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PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT:
THE SOCIO-KINETICS
OF PRAXIS

By

Frances Elsie O'Gorman

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ABSTRACT

PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT: THE SOCIO-KINETICS OF PRAXIS

By

Frances Elsie O'Gorman

Theory and practice seem to show that praxis is an essential aspect of participatory development for people who are kept outside of the mainstream of capitalist socio-economic development. Participatory development is guided by ethical norms of equitable distribution of benefits and responsibilities in social progress. Praxis is the unity of action and reflection through which people bring about the transformation of the world by their work and by their intervention in society to direct socio-economic progress toward the common good. Facilitators for praxis carry out educational roles in their helping relationships with participants of self-development praxis processes.

Socio-kinetics are the energy inherent in and accounting for praxis. This energy can be observed through the characteristics of the indicators of the dynamics. Three indicators seem to be important for facilitator roles in praxis: perception of social reality, values and action-reflection linkages.

Frances Elsie O'Gorman

The research proposed to bring to surface the characteristics of indicators of dynamics in praxis events which involved group interaction of facilitators and collaborators. Insights would be drawn from the indicators to reveal the nature of praxis in participatory development and the educational role of sustaining the dynamics of praxis.

Exploratory qualitative research methods combined with a praxis approach to investigation were applied in 31 case studies and 6 correlated events. The events took place in urban and rural marginalized communities in the Southeast, Northeast and North Regions of Brazil. Focused interviews with participants followed the observation of community events. The data provided descriptions of the indicators of perceived social reality, values and action-reflection linkages related to specific situations of participatory development.

The results showed that the indicators were contingent on the participants' situations of marginalization. Perceived social reality was expressed in terms of felt needs in the neighborhood, needs connected with society and with structural causes of problems. The manner of perception varied from naive localized views to critical awareness of conditioning influences of society. Values were expressed as motivations and aspirations in felt needs, desire for a better life, social relationships, personal worth and Christian religious values. Values were also manifested as the overcoming of counter values. Action-reflection linkages were not generally

recognized by participants but they were evident in the planning and carrying out of projects as well as in the chain of events which constituted the praxis process.

The study disclosed the manner in which praxis events merge as moments in a process. The characteristics of indicators brought out the interdependence among the signs of dynamics and their relationship to social, economic, political and cultural contexts. Differences between facilitator and collaborator participants in regard to levels of perception revealed the importance of flexible tension to stimulate growth in praxis. Spheres of participation showed up in the experiences. The more dedicated collaborators formed nucleus leadership groups. Community groups followed in intensity of involvement. Neighborhood, social class and interest groups participated in a wider sphere.

Implications from the study for the educational role of facilitators pointed to some aspects of helping relationships that merit attention: need for clarification of values, risk of manipulation in giving direction to praxis events, potentiality of small group leadership, importance of previous experience for the quality of participation, use of indicators as pedagogical instruments for the evaluation of praxis, and qualities of an effective facilitator.

The study suggested the need for more investigation of specific aspects of the socio-kinetics of praxis. Recommendations for further research were made.

For
Edmund N. Leising, O.M.I.
A friend
through all seasons.

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The meaningfulness of this study, for me, lies in its bridging the world of the sophisticated intellectual elite and the world of the marginalized and oppressed masses in an effort to better understand the dynamics of educational transformation of society. To the men and women of the rural and urban comunidades de base, who so candidly unfolded their experiences and shared their thoughts and feelings, I extend my profoundest gratitude. They taught me from the wisdom of their hopes and sufferings. To them I renew my commitments as educator.

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CHAPTER I

THE SETTING

Educators have often been deeply concerned about poverty and marginality in developing societies. Programs such as community development, adult basic instruction, job training or rural extension have frequently been introduced as educational measures to upgrade quality of life. Out-of-school education has generally consisted of acquiring fundamental competencies for literacy, health care, appropriate farming technology, cottage industries, labor qualification, social integration, and other skills needed to adjust to modernization.

Many programs have been researched and evaluated. Quantitative and qualitative outcomes have been assessed to verify the kind of changes produced by the educational measures to improve the participants' standard of living and to increment social progress. Some interventions have brought about temporary or superficial changes without touching on the root causes of development problems. Promoting the acquisition of social and technical skills and information was not enough. Education for development would have to engage in a deeper transformation of the lives of the socially deprived and of the social structures which maintained situations of poverty and marginality.

towards promoting "something more" in social development programs. That "something more" seems to entail a penetrating awareness of the root problems of marginality. It appears to foster learning that takes off from appreciation for the life experiences of the socially deprived. This form of education for social change is primarily concerned with the participants being able to decide their own form of sharing in development. Knowledge and skill are gained from experience as well as from theory. Participants grow in awareness by learning about their experience of learning. Education seeks to nurture conscience that is expressed in concern for people developing their fullest human abilities and building an equitable society. Sometimes to build society can call for a constructive confrontation with the social structures that support the causes of poverty and marginality.

Research studies have offered many insights into change-agent roles for social development programs by examining the learning functions and outcomes from the point of view of planners, implementers and administrators. Yet rarely has the "something more" in the self-development of poor and marginal groups been looked at systematically. Little has been learned about the participants' own view of their learning experiences in the educational pursuit of quality of life.

The current status of adult education research tradition is one of ferment (Costa, 1977; Darcy de Oliveira and Darcy de Oliveira,

1975; Freire, 1974c; Griffin et al., 1979; Hall, 1977, 1979; Pilworth and Ruddick, 1976). Qualitative research is gaining more prominence. Ideological implications of research methods are coming to the fore. Among the issues which have newly been recognized is the social distance between researcher and subjects. Subjects must gain not only from the results of research but from the process itself as a part of the total education experience. Research should be an educational process to liberate human creative potential and seek solutions of social problems. Research is looking to education as a total experience encompassing needs, awareness and commitment within a community setting.

Change-agent educators could deepen their roles in fostering "something more" in self-development projects if research would enable the poor and marginal people to look at their own involvement from the inside and voice their own view of what the projects are all about. Beneath the learning experiences are certain perceptions of social needs, motivations, ideas and activities which indicate the presence of an inner transforming dimension of self-development. They point to the people's awareness of causes of their poverty and marginality which cannot be resolved by literacy, labor training or homemaker skills alone. These perceptions, motivations and actions that are continually thought through show what is occurring as people draw lessons from life and from their project activities. They indicate how people grow in their capacity to reason by learning from their actual learning experiences. They bring out the way in

which people can decide their own mode of sharing social progress. The inner transforming dimension is manifested in the people's conscience of their education as the development of human capacities and the shaping of a more just society.

Change-agent educators together with clients from situations of poverty and marginality could cultivate an inner transforming educational dimension that would go beyond the pragmatism of self-help projects. This educational dimension would be important to bring about deeper and more human efforts of development built on respect for the right of all persons to assume the responsibility of shared participation in shaping society. It would allow people to influence change of the structural causes of poverty and marginality while attending to the immediate needs of subsistence and quality of life.

For agents and clients to cultivate a transforming dimension to self-help more should be known about the dynamics forces within groups of marginal people striving for their development. There has been need to learn more about the social situations which influence perceptions, motivations and actions of the groups. If signs of these dynamic forces could be recognized by agents and clients the self-help projects could be directed in a way that they would nurture an educational conscience of human and social development.

Research that begins with the feelings of people has been needed. In order to understand people's participation, their feelings

about their situation must be explored. Agents and clients could learn to understand, appreciate and give direction to the underlying socio-cultural forces.

The research has attempted to bring to surface some of the signs of the dynamic forces in self-development activities of marginal groups. The signs were discovered by looking at three aspects: how people see their social conditions, what values lead people to get involved, and how the action and the ideas of the people about things they do together are linked in a way that stimulates educational growth.

To find out the signs of the dynamic forces the learning experiences had to be looked at from within, from the participants' own perceptions of what was going on and why it was happening in that way. This was done by focusing on specific on-going events in the self-help projects and by motivating the participants to voice their ideas and feelings about the particular experience. The reflections of the agent and client participants about what was happening in the focused event provided insights into the signs of dynamic forces at work.

Understanding the signs could help change agent educators get an inside view of how self-help activities could awaken an educational conscience in development. The signs of the dynamic forces could provide the basis for selective encouragement of educational practices in projects. These educational practices, when guided by respect for the inherent dignity of all persons as

subjects of their society, could greatly enhance human and social fulfillment.

Educational Transformation of Society

Social change occurs incessantly. Change moves society along different paths. The reasons behind change determine the outcomes of it. Agents of social change have often been intrigued by the question: What forces are at work beneath changes in society?

Development is a form of change. Development moves society to new levels of social, economic, political and cultural configurations. Moving to new levels affects the lives of individuals as well as entire populations. Agents of development are often faced with the question: What really brings about development?

Participatory development is change with a special purpose. The purpose is to involve individuals and groups in creating conditions for change to be decided on by the people in developing situations. This purpose is carried out by means of self help participation in which people support each other through associative organization to steer development towards common good.

Participatory development is an educational form of change. Participants extend their knowledge, acquire new skills and information, and broaden their experiences. More important, participants may deepen their sensitivity towards the dignity of being human, nurture critical awareness of themselves and society, assume co-responsible decisions

and actions, and strengthen their sentiments of social solidarity for the common good.

The educational process of participatory education calls for a unique role of helper. The helper facilitates a process which goes beyond explaining, teaching, guiding or dialoguing, but could include all of these. The facilitator educates by engaging in the social change process in interaction with the collaborator, that is, the person or group being helped. Participation in the process requires combined theoretical and living experiential knowledge as an intrinsic element of the educational experience.

Educators might ask: What is the educational significance of the relationship between facilitators and collaborators in participatory development? The relationship takes on meaning in reference to the change occurring as development. To apprehend the educational meaning several questions would have to be asked: What signs of the moving forces in participatory development show up in the interaction of facilitators and collaborators? What makes people join together to help each other learn, act and attempt to influence the direction of change in development? How does participatory development influence personal and societal change? In what way does a facilitator educate and become educated through the process of participatory development?

"Participatory Development: the Socio-Kinetics of Praxis" is a study about people looking at their social reality and acting together to make it a better living environment through an educational process. The process is one of improvement, and so it presupposes something that

was occurring to pave the way for, and something that would occur as an outcome of, the present moment of activity. Improvement seeks a better life; this suggests judgments to evaluate what should be changed in the social reality and what kind of group action would best keep the process flowing.

Praxis of the Research

The study attempts to draw together basic elements of scientific discipline of traditional research and the uniqueness of a process experience. The process of looking at social reality and acting to modify it is a praxis process. To perceive a process of praxis it is necessary to situate scientific observation and analysis within a praxis dimension. A praxis process of investigation is needed to grasp the deeper implications in a given period of an observed praxis process. The basic criterion for this research has been to utilize field research methods within a praxis process of investigation. The elements of problem statement, methodological data gathering, data analysis and conclusion, were interrelated with the elements of action and reflection, within a process of research as praxis.

While conducting the study the researcher was also engaged in a facilitator role similar to the ones in the events being studied. Practice concurrent with research required a dialectical moving back and forth between theory and action. The researcher's involvement also favored moments of dialogical interaction. Consequently the dialogical interaction of reflection on practice occurred in two overlapping spheres. In one sphere, dialogue among participant

subjects of the study and the researcher revealed elements of the process being experienced in the observed units of praxis. In another sphere, dialogue among members of the facilitator team, to which the researcher belonged, revealed elements of the team's own praxis. Dialogue permitted the researcher to draw analogies from experiences being observed in the study and gain different insights. Reflection focused on direct experiences, on observed field experiences, and on sources of literature that helped clarify the concepts as they emerged from reflection on practice.

The study was a dialectical search for understanding: a going back and forth--from listening to and taking part in living experience to grasping reflections of theorists like Marx, Freire or Gutierrez; from reflection on what was observed and heard in various parts of the country, to evaluation of the researcher's own involvement as a facilitator in Rio de Janeiro. The analysis depicted this dialectical movement. Movement indicates trends; it does not pin-point conclusions within a process. Consequently the results of the study were open ended and raised many questions.

Structure of the Study

The research combines the sharing of the researcher's experience with the experiences of the participant subjects. Dynamics of the process are portrayed through the systematic research. The sequence of dialectical moments of action, reflected action, and reflected reflection, followed an overall pattern which has determined the organization of the study. The research was carried out in three

principal interrelated stages: the setting, or preparation of the study; in the field, or data gathering and analysis of case studies; and review and suggestions, or implications of the data as applied to helping relationships in development praxis.

Chapter I states the problem and reason for the study. It brings out concepts from practice which gave impulse and direction to the study of people looking at their participation in development. Concepts from literature lay the theoretical foundations of a conceptual framework for praxis and participatory development. Concepts underlying the dynamics of participatory development are brought out in relation to the facilitator role. The chapter shows the methodological concepts supporting the study and how the study was conducted.

Chapter II accompanies 16 case studies in urban centers, peripheries and neighboring towns in Vitoria, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. A cursory description of the problems of social exclusion brings out some socio-political and economic factors in current Brazilian development. The positions of marginal and integrated populations are shown within concepts of social stratification. The praxis of church participation in development is related to community groups. The analyzed experiences show spheres of participation and differences among open, closed and isolated communities.

Chapter III gives an account of 5 case studies in rural areas near Garanhuns and Capistrano de Abreu, and in the center of Recife. Analyzed data offer some insights into the interrelationship among facilitators and collaborators through perception of social reality, values and action-reflection linkages.

Chapter IV presents 10 case studies in and around Belem and in the rural area surrounding Santo Antonio do Taua'. The chapter introduces concepts on forms of praxis. The data analysis provides descriptions of the characteristics of the indicators of socio-kinetics: perceived social reality, values and action-reflection linkages. Interdependence among indicators is brought out and the direction of participatory development is questioned.

Chapter V summarizes the characteristics of praxis observed in the field data. It interprets the qualitative descriptions to attain a more explicit apprehension of the dynamics which appear in the indicators. Implications from the study are applied to the facilitator role in helping relationships for participatory development. Points are suggested for further study. The chapter proposes a more integrated appreciation for the educational meaning of praxis. It exhorts a more realistic commitment of facilitators to participatory development as an expression of humanizing praxis.

The dialectical unity between action and reflection, practice and theory, is a necessity for me, in whatever context I may find myself--whether it be the concrete context in which I act or the theoretical context in which I 'take myself to a distance' from the concrete and examine what is occurring in it (Freire, 1977:166).

The research is a beginning of a sharing of insights. It is expected that this sharing will continue when the data and suggestions are returned to the field participants so that they also can reflect and evaluate what was learned from their experiences and thus find new meanings for their praxis.

The Research Problem

The quality of relationship between the helper and helped is an important variable in the educational process of participatory development. The nature of the interaction among participants gives direction to and affects the outcomes of the process. The role of helper or facilitator is essential in bringing out the quality of relationship.

The nature of the helping relationship is intrinsically associated with the environment in which it occurs. The agent and client, or helper and helped, relate to each other at a particular time/place, for an explicit or implicit purpose, as a response to needs perceived in a particular situation of development, and in a manner specific to the unique combination of all these factors.

The agent-client relationship involves doing and thinking, building on the results of yesterday's action and projecting for tomorrow. The relationship culminates in action which is the convergence of interests of the helper and the helped.

In his consultant role with the adult literacy team of Guinea-Bissau engaged in the socio-educational reconstruction of the newly liberated country, Freire and his colleagues from the Institute of Cultural Action (IDAC) expressed the helping relationship in these terms:

We knew that the help that was asked of us would only be true help to the extent that, within the process of helping, we would never try to be the only subjects of it. This would reduce the nationals who requested the help to the state of mere objects of it. Authentic helping, and I can never insist enough, takes place when those who are involved help each other mutually, growing together in the common effort to know the

reality which they want to transform. Only through such a practice, that is, when those who help and those who are helped, help each other simultaneously, is the act of helping not distorted to become domination of the helper over the one who is helped (Freire, 1977:16).

How the helping agent and the helping client come to know and transform reality, and grow as human beings through the experience, depends largely on the nature and motivating forces behind the helping relationship. Agent-client relationships are process-oriented, both within the nature of the relationship itself, and outwardly as intervention in society through participatory development

To discover the nature of the dynamics which sustain the helper-helped relationship it is necessary to look at the dynamics that characterize the process of participation of the helper and helped in development. The quality of the helping relationship is contingent on the experience of participation in which the relationship occurs. Since the relationship involves both helper and helped as subjects of the experience, the most genuine interpretation of the nature of the dynamics must come from insights offered by the helper and helped themselves.

The aim of this research is to raise some indicators of the dynamism which sustains the experience of participation in development. These signs of motivating forces are seen from the point of view of the helper and helped. They are analyzed from a conceptual framework of praxis and development. The nature of this dynamism influences the nature of the helping relationship. The helping relationship, in turn, influences and is influenced by the quality of participation in

development. By examining the signs of dynamics that sustain a praxis process of humanizing development it is possible to reach a better understanding of the facilitator role in the helping relationship. The query that underlies this study is: What indicators of dynamics are present in the praxis process of participatory development and how do they affect the nature and outcome of the helping relationship?

Concepts from Practice: Land Statutes for Squatters

Facilitators from a private Brazilian agency for human promotion had been working with several neighborhood communities outside the city of Santarém in the Amazon area of Brazil for several years.

The people were squatters. They had lived on the land for generations, tilling the soil for their subsistence. In 1977 a conflict arose between the squatters and new land proprietors.

The 170 families that were hardest hit by the conflict had been carrying out projects to improve their meagre crops. The threat of being torn from their land jeopardized their very survival.

The people expressed their anxiety in group meetings with the facilitators. Through discussion they came to realize that the laws on land ownership and usage could offer some protection. Until then the squatters had been kept ignorant of the laws that pertained to them.

The families, together with the facilitators, looked for ways to make the laws known, understood, and utilized to protect their rights. It was not enough to talk about the laws at meetings. Something more permanent was needed.

The agents suggested re-writing the Land Statute in local expressions. The squatters welcomed the idea. Agents from other organizations collaborated in paraphrasing the official document. The new text was taken to the villages and discussed by the people. Their suggestions were incorporated to make the real meaning accessible to all. When the 170 families participating in the project gave their approval to the text and understood its implications, the primer was illustrated with sketches from their daily life. With the help of a church agency, two thousand copies were mimeographed.

The results of the project surpassed expectations. Hundreds of copies of the brochure, entitled "The Squatter and the Land," were distributed to the subsistence farm families. Requests for copies came from many parts of the Amazon region. As a result, the law was no longer in the hands of the specialists (doutores) but belonged to the people who could understand their own familiar expressions. Consequently the people wanted to know more about the laws, comply with the requirements, and resist arbitrary expulsion by land-barons. Training courses were planned to get a better understanding of the land statute. The farmers began to see the squatter-proprietor conflict from a different perspective and they learned how to cope with new responsibilities.

The Situation of Development

The experience of facilitators and squatters revolved around producing a primer on land rights. The perceived need of protecting their survival rights brought together interests, values, reflections

and activities of the squatters together with facilitators. Before the event development had meant no more than improving agriculture for better food. Through the experience development was seen as transforming situations that threatened survival and impeded participation in social benefits. Looking to the future, development plans included learning how to apply the Land Statute and resist coercion from wealthy land owners, as well as improving farm crops.

The situation of the squatters brings to light some basic concepts of development. All people have the right and responsibility to build social environments that are conducive to human fulfillment. Through development people construct their society together. Development that is not distributed allows a few people to enjoy the benefits of progress while many, because of their powerlessness, are denied participation. Development is a social process. Sharing responsibility as well as benefits are requisites for an equitable process of development.

Participation

For the facilitators and villagers participation meant active involvement by sharing ideas, discerning needs and causes, discussing, helping each other discover meanings, writing, printing, distributing, gathering together, planning, or defending their land. Participation was conscious. The villagers did not simply follow the agents but took part in decisions and responsibilities, even risking personal safety. The facilitators did not carry out their roles automatically, but shared in the risks of confronting the dominant values and structures

of society. The participants were united in solidarity. The need to survive and to change oppressive conditions brought the 170 families together with each other and with the agents.

The right to live adequately and in free construction of society that respects life of the poor as well as the rich motivated the participation in the event and commitment to follow through the experience. The squatters had been kept out of development of society; they were marginalized.¹ Participation in development signified changing the situation that unjustly deprived them of the basic rights of development.

Conscious participation in development requires critical awareness of the forces in society. Awareness emerges when perceived facts are projected against a values frame of reference. Action springs from awareness, and reflecting is brought to completion in doing. Participation in development can transform society by recreating its structures and systems.

Participatory development can move in two complementary directions. One is a tangential direction, which moves from participants who are consciously engaged in the process, to the normative, executive and sanctioning institutions of society. The other is an interactional

¹The term marginalization comes out of Latin American sociological analyses of capitalist development in which dependency intervenes in the explanation of marginalization as opposed to participation (Cardoso, 1979). Marginalization refers to structural and functional processes of economic, occupational, political and cultural marginality of the unemployed and the exploited labor force bearing ideological-cultural consequences of social exclusion (Consoli, 1973; Martinez, 1973; Quijano Obregon, 1974).

direction among facilitator and collaborator participants. The facilitator, who performs roles of agent, educator, and subject of development motivation, transacts with the collaborator, who performs roles of client, educatee, subject of development experience, and beneficiary of the outcomes.

Participation means intervening in society. It presupposes that people are agents of their own development. People who are cut off from the common good of development and submerged by their social, economic, political and cultural conditions cannot participate. Participation must be stirred up and set in motion by some form of educational mediation. Voluntary non-marginalized elements of society (facilitators) interact with voluntary marginalized members of society (collaborators) to spark a process of participation. At first participatory development is motivated by the helping relationship between facilitators and collaborators. As the process grows the roles of facilitator and collaborator are interchanged and shared.

The Query

Helping relationships stimulate participation that overcomes marginalization and contributes towards building an equitable society in development situations. The dynamics inherent in specific of participation activate the process of development. The nature of helping relationships could be better understood if one knew more about the dynamics of the process of participation. In what way do specific events make up the process of participatory development? What characterizes the dynamics of the events?

Concepts from Practice: The Cost of
Living Assembly

One Sunday afternoon in August, 1978, thousands of people jammed the Cathedral and filled the square in downtown São Paulo. They had gathered to present to government authorities a petition with 1,245,478 signatures. The petition requested the government to put a ceiling on the prices of basic food items and adjust the minimum wage guidelines to the sharp decline in purchasing power accumulated over the past 14 years.

The participants were received by police with dogs, tear gas and truncheons. Buses bringing people from the greater São Paulo suburbs were turned back on the highways. The subway was not allowed to make stops at the Cathedral station. Agitators (presumably set up by the police) infiltrated the crowd to stir up provocations for which the assembly could be (and was) blamed. None of the official guests turned up. Nevertheless the program that climaxed months of arduous group work was carried out: speeches were made, songs were sung, the petition was symbolically presented to the President of the country. The people returned quietly to their homes, disturbed by the callous opposition but determined to keep the Cost of Living Movement in action to defend the rights of millions who were suffering economic oppression and social marginalization.

The Cost of Living Movement was a process that grew out of an urgent need. Between 1964 and 1977 the low salaried worker (75% of the population) lost 56% of the purchasing power of his earnings. Quality of life deteriorated. Groups of Mothers' Clubs in the peripheral area

of M'Boi Mirim in the greater Sao Paulo got together to study the problem. They wrote a letter to the President. It was ignored. They kept on discussing their problems. The interest spread to other groups: students, factory workers, unskilled laborers, neighbors, human rights commissions, political groups, professionals. The joining of forces gave rise to the Cost of Living Movement.

Groups met to discuss the situation at church pastoral meetings, at recreational gatherings, at neighborhood associations, in homes, during lunch break at the factories, in stores, in community centers. The discussion spread from house to house, from street to street, from factory to factory, from peripheries to urban centers. People analyzed their living conditions and the causes, exchanged information, wrote circulars, published news bulletins. The reflection was accompanied by work projects such as gathering signatures for petitions, forming cooperatives to purchase food wholesale, planting community vegetable plots, making house surveys on the cost of subsistence goods, promoting assemblies. Groups in the movement held seminars to help the population understand the complexity of cost of living indices. The marginalized population showed that it could cope with the theoretical demands of their struggle.

The struggle did not end with the assembly at the Cathedral. A few weeks later a group of factory workers and housewives went to Brasilia to hand the petition personally to the President. They were met with rebuff and ridicule. Once again opposition served to intensify activity and increase dedication to the cause. The struggle still goes on.

Praxis, Focal Thematic Content,
Transaction Events

The people directly or indirectly involved in the Cost of Living Movement wanted a more equitable participation in society. Participatory development was the situation for the helping relationship. Agents and collaborators shared leadership roles in different levels and forms of the Movement.

The Movement was a process that extended through many events over time. The events entailed reflecting on the economic situation of the marginalized population and doing something to obtain conditions so that laborers might be able to live by their wages. The process involved action and reflection. The experience of participating in development was a process of praxis.

The theme of the Movement was containment of the cost of living and its multiple effects on the lives of the people. The theme focused the ideas and efforts of the people. The August assembly was a specific happening in the praxis process during which facilitators and collaborators interacted to concentrate their praxis on an occurrence at a particular moment. The assembly could be seen as a transaction event. The theme, or reason for being, of the assembly was to bring to the attention of governing authorities the problems of survival and quality of life for the population by presenting the signed petition.

The Movement was one expression of praxis in a situation of participatory development. The assembly was one transaction event in the experience of the Movement. The transaction event revolved around a core theme; this is the focal thematic content. The arbitrary conceptual

categories of transaction event and focal thematic content in praxis are instruments to help analyze the dynamics of participatory development.

By getting to know more about praxis one can come closer to discovering meaningful approaches to development. The educational process of participatory development is a meaningful approach that is realized through praxis.

Participatory development is a social collective experience of praxis. The praxis of development for human fulfillment is not a series of isolated experiences, nor is it confined to a limited time/space event. Praxis is the dynamic causal-consequence connection between thought and action, the interdependence between perceiving and doing something about what has become discerned, in light of value motivations. The action is carried out in concrete situations preceded by deliberative reflection and followed by evaluative reflection.

Persons can vivify and change society. The dynamics of relationships in situations of praxis can give direction to development. The events in which facilitators and collaborators of praxis interrelate can reveal signs of the dynamics of the praxis process.

Praxis is an experience that transcends each specific event. Preceding events provide the basic incentive and content for the actual event. The focal thematic content links events to the praxis experience and draws socio-cultural as well as psycho-genetic motivations of the participants.

A transaction event can be a definable moment in praxis during which participants interact united by the focal thematic content. Transaction events give momentum to the process of praxis and are concrete expressions of the process.

The Query

Transaction events are specific situations of praxis within a development situation. Each transaction event centers on a focal thematic content which links the particular event to other events in the praxis process. To understand the nature of helping relationships it would be useful to know: What signs of dynamics appear to sustain transaction events in praxis for participatory development?

Concepts from Practice: A Bizarre Birthday Party

The people of Jardim Saverio in the periphery of Greater São Paulo were tired of having the municipal sanitation trucks dump garbage in the middle of their neighborhood. The dump had caused sickness, disaster, discomfort and frustrated anger. Rats infested the homes. Children were bitten. Many had been injured in fires on the dump. For two years complaints to the government authorities had been ignored. By mid 1978 the situation became intolerable. The people sensed their powerlessness in an unjust situation.

A handful of residents of Jardim Saverio had formed a community group to try to solve some of their burdensome living problems. The garbage dump was always first on the list. One day they hit on what seemed to be a solution for the hopeless problem. The leadership group spread the idea and enthusiasm. About 80 people became involved in small commissions that mobilized a great part of the 1,000 home neighborhood. They planned a project to make an impact on the news media to call attention to the garbage dump and force town hall to take measures.

The project called for intense group reflection, decision making and shared tasks. The powerlessness of the people had to become their strength for indirect confrontation.

On the day of the big activity reporters from newspapers, television and magazines flocked curiously to Jardim Saverio. What they saw took them by surprise. The flattened mound of refuse was festively decorated for a huge party--the second "birthday" of the garbage dump!

The party went over with a bang. From a colorful platform in the center speakers poured out loquacious orations; documents were read attesting to the official action taken by the community and disdained by authorities; a mother gave a tearful account of her baby's death from rat bites; the history of 2 years' suffering was relived. A group of local folk singers strummed out a ballad on the evils of the garbage dump and the crowd roared out the refrains. The party ended with the children stomping on the birthday cake--an enormous "cake" of garbage, frosted with soap suds and exquisitely decorated with orange peel garlands, cans, broken bottles, and the like.

This happened on a Saturday afternoon. By the evening news of the party had been broadcasted throughout São Paulo and across many states. On Monday an anxious neighborhood watched for the usual sanitation trucks. They did not turn up. And they never appeared again.

Dynamics in Praxis

Marginalization which causes the poor to be deprived of urban progress was the situation of participatory development. Community

members assumed facilitator roles for specific jobs. The helping relationship pivoted around the theme of the birthday party, which was a particular transaction event within the praxis process of reflecting and acting to solve the problem of the garbage dump.

The people of Jardim Saverio were motivated to engage in the project because they perceived their needs caused by the garbage and by negligent city management. They were concerned about the well being of their families. They found their force in creative and united action. To carry out the birthday party they spent weeks analyzing, deciding, doing and evaluating. These were some signs of the dynamics which sustained their joint participation in the event and in the praxis of changing their oppressive social conditions.

Praxis can be seen as having two dynamics. One dynamic is socio-cultural. It is the social motivation during a determined event in which people are engaged in action-reflection to intervene in society in a specific historical context. The other dynamic is psycho-genetic. It is the energy that renews praxis and regenerates the power that motivates it, as a consequence of the participants' own growth in understanding and value commitments.

Each of the dynamics of praxis hinges on the other; it is distinct but not separate. The socio-cultural dimension is participation in development through the experience of the group in relation to society. The psycho-genetic dynamic of praxis is personal participation in development through individual feeling, knowing and relating to other participants. The two forces energize each other.

Indicators of Socio-Kinetics

The dynamics of praxis are the energy inherent in and accounting for praxis. This motivating power, or dynamism, that energizes the social process of praxis, could be termed socio-kinetics. Kinetic refers to the motion of material bodies and the forces and energy associated with it. Socio-kinetics of praxis could be seen as the motivating force and energy generation associated with the movement of praxis. It is the socio-kinetics of praxis, or power generation and motivating force inherent in and accounting for praxis, that is of interest to educational process of participatory development.

Three facets of socio-kinetics appear to be indicators of the motivating force and energy generation of praxis: perception of reality, values, and action-reflection linkages.

Social reality is perceived according to values that shape meaning. Meaning, in turn, is molded by perception. Perception of social reality is always in evolution. This evolution comes from reflecting on concrete and changing situations of socio-cultural environments. Perception of social reality gives impulse to praxis, while the praxis process of action and reflection stimulates modified perceptions.

Values provide the frame of reference for perception and action. Values influence cognitive and affective social perception. They provide a relatively stable backdrop against which judgments are made to encourage or hold back decision and action. Praxis occurs because of implicit or explicit value commitments. Value perspectives influence socio-cultural and psycho-genetic dimensions of praxis.

Action and reflection linkage is another indication of generating power within. The action and the reflection are distinct but interdependent moments of a single process. They function as energizers for the process. Reflecting is carried out in acting, which then provokes reflection on the action and on the consequences of the action. Each reflected action germinates into further acted reflection. This is the moving force that permeates value commitments and perception of social reality in the socio-kinetics of praxis.

The Query

Reflection on practice has brought out some concepts that begin to mold a framework for exploring signs of dynamics that sustain facilitator-collaborator interaction. These are: the situation of participation in development, the transaction events of praxis revolving around focal thematic contents, and the signs of dynamics, or socio-kinetics, underlying praxis events, such as perception of reality, values, and action-reflection linkages.

The helping relationship occurs in and for praxis as a process of participatory development. To continue looking at the characteristics of the dynamics, this study turns to reflected reflection, or sources of literature, to clarify two basic concepts: development and praxis.

Concepts from the Literature

Reflection on experience can be a source of practical insight into the characteristics of the dynamics which motivate praxis. It brings

out reality in the many dimensions of the participants' experience. Learning from practice is discovering the significance of what has been revealed by reflecting on the experience. Learning from action does not signify that every experience requires beginning reflection anew. Accumulated reflection expressed in concepts, theories, philosophies, also bring to light the significance of what was discovered through reflection on practice.

When terms such as "development" and "praxis" are repeatedly used in particular contexts they often take on connotations peculiar to those usages. Reflection on experience requires clarification of the basic concepts commonly used in connection with the types of experiences being analyzed. Looking at reality is not a neutral action. Perceptions are selected and categorized by the observer according to manifest or latent preconceptions about what reality should be. These preconceptions need to be situated, as much as possible, within a conceptual framework. Conceptual frameworks reveal biases of the observer, but also enrich the observations. In the study praxis is seen as a process of participatory development during which certain events involving facilitator and collaborator interaction are realized as educational moments. To study the dynamics of the praxis events presupposes a view of man as potential creative and constructive transformer of his social reality.

View of Man

Man is a social and historical being immersed in a network of social relationships. Each person is rooted in a historical time and

place context and sees the world from a particular ideological perspective (Vazquez, 1977:9).

Everyday man is engrossed in everyday interests and needs. People know their activities are not purely mechanistic for they realize that one's conscience intervenes in what one does. Action and reflection are practical. People are conscious of their world as a practical world of things and meanings. Yet people do not see where their practical actions are contributing to the writing of human history.

Man has the potentiality to move beyond the confines of his daily practical activity to a reflective consciousness of what he is doing. Man can learn to see his action as praxis, to reflect on his practical material activity so that it becomes transformative and creative (Vazquez, 1977).

The human being's ontological vocation is to act and transform the world by creating conditions for humanization. People give human meaning to history and culture when they combine reflective activity with actions. Humanization means liberation from oppression, dependence and marginality. The oppressed, the dependent and the marginalized must reach for liberation and humanization through their praxis and struggle to obtain it (Freire, 1973a:61-63).

Every person is an active agent of his own history. The history of the oppressed calls for authentic liberation to be assumed by the people themselves within their values. Man seeks to situate himself in space and time through a critical conscience so that he can exercise his creative capacity and assume his rights and responsibilities. Man grows in believing in order to grow in being. To help man develop his

being and believing, liberation theology is re-thinking every stage of human history. The praxis of theology is not to provide liberation for the people but to walk with the people towards liberation (Vannucchi, 1978:208-243).

Praxis in participatory development is a process which moves towards humanization and liberation so that all people can fulfill themselves as subjects of their society and of their history.

Historical Overview of Praxis

The concept of praxis is rapidly becoming a part of current vocabulary in newspapers as well as literature.² It stands out as a reference point from which to look at the position and role of the people in Brazilian development. The usage of praxis has changed through time according to the predominant view of man in each historical period. Some conceptual trends in the philosophy of praxis are traced by Vazquez (1977:16-182).

For the ancient Greeks the word praxis signified any action that performed something. The action was an end in itself, not a creation or production of something outside of the agent or beyond his activity. In Greek slave society work was thought to make man a slave to matter. This kind of praxis was not worthy of the free man who should be dedicated to politics or contemplation in keeping with the interests of the dominant class. The product was valued for its utility but the producer never counted. Political praxis was accepted because it was

²Folha de São Paulo, January 31, 1979, p. 11; Jornal do Brasil, March 4, 1979, pp. 2-3.

considered to be a lower level of contemplation. Man was held to be a reasoning being so theory alone was sufficient. There was no need to subordinate theory to practice. This concept of praxis from the Greeks persisted until modern philosophy introduced the concept of man fulfilling himself as a human being by the practical activity of transforming the material world.

During the Renaissance man was seen as an active subject, a constructor, a creator of the world as well as a theoretical being. Scientific knowledge was placed at the service of an incipient capitalist production. Humanism esteemed man as producer; the product was valued in relation to man's action on it. However contemplation was still held to be superior to practical activity, especially manual activity. The real human activity was contemplation. Practical material work was meant to prepare for contemplation. Many were engaged in work to provide conditions for a few to dedicate themselves to contemplation or science. This opened the way for a division between physical work and intellectual work. Eventually it gave rise to a division of society into classes where a few would be free to pursue human conditions and many would remain outside of that freedom and the condition to be human.

The rise of the bourgeoisie during the Industrial Revolution encouraged the development of productive forces and a transformation of nature. Class interests and the needs of production attributed great worth to productive praxis. Social needs demanded that nature be placed at the service of man by production, science and technology.

Man affirmed his power over nature by knowledge which nourished experience. The philosophy of the Industrial Revolution was practical. The value of praxis lay in production guided by theory and by science which brought about utilitarian transformation. The praxis--work, technology and product--were valued, but no value was attributed to the subject of the process, to man, the worker, and to the human significance of his work.

The classical economists of the 18th century saw human work as the source of all social riches, according to the views of bourgeoisie society. The concept of value-work was not carried to its full consequences. In the mid 19th century Karl Marx (1818-1883) showed that the economists' position valued human work for its external utility and not for its relationship with man. Man, the worker, was being separated from man, the person. Karl Marx searched for the real human praxis, a philosophical conscience of practical human activity which transforms the world. The philosophy of Marxism constituted a dialectical overcoming of idealism and traditional materialism. The transformation of man was a necessary condition of the transformation of nature through praxis. Marxist theories of social analysis had a strong influence on the discovery of the meaning of praxis for Latin America in the mid 20th century, especially in the pedagogy of Freire (Torres, 1976:61; Collins, 1977:28-36) and in liberation theology (Bono, 1975:95-97).

Praxis in Latin American Reality

Coming out of a Third World alienation from domination, praxis emerged in contemporary Latin America through a pedagogy and a theology which realized that it was necessary to cease explaining the world and start processes of transformation to liberate man from the oppressions of a dehumanizing society. Two praxis-oriented currents of thought that influence participatory development are Paulo Freire's "pedagogy of the oppressed" and liberation theology.

Freire saw man as a historical, creative being of praxis. Man's activity consists of action and reflection, of transformation of the world. Man emerges from the world, objectifies it, understands it, and transforms it with his praxis. Freire introduced a pedagogy of scientific humanism in which praxis, expressed through teacher-learner dialogue, analyzes a dehumanizing society, denounces it, and announces its transformation for man's liberation. The content of the dialogue is the historical and dialectical theme of social, economic and political reality of the oppressed. Through humanizing praxis the oppressed recognize the contradictions of their reality and engage in conscious efforts to change it creatively (Jerez and Hernandez-Pico, 1973; Pinto, 1973; Barreiro, 1974; Collins, 1977).

