Setting the Seeds for a Normative Expansion of Lewinian Field Theory for Cultural-Psychological Practitioners

Enno von Fircks[1] ⬤

Abstract

In the present article, I am examining, expanding, and re-evaluating a Lewinian kind of cultural psychology for cultural-psychological informed practitioners. Originating from Lewinian field theory that behavior is a function of a person and environment, $B(f) = P,E$, I am introducing a specific equation wanting to illustrate Lewin's theory about cultural psychology. A person is driven by specific needs and goals that develop while him relating to his very own environment. Yet, how these needs and goals are pursued and satisfied (I call that trajectories) depends to a large degree upon his social environment showing him not only which goals are worth pursuing but also which ways to choose in order to attain them. Culture is thus a function of a person's needs and goals that develop while him relating to his environment and henceforth to the life space of the social other—such as to one's family—but also implying a specific unique social situatedness within the environment that can alter the culturally accepted way how to reach a specific goal. It is within such a perspective that I deduce a normative appeal character of cultural psychology grounded within Lewinian field theory that can be made fertile for people identifying as cultural-psychological practitioners. In the second part of the article, I am comparing a Lewinian (normative) understanding of cultural psychology with other prominent theories such as the one of Boesch, Bruner, and Valsiner reaching the conclusion that such a Lewinian understanding of cultural psychology is in accordance with their theories.

Keywords Field theory · Cultural psychology · Cultural-psychological equation · Normative implications of cultural psychology

The Origins of Lewin Using the Notion of Culture: Lewin's Famous Leadership Study

Lewinian field theory has been applied to a variety of application fields such as leadership (von Fircks, 2021b), dialogue (Bisgaard et al., forthcoming), therapy (Perls et al., 1997), and reducing stereotypes (Marrow & French, 1945)—among many other domains

✉ Enno von Fircks
ennovonfircks@googlemail.com

1 University of Keele, Keele, UK

⚡ Springer

of inquiry. Yet, the very notion of culture within Lewinian field theory remains unelaborated. The reason why is that Lewin used the term only scarcely and to my best knowledge only in a small number of publications such as in his famous leadership study (Lewin et al., 1939): Lewin et al. compared a democratic leadership setting with an autocratic and laissez-faire leadership climate investigating the psychological experience of exactly those climates on the side of a boy's club. It became clear that a democratic leadership climate sets the stage of positive, creative, and productive interactions among the boys themselves as well as between the boys and a task to be performed. On the contrary, these adaptive interactions were missing within the other leadership climates or those produced negative outcomes such as aggression between the boys. Yet, I argue that Lewin did not elaborate the implicit consequences of his leadership studies—especially normative ones that can become important for an expansion of cultural psychology. The present paper tries to make those implications explicit in order to show that cultural psychology might incorporate a normative framework as a science. Before we turn to this normative framework, we need to illuminate Lewinian theory.

It is important at this point in the manuscript to limit my normative expansion of Lewinian field theory onto the work of the practitioner. Lewin et al. such as Bavelas, Marrow, and French—among many others—were all interested in understanding how change can be initiated if employees or people in general do show a tensed life space unfolding negative consequences either for oneself or for one's fellow man (Lewin, 1948a, b, c). Marrow—a close friend of Lewin—continued with Lewin's legacy to understand field theory in a political way trying to work out how people might be able to better relate to themselves as well as to their work-related environment (Marrow, 1969). The present normative expansion of Lewinian field theory needs to be understood in that practitioner-oriented light who wants to stimulate growth for multiple persons implied.[1]

Explaining Field Theory

Lewin's study showed illustratively that a democratic leadership setting helped the pupils to establish a fertile and cooperative learning environment with multiple positive outcomes which was later reproduced by the Lewinian scholar Alfred Marrow in a more industrial setting (Marrow, 1957, 1967, 1969). Yet, before elaborating on the specific notion of culture that Lewin used in his early publication, we need to define field theory, first of all. Behavior is for Lewin a function of person and environment, $C(f) = P,E$ (Lewin, 1926, 1933). A person develops a specific need or goal within his environment. A person gets hungry; food in his nearer or wider environment becomes attractive, and bears thus a positive valence that attracts him to approach the food and to satisfy his need. The life space of the respective person—that is characterized by multiple needs and goals—gets tense and is directed towards the present need satisfaction; the person mobilizes physical energy—e.g., I going to the fridge, and I take the food out—as well as psychic energy (how

---

[1] Questions were raised concerning the definition of a practitioner. I define a practitioner as a person "who attempts to help clients deal with problems in their personal lives, who seeks to increase the effectiveness of schools or businesses (…) which include[s] knowledge about the shared characteristics of all human beings, knowledge about culture and languages, and knowledge about the particular life circumstances of the individuals or group" (Smedslund & Ross, 2014, p. 366). Such a definition includes clinical interventions based upon cultural psychology, yet they can be transferred to other domains of psychological inquiry.

do I want to prepare my food?) in order to satisfy the pressing need (Lewin, 1936). Once the need is satisfied, the life space of the person gets relaxed (Lewin, 1926); food in the individual's environment returns from a positive valence into a neutral valence and shifts to the background of the individual's life space. Psychic and physical energy can be now redirected towards other pressing needs or goals that are important for the respective person.

However, these theoretical underpinnings might create the impression of a life space as something inherently personologically structured—based upon individual needs and goals.

The Environmental Imperative Within Field Theory

While there is no doubt about the individual defining and structuring his needs and goals to a certain extent, the very emergence of the individual's needs depends to a large degree upon his very own environment (Lewin, 1917). The need for peace develops especially in times of ongoing war. The need for social stimulation develops particularly in times of isolation. The need for care develops in a care-deprived environment. Needs do emerge while persons relate to their environments. Even more than that, needs and goals are often a product of a person relating to his environment (Lang, 1988, 1992, 1993) which Lang calls ecological units. Yet, a grain of personology remains within this product. The ascetic or the hermit does not develop the need for social contact while being in isolation. He relates to social stimulation in a different way finding meaning in silence, while for other people, meaning is encountered in the opposing scenario—e.g., social stimulation. Within Lewin's field theory, it is indispensable to both look at the person and his environment, in interaction (von Fircks, 2021a). Bracketing one part of his equation leads into difficulties in actually unraveling concrete human conduct (von Fircks, 2021c). I have described the concrete implications of these seemingly trivial insights within a concrete example that I wish to repeat for the present article (von Fircks, 2021c).

Imagine a family living in a small village. One day, they decide to go to the playground. On their way, they meet a person from the neighborhood. The parents greet the stranger. The stranger greets back. The child asks his parents whether they know the person. His parents deny. Yet, the child asks why his parents decided to greet him. Both explain that this is a form of showing politeness and respect to your very own neighbor. The child nods, and the family continues their way to the playground. After playing and on the way back home, the family comes across another stranger not greeting back; the parents verbalize anger and say that person XY is an arrogant and reckless person. The next day, the little boy goes to his school, meeting the stranger again, yet not greeting this reckless person as he does not want to greet arrogant people.

