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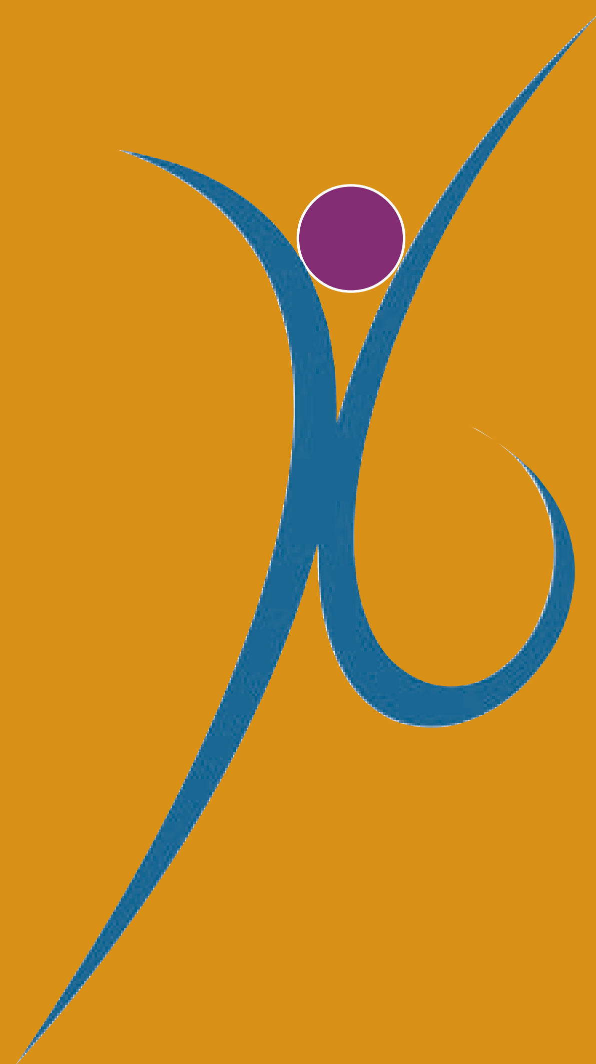
- The sustainable utilisation of subterranean water resources for improvement in the quality of life
- Culture, language and identity



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A Bourdieuan approach

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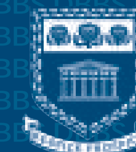
OCCASIONAL PAPER NO. 5



UNIVERSITY *of the* WESTERN CAPE

Project: Policy Management, Governance and Poverty Alleviation in the Western Cape

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John Williams

Project: Policy Management, Governance and Poverty Alleviation in the Western Cape

This new research programme focuses on the three key areas of government activity in housing, health and employment, through:

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3. a skills audit, aimed at comparing skills in health departments with the requisite skills for optimal health care delivery (in terms of financial management, strategic management, technical skills etc) and entailing a review of departmental organograms, of the skills and qualifications of key staff and of the quantity and quality of human resources training available to staff, as well as interviews with both management and workers; and
4. analysing the interface between the state and civil society, aimed at establishing how ordinary citizens perceive the services delivered to them and ascertaining what they believe to be their entitlements and obligations as citizens.

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Community Development Workers as advocacy planners in South Africa?

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Project: Policy Management, Governance and Poverty Alleviation in the Western Cape

2006

Abstract

Poor communities in post-apartheid South Africa have yet to experience the democratic dividend of a better life for all – the promissory note of the democratic "miracle". It was for this reason that the South African president introduced Community Development Workers (CDWs) early in the 21st century. CDWs are supposed to make the poor aware of their constitutional rights, such as their right to basic services including social grants, housing support, and so on. In this regard CDWs are specifically meant to act as change agents. This paper suggests that by strategically deploying Pierre Bourdieu's central concepts and practices of different forms of capital, field, positionality, habitus, doxa, misrecognition and reflexivity, CDWs can act as advocacy planners, advancing the interests of the historically marginalised and excluded.[1]

Introduction

The problematic of service delivery, community participation, development workers and advocacy planning

The formal introduction of democracy in South Africa has been a major success story of the latter part of the 20th century. Even so, throughout South Africa many communities, especially poor communities, have yet to experience the democratic dividend of a better life for all – the promissory note of the democratic "miracle" (Republic of South Africa, 2003). Chapter 4 of the Municipal Structures Act states that "[t]he participation of citizens in the structures will ... revolutionise the way that local governance happens at the metropolitan level. Individual municipalities will be empowered to decide what is best for their situation, with the guidance of national legislation that permits a variety of forms of local participation" (Republic of South Africa, 1998c). This, together with the provisions in Subsection 152(1)(a-e) of the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996), means the following in practice:

- People should have a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives.
- Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- The public participation process communicates the interests and meets the process needs of all participants.
- The public participation process seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected.
- The public participation process involves participants in defining how they participate.
- The public participation process communicates to participants how their input was, or was not, utilised.
- The public participation process provides participants with the information they need in order to participate in a meaningful way.

Despite the legal provisions, it would seem that most community participation exercises in post-apartheid South Africa are largely spectator politics, where ordinary people have mostly become endorsees of pre-designed planning programmes. They are often the objects of administrative manipulation and a miracle of reconciliation in the international arena of consensus politics, while state functionaries of both the pre- and post-apartheid eras ensconce themselves as bureaucratic experts summoned to "ensure a better life for all". This specifically means that, especially during elections, would-be councillors make various promises of service delivery to people at the grassroots level, yet they seldom keep such promises once they have been elected into positions of power. Faced by various forms of protests, as evidenced in 2005, officials and councillors alike often tried to justify the lack of service delivery in terms of a lack of human resource capacity to deliver such services. Yet, this is precisely the capacity that they claim when they contest the elections for a political party!

