis-à-vis transforming institutions, which is where emancipation must take place.) On the other hand, if the administrators had combatted the students, it would have precipitated problems involving the campus police, legal protests over punishments and expulsions to protestors, sympathy strikes, and so on. Administrators did not have to fend off threatening demands because populists do not make any. Populists make it easy for administrators by presenting harmless, personal demands that authorities can readily meet. Just appease them: talk with them, listen to them, respect them, promise them to make interpersonal changes. The Indonesian strike exemplifies this.

Social reformers should learn from this and denounce populism's deficiencies. But they will not because they cannot see past their populist psychology which makes them feel, see, and think that they have been successful, when they have not been. Populist psychology is thus an ideological macro cultural factor that preserves the status quo by distorting peoples' perception and cognition of the status quo.

Proof of populism's deficiencies comes from observing how the ruling class formulates and implements its agenda for social domination. Social leaders never use populist strategies because they do not work. Ironically, the neoliberal revolution from the 1970s to today employed the conception of social transformation that I outlined in Chap. 4. Neoliberals took aim at the political economy and worked to free it from restrictions that the New Deal had imposed. The neoliberal revolution sought to restore unfettered capitalism of the nineteenth century (Ratner 2019). They complemented this fundamental work with systematically transforming every single macro cultural factor—education, health care, religion, science, government, work, trade, and culture—in accordance with capitalist principles. This is particularly ironic because it is Marx's, historical-materialist model of society that was followed to implement naked capitalism, not socialism. Neoliberal capitalists have proven the validity of Marx's historical materialism, while populist reformers of capitalism have rejected this model and have suffered the consequences of abject failure. Populists' rejection of Marxist cultural psychology, and their adoption of populist cultural psychology, leads them to fail, and also to not seeing their failure. Marxist cultural psychology perceives and feels the failure of populism and also overcomes the failures in emancipatory *praxis*.

5.10 Laclau's Empty Signifiers

The abstractness of populism, in order to facilitate free choice of content, has been perceptively described by Ernest Laclau, an Argentinean political scientist. His political thought draws upon the work of such eminent European philosophers as Saussure, Derrida, and Lacan.

Laclau captured the abstractness of populism in his term "floating signifier" or "empty signifier." A floating signifier is a signifier without a

referent in semiotics and discourse analysis. It is a word that points to no actual object and has no agreed-upon meaning.

In his book *On Populist Reason* (2005), Laclau said that empty signifiers are essential to democracy because they give people a chance to choose their definition of things (concepts). And democratic, populist construction of reality defines populism. Laclau correctly defines populism as subjectivistic construction of reality. Even maleness becomes an empty signifier that enables individuals to define it as they wish.

Additional populist empty signifiers are "MeToo," "Black Lives Matter," "Climate Change," "Environmental Protection," "Earth Rights," "Podemos" (we can), "feminism," "wealth," "poverty," "dignity," "globalization," and "justice." None of these contains a specific political term that identifies the content or objective of the social movement. These contrast with traditional political signifiers such as "Communist Party," "Socialist Party," "National Farmers Alliance and Industrial Union," "Industrial Workers of The World," "American Federation of Labor," "Nazi Party," and "Progressive Party."

Empty signifiers are emblematic of populist politics which eschews concrete content in favor of the abstract right to choose any action that one wishes. Empty signifiers not only objectify this philosophy in linguistic terms, but also insidiously prescribe this philosophy as the form (or frame) for conceptualizing and discussing social phenomena and emancipation. They mandate that all content terms be converted into indefinite terms which can be defined by individuals to express their own desires. Empty signifiers thus have a pernicious, political function of degrading concrete, political content and form (structure) into indefinite, impotent concepts and strategies. Instead of speaking of—and conceptualizing and working for—concrete, political-economic, structural solutions to social problems, solutions are reframed as "inclusive, diverse, and open-ended."

Populists equate abstractness with inclusiveness and acceptance of people, for abstraction is open to all particular forms and instances. Justice accepts any and all specific forms. One form of justice is social support for the disadvantaged. But another form is that people must work for what they get. Koch-funded Ethics and Public Policy Center is a think tank that advocates neoliberal ethics. It must be included in discussions and programs regarding abstract justice (just as free speech must welcome

reactionary speech). Schept (2015) brilliantly analyzes other examples of neoliberal-populist programs for justice. These programs disguise old-fashioned, punitive criminal justice with populist rhetoric such as caring for prisoners and empowering prisoners. Populists are incapable of rejecting these "progressive punishment programs" because populists have no concrete concepts with which to oppose them.

Whereas vague concepts allow for contradictory politics to enter, concrete definitions of phenomena (such as justice) would draw people together because diverse individuals would have to agree with general, standard notions of things. Concrete constructs would also enable construction of an alternative social structure. Abstractions do not enable this because they cannot adopt a specific, shared alternative.

Populist, empty signifiers legitimize the status quo by ruling out a viable, concrete, alternative system. This impedes genuine democracy and emancipation in a new social system. Corporations love empty signifiers because these enable corporations to claim allegiance with all kinds of abstract notions while practicing them in corporate form. "'Climate protection' functions as an empty signifier; that is, they make it possible to integrate climate protection into the global hegemonic order without changing the basic social structures of the world economy" (Methmann 2010, p. 345).

Petras (1990, p. 2145) explains that "The critical role of the intellectuals in student, civil rights and peace movement in 'naming the system' and the processes – capitalist democracy, imperialism, exploitative relations of production – is replaced by evasion and the vacuous language of discourse babble. The style of language reveals the substance of the perspective. The retreating intellectuals no longer address a class specific constituency (the working class), but 'democratic' forces." "If one can cut through the linguistic gibberish ('the infinite intertextuality of emancipatory discourses in which the plurality of the social takes place'), Laclau's emphasis is on 'collective wills,' amorphous social groupings, and disembodied democracy" (ibid., p. 2156).

Taylor (2016) compares contemporary social movements with those of the 1960s and 1970s. She observes that the latter conceived of emancipation as requiring structural transformations of specific political-economic factors and power relations through political struggle. Contemporary

movements and concepts, in contrast, are more populist and person-centered in emphasizing respect for individuals and groups, and "working things out" through expressions of individual agency.

Populist ideology has become so dominant that it has penetrated the socialist movement. It has infected the critical, political, immune system of socialists and rendered them incapable of resisting populist ideology. Populist socialism is the resulting immunodeficiency disorder. This is ominous because it incapacitates the most powerful force for political-social-psychological emancipation. I shall analyze and correct this disorder by extending the historical-materialist principles of cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology.

5.11 Populist Socialism

John Foster, editor of the socialist magazine, *Monthly Review*, echoes populist themes that we have been criticizing. Speaking of the ecology movement, Foster said in an interview in *The Bullet* (July 10, 2017):

> The struggle at Standing Rock has left an indelible imprint on today's environmental struggle. *It was a great victory*, even though with Trump's election the conditions were set for the overriding of what had been won.
>
> For me, the high point was near the end when thousands of U.S. veterans arrived *en masse*, approaching Standing Rock in long winding lines of vehicles strung out over miles, to provide a "human shield" for the water protectors. They declared that they were standing with the Indigenous peoples… What really made this so important was that it represented an act of solidarity cutting across the lines that have historically divided us. *It is the emergence of human solidarity in the hour of need in this way that tells us that we can win*. (https://socialistproject.ca/bullet/1446.php#continue; my emphasis).

While the protest against the Dakota Pipeline was spirited, we must recognize its great shortcomings and the errors in Foster's uncritical support for it. Foster admits the protest failed. The pipeline was built! And the entire Federal bureaucracy was reorganized to propel and expand all the issues that were protested. The water protectors developed no new concrete environmental program that included economic growth for the

working class or the Indians. They developed no political strategy for advancing such a program. The Veterans only provided a "human shield" for the Indians. This is not a substantial political unity of objective, common interests that has any potential for long-term development of political critique or transformation. It is the superficial, transient action that populists glorify as solidarity feelings, devoid of political content and effective, material change. This is populist ideology that glorified the process of bonding and raising of ideas amidst the pathetic failures of Occupy Wall Street and the Jakarta strike. The emptiness of the action that Foster idealized is brought into relief by comparing it with Marx's rich, political account of the Paris Commune in his book *The Civil War in France*. It is significant that Foster *refrains* from mentioning any specifically *socialist* issues, knowledge, education, or organizing that are necessary for winning. Martin-Baro is far more specific about these kinds of issues than Foster is.

It is not surprising that these kinds of spontaneous, superficial alliances do not and cannot produce genuine solidarity, much less social transformation. Information about the group, Veterans Stand for Standing Rock, reveals deep holes in the solidarity with the Sioux people (http://taskandpurpose.com/went-inside-story-standing-rock-veterans/). First of all, the Vets visited Standing Rock for three days, December 4–6, 2016. This hardly represents a viable, successful alliance. In addition, a sympathetic account of the action describes massive failures in the populist action. It was organized by Wes Clark, Jr. (son of General Wesley Clark, Commander of NATO), and Michael Wood, a veteran. Neither had had any experience in protest movements. They had had no prior contact with the Sioux and knew next to nothing about them, and vice versa. They went largely to beg forgiveness on behalf of white people for having exploited Indians in the past:

> After the march to the bridge, where the elders prayed while the veterans stood by, waving the flags of the different armed forces, the blizzard set in. The snow blocked roads out of the camp and the wind blew down tents. Before long, the lack of leadership and organization became dangerous. Supplies failed to arrive. Evacuation plans were never sufficiently coordinated. Groups of veterans roamed the camp attempting to offer support in case elderly and mentally ill comrades had been left stranded and without heat. By nightfall, everyone was openly wondering what had happened to

> the funds Veterans Stand for Standing Rock had raised for the mission [$1,115,000]. None of the veterans had yet been reimbursed for their travel expenses. Some had arrived in debt, and without even minimal spending money…Luke Eastman, a Navy veteran from San Diego, said, "this is a big embarrassment to the veteran community." "While cars are flipping off the road, and tents are blowing down, and dudes are frantically trying to make sure people have enough wood, our fearless leader [Clark] is up there getting his picture taken."
>
> Eastman wasn't exaggerating. As the blizzard intensified and temperatures dropped, the situation down at the camp verged on disaster. On Dec. 5, around the time of the apology ceremony, *the chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, David Archambault II, told reporters that, while he appreciated all of the outside support, he now wanted all non-Sioux protesters to leave the reservation* (ibid.)

Clearly, there was no real solidarity or even common interests that could have been organized into political unity.

Another account confirms this dysfunctional, disorganized reality of the alliance: "No one knew where to go or what to do. The supplies that had supposedly been ordered were nowhere to be found," Duesing said. "You had this group of individuals who all had a different impression of what was happening. Some came for a fight; some came for a peaceful war of some sort. There were a lot of vets who suffer from issues like PTSD and traumatic brain injuries, and they were getting triggered. Thousands of people were sleeping all over the place, without the supplies that had been promised and without their medications – or money to get home" (Blankenbuehler 2018).

"Wood, Duesing and Buyukataman tried to figure out what would happen next. At this point, it basically became a FEMA mission, Wood told me. How do we get everyone out of here alive?"

The Veterans group raised over $1 million for the protest, and most of the money is unaccounted for. The Vets group has never conducted an audit of the funds it solicited from sympathizers. By August 2017, most of the leadership of the Vets had become disillusioned and quit. The president, Wood, used donated money for his own rent, which is illegal.

"Michael Wood and Anthony Diggs were the last two volunteers remaining with Veterans Stand. *They abandoned their original mission* –

helping the Standing Rock Sioux fight the Dakota Access Pipeline – and turned to broader activism for recovering veterans." "Veterans Stand faded from view, too. In August 2017, without fanfare, the organization's Twitter account, Facebook page and website were all taken down, and Wood deleted his Twitter account. Clark told me recently that he's spent the past year recovering from a 'mental breakdown' from his time in Standing Rock. 'I'm glad that I got out when I did'" (ibid.).

Clark filmed a video, titled "Commander Update," which he posted on Facebook on December 6. He concluded the video by saying, "We'd kind of like to stay together as an organization. And there's never going to be any salaries; there's never going to be any headquarters. But we'll do a mission every couple months to try to do some good, try to spread the love, try to spread the peace, and try and build a better world that doesn't feel like a police state or a prison that we're all locked inside of." Wood confirmed that Clark is no longer affiliated with the organization (http://taskandpurpose.com/went-inside-story-standing-rock-veterans/).

This is the dysfunctional, disorganized, superficial, spontaneous, untenable alliance that Foster perceives as solidarity that can help us win. There is no solidarity, no common knowledge, no real, common, long-term interests, no organization that could generate solidarity (as a condition for solidarity), and nothing potentially socialist about them that "can help us win." As a scholar with a deep understanding of socialist history and theory, Foster should have known better than to fall for ephemeral, superficial, spontaneous alliances and feelings of solidarity devoid of any material or political basis. He should have been on the lookout for estrangement, atomization, suspicion, ignorance, and self-interest that pervade capitalist society and make true solidarity difficult. He should have looked for signs of this effort and he should have critiqued the entire gathering when he found none. He should have questioned whether the Indians were potentially interested in a deep ecosocialist movement for the nation and the world or whether they were primarily interested in the immediate issue of stopping technological trespassing onto their own property that would despoil it for them. He should have researched the ecological practices of the Indians during recent decades to ascertain their interest in ecology, their participation in world ecological movements, and their qualifications in ecology, and

whether these indicated a potential for ecological and political-economic transformation. Unfortunately, he accepted ecological rhetoric and superficial professions of unity which are the hallmarks of populism. Foster also accepted the populist "intersectional" joining of interests among estranged and uninformed populations.

This is not his personal failure; it is generated by populist sympathy for ephemeral feelings (solidarity) rather than material issues, social organization, individual and social backgrounds and skills, and real accomplishments. This populist sympathy incapacitates his resistance to duping by the superficial appearance and hope of solidarity. Foster's populist enthusiasm distracted him from probing into these real issues beneath the hoopla of "solidarity." Disseminating these populist sympathies in his publications incapacitates his readers' resistance to populist duping as well.

For instance, in an article on revolution and counter-revolution, Foster concludes that "Massive, democratic, egalitarian, ecological, revolutionary change represents the only truly human future" (Foster 2017, p. 12). Importantly, this editor-in-chief of a leading socialist magazine does not mention socialism as the path forward. He uses the populist empty signifier "revolutionary change," which is dangerous because it is open to cooptation by neoliberals and Nazis who also espouse "revolutionary change." Foster refrains from using Marxist, socialist terms such as working-class-based socialist transformation of the capitalist political economy away from private property, wage labor, market exchange, commodities, surplus value, and money.

Foster repeats this abdication of socialism and Marxism in his historical analysis of neoliberalism. He concludes his critique with the characteristic populist reticence about an alternative. Just leave it up to the people (agencies) to decide whatever they wish to do: "humanity still has a choice: a long ecological revolution from below aimed at safeguarding the earth and creating a world of substantive equality, ecological sustainability, and satisfaction of communal needs—an ecosocialism for the twenty-first century" (Foster 2019). Not a word about what an ecological revolution would look like, how substantive equality would be achieved, or what communal needs are. Do communal needs include protecting the community from crime by mass incarceration of criminals? Do communal needs include the rapid educating of all children through stan-

dardized tests? We have seen that cooperatives have foundered on precisely this lack of content. Cooperatives are so devoid of content that their principles never mention cooperation and allow for privatization of surpluses! Populist socialists see no need for any Marxist direction because the people will decide. Foster replaces concrete class struggle and class consciousness with the empty signifier "revolution from below." Who does this include? The majority of white women who voted for Trump in 2016? The majority of Southern women who oppose abortion? Gangsters? Evangelicals? The masses of Brazilians who voted for Bolsonaro for their president?

Foster's populism abdicates Marxist historical materialism. He jettisons material conditions, structures, dynamics, power, material possibilities of emancipation, subjective conditions of emancipation (such as class position), concrete negation of neoliberal capitalism, class consciousness, and class struggle. It is just "people" from "below" who define sustainability, equality, and community. They then somehow implement their definitions in the face of the entire power structure. This impedes the socialist movement for emancipation. Marx sought to advance this movement through detailed analyses of capitalism and its dialectical negation. He was extremely critical of proposals for social equality which did not take these material conditions into account and did not propose concrete negations of them. Foster falls into the error that Marx critiqued. He vitiates Marx's critique by welcoming any and all proposals for equality that the people construe.

Foster typifies populist socialism which commences with a strong critique of capitalism but concludes with populist emptiness as a solution. This is Richard Wolff's strategy as well. This vitiates the critique because critique without genuine, concrete solution is useless.

Michael Lebowitz, another central figure at *Monthly Review*, espouses a similar form of apolitical, populist humanism instead of materialist Marxism. For instance, Lebowitz (2017) quotes Marx's phrase that changing circumstances includes changing action and the self/person. This abstract formulation is devoid of social-political-economic content. Rather than infusing it with political-economic content as Marx did, Lebowitz resorts to compound abstractions. He advises that "workers democratically decide upon a plan, work together to achieve its realiza-

tion, solve problems which emerge, and shift from activity to activity" (Lebowitz 2017, p. 48). This is the populist notion that underlies cooperatives. Workers can decide upon any plan; Lebowitz never stipulates that it must logically and concretely negate concrete capitalist socioeconomic relations that include wage labor, money, surplus value, commodification, alienation, or any of the other specific capitalist problems that Marx discovered. All of the laws of motion of capitalism are jettisoned in favor of abstract democracy and cooperation.

Lebowitz continues his descent into the humanist abyss hole by endorsing abstract notions of human development. He endorses diversity of experience as vital for development and liberation. "Engaging in new types of activity, solving new problems, activities that break with routine – these are practices that expand the stock of capacity" (ibid., p. 49). Lebowitz equates the full development of the worker's capacity with quantitative variety of action (ibid., p. 50). However, he neglects any socialist content to action. It is simply abstract diversity that counts. We have seen that this is populist ideology of the autonomous subject, and it is dangerous because it welcomes all kinds of reactionary ideas under this superficial, abstract, apolitical umbrella.

Lebowitz is concerned that traditional politics, which focuses on changing conditions, often overlooks human development. This is an exaggeration. I have cited Marx's and Engels' statements that changing the conditions does change human development; indeed, that is the *entire objective* of changing conditions—create a socialist person. Changing the conditions is not designed to simply provide more food and cars to people. Every Marxist emphasizes the new subjective, moral fulfillment that follows material changes. Vygotsky and his school of Psychology clearly emphasize this. It is only populists such as Lebowitz who contrast conditions and subjectivity, who believe that material considerations ignore psychological considerations. It is only populists who believe in subjective freedom, who believe that material conditions reify behavior and contradict freedom. Populists have created a straw man of materialistic reification in order to rationalize their populist ideology of subjective freedom. I have explained this error in the discipline of Psychology (Ratner 2012, 2015, 2016b, 2018a, b).

Lebowitz has impeded the full development of human beings. Human development is not simply a matter of engaging in a wide range of activities. It requires new, concrete, socioeconomic relations that negate capitalist relations. This is what Marx was outlining through his critique of capitalist laws of motion. Psychological development requires class consciousness of the concrete social structure and a concrete, viable negation of it.

There is nothing in Lebowitz's article that directs anyone to engage in any specifically socialist consciousness or activity. Democratic cooperation is simply a decision-making process that allows members to decide anything they wish. This is abstract, like all populism is, in order to free up subjectivity to make any decision it wishes. There is no *socialist content* to democratic decisions, as I have explained in my critique of cooperatives. This evisceration of socialism means that non-socialist acts that are democratically decided and include great variation are accepted as fulfilling and liberating.

Lebowitz converts socialism into a bastardized populist form. He also suffers from populist immunodeficiency disorder.

Economist Richard Wolff (2014, 2017) advocates a populist revision of socialism. He calls it new socialism, in contrast to old socialism of the USSR, China, and its allies. He defines old socialism as "The practice of socialism combined criticism of private enterprise and markets with celebration of state enterprise and central planning." He says that this did not sufficiently transform the mode of production. His solution involves admitting the failure of old socialism and developing a new populist socialism (my term) in the form of cooperatives. Populist socialism would focus upon the internal organization of the workplace to give workers more power/decision-making. "Criticism would then focus on capitalist enterprise organization as a hierarchical, undemocratic system for producing the goods and services society depends upon" (Wolff 2014). Undemocratic hierarchy becomes the signature capitalist malady. The solution is to democratize the workplace to give workers decision-making power (2014). This variable of hierarchy-democracy is the single focus of "new socialism." It is the cooperativist reduction/devolution/reversal of socialism from revolution to reform.

Wolff interprets capitalism through the lens of cooperativism. He replaces Marxist concepts with cooperative concepts. Socialism becomes cooperativism. And all by fiat, devoid of theoretical and empirical support—actually, contradicted by theory and evidence.

> One emerging and promising new socialism for the 21st century focuses on worker co-ops. Socialism becomes the campaign to establish and build a sizable worker *co-op sector within contemporary capitalism.* In worker co-op enterprises, all workers are equal members of a democratically run production operation. They debate and decide what, how and where to produce and how to utilize the net revenues. Worker co-op enterprises exist alongside traditional capitalist enterprises. The worker co-op sector of an economy will have to decide what mix of market and planning mechanisms to utilize for the distribution of its resources and products (much as capitalist enterprises always did). The relationships – both competitive and cooperative – between the two sectors of each economy (capitalist and worker co-op) will have to be determined by negotiations between them (Wolff 2017).

These are the words of cooperativism, not Marxism. They reduce co-ops to a series of *technical* decisions—such as the mix of market and planning mechanisms—which are made on the basis of workers' opinions. Wolff does not indicate any principles that would govern this decision. He does not refer us to Marx's writings for guidance. Wolff accepts populist, voluntaristic, subjectivistic, expressions of individuals' agencies.

Marx never reduced business to technical tasks such as managing the ratio of planning to market economics. He never reduced capitalism to undemocratic decision-making, and socialism to democratic decision-making. These narrow issues do not require a lifetime of study and explication, which Marx devoted. Marx was consumed by the cultural-historical-political bases, characteristics, and objectives of business management and decision-making.

In contrast, Wolff construes business as confronting a universal set of technical issues. These can be solved in a variety of ways. All business calculates the best proportion of planning and market, or public and private distribution of profits. At different times, all business will prioritize one or the other. The only distinction is who makes the decision to use this economic mechanism—co-op members or capitalists.

Wolff mentions another essential commonality between co-ops and corporations regarding the distribution of their profits: "For worker self-directed enterprises, increasing enterprise surpluses or profits becomes merely one of many objectives. Local health conditions, workers' family relationships, friendships, community solidarities, and the enterprise's relation to the natural environment are also objectives" (2014). Characteristically, Wolff's enumeration is entirely empty signifiers. The enterprise's relation to the natural environment can be evaluated as currently satisfactory and not requiring further adieu. The relation to the environment could also be evaluated as requiring more recycling bins. Health conditions could be addressed by co-ops funding private, for-profit clinics. There is nothing progressive or effective about these empty signifiers, even if co-ops choose to adopt them (see Blackledge 2017 for Engels' debunking of this abstract socialism, and Engels' enumeration of materialistic, scientific socialism).

