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## The Language of Lament and Love

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### On Women's Discourse and Hidden Capital

*Feminist commentators on social capital have observed that women's associational engagement and volunteerism seldom translate into increased political efficacy. In this paper, I examine an alternative theory of social capital—that of Pierre Bourdieu—with an aim to showing how women's social capital is contained within a Neoliberal society by their inability to attain other forms of capital: particularly the economic and symbolic capital necessary for the successful transition from private citizen to political professional. This paper argues that, while maternal activism does little to elevate women's status within the contemporary political field, it does a great deal to advance an alternative political discourse that is sorely needed within Neoliberal society. Such an alternative political discourse is exemplified by the group, "Sisters in Spirit"—particularly by the activist family members of missing and murdered Aboriginal women.*

Recent studies on women's political participation have been animated by the concept of social capital,<sup>1</sup> a concept that promises to locate the ways in which associational networks might translate into political knowledge and influence. Such studies often draw on the foundational work of Robert Putnam's bestselling study, *Bowling Alone: the Collapse and Revival of American Community*, which lamented the decline of associational membership and the corollary dearth of civic-mindedness. In this paper, I wish to highlight some of the contributions made by Putnam's feminist interlocutors, but I wish also to return to other foundational texts which would serve to amplify the critique, already well articulated by feminist theorists, of Putnam's linkage between associational membership, social capital and political influence. By engaging in the writings of Pierre Bourdieu, one of the earliest and most nuanced theorists of social

capital, I wish to argue that, under the current configuration of political and economic life, women's associational memberships, particularly those concerned with mothering and care, actually serves to *contribute* to their overt exclusion from official politics. This has to do the privation of two other forms of capital that conspire to preempt women's participation within neoliberal politics: economic and symbolic capital. In identifying the complexity of the relationship between female caregivers' social capital to these other goods, I aim to revisit the significance of social capital for feminist purposes in understanding mothers' occlusion from and potential resistance to dominant political discourse through alternative forms of maternal activism. In so doing, I will examine the subversive discursive practices of a particular group of activists—"Sisters in Spirit"<sup>2</sup>—whose testimony and praxis on behalf of Canada's missing and murdered aboriginal women challenges the confining rules of Neoliberal public discourse in an abidingly helpful way.

### **"Social Capital"**

The theory of social capital has become enormously popular in political theory,<sup>3</sup> perhaps in part because it identifies a generally perceived malaise within contemporary North American culture—its lack of community cohesion. In his highly influential book, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Putnam explores the importance of free associations for the flourishing of civil society. Putnam's book argues that citizens' "social capital" can be determined by their extent of participation in community organizations. Such participation can be understood as a value of exchange, a source of capital in which one's social investments—volunteer work, acts of philanthropy, etc.—will, as a general rule, be returned through the reciprocal social benefits—such as elevation of standing within a community, extension of social and financial networks, and political influence. Such connections, according to Putnam, are vital to the fostering of civic life. Putnam argues that local community organizations enable ordinary citizens to gain a greater sense of civic responsibility and efficacy, while they are also offered the skills and networks that would enable them also to participate fruitfully within the broader political landscape.

### **Women and Social Capital**

Feminist political theorists have been quick to point out that Putnam's equation of associational membership with political knowledge and efficacy does not always hold true for women, particularly if they are caregivers. While women are far more likely to have an extended social network within their

communities, networks with tremendous pay-offs in mutuality and reciprocity (Lowndes 2006: 223-224),<sup>4</sup> these engagements are unlikely to involve women in political discourse or to nurture them in civic knowledge and responsibility. In response, several feminist critics note that the *type* of social networking matters: men are still more likely to be involved in economic or work-related institutions, and women “tend to join organizations associated with the arts, religious institutions and care-oriented activities” (Gidengil, Goodyear-Grant, Nevitte, Blais and Nadeau 2). According to Elisabeth Gidengil’s study, this pattern of gender segregation has important consequences for women’s public participation: women’s volunteer associational activity tends to be within smaller groups, and also tends to be more homogenous. The stay-at-home mother meets with other stay-at-home mothers at a parent pre-school meeting. By and large, women’s political influence is not expanded significantly through this encounter. As Gidengil and her colleagues put it:

...[W]omen’s social capital may be less instrumentally valuable when it comes to the sort of resources that men control. Politics is still very much a man’s world, and gendered forms of social capital may mean that men get exposed to more information about the world than women do. One reason that women’s social ties are less instrumentally valuable in this regard is that their ties are much more likely than men’s to be restricted to people with similar backgrounds, skill sets, and social resources, resulting in less varied and more redundant sources of information. (Gidengil et al. 4)

