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## THE SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

Our aim in this opening chapter is to set the scene for the reader, to locate the profession of counselling psychology within its wider historical, social and occupational context both within the UK and internationally, and to facilitate an understanding of the framework in which counselling psychology operates. We shall also include a review of the value base of a profession which is now established in the UK, its preoccupation historically with well-being as opposed to illness, with context, and with the inclusion in its practice of a range of theoretical perspectives. When we state that the profession is now an established one, we are talking about a span of 25 years since the first formal structures of the profession were put in place in the UK. When compared, for example, with counselling psychology in the USA which began in 1946, the profession of counselling psychology in the UK is still relatively new. It may therefore be helpful for the reader if we provide a brief summary of how this profession came into being.

### **Professional developments in the UK and Ireland**

A new initiative in the British Psychological Society (BPS) traditionally starts with the formal establishment of an interest group. This provides a forum where people with similar interests and excitements can meet and discuss their work and their ideas. During the 1970s there was an increasing number of individuals who had gained a first degree in psychology and who had gone on to do counselling training, or 'helping' work of some kind, and who had no place within the BPS where they felt they could 'settle' professionally. Both of us were among those graduates, each of us exploring a number of possibilities for professional advancement. Colleagues meanwhile were lobbying the BPS on our behalf, culminating in what Nelson-Jones (1999) points to as the conception of counselling psychology in September 1979, when the Professional Affairs Board of the BPS set up a working party to consider the relationship between psychology and counselling (BPS, 1980).

Nelson-Jones (1999) highlights a number of contextual factors which are likely to have influenced the timing of the BPS Working Party's emergence. The counselling movement in the UK was well underway, emphasizing help for the 'worried well' rather than those who were 'mentally ill'. Voluntary agencies providing such services were being established. The Marriage Guidance Council (now Relate) had already been established in 1938; the first university counselling service had been offered at Keele in 1963, with the Association of Student Counsellors having been formed in 1970. There had been a significant development of careers counselling over that time in the UK, with this service being offered both in schools and in work settings. One of us (Vanja) did an MSc in Occupational Psychology in the late 1970s where careers counselling, plus the links between the professional and the personal as seen through a counselling framework, formed key components of the core curriculum on that programme. In the wider international setting, there was also the influence of the post-1960s organizational development activities, often based on reflective and humanistic principles as well as helping models (e.g., Argyris, 1970). In 1977, the British Association for Counselling (BAC, now BACP) was established, a significant event which created a professional framework for counselling and signalled the advent of organized training.

The main aim of the BPS Working Party was to assess the extent to which counselling was a legitimate activity for a psychologist and the extent to which such activity could professionally be located and supported within the remit of the Society. The Working Party directed its attention to a very wide range of sources of information, focusing, for example, on definitions of counselling and ways in which this activity could be distinguished from psychotherapy; on training programmes for counsellors and related standards; on professional and ethical guidelines for such work; on the relationship between counselling in the UK and other countries; and on the potential relevance to counselling of psychological research. The role played by counselling within psychology departments was also explored, as was the international setting, and the existence of the profession of counselling psychology in the USA, Canada and Australia. In its final report, the Working Party supported the recognition of counselling as an activity based in the understanding of psychological processes. While there were a number of options open for recommendation, the Working Party settled on the option that the Society establish an interest-based Section of Counselling Psychology. The establishment of this Section in December 1982

is generally regarded as the birth of the profession of counselling psychology within the UK. At the end of that first year the Section had 225 members.

Continuing progress was supported by the launching of the Counselling Psychology Section Newsletter, which in 1986 became the Counselling Psychology Section Review, and in 1989 the *Counselling Psychology Review* (Woolfe, 1996). It was to take some time, however, before counselling psychology took its full professional place as a Division of the BPS. David Lane (Lane & Corrie, 2006), who was a member of the Committee of the Counselling Psychology Section at that time, describes how they sought divisional status but were rejected on the grounds that the professional area was not at that time regarded as sufficiently defined to warrant this; instead the BPS suggested a compromise position whereby a 'Special Group' in counselling psychology be established. The Special Group developed its own practice guidelines and was to function as a kind of 'half-way house' between a scientific interest group and a professional body (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2003). While this development was widely viewed as a stepping stone to later divisional status, there was still much to be negotiated in order to attain that later status. David Lane refers to 'fierce resistance' both from other divisions within the society and from within the ranks of the Special Group. We reflect later on the nature of this resistance, and some of the underlying factors that may have contributed to it.

