

**Democratic Territories:
Mapping the Spatiality of Governing Beyond Governance**

Thomas Catlaw
Associate Professor
&
Kelly Campbell Rawlings
Assistant Research Professor

Arizona State University
School of Public Affairs
Arizona State University
Phoenix, AZ

Contact:
Kelly.Rawlings@asu.edu
Thomas.Catlaw@asu.edu

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Abstract

Governance theories do not extend their considerations of democracy to the internal workings of network collaborators or the “political spillovers” of ostensibly “nonpolitical” domains of social life (e.g. schools, workplaces). This paper, in contrast, contends that the renewal of contemporary democracy hinges on a fundamental shift in how we conceive of the spatiality or social topography of democratic practice, one that must include organizational, workplace, and “nonpolitical” spaces. In this paper, we present a theoretically and empirically-rooted case for such a distributed, post-sectoral mode of governing by showing how the patterns and forms of interaction in one domain of social life impact other aspects of life, although in complex and perhaps indirect ways. In terms of democratic theory, we describe as “democracy as a way of life.” Then, drawing from Bourdieu’s sociological theory, this theory of democracy as a way of life is explicated as it pertains to questions of the scope of the political, governing, and social order. We conclude with an application of these ideas to a hypothetical workplace setting in order to illustrate the situated account of “democratic governing.”

Introduction

In prior work, we (Catlaw, 2007, 2008; Rawlings & Catlaw, 2011) have advanced a critique of the “governance perspective” and argued that while a focus on democratic *governance* marked a useful and necessary practical and theoretical step in reconceiving the real work of contemporary governing, there persisted a neglect of the everyday relationships and interactions of people that serve as the ground for the efficacy of political and social institutional actors; workplaces and organizations, for instance, remained largely “off limits” to democratization. Thus drawing from Boyd Bode’s (1947/1938) and John Dewey’s (1939/1988) assertion that democracy should be seen a *way of life* not just a type of formal government, we (Rawlings & Catlaw, 2011) demonstrated the ways in which various forms of life that are practiced in one area of our lives may be encouraged or discouraged by the forms practiced in other areas. In doing so, we crafted theoretical and empirical justifications as to why public administration and governance should additional attention on the day-to-day relationships in which we talk, work, and live with one another¹. A “deeper” democracy (Green, 1999) would enhance the democratic possibilities of those everyday relationships and interactions.

This paper begins with a summary of the core idea of “democracy as a way of life” and elaborates our prior work by suggesting that such a notion implies a pan-societal distribution of *political labor* and *governing* that problematizes the image of the three-sector society. We suggest that this theoretical move is necessary to deepen the justification and basis for democracy way of life. However this also requires a more precise conceptualizing and operationalizing of “the where” of these situated “democratic” practices within a general

theory of social space; one in which the work of governing is not “quarantined” in a specifically political or state sector, sphere, or system. To this end, we draw substantively from the sociological theory of Pierre Bourdieu (especially his concepts of *habitus*, social field, and forms of capital) to provide greater nuance about what these various social spaces or domains of life (what Bourdieu calls social fields) look like and how they are governed. We conclude by outlining concrete guidance for a *democratic* practice within social fields by using workplace settings as an illustration.

Beyond the Divided Polity: Rethinking the Political and Terrain of Governing

By convention, both scholars and citizens in general tend to divide society up into various parts and this is especially so in polities forged in the liberal tradition (Dean, 2010). Most commonly, we posit the public sphere and the private sphere; the state (political realm), civil society (the social realm), and economy (the economic realm). We, further, tend to give to those parts specific roles and functions². Society, in functionalist terms, is imagined as a kind of organism (or machine) in which each part needs to perform a specific function well in order for the whole to operate effectively or at equilibrium. Different theories and ideologies might assign different functions to different parts, but, generally, this kind of thinking is hard to get away from. Indeed it informs much about how we imagine our social problems.

For instance, a political conservative or free market enthusiast might say that much of what plagues the United States stems from government overstepping its rightful bounds; we need to restore those boundaries and let the markets do what they do naturally. Alternatively, a political-Liberal or critical theorist might argue that markets and economic rationality have

exceeded their domain. Economic reasoning should not drive decision making in government, nonprofit organizations, or personal relationships—these operate according to different logics and values. Related to this, political debates often turn on whether to put a problem or question in the “private” or “public” bucket; one takes it off the table (private), while the other legitimizes it as an object of governmental intervention. In each case, similar divisions are made, but they are given different content and so the diagnosis and (prescriptive, normative) medicine differ.

Perhaps there is nothing inherently wrong with this kind of thinking and, no doubt, it captures a certain dimension of experience. It is certainly an intrinsic dimension of the market economy (Smith, 1976/1776). Of course, different people and organizations do different things and perform different tasks. A clerk in the mailroom has different work to do than an executive in human resources—though the executive wants his/her mail and the clerk wants his/her benefits. Building roads is different work than fabricating asphalt or designing highways, or drafting transportation appropriation bills—even though all this work is intertwined. Law, politics, and historical experience lend different foci and qualities to different institutions, roles, and so on (Lynn, Jr., 2006). Still, there is a serious limitation to this way of thinking when it comes to considering how a polity is created and sustained and, more particularly, when we posit a societal division of *political* labor and explicitly locate the work of *governing* in one sphere or sector (Adams, Bowerman, Dolbeare, & Stivers, 1990).