Furthermore, capitalist corporations make the same adjustments that co-ops do regarding their profits. They donate part of their surpluses to business associations, government lobbying, charities, and community events. They participate in ecological activities, from recycling bins to manufacturing green products. Again we see Wolff reducing co-ops to technocratic organizations which confront the same technical, economic issues that capitalists do. His only complaint about capitalism is the undemocratic decision-making process it employs.

The same holds for other technical business issues such as profit, wage labor, commodity production, and exchange value. Wolff never condemns these capitalist forms within co-ops as Marx did. He treats them as natural, essential elements of business.

This is the populist/cooperativist reduction of revolutionary socialism to meek reform. Wolff has abandoned overthrowing the capitalist system of wage labor, surplus value, commodification, and so on; he replaces this transformation of the capitalist form of economics with workers managing the essential, shared business economics that pertain to all business activity, including capitalist.

The voluntaristic choices that all business confront allow co-ops to make decisions that are more capitalist than those that capitalists make. Workers' freedom of choice enables co-ops to decide that market exchange

comprises 100% of economic activity, that 90% of surpluses are distributed individually to members, that 1% of surplus be spent on ecological activities while 63% of surplus be spent on lobbying legislatures to support co-ops, and that $1 million be allocated to hire a sophisticated general manager. All of these capitalist decisions are compatible with Wolff's notion of cooperative democracy. Conversely, abstract cooperative democracy is incapable of preventing capitalist practices if they are decided by the workers. Wolff's "new socialism" is a phalanx for capitalism within co-ops.

5.11.1 Cooperative Principles

The inadequacy of contemporary, bourgeois, populist cooperatives to lay out a viable, concrete, socialist negation of capitalism is evident in the Seven Cooperative Principles that rule the co-op world. These are:

- Voluntary and Open Membership
- Democratic Member Control
- Member Economic Participation
- Autonomy and Independence
- Education, Training, and Information
- Cooperation among Cooperatives
- Concern for Community

Incredibly, none of these contains any concrete, cooperative principles or practices. They certainly do not contain any socialist principles. They are all populist principles of free choice to do anything members wish.

Principle #2 defines cooperatives as "Co-operatives are democratic organisations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions." The point is free expression and voting. The content of these expressions is secondary, in accordance with populist philosophy. For example, Principle #3 states: "Members allocate surpluses for *any* or all of the following purposes: developing their co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transac-

tions with the co-operative; and supporting *other activities approved by the membership*." Anything the membership decides is welcome because that maximizes expression of agency. Co-ops can retain surpluses or they can distribute them to individual members, or they can invest them in junk bonds. Co-ops are really vehicles to encourage expression; they are not committed to particular content. This reflects our analysis that populism's priority is to rescue subjectivity from cultural encumbrances and validate it as personal expression of agency and creativity. Cooperation is actually *not* a priority of cooperative principles.

Co-ops define cooperation as democratic decision-making, not as particular forms of interaction or objectives. Membership could vote to finance projects by buying junk bonds; they could install a strong management team that does not consult with members on most issues. These non-cooperative contents of decisions conform to the principles of democratic ownership and decision-making which have nothing to do with cooperation.

This is evident in the other co-op principles.

Concern for community is defined as: "Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members." Again, choice trumps content. The only specific term in this principle is sustainability. And that is open to interpretation in the absence of any specific targets or methods. It could mean 5% renewable energy or 95%. It could mean recycling bottles as a way of "phasing in sustainability which we hope to expand in the future." Moreover, sustainability is an ecological issue of reducing pollution and natural resources; it does not entail cooperation of people in carrying out activities. Sustainability could be fulfilled by individuals recycling their bottles by placing them in separate containers for the garbage service to pick up. There is no cooperation of any sort in this vague principle of cooperation. This is by design. Cooperatives exist to enhance choice of decisions, not to stipulate particular content or outcomes to decisions.

The same is true for the principle of cooperation among cooperatives. It is defined loosely as "by working together through local, national, regional and international structures." Again, absolutely no content to cooperation and working together is stipulated. This is also by design, to maximize individuals' flexibility, creativity, and self-interest in choosing.

Working together could include using a common wholesaler to transport products to individual, autonomous co-ops that have no ongoing interaction. It could entail international cooperative associations sending out pamphlets once a year. None of these is truly cooperative yet they fulfill the cooperative principle of "working together." This prevents populism from leveling a concrete critique of the status quo or a concrete, emancipatory alternative to it.

Wolff's populist socialism also ensures that capitalism remains the ruler of society in which co-ops function. He previously said, *socialism becomes the campaign to establish and build a sizable worker co-op sector within contemporary capitalism*. He never says that socialism is the campaign to replace capitalism by a co-op sector that eventually dominates the social system.

Consigned to a minor social role (within capitalism) for perpetuity, it is incomprehensible how co-ops could survive as a socialist sector. Capitalism is not friendly to competing economic systems. Occupy movements, environment movements, animal rights movements, civil rights movements, union movements, socialist movements, peace movements have all been infiltrated and subverted by the capitalist security state. Social critics have been brutalized by the policy and treated as criminals. The mildest protests such as women's marches are brutalized by police. The capitalist state suppresses unions that work within the contours of capitalist enterprises. Why would capitalists work with co-ops which are autonomous, competing economic formations? The capitalist state suppresses voting by progressive constituencies so that progressive candidates are difficult to elect. (The state reduces voting stations and voting hours in minority districts, for example, but not in white districts.) These are ordinary Democratic candidates who support capitalism that the state tries to suppress. Yet they would tolerate non-capitalist economies within their own society? The corporate state overthrows foreign governments and invades countries that seek innocuous nationalistic policies to run their own industries. Yet Wolff expects this state to stand by and watch a cooperative movement intrude into the domestic, capitalist market and take away its business/profit. Indeed, the capitalist sector would negotiate an amicable compromise with co-ops!

The nineteenth-century populist movement, of the 1870s–1890s, was destroyed by a capitalist "counter-revolution" to the threat posed by the

movement's People's Party, or Populist Party (Goodwyn 1978). Wolff takes no heed of this empirical counter-example to his complacent notion that capitalism will negotiate an equitable balance of power with populist co-ops. The only way this could happen is if the populist co-ops do not pose any threat to capitalism. Wolff is doing his level best to bring about this state of affairs by defining co-ops in terms of issues that are compatible with capitalism. Both address basic business issues such as planning versus market distribution of profit. And workers can make the same allocations as capitalists, if they want to. His notion of co-ops is thoroughly benign vis-à-vis capitalism. There is no hostility, no struggle, no risk, no protests, no politics, no supersession of capitalism. Co-ops make no demands on capitalists to give up or change anything! Capitalists can continue to control everything—the state, the institutions, the technology, the artifacts, the ideology, and the ecology. Co-ops simply request space within capitalism to set up shop. The vast majority of the population has no contact with co-ops, and if they do, they do not know it because co-ops look and act exactly like capitalist firms.

Wolff replaces the Marxist-Leninist class struggle with class dialogue. He replaces political change with managerial change. Of course, this means that co-ops have no emancipatory power, since emancipation is defined as transformation of the existing political-economic system.

Wolff's approach to co-ops and to capitalism legitimates capitalism by pretending it is open to negotiation with diverse interest groups to find common, cooperative, rational ways of living. Wolff thus endorses capitalism's ideological self-presentation.

Wolff draws co-ops into the capitalist orbit by drawing workers to manage essentially capitalist economic variables. He offers no truly socialist, that is, Marxist, tools for managing economic variables in a way that would generate non-capitalist outcomes. In his two articles, he never mentions Marxism or Marxist approaches to economic management. He leaves co-op workers and managers entirely within the capitalist system for resources and ideas about managing business issues.

Wolff does offer some Marxist analysis of capitalism's problems. However, he never addresses Marx's full analysis of capitalism that occupied his entire oeuvre. Wolff then proceeds to jettison Marx's socialist solution to capitalism. He rejects the entirety of the class struggle and

historical materialism that culminate in a revolutionary reorganization of the entire capitalist system. He settles, instead, for a meek reform in the decision-making process that confronts business issues. Wolff is far less concerned with the content of decisions, which is typical for abstract, populist democracy. As I have explained, he accepts any decision that cooperators make about business issues because they democratically express the individuals who make decisions.

Orienting co-ops to operate on the same mechanisms that capitalists do (planning vs. profit; distribution of profit; wages, commodity production), with similar results/content, has led co-ops around the world to ignore fundamental differences between capitalist practices and socialist practices. The results have undermined cooperation (Ratner 2013, 2016a; Mulder 2015). Wolff is uninformed about the actual failures of contemporary co-ops that are his cornerstone of socialism. For example To:

Worker co-ops often organize their worker-members as independent contractors who are only united by a common business name and a secretary or supervisor who coordinates scheduling and so on. Taxi co-ops have this form, as do service co-ops that clean houses. Each member receives a salary from his own work, minus a fee that pays the common expenses of secretary, and so on. Few members attend co-op board meetings. This atomized cooperative that involves no real cooperation is democratically decided by the members and reflects their conception of cooperation.

The Ansaloni Housing Cooperative in Bologna, Italy, receives below-market value land from the city government, on which it constructs low-cost apartments, and then sells them to co-op members—who can become members *after* they buy their units—who can sell them at market value and pocket the profit (Ratner 2013)! There is no cooperation whatsoever in this cooperative in Bologna, which is a center of cooperative development in the world.

Sun and Huang (2017) reports that housing associations in China protect the value of members' individually owned apartments. They do not try to collectivize their properties.

Calzada (2013), a member of the Mondragon Cooperative Corporation for 10 years, explains that the communitarian, cooperative spirit that founded Mondragon has been corrupted by the individualism of capitalist society.

> Globalization promotes individualism with the result that the cooperative *modus operandi* is changed and risks losing its cooperative identity. As Azkarraga states: "we have experienced an ideological emptying and the reinforcement of a new human profile that is more shallow, pragmatic and individualistic. The process of de-ideologization has affected the whole of society and, as members of that society, the co-operative social body as well." "an ideological horizon was lacking that would embrace the different self-managing social scenarios within an integrating frame- work. The cooperative valley has not been nourished by the necessary ideological, symbolic and intellectual impetus. There has been no comprehensive project and no vision to mark this orientation since the death of Arizmendiarrieta."
>
> When we examine cooperative companies, we can observe organizational changes from industrial conventional post-Fordist companies to entrepreneurial-networked atomized business units. Moreover, a new generation of cooperative members is threatened by individualism…The increased sizes of the cooperatives, the greater degree of internationalization and a move towards more individualistic patterns of community and civic life have lowered the levels of communitarian social capital (CSC) to historic minimums. Today, therefore, the cooperative model faces a potential crisis (ibid., pp. 221–222, 227).

Wolff is intellectually dishonest in regurgitating cooperative theory without acknowledging their actual failures to achieve cooperation. He is proselytizing a mythical ideal (new socialism) that attracts naive converts to failed utopia. Worker co-ops are the smallest sector of the cooperative movement. Why is this if worker co-ops are our best hope for emancipation? Why aren't workers flocking to them? How can worker co-ops emancipate us if workers avoid them?

Democracy does not generate co-ops. For democracy allows people's culturally formed habituses to express themselves. This is the lesson of cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology.

Co-ops can only be emancipating if they oppose capitalism (rather than circumvent capitalism) and contribute to a democratic, collective, cooperative social system. Working within a socialist political-economic program will inform cooperativism with a genuinely collective, cooperative orientation and organization (see Lenin's essay "On Cooperation," 1923; http://www.marx2mao.com/Lenin/OC23.html).

Marx articulated this in his *The Civil War in France* (1871, chapter 5; https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1871/civil-war-france/ch05.htm), "If cooperative production is not to remain a sham; if it is to supersede the capitalist system; if the united co-operative societies are to regulate national production upon a common plan, thus taking it under their control, and putting an end to the constant anarchy and periodical convulsions which are the fatality of Capitalist production—what else, gentlemen, would it be but Communism?"

Wolff, and other populist socialists whom we shall scrutinize in the next sections, invert Marx's statement. They essentially say, "If socialist production is not to remain a sham, if it is to supersede the capitalist system, if the working class is going to control the mode of production to express and develop their humanity, and putting an end to political autocracy of pseudo-socialist USSR, China, and Cuba, what else, gentlemen, would it be but Cooperativism?"

Marx sought to integrate cooperativism into socialism by making it part of the socialist state, national defense, and national planning by and for the populace as a nation: "the experience of the period from 1848 to 1864 has proved beyond doubt that, however, excellent in principle and however useful in practice, co-operative labor, if kept within the narrow circle of the casual efforts of private workmen, will never be able to arrest the growth in geometrical progression of monopoly, to free the masses, nor even to perceptibly lighten the burden of their miseries. To save the industrious masses, co-operative labor ought to be developed to national dimensions, and, consequently, to be fostered by national means" (http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1864iwma/1864-b.htm).

Marx is explaining that for cooperatives to become emancipatory, they must participate in the revolutionary national, socialist, social system and state. This replaces capitalism; it cannot be a servile sector within the capitalist order, as Wolff accepts.

5.12 Marxist Critique of Populism

Marx debunks another core feature of populism which is its abstractness. We have explained that abstractness is central to populism because it allows for individuals to assert their individual agency in defining things

as they wish. Abstractions such as fairness, justice, and respect are subject to infinite interpretation and realization, which precludes definite, coherent, unified agreement and action. This precludes definite, viable, social transformation and emancipation. Indefiniteness traps people within the status quo with no clear analysis of it or an alternative.

Marx's (and Engels') explain this point in *Critique of the Gotha Program*. It is useful to introduce this pamphlet by observing that the Gotha Program was composed by German workers' and socialist parties in 1875, as a political program that would bring about socialism. It embodies much of Lassalle's political philosophy. Marx and Engels dissected the program as retrograde and demoralizing. They did not support it despite its progressive intentions. Nor did they support it under the need to broaden the progressive coalition. On the contrary, they adopted a principled position that enunciated the necessary way of formulating issues in concrete, anti-capitalist terms. Engels introduced Marx's critique in the following terms: "The ruthless severity with which the draft programme is dissected here, the mercilessness with which the results obtained are enunciated and the shortcomings of the draft laid bare…We were perturbed by the decidedly retrograde step manifested by this draft programme" (https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/Marx_Critque_of_the_Gotha_Programme.pdf). Marx pointedly said that "it is my duty not to give recognition, even by diplomatic silence, to what in my opinion is a thoroughly objectionable programme that demoralises the Party."

This is the reason I have undertaken a strong critique of populism, despite its stated attempt at personal empowerment and emancipation.

Marx critiqued erroneous ways of conceptualizing social issues that curtailed their ability to comprehend and negate capitalism. Specifically, he criticized abstract formulations of social and political issues. He said that abstractions such as democracy, justice, peace, and liberty cannot be realized with emancipatory content. They can only be realized as concrete social relations in a new socialist mode of production that is brought about by revolutionizing the political economy. Short of this, abstractions will be trimmed to fit within the status quo, which will never realize them in an adequate form:

> The Program's political demands contain nothing beyond the old democratic litany familiar to all: universal suffrage, direct legislation, popular

rights, a people's militia, etc. They are a mere echo of the bourgeois People's party of the League of Peace and Freedom…

All those pretty little gewgaws rest on the recognition of the so-called sovereignty of the people and hence are appropriate only in a *democratic republic*.

Since one has not the courage…to demand the [establishment of a truly] democratic republic, as the French workers' programs under Louis Philippe and under Louis Napoleon did, one should not have resorted, either, to the subterfuge, neither honest nor decent, of demanding things which have meaning only in a democratic republic from a state which is nothing but a police-guarded military despotism, embellished with parliamentary forms, alloyed with a feudal admixture, already influenced by the bourgeoisie, and bureaucratically carpentered, and then to assure this state into the bargain that one imagines one will be able to force such things upon it "by legal means".

Similarly,

"Equal elementary education"? What idea lies behind these words? Is it believed that in present-day society education can be *equal* for all classes? Or is it demanded that the upper classes also shall be compulsorily reduced to the modicum of education – the elementary school – that alone is compatible with the economic conditions not only of the wage-workers but of the peasants as well?

"Freedom of conscience"! The Workers' party ought to have expressed its awareness of the fact that bourgeois "freedom of conscience" is nothing but the toleration of all possible kinds of religious freedom of conscience, and that for its part it endeavours rather to liberate the conscience from the witchery of religion. But one chooses not to transgress the "bourgeois" level. (https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1875/gotha/ch04.htm).

The Gotha Program stated, "In proportion as labor develops socially, and becomes thereby a source of wealth and culture, poverty and destitution develop among the workers, and wealth and culture among the non-workers." Marx replied: "this is the law of all history hitherto. What, therefore, had to be done here, instead of setting down general phrases about 'labor' and 'society', was to prove concretely how in present capitalist society the material, etc., conditions have at last been created which enable and compel the workers to lift this social curse." Labor and society are abstractions that omit concrete social relations which are the cause of poverty among workers.

Marx criticized the abstraction of fairness/justice which the program described as follows: "The emancipation of labor demands the promotion of the instruments of labor to the common property of society and the co-operative regulation of the total labor, with a fair distribution of the proceeds of labor."

Marx countered:

> What are the "proceeds of labor"? The product [object] of labor, or its [monetary] value? And in the latter case, is it the total value of the product, or only that part of the value which labor has newly added to the value of the means of production consumed? "Proceeds of labor" is a loose notion which Lassalle has put in the place of definite economic conceptions. What is "a fair distribution"? Do not the bourgeois assert that the present-day distribution is "fair"? And is it not, in fact, the only "fair" distribution on the basis of the present-day mode of production? Are economic relations regulated by legal conceptions, or do not, on the contrary, legal relations arise out of economic ones? Have not also the socialist sectarians the most varied notions about "fair" distribution?

Finally, Marx criticizes the goal of eradicating equality as abstract because it omits the mechanism of achieving the goal: "Instead of the indefinite concluding phrase of the paragraph, 'the elimination of all social and political inequality', it ought to have been said that with the abolition of class distinctions all social and political inequality arising from them would disappear of itself." This is pertinent to today's call for eradicating equality without mentioning the engine of achieving this, which is eradicating social class.

Notes

1. Populist "political organizing" around subjective feelings and expressions is abetted by social media. It enables a major demonstration to be launched spontaneously and loosely in a matter of weeks. It took less than six weeks after the Parkland shootings to mobilize more than one million people nationwide. The airport demonstrations protesting the Muslim ban took place across the country the day after the ban was introduced. In contrast, the Civil Rights Montgomery bus boycott in 1955 and the March on

Washington in 1963 took years to organize by legions of activists (Cole 2019).

The ease of political organizing feeds into the spontaneity and looseness of populist actions. Actions must also allow for individual choice and variation. They cannot be tightly organized, disciplined actions led by strong leaders. For this would continue the "oppression" of subjectivity.

Social media plays into populist organizing. Nothing more is needed than a computer and a mailing list and some slogans about injustice and outrage. It is only after diverse individuals come together from their scattered spheres that they begin the process of trying to figure out what the real problem is and what a solution could be that they voluntarily agree on. This diverse, unprepared gathering has no common, effective, understood theory which could guide their efforts. Of course, populists are not interested in such a constraining theory and prefer to just start recruiting individuals' ideas and ideals, and trying to find some commonality. This is what Occupy Wall Street did, and it could not cope with the scale of the political economy of capitalism, or its military might which one day simply threw the encampment into some garbage trucks and terminated the "movement" without resistance.

Yet this failed movement is still regarded as a heroic touchstone for populist organizing—just as the failed Jakarta strike is.

2. Nivedita Majumdar (2017) provides an excellent critique of this approach that pervades postcolonial theory. She explains how scholars in postcolonial theory confine their admiration of a woman's agency to single acts of female independence from men. They ignore political and military acts of women revolutionaries.

> Draupadi joins the movement [against landlord armies in East India] with her husband; she is clearly trusted and valued by her comrades, as evidenced by her inclusion in a political assassination; and she values the movement itself enough to withstand inhuman torture and rape at the hands of the police. But if we turn to Spivak's commentary, these political and organizational dimensions of Draupadi's agency are strenuously pushed to the background. "It is when she crosses the sexual differential into the field of what could *only happen to a woman* that she emerges as the most powerful 'subject.'"
>
> Her decision to join the revolutionary movement, we are to assume, is not conscious political agency. (Majumdar 2017, p. 103)

Majumdar explains that Spivak's feminist commentary distorts the descriptive details of Draupadi's life and psychology. These details indicate the formative influence of her revolutionary, political conviction and her political solidarity with her comrades. "Yet all of this Spivak sweeps aside with the back of her hand." "This gesture by Spivak … devalues and submerges Draupadi's political agency." "Her subjectivity is [only] affirmed when she steps forth and expresses awareness of her subjugation specifically as a woman—when the brutalization is to her body." "Spivak denies her this [agency] when Draupadi rejects her brutalization as a *class* subject and joins in with her comrades to overturn that class hierarchy. So when she fights alongside the male members of her underground squad, she is *not* yet fully a subject" (ibid., p. 104). "What Spivak holds up as a paradigm of resistance is Draupadi's refusal to obey a single command, not her refusal to abide by an exploitative and patriarchal social order. What is admired is her act as an individual, not her willing and conscious participation in a revolutionary movement" (ibid., p. 105, my emphasis).

> It is not that Spivak and Bhabha, for example, just give more importance to one aspect of their women's political involvement than to another. Rather, they altogether suppress aspects of the texts that would invite another interpretation. The elements of the narratives that highlight the women's commitment to organized and class politics are simply ignored. We only learn about them by reading the texts ourselves. In other words, aspects of political agency that are very much part of the textual record are suppressed by the narrative favored by the theorists—*the very sin of which they accuse the holders of grand narratives*. In this case, it is a quite particular and narrow conception of gender politics displacing and marginalizing the various dimensions of the women's broader political agency. (ibid., p. 113)

Another author in postcolonial studies engages in the same individualistic distortion of a woman's behavior: "For Guha, the acts of resistance are to be found in Bhagobati's decision to abort Chandra's fetus…He presents these actions as an assertion of women's autonomy and solidarity" (p. 93).

Majumdar criticizes the discipline of postcolonial theory in the same terms that I use against populist cultural psychology and populist political organizing: "a distinct unease with class and organized politics, whether as an analytical category or as a form of political engagement… During the years in which postcolonial theory has flourished, the sense of despair very quickly morphed into a general hostility to class which has not only per-

vaded cultural studies but has extended to most every nook and cranny of the academy (ibid., p. 113, my emphasis).

3. This was manifested in the transgender movement which insisted on using public toilets that corresponded to their self-identified gender rather than their biological gender. Their demand was based on respecting their chosen identity. It was not based upon any rational argument, it was not based upon any decision-making that included the opinions of the majority of citizens, and it did not consider the broad social good or social or religious issues. It did not develop any rational, fulfilling principles of gender and bodily privacy in general—for example, should any bathrooms or dressing rooms or shower rooms or dormitories be gender segregated? It was the narrowest of demands that concerned only transgender bodily privacy/exposure. Transgender populism is a dangerous policy that prioritizes the personal feelings of a miniscule percentage of the population simply as a demand for respecting their feeling, no matter what. Disagreement is denounced as disrespect and discrimination—as Amy Goodman declared on *Democracy Now*!. Disagreement is not refuted, it is denounced.

