10

PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

Communicative Action and the Public Sphere

Stephen Kemmis and Robin McTaggart

Participatory action research has an extensive history in many fields of social practice. Our aim in this chapter is to develop the view of participatory action research that has shaped our own theory and practice during recent years. We begin with a short overview of the evolution of our own thinking and the influence of several generations of action research. In our chapter on "Participatory Action Research" for the second edition of the *Handbook,* we identified several key approaches to action research, the sites and settings where they are most frequently used, several criticisms that have been advanced for each, and key sources to explore them (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). The approaches identified were a somewhat eclectic mix—participatory research, classroom action research, action learning, action science, soft systems approaches, and industrial action research. We summarize those approaches again here but do not reiterate our views of them in this chapter. We acknowledge the influence of each approach on the field and as stimulus to reflection on our own ideas and practices.

For our current purposes, we proceed to develop a comprehensive view of social practice and reflect on aspects of our own work that we term "myths, misinterpretations, and mistakes" to move toward reconceptualizing research itself as a social practice. Thinking about research as a social practice leads us to an exploration of Habermas's notion of the public sphere as a way of extending the theory and practice

of action research. We hope that this argument shows more clearly how participatory action research differs from other forms of social inquiry, integrating more clearly its political and methodological intentions. We anticipate that this argument will provide direction for a new generation of participatory action research, and we trust that it will strengthen the theory and practice of participatory action research in the many fields and settings that draw on its intellectually and morally rich traditions, ideas, and challenges.

◙ THE FAMILY OF ACTION RESEARCH

Action research began with an idea attributed to social psychologist Kurt Lewin. It first found expression in the work of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in the United Kingdom (Rapaport, 1970), where Lewin had visited in 1933 and 1936 and had maintained contact for many years. Lewin's (1946, 1952) own earliest publications on action research related to community action programs in the United States during the 1940s. However, it is worth noting that Altrichter and Gstettner (1997) argued that there were earlier, more "actionist" approaches to action research in community development practiced by H. G. Moreno, for example, working with prostitutes in Vienna at the turn of the 20th century. Nevertheless, it was Lewin's work and reputation that gave impetus to the action research movements in many different disciplines. Stephen Corey initiated action research in education in the United States soon after Lewin's work was published (Corey, 1949, 1953). However, efforts to reinterpret and justify action research in terms of the prevailing positivistic ideology in the United States led to a temporary decline in its development there (Kemmis, 1981).

A second generation of action research, building on a British tradition of action research in organizational development championed by researchers at the Tavistock Institute (Rapaport, 1970), began in Britain with the Ford Teaching Project directed by John Elliott and Clem Adelman (Elliott & Adelman, 1973). Recognition in Australia of the "practical" character of the British initiative led to calls for more explicitly "critical" and "emancipatory" action research (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). The critical impulse in Australian action research was paralleled by similar advocacies in Europe (Brock-Utne, 1980). These advocacies and efforts for their realization were called the third generation of action research. A fourth generation of action research emerged in the connection between critical emancipatory action research and participatory action research that had developed in the context of social movements in the developing world, championed by people such as Paulo Freire, Orlando Fals Borda, Rajesh Tandon, Anisur Rahman, and Marja-Liisa Swantz as well as by North American and British workers in adult education and literacy, community development, and development studies such as Budd Hall, Myles Horton, Robert Chambers, and John Gaventa. Two key themes were

(a) the development of theoretical arguments for more "actionist" approaches to action research and (b) the need for participatory action researchers to make links with broad social movements.

Participatory Research

Participatory research is an alternative philosophy of social research (and social life [*vivéncia*]) often associated with social transformation in the Third World. It has roots in liberation theology and neo-Marxist approaches to community development (e.g., in Latin America) but also has rather liberal origins in human rights activism (e.g., in Asia). Three particular attributes are often used to distinguish participatory research from conventional research: shared ownership of research projects, community-based analysis of social problems, and an orientation toward community action. Given its commitment to social, economic, and political development responsive to the needs and opinions of ordinary people, proponents of participatory research have highlighted the politics of conventional social research, arguing that orthodox social science, despite its claim to value neutrality, normally serves the ideological function of justifying the position and interests of the wealthy and powerful (Fals Borda & Rahman, 1991; Forester, Pitt, & Welsh, 1993; Freire, 1982; Greenwood & Levin, 2000, 2001; Hall, Gillette, & Tandon, 1982; Horton, Kohl, & Kohl, 1990; McGuire, 1987; McTaggart, 1997; Oliveira & Darcy, 1975; Park, Brydon-Miller, Hall, & Jackson, 1993).

Critical Action Research

Critical action research expresses a commitment to bring together broad social analysis—the self-reflective collective self-study of practice, the way in which language is used, organization and power in a local situation, and action to improve things. Critical action research is strongly represented in the literatures of educational action research, and there it emerges from dissatisfactions with classroom action research that typically does not take a broad view of the role of the relationship between education and social change. It has a strong commitment to participation as well as to the social analyses in the critical social science tradition that reveal the disempowerment and injustice created in industrialized societies. During recent times, critical action research has also attempted to take account of disadvantage attributable to gender and ethnicity as well as to social class, its initial point of reference (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Fay, 1987; Henry, 1991; Kemmis, 1991; Marika, Ngurruwutthun, & White, 1992; McTaggart, 1991a, 1991b, 1997; Zuber-Skerritt, 1996).

Classroom Action Research

Classroom action research typically involves the use of qualitative interpretive modes of inquiry and data collection by teachers (often with help from academics) with a view

to teachers making judgments about how to improve their own practices. The practice of classroom action research has a long tradition but has swung in and out of favor, principally because the theoretical work that justified it lagged behind the progressive educational movements that breathed life into it at certain historical moments (McTaggart, 1991a; Noffke, 1990, 1997). Primacy is given to teachers' self-understandings and judgments. The emphasis is "practical," that is, on the interpretations that teachers and students are making and acting on in the situation. In other words, classroom action research is not just practical idealistically, in a utopian way, or just about how interpretations might be different "in theory"; it is also practical in Aristotle's sense of practical reasoning about how to act rightly and properly in a situation with which one is confronted. If university researchers are involved, their role is a service role to the teachers. Such university researchers are often advocates for "teachers' knowledge" and may disavow or seek to diminish the relevance of more theoretical discourses such as critical theory (Dadds, 1995; Elliott, 1976–1977; Sagor, 1992; Stenhouse, 1975; Weiner, 1989).

Action Learning

Action learning has its origins in the work of advocate Reg Revans, who saw traditional approaches to management inquiry as unhelpful in solving the problems of organizations. Revans's early work with colliery managers attempting to improve workplace safety marks a significant turning point for the role of professors, engaging them directly in management problems in organizations.

The fundamental idea of action learning is to bring people together to learn from each other's experiences. There is emphasis on studying one's own situation, clarifying what the organization is trying to achieve, and working to remove obstacles. Key aspirations are organizational efficacy and efficiency, although advocates of action learning affirm the moral purpose and content of their own work and of the managers they seek to engage in the process (Clark, 1972; Pedler, 1991; Revans, 1980, 1982).

Action Science

Action science emphasizes the study of practice in organizational settings as a source of new understandings and improved practice. The field of action science systematically builds the relationship between academic organizational psychology and practical problems as they are experienced in organizations. It identifies two aspects of professional knowledge: (a) the formal knowledge that all competent members of the profession are thought to share and into which professionals are inducted during their initial training and (b) the professional knowledge of interpretation and enactment. A distinction is also made between the professional's "espoused theory" and "theories in use," and "gaps" between these are used as points of reference for change. A key factor in analyzing these gaps between theory and

practice is helping the professional to unmask the "cover-ups" that are put in place, especially when participants are feeling anxious or threatened. The approach aspires to the development of the "reflective practitioner" (Argyris, 1990; Argyris & Schön, 1974, 1978; Argyris, Putnam, & McLain Smith, 1985; Reason, 1988; Schön, 1983, 1987, 1991).

Soft Systems Approaches

Soft systems approaches have their origins in organizations that use so-called "hard systems" of engineering, especially for industrial production. Soft systems methodology is the human "systems" analogy for systems engineering that has developed as the science of product and information flow. It is defined as oppositional to positivistic science with its emphasis on hypothesis testing. The researcher (typically an outside consultant) assumes a role as discussion partner or trainer in a real problem situation. The researcher works with participants to generate some (systems) models of the situation and uses the models to question the situation and to suggest a revised course of action (Checkland, 1981; Checkland & Scholes, 1990; Davies & Ledington, 1991; Flood & Jackson, 1991; Jackson, 1991; Kolb, 1984).

Industrial Action Research

Industrial action research has an extended history, dating back to the post-Lewinian influence in organizational psychology and organizational development in the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in Britain and the Research Center for Group Dynamics in the United States. It is typically consultant driven, with very strong advocacies for collaboration between social scientists and members of different levels of the organization. The work is often couched in the language of workplace democratization, but more recent explorations have aspired more explicitly to the democratization of the research act itself, following the theory and practice of the participatory research movement. Especially in its more recent manifestations, industrial action research is differentiated from action science and its emphasis on cognition taking a preferred focus on reflection and the need for broader organizational and social change. Some advocacies have used critical theory as a resource to express aspirations for more participatory forms of work and evaluation, but more typically the style is somewhat humanistic and individualistic rather than critical. Emphases on social systems in organizations, such as improving organizational effectiveness and employee relations, are common. Also, the Lewinian aspiration to learn from trying to bring about change is a strong theme (Bravette, 1996; Elden, 1983; Emery & Thorsrud, 1976; Emery, Thorsrud, & Trist, 1969; Foster, 1972; Levin, 1985; Pasmore & Friedlander, 1982; Sandkull, 1980; Torbert, 1991; Warmington, 1980; Whyte, 1989, 1991).

◙ THE EMERGENCE OF CRITICAL PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

Until the late 1990s, the hallmark of the action research field was eclecticism. Although the Lewinian idea was often used as a first point of legitimation, quite different rationales and practices had emerged in different disciplines. The sequestering of much literature under disciplinary rubrics meant that there was little dialogue between groups of different practitioners and advocates. Increases in visibility and popularity of the approaches rapidly changed this. There were large increases in scale and attendance at the world congresses on participatory action research as well as burgeoning interest at international sociological conferences. Action research reemerged as an influential approach in the United States (Greenwood & Levin, 2000, 2001). New associations between researchers and a vast literature of critique of modernity and its insinuation of capitalist, neocapitalist, and postcapitalist state and social systems into social life created both the impetus for and the possibility of dialogue. The historical and geographical distribution of action research approaches around the world and their interrelationships were better understood.

Critical participatory action research emerged as part of this dialogue. It aimed to provide a frame of reference for comprehension and critique of itself and its predecessors and to offer a way of working that addressed rampant individualism, disenchantment, and the dominance of instrumental reason—the key features of the "malaise of modernity" (Taylor, 1991). Critical participatory action research, as we now understand it, also creates a way of reinterpreting our own views of action research as they develop practically, theoretically, and pedagogically over time (e.g., Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988a, 1988b, 2000; McTaggart, 1991a). Before we revisit some of the myths, misinterpretations, and mistakes associated with our work over three decades, we present a summary of what we have regarded as the key features of participatory action research. We do this to identify some key principles as markers of progress, but we then look back at our own experience to develop what might potentially be seen as the rationale for a new generation of critical participatory action research.

Key Features of Participatory Action Research

Although the process of participatory action research is only poorly described in terms of a mechanical sequence of steps, it is generally thought to involve a spiral of self-reflective cycles of the following:

- *Planning* a change
- *Acting* and *observing* the process and consequences of the change
- *Reflecting* on these processes and consequences
- *Replanning*
- *Acting* and *observing again*
- *Reflecting again,* and so on . . .

Figure 10.1 presents this spiral of self-reflection in diagrammatic form. In reality, the process might not be as neat as this spiral of self-contained cycles of planning, acting and observing, and reflecting suggests. The stages overlap, and initial plans quickly become obsolete in the light of learning from experience. In reality, the process is likely to be more fluid, open, and responsive. The criterion of success is not whether participants have followed the steps faithfully but rather whether they have a strong and authentic sense of development and evolution in their *practices,* their *understandings* of their practices, and the *situations* in which they practice.

Each of the steps outlined in the spiral of self-reflection is best undertaken collaboratively by coparticipants in the participatory action research process. Not all theorists of action research place this emphasis on collaboration; they argue that action research is frequently a solitary process of systematic self-reflection. We concede that it is often so; nevertheless, we hold that participatory action research is best conceptualized in collaborative terms. Participatory action research is itself a social—and educational—process. The "subjects" of participatory action research undertake their research as a social practice. Moreover, the "object" of participatory action research is social; participatory action research is directed toward studying, reframing, and reconstructing social practices. *If practices are constituted in social interaction between people, changing practices is a social process.* To be sure, one person may change so that others are obliged to react or respond differently to that individual's changed behavior, but the willing and committed involvement of those whose interactions constitute the practice is necessary, in the end, to secure and legitimate the change. Participatory action research offers an opportunity to create forums in which people can join one another as coparticipants in the struggle to remake the practices in which they interact—forums in which rationality and democracy can be pursued together without an artificial separation ultimately hostile to both. In his book *Between Facts and Norms,* Jürgen Habermas described this process in terms of "opening communicative space" (Habermas, 1996), a theme to which we return later.

At its best, then, participatory action research is a social process of collaborative learning realized by groups of people who join together in changing the practices through which they interact in a shared social world in which, for better or worse, we live with the consequences of one another's actions.

It should also be stressed that participatory action research involves the investigation of *actual* practices and not *abstract* practices. It involves learning about the real, material, concrete, and particular practices of particular people in particular places. Although, of course, it is not possible to suspend the inevitable abstraction that occurs whenever we use language to name, describe, interpret, and evaluate things, participatory action research differs from other forms of research in being more obstinate about its focus on changing particular practitioners' particular practices. Participatory action researchers may be interested in practices in general or in the abstract, but their principal concern is in changing practices in "the here and
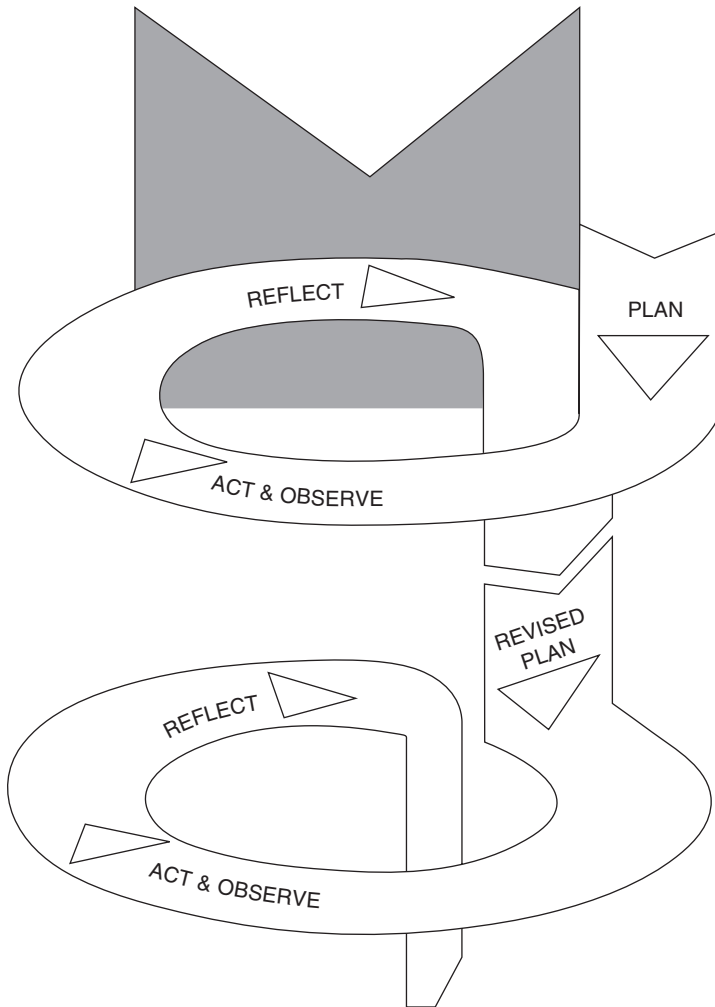
Figure 10.1.   The Action Research Spiral

now." In our view, participatory action researchers do not need to apologize for see-
ing their work as mundane and mired in history; on the contrary, by doing so, they
may avoid some of the philosophical and practical dangers of the idealism that sug-
gests that a more abstract view of practice might make it possible to transcend or
rise above history and to avoid the delusions of the view that it is possible to find a
safe haven in abstract propositions that construe but do not themselves constitute

practice. Participatory action research is a learning process whose fruits are the real and material changes in the following:

- What people do
- How people interact with the world and with others
- What people mean and what they value
- The discourses in which people understand and interpret their world

Through participatory action research, people can come to understand that—and how—their social and educational practices are located in, and are the product of, particular material, social, and historical circumstances that *produced* them and by which they are *reproduced* in everyday social interaction in a particular setting. By understanding their practices as the product of particular circumstances, participatory action researchers become alert to clues about how it may be possible to *transform* the practices they are producing and reproducing through their current ways of working. If their current practices are the product of one particular set of intentions, conditions, and circumstances, other (or transformed) practices may be produced and reproduced under other (or transformed) intentions, conditions, and circumstances.

