EUROPEAN ENCOUNTERS

A Decade of the European Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction

Edited by Andrew Blasko, Thaddeus Müller, Irene Psaroudakis, Greg Smith

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Introduction

Andrew Blasko, Thaddeus Müller,
Irene Psaroudakis, Greg Smith

The European Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction (ESSSI), which is much younger than its North American counterpart, has existed for well over a decade. This publication celebrates the work of the ESSSI. We begin by noting that we have organized and hosted 11 conferences in 10 different European countries during the period indicated. The first meeting of our organization was held in Pisa, Italy (2010). We subsequently have had conferences in Kassel, Germany (2011), Rotterdam, the Netherlands (2012), Uppsala, Sweden (2013), Aalborg, Denmark (2014), Salford, United Kingdom (2015), Topola, Bulgaria (2016), Łódź, Poland (2017), Lancaster, United Kingdom (2018), Reykjavik, Iceland (2019), and Cardiff, United Kingdom (2023). In 2024 we returned to Pisa, where we began 14 years ago. Our conference participants have come from Canada, the United States, South America, Africa, Asia, Australia, and a large number of European countries. Many are members of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction (SSSI), which has extended financial support to our European conferences. ESSSI has also organized summer schools and workshops on qualitative research and grounded theory in Pisa (2016, 2017, 2019, 2024), Kaunas (2018, 2019), and Lancaster (2018).

Our conferences and summer schools show that the ESSSI is thriving. The reality and vibrancy of symbolic interactionism as a sociological perspective in Europe is also evident from the conference presentations and publication activities of scholars affiliated with our organization. While it is not possible to provide here a bibliography of the numerous works in this regard that have been

produced, we may direct attention to a selection of their editorial work in that a journal or a volume of discussions creates a forum in which many scholars can make their voices heard on an extended variety of topics. Selected examples of edited volumes since 2010 include *The Present and Future of Symbolic Interactionism* (A. Salvini, D. Altheide, and C. Nuti, 2012); *Dealing with Grounded Theory: Discussing, Learning, and Practice* (I. Psaroudakis, T. Müller, and A. Salvini, 2021); *Social Change, Social Policy and Social Work in the New Europe* (A. Kwak and R. Dingwall, 2020); *Jane Addams and the Birth of Microsociology as a Science and a Social Enterprise* (A. Blasko and V. Misheva, 2018); and *The Routledge International Handbook of Goffman Studies* (M. H. Jacobsen and G. Smith, 2022). In respect to the presence of ESSSI in scholarly journals and books series in the field of SI, we would like to mention *Symbolic Interaction* (former editor R. Dingwall; special issue editors E. Engdahl and T. Müller (vol. 38/3) and T. Müller (vol. 43/1); *Qualitative Sociology Review* (editor K.T. Konecki; special issue editors A. Blasko and V. Misheva (vol. 15/1); *Studies in Symbolic Interaction* (issue editor T. Müller (vols. 44 and 45); and *Przegląd Socjologii Jakościowej* (editor K. T. Konecki).

Our conferences, publications, and summer schools are a testament to the variety of ways in which symbolic interaction has inspired European scholars. They also demonstrate the creative and dynamic interpretation of symbolic interaction that ESSSI embraces. Our work references classic scholars such as Charles H. Cooley, Robert E. Park, George H. Mead, and Jane Addams; post second world war scholars such as Erving Goffman, Howard S. Becker, and Anselm Strauss; and a substantial variety of late modern interpretations that aptly capture aspects of current social phenomena, ranging from stigma to yoga.

A major theme informing contributions to this book is the ongoing interactive relation between American and European interpretations of symbolic interactionism. This involves an extensive range of themes addressed by scholars from Sweden, Belgium, Bulgaria, Poland, Britain, Lithuania, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands. In the present publication we discuss such topics as Polish sociology, Goffman, the social and emotional impact of Covid, cultural diversity, rock climbing, stigma, social work, alienation, and game shooting. In the first part we present chapters on European

relationships with symbolic interactionism. We focus on a wide variety of scholars who have shaped this relationship as well as the roles played by national intellectual and research contexts within this ongoing process. In the second part we focus on empirical studies within the European context that have employed symbolic interactionist perspectives in their field work and the analyses of their findings.

Part 1: *European Interpretations of Symbolic Interactionism*, consists of seven chapters.

Robert Dingwall focuses in the first chapter, *Interactions between European and Chicago Sociology Before WWII*, on the visits of European sociologists to the Chicago School in its earliest days. He here describes the impact of these interactions on the transformation of European sociology. Specifically, he directs attention to British, German, and French visitors (the Polish connections will be discussed in detail in the following chapter). Dingwall charts how Chicago sociology was encountered in the American travels of Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Max Weber, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, and Maurice Halbwachs.

In *Symbolic Interactionism in Poland: Inspirations and Development*, **Krzysztof T. Konecki** and **Anna Kacperczyk** trace symbolic interactionism in Poland by focusing on the way in which the Chicago School shaped Polish sociology. They discuss two tendencies within the historical transformation of symbolic interactionism in Poland. The first has a more theoretical angle that is related to translations of seminal symbolic interactionism publications, and the second has an empirical focus that is inspired by grounded theory. The authors outline the significance of both of these tendencies while referring to such varied scholars as Florian Znaniecki and Anselm Strauss.

Vessela Misheva's chapter, *Observing Mead*, focuses on George Herbert Mead and the relation between his social reform activism and his scientific work. Misheva's work revisits the emergence of SI to closely examine Mead's contribution to symbolic interactionist theory and methodology. It views Mead as a psychologist trained in empirical psychology who became interested in the psychology of social movement at *Hull House*. The chapter attempts to substan-

tiate the claim that Mead went to *Hull House*, driven by his scientific interest in social psychology, in order to observe the behavior of the settlement sociologists. Misheva discusses Mead's field work role as an observer and how this relates to the role of the informant as a researcher-observer. This chapter also seeks to cast further light on the contributions of other sociological actors from the classical age, whose recognition may facilitate the reconstruction of the actions and events that brought SI into being.

In *Erving Goffman and R. D. Laing: The Relationship That Almost Was,* **Greg Smith** and **Yves Winkin** take into consideration an aspect of Erving Goffman's work that is largely overlooked, namely, its connections with the ideas of R. D. Laing (1927–1989), the Scottish psychiatrist who became a famous countercultural figure in Britain and America in the 1960s and 1970s. Although Laing's name is absent from the handbooks that marked the 2022 Goffman centenary, a number of approving citations of Goffman can be found in Laing's influential writings. Fewer but also approving mentions of Laing's work are found in Goffman's writings. The two met only once, in 1962. The authors discuss Laing's recollections of the meeting, along with a recently discovered correspondence between the two, to explore the sympathies and contrasts between their respective intellectual projects.

Marco Marzano's chapter, *A Complicated but Not Impossible Marriage: Critical Theory and Symbolic Interactionism*, focuses on the interrelation between symbolic interactionism and critical theory. The first part highlights the barriers between these two perspectives, while the second discusses four approaches in which both perspectives meet: radical interactionism, situational analysis, a reinterpretation of Goffman's work, and Burawoy's extended case method. Marzano concludes that although a complete synthesis is impossible, utilizing both perspectives can enrich our understanding of how power is formed and countered in everyday interactions. The recent movement of symbolic interactionists to include social justice themes in their publications reveals how symbolic interactionism can benefit from a critical theory approach, and conversely.

In *An Essay on Meaning, Interaction, and Individuality in the Service of Submission*, **Andrew Blasko** explores how patterns of interaction can both produce and reproduce the mechanisms that create asym-

metries in relations of power within societies. Such asymmetries in power relations can lead in given conditions to the creation of a situation of domination. This initially proceeds from an awareness that asymmetries exist in power relations, through resistance to such asymmetries, to a recognition that one must resign oneself to accepting them. Beyond this point, as emotions and the power of imagination become compliant with the asymmetrical exercise of power in interaction, resignation is taken to be objective knowledge and society comes to be regarded as embodying "the way things should be." Once such a transformation has occurred, the unravelling of the existing power hierarchy may be possible only as a consequence of the appearance of unforeseen circumstances. **Emma Engdahl**'s *Theorizing: A Blind Spot in Higher Education in the Social Sciences* highlights how personal experience contributes to furthering our conceptual understanding of social life. She addresses Charles Peirce and John Dewey as she discusses how pragmatist theorizing is by default an integral part of symbolic interactionism. In this chapter Engdahl examines the lack of theorizing in higher education in the social sciences, how it is currently being taught, and what should be taught. For this chapter she analyzed material supporting thesis writing in higher education in Sweden, along with research literature on theorizing and its role in the research process.

Part 2: *Symbolic Interactionist Research in the European Context*, consists of nine chapters that apply interactionist principles and methods to cast light on a range of social phenomena.

In *Stigma without Shame,* **Thaddeus Müller** focuses on the stigmatization and destigmatization of Newhome (a pseudonym), a new suburb in Alkmaar, the Netherlands, in the period 1970–1980. The findings indicate that shame is not inherently related to stigma, and that this depends on a complex set of circumstances. Müller demonstrates this by comparing the Alkmaar case with the case of a British working-class suburb that Elias and Scotson described in their well-known *The Established and Outsiders* in order to explain why and how a situation of "stigma without shame" developed in Newhome. This study highlights how resisting stigma is shaped by such factors as social cohesion and the cultural repertoire that de-

veloped in the specific political and social historical context of the early the 1970s in the Netherlands, the heyday of the Dutch welfare state. Stigma was also countered in Newhome by the social distance between the residents of the new suburb and the stigmatizers, the normalizing qualities of modern suburban houses, and the social networks of residents outside of Alkmaar. This resulted in a minor degree or form of stigmatization that generated hardly any negative consequences—stigma did not gain a master status because the Newhome residents did not believe that they were inferior. Since the negative label did not stick, the residents experienced neither shame, demoralization, nor disempowerment.

Andrea Salvini and **Irene Psaroudakis** focus on the problematic decline of volunteering in Italy in *Understanding the Changing Landscape of Volunteering and Volunteers in Italy through the Lens of Symbolic Interactionism*. They endeavor to develop an in depth understanding of this transformation by drawing upon the conceptual heritage of symbolic interactionism, particularly in respect to how the meanings that citizens attribute to voluntary activities are changing and the role that the latter play in the identity construction of volunteer actors (Salvini 2012b). They develop an approach that pays careful attention to how dynamic negotiations between different actors in everyday interactions shapes volunteering. They highlight how one's commitment to volunteering is a social construction that researchers can understand only if they include volunteers' perspectives and focus on how volunteering is related to how they define their "selves." This approach can also explain why some prefer a "fluid," "personal," and "do it yourself" volunteering role over one that is associated with a non-formal organization.

In *Women in Between,* **Carlotta Bizzarri** and **Silvia Pezzoli** describe the careers and personal adaptations of Italian professional women during the Covid-19 pandemic. This chapter is based on in-depth interviews with female professionals, particularly journalists, social workers, and teachers. Bizzarri and Pezzoli explore four major transformations related to the domestication of professions: relations between private and work life, attitudes towards digital technology, changes in professional and social identities, and relations to institutions and media information. A follow-up study

conducted in September–December 2022 is included to assess the longevity of these transformations.

In *Pandemic Diaries from Bulgaria*, **Ilina Nacheva** and **Antoaneta Hristova** explore the emotional reactions to restrictive procedures in the early stages of the Covid-19 crisis. In this chapter they describe emotions related to the changes in everyday life within the context of the unprecedented and enforced measures of social distancing. This chapter is based upon a content analysis of diaries written by 24 people during a one-month period at the beginning of the pandemic. The findings reveal significant changes in the organization of everyday activities as well as examples of stress-related behaviors. The respondents' emotional experiences were shaped primarily by fear and joy, followed by sadness and interest. Anger was rarely reported even though the study was conducted during a period in which the most restrictive measures were implemented. **Yolanda Zografova** discusses in her chapter, *Social Psychology and Symbolic Interaction*, how symbolic interactionism can contribute to the field of social psychological studies. She specifically focuses on how it contributes to the study of emigrant and immigrant attitudes in Bulgaria. Zografova displays how tools developed within symbolic interactionism can be used to study and analyze intercultural attitudes as well as attitudes among diverse communities and groups. While the quantitative approaches dominant in social psychology focus on opinions, qualitative studies inspired by symbolic interactionism can expand the current social psychological perspective by gaining a deeper and multifaceted understanding of cultural diversity and identification.

In *The Experience of Sporting Shooting: On the Quality of Dog Work*, **Sam Hillyard** focuses on game shooting as it is practiced in the United Kingdom. This chapter approaches game shooting as a transgressive leisure activity and employs document analyses, including editorials of two leading British shooting titles, to explore its sensory and social aspects. The chapter employs a symbolic interactionist perspective to concentrate on the social construction of "pleasure" in game shooting contexts. This is done by utilizing the interactionist literature on sadism, and more specifically the work of Staci Newmahr on BDSM. Hillyard argues that it is crucial to focus on this significant side of game shooting in that it helps

to understand the overwhelming attraction of game shooting for the participants. Nonetheless, this crucial issue is neglected in the academic and public debate, which largely focuses on its political, ethical, environmental, and ecological dimensions. With this approach, Hillyard extends contemporary theorizing about power, human-animal relations, and spatial engagement with nature.

Anna Kacperczyk examines in her chapter, *"I don't have to be so scared!" Dealing with Fear in Rock Climbing*, the emotions rock climbers experience, particularly fear and how they manage it. Her chapter is based primarily on ethnographic research concerning the social world of climbing in the period 2007–2014 in Poland. The research consisted of observations, interviews, and document analysis. Her research also possesses an autoethnographic dimension insofar as she includes her own experiences with fear when she began climbing. Kacperczyk describes the circumstances that shape the process of managing anxiety while climbing. In addition, she highlights how using one's own physical experience in ethnographic research can contribute to an in-depth understanding of strong emotions encountered during physically challenging and risky activities.

In *Interviewing as Theater,* **Diana Janušauskienė** highlights several methodological and validity issues related to qualitative interviews that were conducted in studies of human trafficking and discrimination. She utilizes Goffman's dramaturgical perspective to draw a distinction between front stage, or what is said, and backstage, or what is left out, in interviews. In this chapter she illustrates how an interviewee constructs personal narratives by highlighting various elements and concealing others in order to create a front stage appropriate for the self to which they aspire. Janušauskienė argues that in order to disentangle the performance of frontstage narratives, researchers need to focus on the wider social context of the interview, the non-verbal expression of the interviewee, and the variety of narrative interpretations that can be generated using different perspectives generated from different sources.

In the final chapter, *Routes Travelled by Medicalization*, **Martin Harbusch** focuses on the integration of the concept of "mental disorders" into the daily practice of social workers. His study consists of qualitative interviews with social workers who seek to make

sense of the problematic situations of their clients through the use of psychiatric interpretations. This chapter presents three of the basic ways in which social workers employ psychiatric categories in their work, namely, the fundamentalist, critical, and utilitarian usages. This study highlights how and why psychiatric categories have been implemented outside of psychiatry itself, including in everyday life-worlds. It explains the different usages of psychiatric concepts by relating them to how social workers manage both their work and the problems that their clients face.

Overall, this volume of articles displays the ongoing vitality of symbolic interactionist approaches for researchers working in European social and cultural contexts. The studies presented here indicate the broad applicability of interactionist theories and methods in efforts to illuminate the intricacies of selves and relationships as they play out in the ordinary interactions that make up the infrastructure of social life.

From the Editors

EUROPEAN INTERPRETATIONS OF SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

PART 1

European Visitors and Chicago Sociology 1892–1940

Robert Dingwall

Introduction

The European influences on the development of sociological thought at the University of Chicago have been extensively documented (Dingwall 2021). What are less well known, however, are the personal interactions between European social scientists and the sociologists working in Chicago and the ways in which these affected the international reception of the body of work that has come to be known as the First Chicago School. This chapter looks at the responses of a number of European visitors and takes into consideration how these shaped the wider impact of what is often treated as a distinctively American tradition.

The period in question stretches from the 1890s to the 1940s. For purposes of discussion, it is broken into two periods, from the 1890s to 1914 and from 1914 to 1940. The visitors to Chicago addressed in greater detail include Beatrice and Sidney Webb, Max and Marianne Weber, Florian Znaniecki, Maurice Halbwachs, and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown.

Visitors before 1914

Beatrice and Sidney Webb (1898)

The modern University of Chicago was founded in 1890 as a collaboration between the Baptist Education Society and John D. Rockefeller, a church member who made a large fortune in the early years of the oil industry and applied much of it to philanthropic purposes. Its first President, William Rainey Harper, was a Baptist minister and noted Biblical scholar. Harper was strongly influenced by the German model of a research university offering advanced professional training, rather than the Scottish models, emphasizing undergraduate education, that had been adopted by older East Coast universities (Herman 2003:195–226). He had encountered the critical Biblical scholarship developed in German universities and saw the advance of secular learning as a way to reinvigorate Christianity by moving away from literal readings of its founding text (Lee 2008). In his public statements at least,[1] he emphasized the academic freedom of his faculty to pursue their own research directions, rather than being tied to any particular orthodoxy. This was supported by the establishment of a university press and an extension program to ensure that the results of their work achieved wide dissemination. A visit to this new foundation was on the itinerary of many European travellers interested in the development of American society and institutions.

Beatrice Potter (1858–1943)[2] married Sidney Webb in 1892. The Webbs were among the leading public intellectuals of their time, contributing extensively to thinking on social policy and to organizational developments in the British Left. They were founding members of the Fabian Society and promoters of the London School of Economics as a training ground for social reformers. Bea-

1. There was considerable controversy over the termination of Edward W. Bemis in 1895, which was alleged to be a reprisal for his support for striking Pullman workers and his advocacy of municipal ownership of utilities (Bergquist, Jr. 1972).

2. Not to be confused with Beatrix Potter (1886-1943), author of *Peter Rabbit* and other stories for children.

trice was a substantial figure in her own right, although she tended to emphasize the partnership in her writings. Her grandfather was a Liberal MP and her father was a successful railway investor—he served as Chairman of the Board of the Great Western Railway in England and as President of the Grand Trunk Railway, operating in New England and the eastern provinces of Canada (Channon 2019). This involved regular visits to North America in the early 1870s and connections with other leading figures in the railroad business.

Like many women of her class and generation, Beatrice had little formal education but was encouraged to study at home. In particular, her father was a great friend of Herbert Spencer,[3] who was a regular visitor to the family from the late 1840s and became one of the most important influences on her intellectual development (Webb 1979). She also read the work of Auguste Comte, but her particular commitment was to empirical social investigation as a basis for social policy interventions. Her autobiography describes participant observation of women mill-workers in the North of England in 1883, following which she also worked with Charles Booth, a cousin by marriage, on his studies of poverty in London. Booth, she thought, "showed us for the first time how best to combine the qualitative with the quantitative examination of social structure" (Webb 1979:246). This was a theme that she reiterated throughout her writings and incorporated into a social research methods text (Webb and Webb 2010) published in 1932. Her research convinced her of the limitations of charitable social work with individual families and the importance of state-led interventions at a structural or community level in response to urban problems of poverty, inadequate housing, and income insecurity.

The Webbs visited Chicago from 1–10 June 1898 in the course of a world tour to study politics and policy in various countries.[4]

3. Spencer's first employment had been as a civil engineer on the construction of the railway line from London to Birmingham (Peel 1971:9–10).

4. Mary Jo Deegan (1988:264) has a reference to the Webbs visiting Chicago in 1893 for the Columbian Exposition and meeting Jane Addams at that time. There is obviously some kind of production error in Deegan's text because the reference has the endnote number 89. There is another endnote number 89 on the same page, which seems to link to a supporting citation, leaving the report of the 1893

They may also have been interested in what they could learn from the University of Chicago for their own recent work in establishing the London School of Economics in 1895. It is fair to say that Beatrice Webb's typescript diary does not record a particularly favorable impression of the city or most of the people whom they met, whether at the university, in the city government, or through her father's connections with railroad executives. However, the diary notes that both she and Sidney were unwell during the visit, with some type of respiratory illness, and the entries were not written up until after they reached their next stop, Denver, on 11 June. This may have colored her recollections.

Their initial hosts in Chicago were Charles Zueblin and his wife. Zueblin had founded the Northwestern University Settlement in 1891 and in 1892 became the first secretary of the Chicago Society of University Extension. In the same year he was appointed as an instructor in the Department of Sociology, University of Chicago. By 1898, he had risen to become an associate professor.[5] The diary describes him as a "Fabian" who had "been much in England." Presumably, this had established some network connection as a basis for the offer of hospitality. It is not clear that the Webbs actually met President Harper or are simply reproducing Zueblin's assessment, but the following is all the diary has to say about whom they did meet:

> We gathered that this brand new place of learning (the result of Rockefeller's generosity) is without form. Dr Harper, the President, pushes

visit unsourced. There is no reference to this in the typescript diary, which has Beatrice Webb in the United Kingdom throughout that year, and the quoted passage from 1915 refers to the 1898 visit to Chicago as part of the Webbs' "*first* world tour" (emphasis added). Deegan (1988:264–265) also refers to a meeting between Addams and the Webbs in London in 1896, citing Addams's memoir *Twenty Years at Hull House*, first published in 1910. Davis's (2000:101) biography also suggests a meeting in 1896, using the same source together with citations to correspondence between Addams, Mary Smith, and Ellen Starr in 1896. Again, I am unable to verify this from Beatrice Webb's diary. The wording of the 1898 diary entry strongly suggests that this was the first meeting between the two women.

5. *Collier's New Encyclopedia* (1921)/Zueblin, Charles https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Collier%27s_New_Encyclopedia_(1921).

> all he knows how to secure a permanent foundation. Not to commit himself on any question is his settled policy. While staying with the Zeublins [*sic*] we saw the Professors Laughlin (individualist economist), Small, Van Holst, Miller, Henderson and others—Van Holst the only man of mark: but he belongs to a German university of fifty years ago: no new suggestions on political or economic questions. Altogether grown barren.[6]

This is very brief compared with the notes of lunches with Robert Lincoln, Chairman of the Pullman Company and former United States Ambassador to London, and with former Illinois Governor (1893–1897) J. P. Altgeld. Clearly, she did not consider whatever conversations she had with this quite diverse group of senior social science professors to be worthy of record. Albion Small was, of course, Chairman of the Department of Sociology and Charles Henderson combined the positions of Professor of Sociology and University Chaplain. J. Laurence Laughlin was Chairman of the Department of Political Economy and Hermann Von (not Van) Holst was Chairman of the Department of History. Both were notable conservatives—Laughlin had been president of an insurance company and was a dogmatic defender of the gold standard, while Von Holst's reputation rested on a massive constitutional history of the United States, published in German, which had been overtaken by the time it was translated (Goldman 1937; Bergquist, Jr. 1972). Frank Justus Miller was a classicist and Dean of the affiliations program, which provided university classes through accredited partners. His wife was involved in the foundation of the University of Chicago Settlement in 1894 (Obituary 1939), although she is not mentioned in the diary.

Neither Small nor Henderson seem, at that point, to have had much idea of what an academic department of sociology should be teaching (Chapoulie 2020:22–26). Small's significant monographs, on Adam Smith (Small 1972), published in 1905, and on the German Cameralists (Small 1909), did not appear until after 1900. It may not be unreasonable to conclude that Beatrice Webb knew a great

6. https://digital.library.lse.ac.uk/objects/lse:foj709hir/read/single#page/134/mode/2up.

deal more about this emerging discipline than any of the men she met, from her studies with Herbert Spencer and her own work with Charles Booth, and that her relative silence about them reflects a genuine view that they had little to offer, either intellectually or politically. They do not even merit the waspish comments that she is prone to make elsewhere in the diaries concerning people of whom she does not approve.

We can contrast this absence of comment with her account of visiting the Hull House settlement and her first encounter with Jane Addams.

