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Title: Historicising Cultural Sport Psychology : Dare we De-centre Methodological Eurocentrism?

Year: 2020

Version: Published version

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Please cite the original version:

Ryba, T., Ronkainen, N., & Lee, S.-M. (2020). Historicising Cultural Sport Psychology : Dare we De-centre Methodological Eurocentrism?. *Cuadernos de Psicología*, 22(3), Article e1566.
<https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/qpsicologia.1566>



Historicising Cultural Sport Psychology: Dare we De-centre Methodological Eurocentrism?

Historiando la Psicología Cultural Deportiva: ¿Nos atrevemos a descentrar el eurocentrismo metodológico?

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Abstract

In this essay we critically reflect on our respective journeys to and within cultural sport psychology (CSP). Since the inception, CSP scholars have advocated for opening the privileged academic space for marginalised voices and omitted subject themes; as well as cautioned researchers that the CSP project itself needs to be constantly revisited and reworked to keep it in progressive flux. We argue that, despite some notable advances, CSP remains a predominantly white Anglo-American intellectual space and that previous calls to engage with issues of power and privilege in the prevailing knowledge production have been largely unanswered. The lack of diverse voices within the CSP community may be a sign of stagnation. Therefore, we believe that sport psychology community would do well to discuss the ways in which CSP research and academic/applied practices may be alienating to the new generation of sport scholars and activists.

Keywords: Cultural Praxis; Methodological Decolonisation; Identity; Social Justice

Resumen

En este ensayo reflexionamos críticamente sobre nuestros respectivos viajes a y dentro de la psicología cultural del deporte (PCD). Desde su principio, los académicos de la PCD han abogado por abrir el espacio académico privilegiado a voces marginadas y los temas omitidos; así como han advertido a los investigadores que el proyecto de la PCD en sí mismo necesita ser constantemente revisado y reelaborado para mantenerlo en un flujo progresivo. Sostenemos que, pese algunos avances notables, la PCD sigue siendo un espacio intelectual angloamericano predominantemente blanco y que los llamados a participar en cuestiones de poder y privilegio en la producción de conocimientos predominantes han quedado en gran medida sin respuesta. La falta de voces diversas dentro de la comunidad de la PCD puede ser un signo de estancamiento. Por lo tanto, creemos que la comunidad de psicología deportiva haría bien en discutir las formas en que la investigación y las prácticas académicas/aplicadas de la PCD pueden ser alienantes para la nueva generación de académicos y activistas deportivos.

Palabras clave: Praxis cultural; Descolonización metodológica; Identidad; Justicia social

INTRODUCTION

We thank Dr. Rodrigo Soto Lagos, the guest editor of “*Quaderns de Psicologia: International Journal of Psychology*,” for the invitation to contribute an article on Cultural Sport Psychology (CSP) for this special issue, before the onset of COVID-19. It was particularly timely to revisit the CSP agenda in the socio-political climate of anti-immigration, anti-refugee and anti-Muslim political debates and policies in many countries, which escalated anxieties over the safety and security of everyday life as well as contested the freedom of movement for sport, education and work. In this paper, we take a highly personal reflexive stance on “sport psychology as cultural praxis” (Ryba & Wright, 2005, p. 203) and its confluences with a larger CSP discourse (Ryba & Schinke, 2009; Schinke et al., 2019) in order to engage with critical epistemological debates about how to produce knowledge that is scientifically legitimate as well as culturally meaningful. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2005) rightly asserted that research is “a site of contestation not simply at the level of epistemology or methodology but also in its broadest sense as an organised scholarly activity that is deeply connected to power” (p. 87). This paper aims to forefront the discourse of methodological decolonisation that underlies research practices with real people who are experiencing historical and daily suffering, to which end we take the considerations that knowledge claims of the world are embedded in power relations and mediated by paradigmatic assumptions seriously. We will attempt to achieve this aim by turning our gaze to our own embodied situatedness in the CSP project to critically excavate decolonising methodologies in its key areas of cultural identity and social justice research through telling scientific, realist, and confessional tales (Sparkes, 2002).

The terms methodological Eurocentrism and decolonising methodology are used in this paper to signify our understanding that CSP and, more broadly, scientific knowledge production are political projects linked in their endeavour to (dis)empower, to give voice or silence, and either to create space for alternative knowledges or to perpetuate the canon in the academy. The Eurocentric worldview and philosophical concepts have trickled down into scientific methods in psychology claiming to produce value-free, universal knowledge, and that is what we aim to invoke when referring to methodological Eurocentrism. Whilst acknowledging that decolonising methodology is deeply rooted in post-colonial and indigenous scholarship, we expand the term’s scope to emphasise the need for centring the worldviews of ‘cultural other’ (e.g., non-binary gendered subjectivities) in CSP research. Thus, when the two terms enter inter-contextual dialogue within a particular research project, the outcome can be a transformative pedagogical project for everyone involved.