Focusing on practices in a concrete and specific way makes them accessible for reflection, discussion, and reconstruction as products of past circumstances that are capable of being modified in and for present and future circumstances. While recognizing that the real space–time realization of every practice is transient and evanescent, and that it can be conceptualized only in the inevitably abstract (but comfortingly imprecise) terms that language provides, participatory action researchers aim to understand their own particular practices as they emerge in their own particular circumstances without reducing them to the ghostly status of the general, the abstract, or the ideal—or, perhaps one should say, the unreal.

If participatory action research is understood in such terms, then through their investigations, participatory action researchers may want to become especially sensitive to the ways in which their particular practices are *social practices* of material, symbolic, and social

- communication,
- production, and
- social organization,

which shape and are shaped by *social structures* in

- the cultural/symbolic realm,
- the economic realm, and
- the sociopolitical realm,

which shape and are shaped by the *social media* of

- language/discourses,
- work, and
- power,

which largely shape, but also can be shaped by, participants' *knowledge* expressed in their

- understandings,
- skills, and
- values,

which, in turn, shape and are shaped by their *social practices* of material, symbolic, and social
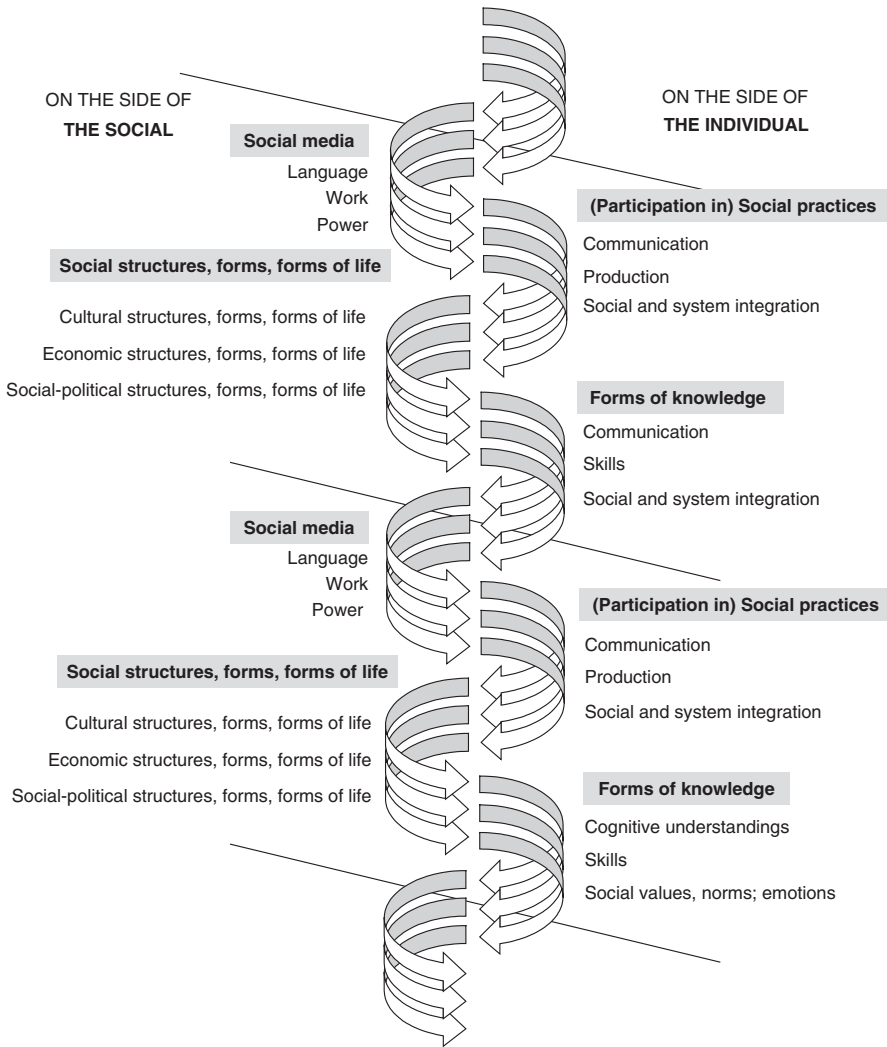
- communication,
- production, and
- social organization, and so on.

These relationships are represented diagrammatically in Figure 10.2.

Participatory action researchers might consider, for example, how their acts of communication, production, and social organization are intertwined and interrelated in the real and particular practices that connect them to others in the real situations in which they find themselves (e.g., communities, neighborhoods, families, schools, hospitals, other workplaces). They consider how, by collaboratively changing the ways in which they participate with others in these practices, they can change the *practices* themselves, their *understandings* of these practices, and the *situations* in which they live and work.

For many people, the image of the spiral of cycles of self-reflection (planning, acting and observing, reflecting, replanning, etc.) has become the dominant feature of action research as an approach. In our view, participatory action research has seven other key features that are at least as important as the self-reflective spiral.

1. *Participatory action research is a social process.* Participatory action research deliberately explores *the relationship between the realms of the individual and the social.* It recognizes that "no individuation is possible without socialization, and no socialization is possible without individuation" (Habermas, 1992b, p. 26), and that the processes of individuation and socialization continue to shape individuals and social relationships in all of the settings in which we find ourselves. Participatory action research is a process followed in research in settings such as those of education and community development, when people—individually and collectively—try to understand how they are formed and reformed as individuals, and in relation to one another in a

ON THE SIDE OF
THE SOCIAL

ON THE SIDE OF
THE INDIVIDUAL

Social media

Language
Work
Power

(Participation in) Social practices

Communication

Production

Social and system integration

Social structures, forms, forms of life

Cultural structures, forms, forms of life
Economic structures, forms, forms of life
Social-political structures, forms, forms of life

Forms of knowledge

Communication

Skills

Social and system integration

Social media

Language
Work
Power

(Participation in) Social practices

Communication

Production

Social and system integration

Social structures, forms, forms of life

Cultural structures, forms, forms of life
Economic structures, forms, forms of life
Social-political structures, forms, forms of life

Forms of knowledge

Cognitive understandings

Skills

Social values, norms; emotions

Figure 10.2.   Recursive Relationships of Social Mediation That Action Research Aims to
Transform

variety of settings, for example, when teachers work together (or with students) to
improve processes of teaching and learning in the classroom.

2. *Participatory action research is participatory.* Participatory action research engages
people in examining their *knowledge* (understandings, skills, and values) and interpre-
tive categories (the ways in which they interpret themselves and their action in the social
and material world). It is a process in which all individuals in a group try to get a

handle on the ways in which their knowledge shapes their sense of identity and agency and to reflect critically on how their current knowledge frames and constrains their action. It is also participatory in the sense that people can only do action research "on" themselves, either individually or collectively. It is *not* research done "on" others.

3. *Participatory action research is practical and collaborative.* Participatory action research engages people in examining the *social practices* that link them with others in social interaction. It is a process in which people explore their practices of communication, production, and social organization and try to explore how to improve their interactions by changing the acts that constitute them, that is, to reduce the extent to which participants experience these interactions (and their longer-term consequences) as irrational, unproductive (or inefficient), unjust, and/or unsatisfying (alienating). Participatory researchers aim to work together in reconstructing their social interactions by reconstructing the acts that constitute them.

4. *Participatory action research is emancipatory.* Participatory action research aims to help people recover, and release themselves from, the constraints of irrational, unproductive, unjust, and unsatisfying *social structures* that limit their self-development and self-determination. It is a process in which people explore the ways in which their practices are shaped and constrained by wider social (cultural, economic, and political) structures and consider whether they can intervene to release themselves from these constraints—or, if they cannot, how best to work within and around them to minimize the extent to which they contribute to irrationality, lack of productivity (inefficiency), injustice, and dissatisfactions (alienation) as people whose work and lives contribute to the structuring of a shared social life.

5. *Participatory action research is critical.* Participatory action research aims to help people recover, and release themselves from, the constraints embedded in the *social media* through which they interact—their language (discourses), their modes of work, and the social relationships of power (in which they experience affiliation and difference, inclusion and exclusion—relationships in which, grammatically speaking, they interact with others in the third, second, or first person). It is a process in which people deliberately set out to contest and reconstitute irrational, unproductive (or inefficient), unjust, and/or unsatisfying (alienating) ways of interpreting and describing their world (e.g., language, discourses), ways of working (work), and ways of relating to others (power).

6. *Participatory action research is reflexive (e.g., recursive, dialectical).* Participatory action research aims to help people to investigate reality in order to change it (Fals Borda, 1979) and (we might add) to change reality in order to investigate it. In particular, it is a deliberate process through which people aim to transform their practices through a spiral of cycles of critical and self-critical action and reflection. As

Figure 10.2 (presented earlier) aims to show, it is a deliberate social process designed to help collaborating groups of people to transform their world so as to learn more about the nature of the recursive relationships among the following:

- Their (individual and social) *practices* (the work)
- Their *knowledge of their practices* (the workers)
- The *social structures* that shape and constrain their practices (the workplace)
- The *social media* in which their practices are expressed (the discourses in which their work is represented and misrepresented)

In our view, this is what theorizing practice means. Participatory action research does not, however, take an armchair view of theorizing; rather, it is a process of learning, with others, by doing—changing the ways in which we interact in a shared social world.

7. *Participatory action research aims to transform both theory and practice.* Participatory action research does not regard either theory or practice as preeminent in the relationship between theory and practice; rather, it aims to articulate and develop each in relation to the other through critical reasoning about both theory and practice and their consequences. It does not aim to develop forms of theory that can stand above and beyond practice, as if practice could be controlled and determined without regard to the particulars of the practical situations that confront practitioners in their ordinary lives and work. Nor does it aim to develop forms of practice that might be regarded as self-justifying, as if practice could be judged in the absence of theoretical frameworks that give them their value and significance and that provide substantive criteria for exploring the extent to which practices and their consequences turn out to be irrational, unjust, alienating, or unsatisfying for the people involved in and affected by them. Thus, participatory action research involves "reaching out" from the specifics of particular situations, as understood by the people within them, to explore the potential of different perspectives, theories, and discourses that might help to illuminate particular practices and practical settings as a basis for developing critical insights and ideas about how things might be transformed. Equally, it involves "reaching in" from the standpoints provided by different perspectives, theories, and discourses to explore the extent to which they provide practitioners themselves with a critical grasp of the problems and issues they actually confront in specific local situations. Thus, participatory action research aims to transform *both* practitioners' theories and practices *and* the theories and practices of others whose perspectives and practices may help to shape the conditions of life and work in particular local settings. In this way, participatory action research aims to connect the local and the global and to live out the slogan that the personal is political.

These seven features summarize some of the principal features of participatory action research as we see it. It is a particular partisan view. There are writers on action

research who prefer to move immediately from a general description of the action research process (especially the self-reflective spiral) to questions of methodology and research technique—a discussion of the ways and means of collecting data in different social and educational settings. This is a somewhat methodologically driven view of action research; it suggests that research methods are what makes action research "research." This is not to argue that participatory action researchers should not be capable of conducting sound research; rather, it is to emphasize that sound research must respect much more than the canons of method.

◙ MYTHS, MISINTERPRETATIONS, AND MISTAKES IN CRITICAL PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

The critical view of participatory action research that we developed over the more than two decades since 1981 emerged in a practice that involved some successes; however, from the perspective of our current understandings, it also engendered some failures. Sometimes we, as well as some of our colleagues, mythologized or overstated the power of action research as an agent of individual and social change. Sometimes we misinterpreted our own experience and the ways in which substantive and methodological literatures might be useful pedagogically. Sometimes others misinterpreted our views, occasionally even despite our stout disavowal. The repeated reference to the action research spiral as "*the method* of action research" continues to frustrate us. We also made some mistakes. These myths, misinterpretations, and mistakes clustered around four key foci:

- Exaggerated assumptions about how *empowerment* might be achieved through action research
- Confusions about the role of those helping others to learn how to conduct action research, the problem of *facilitation,* and the illusion of neutrality
- The falsity of a supposed *research–activism dualism,* with research seen as dispassionate, informed, and rational and with activism seen as passionate, intuitive, and weakly theorized
- Understatement of the *role of the collective* and how it might be conceptualized in conducting the research and in formulating action in the "project" and in its engagement with the "public sphere" in all facets of institutional and social life

We present these reflections on our practices here and return to them later from a different theoretical perspective.

Empowerment

In our earliest work on action research, we argued that self-reflection on efforts to bring about change that was disciplined by group planning and reflection of observations

would give participants a greater sense of control of their work. Sometimes we overstated our claims; we were victims of our own enthusiasm and persuasion. This was not always unconscious. We faced the dilemma of the advocate; that is, rhetoric can help lead to changes in reality. Our aspirations were often picked up by others, and the result left action research advocates vulnerable to charges of hyperbole or naïveté in real settings where individual and collective change often proved to be extremely difficult to effect.

It is true that an increased understanding of social situations through action materially changes individual power, authority, and control over people's work. However, it is equally true that such change is often technical and constrained, invoking concepts such as "efficiency." Authentic change, and the empowerment that drives it and derives from it, requires political sustenance by some kind of collective, too easily construed as an "action group" that defined itself by opposition to, and distinctiveness from, a wider social or public realm. Nevertheless, it was a mistake not to emphasize sufficiently that power comes from collective commitment and a methodology that invites the democratization of the objectification of experience and the disciplining of subjectivity. A question remains as to whether this was an adequate conceptualization of "empowerment," the way in which to achieve it, or indeed who or what empowerment was for.

The Role of the Facilitator of Action Research

We were troubled by the concept of "facilitation" as early as 1981 at the Australian National Seminar on Action Research (Brown, Henry, Henry, & McTaggart, 1988). Too often the facilitator lapsed into the role of "process consultant" with pretensions or aspirations to expertise about a "method" of action research, a role quite inconsistent with the commitment to participate in the personal and social changes in practice that had brought participants together. Despite efforts to contain the concept then, and to disavow its utility and outline its dangers later, it was a mistake to perpetuate the use of a term that already carried connotations of neutrality. Although the role of university researchers in action research is always somewhat problematic and an important object of critique, conceptualizing facilitation as a neutral or merely technical activity denies the social responsibility of the facilitator in making or assisting social change (McTaggart, 2002). The emphasis on techniques of facilitation also overplayed the importance of academic researchers and implicitly differentiated the work of theoreticians and practitioners, academics and workers, and community developers and peasant workers. Preoccupation with neutrality sustained the positivistic myth of the researcher as detached secretary to the universe and focused attention on the social practices (and research practices) of "the other." This in turn helped to make action research look like research for amateurs.

University professors often play an active role in action research. In the education field, for example, they are often teacher educators as well as researchers. Teacher education is just one "subpractice" of *education* as a social practice and, of course, is not practiced exclusively by university professors. In education, there are also curriculum

practices, policy and administration practices, and research and evaluation practices. There is also a variety of student learning practices and community and parent participation practices that help to constitute the practice of education. Similarly, in action research for community development in some parts of the world, outside researchers have often been indispensable advocates and *animateurs* of change and not just technical advisers. It is clear to us that some of these *animateurs* have been heroes in social transformation, and we must acknowledge that many have lost their lives because of their work with dispossessed and disempowered people and communities, struggling with them for justice and democracy against repressive social and economic conditions.

