Elisheva Sadan

Empowerment and Community Planning

Translated from Hebrew by Richard Flantz

To Yitzhak, Meir and Jonathan—with love.

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Introduction to the E-Book

The hard copy edition of this book was published in 1997 (two more printings were made in 1999 and 2002) in Hebrew, under the same title[*]. When the book was first published, both empowerment and community planning were relatively unknown—empowerment was a new concept with a lot of potential, arousing curiosity and intellectual debates; community planning seemed to be an old idea about a social construct whose time has passed. In my introduction to the 1997 book (p. 21) I mention my disappointment at the little interest in local change initiatives since the 1960s. This has changed dramatically since then. Locality has arrived again— the "think global—act local" idea has caught, and now *empowerment* is a household term, a bit worn at the seams, and *community* is the new buzz word. The books of Couto (1999), Putnam (2001), Sirianni & Friedland (2001), Smock (2003) and Taylor (2003) are few examples of this bounty.

   The revival of the new/old concepts, such as *civil society* and *social capital*, are evidence of how the local organization and its role in the shaping of individuals and societies is perceived now—in a much more appreciative and valuing way.

   I enjoy offering my work to English readers in this form, and I would like to state why it might be of interest to you. Empowerment as a concept still needs a theory, as most of the work published on empowerment lacks a theoretical basis. The first part of the book is on theory. The second part focuses on community practice, which is as important now to the ideas of community building and community development as it was ten and twenty years ago, when these ideas were everywhere, but did not get the attention they have now.

[*] Sadan, Elisheva (1997). *Empowerment and Community Planning: Theory and Practice of People-Focused Social Solutions.* Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishers [in Hebrew].

The book is mostly an unchanged translation of the original work, except for a few changes in the introduction. Since I did not touch the original references, I offer additional references, published since 1997, at the end of the book (p. 345).

In the foreword to the book in hard copy I thanked many wonderful people who helped me with its conception and development. You will read about them on the next page. Here I would like to thank two more people, who made this form of the book possible. My dear friend Dorit Barak who encouraged me to make the effort, and my son Meir Sadan who designed this format, invented *Mpow.org*, and generally dedicated a lot of his time and talent to this project.

I hope you enjoy this work. I'll appreciate any thoughts you would like to share with me.

Elisheva Sadan,
September 2004

Foreword

During the years in which I wrote *Empowerment and Community Planning* I received assistance, encouragement and inspiration from wonderful people. The pleasure of thanking them is all mine.

The theoretical development of the concept of empowerment was carried out in the framework of a doctoral dissertation submitted to the Department of Urban and Regional Planning of the Faculty of Architecture at the Technion—Israel Institute of Technology. I thank my teachers there, and the institution itself, for the valuable years I spent with them. Special heartfelt thanks to my supervisor, Prof. Arza Churchman, for being a cornucopia of knowledge, wisdom, responsibility, social commitment, support and friendship.

My thanks to Prof. Yehezkel Hasenfeld from the University of California at Los Angeles for the ideas he contributed to the research, and for his encouragement and support all along the way.

My thanks to the people who helped me research the central concepts in this book, but whose names I may not mention for reasons of secrecy. I thank the tens of community planners who gave me some of their precious time as well as their trust. I thank the students of the school which I may not name, and their parents as well. I thank the parents of children with developmental disabilities who set up a service to grapple with the special problems of their children, and to the community planner who worked with them. My thanks to all the people of all positions and ranks who shared their thoughts and considerations with me.

Introduction

The process of empowerment means a transition from a state of powerlessness to a state of more control over one's life, fate, and environment. The process is aimed at changing three dimensions of a social condition, i.e., to bring about a change in: people's feelings and capacities; the life of the collective that they belong to; and the professional practice that gets involved in the situation. These are three inter-related processes that this book will deal with in breadth: individual empowerment, which is the personal, intimate change process; community empowerment, which is the social change; and empowering professional practice, which is the organizational and functional change that encourages the realization of both the above. I will claim further on that a successful planned change process, oriented to increasing people's control over their lives, has to achieve outcomes in all three dimensions of empowerment.

Why is it important to raise the issue of people's control over their lives and environments? And why, today more than ever, does the question of empowerment require an answer more urgently and more vigorously?

The concept of empowerment is an attempt to break the circle of vicious social problems which are difficult to resolve. People suffer and are harmed not only because of neglect and apathy, but also because of the attention of bad social services. On the threshold of the 21st century it is becoming clear that groups suffer from powerlessness not only because of indifference, cruelty and a shortage of resources in the impoverished parts of the world, but also because of humanly degrading social solutions in the ostensibly enlightened portions of democratic society.

Empowerment is first and foremost an ideology and a world-view, and only someone who accepts its values can attain a deeper understanding of the details of its processes and the methods of its practical implementation. We therefore

have to somewhat expand the discussion about the kind of ideology which the concept of empowerment represents.

The adoption of a concept is an opportunity to refresh and renew conventional ideas and methods of action. In the worst of cases the opportunity is not exploited, and the only outcome is the enrichment of the professional jargon by another word. When I began researching empowerment in the eighties, the concept's fate was not clear. In the meantime, empowerment has established a foothold for itself in the social and political discourse. As in any process of naturalization, its reception is neither uniform nor stable. There are professionals who make use of the concept in their work without committing themselves at all to its message, only to enrich their rhetoric. There are people who present empowerment as an exclusively psychological, or political, process, although its distinction lies precisely in the integration it creates between the psychological and the political. There are those who use it to moderate their radical rhetoric: empowerment makes it possible to express a sensitivity to the individual, and at the same time to aspire to transform society. The concept, then, serves diverse ideas outside the mainstream, as well as giving a new flavor to conservative liberal ideas about civil rights and *social responsibility*. The ideology of empowerment, then, interfaces with social views which have always been considered to be opposed to one another, creates bridges between them and moderates their central concepts.

Empowerment as a world-view takes its inspiration from the Existentialist philosophy, especially from Nietzsche and Albert Camus, and is close in its spirit to Martin Buber. In the realm of psychology, it has a strong affinity with the existentialistically-based humanistic psychology of Victor Frankl, Carl Rogers and Rollo May. The existential approach says that people need freedom and choice despite, and perhaps really because of, the certain knowledge that they are fated to

die. The meaning of the temporary and partial character of life is that *truths* are relative and must not be received as dogma. People's commitment to and responsibility for the world comes into being as a consequence of their development of their abilities, and not vice versa. These abilities are more than technical skills, they are a quest for meaning which stems from an awareness of our own needs and a sensitivity to the needs of others.

In the original sense of the word, empowerment is power of attorney—authorization to act on behalf of society, a kind of delegation of authority on the social and personal planes. Empowerment symbolizes energy which exists in abundance and is not taken by force; it expresses an ongoing social process, not a one-time occurrence. Some writers have made an effort to purge the concept of threatening revolutionary connotations, to present it as a claim for civil rights and as a legitimate democratic resistance to discrimination, and also to propose its implementation as a macro-social policy. At the same time, it is clear that as in any change process that takes place in power relations, in empowerment too there exists a far-from-inconsiderable potential for conflict. Empowerment seeks for a position as a natural process that is anchored in human nature and in social relations: more control over one's life and one's environment is an important component in the life of every human being, and citizens who are in control of their lives and participate in decision-making with regard to their future and their environment make an important contribution to democratic society as a whole. Hence, an empowerment policy which makes more control over one's life possible also increases societal resources – the individual profits, the societal profits, the physical environment profits, the social institutions profit – a win-win outcome in every possible sense.

Emphasizing the social benefits is an important strategic component in the ideology of empowerment, especially in order that well-off potential partners may feel comfortable and not oppose the process. It is important to make clear to all the citizens the extent to which empowerment is relevant to their lives as well, and at the same time to remember that the constant support of the middle class is essential for the success of any comprehensive social plan. Empowerment, then, is a pragmatic world-view, which aims to serve as a guiding principle for diverse democratic views.

Empowerment is a postmodern approach. As such, it is conscious of itself and of its aspirations, and does not recoil from a deconstruction and exposure of its assumptions, both as an educational action towards other approaches, and for the purposes of self-examination and self-criticism. In its view, we shape the world according to our perceptions: just as a competitive ethos creates competitive environments, and forecasts of a recession create a recession, so too people's faith in themselves and in their community – who they are, what they want to do, and how they want to live – has a much greater tendency to become realized than is customarily believed. Empowerment aspires to a legitimate position in the center of the social consensus, from where it is possible to influence the society's character, policy, and goals.

This is an endeavor to create an ethos of empowerment. Such an ethos is important and essential because it is so lacking in the social reality we live in. Societies are saturated with disempowerment—with discrimination, with prejudices, with the casting of stigmas, with blaming the victim. It is permeated with ideals which isolate and exclude individuals inside their private space, and place them in confrontation with one another—the individual's success is measured by her/his capacity to compete in a weak market, to be a winner among losers. Social practices which encourage solidarity, social integration, support of the vulnerable, compassion and empathy, are rare, and the outcome is a society of lonely individuals in the crowd.

The creation of a community is both a personal and a social solution—what it means is working as a group to grapple with problems that the individual cannot cope with alone. True, there is no guarantee that the collective effort will succeed where the individuals have failed, but the very process of collaboration, of involvement, of people's commitment to attain a shared goal, to influence the making of decisions that affect their lives, to improve the quality of their lives and their environment, creates a new feeling and new capabilities among the participants—and this is an important outcome in itself. Empowered action means coming out of the alienation, marginality and sense of irrelevance that are the lot of those who have no influence over what influences them.

The community provides its members with important needs, in ways which people who live without a sense of community are not aware of. Alienation can become an existential condition, unless a person feels that s/he belongs to a body in which there exist mutual trust and commitment to shared goals. In Israel it was customary for years to assume that the State provides a sense of belonging to all its inhabitants—by means of central institutions, mainly of education and the military, as well as by means of the egalitarian ethos it was founded upon and its urgent needs of defense and integration. This is how many of its citizens felt, and perhaps they feel the same way today, but many have remained outside this communal circle of activists. With the passage of time, the State has become more complex and has functioned less as a community, its peripheries have expanded, and there alienation and estrangement have become a central national experience. The more this marginalizing process endangers a society which is based on values of commitment and trust, the more important it becomes to discuss it. It is important to make it possible for people to feel a sense of belonging and being at home in a particular place, for only through this can one belong to a more abstract entity, such as the State or the world. Without a place of my own, where I can be myself, I cannot understand or be concerned

with the universal, nor with the welfare of others. Since the local community is the focal location though which people develop an inclusive social responsibility, community building and community development need to become a national interest, a part of the social charter between the State and its citizens.

There are people who live in a community, and for them the community is a basic fact of life. Some of them would even gladly give it up, because it oppresses their lives and their uniqueness. Others live without a community, and don't need one at all—perhaps they have attained a feeling of being at home in the world, or in their professional or ideological communities. As opposed to these, there are people among us who need a community in order to actualize themselves as involved citizens—at work, or in voluntary organizations. But there are also people who need a community to ensure their very existence. People who do not find a social solution appropriate to the problem that bothers them create communities in order to improve their quality of life and the future of their children, or in order to provide an answer to a physical limitation, or to create a space for a different way of life. These, if you like, are different degrees of the need for empowerment. The critical lack of control over their lives is that of people living in despair, poverty, discrimination, dependence. They need empowerment and the creation of a community in order to survive.

    The need for belonging and meaning is felt by a decisive majority of human beings, even if it hides behind the screen of isolation, cynicism and disbelief in one's own ability to make a change. There can and should be many shades and diverse expressions to people's need to belong to a supportive and egalitarian social group. The need for empowerment, at every level of intensity, is manifested in the call to bring to life the active community that participates in the political arena as a civil right and expresses its unique voice in order to achieve its special objectives.

In this book I have set myself three tasks. The first is a survey of the origins of the concept of empowerment and the development of a theory of empowerment. The second is an understanding of the meaning of the empowering change process. The third is an outline of professional empowerment practice. In the context of the latter task, questions are asked about the principles and the ways of work of professionals who intervene in people's lives. The combination of these three tasks in the one book is intended to bring readers knowledge about empowerment and about its degree of relevance to their personal and professional lives.

I have been talking with people about empowerment for many years now, and have the impression that the concept arouses enthusiasm and even excitement among many. Empowerment is a contemporary concept, and in this lies its strength. It have captured a place in the thoughts of people in a diversity of social fields. Psychologists, social workers, teachers, planners, evaluators, organizational developers. In the world at large, the concept is widespread. As a term, empowerment contributes to the discourse on social problems, since it exposes the extent of oppression, discrimination and stigma in the lives of vulnerable populations, especially in a society with an egalitarian democratic vision.

In conversations about empowerment, reservations are expressed as well. Some people refuse to accept powerlessness as a starting-point for empowerment. For example, leaders of neighborhoods and community organizations, who are people with power, are not prepared to identify with a stigmatic description of poverty, marginality, social alienation and indifference. They explain that since they are not poor or weak themselves, the transition from powerlessness to more control over life is not relevant to their lives. It is important to emphasize here that empowerment is important to every human being, because the danger of deterioration to a constant and systemic powerlessness lurks in wait for any citizen

in the society. The danger is social, not personal, because disempowerment is entailed in social practices that can injure the life of any person: during illness and hospitalization as a patient who needs treatment and nursing; during an absorption crisis, as a new immigrant who needs the support of the social services; during the loss of a spouse, as a widow who needs financial support from the social security services. In every need for social services there exists a potential loss of power and a danger of deterioration to a permanent and destructive powerless dependence. In every intervention in a problematic social situation there potentially exist all the possibilities of professional intervention—one can disempower people and bring them down to powerlessness, or one can encourage empowerment, and develop personal and communitarian abilities. People who have control over their own lives and are not interested in recognizing the dangers of disempowerment may, unconsciously, and not because of bad intentions, disempower others. Such phenomena are known from histories of community organizations (as well as from the private lives of many *self-made* men and women). Organizations that were built through processes of empowerment may, after becoming established, disempower those who need their services.

There are people who oppose empowerment because it is too critical and radical an approach. Empowerment deals with the citizen's rights to self-definition, with people's critical awareness of their social situation, with people organizing in order to achieve important goals, with the creation of a community. There are people who interpret such social change as civic revolt. To them, it is important to make it clear that social changes will take place around us anyway, and will influence our lives. The question is only: Will we participate in what is going on in our lives, and try to influence the course of the change, or will we look on at what is happening and accept every intervention as a *force majeur*. The goal of

empowerment is to create a civic culture which recognizes the rights of people to influence that which influences their lives.

Empowerment, then, supplies a legitimation to social change efforts on the local level. The awakening of local initiatives of change has not received much academic attention since the sixties[†]. Then people spoke of resistance and of civic revolt. Although today the formulations are more moderate, more sober, the demands for equality and dignity remains as it was. In the 21st century too, the struggle for people's rights to more control over their lives and in decisions affecting their future and their environment promises gains for which it is worth risking the status quo.

There are a number of paradoxes connected to the various levels of our subject:

The first paradox has to do with the language of empowerment. A book on empowerment has to be readable, and has to transmit a clear message, free of jargon or patronizing speech. This is a big challenge, and I don't always live up to it. The principle is valid, in any case – the language of empowerment has to be appropriate to the message of empowerment – to allow the readers a control of the subject and to encourage a learning of its principles.

Another paradox has to do with *community*—a concept which in this book serves to describe the creation of diverse kinds of collective entities. On the face of it, the geographical community loses some of its importance as a consequence of this. Paradoxically, however, the creation of communities around a shared critical characteristic is also a process that is bound within boundaries of place and time. When widows create a community of their own, they need it, among other things, in order to compensate for the insensitivity, the

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† Refer to the introduction to the E-Book edition.

prejudices and the indifference towards them of the *geographical communities* in which they live. The new community of women which is created in this way challenges the geographical community, and thus changes the latter as well.

Another paradox has to do with the right to choose. When someone proposes a certain fundamental approach, there is a need for an alertness to the danger of the negation of the right to oppose this approach. The beauty of empowerment is in its consciousness of the wealth and diversity that human society has been blessed with, and in its giving a legitimation to differences among people, and to people's right to be faithful to their way of life, to their thinking and their preferences, and their right to be proud of this, even when they are a minority. This book warns against influences which would make people who are different in any way powerless. It warns against the condemnation of the victim, and proposes that we recognize the social causes of personal distresses. Its goal is to enable someone who is not accepted by the community, because s/he is special and different, to establish a community of his/her own together with others in her/his condition. The book relates to the community that has a geographical base as only one of the possibilities, and emphasizes the other common characteristics upon which a community may be established. However, while empowerment calls for an avoidance of a uniform worldview that imposes itself on others, it is liable to impose itself, and thus to create a dissonance so sharp that it may turn everything empowerment calls for into a farce.

The final paradox has to do with the great love for social change that overflows this book. It is dedicated to my parents, Marek-Meir and Liliana Opatowsky, who lived three entire cycles in this world: one, as citizens possessing equal rights in enlightened Europe between the two World Wars; one as persecuted Jews in the hell of loss and death; and one as new immigrants in the State of Israel. Chaos was their life's reality. And here we are, their sons and daughters, enchanted with theories of change, enjoying thoughts about perpetual change

and about conflict, living in an environment that is stable, abundant and more secure than all the generations of Jews who preceded us in modern times. Thanks to what? Thanks to our demand for sovereignty—thanks to our struggle to control our fate. The great narrative of empowerment of this century, and perhaps in all of human history, is the story of the establishment of the state of the Jews in the Land of Israel. Although this process will not be discussed here, it is the historical context by means of which each one of us can understand the security and the dignity that the process of empowerment provides to those who take a risk and participate in it.

The book has two parts. The first part deals with the development of a theory of empowerment, and the second with the development of empowering professional practice—community planning.

In the first part, which develops a theory of empowerment, there are three chapters. The first chapter discusses theories of power, surveys the development of sociological thought about power, and presents theories of power that will serve further on to enrich the concept of empowerment and to give a deeper understanding of its processes. This chapter clarifies the sources of powerlessness and how it comes about in power relations; the importance of the organizational advantage in these relations; the place of professional knowledge in power relations. The second chapter, *Empowerment—Definitions and Meanings*, defines empowerment and situates it in the cultural context where it is particularly relevant – in Western democratic society. It analyses the principal processes of empowerment – the individual, the community, and the professional processes – and discusses the particular questions connected with each one of these. The discussion of individual empowerment considers the psychological criteria connected with the concept, the personal as political, and the group as a means for the empowerment of its members. The discussion about community empowerment clarifies the meaning of the

community in this book, introduces the groups for whom community empowerment is important in their lives, and presents different qualities of the process. Organization, as an important tool of community empowerment, is also presented here. The third part of the chapter deals with empowerment as a professional practice, and presents the values and principles, as well as professional roles and methods of intervention that have to guide professionals who enhance or encourage empowerment (henceforth, *empowering professionals*). The third chapter – *Developing a Theory of Empowerment* – deals with the quest for a theoretical method that integrates individual and social explanations, and focuses on Giddens' theory of structuration as a basis on which a contextual theory of empowerment is developed. The individual, the group, the organization, the community and power relations in the surrounding society, are presented as contextual relations that influence and are influenced by changing and dynamic circles.

The second part of the book applies the theory developed in the first part within the bounds of a particular professional practice. The fourth chapter – *Community Planning* – redefines this practice as common to a number of professions which deal with planning and intervention in the community. The fifth chapter – *Processes of Individual Empowerment in the Context of Community Planning* – discusses the process that take place in the lives of the people involved in empowering community planning, and signs that assist in the identification of the realization of these processes. The sixth chapter – *Processes of Community Empowerment in the Context of Community Planning* – discusses the principal stages in the process of community empowerment. The seventh chapter – *Community Planning as an Empowering Professional Practice* – develops the empowerment-encouraging intervention in each stage of the process of change. This chapter integrates a conventional professional process with a process of encouraging the

empowerment, into a single professional practice. This chapter presents a conceptual model of the contextual theory of empowerment, and thus constitutes an application of the book's lessons.

Part One

Developing a Theory of Empowerment

Introduction

At the beginning of the discussion about developing a theory of empowerment, I want to pause a little over the special character of the study involved in the composition of this part of the book. In my search for thought about power I discovered that theories on this subject are discussed at least in psychology, sociology, philosophy and the political sciences, and in each of these disciplines the discussants almost totally ignore the other disciplines. Investigation of the concept of empowerment guided me to focus on the sphere in which the theories would clarify power relations and also serve as a basis for the creation of a theory of empowerment. In psychology I found new and interesting knowledge on the subject, but it lacked the methical approach and the complexity required for a meta-theory (Griscom, 1992). Philosophy, as a source from which to create a theory of empowerment, was something I had to eschew because of my lack of methical knowledge of this domain. Since the contribution of Michel Foucault seems to me to be very valuable and important, this caused me a certain discomfort. Sociology revealed itself as the most fertile source for my theoretical needs. I was especially pleased to find that the meta-sociologists – the creators of sociological knowledge – do not eschew Foucault, whom they place in a category of his own, *Post-Structuralism* (a term which he would almost certainly have rejected, but that is already a subject for a different book). Of the new theories of power I have chosen to deal at some length with five approaches, including that of Foucault, which have served me as sources for developing the theory and practice of empowerment.

The chapter on power is principally a discussion of the essence of power and of different approaches to understanding and defining it. The intention is to provide readers with a definition of power that can serve as a fertile basis for a discussion of empowerment. Hence the definition of power will appear only at the end of this chapter, the subtitle of which could have been *A Quest for the Meaning of Power*.

The collection of data about empowerment set me a different challenge. The literature dealing with the subject has only recently begun producing a systematic methodology of its own (Lee, 1994; Gutiérrez, Parsons & Cox, 1998). Hence, not a few writers about empowerment use the concept intuitively, at times even without defining it. In many cases, only an analysis of the text has made it possible to find in it a definition of empowerment and of the level of empowerment the writer refers to (Heskin, 1991). I also felt it my duty to include in the book a number of persons, like Paulo Freire (Freire, 1985) and Miles Horton (Horton, 1990), who do not directly refer to empowerment, but whose spirit infuses the concept, and who, in their practice and their approach, have been a source of inspiration to myself and to many others.

As I traced the concept of empowerment and the development of the use of the term, I saw how it is gathering popularity. In the sixties, I am told, the concept of empowerment was much in use by radical young people on American campuses who carried the message of the social revolution of those years. One can almost sense how the concept matures and changes its locus together with the members of that generation. In the eighties the term empowerment is used mainly by the populists of the new left in the USA (Boyte, 1984) and by several writers in social work and community psychology. In the nineties the term is expropriated from this distinctive slot. It appears in the newspapers and is uttered by politicians and professionals in the social sciences and the human services in the Western world. As this book is being written – the late nineties – the concept of empowerment is becoming established in the social-political-professional discourse all over the world.

The aim of this brief survey of the spread of the term has been to make perceptible the difficulties of sorting and classification of the different uses that have been made of it. A variety of adjectives have attached themselves to the term, such as group empowerment, organizational empowerment, social empowerment. Most of the writers have not distinguished between empowerment as a process that occurs in people's lives and empowerment as professional intervention that encourages such a process. It has become clear that empowerment is a common term that refers to more than one kind of phenomenon, and that paths have to be paved within it to clarify its meaning. The development of the concept of empowerment during a period of several years from a remote non-concept (Russel-Erlich & Rivera, 1986) to a widespread and accepted concept has been dramatic. On the other hand, it is very possible that this has always been the way of new social concepts—from a marginal notion with a tentative character to one that is accepted, from marginality in the world of concepts to an enthusiastic centrality, innovation, and a multiplicity of uses. It is also possible that the sequel is predictable: a sinking into the routine of the cliché, an exposure of its limitations, a wearing-out and a making way for some other new thing. At this given moment of the development of social thought, empowerment integrates well into the discourse on contemporary social ideologies and values, contributes to this discourse, and provides it with an important moral criterion.

Chapter 1
Theories of Power

A Survey Towards the Development of a Theory of Power

Before beginning the discussion of empowerment and the development of a theory connected with it, I want to deal with a concept that is prior to empowerment—power. Power is a key concept for an understanding of processes of empowerment. The theory of empowerment that will be developed further on will draw its inspiration from an integration of two domains: from an understanding of theories of power and the use of insights drawn from these for the purposes of developing a theory of empowerment, and from an analysis of processes of empowerment. Hence, this deeper study of it will also make possible a better understanding of states of powerlessness, practices of disempowerment, and processes by which people and communities struggle for control over their lives and environments.

A Brief History of Theories of Power

This chapter makes no pretension to survey all the existing literature in the field of the theories of power. It begins with a historical survey of thought about power in the social sciences, relating only to the most prominent theories. Further on, a number of theories that contain elements suitable to the development of a theory of empowerment are presented in more detail.

Modern thinking about power begins in the writings of Nicollò Machiavelli (*The Prince*, early 16th century) and Thomas Hobbes (*Leviathan*, mid-17th century). Their books are considered classics of political writing, and the

contrast between them represents the two main routes along which thought about power has continued to this day (Clegg, 1989). Machiavelli represents the strategic and decentralized thinking about power and organization. He sees power as a means, not a resource, and seeks strategic advantages, such as military ones, between his prince and others. Hobbes represents the causal thinking about power as a hegemony. Power, in Hobbes, is centralized and focused on sovereignty.

According to Hobbes' basic premise, there exists a total political community, the embodiment of which is the state, or the community, or the society. This is a single unit, ordered according to a uniform principle, possessing a continuity of time and place, from which the power stems. According to Machiavelli, total power is a desirable final end, which is achieved only rarely.

In the mid-twentieth century it appeared that Hobbes' view was triumphant.[1] His language and his images, written more than a century after the publication of *The Prince*, were more appropriate to the modern scientific approach than Machiavelli's military images. The central tradition of research in the social sciences sought precision and logic (and is still seeking them today), and it asks how one can observe, measure, and quantify power. Power was presented as a *position* of will, as a supreme factor to which the wills of others are subject. In the seventies, Machiavelli's strategic and contingent approach attained to a renewed appreciation in France, with the crystallization of approaches that rediscovered

the unpredictable character of the power game, and its profound dependence on context (Clegg, 1989).[2]

After the Second World War, the social sciences began taking an understandable interest in power. At that time, the work of Max Weber (1947) served as a point of departure for thought about power because it continued the rational Hobbesian line and developed organizational thinking. Weber's approach to power connected with his interest in bureaucracy, and linked power with concepts of authority and rule. He defined power as the probability that an actor within a social relationship would be in a position to carry out his will despite resistance to it. The activation of power is dependent on a person's will, even in opposition to someone else's.

Weber was interested in power as a factor of domination, based on economic or authoritarian interests. He historically researched the sources of the formal authority that activates legitimate power, and identified three sources of legitimation, or accordance of social permission, for the activation of power: the charismatic, the traditional, and the rational-legal.

Theories of power after Weber developed in the direction of investigation of illegitimate power, as this grows within the formal and legitimate frameworks of hierarchic and bureaucratic power, and in the direction of the critique of Weber's bureaucratic model (Merton, 1957). The critique of Weber stemmed, unjustly, from an understanding of his theory as an idealization of the bureaucratic organization. The truth is that Weber saw the organizational power of the bureaucracy as the source of the mechanization and routinization of human life, and as a threat to the freedom of the human spirit. He also predicted that this organizational form, as a power instrument, would sabotage the appearance

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1 Interest in power exists in a variety of fields of thought: Karl Marx influenced the conceptualization of power in all the social sciences; Alfred Adler, following Marx, opened a discussion on power in psychology; Friedrich Nietzsche influenced thought about power in philosophy. The present chapter, however, focuses on contemporary theorists for whom power is the central concept in their thinking.

2 Stuart Clegg's book Frameworks of Power (1989) has been of great assistance in helping me to understand the history of sociological writing about power, and he is one of the sources for my writing of the present chapter.

of more democratic forms of organization (Morgan, 1986, 1997).

Robert Dahl (1961) continues Weber's approach, both in the definition of power and in the attribution of it to a concrete human factor. Whereas Weber discussed power in the context of the organization and its structures, Dahl located the discussion of power within the boundaries of an actual community. However, the major importance of Dahl is in the development of the interest in understanding ruling élites, which came to the fore after the Second World War (Mills, 1956; Hunter, 1953). According to his *theory of community power*, power is exercised in a community by a particular concrete individual, while other individuals, also actual, are prevented from doing what they prefer to do. Power is exercised in order to cause those who are subject to it to follow the private preferences of those who possess the power. Power is the production of obedience to the preferences of others, including an expansion of the preferences of those subject to it so as to include those preferences. To this day, most writers dealing with organizational behavior make do with Dahl's definition of power—power as the ability to make somebody do something that otherwise he or she would not have done.

Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz (1962) developed a model as a response to Dahl—*the two faces of power*. This model is also a critique of Dahl's basic premises. Dahl assumed a pluralistic society, in which all the community interests are represented by means of open processes. Bachrach and Baratz also have a doubt as to whether the decision-making process is really democratic and open as Dahl assumed. They dealt mainly with the connection between the overt face of power – the way decisions are made – and the other, covert face of power, which is the ability to prevent decision making. They pointed to the strategy of mobilizing bias to prevent discussion on certain issues and thus to determine what is *important* and *unimportant*. They referred to this organizing of what stays *in* and what is *out* as the *non-decision-making process* where

power conflicts do not rise above the public face of power which is confined to certain values, rituals or beliefs that tend to favor the vested interests of one (or more) group/s relative to others (Clegg, 1989).

In the seventies, Steven Lukes (1974) developed Bachrach and Baratz's approach further. It was he who shifted the discussion from *community power* to a focus on power as such, by introducing a three-dimensional model into the discussion of the subject. The third dimension that Lukes added to the discussion of power, which theoretically already recognized two dimensions – the overt and the covert dimensions – was the latent dimension of power. While the overt dimension of power deals with declared political preferences, as they reveal themselves in open political play, and the covert dimension deals with political preferences that reveal themselves through complaints about political non-issues, the third dimension deals with the relations between political preferences and *real interests*. Power, according to Lukes, is measured also by the ability to implant in people's minds interests that are contrary to their own good. The third, latent dimension is the hardest of all to identify, because it is hard for people who are themselves influenced by this dimension to discover its existence. The analysis of power, according to Lukes, must henceforth relate – in addition to the open decisions (of Dahl's overt face) and the non-decisions (of Bachrach and Baratz's covert face) – also to the entire political agenda, in order to examine its adequacy to the true interests of various groups. (A more detailed explanation of the three dimensions of power, and their development, appears in the section on Gaventa's theory of power.)

The writings of Michel Foucault (Foucault, 1979, 1980, 1996) extended the discussion of the concept of power from sociology to all the fields of the social sciences and the humanities. Through Foucault's influence, the empirical activity of identifying those who possess power and of locating power loses its importance. His approach systematically rejects the belief in the existence of an ordered and regulating

rational agency. In Foucault's world there is no source from which actions stem, only an infinite series of practices. Decentralization of the position of power is one of the great innovations of his thinking, which will be discussed more extensively further on.

Anthony Giddens (Giddens, 1982, 1984) developed his approach as a continuation – and also as a critique – of Foucault and his predecessors. He constructed an inclusive social theory which he called *structuration* or *duality of structure*. On his view, power is an important, if not exclusive, component of the social structure. Power is exercised by human agents and is also created by them, influences them, and limits them. In other words, power is not a quality or a resource of people, or a position in the social structure, but a social factor which influences both these components of human society and is also created by them—this is the duality that we will discuss once more when we turn our attention to Giddens.

This condensed survey describes in general lines how the discussion of power burst through the boundaries of organization and location and penetrated into all the domains of the social discourse. The roots of the concept are grounded in political theory and political philosophy. In the period after the Second World War, *power* was a central concept only in the political sciences. The work of Lukes and Giddens contributed to the establishing of the importance of the concept of power in the contemporary sociological discourse. Thanks to Foucault, the discussion of power became a widespread intellectual preoccupation. Foucault investigated the concept in new fields: medicine, psychiatry, penology, and human sexuality. Others continued his work in the criticism of literature, art and film, in semiotics, in feminist analysis, in social history, and in theories of planning.

We will go on in this chapter to discuss a selection of contemporary theories of power, and then to present the approach to power that will serve as a basis for this book.

Likewise, we will deal with several issues that are also relevant to the subject of empowerment, like, for example, the human and social damage involved in powerlessness (Gaventa, 1980); the organizational roots of powerlessness (Mann, 1986); the need for a combined approach to action and structure in the social domain (Giddens, 1984); and an understanding of power as concomitant to social relationships (Foucault, 1980).

Gaventa's Theory of Power

John Gaventa (Gaventa, 1980) researched the phenomenon of quiescence – the silent agreement in conditions of *glaring inequality* (p. 3) – and tried to understand why, in difficult conditions of oppression and discrimination, no resistance arises against the rule of a social elite. He found that the social elite makes use of its power principally to prevent the rise of conflicts in its domain, and to attain social quiescence. In other words, a situation of apparent lack of conflicts is identified as both a sign and a consequence of deliberate use of power mechanisms.

The purpose of power is to prevent groups from participating in the decision-making processes and also to obtain the passive agreement of these groups to this situation. A silent agreement, then, is not an expression of a desire not to participate, but evidence of a mute compliance with the situation. Hence, a violation of this quiescence is a rebellion, whether it be an explicit demand to participate in decision-making, or a more minor response, such as non-acceptance. Gaventa bases his model for the understanding of quiescence and rebellion in conditions of glaring inequality on Lukes' three dimensions of power (Lukes, 1974) which were mentioned earlier in the chapter. This will be an opportunity to gain a deeper acquaintance of these dimensions, and to understand how each of them relates to power and to powerlessness.

1st. The One-Dimensional Approach to Power

In the overt arena of power relations, A's power over B is manifested to the extent that A can make B do something which B would not have done had it not been for A. The overt dimension of power may be investigated by means of observation of behavior: who participates, who profits, who loses, and who expresses himself in the decision-making process.

The one-dimensional approach is based on assumptions that were sharply criticized by those who continued it. For example, that people always recognize grievances and act to right them; that participation in power relations occurs overtly in decision-making arenas; that these political arenas are open to any organized group; that the leaders are not an elite with interests of its own, but represent or speak for the entire public. All these assumptions lead to a conclusion which is characteristic of the one-dimensional approach: because people who have identified a problem act within an open system in order to solve it, and they do this by themselves or through their leaders, then non-participation, or inaction, is not a social problem, but a decision made by those who have decided not to participate.

On the basis of this conclusion, the one-dimensional approach provides explanations for the inactivity of deprived groups: indifference is a general quality of the human species, and people are divided into various kinds—the active political person, and the passive civic person. The constant connection between a low socio-economic status and minimal participation is explained as indifference, political incapacity, cynicism or alienation. At any rate, the causes of the non-participants' quiescence are sought in the circumstances of their life or in their culture, and not in the context of power relations. As a consequence of this approach of *blaming the victim* for his non-involvement, the recommendations too are generally for a change of the victim's non-participatory norms of behavior—principally through education and social integration (Pateman 1970).

Even within its own basic premises, the one-dimensional approach will have difficulties explaining what there is in low income, low status, and low education, or in traditional or rural culture, that can explain people's quiescence. And how are we to understand vast differences between one place and another in the political behavior of people with these same characteristics?

2nd. The Two-Dimensional Approach to Power

Power is activated on the second, covert dimension, not only in order to triumph over the other participants in the decision-making process, but also to prevent decision-making, to exclude certain subjects or participants from the process (Bachrach & Baratz 1962). A study of power in the covert dimension needs to observe who decides what, when and how, who remains outside, how this happens, and how these two processes interconnect. One of the important aspects of power, beside victory in a struggle, is to determine the agenda of the struggle in advance. That is, to determine whether certain questions will even be negotiated. The understanding of the second facet of power changed the explanation of the quiescence of deprived groups. From now on , non-participation in decision-making would be explained as a manifestation of fear and weakness, and not necessarily as a manifestation of indifference.

Since the two-dimensional approach, like the one-dimensional, assumed that the powerless are fully conscious of their condition, it cannot easily explain the whole diversity of means that power exercises in order to obtain advantages in the arena. For example, how is the raising of issues for discussion prevented? This approach also did not recognize the possibility that powerless people are likely to have a distorted consciousness that originates in the existing power relations, and thus live within a false and manipulated consensus that

they have internalized. The two-dimensional approach related to open conflicts and to the ability to maneuver their extent and their contents, while one of the most effective mechanisms of power is the ability to ensure quiescence in the decision-making arena—to prevent the outbreak of conflict.

3rd. The Three-dimensional Approach to Power

The third, latent dimension, that of the *true interests* (Lukes 1974), explains that B does things that he would not have done had it not been for A because A influences, determines and shapes B's will. Yet another innovation in this dimension is that this phenomenon can occur without overt conflict. A conflict of interests between the activators of power and the true interests of those who are excluded from the arena creates a potential for conflict—a latent conflict.

An approach which assumes latent processes requires a special research methodology. It is no longer possible to make do with behavioral analysis and with observations of individuals as the only means of understanding power relations. Since systems prevent the appearance of claims and frustrate their transformation into political issues, what is required is a study of social and historical factors that will explain how human expectations are shaped and how people's consciousness of problems is formed.

Mechanisms of Power

After defining the three relevant dimensions, it is important to identify various mechanisms by means of which power operates in each dimension in order to attain its goals.

1st. Mechanisms of the First, Overt Dimension: Open Conflict in the Decision-Making Arena

In the first dimension, relatively straightforward mechanisms are activated. The actors invest resources and talents in order to obtain an advantage in bargaining on key issues. Resources may be votes in the ballot box, or influence that the actors cab bring to the bargaining game. Possible talents are personal efficacy, political experience and organizational strength, which the participants use in order to win an advantage.

2nd. Mechanisms of the Second, Covert Dimension: Mobilization of Bias; Non-Decision-Making

In addition to the resources of the first dimension, the people with power mobilize game rules which work in their favor, at others' expense. Decision-making may be prevented by the exertion of force, the threat of sanctions, or the mobilization of bias which creates a negative approach to the subject. Mobilization of bias means the reinforcing and emphasizing of values, beliefs, ceremonies and institutional procedures which present a very particular and limited definition of problems. By mobilizing bias it is possible to establish new barriers and new symbols which are aimed to thwart efforts to widen the scope of conflict.

Several mechanisms of non-decision-making are harder to discover than others: like institutional inactivity resulting in *decisionless decisions*. The sum total of accumulating outcomes of a series of decisions or non-decisions, and non-events which, because they are such, cannot be observed and thus one may mistakenly think that they have not occurred.

3rd. Mechanisms of the Third, Latent Dimension: Influence on Consciousness and Perception

These mechanisms are less developed theoretically, so they are less clear. This dimension involves identification of the way in which meanings and patterns of action which cause B to believe and act in a way that is useful to A and harmful to himself are formed.

Since in situations of latent conflict it is especially difficult to learn how the perception of needs, expectations and strategies

is shaped, a number of domains must be investigated. For example, what use is made of social myths, language and symbols, in order to obtain an advantage in power relations. We need to investigate processes of communication and information transfer in order to understand what is communicated and what is not, and how this is done; how social legitimations develop around the dominant groups, and how they are imbued into people's consciousness in the form of beliefs or roles. The indirect mechanisms of this dimension, it would seem, have a significant influence on the shaping of people's political perceptions, especially of those belonging to powerless and highly dependent groups.

A Model of Power and Powerlessness

Gaventa's model of power is an attempt to integrate the three dimensions of power in order to explain processes of power and powerlessness in situations of social equality. Gaventa examines the concentrated influence of mechanisms from the three dimensions on responses in such situations. He claims that a challenge, or a rebellion, can occur only if there is a shift in the power relations: a loss of power by A or a gain of power by B. Together with this, before an open conflict can take place, B has to take some steps in order to overcome his powerlessness. B has to overcome both the direct and the indirect effects of the third dimension: he has to go through a process of issue and action formulation, and he has to carry out the process of mobilizing action upon issues. By means of these processes B will develop his own resources – both real and symbolic – to engage in manifest conflict. In other words, B can actually participate in a conflict in the first, overt dimension, only after he has successfully overcome the obstacles of the second and third dimensions. Actual participation means the presentation of well-defined claims and grievances which are brought to discussion in the decision-making arena by B together with others who are in an identical situation.

A has a series of means with which to overcome the outcomes of the overt or covert conflict that B initiates: first of all, A can simply patronize B and remain aloof, thus preventing the very admission of the existence of the conflict. But A can also interfere with each one of B's steps: he can interfere with his obtaining of resources and his development of his own abilities; he can incite against the opening up of issues, and he can sabotage activities. It should be recalled that all the barriers to effective challenge that B has to face are options for the maintenance of the status quo that are available to A.

As the ability of powerless people (B) to act increases, the options of the activators of power (A) diminish; hence, too the process of A's becoming weaker. Each triumph reinforces itself and builds further consciousness and activity among the powerless, towards further change. The meaning of the process is social change—an emergence from quiescence to political participation and, as this happens, a strengthening of the weak. From the point of view of the powerful, expectations of such outcomes are a reason for adopting many means in order to preserve B's quiescence.

Gaventa's theory of power helps to expose the direct and indirect ways in which social powerlessness is created and maintained. It draws attention to the great influence of indirect mechanisms in the creation of powerlessness—a phenomenon which we will have more to say about. Gaventa's theory of power will serve, further on, as a basis for a discussion of powerlessness, not as a personal problem of the powerless, but as a social situation that has its roots in conditions of social inequality and in disempowering social solutions. The various mechanisms of the three dimensions of power will be used for developing strategies of empowering activity.

Mann's Organizational Outflanking

Mann's concept of *organizational outflanking* (Mann 1986) makes clear the extent to which organizational resources and tools to activate these resources are necessary for efficient resistance against power. The advantage in power relations is on the side of those who possess an organizational advantage. Hence, those who possess the organizational advantage will always succeed in overcoming those who lack organizational resources, by means of a principal strategy which Mann calls organizational outflanking. Organizational outflanking finds expression in the ability to eliminate resistances with relative ease, to prevent them in advance by means of organizational priority, as well as to impose the order desirable to those doing the outflanking. All these goals can be achieved by those who possess the preferred organizational means. A historical social analysis proves that the advantage of the networks and alliances of power leans on the preferred organization that was available to them. The act of collective organization alone is inadequate to overcome an organization of power. In order to produce an effective resistance, people have to acquire the ability to activate a collective organization.

Organizational outflanking creates an advantage in the power relations for the outflankers as opposed to the outflanked. Powerlessness in a situation of organizational outflanking may be attributed to a lack of knowledge among the outflanked; however, there exist situations in which the knowledge exists and is available to the outflanked. In other words, not in every situation is knowledge useful to extricate oneself from a situation of organizational outflanking. It is important to understand that there are situations in which the outflanked know and are conscious of their situation, but nevertheless cannot, or are not ready to, extricate themselves from it.

Surrendering to Organizational Outflanking as a Result of a Lack of Knowledge. In situations where the surrender to organizational outflanking stems from a lack in knowledge resources, we must distinguish among various kinds of lack of knowledge:

A. The most common explanation is ignorance. There is ignorance which expresses itself in the fact that people do not know the rules of the game: they lack knowledge about developing a strategy and assessing the opponent's resources. They do not know the rules of behavior, the agenda, and the meaning of informal behavior. However, there can also be a more profound ignorance, when people do not identify the game itself. Especially extreme instances of the second kind occur when a group which possesses a great technological advantage encounters its absolute contrary (colonialism of the traditional kind, which obtained advantages of power by means of colored beads and mirrors; experts in community development and international merchants who exploit local poverty and innocence in order to amass profits in undeveloped countries).

B. Isolation is a more complex kind of lack of knowledge. It expresses itself in lack of information about others who share the same fate, with whom it is possible to create an alliance in order to resist power. Organizational outflanking succeeds because isolated resistance is an event which is easy to overcome. This is true even in cases where protest breaks out in different places at the same time, as long as the protesters themselves do not know about one another and do not form a coalition.

C. Division. Separation is an active step, a part of the strategy of organizational outflanking, and its goal is to create conditions of isolation even when people know about one another and could perhaps form an organized alliance. It is common for organizational outflanking to make use of time and space in order to divide groups from one another. An example of this is the division, on the face of it functional, carried out among workers in a single organization by means

of organizational culture, complex divisions of labor, and extreme competition (for example, in the name of maintaining secrecy, workers are prohibited from telling one another how much they earn; in the name of efficiency, workers are forbidden to organize and co-operate with one another.

Surrendering to Organizational Outflanking, on the Basis of Knowledge. It is less customary to think that a surrender to organizational outflanking can be based on the outflanked people's knowledge about their situation, but there are situations in which surrender to organizational outflanking is based on knowledge. In these cases the outflanked are conscious not only of their situation, but also of the price of resistance to the outflanking. Sometimes people estimate that the price they will have to pay for their resistance may be higher than their chance of obtaining a positive outcome, or than the benefit they may gain. When this is the evaluation of the situation, the knowledge ceases to have practical value in the existing conditions. Another kind of knowledge that is available to the outflanked is the knowledge about the oppression which the organizational outflanking creates in their lives, and about the fact that time that passes in the situation of organizational outflanking operates against them and strengthens the organizational ability of the outflankers, which continually becomes more sophisticated (Clegg 1989).

Organizational outflanking does not describe a particular tactic or mechanism of power, but is a given of the social situation. It makes clear that a lack in organizational resources characterizes everyone who is outside the networks and alliances of power; it makes clear why disempowerment is a common social phenomenon; it enriches the explanation of the quiescence of the powerless (Gaventa 1980); the culture of silence expresses a surrender of the organizationally outflanked, stemming from a knowledge that they are incapable of preventing the outflanking. As opposed to a tendency to explain powerlessness in a one-dimensional manner as people's lack of consciousness and knowledge

about their situation, organizational outflanking explains why knowledge by itself is not always enough to change the situation.