In the sections that follow we speak in our own voice of ourselves and from our own experience; however, we do not claim epistemological authenticity since the subject “who speaks, and the subject who is spoken of, are never identical, never exactly in the same place” (Hall, 1994, p. 392). The article comprises three reflexive parts, each written by one of the authors. The reflexive parts encompass a personal reflection on involvement in CSP and elaborate a critical view on the discipline. Specifically, Tatiana Ryba (TR) historicises her academic career through the emergence of CSP; Noora Ronkainen (NR) critiques the ways in which spirituality is taken up in CSP research; and Sae-Mi Lee (SL) discusses the position of (Western) academics towards struggles against discrimination. This structure allows us to provide different views and critiques of CSP with an aim to enhance readers’ meaning-making. Moreover, the polyvocality (or multi-voicedness) of our jointly produced text intends to theorise against the grain of conventional discourses in sport psychology whilst reinforcing the constructed and incomplete nature of knowledge production.

DARE WE DE-CENTRE...?

I (TR) use this title to invoke a seminal cultural studies paper by Handel Wright (1998), titled “Dare we de-centre Birmingham?: Troubling the ‘origin’ and trajectories of cultural studies,” in which he challenged the widely held assumption that cultural studies originated in Britain. My reference to Handel Wright’s paper signifies that CSP was articulated as a critical interdisciplinary discourse vis-à-vis to the mainstream sport psychology at the turn of 21st century. Perhaps more importantly, it is significant as an indication of a tendency in Western academia to appropriate and commodify non-Western knowledges and, therefore, the CSP discourse needs to focus repeatedly on (re)examining its vision and scope, its relationship with traditional disciplines, and the activist aspect of its praxis.

My early conceptual work on sport psychology as cultural praxis (Ryba, 2003; Ryba & Wright, 2005) was developed at the cultural studies unit of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK) and was influenced by Handel Wright’s scholarship in African cultural studies, critical multiculturalism, anti-racist education, and youth identity. Specifically, Handel Wright’s (2003) cultural studies model in education and Paulo Freire’s (1970, 1985) conceptualisation of praxis as a progressive, theory-driven practice were drawn upon to facilitate the production of a cultural praxis version of sport psychology. The turbulent historicity of my own life story was an important ingredient in that work as it provided me with ample opportunities to reflect on the fluidity of the post-Soviet identity to understand past events as existences that are one with the

present and future. To put it crudely, I was thrown into mulling over my experiences of the world from different standpoints. Although the Cold War had ended and the Berlin Wall had fallen, carrying a post-Soviet alien passport at the turn of the 21st century most certainly guaranteed difficulty in obtaining a travel visa and being subjected to ‘random’ security checks. It was also the first time when I was confronted with deeply entrenched categories, such as gender, race and ethnicity, that seemed the same in the place of arrival and places I left behind but occupied very different positions in local histories and socio-political discourses. Moreover, through my struggles of translating Soviet sport psychology texts in an intelligible and meaningful way (e.g., Ryba et al., 2009), I became acutely aware of how scientific theories are culturally situated, linguistic artefacts (Kincheloe, 2005). While I felt fortunate that the UTK sport psychology program was housed in the cultural studies unit, which allowed me to explore the embeddedness of psychological processes in cultural practices and representations, I was challenged to articulate the connections; even more so, to legitimise my scholarship at the intersection of the two discourses as sport psychology work. Indeed, the sport and exercise psychology textbooks used in my graduate courses were Eurocentric, presenting entirely the Anglo-American perspective, and did not contain a single chapter on issues of socio-cultural difference in sport, exercise and health. Since CSP was not on the map yet, I took to heart the challenge to integrate a cultural studies focus with sport psychology concepts to account for the complex socio-cultural powers in athletes’ identities, performances, and lives in and outside of sport.

The first step was to theorise cultural praxis in sport psychology as interdisciplinary heuristics to solve specific problems in theory and research within a culturally meaningful, contextualised framework. Drawing on the characteristics of cultural studies, we proposed that cultural sport psychology, especially in its applied form, would be evolving as inter- and multidisciplinary work, “focused on issues of sociocultural difference and social justice (with a particular emphasis on the reconceptualization of the athlete’s identity)” and which “blends theoretical and practice work together in praxis, and favours qualitative research approaches” (Ryba & Wright, 2005, p. 203). The overt intent was to politicise applied sport psychology through its integration with critical cultural studies theory, on the one hand, and Freirean pedagogy, on the other hand. By doing so, the articulation of cultural praxis heuristics aimed at opening the discipline to study athletes’ identities, context-dependent meanings, and subjective experiences of being gendered, racialised, sexualised and (dis)empowered. It also aimed to re-conceptualise the Eurocentric performance enhancement discourse into a culturally meaningful and embodied practice

that creates possibilities for athletes' conscientization¹ to occur in the process of mental coaching or professional training. Because sport psychology professionals (SPPs) may be in a unique position to embrace critical development issues in an organisation, it was suggested to incorporate critical pedagogy in educating SPPs to equip them well to support athletes' struggles for authenticity and self-determination (see also Ryba, 2009; Ryba & Schinke, 2009).