Nowadays, of course, there is an enormous body of theoretical and empirical research that problematizes any hard and fast distinction among the political, social, and economic

spheres. In prior work we (Catlaw, 2007, 2008; Catlaw & Jordan, 2009; Rawlings & Catlaw, 2011) provide a summary of and direct engagement with this work and so offer only a brief comment on the key points here. Most germane to the present discussion is the growing recognition that the capacities and identities that people bring into the conventional public, government, and political realms are substantively generated outside that domain. Moreover, the efficacy of conventional politics and government *depend* on those practices and relationships in the “nonpolitical” worlds of the economy, school, and family.

To offer an example, one of the most well known empirical studies of this phenomenon is Putnam’s (1993) work on social capital in Italy. Putnam found that the differences in the effectiveness of government between northern and southern Italian provinces were bound up with the kind of relationships people had in civil society, their social capital. In another vein, pertaining more narrowly to individuals, this idea that the socialization and habituation a person experiences in the workplace, school, and family impacts his or her individual capacity to effectively participate in traditional political life (see Rawlings, 2012) is commonly referred to as “political spillover” effects (e.g. see Greenberg, Grunberg, & Daniel, 1986; Mason, 1982). Moreover, these realms of “private” life often provide opportunities to *practice* the skills and to hone the abilities that help us to communicate and interact in the “public” sphere.

Alternatively, when we are not given opportunities to practice and become habituated to these forms of interaction, we either do not develop personal capacities or those capacities we *do* have atrophy. The limitation, however, of these approaches is this: The political and the work of governing still is largely conceptualized, or quarantined (Harney, 2002), within the terrain of “the state” (see Bang & Sorensen, 1999 for a discussion of Putnam in particular; Catlaw, 2007

on this issue in the governance literature) and the work of governing is not conceptualized as being distributed across the polity.

However, underlying this trans- or post-sectoral view of governing is a very different image of social order. It is one does not divide a polity into parts or spheres but instead sees the work of governing as distributed across the polity and intimates an account of how these discrete domains of social interaction are conjoined and attached. Following the “spillover” and related literatures, we implicitly ask here, “what other than the division of labor does the conjoining?” and offer the following answer: the habits, dispositions, and patterns of relationship that are practiced in given situations and which discrete people via the physicality of their bodies carry with them from one domain to another. These tendencies, crucially, are wont to reinforce or amplify one another depending on the configuration of a given setting. For instance, the ways in which workplaces and schools are arranged give us (or do not give us) the ability to practice what we learn at home (e.g. McFarland & Thomas, 2006).

Thus, notwithstanding the *different physical places* of our day-to-day interactions may be *similar forms*, patterns, and practices of human relationship (cf. Eckstein, 1966; Horkheimer, 1972; Foucault, 1995). These relationships, patterns, and practices and their relative consistency across a polity make up and sustain a coherent polity and give shape to the publics who engage (or do not) in the broader civic life.

The social, domestic, and economic realms of human interaction become *politicized* by a displacement of the liberal division of societal labor and the quarantine of the political in the state (or political, public sphere). In its place, we argue for a view of a polity’s interconnected,

mutually constituting realms, each of which is characterized by political and governing practices and arrangements. The expansion of “government” is not to be equated with the expansion of “the state” or “big government.” The concept of “the political” here is formulated in terms of cross-cutting forms of life or patterns of relating rather than as only being located in one function, sector, or sphere (like the state) among many in a societal divisions of labor³.

The Democratic Political

In our work, this “social topography” was initially derived from John Dewey and the discussions of “boundary blurring” in the governance literature. We focus on Dewey since the governance perspective is likely well known here. Dewey (1988/1939) claimed that beyond our traditional political institutions, mechanisms, and professional duties, “democracy is a *personal* way of individual life” (p. 226) “controlled by personal faith in day by day working together with others” (p. 228). More so than Dewey, it is his now-little-known contemporary, philosopher Boyd Bode (1948/1937) who offers a fuller justification for this everyday democracy.

Boyd seems to have coined the phrase, democracy as a way of life, and makes an explicit case for expanding the topography and conceptualization democracy as such. Writing in the late 1930s, Bode argues that the concept of democracy needs to be expanded beyond institutions and governmental forms if it is to have a future in the face of state-communism and fascism. He contends that we need to shift away from seeing democracy in *narrow* political terms to seeing it as *way of life*. “From the standpoint of American tradition, the concept of democracy is distinctive in that it is an exclusively political term. . . . The fact that a person believed in the principle of democracy was supposed to carry no necessary obligations with

respect to economic, ethical, or religious beliefs” (p. 4)—a proposition he rejects. The power of communistic and fascist ideologies, Boyd continues, is that they recognized the intrinsic interpenetration of all aspect of human life and so offered a “way of life” that provided a coherent frame of reference for making sense of the world and for action. Without such a frame of reference, democratic institutions run the risk of being overwhelmed by more “compelling” ways of life. To this we would add that it is precisely the all-pervasive, compelling use of “the market” calculus that dominates as our “way of life” today.