Some commentators on women’s political participation note that, while women’s social capital will offer returns of considerable substance (such as carpooling and child-care), their social capital and political efficacy beyond their networks are unlikely to be mobilized. This has to do with the segregation and homogeneity of women’s volunteer work. It is not just any kind of association organization that increases social capital; it is the kind in which public life is discussed (Gidengil et al. 1). Accordingly, women’s culture tends to yield fewer political returns on their social capital investment. Although women who are caregivers tend to gain enormously from informal social networking in the day-to-day struggle of getting by, which may trickle over into specific community acts of coalition-building and activism, the more formal the political process becomes, the less likely women are to be active. As Vivien Lowndes writes:

...[W]e know that school runs, child care swaps, and baby-sitting circles all involve relations relationships of reciprocity and mutuality.

... And yet, because they involve children and relationships of care, such networks are presumed to be within the sphere of the family, as belonging to the domestic arena rather than the wider civil society. (224)<sup>5</sup>

While Lowndes acknowledges the value of women's community activities, she sees these activities as survival mechanisms in the "day-to-day" management of their own and their family's lives, with "little time to spend on politics" (226). It is here, in my view, that the theory of French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, is illuminating. For, not only does he account for factors impeding women's political efficacy, he also helps to reveal the complexity of relations between women's social capital and the recognition required to mobilize it.

### **Bourdieu and Social Capital**

The French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, is credited with the development of a theory of social relations in which the metaphor of capital, a mode of production and exchange, figures prominently. For Bourdieu, social capital was "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition" (Bourdieu 1985: 248). According to Bourdieu's analysis, there are several types of capital that are commonly produced, reproduced and exchanged within various types of social relations. For our purposes, we will focus on the relationship among three of these: social, economic and symbolic capital. The capital an agent holds serves rather like "trumps in a game of cards ... powers which define the chances of profit in a given field" (1991: 230). Bourdieu uses the term, field, to connote the distinct social space in which such capital is exchanged, and in which an individual actor is governed by specific rules that are endemic to that field. Relations among agents within a field are embedded with power dynamics that can, more or less, be described as the *acquisition* of various kinds of intangible goods that can be accrued by individual. Social capital, the acquisition of social influence, can only be understood in relation to other kinds of capital. Of particular importance, according to Bourdieu, is economic capital in determining the value and kind of social capital that a particular agent can accrue. As Bourdieu writes:

One can thus construct a simplified model of the social field as a whole, a model which allows one to plot each agent's position in all possible spaces of the game (it being understood that, while each field has its own logic and its own hierarchy, the hierarchy which is established between the kinds of capital and the statistical relation

between different assets mean that the economic field tends to impose its structure on other fields. (1991: 230)

In identifying the priority of the economic field in ordering other kinds of human capital, Bourdieu offers a materialist account of women's political participation or lack thereof. Women's lack of economic capital relative to men will adversely affect their social capital. This is not news to those who study women and politics, but what is new perhaps is Bourdieu's description of the *extent* to which economic pressures exert themselves upon women's spheres of sociality. Women are not marginalized from politics because they are poorer than men; for example, because they cannot afford the high cost of campaigns, although this is certainly the case. Rather, the market economy will *determine* the rules of women's engagement in every social field, including politics, and such positioning will be reinforced and reproduced in all public activities, whether women consciously choose them or not. The economic field, then, is the paradigmatic "set of constraints, inscribed in the very reality of that world, which governs its functioning in a durable way, determining the chance of success for practices" (Bourdieu 1985: 241-242).

Therefore, specific patterns of economic relations will be inscribed in women's social engagements, and social configurations within a specific economy will take the dominant modes of production and exchange as models for other fields of cultural and political production. Within Neoliberalism, citizens tend to elect the kinds of political activities as though it were a market product. So, for example, citizens "buy into" a party in the manner in which they might be loyal to a brand. The role of the party leaders is to offer a product to their citizens/consumers. Political discourse thus becomes increasingly reducible to market slogans or product advertisements. Political professionals are those who are adept at this sort of "branding" and who produce a product that is desirable above those of other contenders (1991: 175). Further, ordinary citizens are excluded from meaningful participation because party politics has increasingly become a specialized and exclusive "market":

This monopoly of production is left in the hands of a body of professionals, in other words, of a small number of units of production, themselves supervised by professionals; these constraints weigh heavily on the choices made by consumers, who are all the more dedicated to an unquestioned loyalty to recognized brands and to an unconditional delegating of power to their representatives the more they lack any social competence for politics and *any of their own instruments of production of political discourse or acts*. The market of politics is doubtless one of the least free markets that exists. (1991: 175 , emphasis mine).