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6

The Populist Debasing of Social Theory: Liberation Psychology, Cultural-Historical Psychology, and Historical Materialism

Populist ideology is so powerful these days, that it has corrupted critical social and political theory. This is particularly worrisome because critical social and political theory has historically been the bastion of exposing the oppressiveness of status quo concepts and practices. Liberation Psychology, cultural-historical psychology, macro cultural psychology, Marx's critiques of political economy, capitalist ideology, and religion, as well as The Frankfurt School's "Critical Theory" (Best et al. 2018) exemplify this scholarship. Social and political critical theory is vital to developing emancipatory practice. Nowadays, much of this field has succumbed to populist corruption, which is far more dangerous than opposition from blatantly conservative opposition. For the latter identifies itself as the opposition. Populism, on the other hand, identifies itself as revolutionary and progressive, standing for the rights of individuals and cultures against the hegemony of exploitive capitalism. This makes populism the enemy from within. It is the Trojan horse that destroys progressive *praxis* under the banner of progressive *praxis*. In fact, populism portrays itself as the real revolutionary *praxis* that is superior to traditional Marxist socialist *praxis*. Populists denounce the Marxist socialist program as being oppressive to individuals, cultures, and marginalized people such as

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women and minorities. Richard Wolff has expressed this position in the previous chapter. The cooperative movement and feminism have expressed this view as well.

Tragically, contemporary followers of critical social and political theory have succumbed to populism: most cultural psychologists who follow Vygotsky, most Liberation Psychologists who follow Martin-Baro, and many social scientists who follow Marxism have succumbed.

It is vitally important to challenge this dangerous orientation that exists under the name of critical social-political-psychological theories. That is what this chapter seeks to accomplish. I shall critique examples of this populist corruption within Liberation Psychology, cultural-historical psychology, and Marxist, post-Freudian psychology. My critique addresses the positions that are taken by certain authors in certain writings. I am interested in exposing the *populist position of these specific writings* which represent the problem of populist corruption of critical social theory. I am neither critiquing the authors, per se, as individuals, nor the entirety of their scholarship.

6.1 The Populist Debasement of Liberation Psychology

Martin-Baro's followers have revised Liberation Psychology in a populist direction that contradicts his ideas. They have employed four strategies to do this. They:

1) articulate concepts that contradict (deny) Martin-Baro's words
2) omit (ignore) important concepts that Martin-Baro emphasized
3) misrepresent Martin-Baro's ideas, by misquoting these, and presenting them incompletely and out of context
4) convert concrete, macro, social-psychological issues into indefinite, micro-level abstractions (as depicted in Fig. 1.2 of the Introduction)

This debasement of Martin-Baro is illustrated in statements expressed in Montero & Sonn's (2009) book, *Psychology of Liberation: Theory and Applications*.

6.1.1 Indefinite, Nondescript Abstractions

Montero and Sonn (2009, p. 2) define Liberation Psychology as "Transformation of societies marked by inequality and exclusion… Strengthening democracy and empowering civil society. Citizens becoming conscious of their rights and duties" "The necessity to produce a science constructed by praxis. That is, practice that produces knowledge, and knowledge that turns into action – theory and practice informing each other."

These statements are nebulous and uninformative. There is no specific analysis of the causes of inequality. Yet these causes are what must be transformed. Leaving them indefinite deprives social movements of the targets they need to challenge; it leaves social transformation indefinite. The authors do not even define rights and duties that people should be conscious of. What are the rights that people should become conscious of? The right to own one's home? The right to own a gun? The right to marry four wives? The right to discharge garbage on one's own property? The right to make as much money as one wishes? The right to keep children from learning about evolution? What does it mean to "empower civil society?" After 150 years of rigorous sociological and political-economic research, Montero and Sonn only offer up platitudes.

Strengthen democracy? The authors do not even specify whether this includes economic democracy or only political democracy. Nor can they specify what strengthening it means. Does it mean more elections like the US holds, with distracting political advertisements and corporate lobbying? Are there different kinds of democracy?

The notion of practice is equally vague and uninformative. Every practice produces knowledge and further action. Surely, a science of Liberation Psychology—that aims at transforming social, material, symbolic, and psychological structures—requires more guidance than what Montero and Sonn offer us. The authors do not tell us whether emancipatory *praxis* consists in studying, mobilizing, and challenging the political economy of our society, or whether it consists in survivalist acts where individuals horde food in their homes and protect it with weapons, or whether it consists in getting in touch with our inner selves, or in forming partnerships with capitalists or in renouncing technology.[1]

Montero and Sonn state that Liberation Psychology encourages oppressed people to "develop modes of control of their lives." But what does it mean to control their lives? How is this achieved? By choosing which consumer products to buy? By removing all the trees on our land to enrich ourselves? Or by democratizing the political economy? Community members in the US have elected school boards committed to not teaching sex education or evolution because these violated their conservative religious beliefs (Frank 2005). British controlled their lives by voting for Thatcher. Americans voted for George Bush twice. Indefiniteness in terms such as controlling life can lead to supporting regressive, repressive actions by community members.

Montero and Sonn never define who the exploited people are or the nature of their exploitation. They employ terms such as "exploited majorities" and "popular majorities," but they never explain which groups comprise these categories. Nor do they explain who the exploiters and powerful elites are and how they rule. Nor do they explain what oppression is. One of the insidious aspects of capitalism is that it masks its oppression as voluntary, individual choice and free market exchange of equivalent values. Populist Liberation Psychologists have no methodology or analytical framework for exposing insidious oppression that must be combatted. They naively rely upon contentless communication processes to mysteriously apprehend complex and mystified content of oppression. This is oxymoronic.

This leaves us directionless about who we should follow and support and who we should denounce. Are Liberation Psychologists such Montero members of the popular majorities, given that they are privileged university professors? Is the wage-earning supervisor of the meat department at a supermarket a member of the popular majority? If a peasant owns 10 hectares of land, is he a member? If a farmer rents a room out to travelers, is he a member of the popular majority or is he a landlord or capitalist elite? And who decides?

Instead of developing concrete analyses of society and psychology, Montero and Sonn's book is replete with abstractions such as:

- Choosing man, choosing our people integrally conceived
- Choosing love for the poor

- Choosing integral liberation
- Denouncing everything that goes against justice
- Defend the right to live in dignity
- Generate strategies to develop collective consciousness (p. 25).

Since none of these is defined with any content, they are useless as explanatory, analytical, or activist constructs.

What is justice? Is it preserving property rights? Is it fair commodity exchange? Is it paying people some money for the environmental damage that corporations have caused? Is it raising the minimum wage for work? Or does it involve replacing the capitalist ownership of resources by workers' associations and collective social relations?

Are we supposed to love everything about the poor? Even their fatalism, apathy, domestic violence, superstitions, crime, and misinformed politics? Should we glorify the political wisdom of American blacks and Hispanics when, in June 2013, 60% of them approved of the government's collection of telephone and Internet data as part of anti-terrorism efforts? (Only 44% of whites wanted the National Security Agency's (NSA's) metadata collections to continue.) Should we praise the practice of certain Amazon Indians who bury their children alive, as depicted in the following video (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pzjrO3x9ef0)?

6.1.2 Privileging Subjective Beliefs Over Objective, Scientific Analyses of Social and Psychological Reality

Populist Liberation Psychologists insist that the masses of people can find the way to liberation by looking at their own indigenous experience and memories. Montero's (2009) chapter focuses on social dialogue in which people understand and respect each other. This communication process is deemed sufficient for generating all the analyses and conclusions that are necessary for transforming society. She never mentions any content to communication that is relevant for people to know. It is all about good listening, respecting, and tolerating the other speaker, and reflection (p. 81): "Everyone should have the opportunity to speak, everyone should

be heard" (p. 83). "Through exercises or games, drawings, and narratives, people express their feelings, their beliefs, their opinions, and general knowledge about an issue or a condition in their lives" (p. 84). Montero never explains how these group dynamics will lead to explicating the falling rate of profit of capital and the relation of financialization and stagnation that are necessary to reveal the actual social causes of poverty, exploitation, and ideological mystification.

Montero's statements about what should be considered in group dialogues are abstract. For example, "deideologization is the conscious construction and reconstruction of an understanding of the world one lives in, and of one's living circumstances, as part of a totality" (p. 75). What does this totality consist of? Other individuals? Institutions? Flowers? Puppies? Ruling class? Everything? Don't we need to focus our understanding on mode of production, ruling class, sources of exploitation, mystification of free market exchange? Without this, merely understanding "totality" will never uncover the basis, character, and alternative to oppression.

Montero and Sonn tell us that liberation psychologists "foster the recuperation of historical memory of the oppressed majorities, in order to overcome alienation and ideology." Jimenez-Dominguez (2009) similarly states, "As proposed by Ignacio Martín-Baró, 'de-ideologization' assumes a critical commitment which gives back to the people the knowledge they have gained of their reality" (p. 37). Jimenez insists "Psychologists must adopt the perspective of the popular majorities and follow them on their historical path towards liberation" (p. 38).

These statements assume that within their oppression, people have acquired knowledge of their reality and that they have somehow "lost" it. Liberation must rekindle it and follow it.

Our lengthy discussion of recuperation has documented the fact that Martin-Baro did *not* advocate this populist sense of subjectivity and recuperation of it.

The authors do not clearly explain what this lost memory included, how it became lost to the people, or what precisely recovering it involves. Was this memory an accurate recollection of objective conditions and events hundreds of years ago? Is this what should be rekindled? Or is any memory worth "recovering?"

Nor do the authors specify what aspects of history are important to recall in order to overcome alienation and ideology. Will alienation be overcome if people remember that 500 years ago their Aztec ancestors sacrificed children by burning them to death? Or by recalling that a witch doctor said that people should pray for rain?

Should "the perspective of the popular majorities" be accepted (by us and by them) if they believe in evangelical Christianity or Wahhabi Islam? If they segregate women by imposing burqas on them and restricting their education? If they are macho? If they value private property and individualism? If they desire harsh penalties for non-violent, working-class crimes?

In recent works, Montero has cemented her retreat into abstractions and micro-level sociality. She focuses upon individuals interacting with one another, without any social context or content and without any consideration of macro-level factors such as power, politics, social class, wealth, and poverty.

The Liberation Paradigm key features include the following:

Ontology: *The subject is constructed in the relation at the same time that s(he) constructs that relationship. Any knowing subject creates reality while at the same time s(he) is constructing him/herself. The so-called subject of knowledge is not a singular One. It is created by the I with the Other. An Other is always present in front of us or as within our ideas, positive or negative*; since *no One can exist without an Other calling her/him that mentions my name, as I mention her/his name; so naming the other. And the dyad that is created by both Others produces knowledge*. Therefore, the person "researched" is not just a subject but an active human being. S(he) is not only reactive in relation to what the researcher is doing; they also construct reality. An individual (a One) is not the only and last expression of the subject. *The I resides necessarily in a I-You relationship*.

Epistemology: *The subject constructs a reality that transforms, or limits, or impels that subject in a dynamic process* that constantly produces movement that can be dialectic or analectic. And all this happens in society. *Knowledge is reflexive, active and open, participatory, and also dialogic, analectic, inductive, deductive, and abductive. There is a continuous dynamic dialectic process of reciprocal construction, because reality is active*

> *every day, as well as symbolically built by people.* (Montero 2017, pp. 151–152)

Montero's sociality is confined to interpersonal, micro-level interactions between a self and an other who construct and define their social reality. This makes social reality an ever-changing, fluid construction that reflects individuals' new ideas and desires. It never extends to capitalism, imperialism, neoliberalism, social class, corporations, advertising; it never includes objectified structures that are administered by power and politics, which require protracted political struggle to change.

Instead, Montero retreats into community arts and cultural development to overcome marginalization through individual acts such as story-telling and theatrical performances which promote dialogue, interactions, and new meanings, not robust, political-military action.

> This work has been aimed at understanding how such practice can be mobilized to challenge racialized forms of exclusion, foster intergroup relations, and generate new narratives for belonging.
>
> Theatre of the Oppressed can be used to foster intercultural dialogue between Indigenous Australian young people and young people of diverse cultural backgrounds. Community drama is defined by several key features, including participation and involvement of multiple social actors, story-telling and process. Ethics and politics are focused on oppression and consciousness-raising. Story-telling from the point of the excluded is an important analytical method used to challenge and contest dominant taken-for-granted "knowledge" reproduced by self and others. Story-telling is also a vital tool for the recovery of historical memory and of excluded and silenced stories.
>
> Through the process of story-telling and performance, individuals and groups are able to deconstruct and give new meanings to their social worlds, fostering cultural pride and building connections between differently positioned social actors. (ibid., p. 155)

Montero praises one community program

> to build a pact of conviviality, respect the other part of the community, and not to forget threats and menaces. So far it is working, and last year they gathered with all those that participated or were interested into celebrate

> the programme and its benefits. Conviviality, and acknowledging others, both positive and negative, has come at last after all those years, also having the joy to receive an apartment. (ibid., p. 157)

This program builds conviviality and respect, not structural transformation. Montero's proof that the program is working is the fact that participants "gathered together" to celebrate the program. And this gathering was marked by conviviality and acknowledging others, both positive and negative. In Montero's populist imagination, just gathering and being convivial is rigorous proof that a community program of liberatory praxis has been produced. No empirical evidence about real community changes in material or political conditions is necessary, as long as Montero reports that people were convivial. Total subjectivism.

Montero's discussion is full of superficial abstractions such as building a pact of conviviality. This replaces all serious intellectual understanding of social problems and serious political understanding of how to organize diverse demographics to oppose principles and practices that generate social and psychological problems. (This becomes especially apparent if one compares Montero's words with the serious effort at understanding and transforming society, along with the populace that is capable of achieving this, that Franz Fanon demonstrates; see Perinbam 1973; Beckett 1973.)

Montero's close friend and colleague, Jimenez-Dominguez (2009), adopts her populist misinterpretation of Martin-Baro. He tells us: "Martin Baro had established that psychology must go beyond a scientist obsession with objectivity and instead focus on the urgent needs of the poor majorities in Latin America and find new ways of (re) searching the truth from their own perspective."

6.1.3 Omissions and Silences

Populist Liberation Psychologists compound abstractions and vagaries with omissions and silences about concrete problems and alternatives. They never mention capitalism, commodity production, the World Bank, World Trade Organization, NAFTA, the CIA, colonialism, imperialism, extracting surplus value from wage labor, or interlocking boards of direc-

tors. They do not explore the content of social lies or their political-economic basis, as Martin-Baro does. These are the cornerstones of oppression. Ignoring them ignores the basis of oppression and the basis of emancipation.

Populist Liberation Psychologists never mention concrete, political constructs that Martin-Baro emphasized, such as social classes; class struggle; false consciousness; oppressive functioning of overall social structures; marginalized children in favelas, champas, or other shanty-towns. The organization and functioning of each social system favors some attitudes while impeding others and rewards some kinds of behavior while prohibiting and punishing others; fatalism is a behavioral pattern that the social order prevailing in Latin America encourages.

6.1.4 Populist Liberation Psychology Contradicts Martin-Baro's Classic Liberation Psychology

In addition to being vague, the notions of Populist Liberation Psychology contradict Martin-Baro's classic, Marxist, Liberation Psychology.

Martin-Baro employed an objective, concrete analysis of oppression and liberation. He probed the concrete social positions, social characteristics, and social possibilities of oppressed people. He emphasized class oppression and the need for class struggle—even armed class struggle. In his unpublished book, he said, "La medida ultimata del creciente poder popular, de su capacidad de controlar recorsos sociales, lo constituye la formacion de un ejercito del pueblo que haga frente a las tropas regulares del poder establecido y que quiebre aquellos mecanismos sociales quo protegen la estructura de oppression" (p. 45). ("The ultimate measure of the growth of popular power, of its capacity to control social resources is to constitute a people's army that confronts the normal squads of established power and breaks those social mechanisms that protect the structure of oppression.") This activity is based on an objective analysis of the structure of power; it is not a summary of people's popular opinions.

Martin-Baro did not search the truth from the people's current perspective. He said the exact opposite: "to acquire a new psychological knowledge it is not enough to place ourselves in the perspective of the

people" (Martin-Baro 1994, p. 28). "The task of the psychologist must be to achieve the de-alienation of groups and persons by helping them attain a critical understanding of themselves and their reality" "that demands overcoming their false consciousness" (ibid., p. 41, 40).

Occasionally, Martin-Baro did speak about the need to comprehend the standpoint of the oppressed; however, his meaning was contextualized; it was not the pure subjectivity of the oppressed but was the objective standpoint about how things stood in the conditions inhabited by the populace. It was "looking at educational psychology from where the illiterate *stands*, or industrial psychology from the *place* of the unemployed" (ibid., p. 28, my emphasis).

Martin-Baro also said we must understand their *needs*—that is, what they objectively need to be emancipated—and their *life*: "we must rethink our theoretical and practical baggage from the standpoint of the *lives* [vida] of our own people, from their *suffering*" (Martin-Baro 1994, p. 25, my emphasis). The point is to comprehend the life conditions of the people that make them suffer, and comprehend what the social world must become in order to eliminate this suffering.

Martin-Baro went so far as to state that "self-knowledge and self-acceptance *presuppose* a radical change in social relations, to a condition where there would be neither oppressors nor oppressed" (ibid., p. 42, my emphasis). This means that the oppressed *cannot* currently understand themselves and their history; they can only *come to* this comprehension as a radical change is made in social relations that eliminate social classes! Social structural change is *prerequisite* to psychological understanding. Consequently, the oppressed cannot presently lead us to liberation based on their contemporary class-based consciousness.

Martin-Baro held an objective conception of the people's perspective, not a subjective perspective. He adopted this from Marx. Marx wrote from the working-class's perspective in the sense of understanding what the world has done to this class and how society must be transformed in order to support fulfillment of workers as the universal, productive class. Marx and Engels (1976, vol. 4, p. 303) said, "Communism, insofar as it is a theory, is the theoretical expression of the position of the proletariat in this struggle, and the theoretical summation of the conditions for the liberation of the proletariat." Communist theory is about working-class

conditions and position in the political economy, for these are what must be transformed.

Marx insisted that the working-class's current subjective perspective must come to correspond to the objective working-class perspective. The working-class's perspective is not the perspective of the working class as it is currently constituted. Both Marx and Martin-Baro unflinchingly criticized current perspectives that fell short of objectively understanding the real causes of, and solutions to, suffering.

Populist Liberation Psychologists do not engage in this critical, (re) constructive process. Jimenez-Dominguez (2009) reprimands "elites who promulgate the belief that people are passive, submissive and fatalistic in regard to the prospect of changing society towards a more socially just arrangement." Yet Martin-Baro emphasized that the dispossessed are fatalistic, which we cited in the outset. Jimenez misunderstands and misrepresents Martin-Baro. He is beguiled by an idealist (post-modernist, New Age, neo-anarchist, liberal-humanist) ideology about oppressed people that Martin-Baro rejected.

Martin-Baro did not "go beyond a scientist obsession with objectivity" as Jimenez claims. He said "Latin American Psychology must stop focusing on itself, stop worrying about its scientific and social *status*, and focus on attending to the needs of the popular majorities" (Martin-Baro 1994, p. 26, my emphasis). Martin-Baro did not renounce scientific objectivity. He merely renounced superficial, formal, quantified, positivistic science and objectivity. Martin-Baro condemned positivistic, colonialized Latin American science and its preoccupation with its own *status* as a legitimate science. This pretentiousness and the need for validation have resulted in sterile, superficial quantification of simplified, overt behavior that ignores broad, complex, macro cultural factors and their psychological correlates.

Martin-Baro renounced pseudo-science because it falls short of true science and objectivity that are crucial for identifying oppression (both social and psychological) and finding viable alternatives to it. He eloquently said, "to realize a psychology of liberation it is first necessary to achieve a liberation of Psychology" (Martin-Baro 1994, p. 25). By this he meant making it truly scientific. This was the explicit objective of his unpublished and unknown book *The Social-psychological Roots of the War in El Salvador* (p. 20): "Con este libro

se pretende mostrar como puede un psicologia social dar un aporte cientifico a las luchas sociales" ["This book seeks to demonstrate how a social psychology can give scientific support to social struggles."] He sought to make this science politically relevant to improving the lives of the "Wretched of The Earth" by understanding the causes of oppression and ways to eradicate it. He sought an emancipatory science, not the elimination of science.

Nor did Martin-Baro adopt the viewpoint of Populist Liberation Psychology regarding the humble role of experts who merely follow the people. He regarded their advanced knowledge as a vital tool for educating the populace and remediating their psychology of oppression. He said,

> Psychotherapy must aim directly at the social identity worked out through the prototypes of oppressor and oppressed, and at *shaping a new identity for people* as members of a human community in charge of a history. Overcoming the traumas of war has to include seizing consciousness of all those realities, both collective and individual, which are at the root of the war. Thus, *a conscientizing psychotherapy must construct a process* that will enable the individual to assert his or her personal and social identity as part of a movement of collective and national affirmation. (1994, p. 43, my emphasis)

In his unpublished book *The Social-psychological Roots of the War in El Salvador* (p. 21), he further added that "Social psychology must contribute to creating a new collective consciousness in our people, a lucid consciousness about the ultimate roots of their being and their social knowledge, necessary for projecting toward a distinctive being that opens the horizon of a new history." [La psicologia social debe contribuir a crear una nueva consciencia colectiva en nuestros pueblos, una consciencia lucida sobre las raices ultimas de su ser y de su saber social, necesaria para proyetarse hacia un ser distinto qua abra el horizonte de una historia nueve."] It is because people do not yet have this consciousness of their existing history (of the roots of their being) and the new historical horizon that social psychologists must help create them.

The people's perspective cannot be uncritically followed because it is corrupted and vulnerable to cooptation. Even progressive social leaders

who had been brutalized by the social system, such as Nelson Mandela and Dilma Rousseff, and even progressives who worked to reform the brutal system, such as Obama and John Kerry, ultimately succumbed to this cooptation.

In his biography of Mandela, Anthony Sampson acknowledged, 'Mandela accepted the imperatives of the global marketplace.' Thus, he appointed Derek Keys, de Klerk's pro-market finance minister, as his own (http://truth-out.org/progressivepicks/item/20974-mandela-was-unable-to-dismantle-the-white-oligarchy-keeping-south-africa-in-economic-chains). Shortly after he assumed the presidency, Mandela said, "for this country, privatization is the fundamental policy." Mandela's neoliberal policies led to black unemployment rising from 16% to over 30%, and the average household income of the black population fell 19%.

These sell-outs by popular, revolutionary figures can only be prevented by rigorously analyzing and criticizing their actions.

6.1.5 The Political Subtext of Populist Liberation Psychology

Populist Liberation Psychologists are indefinite about the nature of oppression, the oppressed, and liberation. They minimize concrete, material, social, structural, systemic, political, and ideological aspects of society. They dismiss external, expert, objective constructs, theories, analyses, methodologies, and programs. They reject disciplined, organized political parties in favor of spontaneous interpersonal relations (Jimenez-Dominguez 2009, p. 39). The errors, distortions, and omissions of Populist Liberation Psychologists possess a logic that is rooted in political values and objectives. The logic that unifies all these gambits is the desire to leave all ideas about liberation to the popular majorities of oppressed people, themselves. The objective is to maximize the unfettered, creative subjectivity/agency of oppressed people. All constraints on this must be minimized. That explains all the varied elements of Populist Liberation Psychology.