People learn to structure their life spaces—needs and goals—while relating to their nearer environment such as to their caregivers, teachers, and role models (Lewin, 1933, 1936) that are embedded in an over-reaching meaning making system which we can call culture (Valsiner, 2014, 2019, 2021). Here, it is important that for the fictitious example, being polite towards your neighbors (g+) only comes into being if one is ready to greet the other (upper part of Fig. 1). The emergence of the need and the specific trajectory how to satisfy it are both learnt within a person's social environment that is part of a larger cultural system (Tateo, 2019). Yet, there might be another family prioritizing talking to a stranger rather than greeting as greeting might be interpreted by the family as superficial contact that neighbors should not be interested in (middle part of Fig. 1). However, there might be even social situations in which it is appropriate

Fig. 1 Greeting in order to reach a feeling of community. M, mother; F, father; C, child; g, goal of showing one's respect (taken and adapted from von Fircks, 2021b)
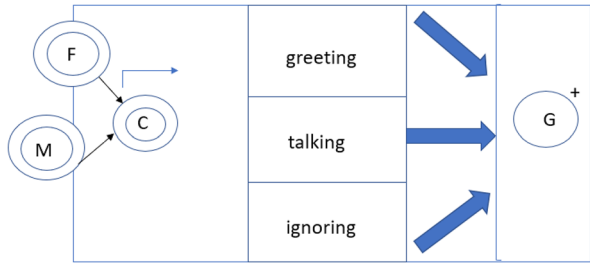
to ignore the other in order to show one's politeness. If the other is for example on the phone while meeting him in the streets, it might not be adequate to distract him by way of greeting or even talking to him. So, the unique social situatedness in time is an important factor that can change the way how to symbolically show one's politeness (see Fig. 2). To study the environment—how needs emerge and are potentially learnt in a social way (see for example Toomela, 2021)—is not enough. We need to expand the Lewinian equation by taking into account a person's unique social situatedness in time that changes the ways how we do act and interact with our environment including people and objects. In most of the situations, a key is an object to open a door, yet in frustration and anger, some people use it to scratch cars.

Our unique social situatedness changes the way how we operate in our environments (Lewin, 2000) from using a key to open a door to using it in order to take revenge. Human conduct is therefore a function of a person's needs and goals (NG), his social environment that shows him why this or that need is important as well as trajectories to satisfy it (SE), and the individual's unique social situatedness in time (USSIT), $C(f) =$, NG, SE, USSIT.
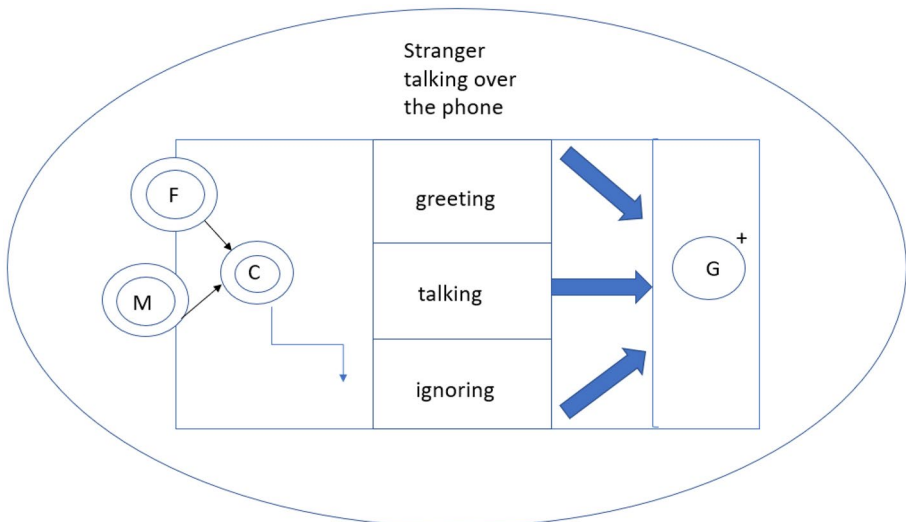

Fig. 2 Unique social situatedness in time changes topology

Culture is More Than a Way of Life: The Symbolic Qualities of a Life Space

Having now defined field theory as well as its extension as proposed in the present article, we can turn our gaze now to the notion of culture. Lewin et al. said that culture is a way of life (1939). Yet, they go beyond that simplistic definition while relying on their leadership experiment:

> With surprising unanimity the boys agreed in a relative dislike for their autocratic leader regardless of his individual personality. Nineteen of the 20 boys liked their leader in democracy better than their leader in autocracy. The twentieth boy, as it happened, was the son of an army officer (the only one in the group), *and consciously put a high value upon strict discipline.* As he expressed it, the autocratic leader 'was the strictest, and I like that a lot.' The other two leaders 'let us go ahead and fight, and that isn't good'. (Lewin et al., 1939, p. 284, author's emphasis).

Nineteen boys showed in their verbal and non-verbal reactions a positive relation to the democratic leadership style. It was the democratic climate that helped them to structure their learning in an interdependent and therefore productive way. Thus, the democratic climate helped them to create order in their classroom, autonomously. Yet, there was one boy not appreciating the democratic leadership climate for creating order within the classroom, and hence he rejected the more democratic leadership climates in favor of a more autocratic one. However, this rejection needs to be explained against the background of him growing up within a more military-friendly cultural environment where order, discipline, and chastisement are important components to reach harmony within one's social environment. The need for order was similar for all boys in the present example, yet the way how to reach that order needs to be understood in a social–historical way. By that, I mean that the emerging trajectories pointing to the need satisfaction are born within the child's interactions within his micro-culture family and the wider military culture of his father, in time. The majority of the boys not growing up within a military culture showed the reverse pattern of wanting to establish structure by means of cooperation or autonomy.

Culture is in this example surely a way of life; yet it is more than that. It is a symbolic life space how to best satisfy certain needs and goals, e.g., which trajectories to choose and which to neglect.[2] Characterizing culture only as a way of life does not pay tribute to the symbolic qualities of a Lewinian life space that emerges while relating and learning from other life spaces and those that overlap for example with the life spaces of my parents—the friend of my father might be a general wanting to bring me to a military career. Taking into account this unique situatedness—a general ground theme of the micro-culture that I am growing up in—can help to explain why we do relate to our needs the way we do (see Fig. 3). In tradition of Lewin, I want to define culture—that is the basis for human conduct (Boesch, 1991, 1998, 2002) as a function of a person's needs and goals (NG) that develop while relating to his social environment (SE) within a unique social situatedness in time (USSIT) or a ground theme that is not to be understood as a fixed component but that is able to develop in time. The father might be disappointed one day by his military bosses and decide to turn his back to every military inquiry which will change the way how needs

---

[2] Lewin (1933) speaks of paths or specific routes how needs and goals are satisfied. For him, a fertile psychology needs to be concerned with path analyses. I use the term trajectory to show the transitory value of the term.
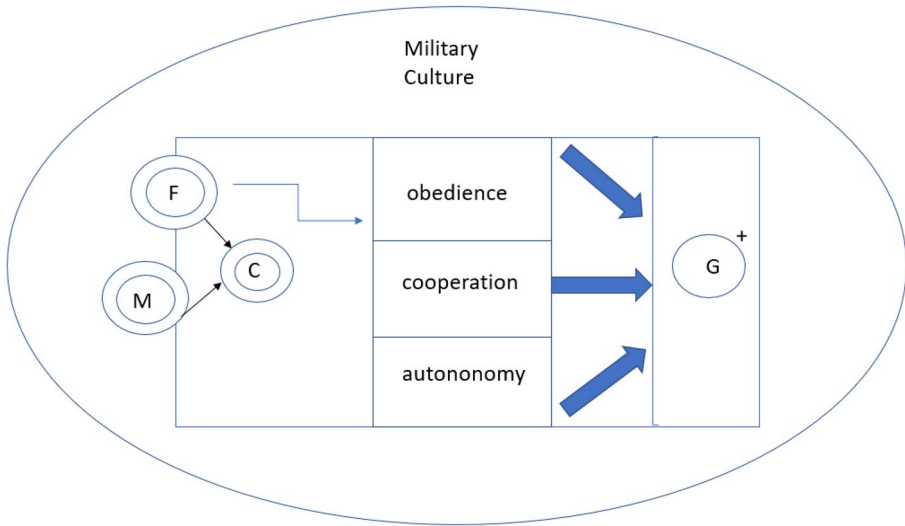
Fig. 3 Ground theme of over-lapping life spaces

and goals emerge for him and his son as well as for the trajectories that are best to satisfy them. Let us repeat our equation: C(f) = NG, SE, USSIT.

I argue that researchers and practitioners are able to decipher complex cultural mechanisms or forms of relatedness (von Fircks, 2021d, 2022) while paying tribute to this equation. Lewin et al. might have explained that culture is a way of life; yet the researchers were showing more than this trivial and insufficient definition (see Toomela, 2021 for the insufficiencies) of culture. On the contrary, they showed that culture is born within our interactions with other human beings that are close to us as their life spaces overlap with ours (e.g., family and friends).