Apart from these moral and political reasons against seeing facilitation as a merely technical role, there are reasons of epistemology. Emphasis on facilitation as a neutral role blinds one to the manifoldness of practice, that is, to the constitution of practice through the knowledge of individuals and a range of extraindividual features, including its social, discursive, moral, and political aspects as well as its historical formation such as the way in which it is shaped and reshaped in traditions of practice (Kemmis, 2004). Seeing facilitation in neutral terms also blinds one to the way in which practice is constituted as a "multiple reality" that is perceived differently by different participants in and observers of practice (e.g., professionals, clients, clients' families and friends, interested observers). Thus, seeing the role of facilitation as a neutral role obscures key aspects of practices and impedes critique of the way in which practices may sustain and daily reconstitute social realities whose character and consequences can be unjust, irrational, unproductive, and unsatisfactory for some of the people involved in or affected by them.

This leads us to the nub of a problem. What is the shared conceptual space that allows the intrication of these subpractices of broad social practices, such as education, health, agriculture, and transportation, to become the object of critique and the subject of enhancement? To understand how these subpractices are constitutive of lived social realities requires what Freire called *conscientization,* that is, the development of an informed critical perspective on social life among ordinary people or, to put it another way, the development of a critical theory of social life by the people who participate in it.

The Research–Activism Dualism

We find significant understatement of the role of theory and theory building in the literature of action research. The causes of this are complex. On the one hand, they include the difficulties associated with group members introducing theoretical concepts and experience of similar cases that are too difficult or confronting for other participants (McTaggart & Garbutcheon-Singh, 1986). On the other hand, they include the difficulties of ignoring or oversimplifying pertinent theoretical resources without which participants may be obliged to construe their own problems or concerns as if in a vacuum, isolating them from useful intellectual and discursive resources and

sometimes leaving them vulnerable to charges of mere navel gazing. This is compounded by thinking in terms of a theory–action (thinking–activism) dualism. Thinking about unsatisfactory conditions is less confronting than actually changing them, and some take refuge in the view that political action is somehow less rational than thinking or talking about change. We reject this dualism; on the contrary, our experience suggests that there should be both more theory and more action in action research. Political activism should be theoretically informed just like any other social practice. Although action research is often incremental in the sense that it encourages growth and development in participants' expertise, support, commitment, confidence, knowledge of the situation, and understanding of what is prudent (i.e., changed thinking), it also encourages growth and development in participants' capacity for action, including direct and substantial collective action that is well justified by the demands of local conditions, circumstances, and consequences.

The Role of the Collective

The idea of the action research *group* is typically credited to Lewin immediately after World War II, although it may be that Moreno pioneered the practice a generation earlier (Altrichter & Gstettner, 1997). It was Lewin who argued the potency of "group commitment" in bringing about changes in social practices. In more recent views of action research, the "collective" is seen as supporting three important functions. First, it is seen as an expression of the democratization of scientific practice. Instead of deferring to the pronouncements of professional experts, a local scientific community is established to use principles of scientific inquiry to enhance and create richer local understandings. We have referred to this process as the "objectification of experience." Two further roles of the collective are expressed in the idea of the "disciplining of subjectivity," where subjectivity refers to an *affective* aspect, the emotional reactions of participants, and an aspect of political *agency.* In the affective aspect of subjectivity, the action research process creates opportunities for feelings to be made accessible and explored. At the same time, it creates opportunities for the way in which people feel about their situations to be examined for deeper causes and meanings and for participants to differentiate serious and abiding concerns from transient or peripheral reactions to immediate difficulties. Again, this work is not simply the preserve of the scientific or professional specialist group therapist or facilitator; on the contrary, in participatory action research, it must be part of a social process of transformation (of selves as well as situations) that is comprehensible to participants. Participants play a supportive role, but the collective has a disciplining function, helping to clarify thinking and providing a context where affect as well as cognitive questions can be justified. People come to realize that some feelings are superficial, misdirected, unfair, and overreactions. Other feelings are focused, strengthened, and nurtured as they are revealed, articulated, thought through, and reflected on. This is introspective in part, but its aim is refined action.

Political agency is a corollary of heightened understanding and motivation. As affect becomes mobilized and organized, and as experience is more clearly objectified and understood, both knowledge and feeling become articulated and disciplined by the collective toward prudent action. Individual action is increasingly informed and planned with the support and wisdom of others directly participating in related action in a situation. The collective provides critical support for the development of personal political agency and critical mass for a commitment to change. Through these interactions, new forms of practical consciousness emerge. In other words, both the action and research aspects of action research *require* participation as well as the disciplining effect of a collective.

The extension of action research collectives to include "critical friends," to build alliances with broader social movements, and to extend membership across institutional hierarchies has been a way of enhancing the understanding and political efficacy of individuals and groups. However, the problem of how to create the conditions of learning for participants persists. People not only are hemmed in by material institutional conditions, they frequently are trapped in institutional discourses that channel, deter, or muffle critique. How do we create (or re-create) new possibilities for what Fals Borda (1988) called *vivéncia,* through the revitalization of the public sphere, and also promote decolonization of lifeworlds that have become saturated with the bureaucratic discourses, routinized practices, and institutionalized forms of social relationships characteristic of social systems that see the world only through the prism of organization and not the human and humane living of social lives? This is an issue that we have now come to interpret through the notion of public discourse in public spheres and the idea of research as a social practice.

▣ PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH AND THE STUDY OF PRACTICE

In our chapter on participatory action research for the second edition of the *Handbook,* we outlined five traditions in the study of practice. We argued that *research on practice* is itself a practice and that the practice of research on practice has historically taken, and continues to take, different forms. Different practitioners of research on practice see it more from the perspective of the *individual* and/or the *social* and more from an "*objective*" perspective and/or a "*subjective*" perspective. They use different research methods and techniques that reflect these epistemological and ontological choices, that is, choices about what it means to *know* a practice (the epistemological choice) and about what a practice *is* and thus how it manifests itself in reality (the ontological choice). If research on practice is *methodologically defined,* however, researchers may obscure, even from themselves, the epistemological and ontological choices that underpin their choices of methods. As ways of "seeing" practice, research methods both illuminate and obscure what the research and the researcher can see. As Ludwig

Wittgenstein noticed, this may involve a "conjuring trick" that obscures the very thing we hoped to see:

> How does the philosophical problem about mental processes and states and about behaviourism arise? The first step is the one that altogether escapes notice. We talk of processes and states and leave their nature undecided. Sometime perhaps we shall know more about them—we think. But that is just what commits us to a particular way of looking at the matter. For we have a definite concept of what it means to learn to know a process better. (The decisive movement in the conjuring trick has been made, and it was the very one that we thought quite innocent.) And now the analogy which was to make us understand our thoughts falls to pieces. So we have to deny the yet uncomprehended process in the yet unexplored medium. And now it looks as if we had denied mental processes. And naturally we don't want to deny them. (Wittgenstein, 1958, p. 103)

We conclude, therefore, that it is risky to proceed in a discussion of research on practice principally *from* research methods and techniques—risky because the methods we choose may inadvertently have "committed us to a particular way of seeing the matter."

In our chapter in the second edition of the *Handbook,* we depicted the relationships among five broad traditions in the study of practice. Table 23.1 summarizes these traditions.

We argued that these different approaches to the study of practice involved different kinds of relationships between *the researcher* and *the researched.* Essentially, we argued that "objective" approaches tended to see practice from the perspective of an outsider in the *third person;* that "subjective" approaches tended to see practice from the perspective of an insider in the *second person;* and that the reflexive dialectical perspective of critical social science tended to see practice from the perspective of the insider group, whose members' interconnected activities constitute and reconstitute their own social practices, in the *first person* (plural). This last perspective on practice is the one taken by participant-researchers in participatory action research.

In terms of these five aspects of practice and the five traditions in the study of practice, it seems to us that a methodologically driven view of participatory action research finds itself mired in the assumptions about practice to which one or another of the different traditions of research on practice is committed. Depending on which of these sets of presuppositions it adopts, it may find itself unable to approach (the study of) practice in a sufficiently rich and multifaceted way, that is, in terms that recognize different aspects of practice and do justice to its social, historical, and discursive construction.

If participatory action research is to explore practice in terms of each of the five aspects outlined in our chapter in the second edition of the *Handbook,* it will need to consider how different traditions in the study of practice, and different research methods and techniques, can provide *multiple* resources for the task. It must also avoid accepting the assumptions and limitations of particular methods and techniques. For

example, the participatory action researcher may legitimately eschew the narrow empiricism of those approaches that attempt to construe practice entirely "objectively," as if it were possible to exclude consideration of participants' subjective intentions, meanings, values, and interpretive categories from an understanding of practice or as if it were possible to exclude consideration of the frameworks of language, discourse, and tradition by which people in different groups construe their practices. It does not follow from this that quantitative approaches are never relevant in participatory action research; on the contrary, they may be—but without the constraints of empiricism and objectivism that many quantitative researchers put on these methods and techniques. Indeed, when quantitative researchers use questionnaires to convert participants' views into numerical data, they tacitly concede that practice cannot be understood without taking participants' views into account. Participatory researchers will differ from one-sidedly quantitative researchers in the ways in which they collect and use such data because participatory action researchers will regard them as crude approximations of the ways in which participants understand themselves and not (as empiricistic, objectivistic, quantitative researchers may assert) as more rigorous (e.g., valid, reliable) because they are scaled.

On the other hand, the participatory action researcher will differ from the one-sidedly qualitative approach that asserts that action can be understood only from a qualitative perspective, for example, through close clinical or phenomenological analysis of an individual's views or close analysis of the discourses and traditions that shape the way in which a particular practice is understood by participants. The participatory action researcher will also want to explore how changing "objective" circumstances (e.g., performances, events, effects, patterns of interaction, rules, roles, system functioning) shape and are shaped by the "subjective" conditions of participants' perspectives.

In our view, questions of research methods should not be regarded as unimportant, but (in contrast with the methodologically driven view) we would want to assert that what makes participatory action research "research" is not the machinery of research techniques but rather an abiding concern with the relationships between social and educational theory and practice. In our view, before questions about what kinds of research methods are appropriate can be decided, it is necessary to decide what kinds of things "practice" and "theory" are, for only then can we decide what kinds of data or evidence might be relevant in describing practice and what kinds of analyses might be relevant in interpreting and evaluating people's real practices in the real situations in which they work. On this view of participatory action research, a central question is how practices are to be understood "in the field," as it were, so that they become available for more systematic theorizing. Having arrived at a general view of what it means to understand (theorize) practice in the field, it becomes possible to work out what kinds of evidence, and hence what kinds of research methods and techniques, might be appropriate for advancing our understanding of practice at any particular time.

The theoretical scheme depicted in Figure 10.2 takes a view of what theorizing a practice might be like—locating practice within frameworks of participants'

knowledge, in relation to social structures, and in terms of social media. By adopting a more encompassing view of practice like the one outlined in Table 10.1, we may be able to understand and theorize it more richly, and in more complex ways, so that powerful social dynamics (e.g., the tensions and interconnections between system and lifeworld [Habermas 1984, 1987b]) can be construed and reconstituted through a critical social practice such as participatory action research.

Table 10.1.   Relationships Among Different Traditions in the Study of Practice

Perspective	*The Individual*	*The Social*	*Both: Reflexive–dialectical view of individual–social relations and connections*
Objective	(1) Practice as individual behavior, seen in terms of performances, events, and effects: Behaviorist and most cognitivist approaches in psychology	(2) Practice as social interaction (e.g., ritual, system-structured): Structure-functionalist and social systems approaches	
Subjective	(3) Practice as intentional action, shaped by meaning and values: Psychological *verstehen* (empathetic understanding) and most constructivist approaches	(4) Practice as socially structured, shaped by discourses, tradition: Interpretive, aesthetic-historical *verstehen* (empathetic understanding), and poststructuralist approaches	
Both: Reflexive–dialectical view of subjective–objective relations and connections			(5) Practice as socially and historically constituted and as reconstituted by human agency and social action: Critical methods; dialectical analysis (multiple methods)

The participants in participatory action research understand practice from *both* its individual and its social aspects and understand it *both* objectively and subjectively. They view practice as constructed and reconstructed *historically* both in terms of the *discourses* in which practices are described and understood and in terms of socially and historically constructed *actions and their consequences.* Moreover, they view practice as constituted and reconstituted in *human and social action* that projects a living past through the lived present into a future where the people involved and affected will live with the consequences of actions taken.

This view of practice as *projected through history by action* applies not only to the "first-level" practices that are the object and subject of participants' interests (e.g., the practices of economic life in a village aiming at community development) but also to the practice of research itself. Participants in participatory action research understand their research practices as *meta-practices* that help to construct and reconstruct the first-level practices they are investigating. For example, participants in a participatory action research project on practices of community development (the first-level practices) understand their research practices as among the meta-practices that shape their practices of community development. Practices of management, administration, and social integration are also meta-practices shaping their practices of community development. However, unlike those other meta-practices, the meta-practice of participatory action research is deliberately and systematically reflexive. It is both outwardly directed and inwardly (self-)directed. It aims to change community development practitioners, community development practices, and the practice situations of community development through practices of research that are also malleable and developmental and that, through collaborative processes of communication and learning, change the practitioners, practices, and practice situations of the research. Like other practices, the practices of participatory action research are projected through history by action. They are meta-practices that aim to transform the world so that other first-level transformations become possible, that is, transformations in people's ways of thinking and talking, ways of doing things, and ways of relating to one another.

This view of *research practices* as specifically located in time (history) and social space has implications that are explored later in this chapter. In the process of participatory action research, the same people are involved in two parallel, reflexively related sets of practices. On the one hand, they are the practitioners of community development (to use our earlier example); on the other hand, they are the practitioners of the meta-practice of participatory action research. They are *both practitioners and researchers* in, say, community development, the development of primary health care, or school–community relations. They understand their research as "engaged research" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) through which they, as researchers, aim to *transform* practices of community development, primary health care, or school–community relations. But they also understand their research practices as constructed and open to reconstruction. They do not regard the research process as the application

of fixed and preformed research techniques to the particular "applied" problem with which they are concerned. On the contrary, they regard their research practices as a matter of borrowing, constructing, and reconstructing research methods and techniques to throw light on the nature, processes, and consequences of the particular object they are studying (whether community development practices, primary health care practices, or practices of school–community relations). And this means that participatory action researchers are embarked on a process of transforming themselves as researchers, transforming their research practices, and transforming the practice settings of their research.

In our chapter in the second edition of the *Handbook,* we also argued for a view of research that we termed "symposium research," that is, research drawing on the multiple disciplinary perspectives of different traditions in social science theorizing and multiple research methods that illuminate different aspects of practices. We believe that this approach will increasingly come to characterize participatory action research inquiries. That is, we expect that as participatory action research becomes more sophisticated in its scope and intentions, it will draw on transdisciplinary theoretical resources (e.g., relevant psychological and sociological theories) and multiple research methods and techniques that will allow participant-researchers to gain insight into the formation and transformation of their practices in context. For example, we expect to see more participatory action research using research techniques characteristic of all five of the traditions depicted in Table 10.1. These methods and techniques are presented in Table 10.2.

In the current edition of the *Handbook,* we argue that the nature of the social relationships involved in participatory action research—and the proper politics of participatory action research—can be more clearly understood from the perspective of Habermas's (1984, 1987a) *theory of communicative action* and, in particular, his later commentary on the nature of the *public sphere,* as outlined in *Between Facts and Norms* (Habermas, 1996, chap. 8).

◨ THE POLITICS OF PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH: COMMUNICATIVE ACTION AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

In his book *Theory of Communicative Action,* and especially the second volume, Habermas (1984, 1987b) described communicative action as what people do when they engage in communication of a particular—and widespread—kind, with three particular features. It is communication in which people consciously and deliberately aim

1. to reach *intersubjective agreement* as a basis for

2. *mutual understanding* so as to

3. reach an *unforced consensus about what to do* in the particular practical situation in which they find themselves.