Under the heading "Councils spurn community workers", Marianne Merten reports on page 10 of the *Mail & Guardian* of 3–9 February 2006 that only about a third of CDWs, i.e. 138 out of 378, managed to get jobs in the Western Cape since graduating on 5 December 2005. Cape Town hired 40,9% of this total, the Cape Winelands hired 26,5%, and the Cape South Coast hired 27,5%. More specifically, Cape Town took 45 of the 110 who served their learnerships there, while the Winelands, comprising Stellenbosch and Paarl, recruited 18 of the 68 and the Cape South Coast councils such as George and Bitou hired 17 of 62.[2] "Many elected public representatives and officials feel threatened by, or are uninformed about, the initiative. Eunice Hlahla, responsible for three wards in the Democratic Alliance-controlled George Council said: 'Since they [the community] know us, they are not going to the councillors any more'. Western Cape local government and housing minister Richard Dyantyi said councils cited financial constraints for not taking on community workers." Meanwhile, though, according to the Democratic Alliance, 203 of the 284 municipalities in South Africa are dysfunctional and do not deliver sanitation services to 60% of the citizens within their jurisdiction (South African Broadcasting Corporation, News at 22:00, 13 February 2006). It is into this problematic of service delivery that CDWs were born.

The structure of this paper

Apart from the preceding introductory section clarifying the research problematic of service delivery, which Community Development Workers as advocacy planners must alleviate, if not solve, this paper contains the following sections:

- Advocacy planning and democratic practice
- Not yet Bourdieu: preparing the conceptual/theoretical ground
- Enter Bourdieu: different forms of capital
- One's positionality on the field
- Habitus as the relational nexus between reflection and action
- Doxa as the transformative nexus with alternative possibilities
- The methodological significance of Bourdieu's conceptual repertoire

- Research challenges: can Community Development Workers be advocacy planners?
- Provisional results: reflections and possibilities

Major research argument

- Adequate service delivery to citizens, even in a “democratic state”, is not inevitable; on the contrary, we must plan for it, struggle for it – conceptually, theoretically, organisationally, institutionally and empirically.
- Constitutionally-driven rights, as in post-apartheid South Africa, can only be realised if they are deliberately and systematically incorporated into the planning programmes and practices of local authorities such as municipalities. Hence the importance of advocacy planning for Community Development Workers.

Research question: Can Community Development Workers become advocacy planners?

Table 1 illustrates the comparative spatial differences of access to services in Metropolitan Cape Town. More specifically, these statistics reinforce the glaring reality of black marginalisation, exclusion and deprivation and largely white privilege, affluence and access to adequate and effective services, even in post-apartheid South Africa and more than ten years since the first democratic elections in the country’s history.

In view of the overriding continuity of racism, exclusion and discriminatory practices in relation to the historically marginalised, the South African president introduced Community Development Workers (CDWs) early in the 21st century to fill the gap between government services and the poor. CDWs are supposed to make the poor aware of their constitutional rights, such as their right to basic services including social grants, housing support, and so on. In this regard CDWs are specifically meant to act as change agents. According to the South African Management Development Institute (SAMDI, 2005), this means that CDWs are officially mandated to “develop”

Table 1 *Comparative racial access to services in Cape Town*

Development indicator	Black residential area: WALLACEDENE		White residential area: CONSTANTIA		White residential area: CLIFTON		White residential area: SEA POINT	
	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%
Employed	5 520	40,89	5 956	60,84	263	64,20	5 702	7,32
Unemployed	7 979	59,11	3 834	39,16	147	35,80	4 246	42,68
Total	13 499	100	9 790	100	410	100	9 948	100
Household subsistence level <R1 000 per month	6 755	78,02	1 320	34,26	51	16,50	1 944	22,98
Household subsistence level >R1 000 per month	1 903	21,98	2 534	65,74	258	83,50	6 516	77,02
Total	8 658	100	3 854	100	309	100	8 460	100
Fuel: candles and kerosene (paraffin)	2 876	52,37	36	0,90	0	0	16	0,26
Proper fuel	2 616	47,63	3 980	99,10	221	100	6 176	99,74
Total	5 492	100	4 016	100	221	100	6 192	100
Outside water only	4 949	90,11	66	1,64	0	0	268	4,32
Access to water inside dwelling	543	9,89	3 950	98,36	221	100	5 924	95,68
Total	5 492	100	4 016	100	221	100	6 192	100
Overall physical infrastructure	Very poor		Excellent		Excellent		Excellent	

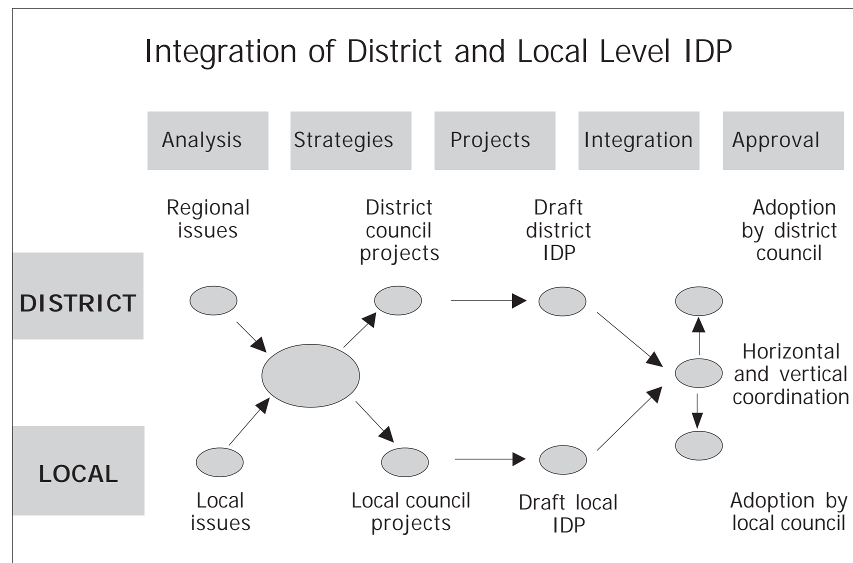
Source: author’s own calculations based on statistics provided by the Urban Policy Unit, City of Cape Town, 2003
Please note: In the historically white areas of Constantia, Clifton and Sea Point the figures for unemployed, household subsistence levels below R1 000, the use of candles and kerosene as fuel, and access to outside water only, reflect the conditions of mostly black domestic and farm workers in these areas.

