

ADAPTIVE REGIONS, DELIBERATIVE POWER SPACES AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLATFORM METHOD¹

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ABSTRACT: Neo-liberal ideologies continue to pervade the regional sciences and Australian regional and economic development policy. But is neo-liberalism still our sharpest tool for creating adaptive regions in this post-globalised age of the ‘me’ individual? A paradigm shift is needed – one that takes us beyond neo-liberalism and social capitalism and towards a renewed social liberalism. Such a transformation, it is argued, would better suit emerging policy needs in an unstable world. In this paper, the Sustainable Development Platform Method’s (SDPM) institutional governance design, core processes and knowledge sharing phases are explored to reveal their capacities for organising power structures and relationships. Using the SDPM, regional development agents can create Deliberative Power Spaces where relational and structural power transparency is increased and subjected to social scrutiny and community interaction. Increased community ownership of power within regional development praxis can facilitate regional adaptability whilst fostering increased social responsibility and re-embedded social economies.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Platform Method; regional development; Deliberative Power Spaces; social liberalism.

1. INTRODUCTION

“Life is risky, certainty is not on offer.” (Professor Lord Nicholas Stern’s address to the National Press Club, Canberra, 1st September 2010)

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The global financial crisis (GFC) and subsequent economic crises have contributed to economic decline in Northwest Tasmania, as well as many other regions throughout the world. Under neo-liberalist policies, regional economic growth has not occurred within a stable global environment and as such, conditions for growth have been anomalous (Olson, 1982). Recent economic crises have been exacerbated by natural phenomena such as droughts and floods, leading to further impacts on regions. These events have resulted in a political call for a policy shift away from neo-liberalism, further opening the socio-political space for a new policy paradigm. For regional science to meaningfully contribute to this policy milieu, regional scientists need to move away from a predominantly positivist paradigm and embrace Isard's (1951, cited in Isard, 2003, p. 41) early vision for a field of research capable of understanding 'the complex of society itself', and his later hope that regional science would incorporate political and social subsystems into regional science studies, 'namely – the analysis of the interaction of decision makers' (Isard, 2003, p. 189). In this paper, notions of power-over and power-to are contextualised within a socio-regional science discourse to argue the case for regional development policy and praxis to embrace social liberalism and notions of social responsibility as a means to build regional adaptability. The Sustainable Development Platform Method (SDPM) developed by Campbell-Ellis (2009) and Campbell-Ellis and McCall (2010), and its newly developed Deliberative Power Spaces (DPS) are presented as tools capable of increasing regional adaptability within a relational and evolutionary regional science paradigm.

2. CRISES AND REGIONAL DECLINE IN NORTHWEST TASMANIA

The Circular Head municipality in Northwest Tasmania has been described as containing a resilient community (R. Forrest, pers. comm. 4/10/2011; T. McCall, pers. comm. 12/10/2011) that has faced a barrage of emotional, natural and economic crises in recent years. It can be argued that the Circular Head community features high levels of social capital but low levels of human capital, particularly university educated individuals (Nelson, 2008). The municipality has a population of approximately 8,000 people, made up of many tight knit sub-communities which are known to come together under crisis circumstances (Hine, 2006 in Grace and Allan, 2006). The Circular

Head community has also been described by many as parochial and isolated (pers. obs.), characteristics that may be both values and barriers. In 2009/10 the latent peripheral impacts of the GFC contributed to the downsizing of the McCain Foods vegetable processing facility in the town of Smithton, resulting in the loss of 150 jobs. Following the McCain Foods downsizing event, flooding caused widespread damage to vegetable crops throughout the region. In 2011, an announcement was made by Gunns Ltd, a major timber company, that it would sell its Smithton Mill; all 60 jobs are expected to be lost (ABC News, 2011).

The region has experienced multiple rise and decline trends but recent events have been described as the areas 'first major economic shock' (M. Buckby, pers. comm. 12/10/11). Early rise periods resulted from endogenous innovation and industry development. Endogenous activities, however, soon began to attract exogenous investments and subsequent exogenous ownership. Exogenous companies such as McCain Foods, Ta Ann, Gunns Ltd, and Murray-Goulburn have in recent history, provided investment capital for local enterprise activities. Exogenous ownership has placed regional actors, particularly those in the agri-foods sector, as price takers rather than price makers (Wells, 2011).

The policy problem within the Circular Head municipality is not one of labour shortages or access to markets and, it is questionable if it is one of innovation capacity or entrepreneurship, both of which have featured strongly in Circular Head's history. The policy problem may well be more akin to notions of complacency, coupled with exogenous ownership and a sense of local powerlessness; but also one of 'groupthink', whereby the local community acts as a cohesive group that will seek consensus and avoid critical evaluation of alternatives to avoid group conflict (Janis, 1982, in Parsons, 1995). First, exogenous ownership brings with it issues of relational network embeddedness and firm-scale decision making processes, particularly those relating to location and operating costs. In essence, Circular Head has become less competitive when compared with other comparable regions around the world, due in part to complacency resulting from a reliance on comparative natural advantages. In response to this diminished competitiveness, some local farmers are trialling the SDPM as a tool to identify and exploit regional innovation systems and associated regional development opportunities.

Secondly, the geographical isolation of the Circular Head region in far Northwest Tasmania, may have contributed to Janis' (1982, in Parsons, 1995) groupthink conditions and the creation of what Etzioni (1968, cited in Parsons, 1995, p. 380) described as a 'community-of-assumptions'. The Circular Head municipality arguably features parochial decision-making and leadership characteristics that manifest as Janis' (1982, in Parsons, 1995) blind consensus to realities held by a highly cohesive community with many shared assumptions. This blind consensus, as Janis (1982, in Parsons, 1995) argued, results from groupthink viewpoints, non-critical appraisal and an irrational fear of exogenous influence. Janis' (1982, in Parsons, 1995) simplified model of groupthink is presented in Figure 1 below.