> On the Thursday, after our arrival at Chicago, we migrated from the attractive home of the Zeublins [*sic*], surrounded by green lawns and avenues of trees, down to Hull House Settlement in the very heart of Chicago slums.... The residents consist, in the main, of strong-minded energetic women, bustling about their various enterprises and professions, interspersed with earnest-faced, selfsubordinating and mild-mannered men who slide from room to room apologetically.... Miss Jane Addams, the Principal, is without doubt a remarkable woman, an interesting combination of the organiser, the enthusiast and the subtle observer of human characteristics.... She has a charming personality, gentle and dignified, shrewdly observant: above all she excels in persistency of purpose and unflinching courage. She has made Hull House: and it is she who has created whatever spirit of reform exists in Chicago.[7]

The visit was not an unequivocal success—an uncomfortable dinner, poorly served, and a crowd of "all those queer, well-intentioned or cranky individuals, who habitually center round all settlements." Sidney and Beatrice were then pressed to deliver an apparently unplanned talk and questions session. The following days were dominated by the heat of the city, the poor food, the restlessness of the residents, and visits involving journeys through "impossible streets littered with unspeakable garbage." They seemed "like one bad dream lightened now and again by Miss Addams's

7. https://digital.library.lse.ac.uk/objects/lse:foj709hir/read/single#page/144/mode/2up.

charming grey eyes and gentle voice and graphic power of expression." Plans to travel on to Omaha, St. Paul, and Madison, Wisconsin, were abandoned in favor of going directly to Denver in order to rest and recuperate.

Despite Beatrice Webb's warm words about Jane Addams, the two women never seem to have developed a particularly close relationship, although their careers had many parallels. The Jane Addams papers[8] include a letter from Sidney Webb in 1906 introducing H. G. Wells, the novelist and fellow-Fabian, and three letters from Beatrice. Two are from the summer of 2013, soliciting contributions to the *New Statesman* political magazine, established by the Webbs and their associates—which Addams declines. The other refers to Jane Addams's visit to London in 1915. The text implies that Beatrice had heard about this visit from a third party rather than directly from Addams. There are apologies for missing a scheduled lecture, due to a prior commitment, and not joining the women's peace congress in The Hague from 28 April–1 May, which was Addams's ultimate destination. This would have conflicted with Beatrice's participation in a Fabian meeting to discuss how to end the war. Addams did, however, dine with the Webbs on 22 June.

> Jane Addams, with whom we stayed at Hull House, Chicago, on our first world tour, dined with us last night. Since we knew her seventeen years ago she has become a world celebrity... Some say that she has been too much in the limelight of late, and that she is no longer either so sane or so subtle in her public utterances. But to us she seemed the same gentle, dignified sympathetic woman, though like the rest of us she has lost in brilliancy and personal charm—the inevitable result of age, personal notoriety and much business (Webb 1984:234–235).

This is the only other meeting with Addams recorded by Beatrice Webb[9]. The discrepancies between the accounts associated with Addams and those associated with Webb cannot be reconci-

8. https://digital.janeaddams.ramapo.edu/.

9. Deegan (1988:265) has them meeting again in 1919 during another visit to London by Addams, citing Davis (2000:259). Again, there is no reference to this in Beatrice Webb's diary.

led here. Beatrice Webb did not complete her diary every day—it is more of a journal for recording events, people, and impressions for later reference. Jane Addams may have been writing accounts from imperfect memory. Either woman might have discarded correspondence. However, they do suggest that any mutual influence was limited. This would not be surprising. Beatrice Webb did not share Jane Addams's pacificism or enthusiasm for community-led reform. Her experience of London city government as a positive model for stateled action on social policy was very different from Addams's experience of corruption and inertia in city government in Chicago.

Max and Marianne Weber (1904)

The transient prejudices from two world wars and the mythology of American exceptionalism have obscured the extent to which science and scholarship in the United States were influenced by the intellectual dynamism of nineteenth-century Germany. Many of Harper's early appointments to the University of Chicago were either German, like Von Holst, or had studied in Germany, like Small and Zueblin.

Max and Marianne Weber (1864–1920 and 1870–1954) spent a week in Chicago in 1904, en route to the Congress of Arts and Sciences in St. Louis, but there is no record of them visiting the University of Chicago—although they did go to Northwestern University on the other side of the city. Weber attended receptions organized by Albion Small and they are likely to have met, especially given Small's networks and family connections in Germany—but Small clearly did not leave any greater impression than he had made on Beatrice Webb (Scaff 2011). While Small was involved in organizing the Congress, alongside Harper, sociologists do not appear to have participated in numbers, although Lester Ward, W. I. Thomas, and Edward A. Ross all presented papers. The pragmatist philosophers generally boycotted the event over its aspiration to formulate a unified view of science, including social science, rather than respecting a diversity of approaches appropriate to problems. Weber spoke about his work on rural communities, but otherwise mostly

seems to have talked to the economists—and gone to the conference receptions.

While in Chicago, Marianne Weber visited Hull House and was impressed with Jane Addams, although she also found herself required to give an impromptu talk (Scaff 2011:43–45). Max preferred to go to the stockyards and watch the process of slaughtering and butchery. He was much more excited by Chicago than Beatrice Webb had been, possibly because German cities were changing in the same way over much the same period—Chicago would have resembled London of the 1830s than the more organized and sanitized city the Webbs knew. Of all the sociologists Weber encountered in the United States, the only one to make a significant impression seems to have been W. E. B. du Bois (Radkau 2011:229; Scaff 2011:98–108). Du Bois had attended Weber's lectures in Berlin in the early 1890s, although they did not meet as colleagues until a breakfast in St. Louis. Their correspondence continued for a year or so and concluded with hopes of further meetings, although these never materialized.

For present purposes, the conclusion to draw may be that the Department of Sociology, University of Chicago, was a good deal less central to the development of the discipline before 1914 than it was to become in the 1920s and 1930s.

> [T]he publications of the members—both instructors and students—of the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago before 1917 had little impact.... No important intellectual innovation, it seems, can be found from that period. In Chicago, as elsewhere, sociology obtained only limited recognition in academic spheres (Chapoulie 2020:30).

Chapoulie (2020:333–352) discusses the historiography of writing about the Chicago School and the importance of using the approach of historians to challenge some elements of the origin myth. The foundations laid before 1914 may seem important in retrospect, but were not obvious to contemporaries, especially people like Beatric Webb who were well-informed about sociology and engaged in promoting the institutionalization of social science elsewhere. Similarly, Max Weber found Chicago to be an exciting research site, but there is no evidence of him taking inspiration from

the work of the sociologists there. He tried, unsuccessfully, to promote a German translation of du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk (Scaff 2011:102). His own work was not taken up in the United States until the late 1920s, through translations by Frank Knight, an economist,* and by Talcott Parsons, both associated with Harvard. To the extent that Chicago sociology was influenced by German sociology, the key figure was Georg Simmel, whose work was translated in early issues of the *American Journal of Sociology* and featured strongly in the 1921 Park and Burgess (1969) textbook and readings, which defined the core curriculum for students through to the 1940s. Simmel, however, declined an invitation to attend the St. Louis Congress and his personal contacts with Small and Robert Park occurred during their visits to Germany.

Visitors 1914–1940

A key meeting at a conference at Tuskegee in 1912 between William I. Thomas and Robert E. Park seems to have been critical in shifting the Department of Sociology in Chicago in a direction that is much more recognizably the foundation of the golden years between the two world wars (Baker 1973; Raushenbush 1979:67–76; Chapoulie 2020:75–84). Thomas had been teaching in the Department since 1894, receiving his doctorate in 1896 and reaching the level of full professor in 1910. Park came to Chicago in 1913, initially with an appointment in the Divinity School because Harper's successor as President, Henry Pratt Judson, was unwilling to create new positions in sociology. Although their relationship is sometimes characterized as Thomas influencing Park, it is much better seen as one between two men of similar age whose very different life experiences had brought them to a similar view of the direction that should be taken by academic sociology. For good or ill, both were keen to cut the ties with social work and social activism and to concentrate on developing a more disinterested science of society that might inspire reform, but would not be a vehicle for advocacy. Their program emphasized the complexity of social problems—prostitution, for example, should not be understood in terms of moral failure so much as the lack of alternative economic oppor-

tunities for women and the insecure employment of men that left them reluctant to form families (Cressey 2008; Chapoulie 2020:67). The relationship did not last very long, however. Thomas was forced to resign from his position at the University in 1918 after a scandal provoked by him being found in a hotel room, booked under an alias, with a woman who was not his wife. The circumstances remain somewhat murky, but the consequence was his expulsion from the University of Chicago and great difficulty in securing paid academic work elsewhere for many years (Chapoulie 2020:65–72). Before this, however, Thomas had recruited a Polish philosopher, Florian Znaniecki, to collaborate with him on the study of immigration that became *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America (Thomas and Znaniecki 1918).*

Florian Znaniecki (1914–1919)

Znaniecki (1882–1958)[10] and Thomas first met in Warsaw in 1913. Znaniecki was forty years old and working for a charity that aided emigrants from Poland. At that time, the country was partitioned between Russia, Austria-Hungary, and the German Empire, and national identity was sustained largely by cultural and religious institutions. There was a great deal of rural poverty and social tensions between Jewish and ethnic Polish communities. Consequently, Poland was a major source of emigration to meet industrial labor demands, particularly in the United States. Like other manufacturing centers in the Northeast and Midwest, Chicago saw a great influx of Polish migrants. W. I. Thomas had been funded by Helen Culver, a millionaire real estate developer who was also a major backer of Jane Addams, to study the consequences for the migrants and the city. Thomas travelled widely in Europe collecting material, but found Poland particularly rich in sources, partly because Polish intellectuals were also concerned about the implications of migration (Znaniecki 1948).

10. There is a major biography of Znaniecki by Zygmunt Dulczewski (1992) that I was unable to access for this chapter.

Znaniecki's (Znaniecki and Thomas 1920) own account of his life history sketches a colorful past—failed poet, disillusioned aristocrat, faked suicide, disabled as a private in the French Army, editor of a spiritualist magazine, undemanding marriage to a Polish woman—and a growing commitment to trying to make a career as a philosopher. However, the Russian control of university education in Warsaw was a serious barrier to obtaining a position in an overcrowded market. He was, then, already contemplating emigrating to the United States before meeting Thomas.

> I expected to find here a fresh enthusiasm for intellectual progress, an intense faith in the unlimited possibilities of future scientific productivity, which would give this country the leading place among the nations of the world in science, literature, and art; a desire to raise higher and higher the standards of intellectual values, and a ready welcome for every new worker who could contribute in some measure to create this wonderful future (Znaniecki and Thomas 1920:192).

He took up Thomas's offer of a post as research assistant and started work in September 1914. His wife travelled with him but, sadly, she died within a few months of their arrival. Znaniecki recorded his first impressions of the milieu around the University of Chicago.

> My first impressions of the external aspect of American cities were such as I expected them to be, but my first experiences with American people were very pleasant and, in certain respects, a surprise. I came in contact, during the first few months, with three different types of Americans. The first was a university group whom I met chiefly through Professor X [Thomas RD], and who were certainly as broad-minded and intellectual as any European group I knew, although perhaps their interest in theoretic pursuits seemed somewhat less intense, and I missed in them that enthusiasm for and faith in the future of American science which I hoped to find. The second was a small "society" circle to which I had some letters of introduction, and which was as refined in its intellectual and aesthetic attitudes as any European aristocracy, though it struck me as prematurely blasé, as if it were already tired of wearing an imperfectly fitting and foreign made garb of culture, reminding me in this respect of some Russian aristocrats whom I had met in France. The third group was that of social workers, professio-

> nals and volunteers; they seemed to me as full of social idealism as European social workers and reformers and more practical, though, with few exceptions, narrower intellectually (Znaniecki and Thomas 1920:193).

The first group are clearly Thomas's faculty colleagues. The judgement concerning their lack of interest in theory may reflect Znaniecki's own leanings towards philosophy. The comment on their lack of faith in the future is possibly a verdict on the degree to which the Department, and the University more generally, was still looking to European scholars as the intellectual leaders in social sciences and humanities. The "society" circle presumably refers to some of the affluent citizens of the city who would be promoting its cultural heritage through organizations like the Art Institute and the Newberry Library. The third group would reflect the continuing connections with the settlement houses and reform charities—Albion Small had tried to recruit Jane Addams to a part-time faculty position in sociology in 1913, although this had not come to fruition (Deegan 1988:80–83).

The outbreak of World War I severed Znaniecki's connections with Poland, and his verdict on the Polish migrant community in the United States was withering—they had "preserved none of the positive features of Poles in Poland, and to have acquired, in an absurdly exaggerated way, all the negative features currently associated by Europeans with American society" (Znaniecki and Thomas 1920:193). He remarried, to Eileen Markley, a graduate secretary of Irish heritage, whom Thomas recruited to work, uncredited, on *The Polish Peasant* (Znaniecki 1948). Thomas also elevated Znaniecki to the status of a full collaborator—much subsequent commentary credits Znaniecki with whatever theoretical rigor the research projected in publications.

> While I learned to appreciate more and more the importance of his [Thomas's] emphasis on concrete data and empirical evidence, he appreciated my theorizing, provided it was not too abstract or difficult to understand. To him, however, theories were mere intellectual instruments, valuable in so far as they helped discover, analyze, and interpret sociopsychological phenomena (Znaniecki 1948:766).

According to Znaniecki's own account, the Chicago experience gave him a better sense of the practical meaning of a theoretical belief in the virtues of democracy, albeit with a residue of aristocratic distaste for the "uneducated classes." It also enlightened him about the value of economic security for the pursuit of scholarly goals. Many of the upper-class European intellectuals on which he modelled himself had private incomes and could afford to be disdainful of money. He now saw through the pose, although he could not fully break with it. While he did not discard his philosophical interests, he directed these more towards questions in sociology.

> In theoretic work also l am conscious of having been influenced by America. I have learned to appreciate much more the value of concrete monographic research and of that particularistic, direct, free, and sincere mental attitude toward phenomena which characterizes the good American intellectual workers. This phase of my intellectual evolution was so marked, that for a time I thought of giving up philosophy for sociology. But a partial reaction came; I began to miss in sociological work the unity and continuity of purpose, the generality of fundamental problems, the wide intellectual horizons which constitute for me the charm of philosophy; and thus I finally decided to continue both types of investigation and to realize as much as possible of my old theoretic plans while remaining open to new and more concrete suggestions (Znaniecki and Thomas 1920:194–195).

Nevertheless, Znaniecki lobbied for an appointment in sociology rather than philosophy as the new Polish Republic reorganized university education. He returned to a chair in philosophy at Poznań in 1920, but quickly renamed the department as "Sociology and Cultural Philosophy." Although he had little contact with Thomas between 1920 and 1933, their relationship was renewed when Znaniecki had a visiting appointment at Columbia from 1931–1933. He visited Columbia again in the summer of 1939 and was out of the country when the Nazis invaded Poland. Columbia extended his stay and he moved on to a tenured position at the University of Illinois. Although Znaniecki finished his career in the United States, and acknowledged his debts, his early experience in Chicago was not wholly positive. Some aspects of American society he had found repellent. The university people that he had first met

were not typical. The majority of professors and students lacked "either intellectual freedom or intellectual idealism; are either narrow-minded and unreasonably conservative, or interested, not in science but in jobs, or in both" (Znaniecki and Thomas 1920:195). The country was hostile towards immigrants, who were assumed to have brought nothing of cultural value and expected to be grateful for being allowed in at all.

> [T]he immigrant is continually given to understand that he should consider himself privileged in being able to profit by American institutions and earn his living in this country; that he should be perpetually grateful to America for having given him the opportunities he has (Znaniecki and Thomas 1920:197).

Certainly, they should not compete for more prestigious jobs like university faculty positions.

> [A] foreigner who does not care to live exclusively in his own racial group, but wants to be a member of American society, and who at the same time is not satisfied with passively adapting himself to existing conditions, but would like to cooperate in creating new and higher values, has no place in this country at the present moment (Znaniecki and Thomas 1920:198).

In reading Znaniecki's own accounts of his experiences in Chicago, it is hard to escape the elements of intellectual snobbery and entitlement, even from someone who had made little impact in his own country. Nevertheless, he acknowledges that both of these faults were dented somewhat by the environment in which he was working. He does not make any comment on any individual other than Thomas in published sources and even then, this seems to be in the context of Thomas indulging his theoretical interests rather than sharing them. He is unimpressed by Thomas's adoption of Freudian thought in preference to the work that they had done together on delineating the Four Wishes, basic desires satisfied by participation in social interaction (Znaniecki 1948:776). In effect, he defines his own systematic and rigorous thinking against Thomas's willingness to use whatever materials are to hand or of interest to his various collaborators. Znaniecki's (1963) final book,

Cultural Sciences, first published in 1952, shows detailed reading of the work of inter-war Chicago faculty such as Luther Bernard and Ellsworth Faris. Perhaps the most telling line, though, is from the Preface:

> If William I. Thomas had not asked me to collaborate with him on *The Polish Peasant*, I would probably have remained all my life a philosopher and never have turned to sociology as an inductive science (Znaniecki 1963:vi).

Maurice Halbwachs (1930)

In contrast to their close engagement with German scholarship, early Chicago sociologists were aware of French sociology rather than directly influenced by it. Albion Small was unimpressed by Durkheim's journal, *L'Année sociologique* (Fournier 2013:283), although Durkheim was more positive about the *American Journal of Sociology* (Fournier 2013:260). Durkheim (1983; Gross 1997; Rusche and Tilman 2007; Fournier 2013:647–654) lectured on pragmatism in 1912–1913 and clearly had some regard for the work of John Dewey, which would also have an impact on Chicago sociology. Nevertheless, the Park and Burgess (1969) text only included two short extracts from his writing and generally gave French social thought scant attention by comparison with that from Germany or the United Kingdom. The First World War took a devastating toll of the generation of brilliant students nurtured by Durkheim at the Sorbonne (Fournier 2013:692–724). Durkheim himself died in November 1917. The difficult economic conditions in France between the two World Wars limited academic replacement and renewal, although two of his surviving students, Marcel Mauss (1872–1950), his nephew, and Maurice Halbwachs (1877–1945) were able to sustain careers until World War II—Halbwachs died in a concentration camp and Mauss was forced out of his chair and died in 1950 after some years of dementia. A third student, Georges Davy, survived to contribute to the reconstruction of French sociology after World War II (Dingwall 2018).

Halbwachs spent three months at the University of Chicago in 1930. Although the correspondence arranging this is all with Ellsworth Faris, the department chair, as protocol would require, it seems likely that the invitation was prompted by William Ogburn, who had visited France in 1925–1926 (Chapoulie 2008; Halbwach 2012:18–22). Ogburn had been recruited to Chicago from Columbia in 1927 to remedy what was perceived to be a weakness of the Department in quantitative methods (Chapoulie 2020:113). Although he is often represented as an outlier among the faculty, his theoretical writings on an evolutionary approach

> Burgess wanted to take me to a neighborhood where we might encounter murderers. I thought this was stupid and refused. Perhaps I was an idiot, but I thought you would approve (Halbwachs 2012:170).[11]

Reviewing this collection, Howard Becker (2012) suggests that Halbwachs experienced a high degree of culture shock from the differences between Paris and Chicago as cities—an ancient city that was slowly adjusting to industrialization and enlargement and a hyper-modern city that was growing explosively on the basis of huge waves of migration from Europe and from the American South. Becker draws attention to a walk from the University campus at Hyde Park to the Loop, through what was becoming established as a distinctively Black neighborhood, and the ability to navigate the public transport system to dine with other professors as evidence that Halbwachs was ultimately able to adjust to the city. Halbwachs also spoke English well enough to teach two courses in the Department, although he apparently struggled with Robert Park's nasal accent—Ogburn had the slower speech of a Southern gentleman, which helped with the interaction. Nevertheless, he came to respect both Park and Burgess, drawing a pen portrait for his wife.

> Burgess is slim and youthful looking (although he is approaching 50), his gaze sometimes lost in his own thoughts and sometimes sudden-

11. Translations by RD.

> ly fixed on you. A broad smile that exposes his teeth, so much that his lips extend almost like those of an ape. Park [is] a German or Slav scholar, with a large and peaceable face, a little ironic with intelligent and thoughtful eyes behind his glasses, at one a metaphysician and a journalist. It is this couple who give Chicago sociology its picturesque and distinctive character.... I like them both and even admire them a little (Halbwachs 2012:206–207).

Halbwachs's response as a sociologist is best captured in an article he wrote for the *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale* (Halbwachs 1932). While much of this is cast in statistical terms, comparing Chicago with Paris, Halbwachs is clearly familiar with Park and Burgess's work on cities (Park 1915, 1952; Park, Burgess, and McKenzie 1925) and the monographs being produced by their students:

> If an original school of sociology exists at the University of Chicago, it is surely not unconnected to the fact that the observers do not have to look far for an object of study. In front of their eyes, from decade to decade, almost from year to year, new phases of an unparalleled urban evolution appear. Whether one attaches oneself to a neighborhood, or just to a block of housing or tries to embrace the whole city, the problems multiply themselves (Halbwachs 1932:17).

While he discusses a number of studies at some length, he is clearly uncertain what to make of them.

> [T]he books are certainly descriptive rather than scientific, uneven, sometimes disappointing, but more usually very colorful, with sketches made from life, precious but overlooked documents, a whole mine of facts, in total, brought to the light of day by explorers who were not afraid to go down to the very bottom of the deepest shafts (Halbwachs 1932:18).

He also distinguishes between the contributions of Park and Burgess.

> The two inspirations behind these works on urban life, Messrs. Park and Burgess, are very different. Mr. Park learned philosophy in Germany and spent some time as a journalist [...]. He has a strong intellectual personality. He is the source of the ideas, the indications and the

> coding frameworks that guide the researchers. Mr. Burgess is very Anglo-Saxon in spirit and temperament: he does not separate in his thinking the theoretical and practical aspects of the researches in which he is engaged [...] these two scholars complement each other (Halbwachs 1932:18).

He goes on to summarize their program of work, observing that

> [T]his kind of work is so difficult. It demands a diverse array of skills, but is entirely lacking in the support that would come from a scientific tradition of research and analysis applied to an object of study that has yet to be discovered. We must treat it with curiosity rather than critique, at least for the present (Halbwachs 1932:19).

Overall,

> [C]learly nothing can replace direct contact with the life of groups. The Chicago school of sociology and the residents of the settlement houses have made remarkable efforts to describe the principal aspects of this city where so many elements of every nationality and class interact to produce a social chemistry whose combinations and reactions can only be observed in that place (Halbwachs 1932:29).

In his introduction to the collection of Halbwachs's (2012:73–78) writings from Chicago, the editor, Christian Topalov, argues that he saw the monographs being produced by Park and Burgess's graduate students as a version of the reports from travellers and missionaries used by Durkheim (1915) in *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life or Mauss* (2004) in *The Gift*. They are resources from which the science of sociology can develop and formulate general theoretical propositions to be tested by quantitative methods. It is only in the next generation that these case studies come to form part of a more explicit model directed to sociological questions. It is not clear that Halbwachs viewed the situation in precisely that way. One of his first acts on arrival, for example, was to read Malinowski's (1922) *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, which he had been unable to get in France and which is widely regarded as a key break with the use of "traveller's tales" by Durkheim's generation. A better reflection of Halbwachs's position might be to say that he recognized that mem-

bers of the Department of Sociology in Chicago were doing something distinctive, forming a "school" in a sense similar to that of Durkheim and the students he had trained. He respected that contribution, but did not see it as something he personally wished to adopt—he had been a late starter in an academic career and was 53 at the time of his visit to Chicago. The economic situation in France during the inter-war period was also a critical constraint on any significant innovation in sociological inquiry (Dingwall 2018).

A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (1931–1937)

The Department of Sociology was also home to the study of anthropology until 1928. Frederick Starr, a geologist turned physical anthropologist, was appointed at more or less the same time as Albion Small and W. I. Thomas taught courses in anthropology (Chapoulie 2020:24–25). Although it had always been envisaged that there would be a separate anthropology department, this did not come about until 1928. Even after that, connections remained close—Lloyd Warner had a joint appointment between the two departments from his arrival in 1935 and Robert Redfield, who joined the faculty in 1927, was married to Robert Park's daughter, Margaret. Warner acknowledged the influence of the urban research monographs from Chicago on his own *Yankee City program,* studying Newburyport, Massachusetts, and his move from Harvard seems to have started from a meeting with Park in the winter of 1933–1934 (Raushenbush 1979:144–145). Apart from his influence on Goffman, Warner served on a number of dissertation committees for the generation who have been labelled as the Second Chicago School (Fine 1995).