The marketplace of contemporary politics tends to be governed by a model of exchange that mirrors consumptive choice. Citizenry here becomes confused with the election of various options that are produced, reproduced and “spun” by professionals at a great distance from ordinary discursive communities. Thus mothers and caregivers are alienated from producing their own discourse, and are asked to hand their political authority or voice over to those who would “spin” it into compact and predetermined products. It is little wonder that women’s collectivization in the realm of care appears at odds with this version of political participation.

### Social and Symbolic Capital

As we have already seen, women’s social capital investment, although greater on the whole than that of men (Coulthard, Walker and Morgan 91), does not translate straightforwardly into political returns for women. This is due in part to the economic structures in which women’s social capital is reproduced, but also because the field of official party politics is a highly particularized one which also requires the endowment of *symbolic capital* in order for an individual to be consecrated<sup>6</sup> into it. Bourdieu speaks of symbolic capital as the granting of legitimacy and prestige to certain individuals. Within politics, symbolic capital is far more likely to be conferred upon men, not only because the old boys’ club is inherently self-interested and self-perpetuating, but because politics demand the kinds of sacrifices that mothers, by and large, have been unable to make. These sacrifices include the enormously time-consuming task of becoming a legitimate political professional. As Bourdieu writes:

The acquisition of a delegated capital obeys a very specific logic: investiture, the veritably magical act of institution by which the party officially consecrates the official candidate at an election and which marks the transmission of political capital, just as the medieval investiture solemnized the transfer of a fief or a piece of landed property, can only be the counterpart of a long *investment* of time, work dedication and devotion to the institution (1991: 173).

Pierre Bourdieu’s writings on symbolic power alert us to the self-reinforcing nature of official politics. In order to be a political professional one must hold the very capacity to speak authoritatively, a capacity that is neither demanded nor straightforwardly merited but is, rather, *conferred* upon the speaker. Thus the political agent is granted authority not so much because of the truth of what she is revealing, as her capacity to reiterate what has already been established as authoritative discourse. As Bourdieu scholar,

John B. Thompson, writes:

When an authorized spokesperson speaks with authority, he or she expresses or manifests the authority, but does not create it: like the Homeric orator who takes hold of the *skeptron* in order to speak, the spokesperson avails himself or herself to a form of power or authority which is part of a social institution, and which does not stem from the words alone. (Thompson 9)

Recognition must be conferred by a community, and members of that community need to be able to put their faith in the authority of the conferee.<sup>7</sup> Bourdieu describes the various conditions that must be met in order for an individual or community to be invested with authority within a specific field, and these tend to involve ineffable, symbolic characteristics that serve the general purpose of reinforcing the *status quo* within a given field. The political candidate will offer her reputation, her service, and her time as a representative when there is the endowment of trust can she be recognized as a legitimate political actor. Hence the move from political anonymity to candidacy in politics is a monumental one. Femaleness alone makes recognition difficult, for the world of politics is a self-reinforcing and closed culture, a world in which like confers upon like the gift of authority. Moreover, should women be mothers or caregivers, critics are likely to question their dedication to the job, which must be unwavering and total in order to receive the sceptre of political authority.

It is the self-reinforcing nature of symbolic capital that is often lost within discussions of participation within the political field. Although the existence of an old boys' club is commonly observed and decried in party politics, those self-perpetuating linguistic and symbolic elements that undergird this culture are often inadequately theorized in efforts aimed at advancing social and political capital.<sup>8</sup> So, in the case of a political candidate who is also a mother, her discursive practices will be constrained by the pressures of the economic forces that have determined that she cannot but view her work as a mother as of anything but idiosyncratic and singular significance. Where she has accrued benefit from her sphere of sociality on mothering groups, this benefit will, in all probability, do little to add to her credibility as a political professional.