When sociology assumes the problem of dependence, and when liberation as a basic structure of analysis displaces the liberal meaning of 'liberty' with the revolutionary meaning of 'liberation' and rearranges its categories according to this new perspective, theology discovers a new direction for its own reflection (Bono, 1975:67).

The theologians of Latin America found new scientific structures in socio-anthropological analyses to grasp and carry forward the

phenomenon of the revolutionary praxis of a growing number of Christians involved in efforts to liberate the oppressed. Traditional theology had no categories for this type of praxis. Liberation theology discovered a new direction for its reflection: the voice of the oppressed. Faith became praxis in an effort to reach freedom from economic, cultural, and political oppression in the reality of Latin America. Theology reflected critically on historical praxis to become a theology of liberating transformation of history of all humanity (Assmann, 1976; Boff, 1975; Dussel, 1976; Gutierrez, 1971; Segundo, 1976). Liberation theology became a new focus, a theology of the poor nations and of world wide liberation, pointing towards "the world-man of the future--man who shall be eternally free" (Gutierrez, 1971:56).

Education and Praxis

Although the word praxis has not always been explicit, the idea of praxis has been implied in concepts of education. "The purpose of education is simple and straightforward: to enable the person to emerge, to come forth, to develop to his greatest potential" (Vaccaro, 1979:6). Awareness, decision and action give impulse to education.

Both Carl Rogers and John Dewey agree that the individual's choosing, with the locus of this process within him, is very important for human development and growth Dewey stresses 'experience' and Rogers speaks of 'this moment.' Both 'experience' and 'this moment' are indispensable for the individual to gain self knowledge and confidence which in turn allow the person to shape his/her life and thereby achieve true education (Vaccaro, 1979:7).

Education to shape one's life is characteristic of adult education. Trigueiro Mendes (1977) points out that knowledge, for the adult, consists of being conscious of real experience which is the adult's individual and social praxis. The adult, even the illiterate, is immersed in culture. Education should give adults the means to appropriate their culture. People are educated through the thought and action of real life situations.

Trigueiro Mendes says that education is re-cognition or renewed cognition of what is known but is veiled from perception because of alienation. Alienation causes people to be marginalized from themselves, from their role in culture, and from their praxis. Alienation provokes disintegration of man's being, of his action, and of his conscience. Education should bring about reintegration. Reintegration takes place when people become profoundly aware of their action and transform their efforts into praxis (Trigueiro Mendes, 1977).

Praxis in the education of marginalized adults focuses on knowing and transforming social situations. Costa (1977) analyzes base level education in terms of appropriation of a "knowledge-instrument" by which people take hold of the wisdom and accumulated learning derived from their own life experiences and from reflection on social events, information, values and attitudes. According to Costa the "knowledge-instrument" permits the people to propose their own modes of participation and to transform their social conditions through the praxis of education.

Development as the Context for Praxis

An ideology of modernization was used to explain the need to pass from a traditional (backward and archaic) society to a modern society in the decade of the 50's. Modern industrial society was the model for self-sustained development. During the following years development presupposed infusion of capital and acquisition of entrepreneurial skills to accelerate progress. Modernization meant acquiring attitudinal traits such as rationalism, efficacy, and achievement orientation in order to reap the benefits of material abundance and social harmony like the democratic developed countries. In the latter part of the 60's the gap widened between the developed and underdeveloped. Theories of development began to be questioned from a historical and political stance. The condition of the poor was seen as a historical sub-product of the development of the rich. Capitalist economics established cores and peripheries, generating progress and wealth for a few and social inequality, political tension and poverty for the majority. By the 70's it was evident that dependency was internationalized. Development was determined by a new type of internal dependency created by the national modernized sectors linked to multinational economic groups which exploited their own peripheries (Black, 1977; Rogers, 1976).

All human beings in every society are entitled to enjoy the structural and institutional conditions which foster universal human ascent. Le Bret supported this ethical axiom with what he considered to be essential attributes of development. Development should serve

the basic finalities to build human economy and to satisfy all human needs in an equitable order of urgency and importance. All major problems should be attacked in a coordinated manner, without sacrificing agriculture to industry, or one segment to another. Development should respect people's past history and their cultural heritage as well as their present capacities, and avoid elitist impositions even when introducing innovations. Society should be able to direct itself autonomously and overcome dependency, parasitism, passivity and inertia. Development is for the common good; all people should benefit from it, without alienating division of labor and privilege systems (Goulet, 1974:40-45).

The current social regime in Brazil is marked by capitalism which values work and private appropriation of the benefits produced by work over the participation of the population. World capitalism has generated unequal interdependence and Brazil occupies one place within the global systems to which it is tied. Dominating cores in the systems control financial, technical and ideological (political) issues and make the decisions regarding production and division of labor. Capitalism causes the violation of human rights and generates increasing impoverishment of the masses. Thus it is the greatest obstacle for people in their process of development as a journey towards liberation ("The Journey of the People of God in Latin America," 1978:310-311).

Development is more than growth in riches and levels of well being. It has to be appraised from an ethical dimension of human

values. The process of change must be subordinated to the common good and the "being more" of all persons. People develop when they grow in liberty and participation, when their rights are respected, when they can choose freely to whom they delegate authority. Development promotes active, conscious and responsible participation of the people in the social, economic, political and cultural processes. Development as liberation looks to the historical vision of humanity assuming its own destiny.

To develop is to participate with equity in the results of the collaboration of all; it is to be able to live in peace and fraternity; it is to be able to nurture hopes for a future that is always better (Christian Requirements for a Political Order, 1977:19).

Participation in Development

Participation in development can be both prophetic and pragmatic. It is prophetic when its task is to overcome economic, political, social and cultural oppression. Overcoming a situation requires a prophetic positioning and a radical transformation, a denunciation of the oppression along with an annunciation of the participation of the new person liberated from marginalization. The facilitator role calls for prophetic participation:

For the prophet it is not enough to speak in the name of those who cannot speak; he or she must make a commitment to the cause of those who have no voice. The prophet struggles along with them so that all of them may speak (Freire, preface to Goulet, 1974:xiii).

Participation is pragmatic when it is carried out through concrete needs and actions motivated by the praxis of participatory development. Intellectuals may be prone to revolutionize in ideas and ideals because

they do not feel the tangible effects of marginalization. For the marginalized people the revolutionary process starts with the struggle for housing, sanitation, job security, skills, salaries, labor unions, transportation, and so forth. Participation begins with awareness of needs as an outcome of reflecting on reality. Participation is education. It is praxis because action and reflection dialectically push to new levels of transformation of society so that, in the familiar words of Perroux "development is for all men and for the whole man" (Goulet, 1974:40).

The process of marginalized people promoting and benefiting from development requires an educational intervention. The oppressed social classes should, ideally, be able to organize their participation independently of external facilitator help. But the nature of participatory development requires background experience and critical consciousness. It depends on means outside the immediate environment to obtain information and channel resources. It calls for structures and mechanisms of effective organization which the context of marginalization does not provide. Therefore a facilitator role is needed to stimulate and organize the people's involvement.

Five aspects of participation vitalize the helping relationship: solidarity, critical awareness, joint endeavors, organization and articulation. Solidarity lays the foundation for participation through unity, cooperation and class identity; it leads groups to discover and utilize their own natural dynamics. Critical awareness guides the process so that participation corresponds to reality through perception

of underlying causes of needs and constant evaluation of experiences. The people themselves assume the action at every stage by engaging in joint endeavors of decision making, planning, orientation, execution and administration of projects. The process grows in coherence and continuity through organization of participants into forms of community association. Articulation among organized groups, associations or social structures of the region, spreads the participation to new levels and to wider social spheres (Rousseau, 1977:18-19, 55-62, 77-80).

Concepts for Identifying Indicators of Dynamics

The study moved from sources of reflection in literature to field observations and experiences seeking understanding of what was being discovered. People in the same environment often interpreted concepts in different ways. For example some viewed development as modernization and rational attitudinal traits similar to the paradigms prevalent twenty years ago; others thought of development as liberation from marginalization. Some regarded praxis in utilitarian terms of valuing the product above the producer; others saw praxis as the creative fulfillment of the human being in conscious reflected work. While a few regarded Marxist concepts of praxis as an insidiously dangerous revolutionary ideology, others drew from Marxist ideas of praxis simply as instruments for socio-economic analysis of reality.

Certain ideas prevailed to give form and direction to the emergent classification of data. These concepts have been summarized in the Conceptual Framework for Identifying Indicators of Dynamics in the

Educational Praxis of Participatory Development (Table I). The chart juxtaposes concepts to show general trends of literature sources relevant to the process of research. The conceptual framework characterizes three indicators of dynamics of praxis in relation to development and praxis concepts.

Perception of reality and action-reflection linkages are foundations of participatory development practices and of the learning experience of praxis. A value, taken as a Gestalt quality, exists and has meaning within specific concrete human situations of social, cultural and historical elements and circumstances (Frondisi, 1971:159-165). Values permeating the indicators give the total configuration of meaning to the praxis event.

The Approach

An exploratory descriptive methodology was used to bring to surface the indicators of dynamics in praxis situations of participatory development. Data gathering and analysis were based on the method of grounded theory in qualitative research, combining analytic procedures with constant comparison and substantive development through an inductive approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1977). The data gathering procedures were carried out in two stages: observation of the transaction event followed by focused interview of the participants.

Structure of the Inquiry

Five points of convergence organized the inquiry: situation of the praxis transaction event, focal thematic content, perception of social reality, values, and action-reflection linkages.

TABLE I
 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR IDENTIFYING INDICATORS OF DYNAMICS IN THE
 EDUCATIONAL PRAXIS OF PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT

	Perception of Reality	Values	Action-Reflection Linkages
References for Praxis Related Concepts:			
Assmann, 1976	man conditioned by economic infras-	man is called fulfill-	dialogical discovery and
Barreiro, 1974	structure and ideo-	ment as human being	intervention
Beozzo, 1978	logical superstruc-	liberation from depen-	reflective consciousness of
Boff, 1974	ture	dence, oppression	action and experience
Bono, 1975	conditions impede par-	and marginality	practical human activity to
Bornheim, 1977	ticipation	man is a creative	re-make the world
Collins, 1977	critical awarens of	being of praxis	denunciation of dehumaniz-
Davis, 1973	conditioning of per-	theological expression	ing society and annunci-
Dussel, 1974, 1976	ception and thinking	of the voice of the	ation
Freire, 1973, 1975a,	conscientization re-	oppressed	practical but conscious
1975b, 1976a,	veals obstacles to	discovery of own path	action
1976b, 1977	humanization	to liberation praxis	understanding united
Gramsci, 1978	praxis interprets the	man fulfills himself	with action
Gutierrez, 1971,	world	in practical activity	dialectical unity of theory
1972	critical reflection on	every person is poten-	and practice
Leite, 1975	current historical	tial transformer of	imitative praxis to multiply
Novoa, 1977	practice	society	experience
Pinto, 1973	analysis of concrete	value of the worker	intentional praxis to create
Secundo, 1976	situations and	above the product	new reality
Suess, 1978	causes	praxis is dialogical,	political action joined to
Torres, 1976	practical conscience	loving and humble	faith action
Vazquez, 1977	to plan and organize	sin causes injustice	action motivated by perceived
Vieira Pinto, 1960	conscience of the	and oppression	needs
Ward, 1979	praxis experience	sharing of needs and	common search and common
	creative solutions	resources	goals
	for social needs	sharing of life's	educational intervention
	conscientization	processes	to foster participation
	production-transfor-	altruism in facilita-	
	mation	tor role	
	reality rooted in	liberation through	
	historical time	justice and faith	
	and place	action	
		anticipation of king-	
		dom of God	
References for Develop-			
ment Related Concepts:			
Black, 1977	situation of marginal-	man is active agent of	active, conscious and re-
Cardoso, 1979	ization, oppression	history	sponsible participation
Comblin, 1968	capitalism denies	defense of rights	in social, economic,
Curle, 1973	human rights	development to foster	political and cultural
Dunne, 1974	increasing impoverish-	universal human ascent	processes
Garaudy, 1976	ment	change towards common	prophetic participation
Goulet, 1971, 1974	production concentrated	good and "being more"	pragmatic participation to
Lebret, 1956, 1963	in power groups	of all persons	improve quality of life
Milwood, 1975	alienation caused by	participation built on	joint endeavors to carry
Nyerere, 1976	unjust division of	solidarity	out projects
Ribeiro, 1977, 1978	society	liberation guided by	organized and articulated
Rogers, 1976	class conflict of	people's values, by	participation
Rousseau, 1977	interests	hope	different degrees and
Schumacher, 1976	development as liber-	equitable distribution	levels of participation
	ation	of production	transform social structures
	critical awareness of	development for all	by socio-political action
	development reality	men and the whole	evaluation of aim and
	creation of new instru-	man	experience of partici-
	ments to analyze	create humanized world	pation
	reality	utopian quest for new	
	unveil reality to act	society and better	
	on it	future	
	make new readings of	self reliance in develop-	
	the "text" of reality	ment	

Situation. What identified the event in terms of locality, participants, time, date and socio-cultural context? What incidents or facts appeared to be important to apprehend the environment and historical moment of the praxis?

Focal thematic content. What did the facilitators and collaborators consider to be the main theme, or reason for, the transaction event? How did the event stand out as a specific moment in the praxis process?

Perception of social reality. What did the facilitators perceive as being the social reality which characterized the praxis? What did the collaborators perceive as the social reality which prompted their praxis? How did the facilitators think the collaborators saw their reality? How was social reality perceived before the event? What kind of social context was aspired for as a consequence of the praxis?

Values. What aspirations sustained the praxis event? What motivated the facilitators to participate? What values drew the collaborators to participate? How did the facilitators perceive the motivations of the collaborators? What kind of motivations seemed to predominate before the event? What were the aims and hopes for future praxis?

Action-reflection linkages. How did the facilitators identify action-reflection linkages in the praxis process and in the specific event? How did the collaborators see their action-reflection linkages in the transaction event and in their praxis? What kind of action-

reflection linkages seemed to exist before the observed event? What kind of action-reflection linkages were hoped for to keep praxis flowing as a process?

Observation of Transaction Events

The research units were events in which facilitators transacted with collaborators. The events were of programmed or impromptu activities within the praxis process of participatory development. The transaction events occurred in diverse ways: 1) scheduled group meetings in which members gathered to discuss their problems, plan and evaluate their activities; 2) informal meetings of the participants in homes, chapels, schools, dispensaries, or market places; 3) visits to project localities, such as farm plots or sewing centers, to discuss projects and obtain technical advice; 4) activities sponsored by community groups, such as a festivity for the metal workers' union, a graduation ceremony for the school equivalency course, a liturgical study day for land workers.

The observed events were drawn from on-going development experiences participated in by facilitators affiliated with a Brazilian organization working for the promotion of marginalized populations. The events were selected on the basis of convenience sampling and diversification of practitioner experience. The sample selection took into account: 1) the regular activities engaged in by the area teams of facilitators and community collaborators, with care not to create artificial situations of interaction for the purpose of the study; 2) practical access to the localities; 3) time-cost factors in selecting

priorities, representative activities, and diversification of experiences; 4) unforeseen changes of programming of the facilitator agency; 5) responsiveness of the facilitators and collaborators to the external intervention of research. Responsiveness was assessed within criteria from two assumptions: 1) people should never be used as objects of research; and 2) all participants should be treated as co-researchers in the endeavor to discover and share knowledge derived from reflecting on the experience of the participants.

To obtain a more authentic view of the total environmental reality of the events, the researcher took part in some routine aspects of the life of the collaborator participants, such as: sharing meals, travelling in crowded buses at rush hour to appreciate the comments of the construction workers going home to the favelas,³ dropping in for cafézinhos⁴ and a chat in the homes, debating with participants some of the current socio-political issues affecting their lives.

Focused Interviews

The interview methodology was based on focused interview procedures (Merton, Fiske and Kendall, 1956). Three types of non-directive methods were used: 1) unstructured questions that were stimulus and response free, e.g., what motivations do you find the most valuable?; 2) semi-structured questions that were stimulus free but response structured, e.g., what do you think caused the low price in the

³Favela = an urban slum.

⁴Cafézinho = a hot, sweet, strong demi-tasse of coffee.

manioc flour?; 3) semi-structured questions that were stimulus structured but response free, e.g., what do you feel will make you want to keep up the community schools? The interviews sought range, specificity and depth in the responses (Merton et al., 1956:41-114).

Range questions. Unstructured range evoking questions brought out anticipated and unanticipated elements. These were followed by cued or reversional transitions to focus on relevant topics, with mutational questions to explicit what had not been referred to. The following are examples of range evoking questions: 1) What other social problems do you notice (unstructured); 2) You mentioned how important the discussion was last week; was there anything else about the group's participation that seemed to lead to this decision tonight? (cued transitional); 3) Just a while back you referred to unity as necessary for revindication; what do you think makes it so necessary? (reversional transitional); 4) Nothing has been said about the last issue of the community newspaper; do you think it had any influence on the voting experience? (mutational).

Specificity questions. Semi-structured questions were used to bring out specific aspects and stimuli of the observed event. The following exemplify specificity questions: 1) How did you feel when, towards the end of the evening, some people started complaining that the project would not work? (graphic re-presentation); 2) You seem to like talking about the problems you feel as women in the home; when do you find opportunities for this to happen? (verbal cue);

3) What was your reaction to the labor union boss' position on salaries for welders? (details about specifics); 4) What do you recall happening that makes you say "the neighbors are disunited?" (reference to previous response); 5) Why do you think those people did not say anything during the meeting? (probing).

Depth Questions. A depth focus was sought by using semi-structured questions to obtain affective, cognitive and evaluative insights. The following are examples of depth questions: 1) You stated that literacy training as a group activity made it much easier to learn; how did you feel about group action before this project (shifting from content to feeling); 2) Several times the expression "to be people" has come up; what does it mean for you? (re-stating feelings to encourage exploration); 3) Do the things you have been saying here today about exploitation of farmers remind you of other situations? (paralleling); 4) In which meeting was the group more aware of its problems, this one or the one in which you planned to sign the petition for running water? (comparison); 5) Does the manner in which you make decisions as a community group have any influence on the type of community association you want to organize? (bridging).

Two classes of participants in separate groups, responded to focused interviews related to the observed transaction event: facilitators and collaborators. The size of the group varied from 2 (facilitators) to 20, with the average being 6 interviewees.

The facilitator participants, sometimes called agents, helpers, educators, or technicians, were for the most part employees of a

Brazilian agency promoting participatory development. Some were volunteers; a few were agents of church pastoral work. They were men and women of all ages, the majority in their 30's. Their educational background ranged from trade school to college. They were liberal professionals or paraprofessionals with practical knowledge in specialized fields, such as: health, agriculture, social work, business, education and labor law. They had broad experience as practitioners in the facilitator role in a variety of settings.

The collaborator participants, also called community group members, clients, educatees, those being reached by the helpers or facilitators, were men and women who were heads of families and stable but marginalized residents of impoverished urban and rural districts. They were agricultural workers on subsistence farms, day laborers on plantations, seasonal workers, sharecroppers, factory workers, odd jobbers, or the unemployed. In the cities they worked in the center but lived in the periphery, mainly in slums.

The facilitators, on the whole, came from intermediate classes in society. They were dedicated to the cause of liberation-development of the subordinate and oppressed classes. The collaborators were from the marginalized strata of society or from subordinate classes of underemployed peasants in factories and construction sites.

The initial design of the focused interview was direct and pointed. But the intrusion of research does violence to the integrity of the subjects being researched, especially when those subjects have a history of having suffered violation of their basic rights. The

design was modified in the early stages of the field research to use more unobtrusive measures along with less directive focused interviews.

The interviews were planned to follow the observed transaction event. However, the participants often dispersed soon after the gatherings that ended late at night and returned to their homes in groups for security reasons. Many were exhausted from the day's labor which had begun at dawn. In such cases the interviews were extended to small groups of participants the following day, focusing on the event of the previous evening. The focused interview often blended into the on-going event being observed. Questions were posed before, during and after the event, and not only at one determined time. This favored spontaneity and more authentic responses. Many comments, reactions, and incidents during the transaction of the participants answered the researcher's intended questions, and these were noted as they occurred. The observations and responses included words, phrases, expressions, definitions, intentions, evaluations, references to incidents beyond the event, cases, exemplifications, and attitudes expressed or implied by the participants. The researcher's own perceptions of action and attitudes were recorded and later included in the structure of the inquiry and in the interpretation of the data.

The researcher prefaced the study of each observed event with an explanation to the group that people from other places wanted to learn from the community's experiences. The participants were asked to share some thoughts and feelings through the focused interview questions

to help provide insights into the experience being observed, both as a particular event and as a moment in their praxis process. Often the participants threw the questions back to the researcher after presenting their own views and a dialogue followed. Many participants expressed that they, too, would like to learn from others and asked the researcher to share with them the results of the study.

The visit of an outside facilitator was often accepted as a normal occurrence within the facilitator-collaborator interaction in community events. Nevertheless, the researcher's presence could have biased the directed interview responses.

Analysis of the Data

In an initial topical analysis the focused interview responses and researcher observations were transcribed in Portuguese from tape recordings and field notes. They were loosely clustered into groups of topics following the five structural elements of inquiry: situation, focal thematic content, perceived social reality, values, and action-reflection linkages. The transaction event data were grouped by geographic region according to urban and rural areas. Data from transaction events in two leper colonies were considered an isolated social category. Many expressions represented more than one element in the structure of inquiry and were annotated under the various headings to which they pertained.

A second qualitative analysis of the data reduced the statements to categories of variables within the five structural elements of inquiry. This was done by abridging and grouping the classes of

elements to representative phrases and incidents according to concepts that emerged during the process of analyzing the data. Six anecdotal illustrations were highlighted from the response data as correlated events. The data were translated into English during this stage of analysis.

A third analysis was made to converge the categories of concepts around significant signs of dynamics (socio-kinetics) of the praxis transaction events within the five structural elements of inquiry. "Significant" was taken to mean essential for the focal thematic content and qualitatively representative of the ideas and feelings expressed by the participants. It included divergences and disparities of opinions. These data can be found in Chapters II, III and IV of the study.

Interpretation

The following questions were used to interpret the data:

1. What evidences support the assumption that perception of social reality, value motivations and aspirations, and action-reflection linkages serve as indicators of the socio-kinetics of praxis for participatory development? In what way are the three classes of indicators interrelated?
2. What do the participants describe as perceived social reality? How do they perceive it? How does their perception relate to the situation of marginalized urban and rural populations? In what way does the perception seem to influence praxis?
3. What values predominate as motivations and aspirations, and

as criteria for evaluating praxis? How do the values relate to participatory development?

4. What indications do the participants give of action-reflection linkages? What do the linkages appear to mean to the praxis process?
5. What evidences of changes in perceptions, values and action-reflection linkages seem to emerge through the same focal thematic content when comparing the present event to past experiences and anticipated or hoped for praxis in the future?
6. What similarities and differences in characteristics of indicators can be distinguished between facilitator and collaborator participants? What relationship is there between what the facilitators project for the collaborators and what the collaborators project for themselves?
7. What implications do the indicators of dynamics of praxis have for the facilitator role in the helping relationship for participant development as an educational process?

An attempt was made to classify categories of indicators according to past (recalled) and future (anticipated) trends. The data were not sufficient to give evidence of changes over time because the present moment of the transaction event absorbed the perceptions of the participants. Some references were made to "what it was like before" and to what was needed for the future. These only allowed for generalizations to be implied about changes in the signs of dynamics.

Validation

One pervasive drawback throughout the study was the researcher's bias in the selection and interpretation of the focused interview responses. Efforts were made to validate the data within the constrictions of working with facilitators who, on the whole, based their approaches on similar ideologies and methodologies.

A new member of the researcher's own facilitator team in Rio de Janeiro accompanied her on two field observations in the Southeast Region. Independent judgements were compared.

Further, after each of the transaction events observed, the researcher discussed the meanings of the interview responses with the facilitators from that region.

At the conclusion of the field data gathering the classified interview responses as well as interpretations and conclusions were reviewed by the former director of the organization. Interpretations that were not clearly agreed upon were eliminated from the study.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The study contributed to a new focus, a different emphasis on the traditional agent-client relationship. It looked at how facilitators and collaborator feel, think, perceive, judge, and act in the same experience. It brought to surface what seemed to be signs of the dynamics, or energy inherent in and accounting for praxis. Praxis was shown to be an educational experience. Concepts came out of base level practice, expressed by the subjects of the experiences. Using the methodology of grounded theory served to broaden the scope of

reflection within the conceptual framework rather than to channel the inquiry.

Some of the weaknesses of the study lay in the fact that the majority of the facilitators belonged to the same organization. Inevitably the conclusions reflected some aspects of the ideology, practices, and limitations of the facilitator agency. Assumptions made about indicators of socio-kinetics were not supported by tested theories. The field data were extensive and somewhat dispersive. The exploratory content analysis was limited by the researcher's criteria and biases. Using convenience samples curtailed generalizability of the findings.

The conceptual framework, research methodology and data interpretation reflected the same philosophical view of man and society. This consistency in bias was intentional. While it detracted from the scientific credibility of the study it provided a necessary coherence in the documentation of a view of people's participation based on their own perceptions.

In the overall appraisal of the study the researcher's interpretations of the events should be considered secondary. The words of the community group collaborators and facilitators, transcribed from the data of the 37 events, should speak directly for the participants themselves.

CHAPTER II

IN THE FIELD: SOUTHEAST REGION

The chapter presents 17 events which took place in towns, cities and peripheral urban areas of the Southeast Region. A brief description is made of some pressing social problems which influence the context of participatory development. Current social stratification is highlighted to show the position of facilitators and collaborators in regard to social change. The support of the Catholic Church for development action in base level communities is explained. Indicators of the dynamics of praxis are situated within the process flow of praxis. Participatory development is seen from a perspective of open, closed and isolated communities. Spheres of participation from small nucleus leadership groups to geographic communities are seen in reference to the roles of facilitators and collaborators.

Presentation of the Data

Transaction events depict moments in praxis experiences. The focus is on the present, in light of what went on before and what was hoped for in the future. The descriptions attempt to capture a "stop" in the praxis process through a specific event, thus allowing signs of dynamics to come to surface and be perceived and communicated. This "stop" offers a vertical view of the dynamics inherent in the praxis. The vertical view concentrates the characteristics of

dynamics at one moment of praxis by reflecting on the participated event or by recalling feelings, perceptions, ideas and activities related to it.

In many cases the participants exemplified the signs rather than defining them. They told of group experiences that seemed to show what they would have liked to express. Six of these accounts, correlated with the transaction events, provide a horizontal view of the same or similar indicators raised through focused interviews and observations.

The following descriptions do not presume to evaluate either the experiences or the social situations. The indicators reflect the historical reality in which the events occurred: Brazil, July to January, 1978. Names of some of the specific localities have been withheld to safeguard the identity of the participants.

The translation of expressions from Portuguese to English has greatly impoverished the spontaneity of language of the participants, especially the unschooled freedom of expression of the collaborator participants. The comments made by the participants have not been linked in any logical or sequential order. They simply enunciate the ideas, feelings, motives, recollections, and aspirations as the participants perceived them at the time. The dispersive and some times contradictory views represent the groups as they really are, with all their vicissitudes. The expressions illustrate and are representative of opinions of the interview groups or communities.

The participants generally used the terms gente¹ or povo,² meaning people, to designate: we, they, you and me, all of us, the community at large, the population. Because of the encompassing flexibility of the word, the translated version has narrowed the meaning to denote certain persons, inevitably reducing the implied feeling of identity and belonging. Often phrases with the subject "I" were used, not to express individual views, but to exemplify what was being discussed by the group.

Wherever statements made by collaborators did not expressly correspond with the views of the facilitators, the notation (C) is indicated at the end of the statement. Conversely, statements by the facilitators not coinciding with the manifest views of the collaborators have been noted (F).

The description of each event is divided into five sections. The first, Situation, has been drawn from general background information. The other four sections: Focal Thematic Content, Perceived Social Reality, Values, and Action-Reflection Linkages, are selections from the interview data using the participants' own expressions.

The six correlated events have been abridged from cases narrated by the participants. Whenever convenient, the indicators have been highlighted by inserting the letters PSR for Perceived Social Reality, V for Values, and A-RL for Action-Reflection Linkages.

¹Gente = person or people.

²Povo = people or population.

The transaction events and correlated cases took place in the outskirts of large cities, in small towns, in villages, or in rural settlements. They were scattered across three Eastern regions of Brazil (see Figure 1, Map of Brazil with Regional Divisions).

Sewing Group, Vitoria

The meeting was held in a center belonging to the diocese, in the periphery of Vitoria, State of Espírito Santo.

Situation

Participants of the afternoon sewing group were women from nearby favelas.³ The ages varied. Many had 2 or 3 children scampering around. Most were wives of workers taking part in discussion groups or job training. They were bashful, respectful, and showed admiration for the facilitator. Some were illiterate. The group had been called together by facilitators because of previous contacts through the project of requesting a bus service which had mobilized all the neighborhoods. Many were absent from the meeting because the slippery mud on the hillsides from heavy rains kept them at home.

The initiative of the discussion was almost totally taken by the facilitator and only a few collaborators responded, although all listened attentively.

Focal Thematic Content

We met as a sewing group to talk about things...to tell about our lives...to look at our problems a little.

³Favela = an urban slum.

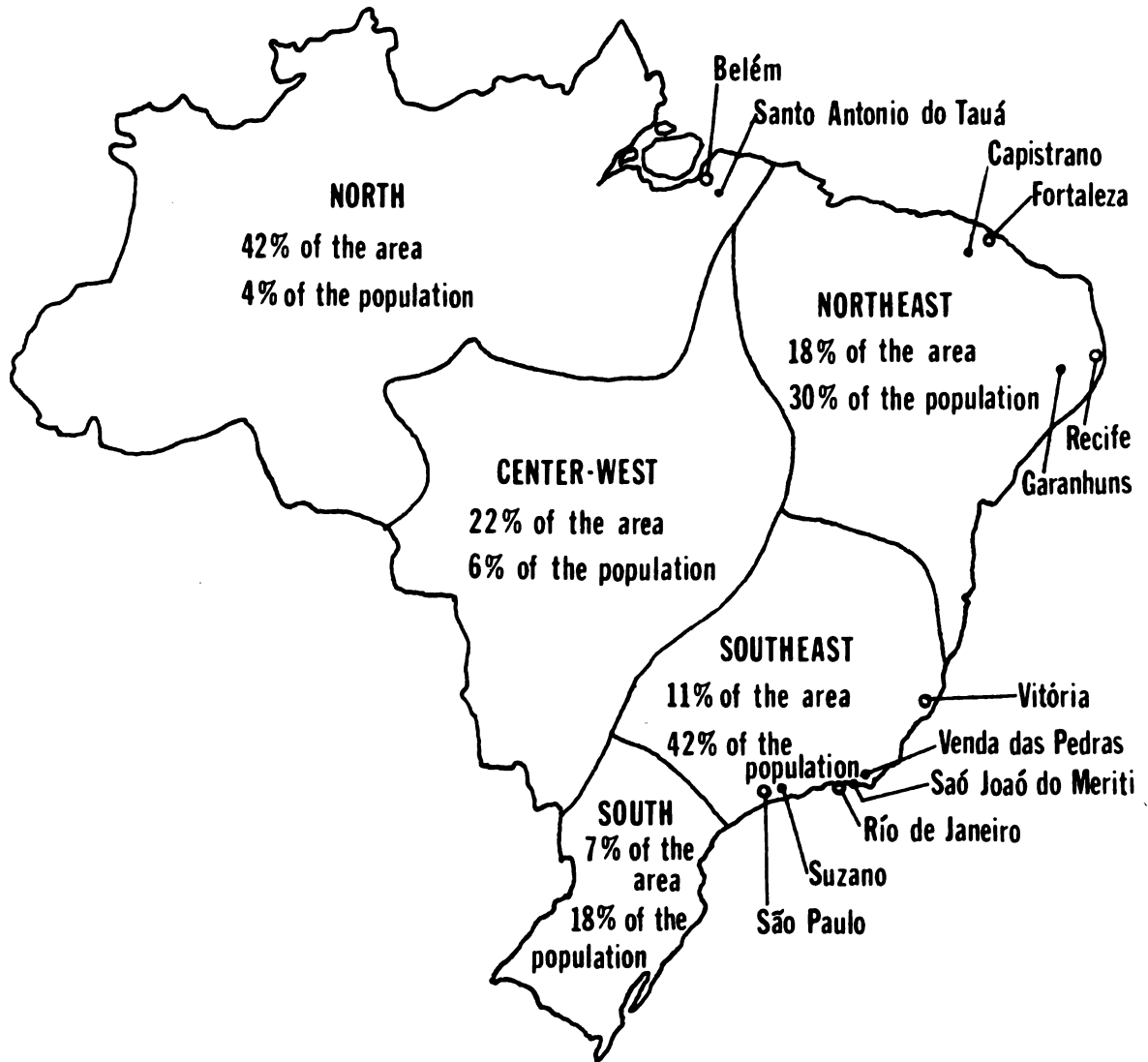


Figure 1

MAP OF BRAZIL WITH REGIONAL DIVISIONS

Anuario Estatístico do Brasil. IBGE: 1976, pp. 19, 83.
 Estimated population for 1978: 116,393,100.

We wanted to use the motivation of the sewing group to awaken interest in work related problems and their consequences in the neighborhood (F). We tried to reflect on and deepen the group's social vision (F).

Perceived Social Reality

The woman is exploited. Husbands get "hunger salaries," which are unjust, not enough to live on. The problems are survival, health, schools. Young people are exploited as cheap labor. A boy who goes to work is worn out and on sick pension by the time he is 20 years old. Men do not communicate with their wives. Public health service is deficient; the doctors arrive 2 hours late and rush through the examinations, but we can't arrive 10 minutes late or we lose our card. There is no water, sewerage, or transportation. Children are left abandoned in the home. Women who work digging for the government get lower pay and suffer insults from the men. Husbands come home exhausted, strained, full of nervous problems...get brutal. People used to complain but did nothing to bring about change. Life is a losing struggle to make ends meet. Women are always kept in the background, in the home, to clean, cook, and raise children. Women have always been marginalized from decisions to resolve problems of the neighborhood. We need day care centers so mothers can go out to work. We need better salaries for husbands. Recognize the exploitation of the laborer (F).

Values

Some came just for the sewing. We like to get together and speak our problems. We need to communicate, to receive support. We have a commitment to each other and to learn. It's worthwhile joining together because in the case of the transportation we got more buses. We want to learn...find friends...divert ourselves...cool down our heads. It's unity that makes the group. We want to share and identify with others. What I know I want to teach others. Learning sewing helps to earn money. Before we used to accept without thinking; life was like that. We were ashamed to speak; we faced things alone. There is much alienation, endurance to bear suffering (F). People show submission and conformity, disunity. The women did not recognize injustices (F). We must take our group seriously; take it forward until things change. Women must begin to be interested and take part in the husbands' involvement in labor and living problems (F).

Women need to take a more political position (F). Let's demand improvements from the government.

Action-Reflection Linkages

We talk things over and learn and see how the salary is too little. We reflect on social problems while learning how to sew (F). Women participate indirectly in the husbands' involvements by going to the assemblies and signing the petitions (F). When we meet and talk we get to see things differently. Before there were lessons of embroidery and crochet. In the beginning we didn't understand anything. We want to get together and put our names down to ask for water. They must revindicate⁴ rights and improve conditions for the woman worker (F). We want a painting course to go on learning. There is need to organize the women into revindication groups (F). We are going to invite some women workers to meet and look at their problems.

Seminar for Manual Laborers, Vitoria

The area was a peripheral district of Vitoria, where the underemployed laborers who serve the city live in five favelas.

Situation

The group was taking part in a seminar, held three evenings, to look at problems of the laborers and their families because of inadequate salaries and unjust working conditions. The seminar met in the diocesan community center.

The group of men, women, and young adults were participants of basic ecclesial communities in the various neighborhoods or chapels. The men all work overtime and arrive home late at night. They get to the meetings dead tired but are anxious to be there.

⁴Revindicate means to demand and take back, a very common expression for the struggle to obtain rights of marginalized people in Brazil.

The facilitator was a lawyer who uses his professional knowledge to orientate the workers on their rights and has the confidence of the people.

Focal Thematic Content

It was a meeting of representatives of the basic ecclesial communities to become involved in concrete action related to work problems, from a faith option (F). We discussed the community work. We have to raise social problems as a result of reflection on the bus service project (F). We come here to learn more about our problems...to see things clearer...to think better together.

Perceived Social Reality

Problems of the area are: water, bus service, people of the lowlands being evicted by real estate companies. The contradictions of society are manifested in the work force and living conditions; we perceive this but the people do not (F). The people are far from perceiving the extent of the problem (F). The big boss uses us to do anything he wants, like a feather duster in his hand--up, down, go. The salary is not enough to live on. The people are despised, abandoned, oppressed...no sewerage...houses falling down...open drains...dangerous roads...no light, water or pavements. There is nothing to help the poor. The little one suffers but does not know where to turn. The group does not recognize the causes of problems; they only know that things are getting worse because of the cost of living (F). We used to believe in the candidates, we elected them, but in 20 years we never saw any results. At first we thought the only problem was the bus service, now we are seeing that there are many problems, a whole potful of problems to be poured out. How are we going to tip the pot over? People must be able to take their rightful places in the social structure. We must pause in our activities and look at the reality of the neighborhood to see how living conditions depend on the work situation (F). Let's turn things inside out to benefit the poor.

Values

We don't want remedies, we want justice. The powerful have everything in their favor, but what do we have? We

only have each other. The people don't know how to read but they know how to work; people who work are of great value. Religion has weight...faith is the motivation... justice that is preached in church...try to live the Gospel in everyday life (F). The reality of felt needs motivates people to want to know and improve. We understand poverty, but not in this unjust form. God wants us to do something about it; God leaves it up to us to decide. We don't have instruction⁵ but we can see far. Before the people accepted ideas without reacting, now they discuss, question, raise doubts. Why is it the poor person has never had any value? Others are climbing all the way to the moon and the poor person hasn't gone up one centimeter. Some can't get beyond the catechism level...can't put the Gospel into practice (F). We don't want a radical change, but growth as one goes on assuming commitments. The poor person must have his rights as a person.⁶ Everyone working and trusting and encouraging each other, a new way of living, a new world...this is what we want.

