Chapter 7

Community Planing as an Empowering Professional Practice

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

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

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

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

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

Community Planners and the Organizations that Employ Them

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

their professional level in domains they had defined for themselves.

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

Empowerment of Community Planners

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Empowering Community Planning Process

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

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

Stages of Rational Comprehensive Planning

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

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

1. Identifying the Problem and Collecting the Data

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

2. Defining the Target Population

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

3. Defining the Problems and Outlining the Goals

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

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

4. Presenting the Alternatives

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

5. Choosing the Preferred Alternative

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

6. Designing the Plan

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

7. Implementing the Plan

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

8. Evaluation

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

Stages of Empowering Community Planning

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

The Beginning of the Planning Intervention Process

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

in a powerless environment may be relatively tranquil and orderly. The planner senses the silence, the alienation, the suspicion and the indifference towards himself, but since he is not involved in a confrontational situation, or under political pressure, and is not obliged to make changes in his role, he is not personally threatened. True, an important side is absent from the planning, but because of this the actual task becomes more simple. The danger is that a planner who is not willing to pay the price of stormy planning and uncertainty, may have to pay the price of disempowering and ineffective planning.

When a community planner enters a community that has already achieved the ability to represent itself, she has to time and to coordinate the planning process and the critical tasks (from her point of view, not that of the community) with many people. Since the planner is not directly or exclusively responsible for the enhancing of community empowerment, she is liable to think that her role as an empowering practitioner is not important at all. The planner's entry stage therefore also requires evaluation of the extent of community empowerment that exists in this place: the extent of ability and control, the sense of community, standards of participation and organization present in the planning environment.

In the community planning process with the group of parents of children with disabilities, the community planner and the group began working together almost from the first stage. There was a need for certain adjustments, because three of the parents had been active on behalf of their children very intensively, although not effectively, for many years. The community planner respected their activism, and recognized its value for their individual empowerment. This small group became integrated in the new organization. Although the planner's attitude may seem obvious, experience teaches that not a few community planners would choose to ignore the senior activists and their history, and even to confront them

Table 1—Stages of Empowering Community Planning

	Stages of the community empowerment process	*Stages of the empowerment facilitation process*	*Stages of the rational comprehensive planning process*
1	Discovering the critical characteristic.	Developing relations of trust and dialogue.	Problem identification and data gathering.
2	Creating the partnership.	Creating a participatory infrastructure.	Defining the target population.
3	Self-definition.	Defining the planner's roles.	Defining the problems and designing the goals.
4	Self-representation.	Developing the organization.	Preparing alternative plans.
5	Active opposition.	Developing the strategy.	Choosing the preferred alternative.
6	Presentation of an alternative.	Presenting the alternative plan.	Presenting the final plan.
	Implementation	*Implementation*	*Implementation*
7	Evaluating the achievements and discovering the limitations of empowerment.	Evaluating if, and how much, empowerment was enabled through the process.	Evaluating the plan's impact on the severity of the problem.

as ineffective and as obstacles to organizational change, thus missing out on the entire empowerment process.

Stage 1: Developing Relations of Trust and Dialogue

In the first stage of the rational planning process, the planner engages in understanding the context—in identifying problems and collecting data. To a large extent, the stage of entering upon a new planning task begins with a widening of the original project's concrete context. This is a spatial activity, which includes people, services and environment. This stage involves quite a number of personal decisions about the style suitable for the dialogue with the people. In many cases the professional begins working without knowing at this early stage who the dialogue is going to be with.

In this stage, the community planner develops a sensitivity towards the place by means of regular presence and becoming personally acquainted with as many people as possible. The emphasis is on opening up good and numerous channels of communication, as a basis for establishing relations of mutual trust. In this stage there is no substitute for the practitioner's personal acquaintance and personal connections with people in the arena of the intended planning. Not a few planners content themselves at this stage with collecting statistical data or holding interviews using questionnaires in order to identify problems and collect data. Limiting oneself to such technical means at this stage may harm the process. If trust is not established between the planner and the people, they will remain outside the process that she initiates, and she will lack feedback on the meaning of the information she has collected. The dialogue created at this stage also contributes to mutual interpretation of the information that has been collected, including the people's knowledge about the place and about themselves. The interpretation that is produced in the course of this interaction facilitates feedback and filtering of partial impressions and of one-sided views that are characteristic of the initial stages of becoming acquainted

with one another. At this stage the planner begins the praxis – learning through action – and gathers new insights as he learns.

It is important for the professional to be conscious of the language that he uses and of the verbal and non-verbal messages that he transmits to the people around him. Since hidden messages have great empowering (and disempowering) potential, everything that transpires in the domain of language and messages requires streamlining and consciousness raising. In community planning agencies I have researched, I did not find an awareness of the importance and the power of messages, or of the importance of dialogue in the opening stage of the planning process.

In this stage, first agreements for collaboration are drawn up. The practitioner's initial attitude towards the place and the people is much more important than the objective data-collection (Reid & Aguilar, 1991). Hence, there is no substitute for the practitioner's consistent presence in the place and his personal contacts with the people. The place has to be learned through its history, its culture, and its everyday life, in order to understand the past, evaluate the present, and collaborate on producing alternatives towards the future. Getting acquainted and establishing trust are processes that take time, and this time has to be devoted if one wants to achieve outcomes. The community planner's commitment to devoting time to the process is the basis for the trust that is created between him and the local people from the first stage on. His consistent and continuous presence proves his commitment. Further on in the process, he will be able to base participation in the planning process upon this commitment.

Stage 2: Creating a Participatory Infrastructure

In the second stage of the comprehensive planning process, the focus is on the target population for which the planning is intended. Planning is an intervention in the human

environment, and hence it is very important to define this environment from as early a stage as possible. I am aware that in the classical rational comprehensive planning process there is no real obligation towards the real target population of the planning, beyond a formal one. The *client* is the one who commissions the work—he pays for the planning, has to be satisfied, and his interests must be acknowledged by the planners. Community planning, in contrast, has to declare its obligation to a particular community, even when it is not facilitating empowerment. This obligation ensures that the community planner will be concerned from the outset not only with the interests of the people who contract for the planning and of her employers, but also with those of the people who will be influenced by the planning.

In this stage it is important to develop the sense of togetherness that will characterize the continuation of the empowerment process. This is the stage in which a community begins to be created. The sense of a common fate, a common interest, and the subsequent common struggle are what create it.

Participation is the critical task of this stage—the outcome which is to be encouraged is partnership. This is the appropriate time for preparing the infrastructures and for creating the possibilities for people sharing a critical characteristic to manage their own affairs. Although we are speaking about new partners, who are perhaps not yet committed to the planning, it is preferable to invest in encouraging a partnership around a common general vision or issue; it is wasteful to invest in particular plans which will later change entirely. Planners who want to implement a ready-made model of participation risk initiating a technical procedure which, even if it does not become disempowering, misses out on the essential creativity and the empowerment potential of a process that is created by the people themselves. In Holland, for example, a technical procedure of public participation in each planning stage was developed. Even if we assume that the procedure was appropriate to all the

people it was applied to, it was the professionals who wearied of it (as I was told by Andreas Faludy, in a conversation in 1992). In the Urban Renewal Project in Israel, the regulations determining residents' representation in the project's steering committees caused similar damage. In a large portion of the neighborhoods, the implementation of this *participation* procedure did not correspond with the processes of participation that developed locally, and frequently was more injurious than useful to the process. Although the project's evaluators praised the fact that there was participation, and the institutional recognition of the need for it, they estimated that the level of participation in the project was not high (Alterman & Churchman, 1991).