The creation of a class of political professionals—those endowed with symbolic capital—is dependent not only upon one's social and economic clout, but also upon the acquisition of skill within politics' increasingly idiosyncratic and specialized language (Bourdieu 1991: 176).<sup>9</sup> According to Bourdieu, the metamorphosis of an unknown subject into a political professional involves the acquisition of a discrete vocabulary in which the speaking agent is able to abide by an unwritten set of rules that foreordain the parameters of her speak-

ing. One of these rules is the transmission of language from the embodied, particular and contingent to the hypothetical and the instantaneous. Political speech acts are increasingly reducible to sound-bites wherein the official party platform is reproduced and reinforced. For Bourdieu, contemporary politics is not only problematic on account of the homogeneity of its participants, but more so because of the paucity of political possibilities that current political discourse can evoke:

In politics ... the dispossession of the majority of people is a correlate, even a consequence, of the concentration of the specifically political means of production in the hands of professionals, who can enter only into the distinctive political game with some chance of success only on condition that they possess a specific competence. Indeed, nothing is less natural than the mode of thought and action demanded by participation in the political field.... This includes in the first instance, of course, the entire apprenticeship necessary to acquire the corpus of specific kinds of knowledge (theories, problematics, concepts, historical traditions, economic data, etc.) produced and accumulated by the political work of professionals of the present or the past, to acquire the more general skills such as the mastery of a certain kind of language and of a certain political rhetoric—that of the popular orator, indispensable when it comes to cultivating one’s relations with non-professionals, or that of the debater, which is necessary in relations between fellow professionals. (Bourdieu 1991: 175-176).

The political field is intrinsically a site for the competition of power among individuals who seek to master its idiosyncratic rules. Those whose language, dispositions, or personal characteristics are not easily absorbed into the political culture tend to become scrutinized or censored. Not only are potential political candidates sacrificed to the standardized and rote mechanism of political culture, but so too are very values that refuse to be reduced to sound-bites. This is particularly poignant in the exclusion of discourse of such substantive goods as care and relationality.

### **Maternal Agency and Activism**

So far, I have suggested that social capital theory holds enormous promise for understanding women’s malaise in relation to official politics, but does so best when considered with other forms of capital that Bourdieu identifies, particularly economic and symbolic capital. While women’s formal political



engagement is impeded by the chasm that exists between women's social and other forms of capital, particularly economic and symbolic, her lack of participation within official party politics is unlikely to change unless structural—particularly economic—conditions shift adequately to provide the kinds of resources that would be needed for women to engage in political activity. While not a fatal circle, I fear that the social capital that women produce has little consequence for their gains politically, at least in the usual manner in which politics are construed, although women's social capital may indeed yet prove beneficial to an alternative politics beyond neoliberalism, a politics which resists the flattening of political language to “propositions, programs, predictions or prognostications” (Bourdieu 1991: 191).

Some examples of this kind of activism are already visible in Canada, in various sites of resistance that refuse to reduce complex political issues to sound-bites and market branding. A profound example of women's discursive resistance is the work of the mothers and family members of Canada's missing and murdered aboriginal women through the “Sisters in Spirit” (see NWAC) campaign. Here, what might be considered a “private” group—mothers, aunts, sisters, and friends—put political pressure upon police and governments to take seriously the scandal of violence against Indigenous women. And yet, their discursive practices and political strategies go precisely against the grain of Neoliberal political discourse in several ways. First, they refuse to reduce the stories of their daughters and sisters to sound-bites and slogans. Second, the Sisters in Spirit campaign embodies an alternative form of symbolic capital, drawing on Indigenous traditions that recognize the authority of elders, particularly grandmothers, mothers, and “aunts.” Third, they refuse to consign the relevance of their stories to that of an isolated incident or idiosyncrasy. Thus they powerfully connect the stories of individual women in their public testimony to name the specific structures of violence against Indigenous women. Thus is no pretense made in their political discourse to a generic identity. In naming the manner in which public policies and laws are experienced individually, they explode beyond the facade that political language ought to be universal and abstract. Here, they remind us precisely of what our early feminist forbears discovered: the personal is political. In what follows, I will look at each of these three strains of rhetorical resistance by Indigenous female activists and suggest that it is precisely this kind of discourse that will break what might seem like a vicious and reinforcing circle of women's exclusion from political life.