True, the theory of organizational outflanking is not an inclusive or a central theory of power and powerlessness, but it does emphasize important aspects which have accompanied the discussion of power all along the way. Organizational outflanking emphasizes the importance of efficient resistance to power—the price paid for the resistance is dear, and therefore it is necessary to obtain results, and in the most efficient way possible. Organizational outflanking makes clear the necessity of active organizational development in order to gain significant achievements while resisting power.

Clegg's Circuits of Power

A tradition which began with Weber and continues to Foucault seeks to understand how social institutions create obedience. After the concepts of quiescence, rebellion (Gaventa, 1980) and organizational outflanking (Mann, 1986), we will discuss the meanings of obedience and resistance. Stewart Clegg (1989) sees power as a circular process that flows in three channels which he calls circuits of power. Each of these three circuits of power has a dynamic form of its own:

1. The overt circuit of power—this circuit may be observed concretely. For example, one may analyze what happens in the decision-making arena. This is a relatively simple circuit, in which a human agent exercises power according to the traditional explanation: A activates resources and means, and influences B in a way in which *B* would not have acted were it not for his relations with *A*.
2. The social circuit of power—this is an abstract circuit, which is called *the circuit of social integration*, in which the rules that order relations of meaning, membership and belonging are created.
3. The systemic-economic circuit of power—this too is an abstract circuit, in which both material and non-material

resources are created. It is called *the circuit of system integration*.[3]

The circuits of power illuminate the importance of context in the theory of power; real acts of power appear in the first, simple circuit. However, the description of the field of power, with all the advantages and limitations that it creates, appears in the second and third circuits, which are complex and contextual. In these circuits, power relations are conducted in complex and diverse ways. On the face of it, power which does not need to struggle against rules and does not require special resources for any goal whatsoever is the most efficient power. However, power relations are actually characterized by a complexity which undermines their effectiveness and thus makes them unpredictable. Hence, a one-dimensional, episodic perception of power relations can teach us something about the character of the relations between *A* and *B*, but teaches us nothing about the context, the field of relations in which *A* and *B* operate, and about how this field influences their access to resources of power and their ability to use these. This field of relations is described in the social and the systemic-economic circuits of power.

In the social circuit of power, the central rules of social life are created. The metaphor of a chess game can illustrate their importance: the overt power of the queen, which is greater than that of the knight, brings it about that the queen

triumphs over the knight in the course of a certain event. This power is based on and stems from the rules of the game. It is social power that, by means of fixed laws, determines the ability of the queen and the knight to take the different steps they can take, However, dispositional power allows certain people not only a greater space of maneuvering for various moves, but also authority to reinterpret the meaning of the rules. Because of the power that the rules give them, they possess greater freedom to activate them according to their own interpretation than do those people who, like the queen and the knight, are permitted only a series of pre-defined moves. Implicit in this state of affairs are several possible strategies of resistance to power: for example, not to recognize the other's game rules; or to object to the meaning that the other attributes to them and to the steps that these entail.

The overt circuit of power is self-evident, but it is not independent, since it moves through the two circuits of power in which a social and systemic integration occurs. These determine rules and permit creation, and create the fields in which episodic power events take place. The *outcomes* of the resistance to power are not based on what happens in the overt circuit alone, but, among other things, on the creation of a "correct and logical *context*". What will be described as a "correct and logical *context*" is a good example of a norm that the social circuit of power supplies. Techniques of production are an example of power that is created in the systemic-economic circuit. They are enabling and innovative, and at the same time limiting and dominating. Hence domination is never fixed and eternal. It is subject to processes of creation and innovation which can weaken it to the same extent that they can strengthen it.

Facilitative power originates in the systemic-economic circuit, and it creates change and tension, making possible new organizational forms. In contrast, *dispositional power* originates in the social circuit, and supplies social integration and stability to the power relations. According to this explanation it is easier to change structures of domination because they

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3 Clegg (Clegg 1989, p. 236) makes use of the term *empowerment* to describe processes that occur in the economic circuit of power. However, although the idea that empowerment and disempowerment occur in the process of the dynamic production of power is correct, Clegg uses the concept of empowerment in the sense of creating or diminishing power. In my estimation, he found in the word *empowerment* a semantic solution for a description of a process in which a gain or loss of power occurs. The word is not used in this sense in the present book.

get built and they flow in a changing and dynamic circuit of systemic-economic power, and in principle they are more open to change and innovation than structures of social belonging and meaning, which get built in the social circuit of power.

It is important to remember that what happens in actuality is not dependent only on what happens in one of the circuits. The ability to exploit new opportunities that open up in the economic circuit to human agents who want to resist depends, among other things, on efficient organization on their part, which is made possible with resources from both the social and the economic circuits. We will recall that organizational outflanking (Mann, 1986) supplies a key to the question as to why people obey so frequently and agree to be subservient: because they are surrounded by organizations of power that are controlled by others. They are organizationally outflanked and lack a strategy of a collective organization.

Power and resistance are two separate, although inter-dependent, aspects of social life. The *circuits of power* model distinguishes between two main kinds of resistance:

1. **Effective Resistance.** This is organized resistance and is very rare: it becomes possible in conditions of victory over organizational outflanking. Such resistance becomes institutionalized as a new power and creates an entirely new field of relations. Michel Foucault argued that the events of May 1968 in France, in which students organized and demonstrated together against the regime, were an example of effective resistance of this kind.

2. **Episodic Resistance.** This is the most common form of resistance. It generally manifests itself only against the exercise of power: it is a resistance which operates in the overt circuit and is conscious only of this circuit of power. Episodic resistance itself actually strengthens the stability of power and confirms its representational character. This is resistance on a manifest level, which is based on obedience in the covert (social and economic)

circuits which determine the division of resources and the rules of power relations. A hunger strike by prisoners, or a demonstration by wives of policemen against deterioration in their husbands' conditions of service, are episodic resistances.

Clegg's circuits of power provide the theory of power with a strategic approach to power relations. The circuits describe a field in which all the possibilities are open, and none of the sides have the possibility of maintaining advantages or a fixed state over a period of time. Another important idea stems from the fact that a stormy and dynamic environment which requires complex resources creates a permanent opportunity for change and for the incorporation of new groups in the power relations.

The rarity of effective resistance is proof of the importance of organization when people are interested in resisting power successfully. (It also explains the success of military coups—these lean upon the military organization, more than on the military weapons, although efficient organization is generally also accompanied by efficient resources).

The three circuits of power also propose an interesting tool for evaluating the degree of power achieved in a process of resistance. The evaluation is divided into three groups of questions: questions about the outcome of the process—which are revealed in the overt circuit; questions about the inner ability created in the course of the process—which develops in the social circuit; and questions about the actual resources available to the process—which are made possible in the systemic-economic circuit.

Michel Foucault on Power

It is almost impossible today to deal with the subject of power without relating to Michel Foucault. Thanks to him, thinking about power, which for many years was ponderous and predictable, has become fascinating and full of surprises.

Foucault does not present an ordered doctrine of power. He himself lives in peace with the contradictions and the dialectics that his approach creates; however, anyone who, like myself, is interested in applying his approach, runs into more than a few difficulties. The solution I have found is drawn from Foucault himself, who claimed that anyone who wants to make use of the knowledge may and should quote aggressively, and make use of what she requires without committing herself to the entire theory. In this spirit, I will make use only of the principal points of Foucault's thought on the subject of power and the research of power.

As already stated, Foucault's writing is full of contradictions. He does not have a sense of some profound and final truth. Instead of this, he finds layers that have to be peeled away. He is influenced by the phenomenological theory, but does not agree with its main idea that the center of meaning is an autonomous subject. His writing evinces a strong structural element, but he rejected the model that develops in his writings, and refused to create a uniform model with rules of its own. Foucault was influenced by Weber and Marx, but unlike them did not feel committed to a comprehensive analysis of organizations or of economic aspects: he chose each time to analyze a different social institution. Despite his claim that he prefers to focus on the micro-politics of power, his theory is suffused with structural macro principles (Walzer, 1986; Ritzer, 1988).[4]

Foucault, as noted, was influenced by structuralist ideas, but because he did not adhere to them and preferred a combination of personal and structural considerations within a single explanation, he is considered a post-structuralist, although there are some who dispute this (Walzer, 1986), himself included. Foucault is also considered a post-modernist. If modernity is connected with terms such as rationality, purpose, totality, synthesis and determinism, and post-modernism is an approach characterized by the opposed concepts—irrationality, play, deconstruction, antithesis and non-determinism, then Foucault is indeed a post-modernist.

Power/Knowledge. Foucault adopted Nietzsche's ideas about the connection between knowledge and power. He assumes a power/knowledge connection which cannot be separated, even semantically. A review of Foucault's writings, rather than a reading of a particular book or essay, reveals his theory of power, and especially the way the power/knowledge connection is created.

In his book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1979) he discusses the period between 1757 and 1830, when the practice of torturing prisoners was replaced by close surveillance of them by means of the prison rules. Foucault interprets this change not as a humanizing of punishment, as is commonly thought, but as a more correct economy of power. The meaning of the change is the development and implementation of a new technology, which he named disciplinary power. The principal mechanisms that disciplinary power develops and by means of which it operates are:

1. The hierarchical observation. The ability of those in charge to observe their entire range of surveillance in a single gaze.

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4 Apart from his own writings, two books are to a large extent authoritative sources on Foucault's approach to power, because they were edited during his lifetime and with his collaboration. These are: Power/Knowledge, edited by Colin Gordon (Gordon, 1980), which is a collection of Foucault's lectures and interviews on the subject; and the book by Dreyfus and Rabinow (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982), which contains mainly their interpretation and concludes with two chapters written by Foucault. In addition to these two books, I have drawn upon the book by Gane (Gane, 1986), which is a collection of critical articles on Foucault; the critical article by Michael Walzer (Walzer, 1986); Giddens' chapters on Foucault (Giddens, 1982, 1984); Rojek's approach to Foucault's research methods (Rojek, 1986); Ritzer's chapter on Foucault's sociology (Ritzer, 1988), in a collection of essays edited by Gutting (Gutting, 1994); Eribon's biography (Eribon, 1991).

2. The judgment of normality. The ability to determine who is normal and who is not, and to punish those who violate the norms, in three dimensions: time—if one is late; activity—if one is not attentive; behavior—if one does not behave properly.

3. The examination. The examining observation of people and the judgment of them according to the norms. This mechanism makes scientific research possible. It makes use of the hierarchical observation and uses science to determine the standards of normality in all spheres of life.

By means of this mechanism the power/knowledge circle is completed; the knowledge that is derived by means of the scientific examination and judgment is fed back in order to impose standards of normality in all spheres of life, and grants the society (by means of its various institutions and its regime) the permission to legislate laws to reinforce the standards and to supervise all the citizens of the disciplinary society in order to prevent a deviation from these laws.

Disciplinary power is not only negative; proper functioning of the military or of industry, for example, is an expression of its positive outcomes. Nonetheless, Foucault is concerned about the expansion of discipline in the governing system and the police, bodies for which the entire society is a field of action and an object of disciplinary action. Although Foucault did not believe that disciplinary power spreads throughout society systematically, he estimated that most of the major social institutions are already infected by it, and hence the great similarity in the structure of prisons, factories, schools, detainment camps and hospitals. The transition from torture to rules, Foucault explains, is also a transition from physical punishment to psychic punishment of the soul and the will, and this is also the beginnings of the scientific discussion of normality and morality (Ritzer, 1988). The combination of power and knowledge with the rule of the state and its

supervision of normality has created something beyond a sophisticated technology; Foucault calls this combination, which is typical of contemporary Western society, *the disciplinary society*.

In *The History of Sexuality* (1980), Foucault describes sexuality in particular, and concern with the human body in general, as an especially dense transfer point for *relations of power* (Gordon, 1980). Medicine, in his view, deals more with the morality of sexuality than with the science of sexuality. Foucault sees medicine, together with psychology and psychiatry, as substitutes in scientific disguise for the religious confessional that preceded them. Medicine is a source of surveillance more than it is an instrument for researching the truth about sexuality. If before the 18th century the society sought ways to control death, since then it has been interested in controlling life, and especially sex. *Bio-power* took on two forms: 1. Anatomo-politics, which aims to discipline the human body (and its sexuality). 2. Bio-politics, which aims at controlling and regulating population growth, health, life expectancy and so on. In both cases sex was central, and society came to see life as a political object. Sex has become more important than the soul, and almost as important as life itself.

Assumptions about Power

Power relations are dependent on culture, place and time, and hence Foucault deals with power discourse in contemporary Western society only, which he characterizes as follows:

A. Power is not a commodity, a position, a prize or a conspiracy. It is the activation of political technologies and is concomitant with the social body. Power not only operates in specific spheres of social life, but occurs in everyday life. Power occurs at sites of all kinds and sizes, including the most minute and most intimate, such as the human body.

B. Power relations are mobile, non-egalitarian and asymmetrical. We must not expect to find a stable logic in power, or a possibility of balance in its domain.

C. Since power is not a thing, is not control of a set of institutions, nor a concealed historical pattern, the aim of the researcher of power is to discover how it operates. To do this, one must isolate, identify and analyze the network of relations which creates political technologies. It is important to research the level of the micro-practices, from which one may learn how power operates in a social institution on the most routine everyday level.

D. From all the previous assumptions it follows that power is not limited to political institutions as it has been commonly thought. Power has a direct and creative role in social life. It is multi-directional, and operates from the top down and from the bottom up. Although power is at its peak when it is situated inside specific institutions such as schools, prisons or hospitals, we should be wary about identifying technologies of power with particular institutions, because power is neither a superstructure nor a quality of an institution.

E. When disciplinary technologies create a permanent connection with a particular institutional framework, they become productive. This is the positive aspect of power—productive power. This point emphasizes the advantages of efficient technologies of power in many productive domains—economic, industrial, and scientific.

F. Power is a general matrix of power relations in a given society at a given time. No-one is outside this matrix, and no-one is above it. The prisoners and the jailers are subject to the same procedures of discipline and surveillance practiced in the prison, and act within the actual limitations of the prison architecture. Even though all are trapped in the grid of the power relations, there also exist rule and domination: the jailers nevertheless have certain advantages according to the prison rules,

as do those who are in charge of them and those who designed the prison.

G. Domination, then, is not the essence of power. Domination does exist, but power is exercised upon the rulers too and not only upon the ruled. For the *bourgeoisie* in 19th-century France to turn into a class it had to activate technologies of power upon its members. Technologies of confession, as well as surveillance over life, sexuality, and health, were implemented first of all upon the bourgeoisie itself. Bio-power served as a central strategy in the bourgeoisie's self-creation. Only a century later would the same technologies be activated upon the French working class.

H. In power relations there is intention, but there is no subject. Only on the micro level, the tactical level, does power have intentions. On the strategic level, which includes the complex of power relations, no subject exists. Hence we may not attribute the totality of what happens in the power field to any personal plan whatsoever (Walzer, 1986).

Nonetheless, power relations are suffused with calculations. On the local level we can generally discover a high level of decision-making, planning, manipulations, intrigues, and co-ordination of political activity. Foucault calls this the local cynicism of power, and does not attribute secret motivations to intentions and interests on the local level. Actors more or less know what they are doing when they do it, and express this clearly. This, however, does not imply that the broader consequences of local actions are coordinated, and that there exists someone (a subject) to whom the total meaning of this activity may be attributed. "People know what they do; they frequently also know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what they do *does*" (Dreyfus & Rainbow, 1982, p. 187). In other words, people are not conscious of the by-products and the implications of their deeds.

Resistance to Power

In his writings and in the interviews he gave, Foucault related to resistance in different and contradictory ways. In his view, power exists only when it is exercised, and it does not depend on agreement or resistance. Power operates only upon free subjects, and hence it presupposes the concept of freedom. Freedom means the ability to choose from a range of possibilities, in different ways of behavior. The relations between power and the freedom of the person who refuses to surrender to it are part of a single whole picture, and are inseparable. Hence, slavery, for example, is not part of the power relations, but merely the exertion of coercion (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982).

Resistance to power is part of the power relations, and hence it is at the same time rich in chances and without a chance. On the one hand, any resistance to existing power relations confirms this power network, and reaffirms its boundaries. On the other hand, the very appearance of a new factor in the power relations – resistance – brings about a redefinition of and a change in the power relations (Wickham, 1986).

It is important to understand the somewhat cunning way in which power shapes the resistance itself. Power is the force that produces the resistance, determines its place, and administers it. In other words, resistance to power draws its means of struggle, and even its actual social position, from the existing form of power. It follows that a successful exercise of power means promotion of *certain* forms of resistance no less than effective mobilization of means against this resistance (Minson, 1986). This has another important meaning: those resistances and individual forms that are promoted by the existing power relations also create conditions for preventing the appearance of other maybe more dangerous and subversive forms of resistance. Hence, a local failure in the exercise of power cannot always be analyzed simplistically: a tactical

failure may be related to in more than one sense as a strategic victory.

Research of Power

Power/knowledge is the critical coupling that Foucault warns us about. The research of power is a scientific activity which has to avoid entrapment in the power relations in order to understand their meaning. Analytical interpretation is the only valid method of analyzing and understanding social phenomena, and it includes three inter-related steps:

1. The interpreter has to take a pragmatic stance of some kind, on the basis of some shared social feeling, about the direction in which things are transpiring. In other words, she cannot speak from an arbitrary personal sense of transcendence or distress.

   Of course, in any given society at any given time there will be various groups possessing different shared feelings about a given state of affairs. Even were a general consensus about the social situation to come about in a particular place at a particular time, it would only prove that a certain orthodoxy has taken over in this society, and not that the situation has arrived at a status of a single objective truth. Hence the interpreter never represents a pure truth or an inclusive social feeling, but only the view of a certain social group, and he has to be critical towards this relativity and also accept its limitations.

2. The interpreter has to supply a disciplined diagnosis of what has happened and what is happening in the social body that explains the shared feeling. At this stage, the work involves a gray and meticulous search in archives and laboratories in order to establish what has been said in the past and in the present by whom and to whom and with what results. In the framework of the diagnosis, the social critic has to investigate the context as an inseparable part of his field of research. This contextual research is different from the research that is common in the social

sciences, which behaves like an entity with internal rules of its own, ignoring the broader social context within which it functions, and relating to important variables as though they were self-evident.

3. To complete the task, the interpreter has to give the reader an explanation as to why the practices he has described create the common good or evil that was the reason for the interpretative research.

Although since 1968 Foucault's writing is suffused with the concept of power, he himself insisted that there is no need to develop a theory of power. He declared that he had not created a theory for fear that it might serve the existing power relations. Foucault claimed that there is no such thing as the objectivity of the scientist, and no validity in the privileged intellectual pose of standing outside the social order like a prophet or a sage (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). Since knowledge is one of the things that define power in the modern world, the researcher is not powerless and is not outside power, he is part of the power relations whether he wants to be or not.

The *Panopticon* created by Jeremy Bentham in 1791 is an illustration of the way Foucault researched and interpreted texts (Foucault, 1979; Ritzer, 1988). The Panopticon is an eight-sided building surrounded by a wall, with a tower at the center. The prisoners (or other occupants of the structure) sit in cells located on floors around the wall. The cells have two apertures – one for light, facing outwards through the wall, and one facing the inner courtyard and the tower. The cells are completely separated from one another by means of walls. Jailers (or overseers of another kind) sit in the tower and observe what happens in every cell. The prisoners are isolated from one another, and exposed to constant observation. Since they cannot know when they are being observed, they supervise their behavior themselves. Research of the Panopticon led to the following conclusions about power:

Power is exercised and not held. In other words, it is not at all important to measure power, or to attempt to locate it. The important question is how power acts and what it produces. Among other things, it produces obedience, discipline, systematic knowledge about the prisoners.

Power tends to be non-personal, diffuse, rational and anonymous, and at the same time all-inclusive—encompassing as many dimensions of social life as possible. The observations of the prisoners in the Panopticon may be exploited for the research and production of scientific knowledge in various disciplines. According to Foucault, the sciences of criminology, psychology and psychiatry developed simultaneously with the development of this technology of power/knowledge.

The most diabolical aspect of power is that it is not entrusted in the hands of someone so that he may exercise it upon others absolutely. It entraps everyone who comes close to it: those who exercise power as well as those who are subject to it. The jailers, like the prisoners, are in certain senses also entrapped in the prison.

A Method of Researching Power

The danger in researching power relations by focusing on institutions is that the researcher may adopt the point of view of the institution itself in the course of his research, and may not notice the technologies used by the institution. When the researcher analyzes power relations from the institutional point of view she puts herself in danger of seeking explanations and sources in the institution itself; i.e., of explaining power by means of power. Another problem in researching power, according to Foucault, is the necessity of researching relations which do not have a necessary particular form. Therefore the researcher has to provide himself with an analytical tool. Foucault proposes a grid that should be laid over the site being researched, with the aid of which it will be possible to analyze the relations in their specific local form. This grid has several dimensions:

1. Differentiation

In the particular institution that is being researched, one has to examine what distinctions are made between workers and clients, between healthy people and sick people, between rich and poor—and also what is included in this set of differentiating distinctions. For example—in the distinction between rich and poor, are further distinctions made beyond the quantity of money? Does the distinction between healthy and sick rely only on medical criteria, or also on social norms practiced in the institution?

2. Objectives

Power is always purposeful, so it is possible to examine its goals. What gains or advantages is the institution interested in achieving? What privileges? What functions does it fulfill?

3. Realization

What is the technology and what are the mechanisms by means of which authority is expressed and obedience achieved? What is threatened, and how? Are patients subjected to physical force, economic punishment, punishment of expulsion from the place? What kind of supervision and control is exercised, what methods of surveillance, and according to what laws or rules? Is the surveillance daily and intimate? Are the rules explicit and clear, or vague, hinted at, and variable?

4. Degrees of Institutionalization

It is worth investigating the influence of four processes of institutionalization (Rojek, 1986):

A. Individuation of Private Space. In almost all the institutions of the disciplinary society there is an increasing tendency to allot each individual a personal space of his own. The purpose of this practice is to enable efficient supervision of the behavior of each individual, so as to evaluate it, judge it, and calculate its advantages and qualities. The interesting question in a process of institutionalization is how the allocation of a private space influence the life of the individual and the society. Foucault claims that it isolates more than it connects. If the institutionalization isolates, we have to ask what goals or purposes this isolation seeks to attain

B. Coding of Activities. Coding of activities is the prescription of social conduct which may be expressed in manners, movements, but also in tasks, and its aim is the regulation of the relations in certain situations. An activity may be permissible in certain contexts and forbidden in others. The researcher is interested in learning these codes, in order to understand what is permitted and what is prohibited, and especially what is considered *normal* in each context.

C. Routinization of Activities. Routinization is an institutionalizing process that serves the expansion of the power relations, because it makes certain acts *automatic*, and ensures the ease of supervision and surveillance over people, especially in schools and work-places.

D. Synchronization of Activities. In the institutionalization process, this means a rational division of labor. The person who operates as a part of a *social machine*, on the principle of *automatic obedience*, was the fulfillment of the dreams of social engineers at the beginnings of this century. When this process of institutionalization reaches its peak, there is no need to exercise influence and compulsion to make people act as they have been programmed to act. They are trained to fulfill functions in concert with others. This is the highest level of the institutionalization of power—the creation of an efficient mechanism in which individuals act predictably on the principle of automatic docility.

5. Rationalization

The exercise of power is a complex, changing, and organized activity. It annexes to itself processes that are more or less appropriate to the situation in which it operates. The search

for the rational asks: What is the effectiveness of the tools available to power? How advanced are they technologically? Do the mechanisms contribute to the achievement of the objectives of power? What is their benefit in relation to their cost? Cost, here, means not only economical cost, but also the cost that stems from resistance to power.

Foucault and the Development of a Theory of Power

Although Foucault, as noted, asserts that he did not develop a theory of power, in fact, as we can see in the present chapter, he did actually develop such a theory (Walzer, 1986). Theoretical insights stemming from his theory will help me further on in the development of a theory of empowerment. For example, to what extent can a practitioner develop a sensitivity to her deeds in order not to mechanically serve systems of power that contradict her original intentions? How to make use of an interpretative analysis as a method for researching the by-products of professional practice? In my opinion, Foucault's method, like Gaventa's theory of power referred to above (1 980), teaches a subversive reading of texts and procedures in order to discover the covert ways in which technologies of power create obedience and powerlessness.

  This is also the place to explain why, despite its great relevance, I have not based a theory of empowerment on Foucault's approach. I have found that Foucault contributes more with his ideas and the spirit of what he says than with structure, which is so necessary for building a theory. Like existentialist writers before him (Camus, 1942; May, 1972), Foucault too sees powerlessness as structured into human existence. This understanding serves a theory of empowerment because it is based on a universal human insight about the damage caused by powerlessness. The difficulty is that Foucault does not believe in resistance, because he denies the centrality of an autonomous subject who has the ability to influence and change social relations. On his view, power, not human agency, is the central factor that motivates all

the other relations. He did not believe that there is a chance of bringing about social change through local efforts, and since the belief in the human ability to effect social change is a central belief of the theory of empowerment, there is no room at its core for the skeptical and pessimistic Foucault. For readers who may doubt the justification for presenting him here at all, I will note that a reading of Foucault's writings reveals contradictions in this sphere as well (Ingram, 1994). In contrast to his subject-less scientific method, his writing is suffused with emotion and humanity, and the topics he chose to deal with attest to a sincere concern for the fate of the subject in Western democratic society.

Giddens on Power

Anthony Giddens (Giddens 1982, 1984) discusses power as part of a social theory that he developed, which he called *Structuration*. Giddens and Foucault are similar in that power is an essential component in their social thought, and is incorporated into their principal writings. However, they represent almost absolutely opposite approaches to the place of the individual in society. Giddens, too, allots power an important place in social life. He agrees that power does not have a locus, is not connected to norms and values, or to class interests. However, he objects to the representation of power as all-inclusive and as possessing awesome dimensions. Giddens is very much influenced by Foucault, but he sees every individual as possessing knowledge and even consciousness, and in this he is the most optimistic among the theorists of power.

  Power is integrated within a complex social practice, in which human agency has structural qualities, and the social structure is part of the human activity that creates it and ensures its continuity. This *duality of structure* model sees the social structure and the human agency as two factors which build and activate the social relations, and power as a central and important component of both. The social structure makes

possible the human activity, and also limits it—by means of laws, rules and resources, and also by means of human practices that are part of it. It is human agency that creates the social structure—it establishes it, consolidates it, and also changes it while it acts. To the same extent, the social structure is a component of all activity. People speak a language that has a structure of rules and syntax, even if they don't know a thing about syntax and rules of grammar. While speaking, the speaker decides to speak differently, and then he activates two processes: he changes the language, and reaffirms and reconstructs the structure and rules of the language. In other words, human activity does not *just happen*—it is structured. People make use of what already exists in order to know what to say, what to do, and even how to begin acting in situations in their lives.

Duality of structure integrates two separate approaches: the idea of power as a voluntary human activity, and the idea that power is structural, and hence is more a quality of the society than of particular people (Hajer, 1989). Hence one can explain power simultaneously in terms of human action and in terms of structure: it is the ability of individuals to act in a directed and voluntary manner and to bring about change; it is also systems of domination and rule, and of the rules and resources connected with these. Power is indeed human activity: a person who exercises power could have behaved differently, and a person on whom power is exercised would have acted differently had it not been exercised. However, this occurrence cannot be fully understood without relating to the social structure in the context of which it occurs.

A number of principles derive from this:

· Power is a basic component of human agency. Absolute lack of power means ceasing to be a human agent. Power is the human ability to intervene in events and to make a difference.

· Power is an inseparable part of the social interaction. Power is an integral feature of social life. It is always part of the relations, and its signs may be discerned even at micro levels of interaction.

· An inequality exists in different people's ability and access to resources, which also creates an inequality among them in the sphere of power. Hence, the development of ability and access to resources are key concepts for an understanding of the power that people can exercise.

· Power can also be described on a continuum of autonomy and dependence. Unequal access to resources for realizing goals and unequal opportunities to influence the course of the interaction ensure mutual relations, because each side is to a certain extent dependent on the other, and also autonomous to a certain extent in its action. The investigation of power involves exposing this dialectics of dependence and autonomy in specific situations (Davis, 1988).

· Power is a process. Power is a factor that intervenes between human agency (in the form of every person's inherent ability to influence the world around him) and social structure (in the form of the structures of domination that determine the degree of a person's ability to influence the world). These relations, between human agency and social structure, are dynamic and processual.

The theory of structuration, or, by its other name, the theory of the duality of structure, will serve, from the next chapter on, as a meta-theory for the development of a theory of empowerment, and so we will go on discussing it. Giddens creates the basis for the discussion of empowerment a theoretical link that integrates micro and macro phenomena: of action by individuals and the change that this action can bring to the environment.

Summary

We have seen how difficult it is to find an agreed definition of power. The discussion of the theory of empowerment will take place in the shadow of the claim that power as a concept is essentially contested. A précis of the views about the essence of power will illustrate this:

· Power has to be acquired. Power may only be exercised. Power is a matter of authority.

· Power belongs to an individual. Power belongs only to the collective. Power cannot be attributed to anyone, it is a quality of social systems.

· Power involves conflict. Power does not involve conflict in every case. Power generally involves conflict, but not necessarily.

· Power presupposes resistance. Power, first and foremost, has to do with obedience. Power is both resistance and obedience.

· Power is connected with oppression and rule. Power is productive and makes development possible. Power is an evil, a good, diabolical, and routine. (Lukes, in Clegg, 1989, p. 239).

This being so, good and contradictory reasons will always be found to prefer one approach over the others. I have chosen to discuss approaches which have a greater methodological value for the development of a theory of empowerment than others: they are conducive to the clarification of problems this book deals with, and they make it possible to deal more comprehensively and profoundly with the central topic—empowerment. Giddens' theory of structuration will be used to establish the general structure of the theory of empowerment. It reinforces the rationale for an integration between the individual and the collective which it is important to develop. Foucault's influence finds expression especially in the conception of power as an inseparable component of social relations. Foucault and Giddens see the practitioner and the researcher as involved in the social situation in the most subjective way. These principles of the Foucaultian approach have been fully adopted in this book. The theories of Gaventa, Mann and Clegg will be used to illuminate specific spheres in the theory of empowerment: the issue of powerlessness; the importance of organization in community empowerment, and the advantages of the development of strategic resources.

Chapter 2
Empowerment: Definitions and Meanings

In this chapter we will define the concept of empowerment, indicate the meanings given to it in various contexts, and discuss each one of these meanings.

Verbal Definition

Empowerment is related to the word power. In English, the concept leans on its original meaning of investment with legal power—permission to act for some specific goal or purpose (Rappaport, 1987).

The new meaning of the concept includes mainly references to power that develops and is acquired. People are managing to gain more control over their lives, either by themselves or with the help of others. The form *to be empowered* relates to what is both a process and an outcome—to the effort to obtain a relative degree of ability to influence the world (Staples, 1990).

Initial Meanings of Empowerment

Three of the first writers to relate systematically to the concept have had a most fundamental influence on the development of its use. Barbara Solomon (1976, 1985) emphasized empowerment as a method of social work with oppressed Afro-Americans. Peter Berger and Richard Neuhaus (1977) proposed empowerment as a way of improving the welfare services by means of mediating social institutions. Julian Rappaport (1981) developed the concept theoretically and presented it as a world-view that includes a social policy and an approach to the solution of social problems stemming from powerlessness.

These writers emphasized the important connection between individuals and community, and encouraged a contextual-

ecological approach to the treatment of social situations. They discussed the failure of social programs to provide social solutions, and the destructive by-product of these programs—the creation of powerlessness among those in need of the programs. The root of the evil, they claimed, is that local knowledge and resources are ignored in the course of corrective intervention, and that the missing resources are provided insensitively, without consideration for what is already there.

Since the eighties, four ideological approaches have provided the framework of ideas for the discussion of empowerment. The first is an ethnocentric approach, which seeks a solution for difficult social problems of ethnic and other minorities (Solomon, 1976; Gutierrez & Ortega, 1991). The second is a conservative liberal approach that seeks to revive the community as a social unit which among other things has to care for its weak citizens as well (Berger & Neuhaus, 1977). The third is a socialist approach which demands of equity and social responsibility in the treatment of social problems (Boyte, 1984). The fourth approach wants to see empowerment as a profound and professional implementation of democracy—one that will contain every legitimate social ideological current in the democratic society. This is a progressive democratic world-view which resolves to live in harmony with the other approaches and attempts to create an integration of them. Its distinctive spokesman is Julian Rappaport (1981, 1985, 1987). The present book is a continuation of this approach. Where there is a multiplicity of shades it is not always easy to distinguish a new color, and not everyone who is interested in empowerment is interested in interpreting the ideologies behind it. Since empowerment is declaredly also a world-view, it is worth acknowledging that different and even contradictory value-systems have participated in its creation.

In order to develop empowerment into a theory I first had to sort the accepted meanings, to discuss them, to analyze them in order to evaluate them, and then to recompose the concept anew. The method I have chosen is not the only possible one (see, for comparison, the books by Judith Lee [1994] and Enid Cox and Ruth Parsons [1994]), but it has determined the character of the present study. I have chosen to divide the discussion into three categories, or levels, which in the literature on empowerment sometimes appear on their own and sometimes together, though not always in a differentiated way: individual empowerment—which focuses on what happens on the personal level in the individual's life; community empowerment—which emphasizes the collective processes and the social change; and empowerment as a professional practice—which sees empowerment as a means of professional intervention for the solution of social problems.

Individual Empowerment

The personality structure, as we know, is significantly influenced by environmental conditions. A person is not formed only by heredity and conditions of growth and care, but also by opportunities and experiences in the world around him. Among these, especially important to us is the ability to make decisions and to act in order to attain goals. This ability (or its absence) shapes the person's character and influences the degree to which she will be the effective actor in her life (Pinderhughes, 1983).

Empowerment is an interactive process which occurs between the individual and his environment, in the course of which the sense of the self as worthless changes into an acceptance of the self as an assertive citizen with socio-political ability. The outcome of the process is skills, based on insights and abilities, the essential features of which are a critical political consciousness, an ability to participate with others, a capacity to cope with frustrations and to struggle for influence over the environment (Kieffer, 1984).

The process of empowerment is an active process. Its form is determined by the circumstances and the events, but its

essence is human activity in the direction of change from a passive state to an active one. The process brings about an integration of self-acceptance and self-confidence, social and political understanding, and a personal ability to take a significant part in decision-making and in control over resources in the environment. The sense of personal ability connects with civic commitment. Individual empowerment is an expression on the individual level of a multi-leveled process which may be applied to organizations, communities, and social policy (Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988).

Empowerment is a process of internal and external change. The internal process is the person's sense or belief in her ability to make decisions and to solve her own problems. The external change finds expression in the ability to act and to implement the practical knowledge, the information, the skills, the capabilities and the other new resources acquired in the course of the process (Parsons, 1988).

Some writers call the internal change psychological empowerment and the external change political empowerment. According to this distinction, psychological empowerment occurs on the level of a person's consciousness and sensations, while political empowerment is a real change which enables a person to take part in the making of decisions that affect his life. To achieve psychological empowerment a person requires only internal strengths, while to realize his political personal empowerment a person requires environmental conditions, mainly organizational ones, which will enable him to exercise new abilities (Gruber & Trickett, 1987).

In this discussion I do not intend to deal with the practical and the psychological processes of empowerment and the differences between them; rather, I want to emphasize the need for an integration of both. While the traditional approach sees political power as the possession of sufficient influence or authority to bring about a change, or even to impose it, the idea of empowerment adopts a different approach to power, one that does not attribute possession of power to anyone. When power is not conceived as a resource or a concrete

position in any particular site, then it is in any case both political and psychological. Indeed, people have testified that in their empowerment process they did not necessarily acquire more social influence or political control, but they did become more able participants in the political process and in local decision making. They estimated that they did not possess more absolute power to dictate the character of their environment, but they believed that they were beginning to be more effective in the dynamics of social and political negotiations (Kieffer, 1984).

Psychological Constructs and Empowerment

Several attempts have been made to define individual empowerment by means of psychological constructs. Especially conspicuous is the desire to connect empowerment to two groups of psychological constructs. The first group is that of personality constructs which are called *locus of control* (Rotter, 1966); the second group is that of cognitive constructs, which focus on self-efficacy, i.e., the belief in one's efficacy to alter aspects of life over which one can exercise some control (Bandura, 1989).

Locus of control is a concept with an internal-external continuum, which in general terms determines that someone whose *locus of control* is inside him is *internal*—he expects reinforcement from himself, possesses inner motivation, and therefore his achievements will be more under his control as opposed to someone whose locus of control is external. The *external* person perceives reinforcements as beyond control and due to chance, fate or powerful others (Rotter, 1966, Levenson, 1981).

Several studies have attempted to define individual empowerment by means of the locus of control construct. Here an internal locus of control indicates the realization of the empowerment process, while an external locus of control means the continued existence of powerlessness (Chavis, 1984;

Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988; Hoffman, 1978; Gruber & Trickett, 1987; Sue, 1981, in Hegar & Hunzekar, 1988).

However, studies on the *locus of control* construct indicate that there is no unequivocal connection between important factors connected with the concept of empowerment and this construct. For example, no significant connection has been found between the locus of control and political social activity. Likewise, especially in extreme states of powerlessness, no indication has been found of the advantage of *internality* over *externality*, particularly not among women. In many studies the *locus of control* has been revealed as a situation-contingent quality which may appear or disappear according to the circumstances, with no clear connection to the personality (Levenson, 1981; Sendler et al., 1983; Parsons, 1988).

The critique of *locus of control* sees it as a culture-dependent concept, which discriminates against those who are in a social and cultural state of powerlessness and lack of control. The *locus of control* research in fact presupposes that the researchers themselves have an *internal* locus, and attributes an *external locus of control* to certain especially weak population groups. If so, it is preferable to see this construct as an indicator of the social situation of those population groups, instead of using it to measure the personality of individuals (Antonovsky, 1979).

Self-efficacy (Bandura, 1989) is a central and ongoing individual mechanism (which operates by means of cognitive, motivational and affective processes) which is comprised of a person's perceived belief in her capability to exercise control over events. Studies indicate that a person's belief in her ability to achieve outcomes is, among other things, connected to her thinking patterns—to what extent they help or hinder her to realize goals. This belief determines how a person will judge her situation, and influences the degree of motivation that people mobilize and sustain in given tasks, their degree of endurance in situations of stress and their vulnerability to depression, and the activities and the environmental frameworks that people choose. The

social influences operating in the selected environments can contribute to personal development by the interests and competencies they cultivate and the social opportunities they provide, which subsequently shape their possibilities of development (Bandura, 1989, 1997). The connection between the self-efficacy mechanism and the empowerment process is so clear that there can be no doubt about the value of an integration between them.

The psychological constructs are not the subject of this book, for if we assume that every powerless person needs empowerment, and that potential empowerment exists in every person, then personality qualities are not essential for an understanding of the various levels of the empowerment process or its outcomes. Beyond this, the hidden message in the personality constructs is that an empowered person has changed psychologically in ways that only professionals can understand and measure. Such a message contradicts empowerment language, which calls for equal and transparent relations between professionals (including researchers) and the people in whose lives they intervene (Rappaport, 1985). I recommend that as part of adopting an empowering professional practice we should avoid using concepts which brand people in advance.

Since empowerment is not a particular quality of a person, but an important condition for his existence, its realization must correspond to the most diverse (theoretically, at least, the infinite) number of human variations. Paradoxically, this very complexity is what enables the process to harmoniously absorb a vast quantity of psychological constructs (Zimmerman, 1995). Although we cannot dismiss the attempt to make connections between psychological theories and the concept of empowerment, my preference is to develop empowerment in a less psychological and more social direction.

Individual Empowerment as a Political Concept

The advantage of the concept of empowerment lies in its integration of the level of individual analysis with the level of social and political meaning. This conjunction appears in feminist thinking, which connects the personal with the political: what happens in the life of an individual woman is not only her private affair, it is also an expression of her social situation (Lengermann & Niebrugge-Brentley, 1988).

If we acknowledge that politics is the everyday activities of ordinary people who are attempting to change social and economic institutions, individual empowerment cannot consist only of personal assertiveness, mobility, and a psychological experience of power (Morgen & Bookman, 1988).

Feminist thinking presents the personal and the political as two sides of one coin, in remonstration against a common social tendency to divide what is considered worthy of public discussion and is openly and publicly discussed from what is not such and belongs inside the private sphere (Ackelsberg, 1988). This division defined women's problems as *private*, prevented public recognition of their importance, excluded them and separated them from one another, and thus prevented them having a community life which would strengthen their perceptions, establishing a vicious circle that augmented their exclusion and institutionalized their disconnection from politics. In this way, too, the private space and the public space were divided: the home and the residential environment as one entity, and public life and work as another. Men are connected with the public domain—the world at large; women with the private domain—the home.

This division has been harmful not only to women. Any division that contributes to isolation and separation between domains in the individual's life brings it about that people do not comprehend the connection between what goes on in their work situation and what happens in their home and community, just as they do not understand the connection between political decisions (or non-decisions) and personal economic outcomes. The severance between the private and the public has reinforced the view that citizens, as individuals, or as residents in a community, are not capable of effecting a change in politics or the economy: they are busy realizing personal goals and are involved in conflicts with one another for the sake of their own interests. *Self-interest* is natural (Perloff, 1987), and this implies that for people to cooperate and contribute to the general interest there needs to be a great change in behavior, attitudes, and human nature. Empowerment is a political concept because it comes out against these views, and connects the individual with a public, a community, and with politics. Individual empowerment is a political demand by women – and men – not to stop them at the door of their residences (Ackelsberg, 1988). Empowerment promotes involvement in politics because it broadens a person's social understanding and connects her with others in the same situation; empowerment broadens a person's horizons, imbues him with faith in social change, and accords him the ability to change.

Group Empowerment—The Group as a Means of Empowerment

Anyone who has gone through the experience of joining a self-help group in order to get help, and has discovered that she can also help others, knows how someone who begins the journey towards empowerment feels (Rappaport, 1985). The group is the perfect environment for consciousness-raising, for mutual help, for developing social skills, for exercising problem-solving, and for experiencing inter-personal influence. Empowerment means coming out from the limited boundaries of the *I* into the expanse of possibilities of the *we*. It was only natural that the professionals who in the seventies developed the concept of the self-help group would add the concept of empowerment to it in the eighties (Reismann, 1983, 1985; Kahn & Bender, 1985).

When the empowerment process is undergone by the individual in a group, it also includes the enabling influence of a peer group within a collective-organizational structure, and also relations with a mentor that enrich the experience (Kieffer, 1983). The conjunction of empowerment with mutuality – *mutual empowerment* – broadens people's possibilities of controlling their lives. It has been found that people in self-help groups who have both provided and received help have gained more satisfaction from their participation in the group and more self-esteem than people who only received help or only provided help (Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988; Maton & Rappaport, 1984).

Participation in a self-help group is considered an ideal (though not exclusive) means of encouraging individual empowerment, for such a group produces empowerment beyond the individual as well: people receive emotional and social support in the course of a change process in which they provide concrete help to others and acquire new skills, including development of ability for future public action (Dodd & Gutierrez, 1990; Chesler & Chesney, 1995).

Critical Consciousness and Individual Empowerment

The development of critical consciousness is, without doubt. The most significant personal experience in the empowerment process. Critical consciousness is the process by means of which people acquire an increasingly greater understanding of the cultural-social conditions that shape their lives, and of the extent of their ability to change these conditions. A person lives not only in the present but also in history, and is capable not only of interpreting but also of interpreting interpretations—hence a critical consciousness is essential and basic to all human learning (Freire, 1970).

Critical self-consciousness includes people's recognition of their right to give their experiences a name. People learn to speak in their own language, and to give names to the elements of their world (Van Den Bergh & Cooper, 1986).

Critical consciousness is people's better understanding of their powerlessness and of the systematic forces that oppress them. The success or failure of a particular struggle or activity are only one aspect of empowerment. The change in people's outlook on themselves, and in their ability to understand the world in which they live, is more important. The empowerment of a woman who is poor, belongs to an ethnic minority, and is at the bottom of the social status and income levels, expresses itself in her understanding and her consciousness of the dynamics of her oppressed condition, and not in her success to liberate herself from it. Her power expresses itself in a translation of her consciousness into action with others in her situation in order to withstand the heavy burden of their lack of resources (Gilkes, 1988; Bookman, 1988).

We may distinguish two main approaches to the significance of critical consciousness in the empowerment process: those who see empowerment as essentially an internal process see the development of critical consciousness as the main realization of empowerment. On this view, critical consciousness is the outcome of empowerment (Luttrell, 1988; Morgen, 1988). Those who claim that the goal of empowerment is actual achievements see the development of critical consciousness as an important stage, but only an initial one in the process (Kieffer, 1984; Gruber & Trickett, 1987).

Consciousness is formed by means of praxis in the course of action (Morgen, 1988). Hence, one may also join in collective action without such consciousness and, through actual experience and learning about such experience, one may achieve consciousness and empowerment. Action alone does not deepen critical consciousness, just as learning with no experience at all does not achieve this. Theories of learning and education have long since recognized the importance of experiential learning. The empowerment process makes manifest the importance of the application of this approach to

the social domain (Rivera, 1990; Freire, 1970; Lane & Sawaia, 1991).

Empowerment, then, is a pro-active concept that encourages an active and initiative-taking approach to life, on the individual level as well. The individual process entails the will to influence the environment on all levels: it begins with a sense of faith in one's own strength, advances to activity in inter-personal domains, and continues from there to activity for social change. An elderly woman may feel empowered from the very fact that she is still independent and controls her own private affairs, but she can feel much greater control over her life when she is involved in neighborhood activity for herself and for other citizens in her situation. Action and consciousness are bound up with one another and vary from one person to another. They, together with the other constituents of the process, contribute to the vast variety of forms and contents of the empowerment process.

