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THE LANGUAGE OF PARTICIPATION AND THE LANGUAGE OF RESISTANCE

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ABSTRACT

Language and gestures define the involvement of low-status groups with authorities either as joint participation in policy making or as conflict. The first definition engenders quiescence and minimizes the likelihood that a wider public will perceive the participants as deprived.

Policies that most seriously offend nonelites are often politicized so as to encourage the perception that all affected by them participated in their formulation. This perception is problematic and often misleading, for formal decision-making procedures chiefly reflect extant inequalities in the resources of participants, especially their resources for establishing their values and their legitimacy in public opinion. It is those who can exercise influence outside the context of formal proceedings who wield real power; but formal proceedings remain vital rituals, for they symbolize participation and democracy and so marshal public support and compliance.

The poor lack the informal sanctions and other resources that confer influence, with the important exception that they can create disorder and thereby threaten elites; but in becoming politicized they renounce that political weapon.

The intense politicization that often takes place in prisons, mental hospitals, and some schools is often defined as self-government, but it induces adaptation to established norms and clouds perception of adversary interests.

THE LANGUAGE OF PARTICIPATION AND THE LANGUAGE OF RESISTANCE

Language and gestures define the involvement of low-status groups with authorities either as joint participation in policy making or as conflict. The dichotomy is a fundamental one, with far-reaching consequences for public support or opposition to regimes and for compliance with, or resistance to, rules. Those who get the least of what there is to get inevitably feel contradictory incentives: to play their expected parts in established institutions and comply with their decisions or to resist them on the ground that they yield unequal and inequitable results. The definition of low-status groups as directly involved in making public policy curbs their disposition to resist and at the same time minimizes the likelihood that a wider public will perceive them as unfairly deprived. In this sense the definition of problematic political action as participation in policy making engenders quiescence, while a focus upon adversary interests encourages resistance.

Whether particular political actions are forms of participation or forms of conflict is often no more self-evident than whether basic interests are in conflict; the perception depends heavily upon linguistic and gestural categorization. Were the representatives of the poor in the Community Action agencies maximum feasible participants or were the agencies one more forum for conflict with the establishment? It is hardly surprising that the decisions that most seriously offend nonelites are often politicized so as to encourage the perception that all affected by them participated in their formulation.

Public and Private

To politicize an issue is to define it as appropriate for public decision making: to take it for granted that people do not have the right to act autonomously and privately and to engender that belief in others. Fundamentally, then, politicization is the creation of a state of mind. Which issues are seen as appropriate for private and which for public decision making is always dependent upon social cuing. How workers are paid and treated on the job has been regarded as an employer prerogative at some times and places and has been politicized at others. The same problematic status holds for matters of faith and morals, and indeed, for every form of human behavior.

Once made, the definition of an issue as either political or private in character is typically noncontroversial for large masses of people who are not directly affected, though it usually remains controversial for those who are directly affected. Trade associations continue to resist and try to modify laws regulating hours, wages, and working conditions; but the definitions of welfare recipients as subject to administrative surveillance of many kinds, of citizens as prohibited from seeing plays and movies defined as obscene, of students as subject to specific controls by school authorities, and of mental patients as requiring permission to leave their rooms, read and write letters, or make phone calls is generally taken for granted by the public unless active resistance makes them problematic. Organized groups with financial resources far more easily mount resistance than do large groups of people subjected to constraints because of their poverty, their age, or their

nonconformist behavior. The latter, in fact, often accept the constraints as in their own interest, though always with substantial ambivalence.

The definition of an issue as appropriate or inappropriate for politics is therefore a key means of social control. It may well be the critical means, for when people accept deprivation of their autonomy in principle, they usually take for granted the legitimacy of particular procedures for public decision making. The constraining effect of these procedures is often masked, though powerful.