> The first presupposition for the understanding [of the person] (…) is (…) his region of freedom of movement, i.e., of the regions that are accessible to him of those regions that psychologically exist for the [person] but which are inaccessible to him by reason of the social situation (…) or because of the limitations of his own social, physical and intellectual abilities. (Lewin, 1933, p. 598)

This social environment makes it more likely to catalyze a ground theme or a prevailing relatedness how to satisfy needs and goals in our very own life spaces. Culture is here a symbolic field whose symbolism is a learnt in a social way, e.g., by means of constant interactions. Yet, this symbolism can be constrained or restricted in peculiar ways by means of a person's unique social situatedness in time that can change the usual ways how people relate to their needs and goals and by which trajectories.

> The stairs are something that one can (or cannot yet) go up and down, or something that one climbed up yesterday for the first time. Thus history, as the child has experienced it, is also a psychologically essential constituent of the things of the environment. (Lewin, 1933, p. 596)

If I have climbed up the stairs for the first time, I have not only mastered a specific developmental task right in this moment but climbing up the stairs makes me discover for

example the private room of my parents, my siblings, or even the spooky attic. It is by this means that I do enrich my personal culture, that I interpret, structure, and re-structure the culture of my parents while looking at it from my very own personal needs. Lewin's field theory in combination with his very own experiments has shown us the depth of such a definition of culture and its psychological implications for a child's actions, for instance.

Potential Origins of Lewin's Cultural Terminology

The above-mentioned theoretical frame paired with empirical examples might seem trivial for some readers. Yet, we need to envisage its implications. Lewin has equipped us cultural psychologists with the very first theory of cultural psychology[3] long before Boesch (1991), Bruner (1990, 1997), Lang (1992), or Valsiner (2014) has done so. Lewin is in this regard one of the pioneers of cultural psychology which we need to acknowledge. Lewin's paper of 1917 written during WW-I can be interpreted as such even if his complex field theory was not yet differentiated at that point. Lewin describes how the landscape of a particular environment changes for the soldier fighting and surviving in contrast to a wanderer for example. While for the wanderer the landscape is seen as a peace landscape, almost infinite, experiencing potentially the esthetics of a field or a particular forest, the soldier experiences the landscape in a different manner, e.g., a fighting landscape.

> The whole zone is constituted by good and bad, structured and natural access points for the infantry and artillery. Also, the relatively deep trenches could be considered as a field or forest, yet they are not a field or forest in the sense of the war landscape. In a similar manner, the villages are interpreted in another light, too. All these things have become fighting things; their characteristic are opportunities and limitations of being spotted by the enemy, their protection they spend against infantry and artillery. (Lewin, 1917, p. 444)

While the landscape is the same for the wanderer as well as the soldier objectively, it does change for both people due to their specific needs and goals that emerge while relating to their environment and their situatedness in time. It is by our equation that specific objects are not only seen in a different light or differently interpreted, but the environment gets also appropriated by different means based on the needs and goals of the soldier or the wanderer.

> What lies within the fighting zone belongs to the soldier, legitimately not because he conquered it (…) but because the fighting thing is a military thing that is naturally there for the soldier. Even something barbaric such as burning floors, doors and furniture is incomparable with the use of furniture in a house within peace-like terms. Even if those things have not fully lost their peace characteristics, the fighting valence shifts more to the foreground. (Lewin, 1917, p. 445)

---

[3] I am aware of different German authors trying to advocate a new science called cultural psychology before Lewin used the term culture such as Stern (1900) or Stern (1920); yet their elaboration remains vague in terms of theoretical underpinnings unlike field theory.

Culture as Something Openly Structured

Yet, every theory needs to show proof of its applicability in science and beyond. I argue that Lewin's cultural psychology can be easily applied to a multitude of psychological problems human beings face in their everyday occurrence. I try to show proof of exactly this applicability while coming back to our little boy example.

Let us imagine that our little boy grows up within this military culture in which he learns to acknowledge discipline, respect, obedience, and authority in order to structure and master his very own life space. Yet, there comes a time where his life space might open up such as in class when befriending a specific classmate coming from another cultural background. He might meet him in his house and discover that his parents are sinologists appreciating Chinese philosophy such as Taoism. He might get invited by them to try out meditation and to observe the effects of meditation upon body and mind. He might get invited to study nature with his friend and to see how growing occurs in a natural and organic way without forcing organisms to do a specific thing. It is here that his social environment gets enlarged in a particular way which makes him discover other cultures. It is here that the boy might realize that meditation, the natural development of life—to use a principle of Taoism—might stimulate his development more than the military culture he was exposed to. And gradually, he develops an own stance towards his culture and towards foreign cultures that can be appropriated by himself. Let us hear Lewin (1922):

> If one has read a novel, followed a thought or has done a mountain hike, one could legitimately say that learning has occurred (…). A particular effect of such an event lies in the fact of changing the individual world view. Such a learning does not need to be necessarily understood in enriching a specific world view; no less important is the elimination of specific elements or a regrouping process. Here, it is about a complex-building process. (…) Such a subjective view of any specific objects or events can be subject of enrichment, re-structuring or elimination of specific events and within such emergence of something new or something re-structured learning occurs. (p. 135-136)

Culture is something openly structured that gets constantly actualized and re-actualized by means of our very own social environment that changes in time. Our social environment paired with our unique situatedness in time is actually a potentiality of being as it shows us multiple ways how to relate to ourselves as well as our worlds. This constant re-actualization of culture is a healthy relatedness towards the ever-flowing characteristic of time and our changing world (Stern, 1920). Re-actualization of culture or cultural life patterns is a necessity in order to survive and to meet the ever-changing demands of life. Yet, in order to trigger re-actualization and to realize what is doing good for ourselves in specific points in time (social situatedness) as well as in specific environments (work, leisure, friends), we are appealed to discover and experience a multitude of micro-cultures in order to equip ourselves with the means of relating to our environment, adaptively. Realizing that our very own culture is relative and that we are inclined to develop an answer to that culture by means of re-structuring, enlarging or even expanding it, is a cultural imperative to not get stuck within our lives. The authoritative parent visiting some of his high school friends for vacation, that have become democratic teachers, might realize during his stay that his authoritative education is not satisfying the child's needs (e.g., be good at school or sports) adequately but that a democratic education could yield into a more adaptive need satisfaction, being a more valid path that could help the child to be good at school or sports. The

goal might be similar for both parents, yet the trajectories and their consequences for the child's development diverge drastically. And it is by immerging into the friend's life space and observing how trajectories are built and structured in order to reach a similar goal, and that the authoritative parent might get appealed to adopt specific cultural patterns and to meet his child within such a cultural life pattern, too.

It is here that Lewin's cultural psychology encompasses the realization of culture as a personal appeal to constantly throw oneself in multiple social environments in order to learn and to grow. And it is here that we learn to write our own cultural narratives from past to future as well as to externalize that narrative in order for other people to negotiate and enrich its meaning. Without externalization, this is not possible (Bruner, 1990, 1996; Valsiner, 2014, 2019). It becomes now obvious why Lewin's field theory cannot leave out either the social or personological component. Both are indispensably intertwined in time.