Community planners I have interviewed were convinced of the importance of participation as a major strategy and as a goal in itself in their work. At the same time, there was a predominant sense that participation, as a concept, was identical with empowerment. Hence it is important to recognize that a formal procedure of participation is no more than a framework for various approaches. *Participation* is not more empowering than *democracy*. Formal structures of participation and democracy are indeed necessary conditions, which provide a basis and a context for the development of empowerment, but they are not sufficient for enhancing empowerment. In order to understand what advances empowerment and what is disempowering in the participation process, we have to devote thought to rules of caution, which are recommendations on how to avoid disempowerment. These are principles of social hygiene, the fulfillment of which creates the (necessary, though not sufficient) conditions for the facilitation of empowerment by means of participation. Likewise, we must analyze the active practice: by accepting these recommendations, the professional ensures the sufficient conditions for enhancement of empowerment in the course of her professional practice. The list of rules of caution and rules of practice may not exhaust all the possibilities of empowerment (and disempowerment) that exist in situations

of participation, but it helps to clarify the differences between participation and empowerment.

Rules of Caution

Caution in professional practice means sensitivity and openness towards the local people. In this way the community planner proves that he is avoiding any arbitrary activity that may harm the social tissues and social networks, especially those whose existence he is unaware of.

A. *The empowerment paradox* has been stated thus: "that even the people most incompetent, in need, and apparently unable to function, require, just as you and I do, more rather than less control over their lives" (Rappaport, 1987, p. 15). It is especially the alienated, weak and dependent people who need to obtain more control over their lives and environments. The paradox warns against the tendency to develop a patronizing attitude towards weak people, to act for them and thus to preserve their inactivity while letting them go through rites of *participation*.
B. *The bias in needs identification* originates in seeing participation principally as a reliable way of collecting information about the participants' needs. The focus on participation for the purpose of identifying needs creates a disempowering *division of roles*. In this division, the local people are the experts on *the needs*, while the professionals are experts on *the fulfillments*. Or, in other words, the people bring *the problem*, and the professionals bring *the solution*. Despite its prevalence, there are no firm proofs of the effectiveness of this division. To date it has not been proved that the experts on solving social problems are exclusively, or especially, the professionals (Borkrnan, 1990).

   Empowering participation means accepting the participants as complete people with wants and aspirations, knowledge and skills, and not only as people

with needs. The very willingness of professionals to relate to people's hopes and to use their knowledge in the framework of a common project is in itself a very powerful message in the direction of empowerment. Empowerment is realized when people begin to believe in themselves as thinking people with abilities and hopes for the future, and do not see themselves only as a source of problems in the present.

C. Avoidance of external intervention in local participation processes. External dictates of conditions for participation may be disempowering. A common example of such external intervention is a one-sided demand on the part of professionals that the local partners in the participation process hold elections to choose their own representatives. Since the empowerment process on the community level means more control by the local people in their affairs, such intervention is a disempowering message. It is preferable for professionals to try to collaborate with the local people, and together with them to formulate rules for local participation. To trample down a local process and dictate the manner of participation from the outside are disempowering actions. All that it achieves, is yet another affirmation of the superiority of experts – this time, experts on resident participation – over the local knowledge and initiatives.

D. Developing a leadership is not the only vision. Some professionals tend to content themselves with developing leaders, or encouraging an existing leadership, and involving them in the planning process. Empowerment is a process intended for all the people, not only for potential leaders. Although a local leadership is an important means of advancing community empowerment, as a strategy of cooperation it is important to remember that empowerment wants to mobilize and activate as many people as possible, to extend the basis of participation, and to provide a diversity of opportunities and subjects for participation (Churchman, 1987). Empowerment is

to a large extent an extension of the idea of leadership into the idea of active citizenship.

E. The fallacy of *representative* or *typical* representation. There is no such thing as *a typical resident* who by her very presence represents all the other local people. Some experts assume that the participants from the community have to represent all the other residents in their way of life and their way of thinking. This is a misleading and discriminatory assumption. Such representatives when chosen do not live up to these expectations, and when it becomes evident that they represent only themselves, it is the professionals who are most disappointed in them, and in the idea of participation altogether. This disappointment leads to a decline in the motivation to encourage participation, and the process generally degenerates until it stops.

F. Participation may isolate and exclude. A danger exists in the seemingly equal treatment of all the participants in the participation procedures. If the non-professional participants do not receive special attention in the course of the process, they will not be able to follow the contents and the expert language, or to understand the various ramifications of the plan, and will lack information sources of their own and an organization to support them. Instead of participation, a frustrating situation arises, where the local participants cannot act effectively for their own interests because they lack the tools. When, despite these limitations, they do act, they are subjected to paralyzing criticism for their inappropriate behavior in the formal forums.

Rules of Practice

Rules of practice are what advances empowerment and creation of a community. The participation process is an opportunity to demonstrate to people that they can work for the good of the community, and it provides them with

practical tools and diverse opportunities to do so. It develops people's organizational ability through involvement in making important decisions in their community.

A. Thinking and action. Participation has a chance of empowering the community if it provides opportunities for active involvement of as many participants as possible, and for thinking about this action. Likewise, it is important that the recruiting of participants be done by the practitioner himself, as part of his dialogue with the community. It is important to ensure that the local people do not get a feeling that an external system is interfering arbitrarily in their lives as a condition for allocation of resources. Participation has to be an expression of an opportunity for change, a will to take on a new challenge, and a learning of new abilities, not a bureaucratic dictate (Breton, 1994).
B. A process of developing skills and abilities. Participation processes should be accompanied by appropriate training of both the participants and the professionals. This participation is a mutual process of learning and development, from which the task should stem. The recommended learning method is that of praxis, learning that integrates theory and action into a commonly shared understanding. The professional is both a teacher who guides the process, and a learner herself. The process leads to the personal growth of all the participants, as well as to their ecological ability to act for the good of the environment (Breton, 1994). The critical consciousness that the professional has acquired as a tool for her own use now serves her in the empowerment process and helps her to teach people to understand their situation, to criticize it, and to act for change (Freire, 1970).
C. An opportunity for people to fill socially valuable roles. The opportunity to fill a role that is of value to the community is an important element of the empowerment process. Some writers believe that it is even worthwhile to underman new programs in order to give participants

in them an opportunity to organize, manage and run services by themselves (Rappaport, 1987).
D. Taking responsibility. Powerlessness causes people to feel that the responsibility for their fate and that of their families is in other people's hands. A person who depends on others and does not believe in her ability to change things also does not see herself as responsible for her life. Hence, experience in responsibility is an important corrective experience. Taking responsibility has a dramatic effect on the community level. Participation enables communities to take responsibility for their own existence again, or for the first time in their history. This is one of the distinctive signs of the realization of community empowerment.
E. Integration of task and process. The empowerment process demands that community planners devote time, effort and resources to two domains concurrently: to the managing of the planning task, and to the empowerment process. The investment in facilitation of empowerment, concurrently with achieving the concrete tasks, is not a simple matter. However, without investment in the processes, any social project will suffer from superficiality and will miss out on its main goals. Although the process consumes resources of its own, it leads to an outcome that is qualitatively different from that which is achieved by task-oriented means only. At the same time, it is important to remember that the converse is also true: when there are no real achievements, the empowerment process loses vitality. All the participants in the process invest effort and resources in it and want to achieve practical outcomes efficiently and in a reasonable time (Churchman, 1990a). There is no point in participation if it does not yield practical achievements.