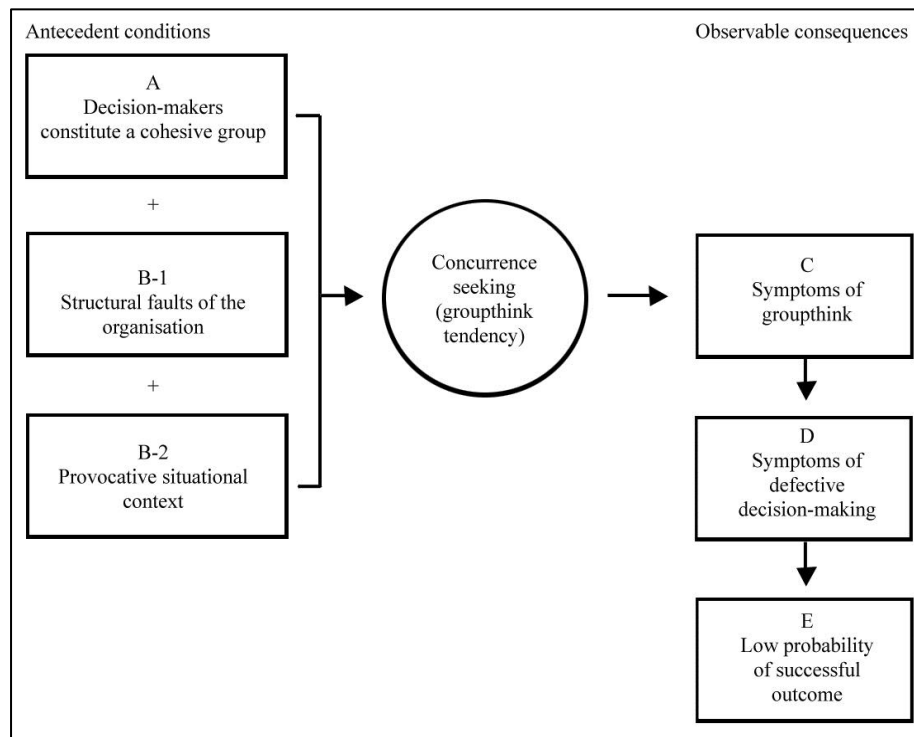


Figure 1. Groupthink.

Source: Janis and Mann (1977) and Janis (1982) cited in Parsons (1995, p. 345).

Janis's (1982, cited in Parsons, 1995) notion of groupthink is contextually significant, and policy and praxis relevant. Groupthink provides a framework for understanding local values, discourse and power relations in the Circular Head municipality. According to Janis, groupthink impacts on decision-making processes and results in the suppression of independent and alternative thinking. As a regional policy problem, groupthink attitudes construct barriers to regional development initiatives and constrain the interpretation and inclusion of decision alternatives. Although groupthink contributes to community cohesiveness and, therefore, resilience, it impacts on the availability of human capital contributions and, hence, regional adaptive capacities. Again, the SDPM contains mechanisms capable of overcoming groupthink symptoms by providing an analysis framework for the systematic appraisal of alternative development platforms.

A region's ability to adapt and engage competitively within a post-globalised market economy can affect rise and decline trends that have significant impacts on regional communities such as those within Circular Head. The emergence of post-globalism results not from market failures but, according to Saul (2005, pp. 222-224), as a result of fragmenting political relationships and alliances and a return to nation-state sovereignty – as demonstrated in the post-GFC period. The emergence of the region as central to post-global economies has significant repercussions for regional development policy and praxis as well as for regional science.

3. THE POST-GFC POLICY MILIEU

The Australian response to the GFC focused on 'restoring the stability of national financial systems' (Sherry, 2009). Political responses to the GFC have attempted to re-establish the role of government as Keynesianesque 'big' government and social capitalism has emerged as the dominant policy rhetoric with then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd claiming that neo-liberalism was nothing more than 'personal greed dressed up as economic policy' (Rudd, 2009, cited in R. Taylor, 2009).

In this post-GFC period, the search for a new approach to fiscal management is in play, one which features systemic and stable economic controls (Konings, 2010). Shifting societal trajectories continue to move away from neo-liberal ideals of free and rational actors. Recent trends have featured a reduction in individual motives for economic success and an

increased focus on well-being (Giddens, 1998). Questions about productivity and ageing populations, increasing socio-economic disparities and of tree-changing and downshifting workforces (Giddens, 1998) are proving difficult for neo-liberal approaches whether old or new.

To declare neo-liberalism dead, however, is far from accurate (Janda, 2010; Ergas, 2010). Neo-liberalism sought to free markets from government intervention, rendering government as passive and powerless (Porter, 1990, in Parsons, 1995), whilst neo-liberal policy increasingly turned to interventionist social policy approaches (Peck and Tickell, 2002) that encouraged government influence on societal values and norms (Giddens, 1998, p. 12). A balance to socio-economic management that provides opportunities for collaboration within market economies and that can deliver community well-being benefits may better suit emerging policy needs. Such an approach that better equalises relations between public and private sectors, could 'create spheres of freedom' (Polanyi, 1944, p. 255) capable of re-embedding the economy as a social and institutional process as advocated by Polanyi (1957, in Cahill, 2010).

Polanyi (1944, p. 163) claimed that the 'laws of the market' severed organic transactions from social economies and resulted in disembedded economies that failed to maintain the social fabric of society, replacing it with market institutionalism (Polanyi, 1944, p. 179). Polanyi was optimistic that social economies would, through protectionist mechanisms, reassert their dominance as the guiding social object and that self-regulating market economies would slip away into history (Polanyi, 1944, p. 250).

Neo-liberalism and the market society, however, did not fade away (Marginson, 1997) and the pursuit of individual commodity rewards, expressed through increasing consumer spending rates, is arguably stronger than ever in this age of the 'me' individual (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2009). This does not place Polanyi's call for re-embedded social economies in the ideological waste basket. Neo-liberalism has been and continues to be, fraught with implementation difficulties among which are market and system failures surrounding Polanyi's social consequences and increasingly problematic risk management complications. According to Eddy (2009) neo-liberalism failed as it focuses on wealth creation for elites rather than broad scale advantages for society.

Achieving the social outcomes that Polanyi called for, which could underpin a reframing of regional development policies, requires a rethinking

of community engagement and participation approaches, the institutionalisation of socially embedded markets and, the emergence of a renewed social liberalism better suited to current regional development needs. Social liberalism seeks to place democratic freedoms before market freedoms whilst arguing that markets featuring minimal government intervention have a significant role to play in managing market failures and ensuring a fair provision and distribution of wealth and power (Howarth, 2007). Social liberals believe that decentralised decision-making and minimised market controls encourage innovation but that market failures (especially asymmetries of information and transaction costs) must be addressed through democratically legitimate government interventions (Howarth, 2007).

According to social liberal theory, inequitable power concentrations can result from a lack of legitimate democratic processes as well as from concentrated wealth inequities which together, threaten individual political freedoms (Howarth, 2007). Social liberals advocate the principle of equal opportunity (Sawer, 2003) and participatory and deliberative democracy notions within a 'fair' and minimally controlled market and political system. These ideals combine with non-market pursuits such as community well-being, standing in stark contrast to the emphasis of neo-liberalism on free markets over political freedoms and, the social capitalist ideal of government-centred macroeconomic control and government sponsored market interventions, stimulation and regulation.