Communicative action is the kind of action that people take when they interrupt what they are doing (Kemmis, 1998) to ask four particular kinds of questions (the four validity claims):

- Whether their understandings of what they are doing *make sense* to them and to others (are *comprehensible*)
- Whether these understandings are *true* (in the sense of being *accurate* in accordance with what else is known)
- Whether these understandings are *sincerely held and stated* (authentic)
- Whether these understandings are *morally right and appropriate* under the circumstances in which they find themselves

In *Between Facts and Norms,* Habermas (1996) added a fourth feature to the original list of three features of communicative action. He noticed something obvious that previously had been overlooked, namely that communicative action also *opens communicative space* between people. He gave this fourth feature of communicative action special attention because he considered that opening space for communicative action produces two particular and simultaneous effects. First, it builds *solidarity* between the people who open their understandings to one another in this kind of communication. Second, it underwrites the understandings and decisions that people reach with *legitimacy.* In a world where communications are frequently cynical, and where people feel alienated from public decisions and even from the political processes of their world, legitimacy is hard-won. More important for our purposes here, however, Habermas's argument is that *legitimacy is guaranteed only through communicative action,* that is, when people are free to choose—authentically and for themselves, individually and in the context of mutual participation—to decide *for themselves* the following:

- What is comprehensible to *them* (whether in fact they understand what others are saying)
- What is true in the light of *their own* knowledge (both their individual knowledge and the shared knowledge represented in the discourse used by members)
- What participants *themselves* regard as sincerely and truthfully stated (individually and in terms of their joint commitment to understanding)
- What participants *themselves* regard as morally right and appropriate in terms of their individual and mutual judgment about what it is right, proper, and prudent to do under the circumstances in which they find themselves

What is projected here is not an ideal against which actual communications and utterances are to be judged; rather, it is something that Habermas believes we normally take for granted about utterances—unless they are deliberately distorted or challenged. In ordinary speech, we may or may not regard any particular utterance as suspect on the grounds of any or all of the four validity claims; whether any particular utterance will be regarded as suspect or needing closer critical examination will depend on "who is saying what about what to whom in what context." On the

Table 10.2.   Methods and Techniques Characteristic of Different Approaches to the Study of Practice

Perspective	*The Individual*	*The Social*	*Both: Reflexive–dialectical view of individual–social relations and connections*
Objective	(1) Practice as individual behavior: Quantitative and correlational–experimental methods; psychometric and observational techniques, tests, and interaction schedules	(2) Practice as social and systems behavior: Quantitative and correlational–experimental methods; observational techniques, sociometrics, systems analysis, and social ecology	
Subjective	(3) Practice as intentional action: Qualitative and interpretive methods; clinical analysis, interview, questionnaire, diaries, journals, self-report, and introspection	(4) Practice as socially structured, shaped by discourses and tradition: Qualitative, interpretive, and historical methods; discourse analysis and document analysis	
Both: Reflexive–dialectical view of subjective–objective relations and connections			(5) Practice as socially and historically constituted and as reconstituted by human agency and social action: Critical methods; dialectical analysis (multiple methods)

other hand, when we move into the mode of *communicative action,* we acknowledge at the outset that we must strive for intersubjective agreement, mutual understanding, and unforced consensus about what to do in this particular situation because we already know that one or all four of the validity claims must be regarded as problematic—by *us* here and now, for our situation, and in relation to what to do in practice about the matter at hand. That is, the validity claims do not function merely as *procedural* ideals for critiquing speech; they also function as bases for, or underpinnings of, the *substantive* claims we need to explore to reach mutual agreement, understanding, and consensus about what to do in the *particular* concrete situation in which a particular group of people in a shared socially, discursively, and historically structured specific communicative space are deliberating together.

What we notice here, to reiterate, is that the process of recovering and critiquing validity claims is not merely an abstract ideal or principle but also an invocation of critique and critical self-awareness in *concrete* and *practical* decision making. In a situation where we are genuinely acting collaboratively with others, and where practical reason is genuinely called for, we are obliged, as it were, to "retreat" to a meta-level of critique—communicative action—because it is *not* self-evident what should be done. Perhaps we simply do not comprehend what is being talked about or we are not sure that we understand it correctly. Perhaps we are unsure of the truth or accuracy of the facts on which our decisions might be based. Perhaps we fear that deliberate deception or accidental self-deception may lead us astray. Perhaps we are not sure what it is morally right and appropriate to do in this practical situation in which our actions will, as always, be judged by their historical consequences (and their differential consequences for different people and groups). In any of these cases, we need to consider how to approach the practical decision before us, and we must gather our shared understandings to do so. In such cases, we interrupt what we are doing to move into the mode of communicative action. In some such cases, we may also move into the slower, more concretely practical, and more concretely critical mode of participatory action research, aiming deliberately and collaboratively to investigate the world in order to transform it, as Fals Borda observed, and to transform the world in order to investigate it. We take a problematic view of our own action in history and use our action in history as a "probe" with which to investigate reflexively our own action and its place as cause and effect in the unfolding history of our world.

Participatory Action Research and Communicative Space

In our view, *participatory action research opens communicative space* between participants. The process of participatory action research is one of *mutual inquiry* aimed at reaching intersubjective agreement, mutual understanding of a situation, unforced consensus about what to do, and a sense that what people achieve together will be *legitimate* not only for themselves but also for every reasonable person (a universal claim). Participatory action research aims to create circumstances in which people can search

together collaboratively for more comprehensible, true, authentic, and morally right and appropriate ways of understanding and acting in the world. It aims to create circumstances in which *collaborative social action* in history is not justified by appeal to authority (and still less to coercive force); rather, as Habermas put it, it is justified by the force of better argument.

To make these points is to notice three things about the social relations engendered through the process of action research. First, it is to notice that certain relationships are appropriate in the *research* element of the term "participatory action research." It is to notice that the social practice of this kind of research is *a practice directed deliberately toward discovering, investigating, and attaining* intersubjective agreement, mutual understanding, and unforced consensus about what to do. It is aimed at testing, developing, and retesting agreements, understandings, and decisions against the criteria of mutual comprehensibility, truth, truthfulness (e.g., sincerity, authenticity), and moral rightness and appropriateness. In our view, *participatory action research projects communicative action into the field of action and the making of history.* It does so in a deliberately critical and reflexive way; that is, it aims to change both our unfolding history and ourselves as makers of our unfolding history. As science, participatory action research is *not* to be understood as the kind of science that gathers knowledge as a precursor to and resource for controlling the unfolding of events (the technical knowledge–constitutive interest characteristic of positivistic social science [Habermas, 1972]). Nor is it to be understood as the kind of science directed toward educating the person to be a wiser and more prudent actor in as yet unspecified situations and circumstances (the practical knowledge–constitutive interest characteristic of hermeneutics and interpretive social science [Habermas, 1972]). Participatory action research is to be understood as a collaborative practice of critique, performed in and through a collaborative practice of research that aims to change the researchers themselves as well as the social world they inhabit (the emancipatory knowledge–constitutive interest characteristic of critical social science [Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Habermas, 1972]).

Second, it is to notice that similar relationships are appropriate in the *action* element of participatory action research. It is to notice that the decisions on which action is based must first have withstood the tests of the research element and must then withstand the tests of wisdom and prudence—that people are willing to, and indeed can, reasonably live with the consequences of the decisions they make, and the actions they take, and the actions that follow from these decisions. This is to notice that participatory action research generates not only a collaborative sense of agency but also a collaborative sense of the *legitimacy* of the decisions people make, and the actions they take, together.

Third, it is to notice that participatory action research involves relationships of *participation* as a central and defining feature and not as a kind of instrumental or contingent value tacked on to the term. In many views of action research, including some of our earliest advocacies for it, the idea of "participation" was thought to refer to an action research group whose members had reached an agreement to research and act

together on some shared topic or problem. This view caused us to think in terms of "insiders" and "outsiders" to the group and to the action research process. Such a view carries resonances of discussions of the role of the avant-garde in making the revolution. It suggests that the action research group constitutes itself *against* established authorities or ways of working, as if it were the role of the group to show how things can and should be done better despite the constraints and exigencies of taken-for-granted ways of doing things.

The idea of participation as central to participatory action research is not so easily enclosed and encapsulated. The notion of *inclusion* evoked in participatory action research should not, in our view, be regarded as static or fixed. Participatory action research should, in principle, create circumstances in which all of those involved in and affected by the processes of research and action (all of those involved in thought and action as well as theory and practice) about the topic have a right to speak and act in transforming things for the better. It is to say that, in the case of, for example, a participatory action research project about education, it is not only teachers who have the task of improving the social practices of schooling but also students and many others (e.g., parents, school communities, employers of graduates). It is to say that, in projects concerned with community development, not only lobby groups of concerned citizens but also local government agencies and many others will have a share in the consequences of actions taken and, thus, a right to be heard in the formation of programs of action.

In reality, of course, not all involved and affected people will participate in any particular participatory action research project. Some may resist involvement, some might not be interested because their commitments are elsewhere, and some might not have the means to join and contribute to the project as it unfolds. The point is that a participatory action research project that aims to transform existing ways of understanding, existing social practices, and existing situations must also transform other people and agencies who might not "naturally" be participants in the processes of doing the research and taking action. *In principle,* participatory action research issues an invitation to previously or naturally uninvolved people, as well as a self-constituted action research group, to participate in a common process of *communicative action for transformation.* Not all will accept the invitation, but it is incumbent on those who do participate to take into account those others' understandings, perspectives, and interests—even if the decision is to oppose them in the service of a broader public interest.

Participatory Action Research and the Critique of the "Social Macro-Subject"

As these comments suggest, participatory action research does not—or need not—valorize a particular *group* as the carrier of legitimate political action. In his critique of the "social macro-subject" in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* and *Between Facts and Norms,* Habermas (1987a, 1996) argued that political theory has

frequently been led astray by the notion that a state or an organization can be autonomous and self-regulating in any clear sense. The circumstances of late modernity are such, he argued, that it is simplistic and mistaken to imagine that the machinery of government or management is unified and capable of self-regulation in any simple sense of "self." Governments and the machinery of government, and managements and the machinery of contemporary organizations, are nowadays so complex, multifaceted, and (often) internally contradictory as "systems" that they do not operate in any autonomous way, let alone in any way that could be regarded as self-regulating in relation to the publics they aim to govern or manage. They are not unified systems but rather complex sets of subsystems having transactions of various kinds with one another economically (in the steering medium of money) and administratively (in the steering medium of power). *Between Facts and Norms* is a critique of contemporary theories of law and government that are based on concrete, historically outmoded notions of governmentality that presume a single, more or less unified body politic that is regulated by law and a constitution. Such theories presume that governments can encapsulate and impose order on a social body as a unified whole across many dimensions of social, political, cultural, and individual life or lives. Many of those who inhabit the competing subsystems of contemporary government and management in fact acknowledge that no such simple steering is possible; on the contrary, steering takes place—to the extent that it can happen at all—through an indeterminate array of established practices, structures, systems of influence, bargaining, and coercive powers.

The same is true of participatory action research groups. When they conceive of themselves as closed and self-regulating, they may lose contact with social reality. In fact, participatory action research groups are internally diverse, they generally have no unified "center" or core from which their power and authority can emanate, and they frequently have little capacity to achieve their own ends if they must contend with the will of other powers and orders. Moreover, participatory action research groups connect and interact with various kinds of external people, groups, and agencies. In terms of thought and action, and of theory and practice, they arise and act out of, and back into, the wider social reality that they aim to transform.

The most morally, practically, and politically compelling view of participatory action research is one that sees participatory action research as a practice through which people can create networks of communication, that is, sites for the practice of communicative action. It offers the prospect of opening communicative space in public spheres of the kind that Habermas described. Based on such a view, participatory action research aims to engender practical critiques of existing states of affairs, the development of critical perspectives, and the shared formation of emancipatory commitments, that is, commitments to overcome distorted ways of understanding the world, distorted practices, and distorted social arrangements and situations. (By "distorted" here, we mean understandings, practices, and situations whose consequences are unsatisfying, ineffective, or unjust for some or all of those involved and affected.)

Communicative Action and Exploratory Action

Participatory action research creates a communicative space in which communicative action is fostered among participants and in which problems and issues can be thematized for critical exploration aimed at overcoming felt dissatisfactions (Fay, 1987), irrationality, and injustice. It also fosters a kind of "playfulness" about action—what to do. At its best, it creates opportunities for participants to adopt a thoughtful but highly exploratory view of what to do, knowing that their practice can and will be "corrected" in the light of what they learn from their careful observation of the processes and consequences of their action as it unfolds. This seems to us to involve a new kind of understanding of the notion of communicative action. It is not just "reflection" or "reflective practice" (e.g., as advocated by Schön, 1983, 1987, 1991) but also action taken with the principal purpose of learning from experience by careful observation of its processes and consequences. It is deliberately designed as an *exploration* of ways of doing things in this particular situation at this particular historical moment. It is designed to be *exploratory action.*

Participatory action research is scientific and reflective in the sense in which John Dewey described "scientific method." Writing in *Democracy and Education,* Dewey (1916) described the essentials of reflection—and scientific method—as follows:

> They are, first, that the pupil has a genuine situation of experience—that there be a continuous activity in which he is interested for its own sake; secondly, that a genuine problem develop within this situation as a stimulus to thought; third, that he possess the information and make the observations needed to deal with it; fourth, that suggested solutions occur to him which he shall be responsible for developing in an orderly way; fifth, that he shall have the opportunity and occasion to test his ideas by application, to make their meaning clear, and to discover for himself their validity. (p. 192)

For Dewey, experience and intelligent action were linked in a cycle. Education, like science, was to aim not just at filling the minds of students but also at helping them to take their place in a democratic society ceaselessly reconstructing and transforming the world through action. Intelligent action was always experimental and exploratory, conducted with an eye to learning and as an opportunity to learn from unfolding experience.

In our view, participatory action research is an elaboration of this idea. It is exploratory action that parallels and builds on the notion of communicative action. It does more than conduct its reflection in the rear-view mirror, as it were, looking backward at what has happened to learn from it. It also generates and conducts action in an exploratory and experimental manner, with actions themselves standing as practical hypotheses or speculations to be tested as their consequences emerge and unfold.

▣ CONSTITUTING PUBLIC SPHERES FOR COMMUNICATIVE
ACTION THROUGH PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

Baynes (1995), writing on Habermas and democracy, quoted Habermas on the *public sphere:*

> [Deliberative politics] is bound to the demanding communicative presuppositions of polit-
> ical arenas that do not coincide with the institutionalized will-formation in parliamentary
> bodies but extend equally to the political public sphere and to its cultural context and social
> basis. A deliberative practice of self-determination can develop only in the interplay
> between, on the one hand, the parliamentary will-formation institutionalized in legal pro-
> cedures and programmed to reach decisions and, on the other, political opinion-building
> in informal circles of political communication. (p. 316)[1]

Baynes (1995) described Habermas's conceptualization of the "strong publics" of
parliamentary and legal subsystems and the "weak publics" of the "public sphere
ranging from private associations to the mass media located in 'civil society'
. . . [which] assume responsibility for identifying and interpreting social problems"
(pp. 216–217). Baynes added that, in this connection, Habermas "also describes the
task of an opinion-forming public sphere as that of laying siege to the formally orga-
nized political system by encircling it with reasons without, however, attempting to
overthrow or replace it" (p. 217).

In practice, this has been the kind of task that many action researchers, and espe-
cially participatory action researchers, have set for themselves—surrounding estab-
lished institutions, laws, policies, and administrative arrangements (e.g., government
departments) with *reasons* that, on the one hand, respond to contemporary crises or
problems experienced "in the field" (in civil society) and, on the other, provide a ratio-
nale for changing current structures, policies, practices, procedures, or other arrange-
ments that are implicit in causing or maintaining these crises or problems. In response
to crises or problems experienced in particular places, participatory action researchers
are frequently involved in community development projects and initiatives of various
kinds, including community education, community economic development, raising
political consciousness, and responding to "green" issues. In one sense, they see them-
selves as oppositional, that is, as protesting current structures and functions of eco-
nomic and administrative systems. In another sense, although sometimes they are
confrontational in their tactics, they frequently aim not to *overthrow* established
authority or structures but rather to get them to *transform* their ways of working so
that problems and crises can be overcome. As Baynes observed, their aim is to besiege
authorities with *reasons* and not to destroy them. We might also say, however, that
some of the reasons that participatory action researchers employ are the fruits of their

practical experience in making change. They create *concrete contradictions* between established or current ways of doing things, on the one hand, and alternative ways that are developed through their investigations. They read and contrast the nature and consequences of existing ways of doing things with these alternative ways, aiming to show that irrationalities, injustices, and dissatisfactions associated with the former can be overcome *in practice* by the latter.