Stage 3: Defining The Planner's Roles

At this stage, relations of trust between the planner and the people in the planning environment have already been established, a feeling of community has begun to form, and a basis exists for partnership in the planning. A diagnosis of the problems the inclusive planning has to focus on has already been made through an integration of the local people's experiential knowledge with the planner's professional knowledge. Now, as the community's self-definition develops, a definition of the role of the community planner, who makes his professional knowledge and previous experience available to the current process, develops as well. Since projects differ considerably in the circumstances and the subjects of the planning, and in the stage the community has reached in the process, in each case the planner's various roles will carry a different weight. In the first part of the book I surveyed a variety of roles that the planner may fill. Here I will pause over two roles that are especially important for the community's ability to define itself—the role of teacher and the role of activator.

The Role of the Teacher and Mentor

The planner's role as a teacher and mentor stems from the constant need to develop the knowledge, skills and abilities of the community. People who can help in the self-definition and building of the community's norms are essential to the empowerment process, and it is the community planner's task to cultivate them. As long as there exists no local leadership that can take responsibility for the community and its affairs, the professional has to ensure representation of the community before various agencies in the planning process. In this domain she functions both as a source of knowledge and as a consultant for the decision makers and the other participants in the planning process.

Development of the participants' knowledge accords them an ability to formulate issues and goals of change. The community's self-definition is at once an emotional experience, a political declaration, and an intellectual process (Boyte, 1984). On the intellectual level, the self-definition stage demands an ability to formulate goals of change. Even though this sounds absurd, people can have the gravest problems, and can feel them without being able to formulate or define them as issues (Alinsky, 1972).

Empowerment attributes great importance to learning—from critical and strategic thinking to organizational skills of management and maintenance. Freire's thinking about literacy, and his methods too, can thus complement the professional practice of encouraging empowerment in important ways. Just as power and knowledge are integrated in Foucault's thought, so illiteracy and powerlessness are integrated in Freire's approach (1970). The ability to think and to be critical develops when people are enabled to express themselves and to know themselves. A person is not a tabula rasa, but possesses many abilities—to know, to create texts, to express his world view and his thoughts. Every person comes to the process with what he has, and the teacher's role is to help him discover and develop himself.

Since people convey the message that they experience rather than the message they understand rationally, the planner has to take responsibility for forming the particular synthesis of systematic and professional knowledge and experiential knowledge appropriate to her style and her personality. In this way she commits to learning how to be self-critical.

The adoption of Freire's approach involves choosing a number of components in the planning environment which are most significant in the participant's lives. In the same way that Freire creates a text book with his learners, the planner can create a *planning log* with the participants, which can help them identify the subjects important to them, develop them into an action plan, and understand their world through it.

In Freire's method, familiar words are used as codified representations of the learners' existential situations. Each word is positioned inside a scene from the learners' lives. The learners describe the familiar situation, and discuss it in a discussion group with the teachers. This is the learning of the code—the superficial structure of the situation. The second stage is that of "decoding"—developing an understanding of the relations between the word and the situation within the scene. After the people engage in dialogue about the reality as they experience it, they continue analyzing the words in order to understand them in different contexts as well. Instead of receiving external information about one fact or another from the teacher, the learners analyze various aspects of their existential experience. Codes of the existing reality may also be decoded by means of community planning. The planner can begin with a log of the local planning which the people prepare together with him, and can go on, using Freire's method, to decipher the deeper meaning of the described reality. This analysis leads to new insights about change, which can serve as a basis for constructing an alternative community plan.

In order to work this way, full cooperation between the teacher and the learners is essential. According to Freire, the learner is at the center of the learning process. Freire rejects methods in which the learner is a passive object who cooperates in a task that has no connection with the socio-cultural reality he lives in. Likewise, empowering community planning places the people at the center of the planning process and together with them shapes the goals that are relevant to the reality of their lives.

Routine plans of community planning are an example of a converse method. For example, in the Urban Renewal Project it used to be customary to divide a community planning project into two—a physical project and a social project. In my estimation, this division symbolized the alienation between the local people and the project, which did not reflect their world and their way of thinking. The result, after ten years

of intensive activity in the neighborhoods (each numbering a few thousand residents), is that most of the residents in these neighborhoods were not acquainted with the project that operated in their neighborhood, and did not make use of the various services that were planned for them (Alterman & Churchman, 1991).

The Role of the Activator

The empowering planner is sometimes called a radical planner (Schuman, 1987; Friedmann, 1987). What this means is not quite clear, for radicalism, in the sense of extremism, is a relative matter. The literature that deals with planners indicates that most of them are not interested in radical practice of any kind (Baum, 1986). We will define the radical planner as an activating planner who is actively involved in creating a community and in encouraging people's control over their environment.

The main radical characteristics in the planner's role are a critical approach to the existing situation and an oppositionary attitude as a planning strategy. Although the radical planner has confrontations with the establishment, in most cases these conclude in full cooperation (Friedmann, 1987). Hence, one may say that swimming against the stream, mobilizing people into action, and struggling against barriers are characteristics of any planner who is ready to struggle for something she believes in (Faludi,1990). It is my impression that disempowering planners are those who tend to see the opposite end of the scale – the undirected, people-focused approach that operates from below – as extreme radical activity. These planners, who perceive their role as essentially technical and consultative, feel there is a conflict of interests between an obligation towards empowerment and their other tasks. For example, the opposition between empowering the weak people in the planning arena and an obligation towards stronger groups in the same environment. Or, the community planner's obligation towards the planning process itself, as

prior to his obligation towards certain groups taking part in the process. Some planners believe that the professional's objective stance is undermined by the empowering role, and oppose it vigorously. I have found that the more that planners see themselves committed to the planning project itself, the more they see empowerment as a practice that does not correspond with their aims and roles.

It is important to note that most community projects are not conflictual. Their aim, generally, is integrative: community development, and integration of the community in the society around it. The social struggle takes place, if at all, in the initial stages of the change processes, and after this the community is built with the establishment's cooperation of and financing (Boyte, 1984; Rose & Black, 1985). Cases in which the radical strategy is the core of the project are most rare (Schuman, 1987). We may therefore define an activating planner as someone who does not recoil from conflict and struggle, is willingly involved in the planning, and understands the necessity of politics. However, in those cases where such planners have both struggled and managed to achieve their goals and to survive in their positions, the role appears much less radical than in cases where there were failures (e.g., Krumholz & Forester, 1990, Schuman, 1987).

As we will recall, the belief in the need to solve social problems in a way that accords people a better control over their lives may also be viable in the framework of a moderate liberal democratic framework. It seems to me that what we call radicalism is a declaration of the community planner's anti-conservative and anti-liberal world view. In practice, community planners who are moderate in their views, and empowering in their professional approach, may also employ means of struggle and resistance if there is a need for it. For our understanding of the community planners' role, it seems to me more useful to define them as community activators than to think of them as radical or moderate.

Stage 4: Developing Organization

In the self-representation stage of the community empowerment process, considerable knowledge and an adequate level of participation to propose various alternatives for achievements of goals already exist. This is therefore the time to start establishing an organization. The organization is necessary to make it possible to confront situations of resistance and organizational outflanking, and to achieve complex goals, which are the tasks of the next stage. The critical task in the present stage is to help the community develop appropriate organizational tools for achieving its goals.

