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# EVERYDAY LIFE SOCIOLOGY

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#### Abstract

Everyday life sociology comprises a broad spectrum of micro perspectives: symbolic interactionism, dramaturgy, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and existential sociology. We discuss the underlying themes that bind these diverse subfields into a unified approach to the study of social interaction. We outline the historical development of everyday life sociology, indicating the individuals, ideas, and surrounding context that helped to shape this evolving theoretical movement. We then examine three contemporary developments in everyday life sociology that represent significant theoretical, substantive, and methodological advances: existential sociology, the sociology of emotions, and conversation analysis. Within these areas, we outline major themes, review recent literature, and evaluate their contribution to sociology. Every-day life sociology has had influence outside its arena, stimulating grand theorists to create various micro-macro syntheses. We consider these and their relation to the everyday life themes. We conclude by discussing the major critiques and assess the future promise and problems of this perspective.

#### INTRODUCTION

Any attempt to offer a brief but thorough outline of the focus and scope of everyday life sociology is difficult because of its diversity and the lack of systematic integration among its subfields. In fact, the sociology of everyday

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life is an umbrella term encompassing several related but distinct theoretical perspectives: symbolic interactionism, dramaturgy, labeling theory, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and existential sociology. The questions arise, then: Is everyday life sociology merely a collection of fragmented parts, arbitrarily referred to as a single perspective for the sake of maintaining proprietary interests? Is there anything that characterizes the everyday life perspective as a distinctive body of theory? We argue that everyday life sociology does represent a theoretical arena (although it is often associated with certain methods<sup>1</sup> and substantive interests) characterized by a climate of intellectual compatibility and eclectic synthesis among sociological thinkers using a micro perspective. Within this overarching approach, individual practitioners can seek relevance for their empirical findings by drawing on a variety of interrelated perspectives, incorporating ideas from diverse camps into their own theoretical formulations. The everyday life field has thus been one of evolving adaptation, with new subfields emerging out of ideas creatively drawn from both within and outside of micro sociology.

# MAJOR TENETS OF EVERYDAY LIFE SOCIOLOGY

## The Critique of Macro Sociology

A central impetus to the development of everyday life sociology was the growing dissatisfaction in mid-twentieth century American social thought with the approach contained in classical and contemporary macro theory. Both positivism and critical sociology were seen as overly deterministic in their portrayal of the individual in society: The actor was depicted as either a *tabula rasa*, internalizing the norms and values of society out of a desire for group membership, or as a *homo economicus*, developing social, political, and ideological characteristics as a result of his/her class membership. As a result, these traditional approaches generated an overly passive and constrained view of the actor. In its determinism, macro sociology also tended to be a monocausal gloss, failing to capture the complexity of the everyday world. Some of the early critiques of macro sociology from the everyday life perspective include Douglas (1970a), Filmer et al (1972), Lyman & Scott (1970), Psathas (1968, 1973), Tiryakian (1962, 1965, 1968), Wilson (1970), and Zimmerman & Wieder (1970).

Everyday life sociologists critiqued traditional sociology epistemologically for its "absolutist" stance toward studying natural phenomena (Douglas 1970a, 1976; Douglas & Johnson 1977; Feyerabend 1972; Johnson 1975;

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>For a fuller discussion of the various epistemological stances associated with symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology (with respect to ethnography), and existential sociology, see Adler & Adler (1987).

Kauffman 1944; Manning 1973; Mehan & Wood 1975; Phillips 1974). They rejected the premise of *subject-object dualism:* the belief that the subject (knower) and the object (known) can be effectively separated through scientific principles. Procedures such as the objectification, detachment, control, and manipulation of abstracted concepts and variables violate the integrity of the phenomena under study (Cicourel 1964; Douglas 1970a, 1976; Schutz 1962, 1964).