Participation in public decision making has become a central symbol of democracy, and it holds that meaning whether a particular instance of politicization extends personal influence or severely constricts it. In the latter case those who have lost their autonomy may be acutely aware of the fact or they may be ambivalent, for the symbol means democracy to them too; but for the public that is not directly involved, it is the democratic connotation of politicization that prevails whenever the emphasis is upon "self-government."

The denial of personal autonomy through politicization of virtually all facets of life is in fact the key device through which authoritarian governments control their populations, regardless of the prevailing ideology. Their forceful suppression of prominent dissidents is more conspicuous and dramatic; but suppression can only be complementary to psychological controls if a regime is to remain in power for long; and politicization is psychologically effective because it is accepted as a democratic element in national life. Indeed, participation in group meetings has often been obligatory: in China, in Russia, and in Nazi Germany, just as it often is in mental hospitals, in prisons,

and in high schools that emphasize student self-government. And in all these instances it has evoked popular acquiescence in rules that would often be resisted if elites imposed them by fiat.

Group decision making is in fact rarely the process for formulating policies that it purports to be. It is far more often a process for producing predictable outcomes by reflecting existing inequalities in the resources of participants, especially their resources for establishing their values and their legitimacy in public opinion. To put the point another way, politicization is likely to assure that decisions reflecting extant allocations of resources will be regarded as basically sound. It is less often the precursor of decision making than the critical decision in itself.

Politicization as Co-optation

Governmental decisions inevitably depend upon the values of participants and upon the information available to them. This proposition is tautological or very close to it.[1] It is therefore hardly surprising that the policy directions of any decision-making group assume predictable and recurrent patterns so long as the values of participants and the information available to them remains constant. This is as true of groups in which interests are directly and formally represented as it is of so-called nonpartisan agencies; and it is equally true of face-to-face groups purportedly representing only themselves.

More significantly, participation in formal decision making, whether it is direct or accepted as vicarious representation of interests, itself induces acceptance of the dominant values of the organization or the polity. The German codetermination laws granting formal representation to

workers in the management of plants have proved to be devices for making worker representatives sensitive to the financial and management problems of the administrators rather than the radical measures many assumed they would be when they were first enacted after the Second World War.[2] "Maximum feasible participation" of the poor in the American Community Action agencies has had much the same result and certainly has done little to increase the political influence of the poor.[3] Government departments and "regulatory" commissions reflect the interests of dominant groups with striking consistency.[4]

Totalitarian regimes recognize that public attendance at political discussions is a potent method of inducing potential dissidents to conform to the dominant ideology, for group discussion enlists peer-group pressure toward that end, and peers are both more credible and less easily rejected than authority figures, who continue to furnish the dominant values and the available "facts." For the same reasons, coerced political participation, labeled self-government, patient government, or group therapy, is invaluable to authorities in prisons, mental hospitals, and schools, and, to a smaller degree, in political discussion that is not coerced except through social pressure.

While this nonobvious effect of politicization needs to be more clearly recognized than it generally has been, it is not its only effect. Where there is widespread discontent, political discussion gives authorities information about the thresholds of deprivation beyond which disorder is likely, and to this degree may place restraints upon deprivation and repression. It is also a source of tactical suggestions, many of which may be acceptable to authorities.

Policy-making bodies also resolve issues that pit different elite groups against each other.[5] This form of choice is often important and even decisive for competing elites, but it does not significantly affect the power or resources of nonelites.

With these important exceptions, formal procedures and discussions that purport to be the source of policy decisions are instances of ritual, not of policy making. This is true in the sense that they influence popular beliefs and perceptions while purporting, usually falsely, to be directly influencing events and behavior. A rain dance is a ritual for the same reason. Formal governmental procedures, in whatever setting they take place, are formalities, vital for inducing general acquiescence in their formal outcomes.

