

## Public Policy and Public Psychology

Culture discussions take into account sociology, economics, multiculturalism, demographics, the arts, systems analysis, but, strangely, not psychology; the psychology of what a people want, and why, or don't want. It is assumed that people want what we have heard they want, what we imagine we might want, what we imagine we should want-- diversity, inclusion, the creative market place, a global economy, an aggressive technology. It is not that these things are not valid and useful public seductions. Discussions, however, don't take into account ambivalences on these matters in the psychology of the population. Every public virtue must leave private room to wonder; it is in this critical ambiguity, that true public values are shaped. It is possible, for example, that "diversity" rubs against the contemporary need for self-referencing. The notion of "inclusion" may not find its opposition in "exclusion", but in the psychic space the individual requires in a dense environments. For that matter, "a creative market place" may defy the home-grown instinct that market and creativity don't go together ( though they profitably might). "A global economy" may be a dire reality, and still appear to the citizen as a surrender of local autonomy. New technology, useful to all, may be irresistible, and still be resented as an "inevitable".

Ambivalences are significant, and human. And where they are ignored in policy discussion, policy discussion ends up ignoring popular resentment; and it is a mistake to think that popular resentment always finds a voice, or a lobby. More often than not popular resentment ends up as private resistance. And this resistance will not enter the forum of creativity.

Creating a creative civic and national fabric calls for amenability in the public and private mind. It cannot be just assumed that citizens must be free to choose the glamorized versions of publicly commended goals. For creativity does not begin with the goals. It begins in the uninhibited psychology that does not feel "led" by the consensus, but is drawn to the consensus, only when it is "invited" to the official ideals, and not "rallied" to the official ideals.

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