### **Stories, Not Sound-bites**

In attending or participating in an Indigenous activist gathering, one might

be immediately impressed by the refusal to reduce stories to sound-bites. Instead of slogans and placards, Winnipeg marchers for missing and murdered aboriginal women carry pictures with the names of the women, their birthdates and the dates of their disappearance. In gatherings, family members and friends are given as much time as they need to tell the stories of their “sisters.” Their lament offers a picture of these women far removed from the stereotypes of addict, runaway or sex-trade worker. In their testimonies, the women are remembered as mothers, sisters, daughters, and friends. In the testimonies of family members, the missing girls and women are remembered for their irreducible singularity. In their testimonies, family members refuse to allow their relatives to be re-victimized through being forgotten. Likewise, in the Report, *What Their Stories Tell Us: Research Findings of the Sisters in Spirit Initiative*, the Native Women’s Association of Canada were deliberate in placing the stories of the women’s lives alongside the statistics and the hard facts of their cases:

Throughout this report stories are shared of some of the missing and murdered sisters, mothers, daughters, and grandmothers, as told to NWAC by their families. Their stories reflect some of the experiences and impacts faced by these women, girls and their families. But most of all, they are a reminder that Aboriginal women and girls are strong, beautiful, proud and loved. (2)

How might the witness of the Sisters in Spirit campaign challenge activism more generally? Perhaps we need to be less reticent about the personal, caring, and familial ties that animate women’s activism. Perhaps it is precisely this kind of testimony that will challenge political discourse beyond its flattened speech of “propositions, programs, predictions or prognostications.” Perhaps it will be the living and patient language of lament that will allow women’s experience at the intersection of private and public life to be named and, it is hoped, transformed.

### **Alternative Speaking Agents and Authorities**

Second, the Sisters in Spirit go against the symbolic rules of Neoliberalism in conferring authority upon other kinds of speaking agents than the political professional. Pierre Bourdieu once defined neoliberalism as “a programme of the methodical destruction of collectives” (Bourdieu 1998). Insofar as the political agent is viewed increasingly as an isolated consumer of distinct products, Bourdieu is surely correct. Yet, one of the sites of greatest resistance to the destruction of collectives in Canada is within Indigenous

communities. There, the Neoliberal project is halted (or at least impeded) by robust collectives with alternative symbolic capital. There, the sceptre of authority is not given in the usual way to political agents: it is often given (at the local level at least) to elders, not political professionals. There, the sceptre of authority is not conferred to those who divest themselves from familial and communal life, but is granted instead to those who are invested profoundly in the day-to-day struggles of family and community members. Might feminist activism take its cues from this alternative form of symbolic capital? Few non-Indigenous people in Canada experience a collective as distinct as Indigenous communities, but is there not a way for associational memberships (such as mothers' groups) so to esteem and support in leadership alternative forms of authority? Might not maternal activism conscientiously object to the detached political professional as the standard bearer for public authority, and deliberately and subversively stand behind instead those members who refuse to abstract their activism from their family and community commitments? In such a politics, representatives might be encouraged and supported to subvert the official Newspeak of party politics precisely in favour of the local, the relational, the subjective.

### Personal and Political

Finally, the Sisters in Spirit refuse to consign the relevance of the missing women's stories to that of an isolated incident or idiosyncrasy. They powerfully connect the stories of individual women to the stories of other Indigenous women, thus refuting systematically the lie that these cases are unrelated. As *What Their Stories Tell Us* insists:

Tragically, too many of their stories illustrate the social and economic inequalities experienced by Aboriginal women and girls, which are directly linked to the impact of colonial policies that dislocated Aboriginal women, families and communities, and result in trauma, violence, as well as circumstances of vulnerability. However, the stories shared by families, communities, and friends also tell us that many missing and murdered women and girls were vulnerable only insofar as they were Aboriginal and they were women. (NWAC)

Feminist activism has long known that the personal is political and that the suffering of a woman in silence and isolation is usually endemic of a much larger societal malaise. What we have been less cognizant of in the recent past is the manner in which the current political economy conspires to keep us silent and isolated from one another every bit as much as the secretive and shame-

based norms of the mid-twentieth century. The tacit pressures of women to forego activism in order to meet the insidious and increasing demands upon their time, and the related pressure to keep silent about their personal struggles in order to gain political and professional legitimacy have had the effect of keeping women of this generation from speaking publicly political concerns affecting their lives.

## Conclusions

This imagining of an alternative kind of politics will take great courage and resources, and perhaps it is here that women's social capital will prove most beneficial. It may be the case that mothers' and other caregivers' concerns are best brought to articulation by their acts of solidarity and resistance precisely within and through their current social networks—so long as these are encouraged to continue to practice solidarity and articulate the precisely public significance of their work. This kind of politics will involve a language far more robust and far more particular than the discourse of contemporary party politics, and therefore will require a different set of skills in order for women to try to bring their concerns to public consciousness. In courageous testimonies of Indigenous women—the Sisters in Spirit—we may also draw inspiration: not content with the master narrative that women's stories are isolable or forgettable, they have painstakingly and publicly connected their stories to others, and have awakened an activist discourse long suppressed in the public square: the language of lament and of love.