Applying a Normative Understanding of Lewinian Cultural Psychology

But let us now turn to an everyday example. I present a fictitious one, yet highly realistic in order to apply a normative expansion of Lewinian cultural psychology. Let us imagine a young pupil having had great marks in mathematics for more than 3 years. Yet, his present mark is more than terrible and insufficient. His class teacher asks himself how one might explain the sudden drop in the pupil's mark. In order to determine specific factors that could explain the drop, he decides to visit the pupil in class. Letting the class know that he sits in the back because of evaluating the teacher, he wishes the pupils to behave as normally as possible. Observing the pupil in class, he realizes that he wants to participate in class; yet the teacher does not see him as he sits outside of his usual visual field. The pupil raised his arm multiple times in the very beginning of the class yet refrained from further tries after having not been acknowledged by his teacher. After the class has come to an end, the class teacher talks to the mathematics teacher and suggests rotating with the seating arrangement. After several weeks, his mark got stabilized. [4]

Let us analyze the scenario from a Lewinian perspective of cultural psychology. The class teacher tried to determine multiple factors. He observed the pupil wanting to participate. By that, he was able to determine that the pupil is actually motivated or shows a tensed life space in regard to contributing to the class. This is the first part of our cultural Lewinian equation, the personological one. Afterwards, he assessed why his tries did not translate into actual contributions and realized that by his unique social situatedness within his social environment, the pupil becomes invisible to the teacher. It is by this knowledge that he decided to argument for a rotating seating arrangement in order for the pupil to get higher chances of actual contributions to the class. Changing the environment helped the class teacher to re-direct the pupil's psychic energy into fertile channels.

Yet, we can imagine another scenario such as the pupil not being motivated for participating in class. This requires for sure another intervention than the first one. If the pupil is not motivated for mathematics, the teacher might be driven by the question how this de-motivation comes into being. The pupil might be de-motivated because he is not able to follow a single world of the teacher's class. It might have been the case that he was ill for

---

[4] During my high school time, we had such a rotating system in order for all pupils to have an equal chance of contributing to the class and to be acknowledged by the teacher

the last three classes in which the teacher started a new topic; it is here that he lost focus for the class. Knowing that his parents are both philologists, the class teacher becomes aware of them not being able to catch up with the class and decided to initiate additional support classes. Either way, the class teacher knows that needs and goals as well as the trajectories that guide them to their satisfaction or distance them are a function between a person and his environment. This makes him change the environment in a way of the pupil being able to better catch up with the class and to satisfy his need actually wanting to participate but not being able to due to his social situated relatedness in time. It makes him to initiate a change in the environment in order to facilitate a change within the person.

A Lewinian cultural-psychological practitioner knows that needs and goals as well as their blockages only come into being while we do relate to our environment in specific ways. Changing the wider social environment (e.g., additional support classes) as well as our unique social situatedness (seating arrangement) helps the practitioner to offer additional trajectories in order to satisfy a need, appropriately. Normatively, there are more adaptive trajectories to satisfy a need than others spoken from cultural psychologically practitioner-oriented perspective. Not supporting the child in the present example with additional classes would make the child's estrangement continue from his math's class. The reason why is that the child might miss important lessons that might become central for his a-levels later on which endangers the child's future, thus his independent growth in time.

Not all trajectories are equally valuable for the child's development. Yelling at a child is culturally less appropriate than to verbalize calmly one's critique. The reason why is that one teaches the child specific trajectories to satisfy a specific need (Lewin, 1933), e.g., yelling and threatening somebody verbally helps one to create order. Of course, such a need satisfaction is creating social issues in the long run as yelling and threatening is not only impacting the present situation but makes the symbiosis between life spaces difficult. Teaching a child to be verbally aggressive in order to create structure is a trajectory that denies a calm and negotiation-centered contact with other micro-cultures from which I can potentially learn. Hitting a child in order to educate her does not only produce violence, pain, and negative emotions but it also teaches the child that violence is an adequate trajectory to create order and discipline which will surely interfere with his future relationships (see the works on attachment styles, Bowlby, 1979).

It is within this example that it becomes obvious why a Lewinian cultural psychology—understood in a practitioner-oriented light—should incorporate a normative stance. But normative in which way? The specific micro-culture needs to help the individual to attain or satisfy his goals, sustainably. By that, I mean that the individual becomes equipped to change his personal life space by his very own means—needs and goals that do not render the life space of the social other absurd. The practitioner is the facilitator in this process trying to show or initiate alternative means of need or goal satisfaction as well helping the individual to change his relation to his environment, autonomously by some kind of support. It is here that the practitioner might show alternative ways how to relate to a specific need and goal as well as alternative trajectories that the individual was not aware of in the very beginning. All support that is directed towards removing the need satisfaction of an individual as well as authoritatively explaining which goals and needs to adopt and trajectories to choose is normatively considered maladaptive (Jacobs, 2012). The reason why is that an external person—such as a practitioner—superimposes his interpretation of the individual's needs and goals as well as which ways to choose for satisfying them, onto the respective person which denies his very own power of discovering and structuring culture all by himself. It is this discovery and re-structuring process of culture based on the individual's needs and goals—that only he knows to be central to him—that is doing

justice to dynamic, yet autonomous agents moving in time. I wonder why we as cultural psychologists have not paid sufficient attention of defining normative boundaries of cultural psychology.

Let us underline the importance of a normative stance in cultural psychology from a Goethean perspective. In Goethe's Faust, Heinrich Faust is not satisfied with his scientific work or more in general with the utility of his life. He wants to discover the depth of life, the secrets of Being; he wishes to transcend the material world in order to connect with something eternal of infinite (Pfeiffer, 1949). He wants to reach unity or harmony with the world and realizing that he is far away from such a goal, he agrees on a pact with Mephisto who wants to help him to reach his goal—and if successful Faust will serve Mephisto. In Faust's strive to transcend the world and to feel connected to the essence of Being, he throws himself into hedonistic trajectories (drinking) and sexual pleasure (Walpurgisnacht) as well as the seduction of a devout young girl—Gretchen who becomes pregnant afterwards. In order to reach his goals, Faust is not afraid of hurting other people that are important in Gretchen's life such as her mother or her brother. The piece is a tragedy as Faust's life space becomes negatively interdependent with the life space of Gretchen leading her away from her family as well as her belief in God. Faust's wish to safe Gretchen in the last scene is an egoistic wish to calm his mind and conscience while Gretchen is emancipating herself from the negatively intertwined life space of Faust while accepting her punishment and not wanting to flee with Faust and Mephisto from her prison cell. Goethe's tragedy is highly illustrative for our modern days as different psychologists argue that it is important to emancipate oneself from toxic relationships (Peterson, 2018), thus relationships that inhibit a freedom of movement or that promote specific actions that make growth difficult.

My modified Lewinian equation of cultural psychology relies heavily on such normative boundaries that are important for the autonomous development of concrete agents in their environments. Yet, I argue that Lewin himself was not far away from normatizing a specific sort of Cultural Psychology showing that specific learning cultures are more adaptive for the autonomous development of the child. Stern (1935) argued a key feature of cultural psychology to lie within the analysis of the positive meaning structure between mind and culture or a pre-stable harmony between the structure of the mind and culture on the other side. Hesse (2021) argues in his glass bead game that a science needs to be interested in analyzing how inner harmony (Seelenharmonie) could be achieved within specific cultural settings. Such harmony is important for Stern (1920) in order to be transmitted for future generations, e.g., to function as psychological tools and to enrich their culture that is yet to come.

One of the reviewers asked the central question if such a normative understanding of cultural psychology were to fix cultural psychology in some prescribed categories. This is a complex question that I am likely to deny. Hermann Hesse's protagonist in his famous glass bead game—Josef Knecht—becomes part of an organizational system (Kastalien) for the meaningful education of children and adolescents as well as adults. This education is organized in a monastic order being separated from the secular world in order for the members to concentrate themselves upon their individual studies that advances different sciences such as literature, history, and languages—among many other professions (see Faesi, 1974). Knecht becomes part of the hierarchy and is fully focused upon internalizing the axioms of this specific kind of education defending the order against an opponent and becoming involved in representing the order towards the church as well as advancing the treasure of their education, the glass bead game—that is a complex science of experiencing nature, culture, and their change. Knecht fulfills the duty of the order almost perfectly yet realizes after several decades being part of the elite schools that he does want to spread his

knowledge into the secular world benefiting not only a specific type of scholars but making his knowledge accessible for all people (Rychner, 1974). Overcoming Kastalien was for Knecht necessary to harmonize knowledge that is not estranged from history or the needs of society (Carlsson, 1974). Yet, in order to overcome Kastalien, he needed to be part of Kastalien first fulfilling his duties and responsibilities to use these skills later on in another more inclusive setting.

