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INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION AS SEMANTIC FIELDS: AGENTS' PERSPECTIVES THROUGH INTER DISCIPLINARY ANALYSIS.

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**INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION AS SEMANTIC FIELDS: AGENTS'
PERSPECTIVES THROUGH INTER DISCIPLINARY ANALYSIS**

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Introduction. The purpose of this presentation is to share the ongoing development of an interdisciplinary framework being constructed by a network of researchers for the analysis of ethnographic and discourse-based data, generated in the context of a two-year study in Argentina, a project called WORK, DEVELOPMENT AND DIVERSITY. RESEARCH ON POLICY AND METHODOLOGY FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT (www.trabajoydiversidad.com.ar). The project started from the assumption that participatory oriented strategic planning has been on the agenda for public policy debate for the last fifteen years, to the point of being considered one of those stereotypical “*musts*” policy makers, government officers and NGOs must address. A considerable amount of state resources have been, and are currently invested in Plans and Programs devoted to locally developing community resources. However, an important question remains un-answered, namely whether participatory strategic planning is, indeed, participatory, and whether social actors called for, and involved in these processes, do think they are being part of real problem solving and decision making. Other related issues need to be answered as well, such as whether local development does support better societal practices and relationships, and whether civil society organizations are participating more in public administration and policy decisions than they were ten years ago. Lastly, an overall question to be addressed is whether Social Plans and Programs are being effective.

This project is currently conducting research on these social issues by: (1) documenting the impact of local development processes on regional/local economies and societies through a combined ethnographic and sociolinguistic framework; (2) conducting action-research studies in a sample of regions/municipalities where local development processes are implemented, identified by methodological and theoretical criteria. This study is being conducted by a network of public and private research oriented universities, CONICET-based Research Institutes, and research and practice NGOs, linking overseas with FORMEZ, an Italian governmental office responsible for local development policy

In this paper we present data from two (North East and Central Argentina) of the four regions under study, to show the specific ways in which the logic of practice in several different social agents (Bourdieu, 1990) create specific semantic fields through action and discourse (Bahktin, 1986; Giddens,

1979; Hymes, 1974; Gumperz, 1982a y 1982b), and how, in turn, the generation of these semantic fields orients agents' positioning towards their interpretation and action upon the dyad inclusion/exclusion.

One of the over-arching themes across sites is the question about as *who is who*, in each social situation analyzed, and who is included, and in what aspects of social, political and economic life. Additionally, these questions relate to how is political and social agency understood according to the discourse of being included/excluded.

We assume that agents orient their interactions and build strategic orientations towards what counts as inclusion/exclusion within the current model, and we analyze how these orientations present internal tensions, as well as tensions across other agents' logics and ways of interacting (Luhman, 1997; 1998). We conclude by showing the potential for combining disciplinary frameworks to the interpretation of social action by way of constructing an inter-disciplinary framework that bridges key concepts across the mentioned fields of study. We show a fertile approach towards understanding very complex phenomena, at the center of thematic discussions current in Argentina, running across the subjects of Development Models, Inclusion/Exclusion Dynamics, and State Policy.

Framework: Recent changes in Argentina's political scene as they relate to local development strategies. Argentina is organized in socio-economic areas based upon the territory's high ecological complexity; thus, access to natural resources has determined much of what is produced, and how. Mapped onto the geopolitical organization of the country (which is structured as provinces and municipalities), a regional organization has emerged, based on the access that specific groups of people have had to natural resources. Historically, several municipalities and regions of our country have based their growth upon mono-productive, extractive strategies. However, not all municipalities and regions in Argentina have followed this mono-productive and extractive pattern, and have created others based on the complementation of several different ways of organizing the economy. When analyzing this phenomenon, Barreto (2001)¹ explains that the latter is in place in Argentina at least since 1870, and that it ran parallel to the mono-productive and extractive economic pattern. Later, when this socio-economic development perspective based on diversification and complementarities was studied, it was labeled Self-Sustained Development (*Desarrollo Autosustentable*). It was characterized not only as an economic model, but as a framework and orientation towards environmental and cultural sustainability based on positively integrating the human experience with the environment, and of creating value chains for producing social and economic goods. A core issue underlying this mode of relating to nature and society is that resources are carefully relied upon and are not depredated or intensively exploited. During the 90's, a methodological orientation towards Self-Sustained Development emerged, widely known as *Self Sustained Strategic Planning for Local Development*. These methods are based on the idea that local development had to be re-discussed, and that it was imperative that productive diversification was achieved, in particular in municipalities and regions where a mono-productive approach had dominated the economy. In other words: it was a change in context what prompted the need to rethink and redesign ways of conceiving what development might be, and how to re-direct the socioeconomic planning in order to diversify and complement natural and socio-cultural resources. The ways in which these processes started to be conceived of was through *participatory strategic planning methodologies for local development*. It must be noted that in many of these places where participatory strategies started to be used, the context had drastically changed (e.g., because of the impact of technology on the ways in which production was organized, or because of the organizational and economic modifications caused by privatization²). Both the productive and the governmental aspects generated the need of jointly conducting the state work with civil society organizations in several municipal and provincial administrations, for which the state used several different models (e.g., a model known as partnership management, *gestión asociada*, or else, participatory strategic planning, as noted above, etc.).

