

# Richmond: The Journey of American Progress

Our story is about a region, and about two kinds of mobility.

## 1. The Physical Kind

The search for new land and opportunity was the founding reason for our City, and our State and Nation. Of course, some people were already *here*.

It's not news that we began with narrow, parochial views of cultural superiority, property and entitlement that did not synch with other cultures. These views did, conveniently, allow many to cloak self-interest in idealistic terms for their own moral comfort, enrichment and reassurance. "Manifest Destiny" is familiar to any 9th-grader.

Our push for physical/commercial mobility and advantage was clothed in terms like Freedom, Self-determination, the Pursuit of Happiness. But *one size did not fit all*, and *one man one vote* nor the *pursuit of happiness* did not extend far past maleness or property-owner privilege for a long time.

Still, humanity itself is a renovation project, as well as a journey. The result is a fitful but inexorable march to new knowledge (because it is advantage itself) and to inclusion (because it is the maximization of Human Capital.) These add up to assets vital to any sustainable social group: new and replenished resources, new abilities, expanding quality of life for more.

Of course, Human Capital is a fancy term for the collected talents, resilience and resourcefulness that any person or persons are endowed with. Yet, whether others know or acknowledge this sameness of ability and capacity that we all share has less to do with the talents and more to do with the threats that competing ideas present to their comfortable worldviews and preferred structures. Which brings kind #2...

## 2. The Social Kind

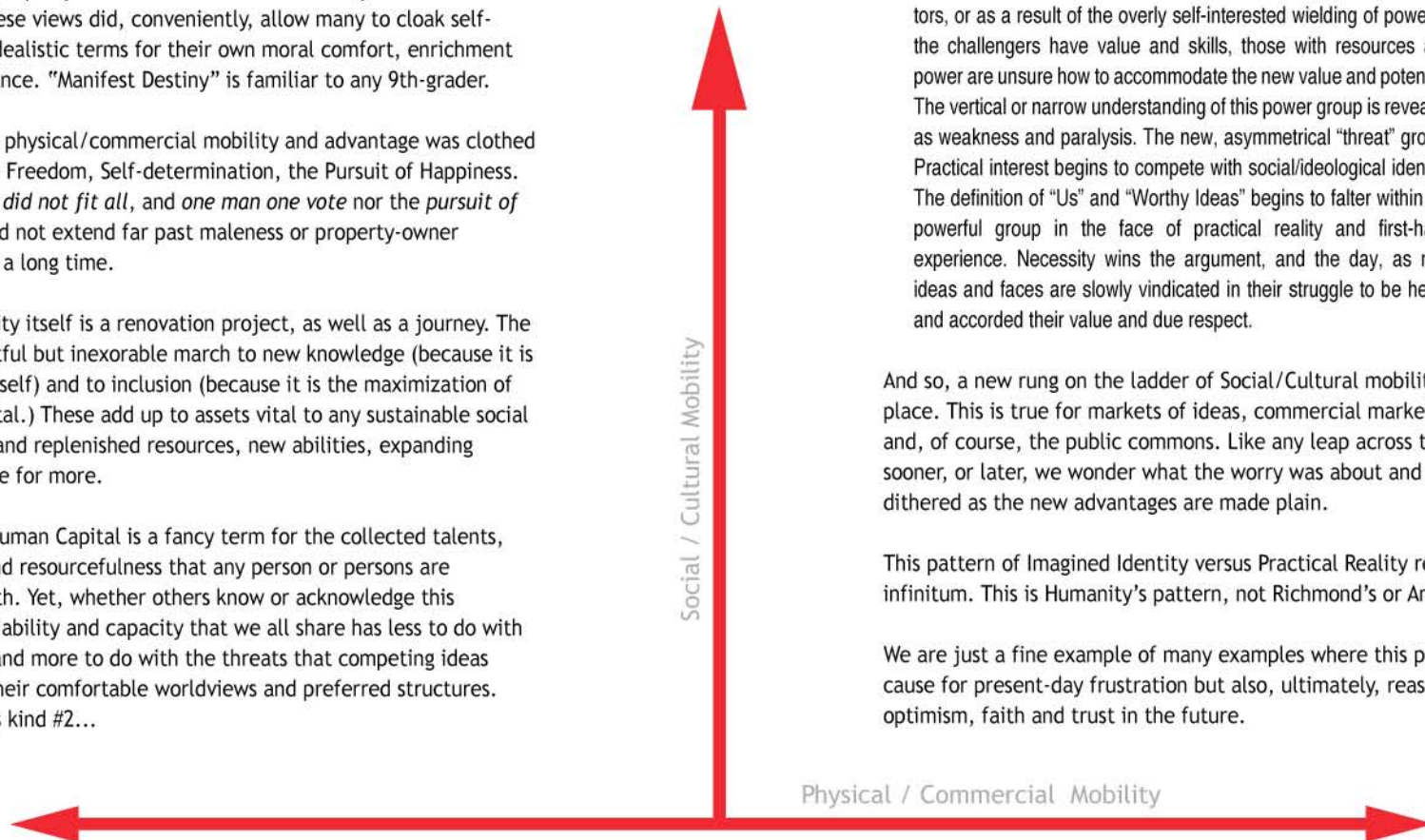
Many established social orders have come and gone, but each usually mirrors its predecessors:

Ownership or access to resources decides power. Power organizes. Power limits admission to those of mostly shared minds and habits. A new challenge arises, either from nature, from surprise competitors, or as a result of the overly self-interested wielding of power. If the challengers have value and skills, those with resources and power are unsure how to accommodate the new value and potential. The vertical or narrow understanding of this power group is revealed as weakness and paralysis. The new, asymmetrical "threat" grows. Practical interest begins to compete with social/ideological identity. The definition of "Us" and "Worthy Ideas" begins to falter within the powerful group in the face of practical reality and first-hand experience. Necessity wins the argument, and the day, as new ideas and faces are slowly vindicated in their struggle to be heard and accorded their value and due respect.

And so, a new rung on the ladder of Social/Cultural mobility is in place. This is true for markets of ideas, commercial marketplaces and, of course, the public commons. Like any leap across the Rubicon, sooner, or later, we wonder what the worry was about and why we dithered as the new advantages are made plain.

This pattern of Imagined Identity versus Practical Reality repeats, ad infinitum. This is Humanity's pattern, not Richmond's or America's.

We are just a fine example of many examples where this pattern is cause for present-day frustration but also, ultimately, reason for optimism, faith and trust in the future.



Viewed this way, many social groups, cultural sensibilities or demographic trends can find satisfying context. And their connected nature.

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## 1. The Physical Kind

Exploration --> Claim --> Settlement --> Development --> Expansion  
Canoe --> Ship --> Bateau --> Freighter  
River --> Canal --> Rail --> Road --> Airway  
Symbol/Signal --> Letter Post --> Telegraph/phone --> Internet Protocol  
Reed --> Wood --> Stone --> Brick --> Steel/Glass  
Extraction --> Transport --> Agriculture --> Manufacture --> Ideation  
Labor --> Machine --> Automation --> Computerization --> Virtualization  
Subsistence --> Surplus --> Depletion --> Reuse --> Reclamation