Notwithstanding the resistance, the field continued to evolve with an important development represented by the establishment of the BPS Diploma in Counselling Psychology. This offered a training framework and a curriculum that defined an area of theory and practice for the profession. Finally, in 1994, divisional status was achieved, allowing graduates of the Diploma in Counselling Psychology, or others who gained the Statement of Equivalence to the Diploma, to call themselves Chartered Counselling Psychologists. Until the formation of the Division of Counselling Psychology there had been no formally recognized route to Chartered Status for those with a psychology degree and subsequent training in counselling or psychotherapy. Both of us had been in that position, Susan with training in Family Therapy, and Vanja with training in Gestalt Psychotherapy, the Person Centred Approach and group work. By the end of the year in which the Division was established, it had become the second largest division of the BPS after Clinical Psychology, with 1164 members. At the time of writing, the Division of Counselling Psychology has 1947 members, making it the third largest division in the BPS after clinical and occupational psychology. Recent developments have included an

emphasis on geographical spread across the UK and the establishment of national branches of the Division of Counselling Psychology in Scotland and Wales. Training in counselling psychology has also continued to grow over the years, with the current provision both of an independent route and course routes to chartered status.

In 2004, a special edition of the professional journal *Counselling Psychology Quarterly* was devoted to ‘counselling psychology across the western world’, and while counselling psychology in the UK was referred to, there was no mention of Ireland or the development of counselling psychology within the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI). Apart from the close historical and geographical links between Britain and Ireland, the two countries have had close professional links at university level, as well as in a mutual consideration of standards in the field of counselling psychology. An outline of the development of counselling psychology in Ireland is provided by Hannan (2001, cited in Cunningham, 2004) who highlights the establishment of the profession in that country since 1997. In 1989, a Counselling and Therapy Interest Group was established in PSI; in 1995 this was renamed the Counselling Psychology Interest Group and had more than 80 members. Division status was achieved in 1997 and by 1999 there were 96 members. Since that time membership has more than doubled, and currently stands at 210. The first professional training course to masters level, which began as a one-year diploma, was established at Trinity College, Dublin (TCD) in 1988, with masters programmes in University College Cork and University College Dublin (UCD) beginning in the same year. Accreditation criteria for training in counselling psychology were established by PSI in 1993, with the TCD and UCD courses achieving accreditation. A particular challenge for counselling psychology in Ireland arises from the political situation with regard to Northern Ireland – part of the same land mass with an associated identity, but historically also a part of the UK. This situation has created some professional recognition problems for qualified practitioners in that area, with a leaning towards acceptance only of BPS qualifications within statutory services in Northern Ireland.

### **International perspectives**

While the profession of counselling psychology exists formally in a number of countries, there are other countries in which this is not yet the case but where professional activities traditionally associated with the practices of counselling psychology can be identified. Information derived from all of these settings throw light on the

professional development of counselling psychology as a specialty in its own right, as well as highlighting some of the challenges currently facing the profession, both in the UK and elsewhere. Our research has resulted in the conclusion that we are in the company of a wide international pool of varied and interesting colleagues, all pursuing worthwhile projects and making a stand for things that matter, often in the name of counselling psychology, but more importantly perhaps, based on values that underpin the development and practice of this profession. In our account below, we include these findings and reflect later on the commonalities between our different concerns and on ways that we might support each other more coherently.

Counselling psychology, as a formally recognized profession, exists, at the time of writing, in the UK, Ireland, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Korea and South Africa, although counselling psychology as a potential professional grouping of practitioners exists also in other countries. A number of contextual and social factors appear to be relevant here, both in terms of where counselling psychology has a clear professional identity and where it does not. Apart from the statutory recognition achieved in these countries, counselling psychology has now been given division status in the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP). This came about at the 2002 Congress of Applied Psychology in Singapore, where the Board of Directors of IAAP voted to create Division 16, The Division of Counseling Psychology (Leong & Savickas, 2007). As part of this development, a special issue of the journal *Applied Psychology: An International Review* was planned, to consider the discipline of counselling psychology in 12 different countries across the world. Authors were selected from the membership of IAAP and were asked to conduct their own SWOT analyses (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) on the current state of the profession in their country and their vision for the future. Individuals invited to take part in this analysis were senior people in the field within their own countries. Authors who wrote the different articles came from the USA, Australia, Canada, Japan, Korea, India, China, Hong Kong, Israel, Portugal, France and South Africa, places with either an established or developing identity in the field. We have also had access to relevant information on the professional situation in Germany and Greece. In the following sections we provide more detail on professional issues relevant to the field of counselling psychology in each of the countries referred to above, together with any assessments about future possibilities. Finally, we consider some

of the commonalities and differences that may be identified on the basis of this information.