Influence Versus Ritual

It is those who can exercise influence outside the context of formal proceedings who wield real power. Political influence always stems from the exercise of positive or negative sanctions that have their effect upon the attitudes and behavior of others. Common forms of effective sanctions include expert skills or information; mutual favors and mutual respect; the expectation of future return favors; physical force; and bribery, subtle or crude. Examples include the influence of economists and statisticians upon tax legislation; legislative log rolling; corporate price fixing; shared values among industries and the officials charged with their regulation; the disposition of police and judges to respect white-collar offenders and to be suspicious of poor and working-class offenders; and the similar disposition of teachers and psychiatrists

to hold more favorable attitudes toward affluent nonconformists than toward poor ones.

It is through such devices that virtually all significant decisions of governmental and other authoritative institutions are realized, though we are socialized to perceive them taking place in formal proceedings. The knowledgable politician, lawyer, professional, or analyst becomes successful by using his knowledge of informal influence, though even these experts see policy as made in formal settings when they are addressing a high school commencement rather than lobbying or plea bargaining. As discussion groups function, legislation is enacted, court cases heard and decided, and administrative regulations formally considered and promulgated, background understandings and informal processes instill values and information that determine the outcome. These processes may be embedded in rituals, but they are not themselves ritualistic, for they directly account for actions that allocate resources. Behind the administrator's, the politician's, and the professional's formal recommendations and decisions lie his group ties and his understandings with interest groups; behind the votes and speeches of rank-and-file members of policy-making bodies lie their expectations of social approval or censure and their fears of sanctions. Both the publicized and the unpublicized aspects of policy-making processes have functions to serve, the former chiefly ritualistic, the latter chiefly influential in shaping value allocations.

The argument that the most publicized and cherished governmental procedures are largely ritualistic is self-evidently based upon an

evaluative judgment, as all classifications are. Formal procedures are ritualistic in the sense that they predictably will not effect any basic or radical change in existing inequalities in wealth or power. They will certainly yield many policies that have symbolic effects and they may effect minor changes in income or tax policies, usually in response to economic conditions already influencing such trends. Socialization and symbolic processes lead a great many people to define such marginal change as significant. Those who favor it consistently portray it as substantial, for their political careers as well as their self-conceptions depend upon that belief. Their conclusion, like its opposite, is manifestly a value judgment. The central point of the present discussion holds regardless of that judgment: politicization systematically masks public recognition that the outcomes of formal procedures are largely symbolic or marginal in character. Without such masking, resort to these procedures by the poor would obviously be less uncritical and reliance upon the influence conferred by their numbers through direct political action more common.

The Uses of Disorder

Nonelites, and especially the poor, lack the informal sanctions and other resources that confer influence, with the important exception that they can create disorder and thereby threaten elites if they act together. They rarely do so because in becoming politicized mass publics implicitly renounce disorder as a political weapon. To accept an issue as appropriate for political decision making is to define it as inappropriate for an open power confrontation outside the formal context.

Because elite power stems from high status, private understandings, and informal bargains, elites remain influential. Because the political power of the poor stems ultimately only from the possibility of collective action that interferes with established routines, politicization minimizes their power, substituting ritualistic participation or representation. The consequences of this exchange are not obvious, though they are potent. The bargaining advantages of economic, professional, and governmental elites are perpetuated and the bargaining weapons of nonelites immobilized. Politicization can be taken as a signal that nonelites have renounced resort to disorder and that substantial concessions are not necessary.

People do sometimes resort to passive resistance, riot, rebellion, or economic strikes that are something more than a temporary change in the form of collective bargaining about incremental gains. These cases underline the point just made about conventional politics, for they are either suppressed by greater force or they succeed in winning substantial concessions. Through disorder the poor have increased welfare benefits in the United States and have liberalized eligibility provisions.[6] The French, American, Russian, and Cromwellian revolutions exemplify more dramatic uses of the collective power of nonelites to win major concessions.