## Contextuality

Everyday life sociologists sought to respect this integrity by studying people in their *natural context:* the everyday social world (Cicourel 1964; Denzin 1970; Douglas 1970a, 1976; Garfinkel 1967; J. Lofland 1971, 1976). This is the most fundamental and central emphasis of everyday life sociology. Naturally occurring interaction is the foundation of all understanding of society. Describing and analyzing the character and implications of everyday life interaction should thus serve as both the beginning and the end point of sociology. This includes the perceptions, feelings, and meanings members experience as well as the micro structure they create in the process.

## Model of the Actor

Everyday life sociologists move from studying interaction and communication in two directions. First, they move inward, toward consciousness, deriving a model of the actor based on people's everyday life attitudes and behavior. This includes the interactionist view of the self, the ethnomethodological view of cognitive structure, and the existential view of brute being. To a degree, the relationship between consciousness and interaction is seen as reflexive: people are shaped or socialized by interaction as well as instrumental in shaping the character of interaction.

## Social Structure

Second, they employ a view of social structure and social order that derives from interaction and is also characterized by a reciprocal relation to it. Social structure, organization, and order do not exist independent of the people that interact within them (Blumer 1969). Rather, they are endogenously constructed, or constituted, as people negotiate their way through interactions (Garfinkel 1967; Heritage 1984; Maines 1977, 1982; Strauss 1978). The rituals and institutions they thus create then influence the character of their behavior through the expectations and micro social norms they yield (Goffman 1967). Interaction is thus both voluntaristic and structured (but not completely determined) because of this reflexivity.

#### HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF EVERYDAY LIFE SOCIOLOGY

The groundwork for the development of everyday life sociology was laid in the 1920s and 1930s in two philosophical traditions that established an ideological foundation and direction for micro sociological theory. At the University of Chicago, Mead was forging a pragmatic social behaviorism that would ultimately evolve into symbolic interactionism (Bulmer 1984, Rock 1979). In Germany, Husserl and Schutz were creating the emerging phenomenological perspective (Wagner 1983). During this era, however, phenomenology and social behaviorism were fairly disparate and isolated, with little reciprocal or combined influence.

By the 1950s and 1960s this isolation began to abate. Schutz came to the New School for Social Research where his influence spread among American scholars. Blumer moved from the University of Chicago to the University of California, Berkeley, and brought with him symbolic interactionism, his revision of Mead's behaviorism. Shortly thereafter he was joined by Goffman.

Blumer's interactionism (1969) took shape in California, where he incorporated Mead's conceptions of the rationally voluntaristic actor, reflexivity, and role-taking, with an emphasis on the way actors construct their worlds through subjective meanings and motivations. He therefore directed his students to look toward shared meanings established in social interaction and to explore various "meaning worlds" (J. Irwin, personal communication). His work was a critical impetus to the everyday life perspective in sociology.

Goffman's new subfield, dramaturgy, was launched with *The Presentation* of Self in Everyday Life (1959). Influenced by the works of Blumer, Burke, and Durkheim, Goffman offered an analysis of the individual in society which made the arena of interaction the locus of reality, of socialization, and of societal regeneration. Goffman's work speaks to both roles (the nature of the self) and rules (micro-social norms). Instead of role-taking for the purpose of cooperatively aligning their actions with others, Goffman's actors intentionally and manipulatively role-play for the purpose of managing others' impressions of them. This occurs through the interaction rituals of everyday life—rituals that shape the individual's inner self by externally imprinting their rules on him or her at the same time they ensure the self-regulatory character of society (Collins 1980, Fontana 1980, Lofland 1980, Vidich & Lyman 1985).

