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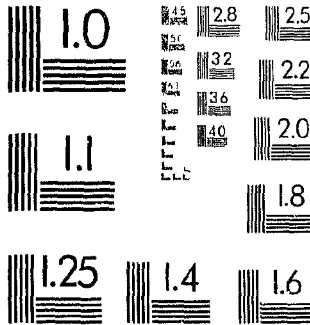

A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE ON SOCIAL INTERVENTION AND EVALUATION IN THE MODERN WELFARE STATE

by

Madine VanderPlaat

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

at

Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
June, 1995

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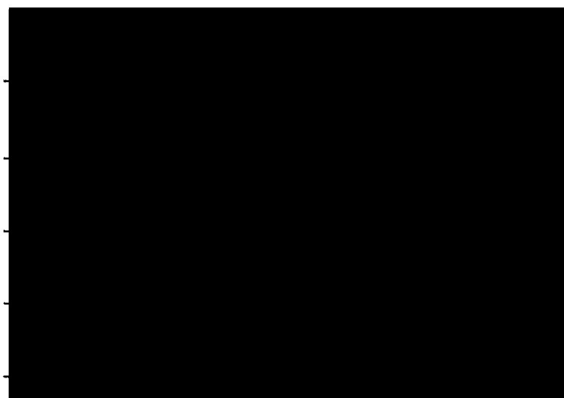

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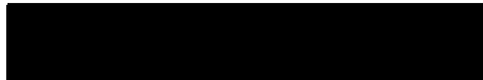

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To my parents
Lynn and Hilbert VanderPlaat
with love

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents		v
Abstract		vii
Acknowledgements		viii
Introduction		1
Chapter One:	Social Intervention and Evaluation	20
	Social Intervention: An Overview	22
	Evaluation Research: An Overview	29
	Problems with Traditional Approaches to the Interventionary Process	41
	Empowerment Oriented Intervention	46
Chapter Two:	The Critical Social Theory of Jürgen Habermas	69
	Habermasian Critical Social Theory: An Overview	73
	The Historical Emergence of the Interventionist State	76
	The Feminist Critique	94
	The Lifeworld Rewritten	101
Chapter Three:	Social Intervention and Evaluation Within a Habermasian Framework	118
	Disempowering Aspects of the Social Welfare State	120
	The Disempowering Aspects of the Interventionary Process	124
	The Emancipatory Potential of Empowerment Oriented Interventions	138

Chapter Four: Social Interventions: Empowering Spaces and Access Routes 159

The Discourse of Empowerment 161

Toward a Theory of Conditions for Empowerment 180

Social Interventions as Access Routes to the Public Sphere 194

Chapter Five: Implications for Evaluation Research 209

Conclusion 251

Bibliography 258

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the social interventionary process, social programming and evaluation research, within a discourse informed by critical and feminist interests. There is a need to develop an interventionary process that is consistent with the interests of critical and feminist educators and social scientists who are committed to the development of political agency and the production of social change. The thesis challenges the assumption underscoring most conventional approaches to intervention that the solutions to social problems lie in the ability to organize and rationalize everyday life according to the professional and technocratic mindset of the state administrative apparatus. Based on a Habermasian analysis of the modern welfare state the thesis argues that empowerment oriented social programming and evaluation practices can support an emancipatory interest. At the heart of an emancipatory approach to intervention is the intent to create a communicative space within which participants can explore the parameters of mutual interests and move toward a sense of collective political agency. Such an approach to intervention seeks to empower the political citizen, rather than increase the self-sufficiency of the welfare state client. The thesis argues that the creation of communicative spaces requires critical thinkers and activists to develop a reflexive concern with their own agent/subject location within an empowerment oriented process. Within this context, the thesis examines the implications that an emancipatory approach to intervention has for social program evaluation research.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines modern day practices of social intervention and evaluation research. The thesis being argued is that contrary to the arguments presented by many critical and feminist thinkers, the activity of social programming, or state initiated response to social problems, need not be simply one of systemic interference and control. Rather, it is argued that social interventions have the capacity to serve emancipatory interests in that they provide a means for carving out "communicative spaces" within which collective voices as yet unheard can be brought into the public arena. By informing the interventionary process evaluation research can play an integral role in the creation of such spaces.

The primary purpose of this project is to develop a theoretical framework within which to reconstruct social intervention and evaluation activities so as to make them more consistent with and productive for the emancipatory interests described by critical and feminist thinkers. To this end, the interventionary process consisting of social programming activities and evaluation research is examined through the conceptual lens of Habermasian critical social theory and various feminist perspectives.

Background

In advanced capitalist welfare states, organized state initiated social programming has become the remedial response to an ever growing list of societal ills. In its earliest form this type of social intervention primarily provided resources targeted to the amelioration of specific economic, educational and health concerns. Since the 1960's, however, interventionary social programs have become even more concerned with changing people's values, attitudes and behaviors. Technically, the terms social intervention and social program can refer to any state organized ameliorative activity. Practically, they tend to denote specifically those activities targeted to the disadvantaged segments of society. Within the context of this project the term "social intervention" is limited to the concept of "social programming", the establishment of ameliorative activities targeted to specific social problems experienced by an identifiable population.

The healing potential of planned broad-aim social intervention was greeted initially with considerable optimism. Edward A. Suchman, a pioneer in the evaluation of social interventions, captures the early enthusiasm of the 1960s,

> Why couldn't man's (sic) knowledge of the forces governing himself and the societies he had created be applied to the remedying of the defects within those societies? ... The emphasis today is clearly

> upon the application of knowledge to the amelioration of social problems. The same scientific methodology that had been so successful in discovering knowledge was now to be brought to bear upon the utilization of that knowledge. Social change could be planned and implemented by scientific research upon the causes of society's ills and by the development of intervention programs to meet these causes. (Suchman, 1972:52)

Despite this general optimism the promise of broad-aim social programs began to fade within a decade of their inception. Highlighted by the disappointing experiences of Project Head Start and Push/Excel, evaluation results showed social interventions to have few, if any, positive outcomes.[1]

Problem Situation

Social scientists, policy analysts and educators were quick to voice their critical reaction to the failure they perceived in social intervention. Some theorists, such as Alvin Gouldner (1978a, 1978b) and Cornelis Disco (1979), saw the application of social scientific knowledge to the resolution of social

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[1] Project Head Start, an American pre-school program was implemented by the Johnson administration in 1965. The program provides compensatory education for disadvantaged children and was one of the first broad scale interventions to come out of "the war on poverty". For critical commentaries on the Project see Rossi, 1972; Ianni and Orr, 1979; Myers, 1981 and Fischer, 1985. Push/Excel, a motivational program for black youth was started by Jesse Jackson in 1975 and is now defunct. Farrar and House (1986) provide a particularly insightful analysis of this project. For further documentation on the post-1960's growing disillusionment with social intervention see Weiss, 1972; Berk and Rossi, 1976 and Rutman, 1980. The concept of large scale, broad-based intervention was, in the early years, predominantly an American phenomenon. Canadian examples are not readily forthcoming.

problems as yet another way in which the "New Class" of intellectuals and intelligentsia could expand their realm of influence and advance their own "scientific" power and interests.[2] However, the bulk of the criticism focused on the assumptions inherent in the concept of social intervention itself. Primarily targeted to the disadvantaged segments of society the interventions of the time derived their basic rationale from an orientation to societal reform which focused on the amelioration of the cognitive, attitudinal and experiential deficits seen to be at the root of the "culture of poverty".[3] As such, social interventions were designed to change attitudes and behaviors through the provision of knowledge and skills and consequently to enhance an individual's ability to cope with the constraints imposed by their life situation. These intervention strategies incurred the disdain of social scientists and educational theorists alike.[4] The attacks were primarily directed at the implicit assumption in these programs that individuals are in part responsible for their own exploitation. The programs accept

---

[2] Gouldner (1978b) describes two elites within the New Class - the intelligentsia whose interests are primarily technical and the intellectuals whose interests are critical, hermeneutic and often political.

[3] The term "culture of poverty" was first introduced by Oscar Lewis in La Vida (1966) and refers to the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

[4] See for example William Ryan's now classic Blaming the Victim (1971), as well as commentaries by Deutscher (1975), Myers (1981) and Airasian (1983).

the *status quo* as given and gear intervention strategies to produce a better fit between the disaffected individual and the social environment. The "logical outcome of analyzing social problems in terms of the deficiencies of the victim is the development of programs aimed at correcting those deficiencies. The formula for action becomes extraordinarily simple: change the victim" (Ryan, 1971:8).

While some social scientists chose to criticize the assumptions underpinning the interventionary process, others cast a critical eye on the medium that had pronounced the "failure" of social intervention in the first place -- evaluation research. The program evaluation activity had been cast as the key informant, the scientific authority for ascertaining the impacts and effects of social intervention policies and programmes. Primarily motivated by the public demand for accountability, evaluation research quickly became an integral part of the interventionary process.[5] By the late 1970's in both Canada and the United States all federally funded programs were required to include a regular evaluation component.[6]

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[5] Throughout the remainder of this dissertation the term "interventionary process" is presumed to include both social programming and evaluation activities.

[6] House (1993) provides an interesting discussion on how the relationship between intervention and evaluation differs within Canadian, American and European political contexts. In Canada, the evaluation activity tends to be more program specific and, unlike the U.S., much less likely to address or

Hand in hand with the critique of the discourse and practice of social intervention came a growing concern with the adequacy of the evaluation strategies used to assess the effectiveness of social programming. For the most part the criticism centred on the methodological limitations of evaluative research.[7] Berk and Rossi (1976) capture the gist of the methodologically oriented critique in their observation that in the evaluation of social programs, "Outcomes that can be counted easily tend to be listed as the outcomes desired ... more subtle, and possibly as important outcomes tend to be underplayed because they are difficult to measure." (339) Thus, the discernible impacts and effects of social programs are limited to those most conducive to the application of available socio-scientific tools.[8]

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guide underlying social policy.

[7] Interest in the theoretical dimensions of evaluation research has been a fairly recent phenomenon. Chen's (1990) Theory-Driven Evaluations is, perhaps, the most aggressive in pursuing these concerns. The work of Guba and Lincoln (1989) and Shadish, Cook and Leviton (1991) also deals extensively with theory related issues.

[8] A particularly useful illustration of the impact of methodological limitations is found in Fischer's (1985) analysis of the negative assessment given to Project Head Start by the Westinghouse evaluation of the project. The evaluation was subsequently used by the Nixon administration to justify a drastic reduction in funding for the project. Fischer, and others, argue that the indicators used to measure the effectiveness of the project undermined its actual and potential remedial impact. For additional discussion on the methodological limitations of evaluation research see Parlett and Hamilton (1976), Patton (1978), House (1980), Lincoln and Guba (1985), Weiss (1986), and Pal (1987).

The focus of social intervention strategies and the principles underlying the development of most social programs continues to be the adjustment of the individual to society rather than the production of systemic change. The concept of intervention does not necessitate this orientation. In the process of defining the construct, social policy analysts Carol H. Weiss (1972b) and Edward M. Bennett (1987) both put forward a conceptual definition of intervention that includes reference to the production of institutional and communal change. In practice little effort has been made to explore and develop the potential of a structural or systemic focus to social intervention. Present day social programming largely continues to view the individual as the necessary target of government initiated remedial activities. While considerable effort is made to improve the design and implementation of social programs, discussion tends to revolve around issues related to "how" to intervene. More basic challenges to underlying principles, and questions concerned with "why?" and "to what end?", are generally ignored.[9]

Research in the field of evaluation continues to be

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[9] The overriding concern with the refinement of process or technical matters is also evident in related fields such as adult education, the premises of which underscore many adult oriented social interventions. Michael Collins in Adult Education as Vocation (1991) provides a particularly relevant and critical analysis of the problem and the implications it has for educational endeavours which aspire to the development of a more participatory democracy.

concerned with the design and refinement of methodological techniques. Perhaps the most significant development to emerge from the critical debates of the 1960's and 70's has been a growing acceptance of evaluation methods based on approaches other than those which demand a strict adherence to scientific traditions.[10] While this has allowed for a broader interpretation of evaluation research rarely has the debate within the field escaped the confines of method or technique. The primary concern is with the refinement of data collection instruments and appropriate measures of effectiveness. Little has been done to challenge the basic premises underlying the evaluation function itself.

The current stagnation in the evolution of social intervention and evaluation research is particularly problematic for feminists and other critical thinkers who have a political commitment to the concept of social change and whose interventionary efforts are directed at the dissolution of oppressive social practices and structures.[11] An active engagement in the production of social change by definition

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[10] Egon Guba and Yvonna S. Lincoln have been particularly instrumental in establishing the validity claims of alternative approaches to evaluation. See in particular Naturalistic Inquiry (1985) and Fourth Generation Evaluation (1989).

[11] Throughout the remainder of this thesis the term critical is intended to include feminist as well as any other political position that seeks to challenge oppressive social relations through a critique of existing social structures.

necessitates some form of intervention. Yet most critical scholars reject the traditional interventionary discourse which tends toward the behaviorist model and the production of individual behavioral change and coping abilities. (Ryan, 1971; Deutscher, 1975; Law and Sissons, 1983; Bennett, 1987; Raeburn, 1987) Instead, the critical political agenda has been to explore more emancipatory strategies which strive to "empower" people collectively to recognize and overcome oppressive social structures. Critical theorists have a need for knowledge generated by a social research practice which, as Lee Harvey (1990) so lucidly states in Critical Social Research,

> ... aims at an analysis of social processes, delving beneath ostensive and dominant conceptual frames, in order to reveal the underlying practices, their historical specificity and structural manifestations. (1990:4)

As will be demonstrated, these attempts to move beyond traditional concepts of intervention run the risk of being at odds with available evaluation strategies. Differences in knowledge interests, epistemological assumptions and research ethics often reduce the ability of evaluation research to address adequately an interventionary practice informed by an emancipatory intent. As a result an evaluation can stand in direct opposition to an intervention by virtue of its "lack of fit".[12]

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[12] Farrar and House (1986) demonstrate this argument in their analysis of the Push/Excel evaluation. The authors' contend that the evaluation's rigid adherence to "scientific

Purpose of Project

The aim of this project is to develop a theoretical framework within which we can construct an interventionary process that is consistent with the emancipatory interests of critical and feminist theorists and practitioners. The rationale for doing so is twofold. First, there is no inherent incompatibility between social intervention and a critical political agenda for social change. The tension between the two is unnecessarily perpetuated by an overemphasis on the disempowering discourse in which social interventionary activities have become entrenched. As a result, it is difficult to conceptualize intervention as anything but a systemic attempt at social engineering and behavioral manipulation. To counter this tendency this thesis will demonstrate that social interventions, with the aid of evaluation, can serve an emancipatory interest. What is required is a critical discourse that allows us to see and pursue this potential.

Second, in the absence of an emancipatory framework for our interventionary efforts, the construct of "empowerment" remains highly problematic. Attempts to be emancipatory in

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principles" and its inability to articulate the essence of Push/Excel resulted in a complete misreading of the impacts and effects of the project, and thus, ultimately, contributed to its demise.

interventionary practices are often undermined by countervailing assumptions and premises. Without a critical theoretical base, the term empowerment is all too readily appropriated by the traditional discourse of intervention and evaluation as an educational technique for facilitating behavioral change within the target group. In the same vein and in critical circles, there is a continual struggle to reconcile a commitment to empowerment with a reluctance to engage in any practice that may be perceived as being impositional.[13] Those who strive to incorporate a commitment to empowerment and social change in their interventionary practices often find their ambitions stymied by the assumptions inherent in the traditional discourse of intervention. What is required is a theoretical framework that dissolves the seemingly antagonistic positioning of critical and interventionary interests. The act of intervention in the form of social programming may be a crucial starting point for the pursuit of emancipatory interests.

Methodology

In pursuit of the objectives of this project I will undertake

[13] Sensitivity to the potentially impositional nature of empowering activities appears to be particularly acute among feminist/postmodernist theorists in the field of critical pedagogy. See for example, Ellsworth (1989), Lather (1991) and Gore (1992).

four tasks. The first of these is to demonstrate the practical constraints that the traditional discourse of intervention and evaluation places on critical efforts to incorporate more emancipatory interests into the interventionary process. In developing this argument I will demonstrate the importance of recognizing the mutuality of interventionary and evaluative activities. While intervention and evaluation occupy the same space in practice, they are often treated as distinctly separate entities within the more scholarly literature. The assumption that the two are unique, mutually exclusive activities is taken-for-granted.[14] Knowledge pertaining to evaluation research tends to be created in relative isolation of the social programs it informs.[15] This positioning ignores the fact that it is through the evaluation process that an intervention and its impacts and effects are articulated. I intend to dismantle this academic distinction between evaluation and intervention to allow for a more careful and deliberate examination of the linkages between the two, not only in terms of program outcomes, but also with regard to the conceptualization of interventionary efforts.

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[14] This is, of course, consistent with traditional approaches to social scientific research which necessitates that "method" is always a value-neutral and objective activity. From this perspective it is important that evaluation research, as an applied research method, does develop within its own space irrespective of the interventions it ultimately seeks to inform.

[15] In Theory-Driven Evaluations (1990), Chen attempts to bridge this gap by developing a framework for integrating program theory with evaluation strategies.

Upon identifying the problematic underpinnings of mainstream interventionary strategies, my second task is to reconstruct the theoretical framework of the interventionary process from the position of critical social theory as it has been developed by the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas and "engendered" by North American feminists such as Benhabib (1986, 1992) and Fraser (1989, 1992).[16] Habermas' work is particularly relevant for this project in that it gives us a political location and context within which to examine the practice of social intervention and evaluation. Habermas' primary concern is with the development of a critical theory of society that focuses on the problematic nature of the relationship between human agency and systemic structures in advanced capitalist society. One of his main arguments is that in the modern welfare state "public will", or collective agency, is being politically subverted by systemic discourses and institutional arrangements. Issues related to how we want to live together and to what end are framed and legitimated by systemic logistics and priorities rather than determined discursively within the public arena. As a result our collective capacity to engage in the production of social change is gradually being undermined by our growing inability to determine communicatively in a nonsystemic discourse the

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[16] By "engendered" I mean that these theorists engage in a reflexive concern with gender in the reading of Habermas' work. See also Marshall (1988), Felski (1989) and Fleming (1989),

nature and direction of that change. Within this context the social interventionary process can be seen as a means by which "the system", as opposed to "the collective", organizes and manages issues related to collective living and social integration.

In the articulation of this theoretical context, Habermas provides us with a backdrop against which we can start to identify and dismantle the assumptions underlying current interventionary practices. For example, his detailed elaboration of "scientism" - the domination of technocratic rationality - encourages us to examine the extent to which social problems are constructed as technical concerns within an interventionary activity. At the same time he presents us with a discourse in which we can begin to see the emancipatory potential of social interventions. In particular his concern with the revitalization of our collective communicative capacities -- in what Habermas terms "the public sphere" -- provides critical theorists and practitioners with a basis from which to develop an alternative rationale for engaging in social interventionary activities. As will be demonstrated, Habermas' usage and exploration of the concepts, "systematically distorted communication" and "ideal speech situation" provide us with a basis from which to argue for an emancipatory reconstruction of the interventionary process, one that fosters collective communicative interests rather

than systemic intrusiveness.

Habermas' work is particularly instrumental for constructing the theoretical rationale for an emancipatory approach to intervention and evaluation. Habermasian critical social theory provides a discourse for elucidating "why" and "to what end" such interventionary efforts should be engaged in. However, we cannot assume that "empowerment", the process conceptually associated with the realization of emancipatory interests will occur unproblematically within this context. A commitment to an emancipatory interest does not guarantee that an emancipatory practice emerges automatically.

My third task is to construct a theory of empowerment which is consistent with the interventionary framework being developed. In the past few years critical theorists have produced a considerable amount of scholarship focused on issues related to the conceptualization and practice of empowerment. Particularly useful to this project is the work of feminist pedagogical theorists Ellsworth (1989), Lather (1991) and LaCompte and DeMarrais (1992) as well as psychologists Surrey (1985,1987), Jordon (1986; 1991) and others associated with the Stone Centre at Wellesley College.[17] The former group are scholars in the field of

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[17] The Stone Centre for Developmental Services and Studies is a research organization dedicated to the enhancement of psychological well-being and a more comprehensive

critical pedagogy. They provide this thesis with the theoretical basis from which to dismantle or deconstruct the term "empowerment" as it is commonly used. The Stone Centre psychologists, by contrast, provide us with an alternative discourse from which to begin the task of articulating the dimensions of an empowerment based interventionary practice.

In working the concept of social intervention and evaluation through Habermasian critical theory and feminist theories of empowerment I employ, as a methodological strategy, the search for the "in-between".[18] This technique, often used in the field of literary criticism, is a deconstructive tool employed to dismantle binary thinking or to subvert the structure of binary opposition (Poovey, 1988). For example, postmodern theorists use this approach to deconstruct the supposedly fixed opposition between such constructs as masculine/feminine, rational/irrational, culture/nature, subjective/objective. While I do not employ the approach in the strictly literary sense of the term, I do strive to overcome any positioning that assumes oppositional or hierarchial placement. The difficulty in moving toward a

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understanding of human development. Particular research interests focus on the experiences of women, children and families across culturally diverse populations. (The Link. Winter 1993. Stone Centre, Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA.)

[18] This principle is sometimes conceptualized as "the middle voice" a term Derrida (1982) uses to illustrate the construct of "différance".

more emancipatory approach to intervention may be due to our adherence to conceptual distinctions that create unnecessary either/or situations. So, for example, rather than formulating an interventionary strategy that focuses on either institutional change or individual change my concern is with the development of a strategy that recognizes the interconnectedness of human agency and social structure. Likewise, rather than seeing empowerment as a process that either one does for oneself or one enables another to do, the emphasis is placed on demonstrating the necessary mutuality of these efforts.

Throughout this thesis I will refer to a particular genre of social programming, that which claims some commitment to the concept of empowerment, to illustrate both the limitations of traditional approaches to intervention as well as the possibilities of an emancipatory interventionary discourse. The three programs which I will be specifically referring to are "Nobody's Perfect", an educational program for parents; "The Stepping Stone Project", a resource and street outreach program for those engaged in prostitution; and "The Self-Help Connection" an organization committed to the development of self-help networks. All three programs are (or were) sponsored fully or partly by the Health Promotion Directorate of Health Canada. "Nobody's Perfect" operates at a national level, while the other two programs are a provincial and

municipal initiative respectively. These programs exemplify recent attempts to escape the manipulative confines of traditional approaches to social intervention.[19] The extent to which they are successful varies considerably. However, I will demonstrate that in each case the potential of an emancipatory approach is evident. My argument in this thesis is that the difficulty in uncovering and fostering this potential lies in both the academic discourse of intervention and the practical constraints imposed by mainstream evaluation strategies. My final task is to demonstrate the implications that the theoretical articulation of an emancipatory approach to intervention has for the practice of social programming and evaluation. In particular I am concerned with how this framework translates into an emancipatory approach to evaluation given this activity's critical role in the framing,

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[19] I selected these specific programs for two reasons. First, as an evaluator, I feel that they are illustrative of the problems one faces in trying to reconcile empowerment oriented intervention with accepted evaluation principles. The results are never less than disappointing for all concerned. Any indication that these programs do foster something other than skill acquisition or individual behavioral change either goes unrecognized or is reduced to anecdotal information. Hence, the emancipatory capacities of these programs are never nurtured beyond their first hesitant steps. My second reason for choosing these interventions is that they, as well as many other empowerment oriented programs, are predominantly designed by, participated in, and evaluated by women and thus very much in keeping with my own feminist interests. This of course raises the question as to whether the argument being developed is transferable to less gender specific interventions. Quite frankly, I do not know. My research interests are guided by my own practical experiences with the evaluation of empowerment oriented interventions, an experience dominated by women. I have no vantage point from which to offer another perspective.

documentation and assessment of social interventions.

Format

In the process of developing an emancipatory framework for the interventionary process and a reconstruction of social program evaluation the project proceeds as follows. Chapter One provides an overview of social interventionary practices and an introduction to the concepts of emancipatory intervention and empowerment oriented social programs. The three programs mentioned above are discussed in detail to illustrate the range of activities which make up this genre of intervention. Chapter One also looks at conventional evaluation strategies and current critiques of these approaches specifically as they relate to our conceptualization of emancipatory intervention. Chapter Two presents an elaboration of Habermasian critical social theory and the key concepts to be used in the theoretical reformulation of the interventionary process. The implications of this alternative discourse are discussed in Chapter Three. Chapter Four provides a critical examination of the term empowerment, its potential interpretation within an emancipatory framework and the implications these arguments have for the practice of intervention. Chapter Five examines the implications that an emancipatory approach to intervention has for social program evaluation.

CHAPTER ONE

SOCIAL INTERVENTION AND EVALUATION

The aim of this project is to develop a discourse of social intervention and evaluation within the framework of a critical and feminist perspective. There is a need to develop an interventionary process that is consistent with the interests of critical and feminist educators and social scientists who are committed to the development of political agency and the production of social change. Traditional approaches to intervention have proven to be ineffectual in eradicating societal ills. One response to this inertia has been the emergence of "empowerment oriented" social programs. This genre of intervention is a recent attempt to move beyond traditional approaches to social programming by focusing on the idea of empowerment, a process by which people are encouraged to engage in individual and collective change on their own behalf. Yet while empowerment oriented interventions do have the potential to support the emancipatory interests of critical and feminist thinkers, this capacity will remain severely constrained as long as its articulation occurs within the traditional discourse of intervention and evaluation. The language normally used and the accepted ways of thinking about the interventionary process have a powerful influence on the ability to imagine alternatives. Hence, what is required for the emergence of an

emancipatory practice is a reconstruction of the interventionary process within a critical, theoretical framework.

This chapter provides the reader with an introduction to modern day interventionary practices and the accompanying evaluation function. Social interventions are organized efforts (usually initiated by the state) to alleviate that which has been deemed to be a social problem. Specifically, this project uses the term as it refers to, "any program or planned effort to produce changes in a target population" (Rossi and Freeman, 1989:15) with the shared goal, "... of making life better and more rewarding for the people they serve" (Weiss, 1972b:1). Evaluation research is applied research to assess whether these interventions meet the expectations under which they are established. The discussion begins with an overview of the more traditional North American conceptualizations of social intervention followed by a detailed examination of the emergence of "empowerment oriented" social programming. Three examples will be provided to illustrate the concept of empowerment oriented intervention and the different interpretations thereof. The second part of the chapter focuses on a description of current evaluation practices and the role of the evaluation function in the interventionary process. Particular attention is given to an examination of the potentially problematic relationship

between mainstream evaluative strategies and the aspirations of empowerment oriented interventions.

Social Intervention: An Overview

"Official" intervention into people's affairs either by the state or by the church has long been a part of the Western social organizational tradition. While the term can be applied to almost any organized state activity the term is usually reserved for activities directed to the disadvantaged of society. The present day connotation of the term "social intervention" has its origins in the New Deal legislation of the Depression years but derives most of its shape and character from the American "Great Society" ideology of the 1960s. The mass unemployment and widespread poverty of the 1930s spawned, for the first time, the introduction of large scale, i.e. regional and national, as opposed to particularistic, economic interventions. These interventions were the first to reflect the idea of "amelioration of condition" which recognized that problematic behavior, eg. poverty and unemployment, were more a result of social conditions and experiences than of individual pathology.[1]

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[1] Rossi and Freeman (1989) date the practice of social intervention, in Western civilization, back to the 1600's. Henshel (1990) provides an interesting historical account of these early interventionary strategies and the underlying philosophies which directed these efforts.

Not until the 1960s did one see a massive expansion of this genre of social intervention practices and interests. Spurred on by "the war on poverty" social interventions began to move beyond economic restitution and redistribution and into the realm of dealing with the attitudinal, cognitive and experiential plight of the disadvantaged segments of society. As Ryan (1971) explains, this emphasis on "condition" represented a significant departure from the previous conservative ideologies. "The latter simply dismissed victims as inferior, genetically defective, or morally unfit ... the former shifts its emphasis to the environmental causation (and) attributes defect and inadequacy to the malignant nature of poverty, slum life, and racial difficulties" (1971:7). From this perspective theorists such as Oscar Lewis (1966) argued for interventions which would eradicate the "culture of poverty", the intergenerational transmission of a socially and environmentally constructed "mind set". Others, such as Miller and Rein (1966) were more immediate in their concerns arguing that the notion of a culture of poverty was naive and that, "apathy is often a protection against repeated failure rather than the barrier to initial efforts ... contemporary experiences and difficulties are frequently more important in determining behavior" (1966:491).

Regardless of the difference in explanation for the continued existence of poverty, the general public sentiment

reflected a sense of social responsibility: "we believe in trying to improve the human condition and alleviate its attendant ills, and as new problems become visible, our response - both publicly through government action and privately through social agencies - has been to set up programs to cope with the problems" (Weiss, 1972a:4). The anticipated role the social sciences were to play in this process was clear,

> ... (the) contribution social science makes to the solution of social problems lies in the discovery of crucial points of intervention in the structures and processes that contribute to the problem. Before such a contribution can be made, the social scientist must arrive at his (sic) own definition of the problem, for intervention can be planned only when we know what the purpose of our intervention is and what particular set of consequences we wish to avert. But, if we know what we want, research and analysis can reveal the crucial points in the development of the problem, the points where intervention will be most effective... (Becker, 1966:25)

Early attempts at intervention such as Project Head Start (pre-school education), Model Cities (urban renewal), Ford Foundation Projects (education and community development), were very much grounded in this positivistic conceptualization of social reality and knowledge construction.[2] From this perspective, the social world consists of a single, tangible reality the pieces of which can be discovered and studied separately from the whole. Social reality or "what is real"

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[2] The examples of early attempts at broad-based intervention are necessarily American because there is no equivalent Canadian experience. (Treasury Board of Canada, 1981)

is believed to exist independently of and external to the individual. Humanity reacts to an external environment which is objectively identifiable. "... though it may never be known perfectly by observers" (Shadish, Cook and Leviton, 1991:71). Human behavior and attitude formation are consequently the result of the impingement of this reality on the person. "The implicit model of society (is) clear: social structure is composed of modules relatively independent of one another and therefore subject to alteration without producing any important ripples throughout the system" (Berk and Rossi, 1976:341). The social reality of poverty was thus dissected into mutually exclusive component parts with interventions designed to meet each one. "Consistent with the social climate of the 1960's ... theories of social programming ... emphasized finding and evaluating manipulable solutions to social problems" (Shadish, Cook and Leviton, 1991:69). As a result interventions were characterized as,

> ... attempts to prevent certain undesirable events or consequences from developing by a deliberate attack upon causes or antecedent events ... Employing the analytic model of intervening variable analysis, we may conceptualize the intervention process largely as one attempting to alter the causal nexus between the independent and dependent variable through manipulation of the intervening variables by means of which the cause leads to the effect, or which modify or condition the effect. (Suchman, 1967:173)

The underlying general assumption was that the alleviation of social problems could be manipulated through the introduction of appropriate knowledge or techniques as an intervening variable. Hence, the design of most

interventionary programs, be they oriented to education, community development, race relations or health promotion, emphasized the acquisition of "life skills" or training as a solution to societal ills.

Social Intervention and Evaluation Research

The onset of broad based social intervention in the 1960's produced a flourishing and highly eclectic evaluation enterprise.[3] Mass spending on social programs necessitated public accountability and empirical evidence of effectiveness. Hence, the role of evaluation research was not only to measure outcomes against stated objectives but also to assess the value of the programs themselves (Hamilton, 1977; Guba and Lincoln, 1989). To advanced capitalist societies evaluation research has come to play a key role as scientific authority for government decision making and actions related to social interventions.

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[3] The modern understanding of evaluation or evaluation research has its roots in the 1930's. Prior to this time the relationship between intervention and evaluation was purely one of measurement with the evaluator's role being the development of appropriate testing instruments. During the 1930's, evaluation research became more objectives oriented, focusing on the extent to which the stated objectives of a program were or were not achieved. Measurement of output became just one of a number of evaluation tasks. For an historical overview of evaluation practices see Hamilton (1977), Nachmias (1980), Guba and Lincoln (1989) and House (1993).

By the mid-1970's evaluation research developed into a thriving industry with a separate and distinct discourse from its original attachment to the social sciences.

> Over time program evaluation has emerged as significantly different from basic research. Research is aimed at truth. Evaluation is aimed at action. Researchers produce knowledge for the sake of knowledge. Evaluators produce information meant to affect policy-making and improve program effectiveness (Patton, 1987:16)

The linkages between social problems, social programming and evaluation research are crucial ones. On the face of it, evaluation research might appear to be a retrospective, purely technical activity focusing on decisions already made, processes already in place, impacts already felt. There is a tendency to think of evaluation as an undertaking which succeeds an intervention (summative) or in some cases runs concurrent with the implementation of a program (formative). While this positioning may be true in as far as the formal applications of an evaluation are concerned it is not often recognized that the need to evaluate, in and of itself, plays a major role in how social interventions are mentally constructed and technically designed. In Professional Evaluation Ernest House, well known American evaluator, makes the rather provocative statement that evaluation, " ... was invented to solve social problems" (1993:11). House's comment is insightful in establishing the critical role of evaluation research in the interventionary process. Evaluation research is not merely the application of methodological techniques.

Perhaps more importantly it is also the primary discursive link between an intervention and the social problem it is intended to address. The description of a program -- in terms of its objectives and the relationship between anticipated impacts and effects -- is usually communicated in evaluative terms. As a result, how the social problem is articulated and how one describes or measures what occurs within an interventionary site is shaped and constrained by the capacities of the evaluative discourse being used. Evaluation research is, thus, much more than a methodological tool for assessing an interventionary program's value and effectiveness. The need to evaluate as well as the evaluation process itself plays a key role in how program rationale, process and outcomes are constructed. As Shadish, Cook and Leviton note, "Evaluation is an omnipresent political activity in social programs even when no formal evaluation occurs" (1991:447).

The need to demonstrate how well we intervene has a major influence on how we intervene and how we conceptualize our interventionary efforts. Social programs are designed specifically to alleviate social problems. Even for the most informal program structures we must be able to think in terms of the linkages between the social problem being addressed, the content and outputs of the interventionary strategy and the desired outcomes. To determine whether or not those

linkages exist and whether they are indeed effective necessitates the use of an evaluative discourse. As such the theoretical underpinnings of an evaluative discourse serve to mould the framework within which the social intervention is constructed. This is neither inconsequential nor unproblematic. As Berk and Rossi explain,

> Dominant ideologies ... affect the definitions of evaluation criteria. ... In other words evaluation research may validate a particular view of social problems by emphasizing certain outcomes as opposed to others. ... evaluation research methodology contributes to the definition of social problems; virtually all technical issues have an ideological side (1976:339).