¹ Barreto, A. (2001). La RAMA. *Una propuesta para relacionar y compartir experiencias*. En *Desarrollo Local. Una respuesta a escala humana a la globalización*. Burin y Heras, compiladores, pp. 113-121. Editorial CICCUS- La Crujía: Buenos Aires, Argentina.

² Heras, A. I. Y Burin, D. (2001) *Enfoque de sistemas y análisis comunicacional aplicados a procesos de desarrollo local*. En *Desarrollo Local. Una respuesta a escala humana a la globalización*. Burin y Heras, compiladores, pp. 53-85. Editorial CICCUS- La Crujía: Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Coincidental with these processes, at the national state level a process of de centralizing took place (what has been known as the State Reform) during Menem's government. A consequence of this process is that now the municipal and provincial administrations perform functions that were not traditionally their responsibility, and they have to do so with limited resources, thus ultimately depending upon national resources. During the past five to ten years, whether they were *partnership management* or *participatory strategic planning*, these joint state and civil society experiences were systematically supported by the state so that participatory development actions could be designed and implemented locally.

The explicit goals sought by these kinds of policies were to become more efficient to seek local administrative governmental strategies (Smulovitz y Clemente, 2004). Additionally, since 1983, Argentina went back to a democratic form of government, after several years of a cruel, genocide dictatorship that killed thousands of people, and pushed several hundreds of thousand to migrate to other countries. In this context, the wave of strategic planning and local governmental strategies was interpreted, at least in part, as a return to democratic practices. Social and political participatory strategies were at the core of these ways of organizing administrative and governmental policies. However, looking back at recent historical times, specifically during the 90's, one can identify other patterns in these kinds of "local development/strategic planning movements" (Bertolotto y Clemente, 2006). Some scholars, for example Poggiese (2006), sustain that these kinds of orientations are a manipulative political maneuver that empty the very idea of what a participatory strategy for local government may be.

However, it can not be denied that political and administrative de centralizing policies did indeed take place, and that these kinds of orientations have placed a high demand on different levels of the administration (cities, provinces, regional administrative networks, etc). These new kinds of governmental frames framed a complex system, one that hosts several different kinds of logics/communities³ with in it (Bourdieu, 1990).

For example:

- epistemic communities, which group theoretical, methodological and interpretative views about the problems that are set to resolve;
- communities of professionals, that is, consulting professionals who are not explicitly recognized by other participants all the time, since their insertion in the process is not continuous;
- political participants (those in state, elected governmental posts, for whom the logic of practice is based on becoming indispensable to whom they are supposed to serve, establishing thus a type of relationship labeled as CLIENT-PROVIDER);
- local communities, formed by the local people to whom several of the social programs are directed to;
- economic communities, namely those groups who base their interest in their pure economic logic.

For these reasons, our project has sought to define the overall experiences that have implemented a participatory strategic planning approach among Argentinean municipalities and regions where such processes have been put into practice for 4 to 6 years, in 4 regions (North West, North East, Patagonia and Central), briefly describing their recent and past experience, and critically examining their results.

We also seek to:

Apply the results of the analyses performed as described above to questioning the need and/or the ways in which participatory strategic planning is to be implemented.

³ We use the word "logic" as in Bourdieu's logic of practice, and we relate it with the idea of community to indicate groups that can be identified as sharing elements that make them recognizable to themselves and to others as a GROUP..

Implement action research processes so that both the problems identified, and the methodologies sought to be implemented, are critically studied and assessed by participants.