Populist Liberation Psychology is a minimalist approach that minimizes (eviscerates) reality, political organization, leadership, programs,

science, external critique, and necessity so that subjective activity can reign supreme. This is essentially a post-modernist—and neoliberal and neo-anarchist—point of view (see Ratner 2009, 2014, 2015; Taylor 2019). It dichotomizes subjectivity and objectivity, freedom, and necessity, instead of recognizing their dialectical interrelation.

6.1.6 The Epistemology and Politics of Respect

New (Age) Liberation Psychology is an epistemology of how to understand a society, its people, its problems, and emancipation. Its understanding is fashioned to respect the populace and validate it. It is a respectful epistemology—an epistemology of respect. Respecting oppressed people is designed to dispel the disrespect leveled by colonial elites. Thus, Montero and Sonn (p. 2) state: "another person must be respected who constructs knowledge…as an active person, not a passive entity, a mere reacting being."

This sense of respect is political in that it has a political content and agenda regarding the fulfillment and freedom of a person. Populist Liberation Psychology is thus *a political epistemology of respect*.[2] Fulfillment and freedom are to be achieved on the interpersonal level as activists work with and from oppressed, marginalized individuals. Fulfillment and freedom are achieved by respecting and validating individual ideas, desires, and agency in the process of social liberation. The emphasis is on the local, micro-level interpersonal relations. This is why theories, programs, systems, and structures—all of which are outside individual members of the populace—are minimized or rejected, as Jimenez does. Instead, the individuals occupy center stage. We must learn from them, how they do things, how they see things. This is all built into the political epistemology of respect that underlies Populist Liberation Psychology.

While this epistemology and politics of respect is well-intentioned, it is scientifically and politically misguided and misleading. The epistemology and politics of respect misunderstand oppression, liberation, and social transformation. They fail to work through the material, social, and symbolic structures of oppression that generate sedimented oppression of consciousness/subjectivity/psychology/agency (which Martin-Baro emphasized in his

previous statement that "Psychotherapy must aim directly at the social identity worked out through the prototypes of oppressor and oppressed"). They imagine that oppressed people can conjure up solutions to social problems from within their subjectivities, agency, activity, dialogues, and memory without concrete analysis, program, or organization. This is utopianism that Martin-Baro rejected. Sartre—in a brilliant explanation of social conditions, oppression, and emancipation—explained how the field of possibles "always exists, and we must not think of it as a zone of indetermination, but rather as a strongly structured region which depends upon all of History and which includes its own contradictions." "The subject appears, then, as a necessary moment in the objective process." "So long as one has not studied the structures of the future in a defined society, one necessarily runs the risk of not understanding anything whatsoever about the social" (Sartre 1963, pp. 93, 97).

Populist Liberation Psychology obscures and falsifies the science and politics of Martin-Baro's Classical Liberation Psychology. It misleads social and political activities in fruitless directions, toward a politics of subjectivity and respect that ignores (a) macro cultural social systems, conditions, structures, politics, analytical frameworks, (b) culturally oppressed psychology/subjectivity, (c) concrete social alternatives such as socialism (not to be confused with Stalinism and Maoism).

Our critique of Populist Liberation Psychology highlights the illusory progressivism of humanism, multiculturalism, post-modernism, individualism, subjectivism, and abstract conceptions of society, history, humanity, civilization, and psychology. We must replace this illusion with objective, concrete, political, programmatic, organized, rigorous, disciplined social science and social activism that directly and concretely challenge the political-economic basis of social-psychological problems.

6.2 The Populist Debasement of Cultural-Historical Psychology

Vygotsky's followers have distorted his Marxist cultural-historical Psychology in the same manner that Martin-Baro's followers have distorted his work. They:

1) articulate concepts that contradict (deny) Vygotsky's (and Marx's) words
2) convert concrete, macro, social-psychological-political issues into indefinite, micro-level abstractions (as depicted in Fig. 4.4)
3) omit (ignore) important concepts that Vygotsky (and Marx) emphasized
4) misrepresent Vygotsky's (and Marx's) ideas by misquoting these and presenting them incompletely and out of context
5) contort Vygotsky's (and Marx's) ideas by pretending that they endorse populist agency, sociality, and freedom/emancipation.

Populist revisionists of Vygotsky have expunged his emphasis on formative cultural factors that organize the form and content of psychological phenomena. They have expunged his conical model of culture that is organized at its core political economy. They have expunged his call for a Marxist Psychology. They have expunged his call for socialist revolution as the key to social and psychological emancipation. They have taken the opposite direction—they reduce all of these concrete, political, macro issues to individual, interpersonal, subjective abstractions.

I have observed this scientific and political degradation in cultural psychology since 1993 (Ratner 1993). I observed that psychological anthropologists were emphasizing personal subjectivity at the expense of cultural structures, politics, and even organized customs to explain, describe, and predict psychological functioning. This "populist-izing" (not popularizing) of cultural psychology has only increased and has now taken over the field (Ratner 2002, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2015, 2018a, b, c).

This is evident in recent work by Bonnie Nardi, the current senior editor of *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, and Anna Stetsenko, an editorial board member of that journal, and an active presence in Vygotskyian studies. I shall critique their recent work that appears in Nardi's adoring book review of Stetsenko's *Transformative Mind*, and in Stetsenko's own articles. (I will not review her book.)

Nardi's ideas follow populist political philosophy that I outlined in the previous chapter. She strips agency of conditionality and materialism that would constrain individual freedom of choice/action. She approvingly quotes Stetsenko's orientation to Vygotsky in abstract terms of activity,

creativity, agency, and independence. "Stetsenko emphasizes throughout the book that Vygotsky was not talking about adaptation to circumstances but active development within the context of a specific sociopolitical ethos. Inherent in this framing is the importance of the individual person and his or her potential for development." This is the individualistic, subjectivistic notion of agency that is central to populism. Nardi does mention sociopolitical ethos; however, we shall see she never defines what this is, who originates it, who maintains it, how it can be changed, or how it relates to active, individual agency. Populists characteristically toss in a bevy of social terms, such as "social," "cultural," "community," "collective," and "history," in undefined, abstract terms that have no clear relationship to subjective individualism. We shall see that they are ultimately reduced to interpersonal acts.

Nardi ignores Vygotsky's concrete, historical-material constructs about psychology. She never mentions social class, power, politics, the political economy, exploitation, laws of society, or socialism. She never mentions Vygotsky's strong emphasis on the cultural formation of psychology. She never mentions Vygotsky's frequent statements that the social structure forms a homologous psychological structure in the individual that reflects the contradictions of society. She never mentions Vygotsky's Marxism and Bolshevism, or his belief in socialist transformation. She replaces all these with empty abstractions, such as "Stetsenko' s courageous appeal to activism, to human potential, to not giving up" (Nardi 2017, p. 393).

Nardi endorses populist empty signifiers which are devoid of concrete analysis of the given and concrete direction for improvement. It is all up to us to figure out how we wish to struggle and strive for a better future. This is populist subjectivism. We all express our opinions and see which are most appealing. Populists do not want concrete analyses or programs because these constrain individual and interpersonal decisions:

> The purpose of education is to give us tools for that co-creation. What tools? That's something the Mind, Culture, and Activity community, and of course many others, should be figuring out.
>
> Stetsenko' s book is not a blueprint for a toolkit, but a bracing summons to imagine and create the tools by richly theorizing what a human being can be, starting with a "primary emphasis on struggle and striving" (p. 393).

> A signature aim of the human project is to postulate sought-after futures, that is, aspirational scenarios and narratives that drive us toward better futures. The human mind, says Stetsenko pointedly, is 'most critically premised on and constituted by a projection into the future.' (p. 395)

These empty abstractions have no capacity to comprehend or transform society in any particular direction, much less a progressive direction toward emancipation. They are apolitical and irrelevant to political emancipation. They tell us nothing about what emancipation is or how to achieve it.

Brecht explained this well in his 1935 essay *Writing The Truth: Five Difficulties* (http://ada.evergreen.edu/~arunc/texts/theater/brecht/five-Difficulties.pdf).

> The man who does not know the truth expresses himself in lofty, general, and imprecise terms. He complains about Evil in general, and whoever hears him cannot make out what to do. All this is put in general terms; it is not meant to be a guide to action and is in reality addressed to no one.
>
> Such vague descriptions point to only a few links in the chain of causes. Their obscurantism conceals the real forces making for disaster.

Nardi reveals the populism of her thinking in a personal statement of what agency, development, resistance, and change mean to her:

> I recall an incident from my own childhood that would require theorizing in the activist mode. We had a library within walking distance, and my older cousins used to take me there to check out books. I was envious of this mysterious ability to check out one' s own books, and I bugged my cousins until they agreed to help me get a library card. A requirement for a library card was to sign your name, but I was 4 years old and could neither read nor write. My indulgent cousins taught me to print something that must have resembled my name, because I returned from the library triumphantly bearing my own card! I'm sure the librarians had a good laugh. The point is, my actions were not legitimate peripheral participation (they were a bit illegitimate), nor were they merely situated. In my tiny way I had asserted agency and beat the system (as far as I was concerned). I believe it is such moments that Stetsenko wants to encourage pedagogically and politically. (p. 395)

Nardi's account of her own heroic personal and social change is pure individualism. It is her egocentric, personal act of "beating the system" by asserting her agency. She reveals her individualistic, egocentric notion of sociality and collectivity. She received some assistance from her cousins, but it was all for her individual desire. It did not benefit them or anyone else. Nor did it improve society in the slightest. It did not alter the library as an institution in any way that would benefit other users. She only gamed the library for her own advantage. Her assertion of her own agency clearly trumped any collective, communal, sociopolitical interest.

It would be difficult to imagine a more apolitical act, yet this is what Professor Nardi glamorizes as epitomizing human freedom, fulfillment, and collective action! This is the human freedom, fulfillment, and collective action that she admires in Stetsenko's work. Nardi even believes that this was Vygotsky's point of view.

In our time of overwhelming, cascading, political, economic, social, military, ecological catastrophes, Nardi speaks of social and psychological liberation as represented by her 4-year-old act of personal gratification. This is her truncated model of individual development and social change. It is the truncated meaning of her flowery abstractions such as agency, development, solidarity, community, context, resistance, striving, activism, and change.

Stetsenko presents her populist revision of Vygotsky in a 2013 article and a 2018 chapter. It parallels the fallacies and failures that Nardi and the other cultural-historical revisionists have articulated, as well as those which Montero and others have foisted upon Liberation Psychology.

Stetsenko says culture is the product of "the non-adaptive nature of human development as always moving beyond the 'given,' always transcending the status quo of the world as it exists in 'the here and now.'" "Within the transformative ontology [that she propounds], human beings are seen as active agents in their own lives and their own society, responsive and responsible agents who co-create, together with other people, their world and their society." "History and society are embodied and expressed in, or even created, through the deeds of each and every single person." "Each individual person … profoundly matters in everything that is going on" (Stetsenko 2013, pp. 14, 15, 16, 17).

This is typical populist adulation of the distinctive, special, human being who is continually active, self-developing, expressive, and assertive. The individual "co-creates" their own individual world and their society with other people. This is all micro-level functioning in which individuals interact independently and also with one another. Individuals even create history and society through their mundane deeds. And social others always take account of each individual in everything that is going on. The emphasis is on individual agency and interaction. Stetsenko implies that society is a populist, democratic community in which individuals come together and voluntarily decide how to act in ways that express and enrich themselves. Social life is so open to these kinds of individual progressive insights that interacting individuals change social life continually and immediately, as they think up these insights. She enthuses that "reality is constantly realized, changed, and recreated through the dialectics and movements of communal transformative practices embodied in human acts of being, knowing, and doing. Human agentive, purposeful, and interconnected processes of being, knowing and doing…are taken to be a *world-forming and history-making* process" (Stetsenko 2018, p. 47). "The social world is posited in Transformative activist stance as emphasizing transformations and changes in the immediately present reality as its core ontology" (Stetsenko 2013). Nothing impedes this immediate, continual, democratic, cooperative change.

Stetsenko never considers social structures, social classes, politics, power, institutions, national and international bodies, modes of production, means of production, armies, laws, cooptation, assassination, propaganda, and economies which could impede individuals from immediately and continually expressing their new ideas in practice. Her framework is entirely abstract "human acts of being, knowing, and doing," not political being, or economic being, or capitalist being. We are just abstract humans constructing our worlds. Even external factors have no definite influence on us because it is our form of engaging with them that determines how they bear on us: "us *being immersed in [cultural] practices through our own agentive engagement* as the starting point and the core existential condition for the entirety of our development" (pp. 50–51

my emphasis). Cultural practices and objects are what we make of them through our engagement with them. They are always "for us"; they are never "in-themselves," independent of us. Consequently, we determine our entire development and the development of things. This is idealism: subjectivity defines the world and the self.

There is no oppression, no totalitarianism, no brutality, and no alienation that could interfere with this utopian existence of continuous, immediate progress and fulfillment.

And this is existential human reality. It is not an ideal that must be achieved in the future after protracted struggle. These are her descriptions of human existence, human nature, and human sociality as they always exist. They are not dependent upon concrete social conditions such as forms of economic ownership, governments, and institutions. Stetsenko makes change so easy. We do not have to struggle to change political, macro factors; all we have to do is to change our perspective on human activity and society, and take a transformative activist stance that recognizes that humans are already actively and continuously making their worlds better through their mundane, intentional acts.

Stetsenko's fantasy of sociality and agency is scientifically and politically wrong. Does the reader know of any instance of her utopian image? Is it the neighborhood Macdonald's restaurant? Do the Macdonald's employees continually and immediately create the reality of their workplace through democratic, communal discussion with the CEO? Is it the call center in India where employees' conversations are all monitored and corrected? Is it the United Parcel Service driver whose truck is completely monitored, and who is castigated if he backs up too many times in a day? Or is it the migrant workers who stand on street corners every morning waiting for an employer to select anyone she wishes to perform work that is strictly defined by her, and who fires the vagrants who do not comply? Are they the ones who continually create their life-worlds and develop them as they wish, in human acts of being, knowing, and doing?

Stetsenko ignores the obvious reality of social systems, institutions, artifacts, social classes, power, politics, exploitation, and discrimination. Everyone knows that people do not constantly create and transform the Pentagon, the Chinese Communist Party, Goldman Sachs, NATO, the Gestapo, the American Petroleum Institute, the capitalist class, or the lettuce-picking work, through micro-level, democratic, voluntary, co-constructing deeds. Everyone knows that these massive, powerful institutions are controlled by powerful, secretive politics of vested interest groups who maintain their power and resist change from "the people." Institutions are becoming more monopolized and centralized, leaving less room for individual input and fulfillment. The university system in which Stetsenko works has become transformed into a neoliberal business, entirely by corporate and political leaders and their appointed university presidents (Ratner 2019), without any agreement from faculty or students; adjunct teachers at colleges have become part of the gig economy like Uber drivers; yet Stetsenko pretends that every individual matters! Individuals do not even control their own jobs and wages. On the contrary, these are controlled by much larger, macro, economic, and political forces. Americans born between 1981 and 1996 have failed to match every other generation of young adults born since the Great Depression. They have less wealth, less property, lower marriage rates, and fewer children. Millennials' family wealth in 2016 was 20% less than Baby Boomers in 1989! Female Millennials' income is 24% less than Baby Boomer women's income at the same age. Stetsenko, and populists in general, believes that this deterioration was democratically decided by communities of people, each of whom assented to deteriorating their own lives.[3] This is despite millennials being better educated than Baby Boomers. (*Wall Street Journal*, May 19, 2019). The American dream, which Stetsenko endorses, of the poorest people improving their situations and rising to the top of the income hierarchy, is only true for 8% of Americans (*New York Times*, July 3, 2019). Upward social mobility is also decreasing in China, as we noted in Chap. 4.

Upward social mobility is determined by structural social factors, not individual initiative or meritocracy. Harvard economist Raj Chetty has demonstrated this in his "Opportunity Atlas" (https://opportunityinsights.org/paper/the-opportunity-atlas/): Structural factors are finely differentiated into micro environments. These determine precise differences in the success and failure of individuals who occupy them. Only 4.4 percent of Charlotte, North Carolina's kids moved from the bottom quintile of household income to the top quintile. In Salt Lake City, a person born to a family in the bottom fifth of household income had a 10.8 percent chance of reaching the top fifth. Mobility is differentiated down to neighborhoods. Consider a child who grows up in a household earning about $27,000 annually, right at the 25th percentile nationally. In Beverly Woods, a relatively wealthy, mostly white enclave in South Charlotte, with spacious, well-kept yards, he could expect his household income to be $42,900 by age 35. Yet in Huntersville, a northern suburb of the city, a similar kid could expect only $24,800. The structural constraints on mobility are so impenetrable to individual strategizing that Chetty abandons strategizing within structural constraints, and he proposes instead to increase the upward mobility of children by moving them to geographical areas with different structures which already have higher mobility (see his piece in *The Atlantic*, August, 2019). Beating the system, whether by navigating within its niches or negotiating interpersonal alternatives (as Stetsenko and Nardi espouse), is incapable of emancipating people. Emancipation requires addressing the system and transforming its structure and core so that it affords fulfilling practices to the populace as a matter of course.

This is obvious from the way that poor peoples' housing is determined. Rather than being voluntarily and collectively formed by individuals, as Stetsenko and Nardi believe, "For much of the 20th century, the Federal Housing Administration declined to insure mortgages for blacks, who instead had to buy homes by signing contracts with speculators who demanded payments that, in many cases, amounted to most of the buyer's income. (As a result, many black families never reaped the gains of homeownership—a key source of Americans' wealth.) Housing discrimination persisted well beyond the Jim Crow years, as neighborhood associations rejected proposals to build low-income housing in affluent suburbs." "In Baltimore, a 20-year gap in life expectancy exists between the city's poor,

largely African American neighborhoods and its wealthier, whiter areas. A baby born in Cheswolde, in Baltimore's far-northwest corner, can expect to live until age 87. Nine miles away in Clifton-Berea, the life expectancy is 67, roughly the same as that of Rwanda. Similar disparities exist in other segregated cities such as Philadelphia and Chicago" (Khazan 2018). These patterns contradict Stetsenko's populist fantasy that autonomous people interact to continually and immediately improve their social environments.

In fact, a major study on discrimination from 1967 to 2017 finds "enduring contours of racial discrimination in Britain. There is no significant diminution in risks of discrimination over time either for Caribbeans or for South Asians as a whole. These results are broadly in line with those from the ethnic penalties literature, suggesting that discrimination is likely to be a major factor explaining the disproportionately and enduringly high unemployment rates of ethnic minorities" (Heath and Di Stasio 2019).

The work of Krysan and Crowder, and Calgarco, in Chap. 3, demonstrates that individuals' agency contributes to structural racism and discrimination; it does not negotiate with it in the sense of contradicting it.

Stetsenko's populist fantasy about free, open, individualistic society is additionally demolished by anti-protest laws in Tennessee, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Louisiana that make it a felony to protest on fossil fuel infrastructure projects such as oil pipelines. No place there for individuals to continually and immediately make their social worlds free of deadly fossil fuels.

Social reality includes psychologists and psychiatrists ensuring that people conform to the system and minimize creative changes by them. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-III* pathologizes "oppositional defiant disorder" (ODD). The official symptoms of ODD include "often actively defies or refuses to comply with adult requests or rules" and "often argues with adults." Since 1980, ODD has become an increasingly popular diagnosis, with an increasing number of these children and teenagers being drugged for this diagnosis. In 2012, the *Archives of General Psychiatry* reported that between 1993 and 2009, there was a sevenfold increase of children 13 years and younger being prescribed antipsychotic drugs, and that "disruptive behavior disorders"—which includes ODD—were the most common diagnoses in children medicated with antipsychotics, accounting for 63% of those medicated.

Glorifying individual freedom in these contexts is intellectually dishonest and an ideological cover-up of oppression (Ratner 2015, p. 61). Populism cannot admit oppression because this would require incorporating oppression within populist social construction—as voluntarily created through individual and collective acts by the populace—as though the populace brings oppression on itself by outsourcing its jobs and brutalizing its members.

Of course, people do change their social lives. However, they only do so via political struggles against macro conditions. People engage in strikes, protests, and revolutions to change their social lives. These are completely different from the individual and interactional, micro social level that Stetsenko emphasizes. She obscures the real political struggle that is necessary to effect social change.

Stetsenko's populism contradicts the essence of cultural psychology which is a stable, structured culture that organizes individual psychology. Moscovici explains this clearly,

> Society has its own structure, which is not definable in terms of the characteristics of individuals; this structure is determined by the processes of production and consumption, by rituals, symbols, institutions, and dynamics that cannot be derived from the laws of other systems. When the "social" is studied in terms of the presence of other individuals it is not really the fundamental characteristics of the system that are explored but rather one of its subsystems – the subsystem of interindividual relationships. The kind of social psychology that emerges from this approach is a "private" social psychology which does not include within its scope the distinctiveness of most of the genuine collective phenomena. It can therefore be argued that … social psychology has not been truly concerned either with social behavior as a product of society or with behavior *in* society…For these reasons it is ambiguous to maintain that social behavior is currently the real object of our science. (cited in Ratner 2012, p. 234)

Ironically, the notion of the individual that Stetsenko invokes as free agency which continually transforms society is a cultural-historical product of the capitalist economy that was initiated by the capitalist class, not by independent, co-acting individuals from all places (ibid., p. 221).

Even personal sexuality is not individually or interpersonally constructed on a voluntary basis. It is a cultural phenomenon that is structured by macro cultural factors, features, and functions which structure the individual's reactions (Ratner 2019, pp. 161–172). Fahs' research on women's orgasms, in Chap. 3, documented that "*women disclosed all sorts of [social] performances, many of which reinscribed rather than unsettled traditional gender roles*." Similarly, Pham's research on campus sex in Chap. 3 dispels Stetsenko's notion of individual and interpersonal agency continually and immediately re-making social relations so as to express the momentary subjectivity of social players.

Some girls who wanted a serious relationship felt compelled to flee from the disruptive pressure of the campus environment and established a long-distance relationship with boys in a different university.

These girls did not use their agency to transform the local culture; they utilized a different environment that was more permissive of serious sexual/romantic relationships (Ratner 2017b).

Harrington (forthcoming) similarly demonstrates that women draw upon prevalent social ideologies, such as neoliberalism, to frame their interpretation of being raped. Rape victims do not mediate this macro cultural factor with idiosyncratic interpretations. Instead, the interpretations change with prevailing cultural ideologies. Interpretations are thus historical-materialist in origin, character, and change; they are not changed as personal meanings by individuals. Interpretations of the causes and solutions to rape were political in the 1970s, following the political critiques of the 1960s. By the late 1980s, interpretations were populist/neoliberal and focused upon personal experience, support, resilience, and recovery. For example, "Most story-tellers individualized causes of rape to their attackers' sexual motivations. Several reflected on how their attacker manipulated them or drugged their drink…. Most told a story of rape as an individual trauma and recovery as personal work to 'take back control…These videos offer accounts that construct recovery from rape in terms of regaining a liberal 'intentional self,' a self that reflexively constructs its own wellbeing and success" (ibid.)