In summary, this points to the need to include both social intervention and the accompanying evaluation function in our examination and reconstruction of the interventionary process.

Evaluation Research: An Overview

While there exists general agreement that evaluation is essentially a management tool for decision making a review of the literature reveals considerable diversity in both definition and application (Suchman, 1967; Weiss, 1972c; Alkin, 1972; Rossi, Freeman and Wright, 1989). As Figure 1 indicates, some evaluations focus on assessing the value or

FIGURE 1 A Taxonomy of Major Evaluation Approaches

Model	*Major Audiences or Reference Groups*	*Assumes Consensus On*	*Methodology*	*Outcome*	*Typical Questions*
Systems analysis	Economists, managers	Goals, known cause and effect, quantified variables	PPBS, linear programming, planned variation, cost-benefit analysis	Efficiency	Are the expected effects achieved? Can the effects be achieved more economically? What are the *most* efficient programs?
Behavioral objectives	Managers, psychologists	Prespecified objectives, quantified outcome variables	Behavioral objectives, achievement tests	Productivity, accountability	Is the program achieving the objectives? Is the program producing?
Decision-making	Decision-makers, especially administrators	General goals, criteria	Surveys, questionnaires, interviews, natural variation	Effectiveness, quality control	Is the program effective? What parts are effective?
Goal-free	Consumers	Consequences, criteria	Bias control, logical analysis, modus operandi	Consumer choice, social utility	What are *all* the effects?
Art criticism	Connoisseurs, consumers	Critics, standards	Critical review	Improved standards, heightened awareness	Would a critic approve this program? Is the audience's appreciation increased?
Professional review	Professionals, public	Criteria, panel, procedures	Review by panel, self study	Professional acceptance	How would professionals rate this program?
Quasi-legal	Jury	Procedures and judges	Quasi-legal procedures	Resolution	What are the arguments for and against the program?
Case study	Client, practitioners	Negotiations, activities	Case studies, interviews, observations	Understanding diversity	What does the program look like to different people?

Reprinted from House (1980:23)

worth of an intervention strategy in achieving a desired goal (Stufflebeam, 1971; Reicken, 1974; Eisner, 1976). For others the issue is one of congruence - the extent to which the program or strategy achieves expected outcomes or discerned needs (Provus, 1971; Scriven, 1973). For still others the focus of evaluation is on the generation of desired information on understanding how the program works (Suchman, 1967; Stake, 1975; Guba and Lincoln, 1981). How evaluation was defined led to the development of a specific strategies for undertaking the evaluation activity. For example, Stufflebeam's (1971) Context-Input-Process-Product Model (CIPP) proposes a process for delineating, obtaining and applying descriptive and judgmental information regarding the merits of a program as revealed by its goals, structure process and product. Provus' (1971) Discrepancy Model consists of a comparison of program performance with expected or designed program performance and client performance with expected client performance. Scriven's (1973) Goal Free Model evaluates actual effects (as opposed to objectives) against a profile of demonstrated needs. Eisner's (1976) Connoisseurship Model relies on the expertise of a human judge as the measurement instrument. Stake's (1975) Responsive Evaluation model looks at the concerns and needs of stakeholding audiences.

Despite the obvious differences among models enough similarity exists in underlying principles and assumptions to allow for categorical comparisons between those which are derived from a positivist social science tradition and those which have an interpretive orientation.

Positivist Models

Evaluation models based on the positivist tradition would include Systems Analysis (Rivlin, 1971; Rossi, Freeman and Wright, 1989), Goal-based Evaluation (Suchman, 1967) and the Decision-making Approach (Stufflebeam, 1971). From this perspective it is assumed that there exists a consensus on society's values and goals with the needs of the individual being equal to the needs of the system. Based on this consensus all social behavior can be judged against a single moral principle, that of "Greatest Happiness" which can be established by reference to what competent judges consider to be desirable. It is, therefore, possible to arrive at a single judgment of a phenomenon's overall social utility in that any activity which maximizes happiness i.e. produces the greatest good for the greatest number is the "just" thing to do (Hamilton, 1977; House, 1980; Worthen and Sanders, 1987).

The positivist epistemology is based on the belief that if the logic, procedure and mode of explanation used in the

natural sciences can lead to increased understanding and control of the natural world the same principles can and should be applied to the social world. As such, the only "true" knowledge is that which is either based on statements that are true by definition or based on statements which can be shown to be true through observation. The subjective human conception of "truth" is rendered irrational. The positivist epistemology further assumes that there is a logical distinction between theory and observational facts. Hence, what is observed (fact) can provide an independent test of a theory. The positivist maintains a rigid separation between fact and value (the ascription of worth to that which is observed) through the quantification of data. The objectivity and validity of the approach is deemed to be inherent in its epistemology.

In a general sense evaluation models derived from the positivist epistemology seek to determine the impact and effectiveness of a program in relation to its prescribed goals and objectives. Impacts are measured in terms of the extent to which the program "delivered" the intended product to participants. Effectiveness is judged in terms of whether the product delivered resulted in the intended consequences. In each of these models the assumption is made that there is a consensus on what the goals and objectives of a program should

be and which criteria or variables provide the most valid indicators for measuring impacts and effects.

In practice evaluations conducted from a positivist perspective are based on some variation of the experimental design which seeks to establish before-program, after-program, in-absence-of-program types of causal relationships. Researchers who adhere to this approach to evaluation refer to the controlled experimental design as their ideal (Cook and Campbell, 1979). Individuals are randomly assigned to control and experimental groups with the latter being exposed to a stimulus or treatment. Comparisons are then made between the two groups to determine if the treatment effected a change in the experimental group that is not discernible in the control group. If so, the observed change can be attributed to the impact of the treatment. Often the use of less "pure" (quasi) experimental designs are necessary but ultimately the positivist evaluator seeks to establish conclusions and generalizations based on statistical, scientifically generated, proof of cause and effect relationships.

As indicated in Figure 1, rigid instruments, such as the structured questionnaire, are the most popular form of data collection technique. The main audience or reference group for this type of impact evaluation is a managerial or

professional elite. The role of the evaluator is that of a technician who generates objective data through the application of scientific principles.

Interpretive Models

Interpretive approaches to the evaluation of social intervention are less commonly used and do not usurp the positivist tradition (House, 1980; Pal, 1987; Chen, 1990; Shadish, Cook and Leviton, 1991). Examples of this genre include Fourth Generation Evaluation (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, 1989) and Responsive Evaluation (Stake, 1975) and Eisner's (1976) Connoisseurship Model. Evaluation models derived from interpretive perspectives reflect a plurality of ethical principles. The value of a given phenomenon is deemed relative depending on the viewpoint of the individual or interest group. Ethical principles are derived from intuition and experience and cannot be unequivocally judged against an overarching single moral principle. Positivist approaches are rejected on the basis of their inherent assumptions regarding the consensus of social values and norms.

The interpretive theorist views people as active participants in the construction of social reality rather than behaving in reaction to a reality composed of external law-like forces. From this perspective social reality

possesses an intrinsic meaning structure that is formulated and maintained by the interpretive activities of its individual members. The social world is seen as shifting and dynamic where individuals act to make sense of the realities they encounter rather than responding mechanistically to role expectations established by the social structure. At its most extreme, adherents argue for the position of "methodological individualism" whereby there is no reality beyond that which each individual constructs (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Whereas the positivist paradigm contends that legitimate knowledge can only be established by reference to that which is manifested in observational facts, the interpretive perspective regards people's perception of reality as being more fundamental. "Truth" is perceived in relative terms and particular to individual and collective perception and experience. Valid knowledge is not limited to that which is supported by facts (that which is literally done). Legitimate knowledge must also be based on an understanding of the meaning people attach to their actions and the rules or conventions which govern such meanings. Experience is the basis for validity and what is valid for one person or group is not necessarily valid for another. The interpretive theorist contends this position is "value-free" in that the objective is to discover and describe the human experience, not to verify it.

An interpretive approach to evaluation strives to gain an understanding of program impacts and effects from a variety of perspectives. The emphasis would focus on how the program is "known" to the various parties involved. This type of evaluation is concerned more with establishing what the impacts and effects of a program are than with measuring the extent of pre-supposed impacts and effects. Whether or not a program "works" is judged from the perspective of those involved, in particular, the participants. The case study research design produces descriptive information as opposed to statistical measurements of effectiveness. Observation and indepth interviews are the most commonly used data collection techniques. Externalization of procedures and reproducibility are not major concerns. In interpretive evaluation models the primary audience is the client or program practitioner and the role of the evaluator is one of information "broker" who portrays the different values and needs of those involved (House, 1980).[4]

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[4] In practice, the distinctions between positivist and interpretive approaches to evaluation are less clearly defined. Numerous evaluations have, in fact, chosen to ignore fundamental differences and been quite eclectic in their approach particularly in the application of the various research techniques (Reichardt and Cook, 1979; Ianni and Orr, 1979; Trend, 1979; Myers, 1981). Advocates of the more synchronized approach argue that methodological techniques are not inextricably tied to a specific paradigm and that the two should be used together to more effectively measure program outcomes.

The Canadian Context

In Canada, social interventions are most often subjected to process/impact/cost-effectiveness types of evaluation strategies. In the Guide on the Program Evaluation Function, the Treasury Board of Canada (1981) recommends that social program evaluation focus on the following types of issues and research questions:

Evaluation Issue	Rationale - Does the Program make sense?[5]
Research Questions	To what extent are the objectives and the mandate of the Program still relevant i.e. is the program still needed for current government policy, even assuming it is producing as expected? Is the program accurately focused on the problem or issue it is addressing? Are the activities and outputs of the program consistent with its mandate and plausibly linked to the attainment of the objectives and intended impacts and effects?
Evaluation Issue	Impacts and Effects - What has happened as a result of the Program?
Research Questions	What impacts and effects, both intended and unintended, resulted from carrying out the Program?

[5] The Treasury Board explicitly states, "The focus here is on the program's rationale, not the rationale of the policy from which the program evolved. Program evaluation must take some level of policy, such as the department's long term objectives, as given in order to have a basis on which to compare the program." (Treasury Board, 1981:8)

	In what manner and to what extent does the program complement, duplicate, overlap or work at cross-purposes with other programs?
Evaluation Issue	Objectives Achievement - Has the Program achieved its objectives
Research Questions	In what manner and to what extent were program objectives achieved as a result of the Program?
Evaluation Issue	Alternatives - Are there better ways of achieving the results?
Research Questions	Are there more cost-effective alternative programs which might achieve the objectives and intended impacts and effects?
	Are there more cost-effective ways of delivering the existing program?

While the methodological techniques associated with positivism are preferred, the Treasury Board orientation to program evaluation does not, either in theory or in practice, preclude the use of methods or assumptions derived from an interpretive perspective. The more positivist approach would assume that program rationale, objectives, impacts and effects are not only identifiable but are also based on some form of consensus.[6] In other words, there is little recognition of difference, it is assumed that there are no disagreements as to how the social problem is defined and what the desired outcome is. An attempt is then be made to isolate and develop

[6] Participant input to this consensus is usually derived from pre-program focus groups with members of the target population.

measurable indicators (preferably observable ones) for every manifestation of the program. The linkages between independent variables (program components) and dependent variables (impacts and effects) are subsequently subjected to the appropriate testing procedures, preferably those which produce quantitative data. The focus of the evaluation is on the verification of anticipated results. Program participants are constructed as data sources, passive recipients of outputs, from which to extract the information required including proof of program success.

A more interpretive reading of the above evaluation questions would allow for the presentation of multiple perspectives. This perspective has the capacity to acknowledge diverse perspectives and interpretations. The stated program rationale, objectives, impacts and effects are made problematic and open to scrutiny by all program stakeholders, including participants. Impacts and effects are not verified but discovered. Because of its more relative nature, interpretive approaches often have difficulty establishing the validity of their assessments. Guba and Lincoln (1989) attempt to resolve this problem in their "Fourth Generation" evaluation model by arguing for the possibility of consensus through negotiation.

> ... evaluation is a joint, collaborative process. It is a process that aims at the evolution of consensual constructions about the evaluand (that which is being evaluated). ... That is not to say

> that all evaluations will end in consensus. Quite the opposite. Some evaluations will end with actions being undertaken via a negotiation where honorable and responsible people simply "agree to disagree". (Guba and Lincoln, 1989:253)

Problems with Traditional Approaches to the Interventionary Process

By the early 1970's evaluation results consistently showed that most social interventions produced few, if any, positive outcomes. Interventionary efforts "... certainly disappointed the hopes of those who sought a new instrument of co-ordination, a stimulus to widespread innovation or popular control of planning; and it confirmed the cynicism of critics who never expected from it any great benefit to the poor" (Marris and Rein, 1973:242).

Some researchers blamed the ineffectiveness of social intervention practices on inadequate program design and implementation:

> More and more the evidence drawn from direct observation of efforts to develop and operate social policies and programs in the field points to the saliency of implementation concerns. The Great Society programs that were begun with such high hopes performed well below naive early expectations; frequently they seemed to make little progress at all. It is becoming clear in retrospect that the architects of the new programs had many good ideas but neglected their execution. (Williams,1976:5)

Others questioned the ability of the social sciences, in any measurable way, to either enhance the understanding of, or to increase control over the intricacies of the social world.

> In sharp contrast to the self-confidence exhibited in the early 1960s by empirically oriented social scientists, the latter half of the decade brought polemical discussion and speculation about the relevance of their research to actual political problems. Complaints emanated from both ends of the political spectrum. On the right, those oriented toward the priorities of the established power structure increasingly lamented the failure of the social sciences to provide usable knowledge for social guidance and control, while on the left, those oriented toward the causes of the poor and of minorities accused the social sciences of ideological distortion and manipulation. (Fischer, 1985:232)

Still other social scientists and educators pointed accusatory fingers at the "life skills" approach to social programming. As Thompson comments, the tone of these programs, "... is one of mission and concern for the less fortunate, in areas in which the distinctions between therapeutic, educational and welfare needs become very difficult to establish" (In Law and Sissons, 1983:67). Adult educators Law and Sissons concur, "There is an urgent need to make sense of practice ... In the social arena the emphasis has shifted towards a "helping/coping" strategy; the distinction between "education" and 'welfare' has been blurred" (1983:60).

Most of the criticism focused on the hypocrisy inherent in the "ameliorative" approach to social intervention. As Ryan points out, on the surface this ideology appears to recognize

that the "stigma that marks the victim and accounts for his (sic) victimization is an acquired stigma, a stigma of social, rather than genetic origin" (1971:7). However, at the heart of this form of reasoning lies the assumption that, "... the stigma, the defect, the fatal difference - though derived in the past from environmental forces - is still located within the victim, inside his (sic) skin" (1971:7).[7] As a result, the target for social action and intervention is not society, but society's victim. Consequently, and as Myers argues, "We can expect that opportunity programs because of their flawed conception of social causation, will be ... largely ineffective. Opportunity programs unaccompanied by the necessary institutional changes are largely a farce and a deception" (1981:8). Rejection of the social interventionary process quickly permeated the academic community. Speaking to the Society for the Study of Social Problems, Deutscher captured the general sentiment:

> Ultimately most of us are concerned with finding ways to alter this world in such a manner that more people may find it a better place in which to live. Our orientation leads us to search for effective alterations of the society rather than effective adjustments of individuals to society. We tend, therefore, to shun efforts to improve treatment of individuals who reflect symptomatically the malfunctionings of society. (1975:9)

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[7] Charles Sykes (1992) offers sharp criticism of Ryan's "blame the victim" ideology. Sykes contends that the ensuing emphasis on victimization ushered in a "no fault" culture where discussions of personal conduct and responsibility were effectively stigmatized.

Despite the plethora of evaluation models, considerable doubt and scepticism was also expressed regarding the ability of current evaluative strategies to inform adequately or improve the practice of social intervention. Practitioners in the field readily acknowledged the problematic nature of their craft with most of the self-criticism being directed at methodological shortcomings (Mann, 1972; Elinson, 1972; Guba, 1972; Weiss, 1972; Ianni and Orr, 1979; Pal, 1987; House, 1990). Until recently, direct discussion on ontological and epistemological issues received little attention in the literature.[8]

> ... current books on evaluation tend to be atheoretical listing of methods rather than theory based prescriptions about how and why various methods should be used in practice... few evaluation texts contain detailed theoretical rationales for their practice prescriptions. (Shadish, Cook and Leviton, 1991:20)

The tendency to construct evaluation as an atheoretical activity was in and of itself regarded as problematic. For some researchers what was lacking was a theory of evaluation *per se*. The emphasis had been on the development and use of methodological techniques as opposed to theoretical frameworks

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[8] Evaluation related journals do not generally devote much space to articles dealing with theoretical matters or issues related to the relationship between theory and practice. For example, a search of a computerized database of journal abstracts (Sociofile) indicated that only 4 out of 522 articles published in Evaluation Review; 4 out of 91 articles published in New Directions for Program Evaluation; 6 out of 76 articles published in Evaluation Practice; and, 1 out of 27 articles published in The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation focused on theoretical concerns.

which dictate how, when and why different methods should be employed (Alkin, 1972; Ianni and Orr, 1979; Guba and Lincoln, 1981; House, 1986; Shadish, Cook and Leviton, 1991). For others, the problem related to the lack of integration of program theory with evaluation practices. Evaluations rarely, if ever, reflected or addressed the theoretical components of intervention strategies (Suchman, 1972; Myers, 1981; Chen, 1990).

Evaluation practices were also criticized for focusing on only those issues most conducive to the application of available socio-scientific tools. It was argued that these issues were not necessarily the most important nor did they necessarily reflect the real needs of those involved in the program. Method dictated what would and would not be addressed (Parlett and Hamilton, 1976; Patton 1978; House, 1980; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Weiss, 1986).[5]

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[5] The critique of current evaluation strategies encapsulizes the disillusionment with social science research practices in general. Positivism, in theory, has been dismantled assumption by assumption not only by those adhering to the interpretive paradigm but also by critical, feminist, and other "new paradigm" theorists, a term coined by Reason and Rowan (1981) in Human Inquiry. It refers to a genre of research argued to be with and for people rather than on people. See also Reason (1988) Human Inquiry in Action. Positions derived from an interpretive perspective have also been subjected to considerable critique, as much for their inherent assumptions as their inability to seriously undermine the positivistic grip on applied research (Hamilton, 1977; Shadish, Cook and Leviton, 1991).

Empowerment Oriented Intervention

The rhetoric of empowerment oriented intervention emerged during the 1980s. Where previously the discourse of intervention had been strongly oriented to the more positivistic elements in the social sciences one now saw the practice of social intervention, particularly that which was adult oriented, increasingly being influenced by the emancipatory language of critical adult educators (Freire, 1970; Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Fay, 1987; Giroux 1988a, 1991; Collins, 1991), feminist pedagogical theorists (Hart, 1990; Lather, 1991; Weiler, 1991), and social action researchers (Hall, 1981; Reason and Rowan, 1981; Maguire, 1987). Having rejected the aspiration to manipulate behavioral changes through the direct transferal of knowledge and skills these social activists attempt instead to develop strategies which will enhance the ability of the disempowered to affect social change on their own behalf. This discourse -- which is actually composed of various discourses (see Chapter 4) -- is, in its scholarly form, characterized by a belief in, and a commitment to, social empowerment and the vision of social justice. Hence, the belief in the possibility for eradicating societal ills remains. Inherent in this belief is a view of social change that acknowledges the constraints imposed by humanity's embeddedness in history, social structures, and personal biographies while at the same time recognizing the

human potential to change both oneself and society. Those concerned with the development of empowerment based practices also tend to see the process in terms of a collective social activity, as opposed to the more traditional emphasis on the individual. Perhaps what distinguishes the discourse of empowerment most clearly from its predecessors is its acknowledgement and deep respect for all people's capacity to create knowledge about their own experiences and the resolutions to problems pertaining thereto. Following Fay, for example, this capacity extends well beyond the possession of basic intelligence or "the disposition to alter one's beliefs and ensuing behavior on the basis of new information" (1987:48). It also includes curiosity - "The disposition to seek out information about one's environment in order to provide a fuller basis for one's assessments" (1987:49); reflectiveness - "the disposition to evaluate one's own's desires and beliefs" (1987:48); and, wilfulness - "the disposition to be and to act on the basis of one's reflections" (1987:50). Within this discourse, what is considered to be a valid knowledge base from which to initiate social change is that which originates in the everyday understandings and experiences of those involved rather than the annals of the social scientific community.

While evidence of these emancipatory principles have found their way into the interventionary literature the

linkages between the more scholarly discourse of empowerment or emancipatory education and the practice of social programming are tenuous at best. Bennett (1987) is perhaps the most articulate in his attempt to develop an emancipatory philosophy for social programming in the field of mental health and in so doing constructs its most utopian aspirations. For Bennett intervention underscored by an emancipatory interest (a term which, incidently, Bennett does not use), " ... implies cooperative activities between people or interest groups to effect change of a social system" (1987:16). Rather than accepting society's prevailing social, political and economic orientations, this type of intervention, in its emancipatory ideal, refers to social actions which seek changes to existing social relationships and institutions. For Bennett, thus, the target of an interventionary effort is the social structure itself rather than individual behavior within that structure. Social intervention so envisioned has as its fundamental goal, "... the need to ensure that individuals and groups have the power to influence the direction of their lives and of their social institutions" (Bennett and Hallman, 1987:93). Hence, these theorists argue for a strategy of intervention premised on the belief that people should not merely be the objects or targets of social policy. They should provide the baseline knowledge and be active creators of such policies. For Bennett, the success of such projects is ultimately to be judged by, "...

the degree to which there has been movement to reduce (oppressive) conditions and whether the strategies employed are creating social processes and structures which provide the marginal person with greater access to goods and services and movement toward a psychological sense of community" (Bennett, 1987:17). In other words, Bennett envisions an emancipatory process as one that identifies and eradicates those factors which contribute to disempowerment *and* which increases the individual's access to and sense of "connectedness" to a larger social collective.

Bennett's call for interventionary measures based on an emancipatory philosophy stands in sharp contrast to the more traditional or mainstream definition of the practice of social programming. Earlier ameliorative efforts largely accepted the legitimacy of existing structural arrangements and focused either on change within social institutions, or on adaptive changes in the behaviors and attitudes of a specific target group. The discourse of a more empowerment based strategy focuses instead on the maximization of individual and collective potential through an emphasis on strengths rather than deficits or weaknesses (Raeburn, 1987; Boudreau, 1987). In principle, the fundamental goal of this approach to intervention is to increase the autonomous and collective capacity of individuals to define and influence the direction of their own lives. Central to this interventionary discourse

is the emphasis on the individual as a "knowing" person, the importance of mutual help and the building of solidarity. Most importantly the discourse advocates the idea of people producing change within and to their environment rather than being the object of change producing strategies.

Such emancipatory aspirations are, of course, not easily translated into practice. While terms such as empowerment, mutual support and participatory research have found their way into the interventionary literature they often appear there as procedural techniques divested of their philosophical base. As Boudreau (1987), speaking from the field of mental health, notes,

> While there may be consensus on the general principles, to transform these highly desirable abstractions into a unified, coherent, effective and rational mental health policy and then into direct experience is a totally different challenge. To appeal to community solidarity, mutual help, voluntary action and interpersonal support as a complement to mental health services is not new, but to make it the foundation of a grandiose vision of a mentally healthy society may very well be little more than an exercise in rhetoric or technocratic idealism. (1987:319)

From Philosophy to Policy

While critical theorists and social policy analysts such as Bennett have explored the dimensions of an emancipatory practice in principle, there is little evidence of these principles being fully translated into a concrete

interventionary practice. What one finds instead is the selective use of some of the concepts associated with an emancipatory discourse. The health promotion policy of Health Canada (formerly Health and Welfare Canada) provides an illustrative example of how elements of an emancipatory philosophy have found their way into Canadian empowerment oriented social programming practices. In 1986 the Health Promotion Directorate adopted a programming strategy which subscribes to the concepts of public participation, enablement and empowerment. In reaction to the traditional individualistic "lifestyle" or "behavioral" model of health promotion the new model claims to be based on the recognition that health is profoundly affected by people's social context and by societal factors such as economic conditions, employment and housing. The focus of the new approach to health promotion is directed at the development of public participation projects. In principle, the commitment to public participation is defined as a process whereby,

> ... community people decide what their own needs are, set their own goals, and take action themselves... these projects are owned, controlled and determined by the people whom they are intended to benefit... at the heart of the system is a fundamental principle, that of people deciding what they want for themselves. (Raeburn, 1987:2)

Regardless of specific health promotion goals, all projects are to be characterized by the development of strong social supports, skills and self-esteem (Epp, 1986; Raeburn, 1987). Within this discourse the role of experts and professionals

are envisioned as "... consultants, advisors and supports to people who are trying to act on their own initiative" (Raeburn, 1987:2) Raeburn coined the term "people led endeavours" for social programs based on these principles.

When one compares Raeburn's empowerment based policy formulation to the emancipatory principles put forward by critical thinkers and policy analysts such as Bennett one can see that the concepts of mutual support, public participation and the recognition of people as "knowing" individuals have survived the journey from emancipatory philosophy to empowerment based policy. However, the *intent* of an emancipatory strategy is no longer as clearly articulated. Social structures are acknowledged as having a profound impact on people's life experiences but they are not explicitly identified as the new target of interventionary efforts. Rather, one gets the distinct impression that at the level of policy public participation and mutual support are seen as a matter of process, an educational strategy through which people learn to cope within the existing fabrication of society. Participation and support become strategies to facilitate more effective "learning" rather than a political environment from which strategies for social change emerge.

From Policy to Practice

Three ongoing Canadian programs which reflect the aspirations to public participation and mutual support and which illustrate the varying degrees by which an empowerment oriented policy has been interpreted and implemented are "Nobody's Perfect" (developed by Health and Welfare and implemented by various provincial agencies), the "Self-Help Connection" (originally sponsored by the Canadian Mental Health Association (N.S.) and funded by Health and Welfare),[10] and "The Stepping Stone Project" (funded by Health and Welfare Canada, the Province of Nova Scotia and the City of Halifax).

The Nobody's Perfect Program

"Nobody's Perfect" was developed by the Atlantic Region Health Promotion Directorate, Health and Welfare Canada and the four Atlantic provinces' Departments of Health. The "Nobody's Perfect" program is an educational health promotion program for parents of children from birth to age five. Specifically, the program is designed for "low-income, single, young, socially or geographically isolated parents or parents with

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[10] The "Self-Help Connection" now operates as a non-profit organization with financial contributions from the Nova Scotia Department of Health.

limited formal education" (Health and Welfare Canada, 1988:6).[11] The overall intent of the program is "to give parents access to accurate, up-to-date information on their children's health, safety, development and behavior (and) to encourage confidence in a parent's ability to be a good parent" (Health and Welfare Canada, 1988:6). In so doing the program acknowledges that, "Health problems must be viewed both in terms of individual and social factors" (Nobody's Perfect, Administrative Manual, 1988:9). The approach used in program design and delivery recognizes that:

> ... parents have needs, limitations and strengths. As a program ... it seeks to build on what parents already know and do for themselves and their children. It seeks to adhere to the basic tenets of adult education beginning with people's experience, interests and desire to participate and providing opportunities for people to be actively involved in the learning process. In addition to acquiring information and to parents solving some of their own problems, mutual support initiatives - actions parents take to help one another - can emerge from (the) program...

As such, the objectives of the "Nobody's Perfect" program are:

- to increase participants' knowledge and understanding of their children's health, safety and behavior;
- to effect positive change in the behavior of participants in relation to their children's health, safety and behavior;
- to improve participants' confidence and self-image as parents;
- to improve participants' coping skills as parents;

[11] Program eligibility criteria based on these characteristics varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

- to increase self-help and mutual support among parents.

The "Nobody's Perfect" program is implemented in parent groups of 8 to 10 participants or on a one-to-one basis, or both. The program is delivered by trained facilitators and sessions are usually held weekly for a five to six week duration.[12] The core materials developed for the program include five booklets containing information on themes related to safety, body, mind, behavior and parents.

The "Nobody's Perfect" program documentation emphasizes the importance of enabling or empowering parents to act effectively on behalf of their children. The stated aim of the program is to transfer skills to parents by supporting and reinforcing self-reliance while at the same time making use of traditional health practices in the family. Learning through the "Nobody's Perfect" program occurs through utilization of adult education methods such as discussion and group support rather than the traditional learning modes of classroom and instructor. It uses the experiences of parents as a recognized and valued part of the knowledge base; attempts to involve every parent in discussions; and places an emphasis on democracy and mutual respect.

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[12] Facilitators have, to-date, usually been public health nurses or social workers. In some jurisdictions, such as Nova Scotia, parents from the target group have been trained as facilitators.

The Stepping Stone Project

The "Stepping Stone" project, established in 1987, is a street outreach programme for male and female prostitutes. "Stepping Stone" holds with the philosophy that women, men and youth who work as prostitutes have basic rights, as citizens, to safety and access to services regardless of their occupation; and, that people who work as prostitutes are entitled to social alternatives to street prostitution.

"Stepping Stone" incorporates into its service delivery the knowledge that women, men and youth who work as proscitutes may choose to continue this work. Therefore, no attempt is made to interfere with this choice. The specific objectives of the program are:

- to establish and maintain close contact with women, men and youth who work as street prostitutes.
- to offer immediate response to the needs and concerns of this segment of the population.
- to assist women, men and youth who work as prostitutes in using existing services.
- to provide long-term support to those adopting an alternative life style.
- to divert youth from becoming involved in street life.
- to establish a self-help program, managed and operated by service users and ex-prostitutes.

The "Stepping Stone" Project describes itself as being "user-directed" responding to the self-defined needs of its constituency. Ideally, the users of the service are also intended to play an integral part in directing the activities of the program and determining the goals, objectives, priorities and structure of the program through participation on the Board of Directors.

The central component of the "Stepping Stone" Project is the street outreach, which consists of the streetworker teams "doing the strolls". Streetworkers walk around each stroll two or three times in each evening shift. They use a casual, unobtrusive approach intended to respect the individual's right to direct the development of her or his relationship to the streetworker according to her or his needs.

Basic support is provided to all with whom the streetworkers make contact, through the provision of condoms, "bad trick lists", invitations to regular drop-ins, and information on the availability of "Stepping Stone" staff and resources. Contacts that result in a regular "streetside" relationship are called "low support". When a woman or man contacted on the street asks for the streetworkers' assistance with any issue they are currently dealing with (substance abuse problems, housing, sexual abuse survivor issues, health concerns, wanting to "get off'), that individual is taken on

by one street worker who will continue to work with her or him in a one-to-one counselling and advocacy relationship. This is called "high support". Once on high support, the user of the service begins to come into the office/resource centre for regular appointments with the streetworker, and they work together to develop a plan. The streetworker enables the person to work at their plan in manageable steps, and supports them as they take each step.

Along with low support and high support work, streetworkers and the co-ordinator are often involved in crisis intervention. This can range from emergency advocacy with a landlord or a social assistance worker to emergency relocation out of the metro area or out of province. "Stepping Stone" is linked to a number of interim residences for someone in the process of an emergency relocation (Stepping Stone, unpublished evaluation reports).

The Self-Help Connection

The "Self-Help Connection" project, began in 1987 and aims to "... enable Nova Scotians to effectively participate in developing self-help, health enhancing activities and improve control over their health status by increasing their knowledge, skills and resources for individual and collective action" (The Self-Help Connection, 1991:2). The project uses

"... citizen participation as an approach to demonstrate the importance of individuals creating the capacity to manage their own health and to address the barriers to health in their social-political environments" (The Self-Help Connection, 1991:1). The Self Help Connection seeks to increase opportunities for citizens to participate in developing the knowledge, skills and resources required for individual and social change. The concept of control over health status is seen to be more than simply seeking remediation for an individual problem. Rather, the aim of the project is to empower people to act on both the personal and environmental conditions affecting their health.

The stated goals of the Self-Help Connection are:

- to provide information on self-help activities, resources and issues,
- to develop a province-wide network of people with skills in self-help and social action,
- to expand the knowledge and understanding of the factors related to the development of self-help social action activities and resources.

The "Self-Help Connection" Centre facilitates this process through the distribution of a newsletter, self help directory, self-help materials and networking amongst the self-help community. In addition the Centre offers a group start-up and follow-up consultation service and is actively engaged in presentations to community groups, and the organization of conferences and workshops.

The "Self-Help Connection" is based on a model which stresses both advocacy and empowerment, self-help and social action.

> The fundamental empowering principle of the Self-Help/Social Action Model is in the transition and transformation of the individual as a victim to acceptance of self as an assertive, efficacious citizen. Achieving empowerment implies developing the knowledge, skills and resources not only needed to cope, but to confront those social forces which make major contributions to most human stress and dysfunction. The Self-Help Connection activities will center on developing essential community participation opportunities and social action skills. (The Self-Help Connection, 1991:13)

"Nobody's Perfect", the "Self Help Connection" and the "Stepping Stone" project are three interventions sponsored by Health Canada and/or other government agencies that attempt to translate the discourse of empowerment, with its emphasis on public participation and mutual support into practice. In the "Nobody's Perfect" program model "empowerment" is viewed as a process whereby participants gain confidence in themselves as parents and in their ability to act on behalf of their children within the system. Empowerment or "to be empowered" is viewed primarily as an individual achievement that can be facilitated by mutual support activities. The "Self-Help Connection" shares the construct of empowerment as increased ability and confidence to act but adds to it the important dimension that empowerment must lead to the increased ability to act both within and *against* the system. In the "Self-Help connection" mutual support is seen as a means for facilitating both individual and collective empowerment. The "Stepping

Stone" project has a somewhat different approach to the concept. It does not hold itself out as being empowering in the more traditional sense of the word. For the "Stepping Stone" project the idea of empowerment is linked to the users' right to decide for themselves how their relationship to the project will be defined and the resources they will seek access to. At this level "Stepping Stone's" use of the term has relatively individualistic connotations, however, their desire for a user controlled Board of Directors reflects their aspirations to a more collective experience.