Novel socio-regional methods and regional development policies and tools are needed to provide regional outcomes capable of establishing and developing conditions for local socio-economic responsibility which support regional sustainability and adaptability. Policies can better suit regional community needs if they are able to provide sustainable development outcomes that are locally constructed and maintained by individual socio-economic agents. Such an approach can be located within a socio-regional discourse, whereby collaborative innovation processes provide social returns that assist build regional adaptability, construct new and dynamic regional advantages and promote regional development that is based on endogenous and nested collective action and social responsibility principles. For regional scientists to participate in the post-GFC policy space, a return to the very roots of regional science and Isard's (2003) vision for the future of regional science is required. This shift entails an expansion from the economic and geographical dominance of regional science (Plane, 1994) that goes beyond

the ‘new regional science’ and into a free-thinking amalgamation of Cooke, Uranga and Etxebarria’s (1998) evolutionary regional science and Bathelt and Gluckler’s (2003) relational economic geography.

4. CAN REGIONAL SCIENCE ADAPT TO REGIONAL NEEDS?

The early history of regional science is presented in Isard (2003), whilst a less detailed but broader chronological history is offered in Boyce (2004). In addition there are various accounts of the history of regional science, or at least components of this history, with a notable critical overview provided by Isserman (1995). Within these accounts, regional science emerged in the 1950s from an interest by regional researchers in input-output analysis and its effects on industrial and population location and regional development matters (Isard, 2003). From its earliest days, regional science sought to understand not only location and regional matters (Isard, 2003), but ‘the complex of society itself’ (Isard 1951, cited in Isard, 2003, p. 41). As a participant at the Interdisciplinary Regional Research Meeting held in Chicago on the 6th September 1951, Firey (1951, cited in Isard, 2003, p. 38) stated he was ‘interested in social organisation and control as it pertains to spatial patterns of land use and regional resource management’. He brought a sociological perspective and interest in power, society and regional resource exploitation, to the emerging economically dominated regional studies field. From the outset, it was asserted that regional research should be multi-disciplinary, with a particular emphasis on economics and the social sciences.

In an early newsletter to interested regional researchers, now referred to as regional scientists, Isard (1954, cited in Isard, 2003, pp. 74-75) wrote that the interests of members of the regional research group included, amongst other things, ‘the interaction of cultural, social, political, economic and geographic factors’. According to Isard (2003, p. 118), the Regional Science Research Institute sought to conduct ‘multidisciplinary studies of the spatial and locational interaction and interdependence of economic, social, political and environmental phenomena associated with urban development and regional growth’, from which the Institute was, amongst other aims, to provide ‘advice to government and academic institutions on policy and research issues’. A core focus of regional science research was to be the development of new understandings of ‘regional structure and function’ as well as

developing a better understanding of the ‘possibilities for economic and social development’ (Isard, 2003, pp. 119 and 121).

Isard (2003, p. 188) further asserted that regional science ‘is concerned with the study of man and the spatial forms which his continuous interaction with, and adaptation to, physical environment take. Regional science concentrates its attention upon human behaviour and institutions’. Isard (2003, pp. 188-189) argued that regional science can progress regional studies to expand on the sociological interests of communication processes and mechanisms, to include ‘all interregional bonds... and exchange[s] of all kinds’ to develop an ‘interregional model which expresses all kinds of linkages in proper relation to one another’. Isard (2003, p. 189) sought to incorporate political and social subsystems into regional science studies, ‘namely – the analysis of the interaction of decision makers (individuals, organisations and institutions) and their interdependent decision making in situations of conflict over policy and other joint actions’.

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of Papers by Discipline. Source: Mera (2004, p. 354).

Meetings/Journal	Economic	Spatial	Social	Other
Papers and Proceedings of RSA 1958/1959	59.4	40.6	0.0	0.0
Papers of RSA 1970/1971/1972	46.2	41.0	10.3	2.5
North American RSA Meetings 2000	62.3	23.2	13.2	1.3
WRSa Meetings 2002	54.2	29.2	14.2	2.5
Papers in Regional Science 2001/2002	55.6	25.0	19.4	0.0
Annals of RS 2001/2002	62.5	31.3	3.1	3.1
RURDS 2001/2002	67.7	25.8	6.4	0.0

Mera’s (2004) search of regional science journals (see Table 1 above), however, indicates that the contribution from disciplines other than economics and geography is lacking – particularly the policy and social science (including qualitative research) contributions that were identified as desirable in the early days of regional science research. According to Quigley

(2001), regional scientists began to vocalise concerns for the future of the field as early as 1991 whilst Mera (2004) claimed that concerns were expressed as early as 1959 by Rodwin. It was not until 1994, however, that a diagnosis of regional science as being 'in a state of crisis' was delivered by Bailly and Coffey (1994, p. 3). Bailly and Coffey's (1994) diagnosis asserted that regional science lacked relevance, being unable to address real world problems and was fraught with a 'narrowness of perspective'. The field of regional science today appears to remain constrained within a positivist paradigm, unable to embrace the sociological aspirations of some of its founding members, called for again by Domanski (1983), who has argued for greater inclusion of social values and social context in regional science inquiries. As Bailly and Coffey (1994) noted, a paradigm shift is required, one that embraces post-positivism, critical realism and constructivism amongst other approaches.

Holland (1976, p. 29 and 274) attests that regional science has entered 'an intellectual cul-de-sac', arguing that orthodox regional science methods are unrealistic and require 'a more divergent approach' that is inclusive of a 'social and political context'. Barnes (2003, p. 21) has added that the field of regional science is too focused on the "'S" science part of regional science... effectively arrest[ing] regional science's development' and resulting in an 'unreflective' discipline 'inured to change'. Barnes (2003, 2004) further argues that regional science has failed to adequately emphasise the region and the socio dimensions of places. Barnes (2003, p. 20) also claims that regional scientists have failed to move away from 'rationalist, formal, and universal explanations' to embrace 'relativistic, eclectic, and local' explanations of regional matters, thus ignoring the contributions to regionalism provided by 'post-structuralism, feminism, post-Marxism, and post colonialism'. Massey (1985, cited in Bathelt and Gluckler, 2003, p. 122) has further criticised regional science for its 'obsession' with spatial regularities, arguing that 'there are no such things as purely spatial processes; there are only particular social processes operating over space'. Additional commentary on the rise, decline and future of regional science can be found in two volumes of the journal *International Regional Science Review* published in 1995 where 32 authors debated the relevance of the field, as well as further analyses in the works of important contributors including Hägerstrand (1989), Gibson (1994), Plane (1994), Anas (1994), Bailly, Coffey and Gibson (1996), Cooke, Uranga and Etxebarria (1998), Rees

(1999), Markusen (2002), Bathelt and Gluckler (2003), Mera (2004), M. Taylor (2009) and Lahr (2009).