Hesse's novel shows illustratively that every developmental stage comes with specific challenges or demands that need to be structured in accordance with the life space of other people: Knecht leaving Kastalien became only possible when talking to his friend (Titus) and negotiating a specific contract to teach the child. Without a pupil, Knecht would not have been able to spread his knowledge and lessons he learnt in his life; and without learning from Kastalien, its ancient director, his mentor (the music master), his friends (Tegularius), or the hermit, Knecht would not have become the person he was when leaving Kastalien (Rychner, 1974). He became that person only because he was open towards his friends and mentors as well as their lessons; thus, he perceived their life spaces as permeable and thus as enriching. The mutual permeability of life spaces and structuring one's life spaces interdependently with the one of my fellow man helps me to become equipped for multiple environmental demands that are yet to come in my life. What I want underline with the above-mentioned is that my normative expansion of Lewinian field theory is not static; every developmental stage demands the imperative of structuring one's life space interdependently with the one of the social others in order to find meaning and especially meaningfulness (see Mazur & Plontke, 2022) in one's life. If this is not the case, a life can easily become a tragedy as visible in Goethe's Faust.

Comparing Lewinian Cultural Psychology with Other Prominent Theories

We have now seen that our Lewinian equation of cultural psychology can be fruitfully applied to our everyday occurrence as well as a normative imperative that comes with a Lewinian cultural psychology. Yet, this is not enough to appreciate Lewin's contribution to the field of cultural psychology. We are in equal need of comparing his theory—that I expanded—with other prominent theories of cultural psychology in order to see the benefits as well as blind spots of such a field theoretical perspective onto the very notion of culture. I am now comparing Lewinian cultural field theory with Boesch's symbolic action theory and Bruner's cultural psychology as well as Valsiner's cultural psychology of semiotic dynamics.

Comparing Lewin with Boesch

Let us begin with Boesch. Boesch (1991) understands culture as a symbolic action field. This action field is structured by a person's goals that are divided in sub-goals. A person acts within this action field in order to pursue and attain goals. All actions bear symbolic meaning in regard to these goals. Let us illustrate that with the complex inquiry of work. Work is a phenomenon that is only to be understood by getting a glimpse into a person's very intimate goals of structuring his environment (Bavelas, 1944, 1960). A pharmacist in a small village wanting to do good to his fellow man and village is different from the pharmacist in the city wanting to make money as fast as possible. While in the first example,

the pharmacist is interested in the long-term recovery or even in the prevention of diseases, the latter is interested in short-term remedies that can be sold rapidly.

As both pharmacists adopt different goals and sub-goals that are meaningful for them, they do relate to work in very divergent ways despite them doing objectively the same job (distributing medication). Boesch clarifies his theory while underlying that psychologists need to analyze connotations of specific objects in order to become aware of the symbolic qualities of exactly those objects. Here, it is important to go beyond denotative meanings and to enter the action field of the person—observing concrete actions directed towards concrete people—in order to understand the actual goal of a person that is symbolically meaningful in very peculiar ways.

Boesch (1991) highlights that an action field brings joy and pleasure and provides mastery of one's environment as well as enhances transparency within one's environment or in other words to bring structure into unstructured forms. Cultural psychology needs to analyze these actions while analyzing the connotative meaning of these actions in order to unravel personal culture after Boesch. Yet, Boesch (1991, 1998) says that symbolism gets externalized in very particular ways such as by myths and sayings and becomes internalized and re-structured by the individual as he relates to them with his very own needs and goals. For example, the pharmacist doing something good for his fellow man as well as his village encounters different myths in his environment than the pharmacist wanting to make money as fast as possible and that is confirming the specific meaning for the respective person. The second pharmacist is more likely to read books about stocks and marketing than the first pharmacist who has maybe even a philosophical background studying social philosophers or authors such as Countess Dönhoff. These myths are specific externalizations of culture that validate both human beings within their specific action fields showing them the meaningfulness of their job-related relatedness as well as broaden potentially needs and goals by showing additional ways of relating to them.

It is remarkable that Boesch's action field is highly similar to Lewin's concept of life space. While reading his major works, I do not find major differences between his concept of action field and Lewin's concept of life space. Some smaller differences are found to be in a more environmental social situated perspective in Lewin's core texts, whereas Boesch is relying more on personological meaning making originating from over-reaching goals. Yet, both speak of valences in regard to needs or goals that attract human beings or distance them from satisfying their needs. However, Boesch's concept of action field is more developmental than for example Lewin's concept of life space. Boesch speaks of transparency in regard to an action field (Boesch, 1991, 1998). The individual appropriates the environment by means of his goals and needs; it discovers the world by wanting to autonomously structure its cultural environment—here action field. By that, he enlarges his action potential; he actualizes it as he is constantly appropriating new elements of hidden cultures such as when he discovers the cellar of his parents potentially seeing old photos of his grandparents during war—among many other examples. It is this discovery, the drive for culture, which makes him structure and re-structure his personal culture by his very own means. Transparency is here constantly enhanced by means of going into the unknown and making the intransparent transparent. This comes close to my normative conception of Lewinian cultural psychology, the imperative of constantly entering new (micro-) cultures, making sense of them and seeing which elements of exactly this culture might help me to better satisfy my needs and goals that are a function of me relating to my (cultural) environment. Culture is here similarly understood as something open, almost an appeal to constantly enhance the action potential of an individual in order to master many different cultural environments over the course of one's life. Lewin's perspective onto cultural

psychology is henceforth reconcilable with Boesch's symbolic action theory (1991) and shows some cultural, qualitative convergent validity in regard to theory and its underpinnings. Yet, the normative aspect of Boeschian cultural psychology is only present between the lines of the author as Boesch did not make such a relation explicit. Yet, the very notion of enlarging one's action potential in order to face maturely environmental challenges and demands shows some hidden traces of normativity.

As above-mentioned, I argued that Boesch's theory is more developmental than Lewin's theory. Other leading cultural psychologists such as Tateo (2018) and Valsiner (1984a, b) argue that field theory—as visible in my different graphic illustrations—does lack a clear developmental component. Valsiner in particular tried to reconcile field theory with Vygotsky's cultural-historical activity theory that does incorporate a developmental axiom. If for example the zone of free movement (ZFM) in a specific culture is restricted or even a taboo, then it is unlikely that a child will learn the cultural good that hides itself within the zone of free movement by means of child-caregiver interactions or child-teacher assistance. For example, if a specific culture restricts the zone of free movement in regard to children's sexuality, the zone of proximal development (ZPD) for dealing with one's sexuality cannot come into being. Valsiner's reconciliation of Lewinian field theory with Vygotsky's zone of proximal development is principally in line with the pillars of my normative expansion of Lewin's theory.

Again, let us point to Goethe's Faust for that purpose: Mephisto enlarges Faust's zone of free movement by helping him to become younger; here, the ZPD enlarges equally the zone of free movement as well as promotes actions that help Faust to approach Gretchen (getting jewelry for Gretchen) and to seduce her. Yet, Faust's ZFM and ZPD inhibit Gretchen's ZFM and ZPD, in the long run, as Gretchen becomes pregnant after them having sexual intercourse and Faust not caring for Gretchen's pregnancy. The example shows that ZFM and ZPD between people can become negatively intertwined catalyzing specific, non-adaptive trajectories for the unfolding of one's life. I need to clarify the word adaptive in this regard as it might be perceived in a controversial manner: Adaptive ZFM and ZPD relations in our example mean that people can grow and learn from each other in order to appropriate culture in a personal meaningful way that helps them to grow in their life, independently and interdependently, not rendering the life space of the social other absurd. Goethe's Faust is highly illustrative for this purpose or Hermann Hesse's glass bead game (Hesse, 2021).