### **Counselling psychology in the USA and Canada**

The USA has the longest established independent profession in counselling psychology. In 1946 the American Psychological Association (APA) reorganized itself into divisions with Division 17, Personnel and Guidance Psychologists, formed to meet the professional demands already identified in those areas (Doll, 1946). Much of the work at that time was focused on providing career or educational guidance to combat veterans – in fact, the USA Veterans Administration (VA) is regarded as a key influence on both the emergence and later professional development of counselling psychology in the USA (Whiteley, 1984; Munley, Duncan, McDonnell & Sauer, 2004). Within a few years this division was renamed Division 17, Counseling and Guidance, a change which reportedly came about through senior members of Division 17 using the term ‘counseling’ rather than ‘personnel’. It is likely that this language change was also influenced by the growing popularity of counselling within the USA at that time. This was in large part driven by the awareness raised by Carl Rogers (also a psychologist) who in 1942 had published his first book, *Counseling and Psychotherapy*, followed in 1951 by his major work *Client Centered Therapy*. Following an important conference sponsored by Division 17 in 1951 on the training of counselling psychologists, the impetus was set in motion for a further name change to Division 17, Counseling Psychology, and the confirmation of this field as a specialty (APA, 1956).

In 1974, the foundation of the National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology provided a focus for discussions about the training and accreditation of counselling psychologists in the USA, with developments which included the specification of ‘psychology’ in the title of accredited programmes, and the development of doctoral level training for counselling psychologists (Gelso & Fretz, 2001). Among the training needs identified for counselling psychologists was a particular emphasis on diversity and a greater understanding of cultural identities. These developments were in line with the humanistic value base of counselling psychology, as well as responses to the changing social world in the USA following the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, the demands of underrepresented social groups, and the rise of feminism. As a result of these concerns, Division 17 was reorganized during the early 1990s to allow for more emphasis on diversity within its structure. In 2003,

the Division changed its name to the Society of Counseling Psychology, promoting an explicit emphasis on 'unity through diversity' (Munley et al., 2004). The Society of Counseling Psychology has proved to be popular as a division within the APA, and currently has the second largest division membership after clinical psychology. Training programmes to date remain generalist, designed to serve a wide range of settings and presenting issues (Leong & Leach, 2007). The majority of training programmes are located in psychology departments, with a minority located within departments of education. Leong and Leach (2007) report an increased blurring of the boundaries between clinical and counselling psychologists, with both professional groups working in similar environments.

The profession of counselling psychology in Canada evolved originally from a diverse set of interests spanning the fields of both psychology and counselling (Lalande, 2004). Two national organizations are recognized as having influenced the development of this field, the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) and The Canadian Counselling Association (CCA). In 1986, counselling psychology in Canada gained recognition as a specialty in its own right with the establishment of the Section of Counselling Psychology within the CPA. The Section identifies a framework for the practice of counselling psychology together with an emphasis on specialist training for this field. The term 'psychologist' is a licensed one in Canada, with all regions having regulatory frameworks in place; however, the specifics of what needs to be done to attain a licence appears to vary across different regions. The CPA outlines the requirements for training in the different regions, with requirements covering both doctoral and masters level. Although practice requirements are set out for different regions there is much variability, and in some areas certain settings are exempt from some of the requirements (Lalande, 2004). The influence of the wider field on the profession of counselling psychology in Canada appears to be in evidence on the CPA Section of Counselling Psychology's website where we see frequent reference to 'counselling' as the profession, rather than 'counselling psychology'. Young and Nicol (2007) highlight external influences and competition from other groups as a threat to the profession, making it more difficult to articulate an agreed definition of the field, or to co-ordinate training standards. Dobson (2002) on the other hand, has emphasized the lack of funding for applied psychology in general in Canada, limiting both the availability and expansion of psychological services. One interesting aspect of counselling psychology in Canada arises from the fact that officially the country is bilingual and multicultural, yet the development of counselling psychology appears to have taken

somewhat different routes in the French-speaking and English-speaking areas. Training programmes in counselling psychology are not offered at any of the four major French language universities in Québec (Young & Nicol, 2007). In the French-speaking parts of Canada there is a greater emphasis on guidance counselling rather than on counselling psychology, and there may be some links, culturally speaking, with the general situation in France with regard to a reluctance to move towards a counselling psychology profession.