Garfinkel broadened the everyday life perspective with his *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (1967). Garfinkel's ethnomethodology addressed Parsons' grand questions about social order and social structure, using Schutz's (1962, 1964, 1966, 1967) hermeneutical perspective of the actor as a vocabulary for

answering them. He directed practitioners to study the mundane routines of everyday life through which social order is created and maintained. He drew on Husserl (1970a, 1970b, 1973) to focus on the rationality and commonality within people that underlies the situational contextuality of behavior. Ethnomethodology thus differs from other everyday life sociology by being less interested in how situations are defined and how subjective meanings emerge.<sup>2</sup> It focuses, rather, on how people negotiate and apply rules which embody the social structure on an everyday level (Heritage 1984, Zimmerman & Wieder 1970).

The 1960s and 1970s brought a surge of sociological interest in phenomenology due to the English translation of Schutz's and Husserl's work. Sociologists applied these philosophical ideas to an empirical plane and evolved another everyday life perspective: phenomenological sociology.<sup>3</sup> Early works in this tradition include Berger & Luckmann (1967), Douglas (1970b), and Psathas (1973). The former tied phenomenology's emphasis on consciousness as the locus of reality to a social constructionist view of society. Douglas' edited volume contained seminal theoretical essays advancing, critiquing, and synthesizing the ethnomethodological, symbolic interactionist, and phenomenological/existential perspectives. This work was one of the first applications of the term "everyday life" to the new sociologies.<sup>4</sup> Psathas' book further discussed and empirically applied the phenomenological sociology perspective.

Everyday life sociology thus had its birth during these decades. It emerged in an atmosphere, especially in California, of eclectic synthesis and excitement about the creation and synthesis of new ideas (Manning 1973). Everyday life sociology was also nurtured and shaped by the surrounding background of California's secularism, heterogeneous beliefs, and pluralistic subcultures, fostering an atmosphere of innovation, divergence, and freedom (Vidich & Lyman 1985). From Berkeley, use of the everyday life perspective spread to the other sociology departments of the University of California system, where compatible thinkers were located. Unfortunately, this burgeoning perspective was somewhat marred by the in-fighting and drift which effectively prohibited "everyday life" from becoming the focal theme of these

<sup>2</sup>For a distinction between ethnomethodology and phenomenological sociology, see Rogers (1983) and Zimmerman (1979). For the difference between ethnomethodology and symbolic interactionism, see Gallant & Kleinman (1983) and Zimmerman & Wieder (1970). See Johnson (1977) for a contrast between ethnomethodology and existential sociology. Finally, Perinbanayagam (1974) contrasts ethnomethodology and dramaturgy.

<sup>3</sup>Zaner (1970) has suggested that we should speak of phenomenologically derived sociology rather than of phenomenological sociology, for the goals of phenomenology as a philosophy are different from those of its sociological derivatives.

<sup>4</sup>Douglas first used the term everyday life phenomena in his (1967) work, where he distinguished between "everyday" and "anyday" phenomena. theorists. While a unified concept remained, no movement developed to press for the identification and recognition of all this work under the everyday life rubric. As a result, individual practitioners chose freely from among the various theories, used and combined them as they saw fit, and made their own decisions as to whether they wanted to affiliate themselves with the everyday life label.

The late 1970s and 1980s brought a new generation of everyday life sociologists. In this era, we have seen a continuation of both the unity and diversity of the everyday life perspective. On the one hand, there has been a growing awareness of the overarching everyday life label. More people identified their work with everyday life sociology, and a number of books appeared that addressed this theme. Morris (1977) produced a theoretical treatise offering comparisons, contrasts, critiques, and historical discussions of the various "creative," or everyday life perspectives. Mackie (1985) employed a phenomenological/existential perspective to analyze the drift of the modern everyday world and the individual's alienated role within it. Textbooks were offered by Douglas and his colleagues (1980), Weigert (1981), and Karp & Yoels (1986). A number of empirical works, drawn from the various subfields, all explored the problematic and mundane features of everyday life. Among these are L. Lofland (1973), Irwin (1977), Cohen & Taylor (1976), and the collected works found in Brissett & Edgley (1975), J. Lofland (1978), and Psathas (1973, 1979).