It is important to note that my project has been aligned with Michel Foucault's genealogical approach to intellectual history—that is, I share his view that “it is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant to power, but power-knowledge... determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge” (Foucault, 1991, pp. 27-28). Hence, I assert that although the UTK sport psychology program produced a number of scholars who were at the beginning of the CSP project (cf., Butryn, 2002; Fisher et al., 2003; Roper, 2001; Ryba, 2009; Ryba & Wright, 2005), our work was a part of the epistemic² shift in the North American academy when subjugated knowledge was released to change “the rules by which new knowledge is generated” (Mills, 2003, p. 62). Indeed, other sites of emergent CSP can be linked to the works by Mark Andersen (1993), Diane Gill (2001), Stephanie Hanrahan (2004), Anthony Kontos (Kontos & Arguello, 2005), Vikki Krane (2001), Kerry McGannon (McGannon & Mauws, 2000), Robert Schinke (Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009) and Brett Smith (Smith & Sparkes, 2009), who drew on other forms of cultural scholarship to address issues of difference in sport and exercise. The Wright's (1998) paper serves as a reminder that it is often misleading (if not colonising) to pinpoint specific and singular moments and figures of origin in telling the ‘origin’ stories of disciplines and of interdisciplinary work in particular. The aim in suggesting a multiplicity of origins is to keep the CSP discursive borders open for influx of characteristics defining the CSP project, especially from non-Western locations, and, most importantly, to avoid canonising the current, largely Anglo-American trajectories, as the *prop-*

¹ Conscientization is a principal concept in Paulo Freire's liberation pedagogy. The assumption is that dehumanisation, although a concrete historical fact, is not a given destiny but the result of an unjust order. The oppressed can remove barriers to total liberation when they become critically aware of the injustice in the world and perform acts that destroy it. In a way, the process of conscientisation is the creation of new perceptions of reality, an awareness of how one is positioned in society and a starting point for doing something to change oneself and society for the better.

² According to Michel Foucault (1980), knowledge is produced within the discourse and technologies of power determine what knowledge stays in circulation and what knowledge is suppressed. He writes in *Power/Knowledge*, “I would define the episteme [as] the strategic apparatus...which makes possible the separation, not of the true from the false, but of what may from what may not be characterised as scientific” (p. 197).

er CSP work. As my early-career co-authors point out next, CSP scholars would be well-served to critically reflect on where we are now and to consider some theoretical and methodological ways of decolonising CSP.

TROUBLING IDENTITY IN CULTURAL SPORT PSYCHOLOGY

I (NR) was introduced to CSP as a critical discourse that aims to challenge culture-blind theorising of identity and Eurocentrism that has dominated methodological landscapes of sport psychology. CSP scholars have highlighted that many studies on athletic identity concerned the experience of white, heterosexual, young men (Ryba & Wright, 2010) and recent scholarship advanced understandings of cultural difference in athletes' identities based on, for example, gender (Kavoura et al., 2018), ethnicity (Blodgett & Schinke, 2015), religion (Sarkar et al., 2015), or a number of intersecting cultural identities (Kavoura et al., 2015; McGannon et al., 2019; Schinke et al., 2019). As a sport psychology student, I became interested in CSP because the genre offered a space to discuss spirituality as an aspect of athletes' experiences and identities—something which seemed absent from other work on athletic identity. To be more specific, although sport and religion have been deeply intertwined also in Western history, as Allen Guttman's (1978) "From ritual to record: the nature of modern sports" attests, mainstream sport psychology scholarship seemed to only rarely acknowledge the spiritual dimension of sport. At the same time, research into athletes' experiences who did not belong to European cultural groups (e.g., Kontos & Arguello, 2005; Schinke et al., 2007) emphasised the importance of their spiritual ways of being and knowing. Although I am a white early-career academic, mostly working in secularised Northern and Western Europe, I found this research highly relevant to my work, too. The challenge to Eurocentric ways of knowing offered by this scholarship led me to critically assess my own methodological assumptions and revealed that while dismissed in the mainstream sport psychology discourse, spirituality still deeply mattered in many peoples' lives. In the last decade, many scholars (including ourselves) also explored and wrote about spirituality in European and American mainstream cultural locations, suggesting that it should be taken seriously by sport psychologists across various cultural contexts (Egli & Fisher, 2017; Gabana et al., 2019; Ronkainen et al., 2015; Sarkar et al., 2015). Furthermore, in sociology of religion it has been noted that although organized religion is losing ground especially in Western Europe while flourishing elsewhere (Gorski & Altinordu, 2008), it does not imply that Western Europe has collectively turned to militant atheists. Instead, many scholars in the European context have written about post-secularism and the need to consider various ways in which (new) religious

movements and spiritualities are shaping contemporary societies (Havlíček, & Klingorová, 2018).