Action-Reflection Linkages

Some advance in their reflections and this advance causes others to start reflecting (F). We don't do anything without preparing together and evaluating together; this is our process. We keep on opening up new reflections. Reflection brings out new needs as we go discovering the why of problems. People grow from practice, reflection, and evaluation (F). Whenever we discover anything we take it to our communities. Before, the two pastoral agents opened our eyes...slowly without our feeling it...the first steps to begin to open our eyes. Then we were anxious to receive something; our antennas were up, but we didn't know where to turn. We saw those things but didn't know where to begin. The seminar group is growing in perception. The members all belong to other groups but have grown individually, and this creates contradictions and blockages within their basic ecclesial communities, which do not advance so quickly in their perceptions (F). We want to take the reflections to the basic ecclesial communities to help them open up. We must demand that the mayor carry out his promises to the people. Reflection should lead to commitment and action to change social reality. We want to appreciate more the meanings of the projects we are carrying out.

⁵Leitura = reading, refers to school instruction.

⁶Ser gente = to be human, means to have rights as a person.

Welding Course, Vitoria

The location was an urban peripheral district with surrounding favelas.

Situation

Underemployed laborers from building construction were taking part in a job training course in soldering. The meeting was to talk over labor union problems.

The gathering was late at night, after the men had served overtime at their jobs. About half belonged to some neighborhood, church or labor group. One older man was an outstanding leader and questioner, with years of experience in Workers' Catholic Action. Some younger ones were only interested in the benefits they could get from the labor unions.

Focal Thematic Content

The meeting was to clarify and motivate participation in the labor union...form a group to give continuity to the soldering class through labor union participation (F). We wanted to take advantage of the welding course to deepen awareness of the problems of the laborer...exchange ideas on work problems...learn more about the labor unions. See what we can do to improve work conditions.

Perceived Social Reality

Workers are disunited and exploited by the firms. There is lack of knowledge about the workers' reality (F). Salaries are miserable and so are the conditions for the class. It's hard to conscientize the worker who believes more in the schemes of the firms than in us because he is afraid to lose his job. They hold back our time cards to oblige us to work overtime. The boss has a lot of money but the worker doesn't even have a nook in which to drop dead. The labor unions seem to want to make us go along

with the firms. The labor unions have always been disconnected from the real problems of the worker. You've got to keep living just not to die. We need more just salaries and better working conditions. The labor unions should be instruments to support the worker.

Values

We feel the need to do something. The church pastoral action motivates some (F). I have been a conscious laborer only since 1975; before that I was just a worker. Before they used to leave everything up to God and let Him resolve everything... accept anything that He sent their way. Workers are disunited and indifferent; there is no class consciousness. People don't get together to put up a united front. We lacked solidarity. We didn't have any awareness of the value of the worker. Each one only wants to defend his interests. We need to be aware of our class. Now we are interested in getting to know the labor union. The basic ecclesial communities really have to fight for the interests of the people. We need perseverance and a fighting spirit.

Action-Reflection Linkages

The worker's pastoral action creates interest in joining the labor union. We are going to form a special group and go together to the labor union assembly. Some of the group brought in the list of unionized people in their work, as we had decided on the last meeting. From the discussion many decided to join the labor union. The reflection group came out of groups working to improve the neighborhood and the basic ecclesial communities. We used to suffer but never thought about changing. We will talk to colleagues about the labor union...take questions to raise at the union meetings...revindicate rights through the unions.

Study Group on Workers' Problems, Rio de Janeiro

The district was in the North of the Greater Rio area with residences of low salaried construction and factory workers.

Situation

The group of men and women met on a Sunday afternoon at a district church training center. They came from several different parishes where they took part in other groups.

The meeting was part of a program to develop workers' issues. Attendance was usually irregular. Questions and explanations were initiated by the facilitator. Half the group responded to the discussions and half remained silent. Level of social perception varied among the collaborators.

Focal Thematic Content

The study group met to discuss the workers' pastoral action...receive clarification and learn about the problems of the laborer. We want to expand the social vision of the leadership of workers' pastoral groups...question subjects like politics, bosses, ideology (F).

Perceived Social Reality

The workers recognize problems in salaries, work loads, job security. The rich man is the owner of the means of production and dictates the laws (F). The population has never participated, not even in the changes that we had in work laws (F). The little one is squashed, exploited by the interests of others. The boss manipulates the capacity of the worker so he can get richer. Women do the same work as men but get lower salaries. Each one offers himself for less because of the excessive supply of labor. The firms fire the unionized workers if they talk to others. Some have too much and others go hungry. Before, the labor unions were only concerned with medical care, recreation, social activities, day care centers. Machines are replacing people. Some class categories have more support and grow faster. The bosses are united but the workers don't get together. We need a labor union with conscious people, not just buffers⁷...extend perception to a vision of the country, of propaganda.

⁷Pelego = sheepskin saddle cover, to soften the bumpy ride.

Values

The worker is responsible for the country's progress. Religious values and faith options lead to participation (F). Our work is open to all Christians, so long as they are workers. When people feel the need, they participate. The worker only unites when he knows he has value. The Christian should give witness, become involved. The number of colleagues who want to join the struggle is increasing and this gives us courage and spirit. Before it was just evangelization, now we extend the church to the factory, to society. What is against the Gospel must be changed. It's hard to unite the laborer; each one wants to gobble up the other because of insecurity on the job. Some give up when the subject requires commitment; some get involved; others just listen--it depends on the formation or capacity of each one. Fear holds people back...fear when there were some troubles, or fear of losing one's job. There is lack of unity. Those who climb are worse than those who are born rich because they exploit their fellows, those from where they themselves came. Before there was no communication among the workers. We want the right to live decently...awaken religious values within the reality of life. The worker must value himself...communicate and have unity to demand...wake up and not be so wishy-washy.

Action-Reflection Linkages

It's time for us to take a stand, conscientize ourselves, unite, and go out to action. Let's look at the situations and see what can be done to change. First we must get to know, then do something, because the majority don't know anything. We look at small experiences and learn. We take the discussion to others by chatting at home, at work. What we learn is a seed to be spread. Before they suffered the problems concretely,⁸ intuitively, with immediatist perceptions, now they want to see the why of all this and find what kind of action will change it (F). It all began with a youth group talking about justice, now we are working in the parishes and discussing reality. The worker needs force behind him to be able to dialogue. We must come to the conclusion that the workers should continue intensifying their perceptions and do something (F). Workers united and conscientized within associations can change the situation (F). We can exchange ideas, take part in neighborhood groups, in church pastoral groups, in labor union commissions.

⁸Na pele = on the skin, as a personal, close experience.

Workers' Pastoral Group, Rio de Janeiro

The place was a back room in a large church in a northern peripheral district of Rio de Janeiro.

Situation

A small group of men took part in the early evening meeting. Half the group did not turn up. Most were representatives from neighborhood and chapel groups of the area covered by the parish.

For a year the group has been trying to organize but without much success because of the instability and inconstancy of the members. There was evident contrast between an older, experienced and committed worker with keen vision, and a young man, orientator of the youth group, who was only looking for comfortable religiosity. One member showed naiveté in his observations but was beginning to question, eager but insecure.

Focal Thematic Content

We met to discuss problems connected with work situations...activate the workers' pastoral. There is need to form groups of workers' pastoral (F). We want to understand better the problems of the workers...bring together representatives of 3 outlying chapels and of the central church...talk about things of interest to the worker.

Perceived Social Reality

The law always favors the boss; alone the worker can't do anything. Democracy is handed out in little pieces, then taken back again whenever they want. Those who climb, exploit their fellow workers. Nothing has really changed, the worker is still wronged. The worker has achieved very little. The worker has always been disunited, exploited. We want a fair salary and security in the job. They need a better perception of the unjust situation (F).

Values

The work is slow, only a few are interested and they have difficulty reaching the rest. When people are united they cannot be squelched.⁹ We have to become aware of the need for worker solidarity. We must overcome that individualism which separates worker from worker. Individualism makes work companions compete with each other. The system we're in has always favored individualism. The workers' pastoral is just a drop in the ocean. There is lack of stability. The Bible circles are still weak. People don't participate; there's no solidarity. We lack a common interest; it's hard to gather the workers together to talk. We want the worker to be valued...develop class consciousness...unite to overcome, because the boss is strong and can fire us. We need more time of motivation to grow. The pastoral work is going to depend on all of us. If the worker doesn't conscientize and get involved nothing will change.

Action-Reflection Linkages

The group reflects together but does not have any joint activity (F). There are discussions of news items that have meaning to the worker. First we must unite, then demand. We try to resolve together the problems of work and life. Someone put an article in the news bulletin of the youth group to stimulate interest in the workers' pastoral. People use all means to alert others into questioning such as: talking in the washrooms at the factory, turning the chatter about football during lunch to problems of work, putting up a poster of a woman with newspaper clippings about workers glued around the poster. We (facilitators) prepare a resume of facts and offer them to the group at the end of the meeting. We must create conditions to revindicate together (F). Let's look out for others in the same conditions...create space for the worker.

Parish Leadership Preparation for Workers' Action,
Rio de Janeiro

An industrial zone of the northern suburbs was inhabited by poor and low middle class workers. The area was closely watched by security.

⁹Massacrado = massacred, meaning repressed.

Situation

The meeting was late at night in a classroom at the side of a large colonial church. Some of the participants came by car. The interests of the group were scattered: one man stood out because of his consciousness and seriousness; one young boy was very eager to do things but lacked experience; one man was completely disconnected from the issues; one talkative woman kept steering the subject to her problems with her husband and the norms of a machist society; the rest were noncommittal. Many of the regular participants had not shown up, but the group could not pinpoint the reason.

The group had begun with the priests, then the participants did a supletivo¹⁰ course with the facilitators. At present the group acts as leadership in several spread out parish groups.

Focal Thematic Content

Meeting of the representatives of parish groups was to prepare for the gatherings each will hold with his own group. It was to discuss the problems of the workers' pastoral and learn things to take back to the groups.

Perceived Social Reality

There are some employees who are more on the side of the boss than on the side of the worker. It's the boss who decides what, how, and in what time to produce. Cost of living is high. The work does not pay. Work conditions are bad. Some dictate everything and others can't even give a suggestion on anything important. A few do the exploiting and many are exploited. A few are the owners of everything and the great majority is the owner of nothing. We have lacked knowledge of the problems of

¹⁰Supletivo = suppletive, a course in adult basic education to provide school equivalency diplomas.

laborers. People think the subject of laborers is a puzzle.¹¹
 We look towards changing the organization of production and
 of society to benefit the worker.

Values

In business and in society there is a great division among men. People are afraid to get involved because it is risky. The priest invites the people to talk about the problems and the workers' pastoral. There is little perception of things as they are (F). Before, the church was not interested in the problems of the worker. The people lack initiative, are inconstant, don't take on commitments. We want to motivate perseverance, unite, and become aware of the problems.

Action-Reflection Linkages

The prepared material gives the group leaders security but often they just base the reflections on concrete events and situations (F). We never used to discuss these problems before. Some of those who took part in meetings and assemblies have formed reflection groups. We want to get to know better the situation of the worker. All could become part of the workers' pastoral (F). Through the bi-monthly meeting we hope to come to a broader view of the problems. We want to make a survey of the problems at work and examine our Christian witness on how we face these problems (F).

Evangelization and Social Action Meeting, Rio de Janeiro

The suburb of the North Zone was densely populated with low income workers. The gathering was held in a hall at the side of a church.

¹¹Bicho de sete cabeças = seven headed beast, meaning an awesome puzzle.

Situation

The meeting drew two representatives from each of the area evangelization groups and youth groups, with the priest and community development facilitators.

The members of the evangelization group also belong to groups working to resolve social problems in activities linked to the orientation of the facilitators. This activity is independent of the church. The meeting took place on three sequential levels: first there was a general gathering of people from an area not involved with the permanent groups but interested in resolving the problem of water. The leadership of the evangelization groups tried to get these people to sign a list of volunteers in order to form their own water project commission. The second level was the regular meeting to prepare the Gospel reflections to be taken to the small groups during the week. The third level was the intervention of the facilitators to encourage the evangelization groups to become involved in resolving problems of the suburb, beginning with the water problem. Articulation among the three levels was somewhat forced.

Focal Thematic Content

We plan to create forms of organization and mobilization of the suburb (F). Meeting of the coordinating groups of evangelization was to prepare for the meetings held in the homes. We talked about the last meeting of the groups and prepared themes and readings for the next session in the homes (C).

Perceived Social Reality

Summer is coming, the water situation is going to get worse. The water shortage is bad. There is a lack of infrastructures (F). The burden of the people is heavy. Just a few people bear the burden for many; everyone should carry out his part. There is a lack of vision of the problems (F). We want things to get better; the laborer is worthy of his labor.

Values

Church people should look more to the neighbor, to the problems: fraternal charity should be more social, not just giving alms. We can't carry everyone's burdens; they (people from other neighborhood) can't lean on us; they themselves must get organized (C). Religion only has meaning if it is lived in practice. I get more enthused with the thought of Brazil than I do with our neighborhood. Before we used to be individualistic in prayer and meetings. There is no unity. Religiosity is disconnected from social involvement (F). Very few take part in the evangelization groups. We're not going to reap any fruits if we slacken. If we hold on firmly we'll get there. People have to change the attitude that says each one for himself (F).

Action-Reflection Linkages

We resolve our problems together in prayer and action. The commissions are struggling and are attentive to what can be done. Now we're seeing things differently. There is need to confront the structural power and the causes of the problems (F). The leadership group for evangelization is working to demand water for the suburb. The struggle to revindicate water is being communicated to the whole suburb and people are being mobilized for tasks. The youth group is preparing a skit on the water problem to get greater participation of the residents. Before we only used to pray and have associations. The training course was important; it increased our knowledge and made us feel secure in what we were doing. Everything stays in the ideas and doesn't come down to the concrete. Just by working together people don't develop a social consciousness (F). People must get together and demand their rights and carry out improvement projects for the neighborhood... steer the religious motivation to a social practice to act on social problems (F). We can't stay just in our neighborhood; we must reflect on the country, on Brazil (C).

Task Groups for Neighborhood Action,
São João do Meriti

The location was a village suburb of São João de Meriti, a city in the lowlands of the state of Rio de Janeiro, notorious for its anti-social behavior, high crime rate, largely due to the harsh struggle of the people and to the concentration of marginals in certain sections. It was there that the "Death Squad" usually dropped off its victims.

Situation

A group of women, with one man present, met during an entire Sunday morning in the home of one of the group members. Another man, a firm supporter of the group, was absent because he was obliged to work at the construction site where he is bricklayer. The group carried out some evangelization for the area but without being directly attached to the neighboring parish.

The group had fallen apart for some time. Sub-groups were formed to carry out specific tasks. This was the first meeting of the small groups together. One member, a teacher and university graduate, took the leadership intellectually and sometimes assumed contradictory and reactionary positions on social problems. The facilitators took the initiative in the meeting. They chose the texts for the evangelization group reflections, introduced survey tasks and prepared the questionnaire, stressed the need for revindication and neighborhood projects, and prepared the news bulletin on the previous meetings.

Focal Thematic Content

Meeting of the 3 sub-groups was to talk about what was done...to see how to improve the work of the neighborhood. The reason was to question the why of social problems...determine tasks to be carried out by the groups in the area (F).

Perceived Social Reality

Women are the force of the neighborhood because they are always present. Salaries are low, people eat poorly and live poorly. The roads are full of mud, there is no sewer system, light is insufficient, schools are deficient. The problems have always existed; they are the responsibility of the city hall which does not carry out its duties. There is need to perceive the causes of the problems of the suburb (F).

Values

Women consider themselves nothing in society. Many missed the meeting. The group is not united. The group is discouraged because people did not carry out the tasks. The group is not solidary, does not assume responsibility. We don't have courage to go out and reach the people. We must question the need for revindication, neighborhood organization, participation of other residents (F). We don't know why the group fell apart before (C). The group fell apart before because it had been dominated by one strong member who then used the group for political reasons, and decisions were not taken together (F). A person has to value him or herself before working for the neighborhood. The group must come to perceive its lack of spirit (F). By uniting, they overcome the idea of each for himself and God for all (F). Gospel reflection should serve the work of the neighborhood (F). We need more participation.

Action-Reflection Linkages

In spite of the specific activities, like getting light connected by preparing a signed petition, the people do not mobilize nor become conscientized (F). There is need to accompany the group to make the ideas move forward (F). The 3 sub-groups carried out their tasks: evangelization met for reflection; the group for women held a gathering for women to talk over their lives; the

recreation group organized some games with the catechism children. We did the survey asking 25 people the questions on the transportation service. The second gathering of women has been set up for next month but we still need an outside speaker (C). The work is slow and cyclical--it rises and drops (F). We need meetings of women, of workers, etc., to revindicate improvements (F). We have to work together to obtain improvements and reach more people.

Survey Study by Representatives of Four Communities,
São João do Meriti

The suburb consisted of several small villages in the lowland area of São João do Meriti.

Situation

The meeting was held during a full Sunday morning in a chapel which also serves as a meeting center for community work. The participants were representatives of 4 groups from different villages of the suburb. These groups were originally only for religious reflection, later they became the motivators for social improvement. However, they revealed a conflict between their religious and social roles and were not very sure of their identity and commitments.

Some participants arrived by car. Some had higher education while others were semi-literate. The facilitators took the lead, kept raising questions on the lack of responsibility of the local government. The collaborators were slow to react. One of the volunteer facilitators was a professor. There was evident disparity in the level of perception and interests among the participants. The facilitators handed out prepared texts for reflection with discussion questions.

Focal Thematic Content

The group met to look at the results of the surveys carried out by each of the 4 village groups: transportation and recreation, health, housing, and education. We need to initiate a process of questioning based on the facts gathered ...start activities to improve neighborhood conditions... talk about the problems of carrying out the activities (F). We learn together by talking things over and thinking.

Perceived Social Reality

The problems of bus service are caused by the power of the companies who want to hold on to their territories and control competition. Children go to school, then come home because the teacher doesn't turn up; the only good thing about the schools are the lunches (C). The school lunches are a sign that the socio-economic system doesn't work; the people say the school lunches are good because they are grateful to get the food not realizing how bad it is (F). Bad health comes from bad nutrition, which comes from low salaries together with high cost of living. There are no health dispensaries, no water nor sewerage systems, few doctors, much verminosis. The people have been illuded by politicians too long (F). There is a gap between those who organize society and those who suffer society ¹² (F). These things have always been so, but people are accommodated. Nobody does anything. The people say it's up to town hall to do something. The people can't do anything; they are the majority in number but are treated as minors; the people don't have liberty (F). We have to get the authorities to see things the way we see them.

Values

The leadership groups of the neighborhood do everything; the others don't take any responsibility (F). If you look at it well, we are the elite in the neighborhood and we are doing the same thing to the neighborhood by imposing our decisions as the government is doing to us (C). There is little participation in the meetings and in the work. There is lack of communication within the group itself during reflection and work. Discouragement comes because the groups can't get people together to take part in the work. There

¹²Sofrem sociedade = suffer society, meaning bearing the burden of unjust and oppressive social structures.

is a lack of something interior to unite us; this activity is not enough (C). People have always been attached to internal religious activities and caught up with the church problems and haven't had time for other activities (F). The problem is always the same: how to get people to participate. People have always been used to receiving from society. Neighbors don't mix. Those who don't belong to the church are not interested in the community problems. We want to see the neighborhoods united and having better living conditions. The groups must be open to a social meaning (F). We have to get more people to take part and understand the meaning of unity and organization of unity (F). We need to give more value to what we feel, be more interiorized, and not just look for material improvement (C).

Action-Reflection Linkages

Problems are influencing our lives but our lives are not influencing the problems (F). We have to act on situations together and influence the authorities (F). We have to begin by getting people interested in something, then bring them to the meeting. We want to reinforce the group meetings to clarify and strengthen the ideas. Neighborhoods have to make their presence felt with the authorities and demand their rights (F). We must evaluate, unite, discuss, and question what is being done (F). Before we carried out some small projects, like renewing the street lamps. The surveys brought in facts for discussions. The solution lies in groups getting organized and putting the pressure on the authorities to resolve the problems raised in the surveys (F). During the next meeting we will try to come to the realization that faith unites people and transforms life (F). The important thing is to encourage, to build up eagerness, organization comes later (C).

Base Groups for Cost of Living Movement, Suzano

The city of Suzano was in a growing industrial area of the state of São Paulo. The periphery of the city was made up of extremely poor and needy suburbs in contrast to the capital producing industries and mills of the center. The suburbs, where the groups have formed,

lacked infra-structures: light, water, sewerage, paved roads, bus services, grocery stores, drug stores, schools, etc.

Situation

Representatives, men and women, from 5 of the peripheral suburb groups met with the facilitators in a classroom of the old parish school in the center of town on a Saturday night. The groups had originated as worship groups only; they expanded their interests while retaining the religious commitment. One collaborator was unusually alert and vivacious and kept throwing questions out to the others, making sure everyone had something to say. All the groups had been involved in collecting signatures for the Cost of Living Movement in a petition addressed to the President. This activity had culminated the week before with a large assembly in and around the Cathedral in São Paulo where the masses had suffered police repression.

Some facilitators were volunteers who taught in the public schools. The parish priest sat in for a part of the meeting and gave his enthusiastic support. Some young people took part because they felt good in the group but had no deeper commitment. Suzano alone collected 11,500 signatures of the total of nearly 1,300,000 signatures on the document.

Focal Thematic Content

The group wanted to evaluate the Cost of Living Movement. It was the first meeting after handing in the signed petition at the assembly to see what people thought of it...to reflect on how the people felt with the police

repression at the assembly...to evaluate the process of 5 months' work. We wanted to plan how to keep the groups alive in the neighborhoods.

Perceived Social Reality

Usually the people feel the problems connected with that which they are living (F). The poor have no rights, only the interests of the big ones count. The problems are closely felt in the daily life and all around, giving a particularized view of reality (F). People do not make the connection between what they are living and the complex political problem (F). Income distribution is unjust. The situation is one of general destitution; cost of living is unbearable. The businessmen get all the profit. Children die of hunger--we must find a better life for all. Cost of living influences the quality of life. We don't even know what the government is doing and this way they keep meddling in our lives. Before the community groups never went beyond discussing their inside activities: their community life, the center, the festivities, the worship, religion; reality was linked with the pastoral work but not with the broader neighborhood (F). Think of all the money that was spent on the world soccer cup--the poor people are the ones who were deceived and ended up paying! The tendency is for things to go on getting worse and the people are not stirring. Problems must be related to the structures (F). We have to relate other problems to the cost of living.

Values

In church the priest always talks about life, work and prayer. To share bread is to share life. Motivation comes from previous experience--the support that was felt. The Gospel gives motivation to work: people need food, clothing, schools; the thing is to struggle and not only keep praying and asking God for it. If the work were totally outside the church the people would be suspicious (F). The simple, more spontaneous, and more needy persons accept the community work but the middle class neighborhood does not accept the Gospel linked to life (F). There is some accommodation because of the structures we live in; it is much easier to turn on TV soap operas than to participate. We have to do what we think is right. There are problems which men themselves must resolve. The great values of the Cost of Living Movement were: confidence, friendship, total growth, the proof of love that encourages.

Before the basic ecclesial communities were ingrown; it was a detached¹³ religiosity (F). Those who have already participated in community are more motivated and more prepared (F). People did not always see that we are one people, one family. We returned from the Cost of Living assembly with our heads hanging down; but the movement built confidence and unity within the neighborhood and between neighborhoods. The work has to come out of local leadership. People try to overcome timidity and develop openness (F). We must struggle to get more harmony, more unity; the kingdom of heaven begins here. A fine work like ours should not stop. It's important to keep stepping forward with a love that walks with us; carry the message of work and struggle; it gives courage to go on.

Action-Reflection Linkages

We feel the problems but we don't understand. The document attached to our petition points out certain measures that could be taken--so the government could do something if it wanted to. We found out that when 10 people made purchases together they economized 100 cruzeiros (\$4.00); just imagine if that whole multitude of people who signed the petition did the same--what an economy it would be for the country! It is much easier to demand when one knows what it is all about. We always reflect on something concrete; the people are practical. To internalize the action we have to reflect from whatever point the group is at (F). Reflection alone leaves the group amorphous (F). One can know very well the causes but not put them together within action. We need prayer and action; nobody lives only by prayer; the movement is a time of action. We have to keep on asking, some day the President is going to say: those guys are really hungry. There were meetings to study the cost of living along with collecting signatures. Everyone feels the problem concretely¹⁴ and it is easy to fall into manipulation of politics or euphoria of the Cost of Living Movement (F). We won over many people with love through gathering the signatures and some asked us to go back and talk some more about these things. We must find other people on the same path and discover ways to demand our rights. While there are problems we must continue to meet and discuss--until

¹³Desincarnado = not incarnated, meaning detached from real life situations.

¹⁴Na pele = on the skin, meaning an experience that is felt concretely.

we get "justice and work for all".¹⁵ We have to learn to unite and participate in the Mass then go and do the same in the neighborhood. Alone the groups only perceive local reality; they have no conditions to go farther; they will not spontaneously come to a more generalized perception (F).

Neighborhood Liturgy, Suzano

The community was a neighborhood in a middle class suburb of Suzano. The suburb is heterogeneous, from middle class professionals to odd jobbers and low salaried construction workers. The gathering was held in the large brick community center built by the residents. It also served as the church on Sundays.

Situation

There is a community association which sponsors various activities. The worship is one of the regular activities. The participants were men, women and children from the neighborhood. The facilitator is also a local resident.

The group has been in action for years, with ups and downs. The people are ambitious (teenagers all work to have more spending money) and find it hard to perservere in activities for the common good. The community association promotes liturgy, catechetics, mothers' club, couples' club, school, adult literacy and cultural groups. It was a cold and rainy morning so very few turned up for the liturgy. Three leaders dominated the reflections on the Scripture readings.

¹⁵"Justice and peace for all" was the motto of the 1978 Fraternity Campaign of the Catholic Church in Brazil.

Focal Thematic Content

We gathered for the celebration of the Sunday liturgy of the community in place of Mass which is held once a month in the suburb. The service is coordinated by 3 men, ministers of the Eucharist, who are also community association leaders.

Perceived Social Reality

The suburb is a developing middle class, some are well off and others are very poor. Some in the community are bosses and others are workers; this causes divergences. The community members, who are the bosses, want to hold the reflections to their point of view, like in the interpretation of the Fraternity Campaign motto "Justice and work for all." The principal problems are the lack of a sewer system and unpaved roads. The people have always been too attached to the central church and dependent on it; so do not commit themselves to the neighborhood.

Values

Instead of facing social issues the community acts as a shock absorber for social contradictions (F). Two or three always speak out more than the others. Many people here don't believe in basic ecclesial communities and only participate when the priest comes for Mass. People still depend on the priest and don't trust the community. We need more neighborhood feeling. People look down on what is local. The people have a background of suspicion, insecurity in all joint work, and lack of initiative and creativity in making decisions because of their traditional religious background from the interior of Minas Gerais (F). Before there was no community at all and the people would not even get together for worship. It's always hard to get the people together for a meetings. The people used to be conservative, traditional, closed, and only interested in processions and promises. It took 5 years to open up to a sense of community. We need to get more of the community involved in worship and in activities like the family movement. The difficulties stemming from divergent interests are the same as those of society; perhaps they can be overcome (F).

Action-Reflection Linkages

Each group is responsible for preparing and orientating the specific activities. We try to link what we read to our own situation, our own reality. People tend to slacken their participation when the meetings are for reflection and discussion; they only take part when there is a specific activity, like a festivity. At the monthly community meeting the people evaluate the Sunday liturgy and decide what should be included. We meet in small groups in the homes to talk about community problems. Ideas came out from the couples' club for improvement of the area and a signed petition to request the paving of a road. This mobilized a large group to go from door to door collecting signatures. The community will not be able to take significant steps in the work because of the lack of common interests to unite the people (F). It's still hard to tell if it will be possible to take a stand on social problems despite the social differences within the community (F).

Anniversary Program for Labor Union, Suzano

The area comprised a highly industrialized center in the city of Suzano. Headquarters of the labor union for chemical and pharmaceutical industries provided the meeting place.

Situation

The collaborator participants consisted of unionized workers and their families, leadership of the union, and a youth group. The youth group put on a play about the injustices that occur in factories and the need to unite and revindicate rights. The program was promoted by leadership of the workers' pastoral group together with their facilitators. The workers' pastoral has only been organized for 3 months.

The labor union was celebrating its 20th anniversary. The workers' pastoral of Suzano offered a program as part of the celebrations

to awaken interest among workers for the aims and activities of pastoral work. During the program some politicians came in. One assemblyman, who is a lawyer for the defense of workers' rights, spoke up during the discussions following the play with strong statements about the injustices of labor situations.

Focal Thematic Content

The gathering was to offer a program to commemorate the anniversary of the labor union. At the same time we wanted to make known the workers' pastoral to encourage participation. The most important aspect was the play put on by the youth group and the discussion which followed to make people aware of the injustices in work and salary situations. The program was to help people become actively involved in defending their rights through the labor unions.

Perceived Social Reality

The laborer who is involved with the union and supports the rights of the worker suffers and is rejected and insecure in his job. All the money one can save at the end of the month is not enough to buy a cafézinho.¹⁶ The minimum wage is not enough to live on; it is a poverty wage. The worker gets more nervous when the time comes to receive his pay check because he knows it won't be enough. At the end of the day the worker can't even sleep because he is overtired. The salary is based on political economy and not real needs. Those who begin to perceive the situation and join unions are cut off by the firms. The machines get all the attention and the workers get none. Labor unions have been corrupt. The worker has always been much more obedient, servile and exploited instead of being interested in his right. In the diocese 85% of the people are laborers but there was never any concern for a workers' pastoral program. The union should carry out that which the workers need. The minimum wage should satisfy the minimum normal needs of food, housing, transportation, health and clothing for the worker and his family. Our rights must be respected.

¹⁶Cafézinho = a strong, hot and sweet demi-tasse of black coffee.

Values

The laws are unjust and have to be changed. If we knew exactly which values motivate participation, it would be much easier to get things going (F). For many the interest in participating comes from having had some previous experience of group work, no matter how simple (F). Uniting helps correct the problems and defend the rights of the worker. At first the people were suspicious about getting into a group. The people are too indifferent;¹⁷ they only care for TV soap operas and don't see what is happening. Participation is still very limited. There is lack of unity among Brazilians who don't know the power they have. We need more unity and participation. We don't have to be afraid, because to revindicate does not mean to make war. We must build more understanding, develop ideals of the worker, unite to represent our interests. Our unity will be our strength.

Action-Reflection Linkages

The workers' pastoral group discusses duties and rights, and assumes responsibilities to fulfill them. After a survey we saw the need for a workers' pastoral group. The time has come for us to look at what is wrong because we are human beings.¹⁸ We build wealth for others but we ourselves live in poverty. We began the reflections informally with workers, wherever their interests were: football, women, etc. The workers' pastoral meetings are to help people become aware of the problems and what could be done about them. The group gathers for prayer and reflection and the action is carried out in the firm or factory through the union. The pastoral group began with one dedicated and conscientized worker who had experience in pastoral work before he was the motivator. So long as the people go on being uninformed they have no conditions to act. The bosses don't allow the workers to get together and think about what they need. If we could all think the same thoughts, it would force change. We must get people to take part in the unions...unite in their jobs...develop openness...work towards just remuneration and valuing of the laborer. Group members read and pass on the workers' pastoral news bulletin.

¹⁷Desligado = switched off, meaning passive indifference.

¹⁸Somos gente = we are people, expressing desire to be recognized and valued as human beings.

Women's Community Group, São Paulo

The area was a southeast peripheral suburb of the Greater São Paulo, densely populated with tightly spaced, cheap houses and a few rows of shacks along the stream that collects the sewage. The entrance to the main road was asphalted but the rest was nothing but potholes and sticky mud.

Situation

The women's group met in the community center on a Sunday afternoon. Torrential rain made it impossible for several to arrive since the water from the polluted stream had risen to their homes. One woman was energetic and enthusiastic and encouraged the others. The group is part of the community activities, but has a more concentrated interest in the cost of living problems and health for the children.

The community began as a church group and recently moved to an autonomous community group, but still maintains interaction with the parish in the adjacent suburb. The women are reticent at the community meetings so the group was formed to give them an opportunity to interrelate and express themselves.

Focal Thematic Content

The occasion was the weekly meeting of the women's group to talk over their situation. We met to discuss the medical dispensary to be set up in the community center...to talk about the contact with a medical couple...to evaluate the

canjicada.¹⁹ We want to see what to do with the free samples of medicine that have been collected.

Perceived Social Reality

The cost of living makes us have to leave our children at home and go out to work as charwomen. Women are not valued. There is not enough food, housing, bus service, health service. The stream overflows and invades our homes with filth. The woman is exploited as cheap labor by the firm that hires us for cleaning the offices. We work cleaning from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. six days a week and get 600 cruzeiros (\$24) a month. If we complain we get fired. Children need medical assistance. The husband's salary is not enough for the family to live on. For 8 years we have been asking to have the stream drained but nothing ever happened and our homes go on getting swamped. We want jobs that pay enough to live on, so the women don't have to work outside. We need job security for our husbands, better salaries for the charwomen. We need light, paved streets, a medical dispensary, lower prices on basic foods. The stream has to be drained. We want better living conditions for all Brazilians.

Values

The needs of life motivate the women to participate. The group is still weak. It is beginning and easily gets discouraged, especially when there is no activity. It's friendship that brings us together. We get encouraged exchanging ideas; we want to join forces and improve our lives a little. At first the reason for joining the group was individual needs. We used to accept things and live the best way we could. The work of the church went opening the way for participation. The women used to be shy and afraid to express their ideas (F). We always used to struggle, but women didn't know they had the power to be able to do anything. We need unity of the women; courage to face life, greater participation, unity to help each other.

¹⁹Canjicada = a festive reunion serving a soup made with white corn, sugar, milk and cinnamon.

Action-Reflection Linkages

We talk things over and then try to find a way²⁰ to resolve problems. When we keep talking together we see things better. The canjicada festivity was fun; we raised some money for the center and many people are interested now in joining the group. Before we didn't talk about problems with intentions of improving things. We always felt the problems but did not have meetings to discuss them. The Cost of Living Movement united workers and housewives to fight for lower prices for basic food items. We all went to the "empty pot" assembly of the Cost of Living Movement in the South Zone of São Paulo.²¹ We are going to keep looking to see what we can do, like set up the medical dispensary, a day care center, literacy classes for women.

Community Coordinating Group, São Paulo

The locality lay in a peripheral suburb of the southeastern area of the Greater São Paulo. The small houses sheltered large extended families that have migrated from the rural Northeast. The odd jobbers lived in a favela section. The community center was a house on the main road adapted to serve as a hall for gatherings.

Situation

The meeting was of the coordinating group, almost all men, of the community. Some curious newcomers strolled in and out of the meeting. People arrived wet and muddy from the rain soaked roads and paths. Most of the participants were laborers in the metallurgical industries or in building construction; some were odd jobbers.

²⁰Um jeitinho = a little way, a common expression for an imaginative way of getting around all obstacles.

²¹This was a follow-up assembly in response to the government's scorn and refusal to acknowledge the petition with over a million signatures requesting a freeze on the prices of basic food items.

At the entrance of the suburb along the road leading from the asphalt was a large clearing. A small circus tent with a few mangy animals and weary performers attracted the attention of the neighborhood. The music and advertisement resounded deafeningly throughout the suburb. The fact was excitedly commented by all the community. It was the crowning symbol of the first big success in community action--the birthday party for the garbage dump. The newly arrived circus tent was the first proof that the land had really been recovered and the people were definitely rid of the garbage dump in the midst of their homes.

Focal Thematic Content

The meeting was of the coordinating group to decide on the problem of the man who had stolen money from the community...to discuss the expansion of the center...to resolve what attitude to take towards the invitation to become part of the district pastoral program. We accompany the activities being carried out by the commissions, especially the night literacy classes.

Perceived Social Reality

The problems are: low salaries, exploitation of labor, high cost of living, injustices by authorities, deficient health, lack of workers' rights. Workers have no experience in revindicating their rights. The favela people do not mix with the people who live in houses. The laborer, who gets involved with the union or movement, is fired or tricked into signing a suspension notice. There is lack of job security, of labor qualification. Housing is inadequate, transportation is expensive and precarious. Things are not good, the suburb is poor; we work Saturdays and Sundays. Every time we go to the mayor's office to request the draining of the stream we are told: "there is no money," or "the equipment is broken." There are no street lights and the road is always muddy. The cost of living is so high yet the salaries are so low. The worst

problem we suffered was the garbage dump. The garbage piled up till people had to move away. It brought sickness. A boy got blind. Babies died of rat bites. Smoke and stench filled the homes. When it rained everything got flooded; children couldn't cross to go to school. The people want more respectable living conditions...a more just life...rights for workers. The stream must be drained. More people should join the labor union. We need better salaries, each one should be able to have a corner in which to live. We don't want to be fooled any more by what the political candidates promise.

Values

The community is very open. It relates well to the other neighborhoods and to the parish church in the next suburb. There is no church here. People think that there should be a more just life for all--a home, food, health, a more human life.²² To work and try to get this life is what brings us to the group. The people don't look beyond the community (F). Much of the motivation comes from religion, from human values. Everything is decided on democratically as a group. We work with the aim of helping each other. It is good to live united; if one is in difficulty the other helps him. Our group is the firm foot of the community. In the beginning it was hard to gather people; but when people see something concrete, something accomplished, they get encouraged and start coming. The people are still submissive. They accept everything...forgive everything...are not organized or united. People used to think that we were doing this community work for selfish reasons. There are still some people here who don't believe in our work. The group has not managed to reach the whole suburb yet and people haven't understood our work. The community needs more unity. It is important for the people to organize in order to attain their rights. We must develop critical consciousness and democratic action (F). We need perseverance and courage not to give up. We have to live united if we are going to do anything. When people are united nothing is lacking. By struggling we'll get where we want to go. If people understood this work they would all be here.

²²De gente = of people, meaning conducive to a life worthy of the human being.

Action-Reflection Linkages

The community has not yet come to perceive the need for structural change; they work and organize; criticize what is not right and try to change it (F). Everything is decided in the group; one person alone does not decide. It is the group which gives force and motivation. Those who took part in the Cost of Living Movement are more aware (F). We meet to resolve some of the problems we are feeling. Each group presents its activities to the coordinating group and all the problems of the groups and the community are discussed. With the opinion of one, of another, we keep on planning. We make resolutions, the whole group confirms them, then we carry them out. Before the people had no real perception of their social problems: it was basically the work of the priests who always encouraged them that to be Christian was to be aware and in the front line (F). If people knew these ideas we have and the work that began years ago, they would have understood and wanted to help do something for the neighborhood, but until today only a few take part. We have a lot of things to discuss and plan...increase the community center...make a signed petition to extend the bus service to our suburb...improve the school. Before elections we want to find out what the candidates do and how they live.