Define and describe the challenges (or even problems) throughout these processes.

In this paper, we specifically present findings from two of the four regions under study (NorthEast and Central regions); in regards to the Central Region, we have generated tools for documenting, analyzing and interpreting face-to-face interactions among participants of state-civil society meetings. These meetings are taking place due to a political and administrative reform in the City of Buenos Aires, where the 1996 City Constitution has created new ways of governing the city (called Communal Government).

In the North East Region, we have documented the several different communities of practice who are participating in the local development processes, seeking to understand the ways in which each of the communities identified (within a specific region or place) create and sustain collective imagery and representations of who they are, what they seek to achieve, and how they relate to others participating in the social and political processes under way ⁴.

Theoretical and analytical framework. We assumed that face-to-face interactions, as well as perception of these interactions, create social realities in which participants of any situation display their everyday lives, and strategically interpret their past and orient their actions towards the future. We base this assumption on the fact that there are semiotic mediations from where we all (as human subjects) construct representations and imagery about our social experience. We sustain that all human subjects act taking these representations and realities into account, and that in interacting we sustain and recreate these realities. It is precisely because of this semiotic capacity that we produce discourse; several different formats are used to produce discursive accounts of our lives, and we create discourses based on these different languages, namely kinetic, proxemic, ornamental, oral and written words, imagery, amongst several others.

Discourse is also based on a specific trait, namely that it does not articulate its own locus of production/generation. A certain veiled origin is thus attributed to discourse and as such, the specific ways in which meaning is created tends to remain silent, tacit or obscure. It is in this sense that we assume that there are frameworks or contexts created by our discursive practices, which, in turn, provide meaning to our actions, and engender (make possible) specific actions, ways of acting and perceiving, and realities on their own. Following this line of thought, one can support the premise that social imagery, discursive practices and actions and interactions, constitute specific communities' resources and become cultural ways of understanding the world.

Cultural and social representations are produced and sustained by communicative action, that is, in interaction, and as such, communication is the process by which shared interpretations are made possible by any given community of practice/ideas. It is to be noted, however, that socially shared representations and interpretive frameworks support and constrain specific interpretations of life; frame clashes are to occur when/whether different communities share the same space (Agar, 1990; Jodelet and Tapia, 2000).

In communities where members recognize themselves as such, a specific, contextualized common system of beliefs is at the core of shared interaction, and becomes credible, not to be questioned because it achieves an ordinary (natural) status. Once this ordinary and given for granted status is achieved, members of the community do not need to make it explicit, and thus, this set of shared knowledge becomes part of what counts as reality. It is also in this respect that at certain points, veiled or unspoken shared systems of beliefs need to be made explicit; it is also in this respect that social interaction amongst members of different communities, at some points, do not make these veiled shared systems explicit, yet they impose them over others.

⁴ Collective imagery and/or representations of the social collective are themes discussed by several different authors such as Marx, Weber, Durkheim, M. Mauss, M. Bloch, L. Dumont, F. Furet, Castoriadis, and Bourdieu.

Participants in any given situation, specifically if they belong to different communities, may dispute what counts as true, valid or even real, since any specific community of participants may impose over the others what they determine to be true, valid, or even real. If this is achieved, one may say that they have managed to impose a certain simplifying operation over the other participants, thus making it possible for their logic to prevail, and to *reduce a certain amount of complexity at play* (Pintos, 1994). In our fieldwork and analysis, we have identified such processes taking place both in the Central and the North East Regions.

In the Central Region, our analysis shows that participants create and sustain specific speech genre and functions of language (Bahktin, 1986; Hymes, 1974) from where, and with which, they dispute meaning with other participants. An ethnographic approach (Rockwell, 1987) was used to identify and analyze how, through genres and functions of discourse, participants create agency (Giddens, 1979). Discursive practice, as has been noted above, is regarded as social action, and as ways by which socially situated practices are created in each specific context (Heras, 1993), for example, knowledge generation, political friendship or collaboration, invocation of hierarchical roles and relationships for specific purposes, etc. In studying discursive practices as ways in which social agency is built, it is also possible to identify patterns that start to emerge, and may break the social order (Arendt, 1954; Bourdieu, 1990; Gumperz, 1982). Therefore, we assumed that agency, discourse and social practice are dynamically and dialectically inter related; factors that contribute to sustain these dialectical and dynamic relations are, amongst others, the use of grammar (whether it follows a standard versus a non standard pattern, and for what purposes); the creation of newly coined terms; the use of space and time in building interaction amongst participants, etc.