While inspired by CSP as a perspective that accommodated my research interests, however, I also became vaguely dissatisfied with some (radical) social constructionist³ conceptualisations of identity associated with this genre. In CSP, spirituality often appeared as ‘merely’ one identity narrative or subject position alongside those associated with race, ethnicity, gender, and nationality. In CSP, identities are often described as ‘fluid’, ‘fragmented’, ‘socially constructed’ and ‘constituted by language practices’ (McGannon & Smith, 2015) and I struggled with seeing how that might be reconciled with my assumptions that perhaps spirituality could be human beings’ response to something greater than themselves. That is, while it was evident to me that expressions of spirituality were culturally shaped and interpreted within language resources that individuals had at their disposal, social constructionist theories appeared to sometimes treat it as a cultural (fictitious) discourse without any substance. This led me to search for an identity theory that allowed considering spirituality as something culturally constructed but *also* potentially real.

In my journey in search of an identity theory that allowed me to make sense of this dilemma, I found out that scholars long ago had grappled with similar problems. Scholars working with the concept of cultural identity had sought for a ‘third’ way beyond essentialism and relativism to conceptualise issues surrounding race and gender that could account for cultural identities as both ‘real’ and ‘constructed’ (Gillman, 2016). In his essay “The epistemic status of cultural identity: on ‘Beloved’ and the postcolonial condition,” Satya Mohanty (1993) observed that identity theories seemed fall into two—in his analysis, dissatisfying—positions. While the ‘essentialist’ (positivist) position (at least allegedly) portrayed identity as something stable and ahistorical⁴, the sceptical postmodern (relativist) position reconceptualised identity as an ever-shifting cultural construction. These antagonist positions had also informed much of the CSP work, which had contributed to dismantling essentialism as outdated and turned to theorising that emphasises language and fluidity in the construction of cultural identities. For Mohanty (1993) and others (Alcoff, 2000; Moya, 2000, 2009; Stewart, 2017), the danger is that by rejecting essentialism in favour of

³ By social constructionism, I refer to a position described by Kerry McGannon and Brett Smith (2015), entailing epistemological constructionism and ontological relativism.

⁴ While often used as a derogatory term and something to be rejected from the outset, Linda Alcoff (2000) noted that ‘essentialism’ does not in itself entail a commitment to ahistorical, pre-linguistic truth or an idea of a fixed, singular identity. Often the denunciation of the concept derives from simplistic and inadequate understandings of its meaning.

radical scepticism, our theories reduce various identities to nothing but discourse. Drawing on minority discourses and focusing on issues of gender identity, Mohanty (1993) proposed that identities ‘work’ like other theories, offering us more or less adequate knowledge about our situation in the world. For example, he supported the arguments of standpoint feminism on the basis that women’s experiences often contain significant oppositional knowledge, without which we could not explain features of gender-stratified societies because they remained hidden to the dominant groups. Drawing on Satya Mohanty’s work, Paula Moya (2000) explored her own identity as potentially “Hispanic”, “Mexican American” or “American”, and how she came to identify as “Chicana” because she believed it gave her new and better knowledge about the world and a position from which to understand her situation and to theorise power relations and racial oppression.

These examples on race and gender identities are different from spiritual identities in a central way: while the former could be treated as aspects of social reality, spirituality by various definitions refers to transcendence, a reality that is thought to be beyond the social order, and questions about meaning of life (Chiu et al., 2004). However, Satya Mohanty’s and Paula Moya’s theorising emphasised that cultural identities can refer to something beyond discourse—and this opens the question whether spiritual identities (similar to race and gender identities) could refer to something beyond language practices, too. Scholars drawing on critical realism have further theorised that many nondiscursive aspects of reality—whether they are social structures or psychological processes—influence the development and change of cultural identities over time (Gillman, 2016). Some of them including Margaret Archer et al. (2004) have also called for rethinking assumptions about spirituality and transcendence.