The British social anthropologist A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (1881–1955) held a visiting appointment from 1931–1937 until his appointment to the chair in anthropology at the University of Oxford. In contrast to his previous positions, as chair in anthropology at the Universities of Cape Town and Sydney, this period of his career does not seem to have attracted much scholarly interest. This is surprising because Warner, who is acknowledged to have been a major influence on Goffman (Collins 1986:109–110; Smith and Winkin 2013), was very much his protégé. Warner's career as an

anthropologist had begun with a fellowship affiliated with Radcliffe-Brown's department in Sydney from 1925–1931, and they continued to correspond until at least 1949.[12] Kuper (1996:64) suggests that Radcliffe-Brown inspired a "Chicago School of Anthropology," represented by the work of Warner, Fred Eggan, and Sol Tax.

Radcliffe-Brown must have cut a curious figure in Chicago. Although he came from quite humble origins in Birmingham, he reinvented himself on the model of a British aristocrat—he was born plain Alfred Reginald Brown and added the hyphenated Radcliffe in 1926, when he moved from Cape Town to Sydney (Kuper 1996:51–88).[13] Powdermaker (1966:41–42), who heard him lecture at LSE and then did fieldwork in the Pacific under his supervision, recalls listening "spellbound on the front seat as, tall and handsome, he gave a beautiful, polished performance." In Sydney, "he gave the impression of enjoying being an English gentleman in voluntary exile [...]. His long cape and high hat, which he wore on social evenings, his level of sophistication as well as his brilliance, set him off from his Sydney colleagues." Kuper (1996:64) suggests, in an unsourced comment, that his manner in Chicago provoked a degree of antagonism, although it attracted some brilliant students. His program for a generalizing "natural science" of society did not fit well with the mainstream of anthropology in the United States, which was still wedded to Boas's descriptive approach and beginning to be influenced by psychoanalysis and the emergence of "culture and personality" studies.

Radcliffe-Brown (1952:1–3) defines social anthropology as a branch of a much wider project of comparative sociology, intending to identify regularities in human social organization that cut across time and place. In this, he remained within the tradition of

12. There is a file of correspondence between Warner and Radcliffe-Brown from 1939–1949, which was not examined for this chapter, in the University of Chicago Library. https://www. lib.uchicago.edu/e/scrc/findingaids/view.php?eadid=ICU.SPCL.WLLOYDWARNER.

13. See Leach (1984) on the importance of class in the formation of British social anthropology. This paper also hints at issues of ethnicity and antisemitism in shaping its reception at British universities other than LSE.

Durkheim, with whom he had corresponded early in his career (Kuper 1996:54). Where history is idiographic, sociology is nomothetic:

> the concrete reality with which the social anthropologist is concerned in observation, description, comparison and classification, is not any sort of entity but a process, the process of social life. The unit of investigation is the social life of some particular region of the earth during a certain period of time. The process itself consists of an immense multitude of actions and interactions of human beings, acting as individuals or in combinations or groups. Amidst the diversity of the particular events, there are discoverable regularities, so that it is possible to give statements or descriptions of certain general features of the social life of a selected region. A statement of such significant *general features* of the process of social life constitutes a description of what may be called a *form of social life* (Radcliffe-Brown 1952:4, original emphasis).

The "discovery of regularities" harks back to *Suicide*, while "observation, description, comparison, classification" is characteristic of the Second Chicago School, as exemplified in the work of both Hughes and Goffman. This is Hughes in a paper read at the American Sociological Society in 1935:

> the scientific study of institutions does not have to do with their essential nature, but merely puts institutions into some orderly and understood relations with other phenomena on which they are contingent... one can, in such a case, work out in detail as does Radcliffe-Brown in the paper just quoted from, a sort of geometry or mechanics of transmission by which the form of the society is maintained (Hughes 1984:6–7).[14]

Goffman (2017:v) has a celebrated dedication of his book *Relations in Public,* first published in 1971, to "the memory of A. R. Radcliffe-Brown whom on his visit to the University of Edinburgh in 1950 I almost met." He reiterated this in an interview with Jef Verhoeven (1993): "Radcliffe-Brown was central to my interest and concern— and a model for writing papers—more than any sociolo-

14. The reference is to A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (1934).

gist." This extract is from his Presidential Address to the American Sociological Association in 1982:

> Whatever our substantive focus and whatever our methodological persuasion, all we can do I believe is to keep faith with the spirit of natural science, and lurch along, seriously kidding ourselves that our rut has a forward direction [...]. The trick, of course, is to differently conceptualize these effects, great or small, so that what they share can be extracted and analyzed, and so that the forms of social life they derive from can be pieced out and catalogued sociologically, allowing what is intrinsic to interactional life to be exposed thereby (Goffman 1983:2–3).

This is not the place to explore in detail Radcliffe-Brown's influence on the Second Chicago School, except to suggest that it has been unduly neglected. Neither Fine (1995), nor Abbott (1999), nor Chapoulie (2020) reference his presence in the 1930s, let alone any potential contribution.

Radcliffe-Brown's approach continued essentially unchanged on his appointment to Oxford. A Presidential Address to the Royal Anthropological Institute in 1940 (Radcliffe-Brown 1952:188–204) reiterated his commitment to a view of anthropology as comparative sociology, a theoretical natural science of human society, which would progress only through the definition, comparison. and classification of social structures and processes. Although he notes the expansion of social anthropology to provide data from contemporary societies, including references to recent studies from Chicago, in Japan, and Canada, this is not something that he seems to have done much to promote. To the extent that British social scientists were aware of Chicago work before World War II, this seems to have owed more to Bronislaw Malinowski. While both had begun as followers of Durkheim, their thinking moved in different directions to the extent of antagonism, at least on the part of Radcliffe-Brown.

Malinowski's connections with Chicago are harder to document.[15] He seems, however, to have commended the Chicago model

15. Unfortunately, Michael W. Young's (2004) monumental biography of Malinowski has not progressed past 1920.

of research to the founders of Mass-Observation, a 1930s movement for the documentation of everyday life in the United Kingdom (Madge and Harrisson 1938; Hall 2015). Tom Harrisson, one of the movement's leaders, analyzed the flaws of British sociology as he saw them.

> As a natural, if violent, reaction away from stale traditions of subjective sociology and all-embracing personal theories of sociology à la Herbert Spencer, Spengler, Hobhouse, or Lévy Bruhl, there has been a vigorous attempt to make the subject as objective and "scientific" as possible. This has led to an absorption in quantitative methods which, with maximum impersonality, satisfy purely "mathematical" criteria. Thus it has come to pass that between the extremes of philosophical, subjective sociology, and statistical, quantitative sociology, there is at present a gulf. To view sociology as a whole, including the subjective and statistical wings, we must recognize that sociology is the study of human relations and institutions, and of social behaviour under the "natural" conditions of human society (Harrisson 1947:10).

He also stated that British sociology needed to look to the United States for a more diverse understanding of the discipline.

> It is generally admitted that American sociology is way ahead of British, notably through the encouragement of *all* methods, including the qualitative and anthropological. Americans over here generally find difficulty in identifying anything we do as sociology. There is no British work comparable to *Middletown,* the series of Chicago University publications under Profs. Park and Burgess, the work of Dollard and the Yale Institute of Human Relations, or the Yankee City Research under W. Lloyd Warner. Thus the latest of the Yankee City volumes consists almost wholly [sic] of human material and the stuff of ordinary living, a descriptive analysis of people, fascinating and illuminating, without *questionnaire,* sample or formal interview (Harrisson 1947:12).

These comments had little impact, partly because of Harrisson's departure to a post as Government Ethnologist and Curator of the Sarawak Museum, and partly because of his tendency to quarrel with those around him (Heimann 1999). Nevertheless, they do establish an awareness in the United Kingdom of the work being done

in Chicago, even if the Mass-Observation version was viciously attacked by Malinowski's successor at LSE, Raymond Firth (1939).

Although Radcliffe-Brown became a powerful institutional actor in social science in the United Kingdom, he does not seem to have contributed directly to the introduction of the Chicago approach into sociology (or anthropology). The United Kingdom already had a model for community studies in the work of Charles Booth, Beatrice Webb, and Mass-Observation, with a focus on statistics, narratives, and activism rather than theoretical generalization. This work continued into the 1940s and 1950s, although Klein (1965a, 1965b) acknowledges that her attempt at synthesis also owed something to the culture and personality work of the American Ruth Benedict (1989), first published in 1934. Frankenberg (1966) attempted to develop a more explicit classification of communitiesin his "morphological continuum" from village to city. However, this derives from the version of anthropology promoted by Max Gluckman and the Manchester School (Evens and Handelman 2006). In that volume, Gluckman presents this as owing more to Malinowski, although he acknowledges Radcliffe-Brown's more systematic approach to theory and the case study method as described by Clyde Mitchell. Where Radcliffe-Brown's structural functionalism had led him to emphasize stability in social systems, however, the Manchester School were much more influenced by Marxist thinking and a consequential focus on conflict and change. This was not necessarily incompatible with the Chicago approach to sociology, but, as Kapferer (Evens and Handelman 2006:318–319) argues, it was an independent development, bridged only when Anselm Strauss visited Manchester after the publication of *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser and Strauss 1967) and struck up a friendship with Mitchell.

Conclusion

The Chicago School (or Schools) have received massive attention in many European countries since the 1960s, with a proliferation of books, conferences and international contacts exploring its contribution and the alternative offered to the theoretical and empirical models developed in Europe. To the extent that the figures consi-

dered here are representative, however, it is hard to argue that its influence was much felt at the time of at least the so-called First Chicago School. While it is not difficult to show the impact of German sociologists like Simmel and Weber, or the English sociologist Spencer, it is not easy to find any influence in the other direction. Both Beatrice Webb and Max Weber seem to have felt that American sociology in general had little to offer them, and neither Webb nor Marianne Weber seem to have been much enamored of Jane Addams's brand of sociological activism, despite their personal regard for her. Florian Znaniecki returned to a newly constituted and fragile Polish state and Maurice Halbwachs to an impoverished and turbulent France, neither of which offered much opportunity for the kind of institution-building work that could have transplanted Chicago thinking at scale. Ultimately, Znaniecki was stranded in the United States by World War II and reluctant to return to Poland under Communism and begin rebuilding again. Radcliffe-Brown might have been able to use the resources of Oxford, but his tenure there mostly coincided with the war years and their disruption to many scholarly activities.

None of this is to downplay the impact in the United States of the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago, particularly in supplying Ph.D. faculty to newer departments and universities in the Midwest and West Coast. European students were not, however, beating a path to Chicago for graduate studies, and there is little evidence in these case studies of European visitors using Chicago sociology, as opposed to their own observations of the city, as a source of inspiration in their own work.

As far as Europeans are concerned, the impact of Chicago sociology needs to be understood much more in terms of the growth of the discipline after World War II, the evolving institutional context as a younger generation sought a more radical vision of what the discipline might look like, and the breakdown of traditional networks of patronage and nepotism in some, but not all, European countries. That story must, however, wait for another day—and probably another teller...

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Symbolic Interactionism in Poland: Inspirations and Development[1]

Krzysztof T. Konecki, Anna Kacperczyk

Introduction

When writing about the development of symbolic interactionism (SI) in Poland, it is necessary to indicate the main inspirations and works that have helped popularize this theoretical orientation in the country and employed the associated methods and concepts in empirical research. We take into consideration those works that directly refer to SI as a perspective to be utilized in sociological theorizing and field studies. We do not discuss in any detail works that mention SI only marginally, do not analyze the basics of theory, do not apply SI concepts in empirical research, or use such concepts only as an adornment in various references. We highlight works whose primary engagement involves the SI perspective in theory and/or empirical research.

1. This article is based on the authors' presentation at the VIIIth Conference of the European Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction, *Studying Everyday Life: Generic Dimensions of Interactionist Inquiry*, which was held in Łódź, Poland, 4–8 July 2017.

The development of qualitative sociology in Poland has arguably been directly connected with the theoretical grounding of sociological qualitative research in the Chicago School and SI (Hałas 1987, 1994; Wyka 1988; Konecki, Kacperczyk, and Marciniak 2005). Even if this development is not specifically referenced, it is inherent in the general perspective of qualitative studies through the application of such concepts of *identity*, *self*, *definition of self*, *transformation of self/identity*, *definition of situation*, *social organization*, and *social worlds*. These concepts have arisen from the influences of both SI and the Chicago School; from works that embrace the personal and subjective view of reality, social organization, human practices in everyday life, and work processes, with a particular emphasis on field work; and from the employment of qualitative methods of research, including personal documents (Schatzman and Strauss 1973; Strauss 1987, 1993).

The Beginnings—Theoretical and Methodological Orientations

The scholars at the University of Chicago had an important impact upon the development of SI and qualitative sociology. For example, Robert E. Park and Ernest Burgess, promoters of fieldwork, encouraged their students to apply observation as a data collection method in their investigations of Chicago urban life (Szacki 1981; Czekaj 2007:163; Węgleński 1983, 1988). Their *Introduction to the Science of Sociology (1921)* presented field research as "a fully-fledged academic undertaking and the foundation of sociology as such," and it remained the basis of the theoretical preparation of sociologists throughout the interwar period (Szacki 2002:604). This work was available to Polish readers thanks to Florian Znaniecki's translation, *Wprowadzenie do nauk socjologji*, which was published in 1926 (see Wincławski 2012:5).

William I. Thomas (1863–1947) and Florian Znaniecki's (1882–1958) landmark study concerning migration, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1918–1920), was one of the most influential works that employed qualitative research methods (Sinatti 2008:2,

5; Stanley 2010:141; Blumer 1969:117). It presented analyses of personal life records—letters between family members, letters sent to newspapers, documents of various associations, autobiographies, life histories—which the authors maintained were excellent sociological material. This constituted an important methodological innovation in that this combination of data had not been used in any previous sociological study.

The qualitative analysis of these personal documents made it clear that attitudes and actions are shaped by social and cultural milieux (Sinatti 2008:7). Znaniecki and Thomas also revealed that an individual's actions are shaped by how personality, social attitudes, and situations are interconnected (Thomas and Znaniecki 1976; Konecki 2017). They further maintained that social analysis should be focused on social change insofar as the latter is accompanied by biographical and personality changes. Znaniecki argued that a person is always immersed within a given culture, and that an innovative or changing self can exist only within a culture (Hałas 1983:350). Znaniecki viewed cultural values and systems of norms as essential for action (interaction) (Hałas 1983:350; see also Kaczmarczyk 2020). His orientation is thus not only interactive in character, but also normative and culturalistic. His point of view differs from that of Blumer in that he regarded norms as already present within a given cultural context, while Blumer maintains that the individual creates norms situationally and actively refers to them in his interpretations, contestations, and redefinitions. This seemingly minor difference paved the way, in effect, for conceptual differences in theorizing concerning the social world by successive generations of Polish social researchers. Not all of them developed approaches typical for Blumerian symbolic interactionism.

In respect to life history analysis, the crucial point is that one must concentrate on the processual aspects of social phenomena, such as the process of adjustment and social organization, the process of changing family forms, and so forth. Thomas and Znaniecki recognized out that qualitative sociology treats processes as "subjects" of research, and that this provides the opportunity to trace changes, such as the sequence of events in a process of becoming, and determine their "subjective meaning," along with how one's definition of a situation impacts diverse other processes. *The Polish*

Peasant in Europe and America and other works by Znaniecki,[2] as well as his promotion of using personal documents in social research, defined the development of qualitative sociology and marked the scope of substantive areas of rural and urban sociology and the sociology of nation (Konecki, Kacperczyk, and Marciniak 2005), including the sociology of migration (Sinatti 2008; Dolińska 2020; Fiń 2020) and the development of biographical methods in sociological research (Schütze 1983; Włodarek and Ziółkowski 1990).

Thomas and Znaniecki belonged to the Chicago School of sociology. At the beginning of the twentieth century, members of the Chicago School had developed not only the method of studying personal documents in research, but also the practice of field studies, today referred to as field research or sociological ethnography (Konecki 2017). The social mapping of cities was another important tool for research and social analysis that was employed by scholars from the University of Chicago (Czekaj 2007:183, 205–229). One can notice its continuing influence today on Adele E. Clarke's (2003, 2005) methods of mapping in situational analysis.

The reception of the Chicago School and symbolic interactionist sociology is strongly associated with Znaniecki's work, particularly *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (see Kaczmarczyk 2018). This book created the intellectual atmosphere that led to the reception of the SI in Poland. For example, the texts published by Znaniecki and his collaborators facilitated acceptance of such concepts as the definition of situation and the definition of self and/or joint action. Interest in the subjective, situational, cultural, and personal approaches to the study of communities has been widespread since the very beginning of institutional sociology in Poland. Znaniecki's influence—by virtue of his endeavor, important methodological publications (1934, 1976) and organizational work—not only laid the foundations of Polish sociology, it also personified the link be-

2. Prominent examples include *Cultural Reality* (1919), *Introduction to Sociology* (1922), *The Laws of Social Psychology* (1925), the two-volume *Sociology of Education* (1928, 1930), *The City Viewed by its Inhabitants* (1932), *The Method of Sociology* (1934), *Social Actions* (1936), *The Social Role of the Man of Knowledge* (1940), *Cultural Sciences* (1952), and *Social Relations and Social Roles* (1965).

tween the American and the Polish schools of sociology. In 1920 he established the first Institute of Sociology in Poznań (Dulczewski 1992; Czekaj 2007), creating the Chair of Sociology and Philosophy of Culture and initiating his famous sociological seminar under the same title (Dulczewski 1992:140). By founding a school of theoretical and applied sociology, Znaniecki introduced the idea of "collecting and examining" sociological materials on Polish soil. Because of his strong interest in the autobiographical method, he created a new way of gathering personal materials by means of diary writing competitions. In 1921 he announced the first diary contest addressed to physical workers and received 149 autobiographical documents. The success of this first competition opened the way to further social diary writing [*pamiętnikarstwo społeczne*]. Such use of autobiographical materials in developing knowledge about contemporary society became a very popular method of data gathering in Poland. During the interwar period, diary competitions shaped under the influence of such great Polish scholars as Florian Znaniecki, Ludwik Krzywicki, Józef Chałasiński, and Jan Szczepański produced monumental collections of diaries written by youths, peasants, emigrants, physical workers, miners, teachers, social activists, physicians, new professions, the unemployed, and others.

Eleven years after the appearance of *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America,* Znaniecki's student and close associate Józef Chałasiński published his habilitation thesis, *The Paths of Social Advancement for the Worker* (1931), in which he examined autobiographies collected during the first diary contest (1921) that Znaniecki had organized. Chałasiński pointed directly to the close methodological and thematic relations that linked his analysis with the work of Thomas and Znaniecki, emphasizing that

> Only autobiographies give us the opportunity to learn about those aspirations that underlie the social advancement of an individual. They tell us about what people in a given environment consider to be a social promotion (a social distinction), to improve their social position and what they are satisfied with in this regard. Finally they, and only they, allow us to understand the role of the social environment and various social institutions in the social advancement of individuals, in the shaping of their social consciousness. No other material, however significant from a different cognitive standpoint and helpful for a so-

> ciologist, can replace the autobiography in this respect. Economic data tell us about the objective, factual structure of society or its classes. However, they do not say anything about what this structure is in the social consciousness of groups, what meanings it has for the social aspirations of people and their collective life (Chałasiński [1931] 1979:20).

Chałasiński applied this method in his subsequent studies of peasants and the working class. As a result of the competition announced in 1936–1937 by the Editorial Board of the magazine *Agricultural Training*, 1,544 diaries were obtained from young rural activists throughout the country. The topic of this competition was "A Description of My Life, Work, Plans, and Hopes." In 1938, on the basis of these autobiographical materials, Chałasiński published a monumental four-volume work entitled *Młode pokolenie chłopów* [The Young Generation of Peasants] (Chałasiński [1938] 1984). Znaniecki states in his Preface to this book that

> A sociologist studies "the mutual influence, development, transformation and decay of social forms, modes of action and functions, or in other words, ways of adapting social groups to new and changing living conditions" [...]. For this kind of sociological analysis, autobiographical material is the best material. It provides a description of the author's social situations as well as his attitudes and actions in these situations. The subjectivism of this material is therefore not a weakness, but an advantage, because the attitudes and aspirations of an individual and his behavior are not the result of objective, but subjective situations. An individual's responses relate not to the situations as they are independently of the individual, but to what the acting individual sees them. An individual's starting point is his own definition of the situation in which he finds himself (Znaniecki, in Chałasiński [1938] 1984:xxxii–xxxiii).

In this way, Chałasiński implemented the idea of the *humanistic coefficient* in his study of the young generation of Polish peasants, their lives, and their struggles to advance their social position. Education was shown to be one of the principal agents in the liberation of young peasants from the shackles of the local community and the social position to which they had been assigned.

Chałasiński was familiar with the works of the American pragmatists, which was evidenced by his article *Dewey as a Pedagogue*

of Democracy (Chałasiński 1927). Following in the footsteps of Znaniecki, his teacher and master in sociology, Chałasiński also visited the United States in 1931–1933 with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation. He published two monographs in Polish on the basis of the studies he conducted concerning Polish economic emigration and the American education system—*Parish and Parish School among Polish Emigrants in America* (1935) and *School in American Society* (1936). However, it is difficult to find direct references to George H. Mead and Herbert Blumer in his works. The influences of pragmatic thought are instead present through the works of Thomas and Znaniecki concerning the personal and subjective view of social reality, and perhaps through the works of Dewey in respect to his work regarding education and democracy. Although neither Znaniecki and Chałasiński, nor any other scholars at the time, ever refer to their publications as "symbolic interactionist" in character, they bore the hallmarks of this manner of thinking concerning social reality and prepared the ground for the reception of the SI perspective in the country.

While the relation between the Znaniecki's concept of the *humanistic coefficient* and SI is more problematic (Hałas 1983), his influence on biographical studies was immense. The diary competitions that he initiated and conducted became a very popular method of gathering empirical material for sociological analysis. Before World War II and after, they were widely used by social researchers in Poland to reach various professional and occupational groups (Szczepański 1971; Chałasiński 1971). Over 300 diary competitions were organized in Poland between 1921 and 1966 (Jakubczak 1966:3).

Over time, diary competitions laid the foundation for the development of the approach widely recognized as "the Polish method," which was based upon methodological directives worked out by Znaniecki and Ludwik Krzywicki concerning the use and analysis of diaries. Franciszek Jakubczak describes this method as consisting the follow elements:

> 1) a scientific materialistic theory of social reality and the laws of social development; 2) a recognition of diaries as an adequate image of social reality and valuable source material that shows the harmonious connection between the facts of consciousness and facts in the field of

> material living conditions and objective social relations; 3) a practical implementation of the principle of binding and the mutual verification of diary research and empirical field research; 4) in addition to the sociological principle of content analysis, the application of economic and statistical analysis to diaries—with reference to relevant indicators on a national scale; 5) employment of the principle of social service in publishing the authentic auto-chronicles of representatives of the working classes in order to illustrate their actual situation and spiritual face, shape the awareness of society, and link worker and peasant culture with the national culture (Jakubczak 1989:265, translated by AK).

Ludwik Krzywicki maintains that diary analysis represents the principle of social service—authentic working-class narratives are published in order to illustrate the actual situation of the working class and their state of social awareness (see Jakubczak 1989). In his understanding, the Polish method clearly displayed the principles of diary analysis. First, the entire content of a single diary should be completely analyzed. Its content should then be compared with other diaries in the collection. If any relevant material exists, a comparative historical analysis is to conducted. Next, the diary is contextualized in respect to the statistics and economic data related to problem being studied. In addition, all materials regarding contemporary sociological knowledge and general knowledge in the field of the research problem being studied should be taken into consideration. As a rule, the personal experience of the researcher and any professional knowledge on the part of the diary's author should be taken into account during the analysis. Finally, Krzywicki recommended applying the principle of complex humanistic content analysis, in which the evidence for descriptions and generalizations consists of 1) excerpts from diaries, 2) diaries presented in their entirety in the appendix, and 3) the entire collection of diaries in a particular study (Jakubczak 1989:265–266).