Mass disorder wins substantial concessions when it threatens the privileges of elites or disrupts programs upon which they rely, but it can accomplish these objectives only if it is broadly supported. Public protest, whether peaceful or violent, has repeatedly won wide support by forcing public attention to shocking conditions and

grievances that had been ignored as long as political participation remained conventional and ritualistic. In these circumstances disorder may create ambivalence even among authorities and economic elites, further contributing to the likelihood of concessions. Disorder invites repression when potential allies regard the tactics of protest as more shocking than the grievances to which the protesters try to call public attention; and it invites a response that is only tokenistic or symbolic when the protest is narrow in scope and expressed through conventional tactics, such as demonstrations or strikes of a kind that occur routinely to express discontent.[7] But whether a supportive or a symbolic response or a backlash occurs is itself influenced by the evocative forms already discussed.[8] Politicization is certainly the most common and the most effective of these.

The Structuring of Perception Through Politicization

Because politicization symbolizes democracy through group influence on decisions, it systematically clouds recognition of fundamental and persistent adversary interests. The adoption of routine political procedures conveys the message that differences of opinion stem from misunderstandings that can be clarified through discussion or that they deal with differences in preference that are readily compromised. For reasons already discussed, such routines perpetuate and legitimize existing inequalities in influence, in the application of law, and in the allocation of values.

A large body of empirical and theoretical work demonstrates that the impact of the most widely publicized formal governmental policies is

consistently small or symbolic, especially when both proponents and opponents expect the policies in question to mark a substantial change. This generalization holds for civil rights legislation, business regulation, welfare policy, housing policy, and every other important area of domestic governmental action.[9]

The manifest conclusion to be drawn from the extant research on policy outcomes and on the shaping of cognitions is that politicization focuses public attention upon incremental change while masking perception of the inequalities underlying the increments. A hard, publicized legislative battle over an 8 percent increase in welfare benefits gives the combatants and their supporters a sense of victory or defeat that minimizes attention to persisting poverty and gross inequalities in living standards. Public disorder, by contrast, occasionally succeeds in drawing public attention to social inequalities while minimizing appreciation of incremental change.

Intense Politicization

Especially intense and frequent forms of politicization are imposed upon people who challenge the legitimacy of the established order by breaking the law or by practicing or advocating other forms of behavior generally regarded as too threatening or too unconventional to tolerate. Offenses against property constitute the most direct challenge, but supporters of the established order have shown throughout recorded history that group behaviors that symbolize rejection of their norms offend them even more than individual delinquency. Unconventional language, dress, and manners and unconventional sexual, religious, and political

practices and beliefs have repeatedly aroused widespread demands for their forceful suppression or their formal definition as sickness requiring rehabilitation. Because the conventional find it intolerable to accept such behaviors as legitimate alternatives to their own moral codes, they welcome their definition as individual deviance. This categorization wins popular support for their suppression, by force or by peer pressure, while it denies that the suppression is political in character.

In schools, welfare agencies, prisons, and mental hospitals people labeled deviant are subjected, often involuntarily, to group therapy, inmate meetings, and discussions with social workers and psychiatrists. The clientele of these institutions consists very largely of poor people who have violated either legal norms (especially offenses against property) or other social conventions; the remainder are students, especially in the ghettos, or people who are unwilling or unable to adapt to their worlds and the roles they are constrained to play. Through group discussion they are encouraged to define their problems as personal rather than institutional, and as remediable through acceptance of existing conventions and values. They are encouraged to see the group discussions as a form of democratic participation and therapy rather than as social pressure for individual conformity. In short, participation is an intensive mode of blurring the perception that the interests of clients and authorities are adversary in some key respects and of inducing people to substitute personal adaptation to their circumstances for dissenting politics, an adversary posture, or a test of power.

That the professional staff and a large proportion of the clientele accept such discussions as a form of self-government, even though attendance is typically compulsory, is a revealing instance of the ambivalence of cognitions. Both staff and inmates recognize, indeed assert, that the meetings are a part of a program for curbing deviance; and they also recognize, though not so explicitly, that the staff narrowly limits the agenda to be discussed and decided and that only minor variations from staff preferences are tolerated in the decisions the group can make. Yet the forms of democratic participation and the belief that inmates are governing themselves coexist with recognition that the forms restrict participants rather than liberating them. Forms generate one set of cognitions and content an inconsistent set. The mind readily entertains both, cued by changing settings and signals to express one or the other.