Douglas Porpora (2006) and Rodney Stark (1999) explained that methodological atheism has been the standard position in Western mainstream social sciences. In tracing the history of scholarship on religion, Rodney Stark (1999) noted that the Enlightenment thought decidedly constructed spirituality as irrational and antithetical to the project of science, and much of sociological and psychological scholarship followed these assumptions, reducing spirituality to either a social or psychological illusion. For example, the classic social theories adopted a functionalist approach to religion, where it operated as ‘opium to the masses’ (Marx, 1844) or a tool for social cohesion (Durkheim, 1915), whereas Sigmund Freud (1927/2001) contributed to dismissing religion as an illusion that in his view should fade away. Positivists similarly held a negative view on religion and some leading scholars including Bertrand Russell repeatedly attacked ‘nonsensical’ religious ideas (Nelson, 2009). In sport psychology, Lee Crust (2006) de-

scribed spirituality as ‘myth’, arguing that “the integration of spirituality into sport psychology consultations is a retrograde step that may undermine the credibility of a growing discipline, which through scientific endeavour, has managed to dispel myths and negative connotations to gain academic and professional recognition” (p. 18).

The turn towards social constructionism and related ideas of local knowledges, diversity and acknowledging marginalised voices seem good news to those who look for an alternative perspective to the positivist dismissal of spirituality. However, Douglas Porpora (2006) explained that social constructionism, too, relies on methodological atheism (which arguably is an aspect of methodological Eurocentrism). That is, by postulating that there are multiple realities that are socially constructed, social constructionism ends up saying that spirituality is nothing but a human projection—thus becoming similar to functionalist explanations of religion. He noted: “religious realities end up no less liquidated by social constructionism than they previously were by functionalism. If objects of religious experience appear constructed, it is because construction is the only possibility methodological atheism allows” (Porpora, 2006, p. 59). As a potential way forward from methodological atheism, Douglas Porpora proposed taking the stance of methodological agnosticism. At a simple level, this only implies not banishing transcendence a priori. That is, people might claim they are religious or spiritual because they have, or at least they think they have religious or spiritual experiences. Methodological agnosticism also most likely requires some form of ontological realism—that is, an assumption that the world is how it is, regardless of how we construct it or are manipulated to view it (Archer, 2007). As long as we stick to multiple, mind-dependent realities (ontological relativism), we end up saying that spirituality is nothing but a human illusion.

Where does this leave us as scholars who might want to study spirituality as one aspect of cultural identity? A first conclusion is that, despite its aspirations for problematising the processes of knowledge production, at a metatheoretical level CSP has not escaped Eurocentrism at least when it comes to methodological atheism. The CSP scholars have centralised epistemological questions and put forth cultural epistemology as a way to move forward from culture blind assumptions about knowledge production (see Ryba & Schinke, 2009), but perhaps have not adequately addressed ontological assumptions and how they might continue perpetuating the Eurocentrism we are seeking to avoid. Secondly, there is an ethical question as to how researchers’ own assumptions trickle down to knowledge production and how we might—sometimes unintentionally—a priori discredit our participants’ existential beliefs because our (Western)

meta-theory postulates them as nothing but psychological illusions or subject positions in a cultural discourse. Another ethical question concerns how we ‘use’ spirituality as academics and practitioners: is it ethical to use prayer or mindfulness as performance enhancement? Sport psychology discourse might reconceptualise these things as techniques not too different from goal setting which appears to provide a justification that might satisfy some practitioners. But we can ask whether those for whom these things are fundamental parts of their mode of being and link to their core personal values (of perhaps humility, kindness, and compassion) will view it that way.

In the applied world of sport psychology, sport psychologists’ encounters with athletes who hold religious and spiritual beliefs different from their own are becoming more frequent due to the intensified transnational movement of athletes. CSP scholars have provided excellent contributions to raise awareness about religion and spirituality in cultural praxis work and argued that it is an important component of cultural competence (Egli & Fisher, 2017; Sarkar et al., 2015). All practitioners inevitably have their own beliefs (whether atheist, agnostic, spiritual or religious) and these beliefs are likely to shape how they interpret clients’ expressions of spirituality. The education and training of sport psychologists should be aimed at helping them become more aware of how the deep-rooted beliefs impact their ways of thinking, doing, and being in the world, and how to remain open and respectful despite not sharing the same beliefs as the client.

POWER AND PRIVILEGE IN CULTURAL SPORT PSYCHOLOGY

I came to theory because I was hurting... I came to theory desperate, wanting to comprehend – to grasp what was happening around and within me.
(hooks, 1994, p. 59)

I (SL) came to CSP because I was hurting. As I moved to Finland and the United States from Korea for my sport and exercise psychology training, the world as I knew it changed. There were the challenges I formerly anticipated such as cultural differences in customs or traditions. However, I increasingly perceived that I was often positioned as *the other*, especially in the U.S. This meant experiencing blatant and subtle forms of racism, which I was obviously never subject to when living in South Korea as the racial majority. I knew I was not alone in experiencing something like this, but discussions of difference and discrimination in sport psychology spaces were minimal. There may have been a chapter on cultural considerations at the end of a textbook or a week or two of discussion in class, but these topics and issues were never centralized. I gradually

experienced dissatisfaction with traditional sport psychology that was void of discussions of difference, of culture, identities, or power.

