

Historical and Theoretical Issues in Applied Community / Cultural Psychology

Randal G. Tonks
Camosun College
Victoria B C

Overview

- Introduction
- The Cross(-)Cultural Divide
 - The particular and the general
- Our Communal Identity
- The Role of Community
- Action Research
- Lewinian Legacy
- Communities in Action
- Canadian Context

The Cross(-)Cultural Divide

- Contemporary Psychology of Culture involves at least two principal domains of empirical and theoretical research.
- **Cultural** and **Cross-Cultural** perspectives have dominated and may be placed into one of two broad streams of science or worldviews.

Two Psychologies of Culture

- **Cross-Cultural** seeks the 'causal' relationships to **behaviour** and cultural experience, with a focus on the **generalizability**
(Berry et al., 1992)
- **Cultural** principles involve:
 - **Mediation** through artifacts
 - **Historical** development
 - **Practical** activity(Cole, 1996)

Cross-Cultural Psychology

- Goals of:
 - **Test and transport:** testing theories and hypotheses as universal '*etics*'
 - **Explore and Discover:** in overcoming testing 'failures' find new phenomena
 - **Integrate:** bring together various studies to establish a **universal** theory of psychology explaining similarities and differences

Cultural psychology

Methodological Principles (Ratner , 1997) :

- ***Verstehen*** - Understanding experience against historical / cultural context
 - **Interpret behaviour** -description of action sequence- that leads to certain outcomes in given **historical social contexts**
 - Interpret verbal statements in terms of **local meanings**

General Worldviews: Tonks (1997)

- Natural Science

- Objective
- Deductive Explanation (*Erklaren*)
- Literal
- Univocal Laws
- Universal (*Etic*)

- Human Science

- Subjective
- Interpretive Understanding (*Verstehen*)
- Expressive
- Equivocal Pluralism
- Contextual (*Emic*)

Roots of the Divide

- Wilhelm Dilthey was first to articulate the distinction between **Natural Science** and **Human Science**
- Natural science methods not appropriate for understanding human experience due to ontological and ethical concerns.

Ontology of Human Subject

Dilthey writes:

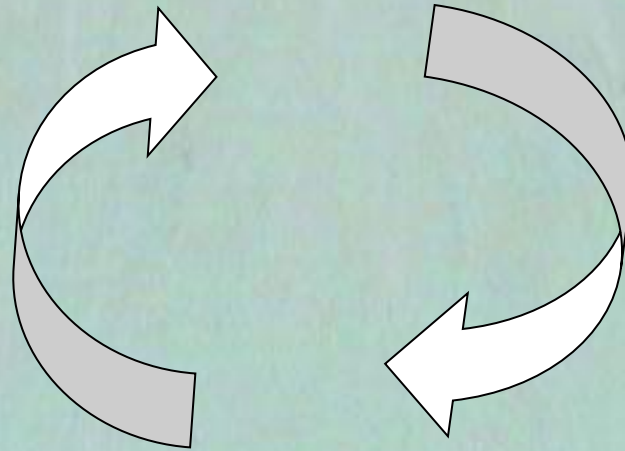
“Self-reflection and understanding are central. To be sure, *self-reflection is primary*, but the *understanding of others also conditions self-reflection*; similarly, *self-consciousness and the world <are> [sic] connected with each other in one [dialectical] system*” (1883/1989, p. 438, italics added).

- Essentially, the self is conditioned by its milieu

Human Science Methods

The Hermeneutical Circle

Pre-understanding



Understanding

..... methods.....

- Human Science methods embrace the **subjectivity** of human beings
- **Biography** and autobiography are best methods
- Reveal the “lived experience” or *erlibnis*
- E.g. Eriksonian psychohistories

Critical Hermeneutics: values and interests

- Habermas (1971) identified three goals or interests for knowledge:
 - *Empirical-analytical* (natural) sciences employ **technical** interest
 - *Historical-hermeneutical sciences* employ **practical** interest of understanding
 - *Empirical-critical sciences* employ **emancipatory** interest.