This phenomenon is easy to see in small groups, and it throws light upon the same phenomenon when it occurs in the larger polity, for the poor and the discontented are constantly exposed to precisely the same kind of ambivalence so far as most governmental social and economic policies are concerned. They resent regressive taxes, inadequate and degrading welfare benefits, military drafts that insure that the poor sacrifice most,[10] educational systems that provide the least effective schooling for the poor, and police forces that give the poor the least protection and the most harassment. At the same time they generally accept all these policies and many others that are discriminatory

because they are the end products of a democratic system the public is socialized to support. In these cases, too, the form and the content of governmental actions generate inconsistent cognitive structures; but the reassuring forms are almost always the more powerful component, partly because they affect everyone, while resentment against particular policies is confined to narrower groupings, dividing people because they focus upon different grievances. The lower-middle-class worker who resents his high tax bill may have little sympathy for the unemployed black who pays no taxes and resents his treatment at the welfare office.

Discussion groups formally charged with decisions affecting their members always operate within the context of a larger organization dominated by authorities who can offer greater rewards and impose more severe penalties. In this situation the "self-governing" groups can almost always be counted on to stay well within the limits acceptable to authority and to discourage nonconformist thought and behavior more severely than the authorities can do it. As already noted, authorities must be anxious about appearing to be despotic, a concern that peers using democratic forms need not share.

There are always some participants who assume the role of guardians of the established rules, conventions, and morality and are zealous in recognizing and suppressing unconventional thought and behavior. Because inmates who dislike or resent discussions and this form of "self-government" withdraw or remain passive, those in the guardian role dominate meetings and influence members who vacillate.

The assumption of the role of guardian may stem from agreement with the rules, from fear, or from the hope of personal privilege; but the role is invariably filled, so that the establishment of inmate self-government is a safe course for authorities charged with controlling the behavior of students, mental patients, or prison inmates.

Because the guardian role is an acting out of the expectations of the dominant groups in a society, it is hardly surprising that it consistently appears among low-status groups, even where the guardians openly curb groups of which they themselves are members. To cite some polar cases, the role was fulfilled in the American slave plantations,[11] and in the Nazi extermination camps,[12] and it is conspicuous in enlisted men's army barracks and among black policemen assigned to urban ghettos. While these are hardly examples of self-government, even in ritualistic form, they do exemplify the universality, in every polity, with which some respond to the expectations of dominant authority.

The role appears as well in representative governmental bodies, including legislatures, administrative agencies, and courts.[13] In these settings as well, it represents a built-in conservative bias, supporting the dominant moral code and the interests of elites. Obviously, the bias is weaker in representative bodies than in total institutions and dictatorships, where the power of the authorities is more conspicuous and the occasions and purpose of its exercise more predictable. Occupants of the role doubtless feel ambivalent about playing it, and those who refuse to assume it may feel some temptation to do so. Though authorities and the guardians that support them must

often deny widely supported demands, the setting in which they act and the participation of representatives of the people blurs the adversary character of their actions; and blurring widens the freedom of action of the authorities.

The ambivalent willingness of people to subject themselves to dominant authority and to renounce autonomy has often been recognized by social psychologists and political scientists and is perhaps most sensitively analyzed by Eric Fromm.[14] It is easy but inaccurate to see such willingness as characteristic of particular personality types, such as "authoritarian personalities," rather than of human beings in general when they are anxious about contingencies they cannot control. The disposition to "escape from freedom" is bound to be a significant element in groups that substitute collective decision making for individual action and personal responsibility. By the same token, submission to a group and to authority doubtless is comforting to many anxious and discontented people, helping them to resolve their personal frustrations and indecision. Group discussion obviously holds clinical benefits for some. My interest, however, is in its political implications, which helping professionals systematically misconceive and misrepresent, and in doing so ignore or seriously underestimate the instances in which denial of personal responsibility and autonomy is also clinically counter-productive.

