

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ACTION RESEARCH IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

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Abstract. *This paper discusses the action research, their origins and historical development. Action research is a flexible process in which the alternate action (change, improvement) and research (understanding, knowledge). It is used to collect information on the implementation of a social action or intervention; the action means any social action. Genesis of action research is based on the sociological approach from Kurt Levin, and their roots can be recognized in the works of Jon Dewey.*

Key words: *action research, social research, action, social reconstruction.*

Modern Action Research has its own history and prehistory. Although the idea of this approach to education research can be found in the work of pedagogical classics, the idea of research in which teachers are active participants, not just users or objects of research, has its roots in the works of John Dewey and Kurt Levin. The aforementioned authors have constructed their ideas parallelly with the pedagogical action, the creation and development of schools.

John Dewey (1910) emphasizes the importance of experience as a continuous transaction and interaction between human beings and their natural and artistic environment. In addition to opinions, it includes feelings, actions, and perception. Man, for Dewey, is not an isolated individual, who must build bridges to other human beings and things in nature, but a human being continuously connected with its surroundings on which depends the organic, which is changing and changing it (Ziniewicz, 1997). This means that the experience, activity and reflection of important elements of learnings (Dewey, 1910), and that the learning achieved by activating the thought process of starting experience. Dewey (1929) considers it as uncertainty and possible hidden or real danger that a person is exposed to the underlying cause of why the man decided to act and thereby distinguish two types of action: (1) immediately undertaken activities which he seeks to remove as soon

as possible sources of insecurity and problems (2) action based on previous research barriers and resources, which can serve us in finding a definitive answer. The delayed action allows finding a deliberate, intelligent response to the problem situation. Furthermore, Dewey (1929) considers it as the only such action, which was carefully designed on a good knowledge of the conditions in which it is exercised, an expression of our freedom. In that sense, physics is as an example that should be followed by other sciences, especially social. He believes that there is a tendency to cover up investigations of real problems and their detection in the full scope and depth. Instead, it accepts the situation existing as it is and continues to operate without a clear goal and plan. That contributes to the social sciences that are predominantly engaged in sorting fact in the framework of general conceptual system, rather than be joined to the active experimental research that, according to Dewey, can contribute to social reconstruction.

Dewey's philosophical ideas, especially his criticism of the separation between knowledge and action, as the request for linking theory and practice, are considered to be important for the creation of a new scientific approach - action research (McTaggart, 1997; Masters, 2000) that represents innovation and a step in relation to the then-research practices. Although Dewey in his works does not establish the concept of action research, and his sharp criticism of the separation between knowledge and action, and the request for linking science and practice, he has significantly contributed to the development of experimental approaches in the social sciences, which have later opened the door to the idea of action research.

The term "action research" comes from Kurt Levin since 1946. The research activities marked as research in the service of social enterprise or social engineering (Koenig & Zedler, 2001:140). Levin is considered the founder of action research because it insisted on the thesis that it is impossible to understand a system if you do not try to change, diagnosis-finding makes sense only if it is associated with the intervention-action (Schein, 1999:7).

Levin was born in Germany in 1890, and emigrated to the U.S. in 1933 where he received citizenship and continued to live. Levin's (1946) starting point, as it is impossible to understand a system if you do not try to change, is based on the definition that the action research refers to experimental research aimed at solving social problems. The survey is conducted in a group composed of scientists and practitioners, and passes through spiral steps involving planning, action and evaluation (Masters, 1995:2), which will be discussed in later parts of the work. For Levin (1946:46) action research is a "basic social research that (...) (...) can offer deeper insights into the laws that govern social life, but which also leads to (...) independence, equality and cooperation", the elimination of exploitation and the establishment of democracy, therefore, to social change. The key moment in his version of the group decision making: the involvement of participants in the social situation in all phases of research. In other words, Levin found that discussion with the possibility of seizing their own positions more effective in changing behavior in comparison to the lectures. A major contribution is in fact the idea of studying the problem through their changes, and observing the effect of that change.

The action creates research investigator in the discernment process, creates change and then observe the effects of and new dynamics of change. In the recent literature on action research Levin's name is mentioned as one of the founders of action research, and John Collier, social worker and an anthropologist from the United States. He was commissioner of Indian affairs in the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Collier is emphasized to local cultures and should be left to the responsibility for education, a process

through which this should make the action research. For him the form of action research studies that are created and realized through the cooperation of administrators and members of local communities, where administrators would need to see themselves primarily as students (Winter, 2001: 33).