"Nobody's Perfect" is the most traditional in the role that the program itself plays in the interventionary process. Here the program serves as a conduit through which a specifically designed systemic resource is channelled to a target group of participants. The "Stepping Stone" project, on the other hand, serves as a bridge between the self-expressed needs of users and available resources. The "Self-Help Connection" is perhaps the most unique in that here the program does not play an intervening role between system and participants/users. Rather, the role of the program is to encourage the establishment of groups which will themselves access and challenge the organization of existing resources.

While none of the examples discussed above reflect the emancipatory ideal they do, unlike their 1960's predecessors,

recognize in varying degrees that the prescription of knowledge and skills as "treatment" is not likely to result in the desired social change. Likewise, they step back from blatantly imposing the direction of that change.

Despite these attempts to move beyond traditional approaches to intervention it is quite evident that as one traces a path from Bennett's (1987) articulation of an emancipatory interest, through Raeburn's (1987) translation of that interest into policy, to the final expression of that interest in the content and design of the social programs just discussed, one loses sight of a social intervention strategy based on emancipatory principles. Along the way the discourse of empowerment oriented social programs falls somewhere between the behaviourist orientation of the 1960s - where the intent was to produce change in people based on "systemic" interests - and the emancipatory ideals of the 1970s and '80s which called on people's capacity to produce systemic change based on their own needs and interests. What we are left with in the end (and again) is an approach to social programming that focuses on peoples' ability to effect change within themselves, thereby enhancing their capacity to adapt to "the system". What is lost in most cases and with the possible exception of the "Self-Help Connection" is any sense of social programming as a means to producing systemic change. Perhaps this conservative relapse is inevitable. It could be argued

that social interventions which originate in the state do not have either the capacity or the intent to be genuinely emancipatory. Those in "the system" are not likely to create knowingly the opportunity for their own loss of power. Hence, the most that can be hoped for are social interventions which encourage people to help themselves but which pose no serious threats to the status quo. As a result, interventions, including those which are empowerment oriented, continue "... to alleviate concerns rather than raise questions about their validity" (Collins, 1991:101).

Whatever emancipatory aspirations or possibilities an empowerment oriented approach to social intervention may have, these are extremely restrained by current evaluation practices. Positivist models are limited to assessing the technical or instrumental elements of an intervention. Process issues, impacts and effects related to empowerment can only be dealt with if the term, or components thereof, can be reduced to a measurable indicator. Hence, the worth of an empowerment oriented social intervention can only be judged in terms of whether the program "works". Did the manipulation of condition result in the intended modifications to attitudes and behavior? An emancipatory interest can only be addressed as a technical interest and one for which there is observable, "objective" evidence.

Evaluation models derived from an interpretive perspective are only slightly less impotent.[13] Their lack of interest in cause and effect relationships and their more active perception of human nature enables them to view intervention in a more holistic manner. However, even the more "critical" models such as Guba and Lincoln's (1989) "Fourth Generation Evaluation" fail to deal, in any meaningful way, with the concept of relative power.

> When stakeholders are professionals who already feel empowered in many ways, and sponsors... are themselves merely "first among equals", there is not much of a problem. But in situations where there are vast power and information disparities, and where those in power prefer things to remain that way, the situation is quite different. ... Rather than regard (power) as a fixed-sum commodity, for example, so that the only way to acquire some of it is to take it away from someone who already has it, we may wish to regard it as (potentially) ever growing and enlarging, as in the case of love. (Guba and Lincoln, 1989:267)

In the process of coming to understand how a program works, and negotiating the resolution to different points of view it is assumed that the stakeholders' equal right to speak is accompanied by an equal *ability* to speak. This more participatory approach may include bodies but not necessarily voices. Likewise, there is little recognition given to the fact that some voices, particularly those of the "expert" or

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[13] This is not to imply that this impotency is inherent to the interpretive epistemology - see, for example, Gadamer's (1976) construction of critical hermeneutics. Rather, the critical potential in a hermeneutic approach tends to get lost in the translation of interpretive principles into evaluation practices.

"specialist", generally assume and are often given a privileged position in the discussion. Hence, what appears to be the reaching of consensus or mutual understanding could, in fact, be the reigning supreme of dominant discourses.

Both positivistic and interpretive oriented approaches to evaluation suffer from an additional dysfunction. Traditional evaluations pride themselves in being disinterested and apolitical informants. In the corresponding role of objective technician or neutral information broker evaluators are incapable of incorporating "what ought to be" into their research practices, and hence, must reject outright any collaboration with an emancipatory interest.

It should not be surprising that mainstream interest in and reaction to the needs of an empowerment oriented philosophy of intervention has been virtually non-existent.[14] At best, some evaluators have attempted to incorporate more interpretive oriented, qualitative methods into existing evaluation models. Others have utilized more "participatory" approaches in an effort to make the evaluation process

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[14] The relatively few evaluators who do accept the challenges posed by this shift in philosophy and who provide the bulk of evaluative services for these interventions tend to be single or small group female practitioners. That these women practice very much on the margins of the industry is evidenced by the content and interests reflected in the <u>Canadian Journal of Evaluation</u> which to-date has had but one article dealing with empowerment related issues.

consistent with the empowerment oriented philosophy of the program (see for example, Whitmore, 1991). At worst, interests that fall beyond available measurement indicators are defrocked and redressed as measurable entities or, as is more expeditious, simply ignored. In general, the concern with the development of alternative evaluation models did not find its way beyond the literature of 1970's.[15] The implication of this inertia for empowerment oriented intervention is paralysis. The use of mainstream methods is only partially informative and potentially crippling. Often the misguided application of traditional evaluation to empowerment oriented intervention can stand in direct opposition to such endeavours by virtue of what it can and cannot see.[16] One is tempted to agree with noted American evaluator Carol Weiss,

> For the social scientist who wants to contribute to the improvement of social programming, there may be more effective routes at this point than through evaluation research. There may be greater potential in doing research on the processes that give rise to social problems, the institutional structures that contribute to their origin and persistence, the social arrangements that overwhelm efforts to eradicate them, and the points at which they are vulnerable to societal intervention. (Weiss, 1973:44-45)

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[15] There are a few theorists who have approached evaluation from a more critical perspective. See for example, public policy analysts Fischer (1980, 1985), Kirkup (1986), Hoppe, Pranger and Besseling (1990), social welfare theorists van der Eyken (1991), Whitmore (1991), Barr and Cochran (1992) and critical educator Kemmis (1993).

[16] As evidenced by the evaluations of Head Start and Push/Excel (Farrar and House, 1986).

Such pessimism does very little, however, to further the emancipatory interests and efforts of those genuinely committed to eliminating the oppressive conditions under which so many people in our society live. It also denies the fact that many social activists are themselves part of the "system" and working actively for improvements within those structures. What is not lacking is commitment or good intentions or even possibility. What *is* lacking is a working discourse that allows us to envision the intervention process as an emancipatory activity. While Bennett and others give us a clear indication of what the outcome of an emancipatory approach to intervention should be they are less forthcoming as to how to get there.

Conclusion

In a broad sense we need to develop an approach to social programming which is ultimately directed at the elimination of oppressive systemic structures. The elements of an emancipatory discourse for social intervention and evaluation, informed by this interest, are not obvious. On a practical level programs which are non-prescriptive, and which promote social change and mutual support are preferable to those which emphasize personal deficiencies, the concept of "coping" and individual change. However, the simple recognition of what is and is not emancipatory or empowering in a social program is

not enough to redirect our interventionary efforts. The abandonment of one approach or set of principles does not automatically reveal an alternative discourse. The empowerment-oriented social programs discussed above show that practical attempts to move toward a more emancipatory approach are still firmly entrenched in the traditional discourse of intervention and evaluation. It is therefore critical that we establish the theoretical underpinnings of emancipatory practice. This includes consideration of what an emancipatory approach assumes about the relationship between systemic structures and human agency and of how this translates into the conceptualization of "intervention". Likewise, we require a conceptual framework within which to examine critically the position of the key players. What are the assumed or preferred relationships among program planners, implementers, participants and evaluators that would be consistent with an emancipatory process? In addition we need a position from which to establish the epistemological grounds for an alternative approach to evaluation research, one that incorporates the critical edge needed to inform and develop emancipatory efforts. This then is the task before us.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CRITICAL SOCIAL THEORY OF JÜRGEN HABERMAS

The aim of this project is to examine the social interventionary process i.e. social programming and evaluation research, within a discourse informed by critical and feminist interests. A primary concern is the extent to which social programs informed by a commitment to empowerment demonstrate a potential to serve as a starting point for an emancipatory approach to intervention. In the previous chapter we examined how "empowerment oriented" social programs influenced by critical educational and social action practices attempt to move beyond the traditional "behavioristic" or "life skills" approach to social intervention. The tentative conclusion reached was that empowerment oriented social programs which emphasize mutual support and public participation, have at best brought some of the language of an emancipatory discourse into the practice of social intervention and evaluation. These programs appear to be much more respectful of people as knowing subjects and strive to make participants more active subjects in the change making process. However, they do not represent a significant departure from mainstream practices nor do they appear to be any more obviously conducive to the production of social change than other approaches to social programming. This thesis contends that this is due in part to the limitations that traditional ways of thinking about the

interventionary process, including the role of evaluation, place on the ability to *imagine* a more emancipatory approach. In other words, whatever potential an empowerment based interventionary practice may have it is unlikely to be realized in the absence of an adequate emancipatory discourse. For such a discourse to emerge it is useful to examine the historical and political underpinnings of the current discourse of intervention and the role of the state in social programming. The exposure of the origins, rationale and subsequent development of the interventionary process will bring into focus the political premises underlying modern day approaches to social programming - assumptions which will continue to undermine more critical efforts if not recognized and adequately addressed.

The first step in addressing these issues is to examine the interventionary process from a perspective that allows us to see clearly the emancipatory limitations of the mainstream discourse of social programming and evaluation. The critical social theory of the German philosopher and social theorist, Jürgen Habermas provides that framework. The reason for selecting this particular perspective is twofold. First, Habermasian critical theory addresses itself directly to the phenomenon of systemic intervention - the extension of the state administrative apparatus into the realm of everyday life. In fact, Habermas sees state intervention into the

"social world" as one of the fundamental challenges to democratic impulses in the modern world. For Habermas the very idea of social intervention is problematic. Habermas makes it possible to move beyond critiques of how we intervene, to an exposition of the social structural premises and assumptions which underlie our interventionary practices. While Habermas does not address social programming and evaluation *per se*, his analysis of the structure of the late capitalist welfare state provides us with a broad political context within which to examine critically the specifics of these activities.

Second, although Habermas offers us a useful framework within which to critique the interventionary process it is not a discourse limited to negativity and restraint. I will argue that it is also a discourse of possibility. As such, a Habermasian analysis provides us with a means for "thematizing both the threat and the promise" (Cohen and Arato, 1992:426), of social interventionary efforts. On the basis of this duality I will, in the next chapter, begin to address the second task at hand, namely the articulation of the rudiments of an alternative discourse for social intervention and evaluation.[1]

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[1] Habermas has generally left it up to others to explore the practical implications of his theoretical deliberations. Particularly relevant for this project is the work of Carr and Kemmis (1986) and Young (1991) who provide interesting examples of how Habermasian thought has been applied in a

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the reader to the basic concepts and premises of Habermasian critical social theory as it relates to this project. In particular, I will sketch out Habermas' image of the historical evolution of the modern welfare state and the concept of state or systemic intervention. I hope to provide the reader with a critical position from which to examine the current relationship between social structures and collective agency and the usefulness of Habermas' imagery for an indepth analysis of the traditional discourse of social intervention and evaluation.

Throughout the chapter I pull into the discussion various critiques of Habermas' position, particularly those put forward by feminist theorists in order to acknowledge the limitations of Habermas' perspective, especially his rather androcentric world view. However, while recognizing the validity of many of these critiques I will also argue that they do not detract from my basic argument - that Habermasian critical theory provides a particularly useful position from

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critical examination of formal educational processes. Hart (1989) and Collins (1991), while more selective in their approach, have illustrated the usefulness of Habermas' work for developing a critical approach to adult education. Habermasian constructs have also found expression in the work of public policy analysts most notably, Forester (1988) who has explored the relevance of Habermas' theory of communication for issues related to public life and Fischer (1980, 1985), who has sought to demonstrate how the epistemological components of critical theory have direct relevance for the politics of policy evaluation.

which to reconstruct the interventionary process and its emancipatory potential.

Habermasian Critical Social Theory: An Overview

In an era typified with academic concern for and against the postmodern, Jürgen Habermas remains firmly committed to the modernist, Enlightenment ideals of truth, rationality and human freedom.[2] For Habermas the unfinished project of humanity, and modernity, continues to be the pursuit of emancipation from domination. Unlike the Marxian tradition which locates human bondage and freedom in the exigencies of class interests, or feminism, which identifies gender as the primary source of oppression, Habermas' construction of

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[2] Postmodernism, or more accurately, postmodernisms, have their origins in French social and philosophical thought and are generally identified with such theorists as Baudrillard, Deleuze, Derrida, Foucault, Lacan and Lyotard. Among other things, the term refers to a specific approach to understanding social reality which positions itself against the assumptions of enlightenment rationality. "Knowledge" and "truth" are argued to be socially constructed and historically situated. Hence, the explanatory capacity of metanarratives or essentializing theory are generally rejected, as is the possibility of any knowledge or conception of reality that transcends the individual. Many postmodernists privilege difference both within and among individuals. As a result, and in its most extreme, postmodernism precludes the possibility of shared experiences and oppressions thus negating the legitimacy or even the possibility of shared emancipatory interests. Habermas has been highly critical of what he perceives to be the neoconservative tendencies in postmodernism. See in particular, The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity (1987) and "Philosophy as Stand In and Interpreter" (1988).

"domination" and "emancipation" are both intricately connected to social interaction and the ability to communicate as rational human beings.

Briefly stated, Habermas' central thesis is that the capacity to overcome oppressive social structures is dependent on our ability to articulate and understand our mutual needs and interests. In the modern welfare state both the ability to communicate with each other, and subsequently our ability to identify and pursue collective emancipatory interests is being suppressed by an increasing dependency on and deference to (or privileging of) the "scientific" and "technocratic" authority of the state administrative apparatus, i.e. "the system". From the Habermasian perspective the suppression of our communicative capacity manifests itself in the increasing intrusiveness of systemic discourses and organizational processes into all aspects of everyday life. Our ability to communicate our understanding of our collective experiences and to coordinate our actions based on this understanding is increasingly undermined by our submission to the system's technocratic and scientific interpretation of everyday life. As a result, issues emerging from social interaction, solidarity and the development of political agency are framed as scientific or technocratic concerns. This in turn distorts our perception and understanding of ourselves, our relationship to each other, the world around us, and the

grounds upon which we establish the basis for truth, justice and "the good life". For Habermas, human freedom or emancipation lies in the collective ability to untangle our capacity to interact with each other from the communicative distortions produced by the intrusion of the technocratic and scientific discourse of the state administrative apparatus. Central to Habermas' elucidation of his theory of communicative action is a revitalization of a "public sphere", a social and political space within which these systemically imposed barriers to communication are removed through a process of discursive reflexivity. In so doing we identify, examine and debate the validity claims and assumptions underlying our communicative actions. In other words, the communication process itself becomes the focus of critique. For Habermas, discursive reflexivity within the public sphere must ideally be governed by a discourse ethic premised on the principles of universal public participation, the pursuit of mutual understanding and the achievement of consensus.[3]

Within the Habermasian framework, social programmes and evaluation research represent concrete examples of systemic intrusiveness. At first glance, it may even appear that the pursuit of an emancipatory approach to social intervention

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[3] I will provide a more thorough discussion of Habermas' discourse ethic in Chapter Four. For a detailed description and defense of Habermas' rationale for a discourse ethic see Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action (1990).

loses all meaning within this context. After all, how can the manifestations of an oppressive phenomenon be anything but oppressive? To reach such a conclusion would, however, constitute a misreading of Habermas. His thesis is not that systemic intervention is necessarily oppressive. Rather, Habermas argues that it is systemic intervention governed solely by the interests of scientific competence and technical control that poses the threat to human freedom. These interests, reflected in the scientific and technocratic discourses of "the expert" and "the professional" attempt to redefine and subsequently subvert all aspects of social life to systemic logic and control. As a result, experiences and needs arising therefrom come to be defined *for us* as technical issues, rather than *by us* as philosophical, moral or political issues. Likewise, we become the objects of social scientific inquiry rather than active participants in the creation of knowledge pertaining to the social world we inhabit.

The Historical Emergence of the Interventionist State

To understand how Habermas envisions the evolution of the interventionist state and to appreciate the significance of his arguments it is important to comprehend more fully Habermas' constructs of "the system", "the lifeworld" and the modern day relationship between the two.

The Early Capitalist State

In Habermas' framework, the concept of "systemic" control over human interaction has its roots in the emergence of the capitalist state. The imperatives of a democratic, capitalist society necessitated a hitherto unprecedented institutional separation (or "uncoupling") between societal functions related to material reproduction or work, and those related to symbolic reproduction as it pertained to cultural transmission, social integration and socialization. According to Habermas, the differentiation between activities related to material and symbolic reproduction represented, "a necessary condition for the transition from the stratified class societies of European feudalism to the economic societies of the early modern period" (1987b:283). The demands of a free market economy, required material reproduction and activities related thereto to be moved beyond their traditional physical and normative location in the household. In the process, two subsystems emerged. Work related functions - material reproduction - crystallized into a distinct and privately organized economic subsystem. The organizational apparatus required to protect the interests of private capital crystallized into the administrative subsystem or what is more commonly referred to as "the state". Habermas refers to these two subsystems collectively as "the system". Tasks related to the transmission of culture, social integration and

socialization - symbolic reproduction - remained in the realm of civil society or what Habermas terms "the lifeworld", the intersubjectively shared socio-cultural world that forms a context of meaning for any given situation.[4] As Cohen and Arato elaborate:

> On the one hand, the lifeworld refers to the reservoir of implicitly known traditions, the background assumptions that are embedded in language and culture and drawn upon by individuals in everyday life. ... Reproduction of not only the cultural-linguistic background but also the second dimension of the lifeworld - its "institutional" or "sociological" components occurs in the medium of communication. This involves the reproductive processes of cultural transmission, social integration and socialization. (Cohen and Arato, 1992:78)

Habermas distinguishes between two spheres in the lifeworld - the public and the private. The institutional core of the private sphere is the restricted nuclear family, "relieved of productive functions and specializing in socialization" (Habermas, 1987b:319). From this private sphere, there emerged, for the first time, a "public sphere", the site of political participation and debate.[5] Habermas

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[4] Habermas' conceptualization of the lifeworld and the term itself is derived from phenomenology, in particular the work of Alfred Schutz. He is also strongly influenced by Talcott Parsons in his characterization of lifeworld functions. While Parsons focused almost exclusively on social integration Habermas gives equal consideration to the tasks of cultural reproduction and socialization. For a detailed discussion of Habermas' interpretation of the lifeworld see The Theory of Communicative Action, v.II (1987).

[5] The emergence of a political public sphere was actually preceded by a literary public sphere which challenged absolutistic domination of art and literature. Here too the goal was to replace "decisionistic secret policies" with "a

characterizes the emergence of this political site as follows:

> The bourgeois public sphere could be understood as the sphere of private individuals assembled into a public body, which almost immediately laid claim to the officially regulated "intellectual newspapers" for use against the public authority itself. In those newspapers, and in moralistic and critical journals, they debated that public authority on the general rules of social intercourse in their fundamentally privatized yet publicly relevant sphere of labour and commodity exchange. .. The medium of this debate - public discussion - was unique and without historical precedent. (Habermas, 1989a:138)

Habermas describes the public sphere as evolving along the lines of a bourgeois, liberal and democratic political space. As Cohen and Arato (1992) go on to explain, its bourgeois characterization was evident in the assumption that only those who were independent owners of property could, through rational communication, generate a collective will representing the general interest of society. As a liberal entity it assumed that the rights protecting the autonomy of the sphere, i.e. those pertaining to freedom of speech, press, assembly and communication, coupled with the right to privacy which ensured the autonomy of the individual served as a constraint to the power of the state. The public sphere's democratic impulses were evident in the principle that the rationale for state action could be challenged, as well as the outcome of such action. In the liberal ideal, the public

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form of domination that is legitimated by means of rational consensus among participating citizens" (Hohendahl, 1979:92). Habermas details the emergence of the public sphere, first as a literary site and then a political one in The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere (1989).

sphere was open to all; in practice only white, propertied males could gain access. Honneth points out that unequal access to the public sphere was a necessary condition of the capitalist society and as such its emancipatory potential was limited.

> [T]he emancipatory potential ... could not be institutionally developed in an unhindered manner since the capitalist presuppositions of an unequal distribution of power and property function as a social limitation against it. (Honneth, 1991:245)

Habermas is, however, quite emphatic that the public sphere *in principle* was committed to the concept of universal access, "a public sphere from which specific groups would be *eo ipso* excluded was less than merely incomplete; it was not a public sphere at all" (1989b:85) In this sense, Habermas' concern with universal access could be, perhaps, more accurately interpreted as a commitment to "equality of opportunity". In other words, "The public sphere was safeguarded whenever the economic and social conditions gave everyone an equal chance for meeting the criteria for admission: specifically to earn the qualifications for private autonomy that made for the educated and property owning person" (Habermas, 1989b:86).

Habermas is careful to emphasize that while material and symbolic reproduction provide the substantive basis for differentiation between the system and the lifeworld the most important distinguishing feature of the classic capitalist

state was the basis for the coordination and rationalization of action within each domain. Activities in the lifeworld were communicatively structured, oriented to mutual understanding and agreement, and secured by a discursively achieved consensus. Activities in the system were organized according to the formal exchange principles, oriented to the achievement of success and measured or rationalized in terms of effectiveness or profitability.

Modernization through Communicative Rationality

According to Habermas, the concept of rationalization within a lifeworld context refers to a communicative process. The grounds for social interaction and integration were secured through the process of negotiating a consensus on meaning and the establishment of a general will. The lifeworld was thus characterized primarily by *practical interests* oriented to the achievement of solidarity and social harmony and reflected in actions "oriented to mutual understanding and consensual action rather than to the goals of efficiency and success" (Bernstein, 1992:203-204).[6] What constitutes a "good reason"

[6] Habermas contends that orientations to technical control over nature, mutual understanding in the conduct of life and freedom from constraint constitute prescientific "interests" which emerge from experience and precede the perspectives from which we construct reality. See Knowledge and Human Interest (1971) for Habermas' elaboration of knowledge-constitutive interests.

itnin the lifeworld emerges from shared interests and a common understanding of "what ought to be".

Consequently, "rationalization" within a lifeworld context entailed a process whereby the arcane policies of the monarchy and the clergy were subjected to public critique and re-established on a communicatively grounded consensus rather than a normative base rooted in tradition. This rationalized political authority, transmitted to the state through the public sphere served to legitimize the activities of the state.

> In the first modern constitutions, the catalogues of fundamental rights were a perfect image of the liberal model of the public sphere: they guaranteed the society as a sphere of private autonomy and the restriction of public authority to a few functions. Between these two spheres, the constitutions further insured the existence of a realm of individuals assembled into a public body who as citizens transmit the needs of bourgeois society to the state, in order, ideally to transform political into "rational" authority within the medium of this public sphere. The general interest, which was the measure of this rationality, was then guaranteed, according to the presuppositions of a society of free commodity exchange, when the activities of private individuals in the market place were freed from social compulsion and from political pressure in the public sphere. (Habermas, 1989a:139)

Modernization through Technocratic Rationality

While communication served as the basis for rationality within the lifeworld, actions within the economic subsystem and the state, came to be rationalized and coordinated primarily

through the application of formal rules and procedures. While this formal logic had its normative roots in the lifeworld it quickly removed itself from this context and the domain of communicative rationality. The subsystems, "... make themselves independent from lifeworld contexts by neutralizing the normative background of informal, customary, morally regulated contexts of action" (Habermas 1987b:309). Consequently, they become, "... peculiarly indifferent to culture, society, and personality" (Habermas, 1987b:307).

Action within the economic subsystem was primarily coordinated through the institutionalization of norms regulating the exchange of money within a free market economy. Likewise, norms governing the exchange and exercising of power, institutionalized in a formal legal and bureaucratic structure, underpinned the activities of the state. Habermas argues that in the progression from early capitalism to the modern welfare state innovations in science and technology, rather than labour, becomes the leading productive force behind capitalist growth. "The quasi-autonomous progress of science and technology then appears as an independent variable on which the most important single system variable, namely economic growth, depends" (Habermas, 1970:105). Power and money is thus intricately tied to *technical interests* and the expansion of technical control over nature. The role of the state is to protect this interest and to eliminate any threats

or risks to the functioning of the economic subsystem.

Habermas describes systemic activity as "media driven" in that its rationale is derived from the formal organization of exchange mechanisms rather than from a communicatively achieved consensus or a collective interest in "what ought to be". As Habermas explains,

> Media such as money and power attach to empirical ties; they encode a purposive-rational attitude toward calculable amounts of value and make it possible to exert generalized, strategic influence on the decisions of other participants while *bypassing* processes of consensus oriented communication. (Habermas, 1987b:183)

The normative basis for these formal structures, once established, were not open to continual reflection and debate. As a result, the subsystems came to operate on the basis of their own, media driven, internal logic. Activities within the subsystems were consequently oriented to the successful completion of media exchange.

> Via the media of money and power, the subsystems of the economy and the state are differentiated out of an institutional complex set within the horizon of the lifeworld; formally organized domains of action emerge that-in the final analysis- are no longer integrated through the mechanisms of mutual understanding, that sheer off from lifeworld contexts and congeal into a kind of norm-free sociality. (Habermas, 1987b:307)

From the perspective of the economic and political subsystems, power and money also formed the basis of interchange relations with the lifeworld. The economic subsystem exchanged employment wages for labour and goods and

services against consumer demand. The state exchanged organizational accomplishments for taxes as well as political decisions for mass loyalty. These exchanges produced various new social roles within the lifeworld. Between the private sphere and economic subsystem there now existed the complementary role of "worker" (economy) and "consumer" (private household). The roles of "client" and "citizen" characterized the social relationship between the apparatus of the state and the public sphere. In the assumption of their roles as workers and clients, individual actors removed themselves from their lifeworld contexts and based their actions on the formal logic of the system. Hence, these roles are defined as "organization dependent" (Habermas, 1987b:319). The formal organization of the subsystems provide actors with a formally organized discourse and established norms with which to negotiate meaning.

> ... areas of action converted over to communication media and systemically integrated are withdrawn from the institutional orders of the lifeworld. This constitution of action contexts that are no longer socially integrated means that social relations are separated off from the identities of the actors involved. (Habermas, 1987b:311)

Economic and political activity within the formally organized sectors presupposed mutual agreement on the definition of the situation at hand.

However, the roles of the citizen and consumer, while defined in reference to the system, were constructed within

the value orientations and norms of the lifeworld. These roles were not dependent on the economic or political subsystems for meaning in that, "the autonomy of the individual consumer and the sovereignty of the individual citizen ... cannot be taken over economically or politically as can abstract quantities of labour power and taxes" (Habermas, 1987b:322). Here, according to Habermas, one finds the capacity for individual and collective agency.

As Cohen and Arato point out, despite their differences, the rationalization of the system and that of the life world is perceived as a complementary process.

> ... the overall processes constitutive of the modernization of society as a whole - the emergence of the economic and administrative subsystems, and the rationalization of the linguistic-cultural and societal levels of the lifeworld - presuppose each other. The lifeworld cannot be modernized without the strategic unburdening of communicative action coordination by the development of the two subsystems. They in turn require institutional anchoring in a lifeworld that remains symbolically structured, linguistically coordinated, and yet, to a certain extent at least modernized. (1992:439)

While it is important to keep the complementarity of the two dimensions of modernization in mind Cohen and Arato also point to the "Catch-22" in this positioning:

> ... other forms of social coordination - the media of money and power, in particular - relieve communication of many of its time constraints. At the same time, since there is no natural limit to the "mediatization" of the lifeworld, the expansion of subsystems coordinated by money and power represents a possible replacement to communicative action coordination in any given area. The same processes that are among the constitutive

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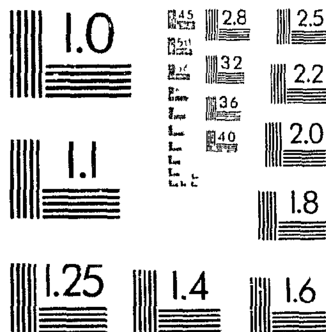

> conditions of a modern lifeworld also represent the greatest potential threats to that lifeworld. (1992:439)

To summarize then, the Habermasian construction of the early capitalist state postulates four distinct and relatively autonomous sectors. First, the interests of capital are pursued through the formal organization of an economic subsystem and protected by the administrative structures of the state. "... [T]he economy steered by money depends on being functionally supplemented by an administrative system differentiated out via the medium of power" (Habermas, 1987b:342). Actions within "the system" are guided by technical and strategic interests and coordinated through the application of appropriate rules and formal procedures. Facing the organizational apparatus of the system is the lifeworld, differentiated into a public and private sphere and constituting the domain of culture, social integration and socialization. Here, the normative base is guided by practical interests, those concerned with social integration and harmony, and established on the basis of consensus negotiation and mutual understanding.

Within the liberal model of classic capitalism there was little room for, or meaning to, the concept of social intervention as *state* intervention. If anything, the ideal direction of political intervention was from the public sphere to the administrative subsector. Interference with economic

affairs, from either the state or the public sphere, was seen as a direct violation of the principles of a free market economy. The basic premise was that capitalism worked best when left alone. Likewise, the perceived autonomy of the private citizen prohibited state intrusion into the affairs of the family or household. The domain of the patriarch was immune to outside interference. Consequently, social programs, as we know them today, were unheard of.

Through the differentiation of the four subsectors, their corresponding roles, and modes of rationalization, Habermas sees quite clearly the democratic promise of the early model of liberal capitalism.

> ... the bourgeois public sphere ... guaranteed society as a sphere of private autonomy. Confronting it stood a public authority limited to a few functions, and between the two, as it were, was the realm of private people assembled into a public who, as citizenry, linked up the state with the needs of civil society according to the idea that in the medium of this public sphere political authority would be transformed into rational authority. On the assumption of the inherent justice of the market mechanisms and the exchange of equivalents ... it seemed that the general interest that was to yield the standard for gauging this kind of rationality would be guaranteed ... so long as the traffic of private people in the market and in the public sphere was emancipated from domination. (Habermas 1989b:222)

In the liberal model of early capitalism the state was assigned a dual and eventually conflicting role. On the one hand, state authority was expected to safeguard the sovereignty of private enterprise from the normative

influences of the lifeworld. For example, the capitalist values attached to competition and individualism could not be exposed to continued public scrutiny and validation. On the other hand, the state had to serve as "the executor of the political public sphere" (Habermas, 1989a:136). Habermas points to the inevitable and indissoluble tension between the demands of democracy and the imperatives of the capitalist marketplace. The normative meaning of democracy necessitated that, "... the fulfilment of the functional necessities of systemically integrated domains of action shall find its limits in the integrity of the lifeworld" (Habermas, 1987b:345). In opposition to this imperative the internal dynamics of the economic subsystem had to be protected from lifeworld restrictions and demands for legitimation. Ultimately the demands of capitalism and democracy come face-to-face in the public sphere where the political agency of the lifeworld positions itself against the administrative apparatus of the state.

The Modern Welfare State

By Habermas' account, as the economic contradictions inherent in capitalism begin to manifest themselves the state finds itself caught between protecting the autonomy of the economic subsystem and mitigating the effects of heightened class conflict and economic disequilibria in the lifeworld.

> The permanent regulation of the economic process by means of state intervention arose as a defense mechanism against the dysfunctional tendencies, which threaten the system, that capitalism generates when left to itself. Capitalism's actual development manifestly contradicted the capitalist idea of a bourgeois society, emancipated from domination, in which power is neutralized. The root ideology of just exchange ... collapsed in practice. The form of capital utilization through private ownership could only be maintained by the governmental corrective of a social and economic policy that stabilized the business cycle. (Habermas:1970:101)

According to Habermas the state is forced to assume responsibility for the functional gaps in the market or risk losing the legitimacy of its position vis-à-vis the lifeworld (Habermas, 1973). As Habermas explains, the state's response to this impending crisis is to position itself between the economic subsystem and the lifeworld in such a way as to offset administratively the more negative social impacts of economic disequilibria while at the same time not interfering directly in the capitalist market place. The state simultaneously attempts to maintain the economic dominance of capital while compensating for its disruptive consequences.[7]

> ... the substitution of governmental for market functions takes place under the proviso that the sovereign right of private enterprise in matters of investment be fundamentally safeguarded. Economic growth would lose its intrinsic capitalist dynamics and the economy would forfeit its primacy if the production process were controlled through the medium of power. The intervention of the state may

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[7] In making this contention Habermas has been interpreted by Offe (1984) and others as rejecting the functionalist Marxist argument, articulated in the Communist Manifesto (1848), that the state necessarily and exclusively serves the capitalist class.

> not affect the division of labor between a market-dependent economy and an economically unproductive state. ... government intervention has the indirect form of manipulating the boundary conditions for the decisions of private enterprise, and the reactive form of strategies for avoiding its side effects or compensating for them. ... as a result of this structural dilemma, economically conditioned crises are not only administratively processed, flattened out, and intercepted, but are also inadvertently displaced into the administrative system. (Habermas, 1987b:344-345)

The state's mitigating response to the lifeworld comes in the form of compensation, enacted in the legislation of basic rights and entitlements which make provision for worker risk in the market place, "without naturally affecting the structurally unequal property, income and power relations" (Habermas, 1987b:347). This can be seen at three levels. The first instance of state intervention into the lifeworld is directly at the economic level. Here, interventions take the form of collective bargaining agreements, labour standard codes, unemployment insurance and monetary subsidization.[8]

The second level of intervention occurs to compensate for what Habermas refers to as "collectively experienced, external effects" (1987b:347). Here one finds the enactment of legislation pertaining to municipal planning and conservation and the assumption of full or partial state responsibility for

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[8] I prefer to use the term "intervention" rather than Habermas' concept of "juridification" in that the latter refers specifically to the appropriation of various aspects of the lifeworld through the extension and increasing density of state legislation (Habermas, 1987b:357). Social intervention is but one instance of juridification.

formal education, the provision of health care and the preservation of cultural institutions.