Power theories have contributed a great deal to our understanding of the importance of organization for community empowerment. The concept of organizational outflanking (Mann, 1986) emphasizes the importance of developing empowerment methods that are specific to the organizational domain: development of alternative organizational resources, control of existing organizational resources, and experience in activating organizational resources. Encouragement of community empowerment in this stage involves, firstly, establishment of an organization, and secondly, improvement of the community's ability to control its affairs by using this organization efficiently and enduringly.

While the need to fit the structure of the organization to the patterns of activity is a source of tension and change in organizations (Clegg, 1989), the lack of fit between institutional solutions and human needs is a cause of the powerlessness of the weakest and most needy people. Hence, we may conceptualize an organization that advances empowerment as a proper fit of an organizational form to a social environment. The danger lies in the organizational tendency to duplicate structures of power—to adapt an organization to the organizational environment. The empowering organization, which is generally different and unique in its surroundings,

is liable, once it is established, to follow socially accepted organizational principles, and to neglect empowerment principles.

Organization and the individual. Individual empowerment means a person's liberation from an undesirable situation in the power relations. The individual's consciousness of the harm that institutions and organizations have caused him creates a resistance in him towards them, and he recoils from them even when he needs them for his own purposes. A very common expression of this resistance is people's sweeping and fundamental repugnance for *bureaucracy* of any kind. However, the organization also constitutes a means for individuals to become involved in social frameworks which they previously did not even know about. For example: joining a social club, or membership in a branch of a political party. Because the entire process of individual empowerment may take on a unique form, the reasons and motivations for organizing, too, are unique to the conditions and circumstances in which each individual finds herself. The activity that mediates between the individual and the organization takes place in the group.

Organization and group. In a group, tension arises between two wants: the want to improve a personal position in the power relations field, and the want to realize social goals beyond the personal goals of the group's members. When the group exists primarily for purposes of social support and consciousness-raising, no contradiction will arise in this domain. A shortage of community goals does not frustrate the group's ability to function; it only limits its roles. In contrast, a group which has political aspirations and goals of social change, which is interested in outcomes that can be achieved only through action in the field of power relations, has to set up an organization. In the group, then, processes of organizational institutionalization meet with the members' needs for support, spontaneity, and self-definition. Hence

groups have to seek organizational solutions which will both ensure the group's ability to grapple with political tasks, and encourage the members' individual empowerment. Experience also teaches that an organization which is formed in the course of empowerment processes is liable to turn into a disempowering organization. Community organizations which have become rigid bodies that are inaccessible to other groups in the community are a common social phenomenon.

Organization and community. If from a group point of view the organization is an option, from a community point of view setting up an organization is the process itself. Hence it is important to check to what extent the organizational model itself advances or frustrates empowerment. Empowering community planning is tested by its ability to integrate an empowering social solution with an empowering organizational solution.

Michel Foucault (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982) contributes important insights for the construction of an empowering community organization. Organizing is essential, in his view too, because the answer to power mechanisms is to develop methods of dealing with their harmful consequences. I propose the adoption of the following conclusions, selected from his writings:

1. A community organization must avoid *the supervisory gaze* that characterizes disempowering organizations. The working methods in such an organization will unequivocally avoid reaching conclusions without the community's participation, and will shun work methods based on observation and supervision. It is important to plan a space which cannot be encompassed by a supervisory gaze; to create a structure and an atmosphere that respect people's privacy as well as their right to assemble without a hierarchical gaze over both these behaviors. This should be strengthened by corresponding physical planning of the organizational setting, as specified in 5 below.

2. A community organization will not impose rules and regulations upon its participants; rather, it will draw the rules and regulations for its operation from the principles upon which it is built.
3. The organization will behave with sensitivity towards each person's body and privacy. According to Foucault, a person's body is an especially crowded intersection of power relations, because too many institutions take an interest in the person's body and psyche. This point is self-evident when homosexuals protest against discrimination and exclusion on the grounds of their sexual preferences, or when dark-skinned people complain about discrimination in a white society.
   However, it also touches much more *ordinary* populations—for example, those people who are considered *bad human material* (this is a literal translation from Hebrew of professional parlance in certain circles in Israel!) according to the criteria of one institution or another (school, the army, etc.). Their *failure* is not grasped by the institution as its own failure but as the failure of the individuals. An empowering organization must exercise an opposite approach: it has to seek within itself for the causes of failure.
4. A community organization must diminish the importance of common formal tests, such as entrance and eligibility tests. On the other hand, it must attribute greater importance to messages and symbols, especially to indirect messages. For example, a community organization which is developing a program for parents will recognize that a name like *School for Parents* may transmit a disempowering message to parents who experienced failure as children at school. If these are the people it wants to involve, such a name and framework will not be suitable (Freire & Horton, 1990).
5. A community organization will take care to transmit an empowering message in the planning of the physical space in which it is located as well. Foucault analyzed

the similarities among jails, factories, schools and hospitals, and showed how the idea of disciplinary power found its physical expression in the majority of social institutions. Hence, attention should be paid to potentially disempowering meanings and messages that the organization's structure and design are liable to convey to people. Symbols of hierarchy and rule should be abandoned, and a more equitable message should be created through the architectural design of the physical space as well (Peters, 1987).

Principles of an Empowering Community Organization

1. The organization is a means of achieving change and not an end in itself. Hence, its importance lies in its continuous activity, and its advantage lies in its simple structure. In order to be able to act, it must be based on clear communications and on as flat a structure as possible, and it must be committed to constant learning and innovation. When developing a new plan, it is preferable to create a new structure, and thus to split the activity into small units which increase the number of opportunities for people in the community to participate in the organizational effort.
2. The organization is committed to its aims and to providing for the community's needs and wants. Hence, each new service that is set up has to undergo maximal adaptation to its users. In no case is a standard service to be set up.
3. Since the organization's major resource is its activists and clients – the people of the community – it must be built to preserve a constant contact with them. The community is the source of the organization's inspiration, and its members fill valuable roles in its frameworks.
4. A community organization may not content itself with routine activity; it has to be an enthusiastic partner of the community in attaining its objectives. The organization's

role is to continue creating a community through a vision of its mission, identification with local culture and pride in its own existence.

5. In order to ensure preservation of its uniqueness and its relevance, the organization – in its structure, its objectives, and its style of action – has to be based on local knowledge. As I have already said several times in this book, most of the valid knowledge in the social domain is based on experiential knowledge, so that an organization which operates in this way will be built on a solid basis of knowledge.
6. In order for the organization to become an empowering factor in the community, it has to operate on a high level of commitment and morality, and to insist on norms of organizational behavior that create respect and appreciation towards it and towards the community it represents. In this sphere it is necessary to safeguard a high degree of firmness, for otherwise the organization is liable to lose acceleration and uniqueness, and become just another institution. On the other hand, in order to ensure continued relevance, the community organization needs to be flexible and prepared to respond to new initiatives. This synthesis – of insisting firmly on values while letting diversified initiatives guide the organization's activities – characterizes successful community organizations (Peters & Waterman, 1982.)

Like participation, organization and organizing are not in themselves empowering processes. Community organizations may be as rigid, hierarchical, and disempowering as any other organization. Hence, there is always the danger that an empowering organizing process may be followed by the setting up of a disempowering organization. Awareness of this danger does not ensure immunity against it, but it does promote the creation of important preventive mechanisms in the form of the empowering principles presented here.

