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Society and Communities in Social Constructionism and Discourse Analysis

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Society and Communities in Social Constructionism and Discourse Analysis

Structure

Historical context
Discursive Psychology
- Interpretative repertoires (Potter et al)
- Dialogue (Gergen)
- The problem of power and inequality
Foucauldian Discourse Analysis
- The problem of agency
- Positioning
A research example
Conclusion
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Historical context

Wundt
Mead and Watson
The ‘crisis’ in social psychology
Critical psychology
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Social Constructionism

- The social world as socially constructed
- Discursive psychology: construction in interaction
- Foucauldian Discourse Analysis: the constitutive power of discourse
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Discursive psychology: situated accounts

Death and Furniture (Edwards et al. 1995)
‘Doing being’
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Potter and Reicher (1987)

‘Community’
St Paul’s riots (Bristol, UK)
Interpretative repertoire
- Cohesive
- Warm
- Organic
But what about power, politics and inequalities?
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- Historical context
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Gergen: The ‘Saturated Self’

“A civil world beyond individual and community” (Gergen, 2001)

- Community as a social construction
- Focus on dialogic relationships
- ‘Transformative dialogue’
- ‘Appreciative enquiry’
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Self and Community in the New Floating Worlds (Gergen, 2002)

- Modern technology and the ‘corrosion’ of communities
- The demise of the family
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Foucauldian Discourse Analysis: power and materiality

‘Subjectivity’ v ‘self’

Diagram:
- Discourse
  - Social structure
  - Social practices
  - Power relations
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The problem of agency

Positioning

- Davies and Harré (1990)
- Drewery (2001)
  - ‘position calls’
  - ‘hailing’ (Althusser)
  - ‘exclusionary’ position calls
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Problems in practice: Lisa’s research
Experiences of domestic violence

- Produced through dominant discourses?
- Situated accounts built for specific purposes?
- What is the status of the events narrated in the interview?
- Do we risk constructing a homogenous ‘them’?
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Conclusion

Discourse analysis
- Research FOR (rather than ON) people
- People as skilled social actors
- Emphasis on context (interaction, history, culture)

BUT
- ‘Voice’ is problematic
- The need to elaborate self and experience