The emergence of the interventionist state represents at best a weak defense of the lifeworld in that it seeks to protect it from the contradictions of capitalism. "Norms that contain class conflict and enforce social-welfare measures have, from the perspective of their beneficiaries as well as from that of democratic law givers, a freedom-guaranteeing character" (Habermas, 1987b:361). This freedom takes the form of the extension of rights and entitlements, through the legal transfer of resources, to those who had previously been excluded from the benefits of citizenship. As Cohen and Arato (1992) point out, the extension of rights and entitlements through interventionism serves as an essential component of the modernized lifeworld. The grounds for fundamental rights are moved beyond the realm of discussion and debate and are now secured to formal and generalized legal principles. Rights are abstracted from specific and collective interests. However, this separation in turn serves to differentiate lifeworld functions further from their normative base. The extension of rights and entitlements is a highly ambivalent process that creates "... a set of social benefits and securities at the cost of creating a new range of dependencies and destroying both existing solidarities and the actors' capacities for self-help and for communicatively resolving

problems." (Cohen and Arato, 1992:450). Person-to-person interaction and interdependence is replaced by person-to-state interaction and dependency. Cohen and Arato argue that the disempowering elements of systemic penetration into the lifeworld was an unintended consequence of the state's attempt to defend the lifeworld against the capitalist economy. "The aim of the welfare state was to promote and develop solidarity not to disorganize it" (1992:466). For Habermas, however, the emergence of the welfare state represents a tremendous threat to human freedom in that protection takes the form of subverting lifeworld activity to the processes and discourse of the system.

> From the start, the ambivalence of guaranteeing freedom and taking it away has attached itself to the policies of the welfare state... the net of welfare-state guarantees is meant to cushion the external effects of a production process based on wage labour. Yet, the more closely this net is woven, the more clearly ambivalences of another sort appear. ... It is now the very means of guaranteeing freedom that endangers the freedom of beneficiaries. (Habermas, 1987b:361)

For Habermas it is not the separation of system from lifeworld, or the process of differentiation within each sphere that harbours this potential loss of freedom. Rather, it is the extension of the systemic rationality into the lifeworld that poses the greatest threat.

> Neither the secularization of world views nor the structural differentiation of society has unavoidable pathological side effects per se. ... It is not the uncoupling of media-steered subsystems and their organizational forms from the lifeworld that leads to the one-sided rationalization or reification of everyday

> communicative practice, but only the penetration of forms of economic and administrative rationality into areas that resist being converted over to the media of money and power because they are specialized in cultural transmission, social integration, and child rearing, and remain dependent on mutual understanding as a mechanism for coordinating action. (Habermas, 1987b:330).

This danger is evident in the third instance of intervention which comes in the form of what Habermas refers to as "therapeutic assistance" (Habermas, 1987b:363). Here the state moves beyond the assumption of economic and cultural responsibilities and into the realm of individual social and psychological well-being. Social Programs such as "Nobody's Perfect", "The Stepping Stone Project" and "The Self-Help Connection" represent this level of state interventionism and it is here that we locate the interests of this project.

The Feminist Critique

Before proceeding further, it is useful to introduce feminist criticisms of and concerns with Habermas' historical depiction of modern society and the emerging interventionist state. The reason for doing so is not only to bring a much needed gendered corrective to the narrative but also to establish the continued usefulness of a Habermasian perspective for feminist thought in light of these critiques. At the heart of the feminist critique is the insistence that Habermas' depiction of the modernized world is a depiction based on masculine (and

white) realities and characterizations. In other words, the model he constructs relies on concepts and points of reference derived from men's, not women's, historical experience. As a result, the realities of women's lives become hidden or distorted. The contrasting position would be that if one used women's lives as the starting point for historical analysis or theory construction one would have different constructs and frameworks within which to understand experience (Smith, 1990).

Of particular feminist concern for this thesis is the dichotomies that Habermas creates to describe the emergence of modern society - dichotomies which feminists argue alternatively hide, undermine or distort the realities of women's lives. First, feminists tend to be highly critical of Habermas' depiction of the differentiation between system and lifeworld. The idea that "work" became an activity done separate and apart from the domain of the private household may be reflective of masculine experience but it becomes a relatively meaningless distinction in understanding the lives of women.[9] Likewise Fraser (1989, 1990), charges that Habermas' exclusion of domestic labour from his definition of work and material reproduction significantly distorts our

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[9] Black theorists have argued that system/lifeworld distinctions are also relatively meaningless for enhancing our understanding of the black experience. Hurtado (in Hartsock, 1990a) argues that the concept of a political sphere and a "private" household have no basis in black historical reality.

understanding of what constitutes the economic system in modern society. Cohen and Arato (1992), in defense of Habermas, argue that Fraser (1989) and other feminists such as Marshall (1988), overemphasize the importance of the difference in substantive elements of action (paid versus unpaid labour) at the expense of the distinction Habermas makes between modes of action coordination (communicative versus technocratic). It is argued that the important point in appreciating Habermas' argument is not the actual activities carried out in each of the subsections but the means by which such actions are co-ordinated and rationalized. Again, feminists such as Fraser would point out that for women activity in the lifeworld has not historically been communicatively co-ordinated and rationalized *by them*. If anything women's sojourn in the private sphere has been co-ordinated by the dictates of patriarchal power and control.

Second, Fraser, Marshall (1988) and Fleming (1989) note that the differentiation between a "private" and "public" sphere has little relevance for describing or understanding the historical experience of women. In principle, the public sphere was open to all as it, "... stood or fell with the principle of universal access" (Habermas, 1989b:85). In reality, however, the public sphere represented the exclusive domain of male property owners. Women, and their capacity to pursue collective interests were systematically excluded from

the public sphere. As a point of interest, Cohen and Arato (1992) note that the literary public sphere, from which emerged the political public sphere, actually had its origins in the reading circles and salons of the private aristocratic household, a site and an activity, dominated by (admittedly elite) women. Likewise, Eisler (1987) notes that, "it was in the 'salons' of women like Madame Rambouillet, Ninon de Lenclos and Madame Geoffrin that the ideas for what later became the more humanist ... modern ideologies first germinated" (148). It was the subsequent differentiation of the public and private spheres, and articulation of citizenship in terms of gender and property ownership which eventually removed all women from this political space.

While Habermas attempted to defend the democratic *intent* of the liberal public sphere there remains the fact that women were by definition still excluded from participation in that they could not "earn" the qualification of being male. Hohendahl (1979) suggests that the focus of the Habermasian ideal should be on its intent rather than the deficiencies in its realization, i.e. the concept of a public sphere as one which, "... recognizes neither social differences nor privileges. Equality of members and general accessibility are assumed, even if they cannot be realized in specific situations" (92). Honneth argues that the Habermasian ideal could never have been realized in a capitalist society:

> the emancipatory potential contained in this idea could not be institutionally developed in an unhindered manner since the capitalist presuppositions of an unequal distribution of power and property function as a social limitation against it. (1991:245)

In agreement, feminist theorists such as Dorothy Smith (1990) argue that conceptualizing the public sphere in abstraction of actual experience renders the idealizing of the construct at best meaningless and at worst oppressive by virtue of the "reality" it hides.

Third, feminists have critiqued Habermas' construction of the individual's relationship to the various spheres and subsectors. Habermas does not intend the worker/consumer, citizen/client to be an either/or situation. One is supposedly both a citizen and a client, and, in the liberal ideal the citizen dictates how the client will be served by the administrative apparatus of the state. However, this characterization denies certain realities, in particular the polarization of worker/consumer, citizen/client along the lines of gender, race and class. For example, a reflexive concern with gender reveals that the worker/citizen, i.e. the active roles, are those most often played out by men, or at least enacted as a masculine representation of work and citizenship. Women, on the other hand, are more likely to be found in the consumer/client role.

The problem is that on the one hand we have Habermas' historical perspective on the modern welfare state reflecting the experiences and ideals of a white male elite. On the other hand, we have feminist theorists who argue that Habermas' depiction of the modern welfare state does not fit with and, in fact, distorts women's reality. For the most part, these criticisms do not negate the usefulness of Habermas' perspective for feminist thinking. If we try to read Habermas' perspective as "this is the way everyone experiences the social world" then yes, Habermas' inattention to gender and race becomes highly problematic. We end up constantly trying to recognize our own biography in someone else's story. However, if we read Habermas as "this is how the social world has been constructed and imposed" than we begin to see the feminist potential in Habermas' framework. While the system/lifeworld, public/private differentiation is not conceptually derived from women's lived experience the widespread assumption of such distinctions is reflected in how women experience life. In other words, how we live and our subsequent understanding of our experiences have been shaped by actual practices based on the assumption of system/lifeworld, public/private distinctions. For example, the exclusion of women's work from the "official" economy is not just a theoretical exclusion, it exists in lived experiences. Likewise, the idea of a differentiated public and private sphere is not merely conceptual as evidenced by

the historical lack of "public" attention to "private" violence. The question, at this point, is not whether Habermas gives an accurate account of our collective reality but rather, whether his framework allows for an illumination of the androcentric and elitist assumptions around which our reality has been socially constructed, organized and legislated. More specifically, for this thesis, the question is whether Habermas provides a useful historical narrative for understanding the emergence of state intervention and whether his concern with the expansion of systemic rationality is meaningful in the context of women's everyday life. To both of these, and in light of the above arguments, I would answer yes.

There is, however, a concern introduced by both Fraser (1990) and Honneth (1991) that must be carried through the remainder of this thesis i.e. the role that power, particularly patriarchal power, plays in co-ordinating and rationalizing activity within the lifeworld. Women's exclusion from the public sphere - the realm of political consensus formulation - was not an historical accident. The liberal ideal of a public/private distinction coupled with the reality of women's restriction to the private sphere created a situation where the oppressive conditions of women's lives were rendered invisible and consequently immune to challenge. In other words, as many feminists would argue, any attempt to

maintain a differentiation between "the public" and "the private" is potentially oppressive. Fraser (1990), for example, insists that the retention of the concept of domestic privacy delimits the scope of "public" debate. As will be discussed later in Chapter Four, this has important ramifications for how women experience state intervention and the manner in which we may wish to reconstruct the idea of a "public" sphere and our participation in it.

The Lifeworld Rewritten

One of Habermas' key arguments is that the penetration of the administrative apparatus of the state into the lifeworld has eroded humanity's capacity to articulate and pursue its emancipatory interest. Habermas sees evidence of this erosion manifesting itself in three interconnected areas. First, the core activities of the lifeworld i.e., cultural transmission, social integration and socialization become increasingly subjected to the dictates of the same technocratic rationality that governs the system. Second, and partially as the result of this technocratic predominance, the political power of the public sphere and the potential for collective will formation is severely undermined. Third, the combination of these two phenomena results in a society where deference to technical expertise is common place and the role of the client dominates

the individual's, as well as the collective's, relationship with the state.

The Expansion of Technocratic Rationality

Within a Habermasian framework, state penetration of the lifeworld is manifested in the ever pervasive systemic assumption of responsibility for social and cultural activities.

> The family increasingly lost the functions of upbringing and education, protection, care and guidance. Indeed of the transmission of elementary tradition and frameworks of orientation. In general it lost its power to shape conduct in areas considered the innermost provinces of privacy by the bourgeois family. (Habermas, 1989b:155)

The systemic assumption of lifeworld activities and problems also entailed the extension of the accompanying technocratic discourse and consciousness which coordinates activities in the economic and political subsystems. "The scientization of disenchantment of social relations proceeds abreast of that in the accumulation process - the mentality is technical, fact hungry and materialistic" (Keane, 1975:84). Everyday experiences needed to be made to fit the language and logistical structures of the system. Lifeworld functions previously underscored by a communicatively achieved mutual understanding and agreement were now rewritten as technical issues. As such, problems related to the building of solidarity and socialization are recast as technical concerns,

subjected to the scrutiny of the "professional" and made amenable to the application of the appropriate scientific principles for their resolution. As Smith points out, social problems thus appear from a systemic perspective. "Issues are formulated because they are administratively relevant, not because they are significant first in the experiences of those who live them" (1990:15). Likewise, technical autonomization is soon considered the only possible process of social rationalization (Honneth, 1991:249)

The extension of a technocratic consciousness into the lifeworld also serves to shield the economic subsystem from threats to its stability and growth. To protect the economic subsystem adequately the state must ensure that the pursuit of technical control is also legitimized in the minds of the public. Much earlier Marx had already noted that the expansion of "interest" into an all pervasive ideology is a necessary form of class preservation.

> For each new class which puts itself in the place of one ruling before it, is compelled, merely in order to carry through its aim, to represent its interest as the common interest of all members of society ... it has to give its ideas the form of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones. (Marx and Engels, 1972:125)

Habermas argues that in late capitalism the legitimacy of both the economic subsystem and the state is partially secured through the elevation of science and technology to a privileged status of an ideology. As Keane explains,

> Natural science and technique ... become ideological when a) their emancipatory potential is considered in abstraction from the patterns of social interaction in which they are embedded, and b) attempts are made to apply them universally or outside the realm of the technical interest. (1975:97)

Science has the power to legitimate but is itself immune to the demand for legitimation. "Within the social sciences the triumph of neo-positivism ushers in the quest for 'rigor', predictive certainty and scientism or science's unquestioned belief in itself" (Keane, 1975:84). Honneth makes the interesting observation that technocracy becomes the sociological complement to the methodological position of positivism:

> Whereas ... positivism indicated the inappropriate generalization of the methods of research of the natural sciences to an exclusive form of knowledge, it must now mean for the concept of technocracy that it can achieve an affirmative interpretation of the tendency toward technical autonomization only because it had not correctly considered the possibility of social rationalization in other directions. (1991:249-250)

The privileging of science eliminates from the collective consciousness the difference between technical problems which require instrumental or strategic actions and practical interests, which require the maintenance of mutual understanding and consensus. "The reified models of the sciences migrate into the sociocultural life-world and gain objective power over the latter's self-understanding" (Habermas, 1970:113). Science not only constitutes the leading productive force in the economic and administrative

subsystems it also replaces communicative rationality as the basis for symbolic reproduction in the lifeworld. "It is a singular achievement of this ideology to detach society's self-understanding from the frame of reference of communicative action and from the concepts of symbolic interaction and replace it with a scientific model" (Habermas, 1970:105). The communicative basis and normative roots of the sciences disappear from public consciousness and possibility for critique. As a result, "everyday consciousness is subordinated to the standards of exclusive expert cultures developing according to their own logics" (Habermas, 1987b:355). This privileging of scientism paves the way for large-scale social engineering. As Thomas McCarthy points out, scienticism and technocracy represent the modern day tools of domination and oppression:

> coercion by violence has been largely replaced by the gentler force of administration by scientifically trained experts, public displays of power by the imperceptible deployment of techniques based on detailed knowledge of their targets. (1991:51)

Habermas refers to this process as the colonization of the lifeworld where, "in the end, systemic mechanisms suppress forms of social integration even in those areas where a consensus-dependent coordination of action cannot be replaced, that is, where the symbolic reproduction of the lifeworld is at stake" (Habermas, 1987b:196). Ultimately, the penetration of a technocratic consciousness or "scientism" into the lifeworld suppresses humanity's ability to articulate and

pursue its emancipatory interest. As Habermas concludes,

> Technocratic consciousness is today's dominant, rather glassy background ideology, which makes a fetish of science, is more irresistible and farther-reaching than ideologies of the old type. For with the veiling of practical problems it not only justifies a particular class interest in domination and represses another class's partial need for emancipation, but affects the human race's emancipatory interest as such. (Habermas, 1970:111)

The Demise of the Public Sphere

The privileging of a technocratic rationality and the legitimation of state interventionism both presupposes and results in the neutralization of the public sphere. As Habermas points out, "... public discussion would render problematic the framework within which the tasks of government action present themselves as technical ones. Therefore, the new politics of state intervention requires a depoliticization of the mass of the population" (Habermas, 1970:103). For the system to maintain control it cannot allow the normative roots of technocratic decision-making to be continually vulnerable to political challenges.

The dissolution of the classical public sphere occurs on two fronts. First, as noted above, in order to protect the economic subsystem the state must remove any threats to the privileging of science and technology as the major productive force. This is achieved by elevating the status of

technocratic rationality and expanding its applications to the social world. "The substitute program which legitimates power today, leaves unfilled a vital need for legitimation: how will the depoliticization of the masses be made plausible to them? ... by having technology and science also take on the role of ideology" (Habermas, 1970:104). Having rewritten the practical concerns of the lifeworld as technical problems their character and resolution are no longer subject to public debate and communicatively achieved rationality. "... [B]y making a dogma of the sciences' belief in themselves, positivism assumes the prohibitive function of protecting scientific inquiry from epistemological self-reflection" (Habermas, 1970:67). Likewise, Honneth notes:

> technical progress has attained such importance for the reproduction of the entire society that today the decisions of the state sector can be justified by the demonstrative indication to its internal lawfulness. (1991:265)

At the same time, and again, by way of compensation for systemic dysfunctions, the extension of citizen rights and entitlements to all members of society serves to increase greatly access to the public sphere. However, according to Habermas, increased access did not necessarily produce increased political participation.

> Group needs that could not expect to be satisfied by a self-regulating market tended to favour regulation by the state. The public sphere, which had to deal with these demands, became an arena of competing interests fought out in the coarser form of violent conflict. Laws passed under the "pressure of the street" could hardly be understood any longer as embodying the reasonable consensus of

> publicly debating private persons. (Habermas, 1989b:131)

With increasing access to an decreasingly influential public sphere the distinction between public and private spheres begins to blur. Issues previously confined to the "privacy" of the household, and not subject to general discussion are now exposed to public scrutiny and pressure for state intervention. The demand for systemic interference and compensation simultaneously narrowed the domain of "the private" and usurped the political capacity of the public sphere and Habermas argues that as the autonomy of the private sphere is being eroded, the public sphere loses its critical, political edge.

> Two tendencies dialectically related to each other indicated a breakdown of the public sphere. While it penetrated more spheres of society, it simultaneously lost its political function, namely; that of subjecting the affairs that it had made public to the control of a critical public. (Habermas, 1989b:140)

Systemic penetration of the lifeworld, the emergence of the welfare state, and the subsequent loss of meaningful political participation results in social issues being defined as technical or strategic problems rather than questions regarding standards of human conduct. Consequently, the system's relationship with the lifeworld becomes characterized as "management of" rather than "responsiveness to". Within this framework, interventions, be they economic, educational, cultural or social, can be understood as a systemic tool for managing crisis in the lifeworld.

> The political system produces mass loyalty in both a positive and a selective manner; positively through the prospect of making good on social-welfare programs, selectively through excluding themes and contributions from public discussion. This can be accomplished through a sociostructural filtering of access to the political public sphere, through a bureaucratic deformation of the structures of public communication, or through manipulative control of the flow of communication (Habermas, 1987b:346)

State penetration of the lifeworld relieves the public sphere of its political function and, as such, breaks down the distinction between state and society. Without this separation the basis for the bourgeois public sphere is destroyed. In fact, the usefulness of an analytical differentiation between public/private, system/lifeworld is, in and of itself, rendered problematic.

According to Habermas, the demise of the public sphere not only deprives us of a place to speak but also adversely affects speech in and of itself. Habermas (1976) refers to this as "systematically distorted communication" which is seen to be the result of a confusion between actions oriented to reaching understanding (secured communicatively) and actions oriented to success (secured instrumentally). The ability to talk about and explore what our real interests and needs might be is severely constrained by the extension of a technocratic way of thinking into our communicative consciousness. The expression of communicative interests is distorted or limited by the necessity of using the language of the dominant

ideology, a language familiar and conducive to the actualization of technical interests but adverse to the expression of communicative concerns. The language of the dominant ideology, "... functions simultaneously to disguise and defend the suppression of generalisable interests" (Thompson, 1981:135). Hence, our ability to reproduce the lifeworld is severely restricted since this reproduction is dependent on our capacity for communicative action.

The concept of distorted communication is, of course, a familiar one for feminists. While Habermas emphasizes communication distorted by the systemic privileging of scientism and feminists focus on the distortions produced by patriarchy both are concerned with demonstrating the oppressive tendencies inherent in language or, "the alienating effects of our participation in language that does not express our experience." (Smith, 1990:31). In pursuing this argument feminists have discerned two levels at which communications can be distorted. First, the ability to speak is limited to the language of the dominant discourse. The extent to which it is possible to articulate experiences, fears and desires is restricted by the words and the rules of language made available to us. One cannot describe, and by extension discuss and validate, experiences and feelings for which we do not have words. Hence, our ability to understand ourselves

and our relationship to each other is undermined.[10] In describing the distorting effect that a patriarchal discourse has on the expression of women's experience Sheila Rowbotham notes, "... thinking is difficult when the words are not your own. Borrowed concepts are like passed-down clothes: they fit badly and do not give confidence: we lumber awkwardly about in them" (In Oakley, 1981:320). At a second level, the restrictions imposed by language can be much more insidious. Thoughts are distorted and the adoption of a language that does not adequately describe one's experiences can effectively preclude certain ways of looking at problems, strategies for practical issues and models of action.[11] As Hart (1985) notes, we cannot express that which we do not perceive. Dominant ideologies, therefore, have the power to both distort and to silence.

The Rise of the Client State and Privileging of Expertise

With the extension of systemic forces into the lifeworld and the demise of the political functions of the public sphere, the role of citizen also loses its participatory character.

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[10] For example, the emergence of the term "sexual harassment" has enabled women to name, discuss and take action on a wide variety of experiences which, prior to the 1980's, existed in discursive isolation of each other.

[11] The term "family violence" has been subject to this criticism. Many feminists feel that the emphasis on "family" effectively hides, and consequently dispels concern with, the gendered nature of violence.

"In the midst of an objectively politicized society, the members enjoy the status of passive citizens with the right to withhold their acclaim." (Habermas, 1973:648). In the modern interventionist state the role of client dominates the individual's and the collective's relationship with the state while "the citizen" is reduced to a mere political observer.[12]

> ... the pacification of the sphere of social labour is only the counterpart to an equilibrium established on the other side, between an expanded, but at the same time neutralized, citizen's role and blown-up client's role. The establishment of basic political rights in the framework of mass democracy means, on the one hand, a universalization of the role of citizen, and on the other hand, a segmenting of this role from the decision-making process, a cleansing of political participation from any participatory content. (Habermas, 1987b:351)

As Habermas notes (1987b) we have become customers of the state trading active political participation for the rewards of a welfare system. This arrangement ensures that the economic subsystem is protected from any immediate political risk while at the same time providing compensation for those disaffected by the contradictions inherent in the economic system.

> Welfare-state mass democracy is an arrangement that renders the class antagonism still built into the economic system innocuous, under the condition,

[12] Habermas argues that the same imbalance occurs in the worker/consumer roles. Rampant consumerism serves to neutralize social labour, "... the family now evolved even more into a consumer of income and leisure time, into the recipient of publicly guaranteed compensations and support services" (1989b:155).

> however, that the capitalist dynamics of growth, protected by measures of state intervention, do not grow weak. Only then is there a mass of compensation available that can be distributed according to implicitly agreed upon criteria, in ritualized confrontations, and channelled into the roles of consumer and client in such a way that the structures of alienated labour and alienated political participation develop no explosive power. (Habermas, 1987b:350)

Feminists point out that this relationship with the state is highly gendered (Fraser, 1989; Winant, 1987). Where men appear as social welfare clients they do as disaffected workers in the official economy e.g. unemployment insurance recipients, job training program participants. Women, who make up the bulk of the welfare state's clientele, appear most often as "dependent clients" by virtue of their relationship to a systemically defined "defective" family or private household, e.g. single parent, abused partner.

As clients of the state and objects of the "implicitly agreed criteria" and "ritualized confrontations" our relationship with the system is purely a technocratic one mediated by experts.

> ... the new professions themselves invented many of the needs they claimed to satisfy. They played on public fears of disorder and disease, adopting a deliberately mystifying jargon, ridiculing popular traditions of self-help as backward and unscientific, misleadingly legitimating themselves in terms of the mantle of science. (Holzner and Marx, 1979:351)

As Habermas reminds us, it is not the rationalization of the lifeworld *per se* that is problematic but rather this

"elitist splitting off of expert cultures from the contexts of communicative action in daily life" that poses the real threat to human freedom (Habermas, 1987b:330). Benhabib elaborates,

> Reforms that were instituted to correct the dysfunctionalities of capitalist growth have the consequences that they serve the disintegration of the very lifeworld contexts which they ought to protect... As a consequence of political demands and concrete economic problems the late-capitalist state tries to regulate education, housing, transportation, health care, job re-training, family planning etc. Its means for carrying out these reforms are formal administrative regulations... more often than not, such well intending reforms have the consequence that the lifeworld context disintegrates even further and becomes impoverished via the control of experts. (1986:248)

The professionalization of social issues and their resolution serves to further undermine the power of the public to provide legitimate input to social policy development.

> Experts (judges or therapists) become the adjudicators of the new rights and the conflicts around them. They intervene with their juridical or administrative means into social relations that become formalized, dissociated and reconstructed as individualized cases to be handled administratively or juridically like any other set of adversary relations. Formal, individualizing, and hence, universalizing judgements that cannot deal with contextual complexities disempower clients by preempting their capacities to participate actively in finding solutions to their problems. (Cohen and Arato, 1992:545)

Hence the potentially manipulative, disempowering characterization of social interventions.

Conclusion

Habermasian critical social theory offers a historical and political lens through which to re-examine modern day social intervention and evaluation activities. Ultimately, this project seeks to reconstruct the interventionary process, i.e. social programming and evaluation, so that it can more effectively serve the dictates of a critical agenda for social change. Habermas enhances our awareness and understanding of the relationship between two distinct forms of systemic oppression, i.e. oppression supported by the political, economic and normative structures of the state's administrative apparatus. First, there is the oppression or disparity that results from the unequal distribution of and access to resources. This is what traditional approaches to intervention attempt to compensate for or ameliorate. The assumption underlying these approaches is that "social change" is a process which requires the upgrading of the instrumental capacity of the dispossessed and that this ability is linked to the acquisition of specific skills. What such approaches consistently ignore is the need for changes to the surrounding structural milieu so that the acquisition of such skills makes experiential sense. The second form of systemic oppression, and here is where Habermas concentrates most of his energies, derives from the privileging of a scientific discourse and technocratic rationalization process that not only justifies

material and social disparities but also discursively disarms political challenges to the status quo. Here Habermas alerts us to the relationship between actions and the interests which govern such actions. Communicative actions which are directed at achieving a sense of mutual understanding and collective will are actions which we pursue to satisfy our practical interests i.e. our interest in social harmony and solidarity. Instrumental actions are those emerging from our technical interest in controlling nature and our environment. In modern societies practical interests and communicative actions are primarily pursued in the lifeworld while our technical interests have become systemically structured and formalized in state bureaucracies and profession agencies. Ideally, from the critical perspective, the direction and content of our technical interests and instrumental capacities should be grounded in a communicatively secured collective interest. Instead, according to Habermas, practical interests are increasingly being recast as technical concerns subject to systemic intervention and the application of scientific and technocratic methods. In the modern welfare state social problems are the domain of the "professional" and the "administrator" who dictate both the understanding of discontent and the skills required to overcome this condition. What Habermas challenges critical thinkers and social activists to do is to recognize the need to harness the technocratic efficiency and scientific capacity of the modern

state to communicatively secured needs and interests. Hence, the technical interests we pursue and the instrumental actions taken are rationalized on the basis of mutual understanding and agreement *not* on the basis of scientific authority or technocratic efficiency. To subvert the exercising of technical expertise to communicative rationality requires the building of communicative competence - the creation of a political voice with which we can articulate and explore the interests and needs emerging from lived experience. In essence, the Habermasian argument contends that the establishment of communicative competence, not technical expertise, must be the starting point for the pursuit of meaningful social change. Hence, the emancipatory interest of this thesis is a communicative one.

CHAPTER THREE

SOCIAL INTERVENTION AND EVALUATION WITHIN A HABERMASIAN FRAMEWORK

The previous chapter provides an historical and political context within which to locate the conventional practice of social intervention. If we follow Habermas' argument, traditional approaches to social programming serve as a systemic tool for control and manipulation of the lifeworld. On the one hand, they serve to offset serious political challenges to the status quo by providing compensation or ameliorative services to the disadvantaged segments of society. On the other hand, they provide a means for penetrating the lifeworld and exposing the dimensions of everyday life to technocratic scrutiny, rationalization and control. In so doing, both the understanding of experience and the basis for action are appropriated and rewritten by professional and bureaucratic agents of the state.

The argument being developed in this chapter is that empowerment oriented social programs seen through a Habermasian lens can provide us with a glimpse of what an emancipatory interventionary practice could strive to be. This genre of social programming, which draws extensively on the principles of critical adult education and social action research, attempts to overcome the negative attributes which

have characterized more traditional interventionary strategies, e.g. the tendency to be manipulative, individualistic, deficiency focused, and disempowering. A primary consideration of this project is whether empowerment oriented efforts demonstrate any capacity for moving beyond traditional approaches to intervention or whether they are only able to appropriate the language without realizing the intent of a critical discourse. The question is whether current articulations of empowerment oriented approaches to social programming have the capacity to support the emancipatory interests of critical and feminist social activists. If so, what is this capacity and how can it be more fully developed?

This chapter will address these concerns by examining from a Habermasian perspective the limits and emancipatory possibilities of empowerment oriented interventions. The chapter begins with a discussion of the disempowering attributes of the social interventionary process as they are revealed by Habermas i.e. the privileging of technocratic rationality, systemic appropriation of communication, and the disempowerment of the citizen/public sphere. We then move into an examination of the extent to which these characteristics continue to manifest themselves in social programs which are based on some notion of empowerment. From here, we proceed to an analysis of those features which

constitute the critical distinctions between empowerment oriented interventions and traditional efforts, i.e. emphasis on group participation and mutual support. I will argue that these two features provide a legitimate starting point for the construction of an emancipatory approach tc social intervention.

Disempowering Aspects of the Social Welfare State

The previous chapter outlined Habermas' main concerns regarding the disempowering characteristics of the modern welfare state. Three of these arguments are of particular relevance. First, Habermas contends that in the process of modernization and the advancement and protection of a capitalist market economy technocratic rationality has come to supersede communicative rationality as the basis for validating all aspects of social interaction. The grounds for legitimating social, economic and political activity are increasingly being limited to that which can be validated through technocratic rules and procedures governing the economic and political subsystems. Hence, practices related to our social or cultural development, such as, child rearing, education and health policies, community development initiatives, etc. tend to be constructed and validated in terms of whether or not they make economic and/or political

sense, on the basis of a meaning of "sense" as it is defined within these sub-systems. The idea of establishing justifications through communicative means, i.e. mutual understanding and discursive will formation, has limited application in modern welfare societies. As a result the ability to understand the social world is measured against a technocratic, rather than a communicative, construct of the term "understanding".

Second, Habermas argues that the trend toward an ever pervasive technocratic mentality is accompanied and promoted by a collective tendency to defer to the authority of those who have developed an expertise in differentiating and compartmentalizing lifeworld phenomena so that its shape and character is more conducive to the application and extension of legal and scientific principles. These artificial constructs are subsequently reified as valid operational definitions of reality. There is a collective tendency to forget that,

> ... these operational definitions are the inventions of researchers. They represent *their* particular order of social reality. They bring with them an aura of artificiality as they are deployed in the arena of human experience. (Collins, 1991:33)

Third, Habermas' argument also illustrates how the expansion of technocratic rationality into the lifeworld via state interventionism has severely restricted the democratic potential of the political public sphere. In modern times

collective political participation and debate along with discursive will formation has been reduced to the extension or withholding of nominal support within systemically structured political contests. The administrative apparatus of the state is far removed from its classical liberal roots, a tradition which envisioned a structure subservient to the demands of the public sphere. State structures and resources strive to control outbreaks of public discontent by systemically purchasing these problems through the extension of economic and social compensations. The effect of a politically neutralized public sphere combined with an ever pervasive technocratic consciousness is that the citizen who personifies the politically active social agent recedes in the face of the social service consuming, politically passive, client of the state.

In constructing these arguments, Habermas does not decry the differentiation of system and lifeworld or lament the modernization of the lifeworld or, for that matter, the making "public" of previously "private" issues. What he opposes is the systemic defining and appropriation of these concerns, a process which sidesteps the opportunity to scrutinize and politicize social and cultural issues within a public domain. "Publicly administered definitions extend to what we want for our lives, but not how we would like to live if we could find out, with regard to obtainable potentials, how we could live"

(Habermas, 1970:120). Likewise, in privileging communicative rationality, Habermas does not negate the efficiency or usefulness of technical or instrumental action governed by formal rules and procedures. Rather, he argues that such actions must have their basis in a communicatively achieved rationale which can at anytime be brought to the fore for public debate and critique. In order for instrumental action to be "liberating" it must be grounded in, and legitimated by, a discursively secured rationale, i.e. a rationale emerging from the collective expression of practical interests.

Within the Habermasian framework the pervasiveness of technicism and the stifling of the public sphere has two consequences. Our capacity to pursue collective emancipatory interests is undermined as is the ability to articulate these interests. In other words, the ability to recognize and overcome oppression is constrained. Hence, we cannot even begin to explore our emancipatory interests until we have divested ourselves of the constraints imposed by an adherence to a technocratic consciousness and resuscitated our capacity to examine and rationalize our collective actions at a communicative level.

For critical theorists the emancipatory interest is that which focuses on the reclamation of a communicatively rationalized lifeworld; the resurgence of the collective,

active citizen/public sphere; and, the harnessing of systemic energies and resources to a discursively motivated public sphere. For Habermas and others there exists a desperate need for humanity to revive its dwindling capacity for communicative action. "Efficiency and expertise are secondary to the larger issues of human fulfilment and equality. They are not sufficient conditions for the development of a more just and humane society" (Collins, 1991:42). It is only through communicative action that we can begin to recapture a sense of agency and control over our social and political lives. Key to the expression of this emancipatory interest is the concept of the public sphere, the theatre in which is shaped the collective, political voice(s).

The Disempowering Aspects of the Interventionary Process

The privileging of the technocratic mindset, the systemic appropriation of communication, and the disempowerment of the politically active citizen serve as modern day mechanisms of disempowerment. By this criteria it would appear that social interventions have, by definition, no emancipatory potential whatsoever and, in fact, stand in direct opposition to the articulation and pursuit of these interests. The Habermasian framework makes it evident that systemic intervention does far more than simply provide compensation or ameliorative

resources for those disaffected by the system. It is through such interventions that technocratic consciousness burrows its way deep into the lifeworld. Where originally the concern had been to redress economic imbalances, one now finds forms of social programming which advance systemic involvement into increasingly more intimate areas of private life, e.g. parenting, familial relations, sexuality, and mental health. In the process particular elements of everyday life are isolated, labelled, and differentiated from their lifeworld contexts by intellectuals and technical specialists and subjected to the dictates and reconstructions of expert or professional knowledge. As a result, how social problems are understood, how corresponding collective needs are articulated, and how these concerns are resolved is removed from everyday experience, mutual understanding and collective will formation.