and "transform" communities by, among other activities,

- informing them about, and assisting them to access, the services provided by the government;
- determining the needs of communities and communicating these to the government;
- promoting networks between community workers and projects to improve service delivery; and
- compiling reports and documents about progress and local issues.

These tasks suggest that CDWs must become advocacy planners (Friedmann, 1987, 1992), i.e. they must act as advocates of development and transformation in a specific community, especially in relation to Integrated Development Planning (IDP) as illustrated in the following diagram.

Figure 1 *Integrated development planning*



Source: Author's own design

Advocacy planning and democratic practice

The question arises: what is advocacy planning, and how could it be mobilised in the interests of the poor and marginalised? The next section seeks to provide a preliminary response.

In his seminal article of 1965 on advocacy planning, Paul Davidoff suggests that this mode of planning is significant for participatory governance for at least two reasons. First, advocacy planning emphasises partisanship, i.e. the idea of winning a specific battle and identifying with the plight of a group that is in a position of power/resource disadvantage. Secondly, advocacy planning emphasises politics, i.e. the concept of rigorous, even aggressive negotiating with opponents or manipulating the environment to obtain a desired end on behalf of a client population, in this instance historically marginalised South Africans.

For the sake of conceptual clarity, it is necessary briefly to illuminate the theoretical dimensions of advocacy planning and then to investigate to what extent the central concepts of Pierre Bourdieu of capital, positionality, habitus, field, doxa and reflexivity can be used to advance transformative planning at grassroots level.

Not yet Bourdieu: preparing the conceptual/theoretical ground

The reflexive advocacy planner [3] (AP) begins with a critique of the present situation. Such a critique is not merely normative, but contains a strong analytical element that allows one to interpret, understand and explain why things are as they are. It is in this regard that Bourdieu's concept of different types of capital and their varied, relational categories become important. The relational nature of differentiated forms of capital acknowledges, yet problematises, the primacy of social capital (Putnam, 1993). For APs the problematic centres around their capacity at both individual and "community" level to intervene in the formal planning domain as agents of social

change. Hence, for APs social capital becomes important in relation to social inclusion. Social exclusion, as Giddens (1991) suggests, derives from the existing class divisions and inequality, resulting, in turn, in differential access to forms of self-actualisation and empowerment. For APs to address inequality and social exclusion they must identify, confront, and seek to change the structures that hamper individuals' efforts to impact on them, at the same time ensuring that they build the capacity of those individuals with the least power and opportunities within a specific community.

The insightful AP will notice that the dominant, even popular, discourses on public participation tend to emphasise building the capacity not of individuals but of communities as territories. And, as pointed out by Shortfall (1994), the community development approach of the 1950s tended to view "community" as a group of people with common interests, living in the same geographical area and frequently feeling a sense of "community spirit". For a critically-oriented AP, such a territorial approach often masks inequalities and power relations between social actors within a "community" by employing the liberal notion of "consensus" (Curtin *et al.*, 1997). Accordingly, the politics of consensus serves to obscure rather than address or resolve power relations of class, ethnicity and gender in a community. The goal for the AP is to secure "adequate" participation (defined by the participants) of all local people in the planning process. As the present author's research has amply demonstrated over the past few years in post-apartheid South Africa, it is frequently the "voice" of the elite that dominates the public participation exercises on development planning, largely excluding historically marginalised individuals and communities (Williams, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c; see also O'Hara, 1998). Indeed, as I have noted elsewhere, participation is often simply ritualistic, if not tokenistic (Williams 2004a, 2004b). It is in this regard that APs can encourage an array of new participative mechanisms, such as deliberative opinion polling, local residents' forums, focus groups and citizens' juries, subject to a careful consideration of the contextual

specificities of a particular area. It is not merely the existential critique of a context that is important, but also its historically-driven relations of power, which often reveal the presence of pre-existing structures of inequality (Williams, 2005c).

As Wright (1990) correctly observes, in many instances existing power-holders become more powerful, partly as a result of the failure of community participants to consider systems of governance and the dimension of power. Consequently, the more articulate and powerful individuals and groups are better able to engage development planning programmes. In the case of Ireland, for example, as noted by Commins and Keane (1994), when leader groups did not assume a proactive role, they were essentially supplementing the capital resources of those already prepared and able to start, or expand, an enterprise. Even so, APs must realise that despite such structural inequities, the notion of community still has a rhetorical significance, especially in a country such as South Africa where it is constitutionally entrenched. This means that APs must seek to build on the wish of people to believe in their "community," thereby encouraging and developing its symbolic construction.