I came to CSP because it held space for, and centralized, thinking about differences. CSP also provided a lens and language to validate the marginalization I was witnessing and experiencing. For example, through Foucauldian poststructuralist theory, microaggressions, which are subtle put downs of traditionally marginalized people and their communities (Sue et al., 2007), became valid forms of marginalization and oppression rather than jokes that needed to be brushed off. By incorporating a critical lens to my research on the experiences of U.S. student-athletes of colour, I was not only able to examine the presence of microaggressions in their personal and sporting lives, but also how the dominant discourses in society and sport shaped as well as limited athletes' understandings of their race-based experiences (Lee et al., 2018). CSP offered multiple theoretical, philosophical, and methodological possibilities through which I could examine, and validate, multiple experiences, especially those at the margins.

Although CSP has offered the space I needed to centralize work on power and racism, I am increasingly frustrated with the limitations of myself and my work in promoting social justice and social change. This frustration is not due to the lack of critical and meaningful discussions within CSP. In fact, many researchers pushed the boundaries of the field, academia, and CSP to create possibilities for rich discussions of theory, methodology, culture, power, and oppression (e.g., Ryba, Schinke, & Tenenbaum, 2010, Schinke & McGannon, 2015). Nevertheless, I look around to see what has materially changed in the world and in sport (psychology). In the 2020 socio-political climate of nationalism where various types of hate crimes are increasing including the El Paso mass shooting in the USA that was accompanied by an anti-immigration manifesto warning of "a Hispanic invasion of Texas" (Arango et al., 2019, para. 2); where legislation that helped promote gender equality in the USA such as *Roe v. Wade* are under threat (Myers et al., 2019); and with countries around the world embracing nationalism and closed borders, these rich academic discussions, although necessary and important, feel insufficient. Although I posit that alternative discourses allow for alternative social conditions to occur, I wonder whether CSP research, including my own, have done enough to move the theoretical discussions into action and social change that extends beyond academia. What role does sport psychology, academia, and CSP play in the current socio-political climate? What real change can occur *right now* to minimize, and eradicate, the everyday violence and suffering that marginalized communities have historically and continue to experience?

I (SL) fear, despite our best efforts, we have not done enough. I have two main reasons for this. First, I look around in the field of sport psychology and CSP. Who are the gatekeepers of social justice-based research? For example, I largely see racially white and able-bodied scholars from Anglophone countries leading the field and CSP. In fact, “a majority of CSP research has been conducted within the privileged space of whiteness... [making it] important to expand this research to other geopolitical regions and cultural value systems” (Ryba, 2017, p. 126). As Alan Ingham et al. (1999) cautioned, “the more we open up the system of recruitment without changing the systems of extraction and allocation, the more failures there will be” (p. 250). Have we done enough to create space and change conditions so that those at the margins can, and want to, enter into the CSP space?

Relatedly, I wonder whether the changes promoted through CSP research largely remain within the walls of academia. Who have been the largest beneficiaries of CSP work? Although CSP pushes boundaries for more diverse forms of knowing and being to occur, traditional publications and academic jargon are still privileged over other forms of knowledge production and representation. For example, I have wondered whether my theoretical dissertation on racial microaggressions, although I value it and believe it is necessary, is inaccessible to many due to its theoretical jargon. Despite all the time and labour I put into that academic project with the goal of promoting social justice, how has it related with or contributed to solving the daily oppression experienced by marginalized communities? Although I do incorporate my research into teaching and service, in the current hostile socio-political climate, I am thirsty to learn of different types of change CSP professionals are creating, and could create, that are local, more immediate, and deeper in impact that can also extend beyond academia.

I recently read an article that was (rather harshly) criticizing the white-led racial justice group called Standing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) (Deigado, 2017). SURJ, which is a “chapter-based network intent on ‘organizing white people for racial justice’” (Deigado, 2017, para. 8) was criticised for their lack of action and accountability to people of colour. Some questions that critics of SURJ encouraged white allies to consider were, “what people of colour are you accountable to?” and “How are people of colour actively influencing your initiatives?” to which “one chapter admitted, our SURJ meetings are probably the last place on earth any Black/Latinx folks [would] want to be” (Deigado, 2017, para. 21-23).

I ask the same questions to myself and to CSP. Who benefits from CSP and to whom are we accountable? As someone who came to CSP because I was hurt-

ing, I am hesitant to say academia, and even CSP at times, has been an inclusive and empowering space to be in. If I do not feel empowered to promote different types of change, would it not be hypocritical of me to urge others to do so? If so, could CSP in academic spaces end up with similar problems as SURJ? Rigorously discussing ways to dismantle oppression amongst ourselves in our roles as academics, without making space for and/or being held accountable to those who are facing and fighting daily oppression? Although I am still exploring answers to decolonizing CSP, I echo Michael Silk's and David Andrews' (2011) call for academics to embrace a radically different criteria for knowledge, research ethics, and what it means to be an academic. As athlete-activism is on the rise in the USA where athletes recognize their role and potential to do more than their sport, how can CSP researchers also embrace their role as a scholar-activist to help promote different types of social change?