After surveying the many ways in which scholars have considered what “democratic” might mean in the broader sense of a “way of life,” we (2011) offer this minimal definition as a starting point—we will add to it later. Here, democracy “emphasizes openness to the other; flexible habits of mind; a concern for individual creativity, autonomy, and personal efficacy; involvement in the tasks close at hand in our lives, which, in turn, seems to facilitate the development of a sense of self in relation to others; and close attention to the concrete empirical situation” (p. 51). It is this definition of democracy that we will attempt to deepen, operationalize, and locate in the context of contemporary governance.

Democracy Beyond the Formal

There is a rich literature that describes the “how to” of democratic engagement beyond voting and campaigning (e.g. Leighninger, 2006; Gastil & Levine, 2005; Luckensmeyer & Torres, 2006; Fung & Wright, 2003; McCoy & Scully, 2002) and many of those techniques may be adapted and applied across varied contexts. This work tends to be located and put to work in what we would characterize as primarily formal and purposeful settings. From the vantage of

democracy as a way of life, this is problematic for two reasons. First democracy, even in expanded deliberative, governance, or myriad public-engagement settings, remains as a *place* to which one *travels* rather than a way or form of life that one practices or enacts on a daily basis *regardless* of where one finds oneself. Second, in this sense then, the political and its governing still remains quarantined within specific domains of interaction, even if the quantity of these domains has expanded. In what follows, we outline a conceptual way to understand both the common structural elements of these formal spaces and the informal everyday practices within these formal spaces. In this sense, we seek not only to advance the important notion of democracy as a way of life but also to contribute to public administration's understanding of the structure of formal spaces (both deliberative and otherwise) and democratic practice within them.

However, since democracy is conceived here not *only* in terms of formal institutions, positions, and rules (though these are not omitted from the discussion by any means) we require an account of social contexts, too, that is essentially interactional but that also can take inventory and still make sense of those more formal (and informal) spaces. To this end, and drawing from sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, we will explore democracy as a way of life that is enacted and practiced in a specific *social field* by historically and socially distinct people who embody specific sets of tendencies, dispositions, manners, and subjectivities called *habitus*. The *social field* gives us a way to describe a set of abstract relationships that specify a pattern of interaction within a social context; *habitus* gives us a way to understand how specific people come to occupy, affect, and act within those positions and relationships. *Capital* gives a way to

account for the various differentials in power and capacity that given actors have in specific fields.

Expanding Democratic Practice: Habitus, Social Fields, and Forms of Capital

Bourdieu's work helps us to understand the forces that enable and constrain what is possible for individuals within social space and sheds light on how individual differences may affect how those interactions unfold in a given field. In other words, habitus and social field give us a way to conceptualize the semi-permanent characteristics of a situation and the familiar formal democratic practices and a way to approach the question of possible action and change in light of individuals' unique histories, capacities, and relative positions within both the local social field and the broader society.

In elaborating this, our intent, then, is to broaden the terrain of possible action beyond formal positions and institutions (since, as we will argue, the field is sustained by the configuration of relationships, not just a single position) and to do so while recognizing the differences those positions in a field afford different people. We will later connect this account to the pan-social view of the political in order to expand the *quantity of possible fields* within which action could be possible and *quantity of potential actors* who might be involved. Before beginning this discussion, however, we want to provide some justification for the use of Bourdieu's work.

Bourdieu's theory of social fields is immediately useful to a range of issues and problems in public administration. First, the theory is generic and scalable. In other words, it is applicable

to a range of administrative contexts and levels of analysis, ranging from the street-level individual client and front-line worker encounter to the organizational and governance-network levels to the town hall meeting. Bourdieu's (e.g. 2005) own scholarship, moreover, offers clear ways to empirically explore each these scales and their relationship to one another. Second, Bourdieu's theory lends precision—and so, we think, renewed relevance—to ideas that have been often used in public administration theory, such as Fox and Miller's (1995) concern for “public energy fields” and Mary Follett's (2004) “law of the situation.” Both are suggestive philosophical ideas, but have not been given sufficient conceptual or analytic depth that would make them more than suggestive metaphors about human relatedness in social space.

Third, as we show at the end of the paper, Bourdieu's concepts lends themselves quite clearly to *direct application* and specification for practicing administrators. That is, as we show later in the paper, it is clear how to derive explicit implications for democratic practice (or other practice) from them. This makes the account less reliant on abstract theoretical justifications and/or “gestalt” style transformations of people's worldview. Finally, and related to this, Bourdieu's multidimensional account of capitals allows for a useful integration of discursive and material accounts of social practice and, in doing so, helps to inform implications for *democratic practice*. The account here allows for a *plurality* of possible social worlds and then locates democratic practices as one possibility with specific characteristics among them. Furthermore, and while we do not do it here, the framework could be useful, furthermore, to inform *design* considerations in formal participatory democratic and citizen engagement initiatives (Bryson, Quick, Schively Slotterback, & Crosby, 2013).

Having said this, there are, of course, many other useful ways to explore the topics we discuss here and, as the paper's references themselves attest to, many other connections to be made with other bodies of scholarship.