The paucity of research on the sociological dimensions of power in regions is further evidenced by the lack of attention placed on sociological forms of power in the regional science literature. A search for the term “power” in the Regional Science Association International’s journals *Papers in Regional Science* and *Regional Science Policy and Practice*, for example, resulted in three uses of the term power in titles with only one of these referring to power in a sociological sense. An abstract search of these two journals resulted in 13 uses of the term power in a sociological sense. With *Papers in Regional Science* being the Regional Science Association International’s oldest journal, having published articles since 1955, these results indicate a lack of inclusion of notions of power-over and power-to within the regional science field. If regional scientists are to work towards developing Isard’s (2003, p. 189) vision of an interregional model that ‘expresses all kinds of linkages in proper relation to one another’, then studies of relational power and the structures they are framed within, as well as the spatial and locational factors that influence power relations, are necessary.

The failure of regional science and regional research in general, to embrace a sociological power discourse as advocated by Firey (1951, in Isard, 2003) and more recently by Domanski (1983), Markusen (2002), Hudson (2007) and M. Taylor (2009), amongst others, has resulted in a significant gap in the regional science literature and an inadequate understanding of regions. By moving regional research away from ‘pure’ geography and into an economic sphere, regional scientists placed regions into a sociological framework whereby the study of regions became the study of regions through a societal lens, albeit a mostly quantitative and positivist lens. Questions that regional scientists have shied away from, such as those pertaining to institutional power structures and power relations, as well as the impact of geographical and spatial factors on sociological notions such as groupthink, amongst others, are central to a more complex understanding of regional matters and in particular, regional development and its associated sociological dimensions (Hudson, 2007). Such inquiries take shape as contextual phonetic research in a Lasswellian sense, asking questions such as ‘who gets what, when [and] how’ (Laswell, 1936, cited in Parsons, 1995, p. 246) or, as Flyvbjerg has suggested, ‘[w]here are we going with [regional development in Circular Head]? Who gains, and who loses, and by which mechanisms of

power? Is it desirable? What should be done?’ (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 145). This approach involves a study of values and power, with an emphasis on political, economic and socio-cultural inquiry within a spatial context.

Regional science, in spite of early ambitions and ideals, has left itself exposed to criticism based on its failure to adequately include non-quantitative methods in its modelling of regional processes that, since the 1970s, have been increasingly recognised as socially and politically complex (Aoyama *et al.*, 2011). One of regional science’s greatest critics has been Harvey (2009 (1973)) who attempts to include notions of power in regional analysis. Harvey (2009 (1973)) has argued that capitalism shapes the elements and relational spaces within itself to ensure its own permanently revolutionising reproduction, and that power lies at the centre of this iterating force. According to Harvey (2009 (1973), p. 215), new modes of economic integration and market institutionalisation are perpetuated through legitimising processes based on violence and the ‘power to coerce’. The ideological superstructure of society, he adds (*idem*, p. 215), contains correlative features of status and class which are projected into ‘patterns of political power, definite supportive institutions and states of social consciousness’. These factors can be unravelled to reveal social and economic organisation, through investigations into the reciprocal, redistributive and market exchange factors (Harvey, 2009 (1973)). This delving into sociological power discourses is missing in the regional sciences that have remained constrained by the positivist paradigm previously described.

Although terms such as ‘control’, ‘inequality’ and ‘influence’ are frequently featured in the literature of regional research, and ‘power’ to a lesser extent, direct inquiries into power relations are largely lacking. Aoyama *et al.* (2011, p. 11), recently stated that ‘socio-cultural contexts structuring economies can be viewed as compilations of Networks which are horizontal, flexible and infused with power relations’. Peck (2005, p. 162) has called for increasing dialogue between social-constructivists and economic geographers, amongst others to foster a better understanding the ‘non-economic parameters of the economy’, particularly institutional phenomena, socio-economic relationships and their effects. According to Peck (2005, p. 166), a valuable shift in economic geography would be to ‘engage more seriously with theoretical and substantive issues around the social construction of markets and of economies more generally’. Economic geographers, according to Aoyama *et*

al. (2011, p. 183), have gone some way towards achieving this through extended economic sociology and organisational theory inquiries into ‘understand[ing] how social networks influence small enterprise and regional development processes, how network structures reflect social inequalities and how networks evolve through social interactions between individuals’.

Bathelt and Gluckler (2003, p. 118), have argued that the ‘economic and the social are fundamentally intertwined’; drawing on the work of Stark (2000) they add that these intertwined factors are ‘dimensions of the same empirical reality which should be studied in a dialogue of perspectives rather than in mutual exclusion and reductionist prioritization’ (*ibid.*). Bathelt and Gluckler (2003) have also argued for a relational re-conceptualisation of economic geography and by default regional science, proposing that this transitional re-conceptualisation of regional science and economic geography into a relational economic geography, would focus on ‘economic actors and their action and interaction’, seeing economic action as a ‘process, situated in time and place’ (p. 123 and p. 126). Through the lens, albeit modified, of Storper’s (1997) ‘holy trinity’ of *technologies, organisations and territories*, they suggest that ‘economic and social processes and their interactions and power relations can be analysed’ (*idem*, p. 130). They offer, as an adaptation of Storper’s holy trinity, their four ‘ions’ of relational economic geography, being ‘organization, evolution, innovation, and interaction’ which are subject to contextuality, contingency of economic action and path-dependency (*idem*, pp. 129-131).

Although Bathelt and Gluckler (2003, p. 129) propose that an analysis of structures, interactions and power relations is needed, and that the ‘strategies and objectives of economic agents and their relations with other agents and institutions’ would become ‘the core of the analysis’ in relational economic geography; a geographical Storperesque lens is useful and valuable but insufficiently suited to understanding the predominantly sociological dimensions of power relations. It remains, therefore, that economic geographers and regional scientists have not adequately investigated notions of ‘why’ agents participate in regional development and economic activities, nor have they adequately investigated the structural forms of power within network relationships (Peck, 2005, in Aoyama *et al.*, 2011).