Correlated Event: How We Resolved the Favela Eviction

One of the concerns of the community group in the southeastern peripheral district of São Paulo was to do something about changing social conditions which were unjustly depriving people of their basic rights to live. The participants told of their confrontation with government authorities to portray their eagerness and dedication.

Across the road from the community center on the lower side of the slope is a 100 meter stretch of favela shacks. The people here haven't mixed with the community. They didn't even take part in our birthday party for the garbage dump because they live in constant fear of being ousted from their shacks (PSR).

The people of our favela received a notification that they had 10 days in which to vacate the area. It was really because the regional administration wanted to have

the favelas cleared out to raise the value of the land for real estate speculation. But the notification said the area was needed to build an avenue. Now to take just a little section on one side in the middle of a road to build an avenue--that was nothing but a whim (PSR).

Some of us from the community group went from shack to shack inviting the people to come for a meeting at the community center. About 50 people came. Together we planned how to take our complaint to the regional administration. It was very well organized (A-RL).

On the day, 82 people from the favela met with some of our group at the community center. Some had to lose their day's work. We all went downtown to the administration office for the region. We had called TV and newspaper reporters and they were all there. The people at the regional administration office were taken aback when they saw the crowd. We spoke to the director and showed the notification.

One newspaper reporter also spoke up. He said: "How can you tell these people to get out in 10 days when they have families of 5, 6 people? If they live there it's because they have nowhere else to go. When it rains the shacks get flooded. Why do they live there? Not because they want to. It's because they have no means to pay rent. Put yourself in their place. See if you could get out in 10 days. Sure the land belongs to the government and the government can evict them, but not like this. Give a 90 days' notice and a place to live, a piece of land where they can build their shacks" (PSR).

The director said the office couldn't do anything because that's the way things were. The people had to get out in 10 days or else the tractor would pass over them. If they wanted, they could go and live under the bridge. It was no concern of the administration office to resolve their problems (PSR).

We knew that in another place nearby the people didn't prepare themselves and the tractors came and raised their shacks to the ground. So we all turned our backs on the regional administration and went off to the mayor's office. We all jammed into buses. The reporters in their cars, with their cameras, went too. The mayor told his secretary to attend us. We showed the notification. He gave some excuses and said we should return in 10 days when he would give us a reply (A-RL).

Then days later two representatives from the favela went to the mayor's office. There they found out that the road which was supposed to be widened into an avenue didn't even exist on the map. The city had had no plans for constructing an avenue of anything else in the area. The mayor told them that the people could go on living there undisturbed for 3 or 4 years, and when the area would be needed for urbanization, they would be given at least 6 months' notification (PSR).

So the people from the shacks were relieved. Now they are getting interested in the community. That's how we resolved the problem of the eviction of the favela (A-RL) (V).

Social Reintegration of Patients with Hansen's Disease (Leprosy), Venda das Pedras

The outskirts of the rural town of Venda das Pedras, state of Rio de Janeiro, was the location of the hospital-colony for patients with Hansen's disease (leprosy), administered by the State Health Secretariat. Scattered over a hillside and part of a valley were medical complexes, administration buildings, infirmaries, laundry facilities, refectory and kitchen, chapels, soccer field, kitchen gardens, snack bars, rows and rows of small houses. The colony was cut off from the rest of the world by a tall whitewashed wall and an iron gate with a guard keeping watch at the entrance. The colony looked self sufficient and forbidding.

Situation

The participants were attending supletivo courses. They were patients who were living within the colony, former patients who were cured but lived close by, and family members of patients. A few bore marks of the physical deformities caused by the more

advanced stages of the malignant form of Hansen's disease, but they had learned to overcome their handicaps. The ages ranged from 15 year olds to middle aged men and women. Some were extremely self conscious; others were outgoing and self reliant. All showed a lot of confidence in and affection for the facilitator. The two classrooms used for the courses were on the main cobblestone road near the center of the colony. The handcraft classroom was in a dilapidated building farther out.

The courses were promoted by a community group within the colony that had carried out many self-help projects. The community organization is integrated within the colony. It interacts with health, education and social welfare institutions concerned with leprosy care. The community can be considered isolated since its activities do not intervene to bring about transformation of society for common good.

Across the highway from the colony was a small spread out town which bears the stigma of Hansen's disease. Former patients, who had to leave without having conditions to work or be reintegrated into society, unable to break the barriers of rejection, began to settle the lowland area and form a colony outside the walls. Low standards of living, joblessness and ostracism by the suspicious and ignorant rural population, have isolated the town from the socio-economic development of the region.

Focal Thematic Content

We are here to take part in regular class sessions in the program to reintegrate those who have been isolated by the consequences of Hansen's disease. We are preparing a place in society.

Perceived Social Reality

The colony is isolated and marked by rejection of the rural population. The director (a doctor) runs the colony and makes all decisions. Family members of the patients or former patients suffer rejection at school, work, in society. The hospital-colony takes care of medical treatment and sustenance but does not attend to the psychological trauma and job qualifications for the lepers to find a way back to society (F). The patients are disconnected from the reality of society, out of touch with politics, cost of living, job markets, etc. (F). The problem is not having a profession. The colony is a piece of Brazil, if out there the government wants to spread culture, we also are part of that plan (C). Our course is gaining recognition from the town hall, state secretariats; it is becoming well known. Before we had no chance to study... no financial conditions. We had no culture...no knowledge. The horizons were limited. When the course was being formed no school would give administrative coverage. They refused on grounds that it would harm the prestige of the school to be associated with a leper colony. The people know they are always going to be rejected and receive no explanations for their situation, so they develop reactions of apathy or aggressiveness. Many stay on in the colony the rest of their lives because they don't know how to return to society. While the colony exists they still have minimum security and stability. The policy is to terminate the colonies and have the patients treated in dispensaries and not withdraw from society. This requires preparation for reintegration, which is not being done (F). The former patient and his family must be reintegrated into society. We want to become prosperous, to grow within the Constitution and the law. We want equality of conditions to face the struggle of society today. Society is competition. We want people out there to know the problems of the colony and put an end to the taboo of Hansen's disease.

Values

The participants came to the course to improve their standard of living, to have a better life, or to prepare to go back to society. The dominant motivation is economic; this is one of their few chances. The teachers like to take part because they have the freedom to create their own educational experiences as a group, without being confined by autocratic school structures, which usually happens in schools (F). The courses are helping the patients and their families understand their situations and be able to accept them. When there is no understanding the reaction is negative. There cannot be integration if we don't have education and culture. Only by being instructed can a man know what he is really worth... conquer that which he wants. Man is what he has, what he knows. The group is united, all with the same ideal, common interests, all going in the same direction. The will to win carries the course ahead. Friendship formed in the groups also motivates. The complexes we used to have are gone; now we are more optimistic. The patients and their families are marked by rejection and mistrust. They never believe anything can come out right. When people have no contact with society they lose their ties and become accommodated (F). When anything is started here in the colony 90% always think it won't succeed because they don't want to be disappointed. After the first group graduated from the supletivo people believed in the course. Now we are looking ahead more, to be accepted, even reach college. Self reliance is the fundamental value needed. We will continue the process of searching for a better culture, for better comprehension. We look to better days...to conquering a place in the sun. We want to feel equality of conditions to reintegrate in society, a chance to climb. Let's open the door to prosperity; without culture we can't attain anything. We need integration and participation. We want to follow the aspirations of any human being--to study, to have know-how, to improve one's standard of living. All one needs is courage and idealism to break through the difficulties. Let's make our peace with society because we were hurt.

Action-Reflection Linkages

The teachers work together in communion of ideas and make the subject matters interrelate. The students decide their own application of the school fund raised from their contributions: maintenance of the rooms, festivities, etc.

Explanations of biological, medical, social and historical aspects of Hansen's disease are correlated with the regular subjects. We always stop to reflect on what we are doing. The team of teachers meets to discuss the questions raised by the students in their own group meetings, then takes the problems to the Health or Education Secretariat to see how they can be resolved. Each meeting has a central theme which is analyzed; then practical measures are taken. There are meetings with teachers, parents of the teenagers, adult students, representatives of the secretariats, directors of the colony. Whatever problem we feel we take our revindication to the coordinators of the course. For the first group the course was a risk because it was not official. However, the students had already had experience of community group work and were able to carry it forward until the course was approved by the secretariat. Planning for the course came out of previous activities of the community group because we felt the need to reach the aspirations of more people. We want to do other courses. Our aim is to become professionals. Plans are being made to set up a snack bar for the course to raise money to renew the classrooms and buy material.

School Equivalency for Patients with Hansen's Disease
(Leprosy), Rio de Janeiro

The area was a low middle class residential suburb of the Greater Rio de Janeiro. The state hospital-colony for patients of Hansen's disease (leprosy), was held up as a model for such institutions. The colony was close to the center of the suburb with a large expanse of land. The town inside the colony offered services all the way from agricultural stations to a movie house, from infirmaries to a jail. Outside the colony, the road on one of the slopes was inhabited only by former patients and their families, a ghetto forced on them by society.

Situation

The participants were engaged in classes of the supletivo courses. They were patients, former patients living on the outside, and family members. The courses were being held in the halls of the Evangelical and Catholic churches, although the groups were not in any way connected to religious structures.

The collaborator participants were eager to share their experiences and ambitions. A group in the colony had been through years of community development projects, but these had only created a dependency on material and financial aid and had not left any appreciable impact on the lives of the participants. The community group could be considered isolated in regard to participation in development as a social process.

Focal Thematic Content

We are taking part in regular classes of the first level (grade school equivalence) and second level (high school equivalence) supletivo course. We are preparing for exams.

Perceived Social Reality

Because of the urban location and support of the city government, the patients are not cut off from society. What causes the distance between the former patients and society is the socio-economic difficulties in reintegrating and the lack of professional qualification (F). All have gone through the trauma of rejection, the family as well as the patient. If we have some study, the jobs we find are much better. Job reclassification depends on diplomas. The bearer of Hansen's disease suffers discrimination. The low salary comes from having a low culture. In here we all work for the state hospital we do the work but we are not professional; to get a better salary we

must have a diploma or professional certification. There is still a taboo against leprosy; it is difficult to penetrate society. The people who are still in the colony have no way of returning to society. Many have given themselves up to a life that no longer has meaning, a process of total mental, spiritual and material destruction. The patient of Hansen's disease must be placed in the community outside. The courses need financial assistance from within the country, for example, increase help from groups like Lyons' Club. We need a good intellectual level to reach a good salary.

Values

The teachers are marvelous. The students have very concrete and immediatist objectives in taking part in the course: they want to improve their socio-economic level (F). Those who are living outside the colony in contact with social reality are more motivated to study. The commitment the participants have towards each other--the agreement not to drop out--carries the course forward. The world gets bigger when you know more. Some of us want to accompany our children's studies. Once we have taken on the commitment to study we must stick with it, because if one drops out and then another, those who really want to study will be left without chances of continuing. It's nothing but self indulgence that makes some drop the course. The group spirit is encouraging. We need more knowledge, more culture. Maria (the facilitator) always encourages group work, responsibility, unity, and we don't want to let her down. Formerly the group was aggressive, hostile, individualistic (F). Those who don't study have a complex. We want to climb in life, and if we stay at grade school level we'll never climb. We want better living conditions. The government talks about the reintegration of the patient of Hansen's disease, so it is necessary to reach that socio-economic level...to attain intellectual and economic improvement.

Action-Reflection Linkages

The second course came out of requests of those who had completed the first level and wanted to go on. The group of teachers meets to plan the course and evaluate the behaviour changes in the participants to develop group spirit and solidarity, to overcome individualism. The participant groups take care of administration: class

funds, material, rooms, coffee, fan, cleaning, public relations. Maria (the facilitator) is our security file; she resolves our problems (C). After the community development projects had all fizzled out, the idea of the course was introduced on the basis of the success of the experience in the other colony. Those who dropped out the first year returned when they saw the first group graduate from the first level of supletivo. We gathered enough students to start the course, our interests served all of us, the competition makes us grow. We want to go on to college, then to be professionals in something that pays better so we can give our families a better level. The courses have developed and cannot stop.

Looking at the Context of the Experiences

The events observed in the Southeast Region depicted a very specific context of rural and urban marginalization in an historical moment of Brazilian society in 1978. This context was also characteristic of the North and Northeast Regions. Reality was manifested strongly in terms of deprivation, needs and aspirations for better conditions. For some the needs were seen as conditions to be endured; for others they were situations to be overcome. Reality was described graphically by the collaborators. While reality was felt, experienced concretely, by the collaborators, it was apprehended theoretically, although with empathy and commitment, by the facilitators. Facilitators more readily described situations in terms of causes and consequences; collaborators described them in terms of the struggle to survive and yearning for a better life.

Collaborators condemned what was evidently unjust in the situations which favored a rich and powerful minority, but they were hesitant to relate what they perceived to the sinfulness of an

oppressor situation. However, they did point out that they were paying the price for a development that never benefited them.

Context of One-Sided Development

The Third Latin American Episcopal Conference has pointed out some of the pressing social problems which affect Brazil as well as other Latin American countries today (Conclusions of the Puebla Conference, 1979:23-41).

Millions of Latin Americans live in inhuman poverty, victims of hunger salaries, unemployment, underemployment, subnutrition, infant mortality, inadequate housing, deficient health, job instability (18)²³. Poverty is a product of economic, social and political situations and structures, with the "rich becoming richer at the expense of the poor becoming each time poorer" (John Paul II, Inaugural Speech No. 4) (19). The growing distance between the rich and the poor is a scandal; it is a social sin. There is need to break down the barriers of exploitation which obstruct even the best efforts of promotion (17). The situation is a permanent violation of the dignity of the human being; it is a lack of respect for fundamental human rights to life, health, education, housing, work (22).

Abuse of power, systematic or selective repression, and total insecurity cause institutionalized injustice (23, 25). Disrespect for the dignity of man is also expressed in lack of social participation on various levels, especially arbitrary enforcement of labor

²³The numbers in parenthesis refer to the section of Conclusions of The Puebla Conference.

laws and repression of unions and organizations of workers, peasants and groups representing the population (24).

Free market economics has increased the distance between the rich and the poor by putting capital before labor and economics in front of social well-being (26). Cold technocracy applies models of development which claim an inhuman social price from the poor who do not even share in the development (27). Economic systems do not consider man the center of society nor do they promote changes to construct a more just society (35). Crises in moral values lead to public and private corruption and greed for immeasurable profit, to indifference towards justice and solidarity (37).

Social Stratification

The imbalance in development reinforces class divisions. Four categories of classes make up the structure of current Brazilian society: ruling classes, intermediate classes, subordinate classes, and oppressed classes (Ribeiro, 1978:87-99).

The ruling classes include high civil and military hierarchies, traditional political leadership, top executives and proprietor managerial classes. The ruling classes exercise political hegemony and perpetuate a social order which corresponds to their interests.

Below the ruling classes come the intermediate classes of small and medium proprietors, liberal professionals, civil and military functionaries, and bureaucratic employees. They are situated between the antagonistic forces of the ruling classes in conflict with the subordinate and oppressed classes. They can carry out roles of

maintainers of the institutional order or stimulators of revolutionary transformation. In revolutionary circumstances, where the established social order is questioned, they tend to adhere to the ruling classes in order to protect their positions of advantage over the subordinate classes.

The subordinate classes come below and sometimes parallel to the intermediate classes. They are the salaried employees or hired workers who form the basic labor force of the productive system: factory, workers construction and public service laborers, technicians, peasant farm hands. They sell their labor to be able to subsist. Their political consciousness does not go beyond simply revindicating a better social order to be more like the intermediate classes.

On the lowest level come the oppressed classes. They form the marginalized masses, the most exploited of all classes. Excluded from the regular work force, they take on any activity that will allow them to survive. They are sharecroppers, seasonal workers, domestic laborers, odd jobbers, peddlers, underemployed manual workers, prostitutes. Their only aspiration is to become wage earners like the subordinate classes. They are hardly ever aware of themselves as being marginalized and depend on the transformation of the entire social system to become integrated.

The ruling classes know that the simple aspirations of the subordinate and oppressed classes could be fulfilled if the power structure would re-direct some of its interests. But innovations would mean a relative loss of wealth, power and prestige, unacceptable

to the ruling classes. Therefore equality before the law continues to be applied for the benefit of the ruling classes and "better" people of the intermediate classes. Rarely does equality include the sub-people of the subordinate classes and it is never meant for the non-people of the marginalized masses (Ribeiro, 1978:98).

Church Space for Participation

Most of the observed events came out of activities related with outreach of the Catholic Church. Facilitators recognized the need for the people to feel confidence in the type of participation they were being called to. Their confidence rested in the Church, which has traditionally been a symbol of security and righteousness. Through the movement of basic ecclesial communities that spread after the Medellin Conference of 1968²⁴ the Church opened a "space," or margin for secular human development projects. Projects had meaning in the spiritual dimension of man and contributed to the growth of the whole person, without which there could be no spiritual growth. The Church gave backing and pre-organization which the facilitators needed to mobilize groups and stimulate experiences of participation in development. The interrelationship among facilitators and collaborators was founded on the implicit agreement that the work was indirectly sanctioned by the Church.

²⁴This was the II Conference of the Latin American Episcopal Council held in Medellin, Colombia, which strongly urged the Catholic Church to turn its goals of evangelization toward the problems of injustice in society which were causing situations of oppression and sin.

The Catholic Church has come to recognize a new mission that is being entrusted to her: to be an institutionalized "space" for participation in liberating action. The Church has become a sign of humanity and solidarity because of her stand in favor of the poor. Many persons who have chosen to participate in the liberation-development of the oppressed seek the Church to be able to contribute towards the transformation of society. Although many do not share the faith, they want to serve the suffering population in community action through the Church. In this way the Church participates, with vigilance and prudence, in a new ministry by opening up a "space" for service to the poor ("Journey of the People of God in Latin America," 1978:305).

Church support for social transformation has been stimulated by the praxis of liberation theology,

the movement or way through the desert of human history, moving from sin as the dominating influence exerted by the various systems (political, sexual, educational) to irreversible salvation in Christ and his kingdom (Dussel, 1974: 42).

Liberation theology sought a new "text" for its reflection, shifting the hermeneutical problem of ancient texts as the basis for theological reflection towards a confrontation with present historical reality. Lived reality and concrete practice became the new "text" for a critical reflection on current history. The primary and basic reference point for all reflection was the people's own situation (Assmann, 1976:104).

Reflection and action on the people's situation can be contradictory and subject to ideological biases. Marx used the concept of praxis to denote that which creates the given human reality and that which extricates human reality from the given situation. It was a measure of criticism of dehumanized life and the alien power that man exercises over man in a society which reduces persons to the state of things in the process of production. Praxis provided a critical framework for evaluating human activity and examining the impact of the structures of State and civil society and the lives of men (Vazquez, 1977).

The Catholic Church warns that Marxist ideologies spread promises of social justice but their strategies sacrifice Christian values and rouse spirals of violence. Yet the fear of Marxism impedes many from facing the reality of oppressive liberal capitalism. Human development must denounce the sin of capitalism without disregarding the historical atheism and violence of forms of Marxism (Conclusions of the Puebla Conference, 1979:26, 51).

Discovering Meanings of the Experiences

Analysis of the data gathered in the 17 observed and correlated events in the Southeast Region brought out some trends which were later noted in other regions.

The indicators of dynamics were embedded in transaction events which stood out as moments in the flow of events making up the praxis process. The dynamics differed in open and closed communities.

Participation occurred in several spheres even within the same transaction event.

Indicators of Dynamics in Transaction Events

Praxis in participatory development is a process. Figure 2 shows the flow of the process in the curved lines running opposite each other. The process happens over time. There is an historical element to the process, a past. What went on before prepares for and leads up to the current experience. The process flows toward the future. Aims, goals, expectations, aspirations, plans--all these draw the experience onward. The development of society also influences the future direction of the process of praxis.

All the groups of community participants interviewed in the study referred to elements of past experience. They pointed out activities or situations in which they had been involved that preceded the event being experienced. The participants mentioned future plans and desired conditions as a result and continuation of the praxis.

The present moment of praxis is the most intensive because it is being lived. It concentrates the dynamics of the process at a specific time, within a limited situation and for a particular experience. During the present time of the process the dynamics which activate the movement of participatory development converge to fulfill a centralized intention of the praxis. These dynamics can be identified through the characteristics of perceived social reality, values and action-reflection linkages.

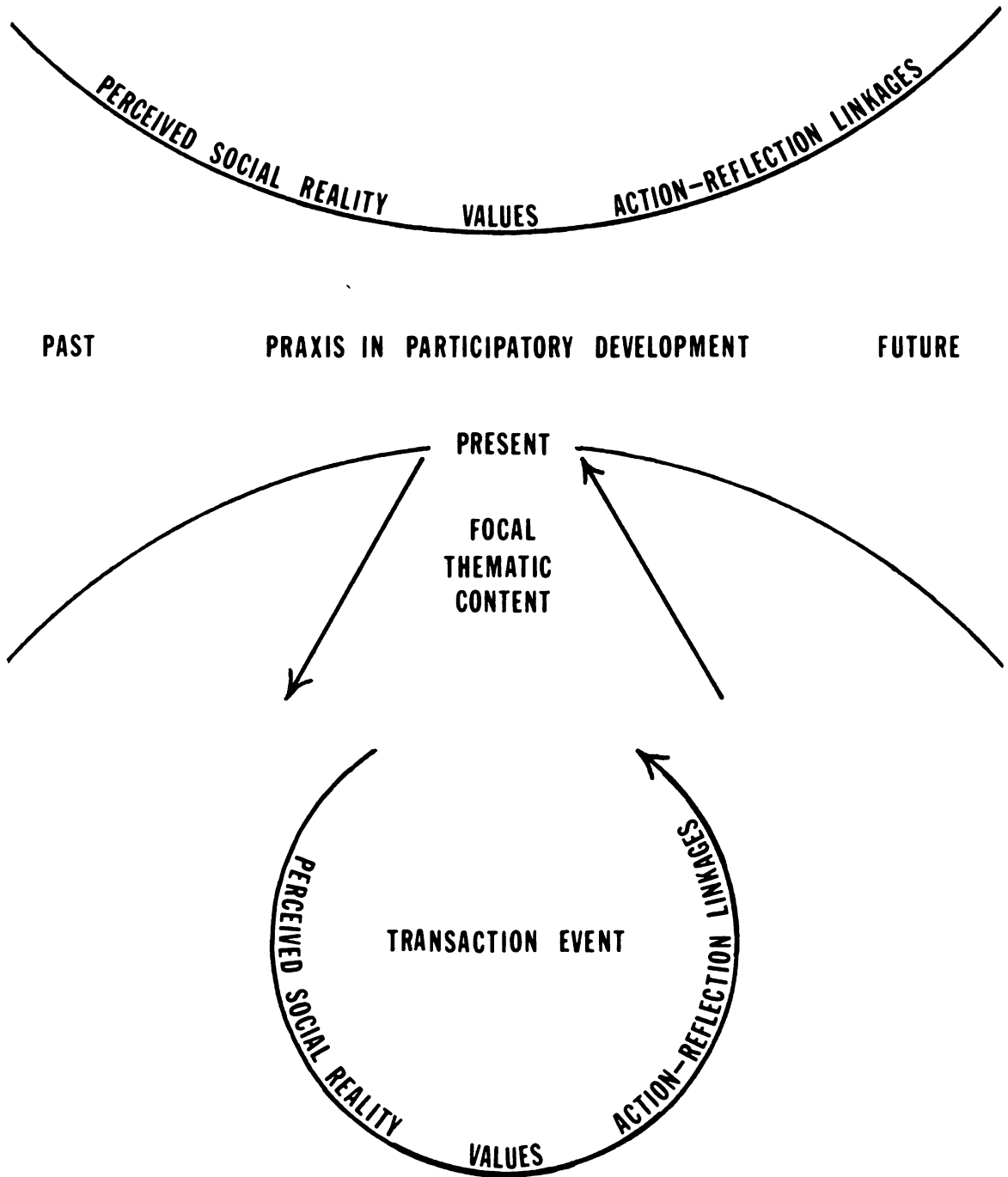


FIGURE 2

THE TRANSACTION EVENT AS A MOMENT IN A PROCESS

The centralized intention of the praxis within the present moment is the focal thematic content. Focal thematic content appears in Figure 2 as an opening or a "stop" in the flow of the process. The intention is expressed as a motivating reason for an activity. The theme of the intention provides the "idea-content" of an experience. The idea, or reason, is made concrete in an activity selected by the participants of the praxis. The activity is focalized through the thematic content, which specifies the reason for the activity. The activity which occurs as a manifestation of the focal thematic content is the transaction event.

In Figure 2 the transaction event is designed as a semi-circular flow proceeding out of, and leading back into, the focal thematic content. The focal thematic content unites the transaction event to the flow of the praxis process so that each "stop", or transaction event, is really a moment in the entire process.

The transaction event is embedded in the praxis of participatory development as one of the experiences making up the global experience of praxis. Each transaction event has its own form of dynamics. The transaction dimension comes out of the interaction of participants, including the helping relationships among facilitators and collaborators, that involves people as subjects of their praxis in group situations. The event is the concrete happening for a specific purpose. The event is carried out through a specific manner of participation decided on by the subjects of the experience. The same energy that accounts for the praxis flow over time is present in the transaction

event and can be observed in the characteristics of perceived social reality, values and action-reflection linkages, which are indicators of dynamics of praxis.

The indicators of dynamics have meaning for participatory development when the transaction event sustained by the dynamics merges with the on-going flow of the process. The process can consist of any number of transaction events. Certain events have been highlighted in the study in order to take a closer look at the signs of dynamics. Each transaction event, while being a complete praxis experience in itself, is relevant to the praxis of participatory development as merely one moment in the on-going process.

Open, Closed and Isolated Communities

One basic factor which determines the kind of development being participated in is whether the community group involved in the praxis is open, closed or isolated. The relationship of the participant group to society and the manner in which the group views society make a difference for the direction of praxis.

Closed community groups are generally integrated into the dominant social systems. Their members reject any questioning of the structures and values which support their integration. Their praxis is to maintain the status quo. Their position is most often of stable or slowly rising middle and lower middle class.

Closed communities that are marginalized usually suffer some pressure that keeps them from questioning society. Even though they are not integrated into it, their model is society as it is. Their

praxis aims at perpetuating the group or community. This is the case of traditional agricultural cooperatives, of small town parishes under the domination of a colonial style clerical church, or of urban interest groups under the influence of Afro-Brazilian cults such as Umbanda.

In isolated groups that are socially integrated the praxis may be to preserve the isolation, such as in voluntary religious seclusion or interest groups such as clubs, or even some types of structured neighborhood associations that are controlled by internal bureaucracy. Isolated groups that are marginalized, and are conscious of their marginalization, are set on overcoming the marginalization to become integrated in society. Their praxis reflects all the perceptions, values and actions of the dominant society in which they seek acceptance.

Closed and isolated groups, whether integrated or marginalized, tend to be concerned with only one form of development--integration. Open groups are faced with an option--seek either integration or liberation as a form of development. This fundamental choice is the first consequence of being open. It is an option that is constantly renewed throughout praxis.

Open groups that are integrated in society question their own status in view of the marginalization of others as a result of social structures and systems. These groups include the teams of facilitators working side by side with the marginalized groups, the prophetic religious who denounce the dehumanizing procedures of social

authority, the intellectuals who use journalistic media to expose the causes of marginalization and oppression, the educators who recognize the gravity of their role in preparing citizens and society.

Open groups that are marginalized perceive their situation and the situation of the integrated strata of society. In contrasting the two situations they deduce the need for liberation and humanization in development. Their praxis is to bring about change so that common good development can benefit all people and not just the privileged. Their position is paradoxical: while denouncing society and working for its transformation, they are also seeking to be integrated into society. They have need of the goods and services of society so that they can survive and fulfill themselves. For these groups the praxis of participatory development faces a severe trial: how long can the participants contest society and recriminate the injustices which weigh on the marginalized while seeking to avail themselves of the benefits of that society?

The study brought out some attitudes distinctive of open, closed or isolated communities engaged in participatory development. Isolated communities ingenuously expressed their unconditional longing for "a place in the sun" of society (leper colony at Venda das Pedras). Integrated social groups wanted to make sure the sun kept shining for them (middle class neighborhood association, Suzano). Marginalized groups with incipient critical consciousness wondered why the sun was shining only on a few (base groups for Cost

of Living Movement, Suzano). Marginalized groups with naive consciousness of internalized domination did not even know the sun was shining (sewing group, Vitoria).

Spheres of Participation in Praxis

Group situations of shared opinion appeared to be the most favorable environment for perception of social reality through discussion, especially to move from a level of sensed need to one of discernment of causes and conditioning influences. Perception of reality was the core motivation for the group, class, or community to become involved in joint action.

Perception was never static, it was always moving towards new levels to cope with, assimilate, and accumulate, new insights. Sometimes the new insights were disturbing because they constrained the participants into taking a stand on the issues revealed by the perception of reality, such as to confront authorities on the issue of the unjust eviction of the favela residents. Not all groups or individuals perceived the same reality in the same objective situation. This difference probably contributed to the spheres of participation in praxis.

Figure 3 shows the spheres of participation in praxis as they appeared in the observed events of the study. At the core of all participatory development is a nucleus of conscientized and active participants. They could be called the nucleus leadership group.

The nucleus leadership group interacts closely with the facilitator, as indicated by the two way arrows. Often the group assumes a

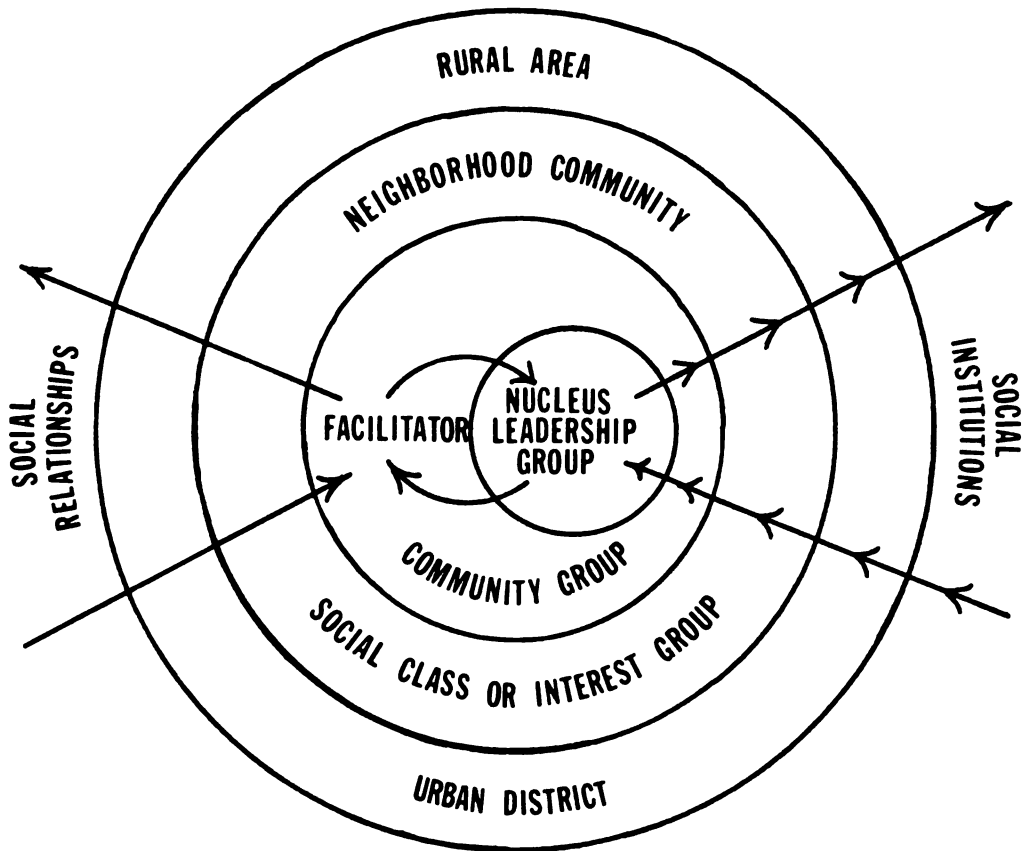


FIGURE 3

SPHERES OF PARTICIPATION IN PRAXIS

facilitator role in interaction with participants from the surrounding community. The members of the nucleus perceive reality far more critically than do the rest of the community. They stimulate the praxis of the population in other spheres.

The conscientized and committed nucleus performs a leadership role, not in making decisions alone or for others, but in dialoguing with participants in other spheres. The dialogue encourages critical examination of reality and concern to change situations which oppress people. The nucleus dialogues intensely with the facilitator. In this dialogue the facilitator questions the perceptions of the group and introduces information (such as newspapers or research reports) to help clarify the discovery of reality and solutions to problems.

The nucleus leadership group and facilitator interact within the sphere of the community group. The community group is intimately related to the leadership nucleus, but is slower in moving towards critical awareness of reality. The community group, generally consisting of 20 to 30 men and women, who are stable participants, is anxious to change the situation together and is dedicated in this endeavor. It depends on the nucleus to stimulate progression in critical perception of the reality and of the process of praxis.

The nucleus leadership group, together with the community group, stimulates its praxis and the praxis of participants from the wider sphere. The groups attempt to stir up a critical awareness of needs and underlying causes. They seek to organize activities to intervene in social reality as it is unfolded through reflection and action.

Perception as well as action becomes more diffused as the spheres widen to embrace neighborhoods, interest groups and areas.

The sphere next to the community group takes in the neighborhood community and social class or interest groups. Neighborhood communities are formed of residents of the same block or alley, or farmers of the same settlement. They are usually indirectly involved in the activities as beneficiaries of projects initiated by the community group, such as supletivo courses, filtered water campaigns or reconstruction of homes damaged by floods. Their involvement stems from concrete needs.

Social class or interest groups convene around common concerns for the good of their groups which create ties with the community group. Social classes can include groups such as factory workers or subsistence farmers. Class consciousness is an important aspect of their perception of, and intervention in, reality. Interest groups can form around temporary needs such as, parents of school age children, or illiterate youth. The interest can also be more long range, as in the case of leaders of church pastoral care for factory workers.

The next sphere of participation encompasses participants from a rural area of an urban district. A rural area can be a village or an agricultural municipality with specific features such as drought lands. An urban district can signify an organizationally determined environment such as a favela. On the whole perception of reality in this sphere is conditioned by socio-cultural and political

domination and participation is very indirect and self-seeking. The action of the others spheres reaches this geographic sphere but the participants do not assume any direct involvement. Mass movements, such as collecting signatures for petitions or promoting campaigns, usually involve participants in this sphere.

In deepening perception of reality and extending action to transform situations the nucleus leadership group attempts to relate to all spheres. Beyond the spheres are the social institutions, such as government, church or education. Arrows link the nucleus leadership groups with social institutions, passing through all spheres. This shows the flexibility of the nucleus to promote interchange on all levels and openness to interact with the dominating institutions of society. In this way participatory development extends the influence of the participants beyond their immediate spheres.

The facilitator also cultivates social relationships, which extend beyond the spheres as well as within the spheres of community involvement, as indicated by the two way arrows in Figure 3. The facilitator brings in new dimensions to invigorate the praxis of the nucleus leadership and community groups. The facilitator also transmits the concerns of the participants to institutional leadership and other members of society. Two way communication between communities and society keeps the energy of participatory development flowing through all spheres to renew the process.

Interaction in the spheres of participation in praxis can be planned and evaluated. The development process does not stem from

chance. Although facilitators do not intervene directly in perception, values and action-reflection they do influence the process. Through the interrelationship of the facilitators and collaborators conditions are deliberately created for the planning and evaluation of practical activities and for the long-range nurturing of a social growth process through praxis.

In the following chapter the field experiences in the Northeast Region will bring out more dimensions of the dynamics of praxis related to spheres of participation. They will point out how the facilitator role can be carried out dialogically with the leadership being shared among facilitators and collaborators. They will stress the social dynamics behind motivations for participation.

CHAPTER III

IN THE FIELD: NORTHEAST REGION

The marginalized strata of Brazilian society are composed of exploited social groups and deprived individuals (Ribeiro, 1978). The condition of marginalization excludes them from participatory development. Situations of marginalization can begin to be changed by introducing an educational intervention to foster participation. Education for development creates conditions for deprived and exploited groups to gain experience in participation through interrelationship among facilitators and collaborators. Collaborators need to modify the situations which exclude them from development. Facilitators who come from intermediate strata of integrated socio-cultural milieus reject the prevailing unjust structures of society. Together collaborators and facilitators want to help redirect development towards the common good.

The interrelationship between facilitator and collaborator builds on shared learning, mutual support, and common concern for, and commitment to, creating more humanizing conditions with the marginalized urban and rural poor. Within this interrelationship the roles of facilitator and collaborator can at times be interchangeable.

To change the causes and consequences of dehumanizing situations of the oppressed, requires a dialectical process of exerting influence on, and receiving influence from, society.

The 7 praxis experiences of the Northeast Region depict some aspects of interrelationship among facilitators and collaborators. They bring out various dimensions of the reciprocal influence between marginalized groups active in self-help development and the society to which they belong.

Women's Literacy Training, Recife

The event took place in a suburb of Recife, state of Pernambuco, with low middle class homes and sections of shanties and hovels. The classroom was located at the side of the office of a private organization to which the facilitators belonged. It was simple but adequately furnished.

Situation

The literacy class consisted of a homogenous group of women from a poverty neighborhood close by. Some were young girls, others were grandmothers. Most had been part of a project to reconstruct homes after a flood had destroyed many of the shanties and the people were being forced out of the area.

The literacy class was based on the Paulo Freire method¹ adapted to urban reality and to more freedom for the participants to provide the content of their own learning during the procedure of the course. The atmosphere was relaxed, friendly, much laughter while making up words with the syllables being mastered. Rapport between collaborators

¹The Paulo Freire method of literacy uses generative themes taken from the life of the learners to introduce syllables to be mastered in reading; this provokes a critical thinking process as well as mastering the skills of literacy.

and facilitators was high. Several of the women had tried to learn through Mobral² but it did not work for them because the words were given ready prepared and did not stimulate their own participation in creating them, nor did the words speak to the women's day to day reality.

Focal Thematic Content

This is a session in the 90 day literacy course for women learning to read and write and learning about things. It is an occasion to reflect on and talk about their own lives and to value women (F).³

Perceived Social Reality

Our situation is one of misery: wash clothes to earn something, carry cans of water on the head. Women are in a degraded position, exploited, used. There are problems in the family: husband gone wrong, son gone wrong. The pressures are massive, struggle with life. The cost of living is dreadful, you look and the prices have gone up; you look again and they have gone up some more. Our neighborhood is molestful,⁴ full of drug pushers. Parents are poor and loaded with children and things get worse with the prices. I have lost good job opportunities because I have no studies. If you work in a place and earn very little and ask for a raise, the boss quickly kicks you out saying you are Communist. In the communities the women are inhibited by the presence of their husbands (f). The woman suffers most oppression in society because she has no point of reference in her person, in her own aspirations (f). I only used to write my name, and badly at that, and I thought I would never be able to learn, but God willing I'm

²Mobral is the Movimento Brasileiro de Alfabetizaçãõ, an adult education program sponsored by the federal government.