Habitus

Bourdieu introduces the concept of habitus to describe an individual person's socially acquired, *embodied* system of dispositions and/or predispositions. It is a "deep structural" classificatory and assessment of ones' propensities and tastes that are historically constituted, institutionally grounded and socially acquired. It is manifested in outlooks, opinions, and embodied phenomena such as deportment, posture, ways of walking, sitting, speaking, etc. Building on Durkheim's view, Bourdieu sees these "internal" capacities as coming from outside the person. External social and historical conditions set limits on the production of habitus and also the "conditioned and conditional freedom it provides" (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 55). He notes that "[e]arly experiences have particular weight because the habitus tends to ensure its own constancy and its defense against change through the selection it makes within new information by rejecting information incapable of calling into question its accumulated information, if exposed to it accidentally or by force, and especially by avoiding exposure to such information" (Bourdieu, 1994, pp. 60-61). It also includes a "sense of one's place" as well as "a sense of the place of others."

To put it simply, habitus is our own personal world of common sense that seems self-evident; it is how the world "objectively-subjectively" appears to us. Bourdieu says, "When habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a 'fish in water': it does not

feel the weight of the water, and it takes the world about itself for granted” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 127). We are “perfectly adapted” for these conditions. Echoing ethnomethodology’s concern for the giving accounts and informed, locally rational action (e.g. Garfinkel, 1984/1967), habitus allows us to appreciate the fact that, while people are not rational in the sense of rational choice theory, they nevertheless usually act *reasonably* with regard to the strategies pursued in the particular social field in which habitus intersects in an effort to successfully navigate its terrain.

Social Field

A social field⁴ consists of a set of objective, historical *relations* between *positions* anchored in certain forms of power or what Bourdieu calls *capitals* (discussed below). This is not “objective” reality in the sense that is a posited object that stands apart from history, contingency, and possible transformation. Rather, in more Structuralist sense, Bourdieu’s notion of objectivity can be understood as “freely floating” partial, limited structures and connections, useful for “local orientation” on a “human scale” (Caws, 2000, p. 255). It is a system of differential relations in which various roles and positions are given significance and meaning by virtue of how they are set in relation with the other positions in the field.

More concretely, a field’s objectivity is the certain *force* impressed on people in it by virtue of the configuration of the various living habitus present and the given arrangement of positions that are opened and occupied. Familiar examples of formal positions in public administrative fields would be, of course, the elected official, city manager, department head, management analyst, etc. In a university, we could identify faculty, student, administrator,

dean, or department chair as formal positions. Families, too, may be seen as social fields with their familiar positions: mother, father, son, daughter, mother-in-law, etc. Informally, social fields may develop their own local positions like “the smart one,” “the funny one,” or “the critic.” Some are selected as targets of abuse and denigration as “others”; some garner praise and prestige; some are simply ignored or rendered invisible.

The particular configuration of the field helps to explain why certain things are more likely to occur than others, why there is a semi-permanence or stability to social ordering. A field defines a “structure of probabilities” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 18) against which certain lines of action appear more or less reasonable to specific agents (and their habitus) as specific positions. This is a profoundly *relational* notion of social space, though this space does not *reduce* to relations since the habitus active in the field is *not* constituted entirely by the local field itself but through its discrete history. This also helps to explain why some people are more “successful” in given domains: Effective, reasonable action is a product of the strategies pursued by particular *habitus* in specific fields. The more a habitus “fits” with the conditions of the social field the more familiar and easier action will be; certain forms or modes of interaction will be like breathing, while others might seem hard to make sense of or even impenetrable.

Forms of Capital

These agents and positions are distributed within the field according to the overall volume of *capital* they possess and in accordance with the composition of their capital (i.e. four forms)⁵.

Capital is a concept of capacity or power. Elsewhere we (2009) summarize these forms:

Bourdieu calls the various forms of power present in a context *capitals* and identifies several forms (1985, 1986). Economic capital names the financial resources that an actor possesses; cultural capital refers to the material assets and embodied capacities that an actor accrues with time, such as certifications or styles of behavior or speech, and that facilitate action in or access to particular fields; social capital refers to the network of interpersonal relationships in which an actor is embedded and the resources those actors can mobilize; and, finally, symbolic capital is “any property (any form of capital whether physical, economic, cultural, or social) which is perceived by social agents endowed with categories of perception which cause them to know it and to recognize it, to give it value” (1994, p. 8). (p. 459)

In an actual field, individuals are arrayed and distributed, first, according to the overall capital or power that they possess and, second, according to the composition of their capitals. These fields and deposits of capital/power are non-substantial, meaning that they are not permanent, given, or ahistorical, but rather are the consequence of historical and political contest to assert and maintain the dominance of a particular symbolic representation of the world and their attendant distributions and classifications. Nevertheless the relations impose an objective force upon us when we enter them. This field of force or power and its distribution among various positions, then, is a *social field*.