Comparing Lewin with Bruner

Bruner (1990, 1996, 1997) understands cultural psychology as a negotiation of meanings—or interpretations. Meaning making patterns or interpretations can be assessed by looking into narratives that are structured via four over-reaching principles such as agency (goal-directed actions); the creation of a sequential order or in other words structuring events and experiences; a feeling for what is canonical (culturally accepted) as well as for what is not canonical; and a specific voice and tone by the narrator—the interpretative perspective through which he looks at his very own agency, canonical conduct, and the structuring of experiences. Yet, canonical and non-canonical human or culturally accepted and non-accepted behavior depends for Bruner upon the human situatedness. What is culturally accepted or rejected by for example a micro-culture such as family depends to a large

degree upon the family's situatedness. A joint breakfast Sunday morning might be ignored during family vacation in order for the family members to get more sleep than usually. Presenting a new partner to my family and arguing that s/he could sleep in my room might be accepted by my family if they realize that s/he is a responsible person. Culture comes only into being if these four principles are understood against the social situatedness of multiple actors implied that externalize specific meaning making patterns and by this way negotiate meaning constantly (Bruner, 1990). Meaning making is here understood as something constructed at the intersection of personal and collective culture. Yet, it is important to see that people act upon a canon of norms, scripts, and prior narratives which they constantly arrange, re-arrange, expand, limit, and so forth in order to meet the personal demands of a specific person—or in Bruner's words agency. Culture does not come into being without acting upon prior knowledge stored within canonical meaning making patterns that are externalized to a certain degree (Bruner, 1996).

The similarities to a Lewinian concept of cultural psychology are striking. Agency is in Lewinian terms understood as needs and goals that are the driving force of human conduct. Without goals and needs, there is no human activity at all. The social situatedness is equally important in Lewinian cultural psychology that changes the way how needs and goals are pursued, and even contradictory trajectories to reach a goal might be chosen by a changing social situation. A cultural canon of stored knowledge via internalized cultural products such as scripts and norms or externalized products (rituals) is for a Lewinian understanding of cultural psychology equally significant. Yet, Lewin uses different terms.

The child or teenager learns in social interactions the preferred trajectories to choose in order to reach a specific goal. In a working class family, the child might pursue other trajectories in regard to completing education than for example the child growing up in an academic micro-culture. The prevailing ground theme, the social environment and within this environment the unique social situatedness of the child, is highly divergent in both settings. Culturally appropriated trajectories to pursue goals are learnt in social interactions over a long period of time for Lewin. This is something that Bruner shares with his theory of cultural psychology (1997). Yet, Bruner's theory shows additional facets that Lewin ignored in his short article about the notion of culture. Bruner does not get tired of repeating that meanings are constantly negotiated. The child growing up in the working class might befriend the academic child early on and discover another world that he finds attractive for himself. Another horizon of experience, another potential future, opens up for him that he considers to be as equally attractive such as studying than the imaginations of what to do with his life as advocated by his parents. And slowly, the child is negotiating the meaning of his future work with his parents trying to enlarge their concept of work and future by additional knowledge that he got to know while immerging into another culture. This negotiation of meaning while encountering new cultures in time and assimilating new elements within one's very own personal culture is clearly in line with my normative understanding of Lewinian cultural psychology even if Lewin himself never used the term negotiation. Moreover, Bruner (1996) tried to make a case for a specific learning culture in schools and universities that is based upon negotiation. Bruner argues that such a perspective makes it more likely for people to appropriate their education and to create a meaningful learning culture that is intrinsically motivated. Bruner clearly shows some implicit normative assumptions in his theory of cultural psychology.

Comparing Lewin with Valsiner

Valsiner's theory of cultural psychology of semiotic dynamics (2014, 2019) is equally interesting to compare with Lewin's concept of culture. In Valsiner's terms, culture is a semiotic field—often a symbolic field. The symbolic meanings of specific events or experiences are semiotically mediated by important micro-cultures such as family, friends, or schools. Valsiner underlines that semiotic mediation only comes into being via internalization/externalization. Important symbolic meanings for a family are only understood and assimilated if externalized and internalized. If the role of family is important for one micro-culture, this importance is externalized via concrete myths and rituals of the family which becomes visible in family tales, sayings, traditions, rituals, and so forth. The importance of family becomes here a hyper-generalized sign field that is difficult to express because its value goes beyond simple denotative meanings and can only be felt and experienced by concrete activity. This hyper-generalized sign field (love and care for example) organizes then nonverbally a concrete life philosophy (Zittoun, 2016) of individuals that becomes externalized by concrete joint activities such as cuddling, hugging, and playing board games together that consolidate the hyper-generalized sign field in all its overwhelming characteristics. Intentional human conduct which becomes visible by goal-directed human behavior is at the core of Valsiner's theory of semiotic dynamics. A sign is only mediated successfully if it is intertwined with concrete human goal-directed activity. The hyper-generalized sign field of care and love becomes only internalized as different agents consider love and care important goals for their family—in contrast to a family who considers economic power more important than love and care. Agency is for Valsiner the driving force of his cultural psychology of semiotic dynamics (2014, 2019).

Agency and intentional human conduct are reconcilable with Lewin's concept of cultural psychology. Even if Lewin did not use the term of semiotic mediation, he used a similar characteristic in his theory of cultural psychology in order to show how culture is learnt in a social way. Trajectories to reach a certain goal are learnt in a social fashion for Lewin. Yet, how this learning occurs is a blind spot in Lewin's theory. Semiotic mediation by means of constant externalization of cultural goods that floods the attention field of the respective child makes it easier to grasp a specific concept (Valsiner, 2019; Werner, 1956). This internalization/externalization perspective channeled by the theory of semiotic mediation is clearly missing in Lewinian cultural psychology. Yet, it is the mechanism of why certain trajectories are preferred to a reach a goal than others. However, we need to admit that Valsiner himself is very shy in introducing normative assets of cultural psychology which contrasts his theory of cultural psychology of semiotic dynamics with my normative expansion of Lewinian field theory.

More Convergence than Divergence Between Lewinian Cultural Psychology and Other Prominent Cultural-Psychological Theories

Comparing Lewin's cultural psychology with prominent, more contemporary definition of cultural psychology showed the following:

Bruner agrees upon the concept of goal-directed human behavior and uses the term agency for that. Yet, cultural psychology is in need of additional components in order to come into being. Canonical knowledge and non-canonical knowledge and the order of events and experiences as well as individual interpretations—the voice or tone of the

agent—are equally important for a theory of cultural psychology. The boundary between what is culturally accepted and non-accepted is determined by the social situatedness of multiple actors implied. Yet, a divergence from this culturally accepted conduct can be negotiated between multiple agents and culture therefore to be transformed and actualized, constantly. Furthermore, Bruner made the case for specific learning cultures to be more adaptive than others (1996). This is in accordance with my normative expansion of Lewinian cultural psychology.

Valsiner's semiotic mediation theory of cultural psychology complements the above-mentioned in an important way. Semiotic mediation only comes into being within concrete agentive human conduct. Signs are successfully mediated if they are in accordance with individual goals and needs and if the situations or experiences to be mediated are born within social interactions. These signs, mostly symbolic actions, catalyze the emergence of a hyper-generalized sign field—that is in accordance with my notion of ground theme—that is structuring non-verbally a specific life philosophy for one's own life or the life of one's family. This is something only implicitly shown in Lewin's concept of cultural psychology such as when the little boy praised the autocratic leadership style and rejected the democratic one as he grew up in a military life space or in Valsiner's terms in a military hyper-generalized sign field. Yet, Valsiner does not argue that some hyper-generalized sign fields are more adaptive for the development of specific agents than others which contrasts my normative expansion of Lewinian field theory.