These individualistic explanations of, and solutions to, personal rape experience are generated by historical-materialist, macro ideology—namely, populism—in accordance with neoliberal political economy.

Individualistic explanations of, and solutions to, personal rape experience were *not* generated by personal agency. Furthermore, this historical-materialist ideology falsifies the structural factors that cause and can eradicate rape. Consequently, seemingly personal explanation and solution are neither personal nor authentic. Nor are they emancipatory as Stetsenko claims. Harrington perceptively observes that "not all forms of speaking out about sexual violence challenge 'dominant patriarchal discourses' and we should interrogate incitements to speak out…" "The desire to tell one's own story can easily support particular neo-liberal or even conservative agendas based on a heroic construction of the individual and of the individuated self." "These accounts exemplify how speaking out about sexual violence can serve in the construction of a neo-liberal subjectivity for women" (ibid.). Narratives must be politically interrogated/evaluated; they cannot be believed simply because they are expressed by marginalized individuals. This refutes the populist slogans: "believe survivors," and "believe women."

This "top-down" sense of culture as an emergent, objectified structure that organizes individual experience is how Vygotsky conceives of cultural psychology. As he said in Chap. 3, "Essential is not that the social role can be deduced from the character, but that *the social role creates a number of characterological connections*. *The social and social class type of the person are formed from the systems that are brought into the person from the outside*."

Stetsenko cannot accept class structure and class psychology because she believes the individuals form their own psychologies and communities via democratic, individual, and social choices. However, no individual or community voluntarily forms itself into a lower class which is where most people reside. Stetsenko has no explanation for the existence of classes.

Stetsenko is thus wrong about social reality and also wrong about Vygotsky's conception of social reality. Comparing his statements in Chap. 3 with her interpretation of his position reveals the magnitude of her misunderstanding and misrepresentation of cultural-historical psychology and its Marxist orientation.

Stetsenko, like all populists, rejects the Marxian, Vygotskyian, objective, materialist, political conditionality of behavior in favor of open, flexible, abstract ideals that are voluntarily decided by human agents and agency in interpersonal interactions that are open to their expressions. She says, "Vygotsky laid the foundation of a dialectical view of history as an

ongoing fluid and dynamic process of human collaborative practices." "Vygotsky's conception of…*open-ended concepts of history and reality*… History is conceptualized…as a living, continuous flow of historical praxis composed of collective practices that are *enacted anew by each generation of people and by each individual*. This Marxist conception was obviously present in Vygotsky's own writings" (2018, p. 48, my emphasis). Her emphasis is on collaboration that is continuous and open so as to accommodate participants' agencies which change individually and generationally. She never mentions any concrete forces that constrain the open collaboration. She never mentions "determinations" that, Hegel explained, constitute behavior; she never mentions conditions of behavior that Marx emphasized. Indeed, she reduces history to collaborative practices: "the sociocultural world is collaborative historical practices of humanity continuously evolving through time from generation to generation" (ibid., p. 48).

It is dismaying that Professor Stetsenko does not offer any real-life examples of social-historical events that illustrate her conception of them. This absence contrasts with Martin-Baro's deep ethnographies in Chap. 2 which demonstrate the truth of his psychological approach. He demonstrates that his Latin American peasants were overwhelmed by their oppressive, precarious social-economic conditions to the point that they felt apathetic and fatalistic about life. He utilized these results to explain the necessity of transforming the oppressive conditions that had engendered this psychology of oppression. His empirical research found none of Stetsenko's populist elements. His subjects had no experience of creating their worlds through collaborative interactions with cohorts.

Nor do American school children. Social life in American schools is not collaborative, and the reason lies in macro-level, structural, political-economic factors, not interactive constructions of agencies. School children are *segregated* racially and economically by a web of interrelated macro factors. This structural segregation precludes trans-class and trans-race collaboration.

> Nationwide, about three-fourths of both African American and Hispanic young people (compared to about one-third of white students) attend schools where most of their classmates qualify as low income. The economic segregation facing African American and Hispanic students represents the convergence of many trends, including the stubbornly high rates

> of childhood poverty since the Great Recession; persistent patterns of housing segregation in many major cities; the increasing economic polarization in many metropolitan areas that has resulted in more residents living either in affluent or poor neighborhoods, and fewer residing in middle-income communities; and the general retreat from efforts to promote racial or economic integration in the schools. Together these factors have left most African American and Hispanic students marooned in schools where economic struggle is the rule and financial stability—and all the social and educational benefits that flow from that—is very much the exception. There is a link between housing policy, economic and racial segregation; you see what those do to schools and to people who grow up in those neighborhoods. (Boschma and Brownstein 2016)

These structural social factors segregate groups of people into classes—as Vygotsky and Marx emphasized—which cannot collaborate because of physical-spatial-geographical, social, cultural, psychological, and intellectual barriers. This is the reality of political-economic life that Stetsenko and populists do not admit into their interpersonal, agentive fairy tale. Boschma and Brownstein refute this fairy tale. They subsume interpersonal contact within more powerful structural factors which determine behavior:

> The issue isn't that sitting next to a poor kid makes you do less well in school. Rather, it's that school poverty turns out to be a good proxy for the quality of a school. They are in poorer communities, they have less local resources, they have fewer parents with college degrees, they have fewer two parent families where there are parents who can come spend time volunteering in the school, they have a harder time attracting the best teachers. So for a lot of reasons schools serving poor kids tend to have fewer resources, both economic and social capital resources."
>
> The cumulative effect of these disadvantages has proven overwhelming almost everywhere. We can look at every poor district in the United States and see if there are any that are doing reasonably well, where kids are performing at least at the national average. And the answer is virtually none. (Boschma and Brownstein 2016)

This research empirically refutes Stetsenko's pipedream of cooperatively interacting agencies in which all individuals matter, continually evolving better lives. Instead, the social system deprives the population of resources

that are necessary for real progress. Individual agents, including administrators, teachers, parents, and students, are incapable of circumventing divisive, class-based, racially based conditions that are *overwhelming*. Bourdieu (1984, p. 471) explained that "The social order is progressively inscribed in people's minds. Social divisions become principles of division, organizing the image of the social world. Objective limits become a sense of limits, a practical anticipation of objective limits acquired by experience of objective limits, a 'sense of one's place' which leads one to exclude oneself from the goods, persons, places and so forth from which one is excluded."

This is just what cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology says. Indeed, despite all of this knowledge, these high levels of concentrated poverty in schools have increased over the years. Why? Because it is functional to the political-economic system!

The political-economic system refutes Stetsenko's individualistic/interpersonalist notion that *agentive engagement* is the starting point and the core existential condition for the entirety of our development. On the contrary, social class position is the starting point and the core existential condition for the entirety of our development. Millions of kids with different agencies and engagement styles all wind up in the same plight that they entered school in. And their trajectory is entirely predictable and fateful from knowing their initial class position. This completely refutes Stetsenko's claim of transformations and changes in the immediately present reality, and that each generation creates history anew: "The sought-after-future is conceived not as a rigid, predetermined telos but as something that *people* commit to and struggle to bring into reality" (Stetsenko 2018, p. 48, my emphasis). The reality is that millions of children's future *is* rigidly predetermined, not by them but by conditions over which they have no control or understanding. What children bring into life is the conditions into which they were born. Poverty is intergenerational because the structural web of macro factors keeps people in their place and *prevents* them from creating them anew.

Byrd (2017) solidifies structural explanations of interpersonal interactions on college campuses; he further debunks the populist notion of individuals co-creating and improving their interactions. He demonstrates how cultural ideology and culturally formed habitus structure racial and class interpersonal interactions at elite universities. "Homogeneity, homophily, and racial hierarchy often overrun diversity

and inclusion on campus; the spaces of interaction become structured to entrench negative and disconnected beliefs about race and inequality, while providing limited space for positive interactions and the changing of such views" (p. 11). Ideologies of individualism and meritocracy reproduce wealthy social positions by justifying these as earned by the elites. These ideologies preserve racial and class prejudices from falsification. Individualism and meritocracy explain the low number of minority students on elite campuses as due to minorities' psychological deficiencies (lacking in merit, intelligence, motivation), not to structural bias and inequality. In other words, rather than undermine their views, interactions with other racial groups are imbued with meanings that more frequently reinforce their existing worldview rather than challenge it. "Increased racial and ethnic diversity on campus does not make such campuses 'inclusive' nor discrimination-free" (p. 188).

Byrd explains these findings using the concept of "organizational habitus" which Pham utilizes in Chap. 3. Drawing on Bourdieu, Byrd argues that interpersonal relations are embedded in a class context that gives those interactions meanings. He notes that college students are "embedded within an organization that carries with it a set of collective interests, practices, and situations forming an organizational habitus" (p. 148). These macro cultural concepts structure interpersonal interactions. Consequently, simply arranging for interpersonal contacts among diverse groups does not generate increased understanding or acceptance. For interpersonal interactions are not self-defining; they are not creatively and openly defined by individual participants. On the contrary, they are defined by macro cultural factors that shape individual meanings. Consequently, improved social relations cannot be achieved on the individual level of populism; they must be achieved on the macro cultural level of ideological reform and structural reform of structural bias.

Human history is nothing like the liberal, happy, harmonious, free fairy tale. Contemporary neoliberal capitalism is the most competitive, egocentric, uncooperative, uncaring, rapacious social system. Corporations are routinely socially irresponsible as they pollute the environment and exploit workers and swindle customers. Wars are not collaborative practices; terrorism is not a collaborative practice; police brutality is not a collaborative practice; censorship is not a collaborative

activity; mass incarceration is not a collaborative activity; class struggle is not a collaborative activity; labor strikes are not a collaborative activity; and supervisors setting work rules for employees and firing them at will is not collaborative. Even work among employees is not collaborative; it is competitive and alienated. An assembly line at which individuals perform their single activity routinely is not collaborative.

Similarly, China's state-managed, capitalist society is wracked by social alienation. It is so extreme that many adult children refuse to visit their aged parents. The situation is so dire that the government has passed a law requiring adults to visit their parents periodically. However, many adult children refuse to obey the law. This leads their parents to sue them in court to require them to visit them. This demonstrates how ingrained parent-child estrangement is. It includes five layers of estrangement that include children who do not visit, government which forces visits, children's continued refusal to visit, parents' law suits against their children, and, if parents win in court, additional government force on the children to visit. This is quite remarkable to employ forceful, punitive measures to produce collaboration/cooperation/altruism. The means contradict the ideal goal and preclude it! Yet, if the laws and suits prevail, and adult children eventually do visit their parents, the government will declare victory and say that the system works to facilitate cooperation/collaboration!! "Socialism with Chinese characteristics" will be validated by the increased number of family visits, without considering their social quality and motivation. This is like forcing criminals to confess to crimes and then declaring that criminals are repentant!

Chinese parents compete with each other to get their children enrolled in the best local schools. High-school students suffer breakdowns and commit suicide over the intensely competitive entrance exam for college. China is wracked by socially destructive corruption and financial disputes. None of this supports Stetsenko's notion of social cooperation as the medium for constructing society and psychology.

Stetsenko's collaborative terminology is ideological because it denies the alienated reality of interactions ranging from the macro level to the micro level. (See Chap. 3's discussion of ideology.) Stetsenko is as ideological as the Chinese government (Party) in nominally humanizing estranged capitalist society.

Stetsenko refuses to recognize this vast literature of facts that refute her populist ideology. This attests to the enormous power of ideology to outweigh reality. She knows of anti-collaborative facts and their causes. Yet her liberal (neoliberal) ideology of individual-interpersonal autonomy and choice outweighs the facts that she knows. Her ideology forces her to deny the truths that she knows, and to pretend that ideology is reality. This is the ominous power of ideology that makes emancipation so difficult. Ideology closes peoples' minds to reality. Ideology is a major cultural-psychological tool of cognitive, perceptual, and emotional constriction and falsification. Presenting people with facts does not lead them to reject their ideologies (see Chap. 3 on ideology, and Ratner 2019). Religious people can suffer unspeakable calamities, yet they maintain their religious ideology that god cares about them. This is why cultural psychologists should devote extensive research to the psychological effects of ideology.

This uncooperative human history is the basis of Marx's view of history as class struggle. Stetsenko ignores it. Moreover, she falsely claims that Vygotsky and Marx ignored it too, as they emphasized open, collaborative historical processes. Vygotsky emphasized that society is divided into social classes. That is not collaborative activity. Far from society being continuously evolving through mundane acts of agency, Vygotsky said that "the life of a society does not represent a single and uniform whole, and society is subdivided into different classes" (Vygotsky 1994, p. 176).

The construct of social class is not compatible with populist individualism/subjectivism/agency. The reason is that social class is intrinsically a sociological, structural construct. It stipulates that society is structured into classes and that individuals play designated social roles within this structure. Social class organizes behavior/psychology to keep individuals in designated social positions of rulers and followers. Individuals cannot come and go from social roles and classes as they please because this would destroy the viability and meaning of social class. There could not be a lower class if people were free to use their agencies to leave whenever they wished. In that case, everyone could leave via their agency and the class would disappear. The upper class does everything in its power to prevent this. Organizing and segregating schools is one such strategy.

Class is anathema to agency. This is why populists have to ignore/deny class in order to emphasize agency. Stetsenko must deny reality in order

to maintain her ideology of personal-interpersonal freedom. She must deny uncooperative social reality in society at large, and she must deny it in the works of Marx and Vygotsky in order to use them to support her populist myth. We have seen that she ignores their use of class. She also distorts their political philosophy to endorse free, open activity. This is quite a slight of hand. Unfortunately for her, anyone who knows Marx and Vygotsky easily perceives that she is distorting their views. Fortunately for her, few Vygotskyians know Marx and Vygotsky well enough to detect her falsification.

Vygotsky said that personality is *degraded* by capitalist manufacturing (which is not collaborative), and this degradation "cannot be resolved without the *destruction* of the capitalist system of organization of industry" (1994, p. 180). Destroying the capitalist system is neither a continuous flow nor a collaboration between the different classes.

Vygotsky continually explained behavior in terms of macro cultural-political structures rather than personal and interpersonal interactions. He said that personality is formed from *systems* of *social roles* that are brought into the personal from the outside; it is not created anew by every individual in micro interactions. In Chap. 3, Vygotsky stated that "the motive force that sets in action the maturational mechanism of behavior impelling it forward along the path of further development is located not inside but outside the adolescent. The tasks that are posed for the maturing adolescent by the social environment – tasks that are associated with his entry into the cultural, professional, and social life of the adult world – are an essential functional factor in the formation of concepts." This diametrically opposes Stetsenko's notion that it is our own agentive engagement in cultural practices that is the starting point and the core existential condition for the entirety of our development.

Vygotsky (1997b, p. 55) said "To formulate the goals of education in a scientific fashion means to have in mind, in an entirely specific and exact form, the particular system of behavior we wish to realize in our student." This is not open-ended behavior that Stetsenko believes in and that she falsely attributes to Vygotsky. Vygotsky also said, "Alongside [the capitalist transformation into socialism], a change in the human personality and an alteration of man himself *must inevitably* take place." Historical-social-psychological change has a necessary, determinable

social-political direction, and a necessary, determinable effect on psychology.

This emphasis is nowhere to be found in Stetsenko's personalistic, subjectivistic, interactionistic, open conception of psychology. Nor is the emphasis on systems to be found in her conception of Vygotsky's Psychology, despite his use of it. Stetsenko misrepresents social reality, and she misrepresents Vygotsky's and Marx's conception of social reality.

Vygotsky took his law-governed understanding of society, reality, and psychology from Marx. Marx vigorously opposed open-ended, voluntaristic, unpredictable behavior. Marx and Engels said socialism was the scientifically derived dialectical alternative to capitalism. They called it *scientific socialism*. Marx said "the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, can be determined with the precision of natural science" (*A Contribution To The Critique of Political Economy*).

"The nature of individuals depends on the material conditions determining their production" (Marx and Engels 1964, p. 32). "The whole internal structure of the nation depends on the stage of development reached by its production" (Marx and Engels 1964, p. 32). "Religion, family, state, law, morality, science, art, etc. are only particular modes of production, and *fall under its general law*" (Marx and Engels 1975, p. 297). Yet Stetsenko pretends that Marx and Engels held an open-ended view of history, which was the basis of Vygotsky's similar view!

Replacing class with generations depoliticizes the direction of emancipation as well as the social mechanism for achieving it. This is the intention of populists such as Stetsenko. I have explained that they insist on abstract, interpersonal processes and empty signifiers in order to maximize individual interpretation and choice. They prefer generation to class because generation is an empty signifier about an age cohort that is entirely fragmented, has no common interest, and is therefore open to any path that any of its members follow. In contrast, social class is a materially determined and laden construct with material constraints, opportunities, and necessities for action.

Communal transformative practices is another empty signifier that Stetsenko espouses: "reality is constantly realized, changed, and recreated through the dialectics and movements of communal transformative practices embodied in human acts of being, knowing, and doing." None of

these terms denotes any content. Stetsenko's emphasis is populist agency-in-action-and-voice. Concrete form and content is not the emphasis. Any set of people can form any kind of social organization they wish, to accomplish any goals they wish. This eliminates coherent, programmatic, united struggle for viable emancipatory change. In the previous chapter we saw that cooperation and collaboration can take many forms. Cooperatives practice these in the form of individualistic voting. Individual voters can vote to privatize cooperative profits, and this is collaborative because members discussed it and voted for it. Collaboration is an empty signifier. Transformative practice is empty as well. We have seen numerous examples of pseudo-emancipation. Even important social reforms such as civil rights do not transform the political-economic system, as I have explained. Since Stetsenko has ignored all of Marx's and Vygotsky's revolutionary constructs—such as social class, class struggle, proletariat, class consciousness, mode of production, means of production, political economy, and, of course, socialism—her transformative practice is empty signifiers and pseudo-emancipation.

The contrast between Stetsenko's and Marx's concepts is evident in her statement "What I believe needs to be posited as central to transformative onto-epistemology is human agency and activism at the intersection of individual and collective dimensions in pursuit of a sought-after future. The critically important concept of the sought-after-future is conceived not as a rigid, predetermined telos but as something that *people* commit to and struggle to bring into reality" (Stetsenko 2018, p. 48, my emphasis). In contrast, Marx emphasized transformation as class struggle over the mode of production in accordance with historical-materialist dynamics! And Luria emphasized "changes which thinking undergoes in social and cultural transformation connected with socialistic growth."

Stetsenko strives to reduce concreteness, definiteness, regularity, lawfulness, necessity, organization, coherence, structures, and forces into ineffable, fragmentary, free-floating, indefinite abstractions that can be defined, revised, and employed ("negotiated") in any way that agents (singly or in face-to-face interactions) wish. (She makes everything that is solid vanish into thin air, to paraphrase Marx and Engels.) This is the motive of her misinterpreting and misrepresenting Vygotsky and Marx (see Ratner 2015, 2016, for rebuttal of this misinterpretation).

The Marxist playwright, Bertolt Brecht, critiqued populist empty signifiers as follows: "If one wishes successfully to write the truth about evil conditions, one must write it so that its avertible causes can be identified. If the preventable causes can be identified, the evil conditions can be fought" (Brecht, *Writing The Truth: Five Difficulties*, 1935; http://ada.evergreen.edu/~arunc/texts/theater/brecht/fiveDifficulties.pdf).

Stetsenko replaces preventable causes and viable actions with empty signifiers that are open to individual and interpersonal interpretation. She (2018, p. 53) encourages "rallying purposeful collaborative practices and activist agency aimed at ecological agendas coupled with the ethos of solidarity, equality, and social justice." This is more of the same empty popular jargon that is devoid of useful, definite content. It is open to reactionary content. Neoliberals say that market economics is social justice because it pays people the value of their work, whereas government programs financially reward laziness and dependency, which is not just. Stetsenko is powerless to reject this because her abstraction of justice welcomes all varieties of justice; it does not care about concrete issues. It is also incapable of promoting her ethos of solidarity because diverse political-economic viewpoints have different conceptions of justice and will fight, rather than unite, over the social-political implications of their viewpoints.

The same holds for her empty signifier "equality."

What is equality? Every job should pay the same wage? Everyone should live in the same size house? Everyone should drive the same price car? Or is equality the right for diverse people to compete on equal terms for a spot in the capitalist hierarchy, with the result being a few winners and many losers? Moreover, Stetsenko needs to explain how equality is to be achieved. How, for example, can her privileged, powerful, lucrative, protected position as a white European-American college professor be equalized with an impoverished, precarious male college professor in war-torn Syria? What personal level or political-economic practices would she undertake (or has she undertaken) to eliminate the power and wealth differential between her privileged, secure position and her brutalized male Syrian counterpart? Critical discourse analysts have demonstrated that power, privilege, and cultural capital inform one's habitus and interpersonal dialogues. Therefore, equality is not easily achieved even interpersonally. It would be helpful if Stetsenko would explain how she has engaged in a

rigorous macro-cultural deconstruction (class-conscientization) of her upper-middle-class, neoliberal, competitive, aggressive, materialistic, self-aggrandizing, commodified, alienated agency, as well as which social movements for political-economic transformation she has joined, in order to concretize egalitarian praxis.

Vygotsky rejected Stetsenko's and Nardi's abstractions about people, agency, and generations seeking a nondescript future. Following Marx, he said, "*In class society, the concept 'man' is generally an empty and abstract concept*. *Man's social behavior is determined by the behavior of his class*, and each person is inevitably a person from a particular class. In this regard, we must be profoundly historical and must always present man's behavior in relation to the class situation at the given moment. This must be the fundamental psychological technique for every social psychologist" (Vygotsky 1997b, p. 212, my emphasis).

Vygotsky rejected populist abstractions about "people" and "generations" expressing their "agency," "striving for the future," and "co-creating" their societies. In *The Psychology of Art*, Vygotsky criticized these populist abstractions in the work of social psychologists.

> social psychologists like McDougall, Le Bon, Freud, et al., regard the social psyche as secondary, originating from the psyche of the individual. They assume that there is a special individual psyche and that from the interaction of individual psyches or psychologies there arises a collective psyche or psychology common to all individuals Thus, social psychology is regarded as the psychology of a collective individual, in the same way that a crowd is made up of single individuals, even though it has a supra-individual psychology. We see that non-Marxist social psychology has a primitive empirical approach to the social entity, regarding it as a crowd, a collective entity, a relation between individuals or persons. Society is taken to be an association of people, and it is regarded as an accessory activity of one individual. These psychologists do not admit that somewhere, in a remote and intimate corner of his thought, his feelings, etc., the psyche of an individual is *social and socially conditioned.* (https://www.marxists.org/archive/vygotsky/works/1925/art1.htm; my emphasis)

Vygotsky (1997b, p. 55) rejected abstract education in the same terms: "From the scientific point of view, it is meaningless to speak of abstract

ideals for education, for example, the development of an indivisible and harmonious personality, or of an educated and civilized person…To formulate the goals of education in a scientific fashion means to have in mind, in an entirely specific and exact form, the particular system of behavior we wish to realize in our student." Vygotsky called for a concrete, cultural-historical, political-economic alternative that will negate the political basis of education.