<sup>1</sup>See, for example, O'Neill and Gidengil; Lin; Lowndes (2004); Woolcock and Narayan; Elmhirst; Edwards.

<sup>2</sup>Sisters in Spirit is a national campaign aimed to raise awareness about violence against aboriginal women in Canada. The group was founded in 2004 by the Native Women's Association of Canada. Although Sisters in Spirit undertake many forms of activism around violence against women, this paper will focus on the public marches and gatherings organized to raise awareness on Canada's missing and murdered aboriginal women through regional vigils and walks. Specifically, this paper will focus on the public testimony of the family members through these gatherings. Although probably not intentional about creating an alternative discourse to the language of contemporary politics, these testimonies of the families are instructive in showing how the rules of Neoliberal politics might be subverted through the language and practice of care in maternal activism. Here, I do not wish to romanticize or exploit the suffering of Indigenous women for the sake of a lesson in advocacy, but

merely wish to suggest that the kinds of public testimonies that characterize the vigils for missing and murdered aboriginal women go against the grain of neoliberal discourse, and the efficacy of Sisters in Spirit may show other women who value care that one not need to capitulate to the status quo in our political speech.

<sup>3</sup>As Alejandro Portes puts it: “During recent years, the concept of social capital has become one of the most popular exports from sociological theory into everyday language. Disseminated by a number of policy-oriented journals and general circulation magazines, social capital has evolved into something of a cure-all for the maladies affecting society at home and abroad. Like other sociological concepts that have traveled a similar path, the original meaning of the term and its heuristic value are being put to severe tests by these increasingly diverse applications. As in the case of those earlier concepts, the point is approaching at which social capital comes to be applied to so many events and in so many different contexts as to lose any distinct meaning” (2).

<sup>4</sup>See Vivien Lowndes, “Exploring the case of child care further, we know that school runs, child care swaps and baby-sitting circles all involve relationships of reciprocity and mutuality. Childcare networks clearly fit with common definitions of social capital forming activities.... And yet, because they involve children and relationships of care, such networks are presumed to be in the sphere of the family, as belonging to the domestic arena rather than wider civil society” (2006: 223-224).

<sup>5</sup>See also Dietlind Stolle and Michele Micheletti, “The Gender Gap Reversed,” “In short, a gendered perspective urges us to broaden our view of what is considered relevant political and social participation.” These authors conclude that Putnam’s lament for the decline of sociality fails to consider new forms of social engagement that are less formal, such as environmentally-conscious consumer networks, child-care networks, etc.” (46).

<sup>6</sup>The term is deliberately borrowed from Bourdieu, for whom the delegation of authority in politics was no less ritualized and regulated than in the church (1991: 171-203).

<sup>7</sup>As Bourdieu elaborates: “Political capital is a form of symbolic capital or belief and recognition or, more precisely on the innumerable operations of credit by which agents confer on a person (or an object) the very powers they recognize in him (or it). Symbolic power is a power which the person submitting to grants to the person who exercises it, a credit with which he credits him, a *fides*, an *auctoritas*, with which he entrusts him by placing his trust in him. It is a power which exists because the person who submits to it believes that it exists” (1991: 192).

<sup>8</sup>Several current development projects in the two-thirds world are, in my view, overly optimistic about the capacity of social capital accumulation to translate

into positive outcomes for the poor. These theories tend not to examine the ways in which the reproduction of social capital is itself determined by relations of power, particularly economic power, which will tend to reinforce, rather than diminish the power of the prevailing political economy. The imprint of the economy can be traced even in the ways in which marginalized people organize themselves. For an introduction to global strategies aimed at marshalling social capital see, Grootaert and van Bastelaer.

“The process whereby the field of ideological production becomes more autonomous is doubtless accompanied by an increase in the standards expected of anyone seeking right of entry to the field and, in particular, by a reinforcement of the demands on their general or even specific competence.... The well informed politician is the one who manages to master practically the objective meaning and the social effect of his stances by virtue of having mastered the space of actual and especially potential stances or, better, of the principle underlying these stances, namely, the space of objective positions in the field and the dispositions of those who occupy them” (see Bourdieu 2006c: 178).

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