While we could further debate the influence of Thomas and Znaniecki, and that of Znaniecki's students as well, upon the further development of qualitative sociology in Poland (Szczepański 1976; Konecki et.al. 2005), there is no doubt that Znaniecki not only founded, but also fundamentally shaped the Polish sociological scene, delineating the ways of thinking about sociological research and

conceptualizing social reality. For many years, his works imposed themes and methods upon social research, serving as a mediator between the legacy of Chicago School and the cradle of Polish sociology. This influence faded with the decline of qualitative methods and the rapid development of the quantitative approach, survey research, and statistical methods of analysis, which began to dominate Polish sociology beginning in the 1960s.[3]

Inspirations and Translations

From the 1960s, reception of the still developing SI perspective was mediated by the original works of Western researchers or by their translations.[4] Among the classic SI texts that had been translated into Polish, scholars in the 1970s had access to Mead's *Mind, Self and Society* (1932/1975) and Blumer's *The Sociological Implications of the Thought of George H. Mead* (1975). A partial translation of Erving Goffman's *Frame Analysis* appeared in 1977 (Łapiński 1977), with a complete translation of his *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) appearing in 1981 (Śpiewak and Śpiewak 1981). This second work, which is basic to the x in sociology, addressed both the problem of identity/self and the interactive involvement of the individual and group in the presentation of second work, which is basic to the dramaturgical perspective in sociology, addressed both the problem of identity/self and the interactive involvement of the individual and group in the presentation of self. Since it is based in part on ethnographic research in addition to being inspired by SI, it provided certain incentives for ethnographic research regarding interaction as well as definitions of the self and others in specific

3. Already in the 1950s Chałasiński was accused of absolutizing the personal document method and overestimating the role of diaries as a source for sociological research. See Drozdowski 1970:123.

4. We should keep in mind that the first Polish translation of Thomas and Znaniecki's *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1918–1920) was published by Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza in 1976. This at last provided Polish scholars with easier access to this classic work.

situations and cultural conditions. *The Presentation of Self* was important for Polish sociology.

A similar inspiration for Polish researchers was provided by Zbigniew Zwoliński's translation (1975) of Goffman's *Characteristics of Total Institutions* (1958), which was based on ethnographic research and formal analyses of various documents. This text, together with *The Presentation of Self,* inspired Polish sociologists in their research and analyses concerning processes of identity presentation and identity change (see e.g. Konecki 1987). These two works of Goffman appear to have been the most popular references for Polish sociologists who are oriented to interactionism in general and SI in particular.[5]

Only a small number of works in the field of SI were available in Polish during the 1970s and 1980s (Blumer 1975, 1984). Moreover, those that were available were primarily selections instead of complete works. Numerous translations began to appear only after 2000 (Blumer 2007, Goffman 2005). For many years, the reception of SI in Poland was essentially mediated by a knowledge of English, while research and analysis were conducted mainly in Polish. The introduction of symbolic interactionist ideas thus took place through translations of concepts as they were applied in empirical research.

5. We are aware that Goffman's relation to SI is problematic. Although he does not define himself as a symbolic interactionist, his early works—especially *The Presentation of Self* (which refers to Everett Hughes and Howard Becker); *Asylums* (inspired in part by Everett Hughes; and *Stigma* (which addresses problems of identity and refers to Howard Becker)—testify to the fact that Goffman indeed drew inspiration from SI and entered into a dialogue with its concepts. For example, he employs the concept of "moral career" in *Asylums* and *Stigma*—and the idea of career, especially moral career, points in general to the processual character of the biographical work that is conducted by the subject. "Definition of situations," along with biographical path changes and changes in the "definition of self," are also generally associated with SI. In addition, "identity ambivalence" is an important topic for both Goffman and symbolic interactionists. Such issues reveal certain common theoretical interests and perspectives shared by SI and Goffman, primarily in his early works. However, we should also note that Goffman's perspective is aimed at deciphering the formal features of interactions—their types and structures—particularly ritual interactions. His later works are more structurally oriented than the earlier ones.

Translations of theoretical works were also important in that they made it possible for the terminology of SI, along with the terminology of its pragmatic precursors, to be utilized in the development of theory (Hałas 1994). Theoretical concepts and the work of analyzing empirical materials or conducting biographical studies (Kaźmierska 2004) flow into each other and weave together the knots of the symbolic interactionist paradigm. We can observe influences of SI in biographical research,[6] especially Strauss's concepts ([1959] 2013; 1993) related to biographical work, the transformation of identity, and immersion in specific social worlds (Kaźmierska 1999, 2008, 2012; Rokuszewska-Pawełek 2002; Kaźmierska, Piotrowski, and Waniek 2012).[7]

In contrast, Elżbieta Hałas addresses what she terms "the uncertain status of biography in the orientation of symbolic interactionism" (Hałas 1990:198). She points out that biographical (auto) reports, although recommended by symbolic interactionists such as Becker (1966), Blumer (1969), and Denzin (1970a), do not in fact provide access to those aspects of the social process on which SI focuses its attention, namely, communication processes as mutual interaction. Hałas speaks of the significant neglect of biographical data in SI studies due to the perceived advantages of interviews and participant observation—which have typically been regarded as the best and preferred methods in this respect (Hałas 1990:199). She also expresses regret that the central categories of SI—constructing and negotiating the interaction order—relate only to cog-

6. The biographical method was comprehensively presented in Poland primarily through works edited by Jan Włodarek and Marek Ziółkowski (1990) and Kaja Kaźmierska (2012).

7. *In The War Experiences of Poles* (1999), Kaja Kaźmierska employed Strauss's concept of awareness contexts, as well as the concept of identity that he developed in *Mirrors and Masks* (1959), in her analysis of interactions between Polish narrators and Soviets and Germans as occupiers. She also referred to identity, the sense of biographical continuity, and biographical work in her study of the experiences of Shoah survivors (2012). Alicja Rokuszewska-Pawełek (2002) invokes the Straussian concept of trajectory in her research based on the war narratives of Poles, applying it analytically in Fritz Schütze's sense in respect to individual and collective processes.

nitive processes, even though "experience has richer dimensions than just meaning" and "understanding can never be reduced to rational comprehension" (Hałas 1990:201).[8]

The achievements of the Polish school of biographical research on the basis of personal documents could be included in the interpretative paradigm, although with certain reservations (see Wilson 1970; Czyżewski 1984; Piotrowski 1998:3). SI has clearly provided strong inspiration for research concerning the relationship between biography, identity definitions, and identity transformations (Piotrowski 1985; Bokszański 1986; Bokszański 1989; Piotrowski 1998:47). These issues were addressed by Polish sociologists beginning in the 1980s (Ziółkowski 1981), particularly among scholars from the Institute of Sociology at the University of Łódź (Czyżewski 1984,1986; Bokszański 1986, Piotrowski 1998). Theoretical foundations for analyzing identity processes were also developed that relied upon interactionist inspirations, including SI (see Strauss 1959). Identity transformation processes were analyzed (Bokszański 1986) and SI identity models that integrated ideas from the Iowa School and the Chicago School were explored (Piotrowski 1998:55; Bokszański 1989).

SI was also presented in the light of other theoretical orientations, such as phenomenological sociology and ethnomethodology (Ziółkowski 1981; Czyżewski 1984). These studies later generated research concerning the language used in descriptions of experiencing the world in biographical research (Kaźmierska 2008) and discourse analysis (Czyżewski, Dunin and Andrzej Piotrowski 1991; Czyżewski, Kowalski and Andrzej Piotrowski 1997). In addition, SI research developed in other institutes in Poland, particularly the Department of the Sociology of Organization and Management at

8. Hałas notes the usefulness of the symbolic interactive perspective for research concerning changes in biographical experience, particularly those conducted deliberately, such as is the case with political indoctrination, religious conversion, and psychiatric therapy (Hałas 1990:206). In general, however, she accuses contemporary SI of excessive formalism and limited interest in the issues of values and the historical dimension of social life (Hałas 1990:202–203). She emphasizes that humanistic sociology is not only a cognitive endeavor, but also a moral undertaking (Hałas 1990:206).

the University of Łódź. Studies conducted there were concerned more with social practices and experiencing the social than with the analysis of language.[9]

Theoretical Development

During the 1980s, Elżbieta Hałas's *The Social Context of Meanings in the Theory of Symbolic Interactionism* (1987), which set off from analyses of the social context of meanings in SI theory, played a very significant role in popularizing the symbolic interactionist tradition in Poland. Hałas, who was then at the Catholic University of Lublin, referred to the idea of the *humanistic coefficient* in her analysis of the concept of meaning in Znaniecki's works and its relation to the concept of meaning in various SI approaches. In a manner similar to that of researchers from the Institute of Sociology in Łódź, she tackled the issue of identity and analyzed in detail the relation between the concept of identity and social roles. Hałas published a number of works on SI and developed many of the associated issues (1992, 1994, 2001). She developed and elaborated the concept of conversion—one type of identity transformation and a very interesting interactionist problem—positioning it within a broader anthropological and historical perspective (1992). She brought the Chicago School classics to students by publishing discussions of Charles. H. Cooley, George H. Mead, and Herbert Blumer and translating selections from their texts (1994). Other works of hers (see Hałas 2001) also reflect the theoretical influence of SI.

Somewhat earlier, Janusz Mucha (1992) published an important study of Cooley's works and translations of some of Cooley's classic texts appeared. Another significant author who acquainted Polish readers with SI was Ireneusz Krzemiński, from Warszawa University. His *Symbolic Interactionism and Sociology* addressed the connection between SI and sociology, analyzing Mead's influence on sociology, on Blumer, and on other researchers as well (Krzemiński

9. See Anna Wyka (1993) on the question of experience in social research. See Andrzej Piotrowski (1986) for an analysis of the relations between language and society.

1986). Krzemiński also made use of SI in his research and theoretical discussions regarding the Solidarity movement in Poland (Krzemiński 1997, 2013, 2016).

Symbolic interactionist concepts were further developed by certain authors who sought to understand SI from the viewpoints of other theories or analyze SI from a critical perspective (Tittenbrun 1983). Grażyna Woroniecka, for example, endeavored to link hermeneutics and the notion of pre-understanding with symbolic interaction ([1998] 2003), analyzing how the actor's subjective point of view is related to and translates into the intersubjective world of communication. An introduction to more contemporary epistemological approaches in SI was provided by Anna Kacperczyk (2007a, 2007b, 2016) in her critique of what Adele E. Clarke defined as "situational analysis" (2003, 2005). A fundamental theoretical analysis of social situations from the perspective of SI was presented by Aleksander Manterys, who critically discussed the limitations of classic symbolic interactionist concepts that employ the negotiation perspective in analyzing social situations and defining situations (Manterys 2000, 2008). In addition, Piotr Sztompka introduced the SI perspective into visual research in his descriptions of how interactionist and symbolic interactionist insights can be applied when utilizing the photographic method in sociological research (2005).

These activities made it possible for students of sociology to become acquainted with historical, theoretical, and empirical works created in accordance with the interpretative paradigm. This formed new conditions for the further development of SI in Poland, particularly after the year 2000.

Learning about SI through Translations and Doing Research

As has been noted above, many works concerning SI were translated beginning in 2000. This was fruitful not only for the development of the empirical SI line in Poland, but also for establishing the interpretive SI paradigm. The Polish translations that had previous-

ly been available were primarily some of Goffman early texts that bore certain similarities to the orientation developed by Mead and Blumer. After 2000, however, translations of *Stigma* ([1963] 2005), *Interaction Ritual* ([1967] 2006), and *Encounters* ([1961] 2010) were published. Grażyna Woroniecka's translation of Blumer's *Symbolic Interactionism (1969),* which appeared in 2007, was very important in that it provided the epistemological foundations of SI and helped in teaching students this perspective. Agnieszka Hałas's translation (2013) of Anselm Strauss's *Mirrors and Masks* (1959) advanced the reception of the concept of identity in SI. Paweł Tomanek's translation (2016) of Glaser and Strauss's *Awareness of Dying (1965)* made available a very practical and methodical example of the use of field studies in analyzing awareness contexts in interaction and of interaction as such.

After Polish scholars could more easily study SI by virtue of having access to key concepts in their native language, it was also easier for them to use these concepts in research conducted in Polish. Undertaking investigations within the frame of SI served to strengthen this approach and made it possible to implement it in theorizing concerning social reality, which facilitated more extensive field studies, ethnographic research, and the analysis of thick data. Moreover, familiarizing Polish researchers with the procedures of grounded theory (GT) methodology, which transferred the general interpretative framework of SI into the field of empirical studies, played a very important role in the further reception of the SI perspective in Polish academic life.

In respect to empirical research, two translations in particular were very fruitful for field studies and the analysis of qualitative data—Glaser and Strauss's *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* ([1967] 2009) and Kathy Charmaz's *Constructing Grounded Theory* ([2006] 2009). These two very inspiring and constructive books helped further not only qualitative research and data analysis, but also SI as a paradigm insofar as the roots of GT can be traced to Blumer's processual vision of reality and the Straussian negotiated order of social reality (Konecki 2000). After 2008, Polish readers could become acquainted with the ordering of GT variants through Marek Gorzko's *Procedures and Emergence* (in Polish).

For many years, Polish researchers had access to only a very limited number of works regarding GT methodology. Before the year 2000, only two works that addressed GT theory were available to Polish readers—Konecki's *The Methodology of Grounded Theory in the Research of the Situation of Work (1989)* and Zakrzewska Manterys' article "De-theoretizing the Social World. Basics of Grounded Theory" (1996). Both authors emphasized that theory should not be created prior to gathering data in empirical research. Konecki's *Studies in the Methodology of Qualitative Research. Grounded Theory* (2000) comprised a manual that highlighted the connection between GT theory and SI (2000:32–47) and spread the idea of qualitative research in Poland. It became an indispensable tool for sociologists who utilized the interpretative paradigm and employed qualitative methods of research and data analysis (Bukalska 2019).

A number of translations important for the development of SI in Poland appeared in the journal *Przegląd Socjologii Jakościowej,* including Robert Prus' (2007) "Drinking as Activity. An Interactionist Perspective," in which the author demonstrates that drinking alcohol is situationally and interactionally conditioned and constructed. Another translation from the same author searches for traces of symbolic interactions and pragmatic themes and thoughts in the creation of communities in classical poetry (Prus 2011).

Translations of very important interactionist works that helped to broaden the view of contemporary interactionist orientations, particularly the methodology and epistemology of SI, also appeared. The Polish translation (2009) of Charmaz's *Constructing Grounded Theory. A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis* (2006) provided support for the constructivist approach in methodology that was implicit in Anselm Strauss's work, which highlighted the SI perspective in methods of research.

Kathy Charmaz also directly referred to the symbolic interactionist and pragmatist inspirations of her constructivist approach in GT (Charmaz 2006:7, 22). She sought to display the legacy of the Chicago School in Anselm Strauss's approach insofar as Strauss was one of the founders of GT methodology. The concepts of enacting change and constructing reality, self, and society in interaction appear in GT epistemology and methodology.

Institutionalization

The institutionalization of research interests and channels of communication has been a very important feature of the development of SI in Poland. For example, the thematic group "Constructing Self and Society: The European Variants of SI" was created at the XII Congress of the Polish Sociological Association in Poznań in 2004. The sessions of this group were very popular, and the deliberations and discussions that took place led to the publication of a volume in Polish edited by Elżbieta Hałas and Krzysztof Konecki (2005). This book summarized the research and analysis concerning SI that had been conducted by Polish scholars at that time.

The year 2005 was additionally important for the development of SI in Poland because of the creation of the section "Qualitative Sociology and Symbolic Interactionism" in the Polish Sociological Association.[10] This section undertook the organization of conferences and lectures regarding SI and qualitative research. It also established the Anselm Strauss award for the best Polish symbolic interactionist publication of the year.[11]

In 2012, the members of this section worked collectively in publishing the *Dictionary of Qualitative Sociology* (Konecki and Chomczyński 2012), which contained many entries relevant to SI, including sociological ethnography, front, total institution, constructivist grounded theory, biographical method, accounts, biographical work, articulation work, social world, techniques of neutralization, labelling theory, identity, trajectory, generalized other, humanistic coefficient, and significant other.

In 2013, the section worked together with the Qualitative Network of the European Sociological Association in organizing the conference "Qualitative Methods and Research Technologies" in

10. Information about this section is available at https://pts.org.pl/en/sekcje/sekcja-socjologiijakosciowej-i-si/.

11. Katarzyna Kowal recently received this award for her article "Between Earth and Sky… Experiencing One's Own Corporeality by People Practicing Body Suspension. A Sociological Study" (Kowal 2018). Katarzyna Kalinowska was also honored for her book *The Practices of Flirting and Pickup. A Study in the Microsociology of Emotions* (Kalinowska 2018).

Kraków. The topic of that conference corresponded with other events held by the section that embraced issues of social worlds and subcultures, new methods of qualitative research, qualitative research and pragmatism, the teaching of qualitative methods, and so forth.

In 2017, the section collaborated with the European Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction in organizing another international event, the conference "Studying Everyday Life. Generic Dimensions of Interactionist Inquiry," which was hosted 4–8 July 2017 by the University of Łódź. The event aimed "to provide an interdisciplinary and international forum within which to utilize and extend symbolic interactionist theory and methods in the thick description and exploration of human lived experience."[12] This provided a valuable opportunity for researchers from Europe and North America to meet and discuss the ways in which empirical SI research contributes to a broader understanding of human group life.

A vital element in the institutionalization of the SI approach in Poland was the establishment of journals intended to bring together researchers working in this tradition. For example, the flyer on the cover of every issue of the *Qualitative Sociology Review* states that it is available "For all sociologists for whom interpretative paradigm and qualitative research methodology are basic perspectives of studying social reality. In order to enable a free flow of information and to integrate the community of qualitative sociologists."[13] Both *Qualitative Sociology Review* (in English) and *Przegląd Socjologii Jakościowej* (primarily in Polish) are published by the Department of the Sociology of Organization and Management at the University of

12. Full information concerning this conference is available at https://www.britsoc.co.uk/ umbraco/plugins/umbracoContour/files/631209c6-532e-4f02-a832-c9e14e6fec63/CFP_ 2017_EUSSSI_1_.pdf.

13. In addition, "All sociologists who make use of an interpretative paradigm and qualitative research methodology are welcome to submit their articles and support our initiative. We especially welcome researchers who use the symbolic interactionism perspective, but also grounded theory, sociological ethnography, autoethnography, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and who use the methods of observation of actions and analysis of lived experiences." See http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/index_eng.php.

Łódź. Each of these two journals, distributed internationally, publishes four issues a year, and they are indexed in a significant number of important databases. Robert Prus from Waterloo University, Canada, is one of the many foreign scholars who collaborate with both QSR and PSJ and support them with their expertise. Prus has published a number of important articles regarding the pragmatic and symbolic interactionist concepts that can be identified in classical philosophical texts, including those of Aristotle and Plato (see Prus 2013a, 2013b).

In light of the range and scope of the symbolic interactionist research projects and texts that have been hosted by and published at the Department of the Sociology of Organization and Management, Faculty of Economy and Sociology, University of Łódź, the latter may justifiably be regarded as an important Polish center of symbolic interactionist research.[14] A substantial number of master's and doctoral dissertations have also been written and defended by scholars working there, a number of which have received awards in local and nationwide competitions because of their high quality.[15]

Polish SI has been characterized by strong empirical trends. The growing matrix consisting of ongoing and completed studies has enriched the world of SI and provided data for reflection and theoretical discussion. The communication channels that have been established have created an important space for the exchange of thoughts, research experiences, and results by means of publications, conferences, and workshops.

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14. Prominent examples of such work are Byczkowska-Owczarek 2012, 2015; Chomczyński 2008, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2018; Dymarczyk 2008a, 2018a; Konecki 1987, 1989, 1994, 1997, 1999, 2000, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2007, 2008a, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015a, 2017; Kubczak 2011; Marciniak 2008, 2016; Niedbalski 2015, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2016d, 2017, 2019; Pawłowska 2012; Ślęzak 2009, 2015, 2017; Wojciechowska 2012, 2015. Anna Kacperczyk is another noted scholar from the Institute of Sociology at the University of Łódź who is associated with this center.

15. These include the dissertations of Lukas Marciniak, Jakub Niedbalski, Piotr Bielski, Marta Zwolińska, Magdalena Wojciechowska, Piotr Miller, Izabela Ślęzak-Niedbalska, and Michał Lesiak, all of whom have employed symbolic interactionist perspectives in research and analysis.

Themes of Empirical Research and Publications

We will now turn our attention to the efforts of Polish researchers engaged with SI in respect to interactionists working at the University of Łódź, who are primarily scholars affiliated with the Department of the Sociology of Organization and Management and the Institute of Sociology. Insofar as it is our view that theory, methodology, and empirical data are necessarily intertwined in symbolical interactionist research, we will focus on empirical studies that meet this criterion.

The key orientation of Polish researchers is GT methodology, with the main theoretical foundation being SI as it was developed by Anselm Strauss. Krzysztof T. Konecki, who studied for one year under Strauss's personal supervision, has employed GT and the interactionist perspective for many years (see Konecki 1987, 1989, 1994). In 1994–1995, Konecki investigated executive search companies in Silicon Valley and reviewed his research outcomes with Strauss in his seminar at UCSF (Konecki 1997, 1999). Although this study did not comprise Konecki's first application of GT, the opportunity to work with Strauss convinced him of the clarity of GT procedures and their usefulness in teaching.

Konecki published the first manual for GT in Polish in 2000, *Studia z metodologii badań jakościowych. Teoria ugruntowana* [Studies in the Methodology of Qualitative Research. Grounded Theory]. Not only did this book encourage other researchers and students to employ GT in their investigations, it provided them with the tools needed to conduct qualitative interactionist research and empirical data analysis. In addition to methodological and epistemological considerations, *Studies in the Methodology of Qualitative Research* focused in pedagogical terms on the collection of qualitative data and on GT analytical procedures. Since Konecki's contributions were based on the work of Glaser and Strauss (Glaser and Strauss 1965, 1967; Glaser 1978; Strauss 1987), who were not widely known in Poland at that time, his manual became a very important source for scholars interested in the qualitative analysis of interaction processes. Subsequent publications of Polish symbolic interactionists were mainly in the Polish language. The articles published—which most often discussed the conduct and results of investigations that

applied theoretical concepts in concrete empirical situations and case studies—revealed the ideas upon which *the general SI perspective* resided. The latter included role-taking, self, looking-glass self, definition of situation, sensitizing concepts, total institutions, impression management, significant other, shame, pride, and others.

GT methodology has primarily organized the course of a given study and the process of data analysis, while the method of sociological ethnography has been predominant in fieldwork (Prus 1996, 1997). Techniques of data gathering have included unstructured interviews, observation, participant observation, collecting and/or creating visual data, and gathering relevant documents for analysis. The significant methodological publications that helped improve qualitative research in the style of SI were Konecki's (2000) book on GT and qualitative research techniques and Kacperczyk's (2016) publication concerning research methods and the analysis of social worlds. A vital undertaking was carried out by the journal *Przegląd Socjologii Jakościowej*, which published a series of monographs under the title *Becoming...*, edited by Anna Kacperczyk.[16] The central category of these studies was the process of becoming, in particular constructing identity, transforming identity, and locating identity in specific social worlds. Research was conducted concerning problems and theoretical concepts that directly related to SI, including occupational sociology and labor issues (Hughes 1958, 1997). Monographs were published on such questions as becoming a new worker in a given factory (Konecki 2007), on converting students of theatrical art to an actor's perspective (Hernik 2007), on becoming an academic teacher (Marciniak 2008), on becoming a poet (Ślęzak 2009), on becoming an organic farmer (Bielski 2009), on constructing the identity of a mountain rescuer (Miller 2010), and on constructing an identity in the world of racing pigeon breeders (Słowińska 2010). All of this research was related to identity analysis, identity work, and identity change, with identity being one of the central categories that focused attention during analyses of the

16. See Kacperczyk 2007 3(1); 2007 3(3); 2008 4(2); 2009 5(1); 2009 5(3); 2010 6(1); and 2010 6(3).

process of becoming (see Wagner 2005, 2011, 2015; Kubczak 2011; Mróz 2012; Bunio-Mroczek 2015).