³The initial (F) at the end of a statement indicates that the opinion expressed by facilitators does not imply agreement by collaborators; (C) indicates that the opinion expressed by collaborators does not imply agreement on the part of facilitators.

⁴Pesado = heavy, meaning violent and dangerous.

going to learn everything here with our sisters (facilitators) who have so much patience. Before we didn't even know how to speak the words correctly. We often took the wrong buses because we couldn't read and they look alike. Society says women like housekeeping and cooking but almost all of the group discovered in the project that they also like making bricks and reconstructing mud walls; only they don't appreciate themselves (F). If we could learn to read and get a job it would be good, to help the struggle. When we can read people won't fool us.

Values

We do this not just to teach, but for the community work: the women sense some difference but don't quite know what makes the difference (F). Our aim is to increase our income once we can read. The women have lots of capacity but need means to express it more, to have more explicit forms of participation (F). One helping the other here--it's wonderful. We want to write a letter, take out documents, read a road sign, tell the bus names. It is good to know. It is good to come here, to forget the house and kids and all the problems; time passes and we don't even know it. The language of the women is contradictory, always filled with the objective aspirations of women and of people, but also the aspirations of men and of the power structures; the values are contradictory and confused in face of reality (F). Be aware of the value of women and demand the minimum rights. Learn in order to be able to get by.

Action-Reflection Linkages

Many of the participants are active in different community and church groups and this helps perceive reality. The group slacks off, then a few women won't let it die and encourage others; they look for the positive points and show the others. They see that the literacy is connected with their problems, homes. The words bring out the difficulties being felt--economic, social, political questions generate discussion. We discuss the way we are seeing things. The most important is the debate around the meaning of the word constructed by the learner (F). We can recognize our situation in the words. Before there was no orientation, but here we have learned. After a hand-craft project of the neighborhood community group during which the women received a lecture explaining crafts, they said: "we don't want just to listen; let's learn how to read and write." By discussing the words try to understand

the value which is the world itself (F). We talk about life, elections, cost of living, jobs, these things.

Neighborhood Discussion to Defend Slum Land
Rights, Recife

Swamp areas in a peripheral district of the city were filled with mud-plaster houses and shacks built on the edge of canals fed by a dam on the property of a factory. The marsh area had been surfaced by the people to build their homes. Privies opened directly into the water. The only source of usable water was a tap over a tank next to the fence of the factory which was claiming the area.

Situation

The meeting held in one of the homes was haphazard, disconnected, an informal exchange of ideas rather than an organized meeting. The participants were mostly women since their husbands (much to the women's disgust) had disappeared at the time of the meeting to avoid the issues. Some women were energetic, involved, critically aware of the implications of the situation, while others dozed off with babies asleep on their laps. Some men dropped in, then sneaked out when the discussion got hot.

The group of participants is not organized nor united despite the previous group work in the successful project to reconstruct homes after the flood. Hostility and disunity prevent common action. The facilitator had made individual contacts with each potential participant to talk over the meeting, and although all had assured that they would be present, most of the men failed to appear.

Focal Thematic Content

We need to discuss the case of the woman who was ejected by the police while putting up her shack. The people must be encouraged to examine the case and their position (F). We want to evaluate the attitude of the neighbors in backing out when the woman was hauled off to the police station (F). The group must try to set up some concrete activity of the group in reference to the problem of the evicted woman. We talked about the situation of the land for the houses and the documents of possession being requested through the lawyer (C).

Perceived Social Reality

The people adopt attitudes of society which go against values of their own people (F). A financial group is interested in taking over the swampland to expand urbanization. The factory at the side is putting on pressure to get the people out in order to sell the property in lots. Justice is not for the poor people, we must defend ourselves on the basis of the stick. The folks here are odd jobbers and have no conditions to live far from the center where they work. When the houses fall down, the government does not let the people rebuild or repair them. The factory keeps moving the fence closer and threatening. The factory has a plan to fill in the dam and force the water to flood the homes and thus get the people out without confrontation. The controversial issue for discussion was the case of the woman who started to put up a shack for herself and her mentally ill husband across the road from some long-time residents. Police and factory guards intimidated her and took her to the police station. Her shack was demolished. The other people did not defend her but let her be expelled in a cowardly manner. We want stability, legalized ownership of our homes, better quality of life, the right to own our house floor.

Values

Internal fights, disunity--we can't get together to do community work. The neighborhood is divided, hostile, attitudes did not change even after the reconstruction experience of working together. People are filled with hatred, aversion towards each other, rivalry. Some step on others just to climb, no one wants to help, each for himself. There is no solidarity except for a group of half dozen women and a couple of men. Some are concerned with

the common good, others only seek their own good. It was wrong to let the woman be expelled. Some are ready to leave the area to receive the indemnization, others want to hold on because they worked hard over the years to fill in 3 meters of water with earth to make their house floors and passages. I feel like running away from here because one can't live in this atmosphere. Not knowing the land will be ours creates uncertainty, confusion, fear, suspicion. Yet when we were reconstructing our homes we were strong and faced authority and each defended his home. The people will only win by being firm, not by depending on a lawyer (F). We need to recognize and revindicate rights ...form a cohesive group to work in common. We want a community feeling, a neighborhood, peace and harmony amongst us.

Action-Reflection Linkages

There is need to reflect on what happened with the evicted woman because it signified a regression in the process to defend the land (F). The people had been prepared to resist, some remained firm but others got afraid of the police and backed down. The activity of reconstruction had not been reflected on with an analysis of reality and a meaning of commitment (F). Neighbors must see that by putting up a united front the people can face the threats of expulsion. We must look for concrete action that will serve to get a foothold in the process.

Community Leadership Meeting, Garanhuns

A village of 50 families of subsistence farmers had settled in an area a few miles inland from the highway that joins Garanhuns to Recife, in Pernambuco, in the meridional semi-drought lands of the Northeast.⁵ The region was high and cold and dry.

Situation

The community group of men and women is active and aware, with years of experience, of ups and downs in the process of their self and community development. The meeting was held in the center built

⁵ Agreste meridional = arid backlands of the Northeast.

by the community. It also housed three large silos for the storage of corn and beans, and a tractor. The participants, some coming straight from the fields carrying their scythes, sat around on the benches and held long discussions by the light of an oil lamp.

The meeting was a regular monthly get together with the facilitators to talk over the many activities, bring in new ideas. The group carries on autonomously but solicits occasional contacts with the facilitators when new dimensions of their work arise. The current problems being focused on are elections and commercialization of their products.

Focal Thematic Content

The gathering was to prepare for the voting during the up-coming elections and discuss other subjects brought up by the group...talk about the cooperative and gather ideas to take to the rest of the community for discussion.

Perceived Social Reality

We are concerned with the historical present moment. The wanderings around have shown them that the injustices are the same in the other states, the roots are much deeper than our own space (F). This year the harvest is small yet everyone runs here to teach us how to market it because of elections. The cooperative system is no good because it doesn't follow as we were taught. When we go up to vote they stick a guy there to cast the vote for us. Because of elections they give donations to keep the people quiet. Alms are pacifiers in the mouths of the people to keep people from eating. The government could put an end to this almsgiving, just give people land to work on. Before we used to go to the storekeeper and ask: how much will you give me for the product? Now we hold it in the open and wait for the storekeeper to ask how much we want for it. Before we offered ourselves, now we wait to be approached. We need better commercialization to defend ourselves from exploitation of the credit cooperative. Hold on to the

goods of the workers of the region until the price is reasonable or keep them to provide the farmers during the rainy season--that's what commercialization should be about.

Values

The people are turned on by the elections and are a little more aware of politics. The group is concerned with articulating its experiences, with involving more people, concerned with the problems of other settlements. Communication reinforces motivation. The motivation is to guarantee the space won; to do so it is necessary to widen the perception of social reality and one's intervention within it (F). Group feeling overcomes individualism. The group takes a firm position, not as isolated members, but when one speaks he has the whole force of the group decision behind him. I'm not against riches, after all I'm struggling to get richer, but not when others are in destitution. Many still value the rich person, but our struggle here is to value one's self, and the other who has nothing, just as much as the one who has a world of things. The present moment belongs to politics, we have a right to choose and know why we are choosing. The group grew by overcoming crises. The people around here still disbelieve in themselves. Our manner of living here oppressed by not being able to free people--our struggle is to make that liberty exist. The worse freedom is not being able to vote directly--it's locked in freedom. Capitalism is a sin. Let's take capitalism out and bring conscience in. Keep the class of the small farmer from stagnating. Let's keep confidence alive by fighting for the cooperative...defend ourselves against exploitation...overcome individualism. We must trust in each other and overcome difficulties.

Action-Reflection Linkages

This community, with the little instruction it has, because of what we talk over with the people, this community already sees through things. Accompany, know what it's all about, talk to one another, learn from the radio, from the newspapers, feel what is happening around, then ask: what is our role here? We discuss all this--land, commercialization, politics, etc.--and this encourages because it comes from the people and they feel motivated to participate. Our group work is like a school to prepare for bigger experiences. Go gaining space--reflect and act and take a firmer step each time--from small group marketing to the

silos project, to the municipal cooperative. Our work is orientation, conscientization; we have reached 7 settlements with our experiences here. Before the work was just carrying out individual projects, like filter campaigns, but today the work is a program that is discussed and planned by the group and the community--problems and causes and action--understand and look for solutions. It was not enough just to sell together, they had to break the barriers of the structures and go beyond the village and penetrate the wider reality (F). Growth means gaining wider spaces. If all of us think one thought, our vote will be a weapon; but we have to see well how we use this weapon of voting because it can backfire and injure us.

Correlated Event: Working Against
the People

The community of Salgadoinho near Garanhuns, Pernambuco, has had a long and rich experience of working together and bringing about social changes to benefit the marginalized subsistence farmer. The group was well known for its respect for human values and strong fraternal unity. But a time came when the pillar of strength of the whole municipality almost crumbled. An internal crisis proved to be the hardest battle in all the years of building community spirit and working for the common good. The group pulled through, hurt, but strengthened in its commitments. The participants reflected on what had happened to learn for the future. They decided to write an account of it. The events were discussed, analyzed, condensed, then recorded on tape. A facilitator transcribed and typed the document. When they were all satisfied that it was a true representation of the facts, they signed the 10 page statement, painstakingly tracing each letter of their names to witness their assent to "History of the Community and the Events Which Came to Damage the Community Work."

The document was presented as an exemplification of the constant need to strengthen values. The following is an abridged version of the section which dealt with the problem.

Our work suffered a serious set back when JB, a foreigner, who said he was a specialist in agriculture and community work, came to live in our village.

He began to appear in our village making himself everyone's friend. The community welcomed him with the same generosity as they would receive someone sent by the Lord. The community helped him build a house for his family. But soon contradictory signs began to show up. The piece of land that should have been divided among three ended up in the hands of JB and his friend.

JB asked to join the community loan fund. Now we have a norm that a new member can only be admitted after taking part in at least three community meetings (A-RL).⁶ But we made an exception for him. Later the community was to pay dearly for it. We wanted to receive him as though he were our own community (V). We gave proof of human values rooted in the Christian meaning of unity and solidarity, living the Gospel in practice (V) (A-RL). JB stayed in the community 2 years.

Our community has a rule that to keep up the revolving fund each member has the responsibility to return the loan after harvest, paying back in cash if the loan was money, or in seeds if the loan was made from the seed storage. We found out that JB was telling the neighboring village it was not necessary to replace the loans. JB himself and his friend did not return their loans to our community fund even though their harvests had been good (PSR).

JB convinced the owner of a piece of land, that was used as a community farming plot for the benefit of the loan fund, to take back the piece of land and break away from the community.

JB started to teach the people that all work has to have a boss, and that they should climb over the others. Some newer members dropped out of the community work (V).

⁶(A-RL) indicates action-reflection linkage; (V) values; and (PSR) perceived social reality.

He insinuated that the community was a bad thing and the people began to doubt and even fear him (V).

When JB went to community meetings he never said a word. Later he would get groups together, foment discontent, and throw them against the community. He gathered enough followers to split the community (V). He discredited the community with organizations that had always worked hand in hand with us.

One day JB told a group working together on the community plot that he was getting a tractor for the village. Although the brothers were mistrustful of JB they welcomed the thought of having a tractor to help the community agriculture (PSR). When the tractor arrived, JB took it off to his house saying he had received it as a present from a friend. Then he charged the villagers 20 cruzeiros (80 cents) and outsiders 30 cruzeiros (\$1.20) an hour for the use of the tractor (PSR).

One day a community representative was presenting a project for financial aid in the building of the manioc flour mill. He was asked about the community tractor. Then it all came out into the open. JB had requested the tractor from a funding agency in the name of the community then used it illegally at the community's expense (PSR).

Back in the village the community resolved to demand the tractor from JB (A-RL). When he persisted in saying it had been given to him by a friend, we showed him a copy of the project document which proved the tractor was for the community.

The tractor was turned over to the community group. We decided that the first need was to prepare drivers (A-RL). Through the community fund 14 drivers were prepared in 6 months. The community fund maintains the up-keep and running expenses of the tractor so that it is always in good condition for the use of the community.

Today, the tractor is still in the community, serving the needs of all. JB, with his malevolent talent for cultivating people's confidence to serve as a ladder to benefit his own interests, has gone.

Rural Community Group Meeting,
Garanhuns

The locality was a rural municipality of small farmers about 15 miles out of Garanhuns in the state of Pernambuco. The mud road leading off the highway to the settlement was full of ruts and mud-holes making driving impossible in rainy weather.

Situation

The participants of the meeting overflowed from the home of one of the farmers. They sat on stools, on a straw mat, or stood outside poking their heads through the window and door.

Only men were present, the women of the house stayed in the back room. Most of the group were long time participants, but 5 or 6 persons came for the first time wanting to join the group because of the loan project for agriculture.

The gathering was held in the afternoon, the participants walked straight in from the fields. The group had chosen to have the meeting in different homes rather than the community center, which served as a church, to give more people a chance to take part and to avoid the overbearing influence of the priest. Members of the group had gained prominent positions in the municipal labor union, the cooperative; one was a town councillor.

Focal Thematic Content

The meeting was to discuss the situation of the medical post...see how the loans and returns to the community fund stand...encourage the participation of women (F). We presented new colleagues who want to become part of the group (C). We had to resolve the purchase of fertilizer for the new planting.

Perceived Social Reality

The planting is difficult. Cost of seeds and fertilizers is going up. There is lack of medical care. The government wants to build a medical dispensary but we already have one built by the community; it's better to reinforce what we already have. It was not possible to make the loan returns by November as planned. Four years ago a doctor dropped by a few times to the medical post but after elections he never came back. We need conscious participation in the labor union, a health program to get the medical dispensary functioning.

Values

A moving force in the community is the priest--not because the group believes in the priest, but out of deference to him (F). To join the loan fund one must enter with the spirit of the group and contribute to build, to participate. The group work is thorny--needs courage and perseverance--a prodding here and there to move ahead. People first, then money. What matters is the group--the group united in commitment is more than the money of the loan fund. We must have responsibility to make the loan return to guarantee the seeds and fertilizers; one may have to go short now to prepare for later--that's education. The priest used to stifle the group and cause them to be closed but after they began to get involved in the group work they became more liberated and now have formed 3 more groups (F). Women are not considered persons, they do not participate (F). If we get the medical dispensary functioning it will help those who don't believe and give more value to the group. Let's recognize the value of our work, respect it, strengthen it, because we are already doing something... get moving and not stand here with folded arms.

Action-Reflection Linkages

The group reflects on the problems and we see how the people are cast aside. In the group we discuss problems of the life of the farmer--the cooperative, health, labor union, loan fund; all these are developed for the good of the whole group and for the good of each one. This participation is education. We develop articulation within the group and orientation of other groups connected with the work. The community group experience is not an end in itself, but a means of support and learning to get into and act on other social fields: the cooperative, the labor union, the medical dispensary. At the meetings we discuss

and learn and take it to other places. Before the group was just concerned with building the church; now we talk about seeds, fertilizers, loans, planting, having training courses. We want to expand to reach others and not just benefit the little group. We need to reflect on our own participation and see what it means to the municipality.

Self-Help Village Projects, Capistrano

The small village lies at the foot of the Baturité Mountain Range which separates the arid lowlands from the harsh drought lands⁷ outside the municipality of Capistrano in the State of Ceará.

Situation

The community group has 110 registered members, 48 are men, the remainder women and youth. The meeting was in front of the home of one family, by the light of a large storm lantern. The group began to organize a year ago and is already guiding the formation of another village community the other side of the mountain range.

It was the eve of the Feast of St. Francis of Canindé and much of the conversation turned to memories of pilgrimages, miracles and blessings. Every family had some members who had left for the shrine before dawn, on trucks or in rattletrap buses. The group had carried out a major project to clear and deepen a pool which, when filled with rainwater, had kept the whole village supplied with drinkable water during the dry season until the pool dried up. Now they are deepening and lining the pool to make a reservoir.

⁷Sertão = arid and remote hinterland; Northeastern drought land.

Focal Thematic Content

We wanted to see what was done during the week on the work of digging the pool...plan the next steps...mark the days for working at night...discuss the project to drill a well...talk about the labor union. We received new members (C). We always read the Gospel (C).

Perceived Social Reality

One of the greatest needs felt by the whole population is lack of water. Most of the water from the pools and wells is briny. People only see the reality of their small locality (F). The labor union is weak; it does not attend the people's needs. Life is a struggle for survival. We have days marked to work for the boss of the land and if we don't do what he orders us to do, he kicks us off. The problem is not having land, not being able to plant. The school was falling down and was filthy, so we cleaned it and renovated it together with the parents of the children. The teachers receive 96 cruzeiros (\$3.80).a month and yet their salaries are 3 months behind. We hang on because it's necessary to go on living. We want to have a reservoir large enough to provide water, and wells for each home.

Values

The church encourages the work but does not take it over. It is the needs lived by the people which motivate them to participate. After the people began to get the taste for community participation, the movement grew. When the results began to appear people began to believe in our projects. Everybody kept saying it wouldn't work, but when they saw that the reservoir project was for real, they believed. Now the people are more united. We never thought we could accomplish so much here. Things are much better, now we put a lot of effort into our work. Reaching for the solutions of problems makes people go...seek unity... think it is beautiful to work together. When people are discovering something there will be progress ahead. Before each one worked for himself, now that there is community it is good and the work is done together. Religiosity has always been strong; people transfer problems to the religious plane and conform to the situation because God wants it that way (F). People want to resolve immediate problems only. There are some disagreements and criticisms but they are few. It's no use participating if deep down they don't want to. Whoever is poor and has no land wants

to take part in the meetings; but those who are bosses find it difficult and don't want to waste time. Not everyone can be alike in the world, some will like the community, others won't. One must have courage to face the work, and patience if not, we soon give up...be calm and treat people with respect and help them to want to participate.

Action-Reflection Linkages

The work can't be too loose when the group does not yet have any awareness of deeper problems. Reflections are on the concrete activities and not on the broader reality (F). The labor union is being analyzed. Meetings help us know, discover, learn, go after those things too. They (facilitators) came to ask us to find out what we were needing because we were at a standstill; they did not come to implement anything. We made a survey to find which was the problem of our place and we concluded the problem was water so we tried to solve it. We met in the homes, discussed the problem, talked, resolved, and more people came to join the work. They (facilitators) went on showing us and we kept learning and uniting and now we are a big community. When we go to do some work we first talk at the meeting what the work is going to be about. If everyone agrees we go ahead, but if one or two do not agree, we try to find out why and finally come to a decision. Before it was difficult to get people to discuss work together. It is hard for us to live, that is why we are curious to look for other ways. Before we knew but we were not instructed, now we are showing this to each other. We are going to invite someone from the neighboring village to tell us how they worked with their labor union. We keep working and each time see things clearer.

Correlated Event: Water for the Community

A village community near Capistrano recounted the experience of the people's activity together. This activity united the people, helped them clarify their ideals through the action, and prepared the way for reflected and organized participation.

Our problem was the lack of water (PSR). At a meeting we decided to dig a well. At the following meeting a woman pointed out that if the well were deep, the water would come out briny. Everyone accepted her opinion. So we

decided to clear out and widen a pool to catch rainwater (A-RL).

Around the pool were some cotton plants. The owner wanted us to pay for the cotton. Many felt there was no need to pay since the owner was part of the community (PSR).

A group of children went from house to house asking for donations to pay for the cotton. All they could raise was 20 cruzeiros (80 cents). It was not enough. We wondered what to do. We had a meeting and decided to buy a chicken to raffle (A-RL). The raffle brought in 50 cruzeiros (\$2) and we paid for the cotton plants.

We started working at clearing out the pool. We had a meeting and decided to include the children. But the children were weak and could not stand a day's work. So we had a meeting to think about what to do. One man suggested we should work at night. So we began to work in the evenings, by moonlight, adults and children. But it began to get too dark. We had a meeting to decide what to do. Someone in a neighboring village had a lantern. We borrowed the lantern and bought gas for it. We decided to invite the women too. Soon we were 31 people all digging (A-RL).

Some youngsters threw stones. Some people mocked us saying that was work for the government not for us. Drunkards passing by cursed in front of the women. Some of the group dropped out. Most kept on (V).

We went to the town hall to borrow wheelbarrows to carry the earth. But the officials said: "No, the wheelbarrows are all occupied." So we got together and resolved to make carts from cans to carry the mud (A-RL).

There were tiny cooperations and big cooperations. People brought the workers coffee, manioc biscuits, bread, tapioca with coconut. They went into the woods and cut sticks to make the fence. They loaned their mules to carry stones.

One night during our work of digging a woman came and said: "Folks, I'm here but I can't do any heavy work. My husband is ill. I have only one small daughter. I wanted to bring something for the snack. But I have no coffee powder at home, nor even any sugar. But I thought of something. Back home we have a papaya, ripe on the tree.

If you'd like it..." Everyone exclaimed: "Oh, yes, bring it." So the woman hurried home and brought 2 papayas and divided them up. Everyone had a piece. Now that for us was working in unity.

When the pool was ready and filled with water, all the people who had never set foot there during the work and had mocked us, were allowed to take water. Now they are interested in the community work and are uniting with us (V).

Looking at the Situation of the Experiences

Participatory development involves people in conscious active and solidary relationships to decide on and influence the direction of development for the common good. Facilitators and collaborators dialogue in the exchange of theoretical and experiential knowledge, talents, skills and interests.

Participatory development is an educational process that seeks to build society while nurturing fulfillment of people. Traditional passivism is being overcome through new, fresh and hopeful experiences of participation.

Freire reminds educators that in the process of humanization, man fulfills his vocation to be subject (1975:38). Man makes himself subject by reflecting on his situation, on his concrete environment. The more a person reflects on and perceives reality, the more he or she "emerges" from it in full consciousness of the situation. People can intervene in and change perceived reality (Freire, 1975). Freire's ideas have meaningful implications for the interrelationship of facilitators and collaborators in striving to change conditions of marginalization through participatory development. In changing society they change themselves and each other.

Responsibilities in the Facilitator Role

Although facilitators and collaborators share the process of perceiving and changing reality, facilitators have added responsibilities. Rousseau (1977) points out some qualities of the facilitator role drawn from years of experience in rural and urban communities in Brazil.

The agent, or facilitator of participatory development should be a person of experience, capacity, with permanently updated understanding of the social, economic and political reality in which the process is occurring. The agent needs altruism and detachment to recognize when the time has come to step aside and allow collaborator participants to assume their own process autonomously. This means the interaction between the agent and the people must constantly be evaluated to see whether the process is truly liberating or is retaining subtle forms of dependence. The process must be gradually transferred to the marginalized groups so that they readily break away from dependence on the agents and define their own participation (Rousseau, 1977).

Diversity in Forms of Participation

How people view their needs greatly influences their form of praxis and the type of facilitator-collaborator interaction that best helps meet their needs.

Participatory development does not mean the same for all people. Certain attitudes, behaviors and forms of action are held up as ideals, especially by facilitators. They are regarded to be desirable by the participants of the praxis experiences but are not always attainable.

Some of the ideals of participatory development, such as solidarity, critical awareness of problems, dialogue, or co-responsible participation on all levels of decision-making and action, are consistently and consciously sought by the participants. Nevertheless, the actual experiences show that diverse types of helping relationships among facilitators and collaborators are present in the praxis.

A very incisive view of the various forms of helping relationships based on perception of needs has been offered by Ward (in press). Ward summarizes five manners of participating that brings out the type of interaction motivated by needs perception and fulfillment. These have been identified as: giver-receiver participation, helper-helped participation, teacher-learner participation, leader-follower participation, and shared participation.

Each of the five modes of participation hinges on a specific interpretation of needs and of motivations to attend those needs. While participatory development in the experiences observed in the study sought shared forms of participation, the other four modes could also be detected in the over all configuration of praxis events.

Giver-receiver participation, according to Ward, is based on motivations of compassion without accountability or commitment. The facilitator participates by giving to fulfill the needs of the collaborator, who receives. Compassion is always at a high in situations of emergency or dire need. This was true of many groups that solicited funding for self-help projects. It was the case of the village that needed money to buy lime and barbed wire to finish off the pool for the community water supply. Giving was sometimes indirect, as happened

when facilitators provided brick making machines for poor people to reconstruct their homes broken down by floods in Recife. A rural village leader near Garanhuns, notably active in self-help projects, gave an unexpected response to a question on motivations: "The community here seeks whoever can give a hand, can help more, because things are difficult."

A favela⁸ group in Recife felt some of the contradictions in compassionate giving-receiving. The group members took pity on a woman who was living on the edge of the canal in a rag shack the size of a kitchen table with her alcoholic husband, who had a broken leg, and their 5 small children. They decided that the woman needed a more decent place to live. They planned to help her build a hut. The group obtained a donation of a couple of sacks of cement. They took the cement to the woman and explained their intention. She seemed delighted and grateful. The next day the sacks of cement were gone. The woman had sold them to buy food for the children. When the group pointed out the rag shack that is still in the same condition, someone remarked: "We should have realized that it wouldn't work. It's not enough just to give when people are in need."

Helper-helped participation is motivated by concern to lift the collaborator out of his situation of need; the helper reaches "down" to pull the helped "up", explains Ward. This mode of participation was also present in some events, especially in the leper colonies where participants depended on facilitators to open the way for their

⁸Favela = an urban slum.

reintegration in society. It was also noticeable in the volunteer work of European health agents in the rural area of the Northeast who went in to the communities to help women acquire better habits of nutrition and first aid. Occasionally this mode would come out in the interaction of agricultural technicians with newly formed groups of subsistence farmers who looked "up" to the technician. The women of the sewing group in Vitoria considered their activity a means of being helped up by preparing to earn and have a better living, although the facilitators tried to move beyond this attitude.

Teacher-learner participation comes from the learner's need to acquire the knowledge possessed by the teacher. Ward characterizes this mode by the efforts to teach, show the way, and introduce the learner into the teacher's sphere of information and skills. The women of the literacy group in Recife were right within this mode of participation when they requested more classes and higher levels of instruction as continuity for their experience. In many events facilitators introduced explanatory material on labor laws, voting rights, land laws, and other subjects which were of interest to the collaborators. During one event in Rio de Janeiro facilitators contributed diagrams on local government formation related to social responsibilities. Skills were also taught, as in the case of training for welders.

Leader-follower participation is based on the need to find the way to fulfillment. The facilitator is leader who identifies physically with the collaborator. The follower discovers the way walking at the side of the leader, is how Ward depicts this mode of participation.

The leader-follower search to fulfill needs appeared often in the observed experiences. Facilitator roles required commitment to the needs of collaborators yet facilitators often did not identify totally with the collaborators. The leader or facilitator always seemed to walk at the side of the collaborator, or follower, yet they did not form one. The leader continued to lead and the follower continued to follow. This stood out almost poignantly in the case of a facilitator working in a very difficult urban slum. The facilitator was totally dedicated. He did everything possible to relate to the interests of the neighborhood. He tried to identify with the people. His clothes were simple. His house was like the slum homes. He stopped to speak to people in the market and on street corners. He drank beer with the men and listened to their problems. He stood side by side with the residents when the police raided the slum. The facilitator wore himself out trying to bring people together to resolve their needs yet never imposed his views. The people loved him. But no matter how earnestly he tried to identify, he was always regarded as the facilitator and the people were collaborators. He was tall, blond and healthy looking; the people were short, dark and puny. He was from a European country; the people were natives of the Northeast. He had no religion; the people were active Catholics and Evangelicals. Someday he could leave the area and go his way; the people had nowhere else to go. He did not want to walk as leader, but the people wanted to walk by his side as followers.

Shared participation is based on spiritual motivations by which participants identify with each other and become one in sharing. This

is Ward's description of the fifth manner of participation. It does not deny the other four but raises them to their ultimate consequences. The identity of shared participation is one of the ideals of participatory development.

Discovering Meanings of the Experiences

The role of facilitator is one of service to the group. In the more experienced groups some collaborator participants also fulfilled facilitator roles. Recognizing and nurturing in the participants potentiality for carrying out facilitator roles is one of the responsibilities of the educator in participatory development. Some community leadership groups took this responsibility seriously and set out to help others initiate their process of self-development. In Capistrano a group from the community crosses the mountain to the drought lands on the other side (a steady 6 hour trot) to orientate the experience of a village similar to their own. In São Pedro a group of farmers takes what it learns from its own experiences to five more groups which have been formed in neighboring settlements. In Salgadinho the community group carries out a facilitator role in the entire rural municipality--with villages, the rural labor union, and the agricultural cooperative.

Praxis does not always mean a successful linking of action and reflection to project outcomes. Accomplishments do not always have an impact on improving social conditions, nor do groups maintain a steady dynamics of praxis. In the history of each community group there were many failures, many steps backwards, many abandoned

activities. Praxis is not success oriented; it is process oriented. Therefore the outcomes were far less important than reflection and growth from the experience that kept seeking new forms of action. Many mature and committed groups were not the ones who showed most successful action. They were the ones who most deeply influenced the process of the community groups, neighborhoods and interest groups in a motivational way. In one community in São Paulo and another in Vitoria the leadership groups had suffered many setbacks due to divergences among participants. Nevertheless the process had not been severed. The dynamics had remained in a sufficient degree to renew and energize the process when the leadership nucleus recomposed and reinforced its interrelationships with facilitators and community members. In Jardim Saverio the group had waned and community participation had dropped. It took a different and challenging venture, such as the project to celebrate the birthday party of the garbage dump, in order to re-awaken interaction among facilitators and collaborators.

The interrelationship between facilitator and collaborator participants is crucial in praxis. It is through the interchange of values, perceptions, and shared responsibility for action, that participants steer the praxis toward common good development, even when it means daring to question and contest the established forms of development. Unity, friendship and mutual concern in the relationship is vital to provide a deeply humanized support for the process.

Interrelationship Through Perception of Reality

Facilitators come from socio-cultural milieus that are different from those of the participants. Their reasons for participating spring from different background experiences. They have access to, and make use of, social relationships and information which the collaborators are deprived of. Updating critical awareness is a constant concern of the facilitators and of the teams to which they belong. It is natural that in the observed events the facilitators' perception was more critical than that of the collaborators, although they were continually becoming more sensitive to the real needs by dialoguing with the collaborators.

Generally facilitators want to help collaborators see social reality the way they see it. This seemingly straightforward intention has all sorts of nuances. For example, facilitators presume they have a critical (and consequently "correct") view of society, but on what grounds can this be assumed? How can the helping relationship foster awareness of the complex factors which make up the situation of the marginalized without resorting to directiveness, or even manipulation, on the part of the facilitator? Marginalized people feel reality in terms of hunger, insecurity, overwork, destitution, etc., but the facilitators know about this reality. How can these two dimensions be reconciled to prevent disparity in forms of perceiving reality? Facilitators must make a selection of the information to be brought into the collaborator groups. What criteria are used to make this discrimination? The facilitator explicitly or implicitly

projects desired levels of perception of reality that are flexibly compatible with the values and action-reflection potential of the collaborators.

Tension among levels of perception of reality is one of the dynamic motivations in growth of perception. Tension can be constructive when it leads to more realistic or deeper levels of perception. Tension can also be destructive when it imposes perception by one person's view dominating the other's. Absence of tension results in lack of motivation to increase perception of reality. The variance among levels of perception which facilitators want collaborators to attain and levels of perception where collaborators feel more securely established, can cause tension. Figure 4 shows the dynamics of interrelationship of perception.

The level of social perception of the facilitator, Figure 4 (a), is usually abstracted from facts, deep in efforts to recognize root causes of situations of marginalization, extensive in scope of information, and critical in awareness of the conditioning influences of society. Degrees in levels of perception may vary greatly among facilitators but on the whole they make conscious efforts to penetrate the significance of the social problems of the groups with which they interact.

The level of social perception of the collaborator, Figure 4 (c), is most often sensed from concrete living situations, limited by the marginalized environment and narrow experiences, veiled by ingenuity of a conscience dominated by socio-cultural oppression, and blunt in recognizing the immediate effects of social problems but not perceiving

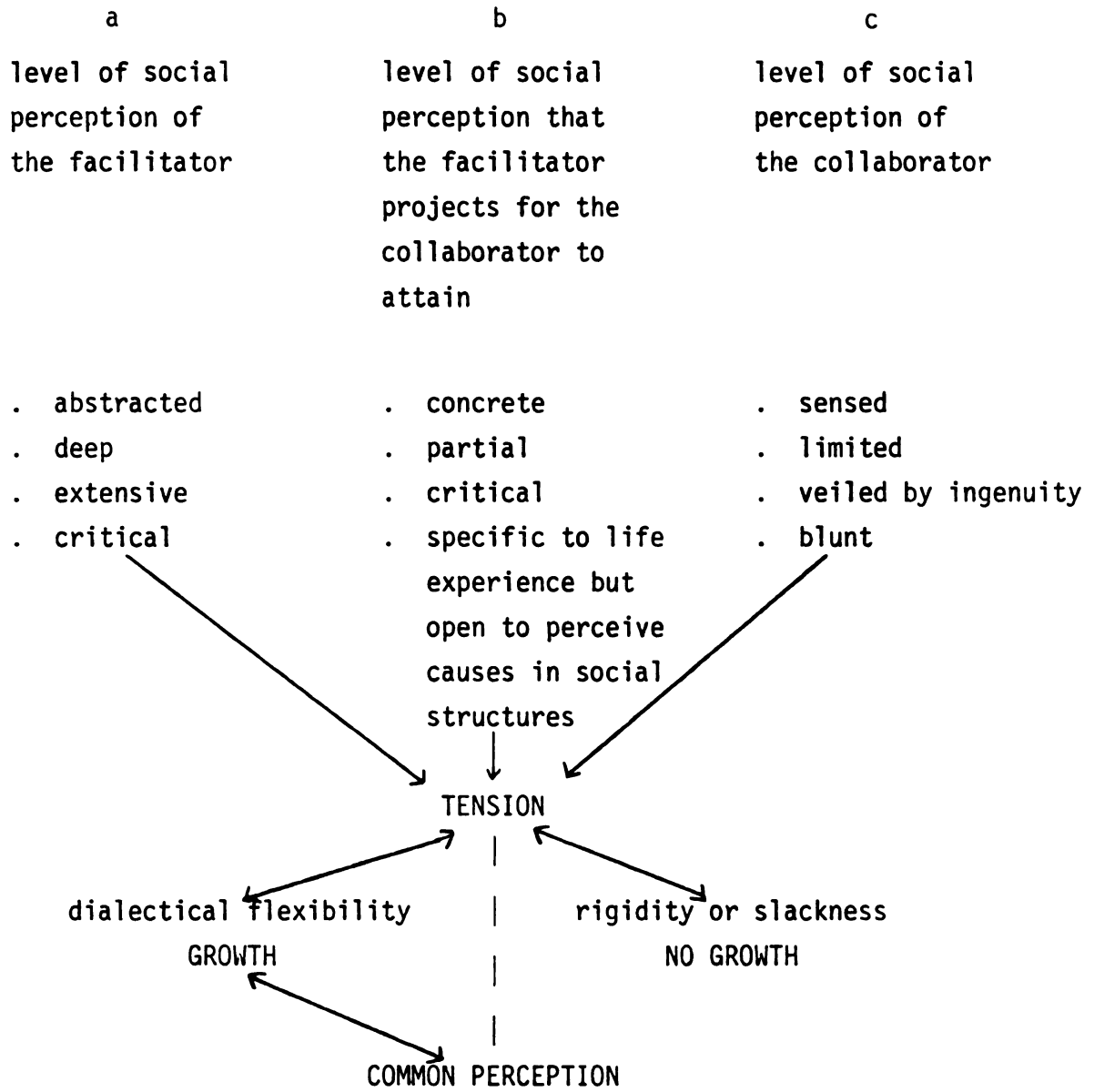


FIGURE 4

DYANMICS OF INTERRELATIONSHIP OF PERCEPTION

the underlying causes. There is great variation in degrees of perception among collaborators even when they have been exposed to the same experiences and influences.

The interrelationship among facilitator and collaborator participants focuses on a level of perception that the facilitator projects for the collaborator to attain, as seen in Figure 4 (b). The levels of perception of facilitators and collaborators are brought together in dialectical interchange of views. The projected level is concrete because it is linked to felt needs. It is partial because reality is best understood by collaborators in terms of their own life situations. It is incipiently critical because it begins to question beyond the mere satisfaction of immediate needs through self-help projects. It is specific to life experience but open to perceive causes in social structures by probing the reasons behind certain conditions of marginalization.

Arrows from the levels of perception in Figure 4 point to the word tension. Tension is caused by the confrontation between the actual and desired levels of perception. This confrontation can conduct the tension towards dialectical flexibility and consequently to growth in perception. Dialectical flexibility permits the exchange of views and perceptions between facilitators and collaborators to move back and forth between actual and projected levels. This results in a move toward new levels of perception. The double headed arrow shows that dialectical flexibility has an equilibrating effect on tension. At the same time tension stimulates dialectical flexibility

and produces growth to attain more intensive levels of social perception.