### **Counselling psychology in Australia and New Zealand**

Counselling psychology in Australia has been described as both a relatively young profession and one that is also contained within a small number of university settings. (Brown & Corne, 2004). The early definition of counselling psychology in Australia came about through a need to establish something professionally different from clinical psychology (Williams, 1978), where individuals would not be regarded as mentally ill, and where the emphasis was more directly on the therapeutic relationship, and less on the techniques that might be employed to bring about change. According to Brown and Corne (2004) the term 'counselling psychology' was first officially used in discussion at the Australian Psychological Society (APS) in 1970. It was some years later, in 1976, that the Division of Counselling Psychologists of the APS was formally established. The establishment of this new profession was also accompanied by an on-going interest in how to advance the profession in the wider field (Penney, 1981). In 1983 the division became the Board of Counselling Psychology, with the current title, the College of Counselling Psychology, being introduced in 1993. While there are many professional counselling organizations within Australia, the College of Counselling Psychology is described as 'the most widespread and the most influential' (Pryor & Bright, 2007, p. 9). Brown and Corne (2004) report a decreasing membership of the College of Counselling Psychology from 904 in 1997 to 774 in 2003, ostensibly as a result of competition with clinical psychology and the fact that economically, clinical psychologists have greater power. However, according to Pryor and Bright (2007) a significant number of psychologists opt to belong to one of the other professional counselling organizations within Australia, taking the emphasis away from jobs in institutional settings (Patton, 2005) and pointing to the growth of private practice. Also, there are only five accredited training courses in counselling psychology throughout the country, all offered by universities. Notwithstanding these factors, counselling psychology



as a profession is well recognized in Australia, with work opportunities across a wide range of domains.

Stanley and Manthei (2004) trace the origins of counselling psychology in New Zealand through the initial establishment in 1947 of the New Zealand branch of the BPS, the later establishment of the independent New Zealand Psychological Society (NZPsS) in 1967, the passing of the Psychologists Act in 1981, its subsequent repeal, and its replacement with the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act of 2003. During this period there was considerable debate about the management of standards in psychology and a tension between a generic view of applied practice and the articulation of specialties. In 1983, at the annual conference of the NZPsS an interest group of 20 people gathered under the banner of counselling psychology. The first ever counselling psychology symposium took place in the following year, which was followed by a proposal to establish a Division of Counselling Psychology. This Division formally came into being in 1985 with an initial membership of 32. According to Stanley and Mantei (2004) a number of rather quiet years for counselling psychology ensued, with a failure to articulate a separate identity for the field. It was not until 2002 that renewed energy and activity emerged for the Division resulting in 2003 in the establishment of the Institute of Counselling Psychology at the annual conference of the NZPsS. Currently, although still in an *early stage* of development, the field of counselling psychology in New Zealand continues to expand and attract interest and debate, specifically around the potential consolidation of a separate identity and the establishment of a solid training ground.

### **Counselling psychology in Hong Kong, China, Korea and Japan**

This section highlights the varied situations for counselling psychology across these different geographical locations. The Hong Kong Psychological Society (HKPS) now has four professional divisions covering the domains of clinical, educational, industrial/organizational, and the most recent one, the Division of Counselling Psychology which was formally established in 2006 (Leung, Chan & Leahy, 2007).

Professionals who were instrumental in supporting the development of counselling psychology in Hong Kong came from academia, service administration and therapeutic practice, and considered that there should be room for an identity which did not fit the others within the HKPS. The establishment of the new division provides a potential platform for those professionals who identify as

counselling psychologists, but who have, to date, been working within the domain of clinical psychology, education, the private sector and the universities (Leung et al. 2007). Due to the relative lack of formal counselling psychology training opportunities in Hong Kong, this professional group is made up of people who have done a first degree in psychology and then gone on to undertake counselling/therapeutic training. The above authors highlight only one university setting where training in counselling psychology is offered, and in this case within a Faculty of Education with the award being a 'Doctor of Education'. Under these circumstances, individuals who wish to acquire a qualification in counselling psychology are forced to seek this overseas. Notwithstanding these training difficulties, there is still the challenge of gaining a clear identity for counselling psychologists, and distinguishing their practice from social workers, clinical psychologists, educational psychologists and counsellors, particularly as in practice there is much overlap. As Leung et al. (2007) point out, all of these groups engage in assessment activities, case formulation, treatment planning and the process of working through a range of issues with clients. A further challenge is the translation of western theoretical models into a body of clinical literature which has a clearly recognized relevance to the local professional and lay population. There is clearly some way to go in the development of the counselling psychology profession within this setting, but as we later highlight, the challenges posed have some similarity to those faced, for example, by counselling psychologists in the UK.