The Privileging of Technocratic Rationality

The centrality of technocracy is most evident in traditional approaches to social intervention which tend not only to privilege the positivist social sciences, and their accompanying technicist assumptions, but also to celebrate them.

> Scientism promised much. Both indirectly and directly, advocates of scientism led people to believe that scientism had discovered remedies for delinquency, divorce, sex problems, family

> troubles, neuroses, and other unfortunate conditions. We were given the impression that such social evils would decline or disappear if the programs of scientism were adopted. (Hobbs,1967:16)

The promise of the social sciences resided in their potential to "lay open" the social world for technocratic rationalization by dissecting any given social problem into its component parts and, by virtue of doing so, to reveal cause and effect linkages and possible routes for intervention and amelioration. In the early years of social programming some researchers, thus, blamed the lack of sufficiently sophisticated social technologies, rather than erroneous program assumptions, for the perceived ineffectiveness of social interventions.

> Some of our social problems in Canada do not have a system of social technologies to provide relief and, hence, we can anticipate continued frustration with little hope of improvement. A critical example of this is the burgeoning problem of racial/linguistic discord in Canada. The social technology for dealing with this problem does not exist and no real efforts are being made to develop it. (Conger, 1974:5)

From this perspective, where the social sciences were perceived to be failing was not so much in their positivistic positioning as in their inability to refine the methods required to provide empirical evidence of the causal intricacies and regularities constituting everyday life.

The fascination with technicist solutions has permeated much of modern day thinking. As adult educator Michael Collins notes, there is,

> ... a growing tendency to make more and more areas of human endeavour (the practical, moral and political projects of everyday life) amenable to measurement and techno-bureaucratic control according to what is invoked as a scientific approach. (Collins, 1991:2)

This trend is of particular significance in that adult education has been closely linked to the development and evolution of social interventionary practices, particularly those which espouse some notion of empowerment.

> Increasingly, the eagerness on the part of many adult educators to be socially relevant has become intertwined with a belief that most of the major ills of society, ... can be ultimately solved by construing the underlying principles of the field in technocratic formats. (Collins, 1991:6)

The prevalence of this technicist slant in adult education has been greeted with considerable consternation and alarm by the more critical theorists in the field who perceive the trend as a direct threat to one of the last remaining learning sites for democratic political participation.

> There are multiple reasons for the anger at the ... mainstream abandonment of adult education's once vital role in fostering democratic social action. ... the anger and frustration with the modern practice of adult education has its roots, in part, in the way the study of adult learning ... was conflated (or reduced) to the study of principles of effective teaching practice. ... the boundary of the Discipline was drawn very narrowly around a set of professional practices and another "expert culture" was constituted in an historical period of an expansive welfare-state capitalism to take its place alongside so many other expert cultures (medicine, law, etc.). (Welton, 1995:128)

It is not surprising that empowerment oriented social programs which originated in the social sciences and which have come to be strongly influenced by developments in adult education have

difficulty divesting themselves of a technicist discourse. The general assumption prevails that the solution to a targeted social problem lies in the application of appropriate techniques.

Of the three programs discussed in Chapter One, the "Nobody's Perfect" program model is the most illustrative of and susceptible to these technicist leanings. As described earlier, the goal of Nobody's Perfect is to empower parents, through the development of knowledge and skills that will enable them to manipulate their environment rather than be manipulated by it. The application of sophisticated needs assessments determine what program participants require to achieve this goal. The implementation of adult education techniques serves to ensure that these needs are then met in an "empowering" way. In Nobody's Perfect, for example, "learning occurs through the utilization of adult education methods such as discussion and group support... [the program] attempts to involve every parent in discussions; and places an emphasis on democracy and mutual respect" (VanderPlaat, 1989:2). In essence, the term "to empower" is itself seen as a process involving the learning and application of certain techniques. And, ultimately, "to be empowered" is reduced, often by the accompanying evaluation activity, to mean only an empirical display or expression of this technical competence. Parenting emerges as a function requiring the development of

certain skills and the process by which these skills are acquired is in and of itself perceived as a matter of technical and procedural competence.[1]

The privileging of technique is less obvious in the "Stepping Stone" and "Self-Help Connection" program models. This is in part because neither of these projects is as blatantly "educational" or skill oriented in its intent as is the "Nobody's Perfect" program. Yet here too one finds an emphasis on the ability of participants or users to gain access to, or manipulate, systemic structures. For example, one of the primary objectives of the "Stepping Stone" project is "to assist women, men and youth who work as prostitutes in using existing services" (Stepping Stone Association, Board Manual). Likewise the "Self-Help Connection" strives to, "enable Nova Scotians to ... improve control over their health status by increasing their knowledge, skills and resources" (Self-Help Connection, 1991:2). In all three programs the emphasis continues to be on how to alleviate social concerns or reduce problems through the manipulation of systemically organized resources and within existing social structures.

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[1] This phenomenon is not restricted to social interventions and adult education activities. Insidious technicism threatens all modern day learning sites. In Nova Scotia, efforts to rationalize the post-secondary educational system have been premised on a purely technocratic definition of the term. For example, a recent report evaluating the university based education programs reduced the intent of these programs to "teacher training".

In terms of a technicist orientation, empowerment based social programming appears to differ from its predecessors only in so far as focus is concerned. Traditional interventions emphasized the direct transfer of what was deemed to be relevant or appropriate skills and knowledge. Empowerment oriented interventions, on the other hand, focus on increasing the capacity to acquire skills and access resources based on self-defined needs and self initiative. However, the development of this capacity is still very much perceived in instrumental terms. As Collins notes, in empowerment oriented interventions, as in adult education, the technicist eye has simply moved from "learning" to "learning to learn" (1991:6). What this constitutes, in effect, is an extension of a technocratic mentality into the very consciousness of program participants. In so doing, people are encouraged to see their lives and the solution to their life problems as a technical matter, one capable of resolution through participation in the appropriate "learning" experience. Through social interventions, including those which emphasize empowerment, participants learn to relate their capacity to produce change with the technical or procedural aspects of a program. The perception is created that understanding and control over everyday life is dependent upon the availability of systemically constructed and validated resources. A one-sided or over-emphasis on "technique" leaves little room for the emergence of the

politically active citizen or the development of a communicatively achieved collective as the basis from which to initiate social change.

Considering the technocratic underpinnings of empowerment oriented social programs, the argument being developed does not preclude the requirement for technical or instrumental action in the amelioration of social problems and the production of social change. What is at issue is the manner in which the underlying rationale for such actions is constructed.

> An anti-technicist stance is not anti-technological, nor is it against the acquisition of technical competence. It places priority on an ethos which requires that any deployment of technological innovations, technical programmes and expertise be steered by practical and relevant interests, both emancipatory and instrumental (Collins, 1991:20).

The concern from a Habermasian perspective is with the likelihood that technical competencies may be acquired without reflexive consideration of the problems they address or the implications of their application. The assumption of a technicist consciousness is, in effect, the assumption of an objective consciousness, "a mode of thought that allows one to avoid thinking about the likely consequences of one's actions by reverting to impartial scientific language" (Holzner and Marx, 1979:351). As Suchman questions, during the height of broad-scale social programming, "What are we trying to

accomplish with these action programs? Is knowledge for knowledge's sake being replaced by action for action's sake?" (1972:53).

Systemic Appropriation of Communication

As noted earlier Habermas contends that the privileging of a technocratic rationality not only blocks our ability to pursue our emancipatory interests but also prevents us from exploring what these interests might be in a communicative fashion. Systemic intervention involves the assumption of responsibility for a particular social problem as well as a discursive appropriation of the issue at hand. Everyday experience is recast within the logic and the language of the administrative sub-system. To this end, issues and concerns are subjected to the "gaze" of various experts and professionals who then mould the subject into an administratively manageable language and form. Fraser (1989), in her discussion on the politics of needs interpretation follows the same line of reasoning and elaborates,

> Expert needs discourses are the vehicles for translating ... politicized needs into objects of potential state intervention. They are closely connected with institutions of knowledge production and utilization, and they include ... social science discourses generated in universities and 'think tanks'; legal discourses generated in judicial institutions ... administrative discourses circulated in various agencies of the social state; and therapeutic discourses circulated in public and private medical and social service agencies. (173)

In the process of intervention the systemic translation of lifeworld experience is fed back to those participating, thus reshaping or distorting their subsequent understanding of their lives and concerns. Consequently,

> when expert needs discourses are institutionalized in state apparatus, they tend to become normalizing, aimed at reforming, ... this sometimes becomes explicit when services incorporate a therapeutic dimension designed to close the gap between clients' recalcitrant self-interpretations and the interpretations embedded in administrative policy.(Fraser, 1989:174)

Dorothy Smith (1990) makes the same observation in her explication of "ideological practices", a process which serves to,

> convert what people experience directly in their everyday/everynight world into forms of knowledge in which people as subjects disappear and in which their perspectives on their own experiences are transposed and subdued by the magisterial forms of objectifying discourse (4)

In a related vein Claus Offe (1984) in Contradictions of the Welfare State, notes,

> in order to qualify for the benefits and services of the welfare state, the client must not only prove his or her "need", but must also be a *deserving* client - a client, that is, who complies with the dominant, economic, political and cultural standards and norms of the society. ...material benefits for the needy are traded for their submissive recognition of the "moral order" of the society which generates such need. (Offe, 1984:156)

The systemic reflection of experience thus distorts the understanding of those experiences as well as the understanding of the needs arising from these circumstances and the instrumental actions appropriate to their alleviation.

Our capacity to articulate what our emancipatory interests might be is greatly reduced.

The hoped for success of traditional approaches to social intervention was, of course, premised on the ability of the social sciences to "make sense" of the social world. The value of a professional or expert discourse was in part determined by its capacity to reduce the complexities of human experience and need into definable and actionable categories. The privileging of a scientific discourse ensured that the professional and bureaucratic discursive "takeover" of a problem situation was perceived as a positive step towards amelioration rather than a communicatively distortive one.

In recent years practitioners emerging from the field of adult education and social action research have been more sensitive to the problematic nature of the traditional prescriptive approach to social programming. For example, in the "Nobody's Perfect" program documentation, one finds the statement that,

> for the Program to have the greatest impact, parents need to be equal partners in the Program; they need to choose voluntarily to participate, and the Program needs to be based on needs and interests as they identify them" (Nobody's Perfect Administrative Manual, 1988:11).

Despite this recognition, what constitutes an appropriate need within "Nobody's Perfect" is still demarcated within the confines of a very restrictive mandate. Parents are invited

to articulate their needs but from a selective menu. In practice, this means that participants are provided with the opportunity to indicate their preferences or priorities from a predetermined list of needs, e.g. children's safety, behavioral concerns, parental stress. While the possibility exists for "other" discussions the content of the resources available make it clear where the emphasis should be. Likewise, the Nobody's Perfect Program Administrative Manual, in an attempt to preclude discussion on certain subjects, is emphatic in its insistence that the program is not designed to deal with parents in crisis. As Collins points out, "... even when the methodology adopted facilitates individual assessment, the nature of participation is typically steered by some predetermined diagnostic format" (1991:62).

What this means is that individuals participating in programs such as "Nobody's Perfect" come to understand themselves as parents, their parenting experiences and their ability to act on behalf of their children within a systemically rationalized framework. Equally important is that those involved in the design, implementation and development of social programs find their best efforts to be empowering and to serve an emancipatory interest consistently undermined by their inability to recognize and rid themselves of this systemic discourse. As a result, our perceptions of societal problems are systemically falsified and our

understanding of our own complicity in this process is distorted and repressed.

Disempowerment of the Citizen/Public Sphere

The privileging of technical action and the filtering of experience through the systemic discursive lens narrows the interests and restricts the language of those actively working to eradicate societal ills. This systemic influence is evident in the design and content of interventionary efforts. As noted earlier, the emphasis in empowerment oriented social programs is to encourage and facilitate participants' capacity to access and make use of resources and structures as they are currently organized. Looking at this process from a Habermasian perspective one can see that what empowerment oriented interventions are doing, in effect, is teaching or "empowering" participants to be better clients or consumers of administrative resources.[2]

The "Stepping Stone" project exemplifies this type of "client-oriented" intervention. The users of Stepping Stone, persons who make a living in the sex trade, are politically and socially marginalized by virtue of their work. As an intervention, "Stepping Stone" provides a bridge between the

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[2] For a related discussions see E.Townsend's (1994) work in the field of occupational therapy.

resources of the system e.g. social services, health care, legal aid, and program users. As such, the project is primarily concerned with advocating the legitimacy of 'prostitutes' as rights bearing clients of the state. "Stepping Stone" holds with the philosophy that "... men, women and youth who work as prostitutes have basic rights ... to safety and access to services regardless of their occupation" (The Stepping Stone Project, unpublished documents). This program, thus, literally intervenes on behalf of program users to ensure that these client based rights are upheld.

The users of "Nobody's Perfect", on the other hand, do not have to establish their identities as legitimate clients. Coded as socially isolated, undereducated, low income and predominately young single mothers, their role as clients have been well defined and interpreted. In fact, they are the well worn subject and target of much "needs talk". The "Nobody's Perfect" model is not so much concerned with the traditional intervention practice of transferring resources and knowledge directly to participants as it is with encouraging participants to have more confidence in their own abilities and their capacity to access other services. In other words, programs like "Nobody's Perfect" help users to "help themselves", as it were, to the systemic, "expert", services available. However, as Cohen and Arato argue, such efforts

can work against, rather than for, our emancipatory interests:

> ... the client/expert relations that proliferate in civil society via the medium of law neither abolish substantive inequalities in power or voice nor facilitate the creation of new meanings, identities and norms. ... Consequently, autonomous processes of collective empowerment and the creation of nonpatriarchal identities in civil society are blocked. (1992:546)

Empowerment-oriented social programming is, thus, very much tied to the client side of Habermas' client/citizen dichotomy. As such, any claim to an emancipatory interest must show that the prior identification of needs had been communicatively achieved and that the linkages between needs and resources have been discursively rationalized. Obviously, and as has been demonstrated, this is not the case. As such the process is disempowering for both participants and program designers, implementers and evaluators. The former group is not encouraged to see themselves as active political agents in the organization and usage of systemic resources. Without this vision the latter group have only systemic interests to indicate where their skills and emancipatory efforts should be directed.

The Emancipatory Potential of Empowerment Oriented Interventions

The Habermasian perspective allows us to see clearly how the discourse of social intervention, including that which

strives to empower, can work against our emancipatory aspirations. As has been demonstrated, the privileging of the technocratic mindset, the systemic (mis)appropriation of communication, and the disempowerment of the politically active citizen continue to characterize the interventionary process and sabotage our best intentions. However, the Habermasian framework also provides a way of seeing beyond this dilemma. As noted earlier the expression and pursuit of emancipatory interests are intricately linked in somewhat sequential order to the reclamation of a communicatively achieved lifeworld, the resurgence of the citizen/public sphere, and the harnessing of systemic energies to a discursive public sphere. With these criteria in mind we now return to the empowerment oriented interventions to assess whether they do indeed demonstrate any capacity to foster these interests.

The Reclamation of the Lifeworld

One of the debilitating aspects of the modern welfare state and its accompanying interventionary discourse is the undermining of the need to provide a communicatively achieved rationality for our individual and collective actions. The privileging of a technocratic consciousness deludes us into believing that control over our lives and the resolution of private and public ills are simply a matter of technique.

Little serious attention is paid to the idea or the possibility that communication, not skill development, could actually be the cornerstone for empowerment and control.

Despite their technicist leanings two of our empowerment oriented interventions do provide a glimpse of this communicative awareness. Both the "Nobody's Perfect" program and the "Self-Help Connection" make a point of singling out the importance of "the group" and the concept of "mutual support". In the "Nobody's Perfect" program, mutual support activities are encouraged to give participants a sense of community, to increase their confidence in their ability to help each other, and to provide a safe forum within which the "learning" components of the program can take place.[3] In the "Self-Help Connection" mutual support is a process that occurs among groups as they move from being exclusively self-help to being more social action oriented. While the steps taken to encourage mutual support may be instrumental ones, the process itself is not. The capacity to be supportive is very much located in a communicatively achieved recognition of mutual needs and interests. Attention is diverted from the system-to-participant transfer of resources/skills and instead focuses on participant-participant interaction. This

[3] The "Nobody's Perfect" program treats mutual support as an ongoing process and participants are encouraged to explore strategies for continuing this support to each other upon completion of the program.

opportunity to talk about, share and validate lifeworld experience works in direct opposition to the individualizing "case" approach of most interventions. Participants do not support each other purely in terms of exchanging instrumental or prescriptive information as they relate, for example, to individual parenting concerns. Instead, the feeling of being supported comes from the communicatively achieved acknowledgement and validation of collective experiences. In my own evaluation work I have found that participants often (and without solicitation) express how important and meaningful the discovery of this collective voice has been to them (VanderPlaat, 1989). Unfortunately, the critical role of mutual support often goes unrecognized as it is seen as just one of many "techniques" for furthering the instrumental health related interests of the program.

The Resurgence of the Citizen/Public Sphere

Most empowerment-oriented interventions subscribe to some concept of group participation and mutual support. They show a *potential* for an interventionary practice which does not, in the words of Cohen and Arato, "create isolated clients of a state bureaucracy but rather empower individuals to act together collectively, to develop new solidarities, and to achieve a greater balance of power relations (1992:547). Mutual support activities which encourage person-to-person

rather than person-to-program interaction begin to clear the way for the emergence of a sense of collective identity which is communicatively secured. Empowerment oriented interventions allow for the possibility of a sphere for public discourse by recognizing the value of mutual support. For collectives built on mutual support to have anything more than a therapeutic function, an emancipatory approach to intervention must also encourage participarts to recognize and develop the politically active side of the client/citizen dichotomy. In essence, what an emancipatory approach to intervention wants to do in practice is to dissolve this bifurcation and rejoin the political agency of the citizen with the needs and interests of the systemic client.

Both "Nobody's Perfect" and the "Stepping Stone" project acknowledge their participants/users as "citizens" but in a very limited way.[4] In "Nobody's Perfect", participants' capacity for citizenship -- their right to identify and interpret their role and needs as clients -- is recognized within a very narrow definition of the construct "citizen".[5]

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[4] I refer to the word "citizen" in the Habermasian sense, i.e. a public political person. In programs such as "Stepping Stone", for example, the use of the word "citizen" is defined in the liberal rights bearing tradition which, in the Habermasian context is closer to the idea of a client or consumer of state services.

[5] The "Nobody's Perfect" program's more client-oriented approach is reflected in the program's use of the word "participant" as opposed to "user".

In the "Stepping Stone" project, the recognition of "prostitutes" as politically active citizens is evident in the project's commitment to user defined needs i.e. users must take the initiative in pursuing the more formal support services available, and in the project's desire, as yet unrealized, for a user-run Board of Directors.

Of the three interventions described, the "Self-Help Connection" appears in principle to be the most aware of project users as politically creative citizens rather than just consumers of mental health services.

> The fundamental empowering principle of the Self-Help/Social Action Model is the transition and transformation of the individual as a victim to acceptance of self as an assertive, efficacious citizen. Achieving power implies developing the knowledge, skills and resources not only needed to cope, but to confront those social forces which make major contributions to most human stress and dysfunction. The Self-Help Connection activities will center on developing essential community participation opportunities and social action skills. (The Self-Help Connection, 1991:13)

This model recognizes the capacity of its users to be both clients of mental health services and citizens who dictate how they will be served as clients. In this sense, the aspirations expressed by the "Self-Help Connection" reflect a Habermasian "what ought to be" with regard to the client/citizen-state relationship.

However, one must be careful not to surmise that the "Self-Help Connection" has a greater emancipatory potential

than the other two programs being discussed. As noted in Chapter One, the "Self-Help Connection" is responsive to the needs of existing and developing self-help groups. It does not, however, actively *initiate* the establishment of such efforts. The "Self-Help Connection" can only foster the pursuit of emancipatory interests which have already been partially recognized by those who have collective concerns. The critical point here is that the collective, or the recognition of a collective concern, preceded the intervention. The "Self-Help Connection" nurtures the political potential already imbedded in this recognition.

This illustrates a very interesting point. The "Self-Help Connection", like the "Stepping Stone" project acts as a resource that people can access if they so choose. Unlike the "Nobody's Perfect" program, no steps are taken to recruit actively participants or to provide a formal or structured program. While this approach would appear to be consistent with the non-intrusive and non-impositional stance favoured by critical and feminist thinkers, it assumes that would-be participants recognize themselves as potential social agents, as politically active citizens. The success of the "Self-Help Connection" depends on this recognition. Participants must already see themselves as a collectivity with a political

capacity.[6] The "Self-Help Connection" provides the instrumental means to further that capacity. One is hesitant to suggest that this is the only way in which an interventionary practice can serve an emancipatory interest. The problem with this approach is the onus such a positioning places on the dispossessed. It is left up to them to find each other and to organize themselves around collective interests. This presupposes a political awareness which may not exist.

What "Nobody's Perfect" and the "Stepping Stone Project" can provide is the space within which this recognition can occur. The "Stepping Stone" project is the least proactive in this regard. While the project creates a space, or a site from which a political collective could potentially emerge it does not actively work to foster collective efforts. However, the model upon which the project is based does permit and encourage this potential, particularly in its assumption and aspiration that ownership of the project should reside with users of the resource.

"Nobody's Perfect" on the other hand, very blatantly and very intentionally, recruits people, who the program assumes have collective interests and needs by virtue of their shared

[6] In its program documentation the Self-Help Connection notes that the move from therapeutic activities to political efforts can result in considerable tension within a group.

characteristics.[7] The program actively creates a collective and through its mutual support activities, attempts to encourage a sense of collective identity. Hence, despite being the most traditional of the empowerment oriented interventions discussed, "Nobody's Perfect" also demonstrates considerable potential to serve an emancipatory interest. By carving out a public space "Nobody's Perfect" creates the possibility for the emergence of a collective political voice.

Both "Nobody's Perfect" and the "Stepping Stone" project allow for the possibility of public participation where "public participation" is understood as a person-to-person communicative process rather than person-to-system participation in attitudinal surveys, needs assessments and focus groups. This raises an interesting point. If we go back to Raeburn's articulation of an empowerment based policy for Health Canada, he is advocating the development of social programs that reflect the needs of a participatory public or expressed collective interest. While this position seems to be consistent with a critical agenda, it does pose a problem. For public participation to underscore a social program it must be assumed that a public voice and a collective interest

[7] In a political climate that still favours universal access "Nobody's Perfect" has had to defend this targeted approach to recruitment. While there has been considerable pressure to open the program to all interested parents, program managers argue that this would undermine the sense of community that the sharing of similar characteristics and lived experiences creates.

exists prior to the establishment of intervention. By extension the needs and interests of marginalized peoples who have not found a collective voice continue to be excluded. This then may be one of the critical criteria by which the emancipatory capacity of any program is judged, i.e. the extent to which it serves as a means via which the needs and interests of voices, which might otherwise be excluded, are pulled into a public domain. Programs like "Stepping Stone" and "Nobody's Perfect" are not empowering because they reflect public participation - but, rather, because they make such participation possible. By extension, the concept of mutual support is not a characteristic or prescribed technique that underpins an empowering social intervention but, rather, a phenomenon that emerges from public participation and the recognition of identity or, at least, connection.

So the glimpse of an emancipatory potential is particularly evident in social interventions which are dominated by women both as users and as program designers and implementers. Also surprising is that the type of interventions discussed are not traditionally linked to the official state institutions usually associated with "empowering" activities i.e. the educational system and/or work(for pay) place.

The emancipatory potential evident in woman centered intervention may lie in the fact that while women have been excluded from the public sphere by virtue of their restriction to the private sphere and/or marginalized position in the official economy, this has not precluded the emergence of women's communicative interests. Women's exclusion from the public sphere necessitated and resulted in the creation of many well-trod corridor zones.[8] Whether it occurred over cups of coffee amidst babies and laundry or in structured women's auxiliaries and institutes or in blatantly political consciousness raising groups, the expression of communicative interests has, historically, been a very "woman" thing to do. Many women are familiar with the idea of a communicative domain, a zone, as Benhabib (1986) puts it, where needs and interests are made accessible to collective reflection and potential action. In fact, the expression and identification of collective communicative interests formed the backbone of the feminist movement. Within this movement, and as Habermas points out,

> The issue is not primarily one of compensations that the welfare state can provide, but of defending and restoring endangered ways of life. In short, the new conflicts are not ignited by distribution problems but by questions having to do with the grammar of forms of life. (Habermas, 1987b:392)

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[8] Mary Ryan (1992) documents this phenomena in her work on women and public sphere access in 19th century America.

The linkage between the communicatively secured interests of the feminist movement and subsequent instrumental actions is evident in the fact that the subsequent demand for transition housing, rape crisis centers, etc. did not originate in the public sphere nor was interest in intervention of this kind instigated by the state. The interest, the need for such action arose from the depths of the lifeworld and was carried into the public sphere and subsequently to the state via the feminist movement.[9] In stating the case for intervention, these women did not forget that the strength of "corridor talk" is its capacity for collective validation of what was perceived to be individual experience and desire, pain and dysfunction. This retention was in part possible because of the contradiction inherent in female job ghettos - the large number of women employed in the social services ensured that these feminist ideals were not completely rationalized out of existence.

> Women have been criticizing the welfare state in recent years not just as academics and activists, or as beneficiaries and users of welfare services, but as people on whom the daily operation of the welfare state to a large extent depends. ... small beginnings have been made from changing the welfare state from within. (Pateman, 1989:200)

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[9] See Fraser (1989) for an interesting discussion on the feminist movement as a bridge discourse. Habermas notes that while most of the new social movements adopt a defensive stance against the colonization of the lifeworld the feminist movement is one of the few to be offensive in its demands for new rights and privileges (White, 1988; Kellner, 1989).

As noted earlier the potential political strength of group participation and mutual support is at risk of systemic appropriation, as are many of the interventions informed by feminist interests. In the area of housing for battered women, for example, the experiences and interests of those directly affected are increasingly being silenced by the discourses of systemic agents who provide the professional and administrative support to these institutions (Fraser, 1990; Walker, 1990). Consequently, battered women are more likely to be viewed as victims, rather than potential activists, and the language of therapy has replaced the language of consciousness raising.

The Harnessing of Systemic Energies

If we think of an emancipatory approach to intervention as one which establishes political "publics" or collectivities, we also see how more effective linkages can be established between systemic resources and lifeworld need and interests. In the critical ideal, the administrative apparatus of the State should serve the needs and interests of its citizenry. Citizens should identify what these needs are and they should also determine, through some form of public discourse, their social, political and economic interpretations, as well as the means by which these needs should be met. What we are striving for is a system/lifeworld relationship whereby the

instrumental capacity of the state is harnessed to the instrumental, communicative and emancipatory interests articulated in the public sphere. The citizen dictates the role of the client.

For an emancipatory approach to intervention to serve this interest it must fulfil two functions. First, it must create a space within which collective needs and interests can be voiced and explored. Second, it must serve as the information base from which the organization of systemic energies and resources is redefined. In this sense it may be useful to think of an emancipatory intervention site as illustrative of the Habermasian idea of a "sensor" - a communicatively secured location from which the activities of the system are monitored and influenced. In other words, what we are striving for is a complete reversal of the traditional imagery of social intervention as an activity which entails the systematic penetration of the lifeworld. Rather we see emancipatory intervention as a process by which the administrative apparatus of the state is informed and directed by communicatively achieved needs and interests rather than the dictates of technical efficiency and scientific authority.

Within this context evaluation comes to play a critical role in the harnessing of systemic resources to a discursive public sphere. It is through the evaluation process that the

needs and interests of the collective client/citizen can be carried back into the system. Evaluation can be made to serve as a communicative bridge between the realm of the citizen i.e. the intervention site and the activities of the State i.e. social policy formation. It is through the evaluation process that we can assess ourselves as emancipatory practitioners and our success in the creation of discursive public spaces. How evaluation practices must be reformulated to reflect this emancipatory interest will be explored more fully in Chapter Five.

Conclusion

The traditional approach to social programming conceptualizes intervention as a systemic penetration into some aspect of the lifeworld that has been deemed problematic. In the process of intervening, and in order to fit the systemic gaze, the problem is rewritten or rationalized within the structures of a systemic discourse, i.e. one that is informed by technocratic interests and actions. A particular aspect of everyday life can be discursively isolated from its lifeworld context and conceptually reorganized to fit the instrumental capacities of the state administrative apparatus. Theoretically then, the success of an interventionary action is dependent on the ability of systemic expertise to reduce what it perceives to be the "muddle" of lifeworld phenomena to

empirically identifiable and systemically actionable occurrences. An interventionary practice so formulated cannot help but be disempowering. The system assumes responsibility for problematic experiences and also appropriates the right to articulate the dimensions and meaning of those experiences and the possible techniques for their amelioration.

Empowerment oriented interventions attempt to move beyond this traditional discourse by constructing program users as participants in the process rather than mere objects of systemic intervention. These interventions make the systemization of experience and understanding more palatable to those involved. The process and the outcome remain the same. Intervention is system-to-lifeworld oriented. Program users learn to think about and organize their experiences within a systemically rationalized space and discourse. The success of a program is measured in part by the closeness of fit between systemic discourses and lifeworld phenomena; the extent to which users are willing to buy into this discourse; and, whether they avail themselves more readily of the systemic resources available.

At an abstract and general level it is easy to discern those aspects of social interventions which are disempowering. However, when we look at our specific examples, in particular "Nobody's Perfect" and the "Stepping Stone" project, the

singular concern with disempowerment misses an important point. "Disempowerment" assumes the appropriation of power. It is not at all clear that the program users being discussed, e.g. poor single mothers and sex trade workers, ever had any power or sense of collective agency to begin with. In these cases, the role of the citizen has not been suppressed by the client - it has never even emerged. Hence, it may be unfair to accuse empowerment oriented interventions of retaining the disempowering persona of traditional intervention. This totally misses the point that in empowerment based social programs the combination of a group oriented philosophy with an emphasis on mutual support allows for the emergence of political energies, not previously recognized. The problem is not so much that these programs are disempowering but that they fail to foster the emancipatory potential that they make possible. Empowerment oriented programs offer the possibility of a communicative space within a systemically co-opted domain. As such, they provide the opportunity for inverting the direction of the interventionary process. Allowing for the expression of collective interests is the starting point for bringing the citizen back into the limelight. With the emergence of a politically conscious citizen comes the possibility of public participation, which in turn, makes possible the subversion of systemic resources to the demands of a communicatively secured collective interest.

The negative qualities associated with social interventions result from the perception that these activities undermine peoples' abilities to identify and act upon their own best interests. While there exists ample evidence in support of this view it does not necessarily follow, however, that intervention must, by definition, always "make dependent" and suppress individual agency and interest. "The juridification of everyday life can result in an increased demand for participation and self-government, just as it can foster an attitude of dependence, passivity, and clientelism" (Benhabib, 1986:352). Intervention can and does allow the reverse to occur. Intervention can work for, rather than against, an emancipatory interest by creating a space that encourages the articulation of a collective voice and interest.

Interventions bring together a potential collective often for the first time. Herein lies its capacity to support an emancipatory interest. Social interventions can create a "public" space, a site for the construction of the citizen. Through an exploration of common experience people may discover a collective voice through which they can reappropriate their role as citizen. Interventions constructed with this emancipatory intent can foster the emergence and development of communicative competence.

However ill defined they may be, empowerment oriented interventions carry within themselves the seed of this emancipatory interest. Shrouded in "needs talk" and program delivery lingo, these interventions allow for a collective, public articulation of and reflection on communicative interests and needs. They provide a legitimate societal location for democratic discourse. Seen in this light the instrumental aspect of intervention, the meeting of needs, e.g. the development of parenting skills, assumes a secondary, facilitative role. Individuals are brought together around a focal point, a mutual, instrumental concern (one which is admittedly systemically defined) in such a way as to allow for the discussion of needs, expression of communicative interests, and potential emancipatory action.

Even in its ideal state empowerment oriented intervention constitutes a technical or instrumental action, the manipulation of conditions and consequently people. It is a form of manipulation worth arguing for. Any interference in "the way things are" constitutes manipulation. The way things are here and now is that those who experience first-hand the debilitating effects of modern society are not the same individuals or groups who identify and define the problem, set social policies or create and evaluate social programs.

> Critical social science arises out of, and speaks to, situations of social unhappiness, a situation which it interprets as the result both of the ignorance of those experiencing these feelings and

> of their domination by others. It is this experience of unhappiness which is the wedge a critical theory uses to justify its entrance into the lives of those it seeks to enlighten and emancipate. (Fay, 1987:82-83).

Critical thinkers and activists committed to social change are faced with two choices. On the one hand, they can let their fear of being seen as intrusive, manipulative, patronizing and impositional leave them "frozen in the zone of dead practice" (McLaren,1991:167).[10] From this position the dispossessed must find their own voice and, if they so choose, make their own way into the public sphere. On the other hand, critical thinkers and activists can choose to act, to intervene on behalf of one another. Intervention is justified if its intent is to create a space for the emergence of collective voices as yet unheard. As such, it bears a resemblance to Fay's notion of an "educative" practice which provides

> a means by which people can achieve a much clearer picture of who they are, and what the real meaning of their social practices is, as a first step in becoming different sorts of people with different sorts of social arrangements. (Fay, 1987:89)

Having identified a discursive political space as the intent of an emancipatory approach to intervention, we must now turn to a discussion as to how the creation of such a space might be achieved. One concern is how, in the

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[10] Critical thinkers who have embraced the postmodern are particularly attuned to this potential paralysis. See Ellsworth (1989) and Lather (1991) for detailed discussions on the contradictions and moral dilemmas facing the critical social activist.

conceptualization of an emancipatory site do we avoid merely paying lip service to the pursuit of emancipatory interests. Another issue is how do we prevent the systemic appropriation and redefinition of a "publicly" expressed interest which may emerge from these spaces. As discussed in the next chapter both of these concerns call for a closer examination of the concept of "empowerment" and Habermas' articulation of the "public sphere".