As we indicated earlier, the approach that participatory action researchers take to identified problems or crises is *to conduct research* as a basis for informing themselves and others about the problems or crises and to explore ways in which the problems or crises might be overcome. Their stock in trade is communicative action both internally, by opening dialogue within the group of researcher-participants, and externally, by opening dialogue with the powers-that-be about the nature of the problems or crises that participants experience in their own lives and about ways of changing social structures and practices to ease or overcome these problems or crises. Sometimes advocates of participatory action research (including ourselves) have misstated the nature of this oppositional role—seeing themselves as simply opposed to established *authorities* rather than as opposed to particular *structure*s or established *practices.* We recognize that in our own earlier advocacies, the language of "emancipation" was always ambiguous, permitting or encouraging the idea that the emancipation we sought was from the structures and systems of the state itself rather than, or as much as, emancipation from the real objects of our critique—self-deception, ideology, irrationality, and/or injustice (as our more judicious formulations described it).

Habermas's critique of the social macro-subject suggests that our formulation of the action group as a kind of avant-garde was always too wooden and rigid. It encouraged the notion that there were "insiders" and "outsiders" and that the insiders could be not only self-regulating and relatively autonomous but also effective in confronting a more or less unitary, self-regulating, and autonomous state or existing authority. That is, it seemed to presume an integrated (unconflicted) "core" and an integrated (unconflicted) political object to be changed as a consequence of the investigations undertaken by the action group. In reality, we saw action groups characterized by contradictions, contests, and conflicts within that were interacting with contradictory, contested, and conflict-ridden social structures without. Alliances shifted and changed both inside action groups and in the relations of members with structures and authorities in the wider social context of which they were a part. Indeed, many participatory action research projects came into existence *because* established structures and authorities wanted to explore possibilities for change in existing ways of doing things, even though the new ways would be in a contradictory relationship with the usual ways of operating.

This way of understanding participatory action research groups is more open-textured and fluid than our earlier advocacies suggested. In those advocacies, we imagined action groups as more tightly knotted, better integrated, and more "solid" than the way in which we see them now. Now we recognize the more open and fluid connections

between "members" of action groups and between members and others in the wider social context in which their investigations take place.

Public Spheres

In *Between Facts and Norms,* Habermas (1996, chap. 8) outlined the kinds of conditions under which people can engage in communicative action in the contexts of social action and social movements. He set out to describe the nature of what he called *public spheres.* (Note that he did not refer solely to "the public sphere," which is an abstraction; rather, he referred to "public spheres," which are concrete and practical contexts for communication.) The public spheres that Habermas had in mind are *not* the kinds of communicative spaces of most of our social and political communication. Communication in very many political contexts (especially in the sense of *realpolitik*) is frequently distorted and disfigured by interest-based bargaining, that is, by people speaking and acting in ways that are guided by their own (self-)interests (even if they are shared political interests) in the service of their own (shared) particular goals and ends. We return to this in our discussion of participatory action research and communicative space later.

From Habermas's (1996, chap. 8) discussion in *Between Facts and Norms,* we identified 10 key features of public spheres as he defined them. In what follows, drawing on other recent work (Kemmis, 2004; Kemmis & Brennan Kemmis, 2003), we describe each of these features and then briefly indicate how critical participatory action research projects might exemplify each feature. From Kemmis and Brennan Kemmis (2003), we also present comments indicating how two kinds of social action projects displayed some of the characteristics of public discourses in public spheres, that is, how participatory action research work can create more open and fluid relationships than can the closed and somewhat mechanical notions sometimes associated with action research groups and methodologically driven characterizations of their work. To use this illustration, it is necessary to give a brief introduction to these examples. The first is an example of a participatory action research project in Yirrkala, Australia, during the late 1980s and 1990s. The second is an example of a large educational congress held in the Argentine Republic in 2003.

Example 1: The Yirrkala Ganma Education Project. During the late 1980s and 1990s, in the far north of Australia in the community of Yirrkala, North East Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, the Yolngu indigenous people wanted to change their schools.[2] They wanted to make their schools more appropriate for Yolngu children. Mandawuy Yunupingu, then deputy principal at the school and later lead singer of the pop group Yothu Yindi, wrote about the problem this way:

> Yolngu children have difficulties in learning areas of Balanda [white man's] knowledge. This is not because Yolngu cannot think, it is because the curriculum in the schools is not

relevant for Yolngu children, and often these curriculum documents are developed by Balanda who are ethnocentric in their values. The way that Balanda people have institu-tionalised their way of living is through maintaining the social reproduction process where children are sent to school and they are taught to do things in a particular way. Often the things that they learn favour [the interests of] the rich and powerful, because when they leave school [and go to work] the control of the workforce is in the hands of the middle class and the upper class.

An appropriate curriculum for Yolngu is one that is located in the Aboriginal world which can enable the children to cross over into the Balanda world. [It allows] for identifi-cation of bits of Balanda knowledge that are consistent with the Yolngu way of learning. (Yunupingu, 1991, p. 102)

The Yolngu teachers, together with other teachers and with the help of their com-munity, began a journey of participatory action research. Working together, they changed the white man's world of schooling. Of course, sometimes there were conflicts and disagreements, but they worked through them in the Yolngu way—toward con-sensus. They had help but no money to conduct their research.

Their research was not research about schools and schooling *in general;* rather, their participatory action research was about how schooling was done in *their* schools. As Yunupingu (1991) put it,

So here is a fundamental difference compared with traditional research about Yolngu edu-cation: We start with Yolngu knowledge and work out what comes from Yolngu minds as of central importance, not the other way [a]round. (pp. 102–103)

Throughout the process, the teachers were guided by their own collaborative research into their problems and practices. They gathered stories from the old people. They gathered information about how the school worked and did not work for them. They made changes and watched what happened. They thought carefully about the consequences of the changes they made, and then they made still further changes on the basis of the evidence they had gathered.

Through their shared journey of participatory action research, the school and the community discovered how to limit the culturally corrosive effects of the white man's way of schooling, and they learned to respect *both* Yolngu ways and the white man's ways. At first, the teachers called the new form of schooling "both ways education." Later, drawing on a sacred story from their own tradition, they called it "Ganma education."

Writing about his hopes for the Ganma research that the community conducted to develop the ideas and practices of Ganma education, Yunupingu (1991) observed,

I am hoping the Ganma research will become critical educational research, that it will empower Yolngu, that it will emphasize emancipatory aspects, and that it will take a side— just as the Balanda research has always taken a side but never revealed this, always claim-ing to be neutral and objective. My aim in Ganma is to help, to change, to shift the balance of power.

Ganma research is also critical in the processes we use. Our critical community of action researchers working together, reflecting, sharing, and thinking includes important Yolngu elders, the Yolngu action group [teachers in the school], Balanda teachers, and a Balanda researcher to help with the process. Of course, she is involved too; she cares about our problems, [and] she has a stake in finding solutions—this too is different from the traditional role of a researcher. (p. 103) . . .

It is, I must stress, important to locate Ganma in our broader development plans . . . in the overall context of Aboriginalisation and control into which Ganma must fit. (p. 104)

Together, the teachers and the community found new ways in which to think about schools and schooling, that is, new ways in which to think about the work of teaching and learning and about their community and its future. Their collaborative participatory action research changed not only the school but also the people themselves.

We give a little more information about the communicative relationships established in the project as we describe 10 features of public spheres as discussed by Habermas.

Example 2: The Córdoba Educational Congress. In October 2003, some 8,000 teachers gathered in Córdoba, Argentina, for the Congreso Internacional de Educación (Congreso V Nacional y III Internacional).[3] We want to show that the congress opened a shared communicative space to explore the nature, conditions, and possibilities for change in the social realities of education in Latin America. When participants opened this communicative space, they created open-eyed and open-minded social relationships in which participants were jointly committed to gaining a critical and self-critical grasp on their social realities and the possibilities for changing the educational practices of their schools and universities and for overcoming the injustice, inequity, irrationality, and suffering endemic in the societies in which they live. Although we are not claiming that the case perfectly realizes the ideal type of the public sphere, it seems to us that the participants in the Córdoba congress created the kind of social arena that is appropriately described as a public sphere. Moreover, the congress is also to be understood as one of many key moments in a broad social and educational movement at which participants reported on particular projects of different kinds (many of them participatory action research projects), seeing these particular projects as contributions to the historical, social, and political process of transforming education in various countries in South America.

The 10 features of public spheres we mentioned earlier are as follows:

1. Public spheres are *constituted as actual networks of communication among actual participants.* We should not think of public spheres as entirely abstract, that is, as if there were just one public sphere. In reality, *there are many public spheres.*

Understood in this way, participatory action research groups and projects might be seen as open-textured networks established for communication and exploration of social problems or issues and as having relationships with other networks and organizations in which members also participate.

The Yirrkala Ganma project involved a particular group of people in and around the schools and community at that time. It was a somewhat fluid group that was focused on a group of indigenous teachers at the school together with community elders and other community members—parents and others—and students at the schools. It also involved nonindigenous teachers and coresearchers who acted as critical friends to the project. The network of actual communications among these people constituted the project as a public sphere.

The Córdoba congress brought together some 8,000 teachers, students, education officials, and invited experts in various fields. For the 3 days of the congress, they constituted an overlapping set of networks of communication that could be regarded as a large but highly interconnected and thematized set of conversations about contemporary educational conditions and educational practices in Latin America. They were exploring the question of how current educational practices and institutions continued to contribute to and reproduce inequitable social relations in those countries and how transformed educational practices and institutions might contribute to transforming those inequitable social conditions.

2. Public spheres are *self-constituted.* They are formed by people who get together *voluntarily.* They are also *relatively autonomous;* that is, they are outside formal systems such as the administrative systems of the state. They are also outside the formal systems of influence that mediate between civil society and the state such as the organizations that represent particular interests (e.g., a farmers' lobby). They are composed of people who want to explore particular problems or issues, that is, around particular themes for discussion. Communicative spaces or communication networks organized as part of the communicative apparatus of the economic or administrative subsystems of government or business would *not* normally qualify as public spheres.

Participatory action research groups come into existence around themes or topics that participants want to investigate, and they make a shared commitment to collaborating in action and research in the interests of transformation. They constitute themselves as a group or project for the purpose of mutual critical inquiry aimed at practical transformation of existing ways of doing things (practices/work), existing understandings (which guide them as practitioners/workers), and existing situations (practice settings/workplaces).

The Yirrkala Ganma project was formed by people who wanted to get together to work on changing the schools in their community. They participated voluntarily. They were relatively autonomous in the sense that their activities were based in the schools but were not "owned" by the schools, and their activities were based in the community but were not "owned" by any community organization. The project was held together by a common commitment to communication and exploration of the possibilities for changing the schools to enact the Ganma (both ways) vision of Yolngu schooling for Yolngu students and communities.

People attended the Córdoba congress voluntarily. Despite the usual complex arrangements for people to fund their attendance and sponsorship of students and others who could not afford to attend (approximately 800 of the 8,000 attendees received scholarships to subsidize their attendance), the congress remained autonomous of particular schools, education systems, and states. The administrative apparatus of the congress was not "owned" by any organization or state, although its core administrative staff members were based at the Dr. Alejandro Carbó Normal School. The congress was coordinated by a committee of educators based in Córdoba and was advised by an academic committee composed of people from many significant Argentinean education organizations (e.g., the Provincial Teachers' Union, universities, the National Academy of Sciences based in Córdoba). Arguably, however, the structuring of the congress as a self-financing economic enterprise (as distinct from its connection with a broader social and educational movement) jeopardized the extent to which it might properly be described as a public sphere.

3. Public spheres frequently come into existence in response to *legitimation deficits;* that is, they frequently come into existence because potential participants do not feel that existing laws, policies, practices, or situations are legitimate. In such cases, participants do not feel that they would necessarily have come to the decision to do things the ways they are now being done. Their communication is aimed at exploring ways in which to overcome these legitimation deficits by finding alternative ways of doing things that will attract their informed consent and commitment.

Participatory action research groups and projects frequently come into existence because existing ways of working are regarded as lacking legitimacy in the sense that they do not (or no longer) command respect or because they cannot be regarded as authentic for participants, either individually or collectively.

The Yirrkala Ganma project came into existence because of prolonged and profound dissatisfaction with the nature and consequences of the white man's way of schooling for Yolngu students, including the sense that current ways of doing schooling were culturally corrosive for Yolngu students and communities. As indicated earlier, Yolngu teachers and community members wanted to find alternative ways of schooling that would be more inclusive, engaging, and enabling for Yolngu students and that would help to develop the community under Yolngu control.

The people attending the Córdoba congress generally shared the view that current forms of education in Latin America serve the interests of a kind of society that does not meet the needs of most citizens, that is, that current forms of schooling are not legitimate in terms of the interests of the majority of students and their families. They wanted to explore alternative ways of doing education that might better serve the interests of the people of Latin America (hence the theme for the congress, "Education: A Commitment With the Nation").

4. Public spheres are constituted for *communicative action* and for *public discourse.* Usually they involve face-to-face communication, but they could be constituted in other ways (e.g., via e-mail, via the World Wide Web). Public discourse in public spheres has a similar orientation to communicative action in that it is oriented toward intersubjective agreement, mutual understanding, and unforced consensus about what to do. Thus, communicative spaces organized for essentially instrumental or functional purposes—to command, to influence, to exercise control over things— would *not* ordinarily qualify as public spheres.

Participatory action research projects and groups constitute themselves for communication oriented toward intersubjective agreement, mutual understanding, and unforced consensus about what to do. They create communication networks aimed at achieving communicative action and at projecting communicative action into practical inquiries aimed at transformation of social practices, practitioners' understandings of their practices, and the situations and circumstances in which they practice.

The Yirrkala Ganma project was created with the principal aim of creating a shared communicative space in which people could think, talk, and act together openly and with a commitment to making a difference in the way in which schooling was enacted in their community. Communications in the project were mostly face-to-face, but there was also much written communication as people worked on various ideas and subprojects within the overall framework of the Ganma project. They spent many hours in reaching intersubjective agreement on the ideas that framed their thinking about education, in reaching mutual understanding about the conceptual framework in which their current situation was to be understood and about the Ganma conceptual framework that would help to guide their thinking as they developed new forms of schooling, and in determining ways in which to move forward based on unforced consensus about how to proceed. Although it might appear that they had an instrumental approach and a clear goal in mind—the development of an improved form of schooling—it should be emphasized that their task was not merely instrumental. It was not instrumental because they had no clear idea at the beginning about what form this new kind of schooling would take; both their goal and the means to achieve it needed to be critically developed through their communicative action and public discourse.

In the Córdoba congress, people came together to explore ways of conceptualizing a reconstructed view of schooling and education for Latin America at this critical moment in the history of many of its nations. The point of the congress was to share ideas about how the current situation should be understood and how it was formed and to consider ideas, issues, obstacles, and possible ways in which to move forward toward forms of education and schooling that might, on the one hand, overcome some of the problems of the past and, on the other, help to shape forms of education and schooling that would be more appropriate to the changed world of the present and future. Participants at the congress presented and debated ideas; they explored social, cultural, political, educational, and economic problems and issues; they considered the achievements of programs and

approaches that offered alternative "solutions" to these problems and issues; and they aimed to reach critically informed views about how education and schooling might be transformed to overcome the problems and address the issues they identified in the sense that they aimed to reach practical decisions about what might be done in their own settings when participants returned home from the congress.

5. Public spheres aim to be *inclusive.* To the extent that communication among participants is *exclusive,* doubt may arise as to whether a sphere is in fact a "public" sphere. Public spheres are attempts to create communicative spaces that include not only the parties most obviously interested in and affected by decisions but also people and groups peripheral to (or routinely excluded from) discussions in relation to the topics around which they form. Thus, essentially private or privileged groups, organizations, and communicative networks do *not* qualify as public spheres.

Participatory action research projects and groups aim to include not only practitioners (e.g., teachers, community development workers) but also others involved in and affected by their practices (e.g., students, families, clients).

The Yirrkala Ganma project aimed to include as many of the people who were (and are) involved in and affected by schooling in the community as was possible. It reached out from the school to involve the community and community elders, it included nonindigenous teachers as well as indigenous teachers, and it involved students and their families as well as teachers in the school. It was not exclusive in the sense that its assertion of Yolngu control excluded Balanda (nonindigenous) people; still, it invited Balanda teachers, advisers, and others to join the common commitment of Yolngu people in their search for improved forms of education and schooling that would meet the needs and aspirations of Yolngu people and their communities more genuinely.