## 2. The Social Kind

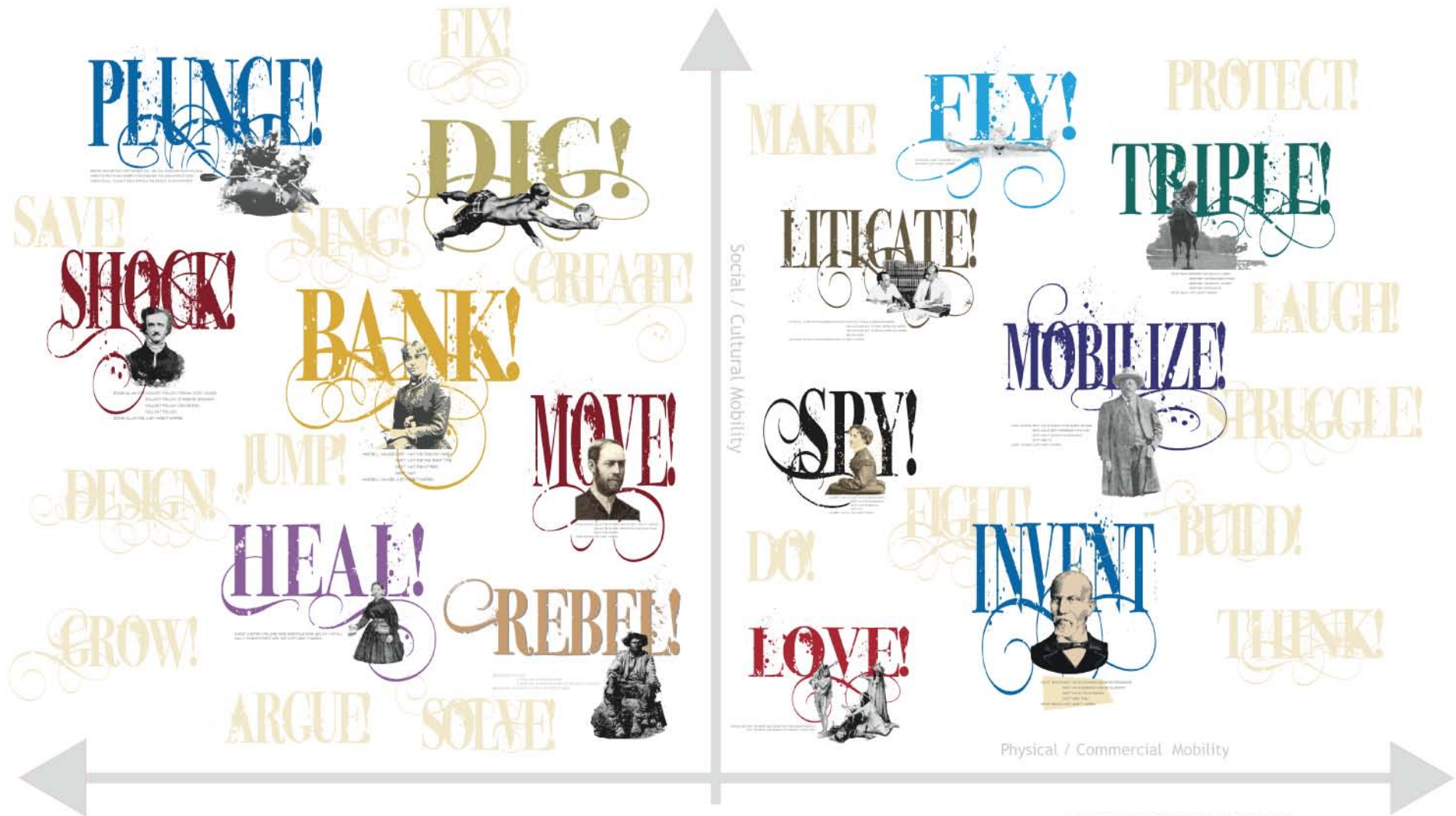
Resource Struggle --> Achievement  
Religious Struggle --> Achievement  
Self-determination Struggle --> Achievement  
Legislative Struggle --> Achievement  
Labor/Capital Struggle --> Achievement  
Ethnic Struggle --> Achievement  
Educational Struggle --> Achievement  
Gender Struggle --> Achievement  
Generational Struggle --> Achievement  
Resource/Climate Struggle --> Achievement  
Identity Struggle --> Achievement



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# They Just Made it Happen.



HISTORY IS A **VERB** NOT A **NOUN**

A PEOPLE-POWERED CAMPAIGN  
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