6.2.1 Class Consciousness Vs. Agency

Vygotsky is calling for *class consciousness* (as Martin-Baro did). He seeks to understand—and for ordinary to also understand—their class position, class conditioning, and class interest. Class consciousness has a definite social referent that must be comprehended and transformed as a structural, political, conflictual, objectified, concrete, dynamic entity. Vygotsky is not calling for people to exercise "agency" or collaborative practices or intentional ideals, in the immediacy of personal/interpersonal micro interactions that are co-created by individuals and by new generations. It is important to highlight the vast differences between these two constructs.

Class consciousness is awareness of one's objective class position; it is the extent to which your social class organizes your psychology. It is an objective, macro psychological construct. It is important for guiding *class action* against class oppression.

"Agency," on the other hand, is an indefinite, subjective construct of individual ideas and wishes. Agency has no particular, objective, societal content the way that class consciousness does. *Agency is a populist notion* that gives vent to individual-interpersonal wishes. The same is true for terms such as communal practices, immediate-continual change, and generations and people. Agency is the populist, individualistic notion of freedom. It is a specifically political term that crystallizes and propagates the individualistic, bourgeois, political notion of freedom.

Agency is not a neutral, empty signifier. *All empty signifiers are actually insidious political constructs that build bourgeois individualism into them*. That is their purpose, of course; it is why they are empty, so that individual agents can fill them with their meanings. In contrast, class

consciousness is conscious of concrete, objective, political-economic-social issues that necessarily condition people and must be opposed through collective struggle that is informed by this objective, social necessity. Class consciousness has social emancipation built into it as its content, motive, and objective. Replacing class consciousness with agency, immediacy, flow, continual change, generations, and solidarity *eliminates* this socially necessary content, motive, and objective.

Although Stetsenko claims some association with Marxism in order to radicalize her populist brand, she confines her association to Marx's most abstract statements and ignores his concrete analyses and alternatives to capitalism. (This is true for virtually the entire field of Vygotskyian studies as I have explained in Ratner and Nunes 2017c.) Marx argued against her ideas about sociality, society, and social change just as Vygotsky did. Marx and Engels called her kind of ideas in the nineteenth century "Utopian socialism" because they were not based upon scientific foundations, and expressed unrealistic, untrue, voluntaristic wishes. In *The Communist Manifesto,* they criticized utopians for the following errors: "Historical action is to yield to their personal inventive action; historically created conditions of emancipation [yield] to fantastic ones" "They habitually appeal to society at large, without distinction of class." "They reject all political, and especially all revolutionary, action; they wish to attain their ends by peaceful means, and endeavor, by small experiments, necessarily doomed to failure, and by the force of example, to pave the way for the new social Gospel." "In proportion as the modern class struggle develops and takes definite shape, this fantastic standing apart from the contest, these fantastic attacks on it, lose all practical value and all theoretical justification. Therefore, although the originators of these systems were, in many respects, revolutionary, their disciples have, in every case, formed mere reactionary sects."

Stetsenko, like Nardi, depoliticizes, dehistoricizes, decontextualizes cultural factors and psychology. She takes real, obvious, powerful, politics, structures, systems, factors, dynamics, history, and culture and *removes* them from her notion of sociality and psychology. She creates a false, ideological picture of society and psychology. And she *deprives* people of means for comprehending them; she *misdirects* people from transforming them. Stetsenko's concepts not only fall short of Marx's and

Vygotsky's, they *impede and contradict* Marxist emancipation. This makes them oppressive and conservative. This is illustrated in Fig. 1.5c.

Nardi's and Stetsenko's micro-level notion of society, individual, and collectivity contradicts true collective action in the form of tight organizations with strong leadership to unify members in common acts on specific targets, with masses of people to achieve structural social change. Their social theory thus *incapacitates* true emancipation.

Populist social-psychological theory does not simply fall short of radical emancipation. It actively *blocks* it by *stripping away* conceptual advances that Marx and Vygotsky had made toward realizing emancipation. Populism is *regressive* in *reversing* advances that have already been made. Populism is not simply ignorant about emancipation, but is *destructive* of emancipation. It *denies, co-opts, distorts, and degrades* emancipatory concepts into apolitical, abstract, directionless, interpersonal notions.

Populist social-psychological theory is as ideological as any mainstream social theory is. It is as ideological as postulating biological determinants of psychology which similarly distract from political-economic factors. Populism is as ideological as psychoanalysis, behaviorism, sociobiology, and positive psychology. All of these approaches obfuscate the truth about harmful conditions by obfuscating the true causes about societal causes of psychology/behavior. All of them minimize societal causes of psychology by attributing it to micro level, individual, and interpersonal mechanisms. These range from physiological mechanisms to interpersonal, individual agency. These distract people away from attacking structural causes and creating a humane social system.

6.3 Degrading Marx's Historical Materialism as the Theoretical Foundation of Psychology

Mexican psychologist, Pavon-Cuellar (2017, pp. 244–245) introduces a somewhat different revision of Marxist historical materialism in psychological theory. He formulates a populist, feminist, psychoanalytic position to criticize and modify/replace Marx's historical materialism. He

repeats the ignorant refrain that the Marxist, historical-materialist treatment of gender subordinates it to social class and thus neglects it—just as Nardi and Stetsenko claimed that Marxism subordinates consciousness to conditions and neglects it. Just as Nardi and Stetsenko seek to salvage subjectivity from conditions by endowing it with an autonomous, willful intentionality, so Cuellar seeks to elevate gender to a primary position that constructs social systems and conditions. He "offers a psychoanalytic interpretation of the Marxian-Engelsian hypothesis of a historical transition from the matriarchal communist ontology to the patriarchal class economy." His interpretation is actually more populist than psychoanalytic. It emphasizes the fundamental creative role of gender construction of social relations and family relations. His article endeavors to explain "Why gender violence cannot be explained by class violence: Marxism, psychoanalysis and *the sexual-familial foundation of political-economic oppression*." He claims to find support for his interpretation in the words of Marx and Engels.

Cuellar inverts the historical-materialist analysis to claim that Marx and Engels make gender relations and sex the basis of capitalist social class and the solution to capitalist class structure. He believes that "the oppression of women is in the origin and the base of capitalist oppression." "Gender relations are the first of class relations, and in this sense precede all the other relations of class." "Accordingly, it is not necessary to end capitalism in order to liberate women; rather, it is better that women liberate themselves so we can eliminate capitalism." ("La opresión de la mujer está en el origen y en la base de la opresión capitalista. "la relación de género es la primera de las relaciones de clase y en este sentido precede a todas las demás relaciones de clase." "Por lo tanto, no hay que acabar con el capitalismo para liberar a las mujeres, sino que más bien las mujeres deben liberarse para que podamos acabar con el capitalismo."). Cuellar is relying on gender relations to explain society, and he is relying on women's self-liberation to prepare us to eliminate capitalism. This is feminist populism that makes women's subjectivity the basis of social emancipation. I have critiqued it in Chap. 4.

Cuellar cites Engels' 1884 book, *The Origins of The Family, Private Property, and The State*, to support his claim: "The first class opposition that appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism

between man and woman in monogamous marriage, and the first class oppression coincides with that of the female sex by the male" (https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1884/origin-family/ch02d.htm).

However, Engels never says that gender precedes class relations. He only says that it coincides with monogamy. The single sentence that Cuellar extracts does not explain the nature of the coincidence. Cuellar exploits this brevity and ambiguity to impose his own explanation. However, Engels explains this coincidence in longer passages that contradict Cuellar's interpretation of feminist Marxism. Engels says, "monogamy was the first form of the family to be based, not on natural, but on economic conditions – on the victory of private property over primitive, natural communal property… *Monogamous marriage is the cellular form of civilized society, in which the nature of the oppositions and contradictions fully active in that society can be already studied*." Thus, monogamy (which is the historical relation between genders), gender conflict, and sexism are *based on economic conditions of private property*. Their features can be seen and studied in the family. Gender crystalizes, embodies, and reflects civilized society, its oppositions, and its contradictions. Gender does not precede these.

Marx and Engels (1964, p. 33) explain that "the slavery latent in the family only develops gradually with…the extension of external relations, both of war and barter." War and barter (which is economic commodity exchange) galvanize the slavery of the monogamous family and its oppression of women, not the other way around which Cuellar claims.

Engels used this historical-materialist analysis to explain another gender issue, prostitution: "With the rise of the inequality of property – already at the upper stage of barbarism, therefore – wage-labor appears sporadically side by side with slave labor, and at the same time, as its necessary correlate, the professional prostitution of free women." Prostitution is the correlate of wage-labor economics, not its basis, in the same way that sexism is.

(Of course, these general relationships of exploitation, class, and gender must be worked out to explain just why and how gender conflict and oppression are generated by exploitation and class. This will avoid reducing gender to class and ignoring it as an important issue. Gender stands in the same relation to the mode of production as cultural institutions do.

Institutions such as education, medicine, religion, art, and family have distinctive features and traditions that are not reducible to the political economy, although they are encompassed within it. They must be addressed in terms of both sets of characteristics. This holds for gender as well.)

Cuellar inverts historical materialism by prioritizing gender/sexism over class and economics. He thereby rejects the Marxist political theory of historical materialism. Yet he continues to call himself a Marxist.

Erich Fromm (1978) provides a Marxist, historical-materialist correction to Freud's and Cuellar's prioritizing instincts, family, and gender. "Class rule was not the result of cunning and deceit, but was a necessary result of the total economic situation of society, or its productive forces" (p. 493). "The libido adapts itself to this economic structure and serves as one of the factors that lend stability to the class relationship" (p. 493). For example, the populace develops emotional ties, dependency ties, and obedience (i.e., "libidinal ties") to the ruling class that stabilizes its rule, for example, admiring and trusting Donald Trump and Bill Gates and placing faith in their leadership. "Analytical social psychology seeks to understand the instinctual apparatus of a group…in terms of its socio-economic structure" (p. 483). Fromm correctly conceptualizes subjectivity in the same terms as Bourdieu's *habitus*: it is the culturally formed impulses that creatively reproduce culture through individual behavior. This is Vygotsky's cultural-historical psychology. Fromm explains this as follows:

> Every society has its own distinctive *libidinal structure*, even as it has its own economic, social, political, and cultural structure. This libidinal structure is the product of the influence of socio-economic conditions on human drives; in turn it [the libidinal structure] is an important factor conditioning the emotional developments within the various levels of society, and the contents of the "ideological superstructure." (ibid., p. 494)

Fromm utilizes historical materialism to situate the family within the conical cultural system, thereby correcting Cuellar prioritizing the family as the core of society: "The family, all its internal emotional relationships and the educational ideals it embodies, are conditioned by the social and

class background of the family…The family is the psychological agency of society" (ibid., p. 483).

In contrast, most psychoanalysts, such as Cuellar, "have almost completely overlooked the fact that the family itself, in its whole psychological and social structure…is the product of a specific social and class structure" (ibid., p. 483).

Cuellar's feminist inversion of gender and class carries over into social transformation. It leads him to the fallacious notion that gender emancipation precedes class struggle for a socialist negation of capitalism. His words expose his populist orientation: "It is not necessary to end capitalism in order to liberate women; rather, it is better that women liberate themselves so we can eliminate capitalism." Cuellar reveals himself to be a populist: the way to emancipate people is for them to emancipate themselves, as they see fit; this is the basis of structural change. Since virtually no feminists are Marxists, leaving it up to them to define their own liberation guarantees that it will be non-Marxist and anti-Marxist. This dooms the capacity of women's liberation to generate an anti-capitalist, Marxist, socialist transformation that Cuellar expects. Cuellar's populist feminism impedes socialist transformation; it does not facilitate it. This confirms Fig. 1.5c in the Introduction.

Gender relations do not precede classes and have no power to eradicate classes. On the contrary, gender reflects the oppositions of class and is powerless to resolve or overcome them. Consequently, gender is only liberated by political-economic struggle, contrary to Cuellar's opinion. Engels stated this bluntly: "Full freedom of marriage can therefore only be generally established when the abolition of capitalist production and of the property relations created by it has removed all the accompanying economic considerations which still exert such a powerful influence on the choice of a marriage partner. For then there is no other motive left except mutual inclination." (Ghodsee 2018, and Ghodsee and Mead 2018, document tremendous improvements in the position of women in socialist countries, despite their numerous problems.) This is what Vygotsky meant by grounding psychology in historical-materialist laws of society.

Marx and Engels offer no support for Cuellar's conception of gender oppression as the basis of class oppression. They contextualize gender

within the primary political-economic categories of class society and capitalism. They do not neglect gender; they explain its determinations. Cuellar does not accept this because he adopts the feminist error of prioritizing gender issues above all others (which I explained in Chap. 4.) This is the same mistake that Nardi and Stetsenko make with consciousness: they believe that the only true consciousness is autonomous, voluntaristic consciousness; therefore, they reject any contextualizing or conditioning of consciousness as denying consciousness.

Cuellar abandons Marxism with his psychoanalytic interpretation of gender. This interpretation is based on some abstract notion of the general relation between being and having: "What we are, we do not have, and what we have, we are not." Men's masculine being does not have femininity, so men try to have women to compensate for this lack. This is supposed to account for the male possession of women, which is institutionalized in monogamous families, which carries into the formation of class society. "El sexismo conduce historicamente a un clasismo"—sexism leads historically to classism (Pavon-Cuellar 2017, p. 249). The gender basis of society determines that social change must begin with women's liberation of themselves so that we can eliminate capitalism: "sexual liberation, and specifically the emancipation of women, is the condition and not simply the consequence of social revolution" ("la liberación sexual y específicamente la emancipación de la mujer es condición y no sólo consecuencia de la revolución social" p. 251).

None of this has any internal coherence. How does "having and being" lead to male sexism, monogamy, and then to classism? Why does "having and being" not lead to sexism in women? Since women are sexist in various ways, for example, they engage in a great deal of domestic violence, what causes their sexism? And why is classism only the result of male sexism, and not female sexism? And how do having and being, or sexism, generate social class? Social class involves exploiting males and females. Slaves included men, as the capitalist proletariat includes men. How does male sexism against women explain social class that exploits men as well as women?

Nor do Cuellar's concoctions bear any connection with Marxist political philosophy, Marxist culture theory, Marxist epistemology, Marxist ontology, Marxist anthropological theory of human nature, and Marxist

psychology. Cuellar confirms Vygotsky's statement that "The juxtaposition of ideas plucked from absolutely different contexts distorts their meaning" (Vygotsky 1997a, pp. 314; 259, 262–263; Ratner 2017a).

Cuellar's psychologistic, psychoanalytical notions (such as having and being, and sexism) are existential conditions which precede cultural-historical conditions. This means they are devoid of cultural-historical form and content, that is, non-historical-materialist content. This makes them unequipped to generate a concrete, socialist change in production relations. As I have stated, abstract social phenomena cannot be emancipated on the abstract level; they can only be emancipated on the concrete level of political economy. This is the level that Cuellar displaces to abstractions such as "women's liberation."

Marx's definition of communism in *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* reveals the antithesis of his ideas with that of Cuellar's. Marx says, "Communism is the positive transcendence of private property… The entire revolutionary movement necessarily finds both its empirical and its theoretical basis in the movement of *private property* – more precisely, in that of the economy." Marx explains that social emancipation in the form of socialism is the dialectical supersession of the capitalist political economy that is based in private property. There is an internal, necessary dynamic from the capitalist mode of production to socialism. This dynamic includes social class (struggle), alienated property, exploitive capital accumulation, proletariat as a universal class, and the capitalist socialization and centralization of production in massive, coordinated enterprises.

Cuellar's psychoanalytic and populist constructs have no such concrete, internal, dialectical, dynamic relationship with negating the capitalist economy in a new socialist form. There is nothing about being and having, or sexual freedom, or women's liberation that logically leads to Marx's communism. Populism *eschews* specific programs. On the contrary, Cuellar's abstract, psychological notions from psychoanalysis *eliminate and distract from* the conceptual, political-economic prerequisites of initiating, guiding, or realizing socialism. His notions convert socialism into some expression of abstract sexual and female gender liberation which is devoid of political-economic insights into the inner workings of capitalism and concrete negations of them.

Cuellar's mixing of Marxism and psychoanalytical proves my point that "Marxist Freudians inevitably devolve into Freudian Marxists" (Ratner 2017a, p. 92).

Cuellar's devolution from Marxism to populist-feminist-psychoanalysis replaces logic and evidence with opinion and assertion. These include the following:

I. He never documents any logical or factual errors in the Marxian historical-materialist account of gender relations. He simply disparages it as dogmatic and inadequate. His antipathy is motivated by the feminist insistence that gender issues are primary to society and to social reform. However, there is no theoretical, logical, or empirical evidence for this. On the contrary, Marxists have actively promoted women's liberation via socialist transformation that empowers all members of the populace. Blanc (2019) documents this in his critique of liberal myths about Marxism that Cuellar promotes: "One of the most popular today is to claim that socialists ignore women's oppression. By focusing only on economic issues and class, we are told, the socialist movement has always marginalized women and their specific demands for liberation. Like all good liberal myths, these arguments rely on bad history. Working class feminism has a long and rich history. For over a century working women fought for their own liberation through the socialist movement. Few cases better illustrate this point (or have been more buried by history) than that of turn-of-the-century Finland. In 1906, through a mass general strike and working-class insurgency against the Russian Empire, it became the first nation to grant universal suffrage. Socialists were at the forefront."

   Blanc observes that bourgeois women's organizations, such as the Finnish Women's Association, opposed suffrage for working-class women, thus debunking Cuellar's feminist notion that women are a coherent category that supports all women. "In contrast, the Workers Party from its inception demanded suffrage for all. In 1900, it helped found the socialist-led League of Working Women to involve working-class women in the labor movement, to develop their leadership capacity, and to help raise their demands."

II. He seeks to improve on historical materialism by invoking psychoanalysis. He offers no justification for this. He never presents any evidence that supports the validity of psychoanalytical constructs (such as "having and being"). Indeed, a great deal of scholarship exposes the fatal flaws in psychoanalysis and its antagonism to Marxism (Ratner 2017a). Cuellar never scientifically compares the two accounts of gender to identify their relative validity. He never demonstrates any congruence between the two that could make psychoanalysis a viable supplement to Marxism.

III. He never demonstrates any plausible, logical, or factual value that abstract Freudian notions about having and being explain gender relations. On the contrary, cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology has carefully demonstrated that abstract, existential factors are *not* the basis of human psychology and behavior. He ignores scientific thinking and evidence.

His reliance on psychoanalysis to explain gender relations and women's liberation is peculiar in view of the tremendous feminist criticism of psychoanalysis as inherently sexist. Feminist research has denounced Freud's analysis of women's psychology. Many of the women whom Freud analyzed had been abused by men and came to hate these men. Freud argued that the women's statements of abuse and hatred were psychoanalytic denials of their real love for the men (see Ratner 2017a)!

Cuellar never acknowledges this vast scholarship. Rather, he sees this psychoanalysis as respecting women's issues in contrast to historical materialism which neglects them. He uses psychoanalysis to explain gender relations, gender violence, women's liberation, and the anti-capitalist revolution! And he touts this as superior to Marx's historical-materialist analysis of gender and class.

Cuellar never acknowledges or argues against Vygotsky's Marxist critique of Freud: "psychoanalysis displays not dynamic, but highly static, conservative, anti-dialectic and anti-historical tendencies… The same key unlocks the creativity of a Dostoyevsky and the totem and taboo of primordial tribes; the Christian church, communism, the primitive horde – in psychoanalysis, everything is reduced to the same source…It does not continue, but contradicts,

the methodology of Marxism. But about this, one keeps silent" (Vygotsky 1997a, p. 263). Vygotsky specifically critiqued Cuellar's attempt to merge Marx and Freud: "The system of Marxism is defined as being monistic, materialistic, dialectic, etc. Then the monism, materialism, etc. of Freud's system is established; the superimposed coincide and the systems are declared to have fused. Very flagrant, sharp contradictions which strike the eye are removed in a very elementary way: they are simply excluded from the system" (ibid., p. 261).

IV. His abstract psychological notions are incapable of explaining the historical concreteness of gender relations. The fact that men may wish to have women can take any number of concrete, cultural forms. It could be a loving, caring "having," or it could be a violent, autocratic "having." This is how abstractions preclude concrete analysis and concrete, viable change. Manipulating "having and wanting" can never eliminate sexism, monogamy, class society, or capitalism.

V. He never proves that sexism leads to the rise and fall of social classes. He never proves that social classes in feudalism, for example, existed primarily to institutionalize sexism. He never proves that feudalism's decline and replacement were based on feudal women's self-liberation.

VI. He never explains the discrepancy in his theory that having and being are existential, universal issues in all humans; however, sexism and social classes are relatively recent phenomena.

VII. He never offers any logical or empirical evidence to support his opinions about emancipation. He assumes (a) sexual liberation will emancipate women and (b) women's sexually based emancipation will somehow make it possible for us to terminate class!! These assumptions are simply his unwarranted personal preferences. Why does sexual liberation lead to women's liberation more than men's? Why doesn't he say that sexual liberation leads to liberation of women and men?

And what does sexual liberation have to do with gender liberation of women or men? Since gender liberation of women, or men, entails massive structural transformation of social systems and class

structures, how can they be based on, or generated by, sexual liberation? Furthermore, how does sexual liberation of either gender lead to any of Marx's characteristics of socialism, such as abolishing of commodity production, surplus value, wage labor, private property, or social class? Cuellar never mentions any connection between his central psychological, social, political constructs?

Nor does he define what any of these constructs means. What is sexual liberation? What is gender emancipation? What is societal emancipation?

Marcuse explained that sexual liberation under capitalism is actually psychically and socially oppressive, not emancipatory. He coined a brilliant construct called "repressive desublimation" to denote this. It means that sex can be freely expressed (desublimated) while bearing repressive features of commodification and alienation. Since Cuellar never defines sexual liberation, his term can easily be taken to mean sexual freedom, which falls under Marcuse's critique.

Cuellar's silence about gender liberation, that is, women's liberation, leaves it equally open to myriad notions. Is it liberation for Ivanka Trump (that includes tax cuts for billionaire women); or is it liberation for poor black women; or is it liberation for evangelical white women who seek freedom to practice conservative Christianity? Is women's liberation a matter of training all women to be bourgeois entrepreneurs, or of having women occupy domestic roles in keeping with their "feminine nature," or joining the military to develop their "masculine" side and become gender balanced? Who decides? "Women" is purely gender and not at all social class—indeed, capitalist, reactionary women are united with poor, progressive women. Consequently, women's liberation ignores social class. It diverts from class consciousness, class struggle, and class elimination.

Equally questionable is how sexual/gender liberation leads to an anti-capitalist movement against the class structure? What does an anti-capitalist revolution require and aspire to? What percentage of women need to become (sexually) liberated in order to galvanize an anti-capitalist movement (obviously not all women will endorse feminist movements for Cuellar's brand of liberation—which he

never indicates)? What percentage of men will accept the values of Cuellar's indefinite brand of women's liberation, to stimulate them to become anti-capitalist? How will the women-led, anti-capitalist revolution prevail against the violent opposition that the capitalist class—men and women—will mount against it?

VIII. He offers no reason for historical sexual repression, or how to instigate sexual liberation at this late date in human history. Why has sexual liberation escaped us for the past 10,000 years? And how will Cuellar make it happen now?