Individual empowerment is a process of personal development. The process involves both a development of skills and abilities, and a more positive self-definition. People testify to a better feeling about themselves, a sense of more self-respect and self-esteem. A new self-confidence and a feeling of self-efficacy are connected with a redefinition of the self, and the latter is closely linked with a real improvement in personal knowledge, abilities, skills, resources and life opportunities. A higher level of personal activity makes possible more effective inter-personal relations. Since self-perception is based on achievements in the real world, there is a clear positive interaction between development of self-confidence and reinforcement of personal ability.

The ability to redefine yourself and to act efficiently for yourself is the essence of individual empowerment. But individual empowerment cannot be an exclusive or principal component of the concept of empowerment because powerlessness is not only an individual problem, but also a social and structural condition. People, generally, are not powerless because of lacks in their private lives or their personalities, but because they belong to a powerless group. Of course, in each such group there will always be those who, thanks to exceptional talent or luck, will attain to personal success and power (the converse situation also exists: in a group that possesses power there will always be some powerless individuals). Nonetheless, although these are known and accepted truths, psychological and individual explanations of success and failure are still prevalent, and the conservative social policy that reinforces them is still in vogue. These explanations remain in force because they cast the responsibility for the situation and the onus of change on the individual victims of inequality and oppression, instead of on the social structure which is the root of these problems. Empowerment is the opposite approach, and that is why its social dimensions are so important. Individual empowerment is only one constituent of the process which as a whole connects the personal and the individual with the collective and the social in people's lives.

Community Empowerment

Community empowerment is the increased control of people as a collective over outcomes important to their lives. Before discussing community empowerment we need to clarify the concept *community* in the sense used in the present book.

The Community and the Common Critical Characteristic

Community has a meaning of a life that is more egalitarian, participatory and intimate than life in society at large, which demands the objectification of man and anonymous obedience to authority and law. The community as an image is a kind of antithesis of the bureaucratic, hierarchical, formal and judiciary society. The concept is to a certain extent abstract, but at the same time concrete, because it operates in the geographical, the ethnic, and the functional sense. The

need for a community is a need to live together, to trust, to communicate. In the Middle Ages the concept *commune* was used to describe a settlement with an independent identity and government. In English, *community* and *communication* are derived from the same root (Handler, 1990).

There are several approaches to community:

1. A utopian approach oriented to a vision of a future community whose members will be able to fulfill their human and social potential. This approach draws its inspiration from the utopians of the 19th century. Although it is far from the idyllic scene of adults and children who are cultured, educated, strong, healthy, and possess high moral qualities, who group together in a rural setting to grow vegetables and weave clothes, it too preaches egalitarianism and autarchy. The separation from society at large is necessary in order to realize important social goals of the members (Friedmann, 1987).

2. A rehabilitational approach which focuses on the situation of ethnic minorities, and more recently also of other minorities, such as the disabled (Dolnick, 1993). On this view, the community struggles with life beside a different and sometimes hostile society, and grapples with the dilemma of integration into this society. Here too a utopian vision exists: to revitalize the intimate and supportive community in which, more by necessity than because they want to, people whom the society isolates and discriminates against live today (O'Sullivan, 1984; Friedmann, 1989; Rivera & Erlich, 1984, Cendeluci, 1995).

3. A social approach which redefines community and departs, perhaps too sharply (because quite a few people still live in traditional communities in our time too) from the traditional community as it used to be (Warren, 1975). The new community is a social collective entity, and the image appropriate to it is one of people with common problems and generally a common dependence on service

providers. This is a community which does not include all the aspects of existence, but responds to those needs in people's lives for the sake of which it was created (Reinharz, 1984). Parents of children with Down's Syndrome can create a community for themselves to deal with all aspects of their lives as parents of these children: the care, the raising and the development of the child. However, they may also have life interests which they do not share with this community (Handler, 1990).

I will be referring mostly to this kind of partial and changing community. It has advantages for analysis on both the macro and the micro levels. On the macro level—the partial community which changes according to circumstances constitutes a recognition of the fact that not all the social needs can, or have to, find a response in a community setting. Community is not the supreme end, but a supportive and complementary means for human existence (Handler, 1990). On the micro level—this community softens the friction between the individual's needs for autonomy and the demand for loyalty to the collective and the imposition of group values implicit in the idea of the community. The individual can choose, and can create a community; he is free to leave a community and join a new one at his discretion.

The concept *common critical characteristic* (Sadan and Peri, 1990), too, supports the conceptualization of the partial community. For example, a geographical place is at times a common critical characteristic of many of the people living in a certain deprived neighborhood. When the basis for solidarity with others is not geographical, it is necessary to seek the common critical characteristic which causes people (or others in their environment) to define themselves in a similar way and apart from the environment. The common critical characteristic is what defines and distinguishes people, and cannot be ignored. Hence it has a potential for the creation of a community. For example, people suffering from hemophilia do not usually live in one geographical community, but they

have a potential to create a community around their common critical characteristic: they need special services, some of which are provided, and some of which are lacking, partial, or defective. Their everyday lives and the problems that preoccupy them are similar and they share a common fate. All these are a common basis for connection. The connection may be partial, unstable and changing, or permanent and requiring more commitment, but it exists, and a community may be built upon it.

It is important to remember not to define all people who share the same common critical characteristic as a community: not everyone who carries the critical characteristic has to belong to a community even if it exists—joining a community is a conscious and voluntary act. Nonetheless, these two concepts – community and common critical characteristic – complement and reinforce one another in very important ways. One of these, perhaps the most important one, is that the creation of the community helps the surrounding society to understand the critical characteristic as a social problem, instead of seeing it as an individual problem. While an individual view isolates those who suffer from a problem, and casts the responsibility for their situation and for changing it upon them as individuals, the creation of a community around a critical characteristic is an expression of an improvement of the human ability to cope with a social problem: there is an improvement both in the ability of those suffering from the problem to ease their suffering, and in the society's ability to understand their distress and to seek a social solution for it.

The definition of community empowerment contains processes that have diverse collective bases. As already noted, community empowerment on a basis of geographical boundaries, as in residential neighborhoods, is only one of the possibilities. Also important is community empowerment of people whose common characteristic is ethnic origin, gender (women), age (the elderly), or a difficult and limiting life problem (such as deaf or paraplegic people). Further on we will discuss these various categories and also some issues that are common to community empowerment of all kinds.

Community Empowerment on a Geographical Basis

The first thing that the idea of community empowerment brings to mind is a neighborhood, or any other defined residential area. It should be made clear that since human existence as such is anchored in a locale in a specific space, the discussion of community empowerment on a non-geographical basis may also take place within the bounds of a geographical neighborhood. In such a case, however, the common critical characteristic of the people involved may be their origin and not their place of residence (e.g., Greeks in Arcadia, New York, or Armenians in Jerusalem).

The discussion of community empowerment on a geographical basis is conducted almost separately in a number of professional disciplines, e.g.,: community psychology (Wandersman & Florin, 1988), community work (Rubin & Rubin, 1992), urban studies and planning (Friedmann, 1992; Brower & Taylor, 1998), social action (Boyte, 1984), and social policy (Page-Adams & Sherraden, 1997). I have chosen to present the essentials without relating to each domain separately.

Techniques of resident participation in the affairs of their neighborhood are considered as encouraging individual empowerment: participation encourages perceived self-efficacy, expectations of successful group solutions, and increased civic commitment (Wandersman & Florin, 1988). Community empowerment is manifested in the increasing actual power of neighborhood groups, especially when the participation produces a change in decision making in the neighborhood and leads to residents' organizations having more control over their affairs (Biegel, 1984). Only when residents' participation in their neighborhood's agenda becomes an accepted procedure (where poor neighborhoods are concerned, this is in most cases an achievement that

entails considerable efforts) can community empowerment be defined as collective knowledge of problems and alternative solutions and skills in the presentation of issues, in groups leadership, and in implementation of tactics (Fawcett et al., 1984).

Community work builds the individual's ability to act together with others and to create a community. It teaches people to cooperate—to make group decisions, to solve common problems and to mobilize resources for the general good. The belief in an active democracy, in maximal participation of residents in the life of their community, in the realization of people's right to influence important decisions in their lives, are the basis of thought about empowerment, and undoubtedly originate in the values of community work.

However, in community work, as in any professional practice, the values do not attest to the actual practice. Hence it is possible to measure the degree of empowerment that is encouraged by community work in the process of professional intervention by means of the *DARE* criteria: 1. Who Determines the goals? 2. Who Acts to achievement the goals? 3. Who Receives the actions? 4. Who Evaluates the actions? (Rubin & Rubin, 1992).

The test of community empowerment, then, is the active participation of the people themselves in processes of decision making that affect the community, starting from the stage of formulating the goals, through to the stage of evaluating the outcomes of the effort. The more the *DARE* criteria point in the direction of resident groups and organizations and less in the direction of formal services and/or factors external to the community, the more community empowerment there is in that area of intervention.

Some writers believe that community empowerment is expressed in the community's ability to create new human, existential, economic, social and political values for its residents, as an alternative to dysfunctional values that penetrate into the community from the capitalist economy, such as intensive consumption separated from daily life,

isolated individualism. Community empowerment therefore depends on a de-linking from the system at large, and on greater local self-reliance based on resources that the community households can produce (Friedmann, 1987). The outcome may be an making change: *the recovery of the political community*. The goal is not community empowerment, but the reactivation of political life—a society whose residents are active in the processes of civil governance. This is an ideal way of life that includes: cooperative production of consumer goods, democracy at home and outside the home, and active participation in political and community life. Household economy, the society and the world economy are integrated together in the framework of a *moral economy* that is based on social justice in the division of resources and the care of people (Friedmann, 1989).

In the domain of urban planning models that declare goals of empowerment are occasionally presented (Bradbury et al., 1987); these models accord people more choice, proclaim a message of more equality, recommend that people should not be labeled, nor isolated in services of their own. The danger in these models is disempowerment resulting from inattention to the importance of the empowerment process. For example, the establishment of a city-wide pilot project means most significant changes in the lives of people who will not be participants in the planing or the implementation of the change. The deterministic premise that the outcomes of such a plan will lead to empowerment of people has no connection with the empowerment approach as it is presented here. A social plan which makes use of the word empowerment to describe final outcomes only, and does not deal with processes of community development or mobilization of participants from the area of intervention, is not empowering.

Following Berger and Neuhaus' classical article (1977), the idea of turning the community into an exclusive provider of welfare services to its members has also been called community empowerment. The critique of this trend stems from concern about the erosion of the idea of the welfare

state by means of such solutions. Although not all the present institutions are efficient as service providers or promoters of public participation, neighborhood organizations too can be "institutionalized, rigid, inaccessible, insensitive and undemocratic just like professional bureaucracies" (Kramer, 1988). Exaggerated enthusiasm about voluntary activity in the community, mutual help and social networks may cause harm, because the replacement of bureaucratic state services by community services is problematic for three reasons: 1. The social networks on which they rely do not always exist, or are not always acceptable to those in need. It also happens that the most needy are not wanted by the geographical community or by the community services (Borkman, 1984). 2. The resources of the community service may be inadequate to provide efficient service. 3. The accountability of community organizations is still particularly problematic. We often tend to forget that the present, formal and bureaucratic form of service provision developed in the wake of the failure of the mediating institutions – the community, the family, the church and the voluntary organization – to provide a response to complex needs.

John Friedmann (1992) claims that community empowerment is the creation of access to social and economic resources. Poverty, then, results from lack of access to essential resources, not only economic but also political and social resources. This being so, some writers claim that politics, not planning, is the major process by means of which needs should be identified and responses for them should be located (Marris, 1987; Hajer, 1989).

The term community empowerment hints at the (at least theoretical) possibility that in a certain sense it is the community itself, and not only the individuals who belong to groups or organizations that comprise it, that undergoes an empowerment process. The question that precedes such a possibility is whether the geographical community can act collectively. Urban neighborhoods lack the primal connections of kinship, emotional connection and economic inter-relations

that in the past created a community and enabled community activity. The typical urban neighborhood of today is, in most cases, a place where individuals and families are separate entities which, by chance or intentionally, have chosen to live in a particular place. Such a divided and thin foundation cannot serve as a basis for solidarity (Davis, 1991). But solidarity can emerge in a residential area when the interests on which it is based stem from non-geographic sources, such as relations of race, religion, ethnicity and class that are expressed in residential neighborhoods. In other words, neighborhoods may serve as arenas in which races, religions, nations or classes are separated spatially and concentrated socially. People who live in the same locale can act collectively on the basis of political and material interests which are not local in origin (Harvey, 1973). However, experience shows that people act collectively on the basis of interests and out of a solidarity that are created in the place itself. Neighborhoods act as a community in order to improve security, services or quality of life, at times in order to protect the value of local property, and at times because inaction means participating in the destruction of the community through silent agreement (Davis, 1991).

Beside the organization of groups which manage to pool their resources into a common effort, there are also groups that act apart from one another. There are situations in which one neighborhood organizes itself for action against the establishment; there are cases when these neighborhood groups initiate separate efforts for interests of their own; and there is activity of neighborhood groups against one another and against the establishment (Atzmon, 1988). The relevant question is: what is the connection between all these kinds of community activity and community empowerment.

Some writers describe an empowered community as a place in which the residents have the skills, the will, and the resources to act in order to regulate the quality of life in their community, and where there exist a structure and relations between the organizations and the agencies: the

empowered community responds to threats to its quality of life, or initiates efforts for the improvement of the quality of life, by means of a network of community organizations. In addition, in an empowered community the following conditions exist: 1. Political openness, which is manifested in serious consideration of the residents' criticism and claims. 2. A strong leadership which seeks the residents' advice, and knows when to confront external forces and when to receive help from the outside. 3. Strong connections between the community's formal and informal leadership. 4. Access to the mass media, such as radio, television, the press, which reflect all sectors of the community (Zimmerman, n.d.). In my estimation, the conditions posited in these descriptions of the perfect community and the perfect environment are not attainable in most community empowerment processes. They may be aspired to, but positing too high a target for the realization of empowerment disregards the importance of primary stages in the process which involve development in the direction of control over the environment and the creation of a community.

Situations in which the community struggles for its survival connect well with community empowerment. In such situations, organized community activity to prevent external intervention that threatens its very existence is essential. If the community does not act, or does not act in time, or does not act efficiently, it does not survive. Those neighborhoods which lack consciousness of the danger they are in, and/or the organizational tools to prepare against it before it happens, are annihilated (Levine, 1982; Gans, 1982; Erikson, 1994). Community empowerment stems from the immense sense of achievement that comes from safeguarding the community's continued existence, and from the assurance of the well-being of its residents, but also from the struggle itself (Couto, 1989; O'Sullivan et al., 1984).

Community Empowerment on the Basis of a Common Critical Characteristic

The common critical characteristic makes it possible to reveal further aspects of community empowerment, and especially to reinforce the non-geographical aspect.

Ethnic minorities

Belonging to an ethnic minority is a common critical characteristic such as origin, language, at times religion or a difference in outward appearance, and life in a different and a more or less hostile environment—all or some of these signs. The dilemma in ethnic community empowerment (even if it is not always articulated explicitly) stems from the tension between the negative and the positive aspects of the barrier between the ethnic community and the environment in which it lives. While isolation by coercion and rejection leads to powerlessness, alienation and backwardness, voluntary segregation facilitates safeguarding of values, uniqueness, and authenticity.

Community empowerment of ethnic minorities, then, involves two sets of needs: needs for control, required by people who live in conditions of permanent marginality (Gutierrez & Ortega, 1991; Solomon, 1976), and need for autonomy, especially cultural. Autonomy is important to the ethnic minority in order to restore its lost dignity, and to enable the community to continue living in frameworks of its own—including the retention of their language and customs (O'Sullivan, 1984; Rivera & Erlich, 1984).

Consequently, two approaches to ethnic community empowerment may be identified: a *corrective* approach and a *preserving* approach. The corrective approach sees empowerment as a method of treatment which will ease problems created as a result of prolonged deprivation and discrimination, and will help a group overcome obstacles on the path to social equality. This approach affirms that it does

not cast blame on the victim, but it still contains a strong emphasis on the adaptation and adjustment of the minority itself to the society around it (Weaver, 1982; Solomon, 1976, 1985; Luttrell, 1988). The preserving approach also wants to overcome discrimination and deprivation, but to preserve the ethnic group's special qualities as well. This approach also demands from the society at large a degree of adjustment to the existence of an ethnic minority in its midst. The ethnic community as a deprived and discriminated-against minority needs empowerment in order to be able to contribute to the society within which it lives from the resources innate in it – original knowledge, values and life-style – and all these are not considered valuable as long as the community is powerless. Hence preserving community empowerment emphasizes the benefit the society at large may obtain from the ethnic community's valuable resources: the community values, the moral economy, the protection of ecological values and new sources of knowledge (Rivera, 1990; Friedmann, 1989, 1990). Instead of seeing the provision of services to ethnic minorities as an organizational problem, ethnicity should be seen as a permanent component in the deploymentof the social services. The society at large needs to make an adjustment to the minorities living in its midst and to provide them with services in the appropriate language and in a style appropriate to the social values that are important to them (Morales, 1984).

We must beware, however, of a one-dimensional approach to the ethnic minority—to remain content with a sensitivity to the ethnic culture, and non-intervention in the minority's norms and the cultural expectations, cannot present a full picture of the ethnic group's situation. This is to attribute too much value to the cultural common denominator within the group, while ignoring the low and powerless status which informs the principal experiences that shape the life of the individual who belongs to this minority. Lack of self-esteem and a sense of self-blame are a part of the ethnic experience, no less than the culture (Horton & Freire, 1990).

Attention should also be devoted to those ethnic minorities whose absorption difficulties are not temporary. They live in separate communities in a society which is not interested in them. Their main goal is survival in a hostile environment. The more skilled these communities are in survival, the more distinctive in character they become. In contrast to the description of the open and partial community referred to above, communities which live in a deterministic life-reality of racial segregation and economic exploitation tend to be relatively closed and permanent. The points of entrance and exit into and out of them are sharply defined, and are based on the cultural, socio-political, and economic situation of the people (Rivera & Erlich, 1984).

Community empowerment of an ethnic minority has to do with overcoming the direct and indirect obstacles of power which are responsible for the ongoing disempowerment of this minority (Solomon, 1976). Some writers see self-help groups as method for empowerment of ethnic minorities (Gutierrez et al., 1990; Neighbors, 1991; Gutierrez & Ortega, 1991). Others side with organization and social action as main vehicles for solving difficult social problems of minorities, and attack the individual (and group) approach to solutions as unsuitable and hindering (Russel-Erlich & Rivera, 1986). Insistence on diverse means, which will always also include community methods, is the key to adapting empowering social solutions to the many and contradictory needs of these groups (Rappaport, 1987). People with special needs, such as disabled people, are beginning to interpret their special situation in society as analogous to that of an ethnic minority (Finkelstein, 1993; Dolnick, 1993; Deegan, 1998). Hence, the path to community empowerment of people with disabilities may be similar in some aspects to that of ethnic minorities (Morris, 1997).

Women

Being marginal and powerless does not indicate a population's numerical weight in the society. Although women constitute half of the world's population, they are discussed in the present context because like the elderly, children, and disabled people, many women are powerless. At times it seems that the only population in the Western world that does not need empowerment is that of healthy, white, male members of the upper classes. This is also a superficial but quite comprehensive description of the decision and policy makers in Western democratic society who shape the social and physical environment and allocate resources, leaving the majority feeling worthless and marginal.

The significant connection between women and community empowerment is their high numerical participation in efforts to create community. The question of how it is that women are more active than men in the residential environment has occupied many researchers (Reinharz, 1984). Some writers explain this by the women's responsibility for social reproduction, an activity which is not acknowledged and is thus rendered valueless by the economic system. The kind of community action that women are generally involved in, at least at the outset of their empowerment process, is close to their social reproduction functions, like organizing a club for children or running a neighborhood laundromat. In this way women create community as an extension of home (Markusen, 1982; Feldman & Stall, 1992).

The greater participation of women in creating community among poor and weak populations is also explained by the fact that women can adopt alternative criteria for the definition of social success. While men of the same social class accept the definition of success that is accepted in society at large – that a successful man is rich and fulfills a valuable social role – society defines a successful woman as married, a mother, mature, responsible and caring. As a result of this difference, women do not experience the powerlessness that

stems from their social situation with the same intensity that men do (Luttrell, 1988). These interpretations suggest that the community empowerment process of women converts the sources of their powerlessness, which are their traditional roles as housewives and mothers, into a power base. From this starting point they become stronger and continue to extend their activities to additional domains with a political character.

The Elderly

Another *special* population which also constitutes a considerable part of human society are the elderly. Especially powerless among these are the poor elderly. Elderly people suffer from lack of economic security more than other populations do. Elderly people suffer from physical and emotional stress, which stems from physical deterioration and from the loss of a marriage partner and of friends of the same age. Elderly people generally lack political influence. Western society has a negative attitude to old age and aging, and in this way increases the powerlessness of the elderly, as well as the social and psychological pressures upon them. The social services for elderly people encourage dependence and helplessness. They do not enable clients' involvement, and that is why the alienation of the elderly from the inappropriate services given to them is increasing (Cox, 1988).

The needs of the elderly are universal and are connected with their age and not with special problems. That is why their powerlessness must be understood as stemming from a social policy of deprivation and from discriminatory social values. Hence their conspicuous need for an empowering environment. Since they are very dependent on public services, encouragement of empowerment among the elderly depends on the creation of a service system based on empowering principles (Gallant et al., 1985).

People with Disabilities

I refer here to the empowerment of people with severe physical or mental disabilities, including people who are released from mental health institutions into life in the community. In addition to empowerment, these groups need advocacy (Rose & Black, 1985; Wolff, 1987). Advocacy/empowerment is an approach to empowerment which sees representation of the powerless as an essential preliminary stage in the empowerment of the most vulnerable people. This approach emphasizes the important role of the change agent who, among other things, serves as an advocate of the people who need empowerment. In contrast to the strong emphasis on self-help and the diminished role of professional assistance so common in empowerment practice, the advocacy/empowerment approach emphasizes the need for an external agent. The reason for this is simple. Very weak people will not succeed in embarking on an empowerment process without help in creating the minimal conditions for managing the environment. The goal of advocacy, then, is the creation of environmental conditions that will enable even the weakest people access to empowerment processes.

   The environment relates to the mentally and physically disabled with hostility and rejection. These people need empowerment as part of a survival plan: they have to learn how to survive by their own strength and how to conduct independent lives. They need community empowerment because life isolation from others endangers their existence. For them, the residential area in which they have to learn to live is an object of social change, rather than a community to become integrated in, and the advocacy process is oriented primarily towards achieving this goal. To enable vulnerable people a basic existence and their rightful access to the various services, they need advocates who will pave a path for them to walk on so as to begin processes that will gain them some control over their lives (Rose & Black, 1985).

Community Empowerment as Political Concept

Some writers argue that community empowerment is a political concept, mainly because it does not content itself with local change and individual achievements, and openly aspires to social transformation. Empowerment means liberation of people from the oppression and deprivation they are subject to, and is oriented to populations which do not obtain social justice. Hence, someone who sees community empowerment as only a means of delivering public community services is manipulating the concept of community in order to exclude the local community and to prevent its members from developing a social consciousness (Russel-Erlich & Rivera, 1986; Boyte et al., 1986; Friedmann, 1987).

   People's discovery that they have the right and the ability to control their destiny, their lives and their environment is the basis for political change. In spite of this, many people choose to ignore the political meaning implicit in the concept of empowerment. On the other hand, there are people who relate literally to the power component of empowerment, and interpret it as partisan intervention (Messinger, 1982). Politicians frequently make use of the word empowerment, and have made it a common political slogan, and hence a clich?. This state of affairs has only an indirect connection to the subject of the present chapter—it is a further proof of the reception and broad acceptance of the concept, but does not suffice to clarify its political meaning.

   Political community empowerment opposes the conservative approach, which is also heavily represented in the empowerment literature. The conservative-liberal writing is not less *political* than the radical writing, but the consensus ideology has the ability and the talent to put on the form of a neutral, apolitical and rational paradigm, while writers on the left wing of the political spectrum appear more political in their outlook (Goodwin, 1980).

   In determining that people come to politics as individuals and equals, conservative liberalism denies the roots that people

have in communities; it denies the creation of communities around class, race or ethnic origin, and ignores the influence of economic inequality on participation in politics. In the name of protection of individualism, the liberal viewpoint isolates people, and at the same time turns them into a homogeneous mass. A community whose members share interests only is a reduction of the ideas of the human community into an instrumental, arbitrary and unstable alliance (Ackelsberg, 1988).

Much evidence exists that people in the lower classes and in minority groups are not isolated in terms of community. Women, as noted, are especially known as *community builders* (Reinharz, 1984), and hence, creating a community is probably not the difficult part of their empowerment. The political problem encountered by the poor and vulnerable is their inability to connect their problems, desires and outlooks and those of their peers with the political establishment which is detached from them yet controls their lives. Politics is not a narrow framework of activities in which only a few people are involved with the aim of influencing structures of governmental power. Politics is a range of activities which people are involved in out of a concern for everyday problems of caring for the life of the home, the community and work. The basis for political activity and the source of community empowerment is, therefore, the need for social relations and for human contact, which is as universal as the need for profits and for representation of interests (Ackelsberg, 1988).

The political approach to community empowerment is part of the critique of conservative liberalism and its abandoning of the welfare state. The background for this is the hard social conditions in the United States, not only among the poor, but also among the lower middle class (Ehrenreich, 1992; Philips, 1993). Added to this is the perpetual lack of social security of elderly people, women, and ethnic minorities these past two decades (Edelman, 1997). The radicals accuse the conservatives of creating insoluble social problems as a consequence of a Darwinist social policy that supports only

slight reforms and ameliorative steps. The conservatives' use of an identical concept – empowerment – creates a new arena where an argument can take place between the various approaches. Moreover, the use of the same concept serves other interests of both sides as well, For example, each side can go on camouflaging its real intentions for tactical purposes. The liberals are interested in appearing more innovative and the radicals are interested in sounding more reasonable than they actually are. The creation of a social consensus is, on the face of it, an interest of conservative liberalism. Hence, the liberal approach prefers to pour its own contents into new concepts rather than to come out against them. This may be seen as a linguistic imperialism. The most important common interest is that the entire range of participants in the political discourse has a real need to reach new audiences by means of new messages—and empowerment is one of these messages.

Organizational Empowerment—The Organization as a Means of Community Empowerment

Participation in organizations and groups in the community is part of the definition of the empowerment of the individual and of his community as well. This combination leads to the question of how much empowerment the individuals bring to the organization and how much empowerment they receive from the organization. In other words, are organizations empowering because powerful people have joined them, or is empowerment what the people gain by means of their participation in the organization? (Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988; Maton & Rappaport, 1984). Since empowerment can be realized only in connection with others, in groups, organizations and communities of people who feel and act together, the small local organization that is managed democratically is a dual vehicle of empowerment, both for social change and for individual empowerment (Crowfoot et al., 1983).

On the theoretical level, I think that organizational empowerment as a separate category of empowerment leads to a dead end, because the concept is defined by identical means to those of community empowerment (Zimmerman, n.d.). Beyond the tautology this produces, concern with organizational empowerment also entails an ethical flaw. Just as concentration of individual empowerment alone ignores the context of the individual as part of a collective with a history of powerlessness, so too emphasis on the organization as the goal of empowerment subordinates the goals of social change to organizational reforms, a knowledge-packed subject in itself, which in any case makes use of the concept of empowerment for its own purposes (Crowfoot et. al., 1983).

These organizations, then, are means of empowering individuals and communities, and not goals of empowerment in themselves. The creation of community organizations and their extension to as many as possible of the life domains that are important to the community are an indication of community empowerment (Couto, 1989). The sophistication of the community organization and the degree of cohesion of its members are expressions of community empowerment. A number of studies indicate that organizations that were created in a community by the community members (as distinct from organizations for the sake of the community created by outsider volunteers) have been responsible for a number of improvements: for physical improvements in the neighborhood; for more stability in the neighborhood; for the creation of a sense of community; for coping with social problems by setting up new services for the growth and development of the people who are members of the organizations (Florin, 1989).

Since empowerment is a process which can be set in motion only by the people concerned themselves, community organizations can provide the climate, the relations, the resources and the administrative means that enable people to achieve more control of their lives; in other words, community

organizations create empowering environments. While the environment that promotes individual empowerment is more intimate, involving interpersonal relations in a group framework, in an environment that promotes community empowerment the organizational aspect is conspicuous in two dimensions: 1. The organization itself: the climate, the relations, the resources and the procedures of the organization and their influence on members of the organization. 2. The community: the climate, the relations, the resources and the procedures that are established between the organization and its environment, which includes the community, other organizations in the community and outside it, and other factors that the organization decides to exert its influence on in order to achieve its goals (Simon, 1990). If so, it is not only the organization's success that signifies the community empowerment process; the very existence of community organizations is an indication of the process. In this context it is important to remember the warning against the use of *success* criteria as signs of empowerment, for success can be defined in more than one way, and an attempt to define it *objectively* and *professionally* may have disempowering effects (Rappaport, 1984).

Community empowerment is realized through organizations, and may be defined and identified by them. Community organizations exist at all levels of organization, starting from support and task groups through to volunteer organizations and social protest movements. The level and the sophistication of the organizations certainly have an important role in empowerment, but the very existence of community organizations, their number and their deployment over the various life domains point to the realization of community empowerment.

Some Issues of Community Empowerment

Resistance

Activity, organization, and creation of a community originate in resistance. People protest against injustice, deprivation, lack of resources and opportunities. Resistance is a catalyst for activism and empowerment (Kieffer, 1984; Feldman & Stall, 1994). Community empowerment develops in conditions of injustice by protest against the harsh conditions, the indifference and the lack of cooperation on the part of the bureaucratic institutions that are responsible for providing services to the neighborhood. When the injustice is overt and glaring it can be paralyzing (Gaventa, 1980). It is important to recall the vulnerability and the fragility of powerless people, beside the very same people's powers and the abilities to withstand failure and conditions of pressure (Erikson, 1994).

Some writers combine the establishment's hostility and indifference into a single thesis if disempowerment. In my view, in order to understand resistance that develops into empowerment, it is particularly important to differentiate between the two (Schuman, 1987). Indifference and lack of interest in what happens in the community on the part of the establishment make possible a certain level of organization and empowering activity within the community, while under a hostile regime the attempt to develop the empowerment process is difficult and even dangerous, for it arouses the regime to brutal activity against the community and its residents (Sanchez et al., 1988).

In a particular combination of circumstances and factors an empowerment process that will strengthen the community for further action may develop despite establishment hostility. But there are places and circumstances in which the hostility of the public mechanism, or of the regime itself, manages to effect disempowerment. The practice of empowerment, perhaps the art of it, is the search for the *right* combination, which arouses resistance without defeating the people's spirit.

Conflict

Part of the community experience is the division between the people who feel they are members of the community and the people who do not belong to it. Hence, the community may be a very stormy framework. Conflict is part of the reality in which the very idea of community is formed, and it is very possible that dealing with disputes and success in resolving them is an essential experience for the creation of people's social consciousness (Ackelsberg, 1988; Davis, 1991).

The literature is not rich in examples of actual implementation, but projects in which empowerment practice has been implemented (Rose & Black, 1985; Couto, 1989; Schuman, 1987; Heskin, 1991) show to what extent conflict is inevitable. Implementation of empowerment principles (in the organization, in the community and anywhere else), exposes the disempowering practices of existing services, and creates a confrontation with the accepted procedures and methods of these services. The ability to survive in a situation of inevitable conflict depends on the allocation of resources to train activists and practitioners for life in conditions of conflict and uncertainty (Delgado, 1986).

The indirect but systematic violence that the establishment exerts against weak people is a principal pretext for the rise of conflicts in the first stages of the empowerment process. Establishment violence manifests itself in the various ways in which people are barred from access to resources, knowledge and information that are essential for their existence and for their ability to control their lives. Like, for example, the delaying of material resources by means of budgetary policy, or control over information and data services in order to leave people in ignorance with regard to their rights and to possible options of change in their situation (Crawfoot et al., 1983; Solomon, 1976).

The literature on empowerment sometimes emphasizes harmony and social integration, but since conflict is an inseparable part of political life in a democracy it should not be feared; it certainly is inevitable in conditions of social injustice, and cannot be skipped over into realms of tranquillity which originate in quiescence and in lack of social consciousness.

Community Awareness

Couto (1989) defines community awareness as the important part of the empowerment process, as a process of the community's rediscovery of its powerlessness. This is a recognition by people who have just achieved a degree of control over their lives and their future that there are limitations to their new ability. Empowerment is not merely action, says Couto; it is also reflection. Especially important is the community's understanding of the constraints on improving their situation in domains where the sources of the problems lie outside the community—the social, political and economical limits to their empowerment. Awareness is also the community's evaluation of its strengths and advantages and of how to exploit these usefully. For example, recognition of the ecological values of the physical environment, or understanding the economic worth of the land on which it is built.

The question of community awareness is interesting because of the surprising use of the terms *awareness* and *consciousness* in the community context. After all, these are in a very basic sense cognitive processes experienced by the individual. Yet here, in the context of community empowerment, we find writers presenting the ability to arrive at a collective consciousness without preparing a basis in theory or by research for understanding such a phenomenon. The main questions requiring clarification are: How does collective consciousness manifest itself? Is it synergetic? (Katz, 1984). Can it be subjected to empirical investigation? If so, with what

means? Who are the people in the community who represent this consciousness—activists? professionals? members of the community? a combination of all these? Is it possible to point to distinct manifestations that are characteristic of community-collective awareness?

Organizing and Creating a Community

The basis of community empowerment is people organizing themselves around a common critical characteristic. Since the meaning of empowerment is, among other things, the overcoming of difficult experiences of isolation and alienation, it can be realized only in a stable and ongoing connection with others.

Organizing turns a collective into a community, while collectives are comprised of people who have a common characteristic of age, race, gender, occupation, income and the like. Where there is no organization, this common characteristic is a burden and a limitation that narrows the individuals' possibilities and their perception of reality. Community organizing is a step towards appropriation of the physical space the people live in. A residential neighborhood can become a community through the organized effort of the people living in it to appropriate their home place—an effort which brings about social change in this place and a personal change in the activists themselves (Feldman & Stall, 1994).

Outcome and Product

Another question that remains open for discussion is whether community empowerment produces an outcome, and if so, what this outcome is. For the empowerment process, as already mentioned, is a creative process which transforms a powerless community into one that is capable of action for its interests and its environment. There is a synergy in the creation of a community, an abundance that stems from co-operation (Katz 1984). People who have a common goal, or

who have shared a common experience, become a community with new and expanded abilities, the influences of which spread beyond the place where they began. Empowerment is a dynamic process, and therefore has no final or absolute outcome. Just as there exists no final state of synthesis, so too there is no final state of empowerment. Empowerment is a continuing process which strengthens the capacity to act successfully in changing circumstances. Some writers distinguish between the empowerment process, which involves a feeling of control and of ability to act successfully, and its outcome, which is the real ability to act effectively (Staples 1990).

In empowerment there is a close connection between the process and the outcome, for both the feeling of ability and real ability are parts of a single, positive and self-reinforcing whole. Yet it is possible to gauge the success of empowerment at a given point in time from a number of what may be called *process outcomes*, such as the existence of community activity, the quality of its decision-making, the degree of its purposiveness, the standard of organization of community activity, and the usefulness of the latter to the community's interests (see also the DARE dimensions [Rubin and Rubin 1992], each of which may be seen as a community outcome). One could claim that the final product of empowerment is power, but power is not a legitimate goal, and hence must not be allowed to be more than a means for the attainment of moral goals. It is always essential to ask: Power for what?—as well as the Foucaultian question: What are the positive and negative by-products of the power that has been attained, and how do they find expression in the community, the society, and the environment?

The process through which a residential area, or a collective possessing a common critical characteristic, becomes transformed into a community is a complex one. Community empowerment is dependent on context, environment, behaviors and circumstances—some overt, and some covert. The present study aims to identify at least some of these:

personal motivations and qualities of the participants in the process, professional practices, and the organizational means which give expression to the aspirations and efforts of all the participants. The particular contents of the process may vary, but they have to include activity which on the one hand contributes to the growth and learning of individuals and groups, and on the other hand has a beneficial influence on the environment (Hegar & Hunzeker, 1988).

The connection between individuals and their environment is important not only for mutual improvement and development, as implied by what has been said so far, but also for human existence itself, for man's survival in the world (Bateson, 1979). The need to survive demands adaptation to changes in the environment, while the need for a degree of control of one's life motivates the will to influence the direction of these changes and not just to adapt to them. Community empowerment is an organized effort by people who, from a starting-point poor in resources and social advantages, attempt to influence the human environment, to achieve more control of their situation in order to improve their lives.

Empowerment as a Professional Practice

The concept of empowerment was born in the context of the professional discourse on social problems. To a large extent, it expresses the disappointment of professionals with the existing social solutions which, not only do not provide an effective response to distress, but also in themselves constitute an obstacle in the lives of weak populations (Swift, 1984).

Although empowerment may also be realized without the intervention of practitioners, the theoretical discussion of empowerment is by its nature professional and academic. From this discussion arises the need for the development of professional tools that will encourage the spontaneous empowerment process. Not for those exceptional individuals who by virtue of their talents or their good fortune will manage to fulfill their potential for empowerment without

any help, but for the many people who need external support in order to liberate themselves from the powerlessness they are subject to. A systematic understanding of the process and a translation of it into policy and principles of action will advance the realization of empowerment, from an esoteric phenomenon occurring in the lives of a few, to a social and political solution.

In this section we will deal with values and beliefs held by the professional who uses empowering methods; with principles that guide empowerment practice and influence professional goals and the design of social programs; with the roles of the professional who encourages empowerment; with a selection of recommended methods of intervention, and, finally, with empowerment as a need of the practitioners themselves.

Values Guiding Empowerment Practice

Empowerment is based on the assumption that the environment has to be adapted to people, and not the other way around as is commonly perceived. In contrast to radical and Marxist approaches which focus on social change, this is an approach that focuses on the individual. Empowerment is indeed an idealistic approach, but this is a practical and rational idealism which can be implemented. Empowerment represents an alternative ideology of intervention that differs from traditional approaches in that it provides a different experience to the person who needs help, and to the professional as well: without dependence on the expertise of the professional and without any attempt to create such dependence (Payne, 1991).

Empowerment wants to create a practical and meta-practical whole which includes language, ideology, and action principles. It may be seen not as the intervention itself, but as a meta-practice—thought about intervention (Russel-Erlich & Rivera, 1986). Meta-practical thinking is essential in all the human service professions, because the professional's

thinking about the way he performs his role is one of the principal expressions of his professionalism.

The empowerment approach recognizes the paradoxical nature of social problems. Social problems do not belong to the kind of logical problems that have one correct solution; social problems may have a number of solutions which are all logical. Social problems are dialectical in character—they pull in different and contradictory directions. The main paradox that empowerment practice has to deal with is that the person most lacking in aptitudes, most lacking in ability to function, the person in the greatest distress, is the one who needs more, not less, control in his life (Rappaport, 1981).

Is empowerment a special method of treatment for defined – oppressed and deprived – groups, or is it a professional practice suitable for the entire human population? On the face of it, the answer to this question looks simple: just as empowerment is a potential innate in every person, so too empowering practice is suitable to general application. However, the equitable deployment of empowerment has a moral meaning. Indeed, the vision should be implementation of empowering social policy on the macro level—in the society at large. Until this is realized, however, the *equitable* distribution of empowerment is liable to create inequality, because those people who will know how to exploit professional resources better will enjoy more empowerment, and they, in most cases, will not be the powerless. Liberal thought demands social equality of opportunities, in the belief that all the actors in the social game begin competing for all the social resources from an equal starting-point, and that those who win probably deserve it more than others. Empowerment wants to grapple with difficult and complex social problems that have arisen as a consequence of this way of thinking. Empowerment is based on the recognition that a potential exists in every person, but that it is the social context and circumstances that determine who realizes this potential and who finds it difficult or almost impossible to realize it. This being the social reality, empowering professional practice

needs to aspire to become a comprehensive social policy, while focusing principally on programs for those who live in the most difficult social circumstances.

An empowerment approach is in many senses a translation of Paulo Freire's educational theory into the social domain (Handler, 1990; Parsons et al., 1994; Rose & Black, 1985). According to Freire (1985), the need for change is an inseparable part of social life. The conditions also oppress the ability to change, i.e., they distort the social development of the oppressed people. Hence, the professional has to believe in people's ability to learn and to change and, at the same time, to recognize that oppressed people are liable to possess a distorted consciousness due to their life circumstances. The consciousness of a person submerged in an oppressive reality may become distorted to the point of actual reconciliation with the oppression itself.

Dialogue is the core of the empowering change process. It is part of the ideology, and also of the principles of action and the methods of intervention. Dialogue is the true speech, with mutual trust, that takes place between the practitioner and the people she is helping. In the course of the dialogue, both the practitioners and their clients change. Its important components are trust and mutuality, each side relating to the other with attentiveness and equal worth. Without understanding, cooperation and trust, there can be no mutuality and no real dialogue.

The human condition is complex, fluid, and constantly changing. The individual does not live for or by himself. He is part of a context and is defined by his situation. Since the right solution for relations between weak people and the public services they depend on is not known, the creation of partial communities which will respond to selected aspects of life is the answer (Handler, 1990). In the framework of these communities, real dialogue and trust are fragile and delicate, but between practitioners and powerless people there is no substitute for them

Empowerment is based on the belief that people have skills and abilities, but need circumstances and opportunities in order to express them. Belief in empowerment claims that new abilities are best learned by means of activity in the life context itself, and not in artificial training programs controlled by professional experts. The sense of control the empowerment process develops is the converse of the sense of dependence. It fills people with energy, and it is self-nourishing. Empowerment is always a political process because it creates social change. Its political relevance stems from its tendency to spread to further aspects of life.

Empowerment is ecological and contextual in character. In the empowerment approach, the environment is always part of the picture. An ecological outlook on human behavior claims that behavior is a function of the interaction between the organism and the environment. Hence, problematic functioning may in certain cases indicate problems in the personality, but when it exists in the lives of entire populations, it is a consequence of a defective social structure and of lack of resources (Rappaport, 1987).

Principles Guiding Empowerment Practice

The principles of action that stem from the values of empowerment are not rules which determine specifically what the professional should do, but guidelines for selecting suitable practices.

1. Empowerment has to be a permanent component in any problem-solving process, irrespective of the theoretical approach that shapes this process. As a meta-practice, it can and must be integrated into every kind of professional thinking, irrespective of the sort of program or the methods exercised. (Rose & Black, 1985).
2. Giving help. Those who receive help need to be able to give help as well. Hence, as already noted, self-help groups are considered as distinctive promoters of empowerment. Active participation in programs is an

empowering principle, and to achieve this it is worth causing a deliberate under-manning of social frameworks (Rappaport, 1985). This means the implementation of programs without sufficient salaried manning of various functions, a situation that mobilizes participants in the program to perform these functions. Frameworks which operate in this way foster empowerment efficiently, because it is essential for the people to help not only as consumers but as people who care for the organization's operation. They enter naturally into a position of worth, and concurrently receive professional and social support with their problems while they perform their valuable role as helpers.

Manning of important functions in a program by those using it emphasizes a corollary principle, one that is accepted in community work and essential to the empowerment process: the professional must see his role as temporary. As he encourages empowerment, he also works towards a diminution of his professional presence. He trains leaders local functionaries to take their positions as soon as possible, so that they can take responsibility and be less in need of outside help.

3. Lack of power cannot be compensated for by means which increase lack of power. Economic dependence, which is one of the forms of powerlessness, cannot be improved by means of a program that humiliates and oppresses those in need of it. Hence, an empowering professional ascribes the same importance to the means of activating social programs as to their objectives (at the same time, it is necessary to be cautious and to avoid programs where the means are strongly emphasized but the goals are unimportant).

4. Think big and act small. An important principle in empowerment is to analyze phenomena on the macro level, but to intervene with attention to the micro level. Empowerment demands simultaneous concern for the environment, the collective, its organization and the individuals who organize. This is the distinctiveness of the integration of the personal change as part of the organizing for social justice (Friedmann, 1992).

5. The collective is a central principle of the empowerment process. Even when the objective is individual the means are collective. Collectivity provides a true rationale for empowerment (Staples, 1990); if the empowerment process were solely individual, it would have no social significance. Collectivity is the source of the synergy in the process, because it grows in power and extends the boundaries of its influence.

6. Empowerment is a multi-leveled concept. It integrates individuals, groups, organizations, communities and states, as well as contexts—the environmental, cultural, and historical contexts. The influence that each of the levels of empowerment radiates upon all the other levels is of much importance. The principle of levels leads to the conclusion that we should aspire to a policy of empowerment, and to the conjecture that professionals need empowerment in order to be able to empower people who need their help (Rappaport, 1987).

Principles Guiding the Relationship Between Practitioners and the People Who Need Their Help

Empowerment requires a re-examination of the whole of social public policy, and demands of the practitioner a re-examination of the professional relationship.

1. Different people require different solutions for the same problems. In order to arrive at a variety of solutions we must emphasize the strengths of those in need of help, and to use a mixture of resources: of the practitioners, and of those who come for help (Solomon, 1985).

2. Cooperation between the helpers and the helped is essential to the empowerment process. The helped bring a distinctive knowledge about their lives and their own point of view about their problems, and the helpers bring specialized knowledge that stems from formal training

and work experience with people suffering from the same problems. In this connection the helped are not seen as responsible for the problems, but as responsible for the solutions. This cooperation also changes the research, not only the practice. The researcher has to make the people he studies participants in his research, and to reward them according to the circumstances: if they contribute to the research they should gain from it (Tyler et al., 1983; Sohng, 1998).