The situation in China is rather different from that in Hong Kong, notwithstanding the closer association between the two settings since the transfer of sovereignty of Hong Kong to China in 1997. This is largely due to the fact that Hong Kong has always been an international and culturally diverse city, with a significant western influence, and although China has since 1978 opened its doors to a broader influence in the support of economic development, the influence of counselling psychology theories and practices have some way to go. Chang, Tong, Shi and Zeng (2005), in a review of counselling and psychotherapy in China, highlight the fact that counselling psychology does not have a clear professional definition in that context, as is the case also for counselling and psychotherapy. In China, these helping professions are all rooted in the medical model and medical settings and as Zhang, Li and Yuan (2001) point out, the practice of psychological therapy, including psychoanalysis, was traditionally carried out in hospitals by medical doctors. As Hou and Zhang (2007) report, the establishment of the Medical Psychology Committee,

created in 1979 in the Chinese Psychological Society, was the first committee of its kind in the country. The Chinese Association for Mental Health (CAMH), established in 1985, was also composed mainly of medical practitioners. At the same time, the support of counselling and psychotherapy provided by the medical profession ensured that these psychological practices flourished at least in hospital settings, while consolidating a medical model approach to presenting difficulties.

The rapid rate of change since the political shift from agriculture to industry is seen as positive for the potential of counselling psychology in China (Hou & Zhang, 2007). The open door policy now running for a decade has ensured greater access to western theories and practices as well as an influx of helping professionals from other countries. A particular development highlighted in this context was the extensive series of workshops organized in the late 1980s by the German–Chinese Academy of Psychotherapy (Chang et al., 2005). At the same time, those authors highlight an urgent need for greater psychological resources to meet the current range of psychological problems in the population, a need being given much greater attention by the Chinese government. One factor identified as potentially difficult for the development of counselling psychology in China is the lack of a clear academic and professional relationship between psychology and counselling. More collaboration will be necessary in order to agree on a set of relevant professional codes in the management of mental health problems, as well as agreement on minimal training standards. There is also a substantial challenge in Chinese communities about the acceptance of mental health difficulties and the seeking of relevant help.

In contrast with China, South Korea has a much stronger counselling psychology identity, supported by its recognition as a separate field of study and practice. Originally a part of the Division of Clinical Psychology in the Korean Psychological Association (KPA), counselling psychology achieved its independence in 1987 with the establishment of its own division, entitled the Korean Counseling Psychological Association (KCPA). The division has its own website, publishes the *Korean Journal of Counseling and Psychotherapy* since 1988, and has a large number of members (Seo, Kim & Kim, 2007). KCPA operates a certification system which demands evidence of high standards of training, practice and supervision and which has also been instrumental in promoting the image of a highly trained, ethical and professional group of practitioners. At the same time, training programmes have very different curricula and there is a growing interest in reviewing training requirements so as to achieve

greater comparability (Lee, 1996). This highlights potentially the need for a clearer identity, a fact reflected in Seo et al.'s (2007) identification of the challenge posed to counselling psychologists in Korea by social workers and clinical psychologists in particular, and the increasing number of professional groups that deal with mental health problems.

Watanabe-Muraoka (2007) provides an insightful account of the development of counselling psychology in Japan, and the difficulties of establishing the profession in that country. Although there has been an influx of ideas derived from the American setting, there has been no concerted effort to establish a local professional identity. While there has been some confusion in Japanese society as to the meaning of counselling, some recent clarity has been offered, both by the publication of a key text on counselling psychology (Watanabe-Muraoka, 1996), and by the definition put forward by the Japanese Association of Counseling Science in 2004. At the same time, some confusion continues, with no differentiation made, for example, between clinical psychology and counselling psychology, with the fact that a large number of teachers of counselling are themselves clinical psychologists, and with a tendency within the counselling field to identify with a specific approach or technique rather than a professional orientation. Watanabe-Muraoka's conclusion is that the profession in Japan needs a title that would more clearly speak to current contextual needs; she identifies this as 'lifespan developmental counseling psychology'.

