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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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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'

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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