3. Respect for people is the basis for professional relationships. Respect is expressed in treating the request for help not as a sign of weakness or dependence, but as an expression of a need to receive professional service. Respect expresses itself in accepting people's interpretation of reality. Respect for a person and recognition of his strengths confirm his very existence and give it a validity. Powerless people tend to cast doubt on the existence of reality as they perceive it. The low self-image of vulnerable people, which involves doubt and self-denial, serves the existing order. People are willing to accept the problems they suffer from as justified, thus reinforcing the negative opinions prevalent about them (Mullender & Ward, 1985; Rose & Black, 1991).

4. Empowerment has a language of its own that influences immediate communication and the meta-communication level. It prefers clarity and simplicity of expression and is very wary of using professional jargon. For example, practitioners who use and think in terms of concepts such as *the placebo effect* and *spontaneous remission* contradict messages of empowerment, because they express a lack of faith in people's ability to help themselves outside the professional context (Rappaport, 1985, 1987).

Principles Guiding the Design of Social Programs

The quality of social programs is critical in determining people's destiny. In the connection between people in need

of help and the services that provide help, an oppressive dependence may develop, or an opportunity may grow to develop independent social skills. The welfare service system has to change from an obstacle route to a system of opportunities (Solomon, 1985).

All that has been said so far does not imply dilettantism. In order to encourage empowerment, the social service system has to be professional. Outcomes are not produced by policy statements. There has to be training of professionals in the field so that they will understand and respect community norms and work with an open approach to people. On the face of it, this demand for professionalism contradicts the messages of participation and equity that were presented earlier as part of the principles guiding the relations of the professional with those in need of his help. However, I see no contradiction here, because in practice one needs considerable professional confidence and knowledge to work in an equitable and empowering manner (Handler, 1990)

1. Social programs need a structure and a design which serve dialogue and openness to the other. A dispersed organizational structure, a free and informal climate, and professional autonomy for the professionals, are suitable for the achievement of the objectives of empowerment. A centralized structure, rigid rules and hierarchical supervision disempower participants in the program (Handler, 1990)

2. Small-scale local projects are preferable to a large central solution. Social projects have to be small enough to provide participant with socially valuable roles, and large enough to assure themselves of resources from various sources. Some writers believe that in any case a program with an empowerment ideology will succeed better in obtaining resources and developing them than a program dominated by professionals and professional treatment methods, irrespective of its size (Rappaport, 1987).

3. Empowerment needs to express itself on three levels of a social program: on the personal level, between the professional and the person who needs his help, empowerment expresses itself in the increase of the person's resources so that he may control his life better; on the organizational level, people in need of the program have to become an important interest and influence group in the program. On the policy level, greater control of the program participants in the program's resources has to be facilitated, as well as an improvement in their access to alternative services (Handler, 1990).

4. For a social program to be empowering, it should preferably be open to outcomes. It should be built on a principle of an open-ended process, rather than on planning that aspires to one particular outcome, as is generally the case (Adams, 1990).

The Professional's Roles

Empowerment demands that professionals have a different set of expectations than what is customary: instead of relying on their professional training and on their socialization into a structured role, they must dare to open up to situations as involved human beings who have taken it upon themselves to fill a role and to survive in it (Rose & Black, 1985). Empowerment also sets up criteria for criticism of professional models. A professional approach which is contradictory to empowerment requires a change of approach or has to be totally rejected, and this is not simple at all. For example, some writers note the contradiction between the empowerment approach and the psychodynamic medical model which focuses on the person as the source of the problems, blames the victim for them, and mostly ignores the direct and indirect influence that social circumstances have on these problems (Solomon, 1985).

The crisis theory is attacked in a similar way. This theory relates to social problems as transient and extraordinary phenomena, focuses on the symptoms of the crisis and on changing the victims of the crisis, and ignores the structural conditions that caused it, as well as the need to change people and institutions that create or sustain the crisis. The crisis theory is a soporific for policy makers: they get used to thinking in crisis terms and expect the crisis situation to pass, and thus encourage the seeing of problems as extraordinary and unrelated to one another. The crisis theory has a bad influence on practitioners, because it guides them to deal with immediate problems only, and to neglect work on processes of social change (Crowfoot et al, 1983).

The mainstream of social work earns similar criticism for its conservative social approach, for basing itself on liberal principles, and for its recoiling from politics. The institutional submissiveness of the social services and their agreement to serve as social shock absorbers impede their ability to encourage empowerment of people who receive services and prevent professionals employed in them from developing a critical consciousness and empowering themselves (Russel-Erlich & Rivera, 1986).

In contrast, the role of the professional engaged in empowerment is to help people who live with a continuous and systematic stigma to perceive themselves as capable of exerting influence on their world and on other people. In contrast to conventional professional approaches, in the empowerment approach the emphasis on the individual does not mean looking for the problem in the individual himself, but moving away from the traditional professional models and emphasizing that the individual is a motivating force who creates change and solves problems.

Empowerment is a professional role by means of which the professional involves the (individual or collective) client in a series of activities aimed at reducing the powerlessness that has been created as a consequence of a negative evaluation towards their belonging to a stigmatized group. This series of activities involves identifying the power blocks that contribute to the problem, and specific strategies intended to reduce the

influence of direct and indirect power obstacles (Solomon, 1976).

In the literature on empowerment a number of professional roles are emphasized:

Resource consultant. More than anything, poor people need provision of resources, such as housing, money, health care, homemaker services. The resource consultant is a role which connects people with resources in a way which enhances their self-esteem as well as their problem-solving capacities. The consultant makes his knowledge about resource systems, and his expertise in using them, available to the client. He has to create an intensive partnership with the people, involving them in each step of the process, from the identifying stage through to the locating and activating of resources (Solomon, 1976).

Sensitizer. People require self-knowledge in order to be able to act upon their problems. The role of sensitizer is performed in a variety of methods of intervention, with the objective of providing people with the maximal opportunities of understanding themselves and their environment (Solomon, 1976).

Teacher/trainer. Many people have difficulties learning because of experiences of failure and boredom in formal educational settings during their childhood. The professional's role is to find suitable ways of helping people to acquire information, knowledge and skills. Teaching is a major professional role of empowering professionals (Rose & Black, 1985). Mutuality is emphasized in the empowering teaching process: the professional learns from the people themselves what their preferred social solutions are and what they need to know. Likewise, from settings in which empowerment is realized, the professional also learns how to plan and activate empowerment enhancing programs.

Service planner. Since the structure of the welfare services contributes to the sense of powerlessness and worthlessness of the people who receive the services, it is important to re-plan this system so that it may operate on different organizational principles through which the services will be able to provide new opportunities to people instead of disempowering them.

Coordinator and networker. It is the professional's role to shape the environment by coordinating and networking the various services that are connected with the people in whose lives she intervenes. The emphasis in this role is on re-planning of services by way of creating mutual connections among them and an atmosphere of community consensus while avoiding conflict (Biegel, 1984; Wolff, 1987).

Advocate. The advocate represents her clients herself, knowing that in the particular situation which requires advocacy, this is the only possible way to stand up for the client's rights. The advocacy aims at a change of environmental conditions that have a bad influence on the immediate situation of people in need of the service. The use of the dual strategy of advocacy/empowerment obliges the professional to watch out for a dual stumbling-block: she must not neglect her responsibility as a leader, and she must not incline in the opposite direction, of excessive directing and taking control of people. The role of advocate complements all the other professional roles, because while encouragement of empowerment is a role performed towards the clients, advocacy is the role towards the environment, and in many cases it precedes empowerment, especially when it is the environmental conditions that create the problems and contribute to their becoming more severe. Advocacy is a role that involves certain professional risks which need to be prepared for well (Rose & Black, 1985, Parsons et al., 1994; Beresford & Croft, 1993). The advocate is often in conflict with the establishment, with other services, and even with colleagues. He is liable to be very isolated; he may not infrequently be considered a crank fighting with windmills, and may even get fired. To contend with all these, organizations dealing with advocacy have been founded in recent years, and people working in them act as a team and have the protection of their organization.

Methods of Intervention

The literature on empowerment is full of recommendations to professionals about methods of intervention that encourage empowerment. The methods of intervention that appear below are a selection from the literature which illustrates how it is possible to implement empowerment in professional practice.

The problem in presenting the various methods of intervention was the great lack of uniformity in their levels and in the content that they represent. I have chosen to classify them in two groups:

1. Strategies, which are methods of intervention that also contain principles, a rationale, and a special role.
2. Tactics, which are more specific ways of action focused on achieving a defined objective and/or a particular outcome which the professional is interested in as part of a strategy she has developed to achieve her goals.

Strategies

Participation is a basic method of intervention for empowerment, which is much emphasized in the literature as encouraging empowerment (Wandersman & Florin, 1988; Beresford & Croft, 1993; Rubin & Rubin, 1992). Participation reinforces a sense of personal and political ability, creates expectations for a successful solution of problems, and encourages civic commitment. People's participation in group and organizational frameworks promotes community empowerment as well as individual empowerment. This method of intervention has aged and become rigid, and needs to be used not in its old form but as a basis for improvements (Arenstein, 1969; Hanna & Robinson, 1994; Condeluci, 1995).

Organization. Organization is the collective voice of those whose voice would otherwise not be heard. By organizing, people learn alternatives to a life of quiet despair. They learn that what looks like a private grievance is part of a broad pattern which influences many people. They translate their general dissatisfaction with life into a set of practical objectives of changing the physical and social environment. Organizing teaches people to administer, to plan, to write, to speak, to conduct negotiations and to activate projects and large budgets (Boyte et al., 1986).

Integration of Levels of Intervention. Empowerment practice integrates clinical, group and community intervention methods into a single intervention system, in order to respond to people's diverse needs and to encourage empowerment (Cox & Parsons, 1994; Gutierrez & Ortega, 1991; Lee, 1994). Empowerment is opposed to the traditional medical model, which tends to sever the interactional connection between the concrete reality (the environment and its influence) and the subjective reality (self-perception and emotional life), and to emphasize only one side in every field of specialization. An empowerment strategy integrates these two, and focuses on an integration that emphasizes the interpretative, dialectical character, which stems from the mutual connection between social reality and human activity. The professional working with an empowerment approach needs to recognize the existence of a vicious circle in the form of a downward spiral: oppressive conditions create alienation, which leads to powerlessness and lack of self-esteem, which reinforce the oppressive conditions.

Praxis—integration of learning and action. A strategy of empowerment is not interested in a separation between theory and practice. The desirable combination, for both the professionals and their clients, is constant practice and thought about this practice. Thought about practice develops critical consciousness among the community and among the professionals. In the empowerment process the professional too undergoes a change, as a person and as a worker. An integration is created between the professional person's fate and the fate of the people in whose life she intervenes.

Tactics

Enabling. People have resources but are not always aware of possibilities of implementing and using them to achieve what they require. Enabling involves actions carried out by practitioners in order to guide people to information or connections with the help of which they will be able to activate their resources more effectively.

Linking. Professional activity which stems from the need to strengthen people by creating connections among them. Linking aims at providing people with more power in confrontations with external systems. The professional connects among people and creates groups and networks that can strengthen individuals and families by providing them with collective support.

Catalyzing. Although people have resources of their own, they need additional resources in order to be able to activate their own resources fully. The professional seeks complementary resources to accelerate processes and to reinforce the activity.

Priming. The assumption behind this professional activity is that part of the problem of powerlessness is caused, or reinforced, by people's unsatisfactory encounters with services that are important to their existence. These systems respond more positively when the conditions are not threatening to them. For example, if an action is not perceived as an infringement of policy, or as submission to external pressure, there is a better chance that the system will perform it. The professional who deals with priming prepares the systems and the clients for a positive connection between them even before problems requiring solutions arise (Solomon, 1985).

Providing information and knowledge. Professionals provide people with information in areas that they have identified together as important: for example, the socio-economic conditions of the country, past endeavors in community development, and the platforms of political parties. The information is transmitted in various ways, in written summaries, in talks and informal meetings (Couto, 1989; Serrano-Garcia, 1984). The difficulty that people without a formal education have in understanding professional knowledge and in processing information obliges professionals to be better teachers—to improve the ways of imparting knowledge and information. The principle is that there is no subject that cannot be learned or spoken about. There must be no withholding of information or knowledge from people because of their *difficulties of understanding*. Each difficulty of comprehension that people have is the professional's responsibility.

Developing Skills. Planning, organizational, and evaluative skills are generally developed in a group framework. The professional works in the following ways: she facilitates the participation of as many people as possible in the groups, identifies the community's resources, guides the people on how to pool these resources, makes sure activities are planned in advance, outlines a clear process of decision making that emphasizes problem definition, assessment and choice of alternatives, allocation of tasks and monitoring of their execution; she refuses to perform tasks that the people themselves have refused to perform, promotes group norms that reward the completion of tasks, devotes structured time at each meeting and after each activity to evaluation, and promotes a non-hierarchical organizational structure in which decisions are made in a consensus and tasks are divided as equally as possible (Serrano-Garcia, 1984).

Modeling. The practitioner serves as a model of collaborative behavior and dialogue. In this method, important interpersonal skills are demonstrated by showing, not by telling, and these are thus reinforced in the course of action. Modeling involves performing various tasks such as cooking, cleaning, preparing collection tins for donations, hauling, and the like. Within the organizational framework the professional does everything that the people do, and while doing so reinforces values important to empowerment. For example, women conduct most of the meetings, the participants have a more active

role than the professionals, and decisions are presented as decisions of the entire team.

Precise formulation of values. The practitioners give verbal expression to values that are important to the group and the community, such as: the residents' ability to perform tasks by themselves; the people's abilities to identify their needs and problems; cultural diversity and individual differences; that leadership potential exists in every man and woman; the importance of effective organization; the need to express, together with others, the sense of pride and of belonging to the community; the importance of collective responsibility.

The use of doubt. In the professional's vocabulary, why is an important word. He has to teach the people to doubt and to investigate each situation. Why can this not be done? Why must this be done in the regular way and not otherwise? Why is it always done this way? Why doesn't everyone think this way? The questions are more important than the answers, because the goal is to encourage a critical approach to the social situation (Serrano-Garcia, 1984).

Informality in the professional intervention. An informal structure of activity is important, because courses or workshops reinforce the specialists, emphasize the learners' lack of skill, and create a distance between the professional and the other people, and this may lead to resistance to the acquisition of skills. Some writers prefer intervention methods which focus on observation, team thinking, trial and error, feedback and critical analysis (Serrano-Garcia, 1984).

Developing social technologies. Designing professional tools as a set of procedures which can be duplicated, with the aim of reinforcing abilities and skills in the social domain. A social technology has to be simple, inexpensive, effective, decentralized, flexible, and adapted to local values, beliefs and customs. The *technologies* are particularly important in order to diminish – by means of an accessible set of procedures and briefings – the hegemony of experts in the social domain over certain techniques, and to reduce dependence on these experts and their opinions (Fawcett et al., 1984).

Technical assistance. Many professionals can be engaged in empowerment enhancing technical assistance. They can: teach people how to create connections between the community and other communities with similar needs; help people understand the reasons for local problems; help with research which harnesses local knowledge to planning a better future for the locale; provide specialized help in domains important to community life, such as marketing, economics, pricing and planning of transport (Couto, 1989).

Empowerment of Professionals

In the past decade, new approaches to organizational development connect the empowerment of employees at all levels of the organization with ideas of progressive management and team development (Tjosvold, 1990; Plunkett & Fournier, 1991; Peters, 1992). Empowerment is presented as an essential means for the business advancement of organizations which are in need of innovative ideas and are facing competition. Here the CEO is seen as the empowering professional, and the employees in the organization as the people in need of empowerment. The principal claim of these organizational approaches is that a humiliated and submissive worker will not initiate innovations and will not take responsibility for solving problems at his work place. An active worker who is confident of his own strengths will also act beyond the defined limits of his job, will take initiatives, invent, and contribute to the success of the firm and his own success as well. Education for empowerment means the opening up of possibilities: to take risks, to struggle for a place in the decision-making process, to acquire knowledge in a critical manner, beyond one's immediate personal experience, and to imagine versions of the future world. All these have to be imparted to the professionals themselves.

Through the empowerment process people become strong enough to take part in events, to participate in institutions which influence their lives, and to attempt to influence them.

A person's empowerment involves her ability to acquire knowledge and skills in order to influence and control her life, and to be an active partner in the lives of others for whom she cares. The need for empowerment of professionals stems from the apprehension that they will not succeed in encouraging empowerment of others from a position of submission and humiliation. The claim is that a person who does not implement empowerment in her own life will not be able to encourage this process in others.

Teachers, for example, have to be intellectuals who use knowledge and information to guide pupils to think, not technicians who transmit knowledge. Today the education system isolates teachers, limits them with regulations and instructions, and does not enable them to use their knowledge in the selection and disposition of study material. A teacher who is treated as a person who is incapable of making a mature decision cannot prepare others for maturity; if she is closely supervised and is not trusted, she will not be able to teach others what autonomy and trust are. Teachers are expected to teach how to take risks, to consider alternatives and to form alliances, while they themselves are limited to technical and mechanical aspects of their profession (Giroux, 1987). For professionals to be able to teach clients how to form alliances, set up coalitions, overcome organizational obstacles and act in a political way, they must first experience all these themselves (Pinderhughes, 1983).

Practitioners implement empowerment in their relations with clients, but are captive within a conception of equality that denies the existence of power relations (and of inequality) in their connection with their clients (Hasenfeld, 1987; Hopps et al., 1994). Besides this contradiction, the organization greatly limits their power as autonomous professionals. The responses of powerless employees are characterized by various forms of withdrawal, ineffectiveness, burnout, and leaving the service. The empowering solution proposed is a mutual support group as a means of self-empowerment. We may learn from this recommendation how essential the

group is for any kind of empowerment: professionals will not succeed in attaining to individual empowerment on their own. The mutual support group creates for the professional employees a sub-culture of their own in the organization, and weakens the influence of the disempowering processes that the organizational culture produces (Sherman & Wenocur, 1983). Beyond the peer group, in order to develop an empowerment policy and practice within the welfare services, professionals need more autonomy and more discretion, as well as a different organizational structure —one that is less hierarchical and more decentralized (Handler, 1990).

In my opinion, focus on empowerment of the professionals themselves is a marginal concern which must not become the major issue in the discussion of empowering professional practice. The question of whether empowerment of practitioners will lead to their becoming empowering practitioners has a different meaning for the individual professional and for the professional organization as a whole. On the personal level, empowerment is a value-based ideological choice, and involvement in empowerment demands a moral and a professional decision. A professional choice such as this is not dependent only, or mainly, on the professional's position and status in the organizational power relations, but on his commitment to the profession and on his professional world-view. On the organizational level, the empowerment of employees as a method of organizational development is an efficient method of advancing empowering professional practice, because it proposes empowerment as a comprehensive change, both in relation to clients and in relation to organizational personnel, and presents it as effective and profitable for the organization itself, thus facilitating the dissemination of an empowerment approach both towards the employees and among them. Even when the change process is organizational, the same rules of choice and discretion mentioned above apply to the individual employee. However, in this situation, the organizational context changes completely. The choice is no longer a moral one, because the

empowering practitioner active in an empowering organization is free from dilemmas of conscience and from conflicts of loyalty connected with the choice of empowerment as a professional path.

Empowerment has to be a mutual process. In the relations between the professional and the people in whose lives she intervenes, each side encourages and actively contributes to the empowerment of the other. At the same time, the focus of attention must be on the empowerment of the people, not of the professionals (Adams, 1990). At the conclusion of the discussion it is important to recall that powerful professionals (physicians, lawyers, and other specialists who come to mind in this context) are not famous for encouraging empowerment of their clients. Hence there is no certainty that increasing the power of powerless professionals will lead them to this. It is possible that particularly those professionals who experience or have experienced powerlessness in their private or professional lives are more capable of identification and of understanding the harm in this situation, and of sustaining more equitable relations of help and dialogue in order to change it. This, however, is in the nature of a speculation, and its realization depends on many complex circumstances.

To sum up, empowerment is a source of inspiration and innovation in the domains of practice of professionals who are interested in social change and in the personal change that it entails. It may be assumed that adoption of an empowering professional practice will not limit itself to the professional's working hours, but will influence her as a person on various levels of her views and beliefs. A theory of empowerment is a theory that is conscious that it is a world-view. The professional who adopts it does so because she agrees with a number of premises about professionalism, about subjectivity, and about the origin of social problems, and these correspond to her beliefs, values, goals and intentions.

Summary

Individual empowerment is a process of personal development in a social framework: a transition from a feeling of powerlessness, and from a life in the shadow of this feeling, to an active life of real ability to act and to take initiatives in relation to the environment and the future. Community empowerment also includes a definition of a community as a partial, temporary and dynamic unit that originates in the human need for a sense of togetherness and identification with others. Community empowerment can be realized in geographically defined areas that constitute the common critical characteristic of their residents, or it can develop in groups with other common critical characteristics, such as origin, age, gender, or physical disability.

The discussion of individual and community empowerment has also touched upon the political meaning of empowerment. The perception of the empowerment process on all its levels as a political process is important to the present study, and is influenced by feminist thought, which accords a new meaning to social change.

The group and the community organization are the main means of activating environmental processes. These are the settings which actively connect the individual with his environment and make possible a change which includes the individual, the group, and the environment in the one process.

The *professionalism* of empowering professional practice is expressed in the professional's critical approach to himself and his practice. Empowering professionalism means placing the profession at the service of processes that empower people. Empowering professionals choose, from their professional repertoire, those strategies and ways of action that encourage empowerment.

In the framework of the discussion on professional practice a discussion generally also takes place on empowerment of the professionals themselves, The need for empowerment of

professionals (such as teachers and social workers employed by complex organizations) is emphasized beyond the universal need for empowerment that every person has. The claim is made that empowered professionals will be more empowering professionals; this claim still needs to find support in a reality in which a majority of powerful professionals (such as physicians and lawyers) have no interest in the discourse on empowerment.

Chapter 3
Developing a Theory of Empowerment

In Search of a Meta-theory

Empowerment theory wants to make a place for itself among those new social theories that are attempting to connect the personal and the social, the individual and society, the micro and the macro. Connecting the individual and the collective in a way which is not organic-biological or systemic-mechanical is not unique to the present study: this is the great challenge of sociology in recent years (Ritzer, 1988). In our case, the search is for a connection between the micro level and the macro level. For the individual – the micro level – the empowerment process is a process of increasing control and transition from a state of powerlessness. Community empowerment – the macro level – is a collective social process of creating a community, achieving better control over the environment, and decision making in which groups, organizations or communities participate. Beside these two we have to develop the theoretical meaning of empowering professional practice, through which an abstract theory is translated into a practical tool of intervention.

An empowerment theory requires a convincing integration of the micro and macro levels in order to make clear the interrelations among individual, community, and professional empowerment. In the search for this integration, I will present three theories which have taken on the challenge of connecting the individual and his behavior with the society and its processes. Drawing on these, I will go on to propose a theory of empowerment processes.

Integration of Micro and Macro Levels in Feminist Thought

The declaration that the personal is political is the feminist rationale for removing the separating fence between the micro as a personal domain and the macro as a public domain. The split between the personal and the public domains is essentially a social means of isolating women and separating them from communities which could validate their views about life and society (Ackelsberg, 1988). The recognition of the existence of mutual influence between private activity and social structures demands a connection between the personal world and what happens in political and public life. The change in the values and beliefs of the individual woman, in the goals that she sets herself, in the life-style she chooses and in the understanding of her existential problems is a political declaration that is aimed at a change of the social structures that influence her life (Van Den Bergh & Cooper, 1986).

The concept *social individuality* (Griscom, 1992) makes the feminist dialectics explicit. The woman is an individual within the social reality in which she grows up and develops with the contradictions between her and society. According to this holistic view, the separation between self, others, and community, is artificial, because these three create one another within a single complex whole. The powerlessness of one woman, which changes by means of her activism in collaboration with others in her situation, is a process that empowers the entire community of women.

Feminist thought attacks the illusion of objectivity. Since knowledge about the social world is always created from a social position, no comprehensive and uniform social outlook really exists. People positioned in different places in the social structure know different things about the world. Hence, when a social view is presented as objective and exclusively valid, it is only an expression of the excessive rights that a certain group has appropriated for itself in the social order (Lengermann & Neibrugge-Brantley, 1988).

Several important ideas follows from this thinking:

The work of production and maintenance in society is done by subordinates whose work is in most cases invisible, and because of a dominant social ideology is not appreciated either by the society or by those who actually do the work. As a consequence, the understanding of the real components of production in society is distorted (Markusen, 1980). A senior manager in a large company can devote all his time to his job thanks to his wife, who takes care of him, their children, his elderly parents, and their home. For the firm, and for the society as well, the invisible work of this woman is of no economic value. It is women, irrespective of their status, who do most of this invisible work, not only in the domestic domain, cleaning, cooking, maintenance, and providing emotional and sexual services. In paid work too they do most of the activities of coordinating, such as waiting, arranging meetings, mediating, being interrupted, which are also considered unimportant. Another part of women's work, which is more obvious in its contribution to social production – motherhood – receives social glorification and idealization, which convert it into an unrealistic experience.

As a consequence of this women walk on a *line of fault* that separates the dominant ideology about their role in social life from their actual experience as they understand it. The incompatibility between the private reality and the social generalizations creates a constant dissonance with reality, and women navigate their lives according to this sense of separation between them and the society. On this line of fault, women navigate in different ways: some by repression, some by acquiescence, some by rebellion, and some by an attempt to organize social change (Lengermann & Neibrugge-Brantley, 1988).

All that has been said here about women may be applied analogously, although not in a totally identical form, to all powerless people who are subordinate to others. These people cannot express themselves as individuals, and silently accept other people's interpretations of their actions and failures.

This is the source of the culture of silence that characterizes life in conditions of inequality (Gaventa, 1980).

The conclusion of feminist theory is to question accepted categorizations that were developed by disciplines that are basically dominated by men (such as sociology, for example). The aim is to create alternative concepts which can help to explain the world as it appears to its invisible and disadvantaged subordinate subjects (Lengermann & Neibrugge-Brantley, 1988).

Theorists must engage in dialectical analysis of the knowledge process, and be conscious of the constant tension that exists between the subject and the object—each affecting and changing the other. The knower (the subject, the theorist) has to admit his interaction with the knowledge (the object), for knowledge about the social world is always created from a social position.

The connection between the personal and the political, which characterizes the feminist approach, has been warmly adopted into the theory of empowerment, as has the premise that feminism is valid not only for women, but also for everyone whose world is characterized by oppression and marginality. Empowerment wants to turn public attention to the distress of groups that are in need of social change.

The Transactional Approach in Environmental Psychology

The transactional theory in environmental psychology (Altmann & Rogoff, 1987) proposes a bridge between the micro level – the person – and the macro level—the environment. In the transactional approach, which is influenced by both phenomenology and ethnomethodology (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Mehan & Wood, 1975), the unit of analysis is a holistic entity – an event, generally – in which people, psychological processes, and environments are involved. The transactional whole is not composed of separate parts (like the whole in systems theory), but is a compound of inseparable factors that are dependent upon one another for their very meaning and definition. The whole – person-environment – is a happening that is changing all the time. Various aspects of the event accord mutual meaning to one another, for in a different setting, or with different actors, a particular person would have acted differently. The observer (the researcher), too, is part of the event, since she defines the event and its boundaries, and her approach and behavior dictate part of the phenomenon. Understanding the observer during the event, her point of view, her role and her position, is part of the interpretation of the event. The transactional theory is pragmatic, eclectic, and relativistic. Despite its ambition to be able to predict, it recognizes that the events are liable to be idiosyncratic and non-recurrent.

Several principles stem from this theory:

1. Change is a property of the whole entity—of the event itself. Change is expected since processes are temporary by their very definition. An understanding of the change – of how it comes about and of its form – is required in order to understand the phenomenon, and not, as in other approaches, in order to understand the change and its reasons. The description and analysis of the event focus on the study of process and change.

2. Since the basic research unit is *an event* involving psychological, temporal, environmental, and social aspects, any focus of the research on one of these aspects turns the others into a context. For example, if the focus of the study is the psychological aspects of an event, then the physical environment is its context.

3. The perceptions and perspectives of the participants in an event are important for an understanding of the event. The analysis is not done solely from the perspective of the researcher who, as already noted, is one aspect of the event. The transactional approach studies the ways different observers interpret the same event.

4. Methodological eclecticism: Resaerch methods are produced out of the event, not imposed upon it. The

theory and the structure of assumptions are constants, while the strategies of study may vary. A study is designed according to the problem and the question being studied. Hence, even when it is not possible to do the research empirically, it is important to report and acknowledge this, so that even without empirical research it will be possible to understand the entire picture theoretically.

From transactional theory, empowerment theory has taken the place of the professional as an inseparable part of the social situation itself, the emphasis on the process, and the freedom to move between focus and context that this theory permits the researcher.

Structuration Theory: Giddens' Duality of Structure

Giddens' structuration theory (1982, 1984) – which is also called the theory of duality of structure, after its central principle – is the most developed among those sociological theories that integrate micro and macro levels of analysis (Ritzer, 1988). On this theory, the social structure has neither primacy nor preference over the human agency, and vice versa. Social structure is the outcome of human action, and this action is made possible within the boundaries of the social structure in which it takes place.

Giddens makes use of the term "system" to describe the overt pattern of social structures. The social outcomes – both the intentional and the unexpected – are an embodiment of the actions of human agencies. Social systems are reproduced social practices that are embedded in time and space.

Rules and resources are drawn upon in the production and reproduction of social action. At the same time they are the means of system reproduction (the duality of structure). Human agency is enabled by means of social rules and resources. The rules guide and inform the action, and the resources provide it with energy: purpose, power, and efficacy.

The three concepts that are central to an understanding of human agency and the social structure are communication, power, and sanction. These represent human actions as well as structures of meaning (communication), systems of rule and authority (power) and systems of morality and legitimation (sanctions).

Giddens breaks the mechanical character of *social structure*, in that he sees it as a cluster of rules and resources, and hence a fundamental part of human activity, and not as an obstacle to activity. Structure is always both constraining and enabling (Ritzer, 1988).

Communication. In order to communicate, people draw interpretative schemes from symbolic structures of signification.

Power. A system of domination is made possible due to the existence of social structures of rule and authority.

Sanctions. In order to impose sanctions, people rely on norms which are part of a social structure of morality and of a system of legitimation.

The concepts of structure and action are produced and reproduced on the human agency level, and exist as concepts of meaning on the social structure level.

I have chosen the structuration theory as a basis for empowerment theory because it is critical, self-critical, holistic, relates directly to the concept of power, and binds micro and macro phenomena in the one explanation.

The principle of duality of structure is suitable as an explanation for the various levels of empowerment, as it is for analysis of any social process. Individual empowerment is human agency whose structural outcomes are not intentional; it may have structural consequences but these are not the essence of the process. Community empowerment is human activity that has structural and organizational aspects, which are aimed at changing social systems and creating structural alternatives. Professional practice is another form of human agency, one that is made possible through existing social systems. When its outcomes are oriented to producing the two kinds of empowerment, it is called *empowering*.

A Theory of Empowerment

A Definition of Empowerment

In my search for a suitable meta-theory, I wanted to establish the idea that the development of a theory of empowerment needs to draw its inspiration from interdisciplinary and multidimensional theories. From here on, I will present a contextual, interdisciplinary and multidimensional theory of empowerment.

Empowerment is a process of transition from a state of powerlessness to a state of relative control over one's life, destiny, and environment. This transition can manifest itself in an improvement in the perceived ability to control, as well as in an improvement in the actual ability to control.

Disempowering social processes are responsible for creating a sense of powerlessness among people who belong to groups that suffer from stigma and discrimination. A sense of powerlessness leads to a lack of self-worth, to self-blame, to indifference towards and alienation from the environment, beside inability to act for oneself and growing dependence on social services and specialists for the solution of problems in one's life.

Empowerment is a transition from this passive situation to a more active situation of control. The need for it is part of the realization of one's very humanity, so much so that one could say that a person who is powerless with regard to his life and his environment is not realizing his innate human potential. Since the sources of powerlessness are rooted in social processes that disempower entire populations, the empowerment process aims to influence the oppressed human agency and the social structure within the limitations and possibilities in which this human agency exists and reacts.

We may therefore conceptualize empowerment processes as three interwoven processes which complement and contribute to one another:

The process of individual empowerment, which actually can occur in an immense variety of circumstances and conditions, without any connection to the other two processes, but when it occurs in the course of active participation in social change processes in groups and organizations it has a special value for both the individual and the environment.

The process of community empowerment is a social change process which involves organizing and creating a community. A collective with a common critical characteristic, that suffers from social stigmas and discrimination, acquires ability to control its relevant environment better and to influence its future. Community empowerment processes develop a sense of responsibility, commitment, and ability to care for collective survival, as wells as skills in problem solving, and political efficacy to influence changes in environments relevant to their quality of life.

Empowering professional practice is methodical intervention aimed at encouraging processes of individual and community empowerment. Empowering professional practice is professional activity that stems from social systems with the aim of encouraging processes of increased control of those individuals and communities in whose lives these systems intervene.

Individual Empowerment, or the Importance of the Human Agency

The potential for empowerment, like one's very humanity, exists in everyone, and the ability to make a difference is a component of human existence. Systematic and permanent limitation of one's ability to exert power is a negation of one's very humanity. A human agency ceases to be such if it loses the ability to influence the world in some way (Giddens, 1984). To be a human being in the full sense of the word,

then, means to carry out intentional acts in order to achieve defined goals, that is to say, to influence the environment, to be able to bring about change.

Circumstances exist in which people's humanity, in this sense, is not realized. At times so many limitations are placed upon a person's ability to exert power that he is unable to act at all. Nonetheless, there is a fundamental difference between inability to act because one has no choice, and lack of ability to act. Not every case of inactivity may be seen as lack of ability to act (Mann, 1986).

The contextual theory of empowerment confirms the connection between the private and the political. It analyzes individual issues in social life politically. The individual interprets the politics of her life on the basis of the knowledge available to her about political achievements in the social domain. In the Western democracies, people are conscious of certain social values. They know that there exists a fundamental demand for autonomy and free independent functioning; and also that freedom and responsibility co-exist socially in a certain balance. Although people are not free in any absolute sense of the word, they are supposed to be free from limitations and conditions of exploitation, inequality and oppression. On the individual level a *private* political response to these ideas develops; Giddens calls this *life politics* (1991). On the collective level, life politics focuses on what happens to people who have achieved a degree of consciousness and initial ability to act, and are in need of community empowerment processes in order to realize their aspirations for personal autonomy.

Community Empowerment, or the Social Structure's Shaping Influence

The individual, then, in seeking his personal political interpretation – a quest which is a result of the individual empowerment process – creates expectations for change on the social structure level. Community empowerment takes place when expectations for change which have accumulated in the social structure in the form of abstract structures begin to materialize. In other words, one could say that individual empowerment creates a reservoir of community potential. Beyond this potential, community empowerment requires resources of its own in order to be realized. It draws these resources from two sources which must be available with a certain coordination between them:

1. Individuals who have come to recognize that they are interested in acting not only to realize their own personal desires, although still in the framework of improving their quality of life.
2. External change agent – professionals and others who are involved in a planned change process and contribute rules and resources to it – meaning, legitimation, and power—which support the creation of a community and its growing ability to influence the environment.

The concept of *life politics* emphasizes the democratic context of the concept of empowerment. The empowerment process is conditioned by what already exists—by the social structure that enables or limits it. Regimes that do not recognize the individual's right to act and to change, and emphasize the duty of obedience as the essence of man, shape social processes in a very different way than the democratic regime which, at least on the expectations level, permits and encourages the individual's participation in public decisions.

This is how the duality of structure principle operates. Beside the social activity, the extent to which there exists a social structure that provides legitimation to civic participation – political regime, policy, resources – influences the character and the route of the empowerment process, and is a critical factor for the chances of initiating it. However, human agency has a variety of ways and means available to it in order to exert control on life, even in conditions of severe structural limitations. Hence, social relations, even when they are asymmetrical, are always mutual, and a person is never

without resources to the point of absolute lack of ability to exert influence on others (even if they have privileged access and control over ability and resources) (Davis, 1988).

Empowering professional practice encourages and facilitates processes of increased control of individuals and collectives over their lives and environments. It develops intervention methods through which people can effect changes in their lives. In the empowerment process people learn to take on socially valuable roles, to exercise social skills, to exert interpersonal influence, to develop commitment, to take responsibility and to acquire political efficacy. The acquired abilities contribute to the joint goals of empowering themselves as individuals and as a community.

Resources of the individual kind exist in every environment and may also be discovered there spontaneously. Few communities have developed from situations of powerlessness to belief in themselves and ability to make independent decisions through their own inner resources alone (by *boot straps* processes). The encounter between the community and practitioners who use empowering professional methods is not spontaneous; it is generally a synthetic occurrence embedded in a social system. It can stem from planned policy (Couto, 1989; Feldman & Stall, 1994), or from the professional's individual moral decision (Schuman, 1987).

The empowerment process produces a synergy that encourages the preservation and reproduction of the process (Katz, 1984). As the empowerment process progresses the empowering professional practice is reinforced, and from the outcomes of the process and from the process itself it receives proofs of its effectiveness and in certain cases also legitimation from the system. On the action level, the practitioner accumulates experience and professional confidence, as well as new knowledge. On the structure level a potential for creating new social systems based on empowerment-enhancing communications, norms, and forms of authority is created. The empowerment process also limits the professional practice, because at its peak it eliminates

the need for its services. The more the empowerment process progresses, the weaker becomes the dependence on professionals (principally on the empowering professionals, who deliberately avoid developing dependence), and they become less essential for the continuation of the process. When a community achieves empowerment it no longer needs the professional services that were essential in the stages of transition from powerlessness.

Social knowledge is neither objective nor neutral; it either contributes to social liberation or it encourages exploitation and social domination. By the same principle, empowerment practice cannot be neutral either: a professional who does not advance empowerment almost certainly hinders it. The rules of empowering practice also apply to an interpretative social theory, which must therefore be a critical theory too, because it is not only the social scientist who produces and interprets knowledge, but also the people who are the objects of the research participate in its creation through their activities that produce and reproduce it (Giddens, 1982). Such double hermeneutics is called for in order to give validity to the knowledge created both by the people living in the society and by the social sciences.

Duality of Structure Dynamics in Empowerment Processes

Empowerment Processes. Duality of structure emphasizes an important dynamic aspect of the empowerment process: empowerment potential exists not only in terms of people's personal resources and abilities, but also in terms of the rules and regulations of the social structure. The connection made by Giddens (1984) between social structure and human agency reinforces the theoretical explanation of the way community empowerment contributes to individual empowerment. Hence, empowerment may be compared to a circular process of social change and activation of abilities and resources, in which human agents in need of empowerment act together with empowering human agents. The social structure that is

produced by means of this activity includes preservation and reproduction of elements from the existing social structure, and a moral process of critical social analysis.

In the communications domain, empowered people learn to understand their situation differently, and thus create a symbolic structure that they share, one which gives them a new social meaning of their situation and their relations with others. In the normative domain, people learn to appreciate anew certain social norms that affect them. They start taking an active part in the moral discourse, and change it by the very fact of their joining it. Through this new social participation they can impose sanctions against social systems with which they had previously acquiesced to their own detriment. Empowerment may be described in terms of individuals' ability to effect change, but one cannot understand the power of a particular person, which is expressed in his own specific activity, without relating to the existing structures of control that this person reinforces, interprets and changes through his behavior. Personal efficacy draws its strength from structural forms of control that are embedded in social systems (Clegg, 1989). Hence, the empowerment process depends on what already exists in the society, but the success of the process is defined by what and how much changes on the personal level, the community level, and the social systems connected with the process.

Community empowerment depends on the acquisition of ability and on access to essential resources, which can be divided into two kinds: allocative resources and authoritative resources. Allocative resources are material resources such as raw materials, technologies, and products produced through the combination of these. Authoritative resources are organizational resources which can be divided into three kinds: 1. Organization of social time-space, i.e., the creation of paths of daily life. 2. Organization of human beings in mutual association. 3. Organization of life chances: the constitution of chances of self-development and self-expression (Giddens, 1984).

The degree of access to necessary resources of both these kinds is what determines the degree of ability to act and to influence. The less accessible these resources are to a person, the further she is from the ability to influence the social structure or to influence the creation of rules and laws (which also determine the degree of people's distance from resources).

Empowerment creates a change in human behavior and in the social structure. The potential for community empowerment exists in every environment, just as the potential for individual empowerment exists in every person. In every process of individual empowerment there also exists a potential for community empowerment, and every process of community empowerment creates an environment that facilitates individual empowerment and at the same time also shapes and determines its form (Maton & Rappaport, 1984).

What are the intended outcomes of this process? Since we are speaking about a theoretical process, it is open to an infinite number of variations, but we may note a number of outcomes in the course of it:

1. The empowerment process in most cases begins from a sense of frustration: people's sense that there exists an unbridgeable gap between their aspirations and their possibilities of realizing them. People discover that the realization of their aspirations depends on abilities and resources that are beyond their reach (Kieffer, 1984).
2. For the empowerment process to be able to develop, this sense needs to be accompanied by a minimal level of ability and resources to enable organized activity, as well a minimum of social legitimation to permit such activity.
3. Empowerment begins, then, with people's will to obtain resources and means to develop ability in order to achieve something in their lives. The mobilization of resolve and will is a first outcome in the process.

4. People's recognition of their right to express aspirations and their ability to define them is an outcome of developing a critical consciousness of the existing situation (Freire, 1985).

5. People's belief in their own ability to achieve outcomes is an achievement in terms of a sense of individual ability to control one's life (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy may become collective efficacy if it gets translated into the community's practical ability to organize itself for a collective effort to achieve outcomes in the environment.

6. Success in mobilizing resources to continue the process, including resources of knowledge about organizing and setting up community organizations, are outcomes that indicate that the empowerment process has established itself (Mann, 1986). This is a proof that the people have secured for themselves an ongoing ability to achieve outcomes: to control their lives, to participate in decision making, and to influence the environment.

The entire sequence of stages may be any hypothetical empowerment process, and each one of the stages is an end in itself and may also be a starting point for a different empowerment process. The point of departure for change depends on the opening conditions of the particular empowerment process.

Powerlessness. It is the social systems which are intended to solve social problems that produce the powerlessness of the people in need of their services, generally not out of bad intentions, but as a by-product of the flawed way that social policy is executed and that public services are given to people in distress (Berger & Neuhaus, 1977; Rappaport, 1981). Hence, empowerment theory diagnoses powerlessness as a social problem and not an individual problem, and criticizes the conservative tendency to diagnose manifestations of powerlessness, dependence, despair, and self-blame as the personal (at times cultural) problems of individuals.

What all situations of powerlessness have in common is the personal psychological experience of loss of control, which every human being can identify with emotionally. Since there is nobody who has not experienced moments of helplessness and powerlessness, there exists an intuitive understanding of the injuries caused by constant and ongoing powerlessness, and this validates the universality of the need for empowerment.

Disempowerment of people who belong to a particular population group produces powerlessness that influences the lives and futures of the individuals and the fate of the entire community. Powerless people, as already noted, expect a lack of connection between their behavior and desirable outcomes, and defend themselves by means of extreme fatalism, self-contempt, and indifference to their deplorable situation.

As a consequence of the negative valuation that is part of the disempowering processes directed towards a social group, this group is systematically denied identities and roles possessing social value, and important resources (Solomon, 1976, 1985). These two – roles and resources – are the basis for the exertion of interpersonal influence and for effective social functioning. Hence, inability to exert interpersonal influence and inability to function effectively in society, which various theories identify as personal problems, are structural manifestations of powerlessness.

Duration is what differentiates between states of constant and ongoing powerlessness and situations of powerlessness that originate in a crisis or in stress and can happen to any person or any group. In crisis situations, too, there are manifestations of powerlessness, but without systematic and structured disempowerment.

Nonetheless, there may be a subtle difference between the two situations of powerlessness, the temporary and the chronic. We can learn something about this from the vulnerable situation of new immigrants in Israel, who in the first stages of their absorption into the society should be regarded as a population in crisis. The transition from the country of origin

to Israel creates a rupture that is accompanied by feelings and manifestations of powerlessness. The expectations of both the immigrants and of the established society are that this is a temporary situation which will pass when they become part of the local society. However, beside groups of immigrants who experience a temporary crisis and then do become part of the society, other groups of immigrants are exposed to systematic and ongoing disempowerment that includes discrimination and stigma, and leads to powerlessness with all its difficult manifestations. The conclusion is that in Israeli society a tendency exists to selectively disempower certain groups of immigrants. To identify the victims is a relatively simple matter. They are always the poorest, the weakest both physically and psychologically, or those who are most conspicuously different in cultural or ethnic terms. The combination of economic/organizational weakness and cultural difference creates an especially high risk of powerlessness.

From this example we can learn that in every case where a crisis event occurs in the life of a social group, even if this crisis is planned, expected and temporary, there needs to be criticism of the practices activated by the social systems that treat the event, in order to identify disempowering policies and practices, to prevent these and thus to prevent the constant and perpetual powerlessness of an entire social group.

Powerlessness, like any social situation, produces adaptive mechanisms in those subject to it, and it is important to identify the principal mechanisms. Powerless people internalize their impossible situation and the blame it entails. They identify with the negative social opinions and accept the society's judgment of their worthlessness. As a means of escaping from their hopelessness and their knowledge that there is no way out of this situation, they tend to internalize the society's values, beliefs and game rules, including those that are directed against themselves. People who are prevented from participating in action that defines them, and from expressing thoughts about their actions, develop a passivity

and give up on the idea of controlling their destiny and their future (Gaventa, 1980). Even when the passive quiescence breaks, it does not totally vanish; its remnants make it difficult for people who have become accustomed to quiescence to express themselves in a clear and stable way. The new consciousness in the stage of emerging from powerlessness is a source of instability and that can easily be manipulated (Freire, 1970). The quiescence of the powerless endangers their future, for it enables the society to speak for them, and tacitly endorses the development of a victim-blaming rationale of powerlessness and a legitimation of its continued existence.