During this period the diversity of everyday life studies in sociology also continued in a variety of directions. For this forum we have selected three to explore more fully: existential sociology, the sociology of emotions, and conversation analysis. These three arenas represent the major successes of everyday life sociology that emerged from the churning dissension and consensus of the 1960s and 1970s. We have chosen them because they represent recent advances in, respectively, theoretical, substantive, and methological arenas of everyday life sociology.

## EXISTENTIAL SOCIOLOGY

Existential sociology is located within a philosophical tradition that dates back to the ancient Greek culture. Early Greek existentialists include both Thrasymachus, the sophist from Chalcedon who rejected Socrates' rational search for an understanding of human beings within the cosmos, and the god Dionysus, who represented the inner feelings and situated expressions of human beings, unbridled by any rational restrictions. More recently and directly, this tradition draws on the existential philosophy of Heidegger, Camus, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty, the phenomenology of Husserl and Schutz, and the hermeneutics of Dilthey (Fontana 1980). Existential sociology is the most recent of the everyday life theoretical perspectives. It shares with the others a common critique of the absolutist sociologies and an orientation toward the same set of focal concerns and beliefs. It goes beyond them in integrating subfields, combining them with a more complex, contradictory, and multidimensional view of the actor and the social world. Existential sociology also differs from other everyday life theories in its view of human beings as not merely rational or symbolic, or motivated by the desire to cooperate by interlinking actions. Instead, its proponents believe that people have strong elements of emotionality and irrationality, and that they often act on the basis of their feelings or moods. People are simultaneously determined and free, affected by structural constraints while remaining mutable, changeable, and emergent (see Zurcher 1977, for a fuller discussion of the relationship between social change and the existential self).

At the same time, existential sociologists view society as complex and pluralistic, divided by power struggles between different groups (see Douglas, 1971, for an existential analysis of American social order). Torn by the loyalties of their multiple memberships, people experience inner conflict. Since most groups in the society have things they want to hide from other groups, people present fronts to nonmembers. This creates two sets of realities about their activities: one presented to outsiders, the other reserved for insiders. Drawing on the perspectives of Goffman (1959) and Machiavelli (1532), existential sociologists also believe that people manage the impressions they present to others. Researchers, then, must penetrate these fronts to find out about human nature and human society (Adler & Adler 1987, Douglas 1976). The main theoretical works in this tradition include Lyman & Scott (1970), Manning (1973), Douglas & Johnson (1977), and Kotarba & Fontana (1984).

A number of empirical works illustrate the application and analytical value of this perspective. These works share a focus on individuals' search for meaning and self in an increasingly bureaucratized modern society. They also emphasize the importance of individuals' core feelings and emotions in guiding their perceptions, interpretations, and lives. *The Nude Beach*, by Douglas & Rasmussen (1977), offered a multi-perspectival view of the complexity of feelings, motivations, rationalizations, behaviors, fronts, and micro and macro politics associated with public nudity and sexuality. In *Wheeling and Dealing*, P. A. Adler (1985) portrayed the greed and narcissism, rationality and irrationality, hedonism and materialism, secrecy and exhibitionism, and the alienation and involvement associated with the fast life of upper level drug dealers and smugglers. Kotarba's (1983) study, *Chronic Pain*, described the anxiety and uncertainty faced by chronic sufferers as they confront the futility of their search for solutions that will both alleviate their

pain and provide viable meanings for their experience. *The Last Frontier*, by Fontana (1977), explored the emotional issues, loneliness, and existential identity changes that underlie and render insignificant the rational meaning of growing old. In P. Adler's (1981) book, *Momentum*, he analyzed the dynamics and self-reinforcing excitement and depression caused by momentum-infused individuals, groups, and masses. Last, a series of articles that address the existential self in society are noteworthy: Altheide (1984) on the aggrandized nature of the media self; Ferraro & Johnson (1984) on the victimized self of the organizational member, and Warren & Ponse (1977) on the stigmatized, conflictful, and dramaturgical nature of the gay self.