Through an actor/network theory perspective, some sociologists and economic geographers have incorporated an anthropological and sociological dimension to regional studies whereby it is argued that economic agents

cannot be separated from their actions as their actions are ‘embedded in multiform and multiscale relationships’ (Murdoch, 1998, in Aoyama *et al.*, 2011, p. 184). Power is expressed in these relationships through ‘micro-social interactions and negotiations [that] construct economic spaces, interconnections and interdependencies’ (ibid).

Although regional science has provided a valuable geo-spatial and locational analysis framework to regional research, it lacks the complexity and ‘messiness’ that current regional policy approaches can benefit from. Regional science can contribute to this policy void by adding a qualitative socio-relational and spatial-relational approach to regional research that fits within the evolutionary regional science approach called for by Cooke, Uranga and Etxebarria (1998). In particular, regional science research is needed that is more attuned to understanding the interdependence of economic, social, political and environmental phenomena and associated power relations in decision making processes; which as Isard (2003, p. 118) hoped, regional scientists could then provide as ‘advice to government and academic institutions on policy and research issues’.

Cooke, Uranga and Etxebarria’s (1998, p. 1563) evolutionary regional science is linked to social and evolutionary economics and takes account of ‘processes of agglomeration, trust building, innovation, institutions, and learning in regional systems’ as well as ‘hard and soft infrastructures, and the cultural superstructure’. They claim (idem, p. 1564) that ‘innovation’, for which social interactions are critical, ‘accounts for a very large amount, perhaps 80-90% of the growth in productivity in advanced economies’. They argue (idem, p. 1580) that:

the systemic dimension of innovation at regional level relies upon a combination of a well-endowed organisational infrastructure and an associative superstructure composed of an embedded civil society capable of activating social capital. Institutionally speaking, embeddedness will reside in the collective social order which evolves according to an informal microconstitution composed of microregulatory conventions, habits, routines, and rules of the game. Systemic innovation is facilitated by the constructive interaction of the institutional order and the organisational infrastructure.

The transformative capacity of these social interactions, which are capable of shaping the cultural superstructure of society and which, according to Cooke *et al.* (1998), are geographically concentrated, should not be underestimated in a regional development context. Socio-cultural interactions and the agents involved in them should, therefore, be considered central to future regional research (Bathelt and Gluckler, 2003) and should be explored in a free-thinking evolutionary regional science.

Notions of power contained within the power discourses, are capable of providing an analysis framework for regional development policy and praxis that can compliment socio-regional research and add richness and depth to evolutionary regional science. Of particular interest for future research are the notions of social and human capitals, embeddedness, and trust in institutional networks as well as what role power plays within social relationships.

5. POWER AND ADAPTIVE REGIONS

To understand the power relations aspect of the above call for a transformation of regional science into a free-thinking form of evolutionary regional science, an understanding of power, particularly 'how people are affected by the outcomes of issues' pertaining to power is essential (Lukes, 1986, p. 9). An understanding of power 'is usually thought to be indispensable for moral or ethical appraisals of political systems' (Dahl, 1986, p. 38). Through an understanding of power, power relations may be modified (Dahl, 1986) to increase opportunities for human benefits that result from the (re)distribution of power. Given the federal government's provision of much regional development funding in Australia and associated policy domination, the benefits that can accrue to regions are arguably biased by political motives and decision-making processes that may further entrench regional disparities. Benefits and political bias, however, are not the only factor of concern for studies of regional disparity. Within the context of the Circular Head municipality, the role of endogenous political influence and the role of groupthink as a social phenomenon are arguably significant.

In a Foucauldian sense (see Foucault, 1978), regional development as a power-based social activity is systemically affected by social structures comprised of individual agents (although individual agents may be affected by group psychology conformity pressures) that shape and are shaped by

agent-based iterative processes. The extent to which individual agents are capable of influencing and changing socio-economic structures is complex, unstable and contextual but it is through the actions of individuals that social action occurs (Weber, in Giddens, 1984). Increasing the (re)distribution of power and equality between individuals and within regional development structures can break down the institutionalised power enclosures that shape time space power relations, organising power values and compliance (Hägerstrand, 1975, in Giddens, 1984, p. 147).

Adding a Bourdieuesque conceptualisation of power (see Bourdieu, 1972) and its effects, Giddens (1984, p. xxv) argued that the situational context of social encounters are not only structurally influenced but are framed within regionalised settings that 'sustain meaning in [agent-based] communicative acts'. These social settings, however, are 'intersocietal' and are not constrained by 'time-space edges' (Giddens, 1984, p. xxvii) – in other words, as with Foucault's (1986 (1976), pp. 233-234) conceptualisation of power as being web-like and everywhere, the social location within which structuration occurs is not clearly defined. This cross-regional setting of social encounters suggests that power relations within regional development are not only net-like but may also be hierarchically non-linear and somewhat chaotic, crossing socio-boundaries between the macro and micro frames. Giddens (1984, p. 2) argued that social activities, such as those within a regional development context, are 'self-reproducing' and are not 'brought into being by social actors but continually recreated by them via the very means whereby they express themselves as actors'. It is through such structured iterating activities that agents 'reproduce the conditions that make these activities possible' (Giddens, 1984, p. 2).

The desirability for increased community-based involvement and control of regional development socio-processes is supported by calls for the continued devolution of power in public governance (Hilder, 2006) and increased public ownership of outcomes (Rankine *et al.*, 2005). The devolution of powers within a groupthink dominated socialscape, however, may require that regional development practitioners and theorists apply a cautious approach to discourse language and a deep understanding of community beliefs, values, assumptions and ideologies. Gaventa (1980, p. 15) argued that understanding the third dimension of power requires 'locating the power processes behind the social construction of meanings and patterns', and it is through such an understanding that the design of devolutionary and

participatory processes can occur. According to Gaventa and Valderrama (1999, p. 7), ‘participation is about power and its exercise by different social actors in the spaces created for the interaction’ but that the ‘control of the structure and processes for participation – defining spaces, actors, agendas, procedures – is usually in the hands [of] governmental institutions [and professional development agents] and can become a barrier for effective involvement of citizens’.

Traditional development approaches too often fail to achieve participation that is free of power inequities, reinforcing top-down, elitist policy agendas through project and programme-based activity resourcing (Eversole, 2010). Rather than implement participation-based theories and development models aimed at empowering regional communities, many professional development agents are disempowered by resource constraints – particularly staffing and funding limitations, funding and organisational vulnerability to politically driven restructuring and policy priorities and, a lack of public interest or understanding of development activities and objectives (Beer *et al.*, 2003).