Symbolic capital warrants additional consideration as it confers *legitimacy*, a concept especially important to any discussion of democratic practice. Symbolic capital confers value to a given statement, action, or composition of capitals in a given field. In essence, Bourdieu is

saying with symbolic capital what Tom Tyler (2006, p. 375) in his work on procedural justice and the psychology of legitimacy defines as legitimacy. According to Tyler, legitimacy can be understood as “a psychological property of an authority, institution, or social arrangement that leads those connected to it to believe that it is appropriate, proper, and just.” For Bourdieu, symbolic capital “marks” positions, speech, or behavior as legitimate and establishes hierarchies and valuations within a given field, which, crucially, must be affirmed through recognition. Beyond this, Bourdieu usefully describes a process by which that marker or property is institutionalized and comes to be recognized as legitimate; a process by which “fairness,” for instance, is created as such (Catlaw & Hu, 2009). Such recognition is not a conventional, freely rational choice, however, since recognition is a product of the history through which a given habitus has been constituted. “The recognition of legitimacy is not . . . a free act of clear conscience. It is rooted in the immediate, pre-reflexive agreement between objective structures [field] and embodied structures [*habitus*]” (Bourdieu, 1991/1994, p. 14)⁶.

Symbolic capital has particular relevance when considering social fields related to government and the State (Catlaw & Hu, 2009) since, for historical reasons, the positions there are often endowed with considerable symbolic capital. To this point, Bourdieu argues that government uniquely exercises the power to “produce and impose . . . categories of thought that we spontaneously apply to all things of the social world—including the state itself” (Bourdieu, 1991/1994, p. 1). It is “in the realm of symbolic reproduction that the grip of the state is felt most powerfully” (p. 2), giving to it a kind of “meta-capital” (p. 4) that confers legitimate authority and capitals to other subjects and fields across the broader social topography and which regulates “their rate of exchange” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 114).

In the modern period, then, government possesses a monopoly “*not only over the legitimate use of physical violence, but over legitimate symbolic violence as well*” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, p. 112, n65). This is “the power to impose and maintain a particular representation of reality” (Catlaw & Hu, 2009, p. 460). More precisely, modern government has exercised the power to represent society *as a whole*, as such terms a “public interest” or “the people” point to. Governmental legitimacy crises, then, may be understood in terms of the diminishing efficacy of these governmental fields to exercise symbolic capital and their related allocation of capitals.

Before closing this discussion, there is one crucial aspect of the relationship between field, habitus, and symbolic capital that bears note. This concerns the intersection of what we might call the “local” field (e.g. a given public organization or agency, or program within one) and the distributions of symbolic capital across the broader societal topography. (We consider affects of other capitals below.) This is an issue deeply intertwined with the discussion of the political presented above. As Smith and Berg (1987/1997) argued in their classic work, *Paradoxes of Group Life*, unless otherwise addressed, the categories or symbolic distributions used in the broader society (the external frame) will find their way into how group members “internally frame” organizational issues, dynamics, and personnel. Another way of saying this is that the distribution of symbolic capital viz. various social groups and classes—i.e. the *status* and *legitimacy* they are afforded in the polity generally—affects the distribution of capitals within the organization’s local field. Thus, broad status differentials among economic classes; men and women; blacks, Latinos, Native Americans, and Anglo-Americans; sexual orientations; able-bodiedness; and so on inevitably affect the constitution of local fields and the efficacy and

perception of action and recognition within those fields. This is, we note, yet another reason to consider the work of governing across a polity's social fields.

Theorizing Democracy as a Way of Life

The foregoing discussion of habitus, field, and capital establishes several important conditions for theorizing democracy as a way of life. First, individuals arrive in given local fields with a habitus and that this habitus will be, in large measure, the product of the distribution of the economic, social, symbolic, and cultural capitals and the practices they encountered previously, like those in family, school, etc. While on the one hand this encourages precisely the integrative, pan-societal, post-sectoral image of the political described here, it also counsels humility regarding the scope of and temporal horizon within which change of a discrete habitus or ensemble of them is possible (even change that is self-evidently accepted and advanced by a person rather than coerced or imposed). Second, local fields are not isolated but are subject to broader social forces (distribution of capitals) that influence the constitution and maintenance of that field. This is, again, a rationale for taking seriously the issue of the replication of similar or consonant relationship forms across various domains (fields) of social life.

Third, we must consider generally the scope of plausible action from formal and informal positions within a social field. An important implication here is that various deposits of capital have *accumulated* within formal positions of social and institutional authority (as in formal hierarchies) and these positions may be augmented by broader societal distributions (symbolic capital) and personal histories (cultural and social capitals). So, for example, a manager's formal authority may be augmented by the symbolic capital afforded maleness in

American organizations (Stivers, 2002); the cultural capital accorded a degree from a prestigious university or way of speaking or performing habituated by social class; and social capital accumulated through a class position and interactions at that prestigious university. Conversely, one kind of cultural capital (e.g. a particular regional accent, way of dressing, physical comportment) may undermine the efficacy of another (e.g. prestigious university degree).

In this connection, while economic capital is an important resource for formal authority (e.g. controlling the budget), we also recognize the considerable *symbolic* capital that is deposited in those formal positions. The habitus occupying positions of formal authority—including those public administrators that, for example, host public deliberations—may exercise greater power to symbolically represent and constitute the reality of the field itself and to reinforce or modulate existing relations. Furthermore, even the distribution of economic capital carries important *symbolic* significance—as the organizational turmoil caused by even comparatively minor pay inequities will suggest. Hence, these formal positions are deserving of the attention that is paid them, yet we must not exaggerate this capacity and endow it with a misplaced isolation from a given field. Efficacious use of symbolic capital depends on a web of ongoing *recognition* by others within a given field.