### **Counselling psychology in South Africa**

Counselling psychology has been a recognized and legislated specialty in South Africa since 1974, along with the specialties of clinical, research and industrial psychology (Leach, Akhurst & Basson, 2003). Originally established to report to the Medical and Dental Council, counselling psychology now reports to the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), and has its own division within the Psychological Society of South Africa. According to Leach et al. (2003) six out of the 20 universities in South Africa offer training programmes in counselling psychology, three of these combining theoretical teaching relevant to counselling, clinical and educational settings. Historically, the development of counselling psychology in South Africa is deeply embedded in the apartheid system. The profession first emerged in the context of Afrikaner nationalism, reportedly as a contrast to the more English and liberally identified field of clinical psychology, although the psychology profession as a

whole was at that time regarded as racist (Leach et al., 2003). Currently, counselling psychologists as a professional group comprise approximately one third of all registered psychologists; the majority of the profession as a whole are white, female and work in private practice. Historically, the profession has been heavily criticized for its use, both in training contexts and practice, of theories and models that are not in keeping with the needs of the majority of South Africans (Watson & Fouche, 2007). Research reflects this bias, being skewed in the direction of urban and middle class samples, while the language of the profession does not reflect the languages of the majority population. This has led to counselling psychology being criticized as overly parochial. Watson and Fouche (2007) highlight a number of challenges facing the profession in the context of a transformation in South African society, drawing attention to the need to address a theoretical and research bias, and to foster more collaborative activities which could meet the needs of the society of which it is a part.

### **Counselling psychology in India**

The situation in India is included here as it raises a number of issues relevant to the field of counselling psychology as a whole, which are addressed in a separate section below. Counselling psychology is not an established profession in India, at least in the formal sense. While psychology in India is represented by a number of key professional bodies, including the Indian Association of Clinical Psychologists, there has not been a move to develop a distinct identity for psychologists involved in counselling. A limited number of courses on counselling are on offer, but the quality of training is not monitored for these. What is apparent from a consideration of the situation in India regarding psychology and counselling, is the need for both western and Indian philosophies and ideas to come together to form theories and approaches that have greater face validity to the Indian population and which therefore might more adequately meet identified needs. For example, Arulmani (2007) draws attention to the fact that traditional Indian psychology, referred to as *Mano Vidya*, or 'mind knowledge', is recorded in ancient Indian writings documenting the existence of psychological ideas and techniques that 'bear a startling resemblance to ideas put forth by modern Western psychology and yet predate these efforts by two millennia' (p. 71). Apparently, there is now some activity in this direction, with the development of psychological inventories that draw on traditional Indian psychology (Wolf, 1998). The challenge that these developments present to

counselling psychology highlight the need to contextualize concepts and approaches within a framework that can cope with different cultural subjectivities, and by doing so recognize the contextual nature of knowledge and research activity.

### **Counselling psychology in Israel**

According to Benjamin (2007) the lack of recognition of counselling psychology in Israel has not been for want of some concerted efforts by counselling psychologists to gain more visibility and acceptance. A programme in counselling psychology was established in Tel Aviv University in the 1970s, organized by USA trained counselling psychologists, but this programme has recently been abolished, apparently for a range of reasons which include the lack of any holding professional body to accredit graduates of the programme. Psychology in Israel is regulated by the Ministry of Health which has recognized the specialties of clinical, educational, developmental, rehabilitation, medical, and social/vocational/organizational psychology. These specialties are also recognized by the Israel Psychological Association (IPA). A proposal to add a division of counselling psychology to the IPA was recently rejected. However, the presence in Israel of a well-established profession in clinical psychology is likely to be a factor in the difficulties of establishing a potentially rival professional group.

While counselling psychology as a specialty in its own right has not flourished in Israel, vocational psychology, as a related field, has been very successful (Robitschek & Woodson, 2006). Activities subsumed under the banner of vocational psychology include career counselling, selection and assessment, and organizational psychology. Given the cultural and social challenges faced by Israel in recent years, these activities have proved to be extremely valuable. Moreover, while not a recognized professional group, counselling psychologists do have a presence, making a meaningful contribution to a range of social and geographical challenges. An example of this, reported by Benjamin (2007) was the recruitment of counselling psychologists to the Israel National Employment Service to help evacuees from the Gaza Strip. This work clearly involved more than a career focus, and took on a holistic quality, with the need to address issues of trauma, grief and crises, as well as the challenges of relocation in terms of vocational demands. The advent of managed care and the growth of new approaches such as coaching have led to an emphasis on skill and competency development within a generic framework. While the Israeli context is very different from that of the UK,

there are elements of these developments that mirror some recent thinking within the UK, highlighting the advantages of not over-specifying specialties within applied psychology, but instead promoting a more generic-based and skill-development approach, which can be applied to a range of settings and presenting difficulties.