Research in milieu and therapeutic communities supports these conclusions about the conservative and ritualistic character of meetings formally presented as self-government. One psychiatrist concludes that

the self-government is in fact "pseudodemocracy." The staff continues to manage the agenda of the meetings and to control them by bringing pressure upon susceptible patients to support particular rules (for example, everybody must attend meetings); and inmates' decisions are ignored when the staff dislikes them, though it does not often have reason to dislike them. The same study found that in self-governing psychiatric communities there is a marked increase in mood and morale shifts among both patients and staff and a substantial increase in the time and effort expended upon discussing rule changes.[15] The last effect is self-explanatory. The frequent shifts in mood and morale constitute added evidence of the significant psychological pressure the meetings exert, a phenomenon that is hardly consistent either with its portrayal as a forum for inmate influence or with the staff assumption that it is therapeutic, unless health is defined as political conformity.

As Goffman has noted of mental hospitals and Cicourel of schools,[16] there is no place one can be free of surveillance and pressure, no place to hide, very little independence; and the involvement of fellow inmates in the surveillance and the pressure intensifies both. In this sense self-government in its ritualistic form constitutes an extension of the bureaucratization of everyday life. What is called "self-government" in total institutions comes close, in fact, to denying all autonomous influence to inmates.

The staff provides the values and the methods for inmate meetings. The fundamental decision, that the personal and civil liberties individuals value may be abridged, is a staff decision and cannot be

reversed. The "participation" consists almost entirely of enforcement of staff principles and rules and not of policy making. In these respects, it is of course not analogous to representative procedures, even though both incorporate ritualistic forms, as noted earlier.

One virtually universal staff principle also springs from problematic categorization: the definition of civil rights and elementary personal freedoms as "privileges." A psychiatrist who experimented with alternative terms has observed that:

> Thinking in terms of privilege, the staff looks at it as reward, something extra, something to be earned. . . .We may hardly have any feelings about "withholding privileges". . .. they just have not been "earned yet," or the patient "doesn't deserve them." Thinking in terms of rights changes the whole picture. We hesitate to deprive people of their rights, or we feel less benevolent when we restore them. I have seen some marked changes in attitude on my own ward when the terminology has been altered.[17]

The same writer, basing his conclusions on observations in three hospitals, found a marked decrease in tension, a more relaxed atmosphere among patients, and much less frequent crises when the pretence of "self-government" was abandoned and patients were routinely accorded ordinary civil rights.

There are some revealing analogies in assumptions, in emphasis, and in concepts between the institutions that reflect the psychiatric ideology and the Nazi German state, and these point to common psychological processes that underlie both forms of polity. In calling attention to these analogies I do not imply that the two are morally

analogous or that these forms of control cannot be defended in psychiatric institutions, though I would not defend them. My interest lies in tracing their similar influence upon political cognition and behavior in the two settings.

These analogies are conspicuous:

1. clear hierarchies of competence and merit, with most of the population consigned to the lowest category and assumed to require strong guidance and control by authority, who alone can decide upon policy directions;
2. definition of all individual activities as public in character and of privacy as suspect and unhealthy;
3. discouragement of individuality and concomitant emphasis upon adaptation to the community and respect for authority, which is assumed to embody the true will of the community;
4. denigration of the intellect as promoting divisiveness, disorder, and confusion;
5. a strong focus upon feeling, especially upon the evocation of feelings shared with others;
6. frequent employment of the metaphor of health and sickness in defining people's psychological and moral condition, with the mass public assumed to be either sick or in constant danger of infection;
7. a consequent emphasis upon purity, expressed in specific puritanical restrictions upon personal conduct;

8. a strong focus upon the need for security against an enemy who is all the more dangerous because he looks normal and harmless: the Jew or the Communist; the parent or the culture of poverty that produces deviance;

9. readiness to employ force and violence to insure the victory of healthy forces over diseased ones: involuntary preventive detention; modification or destruction of the sick person or personality.