Stage 5: Strategy Development

In this stage the community is already capable of expressing its opinion about its problematic situation, and even of actively resisting a plan it finds undesirable. The ability to resist existing policy or plans, we will recall, is an important condition for ensuring the community's survival. In the comprehensive rational planning process, the preferred alternative is chosen at this stage. If the planning is neither participatory nor empowering, and is conducted with no regard for the community, this is a choice that the community is liable to organize against. In this stage an empowerment-enhancing community planner engages in developing the community's strategic ability. Among other things, she may teach them how to resist effectively and to initiate their own alternative. When the community planning process cooperates with the community empowerment processes, the community can move on to the next stage—to develop an independent plan on the basis of alternatives that were developed in the earlier stages. This stage, then, is designed for strategic confrontation against a solution, a situation or a policy that the community does not agree with. The community planner's main task in this stage is to help the community develop a winning strategy.

The community planner's dilemma about political involvement. The community planner's difficult dilemma stems from the potential for tension and conflict that exists in this stage. Although resistance is an expression of active participation in the power relations, and a test of the efficiency of the community's organizational and tactical power, the community planner's commitment to the empowerment process is also put to the test here. In a situation of resistance and active struggle around the planning itself, the community planner cannot not take a position. And yet, quite unrealistically, at this very stage his employers expect him to be neutral, which means only one thing—that they expect him to support them, and at least not to act openly on the

community's side. This happens even if until this point he has been involved in all the stages, and his positions on the disputed subject are known.

For example, in the process of setting up the service for children with disabilities, when a dispute arose between the new parents' community organization and the local authority, the community planner's superiors said that she had to decide where she belonged, and claimed that she was behaving disloyally when she went on working with the organization. The local service for community planning that I investigated prevented its planners from getting involved in any resistance against

City Hall from the outset. The service forbade community planners to take actions that might be interpreted as political involvement, as part of a policy not to antagonize agencies providing finance and legitimation against the service. The time of this policy was a stormy political period in local government, but the message was understood by the planners and it has guided them ever since, in calmer times as well.

We may sum up and say that in this stage planners are expected to be politically involved in a way which may make them recoil from encouraging community empowerment. In some of the personal interviews, and in the group discussions, a few of those interviewed expressed the feeling that there exists a conflict of interests between the idea of empowerment and loyalty to the employer. None of them claimed that their job, or their advancement in the service, were endangered by being politically involved against their own employer, but experience teaches that such a danger indeed exists.

Developing Strategies of Coping with Power

Theories of power, as we have seen, reveal methods of ensuring obedience and discipline that are exercised upon the weak in the power relations. It is to those theories that we must go to draw ideas for strategies of coping with these methods.

Empowering community planning, in this stage, engages in several tasks at once: the technical task of choosing among alternatives becomes a process of development of capabilities: the community has to learn how to present its opinion about those alternatives it objects to in a substantiated manner, based on facts and findings as well (Churchman, 1979). On the more dynamic and political level, the community planner has to engage in two processes: to help the people understand the means and methods of disempowerment that are liable to be used against them in a political struggle, and to help then develop an active strategy of dealing with the difficulties of the confrontation they are involved in.

The very act of setting up a community organization is the most efficient strategy of coping with a hostile environment. However, with or without an organization, it is necessary to learn how to cope with the overt, covert and latent dimensions of power (Gaventa, 1980), and this is what we will discuss now.

Developing a strategy for coping with the overt dimension of power relations. Resistance to an existing plan takes place in the overt dimension of power relations. The ability to appear in the decision making arena is an important sign of the realization of the empowerment process and of emergence from a passive stance towards what goes on in the relevant environment. At the same time, it is important to recall that appearing in the arena does not attest to an ability to join and participate in it permanently. Entering the arena without tools, or unsystematically, may conclude in a major effort that may bring about a particular change, yet without fundamentally influencing the way decisions are made in the community.

For example, the struggle over the school: the struggle of the students who came out against a municipal decision was itself a proof of the empowerment of the participants in the process. But the struggle over the school was also conducted in more sophisticated decision making arenas,

and here manipulations that the students and parents did not have the tools to cope with were already exercised. Firstly, when the students held a demonstration at the beginning of the struggle, the local authority announced that they were minors and therefore no negotiations would be held with them. This was a tactic of division, based on a calculation that the parents would be an easier partner to negotiate with. The students, however, managed to get the parents involved and to get them to identify with their struggle and their way of conducting it.

After this, the parents demanded that representatives of the students council also participate in all the discussions. When the Knesset Education committee decided on a common forum that would make decisions about the school's future, a situation arose in which the students and their parents were a minority among professionals from several organizations. Thus from the outset there was no chance that their proposal might get accepted, and indeed it was not accepted. In that forum it was decided to open the registration zones from which students came to this school to registration for two more schools in the city. The students and their parents were not pleased with this decision, but they were forced to accept it, because they had agreed in advance to the negotiation rules.

After several years of observing the occurrences at and around the school, nothing definite may be said about the change effected in the school by the struggle. The extensive sympathy of public opinion for the students' struggle, and the local and national press coverage, influenced the decision makers' attitude towards the school. The struggle affected the way the local authority relates to the participation of students and parents in the education system, and the allocation of resources to the school. There has been an improvement in the level of achievement of the students at the school, but not to the extent of closing the gap between it and other schools in the city. Since that time, there has been no further attempt to close the school, but there have been efforts to give it new

contents and a different character. Furthermore, since the struggle over the school, the local authority has been working to change the character of social integration in the education system (see discussion below).

Generally, local resistance is not a publicized event as in the example above. In an especially severe case in a particular neighborhood in the Urban Renewal Project, people who resisted the plan were subjected to intimidation and humiliation on the part of the local authority. The situation there changed for the better after advocacy on behalf of the neighborhood by independent professionals and journalists who exposed the oppression and protested against it. Generally, however, resistance is a local matter, and the activists are subjected to pressures of cooption. They are invited to join the authorities and to receive benefits that will cause them to moderate their attitudes or to give them up entirely. For this reason the leaders of COPS in San Antonio, for example, rejected attempts to bring them closer, and avoided any contact with politicians, in order to prevent temptations and attempts to coopt them (Boyte, 1984).

It is important to provide support and guidance to new participants in the power relations who are taking part in the overt stage of discovery of decision making. They need to be trained to cope with circumstances that may arise in the decision making arena. At this stage a community planner who is not a community worker by profession may recommend that the community bring in consultants who are experts in negotiations and political struggle. However, if she is the only professional in the planning environment, she has to be alert to this need from the outset, and to diagnose the extent to which she herself can be of assistance in this sphere.

Developing a strategy for coping with the covert dimension of power relations. The covert dimension contains mechanisms that are aimed to limit the ability of resistance to power as much as possible. Empowerment strategies in this dimension

concentrate on exposing these mechanisms and developing a critical awareness towards them.

A. Developing a strategy for situations in which a consensus exists about one position, and no legitimation exists for the positions that the community represents. This kind of situation may indicate a mobilization of prejudice in order to preserve the existing situation. An empowering strategy will seek to open up public discussion on this subject in order to bring in a diversity of positions and opinions.

For example, in the struggle over the school, the discussion on the character of the integration process in that city was reopened. For many years there had been an acceptance of the situation of one-way bussing of students from the lower social class in the city to upper class areas in the city. Since the school is situated in a lower class area, it lost out from this form of integration, because students from the upper class were not brought there, while students from the area itself were bussed to schools in more established areas of the city. In fact, because of the character of these arrangements, the integration program was never really implemented at the school. The leaders of the struggle for the school claimed that if this was the reason for closing the school, then a grave social situation was being perpetuated here: no hope for educational institutions of a high standard in the poor areas of the city.