In the North East region we studied how a Local Development (LD) system was being built by using Strategic Planning as a method. In particular, we identified the several different communities interacting in a single geographical space, and we studied the several logics of practice at play. We have used Niklas Luhmann's theory to identify inclusion/exclusion processes that define what counts as local development for the participants in a given space. Luhmann, who wrote within the constructivist and systemic perspective in sociology, stated that in order to understand what a given system might be (in this case, LD system), one must identify what does and does not belong to it. Any given social system is described one that

- a) generates its own components;
- b) defines its own limits;
- c) states auto referential limits and identity processes by which each of its components makes sense because there are other components that are related to it;
- d) tends to become closed, self contained.

As we already stated, communication is the process by which meaning is created and constructed, produced and reproduced, and meaning becomes, thus, one of the limits for any social system. In this respect, meaning constitutes also a way by which any object or fact is distinguished from others (because if all were the same, meaning would not exist). Luhman stated also that no system uses the codes created by other system, nor does it understand it, ultimately. However, any system does perceive and understand other system's creations by using its own codes and ways of interpreting reality. This is partly the explanation Luhman provides for the fact that in any given system, a set of sub systems tends to be created, since total meaning is impossible to achieve.

Nowadays, all sub systems in any given system achieve certain independence, and interact with other sets of systems and sub systems by using their own generated codes. This fact makes for the vulnerability social systems as a whole are experiencing.

Central Region. Autonomous City of Buenos Aires' de centralizing governmental policies. An analysis⁵ of the process of de centralizing policies in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires is presented in this section, a process that has been called by their participants "transition process" (the transition is

⁵ Some analytical aspects discussed here are relatd to a paper to be presented in Tucumán, Argentina, and co authored by Heras, Murúa, Cangiani y Burin.

from centralized city government to “Communal-Based Government”). The #1777 Law and the #248 Decree established, in 2006, the ways in which a gradual process is to take place, whereby each *Comuna* is ran by a seven-member Board. The Board, elected by citizens, is in turn controlled by a Communal-Council, to monitor that the community’s (i.e., neighboring residents’) opinions are taken into account. One of the stated goals of the Junta and the Council is to define, and put to work, a plan for Local Development through a participatory approach.

Recent historical facts related to the administrative and legal process of Communal Government. In 1994 the National Argentinean Constitution was reformed, and as a result of this process, the City of Buenos Aires was declared Autonomous. A consequence of this autonomy is that, for the first time ever, Buenos Aires citizens can elect their representatives directly. The City of Buenos Aires sanctioned a Constitution in 1996. This new normative framework is considered cutting-edge by several researchers, in that it established that participatory democratic practices were to be observed to govern the city, and that a series of different mechanisms were put into place in order to accomplish so. Some researchers have also stated that, even if the written norm was indeed cutting-edge, its implementation is at least delayed, or, worst, will never take place. As an example, the process of locally-based government strategies (*Comunas*) did not take place for 10 years, and now that it is starting to occur, several difficulties have arisen, among which contradiction between the City Constitution and other Decrees and Laws is not a minor one (Rabey y Martínez 2006; Des Plats, 2006).

The #1777 Law established that the City be divided into 15 *Comunas*. The limits of each *Comuna* were at dispute, and finally, when an agreement was reached, several participants still disagree (for example, with the administrative limits and with the fact that each *Comuna* now has to accept a grouping of neighborhoods that traditionally have not networked amongst them). Nonetheless, the already mentioned Law, and other concurrent Decrees and Regulations, have set in motion the so-called “transition” process. One of the mechanisms established by Decrees #350 y #248 is that all citizens should participate in what the City Chief has called Forums and Participatory Spaces; these norms have also regulated the frequency of the meetings, the ways in which the meetings should occur, and other aspects. The fact that the transition has been so closely and specifically regulated by the Ministry of De Centralization has also been a huge challenge, since many a participant, or civil society organization, would not think these are the best ways to invite participatory practices to take place.

Research questions. At the beginning we posed several descriptive and exploratory general questions: Which are the sectors represented in the *transition spaces*? Are there different (contradictory, complementary?) definitions of what counts as participating in these spaces/meetings? Throughout fieldwork, other questions emerged: What kinds of discursive genre can be identified as being used by participants in these spaces? What are the specific ways in which agency is constructed through and in interaction, and through which discursive practices, specifically? What functions of language are set in motion, by whom and with what purpose?