According to Eversole (2010, p. 2) ‘[p]articipation is ultimately a discourse’ that under current policy trajectories, seeks to facilitate increased involvement of ‘communities of people as key agents of development’. The participatory nature of development, however, is a contested theory with Taylor and Mayo (2008, cited in Eversole, 2010, p. 3) having suggested that participation is an unattainable ‘elusive goal’ due to the top-down dominance of policy and resourcing constraints. Craig and Porter (1997, cited in Eversole, 2010, p. 7), however, asserted that development ‘professionals and organisations’ utilise ‘practices and processes which are primarily instruments of control, rather than of participation’. Eversole (2010, p. 9) has posited that the ‘problem of participation is not that participation is impossible to achieve; but rather, that it is impossible to achieve for others’. Eversole (2010, p. 10) further adds that:

the challenge of participation is about how to become participants in our own right: choosing to move across institutional and knowledge terrains to create new spaces for communities and organisations to ‘participate’ together.

Eversole (2010) calls for the remaking of participation, ‘reframing the interactions among communities, professionals, and institutions into a truly

‘participatory space’. To achieve this participatory space, Eversole (2010) has made three suggestions. (1) Expert and experience-based knowledge must both be viewed as valid and legitimate and that for participation to be community oriented, community knowledge must be included. (2) Institutionalised participatory spaces are the result of community driven processes that become the ‘institutions through which communities work’ rather than top-down initiatives. These processes can frame participatory spaces according to the interests of those newly created institutional power bases. Development practitioners are, therefore, transformed into ‘participants in other people’s processes’ (Eversole, 2010, p. 9). (3) Community embedded development practitioners, or rather ‘translation agents’, transform knowledge and institutional spaces to be more inclusive and accessible to all participants (Eversole, 2010, p. 11).

The SDPM provides a community oriented development tool through which power can be (re)distributed to create DPS that aim to increase community participation and process ownership whilst being inclusive of public sector agents.

6. THE SDPM AS A TOOL FOR CREATING ADAPTIVE REGIONS

Lukes (1986, p.5) posited that ‘to have power is to be able to make a difference to the world’. As a policy and praxis tool designed to achieve community-based sustainable development outcomes, the SDPM aims to facilitate such a difference. This difference manifests through collective processes built on deliberation that promote collaboration, networked knowledge sharing and, innovation outcomes. The SDPM aims to increase community ownership of relational and structural power within regional development praxis to facilitate regional adaptability. Through power relations that are enabling and collaborative, the SDPM encourages a return to socially and institutionally embedded economies and increased social responsibility. In its principal form, the SDPM aims to network and embed institutional relationships to overcome unique regional dilemmas and innovation inhibitors whilst developing inimitable and non-substitutable resource configurations. The SDPM involves nine phases and is summarised in Table 2 below.

The application of the SDPM suits situations where the exploitation of resources are sub-optimal due to: a failure by local entrepreneurs and others

to instigate and develop successful networks of cooperative innovation; a lack of effective knowledge management systems, and; a lack of path dependant organisational and governance capabilities (Campbell-Ellis and McCall, 2010).

The SDPM provides a mechanism whereby resources can be optimally exploited to provide a source of revenue (through levies) for resources management and community development initiatives (Campbell-Ellis and McCall, 2010). It is through the institutional governance design, core processes and knowledge sharing phases that the SDPM provides mechanisms for the (re)distribution of power and the creation of DPS.

7. DELIBERATIVE POWER SPACES

Within a relational and structuralist regional development context, power can be conceived as both an enabler and as a coercive/domineering mechanism. Such a definition adopts Arendt's (1970, cited in Lukes, 2005, p. 32) conceptualisation of power as a social construct that is 'never the property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together'. According to Arendt (1970, cited in Lukes, 2005, pp. 32-33) and importantly for regional development, power 'springs up whenever people get together and act in concert' and 'far from being the means to an end, is actually the very condition enabling a group of people to think and act in terms of the means-end category'.

Arendt's conceptualisation of power as socially constructed and empowering, as with the feminist view of power as being 'transformative' (Wartenberg, 1990, cited in Lukes, 2005, p. 84), lies at the core of the SDPM which seeks to enable and empower regional development agents through endogenous resourcing and collaborative action. Pitkin (1972, cited in Allen, 2011, p. 3), supported the argument that power is enabling, having suggested that 'power is a something – anything – which makes or renders somebody able to do, capable of doing something. Power is capacity, potential, ability, or wherewithal'. Although Arendt and Pitkin isolate power as being empowering and not domineering, power within the Australian regional development context exists within a complex web, manifesting itself in multiple ways that are empowering and domineering.

Table 2. Sustainable Development Platform Method Phases. Source: Adapted from Campbell-Ellis and McCall (2010).

SDPM PHASE	ACTIONS
(1) Sustainability Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent assessment of resources sustainability • Audit of resource conditions (socio-cultural, economic and environmental) • Identify resource condition indicators and action triggers • Identify environmental management actions
(2) Comparative Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-regional comparison of natural and human resource conditions against sustainable development and RIS theories • Detailed background study of regional assets, industries, communities, academic institutions and government participation
(3) Community / Network Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration of potential network(s) that could participate in and contribute to the SDPM approach • Detailed stakeholder analysis and SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis
(4) Institutionalised Governance Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking of self-identified and research identified stakeholders and leaders • Nesting within local, regional and institutional settings • Defining governance structure and associated working rules • Defining rewards and penalty systems
(5) Futurescaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistical and tacit identification of future megatrends • Analysis of existing and possible trajectories based on network and regional capabilities
(6) Platforms Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of platform opportunities inherent within regional resource constraints and associated capacity and interest of network participants to explore individual platform opportunities

Note: Table continued on following page.

Table 2 (Continued). Sustainable Development Platform Method Phases.
Source: Adapted from Campbell-Ellis and McCall (2010).