When a policy of changing the education structure in the city was announced, on the face of it there seemed to be no direct connection with the struggle over this school. The new program proposed that parents could choose a school for their children already at Junior High level (before this, free choice was allowed only at High School level. In this way attention was diverted from the past to the future, and this too is a tactic of power. The proposed change in education structure in the city obscured the main issues that interest many of the city's residents, the students of this particular school and their parents included. The new program is complex, it has various sections, and these are not presented

in full detail. For this reason, among others, it cannot be understood by someone who is not an expert on education (another tactic of power). In this way the new program is *sold* to various groups as the product that they want, despite the completely contradictory wants of these groups. Because of their developed critical awareness, the activists from this particular school, both students and parents, understood at once that the new program would harm them. However, due to a lack of a suitable organization they did not have the tools to oppose it. This was a city-wide program, and their strength was sufficient only for action within the boundaries of their school.

B. Developing a strategy for an ongoing situation of non-participation of certain groups in the decision making process. Here there is a need to examine the direct and indirect obstacles that have been set up to prevent participation. Exposing the obstacles is an achievement in the domain of critical consciousness, and a basis for preparations for social change. The great difficulty lies in overcoming them.

We may understand this better if we take as an example the findings of the evaluation team of the (Israeli) Urban Renewal Project, who found that in the end the project did not work for an improvement of the situation of especially weak populations, and improved the situation of relatively strong groups in the neighborhoods where it was deployed. In the course of the project, which operated in certain neighborhoods for ten years and more, this strategy was justified by the need to strengthen strong residents in weak neighborhoods so that they would not leave the place, and in this way to achieve a general improvement in the neighborhood situation.

In other words, what happened was not only that the weaker residents were not represented in the project and hardly even benefited from its resources, but that a rationale was also developed to justify this phenomenon, in the spirit of conservative *trickle down economy*. The idea was that the most worthwhile economic investment was to encourage the strongest residents, because they would invest and develop

the economy, and this would eventually also lead to an improvement in the situation of the weak (this should happen in a *natural* way, in the spirit of *laissez faire*, not by direct intervention). In this way improvement in the situation of the weaker residents will *trickle down* without a need to invest in them directly and thus *waste* the project's resources. The outcome – in the Urban Renewal Project in Israel, as in conservative economies allover the world – is a benevolent neglect of the weak, accompanied by an accelerated increase of the social gaps, because the stronger residents benefit not only from their own power, but also from the public resources intended for the weaker residents (Phillips, 1990).

In such conditions, when the rationale for the absence of a weak group is justified by and anchored in social values, a community planner cannot content himself with exposing the obstacles to participation. If he is interested in ensuring the participation of weaker populations (such as the physically disabled, the chronically ill, people with developmental disabilities, people released from mental hospitals) in the policy considerations that affect them, he will probably have to function as an advocate, i.e., to represent these groups himself in order to advance their cause in the community.

The community planner who worked with the group of parents of children with disabilities employed a combined strategy of advocacy/empowerment. At the beginning of the process she had to work on her own opposite the decision makers in the city in order to ensure the participation of this group in the municipal forums that were important for its interests. She had to absorb the criticism of colleagues and superiors for the fact that she was acting as the representative of the parents, instead of looking after her organization's interests. This strategy, even when it is essential, must be very brief in cases where the people have the ability to represent themselves.

In cases where people totally lack the ability to represent themselves – children, very sick or very weak people – the

professionals are permanent advocates and the representing organization's main role is advocacy.

C. Developing a strategy for coping with non-events. This is an especially difficult dimension to identify, because it is difficult to build a consciousness around something that does not happen. Here it is necessary to develop knowledge and understanding of what does not exist, of what has to happen and is not happening.

For example: The evaluation team of the Urban Renewal Project found that in the steering committees that were set up in the project, in which half of the participants were residents' representatives, there existed a procedure of not voting in order to decide on disputed issues (Alterman & Churchman, 1991). The evaluation does not mention how such a procedure came to be accepted in all the steering committees throughout the country. This is the essence of a non-event: it is not a phenomenon that occurs, but a phenomenon that does not occur.

If we pause over this example, we have to ask where the decisions were made, and what actually did happen when there was a need to decide on disputed issues. In order to answer, we need to ask and investigate: who profited from the non-event? In our example, it was not the residents. In order to understand who profited it was necessary to analyze a phenomenon that was prevalent in the project—the *budgetary flight* of project funds. The meaning of this term is that the project's money and resources were used to finance the ongoing public services in the neighborhood and at times also in the entire local authority. The investigation found that it was the Education Ministry that profited most. The education system financed many of its regular programs, and many of the renovations that would have had to be done in schools in any case, at the expense of the urban renewal of distress neighborhoods (Alterman & Churchman, 1991).

This phenomenon eluded supervision, and continued even after it was exposed, despite the fact that residents

and professionals had called attention to it during most of the years the project was operative. This same non-event – the non-participation of residents' representatives in the decision making – was what made possible the uninterrupted continuation of the *budgetary flight* of the project's funds.

The possibility of exploiting the Urban Renewal Project's budgets for ongoing operations explains why it was not in the interest of the existing power relations to allow the neighborhood steering committees to make the real decisions in the project. The continuation of this non-event to this very day in more than a few local authorities proves that to date no efficient strategy of coping with this phenomenon has been developed.

The question that arises here is: What purposes did the steering committees serve? They were a school for residents' participation, they taught negotiation, they made the rules of democracy perceptible. In other words, they had a ceremonial value, and an educational value, but they were also arenas of non-decision.

D. Developing strategies of coping with the latent dimension of power relations. Mechanisms of power in the third, latent dimension of power relations make use of social myths, prejudices, symbols, language, communications processes, information, and social legitimation, in order to achieve a strategic advantage. In this dimension of the power relations, the indirect blocks take form: mothers convey to their children a message of social inferiority and failure which they have internalized as members of a minority group that is discriminated against (Solomon, 1976). This is Foucault's *bodiless power*: the expectations of powerlessness accumulate into oppressive social structures, which accord a legitimation to disempowerment by means of practices and ideology.

The strategic lesson learned from the latent dimension is that it is necessary to make use of the power of symbols and the power of language in the shaping of social myths and symbols in the opposite direction as well. The community

needs to understand how myths, symbols and messages are used against it, and to learn how to harness these for its own ends. A community planner has to help the community to shake off stigmas and prejudices that have been attached to people and/or the environment. He can help the community shape an alternative value message of its own, and to consolidate it so that it will support the community's goals and create identification with it and with how it sees its future.

The message of COPS is a suitable example: the community organization in San Antonio has a name that is a message. The initials stand for the full name, *Communities Organized for Public Services*, but the word cops means policemen. The community is transmitting the message that it has power and is for law and order, and that for its members it is an alternative to law and order. The full name symbolizes the organization's mission and goals; the initials transmit a calming message with regard to the organization's aims towards the outside society (it is worth noting the contrast between *cops* and *Black Panthers*, a name that was chosen in a different period by people in a similar social situation in order to transmit a message of power within, but a threat to the society outside).

The conclusion to be drawn from the discussion of the dimensions of power is that exposing the covert and latent dimensions of the power relations is an important part of developing the strategy. The victories in the first, overt dimension – in the decision making arena – are the realization of the work and the effort in the second and third dimensions. Mechanisms of disempowerment work deeply on the covert and latent levels, and only by exposing these, and by developing a consciousness of them, is it possible to cope successfully in the overt arenas of decision making. The community planner's role as a developer of strategy begins with the development of a critical awareness of the situation.