Fourth, and following from point three, the relational quality of the field raises possibilities and questions for other positions and agents located therein. We are *all* implicated in creating and sustaining the constellation of the field (Author, 2009) and, in general, can

access possibilities for altering the topography of the field, though what is possible and how will be contingent.

It is, of course, the case that, notwithstanding the volume of symbolic and material capitals that exist in formal positions of authority, the work of people across an organization is necessary for the efficacious performance of the organization. Because of this, formal positions of authority, in an instrumental, familiar sense, are dependent on others (Emerson, 1962); people are “connected.” Additionally, the symbolic aspect of capital adds another face to the issue. Indeed, formal authority requires recognition in order forestall its use of violence, coercion or sanction. It is important to keep in mind however, that recognition of symbolic designations is not only oriented towards those in formal authority but also towards others in positions throughout the field.

Two points are instructive in this regard. First, symbolic capital may accumulate to a person in a manner seemingly disproportionate to their formal position—in part, societal distributions and status may account for this but so might local history. This endows, then, certain people with augmented capacities, often of a symbolic, field-shaping manner. Second, all people in a field can participate in the recirculation of symbolic capital though their very mode of relationship with others. That is, while broad societal forces and past histories cannot be entirely overcome in interpersonal relationships in local fields, the field can be affected (perhaps in minor, if unpredictable ways) by intentional effort. So, for example, while it may not remedy the sexism represented by unjustified differentials in pay between men and women, acknowledgment and recognition of this fact and its symbolic (and economic) cost by people in

a field may go some measure towards improving interactions and, perhaps in the longer term, addressing that circulation of economic capital.

Democratic Practice in the Social Field

We want now to integrate and restate the key threads of our argument thus far in order to prepare the way for the general guidance for a situated practice provided in the next section.

1. The political work of creating and sustaining a polity is distributed in the forms of relationships and interactions across myriad domains and realms of human life called social fields. This understanding is obscured by an image of society as divided up into political/nonpolitical sectors and spheres.
2. Those forms and interactions can be understood in descriptive sociological terms (social field, habitus, capitals) that give us a way to think about the possibilities and limitations for relationship and interactions, in general, and in specific social formal and informal settings. The concepts of habitus and capital also give us a way to index social configurations to the broader social topography and its ensemble of fields. Social fields are described as contexts and as local, but this is distinct from a field's scope and scale.
3. Democracy as a way of life is a normative orientation that one may take towards understanding and approaching action and change by a given habitus or ensemble of them within a local, situated field. That is, "democracy" names a specific possible orientation—among others—within a field by a habitus or ensemble. As we described above, "democracy" is explicit in seeking a certain texture or quality of relationship among this ensemble in a given setting. It emphasizes "openness to the other; flexible

habits of mind; a concern for individual creativity, autonomy, and personal efficacy; involvement in the tasks close at hand in our lives, which, in turn, seems to facilitate the development of a sense of self in relation to others; and close attention to the concrete empirical situation” (Rawlings & Rawlings, 2011, p. 51). We will further extend and refine this definition in the light of capitals and fields below.

4. The *work* of fabricating a democratic way-of-life is, in principle, open to *any habitus in any social field*. However, the singularity of the intersection of each unique habitus and local field invariably will inform an assessment of the realistic possibilities and scope for action. Nevertheless, analytically, the robust, non-quarantined notion of the political (point 1) and the relational nature of any field (point 2) significantly expands the spaces for assessing such possibilities *within* and *across* social fields. In other words: while a given habitus may be radically constrained in one field, the possibilities for action may be greater in another. For example, a subordinate line worker in an organization may maintain a very different position or presence within his/her home or social and community networks.
5. Finally, the account here counsels focus on viable action in specific relationships rather than broad “systemic” change—thus, if not with one’s supervisor, one’s coworkers; if not all coworkers, a specific relationship.

In light of the discussion of the dynamic of social fields and habitus, we augment the given definition of the democratic way of life and make more concrete a *democratic* practice in social fields by posing this question: What actions or efforts are more likely to enable a democratic-way-of life to emerge and be sustained?

We answer this question by offering general guidance based on our discussions so far⁷. In connection with each point, we try to be concrete about how *situated* practitioners might actualize these ideas in their own organizational, workplace settings:

1. ***Begin from difference.*** In other words, begin from the presupposition that singular individuals will bring differences rooted in their bodies and their differential capacities and personal histories (*habitus*). “Effective” action in a local field is a function of the dynamic intersection of that field and the person; it is not self-evident. Those differences also open to a multitude of other spaces, and other conditions and possibilities. We view this as a refinement of the general idea of attending to the dimensions of the concrete, empirical situation and the singularity of the other.
2. ***Circulate symbolic capital.*** For historical reasons, in modern organizations symbolic capital has accumulated in positions of formal authority. To circulate this capital is to break their monopolistic hold on it. Concretely, for those in positions of formal authority, this entails explicitly opening the mechanisms for creating the standards and valuations within which official and binding judgments and assessments are made. In other words, engage people in the creation and criticism of symbols, rhetorics, categories, and practices through which the texture of relations and valuations will be articulated (see also Dryzek, 2007). For those in formally subordinate positions, McSwite (2003) offers apt guidance: refuse “to grant deference to leaders [and] to drop all pretense that leaders do anything that is any more important than what non-leaders do” (p. 196). We can make structural sense of this guidance since, although symbolic

capital accrues to formal authority, its efficacy is contingent on the recognition afforded it by a habitus in given field.