The Córdoba congress aimed to be broadly inclusive. It was a congress that was described by its coordinator, María Nieves Díaz Carballo, as "by teachers for teachers"; nevertheless, it included many others involved in and affected by education and schooling in Latin America—students, education officials, invited experts, representatives of a range of government and nongovernment organizations, and others. It aimed to include all of these different kinds of people as friends and contributors to a common cause—creating new forms of education and schooling better suited to the needs of the present and future in Latin America and the world.

6. As part of their inclusive character, public spheres tend to involve communication in *ordinary language.* In public spheres, people deliberately seek to break down the barriers and hierarchies formed by the use of specialist discourses and the modes of address characteristic of bureaucracies that presume a ranking of the importance of speakers and what they say in terms of their positional authority (or lack thereof). Public spheres also tend to have only the weakest of distinctions between insiders and

outsiders (they have relatively permeable boundaries and changing "memberships") and between people who are relatively disinterested and those whose (self-)interests are significantly affected by the topics under discussion. Thus, the communicative apparatuses of many government and business organizations, and of organizations that rely on the specialist expertise of some participants for their operations, do *not* ordinarily qualify as public spheres.

While drawing on the resources and discourses of theory and policy in their investigations, participatory action researchers aim to achieve mutual comprehension and create discourse communities that allow all participants to have a voice and play a part in reaching consensus about what to do. By necessity, they use language that all can use rather than relying on the specialist discourses of social science that might exclude some from the shared task of understanding and transforming shared everyday lives and a shared lifeworld.

In the Yirrkala Ganma project, much of the communication about the project not only was in ordinary language but was also conducted in the language of the community, that is, *Yolngu-matha.* This not only was a deliberate shift from the language in which Balanda schooling was usually discussed in the community (English and some specialist educational discourse) but also was a shift to engage and use the conceptual frameworks of the community and Yolngu culture. On the other hand, the modes of address of the Yolngu culture require respect for elders and specialist forms of language for "inside" matters (secret/sacred, for the initiated) versus "outside" matters (secular, for the uninitiated), so many discussions of the Ganma conceptual framework required participants to respect these distinctions and the levels of initiation of speakers and hearers.

At the Córdoba congress, many speakers used specialist educational (and other) discourses to discuss their work or ideas, but much of the discussion took place in language that was deliberately intended to be inclusive and engaging for participants, that is, to share ideas and open up participants for debate without assuming that hearers were fluent in specialist discourses for understanding either the sociopolitical context of education in Latin America or the technical aspects of contemporary education in Latin American countries. More particularly, the languages used at the congress, including translations from English and Portuguese, were inclusive because they were directed specifically toward fostering the shared commitment of participants about the need for change and the obstacles and possibilities ahead if participants wanted to join the shared project of reconstructing education in Argentina and elsewhere. Specialist discourses were used to deal with specific topics (e.g., in philosophy, in social theory, in curriculum), but the conversations about those topics soon shifted register to ensure that ideas were accessible to any interested participants.

7. Public spheres presuppose *communicative freedom.* In public spheres, participants are free to occupy (or not occupy) the particular discursive roles of speaker, listener, and observer, and they are free to withdraw from the communicative space of the discussion. Participation and nonparticipation are voluntary. Thus, communicative

spaces and networks generally characterized by obligations or duties to lead, follow, direct, obey, remain silent, or remain outside the group could *not* be characterized as public spheres.

Participatory action research projects and groups constitute themselves to "open communicative space" among participants. They constitute themselves to give participants the right and opportunity to speak and be heard, to listen, or to walk away from the project or group. Contrary to some of our earlier views, they are not closed and self-referential groups in which participants are (or can be) bound to some "party line" in the sense of a "correct" way of seeing things. Moreover, they constitute themselves deliberately for *critical* and *self-critical* conversation and decision making that aims to open up existing ways of saying and seeing things, that is, to play with the relationships between the actual and the possible.

In the Yirrkala Ganma project, participants were free to occupy the different roles of speaker, listener, and observer or to withdraw from discussions. In any particular discussion, some may have occupied one or another of these roles to a greater extent, but over the life of the project, people generally occupied the range of these roles at one time or another. As indicated earlier, some people continued to occupy privileged positions as speakers (e.g., on matters of inside knowledge), but they also occupied roles as listeners in many other situations, responding with their specialist knowledge whenever and wherever it was appropriate to do so. In general, however, the prolonged discussions and debates about giving form to the idea of the Ganma (both ways) curriculum was conducted in ways that enabled participants to gather a shared sense of what it was and could be and how it might be realized in practice. The discussions were consistently open and critical in the sense that all participants wanted to reach shared understandings and agreements about the limitations of Balanda education for Yolngu children and communities and about the possibilities for realizing a different and improved form of education for Yolngu children and their community.

The Córdoba congress engendered conditions of communicative freedom. Although the congress program and timetable privileged particular participants as speakers at particular times, the vast conversation of the congress, within and outside its formal sessions and in both formal and informal communication, presupposed the freedom of participants to speak in, listen to, observe, and withdraw from particular discussions. Conversations were open and critical, inviting participants to explore ideas and possibilities for change together.

8. The communicative networks of public spheres generate *communicative power;* that is, the positions and viewpoints developed through discussion will command the respect of participants not by virtue of obligation but rather by the power of mutual understanding and consensus. Thus, communication in public spheres creates legitimacy in the strongest sense, that is, the shared belief among participants that they freely and authentically consent to the decisions they reach. Thus, systems of

command or influence, where decisions are formed on the basis of obedience or self-interests, would *not* ordinarily qualify as public spheres.

Participatory action research projects and groups allow participants to develop understandings of, reasons for, and shared commitment to transformed ways of doing things. They encourage exploration and investigation of social practices, understandings, and situations. By the very act of doing so, they generate more authentic understandings among participants and a shared sense of the legitimacy of the decisions they make.

Over the life of the Yirrkala Ganma project, and in the continuing work arising from it, participants developed the strongest sense that the new way of thinking about education and schooling that they were developing was timely, appropriate, true to their circumstances, and generative for Yolngu children and their community. They were clearly conscious that their shared viewpoint, as well as their conceptual framework, contrasted markedly with taken-for-granted assumptions and presuppositions about schooling in Australia, including many taken-for-granted (Balanda) ideas about indigenous education. The communicative power developed through the project sustained participants in their commitment to these new ways of schooling despite the occasional resistances they experienced when the Northern Territory education authorities found that community proposals were counter to, or exceptions to, usual ways of operating in the system. (It is a tribute to many nonindigenous people in the Northern Territory who worked with Yirrkala Community Schools and the associated Homelands Centre Schools that they generally took a constructive and supportive view of the community's proposals even when the proposals fell outside established practice. The obvious and deep commitment of the Yolngu teachers and community to the tasks of the project, the support of credible external coresearchers, and the long-term nature of the project encouraged many nonindigenous system staff members to give the project "the benefit of the doubt" as an educational project that had the possibility to succeed in indigenous education where many previous proposals and plans developed by nonindigenous people had failed.)

The Córdoba congress was infused by a growing sense of shared conviction and shared commitment about the need and possibilities for change in education in Argentina and elsewhere in Latin America. On the other hand, the impetus and momentum of the developing sense of shared conviction may have been more fragile and transitory because the congress was just a few days long (although building on the momentum from previous congresses and other work that participants were doing toward the same transformative ends). Seen against the broader sweep of education and educational change in education in Latin America, however, it is clear that the congress was drawing on, refreshing, and redirecting long-standing reserves of critical educational progressivism in the hearts, minds, and work of many people who attended.

The shared conviction that new ways of working in education are necessary generated a powerful and nearly tangible sense of *solidarity* among participants in the congress—a powerful and lasting shared commitment to pursuing the directions

suggested by the discussions and debates in which they had participated. It also generated an enduring sense of the *legitimacy* of decisions made by participants in the light of shared exploration of their situations, shared deliberation, and shared decision making.

9. Public spheres do not affect social systems (e.g., government, administration) *directly;* their impact on systems is *indirect.* In public spheres, participants aim to change the climate of debate, the ways in which things are thought about and how situations are understood. They aim to generate a sense that alternative ways of doing things are possible and feasible and to show that some of these alternative ways actually work or that the new ways do indeed resolve problems, overcome dissatisfactions, or address issues. Groups organized primarily to pursue the particular interests of particular groups by direct intervention with government or administrative systems would *not* ordinarily qualify as public spheres. Similarly, groups organized in ways that usually serve the particular interests of particular groups, even though this may happen in a concealed or "accidental" way (as frequently happens with news media), do *not* ordinarily qualify as public spheres.

Participatory action research projects and groups rarely have the power to legislate or compel change, even among their own members. It is only by the force of better argument, transmitted to authorities who must decide for themselves what to do, that they influence existing structures and procedures. They frequently establish themselves, and are permitted to establish themselves, at the margins of those structures and procedures, that is, in spaces constituted for exploration and investigation and for trying out alternative ways of doing things. They are frequently listened to because they have been deliberately allowed to explore this marginal space, with the tacit understanding that what they learn may be of benefit to others and to existing systems and structures. Although they may understand themselves as oppositional or even "outlaw" (in a metaphorical sense), they are frequently acting with the knowledge and encouragement of institutional authorities who recognize that changes might be needed.

As already indicated, the Yirrkala Ganma project was based in the schools but was not an official project of the school system or education system, and it was based in the community but was not an official project of any community organization. The schools and the Northern Territory education system, as well as various community organizations, knew of the existence of the project and were generally supportive. The work of the project was not an improvement or development project undertaken by any of these organizations, nor did the project "speak" directly to these organizations from within the functions and operations of the systems as systems. On the contrary, the project aimed to change the way in which these systems and organizations thought about and organized education in the community. In particular, it aimed to change the conceptual frameworks and discourses in which Yolngu education was understood and the activities that constituted it. In a sense, the transformations

produced by the project were initially "tolerated" by these systems and organizations as exceptions to usual ways of operating. Over time, through the indirect influence of showing that alternative ways of doing things could work, the systems began to accept them—even though the alternative ways were at odds with practice elsewhere. The project changed the climate of discussion and the nature of the discourse about what constitutes good education for Yolngu children and communities. Because similar experiments were going on elsewhere around Australia (e.g., with the involvement of staff members from Deakin University, the University of Melbourne, and Batchelor College), there was a sense within education systems that the new experiment should be permitted to proceed in the hope (increasingly fulfilled) that the new ways of working might prove to be more effective in indigenous schools in indigenous communities where education had frequently produced less satisfactory outcomes than in nonindigenous schools and for nonindigenous students and communities. In a variety of small but significant ways, education systems began to accept the discourses of "both ways" education (realized differently in different places) and to encourage different practices of "both ways" education in indigenous communities and schools with large enrollments of indigenous students.

The Córdoba congress operated outside the functional frameworks of education and state systems and aimed to change the ways in which education and schooling were understood and practiced indirectly rather than directly. No state agency sponsor controlled the congress; as indicated earlier, it is a congress created and maintained by its organizers "by teachers for teachers." On the other hand, state officials (e.g., the minister of education for the Province of Córdoba [Amelia López], the Argentinean federal minister of education [Daniel Filmus]) addressed the congress and encouraged participants in their efforts to think freshly about the educational problems and issues being confronted in schools and in Argentina. The size, success, and generativity of previous congresses was well known (the 2003 congress was the fifth national congress and third international congress held in Córdoba), and it is reasonable to assume that representatives of the state would want to endorse the congress even if some of the ideas and practices being debated and developed by participants were at the periphery of, or even contrary to, state initiatives in education and schooling. Of course it is also true that many of the ideas and practices discussed at the congress, such as those concerned with social justice in education, were generally in the spirit of state initiatives, although most congress participants appeared to take an actively and constructively critical view of the forms and consequences of contemporary state initiatives in schooling.

10. Public spheres frequently arise in practice through, or in relation to, the communication networks associated with *social movements,* that is, where voluntary groupings of participants arise in response to a legitimation deficit or a shared sense that a social problem has arisen and needs to be addressed. Nevertheless, the public spheres created by some organizations (e.g., Amnesty International) can be long-standing and

well organized and can involve notions of (paid) membership and shared objectives. On the other hand, many organizations (e.g., political parties, private interest groups) do *not* ordinarily qualify as public spheres for reasons already outlined in relation to other items on this list and also because they are part of the social order rather than social movements.

Participatory action research groups and projects often arise in relation to broad social movements such as the women's movement, the green movement, peace movements, the civil rights movement, and other movements for social transformation. They frequently arise to explore alternative ways of doing things in settings where the impact of those movements is otherwise unclear or uncertain (e.g., in the conduct of teaching and learning in schools, in the conduct of social welfare by family and social welfare agencies, in the conduct of catchment management by groups of landholders). They draw on the resources of those social movements and feed back into the broader movements, both in terms of the general political potency of the movements and in terms of understanding how the objectives and methods of those movements play out in the particular kinds of situations and settings (e.g., village life, schooling, welfare practice) being investigated.

As some of the statements of Yunupingu (1991) quoted earlier suggest, the Yirrkala Ganma project was an expression of several important contemporary indigenous social movements in Australia, particularly the land rights movement, the movement for Aboriginal self-determination and control, and (for Australians generally) the movement for reconciliation between indigenous and nonindigenous Australians. Arguably, some of the ideas developed in the Ganma project have had a far wider currency than might have been expected, for example, through the songs and music of Yunupingu's pop group, Yothu Yindi, which have resolutely and consistently advocated mutual recognition and respect between indigenous and nonindigenous Australians and have educated and encouraged nonindigenous Australians to understand and respect indigenous people, knowledge, communities, and cultures. The Ganma project was a manifestation of these indigenous rights movements at the local level and in the particular setting of schools and was also a powerful intellectual contribution to shaping the wider movements. On the one hand, the project named and explained ways in which schooling was culturally corrosive for indigenous peoples; on the other hand, it showed that it was possible to create and give rational justifications of alternative, culturally supportive ways of doing schooling and education for indigenous people and in indigenous communities.

In the Córdoba congress, there was a strong sense of connection to a broad social movement for change in Latin American education and societies. Endemic corruption, ill-considered economic adventures, antidemocratic practices, the denial of human rights, and entrenched social inequity in a number of Latin American countries were opposed and critiqued by many progressive people, including many teachers and education professionals, and there was (and is) a hunger for alternative forms of education that might prevent the tragic inheritance of previous regimes (e.g.,

escalating national debt, fiscal crises, impoverishment, the collapse of services) from being passed on to rising generations of students and citizens. The negative/critical and positive/constructive aspects of the education movement represented in and by the congress are connected to a wider social movement for change, but they are also a particular and specific source of intellectual, cultural, social, political, and economic ideas and practices that make a distinctive contribution to the shape and dynamics of the wider movement. The congress itself is now something of a rallying point for progressive and critical teachers and education professionals, but it remains determinedly and politely independent of the state and commercial sponsors that might seek to exercise control over or through it. Its organizers are convinced that their best chance to change the climate of thinking about education and society is to remain independent of the state machinery of social order and to strive only for an indirect role in change by having a diffuse role in changing things "by the force of better argument" rather than striving to create change through the administrative power available through the machinery of the state or (worse) through any kind of coercive force. The congress also expressed, not only in its written materials but also in its climate and culture, a profound sense of passion, hope, and joy; participants clearly regard it as an opportunity to celebrate possibilities and achievements in creating new forms of education aimed at making (and speaking and writing into existence) a better future.

These 10 features of public spheres describe a space for social interaction in which people strive for intersubjective agreement, mutual understanding, and unforced consensus about what to do and in which legitimacy arises. These are the conditions under which participants regard decisions, perspectives, and points of view reached in open discussion as compelling for—and even binding on—themselves. Such conditions are very different from many other forms of communication, for example, the kind of functional communication characteristic of social systems (which aims to achieve particular ends by the most efficient means) and most interest-based bargaining (which aims to maximize or optimize self-interests rather than to make the best and most appropriate decision for all concerned).

These conditions are ones under which practical reasoning and exploratory action by a community of practice are possible—theorizing, research, and collective action aimed at changing practices, understandings of practices, and the settings and situations in which practice occurs. They are conditions under which a loose affiliation of people can gather to address a common theme based on contemporary problems or issues, aiming to inform themselves about the core practical question of "what is to be done?" in relation to the formation and transformation of practice, practitioners, and the settings in which practice occurs at particular times and in particular places.