## THE SOCIOLOGY OF EMOTIONS

For many years the topic of emotions was ignored or addressed only tangentially by sociologists. Recently, however, a newfound interest in the emotions has spawned a spate of articles, books, sessions, and a section of the American Sociological Association devoted to this substantive arena. Most of this interest has come from everyday life sociologists. Their perspective is well suited to generate understanding about emotions because sentiments occur within the interactional realm and its correlates: inward to the self and outward to what Maines (1982) has called the mesostructure. The recent literature on the sociology of emotions can be divided according to these two main themes.

#### Organistic/Voluntaristic

The first of these approaches focuses on the organic foundation of emotion. Emotions are considered to exist apart from and prior to introspection and are motored by instinct rather than by cognition. Social experiences trigger emotions that derive from inner sources. This is, thus, a conception of behavior which emphasizes individuals' inner-directed character. Its practitioners build from this base to show how individuals' emotions ultimately work upward to reconfirm, maintain, and change society and social structure (Franks 1985, Hochschild 1983).

Using an organic perspective, Kemper (1978) has emphasized how the power and/or status inherent in social relationships influence body chemistry. Scheff (1979) proposed a "need theory" of emotional catharsis where individuals undergo arousal, climax, and the resolution of feeling states through a biological reflex sequence. Hochschild's (1983) work on airline stewardesses has attempted to show that emotions are an organically based sixth sense that serve, as Freud (1923) first suggested, a critical signal function. The work of the existential sociologists (see Douglas 1977 and Johnson 1977 for their programmatic statements on emotions), too, falls into this approach, as

they have ascribed a critical emotional dimension to the individual's inner "brute being." For them, feelings are not only independent of rational thought and values but ultimately dominate them.

#### **Constructionist**

The second everyday life approach to the study of emotions does not rule out a biological component but focuses instead on how these physiological processes are molded, structured, and given meaning. Emotions do not exist independent of everyday life experiences, they argue; rather, these experiences call out, modulate, shape, and ultimately create feelings. These are then labeled, assessed, and managed through and by interaction. Structural and cultural factors influence the feeling and interpretation of various emotions due to the way they constrain possibilities and frame situations (Franks 1985, Hochschild 1983).

Constructionist analysts include Goffman (1967), who discussed the link between situations and institutions and proposed that emotions are determined by the rules and micro acts that comprise situations. Hochschild (1979, 1983) discussed the types of "feeling rules" which are structurally mandated onto interactions and relationships through social guidelines. People then try to make their feelings coincide with these rules by doing cognitive, bodily, or expressive "emotions work." Emotion work can become commercialized when it is co-opted by business, leading to a "commoditization of feeling." Shott (1979) focused on role-taking emotions, suggesting that our empathy for the feelings of others is a mechanism ensuring the maintenance of social order and social control. Her discussion of the social processes common to diverse emotional experiences also accentuated structurally derived display rules. Gordon's (1981) approach to emotions focused on sentiments, learned in enduring social relationships, whose differentiation, socialization, management, and normative regulation are structurally dictated. Building on Hochschild, Heiss (1981) discussed "emotion rules" which are shaped through interaction by individuals' definitions of the situation, role-taking, selfconcepts, and self-presentations, leading to the formation of "emotion roles" [i.e. Clark's discussion of sympathizers (1987)]. Averill (1980) proposed that during states of heightened emotional arousal we experience passivity and enact socially prescribed behavior. Zurcher (1982, 1985) and L. Lofland (1985) have suggested that emotions are scripted by structural and interactional contexts. Finally, Denzin (1984) has suggested that emotions are shaped through the direct experience of practical activities in the processes of the obdurate social world. In sum, understanding emotions enriches our perspective on the actor's voluntarism and illustrates further one means by which society motivates individuals to conform to its rules.

#### CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

Conversation analysis is a method of data gathering and analysis that is informed by the theoretical beliefs of ethnomethodology. Like other ethnomethodologists, conversation analysts have largely abandoned the earlier ethnomethodological concern with studying the contextual particularity of subjective meanings because endless indexicality refuted any intersubjectivity and became "a phenomenologically inspired but sociologically aimless empiricism" (Zimmerman 1979:384). Drawing on Parsons through Garfinkel and Durkheim through Goffman (Heritage 1985), conversation analysts have embraced a structural interest that makes them more closely aligned with and acceptable to the interests of positivist mainstream sociologists (see Boden 1986; Collins 1981a,b).<sup>5</sup>

Conversation analysts study language because they regard "natural language" as an everyday-life social system that is (a) external, existing prior to and independently of any speaker, and (b) constraining, obligatory rather than preferential in its framing. Natural language as a "mode of doing things" (Austin 1961, Wittgenstein 1953) is thus reviewed as an interactional object, a widespread, general, abstract system that is both immediate (situational) and transcendent (transsituational). As such, it exhibits the objective properties of a Durkheimian social fact (Zimmerman 1979).

Conversation analysts are concerned with both the competencies and the structure underlying ordinary, everyday social activities. They therefore study the production of natural language in situ, as it occurs spontaneously in the everyday world. They regard conversation as both context-shaped and context-renewing, influenced by and contributing to the context shaped by interaction. Disdaining "premature" theory construction, they have focused on tape recording minute, detailed "instances": the raw, primary data of actual conversation (Heritage 1984, 1985, Schegloff 1980, Schegloff & Sacks 1973).

In their studies, conversation analysts began by concentrating on action sequences of talk. An interest in turns-within-sequences developed out of the early work of Sacks et al (1974) on the management of conversational turn-taking. It was soon discovered that such structural analyses of talk served as a guideline for interpersonal interaction and its analysis.

Further conversation analysis has focused on a number of topics. First, Sacks, Schegloff, and others continued to investigate turn-taking, observing the recurrence of the question-response format they termed the "adjacency pair" (Schegloff 1968, Schegloff & Sacks 1973), "preference organization"

<sup>5</sup>Conversation analysis articles are increasingly beginning to appear in establishment journals, such as Maynard & Zimmerman (1984), Maynard (1985), and Molotch & Boden (1985).

(the tendency of respondents to select the preferred alternative) (Davidson 1984, Pomerantz 1984, Sacks & Schegloff 1979, Schegloff et al 1977, Wooton 1981), and "topic organization" (the continuation of conversation around the same topic) (Button & Casey 1984, Maynard 1980).

Second, conversation analysts have examined the use of non- or quasilexical speech objects such as laughter and head nods that show the listener's continuing participation in the interaction (C. Goodwin 1980; Jefferson 1979, 1984; Schegloff 1982).

A third area of inquiry has been the integration of vocal and nonvocal activities, such as gazing and body movements (C. Goodwin 1981; M. Goodwin 1980; Heath 1982a, 1984).

Last, a number of excellent studies have examined interaction in institutional settings. These works build on the foundation of knowledge about mundane conversations, seek variations from that structure, and attribute it to the institutional context. As such, this body of work represents a more contextual approach and moves away from pure empiricism toward the beginnings of theoretical development. Institutional settings that have yielded fruitful research include courts (Atkinson & Drew 1979, Dunstan 1980, Maynard 1984, Pomerantz & Atkinson 1984), classrooms (Cuff & Hustler 1982, Mehan 1979), and medical encounters (Heath 1981, 1982b; West 1983, 1984b, 1985). Several studies have also addressed the impact of gender on institutional interaction (French & French 1984, West 1984a).