Isabela Wagner, a scholar of Polish origin, has made a very interesting contribution to the field of SI empirical studies. She studied sociology in France under the supervision of Jean-Michel Chapoulie, a professor at the Sorbonne who is a specialist in the Chicago School. Her education in sociology thus involved intensive training in qualitative methods, familiarity with the work of Everett Hughes and Howard Becker, and a strong orientation towards the intellectual tradition developed by the Chicago sociologists. Her Ph.D. thesis, *La production sociale des violonistes virtuoses*, which was based on ten years of field research and published in English as *The Social Production of the Virtuoso* (2015), studied the socialization of instrumental soloists and career-making processes in the world of the artistic élite. Wagner extended her ethnography of professional worlds by addressing the problem of the migration of scientific élites (2011), later expanding her work to include theorizing about biography within the symbolic interactionist frame in her recent *Bauman: A Biography* (2020). In addition to her field studies concerning career coupling (2005), the international mobility of creative professionals (2011, 2016), and becoming a violin virtuoso (2015), she gathered a group of researchers inspired by SI at the Institute of Sociology, Warszawa University, where she conducted the course "The Chicago School and Social Problems" from 2008 to 2017.

Wagner also led the student's research club and supervised Ph.D. theses in Warszawa. Her students Beata Kowalczyk and Mariusz Finkielsztein have investigated identity issues in careers and in processes of becoming. Mariusz Finkielsztein initiated an intriguing area of research concerning boredom, addressing this problem as it existed in higher education in his Ph.D. thesis, *On the Social Significance of Boredom: The Phenomenon of Boredom in a University Milieu* (Finkielsztein 2017, 2019). He also organized the International Interdisciplinary Boredom Conference in Warszawa. Beata Kowalczyk's work—including her Ph.D. thesis, *The "Transnational" Art World: Career Patterns of Japanese Musicians in the European World of Classical Music, and other publications* (see Kowalczyk 2014, 2020)—has addressed the transnational character of careers and questions

regarding ethnicity and gender in connection with the international professional music world.

SI as a theoretical perspective and GI as a methodology have been employed together in research concerning *work, professions, and interactions at diverse workplaces* in respect to various organizational cultures and subcultures (Konecki [1994] 2007; Dymarczyk 2008a, 2018a; Wagner 2005); a range of professions; and educational institutions (Byczkowska 2006). Interests regarding organizations, management, and economic actions (Konecki 2008) have also been significant in empirical research. Research has been conducted concerning the social organization of flea market activities that traced interactional tactics and described the spatial organization, social hierarchy, and division of work (Marciniak 2016). GT and the interactionist perspective were also used in analyzing financial markets and the profession of individual investors (Pyfel 2015).

Other noteworthy publications are Anna Kacperczyk's works regarding *palliative care* (Kacperczyk 1998, 1999, 2002, 2006). These texts have contributed to the analysis of hospice and palliative care in Poland through case studies of care teams and interaction processes between participants in the situation of dying, in which caregivers come into contact with terminally ill recipients and their families. This involved investigation of the awareness contexts of interactions between volunteers, personnel, and dying patients in hospices. Kacperczyk utilized concepts which Glaser and Strauss developed in *Awareness of Dying* (1965) that were fruitful in analyzing interactions with the terminally ill.

Interesting research was conducted concerning *stigmatization and deviance.* Piotr Chomczyński analyzed the workplace, primarily at the micro level, as a location in which victims are created in a process of mobbing (Chomczyński 2008). The viewpoints of participants were widely represented and workable categories of analysis emerged from their narrations. In addition, stigmatization and deviance have been associated with the questions of professions and work in research addressing prostitution and escort agencies that employed the concepts of stigma, identity work (Wojciechowska 2012, 2015, work (Ślęzak 2015), and violence in sex work (Ślęzak 2017). The influence of SI is evident in these studies (Prus and Grills 2003).

The issue of *resocialization* was developed in research in connection with stigmatization and deviance. Maciej Bernasiewicz associated SI with cognitive behavioral theory and situational action theory, especially in pedagogy (Bernasiewicz 2011, 2012, 2017). Field studies performed in juvenile shelters and correctional facilities analyzed interactions between staff and inmates (Chomczyński 2014) and among students in these facilities (Chomczyński 2015).

Social rehabilitation was at the center of interest for another symbolic interactionist researcher, Jakub Niedbalski (2015), who conducted research concerning interaction between personnel and mentally handicapped charges in social welfare homes. Niedbalski's interests later evolved to include sports and the sociology of the body as he investigated sports as practiced by people with disabilities and analyzed psycho-social rehabilitation through sports (Niedbalski 2016; 2016a). He also analyzed the careers of disabled athletes from a symbolic interactionist perspective (Niedbalski 2016c).

Research concerning the *body and embodiment* is a very important recent development. Although the body appeared to have become a forgotten or perhaps taken for granted dimension of interaction in SI studies, it nonetheless comprises an indispensable element of social settings and interaction situations. Studies of the body have addressed human-animal interactions (Konecki 2005b, 2008a), embodiment in dance (Byczkowska 2012, 2015), hatha yoga (Konecki 2015), climbing (Kacperczyk 2012, 2013, 2016a), and sports for people with disabilities (Niedbalski 2016c). The idea of interaction has been a element key in all these areas of study, with an analysis of climbing as involving interaction with material objects and inanimate nature comprising a unique application of this notion (Kacperczyk 2010).

The issue of *emotions* in interaction comprises another significant research topic (Pawłowska 2012; Pawłowska and Konecki 2013). Publications have addressed theoretical issues concerning emotions and SI, Theodore Kemper's theoretical work (Pawłowska 2014), and Thomas Scheff's publications (Konecki 2014). Studies have also explored the emotions experienced in many diverse situations,interactions, and organizations, such as teaching, hatha yoga, climbing, and correctional facilities (Pawłowska 2012; Pawłowska and Konec-

ki 2014; Kacperczyk 2013, 2016a; Chomczyński 2014, 2015). The advancement of visual analysis from an SI perspective is a particular achievement in Poland. One of the factors that moved visual analysis forward was the development of *visual grounded theory* (Konecki 2005a, 2011), and a constructivist flavor dominated this work. The various visual artifacts that have been researched and analyzed include photos of interaction between animals and humans (Konecki 2005), video recordings (Konecki 2008a; Byczkowska 2012), and war posters (Ferenc, Dymarczyk, and Chomczyński 2014). Waldemar Dymarczyk is one of the first researchers to publish visual analyses that were based on GT (2008b), and his analysis of war posters (2014) has aroused a great deal of interest. He also analyzed the use of aesthetics and fascist symbols in the contemporary iconosphere (2018).

In summary, our discussion of the research that has been undertaken at the University of Łódź, and the resulting achievements, has cast light not only on the scholarly activities at the Department of the Sociology of Organization and Management and the Institute of Sociology at the Faculty of Economy and Sociology in Łódź, but also on the work of the Section of Qualitative Sociology and Symbolic Interaction of the Polish Sociological Association and the publishing activity of two important journals, *Qualitative Sociology Review* and *Przegląd Socjologii Jakościowej*. This has made it possible for us to illustrate not only the diversity of areas that have been investigated and the topics that have been analyzed from a symbolic interactionist perspective, but also the latter's internal coherence.

Conclusions

We can differentiate between *two trends in the development of SI* in Poland. The first is connected with the *early theoretical elaboration* of SI and the translation of classic SI texts, while the second is associated primarily with *empirical research* that employs SI concepts and the GT approach in data analysis and the investigation of social reality. The majority of Polish translations of classic SI works did not appear until after the year 2000. However, this does not mean that the reception of SI was not possible earlier insofar as detailed theo-

retical discussions in Polish of the classic texts of SI, including the latter's pragmatist roots, had been available—Ziółkowski (1981), Tittenbrun (1983), Czyżewski (1984), Piotrowski (1985), Bokszański (1986, 1989), Hałas (1986), and Krzemiński (1986, 1997).

Translations nonetheless constituted a very important factor in furthering the reception of SI in Poland, and they exerted a strong influence upon scholarly research and theoretical analysis. For instance, translations of Goffman and of methodological texts regarding GT played a very substantial role in the development of research practices, particularly sociological ethnography and GT methodology as a means for data collection and analysis.

Field research conducted within the SI theoretical frame and employing GT methodology spurred heightened epistemological and methodological reflection on the part of Polish researchers (Konecki 1989, 2000; Kacperczyk 2016; Chomczyński 2017, 2018; Byczkowska 2019). Employing sociological ethnography as a method (Prus 1996) was also critically elaborated in ethical terms (Niedbalski 2016b; Niedbalski and Ślęzak 2016; Chomczyński 2017). For such reasons, the empirical trend of SI as exemplified by extensive field research has been very strong in Poland.

One may conclude that SI in Poland has developed in a number of different dimensions. Methods, ethical issues, epistemological reflection, and other varied topics demonstrate that the growth of SI has been dynamic. Influences arising from other theoretical orientations have also been evident, including the work of Bourdieu and that of Foucault, actor-network theory (ANT), grounded theory, constructivism, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and, more recently, autoethnography and contemplative studies. Although it is obviously difficult to combine varied orientations, being inspired by different perspectives is not only possible, but perhaps somehow unavoidable. We wish to emphasize that GT methodology as developed by Strauss (1987) and later Charmaz (Gorzko 2008:403, 407–408), which has become the fundamental procedure for analyzing empirical data, has been very important for researchers who employ the SI perspective.

Finally, we should keep in mind that the work of Znaniecki and of those who followed him (Chałasiński, Jakubczak, Krzywicki, and others) has prepared the ground for the reception of SI in Poland.

Their reflections and theoretical solutions still resonate in contemporary research and empirical studies, combining Polish SI with the traditions of the Chicago School.

The development of SI has been associated with crossing the boundaries of the perspective. Researchers have not been dogmatic, and they have broadened the view to find new inspiration and deepen the SI approach, such as through the introduction of situational analysis (Clarke 2005; see also Kacperczyk 2007). There has also been a noticeable turn towards autoethnography (Kacperczyk 2014, 2017) and contemplative studies in social research (Konecki 2018). We are convinced that other orientations will also enrich SI on the theoretical level and further its development in significant ways.

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Observing Mead

Vessela Misheva

Introduction

Symbolic interactionism (SI), perhaps more than any other sociological tradition, has been known for its unceasing internal debates and lack of agreement about the true meaning and interpretation of its intellectual roots and classic texts. Among the most important reasons for this are doubtless those associated with certain biographical idiosyncrasies in the early history of the discipline. For example, the emergence of SI at the turn of the twentieth century and its somewhat misplaced establishment as a type of *social psychology* within *sociology* have been exceptional in the world of science and somewhat of a mystery.

Of all the elements of this mystery, the most fascinating and challenging has always been that represented by the professional life and intellectual legacy of George Herbert Mead—philosopher, psychologist and author of the sociological theory of the self, and the acknowledged founding figure of SI. This paper revisits the emergence of SI, not only in order to closely examine once again Mead's contribution to symbolic interactionist theory and methodology and suggest a new interpretation of it. It also attempts by doing so to cast more light on the contributions of other sociological actors from the classical age, whose recognition may facilitate

the reconstruction of the actions and events that brought SI into being.

Given that the aim of the present study is not to challenge any "dominant, received notions about Mead," it does not constitute a contribution to "the Mead critical literature," which is to say that it does not set off from "the actual social activities of the historical Mead" as a way of understanding his ideas (Heubner 2014:25). I here adopt the pragmatist approach to which Mead himself adhered and take as a point of departure his recorded thoughts and the research goals and ideas that have been retrieved from them. It is these that comprise the motive force and solid foundation basis for ascribing meaning to his research behavior and social activities.

In the effort to elaborate a method with which such research can be conducted, I have found Fine and Kleinman's suggestion that we extend the interactionist approach to gain an understanding of the sociological classics—and thereby acquire a better understanding of the process of theory building as well—to be particularly interesting and useful (Fine and Kleinman 1986:139). Fine and Kleinman put forward the idea that, "in the case of the classics," we should take "the sociological theorist as informant" and subject their "behavior (words and actions)" to interactionist analysis. In the terms of SI's "alternate moniker," *social behaviorism*, Fine and Kleinman propose that symbolic interactionists approach this task as "field researchers" in order to "discover" not "the true meaning" of an informant's behavior, but rather the "meanings of behavior to informants." Sociological theorists communicate to us "by indirect means, but still provide data, about which "interactionists can have insights" (Fine and Kleinman 1986:139).

The present work aims to observe Mead's behavior and makes him an object of observation. It perceives Mead as above all a psychologist trained in empirical psychology, who became interested in the psychology of the most remarkable social movement of his time – the *psychology of social reform*. It then attempts to substantiate the claim that Mead went to Hull House, driven by his scientific interest in social psychology, in order to observe the behavior of those at the forefront of this movement, who have been termed settlement sociologists (see e.g. Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley 2002; Oakley 2017), and that Mead joined in their social reform

activities in order to come as close to them as possible. I further address the question of the double identity of Hull House and suggest that it had two legitimate sociological identifications—from without as a *social science laboratory* and from within as a *sociological research field*. I argue that Mead's observation position as non-resident and employee at the University of Chicago allowed him to share the first view but not the second. This allow for a reconstruction of Mead's method in relation to the core principles of sociological observation shared by natural and social sciences, whose essence I identified in Goffman's terms as "observing the unobserved observer." In conclusion, Mead's field study role as a special type of observer is discussed in regard to the relations between observer and informant when the observer does not succeed in taking his informant's role and remains unaware of the fact that the informant is also a researcher-observer.

There is no doubt that "Mead was a social philosopher" (Smith 1931–32:385), and there are certainly good reasons for this opinion to be the dominant sociological view even today. The present work does not challenge this opinion. However, I maintain that Mead's identity as a social philosopher has obscured his identity as social psychologist, which has always been more significant for sociology—particularly from a microsociological point of view. Nevertheless, my intention in the present discussion to depict Mead as first and foremost a psychologist does not contradict Smith's opinion insofar as Smith himself stated that we cannot get "a clear comprehension of his social philosophy" unless we, as philosophers, first "preoccupy ourselves with his social psychology" (Smith 1931–32:377). I contend that this applies to sociologists as well.

Mead as Psychologist

Herbert Blumer credited George Herbert Mead with not only providing the "outlines" of symbolic interactionism as "profound philosophy with a humanistic cast" (Blumer 1969:21), but also with laying "the foundation of the symbolic interactionist approach to the study of human group life and human conduct," regardless of the fact that "no clear formulation" or "reasoned statement of the

methodological position of this approach" has been found in either his published or unpublished works (Blumer 1969:1). Concern about the absence of a methodological statement from Mead was already voiced by Morris in his editorial introduction to *Mind, Self and Society (MS&S)*. Morris first remarked that "science walks on two legs—theory and observation." He further observed that although Mead added "little or nothing to the corpus of the facts of the social sciences as determined by distinctive methods of investigation," he nevertheless "added much" to its "ideational and conceptual structure," isolating and defining "basic categories" and contributing "insight" concerning the nature of minds, selves, and society (Morris 2015:xix). Morris was aware of the problem regarding this statement, namely, it indeed separates what he had already described as the two "ultimately inseparable" aspects of science—the theoretical and the empirical. It also gives rise to the possibility of being misunderstood in the sense of promoting the belief that some "scientific ideas can be fruitfully analyzed and developed" even "without reference to fact." Morris addressed such concerns by arguing that "the observations to which Mead appeals are for the most part open to anyone," and that they "involve no special scientific technique." Nonetheless, such a claim is unconvincing against the background of Morris's stated claim that "the activity of the fact-finder and verifier" is indispensable for science (Morris 2015 [1934]:xix–xx).

If Mead, as depicted by Morris and Blumer, was indeed a theorist who had no specific method of enquiry and was unconcerned about methodological issues and approaches, then his science will appear as deficient in a significant manner—as being not quite science, as trying to walk on only one leg. Morris's comment was perhaps the earliest effort to pose and answer a question that still seems to have no satisfactory answer—the question concerning the specific method or scientific technique which Mead employed to study the "human group life and conduct" that provided the empirical material and facts upon which his sociological theories of mind and self resided. Morris's opinion can be contrasted with that of John Dewey, who did not doubt that Mead himself made valuable observations, but instead argued that Mead had difficulty "in conveying what he observed to others," presumably because what

he observed was a radically new and previously unobserved phenomenon for which no appropriate descriptive language existed (Dewey 1932:xxxix).

Robert Prus remarked that it is precisely ethnography which "refers to the study of the way of life of a group of people," and that it "relies primarily on the method of observation, participant observation, and open-ended interviews." He added that ethnography may also investigate a given way of life as it is found in "descriptions in a variety of documents, journalistic accounts, autobiographies, diaries, letters, and the like" (Prus 1996:103). However, none of these methods has ever been pointed to as the one that Mead employed. The origins of Mead's theoretical achievements—his "contribution to the study of human group life" (Prus 1996: 117) and his unfinished theory of self—do indeed appear to be enigmatic if we can neither identify the concrete group or groups that he observed, nor specify the particular method or methods that have been employed for this purpose. Insofar as it has been claimed that Mead was unconcerned with sociological methods, it is unclear how he succeeded to provide "much of the conceptual foundation necessary for the study of human lived experience" that became what was "most compatible with the ethnographic tradition that was to develop at Chicago" (Prus 1996:116). This is particularly the case when there is not even an educated guess that Mead himself might have been interested or involved in any empirical study or field work.

Mary Jo Deegan argued in her historico-sociological explorations of the Chicago School that Thomas, Mead, and Addams "formed a significant intellectual group" of scholars whose work and writings show "considerable overlap" (Deegan 2005 [1988]:132). Thomas's relation to ethnography has always been somewhat more clearly depicted. At times he has even been described as the sociologist who "helped to develop Chicago ethnography" (Prus 1996:113), while Addams and her collaborators at Hull House spoke of themselves as being the pioneers of field work (Addams 1910). Nothing is known about Mead in this regard, and it appears that among the group of participant observers with whom he worked, he was the only one without a method. Nonetheless, even a superficial glance at Mead's posthumously published lectures in *Movements of Thought*

in the Nineteenth Century, in which he was preoccupied with questions of scientific methodology and objectivity, convinces us that this hardly can be the case. In order to inquire into this matter, it is necessary to observe Mead's behavior as a whole—not just his words, but also his actions.

Mead's expositors have been insistent in attaching significance to the fact that, as a professor of philosophy at the University of Chicago, he "took great interest" in the laboratory of the doctoral student J. B. Watson's and spent "many a Sunday" watching the behavior of Watson's rats and monkeys (see Miller 1973:xxvii). These seemingly unimportant details from Mead's scientific biography— that his observational skills and technique were trained in scientific psychological laboratories and grounded in personal experiences from scientific observations not concerned with the behavior of human beings—are here ascribed particular importance as comprising the *key to* acquiring an understanding of his method and behavior.

Collins observed that physiological psychology in Mead's time employed laboratory methods to study consciousness, adding that Wundt's main contribution was that he brought "with him the experimental method" when, as a medical physiologist, he migrated to philosophy. Experimental psychology was thus created through the emergence of scientific "role-hybrids" that resulted from an innovative "behavioral pattern" caused by a scientist migrating from one science to another (Collins 1989:6). Mead apparently endorsed the transfer of scientific methods to philosophy since he credited Comte for being "the first one to make the attempt to build up philosophy along the lines of the scientific method" (Mead 1962: 452). Although Mead himself played a role-hybrid, he apparently did not regard his social psychology to be a science-hybrid. He rather regarded it as a new branch of psychology alongside individual psychology, and perceived both of them as residing within the field of objective "direct observation," which "completely and exclusively constitutes the field of scientific psychology." Following Comte, Mead also excluded "the field which is opened up by *introspection*," which sociologists at the time endorsed, on the grounds that it was subjective and non-scientific (Mead 2015 [1934]:8, 10).

At this junction, I will address only some of the most important observations of Mead's behavior that I have conducted in order to illustrate the type of results that may be expected from this inquiry, rather than present an exhaustive report. My purpose is to provide support for the hypothesis that although Mead was a philosopher, he was above all a scientist trained in psychology who was well acquainted with observation techniques in the natural sciences. Moreover, he had serious interests in scientific methodology and the principle of observation and scientific objectivity. I contend that this provides the necessary and sufficient background for regarding Mead's activities, including his behavior as a citizen, social reform activist, and public intellectual, as in accordance with the specific character of his scientific identity, and they consequently should be explained in terms of scientific rather than personal or social reasons.

I focus here on a few major groups of questions whose answers have long been a matter of debate and controversy and remain inconclusive: Why did Mead—the philosopher and psychologist employed at the university—became an active participant in the social reform movement and how can this fact be explained? What was Mead's motivation to prioritize social reform activities above the activities associated with his scholarly role as a university employee and member of the scientific community? How can we define his role as an observer who participated in the social reform activities of Hull House? Who was his "key informant"? What was the goal of his scientific project and how can we identify the object of his observation? What could Mead see and what was that which he could not see?

Mead as Psychologist and a Social Reformer

It is difficult to find in the works of Mead's biographers and expositors any description of a personality type that corresponds to the image of a scientist and scholar capable of putting aside and compromising his scientific commitments, thus rendering them secondary to other, non-scientific goals, however noble or morally correct they may be. There appears to be evidence in one exposition

of Mead's thought, which focuses on his philosophical and sociological works, that his political writings and engagements cast light on his "life-long interest in socialism and reform," and that these had a direct bearing on his substantive ideas (Shalin 1987:268). This seems to be particularly appropriate in view of the acknowledged striking resemblance and clear parallels on a number of points in Mead's and Marx's thought, which suggests a possible direct influence of Marx' thought on the young Mead (Shalin 1988:939; vid. Goff 1980). It appears possible, however, to distinguish between the Young Mead, who endorsed the revolutionary ideas of his time, and the more conservative Old Mead in much the same way that this distinction was applied to Marx, Hegel, and other great thinkers. By distinguishing between the thought of Mead as a young man and his thought when he was an employee at the University of Chicago, it might be possible to establish that Mead's views in this regard underwent certain changes. I argue, however, that his early and enduring interests were in psychology, while his interests in philosophy and sociology were only supplementary or auxiliary in character, as was his interest in social reform.

The fact that the intellectual development of the Young Mead was considerably impacted by his friend Henry Castle has often been pointed to as significant. Castle was Mead's closest friend at the time and the "brilliant student" who "persuaded Mead to join him at Harvard," who "offered Mead financial assistance during his studies in Germany," whose sister Mead married, and through whom Mead inherited "part of the Castle's family fortune" (Shalin 1987:268). Within the context of the present discussion, Mead's letter in 1890 to Castle from Berlin holds particular importance since it provides evidence of Mead's strongest interests at the time. This letter, which Shalin retrieved, seems to have been written in a time of distress. It reflects thoughts, dreams, and ideas shared by the two young men faced with the choice of career, on the verge of losing "courage" and "confidence" in themselves, offering each other support, and hoping to be able to "hold each other's hands up in the years to come" and that Castle "will get the real health again" (Mead as cited in Shalin 1987:274).

The letter also reveals Mead's longing for action and his belief that "new blood" needs to be infused into governmental structu-

res. He expresses his desire to follow his early "fancy" to work for city politics, for a "pure city government," upon which "no impure central government can rest"—"the doings" should start with the city, "where everybody recognizes the necessity of change" (Mead as cited in Shalin 1987:272). However, there is some room for doubt that Mead might have addressed these mobilizing and inspiring words more to Castle than to himself—"Now Henry you must come and at least get such a share in these subjects and hold of the social political literature that you can go right on when we are back." In respect to his own future plans, interests, and career, Mead wrote that "I must teach at first, for I must earn money, but I shan't keep at it long. I want more active life and I feel that this phys[iological] psy[chology] gives me exactly the right sort of foundation for this work" (Mead as cited in Shalin 1987:273).