An example of such a rationale is the prevalent conservative position, which claims that a developed political consciousness is the reason for participation in political processes. According to this position, someone who does not participate chooses this course because she lacks political consciousness and therefore prefers to be represented by others. This is a way of explaining non-participation, and also of giving legitimation to the existing situation. However, research has shown that people's participation in political processes augmented their political consciousness (Pateman, 1970). In other words, participation itself creates consciousness no less than consciousness leads to participation, and hence someone who does not receive an opportunity to participate is prevented from developing political consciousness and becoming involved in public matters. In empowerment theory terms, what we have here is not the human agency's choice not to act, but a structural duality which creates a deliberate social outcome: the social structure systematically, by means of structures of sanctions, communications and domination, limits the human agency of particular groups. This limitation is manifested in limited allocation of resources, resulting in the human agency's inability to develop abilities, which condemns them to playing a passive subordinate role in society's production.

Power Barriers. How does the allocation of meager and powerlessness-producing resources come about? The society has direct and indirect ways of effecting disempowerment. The indirect power barriers are the ones that are incorporated into a person's growth and developments stages, and are transmitted to the child and the adolescent by means of significant others in his life (Solomon, 1976). These are the authoritative resources that the society provides by its organization of social relations and life opportunities, in ways which, although covert, have a most profound influence (Giddens, 1984). The direct power barriers, that originate in the allocative resources, are implemented against the individual directly through the practices of social systems. The authoritative and allocative resources integrate the direct and indirect power barriers into a single structure of rationalization and legitimation: the liberal approach, which encourages the non-participation of the poor in political life, gets internalized in the child by means of his parents, who have accepted their negative social valuation, and when he grows up, it is transmitted to him directly by means of the meager allocation of the allocative resources, from the education system through to old-age pensions.

Due to the penetrating thoroughness of the integrated power barriers, as long as the consciousness of the powerless does not change in a stable and fundamental manner, no significant change in their situation may be expected (Gaventa, 1980). Their emergence from a situation of powerlessness, then, demands a great effort, in contrast to the relatively small steps that need to be taken to maintain their existing situation. To overcome the power barriers is much harder than to preserve them. However, when a change process begins, it is self-reinforcing. When a barrier collapses, this means a change in the rules and structures of meaning and legitimation. These lead first to changes in the allocation of the allocative resources (the material resources), and, with much more difficulty, also to changes in the authoritative resources (the organizational resources) (Clegg, 1989). Hence

the breaking-down of one power barrier accelerates and facilitates further progress. This is an example of the synergy involved in the empowerment process and of the motivating power of success, which brings about an improvement of self-image in the course of acquiring abilities and obtaining resources which originate in the empowering professional practice. The question of whether these processes fundamentally influence the field of power relations will be discussed further on (Gaventa, 1980; Clegg, 1989).

Organizational Outflanking. Organizational outflanking is yet another conceptualization, sophisticated in its simplicity, of the power barriers (Mann, 1986). Its claim is that powerlessness is nothing but a submission to power's organizational advantage. Because of this concept's strategic importance to empowering practice, it is worthwhile to become acquainted with the two categories of response to organizational outflanking.

Conscious Submission to Organizational Outflanking
In certain social conditions, the knowledge and consciousness of the outflanked is of no practical value. Their inactivity stems from knowing the price they would have to pay for struggling with the organizational outflanking. Such submission covertly undermines the conception that development of critical consciousness is the beginning of a practical change process. This gives further support to the claim that individual empowerment does not necessarily lead to community empowerment.

The conscious submission to organizational outflanking makes perceptible the affinity of the concept of empowerment, on all its levels, with the democratic context. An event which occurred in a different context describes the regime's brutal response to a community empowerment process in a town in Venezuela, where the residents built homes for themselves by themselves, assisted by professional practice of people form the nearby university, The regime's response made it clear to anyone who needed clarifications that a dictatorial regime

sees even personal empowerment as a threat that has to be eliminated. Although they were conscious of their situation, and possessed not-inconsiderable abilities, the local residents did not manage to advance in their community empowerment process, because the social structure they live in entails dangers to the lives and property of any human agency focused on change (Sanchez et al., 1988). In Israel, the occupation regime in the territories provides daily examples of frustration of attempts to organize and of independent community expression.

An example of conscious submission to organizational outflanking in a democratic society is an event in which a group of parents participated in the running of an open school, but was pushed to the margins as a consequence of the teachers' taking control of all the school's organizational frameworks. The parents, who lacked organizational means of their own, remained outside the decision making process and ceased having an influence. The researchers Gruber & Trickett (1987) analyzed the process by dividing the concept of empowerment into psychological empowerment and political empowerment. Psychological empowerment was described as a personal process that is not dependent on organizational means, and this was achieved by the parents. Political empowerment was defined as actual participation in decision making; this was not achieved by the parents. Had the researchers analyzed the situation with the assistance of the organizational outflanking theory, they would have reached the conclusion that the parents, despite their consciousness of their situation, had difficulties in realizing empowerment because they were organizationally outflanked by the school.

Unconscious Submission to Organizational Outflanking
The unconscious response to organizational outflanking is attributed to three factors: the ignorance, the isolation, and the exclusion of the outflanked (Mann, 1986).

Ignorance is considered the major cause of powerlessness, mainly because of the absence of tools and abilities that accompanies lack of knowledge. People are unable to describe and conceptualize their situation, and their powerlessness deepens because of the quiescence that accompanies ignorance. This connects with the two other factors – exclusion and isolation – which are responsible for preserving the status quo of the ignorance of the outflanked (Gaventa, 1980).

Isolation of groups from one another so that they will not be able or interested to organize themselves is an old and tested strategy in the service of power. The advantage of strategies of isolation and exclusion is that they are commonplace to the point of banality, and at the same time are easy to camouflage.

An example that demonstrates how common is the use of methods of exclusion for purposes of organizational outflanking are the procedures for the participation of residents in the Israeli *Urban Renewal* project, which began in 1978 and has actually not been completed to this day. From 1980 on, the authorities engaged in the project instituted neighborhood elections as a condition for participation of residents in the formal decision making processes. In this way a separation was effected between the elected representatives of the residents, who received appointments to participate in the committees, and other representatives of the residents, who were not given right of entry into the official decision making process. Further separations were also instituted in the same project. For example: between owners and rent payers in public housing; and between the more established residents of the neighborhood and people in need of welfare services (Alterman and Churchman, 1991).

Empowerment as Social Transformation

Does empowerment create a fundamental change in the power field that it occurs in? This is a Foucaultian question, which therefore has no simple answers, for an answer which is not complex and dialectical, which generalizes and simplifies, serves the existing power relations. If we see empowerment

as a local resistance to power, then its occurrence does not transform the field of power relations itself very much. This analysis is correct for individual empowerment in particular. Through his own empowerment a person gains a higher level of consciousness about his place in the power relations, but his achievements are not felt in the existing power fields (although they do add to the potential for social change, as Giddens [1984] presumes).

Michel Foucault claimed that there are human actions and phenomena that have managed to elude the net of power and to preserve their freedom, and then institutionalization is the major danger to their existence. In his view, the very endeavor to develop new knowledge around empowerment, and to organize it in an institutionalized way, as the present book is attempting to do, is liable to turn a phenomenon that means more control by the individual over her life and her fate into yet another domain under the supervision and surveillance of power. Conceptualization of empowerment may be interpreted as yet another attempt by power/knowledge to take control of the field of humane social phenomena.

This is one of the problems in a Foucaultian analysis. Any attempt to organize knowledge in an ordered way is suspect as an attempt at *normalization*—at judgment and domination. Nonetheless, there is truth in this extreme position: a phenomenon that is adopted by the scientific establishment and is disseminated under its auspices to social institutions is liable to lose its authenticity (as a substantiation of the validity of Foucault's claim, we may cite the mechanical use of the concept of *creativity* since it was adopted by educational and therapeutic institutions and became distorted while being activated in their framework). Foucault justified his refraining from creating a theory in the domain of power as a refusal to cause harm to any social subject that is condemned to scientific generalization. Anyone who agrees with him can go on developing a theory only within this contradiction, in the hope that Foucault's evaluation of the extent of the interconnections between

the technologies of power and social knowledge was an exaggerated one.

Although insufficient evidence exists about the fundamental social change that empowerment will bring about if and when it is adopted as a policy and a professional practice, Foucault himself demonstrated how a written idea may serve power relations and provide a direction for development of technologies (1979). Any new idea, any linguistic innovation, then, has this opportunity of bringing some fresh innovation to the accepted perspectives and conceptions in the domain in which it appears. Likewise, any such innovation may be implemented in different and contradictory directions. Empowerment emphasizes the ability to control that is innate in every person, the importance of context for an understanding of this ability, the special place of human solidarity and of community in this context, and the roles of professional people in changing the disempowerment produced by social systems. It is thus different from the ideas about achievement, competition, and selfish individualism that (according to Foucault as well) characterize the knowledge that acts in the service of technologies of power.

A Foucaultian interpretation will also claim that empowerment promises too few outcomes in the field, and places too much emphasis on the consciousness and feelings of individuals and groups without changing their actual situation. In this way empowering practice is liable to turn into a technology in the service of power, which helps deprived groups to be more contented in their deprivation. This is not a totally groundless possibility, especially if we agree with Foucault's evaluation that power in the Western world is characterized by the sophistication with which it conceals itself.

Any focus on individual empowerment arouses a Foucaultian interpreter's suspicion, and in the writing on empowerment in social work such an orientation exists (Lee, 1994; Miley et al., 1998). When the professional practice focuses on the individual question of who is empowered and who is

not, this question becomes yet another criterion for judging people and separating between them, as is common in typical power technologies. Hence, empowerment as knowledge cannot limit itself to developing an individualistic therapeutic approach. Despite its originality and importance, such an approach will limit itself to implementing knowledge in the service of veteran social institutions (the welfare services, for example). Empowerment is valid as a new approach (and a new idea) only when it is implemented on the social level.

Politics of Empowerment

When a chance for social change exists, the next question that follows is what will be the character of the process of social change, or what kind of politics characterizes empowerment. One could answer that generally it seeks social legitimation and consensus, and the use of the concept of life politics attests to this (see above). Empowerment is not interested in appearing as a revolution, but as a new social agreement—a social contract. Empowerment is a demand, in the name of shared social values, for recognition of the harm caused to certain populations as a consequence of manipulation of some of these values against them. Empowerment is a hope that on the basis of a platform of shared values it will be possible to reach conclusions and to change policies and practices that are prevalent in social systems.

From a Foucaultian perspective, at least three remarks are called for on this subject.

1. Since there are no possessors of power, there is in fact no-one to approach. However, it is necessary to ensure the development of a new professional consciousness. In too many cases people ask technical questions – such as *How is it possible to improve the welfare system?* – and do not ask essential ones—such as *What does the welfare system do to the people in need of it?* Empowerment poses such questions (Rappaport, 1985).

2. Since there is no-one who stands outside power, and everyone is activated by the same technologies, then, as already stated, even someone who feels he has power is manipulated and entrapped by it. If only for this reason, it is worth abandoning the prevalent belief that power relations are a zero sum game. This belief results in a refusal to share resources of power with others, thus perpetuating isolation and separation among people, even in opposition to their interests.

3. In a democratic regime we can relate to empowerment as a kind of legitimate resistance that serves as a brake and a substitute for much more dangerous alternatives (Minson, 1986). Empowerment is an idea that is compatible with liberal democratic ideas, and hence Western democratic society is capable of digesting it without shocks, and even to gain some advantages through it. Power is prepared for tactical losses in order to gain a strategic advantage, and empowerment may be a tactical loss of this kind.

"What Does Empowerment Do?"

Foucault, and Giddens after him, would have wanted to investigate the unintentional outcomes of the empowerment processes. At first glance this would be a superfluous investigation, because empowerment was born out of the critique of harmful by-products of social programs that have not asked What does the program do? (Swift, 1984). In fact, however, it is important to investigate the connection between the discourse on empowerment and the empowering professional practice, and also to analyze technologies that declare themselves as empowering, in order to understand what does empowerment do, or how it influences people beyond its overt messages (Rojek, 1986). Like any new concept, empowerment too can lead intentionally or unintentionally to the establishment of new social structures and the preservation of existing structures that contradict its principal goals.

If we believe Foucault, power penetrates more and more into our lives as individuals, but at the same time it increasingly camouflages itself behind knowledge and practices that have goals, aims, and a logic of their own. The question is whether empowerment teaches us something new about the existing power relations. Does it expose these relations and increase our consciousness about them, or, conversely, does it contribute to the concealment of the mechanisms of power? Empowerment's test of authenticity, then, lies in its contribution to the creation of a critical social consciousness by means of speaking the truth and exposing unilluminated levels of oppression and discrimination (Habermas, 1975; Forester 1989).

Does Empowerment Stand a Chance?

In order to realize empowerment processes, reinforcing systems of meaning, power and legitimation are necessary on the level of the social structure. A democratic regime and democratic values provide these better than other regimes. However, the theories of power, as well as everyday human experience, make it clear that in democracy there is no guarantee of fairer or more equitable power relations in every case. The democratic system provides a mechanism, a legitimation, and a moral endorsement for extreme and structured powerlessness. Empowerment theory, then is a product of a democratic climate, and its goal is to deal explicitly with problems of powerlessness created by structures and systems of meaning operating in democratic society.

The advantage of the structuration theory as a meta-theory of empowerment lies not only in the integrated explanations that it provides for phenomena that a contextual theory of empowerment is interested in understanding, but also in the sense of optimism that this theory contributes to the empowerment process itself. Exercise of power is primarily an action oriented to achieving strategic advantages in social relations. The right strategy is more important than the quantity and the possession of power resources. Instead of asking who has power and who doesn't, and how much power, a more challenging and more optimistic question is redefined from the viewpoint of weak and poor people: how to activate what exists in order to influence the power field in a way that will make possible more control in their lives. The perception of the power relations as mutual and as *a non-zero sum* provides a way out of the catch involved in the lack of material resources, and turns the realization of empowerment into a more realistic challenge. The centrality of strategic thought reinforces the rationale which says that development of abilities is the main means of emerging from situations of powerlessness, despite the fact that powerless populations suffer also, and perhaps mainly, from a lack of resources.

Summary of Part One

The first part of this study dealt with a theoretical development of the concept of empowerment: the first chapter explored insights connected with empowerment in various theories of power. The second chapter presented the connection between empowerment as a personal process and community processes and their influence on powerless people, and also emphasized the role of professional practices as an essential component in the definition of empowerment.

In the third chapter, I looked for a meta-theory suitable to empowerment theory. In the course of my search I found out that not a few theorists look for an integrated explanation for social macro-micro phenomena. I examined three such endeavors, and from these I chose Giddens' structuration theory to serve as a meta-theory for empowerment. Giddens is suitable for this role not only because of the quality of his theory, but also for his values. I appreciated the way he discusses the various theoretical influences that guide him; his sources of inspiration and his values are revealed in the course of his theoretical discussion, and are suitable to a theory of empowerment no less than his theory itself is. The

way in which Giddens exposes the sources of his professional method made my choice of him easier for me, on the meta-practical level of my work as well, and has enriched my approach to the development of a theory in many significant ways.

The contextual theory of empowerment presents the transition from powerlessness to more control in life as a change in both human activity and the social structure. Powerlessness is a social phenomenon that has structural aspects which are rooted in the power relations and the disempowering practices that originate in the social systems.

In the second part I will focus on the empowerment process in the context of community planning. The discussion of the professional practice will illuminate and illustrate various issues of the three empowerment processes, the individual process, the community process, and the professional process.

Part Two

Developing Empowerment Practice in the Context of Community Planning

Introduction

The second part of the book applies the theory that was developed in the first part to a particular professional activity—community planning. Community planning as a context makes it possible to examine the mutual influences of empowerment processes and professional intervention upon one another, without limiting the discussion to the bounds of a single discipline. In this way it is possible to make connections among several disciplines and to develop shared knowledge about empowerment for them. This part of the book will point to problems common to professional disciplines that are engaged in the planning of social solutions, without creating the false impression that empowerment or disempowerment are connected to a single discipline exclusively.

  Having decided to choose community planning for the contextual discussion, I had to grapple with a number of difficulties. I had to redefine community planning in order to connect it with the various professions each of which engages in it separately. I also discovered that community planning had gone out of favor—mainly because urban planners who had engaged in it had wearied of the participation of residents which had been forced upon them in the framework of this method. On the other hand, I enjoyed a personal advantage, for I was able to feel at home inside a practice that is connected with my own profession, which is community work. Beyond that, in Israel, in contrast to Holland and the United States, there is no feeling of burnout in the sphere of residents' participation in planning. Community planning has proved itself in a holistic planning of neighborhoods, and in the encouraging of residents to act for themselves in nationwide projects such as the Urban Renewal Project, and it is definitely likely to make achievements in contemporary programs such as regional development of the Negev and the Galilee, for example. Community planning in Israel constitutes a kind of

check and balance mechanism for the national and municipal planning system, by dint of its focus on the local arena.

Community planning, then, has a potential to influence individuals and communities. It is practiced by professionals from a variety of disciplines, and through it, it is possible develop an understanding of empowerment, and to promote empowering practice among those involved in social processes.

Although the empowering change is meant to have a favorable effect on individuals as well, this book focuses not on the personal change, but on the community change. It is important to remember that exclusive focus on individual change almost always entails some blaming of the individual for his situation, and a placing of the onus of the change on him alone. Hence, empowering practice uses individual change methods together with community interventions, and never separately from the latter. In this part of the book special emphasis will be placed on the need for a change in professionals' attitudes and methods of working for social change. Since the conditions and the circumstances which produce powerlessness are social, and disempowerment occurs by means of social solutions and the practices customary in the frameworks of these solutions, the target for change is these practices and not the people who suffer from them. Our assumption is that in this way the situation of powerless men and women will be improved in the fairest and most thorough way.

In principle, the empowerment process need not begin in local planning processes. It may also stem from social policy and from the decision making level in social institutions. However, the reality proves that for the time being such a development route is no more than a wish. Social policy, in most of its manifestations, is still a source of disempowering practices. This book deals with how people overcome the disempowering influence of social policy. The experienced route of empowerment processes is an encounter with a disempowering solution, and a resolute and somewhat subversive effort by local activists to solve social problems that stem from it (Boyte, 1984; Feldman & Stall, 1994). I am interested in pointing to the important, even critical, role played by empowering professionals in these change efforts. It is they who know how to systematically link community empowerment with individual empowerment, and thus to facilitate both processes, and also to mediate between local structures and social policy and institutions and thus to enable the empowerment process to continue.

The fourth chapter – Community Planning – deals with practice in this field, and redefines it, both through an analysis of the approaches of a number of disciplines that engage in planning and in the community, and through a presentation of various styles of community planning.

The fifth chapter – Individual Empowerment Processes in the Context of Community Planning – begins with a presentation of the group context in which individual empowerment processes occur; it goes on to analyze the mutual empowering connection created between the individual and the environment, and then analyzes the signs of the realization of empowerment in the individuals involved in community planning processes.

The sixth chapter – Community Empowerment Processes in the Context of Community Planning – presents the stages of the community empowerment process. This chapter discusses organization as a central tool in the creation of a community and in the encouragement of community empowerment. After this, several issues are discussed: the issue of conflict and its inevitable place in the empowerment and planning processes in the community; the issue of outcomes—how can we evaluate what is a product of community empowerment?; the community empowerment of minorities and of women, two populations whose needs in the domain of community planning are great, yet not enough attention is devoted to them in the urban planning context (Churchman, 1990b).

The seventh chapter – Community Empowerment as an Empowering Professional Practice – discusses the planers themselves, as promoters of the empowerment of individuals and communities, and as a population which itself is in need of empowerment. On the basis of the stages of empowerment that were developed in the previous chapter, this chapter presents a conceptual model of stages of empowerment-enhancing professional intervention. The purpose of the model is to answer some methical questions on the many subjects included in this complex chapter. The discussion of each of the intervention stages focuses on the intervention methods and the questions specific to that stage in the practice of encouraging empowerment.

Chapter 4
Community Planning

Community planning is a practice that is engaged in by numerous disciplines: community work, urban planning, macro social work, architecture, urban geography, community psychology, environmental psychology, community psychiatry. A study of the practice of community planning in the various disciplines leads to the conclusion that despite their similar means, and the fact that they are influenced by the same social processes, almost no dialogue exists among the various professions engaged in community planning. The diversified activity, rather than contributing to an enrichment of this occupation, has led to a dispersal of the knowledge, has made it difficult to create a significant mass, and has interfered with efficient learning of lessons from experience.

In the domain of urban planning, since the early eighties it has been rare to find explicit reference to community planning, except where the issue is to shake free of it (Hague, 1982). In the United States in the sixties, community planning represented a reform in planning methods, but the political and professional expectations this aroused were frustrated. The planning was supposed to consider local needs and to involve the public, but large projects of urban renewal and war against poverty, which used community planning methods, failed. Furthermore, politicians did not achieve social quiet and a more efficient problem solving process by means of community planning (Needleman & Needleman, 1974). The Republican administration, from the time of Reagan on, curtailed public resources and dealt a fatal blow to the social legitimation of investing in the weak (Boyte et al., 1986, Phillips, 1990). However, despite the absence of community planning from the mainstream of planning in the United States in recent years, the documentation of the practice of planning indicates that during all these years there has

been significant – if also modest in resources and extent – community planning activity (Rubin & Rubin, 1992; Feldman & Stall, 1994).

In Israel the situation is different, mainly because the largest community planning project ever conducted – the Urban Renewal Project for the rehabilitation of poor neighborhoods – has had much more impressive results than in the United States. In Israel, however, community planning is almost never related to as a defined field of practice, and was never thought of this way in the past either. Traditionally, community workers and city planners who have participated together in this project define themselves as being engaged in community planning.

My choice of community planning as a context for empowerment processes stems, as I have said, from a desire not to impose disciplinary boundaries upon thought on empowerment. The interdisciplinary approach is more suitable for coping with the diversified knowledge and many conflicting wants which constitute the stormy reality that characterizes community intervention. I have chosen community empowerment as a context for two more reasons: firstly, because the principles of empowerment practice recommend *small* planning (Shumacher, 1973), as close as possible to the people who are living in the planned space and are influenced by the outcomes of the planning, and secondly, because of my personal preference to stay close to community work.

Community planning is a suitable context for a theoretical development of the concept of empowerment, because it is an interdisciplinary professional practice that declares its intent to work *small*, to create a community, and its interest in solving community problems. In principle, though, it is possible to analyze empowerment processes in completely different professional contexts as well.

However, the context is not only a framework. One of its properties is that it can become an important part of the phenomenon itself. The ecological approach presumes that it is impossible to investigate a social situation in isolation from the texture in which it occurs (Altman & Rogoff, 1987). The context includes the environmental conditions which are the cause of the characteristic situations that define the phenomenon. A change in these conditions influences the entire social situation as well as private lives (Stokols, 1987; Saegert, 1987). Community planning, then, is an inseparable part of the social situations in which it intervenes. It is almost certain that a choice of a different practice would have led to a different discussion of empowerment and its meaning.

Community Planning in Community Work

In community work, planning is often discussed under several names: community planning, social planning, and neighborhood planning. In the literature these sometimes appear as synonyms (Lauffer, 1979), but it is also common to differentiate among them: community planning is planning in and with the community; social planning deals with more institutional change—allocation of resources and setting up services for the solution of general social problems (Rothman & Zald, 1985); neighborhood planning is an attempt to escape the vagueness of *community* to a concrete *neighborhood* (Checkoway, 1984; Rohe & Gates, 1985).

The plurality of names attests to dispersion and confusion. Attempts to define a special planning for community work have created divisions between planning and three other kinds of requisite skills—of participation, organization, and action. Planning received a technical meaning of information collecting, program planning, and evaluation (Rothman, 1979). Despite the importance of planning, some writers stress that it is not as *natural* for community workers as their other tasks, and that there exists a tension between community development and community organization, on the one hand, and community planning on the other hand (Morris, 1979). Community planning is considered to be less sensitive

to process than other fields of practice in community work (Tropman, 1984a). While the processes of community development and community organization demand that community workers possess skills in interpersonal communication and creation of dialogue, planning is perceived as an essentially intellectual skill (Gilbert & Specht, 1979). As a consequence, many community workers traditionally avoid engaging in community planning, mainly on grounds of alienation and lack of technical skill—sentiments which originate in the central texts of the profession. This is a mistake that neglects a whole spectrum of solutions and means which it indeed leaves in the hands of professional planners, most of whom (though not all) are not trained or interested in contending with social problems.

Community Planning in the Theories of Planning

In the domain of planning, community planning was a disputed issue even at the peak of its flourishing. Needleman & Needleman (1974) chose to call their book on community planning Guerrillas in the Bureaucracy, and defined it as the source of problematic relations with the employing organizations, as possessing disputed methods of action, and as impossible to implement because of its abrasive intensity and its tendency to arouse conflicts.

A prevalent approach in planning is to present community planning at times as a method in the framework of rational overall planning, and at times as a separate approach to planning. Theoretically, it is a type of comprehensive rational planning (Friedmann, 1987), but practically, the claim is that it opposes rational planning models. Some writers interpret this as an advantage, and others see this as a flaw (Burke, 1979; Mayer, 1986; Hague, 1982). The argument, in theories of planning, between those who negate community planning and those who affirm it, centers around its effectiveness as a means of achieving support for the planning and for quiescence in the planned environment. The writers in favor of

community planning refer to the good influence of residents' participation in the planning, and to the atmosphere of the planning and its effectiveness in the solution of problems in the field. Those who oppose it claim that the chaotic reality and the paucity of achievements overwhelm these advantages. This argument implicitly contains the explanation for the disappointment in community planning evident in the theories of planning. If the main issue is the success of the planning, then only achievement of support for the planning and for quiescence in the relevant environment can justify the planner's work in cooperation with the community. From this approach derive procedures and rituals of participation aimed not at bringing about social change and creating a community, but at achieving social agreement and consent. In this way community planning becomes a manipulation, a double message and a game within a game (Hasson, 1988; Atzmon, 1988). Apart from several exceptionally sensitive planners (Davidoff, 1973; Friedmann, 1973, 1987; Krumholz & Forester, 1990), this is generally the approach to community planning in theories of planning.

Community Planning Orientations in Urban Planning

While community planning, under this name, has been pushed to the margins of planning theories, something which may be called a *community planning* orientation has been emerging in urban planning. A number of writers emphasize that urban planning needs to be more political, more social, and more community-oriented. Politics, social problems, and interpersonal skills need to become more central in planning practice (Benveniste, 1972; Baum, 1980, 1986).

Phillips (1990) predicted that the nineties heralded a new political period in the United States. In his view, after years of *benevolent neglect* (p. 219) that had led to impoverishment of the middle class, homeless families, and people with mental disabilities. After the excessive individualism, the glorification of Mammon, and the disregard of community, a desire for

a new social and political approach that will divide wealth and power differently has emerged. Signs of this may also be found in the planning literature (e.g., Marris, 1987; Krumholz & Forester, 1990), where a trend to change urban planning itself are discernible. The planning process is described less as a technical, economic, and design activity, and more as political, social, and personal intervention. The direction is to see the planner's role as one of creating relationships and mutual understanding, dissolving uncertainty, and assisting self-empowerment.

Urban planning is not only a technique, but also a world-view with distinctive social goals of achieving better quality of life for the city's residents. Hence, planning is always a social political activity, and as such it always entails a tension between the mechanical, the efficient, and the standard, on the one hand, and the cultural, the social, and the historical, on the other. The question is not whether planning should or should not be rational, for there exists no single *rationality*, but many kinds of rationality, and these find expression in political world-views. It is important to understand that according to one – the conservative – world-view, social phenomena such as crime, unstable families, and unorganized communities are the cause of poverty, while according to another – the progressive – world-view, they are the outcome of poverty. The implications for planning are critical: in the conservative approach means and technologies are allocated in order to supervise the internal order in poor communities. For example, conservative researchers prefer to focus on the poor people's motivation to work, instead of acknowledging the humiliation involved in degrading work and miserable wages (Galbraith, 1992), and the existence of deep unemployment where the poor live. According to the progressive approach it is necessary to relate to the causes of poverty, and to seek more environmental, more equitable, and less individual solutions

Since ideologies influence the strategies of intervention in social issues, it is important to understand what sort of

rationality a particular theory of planning employs. One conclusion is that even adoption of the most rational approach cannot prevent the planner from relating to a social problem from a bias in one direction or another, or from accepting the unexamined axioms of others, and from planning unsuitable solutions on the basis of these. Logic always has a clearly political context. Since poverty is a political issue, the questions that have to be asked about it, as about any political issue, are: Who are the people who are included in the division of resources, and who remains outside? Who receives what, and what does this do to the people? Poverty is not an unfortunate accident which has befallen some individuals entangled in the mechanism of social mobility. On the contrary, poverty is an inevitable outcome of a political set of priorities and of economic activity. Hence, both the allocation of resources and the methods of contending with poverty are political-economic issues.

Planning, then, is political activity, and the planner is only one of the participants in it (Katz, 1989; Mueller, 1990). The planners, and they only, are committed to the planning process and the production of a comprehensive plan. The rest of the participants see the planning activity as only one of the options for political activity. Hence they will make use of planning only if it helps them control situations of uncertainty better (Marris, 1987).

Planning is one component in a complex social system in which the dominant processes are the political processes. The practice of planning, when it is at its best, may make a contribution of its own to the process. For example, planning can help relatively weak groups that participate in the planning process to achieve goals of their own (Hajer, 1989). Planning can provide an alternative rationale which can illuminate processes of social change and social action in a more positive and hope-inspiring light (Marris, 1987).

Another orientation in planning thought shifts the focus of planning from thought about form and design to thought about practice and meta-practice. Even if the planner has to

possess analytical skills, interpersonal skills are an important part of her professional practice—she also has to be able to hug somebody, to work with people who are different from her, and not to be arrogant (Forester, 1989). The planner's ethics, honesty, reliability, and the clarity of her communication require a humane and participatory approach. Supreme importance is accorded to processes of communication, language, and creation of reliable and shared meaning. The planning style recommended is democratic, based on broad participation, and engages simultaneously in design and negotiation. It emphasizes the empowerment of the participants in the planning as one of the goals of the planning process.

An explicit communitarian orientation has also emerged from planning theories and gained an important ideological status of its own. This orientation aims at the creation of an active democratic community. Writers in this vein express a longing for a community, and speak of the isolation and the exclusion that Foucault expresses in his writings as one of the most destructive by-products of urban planning and of modern life in general (Handler, 1990; Etzioni, 1992; Etzioni, 1995).

A community has both a local and a national importance. It supports social networks and facilitates relations between individuals and groups, but it is also a significant unit of analysis and action in the domains of social policy and economic development. It is a large enough unit to become a political force, and small enough to relate to the individual and to be accountable to him. On the basis of the connections between people as individuals and as groups, and between them and systems of rule and administration, services are founded, and social and cultural life develops. The opportunities for more skillful participation in politics created in the community help people acquire organizational skills and political understanding, and consolidate a sense of common purpose in their lives. The actual meaning of the recovery of the political community (Friedmann, 1987) is severance

of the household from disempowering service systems, and concentration on community values, The positive aspects of the community are presented as decolonization—severance of the household from exaggerated consumption; democratization—creation of equality within the household itself; and collective self-empowerment produced by means of interaction among the households themselves. By means of these processes, and with the assistance of planners who understand them, people – at least according to Friedmann – can create an organized political community.

These approaches, when they support active and socially involved planning in the advancement of weak groups (like Friedmann's and unlike the communitarians' [Etzioni, 1995]), come very close to the original meaning of community planning. The introduction of community planning principles in this way has contributed to an improvement of urban planning at those points where it is too standardized, total, inclusive, supervisory, and based on scientific technical specialization.

Definitions of Community Planning

So far I have deliberately avoided defining community planning, both because a single agreed definition does not exist, and because it was important firstly to present the current situation in the planning theories, in the framework of which both local planning and the concept of community undergo a metamorphosis, the meaning and orientations of which must be understood first of all.

A dichotomous discussion is generally employed to contend with issues that do not have an agreed solution, and that entail a moral dilemma. This is also the case with the series of dichotomies to be discussed here. The questions are: Which is preferable, and why: planning from above, or planning from below? (Lauffer, 1979) Regional planning or neighborhood planning? (Checkoway, 1984) Professional intervention focused on services or professional intervention focused on

people? (Briscoe, 1976) Directed professional intervention or undirected professional intervention? (York, 1984) An expert planner, who is distant from his client, or a reflective planner who is socially and emotionally involved in his practice? (Schon, 1983)

Planning from Above or Planning from Below

Planners who see planning as stemming from below are more interested in advocacy for people who are deprived of their rights, and believe more in participation than in the achievement of pre-defined goals. On the other hand, planners who see planning as management from above emphasize the achievement of specific goals and prefer a central planning , which in their view is more objective. These two approaches represent two levels of planning: local planning initiatives and supra-local initiatives that come from outside the community. Despite the differences between them, both kinds of planning are task-oriented, efficient, and adhere to a planned schedule, and are likely to transmit the same impatience with the process that characterizes most kinds of planning (Lauffer, 1979).

Decentralized Neighborhood Planning and Centralized Sub-Regional *Planning*

According to Checkoway (1984), we may distinguish between two kinds of planning in the community that originate in two different planning schools: planning that originates in community work is oriented towards neighborhood planning, and planning which originates in urban planning is oriented towards sub-regional planning. Neighborhood planning is directed from below and sub-regional planning is directed from above. This presentation seeks to remain neutral on the question of decentralization-centralization, but some writers explicitly prefer decentralized planning to centralized planning (Handler, 1990). The planner's independent judgment

and autonomy in the course of his activity in the community are an essential component of a professional practice that is interested in developing a community. Organizational centralization and the planner's lack of authority frustrate his effectiveness in these domains.

Project-Focused Planning and People-Focused Planning

Community planning may be divided into planning that focuses on service and projects and planning that focuses on people. People-focused community planning activates people in the planning process to develop a project by themselves, and is compatible with decentralized neighborhood planning from below. Briscoe (1976) maintains that both kinds of practice – the service-focused and the people-focused – are necessary, and complement one another. They represent more of a duality than a polarity. The two extremes are likely to represent different situations, different conditions, and different organizational structures that dictate a different diversity of work methods. However, we must not ignore the fact that they may also represent an ethical dilemma, when the planner has to choose whether to plan a project that has been dictated by the service that employs him even if he knows that the people it is meant for are interested in a different solution.

Directive and Non-directive Professional Intervention

At one end of the scale we find directive intervention, where the initiative for the planning is in the hands of the planner, the planning system, and other professionals, from the beginning of the process until its conclusion; at the other end is non-directive intervention—here the planner serves as a counselor and a companion in a planning process in which people are enabled to decide, plan, and carry out the project by themselves (York, 1984, 1990).

The assumption is that the more people do for themselves, with the assistance of professionals, the greater will be their chances of achieving a solution to social problems that is more suitable to their needs and their life-style (Mullender & Ward, 1990). This is an important therapeutic principle, which is relevant to all the professional practices involved in human change.

The key question is to what extent this principle is applied in practice, for on the level of declarations its importance has been known for decades. In order to examine this we again ask the DARE questions: Who Determines the planning goals? Who Acts in order to achieve the planning goals? Who Receives benefits from the planning activity? And who Evaluates the activity? The more the citizens and their organizations determine the goals, act to achieve them, enjoy the outcomes of the planning and evaluate to what extent the action was worthwhile, the more they direct themselves rather than being directed by others (Rubin & Rubin, 1992).

The Community as an Object or a Subject

The degree to which the professional intervention is directed has a further meaning. Directive community planning relates to the community as an object of the planning—a planned community. Non-directive community planning sees the community as a subject—the planning community (Freire, 1985). From the planner's viewpoint, the question of directiveness is a professional one, a question of style and perhaps also of ethics. From the community's viewpoint the important question is not professional or technical but rather a question of control: "How much do others control the processes occurring among us, and how much do we influence the making of decisions that affect our future, and the plans that determine our quality of life?" Thus, when you change your viewpoint, and shift from the professionals to the local people, the important questions change from professional questions into political questions (Marris, 1987).

The message that non-directive intervention conveys to people is one of transition from existing as an object to existing as a subject (Freire, 1985). As we will recall, people who are objects remain silent, and their interpretation of reality is not taken into account. People who are subjects are conscious of their situation; they participate actively in creating the reality, by means of their experiences in the world and their subjective interpretation of life in this world.

The *Expert* Planner and the *Reflective* Planner

Donald Schon (1983) conceptualized the difference between the two ends of this scale as stemming from different sources of satisfaction that professionals obtain from their practice and their connections with people. He differentiated between the *expert* and the *reflective* professional. The expert presents a total knowledge in planning and solutions despite his own uncertainty, while the reflective practitioner sees his uncertainty as a source of learning for himself and for others possessing relevant knowledge on the situation. While the expert keeps a professional distance and transmits warmth and sympathy in what he considers the requisite dosage, the reflective planner seeks an emotional and intellectual connection with people. The different styles influence people differently. The people who are in contact with the expert planner feel both the solace and the danger involved in the dependence and the unlimited trust that is required of them, while the people who are in contact with the reflective planner feel both the satisfaction and the anxiety resulting from the demand that they participate actively in a shared process of investigation.

The dichotomous discussion supports the conjecture that says that the planning style – be it service-focused or people-focused, directive or non-directive, centralized or decentralized – is an essential component for understanding empowering community planning, while the content of the planning is merely marginal from this perspective. In other words, even if

the substance of the planning is important for the solution of problems in the community, and is based on the community's needs, the planning style – the way the planning is carried out – will have a greater influence on the degree of empowerment that will be made possible through it. The substance of the planning alone, however important it may be to the community, does not ensure the suitable solution. The language that the professional uses, her attitude to people, and the amount of responsibility and authority that she delegates are principal variables in the question of professional empowerment, while the formal contents of the planning are only secondary. The project may engage in the renovation of residential buildings, or in the development of health services, in taking care of single-parent families or the mentally disabled; as positive and necessary as it may be, it still needs to be carried out through certain processes and in a certain style if it is to achieve empowerment.

A Definition of Community Planning

Community planning, then, is activity directed to effecting a social change that creates a community or reinforces an existing community. Community planning operates in a defined and limited environment and activates a process that emphasizes participation and mutual relations between the planner and the community, and among the people in it. There are various styles of community planning—it ranges on a scale between directive and non-directive planning; there is community planning which sees the community as a planned object, and that which sees the community as a planning subject; community planning may be based on centralized organization or it may be decentralized; community planning may give the planner defined authority to develop a certain solution in the community, or it may grant the planner autonomy to initiate a plan with the community.

However, only certain styles of community planning encourage empowerment. The positive connection between the non-directive, decentralized, subjective, people-focused end of the scale of community planning and empowerment processes is almost self-evident; analogously, we may assume that the directive, centralized, objective end of the scale is disempowering. That is to say, community planning, like any professional practice, is not neutral towards empowerment. Community planners operate along a scale of empowerment-disempowerment, and it is impossible to engage in this domain without influencing (for better or for worse) the empowerment potential of the people and their community. In this chapter we have reinforced , in one more way, the claim that community empowerment cannot come about of itself—systematic strategies must be implemented in order to encourage it.

Chapter 5
Individual Empowerment Processes in the Context of Community Planning

This chapter discusses the personal experiences of people in the course of community planning processes. In the interactive process that takes place among them and between them and the environment, they experience a transition to a situation of more control over their lives and environment, discover new insights and abilities, and contribute some of their knowledge, energy and talent to society.

The Importance of the Group in Individual Empowerment

When the individual empowerment process occurs in a man's or a woman's life, they begin to believe that they are capable of having better control over their lives; they understand their situation, and begin to act to improve their lives and their environment. All this and much more can be enabled in group frameworks. In a group people are accepted as equals; they express feelings and aspirations, learn about themselves and their environment, plan solutions, and act for their own good and for the good of the environment.

The social and political skills that are learned in the group are the ability to collaborate with others, to exercise interpersonal influence, to act politically, to fill a responsible role, to become commited to a cause, to make decisions and solve problems, to organize and perform complex organizational tasks, to develop a democratic leadership. Development of many skills reinforces people's belief in their ability and improves their self-confidence, and in this way the individual empowerment process is reinforced in the group, as well as receiving a meaning of doing for others

and changing the environment, which is what motivates the community empowerment process. The group is a mediating agency among the various levels of empowerment: it connects between the individual and the community empowerment processes, it connects among the individuals who participate in it and between them and the environment that is relevant to their lives. The attempts to conceptualize individual empowerment by means of various psychological criteria (see Chapter 2) have led me to the conclusion that the activity in a group, no less than the personality, determines whether the empowerment process will or will not take place in the person's life. A person whose circumstances and conditions have led her to participate in an empowerment-encouraging group has a better chance of becoming empowered than someone who has not participated in such a group. It may be claimed that the very fact of being willing to join a particular group is likely to be a function of a special kind of personality, as may the ability to persevere and to remain a part of the process. However, experience teaches that coincidence and fate also play a part in people's joining an empowering group, and in the way the opportunity for empowerment is created.

> I was sitting on the balcony and I saw some people I knew
> walking with someone in the street. I asked "What's up?"
> and they called out "Come, come", so I left my paper,
> went downstairs and went with them (from a movie about
> community work).

Cooperation develops the personality. The individual who is a member of a group which helps to develop his political and social abilities becomes better equipped for action. A person's belief in his own ability to control his life and his environment becomes part of the active character that Carol Pateman calls *the democratic character* (1970). The same person who testified that he had joined a group by chance,

also testified about how much the activity in the group had influenced him:

> I would not have been the person I am today if I hadn't
> gone through what I went through in the group.

Empowering community planning relates to all the people in the planning environment as candidates for empowerment in the organizational and group process that is developing in the locality. Some of the people will derive more from it than others. The conditions of empowerment depend on integration of environmental components with the individual's personality. However, group activity in the course of the planning is a necessary condition for empowerment. The next condition already depends on the individual himself: the greater the individual's investment in the group, the more successful is his empowerment process. That is to say, the criterion for the realization of individual empowerment is the level of the individual's activity in the group, and not the level of the assistance that the group provides him (Churchman, 1990a). Giving to others, responsibility for the task, and commitment to the group and the community, are important components in the individual empowerment process that occurs in a group (Maton & Rappaport, 1984).

Individual Empowerment and Concern for the Environment

A theory which integrates micro and macro levels in one explanation makes it possible to extend the perspective of time and space, and to integrate micro-psychological with macro-ecological processes. The global ecological problems facing humanity highlight the urgent need to create in people a sense of personal commitment and responsibility to concern themselves with a much broader environment than the one they are aware of. One of the claims made by ecologists is that people do not understand the connection between the solution

of problems in their immediate environment and potentially disastrous by-products in the broader environment. This implies that there is a global need to increase people's ability to care for an increasingly expanding environment.

I claim that processes of empowerment and disempowerment influence the way that people understand their environment and their degree of commitment to take responsibility for this environment. Disempowerment processes make people *feel small*, and imbue them with a sense of marginality and worthlessness to the point of alienation and indifference. People therefore feel that there is no connection between themselves and society, and they certainly have neither the will nor the ability to work for its well-being. Empowerment processes create the opposite affect—people feel that they can influence, they are willing to commit themselves and to take responsibility, and to play an active role in the world, because they know that their efforts are important and valuable.

The question that arises here is: What are the boundaries of a person's relevant environment? For what environment will a person be willing to take responsibility? The assumption that has guided me so far has been that the relevant environment of people at the beginning of their empowerment process is relatively narrow. The word *community*, and *community* planning, designate this narrow realm to the local and the familiar. But for the purpose of the present claim I want to burst through this assumption and to say that we, professionals, do not know enough about people's potential for concern, commitment, and responsibility, because we are more concerned with the limits of our own intervention than with the extent of the environment that is important to them. We consider the boundaries *objective*, while we gather data and information about people that of course also includes their *subjective* data. Disempowering planning does not consider *subjective* boundaries at all, precisely because they are subjective (Stokols, 1987).

Empowering planning avoids the use of the terms *objective* and *subjective* as distinguishing between *true* and *false*. The

empowering planner also relates to herself as a subjective person. She knows that the limits of planning intervention are in most cases determined by technical considerations, when the researcher decides that she possesses sufficient data to describe the situation in a credible and convincing way, or when the economic considerations dictate where and to what extent the intervention may be performed. The *balance* between the practitioner's interpretation and that of the local people does not represent a negotiation between equals who have arrived at an agreement on the limits of the environment that is relevant to both sides; rather, it is the practitioner's (or researcher's) own inner intellectual process, which is not necessarily more objective.

For these reasons, the empowering community planner knows that the limits of the environment that is relevant to the individual depend on what that individual perceives as influencing his life (Churchman & Ginsberg, 1984). This perception is dynamic and changing, and will change further as a result of the empowerment processes the person experiences. It may be said that a narrow perception of the environment attests not only to the limits of the environment that is perceived as relevant to life, but also to the person's social and personal situation. The more powerless people are, the narrower their world, and the more empowered they become, the more their world expands.

My claim is that for the sake of survival in the world, and not only for the sake of the quality of our lives as a society and a community, we must aspire to the empowerment of as many people and communities as possible, because the more empowered people are, the more capable they are of caring for a broader environment.