As already suggested, such communities of practice sometimes come into existence when advocacy groups believe that problems or issues arise in relation to a program, policy, or practice and that change is needed. An example would be the kind of collaboration that occurs when a group of mental health service clients meet with mental health service providers and professionals to explore ways in which to improve

mental health service delivery at a particular site. Another example would be the project work of groups of teachers and students who conduct participatory action research investigations into problems and issues in schooling. Another would be the kind of citizens' action campaign that sometimes emerges in relation to issues of community well-being and development or environmental or public health issues. This approach to the transformation of practice understands that changing practices is not just a matter of changing the ideas of practitioners alone; it also is a matter of changing the social, cultural, discursive, and material conditions under which the practice occurs, including changing the ideas and actions of those who are the clients of professional practices and the ideas and actions of the wider community involved in and affected by the practice. This approach to changing practice, through fostering public discourse in public spheres, is also the approach to evaluation advocated by Niemi and Kemmis (1999) under the rubric of "communicative evaluation" (see also Ryan, 2003).

◪ MYTHS, MISINTERPRETATIONS, AND MISTAKES REVISITED

In the light of the Habermasian notions of *system and lifeworld* (explored in our chapter in the second edition of the *Handbook*), *the critique of the social macro-subject,* and the notion of *public spheres* developed in *Between Facts and Norms,* we can throw new light on the myths, misinterpretations, and mistakes about critical participatory action research identified earlier in this chapter. The following comments present a necessarily brief summary of some of the ways in which our understandings of these topics have evolved during recent years.

Empowerment

In the light of the Habermasian theory of system and lifeworld, we came to understand the notion of empowerment neither solely in lifeworld terms (in terms of the lifeworld processes of cultural, social, and personal reproduction and transformation and their effects) nor solely in systems terms (in terms of changing systems structures or functioning or through effects produced by the steering media of money and administrative power of organizations and institutions). Exploring practices, our understandings of them, and the settings in which we worked from *both* lifeworld and system perspectives gave us richer critical insight into how processes of social formation and transformation occur in the contexts of particular projects. Increasingly, we came to understand empowerment not only as a lifeworld process of cultural, social, and personal development and transformation but also as implying that protagonists experienced themselves as working both in and against system structures and functions to produce effects intended to be read in changed systems structures and functioning. From this stereoscopic view, system structures and functions are not only sources of constraint but also sources of possibility, and lifeworld processes of

cultural, social, and personal reproduction and transformation are not only sources of possibility but also sources of constraint on change. Thus, in real-world settings inevitably constructed by both, the notion of empowerment plays across the conceptual boundary between lifeworld and system, and it now seems likely that one would say that empowerment had occurred only when transformations were evident in both lifeworld and system aspects of a situation.

In the light of Habermas's critique of the social macro-subject, we increasingly recognized that the notion of empowerment is not to be understood solely in terms of closed organizations achieving self-regulation (by analogy with the sovereignty of states) as a process of achieving autonomy and self-determination, whether at the level of individual selves or at the level of some collective (understood as a macro-"self"). It turns out that neither individual actors nor states can be entirely and coherently autonomous and self-regulating. Their parts do not form unified and coherent wholes but rather must be understood in terms of notions such as difference, contradiction, and conflict as much as unity, coherence, and independence. In the face of internal and external differentiation, perhaps ideas such as dialogue, interdependence and complementarity are the positives for which one might hope. Despite its rhetorical power and its apparent political necessity, the concept of empowerment does not in reality produce autonomous and independent self-regulation; rather, it produces only a capacity for individuals, groups, and states to interact more coherently with one another in the ceaseless processes of social reproduction and transformation. At its best, it names a process in which people, groups, and states engage one another more authentically and with greater recognition and respect for difference in making decisions that they will regard as legitimate because they have participated in them openly and freely, more genuinely committed to mutual understanding, intersubjective agreement, and consensus about what to do.

In the light of Habermas's commentary on the public sphere, the basis for empowerment is not to be understood in terms of activism justified by ideological position taking; rather, the basis for empowerment is the communicative power developed in public spheres through communicative action and public discourse. On this view, the aim of empowerment is rational and just decisions and actions that will be regarded as legitimate by those involved and affected.

The Role of the Facilitator

In the light of the Habermasian theory of system and lifeworld, we came to understand that facilitation is not to be understood solely in system terms as a specialized role with specialized functions, nor is it to be understood solely in lifeworld terms as a process of promoting the reproduction and transformation of cultures, social relationships, and identities. Instead, it is to be understood as a process to be critically explored from both perspectives. The question of facilitation usually arises when there is an asymmetrical relationship of knowledge or power between a person expecting or

expected to do "facilitation" and people expecting or expected to be "facilitated" in the process of doing a project. It is naïve to believe that such asymmetries will disappear; sometimes help *is* needed. At the same time, it must be recognized that those asymmetries can be troublesome and that there is little solace in the idea that they can be made "safe" because the facilitator aims to be "neutral." On the other hand, it is naïve to believe that the person who is asked for help, or to be a facilitator, will be an entirely "equal" coparticipant along with others, as if the difference were invisible. Indeed, the facilitator *can* be a coparticipant, but one with some special expertise that may be helpful to the group in its endeavors. The theory of system and lifeworld allows us to see the doubleness of the role in terms of a specialist role and functions in critical tension with processes of cultural, social, and personal reproduction and transformation that aspire to achieving self-expression, self-realization, and self-determination (recognizing that the individual or collective self in each case is not a unified, coherent, autonomous, responsible, and independent whole entirely capable of self-regulation). The stereoscopic view afforded by the theory of system and lifeworld provides conceptual resources for critical enactment and evaluation of the role of the facilitator in practice.

In the light of Habermas's critique of the social macro-subject, we no longer understand the people involved in collaborative participatory action research projects as a closed group with a fixed membership; rather, we understand them as an open and inclusive network in which the facilitator can be a contributing coparticipant, albeit with particular knowledge or expertise that can be of help to the group. Moreover, at different times, different participants in some groups can and do take the facilitator role in relation to different parts of the action being undertaken and in relation to the participatory action research process.

In the light of Habermas's commentary on the public sphere, the facilitator should not be understood as an external agent offering technical guidance to members of an action group but rather should be understood as someone aiming to establish or support a collaborative enterprise in which people can engage in exploratory action as participants in a public sphere constituted for communicative action and public discourse in response to legitimation deficits.

The Research–Action Dualism

In the light of the Habermasian theory of system and lifeworld, action in participatory action research should not be understood as separated from research in a technical division of labor mirrored in a social division of labor between participants and researchers. Instead, research and action converge *in* communicative action aimed at practical and critical decisions about what to do in the extended form of exploratory action, that is, practices of action and research jointly projected through history by action. Equally, however, we do not understand the research and action elements of participatory action research as the "natural" realization of the lifeworld processes of

cultural, social, and personal reproduction and transformation. In participatory action research, systems categories of structure, functions, goals, roles, and rules are relevant when a group works on a "project" (implying some measure of rational–purposive or strategic action). Here again, participatory action research crosses and recrosses the conceptual boundaries between system and lifeworld aspects of the life of the project, and the stereoscopic view afforded by the theory of system and lifeworld offers critical resources for exploring and evaluating the extent to which the project might become nothing but a rational–purposive project and the extent to which it risks dissolving into the lifeworld processes of the group conducting it. Both the research element and the action element of the project have system and lifeworld aspects, and both elements are candidates for critical exploration and evaluation from the perspectives of system and lifeworld. Indeed, we might now conclude that it is the commitment to conducting this critique, in relation to the action, the research, and the relationship between them, that is the hallmark of critical participatory action research.

In the light of Habermas's critique of the social macro-subject, research and action are to be understood not in terms of steering functions for an individual or for a closed group (e.g., to steer the group by exercising administrative power) but rather as mutually constitutive processes that *create* affiliations and collaborative action among people involved in and affected by particular kinds of decisions and actions.

In the light of Habermas's commentary on the public sphere, research and action are to be understood not as separate functions but rather as different moments in a unified process of struggle characteristic of social movements—struggles against irrationality, injustice, and unsatisfying social conditions and ways of life (a unification of research for action that recalls the insight that all social movements are also educational movements). In the light of Habermas's (1996, chap. 8) description of the public sphere in *Between Facts and Norms,* we now conclude that the impulse to undertake participatory action research is an impulse to subject practice—social action—to deliberate and continuing critique by making action deliberately exploratory and arranging things so that it will be possible to learn from what happens and to make the process of learning a collective process to be pursued through public discourse in a public sphere constituted for that purpose.

The Role of the Collective

In the light of the Habermasian theory of system and lifeworld, the collective is not to be understood either solely in systems terms, as an organization or institution, or solely in lifeworld terms, as a social group constituted in face-to-face social relationships. Instead, it must be critically explored from *both* perspectives and as constituted by processes associated with each (on the systems side: steering media; on the lifeworld side: cultural reproduction and transformation, social reproduction and transformation, and the formation and transformation of individual identities and capabilities).

In the light of Habermas's critique of the social macro-subject, the collective should be understood not as a closed group with fixed membership—a coherent, unified, autonomous, independent, and self-regulating whole—but rather as internally diverse, differentiated, and sometimes inconsistent and contradictory. Nor does a participatory action research group stand in the position of an avant-garde in relation to other people and groups in the setting in which the research occurs, but it retains its connections with those others, just as it retains responsibility for the consequences of its actions as they are experienced in those wider communities in which they take place.

In the light of Habermas's commentary on the public sphere, the collective formed by a participatory action research project should be understood not as a closed and exclusive group constituted to perform the particular organizational roles and functions associated with a project but rather as an open and inclusive space constituted to create conditions of communicative freedom and, thus, to create communicative action and public discourse aimed at addressing problems and issues of irrationality, injustice, and dissatisfaction experienced by particular groups at particular times. In our view, some of the most interesting participatory action research projects are those directly connected with wider social movements (e.g., green issues; issues of peace, race, or gender), but it should not go unnoticed that many participatory action research projects constitute themselves in ways that are very like social movements in relation to local issues, although often with wider ramifications, for example, by addressing issues about the effects of hyperrationalization of practices in local settings that frequently have much more widespread relevance. For example, around the world there are hundreds—probably thousands—of different kinds of action research projects being conducted by teachers to explore the potential and limitations of various innovative forms of teaching and learning that address the alienating effects of state regulation of curriculum, teaching, and assessment at every level of schooling. The multiplication of such projects suggests that there is a social movement under way aimed at recovering or revitalizing education in the face of the very widespread colonization of the lifeworld of teaching and learning by the imperatives of increasingly muscular and intrusive administrative systems regulating and controlling the processes of schooling. These projects in education are paralleled by similar action research projects in welfare, health, community development, and other fields. Taken together, despite their differences, they make an eloquent statement of refusal and reconstruction in the face of a version of corporate and public administration that places the imperative of institutional control above the moral and substantive imperatives and virtues traditionally associated with the practice of these professions.

▣ REIMAGINING CRITICAL PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

The view of critical participatory action research we have advanced in this chapter is somewhat different from the view of it that we held in the past. Two decades ago, our

primary aim was to envisage and enact a well-justified form of research to be conducted by teachers and other professional practitioners into their own practices, their understandings of their practices, and the situations in which they practiced. Despite our critique of established ways of thinking about social and educational research, certain remnant elements of conventional perceptions of research continued to survive in the forms of research we advocated, for example, ideas about theory, knowledge, and the centrality of the researcher in the advancement of knowledge.

Two decades ago, we hoped for advances in theory through action research that would somehow be similar to the kinds of theory conventionally produced or extended in the social and educational research of that time. We expected that practitioners would also develop and extend their own theories of education, but we were perhaps less clear about what the nature and form of those theories would be. We had admired Lawrence Stenhouse's definition of research as "systematic enquiry made public" (Stenhouse, 1975) but had given less thought to how those theories might emerge in a literature of practitioner research. Now we have a clearer idea that sometimes the theories that motivate, guide, and inform practitioners' action are frequently in the form of *collective understandings* that elude easy codification in the forms conventionally used in learned journals and books. They accumulate in conversations, archives of evidence, and the shared knowledge of *communities of practice.*

Two decades ago, although we had regarded "knowledge" as a problematic category and had distinguished between the private knowledge of individuals and the collective knowledge of research fields and traditions, we probably valued the knowledge outcomes of research over the practical outcomes of participant research—the effects of participant research in changing social and educational practices, understandings of those practices, and the situations and settings of practice. Now we have a clearer idea that the outcomes of participatory action research are written in histories—the histories of practitioners, communities, the people with whom they interact, and (again) communities of practice. And we see that the outcomes of participatory action research are to be read in terms of historical consequences for participants and others involved and affected by the action people have taken, judged not only against the criterion of truth but also against the criteria of wisdom and prudence, that is, whether people were better off in terms of the consequences they experienced. We can ask whether their understandings of their situations are less irrational (or ideologically skewed) than before, whether their action is less unproductive and unsatisfying for those involved, or whether the social relations between people in the situation are less inequitable or unjust than before. The product of participatory action research is not just knowledge but also different histories than might have existed if participants had not intervened to transform their practices, understandings, and situations and, thus, transformed the histories that otherwise seemed likely to come into being. We look for the products of participatory action research in *collective action* and the making and remaking of *collective histories.*

Two decades ago, we were excited by participatory research that connected with social movements and made changes in particular kinds of professional practices (e.g., nursing, education, community development, welfare), but we were less aware than we are now that this kind of engagement with social movements is a two-way street. Social movements can be expressed and realized in the settings of professional practice (e.g., the powerful connections made between the women's movement and health or education or between green issues and education or community development), but social movements also take strength and direction from participatory studies that explore and critically investigate issues in the particular contexts of different kinds of social practices. Social movements set agendas around the broad themes that are their focus, but studies of particular practices and local settings also show how differently those broad themes must be understood in terms of issues identified in in-depth local investigations. Now we have a clearer understanding not only that participatory action research expresses the spirit of its time in terms of giving life to social movements in local settings or in relation to particular themes (e.g., gender, indigenous rights) but also that local investigations into locally felt dissatisfactions, disquiets, or concerns also open up themes of broader interest, sometimes linking to existing social movements but also bringing into existence new movements for transformation in professional fields and in the civil life of communities. Now, in judging the long-term success of participatory action research projects, we are more likely to ask about the extent to which they have fed *collective capacities for transformation* locally and in the widening sphere of social life locally, regionally, nationally, and even internationally, as has happened in the history of participatory action research as it has contributed to the development of *people's collective communicative power.*

Most particularly, two decades ago we valorized the researcher. According to conventional views of research, researchers were the people at the center of the research act—heroes in the quiet adventures of building knowledge and theory. We encouraged participant research that would make "ordinary" practitioners local heroes of knowledge building and theory building and collaborative research that would make heroic teams of researching practitioners who produced new understandings in their communities and communities of practice. Increasingly, in those days, we saw research "collectives" as key activist groups that would make and change history. We continue to advocate this view of participatory research as making history by making exploratory changes. Now, however, our critiques of the research–action dualism, and our changing views of the facilitator and the research collective, encourage us to believe that critical participatory action research needs *animateurs* but that it also thrives in *public spheres* in which people can take a variety of roles as researchers, questioners, interlocutors, and interested observers. And if we reject the heroic view of history as being "made" by individuals—great men or great women—then we must see the real transformations of history as transformations made by ordinary people working together in the light of emerging themes, issues, and problems (e.g., via social

movements). We now see a central task of participatory action research as including widening groups of people in the task of making their own history, often in the face of established ways of doing things and often to overcome problems caused by living with the consequences of the histories others make for us—often the consequences of new ways of doing things that were intended to improve things but that turned out to have unexpected, unanticipated, and untoward consequences for those whom the new ways were intended to help. As we hope we have shown, Habermas's description of public discourse in public spheres gives us another way in which to think about who can do "research" and what research might be like if it is conceptualized as exploratory action aimed at nurturing and feeding public discourse in public spheres. Now we are less inclined to think in terms of heroes of knowledge building or even of heroes of history making; we are more inclined to think in terms of people working together to develop a greater collective capacity to change the circumstances of their own lives in terms of *collective capacity building.*

Now, more so than two decades ago, we are excited by notions of collective under-standing, collective research, communicative power, and collective capacity. We are interested in describing and identifying conditions under which people can investigate their own professional fields or community circumstances to develop communicative power and strengthen their collective capacity. In "projects" and movements aimed at collective capacity building, we see people securing new ways of working on the basis of *collective commitment.* We see them achieving new ways of working and new ways of being that have *legitimacy* because their decisions are made in conditions like those we described in the last section—the conditions of public discourse in public spheres. Now, more so than two decades ago, we see participatory action research as a process of sustained *collective deliberation* coupled with sustained *collective investigation* of a topic, a problem, an issue, a concern, or a theme that allows people to explore possibil-ities in action, judging them by their consequences in history and moving with a mea-sure of tentativeness and prudence (in some cases with great courage in the face of violence and coercion) but also with the support that comes with *solidarity.*

This account of what we now value as outcomes and consequences of participatory action research—well-justified and agreed-on collective action that reduces the world's stock of irrationality, injustice, inequity, dissatisfaction, and unproductive ways of doing things—may seem a far cry from the kind of justification for much social and educa-tional research. Perhaps more modestly, that research makes few claims to changing history for the better and promises only improved knowledge and theories that *may* contribute to clearer understanding and improved policy and practice. That is not nec-essarily the way it is used, of course; sometimes "scientific" theories or findings are used to justify social programs, policies, and practices of breathtaking foolhardiness. Our advocacy of critical participatory research is intended partly as an antidote to such foolhardiness but also to insist, in an age of hyperrationality and the technologization of everything, that people can still, gaps and miscues notwithstanding, have a hope of

knowing what they are doing and doing what they think is right and, more particularly, doing less of what they think will have untoward consequences for themselves and others. Perhaps this is to take too "activist" a view of participatory action research and to give up on the conventional understanding that people should wait for experts and theorists to tell them what will work best—what will be best for them.