Some of Mead's expositors have argued that there was an unusual "duality" in his professional behavior due to a conjunction of careers by virtue of which he simultaneously played two roles—that of a professional philosopher who wrote scholarly papers, made scholarly presentations, and taught at the university, and that of a citizen who participated in progressive social reform efforts (Fisher and Strauss 1979:10). Fisher and Strauss argued, for instance, that Mead did not participate in projects of "progressive association and social causes" "as an academic expert," as W. I. Thomas and Robert Park did. They also rhetorically posed a very interesting question that remains unanswered—"indeed, what kind of expertise in social reform could a professional philosopher provide?" (Fisher and Strauss 1979:10). "Mead the philosopher" would thus have paralleled "Mead the citizen," but how these two roles were related, how they "deeply informed his social philosophy," and how they came to have a "crucial bearing on the implications of his work for sociology" remains a question that is difficult to answer.

One way to take into consideration Mead's interest in public welfare is to view it as bonded to a philosophical commitment to theory and to the conviction that philosophy is obliged to furnish social practice with a theory that can enhance public welfare. A closer look at *MS&S,* however, reveals that Mead did not work on a theory that would directly assist in resolving social or practical problems. The philosophical theory on which he worked was

instead intended to answer a scientific question and solve a scientific problem. Deegan argued in this respect that Mead's theory maintains the appearance of "a theory of action without applied roots," but the hypothesis that his thought was both based on and "abstracted from its practice in social reform" has not been yet substantiated (Deegan 2005 ([1988]:105). The citizen-scholar role attributed to Mead—as either "intellectual pragmatist" or "friend of the social sciences"— certainly does not suggest any new and satisfactory solutions to the puzzle regarding the origin and nature of his innovative social psychological theory. While one may follow Morris on this point, who was convinced that "Mead's contribution to social psychology could endure separate from his broader social commitment," one could instead follow Fisher and Strauss in insisting that neither of the roles Mead was playing should be ignored, and that a "reconstruction of his thought would have to include both" if Mead—the man of knowledge—is to be understood (Fisher 1969:504; Strauss 1977:xxxi).

That Mead participated for years in the social reform movement and joined in its activities is a fact that cannot be ignored (see Deegan and Burger 1978; Shalin 1988). However, we cannot exclude the possibility that there may have been other reasons for why Mead eagerly embraced such voluntary social engagements. It may be the case, for example, that there was no "duality" in Mead's life, and that the impression of such a duality was created due to a lack of both analysis and articulation regarding the complicated scholarly role that Mead created for himself and played in his effort to establish himself as a researcher at the crossroads of emerging sciences and new disciplinary traditions, such as psychology and sociology. The work of a social scientist does not entail merely reading books, writing papers for professional journals, and teaching students. It also includes action—conducting research, observing, collecting empirical material, accumulating experience, and acquiring a deeper knowledge about the world that has been chosen for observation. Such requirements of the profession render such "discrepant roles," to use Goffman's term, as public intellectual, public speaker, or participant in social movements highly compatible with a career as researcher. They indeed are integral parts of the *master role of* "scholar." It follows from the simple, logical, and un-

dramatic hypothesis which I adopt here that Mead's frequent visits to Hull House—along with his work with sociologists who combined their commitment to sociology with their commitment to social reform— were motivated first and foremost by *purely scientific interests*. Whatever interests Mead had concerning participation in or passion for the cause of social reform were subordinate to playing his scientific role, and their importance found expression in their usefulness for the achievement of some predetermined research goal.

Such a statement does not contradict—and in fact accords with—the claim that Mead's social reform activism and public engagement had a "definite bearing on the development of his concepts" and helped reorient "the context of his thought" (Huebner 2014:4). I argue, however, that Mead's engagement and participation in interaction with social reformers had a more "profound effect on his substantive ideas" than his "ideological commitments," and that he was "at the forefront of the contemporary movement for social reform" for purely scientific reasons. The former may have been important to the extent that they did not interfere with, but rather fostered the realization of his scientific goals. However, the main influences on Mead's substantive ideas and theories, which led him to the *forefront of the contemporary scientific movement for social psychology*, were thoroughly scientific.

To the extent that social psychology was a science intended to resolve such scientific conundrums of the age as the psychology of socialism, the psychology of social reform, and the psychology of social change and revolution, all of Mead's ideological, political, and reformist commitments may be regarded as relevant, although they did not contribute to the content or form of his substantive theories and ideas. Nonetheless, the hypothesis that Mead's interest in social reform as a psychological rather than a social phenomenon must be put to the test, and it will be verified if it is supported by evidence from Mead's own work.

The Psychology of Social Reform: The Birth of an Idea

Mead's only known scientific article dealing with the question of social reform is "The Working Hypothesis in Social Reform," published in the *American Journal of Sociology* (Mead 1899b). This article appears to be a clear follow up to his work on the review of Gustav Le Bon's *The Psychology of Socialism* (2001 [1899]), published in the same issue of the journal. Stated briefly, my argument is that Mead's interest in social psychology and social reform sprang from his scientific curiosity and interest in the psychology of socialism and was likely prompted by his review of Le Bon's book (Mead 1899a). In his review, Mead contended that society is struggling to bring the "social side of our conduct out so that it may, in some conscious way, become the element of control," and that this is a "great, as yet inchoate, movement." He claims, however, that Le Bon's book, which presents "the proper course for Frenchmen to pursue," is inadequate since his psychology is deficient (Mead 1899a:409). Mead juxtaposed the pragmatist psychology of the "opportunist," which declares an "interest in immediate practical effort toward the amelioration of suffering and wrong" (Mead 1899a:412), to the psychology "of the programist," which Le Bon discussed.

In "The Working Hypothesis in Social Reform," Mead defined what he presumed to be the proper course of thinking that the American social scientist should pursue. He first made clear that "the theory of social reform" is not "among the inductive sciences that need emphasis," and that socialism and socialistic utopias, which have already been "recognized as impotent to lead to better conditions," still lie "back of the thought directing and inspiring reform." Mead intended to challenge the "surviving" "assumption that it will be possible to effect by constructive legislation radical changes that will lead to greater social equality" (Mead 1899b:367). The background of the discussion consists of a number of significant observations concerning the radical changes that took place in the main institutions of modern capitalist society at the end of the nineteenth century. Mead observed that, "at least in democratic countries," the government "has become a business concern, which enters into the business world on a basis that is determined by the latter." Moreover, "the municipality has become a business

body" as well, a sort of "stock company" in which "business conditions will determine what the municipality may successfully manage." Particularly interesting is Mead's further observation that "the functions of the government, as an institution, are merging with equal rapidity into the industrial world which it is supposed to control" (Mead 1899b:367–368). Within the context of the large-scale societal changes that have occurred, Mead offered a sober scientific evaluation of the beliefs of the proponents of social reform, proposing the scientifically correct "attitude which social reformers must assume toward their problem" (Mead 1899b:369). Although his suggestion appears to be directed to some unidentified group of "social reformers," there is no doubt that the article, published in a sociological journal, is addressed to sociologists. Mead here brings to their attention the socio– psychological obstacles which, he maintains, render impossible constructive social reform legislation that "leads to greater equality" and radical social change.

Although Mead defined social reform as "the application of intelligence to the control of social conditions," he rejected the possibility of any social forecast of future condition in society. This is a distant echo of what he will eventually state more clearly in his theory of self, particularly in respect to the most controversial aspect of the nature of the "I", namely, its unpredictability. Mead states in this article that our conduct cannot be governed by any such forecasts since "it is always the unexpected that happens" (Mead 1899b:369). In his view, social theories cannot predict events and may only be cast in the form of "working hypotheses," in a manner similar to how theories are put forward in the natural sciences. We possess methods and exert control over their application, but we cannot have "an ideal to work toward" or some "detailed statement of the conditions that are to be ultimately attained." We should adopt "the attitude of the scientist in the laboratory" in order to study the social world, regardless of the nature of our work "as purely scientific or as applied" (Mead 1899b:369–370). In the social sciences, everything that we investigate "always takes the form of a problem." We can form hypotheses regarding such problems, but our foresight can never go beyond testing them (Mead 1899b:370).

Since "we assume that human society is governed by laws," just as the natural scientist assumes "that the world is as a whole

governed by laws," the goals of social reformers, such as "making persons social by legislative enactment," are impossible (Mead 1899b:370). Equally inadmissible in Mead's view is defining a form of social organization that fosters the expression of the social nature of human actions since this depends "upon conditions that lie necessarily beyond our ken" (Mead 1899b:370). Social reform cannot imply having a vision of what is to be and directing conduct towards its realization since this not only would necessarily lead to "a failure," it is also "pernicious" (Mead 1899b:371). Mead then identifies the reasons for this as psychological in nature. "Reflective consciousness" cannot direct conduct in order to "carry us on to the world that is to be," but can only be "applied to conduct." It can identify the efforts to undertake concerning a given problem, lead to overcoming that problem "within a developmental process," and reaches its "highest expression" in stating the problem scientifically, with scientific method and control being acknowledged (Mead 1899b:371). However, social reform is not possible if this implies changing the social world which, just as it is with the physical world, we "assume to be necessarily fixed." It is only possible to identify "a difficulty" and obviate it, whereby "the test of the effort lies in the possibility of this readjustment fitting into the world as it is" (Mead 1899b:371).

Mead stated that, as natural scientists, "we regard ourselves as standing in some degree outside the forces at work" (Mead 1899b: 370). He then added that, as social scientists—and he clearly has psychologists in mind and not sociologists—"we are the forces that are being investigated" (Mead 1899b:371). Mead's commitment to Comte's views about the similarity of the methodological positions of the natural and social sciences—that "society and social events should be approached in the same fashion that the study of plants and animals and moving bodies are approached" (Mead 1977:289)—is apparent in the article. This similarity provided the necessary confidence that behavioristic psychology has a working method that may get at the social process, both "from the inside as well as from the outside"—working "from the outside to the inside," as Comte demanded (Mead 2015:7–8).

Mead's 1899 article on social reform is also interesting in that it states the main scientific question explaining his motivation for

extending his discussion of Le Bon's *psychology of socialism*—which he saw as having no future in America—into a question concerning *the psychology of social reform* that is not only closer to home, but also accords with his scientific interests and expertise. This constitutes a transition from the *psychology of the programist* to the *psychology of the opportunist*, which succeeded it. Mead here finally formulates the question, albeit "stated more generally," that translates the sociological question concerning social reform into a socio–psychological question—"What is the function of reflective consciousness in its attempt to direct consciousness?" (Mead 1899b:371). Committed to external observation and scientific objectivity as he was, Mead could not possibly hope that, by joining the social reformers and becoming a social reformer himself, he would be able to answer the research question that engaged his mind by making himself an object of self-observation or *introspection*. However, this question could have led him to a site where social reformers conducted their field work—and where it was easy, especially for a trained and skillful behaviorist, to observe their behavior without them even knowing it.

Down to the Roots

As Mead's article on the psychology of social reform reveals, he was not interested in social reform as a philosopher or a sociologist, but rather as psychologist for whom studying the *psychology of social reform* meant studying the reflective consciousness of the social reformer. Collins regarded Mead above all as a philosopher who "developed a sociological theory of mind, not primarily as a contribution to sociology, but because it enabled him to solve philosophical problems" (Collins 1989:2). While I agree with Collins that Mead had no intention to contribute to sociology or unravel various sociological problems, I instead view him first and foremost as a psychologist committed to resolving a major psychological problem, concerning a new type of psychology, that he had encountered and formulated through a reading of Le Bon's sociological/psychological work. I contend that Le Bon's discussions of the "psychology of peoples," "the mental state of the disciples of socialism," and

"the psychology of the workman" were the most probable source of inspiration for Mead's idea for a study of the psychology of the social reformer, which he set out to investigate. It was his scientific interest in the solution of this new type of psychological problem—which was associated with the consciousness not of socialists or workmen, but of sociologists-social reformers and social workers—that attracted him to the activities of the residents at Hull House. In general, I argue that the impetus for Mead's social psychology, and his inspiration for solving a *psychological puzzle* that he had perceived, is to be found in his reading of sociological works, but not merely those of the "classical mainstream program," as Boudon termed it (Boudon 1993:39). In accord with Fine and Kleinman's argument (1986) concerning the existence of "alternative Meads," what I present here may be but one among "multiple legitimate responses" to Mead's writings. My intention, however, is to engage and respond not only to other symbolic interactionist responses to Mead's works, but also to certain macrosociological responses that involve philosophical and epistemological issues, which will be left for detailed study in another context.

It is known that Le Bon's most successful book, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (1896), exerted a great influence upon Freud, providing him with the inspiration for his theory of the Ego and the unconscious *Id*. His influence upon sociology, however, appears to have been completely ignored. Le Bon's less popular, but clearly most sociological book—*The Psychology of Socialism* (1899), in which he applied "those principles already set forth" in his previous two works, *The Psychology of Peoples* (1898) and *The Psychology of the Crowd* (Le Bon [1899] 2001:5)—seems to have been totally ignored as an embarrassing and unsuccessful effort to write sociology that was perhaps also dangerous for a science of society that aspires to remain disinterested. Within the context of the emergence of social psychology in sociology, however, Le Bon's *Psychology of Socialism* may be viewed as an inspiration for that sociological tradition which introduced a new, microsociological perspective concerning social consciousness distinct from the perspective rooted in the works of Marx, Weber and Durkheim.

Raymond Boudon observed that Le Bon's sociology was not a "bad" sociology, but rather a different type of sociology with its

own distinctive features. Being "essayistic and literary" in character, it was not intended to increase our knowledge of any particular social phenomenon. It was nonetheless extremely successful in that it was endowed with the authority and power "of good literary products to arouse emotions" and uniquely capable of invoking in the reader or listener the feeling that they were being taught something they "had always known" (Boudon 1993:39). Le Bon thus has a place in the history of sociology as the trigger for the emergence of a type of sociology that Parsons appears to have seen embedded in the works of Cooley, Mead, W. I. Thomas, and even Simmel—which he took as a reason to disregard all of them. Parsons justified his purportedly unbiased professional decision with the argument that none of their works were produced by a "*theorist* on the same level as the others"—by which he meant Durkheim and Weber. Furthermore, all were written by a scholar whom Parsons judged to be "more micro– than macrosociologist," and thus could not be included in what he apparently considered to be the one and only sociological canon that should exist (Parsons 1968, xiv ff). Nevertheless, this is the type of sociology that, as Mullins observed, survived to be incorporated into sociology as a "loyal opposition," which changed the discipline and continues to have "value for those who wish to make the world a better and more secure place in which to live" (Fine 1993:62, 80).

Mead is regarded as a key figure in the refutation of the methodological dogmas of the individualistic Enlightenment philosophy of the eighteenth century and the subsequent transition to the nineteenth century social thought that was focused on "group behavior." A widely acknowledged influence on Mead's thought in this respect is Wilhelm Wundt's physiological psychology, which initiated the shift of psychological interest to the study of "large number of individuals" and drew conclusions concerning the "standard or typical mind" (Jones 1980:3). Le Bon's important contribution to this development has somehow remained insufficiently recognized and essentially overlooked. Le Bon's *The Crowd* was also a study of "the popular mind" as a "collective mind." He also introduced an interdisciplinary perspective to psychology that provided the impetus for both Freud's psychoanalysis and Mead's social behaviorism. Le Bon's works apparently contained challenges that be-

came triggers for subsequent movements in psychological thought. Freud must certainly have been provoked by such statements from Le Bon as "The conscious life of the mind is of small importance in comparison with its unconscious life" (Le Bon 1896:7). Le Bon may also have been the reason why Mead did not follow Freud into a further discussion of consciousness in its relation to the unconscious, which would have led him to a sociological dead-end. Mead instead focused on the more sociologically promising relation between the "I" (Freud's Ego) and the "me" (Freud's Super Ego) (Mead 2015:255). But although he appreciated Freud's idea of "social control in terms of self-criticism," he did not depict the "me" as a "psychological 'censor'," but instead anointed the "I" as "the dominant element over against the 'me'" (Mead 2015:210).

The idea of "striking similarities" between Mead and Freud is not new—and not only in respect to similarities of theoretical ideas. There apparently are a number of striking methodological similarities in their works as well. Dan Jones, for example, observed that both Mead and Freud framed their empirical evidence within "inferential structures based upon non-observable but nonetheless compelling phenomena" (Jones 1980:13). In addition, they both began "with evidence gathered from the material world" and worked "upwards," instead of proceeding "downwards" from a higher abstract plane of reality to the level of material existence (Jones 1980:13). The question then becomes What type of "non-observable" and compelling phenomena did Mead find, observe, and gather evidence for in the material world so that he could move up to the higher abstract level of theory and draw conclusions concerning their "inferential structure" on this basis?

That Mead's interest in individual reflective consciousness led him naturally to the study of the phenomenon of self, including its genesis and nature, can be inferred from the beginning of his 1927 class lectures in social psychology, where he stated that

> The notion of consciousness always implies a reference to some self, but the self is not made up from physical stuff. [...] We start with an assumption of content, which implies a self or mind. We all have perspectives characterized by the self. We cannot separate consciousness as a stuff from the idea of the self. Consciousness is consciousness of

> belonging to something. We must identify consciousness as a stuff with ego or self (Mead 1982:107).

Another question that arises at this point concerns how, with what scientific methods, Mead intended to observe the non-observable, and where in the material world his observation position was located.

Mead, Sociology, and Hull House

The long tradition of scholarly efforts to identify Mead's intellectual predecessors is well presented by Robert Dingwall (Dingwall 2001). Dingwall noted that "Although Mead produced a powerful synthesis, relatively few of his ideas could be said to be truly original." He also provided a quite comprehensive list of Mead's acknowledged "antecedents" (Dingwall 2001:239ff). Dingwall claimed that he was offering only "a brief sketch of that alternative history" of symbolic interactionism, and that it was intended "merely to set out a framework" to be eventually revised and completed, which keeps open the possibilities for elaborations and inclusions (Dingwall 2001:237). A project aimed at returning sociologists working in settlements outside the university to the history of sociology, whose works and ideas were published in the official journals of the discipline and thus cannot simply be discarded, may fit well within the framework for revising SI's history that Dingwall proposed (Dingwall 2001:239). Dingwall's list of the most important thinkers among those who "dominated Western thought for several millennia," whose ideas can be traced forward to Mead's work, placed a heavy emphasis on philosophers, such as Kant, Darwin, Adam Smith, the Greek Stoics, and Aristotle. In a similar vein, Robert Prus appealed for "a socio-logical extension of American pragmatist philosophy," pointing to the need to "trace back" the conceptual foundation of symbolic interactionism to classical Greek scholarship. He also argued for the need to revisit symbolic interactionist's intellectual heritage in order to create "a more adequate, pragmatist informed social science" (Prus 2004:5). The quest to trace the roots of symbolic interactionism back to classical antiquity is doubtless an important sociological task, motivated, not least of all,

by the belief that this "marginal" sociological tradition might be more successful in this regard than its macrosociological counterpart. Within this context, the lack of at least a similar degree of attention to the contributions of sociologists from the classical age of sociology at the turn of the twentieth century to the establishment of the methodological microsociological foundation of symbolic interactionism appears to have become both more visible and more difficult to justify in the current century.

Collins observed that some of Mead's publications reveal an interesting pattern—"to review other writers, primarily in philosophy and psychology," adding that "although there are germs of his later themes that we can recognize in retrospect, he does not push them or develop them systematically" (Collins 1989:3). There is no reason why we should not look for a similar pattern in respect to Mead's approach to sociological publications and his reviews of sociological writers, and search for the "germs of his later themes that we can recognize in retrospect" in these publications—both those that have been left underdeveloped and those which he systematically developed into new concepts and themes. Mead consistently read new sociological literature, which influenced his choice of themes and research problems, and we can recognize in retrospect the antecedents of some of Mead's most valuable and original ideas. Not only was he well-read regarding important sociological classics, such as Auguste Comte and Karl Marx, he was also familiar with the works of the prominent sociologists of his time. In addition to reviewing Le Bon's Psychology of Socialism, he assessed the body of Cooley's work after his death in "Cooley's Contribution to American Social Thought" (1930). He also reviewed Addams's *The Newer Ideals of Peace* (1907), Simmel's *Philosophie des Geldes* (1900–1901), and Veblen's *The Nature of Peace and the Terms of Its Perpetuation* (1918).

Within the present context, the most interesting case among the sociologists whose works Mead reviewed is without doubt Jane Addams—she alone in this group was a reputed social reformer, he worked with her at Hull House, and he followed her publications (see Mead 1907:128). Her name is not mentioned in the lectures included in Mead's posthumous publications on social psychology, but neither are those of Comte and Adam Smith, whose works Mead

knew well—as it is clear from *Movements of Thought in the Nineteenth Century*.

Perhaps there is no need at this point for a detailed argument in support of the claim that Mead's interest in the psychology of social reform motivated his interest in the settlement in general and Hull House in particular. Neither do I find it necessary to argue, continuing the line of reasoning above, that Mead the psychologist was attracted to Hull House for other and perhaps more important reasons—for example, its reputation, above all among male sociologist and social settlement leaders, of being nothing less than a genuine "social science laboratory" (Deegan 2005:34ff.).

One of the reasons why it is very probable that Mead himself perceived Hull House as a "social science laboratory" is that important authorities who adhered to this idea were within his immediate reach. These included Charles Zueblin, a founder of the Northwestern University Settlement and Professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago, where Mead was employed in 1894, and above all Albion Small, head of the Department of Sociology at the latter University. Small himself began using the concept of social science laboratory in the same year after Robert Woods, one of the leaders of the settlement movement, was the first to use it in respect to settlements in 1893 (Deegan 2005:34–35, 37). The fact that Mead adhered to the methodological position that the social and natural sciences should approach their objects of study in an identical manner also serves to support the hypothesis that Mead felt quite "at home" in a settlement that was regarded as a social science laboratory. Hull House was a very suitable location for a research project concerning social psychology aimed at observing the behavior and actions of social reformers (from the outside) and developing hypotheses about "the inner experience of the individual—the inner phase of that process or activity" (Mead 2015:7). As such, Mead's competences as a psychologist with experience in laboratory observation were not misplaced when he joined in the activities of social reformers, but rather appropriate to the research task he had in mind.

As Deegan observed, however, a number of female "practical sociologists" lodged at Hull House, led by Jane Addams, rejected the conception of the settlement as a "scientific laboratory." They

considered this concept to be inadmissible since it suggests a "view of people as 'objects' and not participants in social studies" geared to "extensive data collection that responds to the demands of the community" (Deegan 2005:36). It seems, however, that the practical sociologists' conception of what Hull House really was and how it was supposed to be viewed was not clearly articulated in their publications at the time—it attracted little attention as a possible counterpart to the popular sociological idea of the settlement as "laboratory." This can nonetheless be retrieved as an alternative methodological position from the works of the head of the Hull House settlement, Jane Addams, who had envisioned and founded Hull House as a *sociological research field*. She argued that the residents at Hull House were "the actual pioneers in field research," and that they had been engaged in field work since the establishment of Hull House in 1889—a few years before the opening of "the first sociological departments in the universities" and ten years before "the establishment of the first Foundations" (Addams 1930:405).

Hull House thus claimed an individuality and difference that could not be subsumed under the typical image of a settlement. It apparently thus had two radically different identifications. One was based on an identification from *without* as a social science laboratory, or an extension of the university, as it was applied to settlements at the time. This categorized it on the basis of its similarities with other settlements. The other was based on an identification from *within* that emphasized its specificity and individuality as a sociological research field. This means that it also had two different *identities*— one "*virtual*," which was applied to it by external observers and nonresidents, and one "*nominal,*" which was applied to it by residents. The former is a "name" or an external categorization, while the latter is the "experience of an identity" and an internal group identification (Jenkins 2008:44). The fact that the conflict between these two identifications of Hull House has not been resolved has significant consequences. For example, as long as the Hull House collective identity remains unclear, it might be not possible to acknowledge its sociological identity as "part of the intellectual fabric of early Chicago sociology," which Calhoun has duly noted (Calhoun 2007:16). Nor will it be possible to acknowledge the individual identities of its residents as sociologists, whose

identities as such were systematically produced at Hull House, since "the individual and collective identities are 'implicated in each other'" (Jenkins 2008:45).