To think about symbolic capital, in large part, is to think about how people can affect the creation of the world that they live in and the symbolic categories that organize and value (or do not value) their knowledge, skills, or experiences. In the workplace setting, the elements of autonomy and creativity that emerge from a democracy as a way of life perspective can be thought together in terms of influence over work-related tasks. This occurs in three dimensions (Adman, 2008). First, there is “job autonomy,” which speaks to an individual’s influence over her day-to-day work activity. Second, “face-to-face” interactions concern the influence an employee has in collective decision-making in her proximate workgroup or team. Finally, there is the influence employees have in “enterprise level” decision making, or in setting the overall goals, values, and direction of the organization or agency as a whole. Given an ability to influence the direction and content of their work, employees become more than functionaries carrying out orders from above and begin to view their work in a broader context. In short, increasing job autonomy is one way of recirculating symbolic capital in an organizational, workplace setting (Catlaw & Rawlings, 2010).

We appreciate that the nature of governmental fields poses potential challenges to circulating symbolic capital. These organizations typically receive their goals and mandates from elected officials and are often hierarchically structured and rule-bound. Still, a manager can pose several practical questions to the situation or field in which she

works: Where in the work process is it possible to use consensus based decision-making? If broad organizational goals are set from above, is it possible to open opportunities for collaboration at the department or group/team level? Can job autonomy be encouraged or expanded? If economic-capital issues (like compensation and benefits) are beyond the control of the manager, are procedural and interactional matters being attended to attentively⁸?

3. ***Circulate economic capital.*** Forms of capital interact with one another and are mutually enabling and constraining, and possession of adequate economic capital is an important precondition for developing, augmenting, and sustaining other capacities (Sen, 1999). Of course, what is “sufficient” is contestable—especially in a cultural milieu like contemporary America in which so much social standing, access, and valuation (i.e. symbolic capital) is determined by one’s cache of economic capital. We recognize that public managers often have limited flexibility in circulating economic capital in light of rules and regulations and the limited resources that public agencies have in the current environment.

Still, it is worthwhile considering how to circulate economic capital for several reasons. First, it is increasingly evident there are general ways to evaluate what “sufficient” may mean in absolute and relative terms. For example, the work of social epidemiologists Wilkinson and Pickett (summarized for a general audience in 2010) indicates that after an absolute level of national wealth is achieved, it is *relative* economic deprivation that impacts individual well-being. Second, this a finding echoed by research done on equity

theory in organizational psychology (Adams, 1965). In both domains, *relative* deprivations can provide an array of social and organizational pathologies. A concrete example how public administration could act on these considerations of economic capital might be the incorporation of living wage provisions in government contracts (Matthews, 2002; McCrudden, 2007).

4. ***Generate new cultural capital.*** While some cultural capital is expressed as artifacts, such as expensive art, cultural capital can be one of the hardest forms of capital to develop because of its temporal and embodied dimension. So, as one begins from difference, one must appreciate the *time* it takes to build new cultural-capital capacity. In the workplace setting, one way that we can understand the circulation of cultural capital is in terms of circulating experiences. This, of course, can mean making available various professional development opportunities, encouraging details or rotations, augmenting job autonomy, and so on. Mentorship may be one way for senior, effective members of an organization to share specific strategies for action in an organizational setting. Mentors can help to “decode” organizational culture. We can see how symbolic and cultural capitals can intersect—the opening up of participation in symbolic issues, for instance, can help to develop related aspects of cultural capital.
5. ***Generate new social capital.*** Social capital concerns the network of relationships that one has and the capacity for action that those relationships *may* enable. People with extended social networks, or contacts with especially central agents in networks, may possess enhanced capacity for action. However, it is insufficient to increase in a

quantitative sense the number of “connections” one has. Just because we know someone has 1000+ “friends” on Facebook doesn’t mean we know anything about their volume of usable social capital, what that capital may enable, or how “democratic” those relations themselves are (see note 6). Rather, as we have emphasized in our discussions of “democracy as way of life” the *quality* of relations in given social field is of paramount concern.

Within the workplace, those in formal positions of authority may wish to monitor and control lines of communication and to restrict communication among employees (“everything comes through me!”). The conventional division of labor in the workplace often encourages these kinds of actions. Together, both tend to restrict the generation of new social capital by narrowing lines of interaction and task. In considering how to address these issues, the language of formal network analysis is very useful. From the network analysis vantage, connections in an authorizing social field also may be typologized, for instance, as a *chain* (nodes arranged in a single, straight line), a *hub* or *star* (a central node connected to other peripheral nodes), or a *clique* (a very dense network in which every member of the network is connect to each through some shared convention or practice) (see Degenne & Forse, 1999; Freeman, 1978-1979). In the context of democracy as a way of life, the clique is probably the preferred diagram of relations in a given field. Though social capital is, of course, mediated by other forms, a dense network of social relationships enables the potential for personal contact with others and the cultivation of a concrete sense of the greater work of the organization. While a true clique always may not be viable, new social capital and increased density in

relations can be generated through both task-focused and nontask-focused situations that may seek to consciously bring “unconnected” people in contact with one another in order to create opportunities for interaction.