Bateson (1979) claims that mind and nature, which are our thinking about the environment and the real environment in which we think, are interwoven. We understand the environment as an extension of ourselves, and we act within it according to our perception of ourselves and of what we have chosen to do. In other words, we act in relation to the

environment by means of the definition that we have given this environment. That is to say, there is a close connection between how a person thinks about the environment and her ability to act within this environment. "By survival, I mean [...] in negative terms, [...] the avoidance of the death of the largest system about which we can care [...] We cannot care much about the inevitable survival of systems larger than our own ecology" (Bateson, 1979, pp. 243-244).

Individual Empowerment Broadens Awareness of the Environment

It may be assumed that empowerment of the individual broadens the environment she is aware of. Development of a critical self-consciousness broadens the individual's sense of responsibility for the environment's survival. The added knowledge, information and ability that the empowerment process provides also lead to responsibility for the survival of a much broader environment than before the empowerment process.

> I feel that I walk more erect now and so the distance I can see to has grown and broadened (an activist on the founding of a service for children with developmental disabilities).

> At first I knew only my street, I hardly knew what there was in the city. Today I know the entire city, including the industrial zone (an activist on the founding of a service for children with developmental disabilities).

> At first only my own and my friends' problems interested me, today I understand problems connected with the entire city, the difference between different parts of the city, and how important the school is for all the kids in the neighborhoods around here" (an activist on the struggle against a decision to close down a high school).

The empowerment process gives the local environmental knowledge a new context—an intellectual understanding of the social situation, which encourages a sense of greater control of the environment and an ability *to feel at home* in the world (Howard, 1993). The importance of the process is that it awakens a sense of responsibility towards what is included in the *home*. People have testified that they are aware of a more comprehensive and complex environment, and at the same time have a better understanding of their place in it and of its importance in their lives. They are therefore also willing to care for its survival.

Activists in neighborhoods I have worked in, and one of the boys in the struggle over the school as well, have told me that they feel wiser. Wisdom is the integration of environmental knowledge with a social understanding and an inner sense of ability. Heskin (1991) speaks about *organic intellectuals*, local leaders who have the ability to narrate and to theorize the empowerment experience for others. These people are important for the community empowerment processes because they give the community a reflection of the process it has gone through. Heskin believes that the presence of organic intellectuals in a community is a coincidence. I see the process of environmental broadening and individual empowerment as the source from which the organic intellectual grows. The understanding of the social world and the ability to explain it to others and to conduct the continuation of the empowerment process at a higher level is an outcome of integrated individual and community empowerment processes. The developing sense of responsibility for the environment and of feeling at home in the world, which leads people to take responsibility for an increasingly broader environment, leads some of the participants in the process to discover abilities of intellectual learning and leadership. The way from here to concern for the well-being of the world as a global ecological system depends on the circumstances that will shape the continued development of people as leaders of environments that are relevant to their lives.

Awareness of Environment Encourages Individual Empowerment

One could also formulate an assumption which says that awareness of a broader environment advances individual empowerment processes. That is to say, the environment is a means of encouraging empowerment. The creation of a spiral of mutual influence between individual empowerment and the environment is a professional task—it is possible to develop a learning style and a way of getting to know the environment that will enhance people's sense of control and their real ability to influence the environment. The knowledge itself empowers, but what is fundamentally empowering is the ability to absorb knowledge in an active and critical manner. Getting to know an environment which on the face of it is already familiar to us often means a deepening, and not only a broadening, of the knowledge of the environment. The most empowering materials are those that are taken from the immediate environment for the purpose of critical and analytical observation. People who have learned for the first time how to make a geographical map of their area have been astounded by the new knowledge that they have acquired about the place where they have lived all their lives. This is an active understanding of the individual's world, which signifies the beginnings of the empowerment process (Freire, 1970; Marcus, 1995).

The boys and girls who participated in the struggle for the survival of their high school got to know the political environment relevant to their struggle – the local authorities, the national institutions, and the legislative authority – in the very course of their struggle. They met with people on all administrative and political levels and learned to understand the roles of officials in the education system, members of the Israeli parliament's Education Committee and the teachers' trade union. No Civics class could have let them absorb this knowledge and arrive at an active and critical acquaintance

with it as much as the action they initiated and conducted did.

The parents who founded a service for their disabled children testified that in order for them to be able to survive they need to continue to develop connections with institutions and organizations in their city and in the relevant national institutions. The process of actively getting to know the environment nourished their empowerment, as well as the frustrations and the difficulties they grapple with. It is the organization that they set up, and not their children's problem, that has made them experts on the subject of their children's special problems. They testify that before the organization was set up they only knew about the problems through the individual child. Today they know much more about it through the shared knowledge that has accumulated in their community organization.

Every social entity (an individual, a community, or an organization) organizes its social environment in the same way that it organizes its internal actions (Morgan, 1986). This is yet another interpretation of the connection between the inner process and the environment, this time implying the real ability to care for the environment's survival by means of organizing. The ability to shape the environment according to the inner interpretation is evidence of considerable power, because other factors wanting to do the same are also active in the environment. Although it is customary to assume that a social environment is created through a mutual interpretation by the bodies participating in it, I claim that *mutual interpretation* is indeed such only when all the participants have an equal ability to contribute to it. When we acknowledge that there are individuals and groups in the society whose powerlessness prevents their participation in the mutual interpretation which creates their society, we must also acknowledge our social obligation to enable them to become more involved in the environment so that it will also include their interpretation, that is to say, that it will suit them as well. The *mutual* interpretation, then, has a rich

potential of conflict and of organizational outflanking which promises an advantage to the interpretations of participants possessing organizational and strategic advantages.

In the most general sense, then, we may say that the broadening of the environment in which the person is interested is an expression of her progress in the empowerment process. The limitation that defines the environment as the one *in which the person is interested* is necessary, on the assumption of the difference among people. People are different in their preferences of substance and value, and in the point of departure from which they start out on the empowerment process. Hence, the broadening of a person's attitude to the environment means a broadening of the attitude to the environment which is important to that person.

It seems appropriate to conclude this section with a personal interpretation by Clare Cooper Marcus, who integrates the psychological with the ecological in words that are both beautiful and powerful:

> Part of a deep sadness we carry with us as a species is the barely conscious loss of a loving relationship with the world around us. While we may be quite aware of a lack of community in our lives, we are less conscious of how much we grieve at some deep level for that close connection with nature we once experienced in an earlier period of our history, or, perhaps, in our own personal childhoods (1995, p. 287).

Further Signs of Individual Empowerment

Signs of individual empowerment are proofs of the realization of the empowerment process in the context of community planning. These signs are based on overt criteria, testimonies about which may be obtained from people who have been participants in processes of individual empowerment. Individual empowerment processes that occur in the context of community planning are part of a shared experience, and

it is important that they meet the shared evaluation of all the participants in the process. I therefore quote people's stories about these process in their own words, so as to accord more authenticity to the processed knowledge.

I wish to discuss a number of further signs of individual empowerment that have been revealed at community planning processes. There is nothing final or exhaustive in this list: the individual empowerment process certainly becomes realized in many other ways. However, for planners to be able to understand their significance, and to encourage their occurrence, it is important to analyze several distinctive signs of the process. Apart from feelings of anger and dissonance, which are a distinctive sign of the beginnings of the path, and the critical consciousness which is one of the peaks of the individual empowerment process, we must not seek a fixed pattern or a developmental sequence which can *order* the signs. It is important only to acknowledge that in the individual empowerment process several sub-processes occur, some of them more personal and some more social. Some are common to all the participants, and others are idiosyncratic.

Feelings of Anger and Dissonance

Testimonies about dissonance between a person's inner feelings and the accepted social interpretation of his situation are commonplace among people who have experienced empowerment. The feelings of dissonance are a kind of emotional prelude that heralds the beginning of the process. They include: constructive internal dialogue that people report having conducted with themselves for years (Kieffer, 1983); a vague sense of dissonance which some writers call *navigating a line of fault* (Lengerman & Niebrugge-Brentley, 1988), and others call *lack of fit* (Germain, 1979) or *the problem that does not have a name* (Friedan, 1963). In some of the people these feelings crystallize into a more defined consciousness. Generally, the change occurs in the wake of an event that

makes perceptible the sense of injustice that the people had felt until then as a feeling of vague pain that has accompanied their lives.

In the struggle for the school, the students tell about how they felt when they heard about the decision to close the school, about how amazed they were that they had been able to develop ideas which they hadn't been aware they had. One of them recalled feelings which he had been conscious of but which had not been formulated or expressed aloud because they did not have a goal:

> I told them, why should they suddenly close this school. Our neighborhoods deserve a high school like any other district in the city. On top of all the other problems here in the neighborhood, if there isn't a high school here that children can go to after primary school, what will be done with them? They'll end up in the street, in crime.

Anger is a sign of inner consciousness that begins crystallizing around a sense of dissonance. For some of the people, the anger appears in the wake of a feeling of dissonance and after prolonged inner soul-searching. Other people describe joining a group spontaneously, and tell about how in the course of their participation in it, anger awakened in them together with a new social awareness.

Mutual Help and a Sense of Self-Worth

Anyone who has experienced joining a group with the aim of receiving assistance and has discovered that she was also capable of offering help knows what people feel at the beginning of the path to empowerment (Rappaport, 1985). Likewise, anyone who has experienced joining a group for other reasons and in the course of participation has discovered the ability to fill a useful role, also comes out gaining personally. This lesson is the essence of self-help groups, but is also learned in other groups and organizations

in which participation accords the participant an opportunity to accept responsibility and to take part in a planned change effort. The mutual group experience is the essence of the attraction of task groups and social action groups of all kinds, because it operates against the sense of marginality and worthlessness that are the root of powerlessness.

People who participated in community planing processes testify to the sense of self-worth that accompanies the group effort:

> I feel that I'm helping and am willing to help in any way, because the feeling is that something important is happening and that I'm a part of it (a girl student who participated in the struggle against the closing of the school).

> I have a reason to get up in the morning. I'm useful to myself and to others, I don't have as much time for housework as I used to, but my day is devoted to an important cause (one of the women activists involved in creating a service for children with developmental disabilities).

Filling a Socially Valuable Role, and Leadership

Active participation in a group creates an opportunity to take part in an equitable process in which people experience different social relations and ways of decision making to those they were accustomed to until then. The kind of group and the nature of its tasks are less relevant to this change than the opportunity to act together and solve common problems, which are important political skills. The transition from helplessness to self-efficacy is a political one even when it is personal. Filling a socially valuable role constitutes an important means of emerging from the sense of marginality and lack of self-esteem, because it prepares a person for much more than an improvement in one's inner feelings. Participation in a supportive framework enables people to break the vicious circle of marginality and low self-image

by means of the confirmation and the sense of worth that stem from filling a responsible position and from helping others.

It is important to make clear what a socially valuable role is, and to distinguish between this and leadership. A socially valuable role is any role that is accompanied by authority and responsibility. Groups interested in empowerment need to ensure that rank-and-file members fill important roles in the group. If this is not done, the group the conventional concepts of power, patronage and social status and ceases to I encourage the empowerment of its members. Heskin (1991) describes two different periods in the life of a community organization, one in which the organization's leadership was open and provided opportunities of participation and influence to all its members, and a period of a different leadership which closed itself in and played the role of a patron who functions as a middleperson between the organization's members and influential people outside it. In the second period, the organization became disempowering. He claims that this cycle is characteristic of community organizations—they create and lose community through the character of their leadership.

The group's leadership, then, is an outcome of individual empowerment and also has an important role in the encouragement of individual empowerment. An open I leadership can delegate authority in the group and allocate additional socially valuable roles. The more open the group is, the more motivation grows among its members to take responsibility for group tasks, and the more roles there will be which members I can take upon themselves.

One Important leadership role is that of the *network center* While the role of the *spokesman* leader is generally given to men, the role of the *network center* in the organization is generally filled by women. Centerwomen play a key role in network formation and consciousness shaping, in the establishment of social relationships and of the members' confidence in the leadership and the organization's aims (Sacks, 1988).

In several studies it has been observed that women created an organization, caused members to feel they were part of the common effort, did the routine work that the organization's existence depended upon, while the men represented the organization—were public speakers, representatives and confrontational negotiators (Sacks, 1988; Stoecker, 1989; Markusen, 1989). "Women are organizers and men are leaders" (Reinharz, 1984).

In the struggle for the school, students describe how, at a demonstration of the entire school outside City Hall, they were called inside to conduct negotiations. Since they feared that the demonstration would disperse because the students who remained outside would start leaving if they remained without their leadership, one of the girl leaders took it upon herself to remain with the students and to try to keep them there for several hours. She remembered this role as especially difficult and important, and was proud that she had filled it successfully. Is it a coincidence that the same gender division that is described in the literature on empowerment also appears here, at the school, between girls and boys?

Here are the words of another girl, who filled positions of maintenance and organization with great enthusiasm, because she felt that her help was appreciated and important for the effort:

> I came home and said to my mother: Mother, they want to close our school, you have to come to the Parents' Committee. We need you. My mother's a busy woman, she manages a wedding parlor, but I persuaded her and she joined the committee.

> I was willing to do whatever was needed. I'm not good at speaking or making speeches in front of people. I'm not such a good student. But I did a lot of things that needed doing, I brought benches, I collected money from students for transportation, everything that was needed. The main

thing is for us to succeed, and that they don't close the school.

The brief life-span of community groups teaches that positions of organization maintenance are critical for its survival. Then the entire leadership potential of the members is not exploited, groups cannot perform complex tasks that require perseverance, such as resource mobilization, for example. It is actually tasks like these that offer empowering activity and allocation of valuable roles to many of the group's members. Hence, it is also important for groups that engage in short-term tasks not to disintegrate after a single task. The success of the task itself, however important, is not more important than the benefits that the group can provide to its members if it continues to exist.

This is a different approach to leadership and to group organization than the one which differentiates between a formal and an informal leadership. We have here two kinds of organizational leadership that are essential to the building and the survival of the organization. The role of the network center is an intra-organizational role, and the role of the spokesperson is a more external, representative role.

Jane Baker Miller (1983) explains that beside the conception of power as the exercise of control over others, there exists a feminine definition of power which sees it as the ability to change, to move something from one point to another, a change which can be effected together with others and not at the expense of others. According to her view, the conception of power as producing a change together with others encourages empowerment, and the conception of personal power as taking control over others is disempowering.

Learning and Practicing Social Skills

Women who fill roles of network centers and men who fill roles of spokesmen use different social skills. It may be noticed how at the beginning of their participation in groups there are members who have difficulties in speaking in front of an audience, in thinking on their feet, in formulating their thoughts and expressing them in public. The skill of public speaking is one of the especially impressive abilities that people testify to having acquired in an empowering group.

> At the start I didn't say a word. I only sat and listened. All pantomime. After a lot of time I started speaking in the group, and now I have no problem, I participate like all the others (from the film Encounters of the Community Kind about a group of activists in Yehud).

The ability to speak in front of an audience is considered a quality of leadership. In the individual empowerment process that takes place in a community framework, all the participants acquire this ability, at first by watching others and afterwards by active practice of their own. In this way the group provides an opportunity to learn a skill to which society attributes a very high social value. According to Freire, powerless people are in effect voiceless, they lack the ability to express themselves and their world in a creative way and by choice. From this perspective, the value of speaking in public is important and demonstrates the personal as political—to learn to speak for yourself is to make your imprint on the environment and to see yourself as a leader.

Development of a Critical Consciousness

A critical consciousness is the ability to think and to criticize that comes together with the permission to express yourself. The transition from having no voice to speaking in front of an audience is both a physical and a mental change. Whereas isolation is paralysis and silence, social belonging connects with upright bearing and action. The person begins being busy, much more busy than she was in the past, and at the same time much more free. The development of consciousness has a connection with self-realization, which people expressed

in terms of a feeling that their lives were fuller than they had been previously, before their participation in the group.

In the individual empowerment process a person increasingly feels that he understands his life from a social perspective, that it is his right to give a name to this understanding. This is the process of self-definition that is contained in the development of consciousness (Van der Berg & Cooper, 1986). It is the change from a situation in which others are the possessors of the language and the definitions, while the person is an object that they explain and define as they see fit. In certain senses, the connection between powerlessness and illiteracy (Freire, 1970) is similar to that between power and knowledge (Foucault, 1980).

Development of consciousness, then, is a process of learning—of emergence from illiteracy. The critical consciousness which is created in the empowerment process is an interpretation of the person's situation and of the situation of the world he lives in. People feel that they think more and understand more than they did before they joined the community activity.

Empowerment, then, is a process of expressing criticism. A person evaluates the society he lives in and acts to change what he considers requires improvement. The principal tool for the achievement of consciousness is learning, through dialogue, how to think, how to express thoughts aloud, how to formulate them and to influence the world through them.

A boy recounts how he assembled all the students in the school hall and spoke to them about the decision to close the school and about the need to oppose it. He describes his amazement about himself in this situation. His first feeling was an instinctive opposition to the decision, which he and his schoolmates saw as an injustice, Afterwards, in talks they held to plan the continuation of the struggle, and while giving explanations to the students, they continued developing their claim and crystallized their position:

> I don't know a lot about integration, but if the school has to close because we don't have social integration, that means that integration has to happen when they bring students from stronger districts in the city to our school, and not the other way around.

That is to say, he and his friends started objecting to the reasons for closing the school that had been put forward by City Hall officials, and in this way they crystallized their social world-view, while developing a rationale for why their school should remain open.

Empowerment is a transition from a situation of passivity to a situation of activity and initiative. Critical consciousness develops side-by-side with learning and with the ability to speak. The ability to think, to understand, and to be critical develops together with the right that a person receives, or takes, to express herself.

Praxis

Praxis is a way of learning that integrates activity and thinking about activity. In this method, the critical conscious is integrated into the social activity, and is not separated from it. "From the perspective of planning, the separation from political practice is not permissible. [...] Critique unrelated to action is a respectable, bourgeois practice that is tolerated precisely because it is irrlevant (Friedmann, 1987, p. 268).

The empowerment process is a process of learning while doing, which is shared by all the learners, including the community planner, who in this context is simultaneously a teacher and a learner. The professionals are partners in the praxis process and also change in the course of it, but they should be warned not to expect that all the people in the group will undergo a change process and a raising of

consciousness of the kind that they do. Dialogue means mutuality and acceptance of diversity. On the other hand, they should not set the standard too low and be content with preaching consciousness raising. The feminists, for example had a tendency for years to be content with consciousness-raising groups. There were writers who said that empowerment means a better understanding by women of their powerlessness and of the systematic forces that oppress them, and that neither success nor failure in the struggle were the important aspect of empowerment (Bookman, 1988). Paulo Freire, too, admitted that he had thought this way for years, but changed his mind, since change processes cannot be realized only on the basis of consciousness raising, with no actual doing (1985).

In my experience, people have undergone a significant change in their lives when they have actually participated and been supported by others in their new participatory ability. Foucault's claim that disciplinary power influences people's body – physique – is corroborated here. In order to emerge from a physical sensation of lack of control to a situation of control, something real has to happen to a person, something that is not limited to mental processes alone. Action that is accompanied by knowledge is what nourishes the new consciousness and creates the commitment to go on with the process.

Community planning as a method does not sufficiently emphasize the role of the teacher. Despite the great amount of time that the planner devotes to education, there is no investment in his skills in this domain. Because the learning occurs through dialogue, and because there is no insistence on distance as there is between the traditional teacher and the student at school, and because the group of learners is also an action group, this kind of teaching requires special training (Friedmann, 1973).

Restoration of Respect

Individual empowerment is a process of restoring people's lost dignity. Two concepts of equality are accepted in a democracy: equality of respect and equality of rights. Some writers claim that the struggle for equal rights became more bitter when people despaired of achieving the right for respect (Heskin, 1991). Other writers point out that in the course of their struggle, powerless and dependent groups emphasize gaining respect and autonomy more than justice (Jordan, 1993). People with mental disabilities who have been released from closed institutions are an especially humiliated and oppressed group, and in their empowerment process advocacy is integrated with empowerment, with the aim of ensuring a minimum of respect towards them in their new environment (Rose & Black, 1985).

With the development of the empowerment process, respect is already self-respect which has been acquired with the commitment to take responsibility and to continue bearing it even in difficult conditions of struggle:

> The Chairman of the Parents' committee claimed that he was making time for activism at the school because he felt responsible for the fate of the school and the future of the community, which needed a school with an acceptable standard. He is aware of the fact that his role wins him respect and responsibility which are not his lot as an ordinary citizen (the struggle against the closing of the school).

> Students at the school reported a sense of pride and self-confidence, which were reinforced by the respect and appreciation they received from various systems outside the school: reporters, public representatives and decision makers on the local and the national levels. These students were particularly gratified by the appreciation they have received since the struggle from students of other schools,

who in the past used to look down on their school because of its low scholastic level. They feel that their struggle against the closing of the school had brought them city-wide respect, among their peers and among adults.

People repeatedly testify to a sense of self-respect and of respect from those around them that they have gained in the course of empowering social action (Boyte, 1984). Activists admit that their commitment to continue acting stems from a moral obligation that they owe the community. In slump periods in the community planning process, time and energy resources diminish, and stress is created due to the failure to achieve goals in time. In such periods, part of the motivation to keep going and to preserve what has already been achieved is the will to ensure that the respect that has been restored will not be lost again.

Commitment to Devote Time to the Process and Access to Resources of Time

The individual empowerment process demands a great investment of time from the individual. Generally it is customary to calculate time in a planning project only as the costs to the investors and the professionals, and to ignore the investment of time by other participants in the process (Churchman, 1990a). We will discuss this aspect here.

Poor men and women who display a will, a motivation, and an ability to participate in a community process invest a very important resource, because many of them have very little spare time. Access to surplus time over subsistence requirements is an important source of social power (Friedmann, 1992). Without spare time one cannot get involved in group activity, participate in setting up an organization, or struggle for rights in any other way. Community planners often report low attendance by people in planning processes, and ascribe this to apathy and lack of awareness. Beside these simplistic explanations, we should

remember that even people who do have spare time are selective in their use of it, and will not invest efforts in processes that are not relevant to them.

The goals of community planning, then, should appear worthwhile to people if they are to be willing to devote the necessary time to the process. But even in order to take the first step, to take interest in the planning, there needs to be a minimal access to time resources, which at times are very difficult to obtain. The poorer that people are, the more they work in jobs that demand more time, and the more difficult it is for them to control their spare time. This situation is one of the social barriers to their empowerment (Heskin, 1991). A situation that is familiar to anyone who works among poor people is that people cannot commit themselves to making an appointment in the middle of the week. People require a certain control of their work days and their lives even in order to participate in an evening meeting, and certainly in order to activate and run an organization.

Another important domain of access to time is a certain degree of autonomy in the work place, which, for example, allows for access to the telephone during working hours, or a possibility of taking a few hours off in the course of work for the purpose of community activism without endangering one's job. Many of the institutions (City Hall, schools, government offices) with which groups in a community negotiate and have other contacts with are open for business only during the day, that is, during the activists' working hours.

Women as a group have much less access to surplus time than men do, and this is more true for poor, ethnic, traditional minority groups in Western society (Green, 1996). For women whose husbands forbid them to leave the house, involvement in community activity means real physical danger, just as in oppressive regimes.

The discussion of time resources highlights a problem of the weakest groups living in weak environments. The severe shortage in all resources blocks their chances of empowerment. Empowering community planning demands

special deployment in order to act among groups that are unable to obtain even a minimum of resources (Cohen, 1994).

Chapter 6
Community Empowerment Processes in the Context of Community Planning

Introduction

Community planning has problematic scientific, social, and political contexts. Firstly, the scientific knowledge about social problems often lacks relevance to planning; secondly, society allocates less and less resources to social objectives; thirdly, the connection between the decision to allocate and its execution is most shaky. The planner is given a broad mandate, a budget and regulations, in the framework of which he activates a delicate, diversified, and complex process which involves personal skill, judgment, and discretion, communication and interpersonal commitment. Between these two levels of activity, one general and contextual and the other specific and detailed there is almost no connection, and thus community planning lacks a sufficiently stable legitimation. The community planner's employers can always claim (as has happened not infrequently) that they actually do not know what his real actions are. When the situation in the field becomes politically or economically awkward or difficult, the financing institution can renounce the solution which has been developed, and claim that the original intention was completely different (Elmore, 1983).

Even when community planning operates from below, with local people participating in all the decisions, in most of the cases the decision on the planning itself is still not a local one. Only a powerful community can make decisions on the allocation of professional community planning. In most cases the decision on the allocation of community planning to a particular locality is made outside the local context, and does not necessarily stem from considerations of local needs.

When the residents themselves are interested in community planning, there is no guarantee that they will be able to benefit from it. For example, the residents of a neighborhood listed for renewal wanted to employ an independent community planner because of their mistrust of the local planning process. This initiative was frustrated by means of organizational outflanking: the planner who had been chosen by the residents was asked by the local authority not to respond to the invitation. Since he was a free-lance professional, whose livelihood depended on local authorities, he acceded to the authority's request, and did not counsel the residents.

This example can help us understand that the connection between the theoretical basis of planning and the professional activity in the field is quite shaky. The field requires very different interventions to those learned about in the formal professional training frameworks. A consequence of this is a lack of professional self-confidence among some of the community planners, who instead of relying on their personal experience and on local knowledge as their principal sources of action, may in fact cling to routine and to common solutions that have already been tried in the past, generally without discernible success. Lack of professional confidence together with lack of social legitimation are not a suitable climate for originality and innovation. A community planner also cannot rely on the allocation of resources for his project, because the decisions that are made on the policy level, including the budget level, are not sensitive to their impact on the creation of social problems in the field.

In a situation of uncertainty – of uncertain values as well as economic and professional uncertainty – the planner's outcomes depend on his skills and on the product he creates in the planning arena. He himself depends on the local people for the latter. He expects them to devote time, to participate, to display commitment to the planning process, and solidarity among themselves. However, solidarity among people, which is the basis for building a community, is also influenced by the broader social context. Although the origin of racial, ethnic,

gender and class relations is general-social, not local, they find expression in the places where people live—in the residential neighborhoods themselves (Davis, 1991). Nonetheless, even people who are divided among themselves are in need of community, and at times the very existence of weak people depends on their ability to organize and rise above what divides them. Life demands organization for the purpose of improving personal security, assuring a roof over one's head, obtaining additional social services.

Inactivity may result in physical destruction of the environment and the people (Heskin, 1991, Erikson, 1993). In other words, survival is a strong motivation for creation of solidarity among people. In less acute situations, community planning assists in the creation of a community, a micro-society which is an alternative to the separating, isolating social context which emphasizes the supremacy of self-interest and competition as opposed to group solidarity and the sense of togetherness. Community planners and community leaders frequently find themselves proudly reminding people that their community is a source of different norms and a different morality than those of society at large.

Community planning may become an experiment in *decolonization*, in distancing people from the disempowering social influences in the context of which the empowerment process is taking place (Boyte, 1984; Friedmann, 1987).

Since society still disempowers people and reinforces powerlessness and marginality on a sweeping scale, it is important to foster local processes of social change. Such change has at least a theoretical chance of being realized due to the interrelations that exist between phenomenon and context. Although the phenomenon (community empowerment) is influenced by the context (a disempowering society), the context too is influenced by the phenomenon and consequently might change as well. The human activity and the social structure, as we remember, are parts of a single duality.

Stages in the Community Empowerment Process

The Discovery Stage

People discover that they are not alone in their situation and their needs. They discover the critical characteristic as a source of connection with others and not only as a source of suffering and isolation. The discovery stage has individual-personal aspects, but since it takes place in a group, it has a significance beyond the personal.

In the group, a consciousness of abilities and potentials that exist among people with a common critical characteristic awakens. The potential for everything that is yet to occur is already present in the discovery that *other people feel as I do and suffer as I do and I am not alone*. The discovery of the critical characteristic as a source of individual empowerment also operates as a catalyst of community empowerment.

Parents in a group for children with evelopmental disabilities described this discovery as a great sense of relief. Mothers who before joining the effort to set up an organization had been completely alone in their struggle to cope with the diagnosis and treatment of their child, with their feelings about themselves and the inadequate standard of services, discovered that there are other parents who think and feel as they do. This discovery strengthened them personally and at the same time increased their will to work together.

The Partnership-Creating Stage

People begin relating to the critical characteristic as a source of partnership between themselves and others. This is a new way of relating to people in a similar situation to your own: instead of feeling contempt for them and blaming them (and yourself) for the situation, you start seeing the other people who suffer from the same problems as partners.

Residents in the same street in a poor neighborhood used to feel contempt for one another and for the neighborhood.

People testified that when they were asked about where they lived they did not mention the name of the neighborhood, but only the name of the city, and hoped that their acquaintances at work, or in the army, would think that they lived in the more affluent nearby neighborhood. Their common approach to themselves and their neighbors was that nothing good could be expected to happen in their neighborhood. The participation of these people in the community planning program changed their attitude to the neighborhood and to themselves. When they began acting together, they also understood the damage done to them and to the neighborhood by their mutual isolation and alienation.

In the case above the partnership stage developed gradually, in the course of progress in the community empowerment and planning processes. The new consciousness is formed gradually too, and in the first stage it is very fragile, and not without regressions. Proofs of progress in the process, and real outcomes, reinforce this consciousness. People need proofs and reinforcements in order to feel and think differently about themselves. At the start of the process any difficulty can arouse a wave of mutual recriminations, despair and regression among the participants (Freire, 1970).

The Self-Definition Stage

People seek an authentic definition of their situation. This too is a stage of discovery. After the discovery of other people as partners in distress and as potential partners for change comes the stage of the discovery of the right rhetoric to describe the group and its situation. At the start of the process people use vague terms to describe their situation. They live with a disparity between their own feelings and the definitions that others give them. When people are called *underachievers* they cannot identify with this term, which does not express them as people, but it still exists in the background of their self-identity and casts its shadow upon it. The lack of ability to oppose negative social diagnoses is a symptom of inability to

cope socially with the stigma, and the result is a quiescence in the domain of the self that increasingly dims self-perception and social consciousness (Deegan, 1995).

People's new ability to express themselves and to define themselves decreases their dependence on experts on their situation. When we are less dependent on other people's definitions, we cease being dependent on them for other needs as well. This stage demonstrates the extent to which independence of consciousness is important for the creation of practical independence. For example, when people define their high blood pressure as a life-style problem and not as a disease, they still need a doctor for specific aspects of observation and medication, but they learn to control their blood pressure by means of group support, mutual learning of control methods and changes in life-style. Or, for example, when people perceive a school as an educational, social, and community service, they depend less on education experts for the solution of all of the problems at the school. Then the social knowledge of the students and their parents receives greater weight in the search for organizational solutions. Where a community perception of the place of the school in local life is lacking, many of the parents, students and residents in the area live with the sense that the school is not what it should be, but appeals for improvement of the situation are addressed only to education experts.

The Self-Representation Stage

People discover that they can represent themselves instead of being dependent on professionals and experts. The ability to represent yourself becomes reinforced as you acquire practical skills in this domain. The more the empowerment process unifies people, increases their self-confidence and sharpens their understanding of their situation, the more confident they feel about representing themselves.

The advantages of self-representation point to the need to transfer as many issues as possible in the community planning process to the shared control of the planner and the local people. Advocacy is suitable only as preparation towards empowerment, when it is necessary to mobilize a minimum of resources to enable weak people to begin the process, because it contradicts one of the most basic rules of empowerment: never do for others what they are capable of doing for themselves. Hence, in every case it is important to make sure that people will learn to become their own advocates in a reasonable span of time (Zirpoli et al., 1989).

In the self-representation stage people discover their political ability, and develop self-management skills. A person who can speak for herself before others knows that with the help of appropriate skills, which can be acquired, she will be able to manage her affairs herself.

The *Urban Renewal Project* carried out in Israel in the eighties is an example of a community planning project with a centralized style. The form and style of self-representation were directed from above, and in most cases were not an outcome of local considerations. It is possible that for this reason representation was defined as a democratic right and not as a community task. Both the style and the manner of representation were included in directives that came from outside the neighborhoods. During the evaluation of the project it was found that only a few residents had participated actively in the self-representation frameworks. In most of the neighborhoods most of the residents felt that they were not represented on the neighborhood steering committees; likewise, many of the government representatives who sat on these committees did not see the residents who participated in the committees as representatives of the other residents (Churchman, 1990a). Self-representation, then, like the other stages before it, is realized essentially by means of local praxis processes: integrated learning and action. Policy from above, even when it is aimed at this goal, does not provide the appropriate tools for its realization, and does not enhance empowerment processes.

The Stage of Resistance to Existing Policy

The previous stages in the empowerment process, too, are accompanied by a certain level of resistance. As already mentioned in the discussion of individual empowerment, without a degree of resistance to an existing situation there is no leverage for a beginning of the empowerment process. People resist other people's definitions and learn to define themselves. They resist being represented by others and start representing themselves. At this stage the resistance is already based on experience, progress in achieving goals, and knowledge: the activists have learned what the existing policy is on their concerns, and what plans have been derived from this policy, and they reject these and in effect engage in planning by themselves. People either reject the existing policy as a whole if it does not suit them, or plan changes in particular programs only.

The struggle over the school was conducted around a rejection of a plan to close the school. The struggle was intense because of the pressure of time, and the threat to close the school that very year, and escalated because the students and the parents threatened to strike and shut down the school until an alternative solution was found. The struggle of the residents in Los Angeles against the plan to evict them from their homes (Heskin, 1991), and the struggle of the women in the Wentworth neighborhood in Chicago against the building of a sports stadium in the neighborhood (Feldman & Stall, 1994), also involved resistance to an external plan and a public struggle against it.

When community planning is involved in a process, there is a chance (which is not always actualized) that the resistance will be more organized and orderly in character and less chaotic and violent. This resistance does not begin with a traumatic discovery but with a methodical learning of policy. At times the undesirable policy is covert, and a certain sophistication is required in order to learn it and to find ways to resist it effectively. For example, members of a community who discovered that the solutions of experts were not effective, and were liable to cause further environmental disasters (Couto, 1989). The rejection of the proposed solution in this case[5] was accompanied by the astounding discovery that through their terrible experience, the residents of this small community had become national experts on technical solutions for the removal of coal waste tips.

In Chicago, the community coalition for public housing discovered that the city's policy of encouraging investors was being carried out at the expense of development budgets for their neighborhoods. They organized public resistance to the policy of unbalanced city planning that neglects the poor communities (CAHC—Chicago Affordable Housing Coalition, 1993).

The Stage of Presenting an Independent Alternative

At this stage, people who can represent themselves, and can resist a policy they don't agree with, present an alternative of their own to the existing proposals affecting their community. In this situation, people reach the conclusion that "Either you plan or they plan for you" (Boyte, 1984, p. 97).

Most communities do not reach the point of presenting a proposal of their own. In the Urban Renewal Project, for example, this stage was in effect blocked by the central authorities. Residents' representatives sat on the project's steering committee and participated in meetings of forums that

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5 Aberfan is a mining town in Wales where a mound of coal waste crushed a school. 166 children and 40 adults were killed in the disaster. The story of the disaster and of the recovery that followed, including the struggle against the unsuitable solutions to ensure the safety of coal *tips* in the future, is a story of community empowerment (Couto, 1989).

were supposed to make decisions, but in fact they responded to plans which in most cases were presented to the activists for the first time at that meeting. They engaged in discussions and did not make decisions. As I see it, self-representation in most of the neighborhoods degenerated as a consequence of participation in these ineffective forums. Only in one neighborhood did the residents plan an alternative proposal of their own, but there too the local proposal was outflanked and frustrated by the project's central authorities. This struggle for the realization of an independent alternative was so exceptional that the evaluators of the project called this neighborhood the *shrew* (As in the Shakespearian *Taming the shrew*) (Alterman & Churchman, 1991).

In the struggle over the school, the group of students and parents did not propose an alternative of their own for how to run the school. The parents' committee continued responding as well as it could to existing proposals. This situation designates the limits of empowerment of this group. The level of organization and self-management necessary to design an alternative proposal was not achieved by the parents and students at the school and did not receive encouragement from outside agencies.

The creation of the community service of parents of children with disabilities is an example of a local alternative. The parents organized in order to provide for a need of their own which was receiving no public recognition or response. Their proposal met with some resistance, but since their initiative was the only one available at this time and place, and since the group organized for self-management of the plan, it succeeded in implementing it.

The Affordable Housing Coalition in Chicago prepared a proposal of its own for a balanced urban development that would also allocate money for development of housing in the neighborhoods. The organization lobbied among members of the city council in order to ensure that its proposal would obtain the necessary majority in the council. The organization's proposal was not the most desirable proposal

for the residents, but a compromise that was achieved in the course of negotiations with some of the councilors in order to gain their support. The preparation of the proposal required considerable organizational effort: legal assistance, academic assistance, planning of a lobbying campaign and monitoring of municipal legislation in order to promote the proposal and bring it to the voting stage (CAHC, 1993).

The Evaluation Stage

In this stage the people evaluate their achievements and rediscover the limits of their empowerment (Couto, 1989). The evaluation stage involves the community's thinking about its ability to achieve social change. The rediscovery of powerlessness now stems from a position of active consciousness and empowerment. In my view this is the climax of the empowerment process, and the most important sign of its success. When this stage of the empowerment process is not achieved, there is a danger that the process will deteriorate into a distorted consciousness. A community which is not conscious of the limits of its power and of its powerlessness in certain areas will have difficulties continuing to produce empowerment for its members. Experience teaches that an unrealistic perception of power endangers continued development of the process, while the community's consciousness of its own limits is a constructive factor for such development. People understand that there are goals they will not be able to achieve by themselves. These realizations lead to the setting up of roof-organizations, coalitions between communities, and contractual employment of experts to obtain assistance with technical matters.

In the cases that I investigated the groups did not arrive at this stage. The parents shifted back to the form of representation customary for school parents' committees. The students' council, too, operated in the usual school framework and separately from the parents' committee. The two groups ceased cooperating with one another, and ceased participating

in the management of the school. The parents' committee was still a very involved body committed to the school's continued existence, but it operated without any organized community basis. In my estimation, the sense of community that was created around the school could have mobilized activists to confront a crisis again. For example, the struggle over the school was renewed several years later, when a teacher was dismissed because of his different approach to the students and his criticism of the school's educational policy. Students struggled against his dismissal, and he himself exploited the dismissal to express his opinion on education and on social discrimination. In this case the specific struggle was of no avail. The teacher was dismissed, and became part of a group which founded a school in the spirit of alternative educational values.

The evaluation stage is the last, but not final stage in the circular process of social change that is characterized by rises and falls. We must distinguish between this stage, which may indicate the success of the empowerment process, and the completion of the community project itself, which was the program that the community planning produced, one of the outcomes of which was community empowerment. At times the processes are parallel, but it is possible that from this point on community planning and empowerment go different ways.

Some writers believe that success or failure of the plan itself are not critical to the success of empowerment. Experience in community work shows that successful outcomes are very important. Participation in community activity is a way of acquiring ability within a framework that can and does succeed. Success is an important dimension of learning, especially for people for whom failure has been a constant life experience. Participation in a project that has failed is like repeating a prior history of powerlessness and self-fulfilling prophecy. Hence, an important goal of empowering community planning has to be the development of a feasible plan with reasonable chances of success, in order to provide

the participants with a positive initial experience. Later on, after one success, people acquire organizational experience and self-confidence, and can also learn from failures, especially because of the sense of control of the situation and the confidence in their ability that they have already gained through the process.

Organizing and Organization: The Basis for the Community Empowerment Process

Community empowerment is a process of creating a community and of much greater control over its environment. The process demands organizational means in order to develop. The organization enables the people in the community to manage their lives by themselves (Simon, 1990). The effectiveness of this process is expressed in its ability to produce empowerment: on one level, to produce individual empowerment for the people active in it; on another level, to find social solutions for the community. A particularly strong and efficient community organization, such as COPS (Communities for Organized Public Services) in San Antonio, for example, can achieve a social change and also create a real cultural alternative. COPS provided community – including civic values and norms of behavior; constituted a source of identification and of social criticism and thinking; enabled community members to control their rage and direct it to a constructive route; and symbolized sustainability – hope for a better future for the next generation (Boyte, 1984).

While the traditional communities – the village, the tribe – have almost completely vanished, their place is being taken by a new unit of social integration—the organization. Whereas belonging to the traditional community was fate, membership in an organization is a free choice. The traditional community demanded the entire person, while the organization is a means for achieving personal goals (Drucker, 1995). Community empowerment is realized by means of organizations, and it may be identified and evaluated through them. The evaluation

of the extent to which the community planning process is actually succeeding to enhance empowerment processes is based on the level of independent organization the community planning enables in the course of its activity, and on the community organization's efficacy and degree of sophistication.

The importance of organizing, as a principal means of community empowerment, is made perceptible in the mechanism of organizational outflanking. The organization is a strategic creation. A community can struggle for control of its environment and its future only by the organizational means that it develops. A community organization can serve as an alternative to external bases of decision-making and of expertise, because it can involve community members in processes which develop the skills and knowledge necessary for self-management. Lessons learned from practice and theory indicate that community development and planning processes which also build a community organization achieve more stable solutions to social problems. The Urban Renewal Project did not set goals in the domain of organizing and organization. On the contrary, its centralized structure prevented the establishment of community organizations in the various neighborhoods, sabotaged independent decision making on the neighborhood level, and in a considerable number of the neighborhoods actually even prevented the creation of a community.

As already mentioned, the struggle to keep the school open was characterized by organizing, but what was set up was a weak organizational basis. The parent's committee did set up a non-profit association of its own, which enabled it to mobilize resources and produce plans independently, but this was an administrative arrangement more than a community organization. Because of its organizational weakness, the parents' committee actually had to wage repeated struggles to maintain its achievements. The struggle for the school's survival therefore continued from one year to the next. When the parents' committee and the students found out that the

new director who had been appointed had no intentions of allowing them to continue participating on the level they had become accustomed to, they had to initiate a public struggle to have her replaced. It is possible that a better based organization could have participated more actively in the management of the school, and would have prevented the appointment of an uncooperative headmistress.

An example of a different process is the way parents organized around the establishment of services for children with disabilities. At first they organized together in order to find a local solution for the families involved. The organization they set up engaged in mobilizing resources from the entire town in order to provide several missing services. This goal shaped the organizational form. This group attached special importance to the organizational structure, because it was conscious of the need to ensure the survival of the new services. Hence a lot of work was devoted to networking the new organization within the local and the national organizational system in order to ensure its future survival. A community planner accompanied the process of setting up the organization, but at the stage when the various services that the organization provided became established, she was already much less involved.

Because of the great differences in civic culture, governmental structure and the organization of the public services, it is almost impossible to make comparisons between the Israeli and the American societies. In the United States, due to a strong democratic tradition of participatory community, there exists a legitimation for creating community and for communitarian initiatives of various ideological persuasions (Delgado, 1986; Boyte, 1986; Simon, 1994; Walzer, 1995). In Israel, in the fifty years since the establishment of the State, the authorities and large public institutions have concentrated organizational and community functions of mutual help and social services in their own hands, though with ever decreasing success. This centralism is one of the reasons (though not the only one) for the fact that local organizing,

self-management and participation of residents have not yet taken their rightful place in public consciousness and in the social discourse in Israel.

Community Planning as Context for Empowerment of Populations with Special Needs

The aim of this discussion of issues connected with community planning and empowerment of two groups – minorities and women – is to stress once again the importance of the community in the lives of special population groups. I am not claiming that minorities and women are groups that are more deserving of community empowerment than any other population groups. The idea I am interested in reinforcing is that every population group experiences its empowerment process in a different and unique way, and requires a community definition of its own. Likewise, I wish to emphasize once more that community planning is a practice which requires a critical consciousness—in every planning of a social solution it is necessary to re-examine professional concepts and how well they fit the groups at the focus of the planning process.

Empowerment of Minorities

A minority is a group of people whose existence in the midst of other people is marked by being different and conspicuous. The definition of a minority on a basis of ethnic origin, race, or religious belief, is, for the purposes of the present discussion, not different in principle from the definition of a minority on the basis of physical or mental disability. Any given minority, because of its distinctive characteristics, faces dangers of stigma, prejudice, and marginality. At times minorities need assistance in order to survive in a hostile environment. Hence, everything that has been said so far about community empowerment and the need for organization is equally true for

minorities, but their distinctive needs must be acknowledged as well.

The community framework of a minority group has a special significance, for the more successful the minority is in its efforts to survive, the more distinctive in its character it becomes. Unlike the image of an open, partial and unstable community I adopted for the purpose of developing the concept of community in this book, a community created by a minority group tends to be relatively closed and permanent. This tendency stems from a combination of internal needs and external conditions: as a consequence of living in a deterministic reality of racism, rejection and economic exploitation, the minority community creates an alternative system of values that enables people to preserve a sense of self-worth and self-respect that are not possible outside the community (Liebow, 1967).

Minority communities tend to be relatively closed because the points of entry and exit into and out of them are rigidly defined, at times beyond any possibility of change: only someone who bears the minority's common critical characteristic may belong to the community. The community empowerment of minorities therefore creates a community within a community, in which community planning can operate on two levels, the macro and the micro. On the macro level, the community planning has to relate to the environment that surrounds the minority. A change is required in this environment in order to change discrimination, rejection, isolation, prejudice, and economic exploitation of the minority concerned. The planning approach to such environmental change is generally dubbed a radical approach (Friedmann, 1987; Rose & Black, 1985). On the micro level, the community planning has to encourage individual and community empowerment among the minority people, with the aim of creating solidarity and mutual help, to halt powerlessness and to encourage the creation of a community (Gutierrez et al., 1990, DeLois, 1998; Okazawa-Rey, 1998).

The planning runs into the tension that exists between, on the one hand, the minority's aspiration to preserve its own authenticity and distinctiveness, and to be in a supportive environment with people like themselves, and, on the other hand, the will of this minority to emerge from the isolation and separation imposed upon it because of its difference, and to become integrated with the majority it lives among.