The works cited in this chapter by populist authors represent a threat to emancipatory, scientific Psychology.[4] This threat must be challenged in the way that Vygotsky challenged the inadequate psychology of his era: "Following Spinoza, we have compared our science to a mortally ill patient who looks for an unreliable medicine. Now we see that it is only the surgeon's knife which can save the situation. A bloody operation is immanent. Many textbooks we will have to rend in twain, like the veil in the temple, many phrases will lose their head or legs, other theories will be slit in the belly" (1997a, p. 324).

I have performed this bloody operation because Cuellar, Nardi, Stetsenko, Montero, and other populist psychologists have "neither courage enough nor insight enough to rise above the bourgeois horizon" (as Marx said about Proudhon).

Notes

1. Mao Tse-tung explained this in his 1937 essay entitled "On Practice." He emphasized Marx's concept of praxis, known as historical materialism, in which production is the fundamental activity that must be reorganized. Populist Liberation Psychologists would profit from reading this concrete discussion of revolutionary praxis.
2. Populist Liberation Psychology shares the epistemology and politics of Indigenous Psychology. Indigenous psychologists emphasize indigenous understandings of society and psychology. Indigenous epistemologies strive to respect historically disrespected people who have been excluded from psychological research.

3. This is a capitalist issue, not a feminist-gender issue. Feminists wish to equalize gender wages. In this case, men's income has declined 17%. If women's income equaled that of men's, it would still have declined 17%. This is all feminists hope for. If men's income had fallen 24%, this would also satisfy feminist gender equality! Making wages a capitalist issue would correct the general decline in men's and women's wages that has been caused by neoliberal capitalism, not by sexism. As I have explained in Chap. 4, civil rights only seeks to equalize exploitation; it does not seek to eliminate exploitation.
4. Bob Dylan satirized this kind of threat to reason in his song, Tombstone Blues:

> The sweet pretty things are in bed now, of course
> The city fathers, they're trying to endorse
> The reincarnation of Paul Revere's horse
> But the town has no need to be nervous

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7

Emancipation or Fascism

An emancipatory psychological science is a necessary instrument for our fulfillment and our survival. It combines the scientific understanding of psychology as grounded in macro cultural conditions with the emancipatory politics of radically transforming those conditions in order to enrich human psychology. We have seen that notions of liberation fail because they ignore cultural-psychological science, including its culture theory. Notions of liberation persistently fail to focus upon the core of social problems, which is the political economy of a social system. These notions imagine other causes and other solutions. This is why they all fail, thereby exacerbating social oppression.

We have seen that apolitical views of emancipation have resulted in denying cultural-psychological science which grounds psychology in cultural conditions. Conversely, unscientific ideas about psychology and Psychology that minimize their cultural formation and consequences result in apolitical, flawed conceptions of emancipation.

The historical-materialist culture theory and the political theory that I have articulated in cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology equip our Psychology to comprehend society more deeply than any other psychological approach. And because the macrosphere is the origin and

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organization of psychology, our social comprehension elevates our scientific understanding of psychology. Our culture theory additionally generates insights into social movements aimed at improving society and psychology. These insights expose flaws that retard improvement, and they identify corrections that will advance social and psychological enrichment.

These advances in the science and politics of Psychology require that macro cultural factors and forces in their concrete form in a political-economic system constitute our primary focus. They are the psychological tools of psychological functions, and they make psychological research and treatment directly relevant to social-political issues.

This point of view requires a Copernican shift away from Psychology's classic focus on understanding and helping individuals. I would like to present a final, summary example of this shift and its political significance.

Many progressive psychologists around the world—many in Brazil—are working to criticize and stop the medicalization of non-conformist behavior of school children. This single issue can contain two political motives and objectives. It is important to identify them in order to select the most politically emancipatory one.

One set of motives and objectives is to improve the physical health of young children by curtailing harmful medication. The work of these psychologists consists of presenting medical research about the medicines to parents, children, educators, and government officials. Psychologists hope to build social and political opposition to medication on this basis. This is a populist orientation that emphasizes protecting the autonomy of individual children to function healthily to achieve their goals. Medication interferes with psychological processes such as clear thinking, clear perception, and energizing emotions. Medication suppresses these in order to control behavior.

The second set of motives is cultural-historical, macro cultural, and historical-materialist. It elucidates the politics of medicalizing behavior. Medicalizing behavior creates a false picture of the causes of misbehavior and the solutions to it. The false picture is that misbehavior is caused by biological causes, and it can be treated by biological solutions. The politics of this biocentric view is that it displaces macro cultural causes of misbehavior and macro cultural emancipation for behavior. In other

words, medicalization not only harms the individual patients physically but also mystifies the entire population about the cultural basis of their behavior and cultural improvements that are necessary to fulfill behavior. Suppressing the behavior of the few through biochemical means suppresses the behavior of the many by ideological mystification. The general ideological effects of medicalizing misbehavior are far broader than its biochemical effects.

The medical argument against medicalizing misbehavior is too narrow; it fails to explain or cure the problem of misbehavior, which is ultimately cultural-political. The medical critique of medicalization seeks to replace medicalization on the micro, individual level, with equally individualistic substitutions such as individual therapy. This does not solve the problem of misbehavior which is ultimately cultural-political (Ratner 2017).

The cultural-psychological position elucidates macro cultural factors which generate unfulfilling misbehavior. It adds this problem to the political critique of the social system, and it calls for change in the system to eradicate this problem along with the other problems that the system causes.

The cultural-political critique reframes medicalization as entirely supplemental for a small number of individual cases to facilitate their transition to new forms of pedagogy and life activities that are socially fulfilling. The emphasis on individual problems and individual treatments will be enveloped with social issues of political emancipation. (My diagrams in Chaps. 3 and 4 illustrate this.) The point is to supersede the focus on treating individuals, per se, as the most humanistic treatment. It is the least humanistic treatment because it leaves the deep, extensive, causes of problems untouched and unseen. The point is to improve general society that will encompass the masses of people. This is what Vygotsky emphasized in his comments that personality fulfillment depends on constructing political-economic conditions that negate capitalist exploitation.

Genuine emancipation, that I have outlined throughout this book, has never been more vital to achieve. The reason is that social and psychological—and ecological—deterioration has rarely been as dangerous as it is right now. The severity and extensiveness of social, psychological, and ecological degradation can only be explained in terms of central, core social factors that radiate throughout the social system and environment.

Figure 4.7 depicts this pattern. Fragmentary, disparate factors cannot account for the simultaneous proliferation of extensive, severe problems. (These include a continuous increase in American childhood cancer incidence from 13/100,000 in 1975 to 19/100,000 in 2015, an increase of 32%.) It follows that these associated—interdependent—problems can only be solved by transforming their common base or core. They cannot be treated individually because that misses their deep causes which connect them together.

Cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology is the only theory that can conceptualize this state of affairs. For it is the only psychological theory that has a developed culture theory which recognizes the systemic organization of cultural factors around central, core factors. This culture theory is key to scientifically explaining social-psychological issues, and to emancipating them from their core causes. This culture theory is the historical-materialist theory that Karl Marx developed.

Historical materialism enables us to perceive that capitalism is degenerating into fascism around the world. Populist fascist movements and political parties are rising across Europe and the US. And ruling class capitalists abet them, as the Koch Brothers do (Kotch and Holt, June 4, 2019). Any discussion of capitalism and its psychology, at this point, must consider its fascist tendencies (Guerin 1939; Roberto 2019; Ratner 2019). These tendencies are not individual, hateful attacks on minorities. They are autocratic tendencies that are inherent in the social structure that is controlled by a ruling class which exploits the population (Anderson 2017). This political economy has run its historical course and is now beset by incorrigible, fatal contradictions which are imploding the imperial system. The ruling class can only preserve its system by resorting to more desperate, autocratic measures that keep it going by greater force and exploitation rather than by negotiation and compromise. This is reflected in the transformation from New Deal capitalism to neoliberal capitalism (Ratner 2019). It is reflected in President Trump's imposition of force and executive orders instead of treaties and laws to "make America great again."

This dynamic alters the struggle for emancipation. Emancipation must confront growing fascist trends throughout society, geopolitics, and psychology. This refined emancipatory struggle must utilize a historical-

materialist analysis that traces fascist trends to their capitalist core and character, as Fig. 4.7 depicts. Contesting the phenotypical forms of fascism in hateful speech, police brutality, executive orders, and managerial autocracy will be unsuccessful if they fail to attack the capitalist basis of these trends.

Dwight Macdonald (1939, p. xi) brilliantly explained the error of denouncing the horrific expressions of Nazi fascism without denouncing their deep, normative causes. "By spot-lighting the secondary characteristics of European fascism, such as Jew-baiting and book burning, without exposing its class roots, the false impression is built up that such manifestations are something unparalleled in the history of 'civilized nations.'" In other words, defining Nazism in personal and cultural terms obfuscates its political-economic causes. It misdirects opposition to secondary forms of Nazism. This can never be successful because it leaves the primary causes of Nazism intact. Moreover, the underlying causes which existed in other countries, such as the US, and sprouted less dramatic manifestations, devoid of Jew-baiting and book burning, remained largely unrecognized to critics who defined Nazism in terms of these manifestations. This misperception enabled fascism to grow without opposition. The same is true for the presidency of Donald Trump. Critics focus on his personal traits, for example, notorious liar. This misses the political-economic causes of his lies. The American neoliberal political economy is in critical decline. The only way to maintain it is through greater exploitation and aggression. These must be disguised to avoid resentment and rebellion. So, Trump *must* lie because his policies for sustaining the unsustainable are destructive for the populace and the natural world. The criticism of Trump's lies must be his neoliberal policies to sustain the ruling class. Ignoring this allows those policies and the crises that mandate them, to continue.

While opposition to German fascism was genuine, it was inadequate because of fallacious political philosophy. Heartfelt opposition was defeated because it was inadequate. "It was therefore a weak goodness, a bad, indefensible, unreliable goodness. It takes courage to say that the good were defeated not because they were good, but because they were weak" (Bertold Brecht, *Writing The Truth: Five Difficulties*, 1935; http://ada.evergreen.edu/~arunc/texts/theater/brecht/fiveDifficulties.pdf).

Brecht employed this historical-materialist standpoint in explaining how to confront fascism:

> Fascism is a historic phase of capitalism; in this sense it is something new and at the same time old. In Fascist countries capitalism continues to exist, but only in the form of Fascism; and *Fascism can be combated as capitalism alone, as the nakedest, most shameless, most oppressive, and most treacherous form of capitalism*…Those who are against Fascism without being against capitalism, who lament over the barbarism that comes out of barbarism, are like people who wish to eat their veal without slaughtering the calf. They are willing to eat the calf, but they dislike the sight of blood. They are easily satisfied if the butcher washes his hands before weighing the meat. *They are not against the [concrete] property relations which engender barbarism; they are only against barbarism itself [in general]*. They raise their voices against barbarism, and they do so in countries where precisely the same property relations prevail, but where the butchers wash their hands before weighing the meat.
>
> If anyone wishes to describe Fascism and war, great disasters which are not natural catastrophes, he must do so in terms of a practical truth. He must show that these disasters are launched by the possessing classes to control the vast numbers of workers who do not own the means of production. If one wishes successfully to write the truth about evil conditions, one must write it so that its avertible causes can be identified. If the preventable causes can be identified, the evil conditions can be fought. (ibid)

Vygotsky applied this standpoint to analyze fascism in German Psychology. He revealed how fascist Psychology is an outgrowth of tendencies in mainstream bourgeois (capitalist) Psychology. Vygotsky thus utilizes the distortions of fascism to reflect their base in normal capitalism.

Vygotsky explained that bourgeois Psychology paved the way for Nazi Psychology and was incapable of opposing the latter because it required criticizing itself. Fascist Psychology revealed flaws in capitalist Psychology and capitalist society.

Vygotsky tells us:

> It would be naïve to think that these absurd structures [of fascistic Psychology] are in no way connected with the general crisis occurring in bourgeois psychology and that bourgeois psychology is in no way responsible for these constructions …

> Essentially, Jaensch's system [of Nazi psychology] is built on the same methodological foundations as all the rest of bourgeois psychology. It represents an integration of idealism and mechanism … In the majority of psychological schools these elements, unknown to the authors themselves, are intertwined with one another … Sociology is completely left out of Jaensch's system. It is only race and blood which immediately determine the structure of personality and through it politics as well. Here too, all that Jaensch has done is to push to the extreme and treat with cynical bluntness that which is already part of the very foundation of bourgeois scientific research. (Vygotsky 1994a, p. 334)

The solution to fascist Psychology is to transform its basis, bourgeois Psychology, into cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology.

Solving fascism in society requires the same transformation of its basis in capitalist political economy. It is important to follow Vygotsky's insightful analysis of Psychology into society. A few examples of capitalism's fascist tendencies are documented by Stone and Kuznick (2019, pp. 78–87). GM, IBM, and Ford rebuilt the German economy in the 1930s, thereby helping German rearmament. And then, during the war, their subsidiaries in Europe continued to produce and continued to make profits, which they were able to accrue after the war ended. In fact, GM and Ford were able to sue the US government for millions of dollars for reparations for their plants that the US had bombed and destroyed in Europe during the war that were producing for the Nazis. So, American corporations aided Nazi military armament, and then sued the US government for destroying their pro-Nazi facilities and profits (*Truthdig*, June 6, 2019; https://www.truthdig.com/articles/americas-forgotten-support-for-adolf-hitler/).

> In 1937, Ford's German subsidiary was manufacturing heavy trucks and troop carriers for the German Wehrmacht. In July 1939, the subsidiary changed its name to Ford-Werke. Farben, which was later convicted of crimes against humanity for operating the Buna rubber plant at Auschwitz and supplying the notorious Zyklon-B tablets used to exterminate Jews, owned 15 percent of the company. When the war started in 1939, Ford and GM still controlled their German subsidiaries, which dominated the German auto industry. Despite their subsequent disclaimers, they refused to divest themselves of their German holdings and even complied with German government orders to retool for war production, while resisting

> similar demands from the U.S. government to retool their factories at home. Sloan justified such behavior in March 1939, following the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia, based on the fact that the German operations were "highly profitable." Germany's internal politics, he insisted, "should not be considered the business of the management of General Motors." (ibid., p. 79)

Capitalists were/are not opposed to fascism, in principle. On the contrary, Hitler began imprisoning and murdering Communists, Social Democrats, and labor leaders since 1933—years before the extermination of Jews had commenced. This provoked no opposition from capitalist countries. Indeed, American capitalists were glad to see the Nazi attacks on the Soviet Union as a way of curtailing and destroying communism (https://www.truthdig.com/articles/americas-forgotten-support-for-adolf-hitler/).

Capitalists were also deeply invested in slavery in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Neoliberal capitalists and their ideologists have always supported dictators and fascists (Ratner 2019). The founder of neoliberalism, Austrian economist and sociologist Ludwig von Mises, who was Hayek's mentor, was the economic consultant to the Austrofascist Chancellor/Dictator Engelbert Dollfuss, prior to the Nazi takeover. In his work *Liberalism*, Mises declared: "It cannot be denied that Fascism and similar movements [on the right] aiming at the establishment of dictatorships are full of the best intentions and that their intervention has, for the moment, saved European civilization" (in Foster 2019). Mises later emigrated to the US with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation.

Capitalism cannot be relied upon to stop fascism, as Vygotsky brilliantly explained through the microcosm of Nazi Psychology. Only socialism can stop fascism, just as only socialist Psychology can effectively counter Nazi Psychology.

7.1 Emancipation and Democracy

Brecht's kind of analysis of social problems, and the emancipatory framework for solving them, which I have outlined in Chap. 4, are not intuitively obvious to people. They must be conveyed to people gradually,

respectfully, and in ways that connect to peoples' current lives. The emancipatory analysis and solution must be presented in a dialectical fashion that helps people *transition* from their given life conditions to understanding and working for improved ones. Analysis and emancipation cannot be imposed on people as something they should simply do. Rather, analysis and emancipation must be shown to explain given conditions and their problems, and then transform the core of the conditions in a dialectical supersession into a new political economy that is a viable outgrowth of the given. The future must be shown to logically solve the contradictions of the given. It must be shown to be the best viable outgrowth of present conditions. It cannot be presented as an external alternative.

Progress toward emancipation, as described in Chap. 4, requires enormous education to make it comprehensible, acceptable, and desirable. It needs to be patiently explained, studied, discussed, and refined.

This kind of introductory education about this emancipatory framework is the political task of this era. It is made necessary by the "psychology of oppression" (Ratner 2011, 2014a, b) which mystifies peoples' understanding of society and their own lives. Psychology of oppression is socially engineered by the material, educational, religious, political, cultural, ideological oppressions that form peoples' life-world. Psychology of oppression is evident in the way that people around the world have recently elected conservative politicians and policies that oppose their material, social, bodily, and psychological fulfillment. People around the world have blamed social and economic problems on immigrants rather than the ruling class which has engineered an exploitive political economy and class system. People are confused about how to solve social problems and lead a fulfilling life.

Mystified consciousness requires a long period of re-education, or remediation, known as "conscientization." Martin-Baro utilized this concept in Chap. 2 of this book. He used a related term for it: de-ideologization. Conscientization—or becoming consciousness of one's society—is the crucial immediate political task for practical, political emancipation.

Oppressed people are oppressed psychologically as well as in other ways. Their oppression does not generate automatic comprehension of

their oppression and how to eradicate it. On the contrary, their oppression requires that they obtain guidance from people who have studied the causes of problems and solutions to them. Oppressed people require education about their oppression, just as they require education about literacy, numeracy, science, and philosophy. Only then will people have generated the competencies necessary to adapt and implement objectively based programs of emancipation in the diverse domains of society.

Under present conditions, people have not yet developed objectively based, emancipatory competencies. This is why it is premature to ask them to solve problems in democratic forums. Democracy requires informed voting. Democracy is not constructed by random expressions that are uninformed about conditions and possibilities, just as good medicine is not achieved by asking new medical residents to express their opinions about disease and treatment. That process is only meaningful and proper after the residents have acquired requisite information.

This is the critique of populism in a nutshell. Populists treat democratic decision-making as a fundamental human right and life activity. They encourage people to democratically decide everything because that expresses individual agency. Populism first and foremost seeks the expression of individual agency. Practical results are entirely secondary. It does not matter *what* people decide; the important issue is *how* they decide and *that* they decide. This, of course, is subjectivism. Subjectivity decides and defines reality. Whatever agency wishes to do is fine. Agentive expression is self-development.

Our exploration of populism has demonstrated the dangers of this notion. Populism is refuted by the Harvard protests against Sullivan. It is refuted by the failed populist Syriza Greek Party, the failed populist Occupy Wall Street movement, Dakota Oil Pipeline protest, the Indonesian housing strike, and the massive failures in the Western cooperative movement (see Chap. 5). None of these had any idea about solving deep problems. Coming together to share uninformed opinions can never produce viable solutions to deep problems. This is exemplified by Naomi Klein's embarrassing comment in Chap. 5 that "I don't know what the answer is, but I definitely think that that first stage is just being honest about it" and "moving to a culture of care, of radical care and consent, which begins with the original caretakers of the land, water and

air." There is no value in asking people's opinions about problems and solutions if they don't know anything except platitudes such as being honest and culture of care. Adding together a string of uninformed opinions does not produce knowledge. [Mathematically, $-5\ (+)\ -4\ (+)\ -3\ (+)\ -2 \neq +14$. On the contrary, $-5\ (+)\ -4\ (+)\ -3\ (+)\ -2 = 14$.]

Populists rush toward "Democracy Now" because this is an individualistic, subjectivistic form of emancipation. Populist emancipation is achieved by individuals expressing themselves in democratic discourses. Populist emancipation has nothing to do with transforming systems and structures and conditions. This is obvious in the numerous examples of populism we have examined. Co-ops turn out to be mere mediums for personal opinions about running the association. They contain no concrete cooperative principles (e.g., for handling surpluses or a sustained environment). The most minimal, tokenist acts are praised as empowering, that is, empowering the agent who acts, but not the world. Occupy Wall Street protestors sat around in impromptu tents on the street to hold discussions about reforming capitalism (the most complex and mystified social system in human history) with random people who happened to appear (many of whom were police infiltrators and disruptors), without any preparation whatsoever. And these populists were more concerned about the communication process among themselves than the content of correcting capitalism. Their correction—namely, attack the richest 1% of individuals—was wrong. (The richest 1% includes tennis players and golfers and actresses and book authors. They are not a social problem. They do not cause social problems. They do not exploit anyone. They are not the enemy. It is a grave mistake to attack these people as the enemy. The problem is how the wealth is generated, not how great it is. Populism attacks the amount of inequality rather than the political economics that generates it, that is, exploitation. Populism overlooks the historical-materialist solution which is transforming *capitalism*.) Similarly, the Harvard protest against Sullivan produced a false solution. It only succeeded in terminating one person. And that "success" was actually failure because it was irrelevant to the issue of sexual harassment on campus. Sullivan's legal representation of Weinstein was extraneous to sexual harassment at Harvard, so terminating him was extraneous to reducing sexual harassment. The entire protest was a joke—a joke against the vic-

tims of harassment who remain unprotected by the students' unfounded, misguided attack on the individual.

Democracy Now is not a process for solving social problems. It is a process of individual emancipation by expressing agency. This circumvents social transformation and displaces it to individual, mundane acts. This is clear in the examples of populism we have examined. Populism arises during periods of social-economic-political crisis as a false, facile solution in the form of individual self-expression—that is, Democracy Now. "Democracy Now" is implicitly populism. It is code for populism. It promotes populism. It is misleading, conservative, and anti-emancipatory. It is just as false and facile as other proposals that embrace neoliberal entrepreneurism or Jesus or Allah.

Genuine emancipation does not consist of individual and interpersonal self-expressions. It consists of scientifically analyzing the historical-materialist factors and dynamics of society and then negating them through constructing new factors, systems, and dynamics. Jaeggi (2018, pp. 315–316) perceptively says that creating new forms of life is "not about the big questions discussed in a free-floating debate over ethical values, namely, 'How do we want to live?' At stake is also the relationship about what we (should) want and what we already do and can do." Jaeggi uses Hegel's philosophy of history to explain that great historical figures ("world-historical men") "had an insight into the requirements of the time, what was ripe for development. [They could envision] the next species which was already formed in the womb of [present] time. It was theirs to know this nascent principle, the necessary, next step which their world was to take" (ibid., p. 308). This constructing a new society out of the old, that is, out of the possibilities and resources that the old makes available for constructing the new, is a "determinate negation" of the old. It is a necessary, logical development of the old; it is not a free-floating, wishful ideal that people may hold. Freedom has a material basis in the conditions of the present that afford a more fulfilling alternative (ibid., pp. 291–313). Empowering individuals to express their agencies is destructive because it ignores the essential social, political task, and it supports the status quo *praxes* that inform individual agency/habitus/cultural psychology.

Democracy will only be emancipatory when it is informed by historical-materialist knowledge about concrete society, concrete oppression, and concrete, political-economic negations of these.

Consequently, the first political task of this oppressed, mystified historical era is to become informed with historical materialism. Outlining what this entails is what this book has endeavored to articulate via cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology. Our psychological theory is remarkable for contributing to the most vital, scientific, and political task of our time, namely, to understand the root cause of the cascading social problems, and to understand the social agent/agency that is capable of uprooting this cause and generating a humane, fulfilling core of society. This capacity of our cultural-psychological theory is a major extension of its academic function. It reveals the full importance of its academic function, which academics have not grasped.