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL INTERVENTIONS: EMPOWERING SPACES AND ACCESS ROUTES

This thesis argues that social programming and evaluation practices can support a communicative emancipatory interest. At the heart of an emancipatory approach to intervention is the desire to create a communicative space within which participants can explore the parameters of mutual interests and move toward a sense of collective political agency. The current approach to intervention allows a privileged few to exercise their political agency on behalf of those whose relationship with the state has been reduced to passive clientelism. An emancipatory approach to intervention empowers the citizen rather than enhances the self-sufficiency of the client of the state. Ultimately, a critical approach to social intervention strives for a citizen/client - state relationship in which systemic resources are harnessed to the communicatively achieved collective interests of those effected. An emancipatory approach to intervention strives to foster the emergence and actualization of political agents who have the discursive capacity to define their own needs and the political strength to manipulate systemic energies to meet these needs. The previous chapter argued that empowerment oriented social programs, such as "Nobody's Perfect", "Stepping Stone" and the "Self-Help Connection", have the

capacity to support this emancipatory interest in that they introduce the concepts of group (public) participation and mutual support to the interventionary process, making it possible to think about intervention sites as having an instrumental capacity and a communicative one.

This chapter will examine how the communicative space created by an intervention can support these interests. The previous chapter introduced the image of interventionary sites as lifeworld sensors in the system. Ideally, these sensors would allow the needs and interests of a particular constituency to inform and direct the allocation of systemic energies and resources. The immediate concern is with the practical implications of this ideal. The chapter begins with a discussion on the concept of empowerment and its relationship to emancipatory intervention in order to develop a way of thinking about empowerment that is consistent with the communicative interests of this project. To be "empowered", one must be able to act; one must also be able to consider the interests which inform actions. According to Lather,

> Rather than "how to" guidelines, is the need for intellectuals with liberatory intentions to take responsibility for transforming our own practices so that our empirical and pedagogical work can be less toward positioning ourselves as masters of truth and justice and more toward creating a space where those directly involved can act and speak on their own behalf. (1991:164)

A second concern is to explore the relationship between intervention sites as "communicative spaces" or sensors and the broader concept of a political public sphere. This dimension is included because although public sphere participation is not the immediate intent of an emancipatory approach to intervention it is ultimately what such efforts must make possible or a least strive for. It is necessary to examine the possibilities of an approach to intervention which is both *empowering* - facilitating a sense of collective identity and interest; and, *empowered* - capable of influencing the distribution of systemic power and resources (Florin and Wandersman, 1990).

The Discourse of Empowerment

The activity usually identified with emancipatory interests is commonly understood to involve some construct of empowerment. Empowerment may be thought of as a process, the means through which an emancipatory interest is pursued. Empowerment may also be thought of as an outcome; the end state of being; the realization of this pursuit. What either dimension of the construct refers to is the subject of considerable debate. As Zimmerman observes, "empowerment theory is an enigma" (1990a). How the term is employed and the meanings attached to it are embedded in the context and discipline in which it is found

and "has no particular meaning prior to its construction within specific discourses" (Gore, 1992:56). Each discipline needs to grapple with Simon's (1987) query - empowerment for what?

Empowerment as Outcome

Even a cursory examination of empowerment as an outcome in the various disciplines demonstrates considerable diversity in meaning and intent. Within the management sciences empowerment is defined in very instrumental terms equated specifically with the acquisition of work related skills. "Power" in this sense, refers to,

> increases in workers' effort-performance expectancies or feelings of self-efficacy. Empowering interventions, ... enable workers to feel they can perform their work competently. (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990:666)

Within community developmental literature "power" is equated with access and control over resources.

> Empowerment is an intentional ongoing process ... through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over these resources. (Barr and Cochran, 1992:2)

Definitions from the family therapy literature are similar and include,

> family identification and recognition of needs, the ability to deploy competencies to obtain resources to meet needs, and self attributions about the role family members play in accessing resources and meeting needs. (Dunst and Trivette, 1989:94)

In both community development and family therapy literature one is asked to distinguish conceptually between empowerment as skill development and empowerment as the capacity to employ skills. The competencies to act are presumed to exist but need to be realized. This is consistent with the principles underlying the empowerment oriented programs we have discussed, particularly "Nobody's Perfect" and the "Self-Help Connection".

Notions of empowerment which reflect a psychological orientation include, "As individuals gain control and mastery over their lives, and learn and utilize skills for influencing life events they become empowered" (Zimmerman, 1990b:73). This idea of control is also central to the critical educational and social activist literature which adds a political dimension to the concept. As such empowerment is viewed as,

> the emergence of people who know who they are and are conscious of themselves as active and deciding beings, who bear responsibility for their choices and who are able to explain them in their own freely adopted purposes and ideals. (Fay, 1987:74)

Fay's description is similar to feminist descriptions of the construct. For example, Fox asserts that empowerment , "involves people coming into a sense of their own power, a new relationship with their own contexts" (Fox in Lather, 1991:4).

Given this diversity, it is essential to define the meaning and implications of empowerment as outcome. As Simon cautions, "without a vision for the future a pedagogy of empowerment is reduced to a method for participation which takes democracy as an end and not as a means!" (1987:375). It is also necessary to avoid platitudes as definitions.

> critical pedagogues consistently answer the question of "empowerment for what?" in ahistorical and depoliticized abstractions. These include empowerment for "human betterment"[Parker, 1986:227], for expanding "the range of possible social identities people may become" [Simon, 1987:372], and "making one's self present as part of a moral and political project that links production of meaning to the possibility for human agency, democratic community, and transformative social action" [Giroux, 1988:68-69]. (Ellsworth, 1989:307)

Ultimately, the goal of an empowering process is consistent with Zalk and Gordon-Kelter's goal of feminism,

> to advocate societies that are not characterized by relations of domination and subordination for anyone, societies where all people are free and equal and live with respect and dignity, where power and resources are not hoarded by an elite few who define social values and dictate institutional processes to all others.(1992:3)

Given the communicative irterests of this project, Brodkey's and Fine's idea that empowered subjects are those individuals who have become, "agents who speak the discourse rather than the objectified subjects of which it speaks" (Brodkey and Fine, 1991:105) is particularly relevant. Thus, empowerment as *outcome* is defined as the harnessing of professional and bureaucratic resources to communicatively secured needs and

interests. An empowered collective dictates how systemic resources should be organized to meet its needs.

This definition requires that an emancipatory approach to intervention be concerned with the creation of "voice", the capacity to name and express one's interests. As Benhabib reminds us, democratic participation requires more than presence.

> Public space is not understood agonistically as a space of competition for acclaim and immortality among a political elite; it is viewed democratically as the creation of procedures whereby those affected by general social norms and by collective political decisions can have a say in their formulation, stipulation and adoption. ... The public sphere comes into existence whenever and wherever all effected by general social and political norms of action engage in practical discourse, evaluating their validity. (Benhabib, 1992:105)

Public involvement in this sense refers to discursive involvement. In order to participate "publicly" one has to have a voice - an audible presence. The establishment of a voice is crucial to the articulation of needs and interests and participation in debates concerning the allocation of resources.

> the only ground for a claim that a policy or decision is just is that it has been arrived at by a public that has truly promoted free expression of all needs and points of view. ... The concreteness of individual lives, their needs, and interests, and their perception of the needs and interests of others ... are structured partly through group-based experience and identity. Thus, full and free expression of concrete needs and interests under social circumstances where some groups are silenced or marginalized requires that they have a specific

> voice in deliberation and decision making.(Young, 1990:130)

Likewise, the establishment of a voice with which to enter the public sphere is critical for the preservation of identity and collective interest in a public context which may be confrontational.

> Nothing better prevents others from perspectively distorting one's own interests than actual participation. It is in this pragmatic sense that the individual is the last court of appeal for judging what is in his (sic) best interest. (Habermas, 1990:67)

It is important to bear in mind that the ability to share thoughts and experiences, or to interact discursively, is limited by the ability to use language. "Forms of thought are the means by which people represent their experience to themselves and to each other" (Smith (1990:42). People cannot express that for which they do not have words or the right words.[1] Consequently some experiences are silenced.

> The partiality of desires and feelings is expressed at the level of language in interpretations of needs, that is, in evaluations for which evaluative expressions are available. (Habermas, 1984:92)

There is cause for concern if the "evaluative expressions"

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[1] The problem is a familiar one for those of us who have had to learn English as a second language. I am reminded of my own family's attempts to translate emotive Dutch expressions into English. The result was usually only a partial reflection of the meaning we were trying to convey. Thirty-five years after immigration our "family-talk" is primarily English intermingled with generous sprinklings of Dutch words and phrases. I suspect that this is, in part, due to the inability to communicate fully in English those thoughts and feelings originally experienced and formed in Dutch.

available are increasingly being crafted by professional and bureaucratic voices rather than voices emerging from lived experience.

The development of a voice does not necessarily guarantee equality of treatment in the public sphere. "[S]ocial inequalities can infect deliberations, even in the absence of any formal exclusions" (Fraser, 1992:119). One of the most fundamental of these "inequalities" is the privileging of some discourses over others.

> [T]he language people use as they reason together usually favours one way of seeing things and discourages others. Subordinate groups sometimes cannot find the right voice or words to express their thoughts, and when they do they discover they are not heard. [They] are silenced, encouraged to keep their wants inchoate, and heard to say 'yes' when what they have said is 'no'. (Mansbridge in Fraser, 1992:119)

Empowerment as Process

Issues concerned with empowerment *as outcome* address why we embark on empowering ventures. As such the goal of empowerment is to harness the instrumental capacity of state resources and administrative apparatus to communicatively secured needs and interests. Empowerment *as process* is about the means by which this can be accomplished, "how we can work for the reconstruction of social imagination in the service of human freedom" (Simon, 1987:375). A review of the literature

reveals considerable diversity in definitions of empowerment, ranging from the simple acquisition of specific skills to politically motivated consciousness raising. However, much more interesting distinctions emerge if we look at the fundamental issue of agency - who, in the process of empowerment, has the capacity to empower? More specifically, is the power that is acquired in the process of empowerment something that must be "given to" someone or must it be "taken for" oneself?

Management and organizational behaviorists are straightforward in seeing empowerment as something done to someone else. Within this discipline, "to empower" refers to a process whereby power is given, granted, or delegated by one with power to one without that power. (Conger and Kanungo, 1986; Burke, 1986; Neilson, 1986; Thomas and Velthouse, 1988). The agent/subject position is obvious. "To empower means to give power to" (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990:667). Empowerment is an activity that is done "to" someone else. "To empower... implies the granting of power - delegation of authority" (Burke, 1986:51).

In family and community development literature an empowering process is "an intentional ongoing process centred in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring and group participation" (Barr and Cochran,

1992:2). This characterizes the idea of empowerment which underscores "Nobody's Perfect" and the "Self-Help Connection". While more benevolent in language than the management sciences, the idea of empowerment as something that is done on behalf of another remains secure (Dominelli, 1992). "Empowering the less powerful people in a society is ... a major explicitly stated goal of participatory researchers and evaluators" (Whitmore, 1991:2). The process is generally perceived to entail,

> a) access and control over needed resources, b)decision-making and problem solving abilities, and c) acquisition of instrumental behavior needed to interact effectively with others to procure resources. (Dunst and Trivette, 1987:445)

Other theorists, particularly in the area of critical education, are considerably dissatisfied with a concept of empowerment that involves acting on or for another. (Simon, 1987; Giroux, 1988b; Hart, 1989; Collins, 1991). These writers view power as a capacity or energy that one develops given the opportunity to do so. Hence, definitions of empowerment focus more on the concept of *enablement*, the creation of empowering opportunities, than on a definition of empowerment itself.

> To empower... is to counter the power of some people or groups to make others "mute". To empower is to enable those who have been silenced to speak. It is to enable the self-affirming expression of experiences mediated by one's history, language and traditions. It is to enable those who have been marginalized economically and culturally to claim in both respects a status as full participating members of the community. (Simon, 1987:374).

In all three perspectives discussed above, agency or the ability "to empower" originates with those who already have power. This is obvious in the perspective presented by the management sciences but also true for the other cases cited above. The problem with "to empower" is that the construct suggests that power, or the opportunity to acquire or realize power, cannot only be given, granted and shared, it can also be taken back, withheld and controlled. From this perspective those with power determine how others will be empowered. They also limit or determine the extent to which people should be empowered. Again, it is the management scientists who include the concept of control in the phrase "to empower".

> Although we have focused on the positive effects of empowerment, it is conceivable that such management practices may have negative effects. Specifically, empowerment may lead to overconfidence and, in turn, misjudgments on the part of subordinates. (Conger and Kanungo, 1988:480)

As LaCompte and DeMarrais (1992) point out, any position which adopts a view of empowerment that involves participating in the empowerment of others runs the risk of producing new forms of subordination and control, including those which are hidden in an ideology of liberation and consciousness raising. This view is supported by feminists such as Lather who argue,

> Too often such pedagogies fail to probe the degree to which "empowerment" becomes something done "by" liberated pedagogues "to" or "for" the as-yet-unliberated.... How do our very efforts to liberate perpetuate the relations of power? (Lather, 1991:16)

Likewise Fay contends that all too often,

> critical theories,... by insisting on the self-evident correctness of their doctrines, ... have succeeded only in replacing blind obedience to one ideology with blind obedience to another. It is an historical irony of a disturbing sort that critical social theories promising to set people free often have instead ended up enslaving them. (Fay, 1987:209)

Philosophical objections to the concept "to empower" have led other thinkers, most notably Rappaport (1985) and Zimmerman (1990b) in the field of psychology, and Lather (1991) in the area of critical pedagogy, to reject outright any notion of empowerment that has as its root the transmission of power from an agent to a subject. Rappaport argues that empowerment is not a process of giving; empowerment is taking power or retaking power over one's life. For Zimmerman and Rappaport to be empowered is "to gain psychological control over oneself, to extend a positive influence to others and the larger community" (Rappaport, 1985:). To be empowered is to be able to do things for oneself and others. "Empowerment is not something that can be given; it must be taken. What those who have it and want to share it can do is to provide the conditions and the language and beliefs that make it possible to be taken by those who are in need of it" (Rappaport, 1985:18). This notion of internalizing power or taking control is also evident in family therapy definitions of an empowering process, "the person who is the learner, client, etc. must attribute

behavior change to his or her own actions if one is to acquire a sense of control. (Dunst and Trivette, 1987:445)

In agreement, Lather states that, "empowerment is a process one undertakes for oneself: it is not something to be done "to" or "for" someone" (1991:4). Lather, following Derrida (1982) rejects any notion of empowerment that "positions the emancipators as 'senders' and the emancipated as passive 'receivers'" (1991:4). In opposition to much of the psychological literature, Lather denies all concepts of empowerment which relate *exclusively* to individual self-assertion and to the psychological experience of feeling powerful. For Lather, empowerment involves "analyzing ideas about the causes of powerlessness, recognizing systemic oppressive forces, and acting individually and collectively to change the conditions of our lives" (Lather, 1991:4). Likewise Tronto argues that a feminist description of empowerment sees the concept as an "act by individuals and groups as they come to understand themselves as actors capable of acting" (1992:103). Fay also emphasizes the importance of the collective in empowering activities,

> power exists when a group comes together, becomes energized, and organizes itself, thereby becoming able to achieve something for itself. Here the paradigm case of power is ... one of enablement in which a disorganized and unfocused group acquires an identity and a resolve to act in light of its new-found sense of purpose. (Fay, 1987:130)

Many critical and feminist thinkers reject outright a position that includes an agent/subject definition of empowerment. There is a tendency to side with those who argue against the idea "to empower". This stance obscures the relationship between those with power and those without. If we think only in terms of enabling, the presence of the enabling agent in the process is all too easily ignored.

> As a given in any relation which aims at empowerment, the agent becomes problematic when the us/them relationship is conceived as requiring a focus only on "them". When the agent of empowerment assumes to be already empowered, and so apart from those who are to be empowered, arrogance can underlie claims of "what can we do for you?". (Gore, 1992:61)

As per the earlier discussion on public sphere participation the onus is again placed on the dispossessed to "claim" or choose to pursue an empowering experience. These definitions of empowerment negate the possibility that those with power should have anything to do with the process beyond providing an opportunity for empowerment "to happen". The dispossessed are left "on their own". Whether or not they take advantage o. the opportunities provided e.g. an intervention, is up to them. Conversely if they do not avail themselves of the chance to become empowered it will likely be viewed as their own fault (LaCompte and DeMarrais, 1992). Likewise the concept "to enable" only partially disguises our continued privileged position - the idea that empowerment is a process "others" engage in.

We have to look at the "in-between" (Poovey, 1988) the giving and taking of power to find an adequate theory of empowerment. Too much emphasis on the giving of power reifies the power of the "giver" and undermines the agency of those to whom it is granted. The power in empowerment still resides with the original owners. It can be revoked at any time and at the whim of those who dispense it. On the other hand, focusing too much on the taking of power for oneself tends to ignore the agency of those who have the professional and bureaucratic authority to exercise power. In either case the tendency is to move away from critical reflection on the role of the "empowerers" or "enablers" themselves. Feminists, critical thinkers, social activists, educators, and evaluators often try to carve out a place for themselves somewhere between the nameless and faceless oppressive "system" and the dispossessed "other". As Lather suggests,

> one of the illusions fostered by emancipatory discourses is that there is some "outside" of ideology, some escape from our paradoxical inscription in that which we hope to subvert. (1991:85)

It is with some difficulty that social activists and critical thinkers confront themselves as part of the system - as part of the intellectual and professional community that gives meaning to social relations and the nature of oppression. When activists "enable", as in the exercising of one's own power in an effort to help others (Gore, 1992), they position themselves for the oppressed and against oppressive

social relations. They become the empowerers/enablers struggling between the oppressors and the disempowered. The unstated assumption is that *they* do not oppress and that their own empowerment is complete. As such, critical activists and thinkers see themselves as agents rather than subjects of the empowerment process. The primary concern is with "how to empower" as opposed to "how to become empowered".

An emancipatory approach to intervention aspires to harness systemic resources to communicatively achieved collective needs and interests. Within this context, the skills and knowledge produced by feminists scholars, critical thinkers, social activists, educators, and evaluators constitute systemic resources. This requires coming to terms with one's own power. It is important to recognize that there are no innocent positions between the oppressor and the oppressed. On the one hand, discourses and disciplines locate critical and feminist thinkers firmly within "the system", and, as such, they have the capacity to oppress.

> Leading intellectuals tend to assume responsibility for imagining alternatives and do so *within* a set of discourses and institutions burdened genealogically by multifaceted complicities with power that make them dangerous to people. As agencies of these discourses that greatly affect the lives of people one might say that leading intellectuals are a tool of oppression and most so precisely when they arrogate the right and power to judge and imagine efficacious alternatives - a process that we might suspect, sustains leading intellectuals at the expense of others. (Bové, 1986:227)

By virtue of the ability to oppress through privileged discourses there is also the capacity to give up power or to be "empowering". On the other hand, we need to recognize that critical and feminist thinkers may, in turn, be disempowered by their adherence to privileged disciplines and discourses.

> The most efficient oppressor is the one who persuades his underlings to love, desire and identify with his power; and any practice of political emancipation thus involves that most difficult of all forms of liberation, freeing ourselves from ourselves. (Eagleton, 1991:xiii)

The contradiction here is that the ability to be empowering, or the more benign "enabling", is dependent on the willingness to recognize and challenge one's own disempowerment. In essence, critical and feminist thinkers occupy a dual location, one in which they have to strive to be both empowering and empowered. As such, the emancipatory aspirations for the "other" - to be both agent and subject of the empowerment process - needs to be embraced by social activists and researchers .

Habermas' concept of systematically distorted communication provides a useful illustration of the need to "worry the clear distinctions" (Fine, 1994:80) between "empowerers" and the "disempowered". System language refers specifically to the expert social science and technocratic discourse of the state administrative apparatus. While systematically distorted communication can occur at various levels and in numerous ways Forester (1988) summarizes nicely

how the term tends to be used in the social intervention literature:

> when politicians and administrators pretend a political problem to be simply a technical one; when private, profit seeking interests... misrepresent benefits and dangers to the public; when professionals ... create unnecessary dependency and unrealistic expectations in their clients; or, when the established interests in a society avoid humanitarian social and economic policies with misleading rhetoric and falsehood. (Forester, 1988:204)

In the above quote it is clear that social program users/participants are cast as the intended "victims" of systemically distorted communication. Those who are the focus of interventionary efforts are seen as having had their lives framed in the language of the system as it is developed by various professional interests. As noted earlier, the success of an intervention is, in part, dependent on the willingness (more often read as ability) of participants to accept this discourse. In arguing for the necessity of voice we must be careful not to assume that it is simply a matter of replacing "client" language with the language of the politically active citizen. The assumption that program participants/users cannot communicate their interests because of distorted perceptions of themselves as passive recipients of prescribed systemic formulas is problematic. Numerous theorists, most notably Willis (1977), Weiler (1988), Fraser (1989), and Giroux (1991) have documented how "clients" actively resist the imposition of systemic discourses. The "citizen" lives in this resistance and fights the images imposed. However,

confined to the underground the citizen can only sabotage, and cannot be a creative force actively engaged in the production of social change. Communication is distorted by the language of domination and resistance and fails to articulate and explore interests and needs.

The quote by Forester also demonstrates the commonplace assumption that communicative distortions are intentional acts on the part of systemic agents. While this is undoubtedly true in many cases it is often an unintentional act. The "buying into" an expert discourse is not necessarily always indicative of a disempowering, manipulative motivation. The privileged positions of professionals, intellectuals and bureaucrats does not render them free from systematically distorted communication. Considerable time is spent being educated and socialized into a professional discourse and learning to ignore voices that do not carry the proper credentials. Perceptions are firmly rooted in and carefully cultivated by "expert talk". The right to speak as experts is assured. However, the ability to communicate, in the Habermasian sense - to engage in the production of communicative knowledge, to strive for mutual understanding - is severely constrained by the language of the discipline we emerge from.[2] As such, the professional discourse we have

[2] As Forester notes, communication is as much the ability to listen as it is to speak, "... hearing is easy. Listening seems... not to be. We can hear words but not what

learned so well serves to depoliticize and subtly but effectively disempower.

The point here is that no one, including those in "the system" are immune from systemically distorted communication *and* likewise, no one, including those we generally label "disempowered", are totally mystified by it. Consequently those who plan, organize, design, implement and evaluate interventions, need to question the extent to which their own understandings and subsequent actions are systematically distorted and how these distortions are reflected in the intervention process. Critical and feminist thinkers with a commitment to social activism must learn to make their own voices problematic.

> Self-reflexivity ... entails critical awareness of the contingent conditions which make one's own standpoint possible, ... and an awareness of whom and what the knowledge one produces serves in society. (Benhabib, 1986:281)

Privilege need not, however, be seen as always working against emancipatory interests. Critical theorists in their attempts to divest their own empowering practices of oppressive and manipulative ways of thinking run the risk of ignoring, and thereby withholding, the potential energies of their own power and need to stop seeing their power as a negative entity or as something that needs to be stifled.

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is meant. We can hear what is intended, but not what is important. We can hear what is important but not the person speaking" (1980:220).

There is a real danger of "unplugging" oneself from one's creative energies. Our efforts are much better served if we come to see ourselves along the lines of Foucault's "specific intellectuals" (1977:126):

> As critical intellectuals they can test their own discourses against their awareness of the regime of truth to understand their involvement in the regime and by so doing help to find some weak spot in it. As specific intellectuals they can try their own weapons against the forms power/knowledge takes in their own situations. (Bové, 1986:236)

The task is to open to challenge the actual structures of oppression, or what Smith refers to as "the relations of ruling":

> [the] total complex of activities, differentiated into many spheres, by which our kind of society is ruled, managed and administered. ... the institutions through which we are ruled and through which we ... participate in ruling. (1990:14)

These include structures such as the rules, procedures, justifications used by our own disciplines and discourses and everyday practices. Likewise, we can use our privilege to remove the barriers which prevent others from exercising their power and extending their own capacities.

Toward a Theory of Conditions for Empowerment

Empowerment involves both the freedom from oppressive power and freedom from the power to oppress. Integral to this

process is the recognition that the barriers to be removed will often be of our own making.

> Deconstructing vanguardism means asking ourselves hard questions about how our interventionary moves render people passive ... To abandon crusading and begin to think outside of a framework which sees the "Other" as the problem for which they are the solution is to shift the role of critical intellectuals from universalizing spokespersons to cultural workers who do what they can to lift the barriers which prevent people from speaking for themselves. (Lewis and Simon, 1986:47)

Given these considerations empowerment becomes a process that involves both those with privilege and those without and that both parties are subjects and agents in the process. Feminist psychologists suggest that we think about empowerment both in terms of a capacity "to move into action" and as an ability "to be moved into action" (Surrey, 1987; Fedele and Harrington, 1990). As such power is not given or taken but emerges through interaction with "the other" (Jordan, 1990). From this perspective empowerment becomes a relational process whereby our ability to determine our own actions is acquired through relationship and connection with others.

Careful thought must be given to the conditions required to build empowering connections. In particular, it is necessary to get behind the "how to" of empowering practices and explore some of the principles upon which such practices might be judged to make sense. Three conditions which appear to fit with the idea of empowerment as a relational process.

Mutual Possibility

While many critical and feminist thinkers would reject the definition of empowerment provided by the management sciences it is perhaps most reflective of reality. Within the context of social intervention the process of empowerment is a benevolent action instigated by those with power. Experts, systemic agents and intellectuals have the power to name, define and affect the lived experiences of the dispossessed. In fact, the power to define which groups or individuals are legitimately disempowered, and why, lies exclusively with these professionals (LaCompte and DeMarrais, 1992). To be empowering means in part that those whose discourses are privileged must choose to relinquish some of the power which they currently possess. Guba and Lincoln attempt to soften this stance by suggesting that power need not be seen as a fixed-sum commodity so that "the only way to acquire some of it is to take it away from someone who already has it" (1989: 267). Rather, they put forward the possibility that power, like love, is potentially ever growing and enlarging. In contrast, empowerment as a communicative process must involve the relinquishing of power. If the critical ideal is for people to come to understand themselves and their circumstances and to take action based on this understandings, those committed to the process must refrain from imposing

their own understanding or reshaping the experiences of "others" within our own discourses.

In thinking through empowerment it is, perhaps, more accurate to speak of "allowing" as well as "enabling". The latter term suppresses one's own complicity in the perpetuation of disempowering actions. A definition of empowerment must also recognize the need to allow others to realize power over their own lives. While to be empowered is an energy one ultimately acquires for oneself this is only one side of an empowering process. A desire to enable must be accompanied by a willingness to allow.

The process of empowerment is of course not so one sided. It is not just a matter of "us" allowing and enabling "them" to become empowered. Empowerment must also be allowed and enabled by the other.

> In the case of long-term nonconsideration of their legitimate demands underprivileged groups can in extreme situations react with desperate destruction and self-destruction. But as long as no coalitions are made with privileged grc ps, such a civil war lacks the chance of revolutionary success that class struggle possesses.(Habermas, 1970:110)

The process is reciprocal in nature. Grounding ourselves in everyday experience limits our vision and interpretation to what we live and have lived. What we profess in the name of an emancipatory interest that involves another must, therefore, be based on experiences and knowledge arising from

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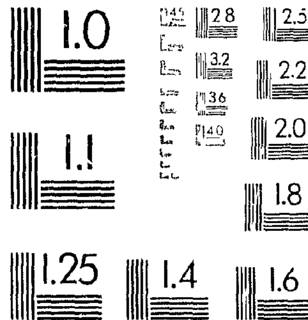

lives which are not necessarily our own. Barriers, oppressions and coercions cannot be identified in isolation of those who live these realities. The extent to which we can be empowered is dependent on the degree to which we are in turn allowed and enabled to engage in the process.

> [S]ubordinates spend much time studying the Other. They carry, therefore, substantial knowledge about Self and dominants. Given their need to anticipate and survive, they contain this knowledge and remain silent about the extent to which dominants depend on them. Rarely do they display/flaunt their knowledge of the Other. At the same time, the dominant Other suffers for lack of knowledge of self or others. (Fine, 1994:78)

As noted earlier, Fay (1987) and Lather (1991) as well as LaCompte and DeMarrais (1992) observe that much of what appears under the rubric of an empowering practice ultimately leads to the further disempowerment of the oppressed. Thus, resistance to empowerment, or more specifically, the would be empowerers is a viable and realistic response. In fact, it may very well be a matter of survival.

> For those who feel that the reconciliation in social life has been achieved at their expense, it might be morally justified to refuse participating. There are some situations when the nature of the conflict between the parties is such that there can be no dialogue, for the preconditions of dialogue - namely the mutual recognition of each other as discursive partners - simply do not obtain. Structural inequalities between the parties, such as pertain to wealth, power or status may be such that reciprocal recognition does not exist; or the emotional burden of conflict between the parties may be so overwhelming that the equilibrated distance necessary for ongoing discourse does not result. (Benhabib, 1986:321)

Resistance alone stands in direct opposition to empowerment.

We must be permitted, by the other, to engage with them in the creation of an empowering social space. Without such reciprocity our efforts are futile.

In a similar vein enablement, the exercising of power to enable others to exercise power, must be reciprocal. The subordinated must choose to exercise their capacity to create and share knowledge in pursuit of their emancipatory interests. Without this knowledge we cannot exercise our power in the service of this interest. This should not be interpreted to mean that the "other" has the responsibility to show us the error of our ways, so to speak. hooks (1984), Ellsworth (1989), and McKaig (in Gardner, Dean and McKaig, 1989) all put the onus on those with privilege *to learn* from the disempowered, as opposed to charging the dispossessed with the responsibility *to teach*.

Courage and Responsibility

"Empowerment with" requires courage. "To empower" is a much safer position. The interdependency is alluded to throughout the critical literature. Adorno refers to "the capability and courage to follow [one's] own understanding" (Adorno in Young, 1991:59). Habermas declares, "the critical dissolution of the existing untruth... requires the cardinal virtue of courage" (1974:257). Collins contends that the pursuit of an

emancipatory interest requires, "a careful, courageous and continuing engagement with the contradictions, opportunities, setbacks and so on which make up the flux of everyday life" (1991:107). Feminist theorists have also emphasized the necessity of courage in the pursuit of one's empowerment. For these women "courage" refers not to the defiance of fear but the capacity and integrity to act in the face of acknowledged vulnerability.

> it will take courage to represent one's reality or speak one's needs, particularly if patriarchal rules indicate you are there to support the entitlement of the dominant group to their "power over" you and others and to their power to define reality unilaterally. (Jordan, 1990:4)

Hart an adult educator, makes a similar observation, "I have... become more attuned to the power of non-cognitive or non-linguistic aspects as contributing to critical abilities by subtly freeing the courage and the curiosity to know and understand" (Hart, 1990:136). Likewise, feminist psychologists argue for empowerment as a process which requires people to "develop courage and confidence to move into relationships with others and the world" (Jordan, 1990:3). Although the claim that we can empower another may not be valid, Jordan's position that we do have the capacity to "(en)courage", to support courage in others is compelling.

Though mutuality is necessary in the empowerment process the cost of such connections can be devastating for the disempowered.

> Courage may in fact be dangerous at times - when knowledge is new and fragile, when reaching out for a desired connection may lead to painful repudiation; when speaking without any possibility of being heard may lead to betrayal or abandonment. (Rogers, 1993:281)

For "the other" the process of empowerment may be a highly dangerous undertaking. Hence, with (en)couragement comes responsibility. As Foucault urges, we must dare to recognize, "the violence of a position that sides against...the effective illusions by which humanity protects itself" (1977:162). Empowerment is a process that is not reversible. Knowledge, awareness, the power to name is not readily undone. Empowerment oriented social programs need to pay serious attention to this warning. Consciousness raising may not be an explicit intent of a program. The need for continued post-program support may, therefore, be critical but unrecognized (see for example VanderPlaat, 1989). Hence, the dispossessed are placed in a very vulnerable position. Fay is highly conscious of this phenomenon when he warns,

> Despite all the best hopes ... critical theories have often betrayed themselves and those in whose name they speak. They have done so by creating social arrangements which encourage harmful and destructive social relationships and behavior.... Or, by failing to deliver on their promises, they have often left their audience not only dissatisfied but also in despair. (1987:209)

In a similar fashion, empowerment oriented practices may pose a considerable threat to the survival skills people have acquired. The move from resistance to collaboration involves incredible risk. In the creation of emancipatory knowledge

the "oppressor management" techniques - such as those in place to "get around" the system, or to maintain one's dignity in the face of blatant paternalism - may be revealed and, through their revelation, potentially undermined. Political agency is both exercised and sheltered by subversive movement against oppression. Yet, to seek empowerment necessitates the suspension of this defensive and reifying positioning.

For critical thinkers, educators, program implementors and evaluators genuine participation in an empowering process is significantly less threatening. At worst, they have to divest themselves of the illusion of "knowing better" the claim to a legitimate right to act upon or for another. We also, as Bernstein notes, require a "willingness to really listen, to seek to understand what is genuinely other, different, alien, and the courage to risk one's more cherished prejudgments" (1992:51). However, confronting privilege is difficult but not dangerous. What is difficult is leaving the shelter of systemic authority or privileged discourse and learning to dismantle it.

> It takes courage to speak up... we feel the inner struggle, wishing to keep the connection with a supposedly protective, dominant group but knowing that the cost of this protection is our silence and invalidation. (Jordan, 1990:6)

The development and/or reexamination of a voice(s) requires a communicative space that can (en)courage. In simplistic terms this means a communicative space that is safe. This brings up

an interesting point in terms of the previously discussed feminist concern with public/private distinctions. As noted, many feminists reject the concept of "the private" because it limits, and, consequently, suppresses what can be brought within the realm of the political public. However, most feminists would also recognize a need for a less than public space where women can articulate, explore and strengthen their collective voices *before* engaging in public debate.