Even so, it is important to note here that in the era of globalisation local agency, if built on cultural-territorial identity, carries with it several dangers of xenophobia, traditionalism, parochialism and so forth. It is thus vital for APs to recognise and manage the very real conflicts of interest that might exist within such symbolically constructed "communities" or "culture territories", since obscuring such myopic tendencies may contribute to exclusion. This potential has several implications for planning. First, the very process of symbolic construction of culture territories will exclude and disempower some residents of these localities if they do not feel affinity with the constructed cultural identity. Secondly, the individual capacity to act will be diminished by parochial tendencies within a specific community. In this context, APs must realise that the personal interests of all individuals

in the area are unlikely to be simultaneously advanced, since contextual planning based on the symbolic construction of cultural-territorial identities is "a political and possibly conflictual process" (Shortall 1994). Thus, for APs this means that contextual planning only has meaning when it challenges the processes of exclusion and empowers those without power. It is precisely in this regard that social capital assumes its ontological significance, even though it frequently operates as a nebulous, if not meaningless, though fashionable term (Fukuyama, 1995, 1999; Schuller, 1999).

When entering this analytical fray, it would be useful for APs to realise that "the concept of social capital has become one of the most popular exports from sociological theory into everyday language" (Portes, 1998: 2). Various researchers have made contributions in this regard: for example, almost some twenty years ago Coleman (1988) defined social capital as "the structure of relations between actors and among actors that facilitates productive activity. [It implies] a structure in which others may be contacted, obligations and expectations can be safely formed, information can be shared and sanctions can be applied." Portes (1998) shows how applications in the sociological literature emphasise social capital's role in social control, in family support, and in benefits mediated by extra-familial networks. Instructively, he relates the concept back to various antecedents, including Durkheim's emphasis on group life as an antidote to anomie, Marx's distinction between an atomised class-in-itself and a mobilised class-for-itself, and Simmel's analysis of social exchange. However, the most influential use of the concept has been by Putnam (1993), for whom social capital refers to "features of social organisation, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating co-ordinated actions." For Putnam the presence of social capital leads to better economic performance.

While this argument may sound persuasive, it is methodologically flawed: its logical circularity as well as its unproblematic application to communities as opposed to individual members within specific communities requires greater theoretical rigour and conceptual refinement (Portes, 1998; Morrow, 1999). Portes, for example, shows that social capital can have negative consequences alongside the positive ones emphasised by Putnam. Thus the need for "a more dispassionate stance [which] will allow analysts to consider all facets… and prevent turning the ensuing literature into an unmitigated celebration of community" (Portes, 1998). If we accept Putnam's arguments, though, there are very important implications for APs. First, there is the long time-horizon over which social capital is built, if indeed it can be built consciously at all. Secondly, it is important to focus on social relations of power, norms and networks of civic engagement, rather than on profits and job creation, as the underlying basis of economic performance.

For APs it thus becomes important to develop the communication and conceptual skills of the people and to give them the confidence and opportunity to work as equals with those in authority in the process of strategic planning for their area (Asby and Midmore, 1995). Towards this end, there is a need to provide integrated facilities for day care, child care, and sports, grounding the reciprocal social practices and responsive institutional structures by involving people in a process of community appraisal by using, for example, household questionnaires to feed into the generation of action plans. However, APs must realise that the implementation of these activities would not necessarily diminish the influence of the elite minority in planning bureaucracies immediately. However, in due course the creation of networks of information sharing and the building of trust will surely curb the dominant power relations of local authorities and other statutory bodies, and quite legitimately make the community the locus of integrated development planning. Unfortunately, though, these resource-demanding, community-driven initiatives are often limited because existing monitoring and assessment criteria are financially or output-oriented rather than concerned with the process of capacity-building and community empowerment.

Enter Bourdieu: different forms of capital

Portes (1998) questions the extension of the concept of social capital from "an individual asset to a feature of communities and even nations, since excessive extensions of the concept may jeopardise its heuristic value" (see e.g. Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 107–8, 118–19; Bourdieu, 1979/2003: 171–83, 183–4; Swartz, 1997: 73–5, 80–2; Fowler, 2001: 319–20). It is in this regard that Bourdieu's concept of social capital presents itself as analytically more apposite as it emphasises the benefits accruing to individuals through participation in groups (Portes, 1998). For Morrow (1999) Bourdieu "sees social capital as a tool or heuristic device for exploring processes and practices that are related to the acquisition of other forms of capital". However, this formulation poses the following questions. How does individual social capital relate to collective social capital? How does the capacity of an individual relate to the capacity of a locality?

It is here that Bourdieu's concept of social capital must be considered together with other forms of capital. For Bourdieu (1977, 1991), individuals in any field struggle over resources and rewards, and their struggles are structured around their possession of economic capital, social capital (various kinds of valued relations with significant others), cultural capital (primarily legitimate knowledge), and symbolic capital (prestige and social honour). For Bourdieu, these are both the objects and the means of their struggle and he suggests that the social construction of group or territorial identities is one aspect of these struggles, and will result in gains or losses of capital for each individual. Analytically, APs must bear in mind that the power of the dominant class succeeds in defining, through "symbolic violence", what counts as legitimate knowledge, what social relations are valuable, and what symbols confer prestige and social honour. It is in this regard that APs must realise that Bourdieu's analysis of social, symbolic and cultural capital offers an explanation of how the construction of a territorial model of development planning may be a means not only of furthering the interests of a locally dominant class (and thus deepening inequalities and exclusion), but also of masking the power relations implicit in this process and making it appear legitimate.