Marx explained this process of historical-materialist education (conscientization). He defined it as the process of the working class forming itself as a self-conscious class that is conscious of its exploitation and its true interests in displacing the capitalist class. Marx brilliantly says that the mere socioeconomic existence of workers is only the condition of the working class. This condition is felt but is not comprehended as to its origin, maintenance, and function. Its full relation to the capitalist political economy is not comprehended. It is only when workers become politically conscious of their condition, and become *class conscious*, that they can organize themselves as a class and take action to dissolve their oppressive condition. Marx says, "Economic conditions had first transformed the mass of the people of the country into workers. The combination of capital has created for this mass a common situation, common interests. This mass is thus already a class as against capital, but not yet for itself. In the struggle, this mass becomes united, and constitutes itself as a class for itself. The interests it defends become class interest" (*The Poverty of Philosophy*; https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Poverty-Philosophy.pdf).

This is a major insight because it says that a functioning class requires consciousness of its political-economic character. Class consciousness is what galvanizes social class into action *as a coherent social body that has a coherent interest in eliminating its class condition*. That is what Marx meant by a class "for itself." It comprehends its interests and moves toward implementing them to better itself as a class. In Sartre's terms, class consciousness is *the totalizing perspective and organization* that realizes the common condition of the class members and unifies them into a coherent, dedicated, powerful, political movement *for* achieving emancipation.

Social class is not a purely objective, technical entity that is entirely defined by its condition in the mode of production. Class members must become conscious of their objective condition in order to transform it. (This refutes the criticism that Marx's theory was mechanistic, reified natural economic laws that excluded human subjectivity and action.)

Class consciousness is the subjective understanding of objective conditions. And objectively formed class consciousness is the key ingredient in class formation as a viable, active force. This is essentially a scientific study of objective conditions in order to know *their* character, what *their* negation consists of (e.g., what is the negation of commodity production, wage labor, exchange value, and accumulation of capital?), and *their* dialectical possibilities for negation/transformation.

This is how consciousness/psychology emancipates itself. It learns new forms from observing social structures more deeply to apprehend new, objective possibilities of organizing social activities. This recapitulates Vygotsky's insistence that "The environment is a factor in the realm of personality development, and its role is to act as the source of this development…and not its context." "Development is achieved under particular conditions of interaction with the environment, where the ideal and final form of development is already there in the environment and actually exerts a real influence on the primary form, on the first steps of the child's development. *Something which is only supposed to take shape at the very end of development somehow influences the very first steps in this development*." "If no appropriate ideal form can be found in the environment, and the development of the child, for whatever reasons, has to take place outside those specific conditions, i.e., without any interaction with the final form, then this proper form will fail to develop properly in the child" (Vygotsky 1994b, pp. 348–349). This point obviously applies to the historical-materialist development of psychology in social transformations. Luria explained this in Chap. 3 in his account of the Uzbekistan cultural-historical psychological research. Cultural-historical Psychology follows the crucial emphasis in historical materialism on grounding psychological development in material conditions. Psychology develops by apprehending contradictory tendencies in the existing political-economic system, and by utilizing these new tendencies as the ideal form of improved historical psychology. This historical ideal exerts a real influence in teleologically pulling psychological

and cultural development toward it. Vygotsky crucially states that if no appropriate ideal form can be found in the environment, then this form will fail to develop properly in the person. This is clear conditionality of psychology. Psychology does not develop on its own, according to its own wishes. Psychology develops through apprehending its conditions for development. This is exactly what Marx says about the populace *becoming conscious of their political-economic conditions and forming the people into a coherent, powerful group that can realize conditions for development.*

Of course, this study of objective social conditions is open to interpretation and debate; however, it is grounded in objective data. The knowledge that forms class consciousness is not decided by populist, democratic voting for political ideals, as in populist socialism. It is decided by scientific argument.

We must be vigilant to avoid relying upon our current subjectivity or habitus as a criterion for emancipation. For cultural psychology teaches us that subjectivity is always informed by the cultural system in which one lives. We must avoid believing that something is emancipatory because it conforms to our subjective sense of happiness, justice, masculinity, or femininity, just as we must reject the idea that something is not emancipatory because it makes us uncomfortable or angry. This is the grave mistake that invalidates populism. We saw an example in the case of Harvard protestors against Sullivan. Their subjective sense of justice was misguided, and it produced injustice under the guise of emancipation.

If I say that XXX makes me uncomfortable as a man, and therefore I do not want XXX to be included in our emancipatory agenda, this opens the door to rejecting activities and policies that do not match my culturally formed, contemporary, competitive, independent, tough masculinity. I would exclude empathy from emancipation on these grounds. Emancipation entails uprooting cultural psychology as much as it entails uprooting cultural factors.

The same objection holds for relying upon feminine subjectivity as a criterion of emancipation. If it is acceptable for me to say YYYY makes me uncomfortable as a woman, so it should be excluded from the list of emancipatory acts, then it opens the door to conservative, Alabama, white women to fill in YYYY with "birth control." These women's subjectivity, or habitus, imposes extant culture and behavior on the agenda for

emancipation. Psychology reproduces its cultural origins, unless psychology is subjected to intensive cultural critique.

The fundamental error in populism consists in disregarding this point. Populists believe that various marginalized social groups already possess emancipated subjectivity which should be validated through democratic decision-making. Women, for example, are currently honest, trustworthy, moral, empathic, supportive, and in touch with their feelings. This is why women should always be believed when they accuse a man of harassing them—as in "Believe Survivors" or "Trust Women." The Harvard students held this belief when they condemned alleged rapist Harvey Weinstein before any due process, and when they condemned his attorney, Sullivan.

Cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology rejects this belief in spontaneous, subjective emancipation. We argue that psychological emancipation requires an objective process of *acquiring* an understanding of capitalist oppression and what its negation would consist of, and then reorganizing subjectivity/psychology in accordance with that objective negation of neoliberal capitalism. Psychological emancipation must be formed through objective social critique of the social system. This is what Marx meant with his phrase about people forming their class and realizing their class potential in conscious struggle. Populists completely reject this process in favor of individual-interpersonal subjective changes. The subjectivities that populists accept as liberated have not gone through the historical-materialist process that cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology requires.

We have presented evidence that women are not emancipated in their political thinking or their actions. (A majority of white women voted for Trump in 2016!) Nor are black people in general. In Chap. 4 we have seen that when Martin Luther King broadened his critique of capitalism from civil rights to the socioeconomic relations of capitalism and imperialism, the black populace turned against him, as did all of the civil rights groups. He was completely isolated before his murder. The black populace and its social-political leaders were clearly not informed about the causes of their economic and social problems, and they rejected King's viable solution to them. They made that choice and exercised their agencies—all in a conservative direction that lacked class consciousness. Their

political choices were self-destructive, not transformative. Another example of this point is that the black population and its political leaders voted conservatively to approve mass incarceration and politics brutality. "Black elected officials had a punitive impact on imprisonment and policing. We corroborate this with public opinion and legislative data. Pooling 300,000 respondents to polls between 1955 and 2014, we find that blacks became substantially more punitive over this period, and were consistently more fearful of crime than whites" (Clegg and Usmani 2017, p. 1). Most black people acted against their objective self-interest by taking the quick, immediate action of protecting themselves by harshly punishing perpetrators. They did not work to understand and eradicate the deep, structural causes of crime by organizing against capitalism, which is the cause of crime and ghettoization and black peoples' problems today.

This is a vital point that refutes the stereotypical racial explanation of mass incarceration as a white backlash against black people who were protesting racial injustices. Black people were supportive of "the new Jim Crow" in this form. It was *not* a white-black racial contradiction. It was a capitalist issue of social breakdown and self-protection. Blacks were as mystified and frightened by increased black crime as whites were, and they reacted reflexively, just as whites did, to get protection for themselves against the violence. They opposed violence with counteractive violence against their own people. They used a "penal logic" within a "carceral habitus" that had been cultivated by the social leaders of capitalism for all people to use (Schept 2015). Black people remained entirely on the phenotypical level, just as whites did, and feminists do when they oppose sexual harassment with punishment of perpetrators. All of these punitive reactions *oppose* emancipation by strengthening the carceral state and the ruling class. The fact that they express peoples' agencies and voices demonstrates the fallacy of this populist expression for solving problems.

People have to acquire consciousness of their objective self-interests before they can embark upon transformative action. Otherwise, they work to enslave themselves through false solutions.

The key task of contemporary conscientization is to understand the emancipatory model outlined by historical materialism in Figs. 4.3 and 4.7. This will draw all oppressed people to discover their common problems and their common solutions in transforming the political economy.

This will correct the false solutions that individual oppressed groups have pursued, which never reach the political economy.

All false solutions to social problems have a common basis in overlooking the political-economic cause of social problems, and the political-economic potential to eradicate the social problems and form a fulfilling life. All the movements we have discussed—from populists to feminists to ecologists to cooperatives to religion to civil rights to fascists—have sought to blame groups and policies and institutions and artifacts and concepts which are (1) either superficial (phenotypical) expressions of deeper causes (e.g., blame minorities for poverty when minority poverty is caused by the capitalist political economy; or blame men for gender conflicts when male behavior reflects the male role in the capitalist political economy), or (2) more commonly, completely fabricated causes of their social problems (e.g., a lawyer who defends an alleged rapist is said to promulgate rape culture).

These are not simply mistakes and oversights. They *block* genuine, full emancipation at the political-economic level. In this way, they support the ruling practice of obscuring this level. The ruling class knows that threats to the political economy threaten its entire system and domination. The ruling class comprehends the truth of Marxist historical materialism. They know the political economy is the core of society, and they do everything possible to maintain it. They accept any other reforms because they know that reforms do not eliminate oppression which is rooted in the mode of production. The ruling class creates and welcomes reforms as "safety values" which allow the populace to release its resentment in ways that leave the social core intact. These reforms attack "superstructural" factors of society. Capitalists are so desperate to divert basic change to superficial change, that they support any movement that follows this requirement. Capitalists do not care what the movement attacks as long as it is not the political economy. Capitalists do not care if the movement is progressive such as civil rights, or conservative such as evangelical religion or even fascism.

Today, American capitalists and their government support every right-wing dictator in the world. They sell them billions of dollars of military weapons to defend themselves! (China does the same.) Capitalists always prefer fascism to socialism because fascists are reformists who do not negate the capitalist mode of production.

Unfortunately, reformers accept rulers' limits on reform, and they utilize their agencies to engage in "release valve" reforms rather than emancipation. The more the people focus on super-structural reforms, the more they contribute to blocking attention from the political economy which is the core of social problems. This is why reforms are essentially complicit with capitalism; they are essentially conservative, as Fig. 1.5c depicts. Seemingly incongruous reforms of conservatives and liberals share this essential commonality. Seemingly radical reforms of populists and fascists share this conservative commonality.

The essential blocking of emancipation at the political-economic level is depicted in Fig. 7.1.

Figure 4.7 is blocked in the same way, above the line labeled "Transformation."

This model explains all false solutions to problems: fascism, religion, consumerism, racism, sexism, populism, and feminism. Populism and fascism have entirely different contents. They are similar in the general sense of being false solutions to social problems that divert attention and

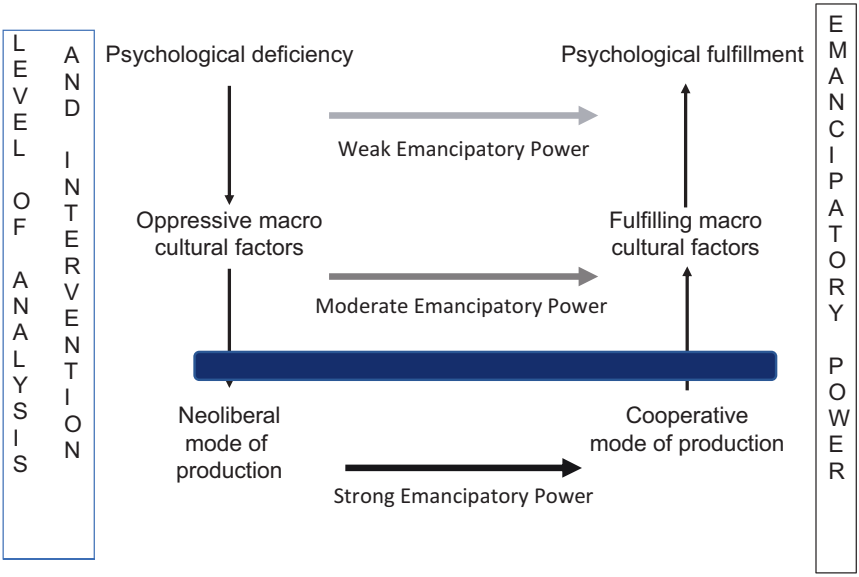


Fig. 7.1 Blocking emancipation

energy from true solutions that require negating the existing political economy, or mode of production. Populism is not a viable alternative to fascism because populism cannot solve the problems that generate fascists' resentment. Fascists will never ally with populists. The only answer to populist fascism is radical critique of the social core. And this is the answer to populism as well, along with being the answer to all reform movements. All reform movements have an objective interest in the socialist negation of capitalism. All reform movements have a common objective interest in forming an alliance.

When one reform movement attacks another, this is suicidal; for it destroys the objective unity that both have. When feminists attack toxic males, this destroys the allies that they need to achieve true social transformation. It divides the populace into separate camps, each pursuing its own cause, and incapable of apprehending and transforming the common core of society into one that benefits the populace as a whole.

The only way to defeat populist fascism is to focus populist fascist anger on the upper class and the political economy. Kinderman (2019) and Blanchflower (2019) document that people who voted for Trump in 2016 were hurting economically and politically.

> The populist movements around the world are a direct result of the inadequate response by the elites to the Great Recession. They were cries for help. According to a CNN exit poll, 51 percent of respondents who had a high school diploma or less or some college voted for Trump, compared with 44 percent of college graduates and 37 percent of those with a postgraduate degree. Fifty-seven percent of whites versus 8 percent of blacks and 28 percent of Latinos voted for Trump. Thirty-six percent of those aged 18–29 and 41 percent of those aged 30–44 voted for Trump. In contrast, 52 percent of those 45 and above did. People living in the rural heartland voted for Trump. The less-educated, low-income, non-immigrant folks also voted for Frexit. The right-wing nationalist in France, Marine Le Pen, fared better in areas with a greater concentration of people without a high school degree. (Blanchflower 2019, p. 265)

> Counties that voted more heavily for Trump than expected had experienced high rates of death caused by drugs, alcohol, and suicide. There was such a sense of hopelessness that it makes sense they would vote for massive

> change.' Nearly every Ohio county with a high overdose death rate saw voting gains of 10 percent or more for Trump compared to Romney (in the primary election). Twenty-nine of thirty-three Pennsylvania counties with high overdose death rates flipped from Democrat to Republican. All of the Pennsylvania counties that chose Trump in 2016 had exceptionally high overdose rates. A national sample of Medicare claims data found that chronic use of prescription opioid drugs was correlated with support for the Republican candidate in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Individual- and county-level socioeconomic measures explained much of the association between the presidential vote and opioid use. (ibid., p. 24)

Blanchflower describes how lower social class is overdetermined by low education, economic dispossession of the Great Recession, and physical and mental crises. Members of the white working class were dispossessed by neoliberal capitalism from the 1980s and then knocked out the by Great Recession of 2007. Between 1965 and 2015, labor participation rates (the ratio of employment to population) for the American male spiraled downward. America is now home to an army of prime-working-age men, some seven million of them aged between 25 and 54, who no longer look for work. In 2015, the work-rate of males aged between 25 and 54 was slightly lower than it had been in 1940, when the official unemployment rate was 14.6%. The result of this oppression has been a fourfold increase in drug and alcohol overdoses, and a 50% increase in suicides among lower-middle-class white women between 25 and 55 over the past decade. These individuals experienced the effects of their class and voted for a successful, wealthy outsider to the political system who (falsely) promised to represent them. They manifested the elements of a class but were not class conscious. They exemplified Marx's statement that capital has created for this mass a common situation, common interests, and common possibilities. This class has no understanding of the reality of the political-economic system and its need to be transformed in a particular direction.

The working class's consciousness has been mystified by forces of the status quo, such as ideology. This mystification has been compounded by well-intentioned reformers who fight for their own limited, immediate struggle, for example, for gay rights, black rights, or women's rights. These do not directly help other kinds of discontent, especially that of the

white working class. Reformers block unity while fighting for separate interests. They also block the awareness of the need for comprehensive, deep structural reform of the political-economic social core.

This blocking of the need and possibility for social transformation leads the working class, and the populace, to "sublimate" this need into inadequate, simplistic, superficial, facile, diversionary, unsuccessful outlets (or diversions) such as attacking scapegoats, preserving historical eras (the good old days), following illusory heroes (from autocratic political figures to mystified religious figures), and following ideological concepts such as individualism and subjectivism. (This is socially organized sublimation—that is, socially restricted and then socially redirected. It is not psychological sublimation proposed by Freud that is a natural mechanism of the psyche.) These sublimations/diversions preserve the fundamental social causes of problems (Duina 2018). Sublimations increase in desperation and intensity as the populace increasingly suffers from the intensifying causes of their problems. This culminates in intense, violent fascism.

Working-class fascism and racism are sublimated reactions against oppression that are generated by the perceived foreclosure of genuine solutions such as political economic transformation. White, working-class racism must be treated as false consciousness that does not apprehend the political economic causes of working-class problems and is diverted to superficial, illusory causes of problems such as migrants and minorities and conservative social causes. (Other diversions/sublimations of oppression include consumerism, substance abuse, forming gangs, and gambling. These are all false solutions to oppression that exacerbate it.) Racism is psychology of oppression. False consciousness and psychology of oppression are sympathetic, empathic constructs that regard subaltern peoples' misconceptions as consequences of exploitation rather than a deficiency of the individuals. False consciousness can be analyzed and re-educated through "conscientization" or class consciousness, which exposes the exploitive conditions that produced it. (This is the methodology of macro cultural psychology.) Racism cannot be effectively opposed by (a) castigating and vilifying white, working-class people, who are shaped by political-economic, structural racism, or (b) pushing for the immediate, subjective/psychological dissipation of racism through humanistic tolerance and inclusiveness. These are both populist errors that prioritize subjectivity over material conditions of behavior. These errors alienate the

white working class which is the potential agent of deep social transformation. It is the only potential agent of social transformation. (Its potential lies not in the number of individuals who occupy the working class, but in their strategic economic positions as producers of society's goods and services. This enables them to stop the gears of society and transform them.) Social transformation can never occur through a mélange of social categories such as minorities, women, homosexuals, or young people. None of these is a coherent, anti-capitalist class-in-itself with a potential for becoming a class-conscious class for itself that can interrupt and transform the production of goods and services of society. It is wrong and politically dangerous to vilify and essentialize working-class racism, as though racism is characteristic of the working class and is in its interest to defend its superior position vis-à-vis marginalized groups. This treats false consciousness as true consciousness of the working class's objective self-interest. It leads to abandoning the working class to the forces of reaction. It treats the working class as the enemy rather than a potentially revolutionary class. It exacerbates the oppression of the working class by reinforcing the false consciousness of that class. Populists are guilty of these errors because they take immediate consciousness/action as the free choice of individual agency. Populist subjectivism validates all subjectivity as authentic agency. Populists therefore blame individuals for their misbehavior. Populists denounce the majority working class as racist, nationalist, and sexist. Populists do not trace agency to macro cultural-historical materialist factors and conditions. Consequently, populists do not sympathize with the fear, and anger of the working class that is "psychology of oppression." Nor do populists attempt to comfort the working class or assist them to transform society. (Populist subjectivism that uncritically validates consciousness is thus less humanistic/emancipatory than objectivistic concepts which socially critique consciousness as false consciousness and psychology of oppression.) Populists focus on minority rights because minorities are super-exploited. Populists focus upon gaining acceptance for marginalized people into mainstream society; they do not seek to eliminate normal exploitation. Populists do not join majority working-class struggles against political-economic exploitation and ideological mystification. For example, in 2018, 26 transgender people were murdered in the US. They received enormous news coverage and were anguished about human rights violations by populists. At the same time,

5140 workers were killed on their jobs, while millions of workers were injured or diseased at work. This received no news coverage and no discussion by populists. Safe working conditions is not a human right, while transgender sexuality is. (This has a political logic: Workers are not protected with human rights—regarding safety, employment, and inclusiveness in decision-making—because exercising them would reduce capitalists' profit and power. Granting transgenders human rights to exercise their sexuality requires no political-economic changes to capitalist ownership or profit. This indicates that human rights are political-economic in form and content. They protect the system that espouses them. They do not liberate people from the system.) Dismissing working-class issues leaves the working class feeling isolated and even overwhelmed by minority demands for sympathy and political and economic resources. The slogan of white nationalists in the US is "you will not replace us." This expresses their fear of being displaced. This is a real and rational fear. The white working class has been displaced by the power of capital which has automated and outsourced its manufacturing jobs (as one example) (see Hochschild 2018). Ideology, promulgated by the conservative upper class, leads the working class to displace its desperation and fury to largely false notions of being replaced by minorities. This distraction is what Trump and Bolsonaro explicitly do. However, this fear cannot be dismissed or denounced, as populists do. This further fragments the working class as whites oppose minorities and minorities denounce white worker racism/sexism. Working-class fear and fury must be worked through to their political economic cause and a solution in comprehensive, radical change that will improve the standard of living and security of the majority working class in concert with minorities (as in Figs. 1.3 and 3.3). The fear of displacement must be shown to be common to the populace in general who have all been displaced and impoverished by the capitalist system. Conversely, most of the various displacements, dispossessions, and oppressions of subpopulations must be recognized as derivatives of the exploitation of labor which is the seat of capitalism. (We have seen that gender identity is not related to the exploitation of labor for the purpose of accumulating capital.) These populations must center their emancipation around the transforming of capitalism. This is the only way that their particular oppressions can be eradicated. They cannot

be eradicated by transforming them into populist, subjectivistic constructs such as "anguish," "disrespect," and "hate," and struggling against these instead of the capitalist political-economy. Submerging majority, working-class oppression in the mass of other oppressions, in a diffuse "rainbow coalition," eliminates the centrality of the political economy and capitalist class structure as the target of emancipation. It also eliminates the materialist basis of that struggle which is the working class that produces and reproduces the system, and embodies its essential elements and its objective possibilities as Jaeggi discussed. This is what enables the working class to directly confront the political-economic class system and paralyze and transform it. Particular oppressed groups can contribute their grievances to this struggle and its resolution to make it more comprehensive, detailed, and emancipatory. Ignoring the centrality of the majority working-class needs propels this class to support conservative, mystified, and fascist movements. This is evident in the world today where dispossessed, impoverished working-class people express their desperation in such movements. An important element of implementing a systemic political economic transformation is transforming the state. A new state is necessary for taking all the levers of government—for example, financial, juridical, police, and military—away from the capitalist class and using them to promote and protect democratic socialism among the populace. Populism's fatal failure has been to ignore the state and to leave it under the control of the capitalist class to destroy emancipatory movements, domestically and internationally.

This is the concrete character of emancipation that is laid out in cultural-historical/macro cultural Psychology.

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