This stage demands special energies and resources of the community planner. At the same time, to avoid creating the impression that we are speaking about an exceptional process, it is worth recalling that resistance is an everyday human activity. Resistance has an energy of its own that can surprise the other side (Clegg, 1989). As the struggle over the school shows, every opposition creates an effect of its own in the power field in which it acts, and hence it is impossible to precisely calculate what the strategy's outcome will be. Some writers believe that the power of each factor is actually less than the abilities it mobilizes when it attempts to achieve a specific outcome (ibid.). Community planners may draw encouragement from this, and occasionally may also see evidence of the truth of this opinion.

For the community and the community planner to be able to submit a joint proposal, they need to go through a long and far-from-simple process of creating a community and of preparing patterns of participation, organization and political involvement. It is important to note that the transition to the next stage is difficult to achieve, not only because it is an advanced stage in the community empowerment process, but mainly because many communities stop, and even get stuck, in the present stage, that of resistance. The political problems and the immense energy required for successful opposition cause many of the participants to see this as the principal goal of the community effort. Some believe that the struggle is the principal achievement; but there also exist rivalry and personal hatred that were aroused in the course of the struggle, and it is difficult to get free of these. The main criticism expressed about conflict as a legitimate professional practice has to do with the fact that it is difficult to control it, and difficult to ensure that it will be possible to manage it and resolve it and then go on advancing towards the achievement of the goals. At times the conflict consumes too many energies and takes too high a price. One of the advantages of entering into a systematic planning process is the organizing of the resistance into a structured framework of negotiations. In this

way there is better control of contacts and emotions, and it is possible to have some more control over the conflict.

It is important to recall that resistance is not always a stage in the community's development. At times it is a desperate struggle for the community's survival. A group of women in Chicago who objected to a plan to build a stadium that would divide their community (Feldman & Stall, 1994), residents of public housing in St. Louis who resisted a plan to evict them (Boyte, 1984), students in Israel who resisted the plan to close their school, are examples of struggles for actual survival, not attempts to obtain an advantage in the power arena.

Stage 6: Presenting an *Alternative* Plan

In this stage, the central product of the planning – the plan – is presented. I have chosen to call the product of the empowering planning process an *alternative plan*, so as to differentiate it from *ordinary* plans which are not based on partnership and on local knowledge (Friedmann, 1992). The alternative plan is a product of the struggles of the previous stage: people have become persuaded that they have to prepare a suitable plan by themselves, and have accumulated the ability and confidence to carry out the task.

The empowering community planner has a unique opportunity to design a proposal that is based on professional knowledge and is at the same time original and well fitted to the community. This is a singular situation, and I want to present its advantages here both as a social solution and as a professional planning method. The agency that employs the planner receives a product which meets its professional standards, and is suitable to the place where it is about to be implemented. The community receives a professional product as a consequence of a joint effort with professionals, and not out of dependence upon or blind faith in them.

In an ordinary comprehensive planning process the presentation of the plan is generally the final stage of the planner's work. In community planning in general, and

empowerment-enhancing planning in particular, continuity is very important. Implementing the alternative plan is a process of adjustment to the community. The implementation stage too is a process of mutual learning, listening, and constructive evaluation of what has been achieved and what needs correction and change. Hence it is very important that the community planner's work should not cease at this stage.

It is worth emphasizing several advantages of a local plan over a conventional plan:

Firstly, the plan is relatively cheap, because it is generally based on local resources and local knowledge. *Imported* plans are always more expensive because they are not aware of available local resources of knowledge, work, volunteering and improvisation.

Secondly, the local problem is human-intensive. It involves more face-to-face interaction among the planners and the implementers. An external plan, in contrast, will try to replace human interaction with capital, and for this reason too it is more expensive.

Thirdly, the technology of the local plan is familiar locally, and generally builds on local technologies even when it is more advanced than they are. The plan is sensitive to local conditions. In contrast, external plans are designed to replace local knowledge and local practice with advanced technology, and therefore require the adaptation of the place and the people to the plan.

Fourthly, the management of the local plan is flexible and flat in its structure, is generally based on the knowledge that changes may occur during the implementation, and emphasizes mutual learning among implementers from the outside and the local people. The management of an external plan is generally bureaucratic, and for this reason the plan's formal aspects are hard to change. The external method emphasizes technocracy: teaching is from above to below, and there is almost no mutual learning in the course of the implementation.

Fifthly, the local plan is built in such a way that it itself can watch over negative by-products easily and quickly, while with the external plan it is hard to control undesirable by-products.

Sixthly, the local plan has an advantage in the speed of transition from planning to implementation, while in external projects prolonged preparation is necessary. I remember local community plans where the implementation began a day after the plan was completed. In contrast, long months of preparation and adaptations passed (in the same community) until it became possible to begin implementation of the first plan in the Urban Renewal Project. (The six points are based on Friedmann, 1992).

The setting up of the service for children with disabilities is an alternative project of this kind. Nonetheless, it is important to note that no solutions of the type which may be called an *ordinary* plan exist for children with developmental disabilities. So it is actually the only plan that exists in this domain. The fundamental difference in terms of planning is in the way it is implemented and in the plan's quality. For those parents of deviant children, no other possibility existed other than to initiate a program by themselves, because, as we will recall, the reason for their organizing together was the severe lack of social services for people in their situation. Since the time they set them up, the services are available to them. The process of individual and community empowerment undergone by this community in the course of organizing together and setting up the services is a most important accompanying achievement. Necessity, then, is often the main motivation for developing local programs, as distinct from cases where the local plan is preferred in principle over other plans.

Actually, for the community the division into planning and implementation does not exist. The people continue living their lives and acting in the community. Hence it is desirable that the implementation processes – which are processes of adapting the plan to the actual conditions – continue in the spirit of the planning stages.

Stage 7: Evaluation

Evaluating the degree of empowerment produced by the planning process is the stage that completes the empowering planning process. The evaluation establishes the knowledge and experience that have been acquired in the process, and distills and prepares them for further use. This is a concluding stage of one process and a starting point for new processes in the community and for new and different planning roles for the planner. Stability is not a characteristic of community processes. In each cycle of community activity there are opportunities for, and dangers to, empowerment, and a particularly successful stage of empowerment may be followed by a regression to a stage of disempowerment. The community organization is one of the means for ensuring relative stability in the empowerment process, but it is not a guarantee of such stability. High stability in a community organization may be a sign of institutionalization of procedures which preferably should be kept flexible, an indication that the organization has become disempowering.

In the evaluation stage, several important issues are summed up. The first, and at times the only issue dealt with in this stage is the degree of effectiveness and efficiency of the planning and the program. Since this book focuses on empowerment processes, we will not devote space to this issue (anyone interested in evaluation of outcomes of social programs will find excellent books on the subject, e.g., Rossi & Freeman, 1989). The second issue is the degree of empowerment that the program, which is the product of the planning, has produced in the course of its implementation, and the third issue is the degree of empowerment that was made possible and was encouraged by the empowering professional practice. I will now discuss these two issues.

Evaluating the Degree of Empowerment Provided by the Program

This is evaluation of the solution – the program – in terms of empowerment. It is an attempt to estimate to what extent the program has enabled the people involved in setting it up to have more (actual and perceptible) control over their lives and their environment. The principal questions for evaluation are:

A. Does the program serve the populations for which it was initially intended? If so, what services does it provide? At times it turns out that the service is not being given to the population which especially needed it, but to others. If this is indeed the case, and the plan serves other or additional populations, it is important to know this, and to analyze the causes.