Heuristically, for APs, Bourdieu's differentiated forms of capital assume dialectical relations of power along at least four axes. Axis one: economic capital as financial and material resources. Axis two: social capital as resources linked to ties of friendship, neighbours, and relatives, i.e. the network of contacts. Axis three: cultural capital as (a) education (exams and titles) and (b) high cultural behaviour as an indication of having a good command of the codes of legitimate culture (e.g. as much knowledge of history, language and politics as is required to enter the sphere of power in society. Axis four: symbolic capital, encompassing prestige, reputation, and respect and overlapping with the other forms of capitals. In short, for APs this means that when economic, social and cultural forms of capital are being read and understood as legitimate, they transform into symbolic capital – a relational quality that is awarded value and recognition. In practice, though, APs must appreciate that the appropriateness of human qualities varies according to both context and time. Consider, for example, the forms of capital that would be appropriate during war as opposed to peace, or during famine as opposed to abundance, or in the field of science as opposed to the field of literature. It is in this regard that the relational nature of the different forms of capital across time and space become important for APs, and where, through the dialectical nexus of Bourdieu's notion of "field", they cohere in their fluidity/permanence to constitute one's positionality in relation to the human condition. This means that for APs one's positionality[4] on the field (of actors) is important.

One's positionality on the field

For Bourdieu, a field is a network of objective relations between positions that are determined and settled through their placements in relation to the

forms of capital that are active in the field in question (see e.g. Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 16–18, 21–3, 98–100, 101, 107–8, 125–8; Swartz,1997: 4, 35, 117, 133–4, 138–9, 278, 286, 291–3; Fowler, 2001: 319).

Hence, for APs this means that in any field there are different forms of capital in action, signifying their positionality (see e.g. Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 97–8, 121–2, 215, 229–30, 253–4; Bourdieu, 1979/2003: 82, 107–8). The different forms of capital can be "cashed in" and converted to other forms of capital on the field. Broadly, on all fields, there are battles going on between the established and the newcomers (or non-established aspiring to a reputable position). APs must realise that the battle on the field is not only about positions, but also about which forms of capital are legitimate. And it is in this context that Bourdieu's concept of habitus assumes conceptual and analytical validity.

Habitus as the relational nexus between reflection and action

With a view to conceptually linking capital and field, i.e. the interdependence between actors' positions in the social space and their choices (taken positions), Bourdieu introduces the concept of habitus, which is a set or system of changeable dispositions to act (see e.g. Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 120–1, 123–4, 139–40; Bourdieu, 1979/2003: 63–4, 76–9, 81–3, 86–8; Swartz,1997: 163–80). Utilising the notion of habitus, APs can analyze the link between social structures and mental structures. Since habitus has an integrative function, it gives more primacy to earlier experiences than to recent ones. Deployed thus, habitus is the preconscious structuring of practice (Bourdieu, 1993: 480), a common-sense way of behaving based on beliefs and understandings about the nature of reality. This means that the process of community building happens at a preconscious level through communication practices that bridge various institutions and social strata.

Here it is important for APs to realise that habitus encompasses the history, beliefs, and rituals that are so well integrated in practice as to be forgotten and taken for granted by the individuals within a community. This raises the obvious question: what happens when these taken-for-granted sanctions are ignored or transgressed? It is within this context that Bourdieu's richly-textured *oeuvre* considers the analytical import of doxa.

Doxa as the transformative nexus with alternative possibilities

According to Bourdieu, every field has its own doxa, i.e. a set of peculiar and vague common-sense ideas about right and wrong, normal and not normal, qualifying and disqualifying (see e.g. Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 73; Bourdieu, 1977/2003: 164–71; Swartz,1997: 126, 231–32, 277). The most obvious, normal and matter of course things are also the most invisible – and therefore not subjects for discussion. Doxa also consists of partly incorporated patterns of behaviour – rules of the game, trump cards, bans, and prohibitions – that are valid on the field. This means that doxa is preserved – and protected – by means of procedures of recruiting and admission, as an intricate system of invitation and consecration. However, APs must realise that doxa-based socialisation is never perfect. Broadly, in all fields, there are battles going on between the established and newcomers (or non-established aspiring to a reputable position). The unorthodoxy, or heterodox, shown by the newcomers threatens the doxa, which then turns to orthodoxy, a defensive monopolistic discourse and action. The established, dominant interest groups try to stop time and progress so that just their forms of capital are reproduced – those forms they had fought for once upon a time.

In this regard, APs must realise that newcomers do not completely deny the doxa – the game – on the field. Their future would be ruined if the field dissolved and vanished. The battle on the field is not only about positions but also about which forms of capital should be seen as legitimate. Two perspectives follow, one showing that the history of a field is determined by former battles, and the other that the battles on a field always are historically

determined. For that reason, the battles on a field are between orthodoxy and heterodoxy.

Both the established and newcomers – those not yet established – share the belief that the field is worth fighting about. This illusion – to be involved in a game, to invest in it, to take it seriously, to forget about it – is ruptured when misbelief comes up. A field that is going in the other direction is the political field. Its autonomy is increasing – and has been – since the field turned professional by means of specialised bureaucrats. It is here that APs must be prepared for institutionalised battles or debates, where the political products – programmes, ideologies, slogans and so forth – are constructed with respect to the opponents of politics.

The methodological significance of Bourdieu's conceptual repertoire

By using Bourdieu's central concepts of capital, field, positionality, habitus, and doxa, APs can help to mobilise radical practice by providing a critical account of the situation to be changed.