While focused on naturally occurring, mundane communication observed in situ, conversation analysis diverges sharply in its orientation from the remaining corpus of everyday life sociology. It is more structural in interest and formal in analysis. Conversation analysis is also more objectively oriented, treating conversation as external to individuals, encouraging the replication and testing of its findings, and addressing the context of verification. In this way it departs from the customary hallmarks of everyday life sociology—subjectivity and discovery. Yet at the same time as it diverges, conversation analysis broadens the base of the everyday life perspective. Its radically micro and radically empiricist approach translates the product of interaction into a form that can be built upon by macro sociologists interested in an objective micro base for grand structural analysis (Collins 1981a, 1981b).

## INFLUENCES ON MACRO THEORY

With the onslaught on macro theory by the early sociologies of everyday life, the schism between the macro and micro perspectives widened. Recently, however, in response to the challenges presented by everyday life sociologists, certain macro theorists have begun to incorporate some of the micro concepts discussed earlier. Prominent among these new "integrationists" have been several important neo-Marxists in Europe (especially the French every-day life sociologists, or *sociologiests de la vie quotidienne*), and in England and America, a small group of neofunctionalists and eclectic, synthetic thinkers. In attempting to bridge the micro-macro gap, these grand theorists have begun to integrate the diametrically opposed positions of absolutist and everyday life sociology (for a further discussion see Alexander et al 1987, Collins 1981a, Knorr-Cetina & Cicourel 1981).

One of the most significant concepts adapted from everyday life sociology is voluntarism and its related dimensions. These newer macro theorists, as Parsons once did, are recognizing the importance of the individual, or active agent, within the structure of society. While they view individuals as constrained by social structure, they of course recognize them as not determined by it. Their portrayals of social life and ultimately society thus incorporate an element of unpredictability (Alexander 1982, Bourdieu 1977, Collins 1975, Giddens 1979, 1984, Touraine 1984), a feature lacking in the Parsonian formulation. In addition, embedding voluntaristic action in structure leads to a view of society as both context-shaped and context-forming. This draws on the ethnomethodological concept that interactions are embedded in their context of occurrence while at the same time they reflexively constitute these contexts. It also uses the symbolic interactionist view that we live in a negotiated order and cause our subjective perceptions to become real by acting on their imagined consequences. Macro theorists have transformed this into a dialectical relationship between action and order: society both creates the historical, social, and cultural orientations that evoke behavior and at the same time serves as an agent of its own self-production (Alexander 1982, Bourdieu 1977, Giddens 1979, 1984, Lefebvre 1971, Touraine 1977).

Modern integrationist theorists also try to avoid totally objectivist approaches by incorporating an element of *subjectivism* from everyday life sociology. Rather than proposing models of generative mechanisms or deep structures invisible to the acting agents, they incorporate a view of the actor who understands and reflects upon his or her behavior as he/she is engaged in it (Collins 1975, 1981a; Giddens 1979, 1984).

Another departure from traditional macro sociology is the formulation of perspectives "propelled by a combination of theoretical and empirical argument" (Alexander 1982:30). Instead of merely looking to the idealistic logic of reason and philosophy for explanatory hypotheses, these new theorists are turning to the material reality of what Blumer (1969) has called the "obdurate" empirical world. This integrates an awareness of the everyday life actor's "natural attitude" (Schutz 1962) with the "theoretic stance" (Douglas 1970a) employed by the social science analyst. In this way irrational and emotional

dimensions can be introduced into the overall perspective (Alexander 1982; Bourdieu 1977, 1984; Collins 1975, 1981a; Giddens 1979, 1984; Lefebvre 1971; Touraine 1977, 1984).

Finally, these theorists have looked to everyday life *interaction*, searching for a hidden unity beneath the surface. They have found everyday life to be organized, even repetitive, to the point of being ritualistic. Goffman's analysis of micro social norms, Garfinkel's discovery of the moral character undergirding the routines of everyday life interaction, and the conversation analytic view that natural language embodies the structural organization of social reality have been especially influential. The organized character of everyday life has been used in two ways: as a base for building an "aggregation" (Knorr-Cetina 1981) of micro interactions into a macro reality (Collins 1975, 1981b), and as a point of mediation between the individual and social structure so that the feedback at the interactional level leads to their reciprocal influence (Bourdieu 1977, Giddens 1984, Lefebvre 1971).