The Role of Values in & of Science

- **Natural Science** attempts to push values aside
- **Human Science** recognizes the role of values in the practices and applications of science. E.g.,
 - Danziger (1990, 1997) the categories of psychology are socially constructed
 - Cherry (1995) the politics and power of psychological categories

Contrasting Values

- Skinner (1938, 1971) scientific rejection of responsibility, free-will and dignity
- **Depersonalized** role of scientist (leave personhood outside lab)
- **Objectification** and manipulation (technology of control)
- Erikson (1950, 1964) recognised *disciplined subjectivity* in psychosocial processes
- Maintain personhood to develop *shared insights*
- Human values and *emancipation* of the passive patient into the *active agent*

Communal Identity of Psychology

- John Conway (1992) offers an Eriksonian psychohistory of William James' Identity crisis:
 - torn between “tough minded” science and “tender minded humanism”
- Leahey (1994) describes the ongoing cycles of divorce, reconciliation, and repeated estrangement between
 - “Pure” and “Applied” identities in American psychology

CPA and Canadian Context

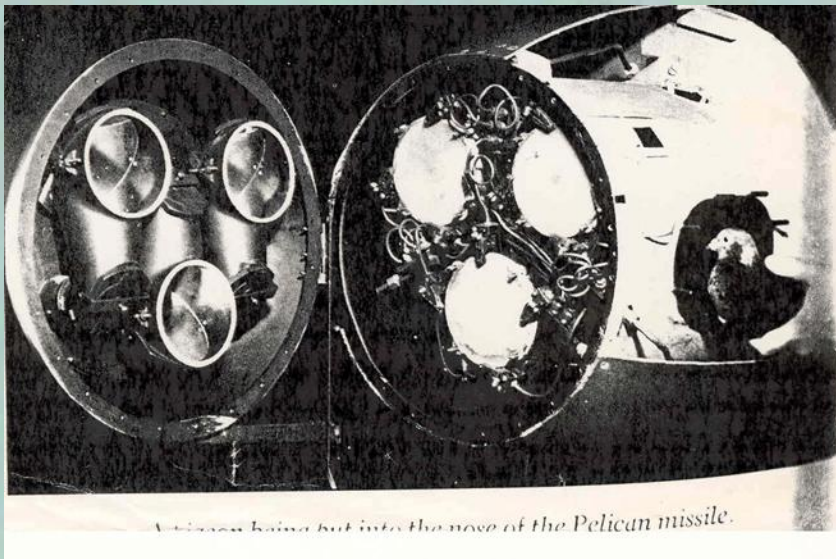
- Belanger (1992) discusses the
 - 1955 MacLeod Report
 - 1960 Opinicon conference
 - 1965 Lake Couchiching conferences
addressing the nature of psychology in
Canada whether scientific or applied practice
 - 1984 Opinicon II conference and the adoption
of the Boulder model (Wright & Meyers, 1982)

Which model of science is to be Applied?

- Do we assume a **natural science** model of applied knowledge?
 - Typical of cross-cultural psychology
- Do we adopt a **human science** model?
 - Typical of cultural psychology

Examples of Applied Psychology

- Skinner (1948; 1974)
 - Technology of control
 - Walden II
 - Project ORCON



Erikson (1950, 1964, 1982)

- Understanding of psycho-social life within community contexts
- Worked with Sioux and Yurok to reveal the meaning of their cultural systems
- Enhance personal and community identities (psyche & polis) to enrich and emancipate (*politics*)
- Interdependence of the Individual and the Community

Identity in a Community

“A sense of identity means being at one with oneself as one grows and develops; and it means, at the same time, a *sense of affinity with a community's sense of being at one with its future as well as its history*—or mythology.”

(1974, pp. 27-28, italics added)

The Role of Community

- Kurt Lewin and the
Research Center for Group Dynamics
- Brought attention to minority groups and the conflicts they face, issues around group development and cohesion as well the big picture of global peace.
- Reflective of Dilthey's approach with the interdependence of the individual (figure) and the group (ground)

Lewin's Model (Allport, 1948)

- Shared with Dewey emphasis on: Social change involving **Democracy** and **Voluntary commitment** to enhance in-group identity and belongingness
- **Re-education and culture change** often met by loyalty to the old and hostility to the new (see James, 1907)