The obvious question is: how can these conceptual and theoretical constructs assist the researcher/grassroots activist? Here Bourdieu's key concept of "reflexivity" allows the researcher to be self-critical about his/her research methodologies, using exactly the same techniques for research in the world to reflect on the researcher who is carrying out the research (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 36–7, 72; Swartz, 1997:10–11, 270–83, 293–5). For Bourdieu, the analysis of empirical data can only be understood if it is subject to a combination of both common-sense and scientific categories, and the realisation that all judgments in social science are permeated by value positions. Such reflexivity will also allow the researcher to appreciate that there is often misrecognition of specific interests and associated power relations as these are frequently presented as the "public good", the "common interest" or the "national interest". Such misrecognition (termed "false consciousness" by Marx) should be disclosed with a view to promoting the interests of the historically marginalised and excluded in society (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 51,160, 1701–2; Swartz, 1997: 9–10, 89–93).

Once one is aware that things are not as they might be, a transformation model is conceived (in Bourdieu's terms, changing the doxa and capital relations). The idea of a grassroots advocacy planner is to help communities and groups that are already mobilised to search for practical (realistic/winnable) solutions to the problems they experience. To this search, professional planners bring a strong analytical ability, a sense of what is likely to work and what is not, a knowledge of what has worked or failed elsewhere, and an ability to assess and evaluate alternative solutions.

Devising an appropriate strategy (in Bourdieu's terms, one's positionality on a specific field) is the next step in grassroots planning practice and requires timely, accurate, and richly textured information ("intelligence"), correct interpretations of this intelligence, a careful assessment of actual options, and the continuous monitoring of grassroots activities, action results, and the changing context of collective action. In this respect, grassroots planners can provide mobilised groups with the intelligence they need for devising a successful strategy of action.

Through a reflexive stance, APs will understand that most solutions to deep-seated problems, even radical transformative solutions, usually have technical aspects that must be considered: questions of design, cost, location, and so on. In these areas grassroots planners can help mobilised groups and refine the technical aspects of transformative solutions.

Reflexive participation by neighbourhood residents in the identification and solution of local problems can be enhanced by using the "social learning model" – a framework that highlights the fact that learning itself is an interactive, dialogical, iterative and recursive process. It feeds on its underlying pedagogical tenets and is informed by the dominant as well as desired social practices. It is never direct, but must be passed through a theoretical and ideological filter where

experience is sifted for what it has to teach us. It becomes available to us only in the "filtered" form. In this regard APs can make conscious use of a social learning framework by devising group process methods of "filtering" so that the group itself can learn from its own experience. These methods may involve open discussion, self criticism, role playing, maintaining a collective memory, and related devices suitable for this purpose. What has been learned from practice constitutes valuable knowledge, especially if the knowledge is also used to expand and revise theoretical and ideological components of transformative practice. Experiential knowledge is ephemeral, embodied in particular individuals who possess "know-how", but it tends not to be articulated and become generally available.

Yet, when the goal is emancipation, it is important that learning takes place collectively. This requires abstraction from experience, which may be called "generalising the solution", and the dissemination of newly-acquired knowledge in ways appropriate to the project: using video, film, and writing; sharing experience by word of mouth; arranging for exchange visits with other mobilised groups who may be interested in the experience, and so on. In this way the experiential fund for radical practice is enriched. It must be emphasised that in the social learning model all the members within the group are considered potential teachers. This means that the group approaches education as a non-hierarchical and essentially non-discriminatory process. Expertise is no longer derived merely from textualised abstractions but is conceived, analyzed and explicated in the totality of human experiences, regardless of formal or non-formal exposure to education. In the social learning model, human beings enter the pedagogical realm both as learners on the one hand and as teachers on the other, minimising as far as possible the distinction between sacrosanct theories and the prevailing social reality. This implies that grassroots planning adopts a dialectical view of education, in which social practice informs theoretical perspectives and theoretical perspectives serve to explicate social reality.

Advocacy planning at grassroots level is oppositional. APs must therefore realise that, sooner or later, they will run up against the State and its regulatory and repressive agencies. What happens then will be guided by the strategy the mobilised group has adopted. In most cases the encounter will be peaceful, and the group may even seek the active collaboration of the State, albeit under carefully controlled conditions. Grassroots planners can mediate these encounters by adopting the latter's jargon and presenting the group's demands in ways that are likely to meet with the approval of the State. When performing this mediation, APs are usually not autonomous agents but have to act as representatives or delegates of the group for which they speak. This implies that APs must be ideologically committed to the transformative project of the group. They must see themselves as agents of collective struggle.

Advocacy planning is further characterised by group processes that are difficult to manage, and the tendency to concentrate information, knowledge and decision-making in small leadership elites is very common, especially as decision time is usually in short supply and only the most committed are prepared to make the necessary time available. In any group process there is thus an oligarchical tendency. Ideally grassroots planners should ensure the effective participation of all members of the group during the entire process, which involves the four related phases of social planning, namely vision, theory, strategy and action.

The meanings articulated by ideology do not remain constant but must be tested continuously in practice. Yet the process of devising a democratically conceived ideology through a collective enterprise rather than through the work of an individual or group, requires attitudinal skills such as patience and empathy. Ideological statements must be persuasive not only to the membership of the mobilised group, but to other groups as well. They must at the same time be coherent, intellectually sophisticated, morally persuasive and simple in expression. Their function is to legitimise emancipatory practice in adversity, and

to disarm and delegitimise the opposition. APs who become an integral part of mobilised groups should have the necessary skills to put together statements and strategies that will serve these several purposes. Hence, grassroots planners must never be far removed from the action itself.

Most importantly, the linkage of knowledge to action in social transformation must be accomplished through neighbourhood participants themselves. This is the most important imperative underlying Pierre Bourdieu's repertoire of conceptual tools that can assist the analytical tasks of CDWs as they engage a given social reality as advocacy planners in the interests of the historically marginalised and excluded.