A double headed arrow in Figure 4 joins tension to rigidity or slackness with its consequence of no growth. This means that when tension among levels of perception is not equilibrated by dialectical flexibility it can produce rigidity or slackness. When the tension is too rigid it ruptures the flow of dynamics and results in stunted growth. Rigidity occurs when either facilitators or collaborators persist in defending determined opinions or ideas and are closed to dialogue and interchange of views. Slackness occurs when either facilitators or collaborators passively accept the others' social perceptions without questioning or comparing them to their own positions. Slackness can produce indifference or manipulation. Both of these weaken tension and sever the growth process. In slackness levels of perception either stagnate or permit weaker perceptions to be dominated by stronger ones through manipulation.

A dotted line in Figure 4 joins common perception to tension, and a double headed arrow links growth with common perception. Common perception is the basis for the dynamics of interrelationship of perception that comes out of tension through the growth produced by dialectical flexibility. Common perception draws facilitators and collaborators toward a meaningful view of reality on which to build the process of praxis. The interaction of facilitators and collaborators during transaction events of praxis brings about common perception. Interrelationship among participants thrives when a common perception serves as dynamic absorber as well as stimulator of the

tension that comes out of the meeting of different levels and degrees of perception of social reality.

Growth through tension and common perception are essential for community praxis of participatory development. In Recife lack of common perception toward the responsibilities for eviction from recovered marshlands caused some slum residents to slacken and eventually abandon their group efforts to defend their neighborhood. In some evangelization and social task groups in Rio de Janeiro the facilitators insisted in pushing critical awareness and social commitment. This caused a manipulative imposition of their views over the collaborators. As a result the community groups never assumed their own praxis and the facilitators became frustrated and discouraged.

Interrelationship in Values

Values seemed to vary greatly among participants even in localized interest groups. The variations can be seen in three main sources of values: cultural, societal and spiritual values. Praxis relies on the predominance of certain values which are held in common by the participants in order to motivate the participatory experience in itself and to move the process towards socially oriented goals.

Values are a sensitive area of interrelationship among facilitators and collaborators. Facilitators often perceived deep rooted values which hindered the praxis of the collaborators, for example, religious fatalism which attributed everything to God's will yet which gave the collaborators strength to survive tribulations. The values had to be respected even while being questioned. Collaborators are inclined to

be emotional in value judgments because their whole lives are being invested in the praxis, whereas the facilitators tend to appraise everything from an intellectual (no matter how warmly human) point of view. Lack of affinity between the values of the facilitators and collaborators also makes the interrelation susceptible to manipulation.

Not all motivations and aspirations nurture human dignity and foster a just society. One of the most delicate tasks of the facilitator is to help collaborators (and the facilitator himself or herself) to clarify motives for participation, and set up criteria to place aspirations in priority order.

Marginalized people, like the socially integrated, tend to shape their values to the dominant values of society. Only critical awareness and evaluation can reveal the difference between alienating values, and values supporting human dignity in its total meaning. The idealism of "values of the people" is often used as the banner and measure for liberation. But it is, in fact, an amalgamation of diverse values coming from the people's cultural heritage. "Values of the people" do include positive (humanizing) characteristics. They come out of the anguishing need to survive and throw off the fetters of capitalistic production systems which crush the population. They result from the expectations held up by capitalistic society to acquire more, individualistically. They originate in the deep seated values of the human being, who wants to be fulfilled as person, in all aspects-- physical, social, and spiritual.

The data showed that values, expressed as motivations and aspirations, were far from homogenous or consistent. Even participants of nucleus leadership groups revealed disparities. These disparities became more evident as the spheres of participation widened from community groups out to geographic areas and social institutions. The smaller groups developed cohesion around similarity, or at least affinity, of motivations. In communities and neighborhoods individual differences among large numbers of participants made it more difficult to focus on common values with enough intensity for the values to motivate praxis and foster interrelationship among facilitators and collaborators.

The participants reflected their position of marginalized populations in society. Consequently motivations and aspirations converged in the struggle to be liberated from situations of deprivation and oppression, and to conquer the right to a quality of life in harmony with human dignity. Quality of life received different interpretations, depending on the underlying values. For some it meant guaranteeing that all people could have a place to live; for others it meant prestige and wealth.

Conflicts in values were often pointed out by the participants themselves. They recognized in their own groups dehumanizing characteristics such as greed, self centered ambition, fatalistic dependence. They also expressed clearly how the "poor exploit the poor" in imitation of the systems in society. They pointed out how the marginalized steps on his own fellow worker in order to climb in the factory. People, who benefited materially from united community

action, hardly ever made any effort to help the others along, but simply sought to better their own conditions individually. This came out, for example, in many cases where participants, after receiving job training sponsored with great sacrifice by the community, ignored their commitment to pass on the skills to other participants, and moved away (and up the social scale) as soon as they got better jobs.

Faith, religion, spirituality, Catholic tradition--all these played a very important part in the motivations of the collaborator participants. Most of the facilitators did not share this faith, but they accepted it and helped create conditions to foster it from a social dimension. The norm for judging all motivations was: love in action to help one's self and one's neighbor to have a more human existence. Contestation, struggle, overcoming social impediments, these came as a consequence, not a reason for the norm. The incentive came from the Scriptures.

Two very strong value motivations appeared consistently in the experiences and served as strong ties among facilitators and collaborators to engage in praxis. The values were expressed by the longing to be fulfilled as persons (ser gente)⁹ and the strength of unity (união faz a força)¹⁰. These two motivations some of the directional dynamics in the praxis of participatory development. They denote the drive to break through dehumanizing repression that marginalized people are subjected to by their situation. They express the longing to become a person in being, in process of fulfillment. The process

⁹Ser gente = to be people, meaning to be valued as human beings.

¹⁰União faz a força = unity produces strength.

of fulfillment is more than a simple accumulation of material goods and social experiences; it is a liberating struggle against the oppression of being deprived of basic human rights. The battle cannot be won by a person alone, nor for a person alone. The power which propels the struggle is generated by unity. People need to realize themselves as people and not be reduced to the state of objects in society. This is the vertical motivational current which radiates from deep within the person, and merges with the horizontal motivational current of people together seeking this realization by changing the repressive situations.

Facilitators in some experiences seemed unconcerned about cultivating values in their interrelationship with collaborators. Values were not recognized as motivating forces in the educational process. Attention placed on perception of reality and action-reflection often clouded the importance of values for the collaborators.

The facilitators whose background was closer to that of the collaborators seemed to have a spontaneous relationship. Consequently the praxis followed a more natural process. One facilitator who had been raised in the favela but had eventually moved away and acquired a higher education, had not lost touch with the people and was fully accepted by the community. In Garanhuns three of the facilitators had been born and raised in a similar rural region and had preserved some of the characteristic values of the population despite their educational and professional experiences. This made the interrelationship one of total equality (but not sameness) with the collaborators.

The collaborators in these events appeared to be more self confident and more ready to face social problems than in events where the facilitators came from very different cultural and value systems.

Interrelationship of Action and Reflection

Facilitators who took part in activities planned through the praxis seemed to reach more meaningful relationships with collaborators. By getting down to sharing physical tasks such as digging, building, marching to the mayor's office, together with community members, facilitators got closer to the real life of the collaborators. The action became shared learning. Facilitators who were agricultural technicians often spoke of how much they learned from the peasants on the community farm plots. Sometimes sharing took on an amusing twist. The women's literacy group in Recife enjoyed re-telling their experience. The learners, from one of the most socially deprived slum areas, were forming words with syllables they could read. Suddenly one woman discovered she had written a very popular and gross swear word. In consternation she showed her neighbor. A whisper went around the room. The group buzzed until one woman took courage and showed the facilitator. Soon everyone was laughing. Reading lost its mysteriousness. From that day onward the women took it upon themselves to increase the underworld vocabulary of the facilitator!

Facilitators were usually impatient to transform situations that were obviously oppressing the marginalized, including the attitudes of the marginalized themselves. This impatience is healthy, because it gives courage and impetus to endure sacrifices and hardships in

order to help the process. But the impatience has to be imbued with the realization that praxis is a process. Action and reflection moves within the entire flow of the praxis; it does not jump ahead by leaps and bounds.

One of the predominant forms of participation, in which facilitators and collaborators recognized the interdependence of action and reflection, was revindication.¹¹ Revindication of rights presupposed a deep reflection on the socioeconomic and political situation. It required an evaluation of rights and responsibilities. It called for courageous decision (in view of the risk of retaliation it incurred on the part of the authorities) to demand just measures by means of non-violent confrontation. The most frequent cases of revindication in the events involved defending land rights, requesting infra-structures such as running water or transportation, presenting formal complaints by petitions signed by a large number of people, such as the Cost of Living Movement. Occasionally revindication resorted to physical manifestations. This was the case of a community in the Northeast which had used all possible means to get the attention of the municipal road department to the problem of thick dust pouring from an unfinished road. The dust was making the people sick. After careful deliberation they decided to block the road for one day. On the selected morning men stayed away from work and children did not go to school. Everyone piled branches, rubbish, furniture, anything movable, into the middle

¹¹ Reivindicação = revindication; this is one of the most frequently used expressions to denote action to claim rights.

of the road. Then the people of the community sat on the piles and waited. The police arrived. There was much beating up and there were many jailings. Factory workers were later fired. But within days the municipal road construction crews were busy setting down asphalt. The dust clouds disappeared and sicknesses in the community decreased.

Interrelationship between facilitators and collaborators seemed to reach more mature levels when collaborators assumed their praxis autonomously, and no longer depended on the incentive of an educator to facilitate the praxis. Complete autonomy is utopian because participatory development is a process and not a state that can be achieved as self sufficiency. It can not be isolated from other processes. Nevertheless the ideal of autonomy is a goal that helps set objectives to foster self initiative and overcome dependency. Autonomy requires self reliance of the marginalized participants to break the bonds of dependent relationships of giving-receiving and to overcome inferiority.

In Salgadoinho the community group dispensed the regular assistance of facilitators yet never hesitated to call on them to help discuss new problems or share new ideas or even to open contacts for the community to obtain resources among social institutions. In another village the participants of the nucleus leadership groups gave proof of their maturity of relationship with the agricultural agent. The agent had decided (on his own) that he should go less frequently to the communities to break any dependency that the collaborators might have on his assistance. After some time the leadership of the two

communities got together to analyze why the agent was not coming. They decided that he was not fulfilling his role of technical advisor in agricultural matters. To the great surprise (and delight) of the regional coordinator of the organization to which the agent belonged, a letter, in simple straightforward language, arrived from the semi-literate settlement farmers. It stated the conclusions of their evaluation. They pointed out that the agent was not doing his job and asked the coordinator to please take measures to correct the situation!

The energy that moves praxis does not come from action resulting from reflection, nor from reflection preparing action, but from the interdependence of the two. What makes praxis a profoundly human process is the constant dialectical movement from activity to retrospection, from pondering the meaning to doing things, from performing what was planned to making judgments on the plans themselves. The interrelationship among facilitators and collaborators through perception of reality, in values, and by action-reflection gives impulse to this dialectical movement and guides the praxis of participatory development.

CHAPTER IV

IN THE FIELD: NORTH REGION

This chapter describes 13 events involving community participation. Some events take place in peripheral areas of the city of Belem, where shacks are built on swampy banks of networks of river arms stretching from the Amazon River. Other events take place in small rural towns and farming settlements in the vast tropical interior of the state of Para.

The chapter looks at different forms of praxis. It offers an overall interpretation of the characteristics of the indicators of dynamics in praxis. It shows the interdependence among the indicators of perceived social reality, values, and action-reflection linkages. The study brings out two directions of praxis in participatory development as well as the need to look at dialogue, previous experience, and small group potentiality.

Freire once quoted Amilcar Cabral as saying: "Hope is only hopeful when there is unity between transforming action of the world and cultural reflection exercised on it" (Freire, 1977:62). This hopefulness permeated the praxis events of the men and women who shared their experiences with the researcher in the North Region of Brazil.

Assessment of Community Campaign
Activities, Belem

The neighborhood was in a peripheral district of the city of Belem, in the State of Para'. Homes were built on the banks of lowland river networks. Squatters usually set up their shacks in the swampy area of the river arms.

Situation

The collaborators were engaged in a temporary pre-election activity also involving other neighbors not connected with the community group. The population was made up of under-employed odd jobbers, manual laborers, factory workers, or the unemployed.

The community sprang from Bible reflection groups seeking more conscious social action. The neighborhood municipal school run by nuns was closed and the main issue of election campaigns had been the need for a school. At election time the poor districts are invaded by candidates seeking votes in exchange for small bribes, promises of material benefits, and personal favors.

Focal Thematic Content

The meeting was to discuss the activity to raise last minute votes on election day for the candidate representing the needs of the community...to find out why we failed to gain support for our candidate and what we are going to do about other elections...to think how to get a candidate who is on the side of the poor people.

Perceived Social Reality

Neither MDB nor Arena¹ really represents the people, but to vote MDB is the only way to show dissatisfaction with the situation (F). Our political consciousness is still at a low level (F). Poll-side campaigning is illegal but everyone does it; if campaigners were to be put in jail there wouldn't be jails enough (C). A candidate ordered us to take down the Cost of Living poster saying it was subversive--he just wants to smother the consciousness of the people and not let them question (C). The local saint doesn't work miracles--people think that the candidate with money can do more. Awareness of the situation is still limited to the coordinating group which also prepares the community newspaper based on discussion of social facts (F). Our neighborhood is poor, we have lots of needs, the biggest is the grammar school (C). Here we lack participation; people think that politics is just voting and they wait for the community to do everything. The candidate didn't define his position in either of the two factions of MDB and caused confusion. Only a small group, channeling information through the newspaper, just a minority, perceives that fundamentally the problem is of the dominated class--the root of the problem is a class problem in which a minority is benefited and the majority abandoned (F). Before we never used to think--we made big campaigns but never demanded that the candidates fulfill their promises. People still vote for the bourgeoisie with capitalistic interests. Political consciousness still means to gain something for the family, some improvement. Many followed the candidate who promised a school and gave a drum of gas to one community. With the help of our community newspaper the people will not be fooled by the politicians--it shows our battle (C). We must choose a candidate who is concerned with the poor; the elite are not going to do anything in our favor. In the discussions we must clarify what are parliamentary and executive roles (F). The candidate must show interest in the collective good: salaries, schools, employment, health, not just surfacing dirt roads.

Values

Everything is in the Gospel, even income tax (C). The community newspaper mobilizes and encourages. People still

¹MDB is the Brazilian Democratic Movement, the opposition party kept under control by the government party Arena, Alliance for National Renovation.

don't know how to defend their rights. It's communication that motivates--conversation, the newspaper. Need causes unity (C). It's the needs of the community that make people get together. We must give an account to the people because we are committed to the people (C). Problems get people mobilized, integrated and interrelated (F). Values are a religious issue...the communities were started by the church ...the Gospel applied to life...people feel the need to fight for human conditions (F). The people don't question the candidate's program. They are used to just receiving or accepting; but the community group had a different view after the discussions. Trust first in God, then in our decisions (C). When we get the school the people will believe in our work and our group (C). The aim must be to reach the needs of others--what the people are feeling. Fight the battle WITH the people and not just FOR the people, if the candidate is elected (F).

Action-Reflection Linkages

The work of poll-side campaigning was not well prepared, not discussed. People gave their support in word but there was no practical organization so it was wasted work. We ran around so much but didn't get anywhere; the communities did not carry out what we had agreed on. There were meetings with representatives of the communities of the neighborhood. Each group took the discussion back to neighbors to develop political awareness of the role of the voter. We discussed what it means to be a popular candidate, a candidate representing the suffering population. The meeting of the candidate with the community was wonderful--we discussed the problems and made him sign a statement of commitment. The people learned to demand that the candidate pay up his promises. We need a selective evaluation of this experience (F). We have to analyze together with the candidate why our activity failed and make an overall evaluation (C). We must vote consciously to vote correctly...come to the perception that the problems of the community are resolved insofar as the community has representation, including political (F). We can't stop fighting--one day we'll get the school (C).

Planning of Community Schools by Neighborhood Representatives, Belém

The locality was an older neighborhood built on swamplands along river arms in the periphery of Belém. Residents had filled

in the swamp to make passages and spaces of dry land under the floor boards of their houses built on stilts.

Situation

The coordinating group of representatives from 8 one-room community alphabetization schools met in the waiting room of the community medical post. The group was heterogenous--teachers, parents, directors of the community association, men responsible for the administration of the schools. Some did not open their mouths. Some older paternalistic leadership dominated the discussion. One man stood out from the rest because of his sharp social perceptions.

Only a few of those present had attended the prior meeting in which the issue of evaluating the schools had been raised.

There was confusion from three levels of intentions for the meeting: 1) community leaders wanted to evaluate and possibly close the schools; 2) administrators wanted to get the budget ready for the contract between the community schools and the Secretariat of Education; 3) teachers wanted to guarantee that their schools would be left untouched and brought mothers to pressure the group opinion.

Focal Thematic Content

The gathering was to discuss the budget and plan to be presented to the Secretariat of Education for 1979 (C). It was a meeting of the teachers, parents and administrators to see the situation of the community schools and evaluate them according to the invitation issued for the meeting and the individual contacts made in preparation.

Perceived Social Reality

Our neighborhood is growing. Public schools have 80 children in a classroom...no books...no benches...children sit on the floor. The parents don't go to the schools. They don't bother when the child comes home complaining and fails the year (last year 70% repeated first grade). Many teachers missed the meeting: one said her husband was sick; another her child was in the hospital; another, her mother-in-law died. Many had to go and get in line for water at the spigot on their way back from class, if not they would be left without any water. What there is of education is terrible, but so long as their children are in school everything is fine. They don't care if the child studies or has to sit on the floor or learns anything. The contract for the schools is an obstacle to the community. The children are wild,² they cuss, answer back, are insolent and agitated. Mother and father work and kids are left on their own. The people are always hungry and lose interest in other things (F). Some people consider themselves open to reality and want to change things for the better. Others, a minority, think that improvements are important but that's not all, they question and want to know what can be done beyond this. Still others are complacent, always saying its no use, they are older and respected in the neighborhood and hold back the work (F). The schools were set up in 1971 when a great many children between 7 and 14 were out of school. Today the schools are attending other interests and not the real needs. The parents are not interested. They have made the community schools just like the public schools, with the same system, same problems ...teachers always absent. The contract of the community schools with the Secretariat of Education was for 20 cruzeiros (80 cents) per child per month. This was to pay the teacher, light, school material, maintenance. The model of society is reflected in community work, for example the medical post, the schools. Any girl who is studying in grade school can open a little first grade school in her house and charge 5 cruzeiros (20 cents) and the child stays on 1, 2 years. The population of the area is young, mostly from the rural areas. They say: thank God I made it to the city, thank God there is a young girl to teach my child.

²Fogo = fire, meaning uncontrollably impetuous.

Values

Some are concerned with the collective good, others with their own welfare. Some have opened up to group work ...realize that unity brings strength. If we don't unite we will be nothing, we will be stepped on. We have to have honesty of intention to say no. Great concern for all the neighbors, for their rights and well being is what we need. Many are individualistic; they enter this battle because they need a school for their children. There are people who don't understand that this work belongs to everyone. I think that people don't want to get involved.³ Parents are accomodated and prefer to pay rather than take on responsibility. Each of us has to have the conscience to be responsible. Motivation is in Christian terms: we are children of God and have rights... Catholics, Adventists and Assembly of God...when the time comes to work, the differences in religion are forgotten.

Action-Reflection Linkages

We were supposed to begin the process of evaluation to see if the schools should continue. The discussion had been started at the meeting last week. Where there was no accompaniment, the school fell apart. At the meeting we could see those of the old line who depend on the assistance of the agent and those who want to take the initiative (F). The community has no owner; the community is the people of the neighborhood. It is important for each one here to give an opinion if something is right or wrong. Problems raised here were not known before because of not taking part in the meetings. We are so concerned with the budget, but are the schools functioning properly? The group does not have a systematic reflection but the evaluation is done as a recall after each event. A small group takes care to reflect when the meeting is over; they get together to evaluate, then they go and tell the agent what they thought and what they resolved to do next (F). We closed ourselves in and did not move along with the schools; it is our fault (C). We can't go on without a profound and sincere evaluation. If the schools are to go on without the teachers taking part in the meetings, they shouldn't go on. We propose a new survey to see who are the children who are not reached by the public school and see what solutions the mothers have...schedule a

³ O povo nao quer nada = the people do not want anything, meaning they are disinterested and self-centered.

get-together to study and discuss and evaluate the schools...
look at our response to the history of the community.

Meeting of a Coordinating Community Group for Land
Problems, Belém

A community center and school had been built in a passage of recovered land in the river arm lowlands of the periphery of Belém, Pará. A bridge of uneven wooden slats connected the one-room center to the passage. The room was filled with long wooden benches. On the wall were rustic posters to teach phonetics and slogans from the community festivity celebrating unity. Narrow planks led from the back door to a privy built over the mud.

Situation

The group was the oldest and most dynamic of the community. It exercised a leadership role in the neighborhood. The current concern was to rekindle the people's fervor in uniting to defend their houses and floors. With the expansion of urbanization, the peripheral lowlands, valuated by infrastructures introduced by the long time residents, have become targets for conniving real estate agencies. Legally the land belongs to the Federal Government and squatters have living rights but no title deeds.

At the entrance of the passage on the edge of the asphalt highway was the house of an elderly widow who was being threatened with expulsion by a real estate lawyer. The community group encouraged the woman to hold on, or demand indemnization, and the lawyer couldn't manage to intimidate the widow enough to get her out.

Focal Thematic Content

The meeting of the coordinating group for the community on the land problem was to see how our work is coming along...evaluate why some people do not take part in the community...plan the meeting with the community group of MA center later this week...see how we can encourage others to work for the defense of the land...think what should be presented to the people to see if they will believe more in the work to defend the lands.

Perceived Social Reality

Some of our group don't participate. They say: I'm going hungry...I'm out of a job...I'm in difficulties. The group sees the situation much clearer than the rest of the community. We are in a situation of exploitation, we are the ones who are working so that the rich⁴ can live well. The problem is not just local. It is not the real estate owner who is bad; the problem is the system. We belong to an exploited class and there is a class of exploiters and the real estate owner belongs to that class, as do so many others (F). At a gathering of community representatives in Recife the group saw that the problem is not just this district so it is not going to be resolved in this neighborhood; it is a problem of Brazil where land has become merchandise (F). The lawyer plays the game on both sides--on the side of the people and of the real estate agency. We confront our enemy face to face and he still hasn't had the power to get us off our land. So it is already a victory--of unity...of struggle...of keeping the enemy away from us, out of our midst. The 3 years show that we have strength to fight as long as God wills. The authorities are small in justice but big in power (C). The people living here have come from rural interior. They come to look for support from the government but don't find any, so they lean on the community. They think that community is not the people but just that little group that keeps going into battle day after day. The lawyer has made many promises and told the people to be calm but till today we are waiting for him to keep his promises. He

⁴Barões = barons, implying the rich are powerful and control the land.

held the people in inaction.⁵ It is we who packed the dirt to fill in this land--men, women and children all carrying cans of earth; but the people have their eyes blindfolded and don't understand that this is theirs. The long time squatter has settler's rights. Since 1975 the real estate firm has been trying to throw the families out. There was nothing here but mud and weeds: we cleared it, filled it in, made roads, passages and bridges, built houses, brought light and water, all the while nobody appeared to claim the land, now this man says he is the owner. We hope for legalized possession of our piece of houseland.⁶ If "Brazil is made by us" and we are Brazilians, then we have the right to a little piece of earth.

Values

We come to the meeting because we have a commitment and understand that we must go on encouraging others. People are motivated because they have understood. I must open the eyes of my colleagues because I know that the problem is general. We must make ourselves available to encourage people. The group is friendship, companionship. At home with husband and children we have no one to talk to. After so much hammering the people are beginning to shake themselves...to know...to believe in us and in themselves...to believe that the total force of the people is not the lawyer, but the people. If you have something and keep it just to yourself there is no future. We must take our service far and help the people recognize their rights and hold on to those things which they need. The people are tired of struggling, they are broken.⁷ They hear the same problem hammered every week and don't come any more. If everyone stays comfortably at home we won't get anywhere. If we let things run down we'll lose the battle. Our duty is to raise the banner and go there to defend the people. We have to unite to see things more clearly. Our group must be identified by the neighbors as people who want the good of others. We need unity of

⁵Cozinhava o povo em banho maria = slow cooked the people in a double boiler, meaning to keep people waiting expectantly without taking any action.

⁶Chão de casa = floor of the house, meaning a piece of land the size of the floor space.

⁷Lascado = splintered into fragments, meaning worn out and defenseless.

the people to defend our rights. Unity brings strength, and together we will win. These are our rights so we fight for them, each time more united. We want to please not only the people but God in heaven too...and shake up the people.

Action-Reflection Linkages

Ours is the most developed of the 16 centers. We throw out ideas to others. Our meeting follows this pattern: preparation--execution--evaluation. The people can't buy newspapers so I (facilitator) take newspaper clippings and they (collaborators) tell facts that happened in the community and we discuss them and keep a file of the facts. We have all our work evaluated like this: we talk, then write everything we think should be put down, then evaluate to get the best ideas, then communicate them to the people. The coordinating team throws out ideas to the people and catches ideas from the people, what they think is best. We orientate the community about things which they have no idea. The group has the task to unite the community, not resolve the problems of the people. We go on struggling...struggling...gaining time here...space there. One says one thing and we evaluate it to see if it is good, then write it down in the notebook of minutes. Then we get together on the best things and push to the forward line. We'll go on fighting for our land...encouraging others. The people must see that we shouldn't only count on the government, the mayor, the lawyer, but count on ourselves, the people. After each meeting make an opinion poll with the community to see what they would want improved in the activities. Every Thursday we'll have a study session to find out what is happening in other parts.

Correlated Event: The Coordinator is the People

The community leadership group in a peripheral neighborhood of Belém sensed that the land problem was a struggle for power of possession. While the people were fighting to hold on to a piece or riverbank for the sake of survival, lawyers were trying to disperse the people's power to make it easier for the real estate firm to lay hold of the land. The following event recalled by the community was used to depict the reality they were facing.

These people used to believe only in lawyers. We tried to show the people that long before lawyers came to help our struggle, the community was already working. And not all lawyers are in our side (PSR) (A-RL).⁸

The lawyer is the people. The people have to engage the lawyer, not the lawyer engage the people. Because our lawyer is in first place God, and in second place, the people. We should seek a lawyer only for juridical questions so he can give us a hand. But not say the lawyer should resolve the people's problems, because we are the sick ones so we must look for the medicine to cure ourselves. It is up to us to fight for what is ours. Badly fought or well fought, it is our struggle and we have to get there (V).

Our community already suffered a defeat with the first coordinating group because the lawyer was on the side of the powerful (PSR). In those days we still had a coordinator, a leader. The lawyer singled out the coordinator. Then he mixed things up so much that the coordinator was against the group and the group was against the community. The people suffered terrible pressure. The group fell apart and the community was left floundering in deep water without any help (PSR).

One night I began to think about what had happened. Was it right to abandon that which had not been made just by us? I analyzed it. We should not abandon the community work. I went to look for some others who were still interested--not the coordinators, just little people. They thought the idea was good. Three of us found 2 more people, so then we were 5. Then we started to work. We did not want to give in, just because of the defeat we had suffered from the lawyer. Because the lawyer knew that, if we failed, the real estate could take over the land (A-RL).

We went ahead. The old group of leaders stayed out. We began to take care of the group. But we didn't act like coordinators. We didn't try to be boss of the community because we are not bosses of anything. We tried to work with the ideas and the wishes of the community (A-RL).

The lawyer came back when the community was holding an assembly. He asked: "Who is the coordinator?" The

⁸The initials (PSR) stand for perceived social reality, (A-RL) for action-reflection linkages, and (V) for values.

people stood up and said: "Here we don't have any coordinator. The coordinator is the people."

The lawyer looked at the face of each one that he knew worked in the leadership group. "Who is in charge?" Everyone replied: "The people are in charge. Anyone here in the assembly is in charge."

The lawyer tried and tried but couldn't get at the leadership group. He began to be unsure of himself. Finally he left the community alone (PSR).

Formation of a Community Task Group for Land Problems, Belém

A community center which also served as a school lay deep inside a partly reclaimed area of river arm swamplands in a peripheral district of Belém. Narrow broken boards over the water made it difficult for people to pass one another. The floor of the passage in front of the center was strewn with dry açai⁹ pits which rolled hazardously underfoot. Two policemen patrolled the passage, an eye out for drug pushers. The nightair was hot and heavy with the stench of sewage. Music blared from a radio. Children got relief from their cramped quarters roughhousing on the passage.

Situation

The meeting brought together two community groups, the stronger one trying to give a push to the weaker one. Some men dozed off during the meeting. Children packed the center to see the slides on land problems. The discussions brought out divergences of opinion on the causes of social problems.

⁹Açai = tiny fruit of a palm tree which provides part of the staple diet of dwellers in the Amazon area.

Across from the center one of the community women runs a kiosk to sell açai juice. After a long day's work she still had to fetch cans of water from the spigot to fill her barrel. Some children came with bottles to buy a liter of juice but it was all finished. They would have to go without their purple mush of açai juice and manioc flour for dinner, so good because it fills the stomach and keeps hunger away. Açai is getting scarce and expensive because large canning industries have increased exportation of the palm heart and have cut down all the palms within reach. It takes 8 years for a new one to produce fruit.

Focal Thematic Content

It was a meeting of some members of Maracá community with some members of the coordinating group for land problems to try to motivate the community to become interested by some residents of Maracá because their area is being reached by the expulsion problem. The group wanted to throw the problems out to the community to see what they were thinking...get some communication between the two groups...stir up the representatives of Maracá to work on the land problems.

Perceived Social Reality

We are feeling the land problem palpably.¹⁰ Most of us here are people who have been expelled from rural areas. The problem is more general than the land--it's water, employment, voting. A minority makes the laws and bosses the whole country. Someone has come along saying he is the owner of the land, but if he has no documents the land is not his. I live here 8 years, I built, I am taking care of it, it's mine. The people have nowhere else to live; the land is the people's. It's three years since the real estate agency let up on its pressures so the people say, it's all resolved. But when the agency starts tightening up again they will want to go back to meeting

¹⁰Na pele = on the skin, meaning experienced concretely.

and uniting, but then it will be too late. After the suffering people, who struggle, occupy a deserted piece of land and make a dwelling there, the police come and say: "This place has an owner." What do the police have to do with it? They come because someone sends them (C). We have to work...there is no time to discuss problems... odd jobbers and the underemployed have no schedules...the unqualified laborer has to work overtime. If we are not prepared, not united, so they will soft-talk us and then threaten. We ourselves must work with the group, and not go along with the talk of others. Let's leave the TV soap operas¹¹ alone, and unite; this is the only way to hold on to our house floor.

Values

If we don't unite we're not going to resolve the problem. The people have a certain preoccupation that there is a need to unite...to meet...to discuss...to try to defend this piece of ground. The main concern is to guarantee survival in first place. The most important is food; even dwelling is not as important as sustenance (F). Some people are beginning to have an idea that it is good to have a group meeting, to discuss whatever is needed to ensure a change in the life. Do we get together just to hear what a social worker has to say, or to think and listen to what the people have to say? When the little person begins to believe in the little person, then things will go; so long as we only believe in the powerful, nothing will move. Unity and evaluation are the two results of the community work. TV novelas¹¹ retard consciousness. Unity and evaluation are the two results of the community work. People have lost interest in meeting about the land problem because nothing is happening. The government is responsible for us. Those people who have ownership papers for their land couldn't care less about unity to defend land. People are dead tired after work and will only go if the meeting is interesting, like a film or a play, but not to discuss. People don't believe until they see concrete results; they're immediatist. The people will be strong if they seek unity. If we keep quiet the situation will overrun us. If we were to wait for the government to improve our lot things would never get better.

¹¹ Novela = novel, a very popular and captivating evening soap opera on television on a variety of themes, which captures a very wide audience.

Action-Reflection Linkages

We must sound out what the Maracá community wants and help organize the group. The action was this meeting, now we will meet to evaluate it and prepare for next Saturday's meeting. What do the people want the community to do so that the work has more meaning of unity? We can form a group just of the community to think, discuss and program some activity. Why do things like land expulsion happen; what does the group here think? We have to prepare each meeting with different programs to avoid repeating the same thing...keep looking for what the people are interested in for the meeting. The people from that other neighborhood were ejected from the land; if it happens here we have to be well organized and prepared not to let anyone kick us off. The people complained here that there was never a meeting about the land question and it was hard to always go to the other center. How can we help the people realize why many are not participating in the community? There is need to relate the land problem with everything and build a more global awareness...look ahead because the situation is spreading...increase information and consciousness... unite to have more strength and resources to obtain justice and have the laws applied justly. No one should leave the land without proof of who are the real owners. Let's read and pass the ideas along...start a Maraca' land group.

Coordinating Groups of Community Schools, Belém

The gathering was in the patio of a church on the highway dividing the peripheral lowlands of poverty shacks from low and average middle class residences, in Belém, Pará. The church was of easy access from various neighborhoods and gave support and encouragement to the local community development and conscientization activities.

Situation

The participants were teachers and administrators who were parents of the school children selected by the community to be responsible for the school. They came from community groups of

various neighborhoods in several districts, which worked together with the facilitators and with each other in planning and reviewing their activities.

The community schools were one-room centers built by the people as meeting places and classrooms for children from 6 to 14 who had not had any instruction. The public school system only receives seven year olds who have already acquired the basics of reading and writing. No provision is made for teaching reading within the public school system. After years of supporting the community schools with private means, an agreement was made in 1975 between the schools and the Secretariat of Education to provide funding on a per capita basis for each school year.

Focal Thematic Content

We wanted to discuss the signing of the contract between the community schools and the Secretariat of Education for 1979...carry forward the discussion initiated at the previous meeting to question whether or not it was worthwhile having the agreement...see the budget prepared by each school to be presented requesting an increase in the contract funds...talk about the delay in payments by the Secretariat...decide what could be done to pressure officials so that the teachers can get their last three months' salaries before Christmas (C).

Perceived Social Reality

A few people are committed to the work and they have a keen perception, for example, they analyze and are critical of the educational system (F). In some public schools the children don't even take a notebook and the teacher is unconcerned. We see in the community schools a repint of the dominant educational system--the teachers just go for the salary and don't teach. The payments from the Secretariat are always behind. The salary of

the teachers is not even enough to pay bus fare. The Secretariat holds back our contract money to get interest; they exchange time for money by delaying the payment. Is it only the Secretariat people who can eat; don't the teachers have bellies? The budget offered by the Secretariat does not square with our real needs. Laws say that education should be free. Children who can't get into the public schools keep going back to the community schools to fill in time. If the community schools exist it is because there are not enough schools for all the children. The government is not doing any favor with this agreement but only its duty. The thing is not to have the 3 months' payment made before Christmas but to pay up each month-- as it is, we get such a pittance. The public school system should be for all children.

Values

People are motivated by a sense of identification among themselves; they have moved from stop-gap projects to begin to feel a sense of class identity (F). The school still mobilizes participation because it is something concrete to be done. Let's go straight to the department, not through intermediaries, and find out why. It's not the level of formal schooling that makes for the selection of good teachers but the experience in community work. We have to demand our rights. Some don't say anything so we put it up for vote. The majority of the teachers just participate because it is a job. Some communities don't assume their commitments. The commission did not function because it was isolated from the rest of the community. Let's strengthen our groups...raise arguments...unite...be representative. When we act like little lambs it is good for them; we must continue to put on pressure (C). We must keep pushing.

Action-Reflection Linkages

Some of the participants had gone through a process of reflection and work so they are more independent and question the established leadership; others joined later without any experience of participation. The inter-community gatherings of schools stimulate a much more global vision...more general...of the underlying causes (F). For some, the community schools are still an instrument for discussing the reality with the people (F). The most fundamental in the work is action with reflection. The steps of community work have always been taken on the

reflection of what we were doing. It is a small group, including some teachers, that carries the work ahead. Any happening or activity takes the people to a reflection on their own experience...on what they are living (F). Our meetings are like this--all dialoguing. For some time the communities have had the experience of revindicating the contract to keep up the community schools. The people used to support the schools entirely on their own but after they advanced in discussion in terms of taxes people had to pay, the problem of education went into a deeper study; they discussed laws and teaching, and knew the conditions of the laws (F). The contract has served to unite people in commissions...to evaluate the contract each year before signing the next one...to confront governmental authorities. We must take a foothold in that which we are disputing--leave the others and not wait. Let's talk to others on what we have decided. The government is responsible; we must face them...ask questions...see their loopholes and make them known by the public.

Community Gathering to Discuss Land
Expropriation, Belém

A community center had been built on stilts in a very swampy area of river arms in a peripheral district between downtown Belém and the airport. A long bridge of narrow broken slats joined the asphalt road to the community center. A canal was being planned by the municipality to urbanize the area and 722 families were being evicted.

Situation

Men and women from the area met with some young agents and the priest of a pastoral program of the church that is committed to the support and defense of the marginalized. Two law students from a society for the defense of human rights explained legal points of land expropriation.

Children have often fallen through the gaps in the wooden bridges and drowned in the thick water which floods the passages in heavy rainfalls. Clean water trickled out of a pipe protruding from the mud alongside the community center. People perched on a plank or leaned over the bridge to fill pots and cans. A radio next door polluted the quiet night with foreign disco music. A middle aged man with deep lines under his eyes and a little curly haired blond boy fell fast asleep during the meeting.

Focal Thematic Content

The team for land problems met with some members of the neighborhood community and the pastoral team to discuss eviction because of the canal. We looked at the situation of the promises made by the government development firm to the people. We want to see what is going to happen to those whose homes have been expropriated...decide to guarantee our rights in view of the promises made in a letter...discover what to do so that the rest don't have happen to them what happened to the 40 families that have already left.

Perceived Social Reality

When someone tries to repair or build a shack here the soldiers come and threaten, and tell them to stop. The people are afraid because one can't resist against armed forces. A lot of things have not been made clear: the value of our expropriated homes...when we will receive a document guaranteeing our possession of the new designated land...how we are going to build and move in 30 days when we have to work...how much we must pay for the land. A decree takes unoccupied lands and makes the government owner. We have a mirror before us--look what they have done to the 40 families. We have to accept whatever price they offer, and run out like fugitives. They (government) take care of their side, all the plans carefully filed, but ask about our side of the issue and nobody knows anything. Nobody likes living here in the marshlands. Life forces us here because the cost of living is impossible.