We have thus so far accomplished:

- thick description of the ways in which participation is occurring;
- preliminary and exploratory interpretative frameworks for meaning constructed in interaction, specifically as it relates to what counts as political and social participation, and what counts, and how do relate, party political participation with neighborhood, social and communal participation;
- we have identified, and started to systematize, concrete mechanisms by which democratic and pluralistic participation seems to be supported and/or constrained.

As a result, we have constructed a data corpus composed of several different types of sources, such as newspaper sources (period running from 1996-2007); normative corpus (laws, decrees, rules and regulations); archival resources (i.e., bibliographical and related sources, e.g. civil society’s organizations’ archives); pamphlets; pictures; videos; notes and artifacts. We have conducted ethnographic interviews, and other types of interviews when appropriate; we have also explored our ideas with other researchers and specialists who are studying related social and political phenomena.

Analysis. Our analytic process is iterative; for a complete description, see Anexos 1 y 2 (currently available in Spanish). For example, we first identified and interpreted several participatory spaces as speech communities, and we analyzed speech genre and functions of language (Bahktin, 1986; Hymes, 1974), in order to pose questions about *what counts as politics* in these spaces. We also continued to

pose descriptive and analytic questions so that we could redirect our observation process to other spaces that we did not specifically studied at the beginning but became relevant as our analytic process evolved. We identified, and described, the several different types of participants in these spaces, and to analyze their specific and culturally situated ways of acting, perceiving and believing, we conducted domain analysis (Spradley, 1980). For seeking understanding into *who is a participant here*, our guiding question was framed, for example, as “who is here”, “what is she/he doing”? Etc. We contrasted and compared *emic, etic and mixed* perspectives so that our own interpretations could be challenged. Some of us participated as observers, and some participated as participants of full right, since some of us are citizens and residents of the Buenos Aires’ Comunas.

In our analytic process, we identified that PARTICIPANTS was an over arching category, allowing for several different types of participants to be called so. We noted that self-nomination as participant counted as enough for someone to be considered such, no matter his or her agenda, or even whether they incurred into frank contradictions (stating, for example, that they attended a meeting as an ordinary citizen, and in the same meeting, switching into militant mode). We constructed several lists (types of participants), for example as follows:

A PARTICIPANT CAN BE A (all listed below):

- neighbor;
- political party “militant”;
- associated neighbors;
- civil society organizations;
- civil society representative;
- political candidate;
- officer;
- legislator.

As we stated above, two specific characteristics were common to the majority of participants: 1) that some of them could/would switch from an assumed role to another, during the same meeting; 2) that members of one type of participant category who would not be a natural participant in a given meeting, would or could attend nonetheless, participating as a full member. Implicit consensus was sustained as to allowing for both identified practices.

Our recursive analyses also showed that participants would also re name other participants, using self-coined terms, or terms coined in specific speech communities (for example, in the political party speech community). Examples are: the term “ROSQUERO”, which in the political party jargon means someone who will impose their agenda, even if in doing so may contradict their own ethical stated principles; or the term “REPRESENTATIVES OF THE POPULAR SECTOR”, to mean participants who attributed to themselves the capacity of interpreting and understanding disenfranchised groups. Even though a ROSQUERO termed as such may not self-recognize himself or herself as one, what is important to make visible is that these categories are part of these systems of thought and action, and are used to create and sustain meaning.

We took time to analyze the embedded term VECINO amongst the terms we identified, since this term seemed to be referred to constantly by members of the groups we observed. We noted that VECINO is a way of being and belonging, and that being a VECINO can grant several different rights to participants, some of which are NOT granted to other participants. However, in performing this specific analysis, contradictions emerged, since sometimes, some participants would self-describe themselves as VECINOS yet act as something else (e.g. militant of a political party).

Following this analytical pattern, we studied also other embedded terms, such as MILITANT. We found that, apparently, VECINOS and MILITANTES might be defined by distinguishing features that, in turn, were opposed to each other. However, the same logic of practice underlined the MILITANT participatory strategies: a MILITANT could be, at the same time, a VECINO, and no one in the meeting would challenge this double status.