### **Counselling psychology in mainland Europe**

Counselling psychology does not exist as a recognized specialty in most of mainland Europe, although there are many psychologists who are working within a practice framework which bears comparisons with what counselling psychologists are doing, for example, in the UK. Our research has uncovered a few published papers and some further professional information which give insight into the situation in France, Portugal, Germany and Greece, and we include a summary of the issues in these countries as they currently stand. Even where the specialty is not officially recognized, there are often relevant issues for us to consider in thinking more broadly about the development of the profession of counselling psychology. There are also political factors which come into play, including the mapping of different professions as mutually exclusive. For example, the Strasbourg Declaration on Psychotherapy (European Association of Psychotherapy, 1990) explicitly defines psychotherapy as a separate profession, although the training background of a psychotherapist can take different forms in different European countries, and in some countries will link more directly than in others with psychology training as the initial requirement.

#### *France*

Bernard, Cohen-Scali and Guichard (2007) present what they describe as a paradoxical situation in France. That is, although counsellors on the one hand work with the theme of 'accompanying' and 'connection', as a professional group there appears to be no interest in forming professional allegiances or identities. These authors point out that the term 'counselling' does not have a direct equivalent in the French language – the nearest work is 'conseil' which translates as 'advice'. Apparently, only one writer in the field uses the actual term 'counseling' in two book titles (Tourette-Turgis, 1996, 1997). While Rogerian ideas on counselling have found their way into French thinking and practice since the 1970s, the practice is generally regarded as very different from 'psychotherapy', the latter seeking to offer psychological assistance of the kind that in the UK we might also ascribe to the majority of counselling practices. They also point out

that there is no equivalent in French to the term 'counselling psychology'. It would seem that although the professional title of 'psychologist' is regulated in France, there is no connection directly with the field of counselling as currently defined in that country.

#### *Portugal*

Duarte, Paixão and Lima (2007) provide an overview of counselling psychology in Portugal. Although there are postgraduate programmes available for the training of counselling psychologists, based on a scientist practitioner model and including rather broad based theory as well as skills in the curriculum, there is no professional organization of the field. Also, there appears to be significant competition from other groups of counsellors who have not come from a psychological background. Duarte et al. (2007) refer to career counselling being undertaken by teachers who have no specialist training in that field. These authors define counselling psychology as a specialty that focuses on a person's subjective well-being, and strengthening problem-solving and decision-making skills. The aim would be to 'resolve normative or sporadic crises' (p. 127).

#### *Germany*

In a research project conducted by the Anglo-German Foundation for the Study of Industrial Society (Lane et al., 2004) the authors report on a study which compared psychology professionals in both countries on a range of work-related dimensions. While there have been attempts by the Association of German Psychologists to create a specialty in counselling psychology these have not been successful. Instead, the professional title in Germany is 'psychological psychotherapist'. Although the title is different, the authors of this report suggest that the two groups are broadly similar. In Germany a four-year degree in psychology to masters level is followed by three-years of full-time training in psychotherapy and one full year of practice. The three main modalities covered are described as psychoanalysis, psychotherapy and behaviour therapy although no detail is given as to what is included in the psychotherapy modality. The results show British counselling psychologists to be relatively optimistic about their profession and the future, whereas their German counterparts were highlighted as very disaffected. The latter finding was put down to the unsatisfactory nature of the legislative framework which now encompasses that professional group, and the feeling that state recognition was undermining for the profession. Sample sizes for the British and German group of psychologists in this study were 317 and 302 respectively.



*Greece*

The Hellenic Psychological Society (HPS) was founded in 1990 in Thessaloniki, with the aim of promoting teaching and research as well as supporting practice across different areas of psychology. HPS has ten divisions including the Division of Counselling Psychology. In Greece the term 'psychologist' and related professional activities are protected by law. A recent development, driven by a Greek colleague of ours, is the establishment of the European Association of Counselling Psychology which was founded in 2006. This association recognizes that most European countries do not have a formally recognized specialty in counselling psychology, but that there are many counselling psychologists in different European countries who have trained abroad and returned with that professional identity. The aim of the association is therefore to support the development and application of counselling psychology in Europe, and is likely to provide a forum for professional exchange as well as networking opportunities. We understand that further developments might include the establishment of a professional journal which could bring together ideas and experiences from colleagues across the European scene. The association already has members from Greece, Malta, Ireland, the UK, Italy and Spain.