Those who receive indemnization always get less than what is just. The government development firm promised to do everything right but they lied; they haven't given any indemnization nor papers on the land because they want to trick the people. The 40 families went to the transition village and nothing has been resolved about their indemnization. They are thrown there, not knowing what they will have to pay for their designated land. The 40 families were moved to lodgings for 30 days while they constructed their homes from the material of their old homes. But the army came to demolish the homes and broke the wood and sawed off the boards at water level (so as not to get their feet wet) leaving all the piles buried in the mud. They came, all three forces--police, airforce, and army--to take the family man out of his house; yet when there are assaults they don't do a thing. For three years the firm has been purposely stepping up the pressure then letting things cool so that the people will get sick of it all and move out. The people have no consciousness of the working class; they must wake up (F). They don't realize that news propaganda serves to make them afraid, like accusing the church of subversion (F). We want to leave only when we have conditions to do so, not like the 40 families, we want indemnization in our hands, and a document guaranteeing ownership of the assigned piece of land and stating clearly how much we have to pay.

Values

It is the people themselves who have to resolve the problems (F). The church is here to support, encourage, stimulate. The poor person is a person too¹² (C). The people must unite to confront. I have no schooling but I have experience of a crushed¹³ life (C). One shack is worth as much as that whole big construction to you. They try to make fools of us--we have to resist. In the beginning the people didn't feel any connection between faith and their own lives; then they started learning (F). Many people of the community are lackadaisical, but some are shrewd. We have been fighting for 3 years and the people are tired. They can't promise and oblige us to trust in

¹² Pobre é gente tambem = the poor person is a human being too, meaning deserves respect and value for his personhood.

¹³ Massacrado = massacred, meaning burdened and torn apart by suffering.

them when we see what they are doing. Fear of speaking comes from repression their whole life through; once they have beaten and jailed they don't want anything more to do with it because of wife and children (F). The poor sometimes have to do the impossible. We of the pastoral work must feel the reality of the people's lives (F). People must have a hope that one day they will win the battle. The people should have that which is theirs by right. Even those who are not being threatened should get together to encourage others.

Action-Reflection Linkages

Everything should lead up to questioning. We get together to talk over many subjects--now it is the problem of the canal expropriation. There is always a constant group that meets weekly. Depending on the problem being discussed, others from the community participate. Our work is to listen and give support...to organize pressure... to get signed petitions to the government authorities. The team for the land stirs up action for the community. We need legal assistance; the lawyer will consult the laws on the land issue then discuss the terms of the letter from the development firm with us. After 2 years the people received a letter telling them that the expropriation would take place; they got in a flap and tried to start up the work they had dropped. The people want immediate solutions, but it doesn't work that way. We must organize to create an impact: cost of living groups, workers, schools, groups on the land problem. We don't want pretty words and promises--we want a document in our hands. We must discuss the indemnization before accepting the expropriation eviction. We have to take their letter to us, in our hands, and point out how they have lied to us. There is a meeting scheduled Monday to study the letter with the lawyer and see what we can do.

Correlated Event: Crying Doesn't Resolve Anything

What makes people join a community group? To explain the interests, values and actions that bring members of their group together, the participants of a community in Belém, Pará, pointed to their newspaper. A feature entitled "Crying Doesn't Resolve

Anything" showed a typical case of a neighborhood resident becoming involved in group work.

The following is a translation of the dialogue in the cartoon comic strip featured in the community newspaper "O Comunitário," reproduced in Figure 5:

In the market, Dona Maria points to a pile of fish heads, aghast: "Heavens above! This little pile of fish heads costs 30 cruzeiros?" (PSR).

Fish Vendor: "That's it. If you don't like it, you can get out."

Dona Maria: "You ole so and so..."

Dona Maria meets her next door neighbor coming home with a can of water on her head: "Oh, neighbor Saba'."

Dona Saba': "Hi there, neighbor. My but you look upset. What's eating you?"

Dona Maria: "Just imagine. The fish vendor wanted to charge me 30 cruzeiros for a little pile of fish heads."

Dona Saba': "Yeah, neighbor. Things are getting worse all the time, because we only keep on crying over them and don't try to find a way to do something about the situation" (PSR) (V).

The two women look around at the huge expropriation notice in front of their shacks built over the water of the river arms (PSR).

Dona Saba': "If only we knew how to value our own selves, lots of things would not be happening" (V).

Dona Maria: "Huh, huh, How right, woman."

Dona Saba': "But here's what's happening. In São Paulo the women and laborers are striking to get a salary hike and to push cost of living down. They got together in factories, on streets, in alleys. They prepared a signed petition to ask the authorities for a salary increase and 20% wage readjustment without deductions, and a price freeze on basic food items" (A-RL).



FIGURE 5

CRYING? IT DOESN'T RESOLVE ANYTHING
(Chorar? Não Resolve)



FIGURE 5 CONT.

CRYING? IT DOESN'T RESOLVE ANYTHING
(Chorar? Não Resolve)

Reproduced with permission: "O Comunitario," Belém, November, 1978.

People's voices: "We want bread on our tables."
 "Enough. We want 20% increase." "An end to this misery."
 "Away with inflation." "Saving? What's that?" "What
 about our homes?" (PSR).

Dona Sabá: They held an assembly in São Paulo with 4,000 people. The authorities were called to attend but they never turned up to receive the signed petition, of 1,200,000 signatures, with some names from all parts of Brazil, even from our people here in Pará."

Dona Maria (eyes wide): "Oh, Dona Sabá! Do you mean that here people are stirring, too?"

Dona Sabá: Yes, and everyone can participate. Over at New Horizon Community Center on the corner of Mauriti and Hortinha passages there is a coordinating group. You can go there."

Dona Maria: "What a good idea! I'm going to invite my neighbors and we'll go ask the coordinating group for help" (A-RL).

Dona Sabá: "Go, by all means. We have to fight. Crying doesn't resolve anything. Unity makes strength. We are people, too"¹⁴ (V).

Dona Maria (going off): "Wait a minute, neighbor. Tell me something. When is our next meeting at the community center?"

Dona Sabá: "This coming Saturday. Take your relatives and friends. And don't forget: crying doesn't resolve anything" (V).

Delivery at a Midwife Clinic, Santo Antonio do Tauá

Santo Antonio do Tauá was a small town in a rural area of the State of Pará about 45 miles from the capital city. The town provided the region, mainly subsistence farmers, with service infrastructures.

¹⁴ Somos gente = we are human beings, meaning people should be valued for the dignity of their humanness.

Situation

The community association, an established organization of the more concerned population, was an active force in the town. One of the central activities was the maternity clinic built and supported by the association and the people. The leadership received assistance of facilitators from the church and from a private organization.

The association worked autonomously in the orientation and administration of the maternity but consulted a general assembly on major decisions. Doctors were hired to come from the city for a couple of hours a day; most were beginning practitioners who were willing to accept low remuneration. There was one midwife. The clinic had a rustic delivery room, a doctor's office, a laboratory with simple equipment, an infirmary with 3 beds and 3 cribs, and a dispensary medicine cabinet.

Focal Thematic Content

The activity in a normal day of the maternity was reflected on by participants: patient, midwife, doctor, administrators and parish facilitators. The activity was the reception of a pregnant mother, delivery of the baby, preparation and release of the mother and infant after 12 hours. The delivery was assisted by the midwife at dawn and a follow up medical examination was made by the doctor in the afternoon. We talked about the importance of the maternity to the people.

Perceived Social Reality

People feel the concrete living problems on a general level--food is expensive...no schools...lack of medical care...poor employment--people feel this but are not aware where the problems come from (F). The maternity is going through a financial crisis because the grant from the government rural fund was cut off for political reasons.

When there was an agreement between the maternity and the rural fund, the mothers received meals during their time at the maternity, but now the clinic can only afford to provide a snack and someone must bring the patient's meals from home. It's very hard to raise funds but now, for the elections, the government has promised 15,000 cruzeiros (\$600) a month. Those people who don't have social security can't use the hospital in the next town and no one can afford to pay. The expectant mother is an associate member and pays 11 cruzeiros (45 cents) a month so she has rights, but we also attend those who are not members. There are situations of oppression but not of liberation such as the maternity losing its funding because of political intrigues (F). The former midwife and president of the association gave up their positions to run for town councillors in the opposition party (MDB) and were elected, but the government became suspicious of the association and suspended financial help from the rural fund to the maternity clinic, and removed the dental equipment. If the promised money comes through, we will be able to breathe easier in our work, but if it doesn't come through, we'll keep on asking. The maternity functions because it belongs to the people--the money comes out of our pockets.

Values

It's the only maternity clinic in the town, that's why we go on struggling to keep it going. We are not committed to any political party, only to the needs of the people. People who have no health conditions try to get along the best they can. The people have grown in their political awareness. The aim of the association is to act on that which the people need most. People belong to the association because they need the services. The expectant mothers have confidence and appreciation. We're happy to be able to cooperate and be useful to others. There is still a mentality of dependence which reflects society (F). People participate only insofar as they use the good--they are not very aware and their motivations are immediatists. We continue the work of the association for the maternity, a sacrificed dedication. We have great love for the work because we know people have need of it and have nowhere to go.

Action-Reflection Linkages

Some themes are developed informally in conversation, like with the mothers preparing their babies' layettes and talking about problems, always asking why. From the little shirt that is being stitched from donated material they get to complex problems of society in which their husbands are oppressed and exploited in their work. The work and the problems are put to the assembly so we can discuss what to do. The association has been pressed with activities and has not paid too much attention to reflecting on social reality, but mostly to getting things done (F). We have meetings to plan our organization. In the beginning we used to depend a lot on Nara (the facilitator), then she started nudging us into standing on our own fee; now we only go to ask her opinion on our problems. One community member was accommodated and subservient and always accepted everything as being OK; but through his participation in the association he began to look at reality and changed. The maternity came from the people--it has been going for 7 years...over 500 babies have been born...we have helped people in their responsibilities. When the funding contract with the rural fund was suspended, the people met in assembly, each one gave an opinion. Then we made a bazaar and everyone collaborated so we could raise enough money to keep the maternity going. If there is any talk of closing the maternity the people get up in arms. When things seem to be dying down we get things moving again.

Leadership Preparation for Neighborhood Reflection During Advent, Town South of Belém

The rural town off the Belém-Brasília highway was in the center of an agricultural region of subsistence farmers and large pepper plantations cultivated by Japanese clans. The town served as a center of commerce, communication, transportation, and culture. The parish had modified its traditional structure to reach out to the scattered peasant population on the basis of their interests.

Situation

The meeting was held after evening Mass in hall of the church. It gathered a motley group of old men steeped in traditional

spiritualism, curious busybodies, children looking for novelties, and a handful of serious men and women who had prepared for the meeting with the intention of assuming the leadership of reflection groups with neighbors.

The pastoral agents were initiating an experience to mobilize the more conscious and committed faithful of the town through an Advent program in order to provide conditions for the springing up of small groups of organization, reflection, and influence on social issues.

Focal Thematic Content

The meeting was to develop awareness of the real significance of Christmas...to prepare a leadership group to gather together with next door neighbors and reflect on the meaning of Christmas related to their lives, during Advent.

Perception of Social Reality

Christmas is a day of suffering like any other work day for us. What we produce is to keep us alive. One sack of manioc flour brings us one kilo of coffee. They feel clearly the inequality which exists, the injustice, but only a few who have taken part in meetings and reflections recognize the deeper causes (F). Christmas everywhere is parties, buying, advertisements, drinking, decorations, food, Santa Claus, clothes, gifts, good times--nothing for Jesus Christ. The center is money and only the storekeepers profit. Christmas is the great gift to the little ones; Christ appeared as a poor person. We see the difference between the Christmas of the rich and the Christmas of the poor. God made the world for all men to be happy in it...he made people to be brothers. Some began to dominate the others; Christ came to invite people to mend the situation. People valued money, Christ came poor; people valued power, Christ came weak. God doesn't drive anyone away--the poor person, who can't get gifts, can still go to church and receive Christ, the greatest gift of all.

Values

They are beginning to see how the Gospel can relate to all this (F). It was life, reflection on their own experience, that took them from life to the Gospel, and from the Gospel to church (F). When we struggle hard, no matter how much it costs, we are going to get there because Christ does not abandon anyone (C). It's good for us to get together and talk about these things, if not we will go along with the Christmas of the rich and care nothing about the poor. Some think this is all very pretty, but they don't go beyond that. It is greed that leads to inequalities (C). There are also poor who exploit each other (C). They think that it is enough to be of the church, so if the priest invites, they go along without any deeper motivation, without questioning; they go along with any activity. If one poor person believes in another poor person and they begin to unite, a lot of things can be resolved. We must transform the world which is not at all Christian. What we want is not just the transformation of society into another regime where everyone will have everything; we think deeper, far beyond...the incarnation of Christ in life (F).

Action-Reflection Linkages

The more committed ones have already taken the first step and invited others to reflection groups, and hopefully it will lead to something. Some in the group have the vision to move forward because of other experiences of reflection with the farmers' groups. Some are beginning to think...to wake up...to know. Some brought their list of contacted neighbors. The conversations with the next door groups for Christmas will produce their influences and form people who are more aware. The best word in that song was "wake up" because we are sleeping and we must get moving. We saw the difference between the rich and the poor; we have to join and discuss and seek the real Jesus of the poor. The process is not ours (F) but of the people; our role is to accompany and give a little nudge now and then (F). Some of us took on the responsibility to reach others to form groups and we invited them to reflect and lead up to something more consistent. Let's give the people an opportunity to organize themselves... to understand the things, then go talking with friends so they can understand. There are ups and downs, we are preparing. We're not interested in changing the life of one, but the change must be secured by everyone together.

We don't know anything so we don't say anything because we don't know; that's why it is good for us to discuss these things here. The Advent activity is an embryo of organization--the groups will appear (F).

Evaluation of Agricultural Project, Settlement South of Belém

A sparse settlement of subsistence farmers had formed about 13 miles from the town. The land had not yet been taken over by pepper growers. Mud and stick homes spread out on the edge of the highway.

Situation

A group of heads of 9 farm families met in one home after sundown when the work in the fields had ceased. The men were weary but hopeful and interested. The only presence of a woman was to serve mugs of coffee.

Farm plots belonged to relatives of the farmers or had been taken over by squatters for generations. They produced manioc, corn, broad beans. Women supplemented the subsistence income as day workers on nearby pepper plantations.

Focal Thematic Content

The gathering was to evaluate the group agricultural project to cultivate a common plot and vegetable garden... to discuss marketing problems...to talk about cooperative group sales and purchases...to plan what is going to be done on the community plot for the following week.

Perceived Social Reality

I have a plot of manioc; I worked all year long and couldn't make enough to buy a pair of pants. Whenever the flour was ready the prices dropped. Transportation is a

problem--the small producer can't get his goods to market. We are beginning to see beyond the municipality. In the meeting we reflect: why does so and so buy fish for 12 cruzeiros (48 cents) then sell it to us for 25 cruzeiros (\$1.00) and nobody says anything? Nobody does anything about the cost of living. We don't have a set price for our products. We can't give a value to them. The middlemen are the ones who set value on our products. Instead of the storekeeper asking: how much do you want for your flour, it is the farmer who has to say: how much are you willing to give me? When the beans begin to flower, the prices drop. When we produce manioc, the prices fall, yet when we don't have any flour ready to sell, the prices go up. Whenever they want to get cheap labor for the pepper harvest they spread the word through the newspapers that the price has gone down and people believe. Yet we know that outside the price continues the same. By working together we can do more and more in the future.

Values

The motivation is to make their own piece of land produce and when some orientation comes along they renew this aspiration (F). Friendship is important to the group. To know each other has brought good results. By our movement of farmers, meetings and organizing, we get closer to each other. There was a workshop to build a spirit of solidarity and bring them nearer to each other (F). Only those who have lost courage, and have given up, go out to work as hired laborers. We understand a lot of things but are afraid to speak. We are beginning to mistrust authority. We feel insecure because we can't set the price for our product. Usually the farmer doesn't believe in his colleague even when he is experienced; we are trying to break the taboo that the local saint doesn't work miracles (F). We want people to go on uniting and working together and not each for himself. We need activities in common to strengthen the feeling of integration, like buying seeds and fertilizers together in the group then dividing them among ourselves.

Action-Reflection Linkages

The perception is still very localized because the experience of group reflection and work is new (F). The group has its own dynamics; people meet in each others' homes and discuss the tasks, decide what is to be done,

plan and make purchases as a cooperative group. We communicate with others of the community and with people outside to talk about agriculture...about the situation... reflect on how the production is being helped or hindered. Our first experience of planting together as groups of 3 showed that some did well while others made no profit under the same conditions. So we reflected and analyzed why: lack of knowledge, lack of interest, lack of technical assistance, lack of belief in the work. We started again and this united our group. We evaluate the work, think about the planting, plan details, see where the work is going. With a little orientation and a small fund they could produce much more (F). Our work is the result of a reflection group started by the church and the agricultural technician. We talk about how to produce better so as not to have to live so pinched. We are not going to keep up a group just for each one to get that which he is needing and improve his situation; we are not going to improve the lot of 9 when 20, 50, are in worse conditions--that way the movement would not be worth anything. We think of doing it so that people out there can see that the group work brings results and they can do the same, and like this the work grows each time more and more.

Weekly Group Planning, Subsistence Farm Settlement
South of Belém

A settlement lay inland from a major highway south of Belém. It consisted of loosely scattered farms cultivated by subsistence farmers. A few large plantations in the area employed some of the farmers as hired hands.

Situation

The gathering was in the home of a farmer. People were seated on the floor, on stools, and in one hammock slung to the side. An oil lamp in the center threw shadows against the mud walls.

The group had been organized for 2 years and had taken the initiative to encourage the formation of 4 other groups of farmers.

These people had always lived stuck to their settlement, hidden; outsiders didn't even know they existed. Some didn't even come into the city once in six months. Women were treated as inferior beings to stay in their place and serve patriarchal machismo.

Focal Thematic Content

It was our weekly meeting to plan work on the group farm plot...to evaluate the division of the harvest crop of beans...to exchange ideas on things...to look at the situation of the farmer.

Perceived Social Reality

The problem is transporting the goods to a market. The price of the product has no value when the cost of everything else goes up. Some people easily get loans from the agencies, yet why is it none of us can? Authorities are not interested. The hardest thing is the low value of our products. The farmers are the most numerous yet lowest class (F). We know we can't show the farmer how to get out of his situation because the causes don't depend on us, but at least we can show what are doing to escape. The merchant controls the people, he dominates. Each farmer has to depend on the storekeeper who becomes the godfather of his children. Small farmers are not organized. We can't work on our plots all the time because we also have to work at odd jobs to get enough to buy the food and house needs. We have to work hired out to land owners. The agricultural labor union should defend the rights of the class. We need a more just marketing for our products.

Values

Those who have taken part in the struggle have a certain class consciousness, though not yet consistent. The majority take part in the group work for personal benefits. We got this unity through meetings. Our strength is in our uniting: look at the ants, small and weak, but they are capable of many things. Anything the others need, if they are swamped in work, we help each other in all friendship. By uniting, 5, 6, working together, this way we begin to escape the many difficulties. The weak man

is already weak, but more so when there is no unity. What destroys the farmer is that he is disunited. We still don't work with each other to defend the rights of all but each one is basically still after his personal interests not to lose his land. What we most see in our work is fear, we notice that we are afraid of everything. Many times we see that we are right but don't have the courage to say anything. The aim is to form class consciousness... a small united group that keeps moving forward. We long to see the group united and everyone being responsible.

Action-Reflection Linkages

One of our group is the voice that screams out within the rural labor union; he does a work of conscientization. A growth in awareness around the work leads to commitment. From the small things other things come out. We give a lot of value to organization. The problems are discussed and then they become clarified and we discover why things work or don't work. By going in the back door we are reaching many settlements, always evaluating to see the way better. At first the group was just a worship group... then the reflection was about the life of the farmer...then about the causes...then comparisons with other situations and documents...about how others found ways of creating resistance and organizing to face certain situations. The group went consolidating and forming other small groups to reflect and work together. We have to go in search of ideas, changes will only come when the farmers join together. Let's put up resistance to bear the situation better...see what is being done in other places...see what we can do to escape.

Correlated Event: The Community Wins the Case

A community group near Santo Antão do Tauá took big strides in action that resulted from reflection on social problems. Facilitators pointed out the following case to exemplify maturity in the process of decision-making and organization to protect the rights of the people.

The state-owned land where the farmers had been living for generations was being claimed by a woman who intended

to sell a large tract of land to a Japanese pepper grower. The judge had conceded to the woman the right to claim the land. Soon the area, which included the village, was to be demarcated. The community group made up of 9 of the families heard what was going to happen (PSR). They went all around the settlement showing the people that they should not give up the land which rightly belonged to them (A-RL).

They organized the action. Each family made a list of all the improvements they had made to value the land: houses...wells...how many fruit trees in the orchard... how many acres of soil were tilled...what was being cultivated on the farm plots...the value of the harvest... how much was produced on the land...what animals were being raised. They helped each family to put all this down on paper (A-RL).

When the judge came to inspect the land for demarcation the group confronted the judge and the woman. They asked the judge to return to the city for she had only heard one side of the case and could not make a decision without knowing the whole situation (PSR) (V).

The group quickly got things moving. They wrote letters to the rural labor union, to the mayor, to the state land office. They prepared all the people for the day of the hearing (A-RL).

When the day of the hearing arrived the judge faced a packed court-house. They were old folks and children, men and women, young boys and girls. Everyone was there. The whole population of the settlement had come. Only those who couldn't walk had stayed at home. The people spoke up and argued with the judge. Each family had the list of improvements. They showed the judge their side of the problem. They won the case. The judge ruled that the land could not be sold (A-RL).

This event served as a pedagogical instrument for other communities--an action that was simple and not dependent on resources (A-RL). It gave the group self confidence (V).

Indicators of Dynamics of Praxis

The community based praxis events brought to surface a cross section of indicators of dynamics that seemed to be the energy

inherent in praxis. The indicators disclosed various characteristics of dynamics in participatory development.

There are many forms of praxis; Vazquez describes a few of them. The experiences of the study do not differentiate the forms although they can be detected in the described events.

Forms of Praxis

Vazquez (1977) has pointed out that praxis can occur in many forms. The kind of praxis depends on the degree of consciousness of the subject and the degree of creativity and humanization in the social or material transformation which results from the process.

Creative praxis. Creative praxis is innovative. Man, the subject, faces new needs, new situations and finds new solutions. Once a new solution is found it is not repeated, for it creates new needs which invalidate the old solutions. Each solution is valid only within its time, and while its validity lasts the solution can be extended and generalized. Creative praxis is not molded by a previously established law, therefore it culminates in new and singular products. Unity between conscience and body in the practical process brings about a unique product, which is largely unforeseen and undetermined during the process. The activities of nucleus leadership groups in the observed events were often manifestations of creative praxis.

Imitative praxis. Imitative praxis is repetitive and mechanistic. It reproduces multiple products that have analogous characteristics.

It follows a plan that exists prior to the process so that the result is predictable. It is based on preceding creative praxis. Imitative praxis does not produce a new reality nor consciously transform, but it does increase the area of what was already created. It copies an ideal model and multiplies quantitatively a qualitative change that was already produced. At a given time imitative praxis has to give way to another creative praxis. The participation of community groups combined creative and imitative praxis. The participation of the neighborhood communities and social class or interest groups was strongly imitative and depended on the initiative of the nucleus leadership group.

Reflexive praxis. Creative praxis requires a high level of action of the conscience. Even imitative praxis in its lowest levels cannot be realized without the minimum of intervention of conscience. The degree of action of the conscience in praxis ranges from reflexive praxis, in which conscience reflects on its own praxis, to spontaneous praxis, in which the conscience is only part of the practical process.

Conscience of praxis. Reflexive praxis manifests an intensive form of conscience acting in the praxis. Conscience not only projects to the material, the exterior, but also knows itself. In reflexive praxis the conscience acts on its own knowing as well as on the activity which materializes the idea. It is conscience of the praxis itself. It is self-conscience of its practice. The praxis is reflected on an integral part of the process of praxis. Active and

responsible community participants who reflected on their own process of participatory development, evaluated their experiences, as well as putting their reflection into practical action, were motivated by conscience of the praxis.

Practical conscience. Spontaneous praxis manifests a more intensive form of practical conscience, which acts during the practical process to make the ideal become real. Practical conscience traces an ideal model in practice. It is practical in that it materializes the idea. All practical conscience has some conscience of praxis within it, and vice versa, the difference being in the degree of intensity of each. Community and neighborhood groups, including nucleus leadership groups planned and carried out their projects guided by the practical conscience of their praxis.

Individual and collective praxis. People exist within social relationships. They are not isolated. The individual praxis of members of a group integrate to become a collective praxis. The results of common or collective praxis transcend the aims and outcomes of the individual praxis which make up the collective praxis. In all the events praxis took on some individual forms, especially evident in certain leaders and facilitators. It was collective when the group work went beyond the conscience and will of the individuals, as for example, group decisions, community support for projects or mobilization of neighborhoods to rally round campaigns.

Intentional and unintentional praxis. Practical human activity is distinguished by being conscious and intentional. Praxis is intentional when the subject fulfills his intentions in the object. Intentional social praxis produces a new political, economic, or social reality based on intentions or plans. The product of intentional praxis goes beyond the actual projects and intentions by creating a new reality. Praxis is unintentional when it results in the appearance of a new socio-economic configuration which cannot be attributed to the intention or project of any individual or collective subject of the practice. Unintentional praxis is a social collective praxis which combines a diverse forms of individual praxis. Individual praxis is intentional when it pursues a specific objective; it is unintentional when it pursues a specific objective; it is unintentional when the action of the conscious being takes on a unpremeditated social form and integrates into collective praxis. Collective praxis produces global results that elude the conscience and will of the individual praxis.

The experiences of the communities generally followed an intentional praxis to bring about certain changes in political, social or economic reality through their projects. Occasionally the praxis was unintentional in that the results could not be attributed only to the project of the individuals or group. This could be seen in activities that involved mass participation, such as the cost of living movement.

In all the praxis events signs of the dynamics that gave impulse to the praxis could be observed through three indicators: perceived social reality, values, and action-reflection linkages.

Perceived Social Reality

The data revealed that perception of social reality was the basis for group formation. It was the content for reflection to identify needs and for evaluated action of praxis.

Perception of reality set the way for the level of participants' praxis. Some participants remained at a stage of sensed needs, of material and social privations, such as lack of drinking water or inadequate bus service. Others went from a sensed need to a perceived need--not enough food because salaries were insufficient, or the low price obtained for the beans and manioc flour was because the marketing conditions were deficient. Some groups of participants were at a stage where the sensed and perceived needs were related to underlying causes, for example, the poor were defenseless because politicians served the interests of the rich and powerful, or factory laborers had their rights controlled by an exploitative capitalist system of production. At the most refined stage of perception of reality the participants were beginning to detect the conditioning influences on their own perceptions. In Suzano some laborers advocated education for the factory employee so that the "educated, disciplined and conscientious worker would not fail in his obligations;" while others argued that education was meant to "open the eyes of our conscience because obeying laws does not always mean having rights for the

workers." This kind of disparity in perception of causes and of conditioning influences on perception were frequent among members of community groups and common interest groups.

The social reality perceived by the participants of the events was almost always linked to a need situation that had bearing on their own daily lives. The focal thematic content of each experience dealt with some specific aspect of these needs as part of a process to change the need situation. The change could be on several levels. One level was to deal with the consequence of the need, by carrying out improvement projects, such as the maternity clinic of Santo Antonio do Tauá. Another level dealt with still vaguely recognized causes of needs, such as the community schools of Belém. A third level was concerned with urgent self defense to survive a need situation, such as neighborhood action to resist eviction along the banks of river arms in Belém.

The perceived social reality was generally expressed in 4 ways: felt needs in the neighborhood, needs related to society, needs linked to structural causes, the manner of perceiving the needs.

Felt needs in the neighborhood. The perceived social reality was directly related to a very concrete situation of living conditions, looking at the effects rather than the underlying causes. This perception led to short range solutions through improvement projects. The principal needs were: health (sanitation, sewer systems, running water, sicknesses from lack of hygiene, medical care and nutrition); housing (land expropriation, threat of eviction, lack of electricity,

flooding); subsistence (high cost of food, low income, no land to plant); transportation (unpaved roads, costly and deficient bus service); and education (not enough schools, poor quality of teaching, adults lacking job qualification).

Needs related to society. For some groups the immediate felt needs were related to a broader social reality of the nearest town or city, with some generalization to the region. Politics were frequently cited: the voter is addicted to depending on favors from the politician, candidates do not fulfill their promises, politics benefit the rich. Employment was felt in direct relationship to living conditions: low salaries, lack of job opportunities, under-employment, job insecurity, salaries paid late, forced overtime. Exploitation expresses the situation of the poor: no place for the poor in the present society, people suffer from deprivation of basic needs, rural workers slave to produce and can barely keep alive, government just wants to get the poor people out of sight in urban areas, unjust indemnizations, the powerful grab up the lands. "Our country is rich, but these riches are not distributed equally" said a woman in Belem. Women are doubly exploited. Labor-production relationships stressed the lack of class consciousness of workers, lack of liberty to get organized and express opinions, exploitation by middlemen, market controlled by large business, labor unions not serving the needs of the class, disunited laborers open to exploitation. Some basic needs of the neighborhood were also seen as generalized social problems: lack of medical facilities,

subnutrition, sub-human living conditions, adult illiteracy and lack of job qualification, hunger.¹⁵ Social order was felt in terms of police violence and repression.

Needs linked to structural causes. For some groups with longer experience the felt needs were perceived in connection with structural causes of society which called for changes in the existing social order. The perceptions exemplified but did not define the structural causes.

In political and governmental structures the social reality was expressed as: lack of efficacious and conscious participation, domination of bourgeoisie not concerned with the poor, corrupt politicians, irresponsible government, "we keep going to the mayor but nothing ever gets better" (Vitoria welder), candidates elected to represent the poor end up serving the rich and powerful, social repression. "When we talk about things and go seeing the reality of life, they don't like it and call it subversion, communism," complained a peasant in Garanhuns.

In economic and production structures the social reality was signified by: industry only seeking profit and not concerned with the needs of workers, commercialization favoring middlemen and storekeepers and not the farmer, exploitation of the laborer forced

¹⁵In an adult literacy class in Recife new words were being explored through related concepts. The entire group linked the word "food" (comida) to "hunger" (fome) rather than to types of food, because there wasn't a single person in the class who hadn't known the gnawing hunger of poverty.

to build capital for the powerful and rich, "we plant soy beans to feed the cattle of foreign countries while our people have no beans to eat" (woman from campaign group, Belem), all the problems of living conditions come from problems of low salaries.

Manner of perception. The manner of perception which influenced what was perceived as social reality was sometimes recognized by the groups. Differences in how the reality was seen often caused divergences within the same group looking at the same situation. For example, in the task group for land problems in Belém, some of the collaborator participants said that illiterates had right to have their names written in by others on the signed petition for the Cost of Living Movement, and the government had been wrong in accusing the Movement of falsifying signatures. Other collaborator participants argued that anyone who couldn't write his name did not have the right to be included in a signed petition and the government was correct in condemning the inclusion of names without the person's own signature.

The manner of perception tended to move back and forth along a continuum. On one end problems were lived and felt but not known; the view of reality was localized and narrow, without recognition of the causes of the needs. On the other end social reality was related to structures of oppression, marginalization, exploitation, capitalistic manipulation of production, going beyond the region and even the country. Perception of the complex inter-relationships of social issues was slow, restricted, a gradual moving beyond and

often pulling back. A village leader in Salgado, near Garanhuns said:

I saw far ahead, but after many steps forward the work of the group shrank. I never thought it could shrink, but it did. I used to think that becoming conscientized happened at once. I thought people would understand at one go. But it isn't so. After a long struggle we saw that everyone does not acquire a bit of conscientization right away.

The manner of perceiving social reality often revealed the values which motivated the participants.

Values

The term "values" appeared to be foreign to the every day vocabulary of the participants and soon had to be substituted by "motivations." Motivations indicated four aspects of values:

1. Those characteristics which were recognized as valuable and meaningful for participation in development, and were reinforced by the praxis itself (e.g., solidarity, commitment, faith);
2. Those characteristics which were the inverse or antithesis of the attitudes accepted as good (e.g., indifference, discouragement, individualism);
3. Those characteristics which represented desired value states (e.g., consciousness of the poor, good will to participate in the community, human dignity); and
4. Characteristics that were aspired for in social situations (e.g., fair employment, right to live in security, poor people joining hands to defend each other).

Expressed values went from concrete individual principles of conduct and desire for fulfillment to altruistic concerns for the welfare of humanity. Christian values, made explicit through church inspired participation, were evident in most of the praxis, even though the groups were not expressly linked to church structures. The motivations and aspirations in the various forms tended to manifest "knowing" values (consciousness), "doing" values (action), and "being-for-others" values (solidarity).

Needs motivations. Some participants, especially in the early stages of community involvement and the community beneficiaries of the action initiated by the leadership group, were motivated by needs fulfillment: economic improvement (get a job or a better job, salary increase, just returns for services rendered); education (school for the children, job training, learn to read, listen and learn but without further commitment); partake of the community improvement projects (roads, water, get rid of the garbage dump); self fulfillment (protect my rights, provide for the family, defend my house, over come social barriers, prove one's self in society). "Those who don't participate can't share in the benefits" (farmer near Garanhuns).

Focusing on needs raised aspirations for a better life. On the problems level the aspirations were: solve immediate problems, take interest in the needs of the community, guarantee survival, make the land produce better, unite to be able to confront problems, improve

living conditions. On the awareness level the motivations were: question and understand why, perceive social reality, political consciousness, critical consciousness, become aware of the contradictions of society. On the level of rights and responsibilities the aspirations expressed as: unity makes strength, develop responsibility, fight for our rights and defend what is ours, promote justice, make sure the laws are obeyed, hope for things to improve and win the battle some day, promote the rights of workers, get moving the change things, commitment, represent the needs of all. "The community is us--at home, on the street, at the meeting--each person has the duty to spread and strengthen unity" (women in Belém).

In the struggle for a better way of life some values were explicitly directed to the well being of others. The most evident aspiration was for revindication of rights: concern for each other's rights, defend the people, change situations of injustice and inequality, what is not good must be changed for all and not just for a small group, influence social institutions like cooperatives and unions.

Social relationships. The motivation of being with others generally accompanied other motivations: friendship (get to know each other, feel good in the group, companionship of those having the same needs); unity (working hand in hand, identify as a group, as a community, or as a social class, cohesion, class consciousness and solidarity, help each other in need, develop confidence); organization (autonomy of the group, opportunity to get organized,

join forces, confidence in group work, resolve problems together, discover the strength of the group, appreciate the values of working for the neighborhood); sharing (share responsibility, develop common interests, develop group spirit, share feelings and ideas, incentivate others, from groups based on needs).

Personal worth. Aspirations of personal worth, for self or others, linked social relationship values to commitment for the welfare of others. Personal worth was often expressed as ser gente, meaning to be human, to be recognized as a person, to be accepted for one's self, to be accorded the dignity of an individual member of mankind. "If you treat people like human beings (gente) they will act like human beings" (villager in the Northeast).

Personal worth included: belief in self and in others, belief in the poor and down trodden, the worker is important, need to value self before working for the neighborhood, everyone should have a chance, count on selves and not wait for authorities, be strong to resist provocation, people are more important than money, stop being fooled and stepped on.

In some events external motivation reinforced personal values: strong and committed leadership, awareness brought about by the community newspapers, previous experience of group work.

Religious motivations. In some events the religious motivation was implicit in the interdependence between faith motivation and social needs motivation, above all when the participants belonged

to both community and church groups. In other events the religious motivation was expressed as being fundamental to the values of social commitment: connect the Gospel to life, reality, life and religion are not separate; God wants us to live well and he is present in our struggle; faith motivates, the church supports us, encourages us, and stands by our side. "Baptized Christians can't stand there with their mouths closed when they are faced with injustices," insisted a woman from a land eviction task group in Belem. "What hurts others, hurts me, because we are children of God and they are my brothers," affirmed a union leader in Vitoria.

Two methods of linking the Judaeo-Christian teaching to the praxis of the marginalized showed through the experiences. One was the traditional ecclesial approach of interpreting the Scriptures, then putting the norms to practice in daily life. Lessons taken from the Scriptures were to steer the patterns of action. This approach was often used by facilitators to encourage the participants to become actively engaged in social change as acts of charity. However, it revealed two risks. First, by applying religious guidelines to life, the real situation of the people's lives was not always perceived and the norms were superimposed on a veiled, sometimes naive, view of reality. The second risk took the form of inadvertant manipulation by facilitators who "used" the Scripture teachings to get collaborators to move in the direction desired by the facilitators, for social not spiritual reasons. There was evidences of this in Rio de Janeiro and São João do Meriti.

The other approach originated among the more experienced community groups as they sought to perceive their own situations better in light of their faith values. Instead of taking off from Scripture orientations, they started from their own daily lived situations, analyzing their reality, then looking to Scriptures to understand the meaning and find values to guide their actions and reflections. This showed up in Garanhuns and in the rural communities south of Belém. The leadership nucleus using this approach went more freely to the Scriptures without depending on facilitators or church personnel.

Counter values. To develop values often meant to overcome the negation of those values. Motivations and aspirations were hindered by the counter values or negative motivations and aspirations manifested in the groups, communities, neighborhoods, and society. The groups were often heterogeneous in their levels of awareness and acquiescence to counter-values.

Most of the counter values were expressed as attitudes of self-centeredness: indifference, self-indulgence, disunity, inconsistency, individualism, people don't want to get together to discuss and take responsibility for action, lack of communication, discouragement, instability, lack of initiative.

Many of the counter values reflected the situation of the participants within the dominant values of society: submission, people don't believe until they see tangible results, mockery of those who are committed, only a few participate, insecurity, fear,

suspicion, dependence on authority, lack of social conscience, disdain for what is local, step on others to climb, people are blind because they don't even see how they are suffering, consumerism¹⁶ manipulation by TV novelas.

In a few cases traditional fatalistic religiosity still influenced the participants: we accept whatever God wants. "Someone wished someone else harm, then that same harm happened to the person who had wished it on the other; now that is God's justice," postulated a woman in a slum of Recife.

Values influence perception of social reality. Perceived social reality opens up new fields of reality where values have to make judgements. Perceived social reality together with values provide the content and impetus of reflection which is completed in action.

Action-Reflection Linkages

The linkages between action and reflection were not generally recognized by collaborators, who tended to focus either on the reflection aspect or on the action aspect without making explicit the connection between the two. Facilitators were inclined to see action-reflection linkages as important and intentional facets of community praxis, especially for the nucleus leadership group.

Two dimensions of action-reflection linkages showed up in the observed events. One dimension stressed planning for practical

¹⁶In the bare home of a rural worker in the North, where the children didn't have enough to eat, the mother showed off her jars of Avon cosmetics, each costing 2 days of sweat in the fields picking peppers. She couldn't resist the "take it now, pay later" Avon sales lady.

action, reflecting on what was done, and deciding what to do next. The other dimension built on reflection on broader social issues related to the causes of felt needs in the community with the intent of carrying out action to intervene in the social structures. Evaluation was often used by participants to express the process of reflecting on, apprehending, and judging situations or actions, in preparation for decision-making and planning.