Mead's Method

Mead participated in social reform activities together with the sociologists at Hull House, but not as a resident of Hull House. One may suggest that the observation which he wished to conduct did not require sharing life in the slums. This means, however, that Mead did not visit Hull House in order to conduct the two modes of inquiry which Blumer defined that "clearly distinguish the direct naturalistic examination of the empirical social world" (Blumer 1969:41ff). More specifically, Mead apparently did not engage in "naturalistic exploration" to study human group life in order to familiarize himself with the latter, and he did not utilize any method that Blumer identified as being appropriate for this purpose.

It follows that Blumer's supposition about two modes of inquiry that follow one after the other and are conducted by the same researcher may be in need of revision. In order to solve the puzzle that Mead's theorizing without exploration represents, we have to assume that it is possible for the researchers who come to the field from the outside to proceed directly to an analysis of already existing data about social facts that they themselves have not collected, for which they have not resided or spent much time in the field. This in fact is a well-known rule in the natural sciences. Researchers rarely, if at all, produce theories solely on the basis of the analysis and interpretation of data and empirical material that they themselves have gathered and produced.

At first glance, nothing that resembles the research phase of *exploration* can be detected in Mead's case as part of field work. The role of field worker includes such procedures as direct observation, interviewing, listening to conversations, reading diaries, making life-history accounts, arranging group discussions, and everything else that Blumer associated with the role of "explorer" (Blumer 1969:41). It seems more appropriate to identify Mead's analyses and theorizing as embodying the second phase of inquiry, which Blu-

mer's defined as *inspection.* In Blumer's terms, the question becomes where did the "comprehensive and intimate accounts of what takes place" come from that made it possible for Mead to begin his analysis of descriptive accounts, cast his problem in theoretical form, unearth generic relations, sharpen the connotative reference of his concepts, and formulate theoretical propositions (Blumer 1969:42–43)?

I find it improbable that Mead made his significant theoretical contributions without personally carrying out observations and establishing various facts. The assumption is that Mead could not but leave information about the methods he as a social behaviorist employed, and that this information can be retrieved from his posthumously published lectures on social psychology. Based on what Mead himself said to his students about "the point of view of social behaviorism," it is legitimate to conclude that Mead came to Hull House as a psychologist and social behaviorist who relied exclusively on the method of external observation. He set off from the outside "with an observable activity" and proceeded to an "observation" of "the parts of the act which do not come to external observation" and are accessible to the individual alone, that is, the "inner experience of the individual" and how it arises "in the social act" (Mead 2015:8). He stated that his psychology, as behavioristic, is not interested in consciousness, but rather in the experience of the individual in their relation to the social "conditions under which the experience goes on," and that this can be approached through their conduct (Mead 2015:40–41).

Furthermore, since "language is a part of social behavior" (Mead 2015:13), it is possible for "a great deal that appears simply as the experience of an individual, as his own sensation or perception," to later become public through being stated in terms of the *biography* of the individual. It is interesting in this respect that Mead does not speak about the individual in general, but rather about the autobiography of the *discoverer* in particular, who

> can note exceptions and implications which other people do not see and can only record them in terms of his own experience. He puts them in that form in order that other persons may get a like experience, and then he undertakes to find out what the explanation of this

> strange fact is. It is the work of the discoverer through his observations and through his hypotheses and experiments to be continually transforming what is his own private experience into a universal form (Mead 2015:41).

Mead further adds that "the same may be said of other fields, as in the work of the great artist who takes his own emotions and gives them a universal from so that others may enter into them" (Mead 2015:41).

Mead made no reference in his published or unpublished works to biographical material. I nevertheless contend that the above citation from the important chapter concerning the "point of view of social behaviorism," which discloses his methodological approach, is not accidental in that it expresses Mead's research interest in the biographical accounts of prominent people in his time, whose numbers clearly include social reformers. There is no reason to assume, for instance, that his statement above is not applicable to the director of Hull House, not the least in that what even today is considered to be Addams' "autobiography," *Twenty Years at Hull House* (1910), was exceptionally popular and had a very positive public reception. This suggests that if Mead regarded words as behavior, and if he was interested in the unobservable experience of social reformers, then his method may well have included reading essentially all available reports, ethnographies, autoethnographies, autobiographies, and other data regarding the experiences of social reformers in the field. Another important point that we can retrieve from Mead's lectures concerning his methodological approach is that he himself used a method of direct observation that properly belonged to the natural scientist's laboratory, but had been transferred to sociology as well. This concerns the observation a "conversation of gestures" that are not or "cannot be articulated into articulated speech" (Mead 2015:14). Observations of this type can apparently be conducted in respect to human beings as well, even when they communicate by means of articulated speech, but are observed from a distance. Insofar as a "certain attitude of the individual" as well as their "intent" can be observed in the gesture," one may argue in this respect that Mead disclosed an observation technique at the beginning of *MS&S* that he himself had been using.

He presented it as a general practice familiar to all, thereby anticipating its eventual discovery and use in sociological field work.

> We are reading the meaning of the conduct of other people when, perhaps, they are not aware of it. There is something that reveals to us what the purpose is—just the glance of an eye, the attitude of the body which leads to the response (Mead 2015:14).

Goffman was the first to introduce the method of *observing the observer* into sociological field work, referring to the type of case above in particular as "*observing the unobserved observer*." The latter involves observing an observer when they do not know that they are being observed and are consequently behaving naturally. Goffman suggested that this mode of observation is particularly useful for the participant observer, who must observe their informant. He contended that this makes it possible to "check up on the more controllable aspects of behavior" of informants "by means of the less controllable," by virtue of which one may come to know an informant's true feelings and opinions (Goffman 1990 [1959]:19). It may seem at first glance that there could be a problem with the hypothesis that Mead was playing a research role as an observer in Hull House if he did not share the view that Hull House was a research field. The residents-researchers at Hull House who had overt research roles, including Addams herself, whose friendship and good working relations with Mead have been emphasized by many of her biographers, never acknowledged that he played such a role. As we have noted above, Mead believed that the social and the natural sciences may and should approach their objects of study through using the same methods and adopting the same methodological position. It thus appears that it was no problem for him to view Hull House as a "social science laboratory," as many of his sociological colleagues at the University of Chicago also did. On the other hand, the methods he employed made it possible for him to identify himself as a type of field worker at Hull House, even though he was working on his own psychological project that was quite distinct from the sociological projects of the other field workers there. The latter observed their informants and the life of the neighborhood in order to attain their research goals, while Mead observed these

observers in order to attain his own. It thus appears that Hull House had two equally legitimate research identities—from one point of view it was a social science laboratory, while from another it was a sociological research field.

Principles of Observation in Socio-psychological Field Work

A study of the behavior of classical sociological theorists that is aimed at combining the "informing theoretical perspective" of symbolic interactionism with ethnography as a "strategy of inquiry" allows for descriptions in terms of "interactionist ethnography" (Tan and Hall 2007:604). In the interactionist field work proposed here, however, the theorist in the field who will be observed is regarded not as an informant, but as an observer who himself had a field role, along with informants who helped him play this role. This approach allows us to observe not only the theorist himself, but also the relationships and interactions between observer and observed, that is, the observer's informants. For this purpose, the interactionist ethnography proposed here further elaborates Goffman's "observing the observer" within the context of macrosociological systems theory into a mode of observation termed *second order observation*.

Second order observation is by definition the "*observing of an observer with a view to that which he cannot see*" (Luhmann 2013:112). The second order observer thus seeks to answer the question, what does the first order observer see and what is that which they cannot see? What the first order observer cannot see comprises their *blind spot* (Luhmann 2002:74). This does not imply that the observed needs to be aware of the fact of being observed or that they had to have given their consent. In this respect, the notion of second order observation is similar to the theories of observation of the natural scientist, whose objects are not capable of human speech. However, its application to sociological observations is appropriate in the present case, when the observed is a classical theorist who lived in the *past*. When such observations are conducted in the *present*, certain ethical problems may arise that Goffman does not

discuss. Luhmann notes that the observed may also observe that they are "observed in the same way" (Luhmann 1998:35), but also that they may have an awareness of being observed in a way that may lead to a change in their behavior. We must also find a method that can help us guess, with the highest degree of probability, what or whom the observer has chosen to observe. Briefly stated, the question is how the observer, who in the present case is Mead, has chosen his informants, particularly his key informant, whom he himself will observe.

Instead of discussing the nature of the "researcher's 'filters'" and strategies of inquiry that are employed during the process of data collection and analysis in interactionist ethnography, the present study employs principles of scientific observation retrieved from Mead's methodological position as it is found in his *Movements of Thought in the Nineteenth Century*. In these posthumously published philosophy lectures, Mead argued in favor of a type of scientific observation that is directed not by some type of theory that subsumes impressions from the events of social life, as Comte's positivism presumed, but rather "by some sort of a problem which lies back in one's mind" and "always expresses an interest of some sort." As if anticipating Popper's position in *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, Mead emphatically argued that scientists in fact necessarily observe what attracts their attention, not something that one or another theory prescribes. They rather observe something that is "relatively novel," that is, *facts* that "always represent possible or implicit problems with which science deals." Such facts do not confirm some existing law and do not relate to other facts, but are instead "hard enough to break down some law, some accepted idea" (Mead 1962 [1936]:281–282). Stated briefly, Mead claimed that the scientist is driven to observe a given fact not because of its *similarity* to other facts, but rather because of its *difference.* He remarked that

> the scientific problem is one that arises out of the exceptional event, something that is contrary to laws as they have been accepted, so that attention is directed toward observation and toward a statement of the so-called "fact" in terms of the problem that arises (Mead 1962 [1936]:281).

Mead thus views the scientific method of observation as comprising "the observing of that which runs counter to accepted opinion" or "counter to the currently accepted laws." Furthermore, it demands the gathering of "all other facts that you can get hold of which are of the same sort and which will show you something of the nature of the hypothesis that may possibly meet that situation" (Mead 1962 [1936]:283–284). Mead argued that this is "what we term the 'scientific method'" (Mead 1962 [1936]:285).

Mead could hardly be more insistent on this than he was throughout his lectures. He consistently argued that

> Exceptions arose, we have seen, and a problem was formulated, and then a hypothesis for the solution of the problem was presented, and then the solution had to be tested. That is, one had to see whether or not this new hypothesis would work. If it did, then the hypothesis became an accepted theory; if it did not, a new one was substituted for it and subjected to the same test (Mead 1962 [1936]:353).

Mead's position concerning scientific observation thus reveals that he agreed with Comte's proposition that the *basic scientific method for all sciences*—including both the natural and social sciences—should be the same, but he also disagreed with Comte's claim that we set off in science with a theory or hypothesis that is then to be proven or disproven in empirical research. Arguably, Mead expressed his most serious and uncompromising discontent with Comte's philosophical positivistic position precisely in respect to the question of methodology. We can find many reasons for why Comte's influence on Mead has not attracted sufficient attention on the part of Mead's interpreters. This is nonetheless in sharp contrast with the significance that Mead himself attached to it. He certainly regarded this issue to be of cardinal importance if he went further to clearly express his anti-positivistic position. Mead stated in this respect that

> What is not recognized in the positivistic doctrine is that the observation is always one that has an element of novelty in it. That is, it is in some sense unusual. It is observed because it is distinct in some way from the expected experience (Mead 1962 [1936]:458).

Further evidence of Mead's methodological convictions in this regard can also be found in some of his other posthumously published works. For example, Mead argued in *The Philosophy of the Act* in support of the complementarity of the two approaches that we have noted, stating that although one may begin in science with a law and then proceed to observation, it is also possible that "one starts with observations and ends up with law" (Mead 1938:643). The same ideas also appear in *MS&S* in a form generalized for internal self-observation, which is at the very core of the program of behaviorism that he endorsed. Mead again expresses in this text, albeit in other terms, the notion that scientific observation comprises an attraction to what is different.

> We are always separating that which is peculiar to our own reaction, that which we can see that other persons cannot see, from that which is common to all (Mead 2015 [1934]:33).

It appears, however, that although Mead agreed with Comte that "the whole (society) is prior to the part (individual)," not the part to the whole, even in respect to his social psychology (Mead 2015 [1934]:7), he himself designated neither the observation of society, nor the act as the starting point of social psychological research. Mead instead identified the starting point of observation as an encounter with certain unique phenomena of which the researcher has personal experience.

The fact that Mead did not play the role of "participant observer" in Hull House should be regarded as responsible for why he was not viewed as a role player in this "research field," where the "objective observations" of people's behavior that his social behaviorism promoted were not tolerated by the residents-researchers in the field, whom Deegan referred to as "practical sociologists." The present study must then identify the legitimate role in sociological field work that was capable of propelling Mead into the center of the reform movement and permitting him to closely observe the behavior of social reformers who remained unaware of being observed.

Mead as Complete Participant and His Informants

Mead apparently did not play the prominent and visible role of *participant observer* since neither he himself, nor any of the other field workers at Hull House seem to have been aware of him doing so. There are, however, other less popular roles that are rarely used today in sociological field work with properties that better correspond to the particular character of Mead's behavior (words and actions), all aspects of which should be viewed as pertaining to his research role in the field.

According to theory, the field worker selects the type of role they have to play in order to achieve the best results when studying those aspects of social reality in which they are interested. At the end of the nineteenth century, however, there was not yet a descriptive theory for identifying possible roles in sociological field work. Against this background, viewing Mead as an observer of (participant) observers when he was not one of them suggests that he invented rather than selected a field work role for himself. This invented role entailed the possibility of close and direct observation in a field inhabited by social reformers, which allowed the observer to gather data and information and interact as naturally as possible as a seemingly regular participant in social reform while remaining unobserved.

In accord with the earliest conceptualization of the roles of sociologists who conduct field work (Junker 1952), and on the basis of its further development, elaboration, and extension, Raymond Gold identifies four "theoretically possible roles" that are located on a continuum between the two poles of *participation and observation*—"complete participant," "participant-as-observer," "observer-asparticipant," and "complete observer" (Gold 1958:217). These are the roles that field workers may adopt when gathering data in "natural or nonexperimental settings," and their focus is on the observer—both "as a person and as a sociologist plying his trade" (Gold 1958:218).

The role in Gold's role-repertoire that appears to be the most capable of accommodating all aspects of Mead's behavior, which is also appropriate for a psychologist "plying his trade," is the one he termed "*complete participant*." In Gold's description, the role of *com-*

plete participant in field research conceals the true identity and purpose of the researcher. The latter are "not known to those whom he observes," with whom he "interacts as naturally as possible"—the researcher operates incognito and the basic theme in such cases is "role-pretense" (Gold 1958:219). This role has certain advantages, such as providing "possibilities of learning about aspects of behavior that might otherwise escape a field observer" (Gold 1958:220). On the negative side is the problem of finding a balance and avoiding conflicts between the demands of role and self. The observer alone "knows that he is pretending to be a colleague" while in reality they are a different person whose real self is not represented by the role they are playing. If the "mask of pretense" is not bound to their self, then they "stand the risk of exposure and research failure" (Gold 1958:219).

I regard these observations as sufficient to suggest a very probable hypothesis as to who Mead's informant in Hull House was. The descriptions above of the role of complete participant comprise a good explanatory framework for much of what appears difficult to interpret concerning the nature of the relationship between Mead and Addams. Addams' expositors have long been puzzled by the evidence that Mead admired Addams, but never mentioned her name in his university lectures and public presentations. He also never quoted her, engaged with the substance of her sociological thought, or considered her to be an equal interaction partner for serious scientific discussions. Unlike Cooley and Dewey, he never made any reference to her works, even to those of her books acknowledged by the sociological community as sociological in character and published in sociological journals and volumes.

Addams' expositors have typically interpreted the following letter of Mead to Addams (1907) as evidence of "intimate friendship," "admiration," and "respect for Addams' writing and intellectual thought."

> I presume that you could not know how deep an impression you made last night by your very remarkable paper. My consciousness was, I presume, in the same condition as that of the rest of your audience—completely filled with the multitude of impressions which you succeeded

> in making, and the human responses which you called out from so many unexpected points of view (Mead as cited in Deegan 2005:119).

In another letter on the occasion of the publication of one of Addams' books (presumably *Twenty Years at Hull House*, as Deegan suggested), Mead wrote that

> May I add my affectionate appreciation—the appreciation which I feel whenever I think of what you are to Chicago and to those who are fortunate enough to feel that they belong to the circle of your friends (Mead as cited in Deegan 2005:119).

These highly flattering words leave no doubt that Addams made a deep impression on Mead. The content of his letters, however, does not suggest that he respected her for her work as a scholar and explorer of the social world that she inhabited. Mead's admiration seems to be focused more on her remarkable *personality* than her scientific thought and ideas. There is no doubt that Mead shared the veneration she aroused not only in ordinary people, but also in many sociologists from Chicago, the United States, and elsewhere in the world. Marianne Weber wrote in her *Max Weber: A Biography* about how the Webers were "stirred" on their visit to Chicago in the summer of 1904 not only by the "magnificent wildness" of "modern reality," but also by its "gentle features that bespoke a capacity for love as well as kindness, justice, and a tenacious desire for beauty and spirituality" (M. S. Weber 1995:287). She observed that

> On the billboards there was a poster proclaiming CHRIST IN CHICAGO. Was this a brazen mockery? No, this eternal spirit dwells there, too—for example, in the work of a woman who has the courage of her convictions. In the dreary streets of a workingmen's district Jane Adams [sic] created her famous "settlement." There this gentle, refined woman together with a large staff of enthusiastic assistants provided the proletarians who were thrown together from all over the world with all the things that they could not provide themselves. In the hectic struggle for existence it was a place offering beauty, joy, intellectual uplift, physical training, and social service. People looked, marvelled, and believed in this "Angel of Chicago" (M. S. Weber 1995:287–288).

Max and Marianne Weber apparently visited Hull House in order to meet the social reformer, the "founder and the leader" of Hull House, who "earned the appellation 'angel' Joanna [sic]" and succeeded in transforming this "monstrous, demonic city" into "a more 'harmonious' place" (M. S. Weber as quoted in Scaff 2011:44–45). Jane Addams the sociologist, who spoke at a session at the *Congress of Arts and Science* in St. Louis at which W. I. Thomas, Edward A. Ross, and Max Weber himself were participants (Scaff 2011:54), remained invisible. Deegan also noted this phenomenon, and she illustrated its character by an "adequate summary" of Addams' "appellations": "ideal woman," "Saint Jane," and "epitome of the nineteenth century heroine," who was "wonderfully gentle" and, most importantly, never had "a selfish thought'" (Deegan 2005:80).

The working hypothesis in the present discussion is that Mead came to Hull House to take a look from the *inside* at the world of the strange group of social reformers who—quite contrary to what is expected by psychological theory—left their comfortable middle-class neighborhoods, disregarded their family obligations, and, of their own will, went to live among the working poor, placing concern for the other above concern for self. In addition to the opposing images of Hull House as a "social science laboratory" and a "research field," there is a third that should also be acknowledged. This is the image of Hull House as a residence of "altruists"—philanthropists and social workers—with a "selfless" devotion to the good of the "other" in the midst of a world where it is scientifically correct and psychologically normal and healthy for individuals to have a strong ego and exhibit selfish behavior steered by profit for self. This gives substance to the claim that Hull House, not the university, was the place where Mead's idea of a truly *social psychology* was born on the basis of his observations of an "exceptional" psychological phenomenon that defied psychological laws and behavioral rules.

Above all, however, this discussion also proposes that the "striking" phenomenon which grabbed Mead's attention—and apparently not only his—was Addams herself. In addition to being "exceptional," Addams' central position in the field and in the movement for social reform suggest that it is natural and logical to regard her as Mead's *key informant*, not a friend.

Mead's Key Informant

In the literature, the informant is presented as being of crucial importance for the success of field work, but there is no hint that their behavior and actions are to be defined within a particular field work role. Blumer regards the informant as the participant in the sphere of life being explored who is the most "informed" and "acute observer" (Blumer 1969:41). Ethnographers themselves often do "not introduce clear signs and characteristics which might identify the 'good informant'" (Shokeid 1988:34). The "key informant" seems to have attracted more attention—although, once again, not as a role. Some field workers advise choosing "insiders" whose status cannot be questioned, who act on "center stage" and occupy "formal or informal leadership roles that make them knowledgeable experts about the issues being researched," as key informants. Such highstatus members of the community are considered to be more capable of giving general information about all aspects of community life, practices, and beliefs that are common to all members of society (John and Reve 1982:519). Although the key informant is deeply immersed in the social life and world that is being studied, without any mediation or distance from it, they also possess the potential to become a member of the researcher's "team," without this implying the assigning of a particular independent role within that team or acknowledging their individual contribution to the outcome.

One particularly enduring conception of the identity of informants, with ideational roots in the sociology of Robert Park (1928), maintains that what distinguishes them is their status of "marginal men" in their societies—informed, but detached observers, who due to their marginality are much "better observers of their own people" (Shokeid 1988:34). This concept is associated with the tendency in encounters between researcher and informant for the former to inevitably play "the dominant role" so that "the outcome cannot but be a tribute to his ingenuity and originality rather than to that of his informant" (I. Lewis as quoted in Shokeid 1988:41–42). The argument suggests that "a composite portrait of the major informants in a successful field work project can no longer condone their characterization as 'marginals'." A question raised is whether

anthropologists or field workers in general "will increasingly have to share their texts and authorship with their indigenous collaborators" (Shokeid 1988:42).

Towards the end of a century in which ethnography and field work became well-established anthropological and sociological methods, it became clear that certain complications emerge when writing about people who read what researchers have written and then speak with and write to them in turn. The informant who acts center stage may disagree with the researcher's interpretation and take it upon themselves to disqualify observations and accounts concerning the "host society," or the world of which the researcher never became a part, that the researcher has already made public. Addams herself in fact wrote in the Preface to one of her books that one of the motivations for writing it was "to start a 'backfire,' as it were, to extinguish" some texts that presented the settlement in a false light as "all too smooth and charming" (Addams 1910:6). The case appears to be even more complicated if it involves the researcher's experience of writing, in whatever abstract terms, about people who not only read, but also write, and who themselves are observers and researchers working with informants.

Many very important questions are associated with these issues. For example, the urban ethnographer W. F. Whyte asked "Whose voice does the researcher use when reporting results that were collaboratively generated? Can the researcher ever represent anyone but himself/herself?" (Whyte 1995:298 as cited in Shokeid 1997:637). A similar question emerges from the interactionist study sketched here, which chose George Herbert Mead for its object of sociological observation—Would it be possible to separate Mead's voice from the voices of his informants after almost a century of imputing to him thoughts and ideas that might have originated in their works? Dewey claimed in his eulogy to Mead that the latter did not view himself as original. He stated that Mead "did not seem to have had any consciousness of the way and the degree in which his own conception was a novel contribution," but instead regarded it as "a natural outgrowth with at most some change of emphasis in statement," linking the problems he addressed with "ideas and movements already current" (Dewey 1932:xxxvii). In light of these observations on the part of Mead's closest friend, we may better

appreciate Dingwall's suggestion that we regard Mead as "a man who drew in a particular way on a set of authors whose ideas and work were common currency at the University of Chicago until the 1940s" (Dingwall 2001:237).

Deegan observed that Mead and Addams had "shared ideas," and not only "reform ties" (Deegan 2005:118). The same may also be said about Cooley and Mead (Misheva 2019). This gives me a reason to suggest that the "powerful synthesis" of ideas which were not originally Mead's own should include the ideas of both Addams and Cooley, whom we consider to be Mead's most important informants. Further inquiry concerning whether and how the "voices" of some of his contemporary sociologists were subsumed in some of his theoretical propositions—which were formulated in the manner of a natural scientist, with no reference to the particular "objects" observed, taking their published and unpublished words as simply behavior—will be presented in another work.