   This point connects with a known organizational phenomenon: human services tend to prefer certain clients over others, and to select those who receive the services according to undeclared criteria (Hasenfeld, 1984). This happens, for example, when a marriage counseling service, intended for a particular distressed neighborhood and financed from its budget, is set up in the center of the city and not in the neighborhood itself. The distant location has actually been designed to ensure secrecy to those who visit the service, and to spare them the possible stigma. However, an evaluation after some time may reveal that the program is being used by married couples from allover the city, and that in fact the majority of those receiving the service were economically established residents, while people from the neighborhood itself were making almost no use of the service.

B. Has the program encouraged community participation in the environment in which it was implemented? Who are

the people who participated? (It should be recalled that the empowering goal is to reach population groups that have not participated before). What is the level of participation? What is the number of volunteer participants, relative to the number of salaried workers in the program? What are the actual roles being filled by the new participants? To what extent are these roles socially valuable in the views of the various participants?

The aim of these questions is to understand whether the program contents itself with a small nucleus of participants in a particular domain, or, by means of organizational structure and agendas, creates diverse opportunities for involving volunteers in its ranks. It is also important to know what roles the participants fill, for as we have said, it is important that as many people as possible obtain the opportunity to fill socially valuable roles. There are programs which produce a hierarchy of importance between people in salaried positions, who fill important roles, and unsalaried volunteers, who fill marginal roles. When the program puts people in maintenance roles identical to those they fill in their private lives, these people may miss out on an important opportunity in their lives (I refer mainly to repairs, cleaning, cooking, which, even if they involve responsibility, may not involve learning of new skills).

C. What influence has the program had on the local environment? Has anything changed in the local people's ability to influence the physical environment since the program was implemented? What has changed in the lives of particular groups as a consequence of the program? Can one say that a community has been created in the program's environment? What community and whose community is this (see further in par. E)?

D. To what extent has the program helped to organize a community? This question examines *what remains* on the organizational level after the planning. Has a group of equals been formed? Is there a group of activists who are committed to continuing the program? Are people who were active in the plan initiating or participating in new projects following their experience in this one? Has a roof-organization been set up following the planning? If so, what is its character? How closed and hierarchical, or open and equitable, is it?

E. Has the program contributed to the creation of a community? Besides its other achievements, a local program, in order to be empowering, has to contribute to a sense of community. Some questions which can discover signs of such a contribution are, for example: Has a new community organization, created by a group which was previously not actively involved in the community, been set up around the project? To what extent does the project contribute to social control, to the community's ability to cope with its principal problems (Holahan & Wandersman, 1987)? Has the program contributed a service which the community needs access to? It has to be recognized that for the community it is preferable that certain services (such as a drug rehabilitation center) be not too accessible, so not every affirmative answer to the previous question will be relevant. What has the project contributed to social networking? To what extent does it provide opportunities for new acquaintanceships and new connections in the community? To what extent does the project provide opportunities to create connections with agencies outside the community in a significant new way?

F. The creation of new and surprising social networks is an indication that the program has contributed to social integration in the community and its surroundings. Hence it is important to ask to what extent the program

encourages and enables the integration of the community into its social, organizational and political environment without its losing any of its authenticity.

G. To what extent does the program encourage a new leadership? Who? How many? In what domains? Questions of revitalizing the leadership are directly connected with questions of power. Empowerment is a process which develops leadership among people in the community, and the proof of the plan's success in encouraging individual empowerment may express itself, among other things, in the development of new leaders as a consequence of the plan.

H. To what extent has the program had a good influence on the image of its users and the community it serves, as perceived by others in the environment? The reference is to a change in the prejudices and the stigma that exist against the people who need the service. There are different ways of estimating the inputs of the program in this context:

(1) To what extent has the program been publicized in the community itself, in the town or city, among groups of populations which should have an interest in it?

What kind of publicity has the program received outside the community, and what direction has this publicity taken? Has it created appreciation of the community and interest in joining it, or has it strengthened the stigma and the isolation of the community?

(2) Have there been expressions of satisfaction with the program? By whom? Have there been criticisms of the program? By whom? It is possible to examine the kinds of statements that have appeared in the various communications media about the program and about

the community before and after the implementation of the program, and to analyze expressions of satisfaction with it and criticisms of it in terms of two aspects: their content and their source.

The populations whose response it is important to receive if we want to understand the extent of empowerment fostered by the program are: users of the program; people who live in the vicinity of the program (it is important that the program also contribute to its neighboring environment, in aesthetic values, in prevention of noise and pollution); people responsible for the program; professionals; politicians.

(3) It is possible to draw upon evaluation methods used by urban planners and to develop a method that will attempt to present the uses and the costs of the program, and to evaluate its success from the points of view of various populations (e.g., Hill, 1968; Lichfield, 1975).

It is difficult to assume that a single program will have a significant influence on the social image, or on stigma and prejudices. Nonetheless, every social program generally invests a great deal of effort in this domain, and it is important to evaluate its outcomes, both as a contribution in the right direction that has had an accumulating influence, and as inspiration for subsequent programs in this environment. Hence it is important to try to evaluate the extent of the program's influence on improvement of the community image.

Evaluating the Extent of Community Empowerment Facilitated by the Planning Process

Here we engage in evaluating the extent of individual and community empowerment encouraged by the community planner herself.

Some questions about the enhancement of the community empowerment process are: To what extent did the planner develop dialogue and praxis in the course of her intervention? To what extent did she make possible a process of collaboration and develop tools to ensure participation? To what extent did she define her various roles and adapt them to the needs of the community empowerment process? To what extent did she assist in setting up a community organization already during the planning stages?

To what extent did she help in developing an appropriate community strategy? To what extent was local knowledge also used in the planning process? Did the planners also help in developing an ordered evaluation process for their plan?

Evaluating the Extent of Individual Empowerment Encouraged by the Planning Process

It is important that the planner ask himself a number of questions about the extent of individual empowerment that his intervention has provided.

1. To what extent has the planning intervention assisted in extending the local participants' knowledge about and responsibility for the environment? What tools were used to bring this about? What were the outcomes?
2. To what extent did the planners cope with negative feelings (such as anger and contempt) on the part of people in the planning environment, and to what extent did they manage to channel these and use them to produce a critical consciousness and a positive energy of inspiring people to act for themselves? This question requires the creation of operational categories of critical consciousness and positive energy, and this in itself is research of great value.
3. Did the planners manage to encourage mutual help among the groups participating in the planning?
4. Did they exploit every opportunity to create socially valuable roles for people in the planning environment and in the planning intervention process?
5. Did they develop the roles of the teacher and the guide? And, as a corollary, has the planning process also been a process of learning and of exercising social skills?
6. Has the planning process assisted in enabling people to develop a critical consciousness towards their own situation, and has the planner himself arrived at new insights with regard to his work, his life, his own social situation?
7. Did the planners accord sufficient importance to the self-respect of the participants in the process? Did they contribute to feelings of self-worth among the people they worked with?
8. Finally, in the light of the outcomes, do they think that they have devoted sufficient time and resources to encouraging the empowerment process?

These three sets of questions – evaluating the extent of empowerment achieved by the plan; evaluating the extent of community empowerment in the professional planning intervention; and evaluating the extent of individual empowerment encouraged by the community planner – represent the possible achievements of processes that encourage individual, community, and professional empowerment in the community planning process.