Activism as Scholarship

Traditionally marginalized communities and their allies have been generating useful and meaningful knowledge for their communities and fighting for social change for forever. Although I have met several inspiring activists in sport and exercise psychology, their work does not always get translated into the form of academic research. This makes me wonder, what barriers do academia and research create for scholar-activists to not already be recognized as scholars engaging in cultural praxis and as leaders of CSP? In addition to training people to become scholar-activists, can we also reimagine what it means to be a scholar to include those who are already engaging cultural praxis by engaging in community activism, providing service to their communities, and helping create different types of change in the world? Because many, including my own students, are doing social justice work and creating localized change even if it does not always get written up and discussed in academic ways.

Nevertheless, such a radical revisioning of the academic as an activist that is critical and publicly engaged cannot occur without a radical revisioning what it means to conduct (ethical) research. For example, Michael Silk and David Andrews (2011) argued that the criteria for ethical research should be focused on, and measured through, whether praxis and radical social change occurred. Moreover, they argued for academic gate keepers such as hiring committees or tenure review committees to reimagine what it means to be scholarly productive. Often, publications are the most important, if not the only important, criteria for academic advancement. This can be a barrier for some academics' career advancement, especially those who are at the margins, those who are doing social justice work, those who are often doing significant amounts of unseen and uncounted service and emotional labour for their communities in and

out of academia (Bellás, 1999; Tunguz, 2014). How could gate keepers re-vision their criteria for hiring and promotion to view this work as valuable scholarship and productivity?

Despite logistical difficulties in revisioning evaluation criteria for ethics, scholarship, and productivity, I believe these real changes in social conditions are imperative for CSP academics to create alternative knowledge that is collaborative and empowering of the communities we proclaim to serve. Recently passed Nobel prize winner Toni Morrison stated, “I stood on the border, stood on the edge, and claimed it as central and let the rest of the world come over to where I was” (Fultz, 2003, p. 101). How can we move academia to centre scholar-activists who are already engaging in decolonizing work?

Scholarship as Activism

In addition to changing social conditions to recognize activists as scholars, others have also argued for researchers to continue to develop ways for their scholarship to encompass praxis that lives beyond publications. This argument is not novel as scholars have discussed the role of academics and scholarship as means to improve society throughout development of the social sciences (e.g., Horkheimer, 2002). Researchers from numerous fields such as political sociology (e.g., Bevington & Dixon, 2005; Coleman, 2015), critical geography (e.g., Autonomous Geographies Collective, 2010; Routledge & Derickson, 2015), and feminism(s) (e.g., Ackerly & True, 2010; Sudbury & Okazawa-Rey, 2015) have widely critiqued the distance between academics and social movements and political struggle and offered various solutions to bridging this gap. For example, the Autonomous Geographies Collective (2010) outlined three main different approaches to scholar activism in critical geography. The first approach is to combine “activism and research, [which] fuses politics and academic research agendas into one coherent strategy and methodology working closely with resisting others and social movements” (Autonomous Geographies Collective, 2010, p. 248). The second is participatory research, which “aims to ‘improve practice rather than to produce knowledge’ (Elliot, 1991, p. 49) and [instead] gives the ‘subject’ far greater involve[ment] in the research” (Autonomous Geographies Collective, 2010, p. 248). The third form of scholar activism is policy-oriented research, which can influence policy makers to adopt policies that result in social justice and transformation (Autonomous Geographies Collective, 2010).

Calls for scholar activism have been echoed in CSP-neighbouring fields such as physical education as well. Through activist research methodology, which is more participatory and geared towards localized change, Kimberly Oliver and

David Kirk (2015) urged researchers to not only “produce different knowledge, [but]... also *produce knowledge differently*” (p. 2, emphasis in original). The difference between traditional research and activist research, they explained, “is in the action: action directed towards challenging and changing barriers, identified by our participants, so that they might have better opportunities” (Oliver & Kirk, 2015, p. 2). At the same time, the Autonomous Geographies Collective (2010) also cautions academic calls for more action research as it could problematically imply that academics are “still the main foci for the production of knowledge, and specifically placed to assist the social and political struggles of others... rather than as citizens jointly challenging the broader social system” (p. 250). Alternatively, some scholars have argued for the embrace, rather than critique, of the gap between scholarship and activism. Lara Montesinos Coleman (2015) argued “the gaps between solidarity and writing produce spaces for emergence of a critical attitude—along lines sketched by Foucault” (p. 263) and should be maintained through “a persistent back-and-forth movement between critique and commitment that unsettles the identity of ‘activist scholar’” (p. 265). These rich discussions from diverse disciplines offer guidance for CSP researchers to continue to examine the role of scholarship as well as the affordances and limitations of various methodologies that can serve the goals of social justice and transformation.