In 1957, in the *Journal of Educational Sociology,* Harold Hodgkinson presented a critique of action research that he regarded as "a symptom of the times in which we live" (Hodgkinson, 1957, p. 152). Against Arthur Foshay, whom he quoted as saying, "Cooperative action research is an approach to making what we do consistent with what we believe" (which we would argue fails to acknowledge the power of action research to put our ideas to the test and correct what we believe), Hodgkinson retorted,

> This is simply not so. Action research merely focuses attention on the doing and eliminates most of the necessity for believing. We are living in a "doing" age, and action research allows people the privilege of "doing" something. This method could easily become an end in itself. (p. 153)

Hodgkinson (1957) believed that action research would produce "teachers who spend much of their time measuring and figuring, playing with what Dylan Thomas would call 'easy hobby games for little engineers'" (p. 153). He held out for the great scientific generalizations, based on sound empirical and statistical methods that would provide a secure scientific basis for what teachers could or should do.

Those other approaches to research have produced some justifications for improved ways of working in education, social work, community development, and other spheres of social action. They will continue to do so. But they will always create a problem of putting the scientist as "expert" in the position of mediator, that is, mediating between the knowledge and action and the theory and practice of practitioners and ordinary people. They will always create disjunctions between what scientific communities and policymakers believe to be prudent courses of action and the courses of action that people would (and will) choose for themselves, knowing the consequences of their actions and practices for the people with whom they work. For two decades, we have insisted that *practitioners'* interpretive categories (not just how they think about their work but also how they think about their world) must be taken into account in deciding what, when, whether, and how research should be conducted into professional practice and community life. Critical participatory action research is an expression of this impulse, and it has proved, in hundreds of studies, to be a means by which people have transformed their worlds. Sometimes, perhaps, things have *not* turned out for the better, but many times people have concluded that their participatory action research work has changed their circumstances for the better and avoided untoward consequences that they otherwise would have had to endure. This has been true in rebuilding education in South Africa, in literacy campaigns in Nicaragua, in developments in

nursing practice in Australia, in improving classroom teaching in the United Kingdom, in community development in the Philippines, in farms in Sri Lanka, in community governance in India, in improving water supplies in Bangladesh, and in hundreds of other settings around the world. These are not "easy hobby games for little engineers," as Hodgkinson might have it, but rather matters of great human and social significance. These people might not have changed the world, but they have changed their worlds. Is that not the same thing? They might not have changed everything everywhere, but they have improved things for particular people in particular places and in many other places where their stories have traveled. We do not think that it is too immodest an aspiration to judge participatory action research in terms of historical consequences. Indeed, perhaps we judge too much social and educational science against too low a bar. We are used to expecting too little help from it, and our expectations have been met. Under such circumstances, we believe, people would be wise to conduct their own research into their own practices and situations. Under such circumstances, there continues to be a need for critical participatory action research.

◪ NOTES

1. The quotation is from page 334 of the German edition of Habermas's (1992a) *Faktizität und Geltung* (Between Facts and Norms).
2. This description is adapted from Kemmis and Brennan Kemmis (2003).
3. This description is adapted from Kemmis (2004).

◪ REFERENCES

Altrichter, H., & Gstettner, P. (1997). Action research: A closed chapter in the history of German social science? In R. McTaggart (Ed.), *Participatory action research: International contexts and consequences* (pp. 45–78). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Argyris, C. (1990). *Overcoming organisational defences: Facilitating organisational learning.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Argyris, C., Putnam, R., & McLain Smith, D. (1985). *Action science.* San Francisco: Jossey–Bass.

Argyris, C., & Schön, D. A. (1974). *Theory in practice: Increasing professional effectiveness.* San Francisco: Jossey–Bass.

Argyris, C., & Schön, D. A. (1978). *Organisational learning: A theory of action perspective.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Baynes, K. (1995). Democracy and the *Rechsstaat:* Habermas's *Faktizität und Geltung.* In S. K. White (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to Habermas* (pp. 201–232). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. J. D. (1992). *An invitation to reflexive sociology.* Cambridge, UK: Polity.

Bravette, G. (1996). Reflection on a black woman's management learning. *Women in Management Review, 11*(3), 3–11.

Brock-Utne, B. (1980, Summer). What is educational action research? *Classroom Action Research Network Bulletin,* No. 4, pp. 10–15.

Brown, L., Henry, C., Henry, J., & McTaggart, R. (1988). Action research: Notes on the national seminar. In S. Kemmis & R. McTaggart (Eds.), *The action research reader* (3rd ed., pp. 337–352). Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press.

Carr, W., & Kemmis, S. (1986). *Becoming critical: Education, knowledge, and action research.* London: Falmer.

Checkland, P. (1981). *Systems thinking, systems practice.* Chichester, UK: Wiley.

Checkland, P., & Scholes, J. (1990). *Soft systems methodology in action.* Chichester, UK: Wiley.

Clark, P. A. (1972). *Action research and organisational change.* London: Harper & Row.

Corey, S. M. (1949). Action research, fundamental research, and educational practices. *Teachers College Record, 50,* 509–514.

Corey, S. M. (1953). *Action research to improve school practices.* New York: Columbia University, Teachers College Press.

Dadds, M. (1995). *Passionate enquiry and school development: A story about teacher action research.* London: Falmer.

Davies, L., & Ledington, P. (1991). *Information in action: Soft systems methodology.* Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan.

Dewey, J. (1916). *Education and democracy.* New York: Macmillan.

Elden, M. (1983). Participatory research at work. *Journal of Occupational Behavior, 4*(1), 21–34.

Elliott, J. (1976–1977). Developing hypotheses about classrooms from teachers' practical constructs: An account of the work of the Ford Teaching Project. *Interchange, 7*(2), 2–22. Reprinted in Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (Eds.). (1988). *The action research reader* (pp. 195–213). Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press.

Elliott, J., & Adelman, C. (1973). Reflecting where the action is: The design of the Ford Teaching Project. *Education for Teaching, 92,* 8–20.

Emery, F. E., & Thorsrud, E. (1976). *Democracy at work: The report of the Norwegian Industrial Democracy Program.* Leiden, Netherlands: M. Nijhoff.

Emery, F. E., Thorsrud, E., & Trist, E. (1969). *Form and content in industrial democracy: Some experiences from Norway and other European countries.* London: Tavistock.

Fals Borda, O. (1979). Investigating reality in order to transform it: The Colombian experience. *Dialectical Anthropology, 4,* 33–55.

Fals Borda, O. (1988). *Knowledge and people's power.* New Delhi: Indian Social Institute.

Fals Borda, O., & Rahman, M. (1991). *Action and knowledge: Breaking the monopoly with participatory action research.* New York: Apex Press.

Fay, B. (1987). *Critical social science: Liberation and its limits.* Cambridge, UK: Polity.

Flood, R. L., & Jackson, M. C. (1991). *Creative problem solving: Total systems intervention.* Chichester, UK: Wiley.

Forester, J., Pitt, J., & Welsh, J. (Eds.). (1993). *Profiles of participatory action researchers.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, Department of Urban and Regional Planning.

Foster, M. (1972). An introduction to the theory and practice of action research in work organizations. *Human Relations, 25,* 529–566.

Freire, P. (1982). Creating alternative research methods: Learning to do it by doing it. In B. Hall, A. Gillette, & R. Tandon (Eds.), *Creating knowledge: A monopoly?* (pp. 29–37). New Delhi: Society for Participatory Research in Asia. Reprinted in Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R.

(Eds.). (1988). *The action research reader* (pp. 291–313). Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press.

Greenwood, D., & Levin, M. (2000). Reconstructing the relationships between universities and society through action research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 85–106). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Greenwood, D., & Levin, M. (2001). Pragmatic action research and the struggle to transform universities into learning communities. In P. Reason & H. Bradbury (Eds.), *Handbook of action research* (pp. 103–113). London: Sage.

Habermas, J. (1972). *Knowledge and human interests* (J. J. Shapiro, Trans.). London: Heinemann.

Habermas, J. (1984). *Theory of communicative action,* Vol. 1: *Reason and the rationalization of society* (T. McCarthy, Trans.). Boston: Beacon.

Habermas, J. (1987a). *The philosophical discourse of modernity: Twelve lectures* (F. G. Lawrence, Trans.). Cambridge: MIT Press.

Habermas, J. (1987b). *Theory of communicative action,* Vol. 2: *Lifeworld and system: A critique of functionalist reason* (T. McCarthy, Trans.). Boston: Beacon.

Habermas, J. (1992a). *Faktizität und Geltung* (Between facts and norms). Frankfurt, Germany: Suhrkamp.

Habermas, J. (1992b). *Postmetaphysical thinking: Philosophical essays* (W. M. Hohengarten, Trans.). Cambridge: MIT Press.

Habermas, J. (1996). *Between Facts and Norms* (trans. William Rehg). Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Hall, B., Gillette, A., & Tandon, R. (1982). *Creating knowledge: A monopoly?* New Delhi: Society for Participatory Research in Asia.

Henry, C. (1991). If action research were tennis. In O. Zuber-Skerritt (Ed.), *Action learning for improved performance.* Brisbane, Australia: Aebis Publishing.

Hodgkinson, H. (1957). Action research: A critique. *Journal of Educational Sociology, 31*(4), 137–153.

Horton, M., with Kohl, J., & Kohl, H. (1990). *The long haul.* New York: Doubleday.

Jackson, M. C. (1991). *Systems methodology for the management sciences.* New York: Plenum.

Kemmis, S. (1981). Action research in prospect and retrospect. In S. Kemmis, C. Henry, C. Hook, & R. McTaggart (Eds.), *The action research reader* (pp. 11–31). Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press.

Kemmis, S. (1991). Action research and post-modernisms. *Curriculum Perspectives, 11*(4), 59–66.

Kemmis, S. (1998). Interrupt and say: Is it worth doing? An interview with Stephen Kemmis. *Lifelong Learning in Europe, 3*(3).

Kemmis, S. (2004, March). *Knowing practice: Searching for saliences.* Paper presented at the "Participant Knowledge and Knowing Practice" conference, Umeå, Sweden.

Kemmis, S., & Brennan Kemmis, R. (2003, October). *Making and writing the history of the future together: Exploratory action in participatory action research.* Paper presented at the Congreso Internacional de Educación, Córdoba, Argentina.

Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (1988a). *The action research planner* (3rd ed.). Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press.

Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (1988b). *The action research reader* (3rd ed.). Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press.

Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (2000). Participatory action research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 567–605). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kolb, D. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Levin, M. (1985). *Participatory action research in Norway.* Trondheim, Norway: ORAL.

Lewin, K. (1946). Action research and minority problems. *Journal of Social Issues, 2,* 34–46.

Lewin, K. (1952). Group decision and social change. In T. M. Newcomb & E. E. Hartley (Eds.), *Readings in social psychology* (pp. 459–473). New York: Holt.

Marika, R., Ngurruwutthun, D., & White, L. (1992). Always together, Yaka gäna: Participatory research at Yirrkala as part of the development of Yolngu education. *Convergence, 25*(1), 23–39.

McGuire, P. (1987). *Doing participatory research: A feminist approach.* Amherst: University of Massachusetts, Center for International Education.

McTaggart, R. (1991a). *Action research: A short modern history.* Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press.

McTaggart, R. (1991b). Western institutional impediments to Aboriginal education. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 23,* 297–325.

McTaggart, R. (Ed.). (1997). *Participatory action research: International contexts and consequences.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

McTaggart, R. (2002). The mission of the scholar in action research. In M. P. Wolfe & C. R. Pryor (Eds.), *The mission of the scholar: Research and practice* (pp. 1–16). London: Peter Lang.

McTaggart, R., & Garbutcheon-Singh, M. (1986). New directions in action research. *Curriculum Perspectives, 6*(2), 42–46.

Niemi, H., & Kemmis, S. (1999). Communicative evaluation: Evaluation at the crossroads. *Lifelong Learning in Europe, 4*(1), 55–64.

Noffke, S. E. (1990). *Action research: A multidimensional analysis.* Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Noffke, S. E. (1997). Themes and tensions in U.S. action research: Towards historical analysis. In S. Hollinsworth (Ed.), *International action research: A casebook for educational reform* (pp. 2–16). London: Falmer.

Oliveira, R., & Darcy, M. (1975). *The militant observer: A sociological alternative.* Geneva: Institute d'Action Cultural.

Park, P., Brydon-Miller, M., Hall, B., & Jackson, T. (Eds.). (1993). *Voices of change: Participatory research in the United States and Canada.* Toronto: OISE Press.

Pasmore, W., & Friedlander, F. (1982). An action research program for increasing employee involvement in problem-solving. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 27,* 342–362.

Pedler, M. (Ed.). (1991). *Action learning in practice.* Aldershot, UK: Gower.

Rapaport, R. N. (1970). Three dilemmas in action research. *Human Relations, 23,* 499–513.

Reason, P. (Ed.). (1988). *Human inquiry in action: Developments in new paradigm research.* London: Sage.

Revans, R. W. (1980). *Action learning: New techniques for management.* London: Blond & Briggs.

Revans, R. W. (1982). *The origins and growth of action learning.* Lund, Sweden: Studentlitteratur.

Ryan, K. E. (2003, November). *Serving public interests in educational accountability.* Paper presented at the meeting of the American Evaluation Association, Reno, NV.

Sagor, R. (1992). *How to conduct collaborative action research.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Sandkull, B. (1980). Practice of industry: Mis-management of people. *Human Systems Management, 1,* 159–167.

Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action.* New York: Basic Books.

Schön, D. A. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner.* San Francisco: Jossey–Bass.

Schön, D. A. (Ed.). (1991). *The reflective turn: Case studies in and on educational practice.* New York: Columbia University, Teachers College Press.

Stenhouse, L. (1975). *An introduction to curriculum research and development.* London: Heinemann Educational.

Taylor. C. (1991). *The malaise of modernity.* Concord, Ontario: House of Anansi.

Torbert, W. R. (1991). *The power of balance: Transforming self, society, and scientific inquiry.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Warmington, A. (1980). Action research: Its methods and its implications. *Journal of Applied Systems Analysis, 7,* 23–39.

Weiner, G. (1989). Professional self-knowledge versus social justice: A critical analysis of the teacher– researcher movement. *British Educational Research Journal, 15*(1), 41–51.

Whyte, W. F. (1989). Introduction to action research for the twenty-first century: Participation, reflection, and practice. *American Behavioral Scientist, 32,* 502–512.

Whyte, W. F. (Ed.). (1991). *Participatory action research.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Wittgenstein, L. (1958). *Philosophical investigations* (2nd ed., G. E. M. Anscombe, Trans.). Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell.

Yunupingu, M. (1991). A plan for Ganma research. In R. Bunbury, W. Hastings, J. Henry, & R. McTaggart (Eds.), *Aboriginal pedagogy: Aboriginal teachers speak out* (pp. 98–106). Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press.

Zuber-Skerritt, O. (Ed.). (1996). *New directions in action research.* London: Falmer.