Connection through Complexity

So far, our conceptualization of empowerment has recognized the necessity for mutual possibility and courage. To these criteria I would now add a focus on complexity. In pursuing an emancipatory approach to intervention we must consider how we see ourselves in relation to program users and in relation to each other as feminists, critical thinkers, professionals, bureaucrats and/or activists. In recent years there has been considerable pressure placed on feminists and critical thinkers to focus on difference rather than sameness. Many feminist thinkers have come to question the notion of commonality in light of confrontations with their own essentializing practices. In response to the assumptions inherent in earlier feminist writing, black feminists (hooks, 1984) and lesbian feminists (Frye, 1983) have presented compelling arguments against the legitimacy of an all-

encompassing, sociological categorization of "woman". hooks argues that the rigid distinction being made between race, class and gender has little validity in the lived experiences of women of colour. She is not black and a woman, she is a black woman. Likewise, she contends that shared oppressions, by virtue of race and/or class, place men and women of colour in apositional as well as oppositional locations. Frye, from a different perspective, argues that the unitary classification of "woman" denies its multiple dimensions as evidenced by lesbian experience. These and other women charge that much of what has been produced under the guise of a universal feminism has, in fact, been based on the experiences and privileged position of a Eurocentric, white, heterosexual feminist elite. Different positions in race, sexual orientation and class, hence, preclude the possibility of a transcendental identity.

The feminist and postmodernist "celebration of difference" argues for the promotion of a multiplicity of perspectives without seeking to reconcile them into a single unified voice. As such this position supports Derrida's (1992) concept of "différance" which denies the classification of persons to a sociological position by virtue of the characteristics they possess, and recognizes instead the active, subjective process of a person's identification with different and multiple groups. Jordan (1990) argues that the

success and security of a dominant group are dependent on its ability to stifle the expression of difference. This is done through a variety of strategies including the devaluing of opposing concerns, the creation of a myth of harmony which the subordinates are expected to preserve, and the specification of the rules for legitimate conflict e.g. the privileging of "rational" debate. Hence, from this perspective, equality and respect can only be pursued "by *highlighting differences* not by transcending them or looking beneath them for a common foundation" (Welch, 1991:83). Difference, not consensus, is regarded as the potential source of strength from which to build the forces of change (Gardner, Dean and McKaig, 1989; Ellsworth, 1989; Burbules and Rice, 1991). These critical thinkers encourage dialogue across difference in pursuit of understanding and tolerance and caution us to resist assuming homogeneity where it may not exist.

The emphasis on difference has caused concern among some feminists. Martin (1994) argues that in our eagerness to compensate for the failure to acknowledge difference we may end up recognizing nothing but difference. "In trying to avoid the pitfall of false unity, we walked straight into the trap of false difference" (631). Likewise, Hartsock (1990) and Harding (1991) warn that the growing threat to the assumed supremacy of the elite by women, people of colour and other classes is effectively undermined by the negation of

commonalities of identity and oppression.

At its extreme the emphasis on difference abandons the pursuit of any concept of sameness upon which to base the struggle for social justice. This negates the possibility of an emancipatory interest based on collective needs. A profound respect for complexity may be a more productive position for feminists and critical thinkers to assume. Rather than denying all possibility of common ground it is, perhaps, more useful to acknowledge that we do not know what the basis of our sameness is, or whether, indeed, there is an essence that transcends us all. Given this uncertainty the best we can do is to pursue shared interests through connection rather than commonality. For example, as a middle class, well educated, married, white, feminist woman, I do not occupy the same "critical plane" (Smith, 1987) as the young, single, poor women of "Nobody's Perfect" or the women at "Stepping Stone" who work at prostitution. I doubt if shared gender constitutes a sufficiently strong basis for sameness (Stacey, 1991; Shields and Dervin, 1993). However, in addition to all the above characteristics I am also a mother, and this connection does allow for the possibility of some shared interests, e.g. the desire to protect our children. The above example is not intended to suggest that all mothers are necessarily connected or that being a mother is a necessary condition for making child-related connections. It

merely illustrates the possibility of connection across a vast expanse of difference. Striving for connection does not mean that we should ignore difference - in fact, I would agree with Jordan that, "We gain strength and harmony in similarity, but we learn and expand in difference" (1990:9). Hence, empowering practices must place an emphasis on complexity - an emphasis which does not ignore multiple experiences and locations, but which also does not privilege difference over the possibility of connection.

This argument applies not only to the relationship between program users and "us". It also applies to the relationship among the feminist scholars, educators, social activists, professionals and bureaucrats who constitute "us". It is increasingly recognized that "difference" is not limited to the dimensions of race, gender and class but is also embedded in competing feminist discourses emerging from different institutional locations and professional allegiances.[3] A commitment to a politics of empowerment necessitates an exploration of connection among those of us who strive to create empowering spaces.

> The acknowledgement of the multiple locations of oppositional feminist practice works against the notion of a privileged political subject, for example, the belief that the activist who works "outside the system" is necessarily more radical

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[3] The problems associated with discursive differences within the feminist movement is addressed in Strong-Boag (1994) and Bell, Delaney and VanderPlaat (1995).

> than the feminist who works within an institution. (Felski, 1989:171)

The valuing of complexity does not necessarily come easily. As Miller illustrates,

> In the early years of a group or organization, women often find great joy in coming together and sharing so many previously unspoken feelings and thoughts. Women understand and support each other. Trouble can arise when women begin to recognize their differing experiences and perceptions. They can fear losing the connection and unity which they so cherish. They can also fear that the emergence of differences will re-create a dominate-subordinate situation. (1986:138)

Fear of conflict ought not stand in the way of exploring the complexity of a given situation. There is a need to engage in "good conflict", the goal of which is not to eradicate differences but to move beyond mere tolerance of existing difference to the creation of new opportunities. "Without the capacity to bear conflict, an individual *is* in danger of being defined by another, or taken over by another's reality" (Jordan, 1990:4). Not to encourage the articulation of difference can, thus, be self-defeating for an emancipatory interest. There must be a willingness to engage in the "contestation of interpretations" (Fraser, 1989).

Social Interventions as Access Routes to the Public Sphere

The concern in elaborating the idea of social intervention as the creation of communicative spaces is twofold: first, to

explore the dimensions of a communicative space that is empowering in that it supports the creacion of communicatively secured needs and interests and, second, to consider the role of emancipatory intervention within the context of a political public sphere. Without this broader vision emancipatory efforts could easily be reduced to a highly restrictive concept of political agency, i.e. one that is confined to the systemically defined instrumental interests of a particular social program. An example of this would be a construct which defines and limits the idea of "agency" to the ability to act on behalf of one's children. The emphasis here is on an individual's ability to engage in situation-specific action informed by systemically defined social arrangements. An emancipatory construct of political agency focuses on the capacity to reorganize existing social relations so that they are more consistent with communicatively secured interests. In other words, just as we do not want to carve up everyday experience into neat and scientifically manageable parts, neither do we want to limit our concern with political agency to narrowly defined, task driven situations. As such, I envision the relationship between communicative spaces and the public sphere in a manner similar to Felski's construction of the feminist public sphere.

> The feminist public sphere ... serves a dual function: internally it generates a gender-specific identity grounded in a consciousness of community and solidarity among women; externally, it seeks to convince society as a whole of the validity of feminist claims, challenging existing

> structures of authority through political activity and theoretical critique. (Felski, 1989:168)

Central to this position is the argument that participation in the modern day public sphere necessitates the prior existence of a collective voice, or what Habermas calls "publics". As noted earlier while feminists express concern with the inherent oppressive tendencies of a private sphere, it is important to think about communicative spaces as lifeworld locations that allow for *pre-public* articulation and strengthening of voice. Without this space, private troubles, when made public, are all too easily appropriated as systemic concerns, rather than political, collective concerns informed by experience. Genuine political participation necessitates the prior existence of voice. It is not as if the users of "Nobody's Perfect", for example, already have a voice and that they just have not been given the chance to articulate publicly their position. Disempowered groups need a space in which to explore common experiences, shared interests, and how collective needs might best be expressed and met. Hence, empowerment oriented interventions, which stress group participation and mutual support, create a communicative space which, in time, can serve as an access route to the larger public sphere.

As will be recalled from Chapter Two, the public sphere was articulated by Habermas as, "a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed ...

a sphere which mediates between society and the state, in which the public organizes itself as the bearer of public opinion" (1989a:136-137). As such, Fraser envisions the public sphere as, "a theatre in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk. It is the space in which citizens deliberate about their common affairs" (1992:110). In its classic liberal construction the public sphere was ideologically comprised of private citizens who debated the legitimacy of competing interests and grounds for the allocation of resources, "a public body who as citizens transmit the needs of bourgeois society to the state, in order, ideally, to transform political into 'rational' authority" (Habermas, 1989b:139).

Habermas argues that in the original liberal conceptualization of the public sphere, political debate was intended to be governed by a process of communicative rationality. Collective needs and interests were to be established through a discursive process aimed at the achievement of mutual understanding and consensus. Rationalization in this sense was tied to the idea of discursive will formation or a communicatively achieved general interest. Ideally, the process by which such general interests, or as Habermas prefers, "generalizable interests" were to be established entailed a public debate on the merits and legitimacy of competing claims. As McCarthy elaborates,

> The public deliberation that leads to the formation of a general will has the form of a debate in which competing particular interests are given equal consideration. It requires of participants that they engage in "ideal role-taking", to try to understand the situations and perspectives of others and give them equal weight to their own. ... It is only from this standpoint ... that we can draw a distinction between what is normatively required of everyone as a matter of justice and what is valued within a particular subculture as part of the good life. (McCarthy,1992:54)

In pursuit of generalizable interests participants are asked to differentiate themselves from or transcend contextually bound interests. In other words, one is required to move beyond the contingencies of everyday life and situationally specific validity claims. An example from the legal profession may provide illumination. In a common law legal system the establishment of civil liability is tested against the concept of "the reasonable man" (sic). Arguments are presented, weighed and judged against this objective viewpoint to determine the degree of fault in human actions or omissions. The question is, what would a reasonable man do, or have done, if faced with similar circumstances. Benhabib provides a particularly lucid description of assumptions underlying this position,

> The standpoint of the "generalized other" requires us to view each and every individual as a rational being entitled to the same rights and duties we would want to ascribe to ourselves. In assuming this perspective, we abstract from the individuality and concrete identity of the other. We assume that the other, like ourselves, is a being who has concrete needs, desires, and affects, but what constitutes his or her moral dignity is not what differentiates us from each other, but rather what we, as speaking and rational agents,

> have in common. ... each is entitled to expect and assume from us what we can expect and assume from him or her. The norms of our interaction are primarily public and institutional ones [based on rights and entitlements]. (Benhabib, 1986:340)

In this sense a "rational" decision is one that is arrived at by an appeal to a overarching rule or rules. "Justice" and "fairness" are conceptualized in terms of the general applicability of rules and decisions. Equality of treatment, regardless of circumstances, is the key principle underlying Habermas' notion of communicative rationality.

The Public Sphere in the Modern Welfare State

As noted earlier, Habermas discusses the liberal model of the public sphere as an ideal type, not as one that ever actually existed in practice. In exploring the potential for a revitalization of the public sphere within the modern welfare state, Habermas and others have made some important conceptual changes to the liberal ideal. First, the liberal principle of universal access to the public sphere supported, in theory, a unified embodiment of the citizen/client. In other words, if everyone had equal access to the public sphere then everyone would be at one and the same time a client *and* a politically active citizen. This ideal was never realized. As noted in Chapter Two, universal access presupposed the acquisition of certain criteria. It was in the right to pursue these criteria that everyone was presumed to be equal.

Consequently, the inevitable exclusions based on gender, race and class privileged the political agency of propertied, white men. This in turn gave them the right to name or to ignore the needs and interests of those excluded from the public sphere. In practice, restricted access to the public sphere, thus, produced the original impetus for the client/citizen dichotomy so characteristic of dispossessed groups in modern day society. While Habermas attributes the demise of the public sphere, in part, to the expansion of its franchise and subsequent cacophony of competing demands, most critical theorists agree that any aspiration to a participatory democracy necessitates the actualization of universal access. There is limited tolerance for a view of political participation that excludes specific groups or has the needs and interests of these groups objectified and articulated by a second party. Likewise there is no longer much credibility for the idea that certain individuals by virtue of their privileged characteristics have a heightened capacity to understand, or speak about, those who occupy marginalized locations within the lifeworld.

Second, the liberal model of the public sphere was premised on the notion of discursive interaction *among individuals*. The assumption was made that there existed a unified discursive community which was not differentiated internally on the basis of identity. In other words, while the

liberal model recognized competing individual interests it assumed a common lifeworld identity which would make the transcending of these interests possible. This assumption was not unreasonable given that the homogeneity of the liberal public sphere in terms of race, gender and class precluded the existence of profoundly divisive experiential differences. The liberal public sphere thus did not envision the emergence of a lifeworld divided on the basis of identity or the pre-existence of *collective* interests emanating from oppositional lifeworld locations. As a result, many modern theorists, including Habermas, have since abandoned the idea of a public sphere wherein people participate as individuals and on the basis of individual interests. Instead Habermas argues that the only possibility for revitalizing some semblance of a discursive public sphere lies with organized groups of individuals who share collective interests. As such,

> a public body of organized private individuals would take the place of the now-defunct public body of private individuals who relate individually to each other. Only these organized individuals could participate effectively in the process of public communication (Habermas, 1989b:132).

For Habermas, individual access to a modern day public sphere would be through one's identification with an organized collective interest. I am going to assume that, in this case, Habermas uses the term "organized" to refer to a discursive process which is communicatively driven, rather than an institutional or structural entity concerned only with instrumental pursuits. In other words, a public sphere

comprised of collectivities organized on the basis of a shared identity and common interests.

> The idea of the public sphere... could only be realized today... as a rational reorganization of social and political power under the mutual control of rival organizations committed to the public sphere in their internal structure as well as in their relations with the state and each other. (Habermas, 1989b:141)

The recognition of a public sphere which is itself comprised of mini-spheres is also consistent with most feminist deliberations on public participation.

> It follows that public life in egalitarian, multicultural societies cannot consist exclusively in a single, comprehensive public sphere. That would be tantamount to filtering diverse rhetorical and stylistic norms through a single, overarching lens. ... the idea of an egalitarian, multicultural society only makes sense if we suppose a plurality of public arenas in which groups with diverse values and rhetorics participate. By definition, such a society must contain a multiplicity of publics. (Fraser, 1992:126)

In recognition of these multiple interests Cohen and Arato argue that the primary task of a revitalized public sphere must be the pursuit of a "collective identity" - an exploration of commonality and shared sense of who "we" are. The Habermasian concern with the establishment of generalizable interests presupposes that such an identity already exists.

> In societies characterized by a plurality of value systems, modes of life, and individual identities, discourse analysis provides a way of discovering or reaffirming what, if anything, we who come into contact with one another and who are affected by the same political decisions have in common. ... we affirm and in part constitute through discourse who we are, and under which rules we wish to live

> together, apart from our personal or particular identities and differences - that is, what our collective identity as members of the same civil society is. (Cohen and Arato, 1992:368)

Despite the recognition of difference, Habermas, Cohen and Arato still retain the idea of commonality - the possibility of overarching generalizable, or collective interests, among diverse public communities.

Against this position, Felski (1989), Young (1990) and Welch (1991) argue for a public sphere in which various groups seek to determine and pursue shared interests without the presupposition of an overarching collective identity.

> Ideally a rainbow coalition affirms the presence and supports the claims of each of the oppressed groups or political movements constituting it, and it arrives at a political program not by voicing some "principles of unity" that hide differences but rather by allowing each constituency to analyze economic and social issues from the perspective of its experience. (Young, 1990:131)

The notion of coalition building put forward by these theorists is premised on the concept of solidarity as opposed to linkages forged on the basis of a common identity and consensus. As Welch explains, the principle of solidarity has two aspects,

> granting each group sufficient respect to listen to their ideas and to be challenged by them; recognition that the lives of the various groups are so intertwined that each is accountable to the other. (1991:95)

Cohen and Arato elaborate further,

> solidarity ... refers to the ability of individuals to respond to and identify with one another on the

> basis of mutuality and reciprocity, without exchanging equal quantities of support, without calculating individual advantages, and above all without compulsion. Solidarity involves a willingness to share the fate of the other, not as the exemplar of a category to which the self belongs but as a unique and different person. (Cohen and Arato, 1992:472)

In keeping with this concern for difference, Gilligan (1982), Belenky et al. (1986), and Luttrell (1989), have argued against the privileging of the ethical position of the "generalized other" on the grounds that the standpoint is not reflective of the feminist approach to knowledge acquisition and ethical decision making. The authors provide evidence to suggest that women's actions and interactions are much more likely to be governed by lived experience and the knowledge gained through personal connections embedded in everyday relationships. As such, Benhabib, argues for a more "grounded" ethical position.

> The standpoint of the "concrete other", by contrast, requires us to view each and every rational being as an individual with a concrete history, identity, and affective-emotional constitution. In assuming this standpoint, we abstract from what constitutes our commonality and seek to understand the distinctiveness of the other. We seek to comprehend the needs of the other, their motivations, what they search for, and what they desire. ... each is entitled to expect and assume from the other forms of behavior through which the other feels recognized and confirmed as a concrete, individual being with specific needs, talents and capacities. ... The norms of our interaction ... are the norms of solidarity, friendship, love and care. Politics of empowerment extends rights and entitlements while creating friendship and solidarity. (Benhabib, 1986:341)

Rather than subverting individual experience to a general

principle, the standpoint of the concrete other requires that the application of principles reflect actual experience. In other words how we chose to deal with each other is not only dictated by an appeal to an abstract rule. Circumstances and the consequences resulting therefrom must also govern our actions.

The debate as to whether or not it is possible to make any statement about identity, needs and interests that transcend the particular is a critical one. If the answer is no - if, as some postmodernists would have it, identity can be dissolved into an endless play of difference - than any aspiration to an emancipatory interest is also negated. Without the recognition of a common condition the idea of common oppressions against which there can be a collective struggle is also denied.

Critical and feminist thinkers must by definition reject this extreme, anti-modernist position. However, Haraway (1988), Hekman (1990), Giroux (1991) all encourage the serious consideration of a more modified postmodern position. They suggest that postmodernism does have much to offer.

> [I]ts merger of the horizons of the philosophical and literary discourses has ... produced creative deconstructions of the tacit assumptions that sustain a variety of unreflective beliefs... its refusal to validate univocal interpretations has generated a new appreciation of plurality and stimulated thinking about ways to value difference. (Hawkesworth, 1989:554)

Cohen and Arato, in an attempt to reconcile the difference/identity debates, point out that while the argument for coalitions linked through solidarity is more mindful of difference, the idea of pursuing solidarity among differentiated lifeworlds still presupposes the existence of some sense of commonality.

> Despite this orientation to "difference", the resource of solidarity nevertheless presupposes common membership in some actual or ideal group, and beyond this some common norms, symbols, and memories as well. Solidary individuals are consciously rooted in the same or significantly overlapping lifeworlds, and this guarantees consensus about important matters, even in a modern lifeworld where their content can be discussed and challenged. (Cohen and Arato, 1992:472)

Likewise, Bernstein cautions against a polarization of the scholarly concern with sameness/difference.

> Acknowledging the radical alterity of "the Other" does not mean that there is *no* way of understanding the Other, or comparing the I with its Other. ... We must cultivate the type of imagination where we are at once sensitive to the sameness of "the Other" with ourselves *and* the radical alterity that defies and resists reduction of "the Other" to "the Same". (1992:74)

The critical and feminist recognition of social change as a collective undertaking brings with it an *a priori* assumption of at least partial shared identity and temporal common need. It is more productive to argue for the concept of complexity rather than difference. Complexity allows for both the recognition and maintenance of difference *and* the assumption of some common bond. In this sense, it is similar to Fraser and Nicholson's analogy to, "a tapestry composed of many

different hues" (Fraser and Nicholson, 1990:35). Following Lyotard (1984), Fraser and Nicholson, thus, envision a social bond comprised of, "a weave of crisscrossing threads of discursive practices, nc single one of which runs continuously throughout the whole" (1990:24). The task of critical thinkers is to ensure that this connectedness extends to everyone - that the bond or linkages are all embracing and strength giving rather than exclusionary or suffocating.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to examine the concept of empowerment within the context of an emancipatory approach to social intervention. The discussion is premised on the argument that an emancipatory interest must focus on the communicative dimensions of social programming. Hence, empowerment as process is discussed as the acquisition of a political voice that gives public expression to collective needs and interests. Empowerment as outcome, is argued to be the harnessing of systemic resources to these collective needs and interests.

In the course of the discussion I have put forward three conditions as necessary for an interventionary strategy to be empowering, both in process and in outcome. These include the possibility for mutual empowerment, the recognition of courage and responsibility, and the willingness to pursue connection

in the face of complexity. Underlying these principles is the contention that would-be empowerers recognize themselves as both subjects and agents in the empowerment process. There is a need to incorporate a reflexive concern with one's own voice and practices while at the same time using one's privilege to dismantle the structural and discursive barriers created by that privilege.

The implications of these principles for interventionary practices are multidimensional and need to be incorporated within the various discourses that feed into the social interventionary process, e.g. adult education, family therapy, participatory and action research. How these principles get translated into practice will thus be context specific depending on the nature and goals of a particular intervention, e.g parenting education, family violence amelioration, etc. Hence, the technical "how to" of an emancipatory approach to intervention must remain situation and discourse specific. The next chapter offers a careful consideration of the implications that an emancipatory approach to intervention has for social program evaluation.

CHAPTER FIVE

IMPLICATIONS FOR EVALUATION RESEARCH

An emancipatory approach to social intervention envisions a system/lifeworld relationship whereby the instrumental capacity of the former is directed by the communicatively secured needs and interests of the latter. Ideally, a social program should provide professionals and bureaucrats the opportunity and knowledge to organize resources and research efforts to better meet the demands of experiential need. We are trying to move beyond conventional approaches to intervention which assume that the solutions to social problems lie in the ability to organize and rationalize the lifeworld according to the professional and technocratic mindset of the system. Instead, the argument put forward is that collective understanding emerging from lifeworld experience should dictate, or rationalize, systemic activity.

An emancipatory approach to intervention requires a rethinking of many of the assumptions underlying conventional social programming strategies. The key concern is for the political agency of the citizen rather than the self-sufficiency of the client of state resources. The interest shifts from increasing the instrumental abilities of program users to increasing their communicative capacities to inform instrumental actions. Mutual support and public participation

are seen as key outcomes rather than assumed-to-exist conditions, or facilitating techniques for "empowerment". What an emancipatory approach means for initiatives such as "Nobody's Perfect" is that the focus is on the creation of a communicative space that would allow parents the opportunity to identify the skills, resources and institutional organization they require to parent effectively, given the needs emerging from their lifeworld locations. Program objectives are not framed in terms of helping parents to improve their parenting skills using available resources, within existing institutional arrangements.

An emancipatory approach to intervention which focuses on the creation of communicative spaces requires careful consideration of the concept of empowerment. Researchers and practitioners in the field need to incorporate a reflexive concern with not only the ability "to empower" or enable, but also with the capacity (and willingness) to be empowered. We need to explore how personal political agency and ability to engage in meaningful social change with others is constrained by the professional and political discourses adhered to and the systemic locations occupied. This applies not only to programs like "Nobody's Perfect", which are based on a system ⇒ participant relationship, but also projects modelled after "Stepping Stone" and the "Self-Help Connection" which position themselves between "the system" and the everyday world of

program users. A reflexive concern with our own practices/politics is an imperative regardless of our system/lifeworld location.

As noted in the previous chapter, an emancipatory approach to social programming has significant implications for all aspects of the interventionary process. To examine each of these in detail is beyond the scope and intent of this dissertation. However, by way of exploring some of the ramifications of the argument being presented, the remainder of this chapter provides a preliminary examination of what an emancipatory approach to intervention means for evaluation research.

Chapter One notes the integral role that evaluation plays in the development and subsequent formulation of a social program. The desire to demonstrate effectiveness and the demand for accountability shape and limit both how a program is defined and the standards by which the "success" of the program will be judged. As key informant for systemic decision-making the discourse of evaluation research shapes what is publicly "known" or communicated about a social program. Hence, the background recognition of a need to evaluate often determines how a program is inscribed. This inscription is limited not only by the discursive concepts available but also by the "credibility" of the discourse in

which these concepts are embedded. Modern day evaluation practices tend to privilege the systemic discourses of scientism and technocracy. What a program is, what it does and what it is has the potential to be must, therefore, "fit" within the discursive capacity and legitimating claims of systemic structures.

In Canada, evaluation research informs government decision making regarding the organization and allocation of resources. Any project funded fully or partly by federal monies must participate in a periodic, formal evaluation process (Treasury Board of Canada, 1981). The articulation of an emancipatory approach to intervention cannot ignore this reality and must, therefore, deal with the issue of evaluation. As noted in Chapter One, the aspirations of an emancipatory apprcach to social programming can easily go unrealized if not accompanied by an evaluation strategy that recognizes and supports these aspirations. However, it is also important that in thinking our way through an emancipatory approach to the evaluation function we retain the conventional notion of evaluation as a form of assessment. The ideas of "accountability" and "program effectiveness" are not antithetical to the argument being presented. These criteria constitute a systemic reality that cannot be ignored. Therefore, to focus our attention, I want to distinguish between evaluation and action research (Reason, 1988;

Reinharz, 1992). An action research approach may constitute an important part of an empowerment based interventionary strategy. For example, it could provide the means through which collective interests are articulated and pursued. However, evaluation research and action research constitute distinct research activities. Action research focuses on collaborative efforts to produce knowledge for the purposes of social change. Evaluation research focuses on how effective such efforts have been. As such, action research may include an evaluation function, but they are not the same thing. Bearing this distinction in mind, let us now examine some of the key aspects of the evaluation function that will need to be reconsidered within the critical framework being developed here and in particular the implications that an emancipatory interest has for the ***role, focus*** and ***tasks*** of social program evaluation.

The Role of Critical Evaluation

An emancipatory approach to intervention necessitates that we give careful consideration to how we construct the role of evaluation as systemic informant. In Canada, "program evaluation is viewed as an aid to decision making and management; that is, as a source of information for resource allocation, program improvement and accountability in government" (Treasury Board, 1981:4). If we apply a

Habermasian analysis to the conventional notion of systemic informant we can see that, in most cases, evaluation is regarded as an activity that assesses how well "the system" has penetrated and manipulated an area defined as problematic within the lifeworld. Within this context, evaluation, as a systemic informant, functions purely from a system to lifeworld location. The idea is to examine what effects accrue from systemic interference with lifeworld phenomena. In essence, it is a self-monitoring process. Projects initiated and/or sponsored by the system are consequently judged in light of systemically defined criteria of effectiveness.

An emancipatory approach to intervention necessitates a reversal of this position. Keeping in mind the idea of social programs as sensors - communicatively secured locations from which the activities of the system are monitored and influenced (See Chapter Three) - the evaluative gaze should be from lifeworld to system. Relevant issues, thus, focus on the extent to which communicative interference from the lifeworld has resulted in the more effective organization and allocation of systemic resources. It should be noted that this does not contradict the Treasury Board view of evaluation, quoted above. Critical evaluation still functions to inform the system, but it does so on behalf of the lifeworld.

An evaluation that is informative for an emancipatory approach to intervention must acknowledge its emancipatory "interest". It cannot adopt the position recommended by the Treasury Board of Canada which casts evaluators as disinterested third parties located somewhere between the system and a social program site.

> The independence of the evaluators is essential to the production of objective and credible evaluation work... Independence also requires evaluators to be able to stand back from everyday concerns of a program's operation and to look at what is going on in a detached, but not uninformed way. (1981:54)

As many feminist thinkers have pointed out, there are no innocent positions from which one can conduct research (Smith, 1987; Haraway, 1988; Lather, 1991). Traditional approaches are not apolitical. For example, the systemic privileging of scientific discourses and the scientific notion of objectivity constitutes not only an epistemological position but also a political stance. Dorothy Smith is particularly articulate in identifying the irony this position holds for critical and feminist researchers who incorporate an emancipatory interest in their work.

> Curiously, objectivity in the social sciences is to be guaranteed by the detachment of the social scientist from particular interests and perspectives; it is not guaranteed by its success in unfolding actual properties of social relations and organization. (1990:32)

The critical evaluator approaches the evaluation function with a prior and stated understanding of "what ought to be". We work from a political position, one that advocates the

harnessing of systemic resources and institutional relations to communicatively achieved needs and interests. A more consistent and useful understanding of the term "objectivity" may be derived from Haraway's construct that, "objectivity is about limited location ... not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object. It allows us to become responsible for what we learn to see" (1988:583). Within this context the evaluator "appears not as an invisible, anonymous, disembodied voice of authority, but as a real, historical individual with concrete specific interests - and ones that are in tension with each other" (Shields and Dervin, 1993:67).

The role of critical evaluation is to act as a bridge discourse between the administrative and professional apparatus of the state (system) and a program site (lifeworld). In assuming this position evaluation acts as critical informant on behalf of the lifeworld. Its primary purpose is to assess how well the energies and resources of the state have been organized to meet the realities of everyday life. Evaluation becomes a self-conscious, as opposed to a self-monitoring, activity. Critical evaluation does not sit in the system looking at the lifeworld - rather, it constitutes a systemic effort to look at its own activities from the perspective of the lifeworld.

The Focus of Critical Evaluation

The development of a critical approach to evaluation also requires a careful rethinking of who, or what, is the focus of an evaluation. The Treasury Board of Canada, in describing the evaluation function, defines the measurement of program impacts and effects in terms of "the resulting goods, services and regulations produced by others and the consequent chain of outcomes *which occur in society and parts thereof*" (1981:16) (emphasis mine). Here again, the underlying assumption is that the direction of an interventionary act and the subsequent focus of an evaluation, is system to lifeworld. Even in more participatory approaches to intervention and evaluation the idea of "program effectiveness" is primarily constructed in terms of the relationship between the program and those for whom the program was designed, i.e. its participants/users. This assumption underscores the basic evaluation issues described in Chapter One and has a significant impact both on our understanding of the issue and where we look for the answer. For example, in addressing the evaluation issue as to whether or not a program makes sense, the research question posed is,

> To what extent are the objectives and the mandate of the Program still relevant i.e. is the program still needed for current government policy, even assuming it is producing as expected? (Treasury Board, 1981:7)

The conventional approach to this question would include, among other things, an examination of whether "the problem" still exists. Is the original, systemically defined, rationale for the program still relevant? So, for example, one might question the extent to which the physical and mental health of children of young, single, poor parents is at risk (Nobody's Perfect), or, whether people who work in the sex trade have difficulty accessing existing social and legal services (The Stepping Stone Project). Or alternatively, one might question the rationality of a targeted approach to health promotion (Nobody's Perfect), or government involvement in the establishment of self-help groups (The Self-Help Connection). In any event, the issue of continued rationality is a question that "the system" asks itself, about its own original assumptions, and using its own discourse.

A critical approach to social program evaluation requires that the question of program rationality be asked from the perspective of the lifeworld. As such, the question becomes: does this program make sense given the needs emerging from lifeworld experience? Can we establish linkages between systemic assumptions held, activities engaged in, *and* communicatively secured collective interests?[1] It is not

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[1] The possibility for such linkages can be demonstrated using a somewhat unrelated, but illustrative, example. In the building of the new Grace Maternity Hospital in Halifax, Nova Scotia the original design of the hospital was considered "rational" in that it met the needs of professional interests,

whether we can find lifeworld evidence to support our systemic assumptions but whether our systemic assumptions (activities) support lifeworld realities.

The same argument can be demonstrated using the basic evaluation issue of what has happened as a result of the program (See Chapter One).

> What impacts and effects, both intended and unintended, resulted from carrying out the Program? (Treasury Board, 1981:7)

Conventional approaches to this question look to the behaviors and attitudes of program users as the prime indicators of program effectiveness. A critical approach looks to the effects a program site, as communicative sensor, has on the subsequent organization of resources and systemic responsiveness to everyday experience.

The previous chapter argues against the idea of an interventionary mindset that focuses exclusively on "the other". A similar argument needs to be made for the evaluation function. An emancipatory approach to intervention emphasizes communicative capacities and requires that professional and technocratic "systemic agents" place themselves in the center of the evaluative gaze. Such an

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e.g. medical staff and administrators. A subsequent demand by women who insisted that the process be rationalized by the users of the facility i.e. women who had given birth, resulted in considerable changes to the original layout and structure.

approach questions the effectiveness of systemic instrumental actions as these relate to the communicatively secured needs and interests of program users. The worth of a program is not judged by how well program users respond to a systemically organized resource, but rather, how responsive systemic resources are to the realities of program users. In essence, a critical approach to evaluation necessitates a change in the object of the evaluative inquiry and puts systemic agents and their activities in the center of the assessment (subsequently dispelling the subject/object dichotomy so disdained by critical and feminist thinkers). Program users/participants come to act as critical informants to the process, (perhaps through an action research strategy), rather than bearers of the indicators (e.g. behaviors and attitudes) by which the effectiveness of a program is usually judged.

This shift in focus presents some interesting opportunities for how we might rephrase some conventional evaluation questions. For example, rather than asking:

> Are sex trade workers more aware of AIDS prevention as a result of the Stepping Stone Project?

a question more in keeping with a critical approach might be:

> Do users feel that the Stepping Stone Project is an effective vehicle for the dissemination of AIDS related educational material?

Likewise, for "Nobody's Perfect", while a conventional approach might ask:

> Are parents, as a result of the program, more likely to seek outside support when needed?

a critical approach would ask:

> Have we been able to identify the barriers that prevent people from seeking additional support when needed?

The Task of Critical Evaluation

The need to rethink the role and focus of evaluation research within an emancipatory interventionary process, has implications for the tasks that we would expect a critical evaluation to conduct. It is important to retain the notion of evaluation research as a form of assessment. A critical approach does not require that we abandon this task. Many of the basic questions asked in more traditional evaluations remain relevant.

Conventional approaches to evaluation research determine the extent to which program objectives are reasonably linked to instrumental outputs which in turn can be demonstrated to produce the desired impacts and effects. Social interventions that reflect an emancipatory interest place significant new demands on the evaluation function. In particular emancipatory intervention requires an evaluative strategy that address a social program as a communicative site. In other words, it needs to look past the idea of a program as a set of purely instrumental activities designed to produce a certain

outcome. It must have the capacity to recognize and address the communicative space and political potential created by a social program. Not only do we need to ask if instrumental knowledge is reasonably linked to needs and interests, we also need to ask how and to what extent these needs and interests are communicatively secured.

In thinking through the evaluative needs of an emancipatory approach to intervention the recognition of communicative concerns requires that we do not privilege technical interests or examine instrumental concerns in abstraction from their everyday contexts. It is equally important that we do not ignore the instrumental aspects of both political agency and social change. Ultimately, the exercising of political agency for the purposes of social change is an instrumental or strategic act. An emancipatory approach to the interventionary process does not ignore technical interests - it simply recognizes that meaningful social change is only possible if the rationale for instrumental actions is communicatively secured. An emancipatory intervention strategy seeks to subvert instrumental capacity to the communicatively achieved needs and interests of those effected. An emancipatory approach is multi-interested and requires an evaluation strategy that can see well beyond the instrumental dimension.