It would be interesting to hear a Valsinerian opinion on this topic. Yet, there have been papers implicitly arguing for such an extension for example in IPBS—see Smedslund and Ross (2014). Smedslund reports that he had a young boy as a client with persistent headaches, and no other doctor was able to cure. This was the reason for Smedslund to visit the young boy in his cultural environment (apartment) and to observe their daily interactions. It became clear that the young boy and his family did not use a large living room that was for them reserved for bigger, cultural festivities such as Christmas. This was the reason for them doing all social activities (eating, homework, and so forth) in the kitchen while the living room remained unused. Smedslund then suggested the family to use the living room for different, more mundane activities, and the boy's headaches disappeared as a consequence. The example shows illustratively that some hyper-generalized sign fields (living room=only for festive activities, kitchen=place for all social activities) do come with a maladaptive relatedness that hinders the growth of concrete agents. So, even if Valsiner is shy about including normative assets within his cultural psychology, they do not contradict his theory.

Conclusion: Acknowledging the Fruits of a Normative Undertone of Lewinian Cultural Psychology

Field theory was priorly defined within the equation of explaining behavior as a function of person and environment, $B(f)=P, E$. I have argued in the present paper that this equation can be further differentiated. The environment plays for sure an important role in explaining conduct, yet it often depends upon the unique social situatedness in time—or within that environment—that can explain why people deviate from culturally accepted or non-accepted behavior. A trainer slapping friendly and approvingly his player on his posterior is acting culturally appropriated in contrast to a person wanting to slap a person friendly outside the pitch. The ground theme—that I have argued to be important for an expansion

of the equation—is the driving force for understanding the appropriateness of such cultural conduct. On a football pitch, players and trainers try to constantly motivate themselves, and they need to show their appreciation in a short period of time often not having minutes to talk about what has been done good or bad. Small actions that bear symbolic meaning in regard to a ground theme do help the players and trainers to show their mutual recognition while trying to motivate each other over the course of the match. Cultural psychology should therefore not only analyze needs and goals of a person in regard to environmental demands or constraints but we need to decipher equally what person-environment units are catalyzing as meaningful ground themes that can show what actions are in a canonical frame or not. I have tried to show the application of my modified Lewinian equation for a fictitious example in a classroom showing the benefits of analyzing people and their environments in conjunction potentially catalyzing interventions if people show negative reactions in their life space.

Based on this example, I argue that Lewinian field theory needs to make explicit its normative assumptions. Originating from Lewin's leadership studies, we do have cultural material that shows us that not all environments and their specific ground themes help people to relate to themselves as well as to their significant social other in an adaptive way. The leadership styles have shown illustratively that an autocratic climate did lead into multiple negative outcomes for a youth club while the democratic climate stimulated cooperative on-target learning for almost all children implied. Adaptive means in this regard that people and specific life spaces do not interfere negatively with the life spaces of other people which makes either their independent growth difficult or mine. Thus, responsible and emancipatory growth is rendered difficult in a life space that tries to limit a specific ZFM which would also incorporate specific ZPDs that could benefit the person's development in order to find meaning in his/her life. The brief analysis of Goethe's Faust has supported such a normative stance of cultural psychology. Faust's life space (needs and goals) had a severe negative impact upon the life space of Gretchen denying and suppressing her very own goals such as piety, love, care, and family leading into a severe tragedy that was only overcame when Gretchen decided to make herself independent from Faust and Mephisto's influence or life space—accepting her death rather to escape with them. Human traffic is organized in a similar fashion: Traffic lights and traffic signs try to organize human mobility in a way of not one person to negatively interfere with the other (accidents) or in other words that both persons can reach their destination while showing mutual respect for the needs and goals of the other.

Comparing my normative expansion of Lewinian field theory with prominent theories of cultural psychology has shown the following: Boesch's notion of action potential bears implicit normative consequences; a specific culture enlarges the action potential of a child or a person in order for the child to structure his environment (school, home, work) in a meaningful way. By means of over-reaching meaning making systems that guide personal action fields, a child or a person discovers constantly new elements of their culture equipping the individual with the possibility of mastering one's own environment that brings joy and pleasure as well as transparency. Inhibiting this action potential by means of deprivation for example is depriving the child to discover its culture by his own means and to appropriate the environment meaningfully based on connotative directionality. Bruner (1996) is more explicit in making normative assumptions about cultural psychology as he argues that negotiation is key for a sustainable learning culture—an asset that was also important in the Lewinian leadership studies. Without negotiation, a specific (learning) culture is superimposed upon the individual that denies his/her meaningful goals which are the actual drive to appropriate specific learning material. Culture is born in interaction

between diverse people and their diverse meaningful goals (Bruner, 1990, 1997) against the background of canonical knowledge (Bruner, 1996). Denying this pluralistic attitude is making culture monotone and empty. While we are able to decipher some minor normative assumptions within the theory of Boesch and Bruner, Valsiner is much more reserved in doing so. While Valsiner places equally emphasis upon trajectories and culture as guiding role in order to prefer several trajectories than others—and that needs and goals are learnt within semiotic mediation as well as the paths how to satisfy them—he does not have any underlying assumptions about some trajectories or goals to be more important for independent and interdependent growth of people. Yet, principally, my normative expansion of Lewinian field theory can be reconciled with Valsiner's theory of semiotic dynamics as shown by the Smedslund and Ross example (2014).

I am aware that my conclusions might be perceived in a controversial way and that many cultural psychologists are likely to object my normative assumptions about cultural psychology. Yet, I am a cultural-psychological practitioner (von Fircks, 2020, 2021a, b), and during my experience, as such, I have seen people relating to their environments in a way of them not being able to develop or inhibiting the development of other people—which is in close accordance with Smedslund's and Ross's experiences or the Lewinian scholar Bavelas (1944, 1960). The goal of the practitioner is to stimulate learning, and in learning, not all trajectories are equally valuable for development. This was something already discovered by Lewin et al. (1939), Marrow (1957), and Perls et al. (1997) but has not been made fertile for a general understanding of cultural psychology. The present article sets the seeds for that.

Declarations

Ethics Approval The article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by the author.

Informed Consent The article is a theoretical article and does not require consent.

Conflict of Interest The author declares no competing interests.

References

Bavelas, A. (1944). An analysis of a situation preliminary to leadership training. *Journal of Educational Sociology, 17*(7), 426. https://doi.org/10.2307/2262552

Bavelas, A. (1960). Leadership: Man and function. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 4*(4), 491. https://doi.org/10.2307/2390770

Bisgaard, C. H., Campill, M. A., von Fircks, E., & Valsiner, J. (forthcoming). Layered Attunement: Internal dialogues of intersubjectivity. In Erstad. O., Hagtvet. B. E., & Wertsch. J. V. (Eds). *Dialogic Perspectives in Times of Change*. Oxford University Press.

Boesch, E. E. (1991). *Symbolic action theory and cultural psychology.* New York, NY: Springer New York.

Boesch, E. E. (1998). *Sehnsucht: Von der Suche nach Glück und Sinn [Longing: On the search of joy and meaning]* (1st ed.). Huber.

Boesch, E. E. (2002). Genese der subjektiven Kultur [Genesis of subjective culture]. In M. Hildebrand-Nilshon, C.-H. Kim, & D. Papadopoulos (Eds.), *Kultur (in) der Psychologie: Über das Abenteuer des Kulturbegriffs in der psychologischen Theorienbildung* (pp. 67–95). Heidelberg, Germany: Asanger.

Bowlby, J. (1979). *The Making and breaking of affectional bonds*. Tavistock Publications.

Bruner, J. S. (1990). *Acts of meaning: Four lectures on mind and culture* (Vol. 3). Harvard University Press.

Bruner, J. (1996). *The culture of education*. Harvard University Press.

Bruner, J. S. (1997). *Sinn, Kultur und Ich-Identität: Zur Kulturpsychologie des Sinns* (1st ed.). Carl Auer.

Carlsson, A. (1974). Hermann Hesses Glasperlenspiel in seinen Wesensgesetzen [Hermann Hesse's Glass Bead Game in its Lawfulness]. In V. Michels (Ed.), *Materialien zu Hermman Hesse Das Glasperlenspiel* (1st ed., pp. 39–59). Suhrkamp Verlag.