Research challenges: can Community Development Workers be advocacy planners?

Based on the preceding exposition of Pierre Bourdieu's key conceptual tools, it could be suggested that for him democracy can best be understood not as an ideal state of being where there is formal equality, but rather as a series a historically determined processes that seek to make the actual lived experiences of ordinary people "less unjust", existing social relations "less arbitrary", institutions "less unjust", the distribution of resources "less imbalanced", and recognition "less scarce" (Wacquant, 2005: 21).

Ontologically and hermeneutically, this means that CDWs as APs in South Africa must recognise that policy initiation, design, implementation and monitoring still largely occur through racialised, gendered, ethnicised, and class-based relations of power (economically, ideologically, politically). Hence, it is the spatialisation and concomitant geographical embeddedness of such uneven power relations that characterise the South African social formation at the beginning of the 21st century — a veritable challenge for Community Development Workers as they seek to give material content to the basic rights of ordinary people in the "new" South Africa.

Preliminary research[5] on CDWs suggests that they can keep the local state accountable (see e.g. Fung and Wright, 2001) by linking the temporal (history), spatial (geographical embeddeness of place), and constitutional features (idealised reality) of the South African context. Here Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* (1964) provides a theoretical anchor, as the South African democratic project also seems to be a quest for modernity as the telos and singular defining referent. Indeed, it would seem that in the case of the CDWs' mandate, "development" has come to be a totalising, often unproblematic mantra, filtering/directing all official policies and planning frameworks. Accordingly, this research specifically seeks to detotalise this "development" discourse by problematising the deepening of democracy for CDWs (in the Western Cape, South Africa). Worcester was chosen as it is a peri-urban area within a distinctly agriculture hinterland, approximately 90 kilometres north-east of Cape Town, where historically disadvantaged communities are not yet able to access and satisfy their constitutionally guaranteed rights of basic service delivery. Indeed, in the case of Worcester, CDWs appear to reflect Marcuse's triad of dialogical relations *vis-à-vis* the temporal, spatial and constitutional features of South Africa and quite clearly are not as monolithic as their foundational mandates would seem to suggest This means that CDWs do not simply see their role as unproblematic "solvers" of narrowly-defined forms of service delivery such as advising people how to access their housing subsidies or how to apply for old-age pensions. On the contrary, they tend to interpret their mandate to assist the poor to access such state-aided programmes by linking their service to the notion of the rights of ordinary in a democratic South Africa, such as the right to housing guaranteed by the Constitution. Stated differently, CDWs are not unproblematic conduits through which the State can simply channel its understanding of "democratic rights", but CDWs have their own understanding of what "democracy" could or should mean in practice. And it is precisely in this context that there arises, perhaps unintentionally, a dialogical relationship between the

State on one hand and the CDWs on the other. Thus CDWs seem to be conducting their dialogue on democratic practice along the three distinct class lines of social change (see e.g. Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 23–4, 204–5; Bourdieu, 1977/2003: 80–1, 85–6; Swartz, 1997: 153–8, 180–8; Fowler, 2001: 318–23). These lines are:

- the dominant neo-liberal (status quo) mode
- the residual revolutionary (liberation) mode, and
- the pragmatic (mixed) mode.

It is here hypothesised that CDWs choose any of these ideological modes of dialogue in their contact with communities and that specific community issues trigger the conceptual/theoretical frame of specific dialogues. Dialogues are important for the deepening of democracy (see e.g. Alinsky, 1971) for the following reasons:

- They allow assumptions to be brought out into the open and encourage participants to suspend judgment in order to foster understanding and break down obstacles.
- They seek to create equality among participants. Certain conditions can be created to level the playing field for participants, who might have differing amounts of information about the issue, differing experience in public forums, and differing degrees of real or perceived power or authority. They help build trust and a climate of safety for deep dialogue.
- They aim for a greater understanding of others' viewpoints through empathy. In dialogue, multiple perspectives are invited to the table and encouraged to be voiced.

The importance of dialogue thus suggests that deepening democracy depends to a great extent on the ideological significance that CDWs attach to their work in communities, through a range of coding, namely

- open coding by generating distinct categories of meanings in relation to development (see e.g. Straus and Corbin, 1990, 116–20)
- axial coding by invoking related categories of meanings to core concepts in relation to development (Straus and Corbin, 1990, 74, 102), and
- selective coding by integrating and refining specific categories of meaning in relation to development (Straus and Corbin, 1990: 116–21; Glaser, 1998: 143).

These differential codings allow the researcher to establish whether or not CDWs

- note differences (in terms of the meaning and practice of democracy)
- accommodate differences (in terms of the meaning and practice of democracy), and
- identify procedures, principles and discourses to resolve specific community issues.

Thus the goal of CDWs is the affirmation of context as the locus of life-enhancing change/possibilities, as illustrated in the diagram on page 24.