The key to community empowerment of minorities lies in raising their consciousness of these legitimate and contradictory needs: on the one hand, support and acknowledgment of the group's difference and hence of its distinctive social and existential needs; on the other hand, support of the group's need to become integrated into the surrounding community. The individual empowerment of as many of the minority people as possible brings confidence and hope to the entire group, and also enriches its leadership potential and its capacities for self-management. An example of this is the development of organizations of disabled people, from being organizations *for* these people, that were administered by people who were not disabled, into organizations *of* these people, which provide mutual self-help. It is important to note that this change may give confidence and a sense of control to all those belonging to the minority, and not only to members of the organization or its activists (Renz-Beaulaurier, 1988; Hasler, 1993).

Empowering community planning broadens the minority's possibilities of choice, and adapts existing social solutions to its needs and its life-style. As I have said, the key to empowerment is acknowledgment of the group's difference and distinctiveness. What this acknowledgment calls for is community planning of diversified and non-stereotyped solutions for minorities. Here in particular, a policy of avoiding arrogance and patronizing – a characteristic of all empowering community planning – is imperative.

I make no pretension to claim that empowering community planning provides a perfect social solution for the empowerment of minorities. The disempowering processes directed at minorities are massive. They can involve fear, hatred, prejudice and social exclusion that have been going on for generations, enclosing the minority within discriminatory laws, procedures, and policies. A minor local tool such as community planning may have a most limited effect from the outset when the powerlessness is an outcome of systematic discrimination and is anchored in laws which support the existing local social relations and culture. However, every empowerment process is a change in the status quo, and is thus important in itself.

Empowerment of Women

Community empowerment in community planning processes takes on a special meaning among women, because of the paradoxical manner of their participation in community activity. According to reports from all over the world, women constitute a majority among the activists in any community, and a minority among the leadership in the community (Reinharz, 1984; Andersen & Larsen, 1998)

We have to discuss the special way in which women are involved in the community, and the difference in the empowerment process of women, in contrast to men in the same social situation. Likewise, it is important to try to understand why women are active in all aspects of setting up a community, but tend to retreat and vacate the arena when there is a need for leadership and formal representation of the community.

Some writers claim that women who are active in a community do so out of their traditional roles: they

maintain structure and activity, obtain resources, and in general function in the community as an extension of their activities in the home and the family. For example, women were the majority in the process of setting up a community service for children with disabilities. Women were a majority among the tenants in the effort to cope with landlord abandonment of a low income neighborhood in New York (Leavitt & Saegert, 1988), and women were the activists in Wentworth, Chicago and struggled for the community's existence (Feldman & Stall, 1994). Some writers explain that activity in the community is indeed a process that empowers and advances women, but in part it represents a perpetuation of the traditional feminine roles. The women open community laundromats, day-care centers for children, playgrounds, babysitting services and the like, all of which are only an extension of their activities inside the home. The criticism implied here is that women are exploited in the community as well, and not only in the home, and do not progress in an equitable way while realizing their potential.

I would like to illuminate this subject in a different way. I claim that women[6] experience individual and community empowerment from a better starting position than men in the same community, because they sense their social situation in a different, less destructive way than men do. Because of their gender, they have had to reconcile themselves with powerlessness and marginality since childhood, and for this reason they develop an alternative culture out of which they draw power (Liebow, 1967).

Because of their social roles, which are limited to the bounds of the home, women are not perceived, and do not perceive

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6 The reference to *women* is a sweeping generalization. I am referring principally to the phenomenon of women who are active in a community, and the explanation therefore relates to these women. Of course, there are women in the same social situation and class who experience all these things differently.

themselves, as responsible for the social situation of the group to which they belong. Hence, they do not bear the same amount of guilt and do not experience personal and social failure in the paralyzing way that men with the same critical characteristic experience it. A woman who succeeds in filling her traditional roles is likely to draw self-confidence and a sense of self-efficacy from this. In this way an alternative feminine culture is created, which includes values of mature femininity, responsibility for the home and the family, and a sense of mastery. From this compensating starting point, women can identify with the social powerlessness of their group, and at the same time can be less harmed on the personal level (Andersen & Larsen, 1998). Hence, it is easier for them (than for the men in their environment) to overcome inner barriers, to make a commitment to community social action, and to fill socially valuable roles in this domain. Women who since their youth have held on to values of maturity, responsibility and independence, begin the community empowerment process from a higher point of individual empowerment relative to men. They derive pride and a sense of self-worth from the very fact of their skills and mastery in filling feminine roles, which is not dependent on economic success, on a level of formal education, or on social class. This protects them from the despair and marginality that men in the same situation feel, and makes them a catalyzing force and a stabilizing factor at the beginning of community empowerment processes.

Another important aspect of the difference presented here is who the women who turn to community social action are. My impression is that women do not *escape* to valuable roles in the community due to unwillingness or inability to fill their traditional roles in the home. On the contrary, the women active in community building are generally successful housewives and mothers. Poor women who do not successfully fill their traditional roles in the home belong to a very weak and deprived group which also lacks the strength to contribute to the community. It is important to understand

that in very poor families, a woman who does not function at a very high level is often the cause for a diagnosis of the entire family as a *multi-problem* one. In order to survive in conditions of poverty and deprivation a woman has to have organizational and economic talents, excellent physical fitness, and needs to excel in human relations in the exercise of influence, and in negotiating.

The modest status of the role of wife and mother is entirely disproportionate to the standard of personal skills that are required in order to function properly in this framework. For this reason, indeed, analogously to their status in the home, when the community process develops, most women abstain from overt leadership roles, especially when their organization enters the stage where more public representation and political visibility are required. At the beginning of the struggle against the closing of the school, the parents' committee was headed by a woman. When the parents' committee actively joined the struggle she was replaced by a man, and from that time on the leadership roles in the school parents' committee were taken by men. Among the students, there was a majority of girls, and after the struggle the students' council was headed by a girl (although during the struggle itself the leader was a boy). A similar phenomenon may be found in neighborhood committees and community organizations: many women generally participate in neighborhood activities itself, yet it is rare to find a woman at the head of a neighborhood committee (Churchman, 1985).

When leadership in an organization is evaluated not only for charisma or other superfluous reasons, but is rewarded for results, women can fill formal leadership roles more securely. A woman activist in San Antonio explained that in the COPS organization this is what made the difference: "Women have community ties. We knew that to make things happen in the community, you have to talk to people. It was a matter of tapping our networks" (Boyte, 1984).

Community planning frequently relies on the activity of women in networking and maintenance roles, and it turns out that when leadership roles are developed on the basis of tasks and not of representation, equal opportunity is given to development of leadership among both women and men.

Conflict and Community Appropriation

Are resistance and conflict an inseparable part of the empowerment process? As I see it, conflict, like all expressions of anger and resistance, is a sign of emergence from a state of powerlessness. It is important to remember that social powerlessness is characterized by social quiescence, and not by overt resistance and conflict.

Resistance to an existing situation is in many cases expressed in claims for space appropriation (Feldman & Stall, 1994). In the course of the struggle against the evacuation of a poor neighborhood in Los Angeles, people obtained ownership of their homes, either as individuals or through shares in cooperatives. Since the housing authorities in Los Angeles prevented the residents from managing the cooperatives by themselves, they were not given the opportunity to appropriate their community. This is an example of organizational outflanking that had a disempowering influence on the development of community among the members of the cooperatives. Heskin has described these processes of disempowerment and destruction of community as cycles of gaining and losing community (Heskin, 1991).

In the struggle against the closing of the school, teachers and other school employees noted that members of the school's parents' committee were "behaving as if they owned the school". They said this in a critical tone, which cast doubt on the parents' right to behave in this way. During the struggle, students and parents took control of the school's daily schedule: they determined a time-table for demonstrations and meetings outside the school during school hours. After

the struggle they felt as if they owned the school because it was they who had ensured its continued existence.

The issue of space appropriation not infrequently arose in the Urban Renewal Project. In one neighborhood the neighborhood committee decided to dismiss the project director, after the authorities had refused to dismiss him despite the residents' dissatisfaction with how he was doing his job. The dismissal notice drew harsh criticism from the project and town authorities, who saw it as a radical declaration of appropriation of the project by the neighborhood activists. Despite the criticism and the formal resistance of the authorities to this move, it was impossible to ignore the dismissal, and the project director was forced to resign. Apart from this step, which was in essence a political declaration, this neighborhood failed to create an organization efficient enough to realize the claim for space appropriation. The neighborhood committee absorbed the harsh criticism of their step, and did not make any more claims of executive responsibility in this project. The appropriation of space, then, is a conflict. It cannot be expected that the such a powerful claim will not run into opposition on the part of authorities and institutions which perceive themselves as owners of the space or as rulers of the process.

Community appropriation is a process which originates in people's inner needs. The struggle for a community proves how artificial the separation between individual and community empowerment is. A successful outcome of such a claim is a commitment to take care of the environment. On the individual level, the struggle answers the need to feel at home in the world (Howard, 1993), a deep need that is repressed by processes of disempowerment and powerlessness. In the empowerment process it surfaces and demands realization. The sense of being betrayed by society and the man-made environment in disasters such as the coal slide in Aberfan, or the chemical pollution of an entire town in Love Canal (Couto, 1989; Levine, 1982), leaves the people dispossessed of any control in their world. The residents of Aberfan set

up group processes of empowerment in order to express and give meaning to their loss. The residents of Love Canal remained injured and uprooted. They had lost their homes and their basic sense of security at home, with no possibility of erecting a memorial for their loss. After the process, Lois Gibbs, the woman who headed the Love Canal residents organization, became chairperson of a federal organization of citizens against chemical pollution. Creating this organization was her way of structuring a social meaning from the disaster that had occurred in her life.

It is worth noticing that the struggle for ownership does not always involve the appropriation of a physical space. It may also be a claim of proprietorship of the definition of a problem. For example, in the town of Love Canal, people struggled for years to have their definition of the disaster that had occurred in their life accepted. The neighborhood had been built beside a chemical plant, which employed many of the town's residents, and caused the pollution of the entire town. During the years when chemicals seeped through the ground into the residents' homes they caused chronic and malignant diseases, children born with deformities, and miscarriages. The conflict between the state and federal health authorities and the residents of Love Canal arose on the background of the authorities' unwillingness to recognize a definition that would expose them to long-term responsibility and to immense damages suits, including precedents throughout the entire country. At its height, the struggle between the residents and the authorities and their experts centered on the definition of the problem and on knowledge about the problem (Levine, 1982).

When the conflict subsided, it turned out that in this case, as in other cases too, it was the residents, and not the experts appointed by the authorities, who possessed the most relevant and most precise knowledge about their problem. It is interesting that in the examples above, and in others as well, apart from the experts appointed by the authorities, yet another professional agency appeared, of great importance

to processes of community planning: external professional experts whose services are recruited by the community, at times on a voluntary basis. These experts may be, as the case may call for, community planners, psychologists, chemists, educators. These experts provide the community with knowledge about the problem, and reinforce the people's ability to deal with expert claims that are directed against them in the course of the conflict. These external consultants are important for giving the community confidence in their knowledge as opposed to the "authorized" knowledge they are struggling against. Their involvement in the process is sometimes subversive and may endanger their professional career in the future (Levine, 1982). In Chicago, the CAHC organization set up a formal partnership with the city's universities, which research disputed issues for them. In this way the organization strengthened its claim to appropriate the problem definition, and its ability to fight for its solution, and also neutralized the system of pressure and sanctions almost always activated against experts who participate in public struggles on the side of community organizations.

Conflict is an aspect of the empowerment process. The struggle for the community and the struggle for self-definition express a blocked need to act in the world. Conflict is not only an expression of anger but also a proof of a will to act and to create something new even in the face of opposition. The great danger lies not in conflict, but, on the contrary, in quiescence and indifference, which enable planners to create an environment that is foreign to and alienated from the people who live in it

Outcomes of Community Empowerment

Is it possible to define community empowerment outcomes that community planning is interested in? In general terms, a social change involving community activity and community organization and action that continue encouraging

empowerment even after the conclusion of the planning task is an important outcome of the planning.

The need to achieve a concrete outcome stems from the instability of community achievements that are based mainly on good will and activism. It not infrequently happens that an especially empowering leadership contents itself with widespread community activity and deliberately avoids investing in organization building. When such a leadership is replaced, an organizational vacuum may come about, where leadership that will *lose the community* may position itself (Heskin, 1991).

A community organization has to be stable, and needs to produce efficient empowerment. Efficiency is the ability to mobilize resources, to set up a structure suitable to the community's purposes, to achieve goals even in difficult conditions of organizational outflanking (Mann, 1986).

Another important outcome is the creation of a community culture. Distinctive values and rules of behavior are a basis for the community's existence. The community that was formed around COPS in San Antonio based itself on a set of values and norms that not only obligate the organization's leadership and major activists, but also reinforce the pride, the mutual responsibility, and the self-respect of the local residents. People in this community are conscious of the fact that the community norms they have adopted are an alternative to the discrimination and the injustice that characterize the society outside their community. They are aware of this contradiction and of the vulnerability of their situation, and hence see themselves as responsible, both personally and collectively, for safeguarding the organization's existence and values (Boyte, 1984; COPS., 1994).

In especially successful cases, the outcomes of the empowerment process also have an influence beyond the community itself. For example, over the years the town of Aberfan developed knowledge of its own on a national problem – safety treatment of coal waste *tips* – and in this way contributed to the quality of life in the entire region.

Likewise, this community decided to devote compensation money they had received from the government after the catastrophe to setting up a joint community center with a neighboring village that had been not been harmed, and in this way the compensation money was used to foster an additional community (Couto, 1989). In Israel, the successful struggle of several poor neighborhoods to be treated as partners in the decision making processes affecting their renewal led to the creation of rules for the participation of residents in the Urban Renewal Project throughout the country.

Senior functionaries in the local education authority testified that as a result of the struggle against closing the high school, they had changed their attitude towards the participation of parents and students in educational decision making, and had enlarged the resources for fostering participation of parents and students in the schools. After the struggle the education authorities also understood the importance of community planning as a suitable approach in their domain.

It is important to highlight the Foucaultian aspect of these achievements, one expression of which is greater attention on the part of the authorities. Constitutions allowing residents to participate in the renewal of their neighborhood, or parents and students to participate in the life of their school, also represent an attempt by the authorities to take control of a local field of resistance; institutionalization of the relations makes possible closer surveillance of phenomena which were relatively free of *the supervisory gaze* of the authorities. Since we are speaking about a successful organized struggle of ordinary citizens (some of them children, poor citizens, residents of low income neighborhood) against governmental authorities, it is worth taking into account the following interpretation as well. The institutionalization of local processes by the authorities always entails a potential for cooptation and domination. Beside the official recognition of an additional active factor in the power relations arena, there exists the desire to position it in such a way that it will not threaten the status quo.

Empowerment processes always involve a process and an outcome—a process of organizing and outcomes of organization. The organization is the main means of encouraging community empowerment, and also the major outcome of the process and the proof of its realization. However, the processes of organizing have to continue even after the setting up of one organization, efficient as it may be, because encouraging empowerment by means of the organization is a no less important outcome than the organization itself.

We may therefore identify several integrated outcomes of community planning and community empowerment: 1. The establishment of an empowering community organization; 2. Widespread community activity; 3. Active community consciousness; 4. The appropriation of space and responsibility for it 5. Improvement of the quality of life and the attitude to citizens in the society. These are different levels of outcomes, which indicate once more that empowerment is a process that occurs simultaneously on the levels of human agency and social structure. For community empowerment to become stable, it has to be preserved on the level of the individual consciousness of many members of the community, as well as to be enabled by the norms and values of the social structure. A social change is established by means of actions of individuals who produce new values through their everyday behavior and their discourse. The new social process becomes meaningful through the new community frameworks that enable people to make a difference and to reinforce social change.

Chapter 7
Community Planing as an Empowering Professional Practice

In the two previous chapters I outlined individual and community empowerment processes made possible in the course of empowering community planning practice. The present chapter deals with community planning itself and with the adaptation of it to encourage these processes.

Social problems are not the kind of problems that have only one logical solution. Because of the paradoxical and dialectical character of these problems, several solutions, all of them logical, may be suitable for the one problem, and each of them will lead to different and even contradictory outcomes. Out of the range of possible solutions, the empowerment approach prefers those solutions which, in the course of their planning and execution, lead to the creation of as much real and perceptible control as possible by people over their lives, their future, and their environment (Rappaport, 1987.)

In the domain of city planning a trenchant discussion is being conducted about the negative by-products of social solutions, including those caused by the planning process itself (Harvey, 1973). Some writers prefer to think that the harmful effects are inevitable (Moore, 1978). *You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs* is an example of a cliche used by people who claim that in the course of changes for the good there will always be victims. Although it's a pity that there are victims, it is inevitable. This claim ignores the fact that in city planning processes these victims are not randomly chosen—they are are generally the weakest, the poorest, those without knowledge, while those who gain are generally the people who possess power resources.

Empowerment theory wants to make professionals aware not only of what they do and why they do it, but also, in Foucault's words, of "what they do does" (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982).

A professional solution also has to provide an empowering process that will act against the negative by-products of plans and planning on people and their environment.

Community Planners and the Organizations that Employ Them

Community planners work in social, political, professional and organizational contexts that have much influence on their ability to encourage empowerment as part of their professional activity. We have discussed the first three contexts in previous chapters; in this chapter we will consider the organizational context. Although significant differences exist among planners from different professional disciplines, we will not deal with this here; rather, we will focus on organizational questions that are common to the various professions that engage in community planning.

Experience teaches that most planners find it difficult to act with social responsibility if they have not received backing for this from the agency that employs them. In both my practice and my research experience, I have found that very few planners acted to encourage empowerment without backing from the organization that employed them. Those who did do so in most cases had considerable seniority in the profession and a high level of professional commitment, and in all cases they received alternative legitimation and backing from activists in the community organization that they set up in the course of the planning. As I see it, when the employing organization opposes a process of community planning, a combination of professional confidence, commitment to the process, and backing from the field are required for the completion of the process, and only few professionals will risk this.

Likewise, a research on city planners found that very few of them are socially and politically committed. Most of the planners functioned as technicians, defined themselves as

possessing quantitative and analytical problem-solving skills, and deliberately avoided social activity (Baum, 1986).

Agencies engaged in community planning may be divided into those that see planning as engagement in decision making on policy and environmental design, and those that see the solution of social problems as their mission. Organizations which see their role as technical, and the plan as the major component of the planning, are outside the context of my discussion. Two community planning agencies that I investigated acknowledged their social responsibility, but tried very hard to avoid conflicts, and to establish themselves within an inter-organizational network of cooperation and complementary relations.

The situation in both agencies teaches that it is impossible to understand the activity of the community planner without understanding the organization that employs her. The organization's policy determines the approach of the community planners in the field, even when, on the face of it, they are given relative autonomy and freedom of judgment, which are essential to ensure empowering practice. Organizations can direct their employees by means of rewards given to practices favored by the organization, or by hierarchical departmentalization of the discussion of new ideas. This directing can even contradict principles declared as important and essential by the organization.

We must however make a reservation here, and stress that there are community planners who will act with an empowering approach in any organizational context. As a minimum they will content themselves with preventing disempowerment, like for example the community planner who built a professional training program and asked the participants to take part in the evaluation of the program and in thinking about the continuation of their professional advancement. The planning was conducted with an equitable approach to the participants and a shared interest – the planner's, and their own – in the advancement of

their professional level in domains they had defined for themselves.

There always exists a minority of community planners who will encourage empowerment from a personal, professional and ideological commitment, and will struggle against the negative messages and evaluations of their superiors in the organization even at the critical stages of the process. When the organization that employs such a community planner begins to benefit from his activity, his position in the organization changes for the better, and he receives the positive appreciation and the rewards that he had been forced to give up in the earlier stages of the process. For example, the establishment of the local organization of parents of children with developmental disabilities was accompanied by pressure on the community planner. The employing agency found it difficult to accept as partners people it perceived as weak, who in the past had been dependent on the agency. As the group grew stronger, the agency too learned to benefit from its empowerment. Then the attempts to disempower and to weaken the community planner's involvement in the process lessened. Appreciation of her work increased in the organization, and she was promoted to a more senior position.

Empowerment of Community Planners

Another aspect of the organizational context is the popular issue of the empowerment of the professionals themselves. The main claims of those who believe that empowerment of professionals is essential for the empowerment process of their clients may be divided into two: the most widespread claim is that professionals cannot engage in empowerment from a position of weakness (e.g., Giroux, 1987). Some writers claim that the power of professionals has a good influence on the results of their work with powerless people, and that what is involved is parallel processes of empowerment (Guterman & Bargal, 1996). All agree that professionals

have to understand the way that power relations shape their professional intervention on all levels: their connection with the organization that employs them, their attitudes to their clients, the attitudes to themselves as professionals, and their world-view (Hasenfeld, 1987). An additional aspect of the subject deals with the ineffectiveness of the professional who does not understand the politics of his practice (Benveniste, 1989). This lack of understanding facilitates the creation of the dangerous *power/knowledge* connection: due to a lack of tools and a lack of consciousness, the knowledge serves the power relations existing in the place and time in which it is produced (Foucault, 1980).

I adopt the conclusion that lack of political sophistication on the part of professionals, and their unwillingness to take full responsibility on all levels – from the consciousness level to the execution level – for the power aspects of their professional status, also casts doubt on their ability to encourage empowerment.

People who are not conscious of the disempowerment that is structured into their professional activity may be unable to abandon it for a more empowering practice.

I am interested in discussing the need to empower professionals, but not in line with the over-simplified claim that a powerful professional will encourage empowerment of others better (there are too many powerful professionals who empower no-one but themselves). Agencies that employ community planners will allow empowerment of their employees if and when the empowerment approach is adopted as an efficient management principle and as a basis for business success. Indeed, the empowerment approach has recently been gaining a reputation as a successful management method as well. The more respect and independence the employees receive, the more creative they become, and the more willing they are to invest their energy and strength in their workplace (see, e.g., the books by Plunkett & Fournier, 1991; Peters, 1992, Well ins et al., 1991, Tjosvold, 1991). This phenomenon is increasing the legitimation of the concept of

empowerment in the organizational context. Following the adoption of the empowerment approach by the business and management world, there is a chance that the public sector too, which is known as being less sensitive to its own survival, and also as slower in its initiatives, will join this trend.

The Empowering Community Planning Process

The community planner's efforts to encourage empowerment are meant to achieve outcomes in the domain of community empowerment. In the previous chapter I presented the stages of community empowerment; here I will outline parallel stages of empowerment enhancement. At the same time, it is important to remember that a division into stages is not a method of analyzing a process. It is possible that certain stages will indeed be realized concurrently, but it is equally possible that they will not occur at all. There are various ways of entering the process and staying with it.

Table 1 (p. 262) presents community planning as a professional method that engages in planning and enhancement of community empowerment concurrently. The stages of community empowerment that were presented in the previous chapter appear here beside the practical steps that support and enable them. Human activities and social structures are intertwined in empowerment theory, and there is therefore no point in asking what comes first, the community process or the professional intervention. However, what is important is a proper orchestration of time and space. It is particularly important to intervene at the right time and the right place in order to support and reinforce both processes—the planning process and the empowerment process.

Stages of Rational Comprehensive Planning

The steps of rational comprehensive planning appear on the left side of the table. Although this is not the only possible

kind of professional planning process, I have chosen to present it as a representative planning orientation because of the universality of its use. Rational comprehensive planning has served as a basis for most of the subsequent planning methods, as well as for models of problem solving. Here, because of these advantages, and despite its many disadvantages, it represents community planning (Alexander, 1984). I will briefly explain each of the stages of a rational comprehensive community planning process (Meyerson & Banfield, 1955).

1. Identifying the Problem and Collecting the Data

In this stage the community planner becomes acquainted with the reason for the planning, and with its site. If, for example, the planning calls for housing solutions in a particular neighborhood, the planner identifies the housing situation, and methodically collects data about the neighborhood as a whole and the housing conditions there.

2. Defining the Target Population

In this stage the planner becomes acquainted with the various populations in the arena of intervention. She locates the people who particularly suffer from housing problems, and decides on how to describe them. She may content herself with defining them by their housing situation only, e.g., – renters, owners, non-owners – or she may add data according to other criteria, such as age, size of family, seniority in the neighborhood, and the like. At this stage she engages in determining criteria for identifying and classifying various populations, their size, and the intensity of their problems.

3. Defining the Problems and Outlining the Goals

At this stage the goals of the project are presented. Defining the problems also means outlining the domains in which the planning will engage. Articulating the goals defines the

expectations for the project's achievements. The project's goal may be a solution to the housing problems of young couples living in the neighborhood.

4. Presenting the Alternatives

The community planner activates a planning process, in the course of which a number of ways of achieving the goals are proposed. Each of the proposed ways deals differently with the target populations and with the goals of the planning. Hence, different alternatives provide different solutions to the same problem. One alternative may propose the construction of public housing for young couples in a different part of the city, which young couples from the neighborhood in question will also be directed to. Another alternative may propose allocation of land in the neighborhood for a *Build Your Own Home* program for young couples born in the neighborhood only. A third alternative may be a change of land use regulations that will allow neighborhood residents to build housing for their children in the yards of their own homes.

5. Choosing the Preferred Alternative

The task in this stage is to consider the advantages and disadvantages of each of the alternatives developed in the previous stage, and to decide which alternative is the best. In practice, the planners do not make this decision. However, they help the decision makers to make it, by presenting their professional opinions and their estimates of the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative, in economic, social, environmental, psychological and other terms. They can thus have a considerable influence on the decision making. For this reason the various criteria the planners provide are very important, since they determine the extent to which they have facilitated a responsible and informed choice.

6. Designing the Plan

At the conclusion of the decision making stage, and after the preferred alternative has been chosen, the community planner designs a plan which will facilitate implementation of the chosen program. If the chosen alternative is the allocation of land in the neighborhood to build homes for young couples, it is necessary to set up an executive team, to start the necessary changes in the land use regulations and in the infrastructure blueprints, and to outline the stages of implementation of the project.

7. Implementing the Plan

In the classical planning process, implementation of the plan is not part of the planning, and the planner is not a participant in it. If we come back to our example, the executive team may be a firm of architects and planners who have been hired to implement the project, and the project manager will be a building engineer from the municipal engineering department. Today it is customary for planners to be part of the implementation team itself, but there are also cases in which the planner continues only in monitoring roles—to gauge the real success or failure of the implementation.

8. Evaluation

This stage is supposed to be implemented at the conclusion of the project, and it examines whether, and to what extent, the community planning project has achieved its goals. This is a stage which is frequently not implemented, at times because of the non-allocation of resources for the concluding stages and the evaluation of the project, most often because most projects in which comprehensive planning is involved are not implemented according to the original plan that was designed in the sixth stage, due to adaptations to a changing reality.

Stages of Empowering Community Planning

Eric Erickson (1963) outlined stages in people's combined biological, social, and psychological development. Although many different developmental phenomena occur in each of these stages, he chose to characterize each stage by a single task, completion of which was critical for the advancement of the process. Likewise, each stage in the process of enhancing community empowerment will bear the name of one critical task that the planner has to activate at that stage (beyond this analogy, there is no similarity between empowerment processes and Erickson's psycho-social development processes).

The Beginning of the Planning Intervention Process

The model presented in the table describes a complete hypothetical process, where the planner begins at the first stage of empowerment, and brings an empowering intervention in the lives of a powerless population to its successful conclusion. The reality, as usual, is more complicated and interesting. For example, community planners frequently arrive at a community which is in the fifth empowerment stage, i.e., that of resisting an existing outside plan. In certain cases, the planner enters the scene in the fourth stage—as one of the achievements of the local negotiations over allocation of additional resources to the community. At each stage, the community planner has to adapt herself to the time and place of her entry into the process. She has to integrate herself into the local empowerment process, to act in accordance with the community's norms and values, and to intervene in a manner that will reinforce local organization and patterns of cooperation that have been developed there before she arrived. In many senses these situations are more complicated than the situation in which the planner begins a planning process with a powerless group that is itself at the beginnings of its path. More than a few planners prefer the difficulties that accompany a process which begins at an initial stage

such as this, to the difficulties they may expect from having to adapt their efforts to local empowerment processes. Some of the difficulties that are characteristic of a late entry into a community empowerment process are:

1. The difficulty of creating relations of dialogue and trust when the community already has experience in creating connections of this kind with practitioners, while for the community planner relations on an equal basis are new and unfamiliar. Misunderstandings and friction between the community planner and the local leadership are liable to thwart the connection between them and consequently to sabotage the entire process.
2. The difficulty of understanding community values and local forms of action when the stormy dynamics of the process are already in progress. A new professional requires a period of learning and adaptation in order to become part of the process. When the process demands quick decisions, the planner is liable to act without a strategic understanding of the situation, and without understanding his role and his place in the process.
3. Groups which are in the midst of empowerment processes are still also in the midst of processes of developing their critical consciousness. One of the signs of this is the instability of this consciousness. Not infrequently, the community lacks sufficient confidence to understand the limitations of its empowerment.

Manifestations of this may be a leadership which presents an arrogant and omnipotent stance, or that the people find it difficult to define the kind of connection and the nature of the assistance they need from professionals. At times they think that they no longer need the services of community planning; in other cases they decide by themselves on the definition of the community planner's role, without allowing her to participate in the decision.

Power struggles and conflict characterize advanced stages of the community empowerment process. Community planners

who are not experienced in empowerment processes (and most are not) have to beware of several characteristic mistaken responses: they may receive the impression that they are not needed by the community at all; they may get offended by the lack of trust towards them, and sever the connection with the community and its leaders; they may forget that that in this situation the responsibility for a large part of the building of a relationship and a dialogue is still theirs and depends on their understanding of the process. The planner has to conduct negotiations with the community about her role and the kind of connection she is to have with it; she must try, as far as possible, to avoid conflict over respect, and must strive to create a work contract with the community; most importantly, she must take care not to submit to attempts to position her in a marginal role that will prevent her from being effective in the process.

There thus exists a great potential for friction and even conflict in relations with the community when the community planner enters the planning in advanced stages of the community empowerment process. The more advanced the community is in the empowerment process, and the later the planner enters the process, the greater the potential for conflict. When the empowerment process stabilizes, the community is more experienced in working with professionals, and is relatively organized. At this stage, entry into the planning process is different, more like a contract with any powerful client who is aware of his needs.

Likewise, entry into a place of powerlessness entails many stumbling blocks for the planner. The quiescence and alienation that characterize community powerlessness are indeed accompanied by suspicion and mistrust, but on a superficial view they create the illusion of agreement with the planning. Interpreting community quiescence as a kind of acquiescence is a common mistake made by planners. Many of them understand the alienation as indifference and as proof that the people are not interested in active cooperation. From the point of view of the planners, entering into planning

in a powerless environment may be relatively tranquil and orderly. The planner senses the silence, the alienation, the suspicion and the indifference towards himself, but since he is not involved in a confrontational situation, or under political pressure, and is not obliged to make changes in his role, he is not personally threatened. True, an important side is absent from the planning, but because of this the actual task becomes more simple. The danger is that a planner who is not willing to pay the price of stormy planning and uncertainty, may have to pay the price of disempowering and ineffective planning.

When a community planner enters a community that has already achieved the ability to represent itself, she has to time and to coordinate the planning process and the critical tasks (from her point of view, not that of the community) with many people. Since the planner is not directly or exclusively responsible for the enhancing of community empowerment, she is liable to think that her role as an empowering practitioner is not important at all. The planner's entry stage therefore also requires evaluation of the extent of community empowerment that exists in this place: the extent of ability and control, the sense of community, standards of participation and organization present in the planning environment.

In the community planning process with the group of parents of children with disabilities, the community planner and the group began working together almost from the first stage. There was a need for certain adjustments, because three of the parents had been active on behalf of their children very intensively, although not effectively, for many years. The community planner respected their activism, and recognized its value for their individual empowerment. This small group became integrated in the new organization. Although the planner's attitude may seem obvious, experience teaches that not a few community planners would choose to ignore the senior activists and their history, and even to confront them

Table 1—Stages of Empowering Community Planning

	Stages of the community empowerment process	Stages of the empowerment faciliatation process	Stages of the rational comprehensive planning process
1	Discovering the critical characteristic.	Developing relations of trust and dialogue.	Problem identification and data gathering.
2	Creating the partnership.	Creating a participatory infrastructure.	Defining the target population.
3	Self-definition.	Defining the planner's roles.	Defining the problems and designing the goals.
4	Self-representation.	Developing the organization.	Preparing alternative plans.
5	Active opposition.	Developing the strategy.	Choosing the preferred alternative.
6	Presentation of an alternative.	Presenting the alternative plan.	Presenting the final plan.
	Implementation	*Implementation*	*Implementation*
7	Evaluating the achievements and discovering the limitations of empowerment.	Evaluating if, and how much, empowerment was enabled through the process.	Evaluating the plan's impact on the severity of the problem.

as ineffective and as obstacles to organizational change, thus missing out on the entire empowerment process.

Stage 1: Developing Relations of Trust and Dialogue

In the first stage of the rational planning process, the planner engages in understanding the context—in identifying problems and collecting data. To a large extent, the stage of entering upon a new planning task begins with a widening of the original project's concrete context. This is a spatial activity, which includes people, services and environment. This stage involves quite a number of personal decisions about the style suitable for the dialogue with the people. In many cases the professional begins working without knowing at this early stage who the dialogue is going to be with.

In this stage, the community planner develops a sensitivity towards the place by means of regular presence and becoming personally acquainted with as many people as possible. The emphasis is on opening up good and numerous channels of communication, as a basis for establishing relations of mutual trust. In this stage there is no substitute for the practitioner's personal acquaintance and personal connections with people in the arena of the intended planning. Not a few planners content themselves at this stage with collecting statistical data or holding interviews using questionnaires in order to identify problems and collect data. Limiting oneself to such technical means at this stage may harm the process. If trust is not established between the planner and the people, they will remain outside the process that she initiates, and she will lack feedback on the meaning of the information she has collected. The dialogue created at this stage also contributes to mutual interpretation of the information that has been collected, including the people's knowledge about the place and about themselves. The interpretation that is produced in the course of this interaction facilitates feedback and filtering of partial impressions and of one-sided views that are characteristic of the initial stages of becoming acquainted

with one another. At this stage the planner begins the praxis – learning through action – and gathers new insights as he learns.

It is important for the professional to be conscious of the language that he uses and of the verbal and non-verbal messages that he transmits to the people around him. Since hidden messages have great empowering (and disempowering) potential, everything that transpires in the domain of language and messages requires streamlining and consciousness raising. In community planning agencies I have researched, I did not find an awareness of the importance and the power of messages, or of the importance of dialogue in the opening stage of the planning process.

In this stage, first agreements for collaboration are drawn up. The practitioner's initial attitude towards the place and the people is much more important than the objective data-collection (Reid & Aguilar, 1991). Hence, there is no substitute for the practitioner's consistent presence in the place and his personal contacts with the people. The place has to be learned through its history, its culture, and its everyday life, in order to understand the past, evaluate the present, and collaborate on producing alternatives towards the future. Getting acquainted and establishing trust are processes that take time, and this time has to be devoted if one wants to achieve outcomes. The community planner's commitment to devoting time to the process is the basis for the trust that is created between him and the local people from the first stage on. His consistent and continuous presence proves his commitment. Further on in the process, he will be able to base participation in the planning process upon this commitment.

Stage 2: Creating a Participatory Infrastructure

In the second stage of the comprehensive planning process, the focus is on the target population for which the planning is intended. Planning is an intervention in the human environment, and hence it is very important to define this environment from as early a stage as possible. I am aware that in the classical rational comprehensive planning process there is no real obligation towards the real target population of the planning, beyond a formal one. The *client* is the one who commissions the work—he pays for the planning, has to be satisfied, and his interests must be acknowledged by the planners. Community planning, in contrast, has to declare its obligation to a particular community, even when it is not facilitating empowerment. This obligation ensures that the community planner will be concerned from the outset not only with the interests of the people who contract for the planning and of her employers, but also with those of the people who will be influenced by the planning.

In this stage it is important to develop the sense of togetherness that will characterize the continuation of the empowerment process. This is the stage in which a community begins to be created. The sense of a common fate, a common interest, and the subsequent common struggle are what create it.

Participation is the critical task of this stage—the outcome which is to be encouraged is partnership. This is the appropriate time for preparing the infrastructures and for creating the possibilities for people sharing a critical characteristic to manage their own affairs. Although we are speaking about new partners, who are perhaps not yet committed to the planning, it is preferable to invest in encouraging a partnership around a common general vision or issue; it is wasteful to invest in particular plans which will later change entirely. Planners who want to implement a ready-made model of participation risk initiating a technical procedure which, even if it does not become disempowering, misses out on the essential creativity and the empowerment potential of a process that is created by the people themselves. In Holland, for example, a technical procedure of public participation in each planning stage was developed. Even if we assume that the procedure was appropriate to all the

people it was applied to, it was the professionals who wearied of it (as I was told by Andreas Faludy, in a conversation in 1992). In the Urban Renewal Project in Israel, the regulations determining residents' representation in the project's steering committees caused similar damage. In a large portion of the neighborhoods, the implementation of this *participation* procedure did not correspond with the processes of participation that developed locally, and frequently was more injurious than useful to the process. Although the project's evaluators praised the fact that there was participation, and the institutional recognition of the need for it, they estimated that the level of participation in the project was not high (Alterman & Churchman, 1991).

Community planners I have interviewed were convinced of the importance of participation as a major strategy and as a goal in itself in their work. At the same time, there was a predominant sense that participation, as a concept, was identical with empowerment. Hence it is important to recognize that a formal procedure of participation is no more than a framework for various approaches. *Participation* is not more empowering than *democracy*. Formal structures of participation and democracy are indeed necessary conditions, which provide a basis and a context for the development of empowerment, but they are not sufficient for enhancing empowerment. In order to understand what advances empowerment and what is disempowering in the participation process, we have to devote thought to rules of caution, which are recommendations on how to avoid disempowerment. These are principles of social hygiene, the fulfillment of which creates the (necessary, though not sufficient) conditions for the facilitation of empowerment by means of participation. Likewise, we must analyze the active practice: by accepting these recommendations, the professional ensures the sufficient conditions for enhancement of empowerment in the course of her professional practice. The list of rules of caution and rules of practice may not exhaust all the possibilities of empowerment (and disempowerment) that exist in situations

of participation, but it helps to clarify the differences between participation and empowerment.

Rules of Caution

Caution in professional practice means sensitivity and openness towards the local people. In this way the community planner proves that he is avoiding any arbitrary activity that may harm the social tissues and social networks, especially those whose existence he is unaware of.

A. *The empowerment paradox* has been stated thus: "that even the people most incompetent, in need, and apparently unable to function, require, just as you and I do, more rather than less control over their lives" (Rappaport, 1987, p. 15). It is especially the alienated, weak and dependent people who need to obtain more control over their lives and environments. The paradox warns against the tendency to develop a patronizing attitude towards weak people, to act for them and thus to preserve their inactivity while letting them go through rites of *participation*.

B. *The bias in needs identification* originates in seeing participation principally as a reliable way of collecting information about the participants' needs. The focus on participation for the purpose of identifying needs creates a disempowering *division of roles*. In this division, the local people are the experts on *the needs*, while the professionals are experts on *the fulfillments*. Or, in other words, the people bring *the problem*, and the professionals bring *the solution*. Despite its prevalence, there are no firm proofs of the effectiveness of this division. To date it has not been proved that the experts on solving social problems are exclusively, or especially, the professionals (Borkrnan, 1990).

Empowering participation means accepting the participants as complete people with wants and aspirations, knowledge and skills, and not only as people

with needs. The very willingness of professionals to relate to people's hopes and to use their knowledge in the framework of a common project is in itself a very powerful message in the direction of empowerment. Empowerment is realized when people begin to believe in themselves as thinking people with abilities and hopes for the future, and do not see themselves only as a source of problems in the present.

C. Avoidance of external intervention in local participation processes. External dictates of conditions for participation may be disempowering. A common example of such external intervention is a one-sided demand on the part of professionals that the local partners in the participation process hold elections to choose their own representatives. Since the empowerment process on the community level means more control by the local people in their affairs, such intervention is a disempowering message. It is preferable for professionals to try to collaborate with the local people, and together with them to formulate rules for local participation. To trample down a local process and dictate the manner of participation from the outside are disempowering actions. All that it achieves, is yet another affirmation of the superiority of experts – this time, experts on resident participation – over the local knowledge and initiatives.

D. Developing a leadership is not the only vision. Some professionals tend to content themselves with developing leaders, or encouraging an existing leadership, and involving them in the planning process. Empowerment is a process intended for all the people, not only for potential leaders. Although a local leadership is an important means of advancing community empowerment, as a strategy of cooperation it is important to remember that empowerment wants to mobilize and activate as many people as possible, to extend the basis of participation, and to provide a diversity of opportunities and subjects for participation (Churchman, 1987). Empowerment is

to a large extent an extension of the idea of leadership into the idea of active citizenship.

E. The fallacy of *representative* or *typical* representation. There is no such thing as *a typical resident* who by her very presence represents all the other local people. Some experts assume that the participants from the community have to represent all the other residents in their way of life and their way of thinking. This is a misleading and discriminatory assumption. Such representatives when chosen do not live up to these expectations, and when it becomes evident that they represent only themselves, it is the professionals who are most disappointed in them, and in the idea of participation altogether. This disappointment leads to a decline in the motivation to encourage participation, and the process generally degenerates until it stops.

F. Participation may isolate and exclude. A danger exists in the seemingly equal treatment of all the participants in the participation procedures. If the non-professional participants do not receive special attention in the course of the process, they will not be able to follow the contents and the expert language, or to understand the various ramifications of the plan, and will lack information sources of their own and an organization to support them. Instead of participation, a frustrating situation arises, where the local participants cannot act effectively for their own interests because they lack the tools. When, despite these limitations, they do act, they are subjected to paralyzing criticism for their inappropriate behavior in the formal forums.

Rules of Practice

Rules of practice are what advances empowerment and creation of a community. The participation process is an opportunity to demonstrate to people that they can work for the good of the community, and it provides them with

practical tools and diverse opportunities to do so. It develops people's organizational ability through involvement in making important decisions in their community.

A. Thinking and action. Participation has a chance of empowering the community if it provides opportunities for active involvement of as many participants as possible, and for thinking about this action. Likewise, it is important that the recruiting of participants be done by the practitioner himself, as part of his dialogue with the community. It is important to ensure that the local people do not get a feeling that an external system is interfering arbitrarily in their lives as a condition for allocation of resources. Participation has to be an expression of an opportunity for change, a will to take on a new challenge, and a learning of new abilities, not a bureaucratic dictate (Breton, 1994).

B. A process of developing skills and abilities. Participation processes should be accompanied by appropriate training of both the participants and the professionals. This participation is a mutual process of learning and development, from which the task should stem. The recommended learning method is that of praxis, learning that integrates theory and action into a commonly shared understanding. The professional is both a teacher who guides the process, and a learner herself. The process leads to the personal growth of all the participants, as well as to their ecological ability to act for the good of the environment (Breton, 1994). The critical consciousness that the professional has acquired as a tool for her own use now serves her in the empowerment process and helps her to teach people to understand their situation, to criticize it, and to act for change (Freire, 1970).

C. An opportunity for people to fill socially valuable roles. The opportunity to fill a role that is of value to the community is an important element of the empowerment process. Some writers believe that it is even worthwhile to underman new programs in order to give participants

in them an opportunity to organize, manage and run services by themselves (Rappaport, 1987).

D. Taking responsibility. Powerlessness causes people to feel that the responsibility for their fate and that of their families is in other people's hands. A person who depends on others and does not believe in her ability to change things also does not see herself as responsible for her life. Hence, experience in responsibility is an important corrective experience. Taking responsibility has a dramatic effect on the community level. Participation enables communities to take responsibility for their own existence again, or for the first time in their history. This is one of the distinctive signs of the realization of community empowerment.

E. Integration of task and process. The empowerment process demands that community planners devote time, effort and resources to two domains concurrently: to the managing of the planning task, and to the empowerment process. The investment in facilitation of empowerment, concurrently with achieving the concrete tasks, is not a simple matter. However, without investment in the processes, any social project will suffer from superficiality and will miss out on its main goals. Although the process consumes resources of its own, it leads to an outcome that is qualitatively different from that which is achieved by task-oriented means only. At the same time, it is important to remember that the converse is also true: when there are no real achievements, the empowerment process loses vitality. All the participants in the process invest effort and resources in it and want to achieve practical outcomes efficiently and in a reasonable time (Churchman, 1990a). There is no point in participation if it does not yield practical achievements.

Stage 3: Defining The Planner's Roles

At this stage, relations of trust between the planner and the people in the planning environment have already been established, a feeling of community has begun to form, and a basis exists for partnership in the planning. A diagnosis of the problems the inclusive planning has to focus on has already been made through an integration of the local people's experiential knowledge with the planner's professional knowledge. Now, as the community's self-definition develops, a definition of the role of the community planner, who makes his professional knowledge and previous experience available to the current process, develops as well. Since projects differ considerably in the circumstances and the subjects of the planning, and in the stage the community has reached in the process, in each case the planner's various roles will carry a different weight. In the first part of the book I surveyed a variety of roles that the planner may fill. Here I will pause over two roles that are especially important for the community's ability to define itself—the role of teacher and the role of activator.

The Role of the Teacher and Mentor

The planner's role as a teacher and mentor stems from the constant need to develop the knowledge, skills and abilities of the community. People who can help in the self-definition and building of the community's norms are essential to the empowerment process, and it is the community planner's task to cultivate them. As long as there exists no local leadership that can take responsibility for the community and its affairs, the professional has to ensure representation of the community before various agencies in the planning process. In this domain she functions both as a source of knowledge and as a consultant for the decision makers and the other participants in the planning process.