Brief discussion. Our data corpus and analysis allow us to show that discursive patterns, and specifically speech genre and functions of speech, are one of the privileged mechanisms by which a very important political process is taking place. We are now tracing specific units of analysis to a larger context, that of the recent social participatory history, on the one hand, and that of the political parties' campaign to running elections, on the other hand (national and city elections are taking place this year).

At a first sight, when observing and documenting meetings, one is left with the impression that a myriad of insignificant interactions, petty disputes, and non-conducive arguments are at stake. However, closer interpretation of these same data may lead us to the texture of political and social participatory experiences. We can state that it is not only words, but it is meaning what is at stake. And the dispute over meaning and what count as facts is what political participatory processes are made of.

We conclude that it is relevant and necessary to take a two-way approach to the study of these kinds of processes: on the one hand, first hand, face-to-face interaction data needs to be documented and analyzed in order to identify and interpret the situated meaning-making mechanisms that make politics happen. On the other hand, these data should be looked into as part and parcel of larger social, political and recent (and not so recent) historical processes, since the meaning of an event may change when looked at from a different perspective, or as part of a larger context. In this respect, our inter disciplinary team is constructing frames for analyzing different, several pieces of data from angles that may provide insights into "what is happening here".

Our analyses of this participatory process has been oriented by prior analysis of school data, and we are showing how categories used to describe social situations within schools and classrooms may prove useful to analyzing these other types of social situations. For example, in our work in schools and classrooms we have coined the analytic category of ambiguous zone (Heras, Guerrero, Martínez, 2006); in other pieces of writing, we have also anchored our analysis to a dialectic pair (position/positioning) which proven to be fertile as well (Heras, 1993; 1995). Building on these analytic constructs, and establishing interpretive relationships amongst them, we are now being able to transpose them into a different setting altogether, which may mean that our basic hypothesis holds true: human interaction is about making meaning, and meaning may guide what counts as real, true and even intervene in defining material disputes over goods, resources and controlling mechanisms. We have followed Hanna Arendt (1997-1956-59) to establish connections between praxis and lexis, the two domains that she found useful in order to analyze human interaction, and political participation in particular.

North East Region. Social Inclusion as a code for bridging difference. Data corpus for the North East Region is composed of interviews, observations, artifacts and archives. Through our analysis we identified the different sets of subsystems that conform a complex field, namely that of Local Development (LD). Our analysis identified veiled procedures by which meaning is generated. WE have also identified ways in which the sets of sub systems, and their participants, define their relevant fields. We present these analyses below. See Anexos 3 y 4 (currently available in Spanish) for a detailed description of some of the analytic procedures.

Definitions according to the communities or collective groups identified.

- a) Epistemic Communities
- b) Professional Collectives
- c) Political Agents
- d) Local Communities

For the Epistemic Communities, local development is defined as the capacity for subjects to choose a way of living whereby a set of conditions will irremediably act upon them (for example, market economy and its logic), bur whereby a set of choices is still available. For these social actors, there are several participants that interact in constructing the logic that supports local development processes. Amongst such participants, non-state agents play a significant role, be those NGOs, or others who play an important role in the local economy. From this perspective, local development must manage to coordinate actions at different levels (local, regional, provincial, national, international), and must be

sustained by self-organization over time. For these communities, establishing social networks by more or less freely choosing to participate is crucial.

In contrast and contradiction with the Epistemic Communities, the Professional Collectives (who are local civil servants in their majority) are guided by the logic of state-practice, oriented towards implementing the different Social Programs that are mandated by the state. Specifically, several nationally ran Social Programs are implemented at the local level in order to alleviate situations of extreme poverty. From this perspective, what counts as Local Development does not rest, as for the Epistemic Communities, on freely or willingly associating resources and ideas with one another. Contrastively, it is based on the idea of making Social Programs “happen” and be effective, knowingly that these resources are not to generate sustained employment or different living conditions, but are a day-to-day resource aimed at reducing poverty. If establishing networks is one of the distinguishing traits identified in the discourse of the Epistemic Communities, it is not to be found in the discourse of the Professional Collectives. These civil servants attribute no associative capacity to beneficiaries of the Social Policies and Programs.