Faesi, R. (1974). Hermann Hesses Glasperlenspiel [Hermann Hesse's Glass Bead Game]. In V. Michels (Ed.), *Materialien zu Hermann Hesse Das Glasperlenspiel* (1st ed., pp. 7–25). Suhrkamp Verlag.

Hesse, H. (Ed.). (2021). *Das Glasperlenspiel: Versuche. Einer Lebensbeschreibung d. Magister Ludi Josef Knecht samt Knechts hinterlassenen Schriften* ([21st ed.]). [Frankfurt am Main]: Suhrkamp.

Jacobs, L. (2012). Critiquing projection: Supporting dialogue in a post-Cartesian world. In T.B.-Y. Levine (Ed.), *Gestalt therapy: Advances in theory and practice* (pp. 59–71). Routledge.

Lang, A. (1988). Die kopernikanische Wende steht in der Psychologie noch aus! Hinweis auf eine ökologische Entwicklungspsychologie [The Copernican revolution still lacks in psychology! Advices for an ecological psychology]. *Schweizerische Zeitschrift Für Psychologie, 47*(2/3), 93–108.

Lang, A. (1992). On the knowledge in things and places. In M. von Cranach, W. Doise, & G. Mugny (Eds.), *Social representations and the social basis of knowledge* (pp. 76–83). Hans Huber.

Lang, A. (1993). Non-Cartesian artefacts in dwelling activities: Step towards a semiotic ecology. *Schweizerische Zeitschrift Für Psychologie, 52*(2), 138–147.

Lewin, K. (1917). Kriegslandschaft [War landscape]. *Zeitschrift Für Angewandte Psychologie, 12*(5), 440–447.

Lewin, K. (1922). Das Problem der Willensmessung und das Grundgesetz der Assoziation [The problem of will measurement and the principal law of association]. *II. Psychologische Forschung, 2*(1), 65–140.

Lewin, K. (1926). Vorsatz Wille und Bedürfnis: Mit Vorbemerkungen über die psychischen Kräfte und Energien und die Struktur der Seele [Purpose, will and need: With a preliminary remark about the psychological powers and energies and the structure of the mind]. *Springer*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-50826-4

Lewin, K. (1933). Environmental forces. In C. Murchison (Ed.), *Handbook of Child Psychology* (pp. 591–625). Oxford University Press.

Lewin, K. (1936). *Principles of Topological Psychology*. McGraw-Hill.

Lewin, K. (2000). Resolving social conflict: Field theory in social science. *American Psychological Association.* https://doi.org/10.1037/10269-000.(Originalworkpublished1948)

Lewin, K., Lippitt, R., & White, R. K. (1939). Patterns of aggressive behavior in experimentally created "social climates." *The Journal of Social Psychology, 10*(2), 269–299. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.1939.9713366

Lewin, K. (1948a). Social-psychological differences between the United States and Germany. In G. W. Lewin (Ed.), *Resolving Social Conflicts* (pp. 3–34). Harper & Brothers.

Lewin, K. (1948b). Cultural reconstruction. In G. W. Lewin (Ed.), *Resolving Social Conflicts* (pp. 34–43). Harper & Brothers.

Lewin, K. (1948c). The special case of Germany. In G. W. Lewin (Ed.), *Resolving Social Conflicts* (pp. 43–56). Harper & Brothers.

Marrow, A. J. (1957). *Making management human*. McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Marrow, A. J. (1967). The Harwood organization. In A. J. Marrow, D. G. Bowers, & S. E. Seashore (Eds.), *Management by Participation* (pp. 64–76). Harper & Row.

Marrow, A. J. (1969). *The practical theorist; the life and work of Kurt Lewin*. Basic Books.

Marrow, A. J., & French, J. R. P. (1945). Changing a stereotype in industry. *Journal of Social Issues, 1*(3), 33–37. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1945.tb02691.x

Mazur, L. B., & Plontke, S. (2022). Meaningfulness beyond meaning-making. Cultural Psychological Aspects of the Donor Portrait. *Culture & Psychology*, *28*(1), 133–151. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X211057748

Perls, F. S., Hefferline, R. F., & Goodman, P. (1997). *Gestalttherapie: Grundlagen* [Gestalt therapy: Foundations] (4th ed.). Klett-Cotta.

Peterson, J. B. (2018). *12 rules for life: An antidote to chaos*. Penguin UK.

Pfeiffer, J. (1949). *Goethes Faust: Eine Einführung* [Goethe's Faust: An Introduction] (3rd ed.). Johs Storm Verlag.

Rychner, M. (1974). Das Glasperlenspiel [The glass bead game]. In V. Michels (Ed.), *Materialien zu Hermman Hesse Das Glasperlenspiel* (1st ed., pp. 30–36). Suhrkamp Verlag.

Smedslund, J., & Ross, L. (2014). Research-based knowledge in psychology: What, if anything, is its incremental value to the practitioner? *Integrative Psychological & Behavioral Science*, *48*(4), 365–383. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12124-014-9275-1

Stern, E. (1920). Probleme der Kulturpsychologie [problems of cultural psychology] *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft,* 267–301.

Stern, W. (1900). *Über Psychologie der individuellen Differenzen: Ideen zu einer" differentiellen Psychologie"* [About the psychology of individual differences: Ideas about a differential psychology] JA Barth.

Stern, W. (1935). *Allgemeine Psychologie auf personalistischer Grundlage [General Psychology on the basis of personology]*. Martinus Nijhoff.

Tateo, L. (2018). Tensegrity as existential condition: The inherent ambivalence of development. In I. Albert, E. Abbey, & J. Valsiner (Eds.), *Trans-Generational Family Relations: Investigating Ambivalence* (pp. 3–20). IAP.

Tateo, L. (2019). Who wants to keep me a puppet? Pinocchio's tale as a metaphor of developmental processes. *Mind, Culture, and Activity, 26*(1), 24–40. https://doi.org/10.1080/10749039.2019.1576051

Toomela, A. (2021). *Culture, speech and myself*. Porcos ante Margaritas.

Valsiner, J. (1984a). Construction of the zone of proximal development in adult-child joint action: The socialization of meals. In B. Rogoff & J. V. Wertsch (Eds.), *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development* (pp. 65–76). Jossey-Bass.

Valsiner, J. (1984b). Two alternative epistemological frameworks in psychology: The typological and variational modes of thinking. *Journal of Mind and Behavior, 5*(4), 449–470.

Valsiner, J. (2014). *An invitation to cultural psychology*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Valsiner, J. (2019). *Ornamented lives. Advances in cultural psychology*. IAP.

Valsiner, J. (2021). *General human psychology. Theory and history in the human and social sciences*. Springer.

von Fircks, E. F. (2020). Existential humanistic leadership (EHL) as a dialogical process: Equality of the non-equality in organizations. *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science, 54*(4), 1–23. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12124-020-09560-1

von Fircks, E. F. (2021a). Culture and leadership: A Lewinian perspective of organizational problem solving. *Human Arenas.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s42087-021-00256-5

von Fircks, E. F. (2021b). Cultural resources for leadership: When a banana is more than a banana. *Human Arenas.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s42087-021-00231-0

von Fircks, E. F. (2021c). A new fertile psychology? A practical book review essay. *Human Arenas*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s42087-021-00254-7

von Fircks, E. F. (2021d). Daseinssemiosis: A new look at the phenomenology of Theodor Lipps. *Human Arenas.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s42087-020-00159-x

von Fircks, E. F. (2022). Culture in the seminar room of poetry: Poetic insights for cultural psychology. *Culture & Psychology*. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X221097609

Werner, H. (1956). Microgenesis and aphasia. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *52*(3), 347–353. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0048896

Zittoun, T. (2016). Reflexivity, or learning from living. In G. Marsico, R. A. Ruggieri, & S. Salvatore (Eds.), *Reflexivity and Psychology* (pp. 143–167). Charlotte, NC: IAP.