**Values and tensions in counselling psychology**

Our above review of the profession of counselling psychology and its status in many different countries across the globe brings out a number of interesting themes. There is a keenness and protectiveness that comes across about the profession in general, perhaps driven by the fact that it is relatively new in many countries or not even recognized officially in some. There is also the fact that the profession has had to fight relatively hard, over a sustained period of time, for any recognition that exists. A number of factors appear to be relevant in attempting to understand this situation. Firstly, counselling psychology has emerged from a psychological 'field' dominated by positivism and a particular conception of 'science'. Traditional ideas about 'science', especially within western psychology, do not sit easily with the concept of 'the person'. Moreover, the value base of the profession eschews the notion of 'expert', not as a way of denying a skill and knowledge base, but as a fundamental humanistic and democratic position. This raises questions about the interface of counselling psychology with the medical profession which is based on a hierarchy ranging from experts at different levels to patients. Bringing humanistic values into that frame

has of course entailed a clash of values in many settings and some considerable effort to find a way through such differences. It would appear to us that these efforts continue in the field at the time of writing, perhaps suggesting that this is itself a characteristic of the profession. Of relevance also, is the competition for finite resources among different professional groups.

Secondly, counselling psychology has been driven by a desire to 'make a stand' – for subjectivity, for the inclusion of context in its research and practice, for promoting well-being as opposed to a focus on illness, for diversity, for the rights of all human beings, and for the right to bring psychology to many different settings. At times, as appeared to be the case in South Africa, these values found themselves sidetracked in the service of political ends. In the UK as we write, there is considerable pressure for counselling psychologists who are working within the National Health Service (NHS) to adopt the 'illness' frame of reference which lies at the core of this service. Such pressure exists in other countries too, and has created tensions and an oppositional frame. It can also foster a desire at times to be even more positivistic than the positivists, a response which is likely to be in part a defence against powerful establishment ideals and values. Many of the issues highlighted here are addressed in more detail in later chapters in the context both of a discussion about the knowledge base of the profession, as well as in the articulation of current dilemmas and debates. For the moment, we hope that we have been able to provide the reader with a 'feel' for the profession, a kind of felt sense of what engaged people to lend their time, energy, and spirit in support of the development of this realm of theory and practice.

### **What is counselling psychology?**

Having reviewed many aspects of the profession of counselling psychology, in many different countries, we would like to end this chapter with a consideration of how we might define this field. This is a challenging task, in part because the profession has both a coherence and, as we have suggested above, can also be defined as the 'different from' position. The official definition, provided by the BPS, is as follows:

'Counselling Psychology is a distinctive profession within psychology with a specialist focus, which links most closely to the allied professions of psychotherapy and counselling. It pays particular attention to the meanings, beliefs, context and processes that are constructed both within and between people and which affect the psychological wellbeing of the person'. (BPS website, 2007)

The emphasis on the importance of humanistic values can be seen in the statements contained in the Professional Practice Guidelines for Counselling Psychology (BPS, 2005a):

Counselling psychology has developed as a branch of professional psychological practice strongly influenced by human science research as well as the principal psychotherapeutic traditions. Counselling psychology draws upon and seeks to develop phenomenological models of practice and enquiry in addition to that of traditional scientific psychology. It continues to develop models of practice and research which marry the scientific demand for rigorous empirical enquiry with a firm value base grounded in the primacy of the counselling or psychotherapeutic relationship. These models seek:

1. to engage with subjectivity and intersubjectivity, values and beliefs;
2. to know empathically and to respect first person accounts as valid in their own terms; to elucidate, interpret and negotiate between perceptions and world views but not to assume the automatic superiority of any one way of experiencing, feeling, valuing and knowing;
3. to be practice led, with a research base grounded in professional practice values as well as professional artistry;
4. to recognise social contexts and discrimination and to work always in ways that empower rather than control and also demonstrate the high standards of anti-discriminatory practice appropriate to the pluralistic nature of society today. (pp. 1–2)

We are both in accord with the above guidelines as a succinct and appropriate statement about the profession of counselling psychology, although in our view they do not convey the wide range of attitudes and activities which can be highlighted in different contexts. Also, we recognize that this statement contains a number of philosophical dilemmas and potential conflicts which need constantly to be negotiated. We return to these in more detail in Chapter 2 – for the moment we wish simply to highlight the fact that putting these philosophical ideas and values into practice is not a straightforward matter. It takes courage, is intellectually demanding, and requires a desire to stand for issues that are not always met with a benign attitude (see, for example, Van Scoyoc, 2004). However, in our experience, there is something of the maverick in many counselling psychologists, a quality that is likely either to attract you instantly to the field or send you off looking for something more ‘mainstream’ and less troublesome.