Inculcation of this pattern of assumptions and cognitions produces the ultimate degree of compliance with established norms and authority and the strongest insurance against the adoption of an adversary political posture, of self-assertion, of independence, or of skepticism. At the same time it engenders the form of mass contentment and security Fromm identified, for it lulls the critical faculties and discourages autonomy. The various components of the pattern manifestly reinforce each other and transform into each other; and they are clearly compatible with an emphasis upon a public language, as Bernstein uses that term. The contentment and security the pattern produces are therefore certain to be short-lived; for the life to which it adapts people is possible only in a contrived environment that is virtually all ritual in its social forms and that makes independent inquiry difficult. Because errors are unlikely to be detected or corrected, effective action is impossible for long.

Obviously, formal participation in such a setting has far more intensive and repressive policy effects and psychological con-

sequences than it has in democratic policy-making institutions in which social stratification is blurred, intelligence welcomed, and a considerable measure of independence encouraged. In the latter case independent research and information from non-governmental sources can be influential in shaping policy directions and informal modes of influence upon policy reinforce personal assertiveness and independence. What is alike about the two settings is the effect of formal proceedings. In both cases these encourage acceptance of dominant perceptions and beliefs; but in the first case only formal authorities are permitted to function outside the ambit of formal proceedings.

Clarification and Blurring of Adversary Relations

For authorities and dominant social groups, political situations that call attention to adversary interests and to the forms of power available to the interested groups are hazardous. Forceful suppression and open resistance are the polar cases. The employment of force to suppress resistance or dissent engenders fears of the arbitrary and despotic use of power. It evokes popular opposition that threatens to curb or overthrow the regime unless the repression is reinforced by psychological ploys that lend it legitimacy. Resort to force to suppress dissent is therefore a clear signal that a regime is unstable and limited in what it can do for long, precisely because it symbolizes unlimited power.

In both its general and its intensive forms politicization has the opposite effect upon public opinion. By focusing upon popular participation, by clouding recognition of adversary interests, by presenting authorities as helping and rehabilitative, it symbolizes narrow limits upon elite power. In these circumstances public opinion focuses upon procedures rather than upon their outcomes, so that the power to coerce, degrade, and confuse dissidents is increased.

Involvement in situations that are openly adversary in character heightens the self-esteem of people with low status: those defined as inadequate, incompetent, deviant, or subservient. More likely, heightened self-esteem and heightened willingness to assert one's rights are expressions of each other. In the England of the early nineteenth century[18] and in the United States of the 1930s the industrial worker who first took part in open conflict with his employer typically exhibited a new self-respect and felt a new dignity. Frantz Fanon concludes that the open resistance of African colonials to continued rule by the European powers similarly brought a more autonomous personality into being.[19]

Differences exist among total institutions in the degree to which people define the staff-inmate relationship as adversary. In prisons the power relationship is clear; inmates and guards typically see their interests as largely adversary in character, and so subordination is very largely a function of coercion. The prisoner does not have to internalize his subordinate status in the form of a belief that he deserves his subservience and is benefiting from it. To a smaller degree and in a more ambivalent way, the same

is true of the relationship of students and teachers in the public schools, especially in the ghettos, where schooling is more openly a form of custody than it is in middle-class neighborhoods. The relatively recent movement to make psychiatric and social-work counseling a part of the prison and school program amounts politically to an effort to blur the power relationship and encourage internalization of the norms of authorities, but it is doubtful that it has been very effective in achieving this objective, for the locus of power is clear, and both prisoners and students easily establish informal alliances among themselves, thereby winning some instrumental concessions and also underlining the reality of the adversary relationship. While rituals of subordination and of self-government may be imposed, they are recognized as tests of physical power, and only rarely as evidence of intellectual or moral worth.