SDPM PHASE	ACTIONS
(7)RIS Conceptualisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of likely network participants and associated institutional resource configurations to pursue a specific RIS platform • Creation of a shared individual platform vision to support and guide the identification and definition of core processes associated with a particular RIS platform
(8) Core Process Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of processes that deliver a unique RIS platform • Definition of individual responsibilities and tasks to achieve the RIS platform • Definition of how sustainability indicators will be reported against monitoring criteria • Definition of individual property rights and how they will be assigned and enforced (aligned with the broader working rules) • Definition of levy duties to fund socio-cultural, economic and environmental management actions identified in the first phase
(9) Knowledge Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages new learning and knowledge creation and knowledge dissemination • Feeds into phases one and six to ensure that knowledge is distributed at critical phases of the SDPM process

The ways in which power is manifested, Saar (2010, cited in Allen, 2011, p. 5) recently argued, ‘remains individualistic’ whereby ‘power operates on individuals as individuals, in the form of a ‘bringing to action’ or external determination’. Saar’s individualist notion of power exists within the relational structures where power affected agents operate. By contextualising Saar’s claim within a relational and structural framework, power as power-to and power-over can be integrated with each other to provide a more holistic view of power and how it manifests within the regional development context as well as under groupthink conditions.

Understanding how groupthink and power enclosures affect regional development is critical to understanding how power, in whatever forms it may take, can be (re)distributed and applied within the regional development setting using the SDPM. French and Raven's schema for power analysis provides a useful lens to reveal power-over relations and affects. They identify five common and important bases of domineering power which include (French and Raven, 1959, pp. 155-156):

- (1) reward power, based on P's [person affected by power-over agent, O] perception that O has the ability to mediate rewards for him;
- (2) coercive power, based on P's perception that O has the ability to mediate punishments for him;
- (3) legitimate power, based on the perception by P that O has a legitimate right to prescribe behaviour for him;
- (4) referent power, based on P's identification with O;
- (5) expert power, based on the perception that O has some special knowledge or expertness.

French and Raven define power in terms of influence that results in 'changes in behaviour, opinions, attitudes, goals, needs, values and all other aspects of the person's psychological field' and that these changes can result from inducement by another agent, 'a restraining force corresponding to anchorage in a group opinion, and an own force stemming from the person's needs' (idem, pp. 150-151). These forces of power-over are limited to those influences which are produced by the actions of a particular social agent or agents that affect the subject and result in a directly related change (p. 153). This paper rests on the hypothesis that regional development agents both shape and are shaped by power relations and structures that manifest in regional development praxis.

French and Raven's bases of power, however, do not account adequately for phenomena such as false compliance in the case of reward power or non-compliance when punishment may be avoided in the case of coercive power; nevertheless these five bases of power-over emphasise the scope of limitations for these power types, particularly the bounded nature of applied power-over. The five bases of power were expanded upon by Morgan (1997, p. 171) who identified 14 sources of power as being 'among the most important':

1. Formal authority
2. Control of scarce resources
3. Use of organizational structure, rules and regulations
4. Control of decision processes
5. Control of knowledge and information
6. Control of boundaries
7. Ability to cope with uncertainty
8. Control of technology
9. Interpersonal alliances, networks, and control of “informal organisation”
10. Control of counter-organisations
11. Symbolism and the management of meaning
12. Gender and the management of gender relations
13. Structural factors that define the stage of action
14. The power one already has.

According to Morgan (1997, p. 171), these ‘sources of power provide organizational members with a variety of means for enhancing their interests and resolving or perpetuating organizational conflict’.

French and Raven’s five power bases and Morgan’s fourteen sources of power provide a valuable critical theorist schema for investigating power-over and developing mechanisms that support power-to. The relationship between these categories of power and the SDPM is that through such a schematic lens one can identify which forms of power may be present within the relational and structural dimensions and confines of a given regional development issue. By identifying, mapping and incorporating power structures and relations into the SDPM at the Institutional Governance Design, Core Processes and Knowledge Management phases, power structures and relations can be revealed and power can be (re)distributed to facilitate increased community control of regional development praxis. In addition, this inclusion of power and its analysis into the SDPM enables the breaking down of the antecedent conditions for groupthink to occur as well as the minimisation of impacts resulting from groupthink symptoms where they continue to affect development outcomes. Specifically, this results from the critical analysis of alternatives that the SDPM facilitates combined with the deliberative exposure and (re)distribution of power that DPS enable. This

(re)distribution of power into deliberative spaces within the regional development context endeavours to achieve a social liberalist outcome rather than a neo-liberal outcome more common to regions engaged in globalised markets (Aoyama *et al.*, 2011; Giddens, 1998).

The SDPM was designed to be inclusive of deliberative democracy principles that facilitate discussion-based decision-making and polity free governance processes (Campbell-Ellis, 2009) that contribute to the realisation of what Lindblom (1990, in Parsons, 1995, p. 439) described as a 'self-guiding society'. Lindblom's (1990, in Parsons, 1995) self-guiding society is a problem solving society whereby problem solving is based on deliberation, communication, participation and democracy as well as the redistribution of power. Hartz-Karp (2004) asserted that cycles of trust must be created for deliberation to work in a democracy. These cycles of trust can be created by including participants that: are 'representative of the population; ... focus on thoroughly understanding the issues and their implications; ... [provide] serious consideration of differing viewpoints and values; ... search for consensus or common ground; and [have] the capacity to influence policy and decision-making' (Hartz-Karp, 2004, p. 16). These design components aim to build positive cycles of learning, understanding and decision-making for the collective good and are a firm foundation for power-to outcomes. According to Pettit (2001) deliberative democracy concepts imply inclusiveness, deliberative judgement, and open and unforced dialogue that can best be achieved with the depoliticisation of discourse, deliberation and governance. Cohen (1989, pp. 3-4) posits that deliberative democracy features five main elements:

D1 A deliberative democracy is an ongoing and independent association, whose members expect it to continue into the indefinite future.

D2 The members of the association share (and it is common knowledge that they share) the view that the appropriate terms of association provide a framework for or are the results of their deliberation. They share, that is, a commitment to co-ordinating their activities within institutions that make deliberation possible and according to norms that they arrive at through their deliberation. For them, free deliberation among equals is the basis of legitimacy.

D3 A deliberative democracy is a pluralistic association. The members have diverse preferences, convictions and ideals concerning the conduct of their own lives. While sharing a commitment to the deliberative resolution of problems of collective choice (D2), they also have divergent aims, and do not think that some particular set of preferences, convictions or ideals is mandatory.

D4 Because the members of a democratic association regard deliberative procedures as the source of legitimacy, it is important to them that the terms of their association not merely be the results of their deliberation, but also be manifest to them as such. They prefer institutions in which the connections between deliberation and outcomes are evident to ones in which the connections are less clear.

D5 The members recognize one another as having deliberative capacities i.e. the capacities required for entering into a public exchange of reasons and for acting on the result of such public reasoning.