Political Agents’ actions are conditioned by the logic of the national Social Programs and Policies. Since they are part of the administration at the local level, they cannot turn their back towards these policy lines; however, their participation in these nationally designed mechanisms is not chosen but imposed by them. Their views of what counts as Local Development is thus mediated heavily by the fact that they have to implement policies that they have not designed. A by-product of being in such position has been, however, the fact that they are calling for action at the local level, in particular towards Strategic Planning, mounting their call on part of the messages communicated by the National Government: “work culture”, “inclusion”, “learning”, etc. These Agents prioritize these values for their local discourse towards generating Local Development, and attribute any potential failure to the fact that the National Government does not allow any leeway for local policies to emerge. They identify clearly that participation occurs at the local scene but they refer to it as being always done by the same people or organizations over time.

Local Communities in turn do not seem to have a clear understanding, nor do they identify distinctively what may Local Development Programs or Plans be, or have to do with their everyday practices. Instead, their discourse is centered on demands for inclusion and participation in the labor market, the culture associated with employment, and schooling. These are seen as opportunities to better their income and to include themselves in the logic of social mobility. Their discourse is built around highlighting the importance of community links, associative strategies, and pointing to the contradictions between the logic of market economy and of local development, community based logic. Their discourse also points to the fact that participating in community or local planning is reserved to organizations that, in turn, respond to the “client” logic. They highlight this fact as a contradiction in that not all strategic, community and local oriented planning is necessarily open, but is closed to some who agree to participate within certain parameters.

Our analysis of each of these discourses as subsystems allows us to point to the basic characteristics underlying each of them:

- For the Epistemic Communities, strategic planning is relevant, and so is also social participation, since they orient their action towards bridging globalization and local development, seeking to integrate the market economy logic with that of local development and community integration (establishing this integration as their chosen area of action).
- For the Professional Collective, a crucial distinction is made amongst those who are actively seeking to integrate themselves to the logic of employment and learning, and those who are oriented to being supported by state subsidiary funds. Their choice is to support those who are active in seeking their inclusion, and not those who orient themselves to welfare funds (their chosen area of action is that of stable employment and ongoing learning processes).
- Political Agents orient their action towards local autonomy, seeking to participate at the decision table of economic resources and state power. For them, the dispute over national/local resources is crucial.
- Local Communities in turn orient their area of interest and action towards opportunities for accessing school and income.

From this perspective, we have identified that each of the subsystems is orienting their action towards a distinct social, political and economic area, and that the codes by which they make meaning are not necessarily shared. For each of these subsystems, there's a difference in what counts as "inclusion" or "exclusion", since their perceived area of interest is different. However, what is also observed is that these logics seem to interact in a complementary way, establishing consensus as to the ways in which these several different perspectives should not exclude any of the subsystems. What is common to all perspectives is that all of them seek for a way for being included, and that there are several mechanisms by which this inclusion process is being reproduced, as it is seen by participants of each of the subsystems.

As analysts of this situation, we posed questions such as "what is Local Development", "how is it perceived", and "what counts as such for each of the subsystems identified". In following through the analysis of how participants of the different subsystems are to respond to these questions, we also found that there are veiled, tacit, non explicitly stated statements, for were they made explicit, the risk is that conflictive perspectives may arise. If these conflictive perspectives arose, instead of making it possible to support the discourse of "inclusion" and "belonging", the more evident mechanisms of exclusion and power struggles would be in the open. It is known, for example, that local development may not constitute a real option for several regions in Argentina to become included in the market (global) economy, since the ways by which the global economy works may not be controllable by local communities at all. Therefore, welfare and Social Programs become functional since they absorb populations that would otherwise become totally excluded. In turn, these Programs become ways by which their recipients find reasons to continue to be "included". They perceive that their inclusion through these Plans or Programs allows them to not become totally excluded. However, a veiled or tacit statement is that there are no real, active Employment/Income Policies at work, nor locally or nationally, and thus, their inclusion to what they expect to participate in (full employment, for example) will not occur. Implicitly, there seems to be a tacit agreement amongst all these subsystems in that any individual who seeks to fully participate may be able to achieve full inclusion.

Conclusions

By presenting two different, yet complementary ways in which discourse practices are understood and studied, we have shown a fertile approach towards analyzing social and political action. We in turn have shown that what participants in any social process do, say and think, generate in turn realities to which participants orient their actions and interactions. Discursive practices and face-to-face interaction data should also be interpreted in light of larger socio historical contexts, so that other layers of meaning be taken into account.

We pose a methodological question that we think needs further revision: what are the specific ways in which analyses of this kind should be presented to the communities in which us, as researchers, produce meaning? What counts as evidence in order to show that these are possible, and well framed, interpretative procedures?

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