The case is different with welfare recipients and inmates of psychiatric institutions. Early socialization inculcates the belief in the general population that these are helping institutions for the inadequate, and staff procedures powerfully reinforce that perception, even though welfare recipients and patients are likely to develop considerable ambivalence about it. Hospitalized mental patients are more ready to define each other as intellectually and morally inadequate and therefore to yield to staff pressure to help control each other, rather than forming alliances against the authorities. Welfare recipients normally do not meet each other in a way that permits them to form alliances. When a leadership springs

up that encourages alliance, as in the Welfare Rights Organization, the result is more self-respect and confidence and a measure of power to extract concessions from authorities.

Mortification rituals reinforce subordination and individual isolation: deprivation of ordinary civil rights and the requirement of confession of abnormalities in mental patients; need tests, submission to bureaucratic probing into their private lives, and long waits in demoralizing settings for welfare recipients. The basic fact, however, is that the power relationship is blurred, and this in turn wins general public support for the authorities while minimizing the incentive of the "helped" clienteles to assert their rights or to behave like adversaries.

It is symptomatic of this difference in the recognition of adversary interests and power that the rapidly increasing use of behavior modification is being militantly resisted in prisons on the ground that it represses and brutalizes prisoners under the guise of science; but there is little resistance to it in mental hospitals, where it is used more widely and its methods and political consequences are similar.

Though there are important analogies to the larger polity, and I have called attention to some of them, much of this discussion focuses upon the forms politicization takes in institutions that deal with children, with people who have conspicuously failed to conform to accepted conventions, and with those believed most likely to violate norms. These institutions play a central role in the larger polity, all the more potent because it is usually unrecognized or

minimized. Most of the population behaves within acceptable limits as a result of ordinary socialization processes, with no need for intensive politicization. Yet the conspicuous labeling and segregation of some people as deviants constitutes a potent, though masked and subtle, reinforcement of conventional thought and behavior. Those who are so labeled serve as a benchmark for everyone, marking off normality from unacceptability. In this sense politicization in total institutions underlies and reinforces the norms that find overt expression in the entire polity.

Antipolitics

The perception of an issue as nonpolitical often serves to win general acceptance for elite values, just as politicization does, even though the two categorizations are nominally dichotomous. The definition of an issue as professional or technical in character justifies decision making by professionals and technicians and promotes mass acceptance of their conclusions. It therefore avoids the need for ritualized political meetings and minimizes the likelihood of mass protest or disorder. In their technical and professional opinions, lawyers, engineers, accountants, and other professionals constantly make authoritative decisions that directly influence the standard of living of large numbers of people who have no effective control over the outcome.

As symbolic processes, then, politicization and antipolitics reinforce each other, for both induce mass quiescence while leaving the critical tactics for influencing policy to groups that can employ

special resources in money, skills, and public esteem. People who are lulled by ritualistic participation are the more willing to leave critical decisions about important facets of their lives to the experts, especially when the latter are formally defined as only "carrying out" policy. More importantly, a population socialized from infancy to believe it is incompetent to deal with the important decisions because they are technical and complex is the more satisfied with ritualistic participation that stays within the limits set by professionals and other authorities and which serves chiefly to induce conformity.

NOTES

1. Herbert Simon explores the contribution of facts and values to administrative decision making in Administrative Behavior, 2nd ed., (New York: Macmillan, 1957), though he is oblivious both to the sense in which fact and value are empirically inseparable from each other and to the basic tautology.

2. Herbert Spiro, The Politics of German Codetermination (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958).

3. Ralph M. Kramer, Participation of the Poor: Comparative Case Studies in the War on Poverty (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), pp. 244-250.

4. Cf. Murray Edelman, The Symbolic Uses of Politics (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964), chs. 2 and 3.

5. Thomas R. Dye and L. Harmon Ziegler, The Irony of Democracy (Belmont, Cal.: Wadsworth, 1970).

6. Frances F. Piven and Richard A. Cloward, Regulating the Poor (New York: Vintage, 1971), ch. 1.

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