In closing this section, we raise two questions. First, in what way is this guidance “normative”? That is, towards what ends, or telos, or value does it point us, if any? We note that this guidance is prescriptive with regard to action that essentially constructs *conditions* whereby individual and collective endeavors may be developed and carried forth (see Sen, 1999). Notwithstanding the examples, it is not, however, prescriptive regarding a preferred arrangement of the elements of a field or to specify a composition of capitals. In this connection, we have chosen the verb *circulate* purposefully. While one may be tempted to read in this the verb *redistribute*, this would be misleading and inconsistent with the substance of the guidance outlined in this section. We select *circulate* to emphasize the importance of *movement* in a democratic practice concerned with creativity and generation. To specify a given composition of capitals outside a given historical social field would be fruitless and indeed undermine the point of the notion of democratic practice outlined here. By definition, then, one is agnostic regarding what must be *uncertain ends* (in the forms of decisions, policies, etc.) that a vital process of democratic practice invariably generates.

Second, it bears repeating that while the separation of capitals into these four forms is a useful analytical framework to describe the differences in power and capacity in a social field, the four forms, in practice, mediate one another. They must be thought of together in terms of a composition of capitals. In this connection, social capital, in particular, was once imagined as

an all-encompassing solution that could resolve all of society's problems. Yet it became clear that social capital could not, in and of itself, carry the freight its enthusiasts wanted it to (see, for example, Warren, Thompson, & Saegert, 2001). Social capital needed to be thought in connection with other forms and in light of the people, situations, and societal contexts in which they are configured. In similar vein, we suggest here that these capitals need to be analyzed and deployed in light of an explicit concept of political and the forms of life into which they are embedded⁹.

Conclusion

In this paper, we aim to give greater conceptual and practical precision to the idea of "democracy as a way of life." More particularly, we attempt to deepen a theoretical account of the "social topography" of such a view of post-sectoral democracy and advance a concept of democratic practice both on that topography and in such a way that is consistent with the democratic way of life. We find that Bourdieu provides a rich, flexible conceptual toolbox that enables us to specify the characteristics of the "fields" or "situations" of social interaction and, in doing so, to generate a better and more nuanced understanding of the possibility for action within these domains, or social fields. The relational nature of social fields allows us to conceptually justify expanded, albeit circumscribed, possibilities for individual agency; while democracy-as-way-of-life's robust pan-societal concept of the political allows us to expand the quantity of fields that bear on the question of governing.

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Notes

¹ In our view, the closest account to what we outline here is provided by Kooiman (2003) in his exceptional *Governing as Governance*. We have offered a sympathetic critique of Kooiman's work in Catlaw (2007).

² Important discussions of the social and economic division of labor include: Becker (1993), Durkheim (1997/1893), Marx (1967/1867), and Smith (1976/1776). The resources concerning the political division of labor in the liberal state and the public-private divide are vast. Very useful overview are Caporaso and Levine (1992) and Weintraub (1997) and, in public administration, Pesch (2005). Also germane are Pateman (1992), MacKinnon (1992), and Mills (1999).

³ For extended discussions of how social order may be maintained through the replication of consonant patterns of relationship see, Eckstein (1966) and Eckstein and Gurr (1975). A very interesting and related argument is offer by Brodtkin (2011) in her recent study of "street-level logic of choice and constraint under new managerialism" (p. i253) in a Chicago TANF office. Brodtkin argues, "In practice, the policy work of street-level organizations is political work to the extent that it effectively determines who gets what and how, thus constituting a form of policy politics (i.e., the politics of what policy should be). Consequently, managerial strategies should be understood as political when they alter informal street-level practices in ways that have substantive and distributive consequences for the production of policy, whether intentional or inadvertent . . ." (pp. i254-i255). The "who gets what and how" logic of conventional politics is evident in our account of democratic practice and the circulation of capitalism offered later in the paper.

⁴ The notion of field has a long lineage in psychoanalysis and sociology. One of the earliest usages is Lewin's (e.g., 1947) force field analysis. It was used to great effect as "public energy fields" in Fox and Miller's (1995) original *Postmodern Public Administration*, though it was dropped from the revised edition.

⁵ Bourdieu (1991) expands this list to include personal, political, physical, professional, and linguistic capitals. However these can readily be viewed as more precise forms of cultural or social capital.

⁶ Though this "production" thesis has circulated for more than a century, empirical research is limited. See, however, the recent article by McFarland and Thomas (2006) and also Authors (2011) for an overview of related literatures.

⁷ We recognize that this account skirts quite close to a distributive theory of justice. Iris Young (1990) critiques the distributive paradigm. The argument here is closer to Sen's (1999) "capacities based" approach.

⁸ The organizational justice literature (e.g. Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007) offers an instructive perspective on these questions.

⁹ One could also ask, why talk about *capitals* at all? Does the language itself conceive of relations in economic terms? As Smith and Kulynych (2002) put it: "It may be social, but why is it capital?" This is a legitimate concern. In this paper, we have adhered to Bourdieu's terminology. For his part, Bourdieu is resolutely opposite to economism and has said that the only thing he has in common with economic orthodoxy "are a number of words" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 118).