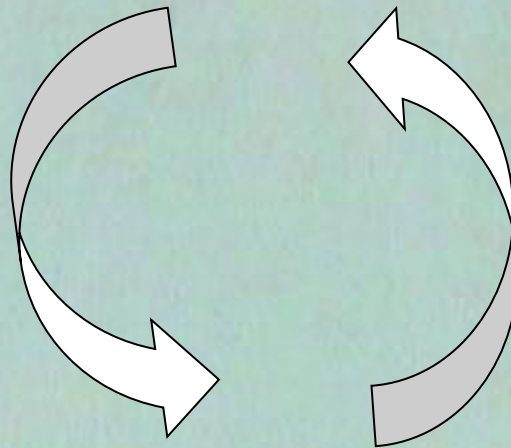
Action Research

- 1939 – When facing Danger [*War*] (Ch 10)
 - Conflict of wanting to stand up for his nation but unable due to Social Categorization of Jews by Nazis
 - “I suppose many feel as deeply as I do that action is what we need in the Jewish life today” (1939/1948, p. 161).
- Called on sociology and social psychology to take action and help solve this problem

Action Research and Minority Problems (Ch 13)

- Not “if-so” general conditions but rather the **diagnosis of a specific situation**
- Model is iterative and circular

– Stages of:
Planning
Executing
Evaluating
Preparation



Action and Change

- “remedial efforts, he insisted, should be introduced into a community prepared to study the results of its *own* social action”

(Allport, 1948, p. xiii, italics added).

- “requires that participating groups be led to examine their goals and their pre-suppositions” (p. xiii)

Cultural Reconstruction

- Lewin (1943/1948) says it is often required after a war to help build a world of peace
- Humbly, expect outcomes “better than before”
- The **integrated efforts of local, national and international partners** are needed to conduct appropriate action research that can lead “**gradually to independence, equality, and co-operation**” (Lewin, 1946/1948, p. 215).

Call for action

- “It is equally clear, however, that this job demands from the social scientists an utmost amount of courage. It needs courage as Plato defines it: ‘Wisdom concerning dangers.’ It needs the best of what the best among us can give, and the help of everybody”

(Lewin , 1948, p. 216).

Lewin Legacy

- 1950 - **The National Training Laboratories** (NTL) was established to continue work on T-group training lead by Lippitt.
- The **Tavistock Institute** in London became the post-war home for many social-activist researchers who were also strongly influenced by Lewin's work.

Legacy

- 1984 First International Kurt Lewin Conference.
 - theory and research in developmental, social, and mental health research
 - education
 - organizational development
 - community psychology

Communities in Action

- Minorities and marginalized groups
- Feminisms (Harding 1987, Cherry 1995)
 - Consciousness raising
 - Social Change
- Healthcare & Mental Health movement
- Peace studies and International Relations

War Effort and Applied Research

- **Committee for National Morale**
Lewin, Erikson, Benedict, Mead, Bateson and others ...
- **Council on Intercultural Relations (CIR)**
“to apply anthropological and related methods to the international crisis in ways that would facilitate Allied military efforts.”
(Freidman, p. 164).

Canadian Context

- Mead also brought Erikson to study German character and German war prisoners, as part of the “**Canadian Project**” between 1940 and 1942 (Friedman, 1999, p. 167).
- **CPA established in 1939** – Soon there after the **Department of Personnel Selection and Research** was established under Brock Chisholm’s leadership
- Many Canadian psychologists hired to develop M-test and conduct other activities

- In September 1948, a copy of Lewin's text was sent to Brock Chisholm at the request of Professor Gordon Allport

Sent by Publishers to Dr Brock Chisholm
at request of Professor Gordon Allport. Sept 1948



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Gift of

Dr. Brock Chisholm.

RESOLVING SOCIAL CONFLICTS

SELECTED PAPERS ON GROUP DYNAMICS

By Kurt Lewin

*Late Director, Research Center for Group Dynamics
Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

Edited by
GERTRUD WEISS LEWIN

Foreword by
GORDON W. ALLPORT

*A Publication of the Research Center for
Group Dynamics, University of Michigan*

HARPER & BROTHERS



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World Health Organization

- Brock Chisholm First Director General
- Controversial Figure – outspoken critic of socialization of children
- Called for more rational approach
- Received the first Kurt Lewin Award (1948) for his work on Social Responsibility

Closing

- Action Research has developed in many areas and in many ways
- Grounded in tradition of Hermeneutics and Human Science
- New methods and techniques developed
- Great influences and developments, including the following papers