Development of the participants' knowledge accords them an ability to formulate issues and goals of change. The community's self-definition is at once an emotional experience, a political declaration, and an intellectual process (Boyte, 1984). On the intellectual level, the self-definition stage demands an ability to formulate goals of change. Even though this sounds absurd, people can have the gravest problems, and can feel them without being able to formulate or define them as issues (Alinsky, 1972).

Empowerment attributes great importance to learning—from critical and strategic thinking to organizational skills of management and maintenance. Freire's thinking about literacy, and his methods too, can thus complement the professional practice of encouraging empowerment in important ways. Just as power and knowledge are integrated in Foucault's thought, so illiteracy and powerlessness are integrated in Freire's approach (1970). The ability to think and to be critical develops when people are enabled to express themselves and to know themselves. A person is not a tabula rasa, but possesses many abilities—to know, to create texts, to express his world view and his thoughts. Every person comes to the process with what he has, and the teacher's role is to help him discover and develop himself.

Since people convey the message that they experience rather than the message they understand rationally, the planner has to take responsibility for forming the particular synthesis of systematic and professional knowledge and experiential knowledge appropriate to her style and her personality. In this way she commits to learning how to be self-critical.

The adoption of Freire's approach involves choosing a number of components in the planning environment which are most significant in the participant's lives. In the same way that Freire creates a text book with his learners, the planner can create a *planning log* with the participants, which can help them identify the subjects important to them, develop them into an action plan, and understand their world through it.

In Freire's method, familiar words are used as codified representations of the learners' existential situations. Each word is positioned inside a scene from the learners' lives. The learners describe the familiar situation, and discuss it in a discussion group with the teachers. This is the learning of the code—the superficial structure of the situation. The second stage is that of "decoding"—developing an understanding of the relations between the word and the situation within the scene. After the people engage in dialogue about the reality as they experience it, they continue analyzing the words in order to understand them in different contexts as well. Instead of receiving external information about one fact or another from the teacher, the learners analyze various aspects of their existential experience. Codes of the existing reality may also be decoded by means of community planning. The planner can begin with a log of the local planning which the people prepare together with him, and can go on, using Freire's method, to decipher the deeper meaning of the described reality. This analysis leads to new insights about change, which can serve as a basis for constructing an alternative community plan.

In order to work this way, full cooperation between the teacher and the learners is essential. According to Freire, the learner is at the center of the learning process. Freire rejects methods in which the learner is a passive object who cooperates in a task that has no connection with the socio-cultural reality he lives in. Likewise, empowering community planning places the people at the center of the planning process and together with them shapes the goals that are relevant to the reality of their lives.

Routine plans of community planning are an example of a converse method. For example, in the Urban Renewal Project it used to be customary to divide a community planning project into two—a physical project and a social project. In my estimation, this division symbolized the alienation between the local people and the project, which did not reflect their world and their way of thinking. The result, after ten years

of intensive activity in the neighborhoods (each numbering a few thousand residents), is that most of the residents in these neighborhoods were not acquainted with the project that operated in their neighborhood, and did not make use of the various services that were planned for them (Alterman & Churchman, 1991).

The Role of the Activator

The empowering planner is sometimes called a radical planner (Schuman, 1987; Friedmann, 1987). What this means is not quite clear, for radicalism, in the sense of extremism, is a relative matter. The literature that deals with planners indicates that most of them are not interested in radical practice of any kind (Baum, 1986). We will define the radical planner as an activating planner who is actively involved in creating a community and in encouraging people's control over their environment.

The main radical characteristics in the planner's role are a critical approach to the existing situation and an oppositionary attitude as a planning strategy. Although the radical planner has confrontations with the establishment, in most cases these conclude in full cooperation (Friedmann, 1987). Hence, one may say that swimming against the stream, mobilizing people into action, and struggling against barriers are characteristics of any planner who is ready to struggle for something she believes in (Faludi,1990). It is my impression that disempowering planners are those who tend to see the opposite end of the scale – the undirected, people-focused approach that operates from below – as extreme radical activity. These planners, who perceive their role as essentially technical and consultative, feel there is a conflict of interests between an obligation towards empowerment and their other tasks. For example, the opposition between empowering the weak people in the planning arena and an obligation towards stronger groups in the same environment. Or, the community planner's obligation towards the planning process itself, as

prior to his obligation towards certain groups taking part in the process. Some planners believe that the professional's objective stance is undermined by the empowering role, and oppose it vigorously. I have found that the more that planners see themselves committed to the planning project itself, the more they see empowerment as a practice that does not correspond with their aims and roles.

It is important to note that most community projects are not conflictual. Their aim, generally, is integrative: community development, and integration of the community in the society around it. The social struggle takes place, if at all, in the initial stages of the change processes, and after this the community is built with the establishment's cooperation of and financing (Boyte, 1984; Rose & Black, 1985). Cases in which the radical strategy is the core of the project are most rare (Schuman, 1987). We may therefore define an activating planner as someone who does not recoil from conflict and struggle, is willingly involved in the planning, and understands the necessity of politics. However, in those cases where such planners have both struggled and managed to achieve their goals and to survive in their positions, the role appears much less radical than in cases where there were failures (e.g., Krumholz & Forester, 1990, Schuman, 1987).

As we will recall, the belief in the need to solve social problems in a way that accords people a better control over their lives may also be viable in the framework of a moderate liberal democratic framework. It seems to me that what we call radicalism is a declaration of the community planner's anti-conservative and anti-liberal world view. In practice, community planners who are moderate in their views, and empowering in their professional approach, may also employ means of struggle and resistance if there is a need for it. For our understanding of the community planners' role, it seems to me more useful to define them as community activators than to think of them as radical or moderate.

Stage 4: Developing Organization

In the self-representation stage of the community empowerment process, considerable knowledge and an adequate level of participation to propose various alternatives for achievements of goals already exist. This is therefore the time to start establishing an organization. The organization is necessary to make it possible to confront situations of resistance and organizational outflanking, and to achieve complex goals, which are the tasks of the next stage. The critical task in the present stage is to help the community develop appropriate organizational tools for achieving its goals.

Power theories have contributed a great deal to our understanding of the importance of organization for community empowerment. The concept of organizational outflanking (Mann, 1986) emphasizes the importance of developing empowerment methods that are specific to the organizational domain: development of alternative organizational resources, control of existing organizational resources, and experience in activating organizational resources. Encouragement of community empowerment in this stage involves, firstly, establishment of an organization, and secondly, improvement of the community's ability to control its affairs by using this organization efficiently and enduringly.

While the need to fit the structure of the organization to the patterns of activity is a source of tension and change in organizations (Clegg, 1989), the lack of fit between institutional solutions and human needs is a cause of the powerlessness of the weakest and most needy people. Hence, we may conceptualize an organization that advances empowerment as a proper fit of an organizational form to a social environment. The danger lies in the organizational tendency to duplicate structures of power—to adapt an organization to the organizational environment. The empowering organization, which is generally different and unique in its surroundings,

is liable, once it is established, to follow socially accepted organizational principles, and to neglect empowerment principles.

Organization and the individual. Individual empowerment means a person's liberation from an undesirable situation in the power relations. The individual's consciousness of the harm that institutions and organizations have caused him creates a resistance in him towards them, and he recoils from them even when he needs them for his own purposes. A very common expression of this resistance is people's sweeping and fundamental repugnance for *bureaucracy* of any kind. However, the organization also constitutes a means for individuals to become involved in social frameworks which they previously did not even know about. For example: joining a social club, or membership in a branch of a political party. Because the entire process of individual empowerment may take on a unique form, the reasons and motivations for organizing, too, are unique to the conditions and circumstances in which each individual finds herself. The activity that mediates between the individual and the organization takes place in the group.

Organization and group. In a group, tension arises between two wants: the want to improve a personal position in the power relations field, and the want to realize social goals beyond the personal goals of the group's members. When the group exists primarily for purposes of social support and consciousness-raising, no contradiction will arise in this domain. A shortage of community goals does not frustrate the group's ability to function; it only limits its roles. In contrast, a group which has political aspirations and goals of social change, which is interested in outcomes that can be achieved only through action in the field of power relations, has to set up an organization. In the group, then, processes of organizational institutionalization meet with the members' needs for support, spontaneity, and self-definition. Hence

groups have to seek organizational solutions which will both ensure the group's ability to grapple with political tasks, and encourage the members' individual empowerment. Experience also teaches that an organization which is formed in the course of empowerment processes is liable to turn into a disempowering organization. Community organizations which have become rigid bodies that are inaccessible to other groups in the community are a common social phenomenon.

Organization and community. If from a group point of view the organization is an option, from a community point of view setting up an organization is the process itself. Hence it is important to check to what extent the organizational model itself advances or frustrates empowerment. Empowering community planning is tested by its ability to integrate an empowering social solution with an empowering organizational solution.

Michel Foucault (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982) contributes important insights for the construction of an empowering community organization. Organizing is essential, in his view too, because the answer to power mechanisms is to develop methods of dealing with their harmful consequences. I propose the adoption of the following conclusions, selected from his writings:

1. A community organization must avoid *the supervisory gaze* that characterizes disempowering organizations. The working methods in such an organization will unequivocally avoid reaching conclusions without the community's participation, and will shun work methods based on observation and supervision. It is important to plan a space which cannot be encompassed by a supervisory gaze; to create a structure and an atmosphere that respect people's privacy as well as their right to assemble without a hierarchical gaze over both these behaviors. This should be strengthened by corresponding physical planning of the organizational setting, as specified in 5 below.

2. A community organization will not impose rules and regulations upon its participants; rather, it will draw the rules and regulations for its operation from the principles upon which it is built.

3. The organization will behave with sensitivity towards each person's body and privacy. According to Foucault, a person's body is an especially crowded intersection of power relations, because too many institutions take an interest in the person's body and psyche. This point is self-evident when homosexuals protest against discrimination and exclusion on the grounds of their sexual preferences, or when dark-skinned people complain about discrimination in a white society.

However, it also touches much more *ordinary* populations—for example, those people who are considered *bad human material* (this is a literal translation from Hebrew of professional parlance in certain circles in Israel!) according to the criteria of one institution or another (school, the army, etc.). Their *failure* is not grasped by the institution as its own failure but as the failure of the individuals. An empowering organization must exercise an opposite approach: it has to seek within itself for the causes of failure.

4. A community organization must diminish the importance of common formal tests, such as entrance and eligibility tests. On the other hand, it must attribute greater importance to messages and symbols, especially to indirect messages. For example, a community organization which is developing a program for parents will recognize that a name like *School for Parents* may transmit a disempowering message to parents who experienced failure as children at school. If these are the people it wants to involve, such a name and framework will not be suitable (Freire & Horton, 1990).

5. A community organization will take care to transmit an empowering message in the planning of the physical space in which it is located as well. Foucault analyzed the similarities among jails, factories, schools and hospitals, and showed how the idea of disciplinary power found its physical expression in the majority of social institutions. Hence, attention should be paid to potentially disempowering meanings and messages that the organization's structure and design are liable to convey to people. Symbols of hierarchy and rule should be abandoned, and a more equitable message should be created through the architectural design of the physical space as well (Peters, 1987).

Principles of an Empowering Community Organization

1. The organization is a means of achieving change and not an end in itself. Hence, its importance lies in its continuous activity, and its advantage lies in its simple structure. In order to be able to act, it must be based on clear communications and on as flat a structure as possible, and it must be committed to constant learning and innovation. When developing a new plan, it is preferable to create a new structure, and thus to split the activity into small units which increase the number of opportunities for people in the community to participate in the organizational effort.

2. The organization is committed to its aims and to providing for the community's needs and wants. Hence, each new service that is set up has to undergo maximal adaptation to its users. In no case is a standard service to be set up.

3. Since the organization's major resource is its activists and clients – the people of the community – it must be built to preserve a constant contact with them. The community is the source of the organization's inspiration, and its members fill valuable roles in its frameworks.

4. A community organization may not content itself with routine activity; it has to be an enthusiastic partner of the community in attaining its objectives. The organization's

role is to continue creating a community through a vision of its mission, identification with local culture and pride in its own existence.

5. In order to ensure preservation of its uniqueness and its relevance, the organization – in its structure, its objectives, and its style of action – has to be based on local knowledge. As I have already said several times in this book, most of the valid knowledge in the social domain is based on experiential knowledge, so that an organization which operates in this way will be built on a solid basis of knowledge.

6. In order for the organization to become an empowering factor in the community, it has to operate on a high level of commitment and morality, and to insist on norms of organizational behavior that create respect and appreciation towards it and towards the community it represents. In this sphere it is necessary to safeguard a high degree of firmness, for otherwise the organization is liable to lose acceleration and uniqueness, and become just another institution. On the other hand, in order to ensure continued relevance, the community organization needs to be flexible and prepared to respond to new initiatives. This synthesis – of insisting firmly on values while letting diversified initiatives guide the organization's activities – characterizes successful community organizations (Peters & Waterman, 1982.)

Like participation, organization and organizing are not in themselves empowering processes. Community organizations may be as rigid, hierarchical, and disempowering as any other organization. Hence, there is always the danger that an empowering organizing process may be followed by the setting up of a disempowering organization. Awareness of this danger does not ensure immunity against it, but it does promote the creation of important preventive mechanisms in the form of the empowering principles presented here.

Stage 5: Strategy Development

In this stage the community is already capable of expressing its opinion about its problematic situation, and even of actively resisting a plan it finds undesirable. The ability to resist existing policy or plans, we will recall, is an important condition for ensuring the community's survival. In the comprehensive rational planning process, the preferred alternative is chosen at this stage. If the planning is neither participatory nor empowering, and is conducted with no regard for the community, this is a choice that the community is liable to organize against. In this stage an empowerment-enhancing community planner engages in developing the community's strategic ability. Among other things, she may teach them how to resist effectively and to initiate their own alternative. When the community planning process cooperates with the community empowerment processes, the community can move on to the next stage—to develop an independent plan on the basis of alternatives that were developed in the earlier stages. This stage, then, is designed for strategic confrontation against a solution, a situation or a policy that the community does not agree with. The community planner's main task in this stage is to help the community develop a winning strategy.

The community planner's dilemma about political involvement. The community planner's difficult dilemma stems from the potential for tension and conflict that exists in this stage. Although resistance is an expression of active participation in the power relations, and a test of the efficiency of the community's organizational and tactical power, the community planner's commitment to the empowerment process is also put to the test here. In a situation of resistance and active struggle around the planning itself, the community planner cannot not take a position. And yet, quite unrealistically, at this very stage his employers expect him to be neutral, which means only one thing—that they expect him to support them, and at least not to act openly on the

community's side. This happens even if until this point he has been involved in all the stages, and his positions on the disputed subject are known.

For example, in the process of setting up the service for children with disabilities, when a dispute arose between the new parents' community organization and the local authority, the community planner's superiors said that she had to decide where she belonged, and claimed that she was behaving disloyally when she went on working with the organization. The local service for community planning that I investigated prevented its planners from getting involved in any resistance against

City Hall from the outset. The service forbade community planners to take actions that might be interpreted as political involvement, as part of a policy not to antagonize agencies providing finance and legitimation against the service. The time of this policy was a stormy political period in local government, but the message was understood by the planners and it has guided them ever since, in calmer times as well.

We may sum up and say that in this stage planners are expected to be politically involved in a way which may make them recoil from encouraging community empowerment. In some of the personal interviews, and in the group discussions, a few of those interviewed expressed the feeling that there exists a conflict of interests between the idea of empowerment and loyalty to the employer. None of them claimed that their job, or their advancement in the service, were endangered by being politically involved against their own employer, but experience teaches that such a danger indeed exists.

Developing Strategies of Coping with Power

Theories of power, as we have seen, reveal methods of ensuring obedience and discipline that are exercised upon the weak in the power relations. It is to those theories that we must go to draw ideas for strategies of coping with these methods.

Empowering community planning, in this stage, engages in several tasks at once: the technical task of choosing among alternatives becomes a process of development of capabilities: the community has to learn how to present its opinion about those alternatives it objects to in a substantiated manner, based on facts and findings as well (Churchman, 1979). On the more dynamic and political level, the community planner has to engage in two processes: to help the people understand the means and methods of disempowerment that are liable to be used against them in a political struggle, and to help then develop an active strategy of dealing with the difficulties of the confrontation they are involved in.

The very act of setting up a community organization is the most efficient strategy of coping with a hostile environment. However, with or without an organization, it is necessary to learn how to cope with the overt, covert and latent dimensions of power (Gaventa, 1980), and this is what we will discuss now.

Developing a strategy for coping with the overt dimension of power relations. Resistance to an existing plan takes place in the overt dimension of power relations. The ability to appear in the decision making arena is an important sign of the realization of the empowerment process and of emergence from a passive stance towards what goes on in the relevant environment. At the same time, it is important to recall that appearing in the arena does not attest to an ability to join and participate in it permanently. Entering the arena without tools, or unsystematically, may conclude in a major effort that may bring about a particular change, yet without fundamentally influencing the way decisions are made in the community.

For example, the struggle over the school: the struggle of the students who came out against a municipal decision was itself a proof of the empowerment of the participants in the process. But the struggle over the school was also conducted in more sophisticated decision making arenas,

and here manipulations that the students and parents did not have the tools to cope with were already exercised. Firstly, when the students held a demonstration at the beginning of the struggle, the local authority announced that they were minors and therefore no negotiations would be held with them. This was a tactic of division, based on a calculation that the parents would be an easier partner to negotiate with. The students, however, managed to get the parents involved and to get them to identify with their struggle and their way of conducting it.

After this, the parents demanded that representatives of the students council also participate in all the discussions. When the Knesset Education committee decided on a common forum that would make decisions about the school's future, a situation arose in which the students and their parents were a minority among professionals from several organizations. Thus from the outset there was no chance that their proposal might get accepted, and indeed it was not accepted. In that forum it was decided to open the registration zones from which students came to this school to registration for two more schools in the city. The students and their parents were not pleased with this decision, but they were forced to accept it, because they had agreed in advance to the negotiation rules.

After several years of observing the occurrences at and around the school, nothing definite may be said about the change effected in the school by the struggle. The extensive sympathy of public opinion for the students' struggle, and the local and national press coverage, influenced the decision makers' attitude towards the school. The struggle affected the way the local authority relates to the participation of students and parents in the education system, and the allocation of resources to the school. There has been an improvement in the level of achievement of the students at the school, but not to the extent of closing the gap between it and other schools in the city. Since that time, there has been no further attempt to close the school, but there have been efforts to give it new

contents and a different character. Furthermore, since the struggle over the school, the local authority has been working to change the character of social integration in the education system (see discussion below).

Generally, local resistance is not a publicized event as in the example above. In an especially severe case in a particular neighborhood in the Urban Renewal Project, people who resisted the plan were subjected to intimidation and humiliation on the part of the local authority. The situation there changed for the better after advocacy on behalf of the neighborhood by independent professionals and journalists who exposed the oppression and protested against it. Generally, however, resistance is a local matter, and the activists are subjected to pressures of cooption. They are invited to join the authorities and to receive benefits that will cause them to moderate their attitudes or to give them up entirely. For this reason the leaders of COPS in San Antonio, for example, rejected attempts to bring them closer, and avoided any contact with politicians, in order to prevent temptations and attempts to coopt them (Boyte, 1984).

It is important to provide support and guidance to new participants in the power relations who are taking part in the overt stage of discovery of decision making. They need to be trained to cope with circumstances that may arise in the decision making arena. At this stage a community planner who is not a community worker by profession may recommend that the community bring in consultants who are experts in negotiations and political struggle. However, if she is the only professional in the planning environment, she has to be alert to this need from the outset, and to diagnose the extent to which she herself can be of assistance in this sphere.

Developing a strategy for coping with the covert dimension of power relations. The covert dimension contains mechanisms that are aimed to limit the ability of resistance to power as much as possible. Empowerment strategies in this dimension

concentrate on exposing these mechanisms and developing a critical awareness towards them.

A. Developing a strategy for situations in which a consensus exists about one position, and no legitimation exists for the positions that the community represents. This kind of situation may indicate a mobilization of prejudice in order to preserve the existing situation. An empowering strategy will seek to open up public discussion on this subject in order to bring in a diversity of positions and opinions.

For example, in the struggle over the school, the discussion on the character of the integration process in that city was reopened. For many years there had been an acceptance of the situation of one-way bussing of students from the lower social class in the city to upper class areas in the city. Since the school is situated in a lower class area, it lost out from this form of integration, because students from the upper class were not brought there, while students from the area itself were bussed to schools in more established areas of the city. In fact, because of the character of these arrangements, the integration program was never really implemented at the school. The leaders of the struggle for the school claimed that if this was the reason for closing the school, then a grave social situation was being perpetuated here: no hope for educational institutions of a high standard in the poor areas of the city.

When a policy of changing the education structure in the city was announced, on the face of it there seemed to be no direct connection with the struggle over this school. The new program proposed that parents could choose a school for their children already at Junior High level (before this, free choice was allowed only at High School level. In this way attention was diverted from the past to the future, and this too is a tactic of power. The proposed change in education structure in the city obscured the main issues that interest many of the city's residents, the students of this particular school and their parents included. The new program is complex, it has various sections, and these are not presented

in full detail. For this reason, among others, it cannot be understood by someone who is not an expert on education (another tactic of power). In this way the new program is *sold* to various groups as the product that they want, despite the completely contradictory wants of these groups. Because of their developed critical awareness, the activists from this particular school, both students and parents, understood at once that the new program would harm them. However, due to a lack of a suitable organization they did not have the tools to oppose it. This was a city-wide program, and their strength was sufficient only for action within the boundaries of their school.

B. Developing a strategy for an ongoing situation of non-participation of certain groups in the decision making process. Here there is a need to examine the direct and indirect obstacles that have been set up to prevent participation. Exposing the obstacles is an achievement in the domain of critical consciousness, and a basis for preparations for social change. The great difficulty lies in overcoming them.

We may understand this better if we take as an example the findings of the evaluation team of the (Israeli) Urban Renewal Project, who found that in the end the project did not work for an improvement of the situation of especially weak populations, and improved the situation of relatively strong groups in the neighborhoods where it was deployed. In the course of the project, which operated in certain neighborhoods for ten years and more, this strategy was justified by the need to strengthen strong residents in weak neighborhoods so that they would not leave the place, and in this way to achieve a general improvement in the neighborhood situation.

In other words, what happened was not only that the weaker residents were not represented in the project and hardly even benefited from its resources, but that a rationale was also developed to justify this phenomenon, in the spirit of conservative *trickle down economy*. The idea was that the most worthwhile economic investment was to encourage the strongest residents, because they would invest and develop

the economy, and this would eventually also lead to an improvement in the situation of the weak (this should happen in a *natural* way, in the spirit of *laissez faire*, not by direct intervention). In this way improvement in the situation of the weaker residents will *trickle down* without a need to invest in them directly and thus *waste* the project's resources. The outcome – in the Urban Renewal Project in Israel, as in conservative economies allover the world – is a benevolent neglect of the weak, accompanied by an accelerated increase of the social gaps, because the stronger residents benefit not only from their own power, but also from the public resources intended for the weaker residents (Phillips, 1990).

In such conditions, when the rationale for the absence of a weak group is justified by and anchored in social values, a community planner cannot content himself with exposing the obstacles to participation. If he is interested in ensuring the participation of weaker populations (such as the physically disabled, the chronically ill, people with developmental disabilities, people released from mental hospitals) in the policy considerations that affect them, he will probably have to function as an advocate, i.e., to represent these groups himself in order to advance their cause in the community.

The community planner who worked with the group of parents of children with disabilities employed a combined strategy of advocacy/empowerment. At the beginning of the process she had to work on her own opposite the decision makers in the city in order to ensure the participation of this group in the municipal forums that were important for its interests. She had to absorb the criticism of colleagues and superiors for the fact that she was acting as the representative of the parents, instead of looking after her organization's interests. This strategy, even when it is essential, must be very brief in cases where the people have the ability to represent themselves.

In cases where people totally lack the ability to represent themselves – children, very sick or very weak people – the

professionals are permanent advocates and the representing organization's main role is advocacy.

C. Developing a strategy for coping with non-events. This is an especially difficult dimension to identify, because it is difficult to build a consciousness around something that does not happen. Here it is necessary to develop knowledge and understanding of what does not exist, of what has to happen and is not happening.

For example: The evaluation team of the Urban Renewal Project found that in the steering committees that were set up in the project, in which half of the participants were residents' representatives, there existed a procedure of not voting in order to decide on disputed issues (Alterman & Churchman, 1991). The evaluation does not mention how such a procedure came to be accepted in all the steering committees throughout the country. This is the essence of a non-event: it is not a phenomenon that occurs, but a phenomenon that does not occur.

If we pause over this example, we have to ask where the decisions were made, and what actually did happen when there was a need to decide on disputed issues. In order to answer, we need to ask and investigate: who profited from the non-event? In our example, it was not the residents. In order to understand who profited it was necessary to analyze a phenomenon that was prevalent in the project—the *budgetary flight* of project funds. The meaning of this term is that the project's money and resources were used to finance the ongoing public services in the neighborhood and at times also in the entire local authority. The investigation found that it was the Education Ministry that profited most. The education system financed many of its regular programs, and many of the renovations that would have had to be done in schools in any case, at the expense of the urban renewal of distress neighborhoods (Alterman & Churchman, 1991).

This phenomenon eluded supervision, and continued even after it was exposed, despite the fact that residents

and professionals had called attention to it during most of the years the project was operative. This same non-event – the non-participation of residents' representatives in the decision making – was what made possible the uninterrupted continuation of the *budgetary flight* of the project's funds.

The possibility of exploiting the Urban Renewal Project's budgets for ongoing operations explains why it was not in the interest of the existing power relations to allow the neighborhood steering committees to make the real decisions in the project. The continuation of this non-event to this very day in more than a few local authorities proves that to date no efficient strategy of coping with this phenomenon has been developed.

The question that arises here is: What purposes did the steering committees serve? They were a school for residents' participation, they taught negotiation, they made the rules of democracy perceptible. In other words, they had a ceremonial value, and an educational value, but they were also arenas of non-decision.

D. Developing strategies of coping with the latent dimension of power relations. Mechanisms of power in the third, latent dimension of power relations make use of social myths, prejudices, symbols, language, communications processes, information, and social legitimation, in order to achieve a strategic advantage. In this dimension of the power relations, the indirect blocks take form: mothers convey to their children a message of social inferiority and failure which they have internalized as members of a minority group that is discriminated against (Solomon, 1976). This is Foucault's *bodiless power*: the expectations of powerlessness accumulate into oppressive social structures, which accord a legitimation to disempowerment by means of practices and ideology.

The strategic lesson learned from the latent dimension is that it is necessary to make use of the power of symbols and the power of language in the shaping of social myths and symbols in the opposite direction as well. The community

needs to understand how myths, symbols and messages are used against it, and to learn how to harness these for its own ends. A community planner has to help the community to shake off stigmas and prejudices that have been attached to people and/or the environment. He can help the community shape an alternative value message of its own, and to consolidate it so that it will support the community's goals and create identification with it and with how it sees its future.

The message of COPS is a suitable example: the community organization in San Antonio has a name that is a message. The initials stand for the full name, *Communities Organized for Public Services*, but the word cops means policemen. The community is transmitting the message that it has power and is for law and order, and that for its members it is an alternative to law and order. The full name symbolizes the organization's mission and goals; the initials transmit a calming message with regard to the organization's aims towards the outside society (it is worth noting the contrast between *cops* and *Black Panthers*, a name that was chosen in a different period by people in a similar social situation in order to transmit a message of power within, but a threat to the society outside).

The conclusion to be drawn from the discussion of the dimensions of power is that exposing the covert and latent dimensions of the power relations is an important part of developing the strategy. The victories in the first, overt dimension – in the decision making arena – are the realization of the work and the effort in the second and third dimensions. Mechanisms of disempowerment work deeply on the covert and latent levels, and only by exposing these, and by developing a consciousness of them, is it possible to cope successfully in the overt arenas of decision making. The community planner's role as a developer of strategy begins with the development of a critical awareness of the situation.

This stage demands special energies and resources of the community planner. At the same time, to avoid creating the impression that we are speaking about an exceptional process, it is worth recalling that resistance is an everyday human activity. Resistance has an energy of its own that can surprise the other side (Clegg, 1989). As the struggle over the school shows, every opposition creates an effect of its own in the power field in which it acts, and hence it is impossible to precisely calculate what the strategy's outcome will be. Some writers believe that the power of each factor is actually less than the abilities it mobilizes when it attempts to achieve a specific outcome (ibid.). Community planners may draw encouragement from this, and occasionally may also see evidence of the truth of this opinion.

For the community and the community planner to be able to submit a joint proposal, they need to go through a long and far-from-simple process of creating a community and of preparing patterns of participation, organization and political involvement. It is important to note that the transition to the next stage is difficult to achieve, not only because it is an advanced stage in the community empowerment process, but mainly because many communities stop, and even get stuck, in the present stage, that of resistance. The political problems and the immense energy required for successful opposition cause many of the participants to see this as the principal goal of the community effort. Some believe that the struggle is the principal achievement; but there also exist rivalry and personal hatred that were aroused in the course of the struggle, and it is difficult to get free of these. The main criticism expressed about conflict as a legitimate professional practice has to do with the fact that it is difficult to control it, and difficult to ensure that it will be possible to manage it and resolve it and then go on advancing towards the achievement of the goals. At times the conflict consumes too many energies and takes too high a price. One of the advantages of entering into a systematic planning process is the organizing of the resistance into a structured framework of negotiations. In this

way there is better control of contacts and emotions, and it is possible to have some more control over the conflict.

It is important to recall that resistance is not always a stage in the community's development. At times it is a desperate struggle for the community's survival. A group of women in Chicago who objected to a plan to build a stadium that would divide their community (Feldman & Stall, 1994), residents of public housing in St. Louis who resisted a plan to evict them (Boyte, 1984), students in Israel who resisted the plan to close their school, are examples of struggles for actual survival, not attempts to obtain an advantage in the power arena.

Stage 6: Presenting an *Alternative* Plan

In this stage, the central product of the planning – the plan – is presented. I have chosen to call the product of the empowering planning process an *alternative plan*, so as to differentiate it from *ordinary* plans which are not based on partnership and on local knowledge (Friedmann, 1992). The alternative plan is a product of the struggles of the previous stage: people have become persuaded that they have to prepare a suitable plan by themselves, and have accumulated the ability and confidence to carry out the task.

The empowering community planner has a unique opportunity to design a proposal that is based on professional knowledge and is at the same time original and well fitted to the community. This is a singular situation, and I want to present its advantages here both as a social solution and as a professional planning method. The agency that employs the planner receives a product which meets its professional standards, and is suitable to the place where it is about to be implemented. The community receives a professional product as a consequence of a joint effort with professionals, and not out of dependence upon or blind faith in them.

In an ordinary comprehensive planning process the presentation of the plan is generally the final stage of the planner's work. In community planning in general, and

empowerment-enhancing planning in particular, continuity is very important. Implementing the alternative plan is a process of adjustment to the community. The implementation stage too is a process of mutual learning, listening, and constructive evaluation of what has been achieved and what needs correction and change. Hence it is very important that the community planner's work should not cease at this stage.

It is worth emphasizing several advantages of a local plan over a conventional plan:

Firstly, the plan is relatively cheap, because it is generally based on local resources and local knowledge. *Imported* plans are always more expensive because they are not aware of available local resources of knowledge, work, volunteering and improvisation.

Secondly, the local problem is human-intensive. It involves more face-to-face interaction among the planners and the implementers. An external plan, in contrast, will try to replace human interaction with capital, and for this reason too it is more expensive.

Thirdly, the technology of the local plan is familiar locally, and generally builds on local technologies even when it is more advanced than they are. The plan is sensitive to local conditions. In contrast, external plans are designed to replace local knowledge and local practice with advanced technology, and therefore require the adaptation of the place and the people to the plan.

Fourthly, the management of the local plan is flexible and flat in its structure, is generally based on the knowledge that changes may occur during the implementation, and emphasizes mutual learning among implementers from the outside and the local people. The management of an external plan is generally bureaucratic, and for this reason the plan's formal aspects are hard to change. The external method emphasizes technocracy: teaching is from above to below, and there is almost no mutual learning in the course of the implementation.

Fifthly, the local plan is built in such a way that it itself can watch over negative by-products easily and quickly, while with the external plan it is hard to control undesirable by-products.

Sixthly, the local plan has an advantage in the speed of transition from planning to implementation, while in external projects prolonged preparation is necessary. I remember local community plans where the implementation began a day after the plan was completed. In contrast, long months of preparation and adaptations passed (in the same community) until it became possible to begin implementation of the first plan in the Urban Renewal Project. (The six points are based on Friedmann, 1992).

The setting up of the service for children with disabilities is an alternative project of this kind. Nonetheless, it is important to note that no solutions of the type which may be called an *ordinary* plan exist for children with developmental disabilities. So it is actually the only plan that exists in this domain. The fundamental difference in terms of planning is in the way it is implemented and in the plan's quality. For those parents of deviant children, no other possibility existed other than to initiate a program by themselves, because, as we will recall, the reason for their organizing together was the severe lack of social services for people in their situation. Since the time they set them up, the services are available to them. The process of individual and community empowerment undergone by this community in the course of organizing together and setting up the services is a most important accompanying achievement. Necessity, then, is often the main motivation for developing local programs, as distinct from cases where the local plan is preferred in principle over other plans.

Actually, for the community the division into planning and implementation does not exist. The people continue living their lives and acting in the community. Hence it is desirable that the implementation processes – which are processes of adapting the plan to the actual conditions – continue in the spirit of the planning stages.

Stage 7: Evaluation

Evaluating the degree of empowerment produced by the planning process is the stage that completes the empowering planning process. The evaluation establishes the knowledge and experience that have been acquired in the process, and distills and prepares them for further use. This is a concluding stage of one process and a starting point for new processes in the community and for new and different planning roles for the planner. Stability is not a characteristic of community processes. In each cycle of community activity there are opportunities for, and dangers to, empowerment, and a particularly successful stage of empowerment may be followed by a regression to a stage of disempowerment. The community organization is one of the means for ensuring relative stability in the empowerment process, but it is not a guarantee of such stability. High stability in a community organization may be a sign of institutionalization of procedures which preferably should be kept flexible, an indication that the organization has become disempowering.

   In the evaluation stage, several important issues are summed up. The first, and at times the only issue dealt with in this stage is the degree of effectiveness and efficiency of the planning and the program. Since this book focuses on empowerment processes, we will not devote space to this issue (anyone interested in evaluation of outcomes of social programs will find excellent books on the subject, e.g., Rossi & Freeman, 1989). The second issue is the degree of empowerment that the program, which is the product of the planning, has produced in the course of its implementation, and the third issue is the degree of empowerment that was made possible and was encouraged by the empowering professional practice. I will now discuss these two issues.

Evaluating the Degree of Empowerment Provided by the Program

This is evaluation of the solution – the program – in terms of empowerment. It is an attempt to estimate to what extent the program has enabled the people involved in setting it up to have more (actual and perceptible) control over their lives and their environment. The principal questions for evaluation are:

A. Does the program serve the populations for which it was initially intended? If so, what services does it provide? At times it turns out that the service is not being given to the population which especially needed it, but to others. If this is indeed the case, and the plan serves other or additional populations, it is important to know this, and to analyze the causes.

   This point connects with a known organizational phenomenon: human services tend to prefer certain clients over others, and to select those who receive the services according to undeclared criteria (Hasenfeld, 1984). This happens, for example, when a marriage counseling service, intended for a particular distressed neighborhood and financed from its budget, is set up in the center of the city and not in the neighborhood itself. The distant location has actually been designed to ensure secrecy to those who visit the service, and to spare them the possible stigma. However, an evaluation after some time may reveal that the program is being used by married couples from all over the city, and that in fact the majority of those receiving the service were economically established residents, while people from the neighborhood itself were making almost no use of the service.

B. Has the program encouraged community participation in the environment in which it was implemented? Who are

the people who participated? (It should be recalled that the empowering goal is to reach population groups that have not participated before). What is the level of participation? What is the number of volunteer participants, relative to the number of salaried workers in the program? What are the actual roles being filled by the new participants? To what extent are these roles socially valuable in the views of the various participants?

The aim of these questions is to understand whether the program contents itself with a small nucleus of participants in a particular domain, or, by means of organizational structure and agendas, creates diverse opportunities for involving volunteers in its ranks. It is also important to know what roles the participants fill, for as we have said, it is important that as many people as possible obtain the opportunity to fill socially valuable roles. There are programs which produce a hierarchy of importance between people in salaried positions, who fill important roles, and unsalaried volunteers, who fill marginal roles. When the program puts people in maintenance roles identical to those they fill in their private lives, these people may miss out on an important opportunity in their lives (I refer mainly to repairs, cleaning, cooking, which, even if they involve responsibility, may not involve learning of new skills).

C. What influence has the program had on the local environment? Has anything changed in the local people's ability to influence the physical environment since the program was implemented? What has changed in the lives of particular groups as a consequence of the program? Can one say that a community has been created in the program's environment? What community and whose community is this (see further in par. E)?

D. To what extent has the program helped to organize a community? This question examines *what remains* on the organizational level after the planning. Has a group of equals been formed? Is there a group of activists who are committed to continuing the program? Are people who were active in the plan initiating or participating in new projects following their experience in this one? Has a roof-organization been set up following the planning? If so, what is its character? How closed and hierarchical, or open and equitable, is it?

E. Has the program contributed to the creation of a community? Besides its other achievements, a local program, in order to be empowering, has to contribute to a sense of community. Some questions which can discover signs of such a contribution are, for example: Has a new community organization, created by a group which was previously not actively involved in the community, been set up around the project? To what extent does the project contribute to social control, to the community's ability to cope with its principal problems (Holahan & Wandersman, 1987)? Has the program contributed a service which the community needs access to? It has to be recognized that for the community it is preferable that certain services (such as a drug rehabilitation center) be not too accessible, so not every affirmative answer to the previous question will be relevant. What has the project contributed to social networking? To what extent does it provide opportunities for new acquaintanceships and new connections in the community? To what extent does the project provide opportunities to create connections with agencies outside the community in a significant new way?

F. The creation of new and surprising social networks is an indication that the program has contributed to social integration in the community and its surroundings. Hence it is important to ask to what extent the program

encourages and enables the integration of the community into its social, organizational and political environment without its losing any of its authenticity.

G. To what extent does the program encourage a new leadership? Who? How many? In what domains? Questions of revitalizing the leadership are directly connected with questions of power. Empowerment is a process which develops leadership among people in the community, and the proof of the plan's success in encouraging individual empowerment may express itself, among other things, in the development of new leaders as a consequence of the plan.

H. To what extent has the program had a good influence on the image of its users and the community it serves, as perceived by others in the environment? The reference is to a change in the prejudices and the stigma that exist against the people who need the service. There are different ways of estimating the inputs of the program in this context:

(1) To what extent has the program been publicized in the community itself, in the town or city, among groups of populations which should have an interest in it?

What kind of publicity has the program received outside the community, and what direction has this publicity taken? Has it created appreciation of the community and interest in joining it, or has it strengthened the stigma and the isolation of the community?

(2) Have there been expressions of satisfaction with the program? By whom? Have there been criticisms of the program? By whom? It is possible to examine the kinds of statements that have appeared in the various communications media about the program and about the community before and after the implementation of the program, and to analyze expressions of satisfaction with it and criticisms of it in terms of two aspects: their content and their source.

The populations whose response it is important to receive if we want to understand the extent of empowerment fostered by the program are: users of the program; people who live in the vicinity of the program (it is important that the program also contribute to its neighboring environment, in aesthetic values, in prevention of noise and pollution); people responsible for the program; professionals; politicians.

(3) It is possible to draw upon evaluation methods used by urban planners and to develop a method that will attempt to present the uses and the costs of the program, and to evaluate its success from the points of view of various populations (e.g., Hill, 1968; Lichfield, 1975).

It is difficult to assume that a single program will have a significant influence on the social image, or on stigma and prejudices. Nonetheless, every social program generally invests a great deal of effort in this domain, and it is important to evaluate its outcomes, both as a contribution in the right direction that has had an accumulating influence, and as inspiration for subsequent programs in this environment. Hence it is important to try to evaluate the extent of the program's influence on improvement of the community image.

Evaluating the Extent of Community Empowerment Facilitated by the Planning Process

Here we engage in evaluating the extent of individual and community empowerment encouraged by the community planner herself.

Some questions about the enhancement of the community empowerment process are: To what extent did the planner develop dialogue and praxis in the course of her intervention? To what extent did she make possible a process of collaboration and develop tools to ensure participation? To what extent did she define her various roles and adapt them to the needs of the community empowerment process? To what extent did she assist in setting up a community organization already during the planning stages?

To what extent did she help in developing an appropriate community strategy? To what extent was local knowledge also used in the planning process? Did the planners also help in developing an ordered evaluation process for their plan?

Evaluating the Extent of Individual Empowerment Encouraged by the Planning Process

It is important that the planner ask himself a number of questions about the extent of individual empowerment that his intervention has provided.

1. To what extent has the planning intervention assisted in extending the local participants' knowledge about and responsibility for the environment? What tools were used to bring this about? What were the outcomes?
2. To what extent did the planners cope with negative feelings (such as anger and contempt) on the part of people in the planning environment, and to what extent did they manage to channel these and use them to produce a critical consciousness and a positive energy of inspiring people to act for themselves? This question requires the

creation of operational categories of critical consciousness and positive energy, and this in itself is research of great value.
3. Did the planners manage to encourage mutual help among the groups participating in the planning?
4. Did they exploit every opportunity to create socially valuable roles for people in the planning environment and in the planning intervention process?
5. Did they develop the roles of the teacher and the guide? And, as a corollary, has the planning process also been a process of learning and of exercising social skills?
6. Has the planning process assisted in enabling people to develop a critical consciousness towards their own situation, and has the planner himself arrived at new insights with regard to his work, his life, his own social situation?
7. Did the planners accord sufficient importance to the self-respect of the participants in the process? Did they contribute to feelings of self-worth among the people they worked with?
8. Finally, in the light of the outcomes, do they think that they have devoted sufficient time and resources to encouraging the empowerment process?

These three sets of questions – evaluating the extent of empowerment achieved by the plan; evaluating the extent of community empowerment in the professional planning intervention; and evaluating the extent of individual empowerment encouraged by the community planner – represent the possible achievements of processes that encourage individual, community, and professional empowerment in the community planning process.

Conclusion

Whereas the introduction to this book dealt with empowerment as a new concept, the conclusion will be devoted to the meaning of empowering professional practice. Community planning has been redefined according to the principles of the contextual theory of empowerment that was developed in the first part of the book. Community planning methods have been adapted to processes of individual and community empowerment of the people in the planning arena. We have discussed the abilitiesand skills required of the professional who is interested in achieving the joint goals of empowerment and planning. Likewise, we have proposed a theory of practice that encourages empowerment of others and persists in critical thinking and constant re-evaluation.

In contrast to *pure* theoretical approaches which prefer to focus on theory and leave the practical aspects as recommendations and conclusions for further work, this book has proposed the principles of empowerment and the professional activities that encourage them as a single whole. The connection between reflection and action has been preserved in the structure of the book itself.

The situation in the field, and the little that is being done to encourage empowerment, lead to the almost self-evident conclusion that in order to deal thoroughly with powerlessness, what is needed is an empowering social policy that will create a supporting basis for empowering social plans and practice.

This requires a fundamental change by policy makers and the management of the public social services, because public services that are not aware of their practices and especially of the undesirable by-products of their daily activities are responsible for the chronic powerlessness and the disempowering practices that reinforce it.

In contrast to *the prevalent view*, we have learned that the quiescence of powerless people is not evidence of agreement. Injured people are silent because of despair, because they

are resigned to their hopeless existence. A democratic society with a social contract of mutual human responsibility must refuse to resign itself to the existence of powerlessness among sections of its population. The practical expression of this refusal is the creation of a partnership with the people in whose lives society intervenes. Such a partnership is not a harmonious idyll. It is a stormy reality, which begins with a quest for mutual understanding and a common language, and the creation of an ongoing dialogue. Its next stage is a common quest for suitable solutions which respect the people who need them. The purpose of the partnership is the creation of a society that has a sense of community and encourages greater control by local people over their lives and environment.

The book has outlined several methods of empowering professional practice. In concluding it is important to stress that all these methods have a single common principle—an empowering practice does not seek for easy solutions. The cause of people's distress is not to be sought in the victims. When the problem we have to deal with encompasses entire populations, we have to improve our understanding of an entire social situation. We must not go on contenting ourselves with out-of-context diagnoses of individuals who come to us with their suffering, or continue blaming them for their situation.

This book wants to encourage professionals to shift from the passivity and the objective professionalism of *therapeutic intervention* in the lives of people with *multiple problems* to an active involvement of collaborative work with people who need more control over their lives and environments. The aim is to learn how to improve the situation and the quality of life of all the people living in the planned environment.

The book has also dealt extensively with the limits of power. Its aim has been to convey a message of hope to all those people who do not believe in their ability to change their lives and to have an influence on their world. However, it also contains an explicit warning against the *power intoxication*. We

are all weak and transient. Anyone who, for the sake of the power advantages his role or position affords him, dares to dominate the lives of others, will have to face the inevitable by-products of his actions.

The alternative lies in the understanding that the feeling of being at home in the world is acquired through creativity and action. Devoting effort to creating a community, participating in processes of social change, partnership in making decisions that affect our fate, accord us a sense of ownership of and responsibility for the place we live in. In the course of this process, we discover that the right to realize ourselves as active citizens and equal partners is in fact also an amazing grace, for it rehabilitates injured souls, provides self-respect, adds knowledge, ability and power. The synergy produced by the addition of self-respect, knowledge, ability and power enriches the individuals, creates a community, strengthens the society, and adds most valuable resources to the world: human initiative, social responsibility, and care for others.

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