CONCLUSION: DECOLONIZING CULTURAL SPORT PSYCHOLOGY

There is growing evidence within psychology that cultures and selves are mutually constituting. Human development, therein, is conceptualised as a process of transforming through participation in cultural practices. Applying similar logic to the development of scholarship, we reflexively examined our respective journeys to and within CSP. We argue that CSP has made an impactful stride within the sport psychology community in the last two decades, by opening up the discipline to previously unexamined topics and a greater range of qualitative methodologies. For example, to assess an intellectual impact of the cultural turn on the study of athletic identity, Noora Ronkainen et al. (2016) reviewed 108 empirical psychological studies published in international peer-reviewed journals. Out of these, 40 were qualitative studies conducted from a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives, such as narrative inquiry, grounded theory, and discourse analysis. The review revealed that the burgeoning of qualitative sport psychology could be traced to the beginning of the present millennium. The authors concluded that “post-positivism is no longer the dominant paradigm in qualitative athletic identity research” and that the shift to constructivist epistemology “had led to diversification of research methodologies, methods, and findings” (Ronkainen et al., 2016, p. 57).

Thus, the calls for recognising the diversity of meanings within a social position (such as what it means to be an athlete) and greater epistemological reflexivity in sport psychology have been, to some extent, responded.

Furthermore, cultural praxis provided a conceptual framework and language to articulate indigenous practices and ways of knowing as legitimate sport psychology. This indeed facilitated publication and information sharing of original work developed in the Global South, such as, discussions about cultural rituals and dance (Hagan & Schack, 2017), and meditation and mindfulness (Si et al., 2011) that are ontologically authentic, non-Western intervention strategies. On the organisational level, by adopting CSP lenses in its mission, the International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP) has been an institutional power to foreground considerations and knowledge that embraces concepts of inclusivity. As stated by the ISSP President, Robert Schinke, in personal communication, these are critical points in mobilising member engagement and ensuring high quality of service provision; this work includes the ISSP Position Stands intended to update and to advance timely topics in the international sport and exercise community. As examples, see the recent position stands on cultural competence in research and practice (Ryba et al., 2013); social missions through sport and exercise psychology (Schinke et al., 2016); and athlete career development and transitions (Stambulova et al., 2020).

Despite the aforementioned advances, we argue that CSP may be faulty of “romanticising and/or appropriating the vision of the less powerful while claiming to see from their positions” (Haraway, 1988, p. 584). As already noted, CSP has been a predominantly white Anglo-American intellectual space and we ought to be mindful of the continuing power struggle over Western appropriation of indigenous knowledges. CSP professionals, especially those in academia, should reflexively consider their role as scholar-activists and work to create more radical and impactful social change through direct action and collaboration with those we hope to centralize and empower. We worry about the lack of diverse voices in CSP. Are we alienating the new generation of scholars as Noora and Sae-Mi alluded to in their sections? Do CSP theoretical and methodological approaches strip soulful meaning of cultural modes of being when presented as scholarly texts? Or, as Gayatri Spivak (1990) poignantly asserted, the question ‘who shall speak’ is less crucial than ‘who will listen?’ Do we have an infrastructure that encourages non-privileged voices to be heard?

We contend that previous calls to engage with issues of power, privilege and position/agency in the prevailing knowledge production have not been answered. This is a serious problem that CSP professionals must address immediately. We argue that enlarging the CSP canon, which remains Eurocentric,

would require thinking new thoughts rather than merely adding a response to Eurocentric philosophical paradigms. This process is inherently power-laden and, therefore, scholars must transparently demonstrate who is served through their work. Moreover, we argue that discussions of decolonising approaches to sport psychology and de-centring methodological Eurocentrism in CSP research are not merely ways of engaging in academic scholarship. These are urgent discussions and changes that are required for the survival and liberation of those at the margins and need to actively permeate our practices at all levels of the CSP project. Progressive change cannot, and should not, wait because,

For years now I have heard the word “wait”... This “wait” has almost always meant “never”... I guess it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say “wait.” But... when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of “nobodyness” — then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. (King Jr., 1963, p. 2).

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<https://doi.org/10.1177/136754949800100103>



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FORMATO DE CITACIÓN

Ryba, Tatiana V.; Ronkainen, Noora J. & Lee, Sae-Mi (2020). Historicising Cultural Sport Psychology: Dare we De-centre Methodological Eurocentrism?. *Quaderns de Psicologia*, 22(3), e1566. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5565/rev/qpsicologia.1566>

HISTORIA EDITORIAL

Recibido: 11-09-2019

1ª revisión: 30-01-2020

Aceptado: 10-07-2020

Publicado: 11-12-2020