These idealistic attributes of deliberative democracy are fraught with challenges when exposed to groupthink affected communities, individual interests and free rider dilemmas. Cohen's (1989) principles of deliberative democracy, combined with French and Raven's (1959) five bases of power and Morgan's (1997) 14 sources of power influence the design of the DPS framework below. In addition to these theorists and models is Janis' (1982, in Parsons, 1995) measures to counter the groupthink process, which include: leader encouragement of critical evaluation of alternatives and open objection, leaders refrain from stating policy preferences, decisions should be evaluated, external participation and policy challenge should be included, and additional meetings should be held to enable the expression of outstanding doubts.

The (re)distribution of decision making power into a deliberative democracy arena can provide institutional power equities that are legitimising and trust building (Carson and Hart, 2006). In order to incorporate constructive and empowering power relations into the SDPM and thereby

establish DPS, a feminist orientation to power has been applied. According to Allen (2011, p. 1) feminists have conceptualised power in three main ways, ‘as a resource to be (re)distributed, as domination, and as empowerment’. Through the liberal feminist conceptualising of power as a resource, ‘the goal is to redistribute this resource’ in a more equitable way (Allen, 2011, p. 7).

From this feminist perspective, dominating dimensions of power relations are transformed into positive outcomes capable of creating and sustaining spaces where power is equitably distributed to provide beneficial outcomes. Such outcomes can be achieved through discursive mechanisms where power, in a Bourdieuan sense, is always present. As Bourdieu (1972) argued, the control of language and discourse is central to notions of power-over. Through the transformation of power-over into power-to, discourse becomes deliberative and democratic and groupthink antecedent conditions can be overcome. The SDPM seeks to achieve this through establishing and maintaining DPS. The SDPM’s DPS do not aim to, nor can they, transform and (re)distribute all forms and manifestations of power but limit their focus on relational and structural power typologies.

The discourse of power theory and deliberative democracy suggests that the construction of workable DPS within a regional development context requires that the SDPM’s deliberative processes be (1) participant owned, accessible and embedded; (2) mutually supportive, empowering and resourced; (3) dialogically reason-giving, transparent and decision-challenging, and; (4) contextually binding. These four deliberative process constrain the design of institutionalised working rules that guide agent behaviour (as per Ostrom, 2005, p. 18) and generate ‘a commitment to co-ordinating their activities within the institutions that make deliberation possible and according to norms that they arrive at through their deliberation’ (Cohen, 1989, p. 3). The four deliberative processes listed above, are comprised of the following characteristics:

- (1) **Participant owned, accessible and embedded**, whereby the forms of collective behaviour are networked within pluralistic relationships that are constructive and participatory and are accessible to all interested public and private agents who are empowered to take ownership of the process. The embedded nature of collective relationships supports legitimacy which in turn promotes process influence and outcomes attainment (Cavaye, 2004). According to Prager (2006), participants

should have an interest in and be relevant to the issue and should have scope to work within a range of decision alternatives. Accessibility, however, is an entitlement that is subject to positive and negative social sanctions. Non-compliance will result in non-participation in the SDPM and a forfeiture of any rights (outside of what an agent is legally entitled to) to beneficial outcomes that may be derived from the SDPM's collaborative processes that take the form of regional innovation systems (see Campbell-Ellis, 2009), risk sharing and, as processes that strategise and action collective priorities (McCall, 2011).

- (2) **Mutually supportive, empowering and resourced**, whereby participating agents can act individually within a pluralist environment that sees power as a resource that can be equitably (re)distributed to empower all entitled participants. Through cooperation and collaboration, innovation based on trust and mutual support is fostered in a creative environment that seeks to see multiple individual benefits achieved through collective behaviours (McCall, 2011). The resourcing of the collectivity is accomplished through individual inputs that are power transforming as well as mobile. Fiscal resources are critical and support the pre-investment components of the SDPM and to some degree, the actionability of the collective's non-innovation phases. These inputs are secured through redistribution and reallocation levy components built into the SDPM's Core Processes phase (see Campbell-Ellis, 2009). The SDPM also includes the sustainable development provision that levies will be used to support community development and environmental management outcomes (Campbell-Ellis, 2009) and as such further support and empower participating agents, the broader community and future generations.
- (3) **Dialogically reason-giving, transparent and decision-challenging**, based on deliberative and analytical discourse that is open, transparent, and accountable, and where process transparency generates trust and understanding. Dialogical processes should not be forced or restricted to closed timeframes. Open timeframes, however, are not intended to become barriers to innovation processes but are seen as providing pathways to collaboration and creative tensions. Decisions should be

open to questioning and outstanding doubts should be provided sufficient opportunities to be heard. External participation and professional input should be included and open to challenge.

- (4) **Contextually binding**, in so far that decisions made by the collective group or sub-groups are expected to be carried out by those members of the group that accept the contextual responsibilities, obligations and, therefore, the associated benefit rights to development platform outputs. Compliance results from incentive and coercive mechanisms that are the result of participation entitlements as per these four deliberative processes and in the collaborative innovation-based processes that are capable of providing market benefits through the outputs of the SDPM.

The current application of the SDPM in Northwest Tasmania has not yet tested the effectiveness of DPS. Elements of the DPS concept, however, have been in place since the SDPM has been applied within the region. The theoretical basis of the DPS as a tool for (re)distributing and equalising power within regional development policy and praxis aims to assist develop regional adaptability based on collaborative and participatory processes capable of overcoming groupthink barriers. The role of a DPS, therefore, is to support and enable collaboration featuring equitable power relations and to assist with the application of the SDPM.

8. CONCLUSION

As a socio-regional science tool existing within a relational and evolutionary regional science paradigm, the SDPM and its DPS aim to achieve the realisation of increased regional adaptability and community well-being by equalising agent-based power in participatory development processes. The SDPMs deliberative and participatory processes support inclusive access, critical analysis, collaboration and innovation as well as the attainment of social responsibilities within regional communities. The SDPM and DPS aim to shift regional development policy and praxis away from external government domination and towards community driven agendas. This approach seeks to balance local social responsibility with private sector profit seeking activities, thus supporting a social liberal policy approach. To

achieve this, the careful devolution of government and regional development organisational powers is required to transform and (re)distribute those powers into community driven participatory processes. The SDPM and its DPS facilitate such outcomes, endogenously resourcing development agents and actions to provide regional self-determination, adaptability and resilience. The SDPM and DPS are newly applied tools that support a paradigm shift for regional science into a free-thinking evolutionary paradigm, a shift that involves a somewhat chaotic and non-linear socio-regional approach that is inter-disciplinary and capable of expanding Bourdieu's (1972, pp. 169-170) 'universe of possible discourse'.

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