Lewin and Collier's idea of action research came at the same time, independently of one another. Both are about the action research published relatively few works, but the credit for the establishment of action research attributed to Lewin, while Collier's role for a long time has been neglected. However, to fully understand Collier's action research approach we have to look at the correspondence between him and Ronald Lippitt, Lewin long-term associates. For many years, correspondence between them was only available in the form of microfilm, until the moment when Bill Cooke (2004) from the Institute for Development and Management in Manchester posted their letters on the internet version of the text as: "A Foundation Correspondence on Action Research: Ronald Lippitt and John Collier" and thus enabled the general public learning about important historical facts about the origin and development of action research. So they created two basic approaches to action research. The first approach, which advocated Collier, involved the active engagement of researchers and social values favoring a democratic society. In contrast, Lippitt observed action research as a methodological orientation that allows different groups in achieving their goals. No matter what the Collier access contained interesting ideas, but has fallen into obscurity because their ideas did not sufficiently developed and popularized. Lewin ideas have had much greater influence on the professional and scientific public.

Exploring social issues such as discrimination against minority groups, Lewin proposes action research as an extension of a further step from field experiments and a laboratory for the group dynamics. Action research strategy consists of "cycle of planning, execution (action), and data collection". Data collection (reconnaissance or facts-finding) has four functions: it should serve as a basis for evaluating derivative actions, as well as planning the next steps, as well as modifying the general plan of action and finally as an opportunity for learning, for "the acquisition of new general insight" (Lewin). Given that heritage Lewin is a spiral of action research, Mc Taggart that the danger is that action research becomes more than a procedure. It is wrong to consider the monitoring phase spiral and its conduct action research.

For Lewin (1946), the approach to the development of the idea of action research is characterized by an unexpected event during the experiment in 1946 was conducted with collaborators Ronald Lippitt, Leland Bradford & Kenneth Benne within the Research Center for the group dynamics. They created the two-week program, whose purpose was to encourage group discussions and decision making. In addition, all participants were equal. The experiment involved fifty participants who are continuously trained in three separate groups. Each group had its leader and an observer who is recording the interaction between participants. Presenters and observers met in the evening, commented to the collected data and made their evaluation procedures. At the beginning of a meeting three parties have requested that they be present. Despite the disapproval of staff, Lewin, (1946) has accepted the unusual request. After the observers submitted reports, one of the participants expressed their disagreement with spectator interpretation her behavior that day. Another participant agreed with this view of the situation which developed after a fierce debate about the behavior of participants in the experiments and their interpretations. At the end of the project the vast majority of participants were present at the evening debate that often lasted long into the night (Smith, 2001). After that Lewin and his collaborators designed a survey to test the

contribution of the day and evening sessions. Interviews and questionnaires showed that the participants who took part in educational activities, and then had the opportunity to participate in discussions on the results of their learning, become more successful in diagnosing the conflict than the control group (Waring, 1991:112).

According to Lewin, action research based on the respect of feedback on achievements results can be described as a spiral version of planning, action, data collection and reflection (1946: 206). Lewin works very quickly and applies his ideas to the field of pedagogical research: in the development of curriculum and professional development of teachers, a late fifties, this relatively short climb pedagogical action research, was completely suppressed then dominant "engineering" approach to the study and solving educational problems. Tyler draft model curriculum and Bloom Taxonomy educational objectives (Tyler, 1949 & Bloom, 1956), only the initial and influential examples of this positivist orientation in pedagogical research. Lewin is about action research as a method in which the emphasis on the distinction between interpretative research and practice of traditional analytical and empirical research (McTaggart, 1992, 1997). Action Research of Lewin time, who at the time represented by the analytical and empirical approach to the study, changed its direction and meaning.

Moon (Moon, 1990: 90-20) argues that the Levin (Lewin) approach to action research in many different settings of contemporary action research that set the center of the active role of practitioners. For Lewin, according to the moon, action research actually applied research in which they used a classic experimental approach in order to promote social action. Second, Moon considers that the specificity of Lewin's action-research approach, above all, his subject: the social action - action, while the contemporary authors refer to specific methods: the participation of practitioners in the study, researchers taking part in practical activities, action research group. Moon's statement is only partially in line with Lewin's action-research approach, which from the beginning contains all the essential elements that are relevant to contemporary action research, which primarily relates to the fact that action research is not conducted on humans but with men, and that practitioners have an active role in the research.