To discuss the multi-dimensional needs of an emancipatory intervention strategy it is useful to return once again to Habermas' reflections on the relationship between interests and knowledge requirements. Habermas (1971) charges that the debate between positivist and interpretive approaches mistakenly assumes that all human behavior can be explained from one epistemological perspective. Instead, Habermas puts forward the idea that the human search for knowledge is informed by three interests - that which serves what humanity must do to meet material needs (instrumental action); that which serves what humanity requires to maintain social integration (communicative action); and that which serves the social evolutionary process which results from the dialectical interplay between the interests of instrumental action and communicative action (emancipatory action). In other words, we have an interest in controlling our environment; an interest in getting along with each other and an interest in resolving the tensions resulting from the often competing interests of harmony and control. The modern day obsession with positivism and technicism represents the increasing domination of the instrumental interest over communicative knowledge interests which in turn blocks from view the basis for emancipatory action.

Instrumental, communicative and social evolutionary activities each require the construction of a different type

of knowledge. Instrumental action requires technical knowledge to allow for the prediction and control of events. For evaluation, this means that we analyze whether instrumental actions produce the desired outcomes. Communicative interests require practical knowledge to facilitate the reaching of understanding with others. It is here that we seek agreement as to who we are, how we want to live and how we want to use the instrumental capacities available to us. Social evolutionary action requires emancipatory knowledge which will facilitate the resolution of contradictions between instrumental and communicative interests. It is here that evaluation can examine, or critique the extent to which the instrumental actions proposed reflect the discursive will and interests of those affected. The construction of technical, practical and emancipatory knowledge necessitates the application of distinct sets of methodological standards. Empirical/analytical techniques are seen to be most consistent with the needs of technical knowledge. The interests of practical knowledge are best served by interpretive techniques. The interests of emancipatory knowledge are best pursued through a process of critique.

Given different knowledge requirements and interests, how should the evaluation activity be constructed so that it is more informative for emancipatory interests while retaining

the traditional tasks of assessing or measuring the effectiveness of instrumental actions? An emancipatory approach to intervention requires that this function be located in a communicative and critical context. Accordingly there are two additional tasks for a critical approach to evaluation.

First, there is the function of evaluation as a narrative designed to construct the different understandings of those involved in the interventionary process. Keeping in mind the emphasis on complexity, discussed in Chapter Four, this narrative would seek to identify points of connection as well as points of conflict and difference. Second, there is a role for evaluation as critique - a process by which we assess the social change potential inherent in a social program. The concern here is the identification and examination of the discursive and structural barriers traversing the area of social change targeted by a program. In other words, concern with empowerment underscored by mutual possibility (see Chapter Four), requires that we look at the power dynamics that could impact on potential program "effectiveness" (in an emancipatory sense) before the program is even implemented. An assessment of the usefulness of instrumental actions would take place within the context produced by the other two activities. The conduct of these tasks is neither mutually exclusive nor sequential. In fact, they would assume a

continually interactive relationship. However, for the sake of clarity I will discuss them separately.

Evaluation as Narrative

The critical evaluator is faced with an interesting challenge in constructing the various vantage points to an interventionary process. At one end of the knowledge construction spectrum are conventional positivistic approaches to evaluation research which assume that reality - in this case, the dimensions of a particular social problem, the impact of a program and so on - is out there waiting to be discovered. In traditional evaluation the questions asked are, thus, usually framed by an "expert", in a social science discourse informed by systemic interests. From this perspective, what current evaluation models are perceived to be lacking is the methodological refinement to depict this reality accurately.

Against this traditional approach would stand those critical and feminist thinkers who argue that social scientists cannot assume the position of "the other", that they cannot inhabit the space of the various program stakeholders and claim to "know" their reality. Hawkesworth (1988), Mascia-Lees et al. (1989) and Lather (1991) note a profound skepticism about the ability of any particular group

to "know" what is in the interest of all. By the same token, conventional approaches are criticized because they do not deal with the researcher's own lifeworld/system locational biases. The assumption is that the evaluator can somehow step back into some neutral zone that allows for clearer vision. Other scholars, most notably Dorothy Smith, argue that traditional scientific approaches to knowledge construction obscure the actualities of people's lives,

> Sociologists ... took it that [the] concepts of their discipline... referred to phenomenon that were discoverable in the world of actual events and living people... The actualities of living people become a resource to be made over into the image of the concept... Sociological procedure legislate a reality rather than discover one. (1990:53)

In opposition to traditional approaches, many critical and feminist thinkers favour a standpoint epistemology (Harding, 1987, 1991; Nielson, 1990). This position argues that in the pursuit of knowledge for the purposes of social change less powerful groups in society have a greater potential to create legitimate knowledge by virtue of a more complete view of social reality. In the Freirian (1970) variation on the theme, the oppressed are seen as harbouring their own reality as well as that of the oppressor. The oppressed can "see" both what it means to be oppressed and what it means to be oppressive. The oppressor lacks this dual vision. Women of colour contend that the possession of a dual vision is grounded in the need to survive, both socially and physically (hooks, 1984). The subordinate must always

anticipate and be alert to the reality of the dominant and its implications for the subordinate's lived experiences. This epistemological positioning, has, as far as I know, never underscored an evaluation process. However, the position implies that program participants, those who live the "social problem", are in the best position to create knowledge about their disaffected situation and the possible avenues for its amelioration. While a standpoint epistemology has considerable appeal for feminist and critical thinkers, Haraway warns against,

> (the) serious danger of romanticizing and/or appropriating the vision of the less powerful... to see from below is neither easily learned or unproblematic... the standpoints of the subjugated are not innocent positions. (1988:584)

Likewise, Pinnick (1994) points out that there is no empirical proof or criteria for accuracy to substantiate the claim that the marginalized have superior vision. In support, Nancie Caraway draws our attention to,

> some of the assumptions hidden in standpoint/ margin/center claims: beliefs that people act rationally in their own interest, that the oppressed are not in fundamental ways damaged by their marginality, and that they themselves are somehow removed from a will to power. (1991:181)

Nielson (1990) warns that a standpoint epistemology, when taken to the extreme, could imply that the more oppressed a group is, the more knowledgable they are. This, in turn, evolves into endless arguments as to who is the most oppressed (and therefore most knowledgable).

Against both the empiricist and standpoint epistemologists are thinkers who engage the postmodern, and follow Derrida (1982) in arguing that reality is an illusion which we try to capture by an endless substitution of words. These critical thinkers challenge traditional approaches and contend that knowledge is "the result of invention, the imposition of form on the world rather than the result of discovery" (Hawkesworth, 1988:536). In a similar vein Lather argues, "... facts are not given but constructed by the questions we ask of events" (1991:105). Therefore, the knowledge produced by our research efforts does not reflect a given reality either on a universal or an individual basis, but rather the research itself constitutes reality for us. What we "know" is heavily dependent on what knowledge is being sought, what questions are asked and who the inquirer is (Hawkesworth, 1989; Lather, 1991). For feminists such as Lennox (in Mascia-Lees et al. 1989), Bordo (1990), and Harding (1991) the "postmodern turn" comes at a suspiciously convenient time for the elite. Lennox argues that the questioning of definable "truth" is an inversion of western, white, male arrogance. Harding (1991) agrees and contends that the postmodern turn is a sexist, defensive attempt at preserving privilege in the face of contrary evidence. Bordo (1990), attacking postmodernism from another angle, argues that while reality may be endlessly different there are limits to the range of human interests and understandings. Just as

our bodies are physically limited, our minds are restricted in the extent to which they can recognize, simultaneous, endless multiplicity.

The integral relationship between evaluation research and the manner in which a social program is inscribed supports, in part, the postmodern position. What eventually becomes known about a social problem and the programs designed to address it is dependent on who the researcher is (in terms of social world/system location), the discourse in which the evaluation is framed and the data collection techniques preferred. However, a commitment to an emancipatory interest precludes a position that denies common identity and shared interests. As Donna Haraway puts it,

> [Our] problem, is how to have *simultaneously* an account of radical historical contingency for all knowledge claims and knowing subjects, a critical practice for recognizing our own "semiotic technologies" for making meanings, *and* a no-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of a "real" world, one that can be partially shared and that is friendly to earthwide projects of finite freedom, adequate material abundance, modest meaning in suffering, and limited happiness. (1988:579)

Hence, an evaluative narrative based on Haraway's notion of "situated knowledges", "... partial, locatable, critical knowledges sustaining the possibility of webs of connections called solidarity in politics and shared conversations in epistemology" (Haraway, 1988:584) seems the most appropriate. In other words, every position is limited in terms of what the

social world/system location allows one to see. In a similar vein, Smith (1987) contends that *every* subject is a knowing subject but has a specific location that limits her perspective. Not only does every position have limits, all positions have the possibility to enhance our understanding of the social world. To privilege any one position or to entirely ignore others renders our understanding of the social world to be even more incomplete than it must already be.

From the perspective of situated knowledges, no single position is considered either privileged or less able to contribute to the construction of what constitutes the "realities" of a given situation. What this implies is that while most critical thinkers automatically react against the narratives of professional/technocratic systemic agents we should not simply discard them. The Habermasian argument stresses that a systemic and expert view increasingly dominates all our perceptions including how we define social problems and their amelioration. While we do not want to privilege this position it is just as important not to ignore it or fail to challenge it. Systemic appropriation of everyday experience constitutes a very powerful "reality" that must be dealt with (Smith, 1990). To dismiss it as simply being wrong deprives us of the opportunity to examine and analyze how the system and professional discourse has shaped our perceptions and how this in turn may be disempowering not only for program

participants but also for those who work as social activists within the system. What the systemic "portion" of the narrative can provide, especially if it is examined in a self-conscious manner, is an increased understanding of how the system and the professions shape our perception of a particular social phenomenon and our participation in it.

The same argument extends to the narratives of the disempowered. While placing considerable value on the standpoint of the dispossessed it would be shortsighted and potentially limiting to privilege its perceptiveness. The disempowered are no more able to stand outside of their experiences than are social scientists and activists. Just as those with privilege may have their perceptions distorted by systemic interests and professional discourses, those without power have their understandings framed by both systemic discourses and experiences of disempowerment and resistance. While the dispossessed certainly have the experiential basis from which to identify forms of oppression that others may not readily see, social scientists and activists who have a reflexive concern with their own practices can make a significant contribution to the understanding of intellectual and discursive forms of manipulation and control.

A critical approach to social program evaluation needs to provide a narrative of a range of viewpoints not only in terms

of how they see the situation at hand but also how they see each other. How is the program and the "social problem" to which it is directed understood by the various actors? This is a departure from traditional approaches which generally accept the systemic interpretation of the issue as a given. Instead, "reality" gets constructed from a variety of perspectives not all of which necessarily agree with each other or which are capable of being reconciled. In this, the approach also differs from Guba and Lincoln's (1989) "Fourth Generation Evaluation" in that the activity is intended to accentuate locational and power differences rather than provide the basis for a negotiated consensus.

The challenge for the evaluator is to construct or stitch together the various parts of the narrative - to make connections and to lay open for discussion and reflection competing interpretations and points of conflict. Evaluators do not do this as outsiders but as individuals interested in enhancing the emancipatory capacity of social interventionary practices. They are active participants in, rather than eavesdroppers to, the conversation from which the narrative is constructed. In so doing, they assume an evaluative position of partial location:

> The split and contradictory self is the one who can interrogate positionings and be accountable, the one who can construct and join rational conversations and fantastic imaginings that change history. ... the knowing self is always constructed and stitched together imperfectly and therefore

> able to join with another, to see together without claiming to be another. Here is the promise of objectivity: a scientific knower seeks the subject position, not of identity, but of objectivity, that is, partial connection. (Haraway, 1988:584)

Critical evaluation strives to bring into the conversation as many voices as it is capable of hearing in an effort to make these partial connections, to reveal limited "truths". The purpose of critical evaluation is to ensure that "other" narratives have the chance to emerge into the interventionary space. In so doing, critical evaluation as narrative produces data that, "... might be better conceived as material for telling a story where the challenge becomes to generate a polyvalent data base that is used to vivify interpretation as opposed to 'support' or 'prove'" (Lather, 1991:91). Consequently, the challenge is to determine how to acquire the most useful and insightful information or which "form" appears to work best for enhancing our mutual understanding of a situation. Hence, the task is less concerned with defending the "truth" of results than assessing the appropriateness of the particular framework in which we have chosen to suspend "reality" temporarily.[2]

Evaluation as narrative seeks to provide a complex picture of the system/social world context surrounding the

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[2] I intentionally use the word "suspend" rather than Schutz's (1967) concept of "bracket" which refers to the setting aside of private interests and the assumption of an attitude of disinterested observer.

interventionary process. In this sense evaluation is used to identify the presuppositions behind the various actors' understanding of the situation and the complementary/competing discourses within which "reality" is being constructed. As such, it serves to enhance mutual awareness, if not necessarily agreement, of where everyone involved is "coming from". Evaluation as narrative does not attempt to compartmentalize social phenomenon into neat and easily identifiable component parts. Rather, it strives for the creation of a vivid contextual base that will constantly inform subsequent evaluative activities.

Evaluation As Critique

Evaluation as narrative provides a description of the realities that actors bring with them to an interventionary process. As such, critical evaluation sketches the basis for understanding, potential connection and points of conflict. However, a commitment to an emancipatory interest requires that evaluation not remain at the level of describing things "as they appear to be". Rather, critical evaluation must address issues relating to "what ought to be" and the potential for social change.

The purpose of an emancipatory approach to intervention is to harness systemic activity to communicatively secured

collective needs and interests. Critical evaluation must examine the extent to which a social program fostered this interest. It must do this by first establishing the extent to which the intervention allowed for the emergence of collective identity and discursive will. As such, critical evaluation needs to incorporate a notion of critique bearing in mind our earlier position that, 1) the role of critical evaluation is to inform the activities of the system from the perspective of the lifeworld; and, 2) the focus of critical evaluation is on the assumptions and activities of systemic agents, not program users/participants.

From this self-conscious perspective "critique" is, "a form of discourse which seeks to inhabit the experience of the subject from inside" rather than, "recounting to someone what is awry with their situation, from an external, perhaps, 'transcendental' vantage point" (Eagleton, 1991:xiv). To focus the discussion more specifically on the communicative concerns of this thesis, I also incorporate Fraser's (1992) elaboration of critique which includes an assessment of how social inequality taints deliberation within/between/among publics, and how publics are differentially empowered or involuntarily subordinated to others.

To support an emancipatory interest critical evaluation needs to focus on the barriers to/possibilities for the

emergence of collective identity and communicatively secured interests *within* the program site. It also needs to identify the barriers to/possibilities for linking systemic activity to communicatively secured interests emerging *from* the program site. The purpose of evaluation as critique is to look at the contradictions between good intentions and actual practice.

The first concern is with the extent to which collective identity and communicative interests emerge from an interventionary site. In thinking through how a critical evaluation can inform this concern it is useful to return to Habermas and in particular his construction of the ideal speech situation. Habermas holds out the idea of an "ideal speech situation" to demonstrate the concept of undistorted communication or reasonable discourse aimed at the establishment of generalizable interests which are grounded in mutual understanding and consensus. Within the ideal speech situation disagreements are resolved through a mode of communication which is free of compulsion and where the conclusions reached are determined by the force of the better argument alone. "A communicatively achieved agreement... cannot be merely induced through outside influence; it has to be accepted or presupposed as valid by the participants... it cannot be imposed by either party." (Habermas, 1984:287) According to Habermas we can do this through engagement in rational discourse, whereby we suspend action, judgement and

personal interests in favour of establishing the validity claims inherent in a statement, i.e. claims related to the intelligibility of the utterance, the truth of the statement, the appropriateness of the performatory component and the sincerity of the speaker.[3] As Habermas explains,

> The participants of a discourse no longer seek to exchange information or to convey experiences, but rather to proffer arguments for the justification of problematicised validity claims. The latter process presupposes the suspension of all action constraints, in order to render inoperative all motives other than that of a co-operative readiness to come to an understanding. (In Thompson, 1981:87)

The ideal speech situation is characterized by the absence of barriers to discourse including the constraints which are imposed by the structure of communication itself. It provides the basis from which we can begin to free ourselves from the identifiable communicative distortions that impede rationale discourse. The ideal speech situation is governed by a discourse ethic which "presupposes equal participation of everyone concerned in public discussions of contested political norms" (Cohen and Arato, 1992:345) and where all

> affected can freely accept the consequences and the side effects that its general observance can be anticipated to have for the satisfaction of the interests of each individual. (Habermas, 1990:93)

Ultimately the goal of the process is uncoerced rational acceptance of the better argument. Consensus is achieved

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[3] For a detailed discussion of these validity claims see McCarthy (1985) and Benhabib (1986).

through the reaching of a common understanding, not because one party is persuaded to conform. For Habermas, the idea of an ideal speech situation is directly linked to the concept of generalizable interests. He envisioned this as the process by which such interests could be established.

Habermas argues that the ideal speech situation is inherent in and anticipated by everyday human speech and that the very act of participating in a discourse carries with it the supposition that a genuine agreement is possible.

> In action oriented to reaching understanding validity claims are "always already" implicitly raised. These universal claims... are set in the general structure of possible communication. In these validity claims communication theory can locate a gentle, but obstinate, a never silent although seldom redeemed claim to reason... (Habermas 1974:97).

Habermas does not, however, assert (as some would have it) that the ideal speech situation can be realized concretely. He argues for the conditions of possibility for meaningful encounters to occur at all.

> ... standards of procedural rationality hold only for dealing with questions that are sorted out according to one universal aspect... and that the corresponding learning process can be understood in the light of these standards as an approximation...to ideal limit values. (Habermas in Young, 1990:77)

Habermas' task is to show "... the element of truth and emancipatory potential that it contained despite its ideological misrepresentation and contradictions" (Calhoun, 1992:2) For Habermas the ideal speech situation thus provides

a theoretical tool for the critical analysis of systematically distorted communication.

As discussed in Chapter Two, Habermas' notion of generalizable interests which transcend experience stands in opposition to most feminist concerns with the realities of the "concrete other", and our commitment to connection through complexity (See Chapter Four). Likewise, the notion of rational discourse, based on the force of the better argument, privileges one particular way of knowledge construction, and assumes a discursive equality that has no basis in reality. However, in thinking through the requirements of a communicative space, Habermas' insights direct our attention to some of the barriers to communicative actions. For example, an ideal speech situation sets forth the criteria that all participants must have the same chance to initiate and sustain dialogue; all must have the same opportunity to proffer interpretations, recommendations and justifications; all participants must have the same chance to express their attitudes, feelings and intentions leading to transparency of the subject; and, all must have the same chance to order/prohibit, obey/refuse. Using these criteria as a means to assess the communicative capacity of a program site - bearing in mind that systemic agents are the focus of this assessment and project users act as critical informants - relevant evaluation questions might be:

How are user needs determined? What level of input do users have in the articulation of needs?

To what extent does the structure of the program allow for participant-participant interaction?

Are certain voices awarded more authority/privilege than others? On what basis?

Does the project allow for user input to the philosophy, direction, and content of the project?

What systemic structures hinder/prevent input from program participants/users?

However, evaluation as critique should not only focus on limitations and barriers. It must be capable of revealing the opportunity for effective actions. We cannot assume that, in the process of identifying barriers and contradictions, their solutions become self-evident. An emancipatory evaluative strategy should be alert to the seams and fissures through which possibilities for social change can and do emerge. Strategic issues, such as what practices work best in the creation of a communicative space, thus, become relevant.

The above discussion provides some preliminary thoughts about how evaluation as critique might assess the extent to which a program site allowed for the emergence of collective identity and discursive will. Evaluation as critique also needs to identify the barriers to/possibilities for linking systemic activity to the communicatively secured interests emerging from a program site, i.e the exercising of political agency. It is useful to consider Nancy Fraser's (1990) discussion of discourse resources as it provides us with an

avenue for pursuing these concerns. Fraser describes how discursive barriers may affect the extent to which people can exercise political agency and influence the organization and allocation of systemic resources. Evaluation as critique would need to look at the way in which the discourse of the system (including the discourse of evaluation) may stand in direct opposition to the discourses of collective interests. In other words, evaluation as critique attempts to expose and explore discursive power differentials and the implications these have for the pursuit of emancipatory interests. Fraser points to five areas where we might expect discursive conflicts to occur. First, there are the idioms in which a claim may be pressed, e.g. needs talk, rights talk, interest talk. Second, there are the vocabularies for instantiating claims. For example, in the idiom of needs talk the vocabulary might reflect therapeutic or administrative, or feminist interests. Third, there are the paradigms for argumentation which are deemed authoritative, e.g. scientific, democratic, or negotiated. Fourth, there are narrative conventions, or the manner in which claims are presented, e.g. systems language, street talk. And finally, there are different modes of subjectification - how the actors are represented, e.g. normal, deviant, victim, activist. The task for evaluation as critique is to examine the different discourse resources people use and what impact these have on the identification of systemic barriers and the possibilities for social change.

For example, what are the implications when project users represent their interests in a different "language" than the administrative apparatus of the state? Of the three empowerment oriented programs discussed in Chapters One and Three the "Stepping Stone" project is the most susceptible to this confrontation. Often its language of rights and choices stands in opposition to the therapeutic needs talk of the social agencies the project deals with.

Evaluation as critique disrupts the appearance of relativity among the narratives and blatantly pursues an emancipatory interest. In essence, the aim is to bring to light the discursive and structural barriers that limit the political potential of empowerment-oriented intervention. Coupled with evaluation as narrative it provides a rich contextual background against which to assess the instrumental or procedural dimensions of an intervention.

As noted earlier, assessment is the traditional function of evaluation research. What critical evaluation adds to this role is the prerequisite that the assessment take place within the context of the data produced by evaluation as narrative and evaluation as critique. In other words, the "value" of a specific component of the program can not be judged in isolation of this other data. For example, assessing whether or not a particular way of providing information on transition

housing reduces the incidence of family violence only makes sense if we have some insight as to how the term "family violence" is constructed by all parties; how transition housing is perceived; what the specific communicative interests are surrounding the issues; and what the presumed link is between the means proposed and the ends desired. In other words it is not just the act of giving information that needs to be evaluated. We also need to consider issues such as, whether an intervention focusing specifically on family violence is the best approach - or whether it is self-defeating by virtue of its blatant focus that forces women to identify themselves within this context. We also need to address whether or not the concept of accessing a transition house is in itself a reasonable assumption to make, given the realities of everyday life.

Areas for Further Deliberation

The implications of an emancipatory approach to intervention for evaluation research are far reaching. What I have attempted to do here is to construct a framework - in terms of role, focus and tasks - within which additional concerns can be pursued. Three areas which immediately come to mind, and which I will briefly discuss include methods, representation and validity.

A critical evaluation informed by an emancipatory interest needs to give careful consideration to the research practices which best support this approach. Traditionally, epistemological positions have dictated the use of data collection techniques. So, for example, positivist evaluators are more likely to use those methods which are capable of producing quantitative data such as the experiment or the survey. Interpretive-oriented researchers are more apt to engage in an extensive interviewing process focusing on the solicitation of descriptive data. It might appear that the interpretive techniques are more consistent with the discourse of critical evaluation. Feminists and other critical thinkers have made strong arguments that, to-date, quantitative methods, in particular the survey, have been less than adequate in reflecting lived experience (Graham, 1983; Reinharz, 1992). While the interpretive mode of inquiry is preferred, the usefulness of empirical data is not denied (Jayaratyne, 1983; Stanley and Wise, 1990; Harding, 1991; Finch, 1991; Reinharz, 1992). As a result, theorists such as Harding (1987) and Smith (1987) have argued that the issue is not the methods or techniques used to collect evidence, as it is to recognize how a technique is used to construct knowledge. We need to have a conscious awareness and sensitivity to the limitations and impositions presented by a particular way of collecting and analyzing information.

Lather (1991) and other critical thinkers assert that the potential use and usefulness of any technique, and the subsequent validity of the data produced, is undermined if not subjected to the principle of maximum reciprocity. All concerned must be actively engaged in the design of the research tool, and in the construction and validation of knowledge. Lather suggests that steps toward maximum reciprocity would include interviews conducted in an interactive, dialogic manner that requires self-disclosure on the part of the researcher; sequential interviews of both individuals and small groups to facilitate collaboration and a deeper probing of research issues; and, the negotiation of meaning construction (Lather, 1991:61-62). I would add to this - direct input by all parties to the development of evaluation questions and issues. Most importantly, the concept of maximum reciprocity necessitates full disclosure of, and documented reaction to, the findings and recommendations contained in the evaluation report.

Critical evaluation presents a new challenge to conventional evaluation in that it forces us to address ethnographic concerns with representation (Brodkey, 1987; Mascia-Lees et al., 1989; Borland, 1991; Fine, 1994). In traditional evaluations a research report is presented in the voice of the system or, in a detached voice that claims be representing the interests of all parties. Evaluation as

narrative raises such issues as how to write the voice(s) of others? Can complexity be articulated without privileging a voice? Also, how should voices be inscribed? For example, should the voice(s) of program users be presented in their own speech styles and grammatical structures or do we edit this narrative to give it greater "legitimacy" within the system? The question is not easily answered. From the critical point of view we would want to present the voices of the dispossessed as heard. However, does this, necessarily, facilitate the process of systemic change? Is there value in translating the voice(s) of the dispossessed, so that the implications for the re-organization of resources are made clear within a discourse that the system understands?

> Herein lie the very profound contradictions that face researchers who step out, who presume to want to make a difference, who are so bold or arrogant as to assume we might. Once out beyond the picket fence of illusory objectivity, we trespass all over the classed, raced, and otherwise stratified lines that have demarcated our social legitimacy for publicly telling their stories. And it is then that ethical questions boil. (Fine, 1994:80)

Consequently, Fine suggests that one of the challenges that critical researchers/activists face is negotiating how, when and why to situate and privilege various voices. "Those of us who do this work need to invent communities of friendly critical informants who can help us think through whose voices and analyses to front, and whose to foreground" (Fine, 1994:80).

The question of representation leads to a third area for future deliberation - the need to address questions of validity. How is the validity of our interpretations and conclusions established? The concern with validity touches all areas of the interventionary/evaluation process including the validation of data collection instruments and procedures (Cronbach, 1980; House 1980); the credibility of narratives and descriptions (Lather, 1991); and, the legitimacy of conclusions and recommendations (Heron, 1988). At minimum most critical researchers require the considered reaction of the actors from whom the information was derived. Guba and Lincoln suggest that the process of establishing validity through member checks is:

> the single most crucial technique for establishing credibility. If the evaluator wants to establish that the multiple realities he or she presents are those that the stakeholders have provided, the most certain test is verifying those multiple constructions with those who provided them. (1989:239)

To this is added the need to assess the worth of our evaluative narratives and critiques in terms of its catalytic validity (Reason and Rowan, 1981) "the degree to which the research process reorients, focuses and energizes participants toward knowing reality in order to transform it" (Lather, 1991:68). The focus of critical evaluation requires that we recognize the "participants" in question as "us". The question is whether, as a result of evaluative efforts, systemic agents have a clearer picture of the systemic

barriers which block the emergence of communicatively secured interests and political agency.

Conclusion

Traditional evaluation strategies, guided by the knowledge interests of instrumental or strategic action, focus on a construction of knowledge that informs the interests of systemic manipulation and control. The matching of an empowerment-oriented intervention with an evaluation strategy which has a singular concern with technique may miss the point, as it were, and effectively stifle the practical and emancipatory knowledge to be gained from these efforts. In effect, by trying to "fit" a communicative concern into an instrumental mould we end up struggling methodologically to find, "a precise answer to the wrong question" (Tukey in Henshel, 1990:221). Empowerment-oriented interventions require the construction of evaluation strategies which also recognize the need to construct knowledge for communicative and emancipatory interests. Evaluation informed by critical concerns must neither ignore instrumental issues nor privilege them. These concerns must be secured to communicative interests and issues before one can judge the extent to which they have the capacity to produce meaningful social change. The challenge is not methodological innovation and refinement for its own sake but the development of evaluative practices

and strategies that further communicative and critical capacities.

CONCLUSIONS

The previous chapters develop a conceptual framework for social intervention and evaluation practices that reflects the emancipatory interests and aspirations of critical and feminist thinkers. Conventional interventionary strategies view social change as a process which focuses on increasing the self-sufficiency of the dispossessed client of the state within existing social structures. These approaches also assume that intervention and the amelioration of social problems are largely technical actions. Within this framework professionals and bureaucrats use the social sciences to reduce the dimensions of a social problem into manageable "expert" and "bureaucratic" components. Each of these components is then subjected to the ameliorative techniques of an appropriate agency or profession. In practice this usually involves the teaching of specific skills or coping mechanisms to those affected. Whether or not an intervention is successful or effective comes to be judged in terms of whether or not it can be rationalized within a particular professional or bureaucratic discourse.

Habermasian analysis allows us to see clearly the disempowering consequences of such an approach. Understanding of self and experience come to be defined and explained by the professional and bureaucratic discourses and administrative

structures which constitute "the system". As a result systemic agents determine what "needs" exist and how they might best be satisfied or addressed. Ultimately the "dispossessed" become the *objects* of systemic concern and interventionary practices, organized (and diversified) according to an imposed identity, e.g. single parent, abused wife, and bereft of political agency, e.g. the capacity to harness resources to expressed needs and interests.

In contrast, an emancipatory approach to intervention seeks to produce changes to oppressive systemic structures by enhancing the political voice and agency of the disaffected. An emancipatory approach to intervention recognizes the need to address the communicative as well as the technical dimensions of social change. Premised on a Habermasian perspective the thesis argues that actions taken to produce social change can only be emancipatory if they are linked to the communicatively expressed collective needs and interests of those effected.

The thesis also argues that the rudiments of an emancipatory approach to intervention can be found in empowerment-oriented social programs such as "Nobody's Perfect", the "Stepping Stone" project and the "Self-Help Connection". In principle they aspire, in various degrees, to the development of political agency and the linking of

resources with expressed (versus assumed) need. These programs link the concept of empowerment with some commitment to public participation and mutual support - two concepts seen as central to the creation of collective political agency. Public participation and mutual support provide the key means by which an intervention site becomes a "communicative space" - a location within which mutual interests can be explored, collective identities established, and, ultimately, from which a sense of political agency can emerge. However, as demonstrated the political potential of public participation and mutual support is often undermined by the continued deference to an instrumental and technocratic understanding of these concepts within the interventionary process. Public participation is reduced to limited "public" input in the form of pre-program focus groups and needs assessments and in-program use of adult education techniques such as group discussion. Likewise, mutual support activities are viewed in terms of their capacity to support the instrumental learning process. As a result, the two concepts are marginalized as "techniques" which support an "empowering" approach to intervention. An emancipatory approach to intervention necessitates that public participation, as in the creation of voice(s), is not an assumed, pre-existing part of the process but rather its hoped for end result. Likewise, mutual support is perceived as a product that emerges from a sense of solidarity and connection.

A focus on the communicative dimensions of social programming necessitates a careful consideration of the concept of "empowerment". The process of becoming empowered is argued to involve the acquisition of a political voice that gives public expression to collective needs and interests. The outcome of an empowering approach to intervention is seen as the harnessing of systemic resources to these collective needs and interests. In essence, the aim of emancipatory intervention is to create a communicative space that is both empowering and empowered. Three conditions underscore an interventionary strategy based on empowerment. First, we need to recognize that empowerment is a process that all parties must be willing and *permitted* to be engaged in. Second, we must recognize that empowerment requires considerable courage on the part of the disaffected and hence systemic agents must assume responsibility for their empowering activities. Third, there must be a willingness to pursue connections through complexity. We cannot let our differences obscure our commonalities yet we do not want to silence difference through the assumption of commonality. Central to an empowerment based strategy is the understanding that critical thinkers, activists, educators, and evaluators recognize themselves as both subjects and objects in the process.

The implications of an emancipatory approach to intervention coupled with a communicative concept of

empowerment are explored in the context of evaluation research. Two primary contentions emerge from the discussion. First, there is a need to reconstruct the role of evaluation so that it comes to act as critical informant on behalf of the lifeworld. The aim of critical evaluation is to assess how well the energies and resources of the system have been organized to meet the realities of everyday life. Second, an emancipatory interest requires that we refocus evaluative inquiry. The attitudes and behaviors of systemic agents become central to the assessment - program participants/users act as critical informants to the process.

A critical approach to evaluation also requires an extension of the conventional tasks usually associated with social program evaluation research. The traditional exploration of program effectiveness needs to be grounded in a rich contextual narrative drawn from the system/lifeworld locations of actors in the interventionary process. Evaluation as critique works its way through these narratives looking for the barriers to/possibilities for the emergence of communicatively secured collective interests, as well as the barriers to/possibilities for harnessing systemic activity to these interests.

My primary purpose in this thesis has been to provide a philosophical basis for an emancipatory approach to social

intervention and evaluation. The work is underscored by a belief that any concern with "how" we intervene must be examined within the context of "why" we intervene. Without this understanding our best efforts to create empowering spaces and practices are undermined. The challenge for those committed to an emancipatory approach to intervention lies in translating the philosophy into actual practice. If the goal is to organize systemic resources according to communicatively secured needs and interests we need to examine the implications this has for the manner in which supportive social policies are drafted. For example, what would be the criteria for rationalization and how would concepts such as "public accountability" and "program effectiveness" need to be defined? What ethics govern emancipatory social policies? Likewise, consideration must be given to how, in practice, the evaluation process can be made to serve as a communicative link between program sites and social policy. By what mechanisms can interests and needs emerging from an intervention be linked to the organization of resources? Similarly, if the task of emancipatory intervention is to create communicative spaces what implications does this have for how programs are designed and facilitators trained? What skills would a critical evaluator need to develop? How can existing data collection techniques be modified to support an emancipatory interest?

These are but a few of the challenges posed by an emancipatory approach to intervention. However, the most difficult challenges will undoubtedly be political rather than practical. There must be a willingness to subvert systemic power and resources to communicatively secured needs and interests. Likewise, there must be a willingness to accept the legitimacy of collective needs and interests emerging from specific lifeworld locations. Perhaps most important, critical thinkers and activists must be committed to changing their own practices and challenging their own discourses.

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