Continuity in action. Each event was a moment in a series of activities constituting a process. There was always a specific activity going before the event and another following it. Some examples of the activities which gave continuity to the praxis are: group meeting last week; assembly next week; write up a document to show the education secretariat the needs of the community; monthly meeting; talk to the lawyer of the human rights society on Monday about the eviction notification; at the end of each meeting we assign a task to be carried out before the next meeting; get together next week to decide how much fertilizer we must buy; take the signed petition to the mayor; go to the union assembly; bring 3 friends from the factory to the next pastoral meeting; the facilitator makes individual contacts with the members of the leadership group to prepare the meeting.

The process also pointed to the future. Some activities coming out of, or preceding, the events were concrete, but more generalized. Although they were part of a plan, they expressed aspired action rather than specific tasks: expand the work, get more people

involved in the land struggle; tell others what we discussed here today; take back the results of the seminar to the village; set up an experimental farm plot; make charcoal from the tree stumps of the community field; we took the ideas of making group purchases to the next settlement; conscious participation in the labor union; train women of the community in health and first aid; at first the group resolved the bus problem and then went on to other things; give personal witness at the factory; write up a community news bulletin and spread it around.

Reflection for planning and evaluation. Reflection was often linked to planning: make a survey before planning next year's program of the schools; "we are preparing new material about the land problem to bring to the people so that they can develop themselves and get a taste for community work" (nucleus leader in Belem); discuss the best way to divide the bean crop among the families of the settlement; each reflection led to an expansion in the activities; discuss the booklet on voting with the neighbors before elections; "people feel the need to reflect on what they are doing, to think together, to place things in common" (welder in Vitoria); the experience is born as a localized action, it multiplies, then arouses other action on a wider level; study the Gospel then go out to work, but do both things at the same time; reflect together to develop group spirit, organization and commitment; for the people, reflection has to be practical; wherever there was only reflection and discussion the group began to fall apart; in the revindication commission we discuss

the closest problem then attack it. "We take news clippings to groups for discussion: first clarify the fact, then see what can be learnt from the fact, then decide how the fact can take people to a concrete commitment with neighbors or work colleagues," explained a facilitator in Rio de Janeiro.

Reflection for evaluation was experienced as: we always prepare, carry out, then evaluate; "we always meet with an objective, after the meeting we look at the objective and evaluate where we were right and where we were wrong" (community school coordinator in Belem); the people never have a meeting without planning and evaluating; the groups from the 3 regions will meet to bring the results of their self-evaluations; it's no use making the plans without evaluating whether or not we plan to continue the schools; it is better to evaluate than to inspect; we failed to evaluate our political campaign. "We try to evaluate not only the agricultural project but make a critical review of the year's journey--what changes there were in perceiving things," said a facilitator in a rural village south of Belém.

Reflection on social reality. Some action-reflection linkages were clearly intended to go beyond the needs of subsistence and living conditions of the communities to reach the structures of society that were at the root of the problems. These structures had to be analyzed critically and then reached through some concrete and constructive means. Many experiences looked to specific ways of influencing society to bring about the kind of transformation

reflected on and desired by the community. The principal means used were: labor unions, politics, organized class groups, cooperatives, revindication of rights. Some examples are: get into the unions to make them work for the rights of the class; we learn from our group work so that we can do the same in the municipal cooperative; "we reflected on the reality of the land situation as we felt it, but it was left empty because we never planned any action" (members of neighborhood land group, Recife); prepare the people to speak to the reporters on the land eviction; form commissions to go and revindicate the rights of the neighborhood at the government agencies; discuss the program with the political candidate to develop political awareness; "use the community newspaper to alert people to question the politicians in power and the class to which they are linked--the dominating class or the exploited class" (facilitator in Belém). "The group began from the reflections of the leadership of several settlements on the overall situation of the land worker, then they saw that just talking was not enough and decided to get down to concrete group work," pointed out a farmer near Santo Antonio do Tauá.

To give direction to the practical intervention in society some action-reflection linkages were generalized and motivated by aspirations. These were expressed as: find ways to fight against injustices and exploitation; know reality better to be able to act on it; discuss the problem of the workers' class; analyze the contradictions felt in the neighborhood because of the labor situation; "the meeting

was one small stage in the whole process of transforming the world for God" (facilitator in a town near Belém); discuss the real meaning of rural labor unions with the hired farmers of the region; study agrarian laws and labor union legislation to see what we can do; "resolve needs close at hand to create space, then reach the structures" (facilitator in Garanhuns); try to get the workers united as a class; "after the transportation project the workers pricked up their ears and began to get conscientized" (factory worker in Vitoria). "A split arose in the Cost of Living Movement--whether it was going to be for the participation of all people, or whether it was going to be used by groups as a political instrument for putting on pressure to bring about structural changes" explained a facilitator in Suzano.

Revindication was a prominent aspect of action-reflection expressed by the participants. Revindication has a profound meaning in praxis as participate development. It testifies to the maturity of conscience and critical awareness of the leadership participants to perceive the causes of social deficiencies which obstruct quality of life for the marginalized. It manifests values tested in practice, especially generosity and selflessness to defend the rights of all. Revindication embodies the dynamics of action-reflection linkage.

The indicators of dynamics of praxis are not theoretical speculations. They are real, day to day, life struggles of people who are marginalized from the common good of development as it is occurring in the present historical moment of Brazil. To re-route

current development means to change the structures of pyramidal development which favors a privileged minority. Praxis can effect change on a variety of levels, from pragmatic improvement of local living conditions to the revolutionary shaking up of social structures.

Interdependence of Indicators in the Dynamics of Praxis

Praxis is movement. The energy inherent in and accounting for praxis appeared to be generated by the inter-stimulation of the indicators of dynamics in two movements: one starting from the participants themselves as persons, the other starting from external social reality. The movement springing from the participants themselves, to social reality and back to the internal being of the subjects, comes through the actions of perception of reality and value motivation. The psycho-genetic make-up of the individuals strongly conditions this movement. The other movement, taking off from the participants' immersion in concrete social situations, is the action-reflection which encounters reality and acts on it according to evaluated perceptions. Situations and environmental factors influence this movement which is socio-cultural.

Socio-cultural and psycho-genetic sources of energy merge in the indicators of dynamics of praxis. The indicators of dynamics appeared to be strongly interdependent in the characteristics observed in the praxis events. Figure 6 attempts to diagram some facets of the interdependence.

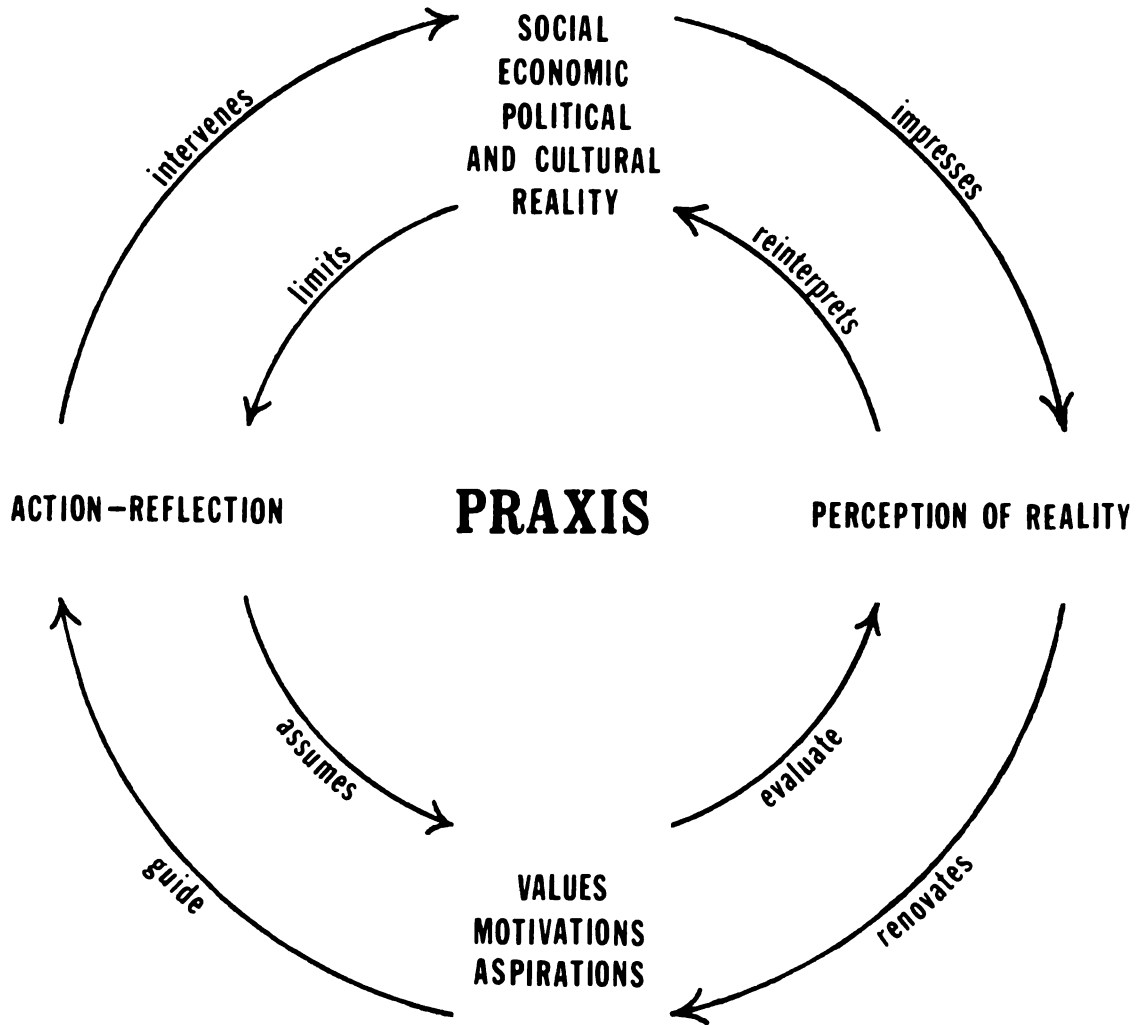


FIGURE 6

INTERDEPENDENCE OF INDICATORS IN THE DYNAMICS OF PRAXIS

The movement of dynamics energizes the praxis process of participatory development. The dynamics are praxis and cannot be separated from it. The indicators have been conceptually detached and highlighted in this study merely for the sake of clarity.

The diagram in Figure 6 shows two concentric circles with arrows pointing in opposite directions to signify the direction of the flow of dynamics. This means that dynamics influence and are influenced by one another.

At the upper end of the circles are the words social, economic, political and cultural reality. The present historical moment of the reality context is the situation in which praxis of participatory development occurs. The process of praxis seeks to apprehend reality and re-create it through conscious action.

To the right of reality is perception of reality. The living context of society in its socio-economic, political and cultural dimensions impresses itself on the participants of praxis and becomes disclosed through perception. Perception is modified by the other dynamics and consequently continually reinterprets what is perceived in reality.

Perception of reality leads to and from values, motivations and aspirations. Perceived reality is judged in the procedure of perception according to the hierarchy of values of each participant and of the group as a whole. Values are expressed in motivations, which give the immediate impulse of desirability to praxis, or in aspirations, which carry the process toward a more future orientation.

Values are applied to external reality and to the internal process of group praxis. Criteria from motivations and aspirations evaluate perception of reality making the act of perceiving more critical and conscious. As perception is opened up in new perspectives, it renovates values, which could mean either reinforcing or altering them. Values guide the practical conscience of organizing and planning as well as the conscience of praxis which reflects on its own experience. In this way values influence action-reflection.

Action-reflection comes between reality and values in the diagrammed circles. Action-reflection assumes values and makes them tangible. It intervenes in the social, economic, political and cultural situations of development in order to create, change or renew living environments of the participants of praxis. It is not brought about by single or isolated incidents or actions, but by the continual flow of interrelated events as moments of praxis. Reality limits the extent and depth of the intervention of action-reflection. Creative praxis is always in search of new solutions to pierce through the limitations imposed by current and historical reality. The intervention of action-reflection opens the way for new impressions of reality to bring forth new perceptions.

Action-reflection is a strong and significant indicator of the energy within praxis. Yet it is not realized without values and perception of reality, nor do these two indicators appear in praxis apart from action-reflection.

Direction of Participatory Development

The praxis of marginalized strata of population to change situations of injustice, liberate themselves from oppression, and participate in development, is a continual movement. It is much easier to see what the praxis is moving away from, than what it is moving towards. The long range expectations of praxis are idealized aspirations and not defined forms.

Praxis for participatory development is a moving away from a very tangible situation of marginalization: lack of infra-structures, inadequate living conditions, exploitation of labor, repression, etc. The participants attempt to tackle problems according to felt needs, moving very gradually towards awareness of the underlying causes of the situations. As the reasons behind the marginalized conditions begin to unravel, social reality gets more complicated and unmanageable. This raises the question: How far can the marginalized go in changing society by moving away from their condition through literacy, job training, cooperative purchasing and marketing, defending ownership of a piece of river bank, improving bean crops, and so forth?

The aim of participatory development is to transform society so that people can share justly in the common good of development. This is an ideal. Liberation, humanization the right to human fulfillment, respect for dignity fo the person--these are all ideals. The only practical model the marginalized have for this ideal is society as it is, or what history has shown (and is showing) of

other societies. Marginalization is a concrete fact; fair participation in development is an ideal. The dialectical movement of praxis between the concrete and the ideal is as hazardous as it is powerfully constructive.

If praxis remains at a level of moving away from conditions of marginalization, it runs the risk of merely providing better conditions for the participants, who then become complacent about society once their needs are satisfied. If praxis seeks a level of moving towards a more humanized society for all, it has to confront two dilemmas. On one hand, a solution must be found to change the dominant social power structures which control all aspects of society. Those who rule society tend not to want it to be changed. They curb any efforts that might threaten the regulatory mechanisms which maintain society and which, ultimately, serve a transnational capitalist economy. On the other hand, change requires new options. This brings out another question: What can be done to introduce a concrete new society to substitute the unjust one, when all there is to base the action on are the vague, idealistic attributes of an aspired "better world"?

Through their experiences communities are discovering that by persevering united in small steady activities of improving living conditions, while at the same time putting pressure on the big structures, the marginalized can open a crack in the closed door of development. This was the conclusion of a dilemma posed by a vivacious collaborator from a favela in Suzano. He wanted to shake

his companions out of their despondency following the repressive experience of the Cost of Living Assembly and stir them into appreciating their potential. He challenged the community group with this case:

At home I have a serious problem. I am being tormented by the attacks of one enormous rat and a whole lot of pesty little mice. If I go after the mice, the rat will invade the house. If I go after the rat, the mice will keep multiplying and eat everything up. Now what should I do?

The community group got into heated discussion. The participants soon perceived the analogy with their own situation. They concluded that the immediate task was to keep catching the mice and killing them off before the house was overrun. At the same time it was necessary to think how to catch the big rat. Since the task was too difficult for one person alone, the solution would be to get together with the neighbors and plan an action together. They decided to keep up the small improvement projects, like making cooperative wholesale purchase of food and demanding running water for the neighborhood. Meanwhile they would continue meeting to plan together how to pressure the authorities to take steps to control the cost of living.

Unforeseen Indicators of Dynamics

The data revealed two unexpected indicators of dynamics in praxis events: dialogue and previous experience of participation.

Dialogue

Dialogue appeared under several guises during the observed transaction events: exchange of ideas, of questioning and listening; initiative by facilitators with responses by collaborators; management of the oral exchange by a few collaborators; exposition by facilitators of certain issues with interested receptivity by collaborators. Through dialogue, facilitators and the nucleus leadership groups stimulated commitment, questioned ideas and reached consensus. Dialogue prevented facilitators from imposing their views and intentions on the collaborators. Leadership participants took initiatives, but the initiatives belonged to the group as soon as they were discussed in dialogue. Facilitators were not necessarily enlightened because of acquiring more information, nor were the collaborator's perceptions more real because they were concretely felt. Dialogue kept the interrelationship dialectically in search of a more profound and penetrating perception of reality.

Several questions came out of the data: What kind of dialogue characterizes the socio-kinetics of praxis? Does equality of participation in dialogue require a leveling of interests, values, and perceptions among the participants? How can dialogue safeguard against manipulation of the collaborators by the facilitators? What is the relationship between the type of dialogue and the level of praxis?

There seemed to be signs of a lacuna between the moment of decision in reflection during dialogue and the realization of that

decision in action. Collaborators would say, "Let's do this or that," then never fulfill it. What could be the cause of this hiatus? What are the consequences for socio-kinetics of praxis?

Previous Experience of Participation

Accumulated experience, or the history of individual and group participatory development, showed up to be necessary for continuity in the process so that the praxis would not stop short at a single activity or series of activities. Accumulated experience gave depth and breadth to the dynamics of the praxis in each particular event. Background experience of participation included the participants' histories of involvement in group interaction, in joint decision-making, in shared responsibility for activities, in breaking the barriers of isolated individualism.

Many things still need to be known about the relationship between the participants' accumulated experiences and the level of their commitment and involvement in the praxis. Do the nucleus leadership groups have a fuller background experience than the participants in the spheres of neighborhood and interest groups? Is present participation influenced by the quantity of previous experiences? Or by the types of experience? Or by the significance of the experiences for life problems?

Another dimension of previous experience deserves more attention: What is the relationship between participative practices of children and youth and their responsible participation later on as adults?

Can praxis for participation in development be stimulated among marginalized youth to learn for adult experiences?

Praxis cannot be taught; it must be lived to be learned. If there is a need to change society, should not the change process begin with the younger generation? What can the socio-kinetics of praxis teach educators about their role as nurturers of praxis? If school systems are impervious to the needs of participatory education, why not create other means of providing experiences of participation for the future adults of society?

Potential of Small Group Leadership

Facilitators of a process cannot mass produce their roles. They can best fulfill their roles in small group interrelationship. Many facilitators are needed for the marginalized population. Yet the number of facilitators dedicated to the education of marginalized people is minimal.

The data have shown that small groups have emerged from among the collaborator participants to become leadership nuclei and carry out facilitator roles within their community or area. These leadership nuclei interrelate with the outside facilitators who help them in their own group process and in their facilitator role. The facilitator is thus able to multiply his or her helping role and concurrently foster the autonomy of the marginalized groups engaged in participatory development.

Working with nuclei of leadership promotes a process that belongs to the people and not to the facilitator. The facilitator

can often perceive a potential group and can help its formation without pressuring the natural dynamics of group formation. The nucleus leadership group does what facilitators alone could not do: stir up a praxis from within.

CHAPTER V

REVIEW AND SUGGESTIONS

Praxis research is a process. There is no predetermined point of termination. Specific moments in the process of research can be complete in themselves, nevertheless they form part of an on-going process of discovery and learning. What is known at one moment becomes the basis for inquiry leading to the next moment of search and discovery. What has been apprehended by some is shared with others to keep the process renewed.

The study of socio-kinetics of praxis of participatory development has been a moment in a process of praxis research. Questions and suggestions coming out of the study open the way for continuity of the process.

Characteristics of the Study

The study of the socio-kinetics of praxis brought out many viewpoints of human and social dynamics that are similar to results coming from broad areas of research on programs such as adult basic education, community development, rural extension, labor training or literacy. While the conclusions were often similar in specific aspects, they were reached independently through a different process of research and with different intentions. Some very marked differences give the study its unique characteristics which influenced conclusions.

Intention

The intention of the research was not to learn in order to predict and pattern behavior. It sought instead to recognize, appreciate and learn how to enhance behavior that would promote educational liberation from socio-economic marginalization in specific community settings. The study looked at socio-kinetics, that is, the social moving forces that cause groups to intervene in society to bring about just participation.

The different indicators of social moving forces were not examined as isolated elements of dynamics but as a whole made up of closely interdependent parts. While certain aspects appeared to be common to all group formation, the intention was to look at the configuration in experiences that combine social reality, psycho-social group relationships, educator roles for facilitators, consciousness raising, value systems, pragmatic self-help projects and a process of participatory development in the context of marginalization.

Procedures

The study purposely started from scratch. It attempted to penetrate an on-going experience. The researcher, together with the subjects of the research, plunged into the process to draw out what were felt to be the signs of dynamics that seemed to be contributing to the energy flow of the process.

The research was not concerned with comparing studies or verifying results but with raising indicators of dynamics in self-help and consciousness raising educational processes of marginalized

people. The procedures of data gathering required such simple techniques of group reflection that they could be carried out as self studies by community groups at any cultural level.

Experience

The research was rooted in an experience of participatory development. It assumed that dominant forms of development could and should be questioned within criteria guided by spiritual values of integral human fulfillment.

The focus was on the present historical moment which delimited the experience of the participants. In 1978 Brazil was on the edge of an almost impossible renewal. The Fifth Institutional Act which had suspended constitutional rights during the 14 years of tight military rule was about to be revoked. The economic crunch had pressed the poor to the limits of endurance. November elections were notoriously mismanaged yet they re-kindled in the population latent aspirations of democracy. The Catholic Church was insistently pushing forward on issues of human rights. The desperation of poverty and destitution was tempered with hopeful anxiety about a better future. The dynamics of the experience could only be understood in light of the historical present.

The research looked beyond the events to recognize the socio-economic controls of world capitalism. Conclusions cling tenaciously and idealistically to the belief that an educational process of small group praxis could influence change without having to resort to revolutionary transformation of society.

Participation

The research concentrated on bringing together the life wisdom of illiterates and the scholarly wisdom of theoreticians. The voice of the marginalized people weighed as heavily as the voice of the intellectuals in interpreting the dynamics of praxis. The study sought to be a bridge between the world of the oppressed masses and the world of intellectual elites so that the praxis of participatory development could show the way to dialogical learning in order to build a more equitable society.

Review of Data and Need for Further Inquiry

A study was made of 37 rural and urban praxis events using a qualitative approach based on grounded theory. The data consisted of descriptive focused interview responses and researcher observations which were analyzed to explore the signs of dynamics of praxis. Implications from the results were applied to the role of facilitator in helping relationships for participatory development. The following points recall some of the findings and bring out unanswered questions that could be explored by people documenting their own participation.

Socio-Kinetics of Praxis

What was discovered. Perceived social reality, values and action reflection linkages appear as characteristics of indicators of socio-kinetics of praxis. The energy movement within these psycho-social dynamics proceeds from the interaction among persons within groups, and between groups and society. Indicators are

interdependent and are influenced by social, economic, political and cultural situations.

What needs to be known. Do the indicators cause the energizing movement of praxis? What stimulates the interdependence among indicators?

Perceived Social Reality

What was discovered. Social reality is generally perceived as: needs for survival and well-being in the neighborhood, needs related to society, and needs from structural causes of problems. Consciousness of perception varies among individuals and groups. Perceptions tend to move back and forth along a continuum from concrete local needs to generalized concepts referring to regional or national causes of marginalization. Perception of reality stimulates group reflection and action. Group praxis continually reinterprets perceived social needs.

What needs to be known. How do participants move from naive to critical consciousness of needs? What causes perception to go from a level of feeling to a level of understanding?

Values

What was discovered. Values are linked to needs and problem solutions of marginalized people. They are related to social interaction, feelings of personal worth, social expectations, socio-cultural traditions, and religious inspiration. Many values are

implied through counter values. Values provide the motivations and aspirations that stimulate perception of reality and action-reflection. Values are manifested in situations and events.

What needs to be known. How are values cultivated in praxis? Which values are most likely to support participatory development?

Action-Reflection Linkages

What was discovered. Two levels of action-reflection linkages support praxis: a level of planning, administrating and evaluating activities, and a level of intervening in society to redirect development. Reflection focuses on practical projects or on the actual experience of praxis. Action-reflection puts values into practice.

What needs to be known. What forms of action-reflection linkage stand out in accomplishment-oriented practices? in value-oriented practices? in process-oriented practices? in participatory development practices? What distinguishes the action-reflection linkages of facilitators from those of collaborators?

Changes and Continuity of Indicators

What was discovered. Praxis events are moments in a process. Specific or generalized activities before each event follow a focal theme that leads up to the event, and extends the praxis beyond the present moment. The process is continued through specific tasks and through long range goals. Indicators of dynamics are modified by the experiences they energize.

What needs to be known. What signs of changes in perception of social reality, values and action-reflection linkages can be observed in the praxis of a specific group over a period of time? In what way do short range tasks and long range aspirations cause indicators to coincide or to diverge?

Similarities and Differences Between Facilitators and Collaborators

What was discovered. Tension is created between the level of praxis involvement desired by facilitators for collaborators and the level of involvement projected by collaborators for themselves. When the tension is dialectically flexible, events result in common praxis and growth in participatory development. When the tension is too rigid or too slack, events produce indifference or manipulation of collaborators by facilitators. Facilitators are more concerned with abstractions, critical consciousness and idealistic commitments than collaborators. Collaborators are more concerned with concrete situations of satisfying needs for quality of life and solidarity of group involvement than facilitators.

What needs to be known. What aspects of manipulation appear in participatory development? In what way are the indicators of dynamics similar or different for facilitators and collaborators in successful praxis events? in unsuccessful praxis events?

Similarities and Differences Among Collaborators

What was discovered. Some participants actively assume commitments for development change. Others in the same situation remain passively dependent on the initiative of a few. Still others seek only their own welfare.

What needs to be known. What are the reasons for disparities in levels of participation? How could facilitators work with each level in a group environment? What is the relationship between psycho-genetic and socio-cultural dimensions of indicators of dynamics of praxis?

Training of Facilitators of Praxis Processes

Facilitators involved in praxis development processes could learn to be more effective in their roles. This would entail knowing more about the theory of educational praxis and about the concrete social situations in which the praxis would occur. But theory cannot be separated from practice. So facilitators would also learn from the experience of being a facilitator. The training of facilitators would have to be a praxis process. Such training places high value on experience through which the learners shape their own understanding through an interplay of theory and practice.

Praxis does not inherently lead in desirable directions. In order for a praxis experience to lead to equitable human and social development the facilitator would need to recognize his or her own value system, remembering that values are very often latent. Criteria

for determining the paradigms of just human and social development would have to be clarified. The criteria would need to be based on scientific analyses of the social determinants of society.

Facilitators should be aware of their own position as a social class in a stratified society. This would mean defining their own level of commitment to the marginalized segments of society while recognizing their responsibility to keep open the channels of communication and interaction with institutions and systems that control society. Facilitators would have to be willing to grow in critical consciousness of national and international society. They would need to be ready to believe in the value of simple, practical projects to improve quality of life while keeping an open view of how society should be transformed. Facilitators should be deeply sensitive persons steeped in confidence in human ability, respect for human dignity and acceptance of the rights and responsibilities of all people in contributing to the building of society.

Facilitators could be extension change agents, educators in out-of-school situations or even teachers in formal institutions. The crucial dimension of their effectiveness in the facilitator role would be to foster praxis experiences and not impose top-down learning or practices. The praxis experiences would have to be linked to the dynamics of socio-cultural, political and economic conditioning factors in society.

Facilitators could learn to utilize some practical techniques for fostering praxis experiences. Some of these are: nucleus

leadership groups, values clarification, building on previous experience, analysis of verbal or visual representation of perceived social reality, dialogue, self-help projects as tools for reflecting on social reality, and many other techniques that facilitators could create in interaction with collaborators.

Indicators of Socio-Kinetics for Evaluating Praxis

Indicators of dynamics give a descriptive view of praxis during specific events. Indicators could be used as points of reference for evaluating involvement in praxis. Facilitators and collaborators together could get clearer insights into their process by examining the indicators of dynamics.

The following questions exemplify how the indicators of perceived social reality (PSR), values (V) and action-reflection linkages (A-RL) could be used to focus evaluation. They could be used by facilitators with nucleus leadership groups, by teams of facilitators among themselves, by nucleus leadership groups with community groups or by facilitators with representatives of neighborhood, class or interest groups.

Perception of Social Reality

1. What seems to be the most pressing social need or solution that we are noticing right now? (PSR)
2. Why are we stressing these perceptions and not others? (PSR) (V).

3. What do these perceptions mean to our current activity?
(PSR) (A-RL).

Values

1. At this time, what motivations are keeping us involved as a group in this activity? (V).
2. What do we aspire for as the fulfillment of our group work?
(V).
3. Why do we think these motivations and aspirations are important? (V).
4. In what way do our perceptions of social reality relate to these motivations and aspirations? (V) (PSR).
5. Do these motivations and aspiration show up in our projects and discussions? (V) (A-RL).

Action-Reflection Linkages

1. How have we been reflecting on our work and on our group?
(A-RL).
2. In what way are we putting our thoughts and opinions into action? (A-RL).
3. What are we learning from bringing our ideas, information, insights and project needs together in our group work?
(A-RL).
4. Does the social reality we are perceiving at this time have any meaning in the activities we are planning and carrying out? (A-RL) (PSR).

5. Why have we chosen this activity? (A-RL) (V).

It is difficult and impractical to try to see praxis as a whole. Participants who are involved in the process generally find it hard to evaluate their praxis. By using indicators as foci for examining delimited aspects it is possible to analyze and assess some of the dynamic components of praxis.

What do indicators signify for praxis of participatory development? Simply this: they are signs of an energizing force in and from praxis. They do not determine where the praxis will lead; they only energize the movement. It is the participants, who are the subjects of praxis, who decide the direction, despite conditioning factors from society, history, economics, politics or culture. Indicators can show what characteristics of socio-kinetics are present and if they are inter-related in an event. But ultimately praxis, and the kind of development it will bring about, is a human choice.

Suggestions for Further Research

The study on praxis brought to surface many facets of helping relationships for participatory development. Some of these facets deserve to be explored. Through continued research new insights could be found for the significance of praxis in out-of-school education.

Praxis Research

At the outset of this study praxis research was not considered a method. As the study progressed it pointed the way to a kind of

research that was being built on action and reflection. The study initiated a process of learning from experience and theory in which practice and theory were mutually enriching.

The research method that began to evolve had some noticeable characteristics:

1. It was dialectical. There was a continual moving back and forth between practical and theoretical levels of reflection, between the action of applied theory and theoretical evaluation of action.
2. It was dialogical. The researcher, the researcher's team mates, the facilitator and collaborator participants of the praxis events, took part as co-researchers with different functions through the sharing of ideas and experiences.
3. It was a process. There were moments of completion, such as writing the study, but these were events in a continual spiral process. The process will grow in meaning as it gains new dimensions through the reflections of more people, especially of community participants.
4. It was exploratory. The principal focus was on finding out what was really taking place in praxis. It followed the scientific approach of grounded theory.
5. It was qualitative. It looked for the descriptive quality of the characteristics of dynamics of praxis, not frequency nor quantity. No group was too small to be considered; no voice in a group was left unheard.

6. It was humanistic. The motive underlying the research was to value the dignity of persons and discover new understanding of the potential for fulfillment in every human being and in society.
7. It was rooted in a critical consciousness of socio-cultural reality. The research was not detached from the context in which it occurred. Influences of social, political, economic and cultural factors were taken into consideration.

- Praxis research could be developed theoretically and experientially. Knowledge from field research methods could be brought to bear on it, such as: participant observation, case studies, anecdotal interview methods, content analysis, data analysis of community histories, and so forth. Two significant methods of social investigation could be studied in relation to praxis research. One is the method of participatory research (Hall, 1977; Hall et al., 1979); the other is qualitative research based on heuristic, phenomenological, intuitive and hermeneutical approaches (Griffin et al., 1979). Dialectical anthropology (Ribeiro, 1978), philosophy of praxis (Vazquez, 1977) and the research implications of Paulo Freire's concepts of learning could contribute to developing a method of praxis research. The concepts supporting the method could be drawn from the analysis of experiences as well as theoretical speculations.

Indicators of Socio-Kinetics of Praxis

The study began to raise some signs of dynamics of praxis in very specific events of community involvement. Much more could be

known about the indicators of perceived social reality, values, action-reflection linkages. Dimensions of dialogue and previous experience of the participants could be added to the indicators.

- A longitudinal study could be made in two or three communities to trace the indicators in depth and over time.
- A self study by participants could be made to distinguish similarities and differences in characteristics of indicators between facilitators and collaborators; between nucleus leadership groups and community, neighborhood, class or interest groups.
- Indicators could be looked at in events stemming from varied facilitator roles, such as: national non-formal education programs, community development, training for commerce and industry, church sponsored agencies, locally initiated movements.

Participatory Development

The praxis events in the study showed that concepts of participatory development could have meaningful implications for human development and social well being. Further research could be carried out by educators, change agents and leadership groups of people engaged in participatory development. The following could be focused:

- What are the characteristics of participatory development in diverging experiences, such as: open or closed communities, marginalized or socially integrated populations, agrarian or industrialized neighborhoods? What do experiences show about the dynamics of participatory development?

- How is participatory development seen in relation to current paradigms of development? in relation to transnational development networks?
- In what way can participatory development be included in the curricula of formal schooling? in the aims of non-formal education?

Basic Ecclesial Communities

For the most part the praxis experiences of the study came as a consequence of motivation from basic ecclesial communities. These forms of community organization are rapidly growing phenomena of the outreach of the Catholic Church in Brazil and in many parts of Latin America. Institutional church leadership is generally not aware of the multiplier effect dynamics generated by the basic ecclesial communities. Their potential for assuming facilitator roles to create conditions for human development is not recognized.

- An exploratory study could be carried out taking a cross section of basic ecclesial communities to find out the dynamics of their praxis, to explore the nature of the relationship between faith motivation and social action, and to trace evidences of the significance of basic ecclesial communities for social development.
- An investigation could be made of how basic ecclesial communities link religious teaching to life by focusing on the two approaches which showed up in the study: 1) the approach of applying norms derived from scripture reflection to life, or 2) the approach of reflecting on life then taking the reflections to

scriptures to find meaning and guidance. Implications could be drawn for facilitator roles in evangelization and missions involving social action.

Manual for Base Level Communities

The study brought out a variety of aspects of participant roles in praxis. The interpreted data should be returned to the base level community participants who contributed the reflected experiences to be assessed by them. Conclusions from the study could be re-elaborated together with facilitators from agencies, and base level community participants, to write a manual on the pedagogy of praxis for participatory development. Both facilitator and collaborator roles would be defined. The preparation of the manual would involve research on the following questions:

- What new ideas do the participants introduce that had not been perceived by the researcher or not expressed in the observed events?
- What similarities and differences appear in the elaboration of the manual according to region (Southeast, Northeast, North), according to area (rural, urban), or according to years of experience of group work?

Pilot Test of Praxis Research in Facilitator Roles

Much could be learned about praxis and about praxis research if more experiences were carried out, analyzed and evaluated.

- A pilot test of praxis research could be built into selected facilitator roles in on-going helping relationships. The research dimension could be a pedagogical instrument to renew, evaluate and correct the process of the facilitator's role and the process of the group's praxis. The pilot test would be planned by researchers and facilitators together.

- The evaluation of the pilot test could bring out the meaning of praxis as education and the appropriateness of learning about praxis research from experience rather than from theory.

Group Leadership

The study showed that within large groups and communities there was generally a small leadership nucleus which interacted more closely with facilitators and performed a vital stimulator role with participants from the community, neighborhood and interest groups.

- An investigation could be made of a broad sample of community based actions to find out more about nucleus leadership groups. Where do they occur? Where do they not occur and why not? What motivates the leadership interaction? What do the dynamics of nucleus leadership groups signify for facilitator roles and for non formal education?

- Facilitators who work in teams also form a nucleus leadership group. What kind of interaction takes place within the nucleus? How do facilitator nuclei interact with different spheres of community participants? How do they relate to the systems and structures of society?

What the Study Suggests for Facilitator Roles

The study of praxis could offer widespread implications for facilitators. The following suggestions stand out as a consequence of the researcher's own need to learn from collaborators how to relate meaningfully to base level participants.

1. Cultivate respect and concern for collaborators as equals. Equality, but not sameness, is inherent in the dignity of being human.
2. Be aware of the praxis process of collaborators. Knowledge, information and background experiences that facilitators bring to the helping relationships only have lasting meaning when they enrich the praxis of the collaborators.
3. Recognize and accompany the group's process of participation. Involved community members go through a profoundly absorbing, disorienting and tensely creative social process. Facilitators can never live the same experience.
4. Be attentive to evidences of manipulation in interrelationships with collaborators. Eagerness to see the process move ahead can easily lead to imposition of the facilitator's perceptions, ideas and values.
5. Make an effort to build a facilitator group (which could include agents and community leadership) so that the praxis of the facilitator role can be constantly and critically evaluated.
6. Enjoy the experience of learning from base level collaborators. When marginalized groups together with conscientized educators

learn from each other in a common praxis the outcome is productive, creative, refreshing and realistic.

7. Accept collaborators as partners in praxis experiences. Facilitators and collaborators have equally important roles in the transformation of society through group praxis. There could be no facilitator role without collaborators.
8. Keep communication open with the power structures of society. Facilitators have access to social context which could influence processes of participatory development. They are in positions to reach out to ruling classes as well as to subordinate and oppressed classes.
9. Promote social contacts to remind institutional leaders (government, industry, education, church, etc.) of the need for justice in development. Facilitators can fulfill prophetic roles by raising consciousness of the situation of the oppressed, by stimulating recognition of the moral responsibility of those in power to eradicate the causes of oppression, and by challenging authorities to cooperate with the people in creating a new social order.
10. Cultivate values in interrelationship with collaborators by clarifying and strengthening values and setting up priorities. Values manifest the uniqueness of human worth and the call to be person. Without values praxis could lead to a dehumanizing society.

11. Avoid stopping short at "bandaid solutions" to problems that go far deeper than self-help projects. Poverty and marginalization have root causes in socio-economic structures that extend as far as world capitalistic dependency. This requires constant questioning of problems and searching for ways to influence society while attending to the immediate needs of quality of life.
12. Be willing to grow in the qualities of effective facilitators: patience, respect, humility, solidarity, critical consciousness, idealistic commitment to action as well as to theory.

There is a wisdom of living that takes the pretentiousness out of intellectualizations about living. Marginalized people live vividly in senses, feelings, thoughts, aspirations, joys, and sufferings. They cling obstinately to the will to live and to be fulfilled. This will is eroded over the years by the burden of their deprived conditions. Facilitators have much to learn from this side of life. The lives of collaborator participants are rich with down to earth human wisdom gathered through the culture of generations. They face life stripped of fantasies yet fall prey to mass produced culture of modern society which gullibly absorbs consumerism pushed by economic interests. Praxis for participatory development discloses a world from which educators can draw deep lessons for humanity.

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