Stephen Corry (1953) and his associates at Columbia University initiated research aimed to encourage teachers to use the results of their research in order to achieve social reconstruction. This research (Poetter, 1997:15) has achieved the ideas of Lewin. Despite initial enthusiasm, the idea of the teacher researcher is suppressed and replaced by the so-called large studies in which there was a clear division between researchers and practitioners (McNiff, 2002:43). By re-discovery action research, methods that simultaneously lead and change and improve educational practices and the development of established pedagogical theory, comes the 70's. Several trends in social and pedagogical research and the philosophy and theory of knowledge significantly influenced the renewal of interest in this approach.

The ideas of the teacher researcher re-actualize Lawrence Stenhouse late sixties and early seventies in the UK. He tried to demystify and democratize the research in the form of the former and was not able to contribute to a useful understanding of professional development and advancement of professional practice. Stenhouse and his associates encouraged teachers to take an active role in the process of research and thereby strengthen their judging, improve their educational and classroom practice and improve personally (Poetter, 1997:16). Stenhouse (1975: 143) points out that the teacher is not enough work to be explored, but they (teachers) have to do it themselves, and that the main obstacle to improving educational practice is reflected in the critical examination of illusions and habits of teachers.

Stenhouse's ideas were continued in the works of John Elliott and Clem Adelman, which were made in the three-year educational project "Ford" (1973-1976) and Project humanities subjects (The Humanities Project, Stenhouse, 1971). The project has been one of the most important incentives for the revival of the idea of action research (McNiff, 2002:44) and "teachers," the researchers. Elliott and Adelman are considered to be teachers to take responsibility, for the action, and for reflection (Stenhouse, 1975: 163). These influential projects as well as the later work of the entire group of researchers and teachers led these authors, the first at the Centre for Applied Educational Research at the University of East England, and then Cambridge pedagogical institute, led to the development of specific action research and their representation in schools, as a form of extending the professional practice of teachers. In addition to these influences, the development of action research are also important ideas were developed in the Frankfurt philosophical circles, especially critical theory of society Habermas (1975), which we have already mentioned in the paper.

American anthropologist Sol Tax (1975) among anthropologists is the true founder of action research. Tax first used the term action anthropology in 1951. He and a group of anthropologists gathered around him at the University of Chicago were members of the scientific tradition of cultural anthropology, which means that their culture is a central concept and that everything else depends on it. Because they primarily deal with the problem of acculturation that occurs during the contact between two radically different cultures, when a relatively small community is under pressure from a larger and more powerful company, which has the technical and political advantages. He is known for his project Fox (Fox Project) in an action to connect a tribe, a reservation of Native Americans. The methodology of this project was similar to the approach Robert Redfield applied in the study of communities in Latin America. One of the participants in this Redfield research was the Tax. This approach required the existence of a team of students led by professor, the division of tasks, or threads of research among the participants and long-term operation. That means that students accepted the professor's theoretical approach. Also, Teks (Tax) points out that he and his followers, field researchers, after leaving the field to discover something new about the circumstances, change and resist to it. It requires you to pay attention to each individual and understand all the people who participate in contact with residents who belong to different cultures.

In addition, the action anthropologists serve clinical, and experimental method, which means that they do not only keep the observation, but they also try to influence the reality. They tend to put anthropological issues in the context of action, and hence the term action anthropology. Field work should be carried out under the sign of learning from the studied group, as well as the help to the group. Anyway, this aid would be based on the fact that it is necessary together with Indians to discover what suits them and what they want (Tax in Adam, 1984:103).

Today, action research for many authors is the key lever in order to improve professional practice of each teacher and for changing schools and society at large.

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ISTORIJSKI RAZVOJ AKCIONIH ISTRAŽIVANJA U DRUŠTVENIM NAUKAMA

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U radu se govori o akcionim istraživanjima, njihovom nastanku i istorijskom razvoju. Akciona istraživanja predstavljaju fleksibilni proces u kome se smenjuju akcija (promena, poboljšanje) i istraživanje (razumevanje, znanje). Ona se koriste da bi se prikupile informacije o sprovođenju neke društvene akcije ili intervencije, a pod akcijom se podrazumeva bilo kakva društvena akcija. Geneza akcionih istraživanja počiva na sociološkom pristupu počev od Kurta Levina, a njihovi koreni mogu se prepoznati u radovima Džona Djuia.

Ključne reči: *akciona istraživanja, socijalno istraživanje, akcija, socijalna rekonstrukcija.*