Provisional results: reflections and possibilities

This research focuses on context-specific understandings of the meanings and possibilities linked to democracy in Worcester, a town that is historically the epicentre of revolutionary grassroots activism. Based on preliminary research it would seem that there is sufficient residual revolutionary memory to re-awaken status quo transforming energies of engagement, debate, dialogue, learning, teaching and doing things differently. There already seem to be new patterns of activism through which poor people are claiming their rights. Chief among these discernible changes is the fact that ordinary people no longer contact their ward councillors but their CDWs to attend to their daily concerns and problems as citizens in Worcester. Although CDW spaces are state-initiated operational spaces, they are quite clearly community directed. For this reason community members seem to be claiming these spaces as their own

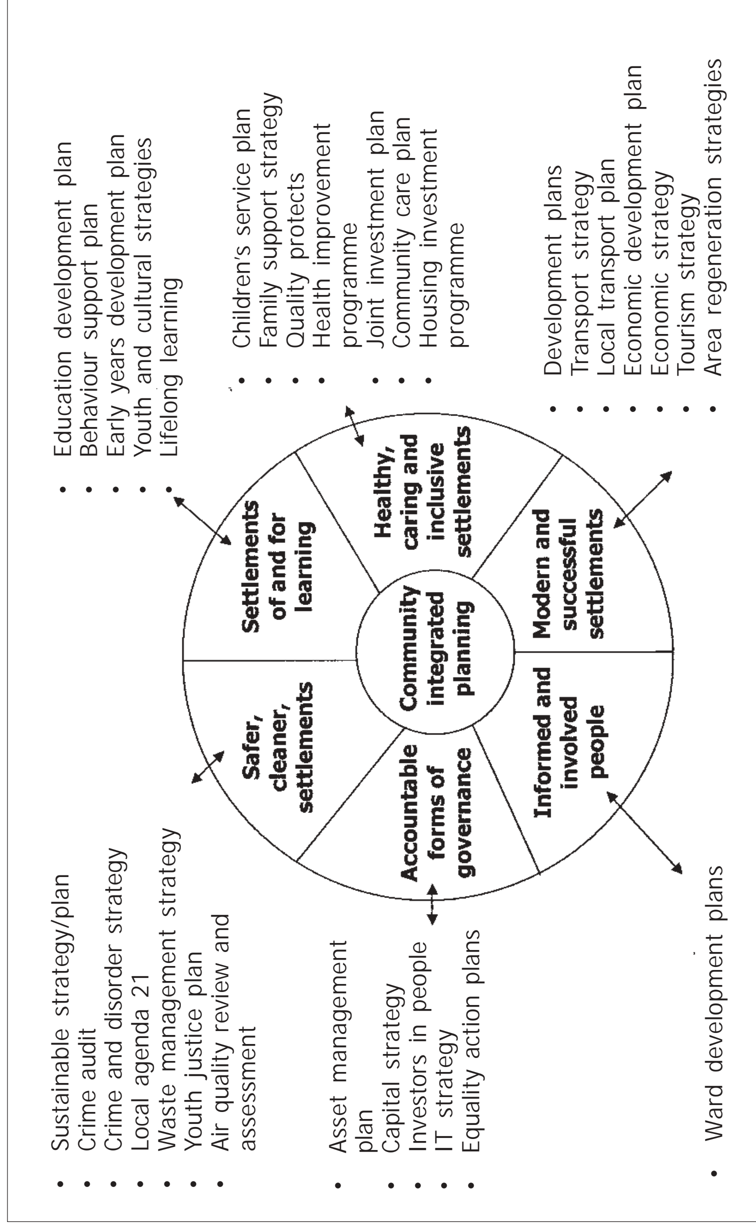


Figure 2 *A better life for all through Community Development Workers*

Source: author's own design

and, in the process, through a collective sense of revolutionary memory and trust, they are mobilising substantial social capital (of familiarity, trust and solidarity) to transcend the parameters of permissible dialogue of conventional planning. And, through the "symbolic capital" of revolutionary memory, CDWs are able to introduce alternative vocabularies of a collective sociality as opposed to an individualistic sense of citizenship. In this process of engagement at grassroots level, social capital serves to transform I-centred discourses into our-centred discourses. And, quite remarkably, it would seem that the vocabulary of an atomistic sense of citizenship, at least rhetorically, is making way for a collectivised sense of being by the re-valorisation of struggle against the continuities of a de facto/residual apartheid planning bureaucracy. It is this reconceptualisation and reformulation of citizenship and its multiple meanings for democracy and its variegated permutations that enjoys attention in this research project. Thus defined, democratic practice is an attempt at socio-economic-political inclusion that acknowledges differential human experiences and needs within a particular society, locale, place/space, thereby necessitating a continual revisioning of what it means to be a citizen of a particular country within a particular place and time.

Indeed, citizenship entails a sense of belonging, not merely to a particular territory, country, nation or state, but ultimately to an ensemble of social relationships – relationships that are meaningful, engendering a sense of well-being in a person and group of people. This definition straddles both the individualistic notion and a more collective/shared notion of citizenship. In a globalising world, localities are linked not merely spatially but also temporally, creating a simultaneity of multiple issues that impact on the sense of belonging of a person. It is in this regard that CDWs play a dynamic role as they have been trained to be aware – and in terms of provisional research results they are aware – of the multidimensionalisation of issues and concerns in the era of globalisation that impact on citizens and citizenship. This means that citizenship is both a state of being and a multidimensional process.

Notes

1 A version of this paper was presented at the Annual VLIR/Building a Dynamic Society Workshop on 21–22 February 2006 in the Faculty of Economic Management Sciences, University of the Western Cape, South Africa. The author appreciates the comments on the paper, especially those of the discussant, Professor Willem van Vuuren, but accepts sole responsibility for any remaining textual weaknesses.

2 These figures do not add up to the total amounts mentioned by Merten, which suggests that the remaining Community Development Workers could have been deployed in other municipalities not covered by her survey.

3 The self-critical advocacy planner. This term will be explained later with reference to Pierre Bourdieu's work.

4 In the case of APs, positionality connotes one's position as a dynamic relationship with regard to other actors and not as a frozen presence in space and time.

5 Based on research conducted in September 2005 in Worcester, a peri-urban town 90 kilometres north-east of Cape Town, South Africa.

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