It is in these micro-macro syntheses that many of the most far-reaching theoretical advances of everyday life sociology can be found.

## CRITIQUES AND ASSESSMENTS

The critiques of everyday life sociology are legion. Research guided by this perspective has been condemned as astructural or acontextual (Coser 1975, Gouldner 1970, Horowitz 1971, Reynolds & Reynolds 1973, Zeitlen 1973), incapable of addressing political factors (Gouldner 1970), ahistorical (Bernstein 1976, Gouldner 1970, Ropers 1973, Smith 1973, Zeitlen 1973), and generally trivial in its focus and findings (Coser 1975, Gellner 1975), to name the major ones.

While several of these critiques may have been accurate during the early years of the field, there have been movements in the last decade to address these criticisms. The area where the greatest advances have been made is structural analysis. Some practitioners have addressed the topics of social organization and social structure directly, theorizing about the macro implications of micro models of interaction and communication (Hall 1986; Maines 1977, 1982; Maynard & Wilson 1980; Schegloff 1987). Other every-day life sociologists have studied specific organizations or industries and written about their structural characteristics (Denzin 1977, Farberman 1975). Last, research into the structure and content of organizational culture has been fruitful (Fine 1984, Rohlen 1974, Schein 1983, Van Maanen 1973).

The political arena has also attracted increased attention from everyday life sociologists. Some researchers have addressed organizational or governmental power and politics (Clegg 1975; Hall 1972, 1985; Kinsey 1985; Klatch 1987; Molotch & Boden 1985), while others have focused on inter-

personal political dimensions (Fisher & Todd 1983, Kramarae et al 1984), especially those related to gender politics (Thorne & Henley 1975, West 1979).

Everyday life sociology can still be considered largely ahistorical because of its emphasis on the contemporary. Some research is historically embedded though (Ball & Lilly 1982; Galliher & Walker 1977; Gusfield 1963, 1981), and the aggregation of micro interactions may build to an understanding of historicism (Collins 1981b).

Last, everyday life sociology may appear trivial to outsiders who are unfamiliar with the theoretical issues it addresses. The strength of everyday life sociology lies in generating sociological concepts or insights from seemingly trivial settings, such as the notion of idioculture from Little League baseball (Fine 1987), emotion work from airline stewardesses (Hochschild 1983), and lust and deceit from nude beaches (Douglas & Rasmussen 1977), and from the minutiae of everyday life, such as telephone openings (Schegloff 1979), interruptions (West & Zimmerman 1983), and gazing (C. Goodwin 1980). Beyond this, the study of everyday life lays a foundation for understanding the basis of social order, social action, and the social construction of reality (Collins 1981b).

## FUTURE

Everyday life sociology is at a crossroads. It has a rich heritage of making valuable theoretical, epistemological, and substantive contributions to social science. It also has continuing potential to fill lacunae in empirical knowledge and conceptual understanding of the everyday world. It has a secure foothold in the discipline as an established alternative approach. Everyday life sociology is routinely published by university presses, its own journals, and to a lesser degree, by mainstream journals. Last, some of its subfields have lost their cultlike isolation and become increasingly integrated into the discipline.

Yet several dangers lie ahead. First, the field must continue to advance new perspectives on substantive, epistemological, and theoretical issues rather than merely applying existing ones. Second, with the imminent retirement of many of its founders, leadership must emerge from within its ranks. Third, there is a near absence of research centers with the critical mass of faculty necessary to train the next generation of everyday life sociologists. Without this regenerative capacity, everyday life sociology may have a limited future and faces a bankruptcy that threatens not only itself but the insight it brings to the entire discipline.

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