If Mead closely observed Addams's behavior, works, and actions, and if he selected her as his key informant, not least on the grounds of her good observation skills, one should expect that she would have been aware of being observed. The impression is that she was. She knew that the "various studies and fact-finding analyses" that she and the other settlement residents had conducted held a particular value. Even though they would likely not receive recognition and acknowledgement for their ground-breaking work, their scientific contributions would someday be incorporated into other scholars works. Addams wrote that

> Our achievement was halting, but I still think there was something fine in that youthful statement, and that our contention was wellfounded that the man who breaks new soil and makes it ready for the seed, may be quite as useful as the sower himself or even the triumphant harvester (Addams 1930:405).

In the last pages of Addams' *The Second Twenty Years at Hull House*, at the end of her research career, she found it necessary to acknowledge the "cordial cooperation" and support for these "early efforts of the settlements in research" on the part of the "university men." In this last section of the book, which finishes with a

reference to Dr. Dewey's conception about the public as a medium of general intelligence, Mead is not mentioned.

Conclusion

The present study employed an interactionist approach to gain an understanding of George Herbert Mead as a sociological theorist from the classical age. It made him an object of observation in order to find answers to the questions concerning *what he himself thought he was doing* and *what his actions meant to him*, rather than to discover "the true meaning" of his behavior" (Fine and Kleinman 1986:139). The method employed in the present study is novel in that it represents an elaboration of the method of *observing the observer* in interactionist ethnography (Goffman) into *second order observation*, which implies observing an observer in respect to what they cannot see on the basis of ideas found in macrosociological systems theory (Luhmann).

The observations conducted in order to attain the above goal provided three novel identifications as complements to exiting identifications rather than alternatives to them. The first is the identification of the Hull House settlement as first and foremost a "research field," as its residents conceived of it, in addition to its identification as a "social science laboratory," as most sociologists who worked at the University of Chicago perceived it. The second is the identification of Mead as primarily a psychologist interested in the psychology of social reform and an observer with a field worker role at Hull House, not only an academic philosopher. Coming from the outside and not being a resident of Hull House, Mead viewed Hull House as a genuine "scientific laboratory" where one could observe social reform in the making. The third identification is that of Addams as a participant observer at Hull House and Mead's key informant in "the field" as well as a leading figure in the social reform movement.

Observing George Herbert Mead as a psychologist who was led to Hull House by his scientific interest in the psychology of social reform means that he was not simply taken as an "object" of observation, but was observed as an active subject who conducted

research and observations. Second order observation made it possible to put forward and support the hypothesis that Mead's blind spot as an observer was his key informant—Addams. It established that what Mead could not see from his observation position was that Addams was also an observer and researcher who pursued her own sociological research agenda in addition to being a social reformer. As a pioneer in naturalistic sociological observations conducted in the world of the Chicago slums, Addams wrote sociological works, collected ethnographic material over a period of forty years, and published that material in autoethnographies that were much appreciated by her readership.

These observations comprise the building blocks or elements of a novel view concerning the history of symbolic interactionism that places its emergence as a distinct approach to the study of human group life somewhat further back in history, associating it with the opening of Hull House as a sociological research field where the first naturalistic sociological explorations were conducted. Perhaps this perception, if further elaborated and developed, will allow for the reconstruction of a more realistic view of Mead as a major contributor to the emergence of one of the most original and humanistic sociological traditions in place of the highly ambiguous and unworkable image of him as the single "harvester" of what was created through the efforts of many.

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Erving Goffman and R. D. Laing: The Relationship That Almost Was

Greg Smith, Yves Winkin

Introduction

In the critical literature about Erving Goffman's work there is relatively little coverage of its relationship to the ideas of Ronald David ("Ronnie") Laing (1927–1989), the Scottish psychiatrist who became a famous countercultural figure in Britain and America in the 1960s and 1970s.[1] Certainly, the systematic examination of their respective bodies of thought has not been a conspicuous feature of recent Goffman studies. R. D. Laing's name is absent from the two large handbooks (Lenz and Hettlage 2022; Jacobsen and Smith 2022) marking the Goffman centenary. This may be due in part to Laing's declining reputation in his later years as a fallen star who was compromised by a range of personal, alcohol, and drug issues, and whose unfortunate situation was epitomized by the young woman who approached him at a meeting and asked, "Didn't you use to be R. D. Laing?" (Barham 2012). In contrast, Goffman's reputation and standing, considerable as it was at the time of his death in 1982, has only grown since then.

In discourse about Goffman's sociology, linkage to Laing's ideas usually crops up in connection with the notion of "anti-psychia-

1. For exceptions see Brown 1995; Oelbaum 1972; Scott and Thorpe 2006.

try." This term was popularized by Laing's erstwhile collaborator, David Cooper (1967), and it became a magnet to bracket Laing with Goffman (or more precisely, the Goffman of *Asylums* fame), alongside Cooper, Michel Foucault, and Thomas Szasz (see e.g. Sedgwick 1982; Jacobsen and Kristiansen 2002; Scheff 2006). Laing (1985:8–9) himself did not embrace anti-psychiatry as a characterization of his position; nor did Goffman, whose *Asylums* (Goffman 1961a) was written some years prior to the label's popularity. All these writers came to be seen as part of a movement that critically questioned psychiatry's capacity to adequately address and relieve the situation of the mentally ill (Crossley 1998). Yet, as Sedgwick (1982) was the first to argue in detail, the positions of those commonly linked to anti-psychiatry were only very loosely aligned.

Citations

There are few references to Laing in Erving Goffman's writings. One occurs in his 1969 study of the havoc wrought by the mentally ill in the home and the local community, "The Insanity of Place," where Goffman (1969b:359) states in a footnote, "A vivid treatment of collusion within the family is provided in the writings of Ronald Laing." A second is found in the chapter of the vulnerabilities of experience in *Frame Analysis* (Goffman 1974:459), where Goffman cites from *Self and Others* (Laing 1969) about the recursive character of phantasies about one's own and the other's experiences. These brief mentions show that Goffman was well acquainted with leading themes in Laing's thinking and indicates points of contact between their analytic preoccupations.

Did Goffman see Laing's groundbreaking first book, *The Divided Self,* when drafting *Asylums*? It remains a possibility. *The Divided Self* was originally published in 1960 but circulated in manuscript form around the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations and the Tavistock Clinic from 1957 (Laing 1994:68–70). Goffman could have heard about Laing's work and perhaps seen the unpublished manuscript through his confidante Elizabeth Spillius, with whom he kept in touch throughout his life (Winkin 1987). She worked at the Tavistock Institute in the 1950s and participated in research semi-

nars with Laing and his associates at the Tavistock Clinic (Laing and Esterson 1970:9). If Goffman did see the manuscript or read Laing's first book, he did not cite it in *Asylums*.

When did Laing come across *Asylums,* Goffman's most substantial foray into mental illness? Again, we can only speculate. *Asylums* was written between 1956–60 and published in 1961, a year after *The Divided Self*. It is possible that Laing could have read those parts of Goffman's book that were published earlier (Goffman 1958; 1959b). He may have heard of Goffman from Spillius or have come across Goffman's "Alienation from Interaction" (Goffman 1957), which appeared in *Human Relations*, a journal then published by the Tavistock Institute. However, the textual evidence suggests that Laing became aware of Goffman's work only after the 1960 publication of his own *The Divided Self*.[2]

While it is not possible to precisely date the moment that Laing read Goffman, once he had, he was happy to cite portions of Goffman's writings that he saw as endorsing many of his own arguments and interpretations. By 1964 he was citing passages from *Asylums* (Goffman 1961a: 303, 306–307) about the social control functions of mental hospital treatment in a major talk, "The Schizophrenic Experience," delivered to the International Congress of Social Psychiatry (in Laing 1967), and in the influential article "Schizophrenia and the Family" (Laing 1964) in the British weekly *New Society*. When making a case for the social dimensions of schizophrenic experience, Laing liked to quote Goffman's (1961b:41) claim that "there seems to be no agent more effective than another person in bringing a world for oneself alive or, by a glance, a gesture, or a remark, shrivelling up the reality in which one is lodged" (e.g. Laing 1967:28; Laing 1976:12). The textual evidence points to the productive use that Laing made of Goffman's *Asylums* and his broader sociology of the interaction order, which was especially sensitive to issues of social control and the social psychology of the patient's situation (Brown 1995). It is quite conceivable that in the

2. The 1965 second edition of *The Divided Self* added *Asylums* to the "References" as part of its "further reading."

mid-1960s Laing's citations helped stimulate further interest in Goffman's work among British audiences.

Goffman biographers face considerable obstacles because of the absence of an authorized Goffman archive. In response, scholars have interviewed Goffman's colleagues, students, friends, and family to record their recollections of the man and responses to his ideas. These efforts have yielded a rich vein of source materials (see Shalin 2007–2015, 2021; Winkin 1988, 2022a, 2022b). Documentary sources have also proved fruitful. Gary Jaworski (2000) led the way with the discovery of correspondence between Goffman and Everett Hughes in the University of Chicago archives. Further mining of the Hughes archive by Philippe Vienne (2010) has added fresh dimensions to our understanding of the Hughes-Goffman relationship. Jaworski's (2023) major work *Erving Goffman and the Cold War* is full of archival discoveries. As libraries digitize their holdings, new epistolary sources have become more readily available, including the correspondence between Goffman and Harold Garfinkel about a joint book (Rawls 2023) and Goffman's letter in the Allen D. Grimshaw archive sketching the overall organization of his corpus of writings (Smith 2022).

This chapter represents one contribution to this broader biographical endeavor. Drawing upon the discovery of little-known documentary sources—Laing's recollections of a meeting between the two in 1962 and the correspondence between Laing and Goffman concerning the organization of the 1967 Dialectics of Liberation conference—we explore the sympathies and contrasts between their respective intellectual projects.

Copresence

The first document is a passage from Richard Simon's January 1983 interview with Laing. It recalls an evening two decades earlier when Goffman and Laing first met. It was 1962, Goffman had just become a tenured full professor of sociology at the University of California, Berkeley, and Laing was on a research visit to the United States underwritten by the Foundations Fund for Research in Psychiatry. In the 1964 Preface to *Sanity, Madness and the Family,* Laing

listed Goffman among the researchers with whom he had "valuable exchanges" (Laing and Esterson 1970:9).

The interview presents the meeting through Laing's eyes and perspective. Laing seems amused at Goffman's choice of meeting place: not any of the usual places that academics meet to talk business—the university office or seminar room, the pub or the city center restaurant—but "a sort of milk-shake bar in a suburb of Berkeley." Laing recalled that "it was a bit boring," mainly because they shared so much common ground. It "went on for about six or seven hours... it was one o'clock in the morning or so when I found my way out of there" (Simon 1992:31). Nonetheless, it seems to have been a memorable meeting for Laing:

> **Laing:** Although we had never met or seen photos of each other, we recognized each other immediately. He was carrying on like a very frisky dog—very vibrant, very conscious, very alert. He wasn't particularly frightened of me, I don't think, but was maintaining a sort of courageous terror in the face of the horror that was his main vision of things and his despair at not making any difference to it. With Goffman there was no consolation in the possibility of transcendence. It was as if he was saying, "It might be all right for God in his heaven, but it's not all right for me."
> [...] In some ways, we both saw the same sort of things: what goes on at the interface between people without their consciousness, how the contextual web in which they meet governs their slightest eye movement. In view of that, apart from exchanging anecdotes, it was a bit boring.
> **Q:** *It sounds like something out of* Knots. *You knew that he knew, and he knew that you knew that he knew.*
> **Laing:** Oh, certainly (Simon 1992:31).

The image of a very frisky dog[3] strikingly captures Goffman's intellectual energy and his reputation as an incessant observation and insight machine, noted by others who knew him well (Hymes 1984; Lofland 1984; Marx 1984). Characterizing Goffman's under-

3. In the original interview transcript, the wording is "He was fibrillating and twitching and carrying on like a very frisky dog—very vibrant, very conscious, very alert". See Simon (1983:60) and Burston (1996:59).

lying stance as one of "courageous terror" perhaps also reflected Laing's own take on the human condition (Burston 1996). Similarly, Laing noticed their shared appreciation of how the "contextual web" of the taken-for-granted worked to establish meaning in the face-to-face domain. If Laing found the meeting "a bit boring" then it was because, Laing felt, they were "kindred spirits": neither had to work hard to persuade the other. Finding the meeting a bit boring testified to Laing a concordance of their attitudes and outlook. Laing continued:

> He did say to me that he thought I'd give another twist to my thinking if I got myself admitted to a mental hospital as a patient incognito and really lived out a change of roles in practice. I told him I was far too frightened to take that suggestion. He himself had never done that, although he had been a junior physical therapist at St. Elizabeth's Hospital. I didn't feel any desire to pretend I was a patient and didn't think I needed to. I told him to do it himself if he wanted (Simon 1992:31).

Goffman's suggestion to Laing can be read as his reflection about how his *Asylums* research could be done differently. It was a proposal that would be taken up in a very famous study by David Rosenhan (1973) which saw otherwise normal "pseudopatients" admitted to mental hospitals, where they remained for periods ranging from 7 to 52 days.

Laing then raised what is for the biographer the difficult question of his status as the spouse of a suicide:

> There was a very curious postscript to the meeting when I heard a few months later that his wife had committed suicide by jumping off the Golden Gate Bridge[4]... Goffman was such a brilliant frame analyst that anyone living with him had to feel caged in by his ability to be meta to whatever was going on. You know, he was someone who was always outside things, who could sort of put his frame on whatever was occurring (Simon 1992:31).

4. She took her own life not from this bridge, but from another in the San Francisco Bay area, the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge (Anon 1964).

The suicide of Angelica (known as "Sky") generated a great deal of scurrilous gossip linking her death to the "difficult" personality of her husband. Some of this talk was generated by those burned by Goffman's no-holds barred sarcasm and searing wit and who thus had an axe to grind. Those with a fuller knowledge of the history of Sky's mental issues and circumstances considered such comments unjustified and out of order (Winkin 1987). However, Laing takes a different tack, drawing a link between Goffman's extraordinary capability as a frame analyst, always ready "to be meta to whatever was going on," and how that might lead a partner "to feel caged in." What we see writ small here is Laing the therapist trying to make troubling circumstances intelligible. Some of Laing's (1985) hallmark capacity to try to understand how the person's mental misery is connected to their relations with other human beings may have been conveyed to Goffman in this meeting. As we shall see, three years after Sky's death Goffman was earnestly seeking to spend time in discussion with Laing.

Laing's opinion that Goffman was "maintaining a sort of courageous terror" and was "a very, very lonely spirit" (Simon 1992:31) anticipates Dell Hymes' characterization of "Erving's gift": "he made of this gift a life in which joy and anger were inseparable" (Hymes 1984:628). It was to be the only meeting between Laing and Goffman. Laing remarked that "we never actually crossed paths again, although we could have." One reason why they did not meet again can be found in our second documentary source, the 1966–1967 correspondence between Laing and Goffman.

Correspondence

Goffman and Laing left their Berkeley milk-bar meeting on good terms. Laing remembered (Simon 1992:31) that "he and I found ourselves completely relaxed with each other although, as I said, we had nothing very much to say to each other." When Laing began planning a major conference to be held in London in 1967, Goffman was among the first to be invited as a principal speaker. The Congress on the Dialectics of Liberation, as it became known, was held from 15–30 July 1967 at the Round House, Chalk Farm, London.

Organized by four psychiatrists, R. D. Laing, David Cooper, Joseph Berke, and Leon Redler, it was their experience of radical innovation in their own field that led them to reconsider the nature of radical activism globally. David Cooper (1968:9–10) argued that:

> ... a cardinal failure of all past revolutions has been the dissociation of liberation on the mass social level, i.e. liberation of whole classes in economic and political terms, and liberation on the level of the individual and the concrete groups in which he is directly engaged. If we are to talk of revolution today our talk will be meaningless unless we effect some union between the macro-social and microsocial, and between 'inner reality' and 'outer reality.'

As a leading figure in the study of the micro-social and someone whom Laing felt "completely relaxed with," Goffman was an obvious person to approach. He accepted the invitation to speak. His name figured prominently in the advertising of the conference. Then, shortly before the conference was due to start, he withdrew. Why? What was the back story?

Previously it was believed that Goffman's withdrawal was due to political considerations. According to Gary Marx (1984:658), once Goffman found that the Black Power activist Stokely Carmichael was on the program, he pulled out. Given the typical distance Goffman kept from political concerns (Marx 1984), it is a plausible explanation. However, fresh light has been shed on Goffman's decision to withdraw by the discovery of correspondence between Goffman and Laing and other members of the organizing team of the Dialectics of Liberation event in The Joseph Berke Archive, 1960–2003 (Mulberry Bush Third Space).

The correspondence opened with an invitation from Laing to Goffman from his office in Wimpole Street, London W.1, dated 6 July 1966. It was a standard letter that outlined the scope of the conference, set the dates on which it would take place, and sketched the state of play about the funding of attendance. About its scope Laing stated, "the theme of this conference will be the Dialectics of Liberation" and it would feature "meetings in halls and in the open air" across London to maximize participation. In addition, "behind the scenes" the aim was "to achieve an informal on-going meeting

of particular thinkers who by their retotalizations of the historical forces in which we are all caught will catalyze the efforts of people in all countries to rethink through the problems with which they are confronted." On 18 July, Goffman replied positively to Laing's invitation on Department of Sociology, Berkeley headed notepaper:

> Dear Ronald,
> Sounds like a wonderful conference, and I would love to attend. Two problems: I have very little political understanding or orientation; I have no money.
> Are we slated to meet this October some place?
> It was nice to hear from you again, and thanks for your very impressive books.
> Regards,
> Erving Goffman

Goffman's apparently candid remark about his political understanding and orientation is not to be taken entirely at face value. Goffman was adept at keeping his political commitments well camouflaged.[5] Perhaps it was a tease or an invitation to open issues that were not much discussed explicitly in the subsequent correspondence. His "slated to meet" query probably alludes to Laing's participation in the "Society and Psychosis" conference held in Philadelphia in mid-October 1966 that featured "the cream of the American... 'communication/environmental/family interactionists'." Goffman was due to attend, "but stood down at the last minute due to family commitments" (Laing 1994:125). Goffman was the single parent of a 13-year-old son at the time and had just begun a fellowship at the Center for International Affairs, Harvard University. The letter ends with Goffman thanking Laing for his books, confirmation of Goffman's close familiarity with Laing's work.

After the July letter to Laing there was an eight-month silence from Goffman. In November Laing wrote to Goffman to update him on conference, travel, and accommodation arrangements. On 30 December 1966, Laing proposed the date of 20 July 1967 for

5. On Goffman and politics, see Smith and Jacobsen (2019) and Hannem (2023).

Goffman's presentation at the "Congress," as the conference was now being described, and inviting his suggestions about how his presentation and the day might be best organized. There was no reply to these and other requests for information. Finally, in response to a letter from Dr Joseph Berke, who had taken charge of the organization of the Congress, Goffman undertook to "give a brief paper of some kind on the date designated."[6] Replying to Berke on 24 March 1967, Goffman registered his disquiet about the publicity attracted by "the conference on Liberation" ("I had not thought the Conference would attract the publicity it has") and its launch as "something that people pay to attend." He suggests "that such a format may be fine for disseminating ideas to a wider public, but perhaps not the best imaginable one for cultivating and developing perspectives and conceptions"—clearly implying that it was the latter that interested him.

Berke's robust reply emphasized that "the Congress is still being organized in the way that Dr. Laing described to you in his initial letters." He also sought to address Goffman's misgivings about its organization and fee. The organization included accommodation at a "large estate" (Rotherfield Hall) in Sussex for the principal participants that provided ideal circumstances "for cultivating and developing perspectives and conceptions" (as Berke, echoing Goffman's words, put it in his letter of 13 April 1967). Berke went on to explain that there would be three levels of people and participation at the conference, and the only public-facing event was the morning lecture. A fee charged to "registrants" was necessary because of the absence of outside funding. Berke was evidently pleased to hear that the Congress "was attracting a great deal of publicity in the U.S.A." and asked Goffman for more information about it as well as for a title for his talk. Berke ended this letter to Goffman, like his previous one, by passing on Laing's regards to him.

6. Goffman did not supply any reason for not replying to the requests of previous letters. However, his reply was typed on Center for International Affairs, Harvard University notepaper; all the letters to Goffman up to this point were sent to the Sociology department at Berkeley.

A week later Goffman replied to state that he could be in London for a 20 July talk, but that he could not stay for the two weeks of the Congress nor attend the event's opening dinner. He gave "Frame Analysis" as the "tentative title" for his presentation. He remarked, "Dr. Laing whizzed through the Boston area, and I missed him again" adding, "since he is always whizzing through, will you give him my phone number please [number supplied] so that I can get to chat with him on his next passage through" (Goffman to Berke, 20 April 1967). Goffman gave no indication to Berke about how long he planned to stay in London, nor did he supply the information about the publicity in the United States that concerned Goffman but delighted Berke. Berke wrote again on 8 June to arrange to collect Goffman from the airport when he arrived in London and to inform him that the Rotherfield Hall arrangement had collapsed, but that an alternative in London had been found. There is nothing in Berke's archive to indicate that Goffman responded to that letter.

However, the archive held one more letter from Goffman. It was a reply not to Berke but to Laing. Laing's letter is not in the Berke archive. Dated "July 7" it seems to have been typed by Goffman himself[7] on Center for International Affairs notepaper. It was signed "Erving" in his own hand:

> Dear Ronnie:
> That was a very civilized letter indeed, and if anything could allay my concerns it would. Obviously, you yourself will be trying to find a course between extremes where humaneness can survive. But the course still seems to me to be a very public one (for example, the advertisement in Ramparts[8]), and I just don't feel right doing things at that level. It's a rotten time to have you produce another speaker and if that can ever be forgotten I hope we can get together quietly for a couple of days of discussion. There is a lot of stuff I'd like to talk to you about.

7. The other three letters from Goffman in the archive were typed by secretarial staff at Berkeley and Harvard.

8. *Ramparts* was "America's premier leftist publication" (Richardson 2009:22) at its peak.

Goffman's letter sympathized with the predicament he had created for Laing and the co-organizers, but repeated that he remained uncomfortable about giving a large public lecture. Goffman's 7 July letter could not have been received by Laing until a few days before the Congress's start. It created an immediate problem for conference organizers who had to find someone else for the 20 July slot that Goffman originally agreed to occupy. It was filled by Ross Speck, a Canadian-born psychiatrist "who had to make a hasty retreat to the Isle of Man to think of something suitable to say at very short notice" (Laing 1994:136).

Conclusion

Was Goffman's withdrawal prompted by Stokely Carmichael's appearance on the program? A sceptic might argue that the correspondence is consistent with this interpretation. Carmichael's name was not mentioned in the letters, nor were any expressly political considerations directly entertained after Goffman's first letter. But it seems that Carmichael was a late addition to the program,[9] and Goffman's remarks (Goffman to Berke, March, 24, 1967) about not expecting the conference to attract the publicity it had in the United States might be read as an indication that he had noted the change. What was also becoming clearer as the planning of the Dialectics of Liberation developed was that it was on its way to attracting a reputation as legendary "happening" that brought together diverse strands of political dissent and cultural innovation. Perhaps the reasons for Goffman's disquiet concerned participation in a meeting that "was no academic conference," but "a series of public lectures, discussions and seminars, some poetry and music, films and documentaries" (Mullan 1999:106). It would be easy to regard Goffman's long period of silence as a kind of buyer's remorse and to read the correspondence as a front to cover up a decision Goffman had come to regret, exacerbated by the decision to invite Carmichael.

9. His name did not appear in the program circulating at the beginning of 1967, but did appear on the posters advertising the Congress in early summer.

Certainly, Goffman was never renowned for taking stances on the issues of the day.[10] The correspondence covers the year that Goffman spent at Harvard University's Center for International Affairs, drafting the essays making up *Strategic Interaction* (Goffman 1969a). There he was surrounded by academics with political and strategic expertise such as Thomas Schelling. They may not have counselled Goffman directly, but they would have known that this was the kind of conference that would attract the interest of the FBI—which in fact it did (Keen n.d.). So astute an analyst of the symptomatic significance of expressive behavior as Goffman could have realized that if he showed up on the FBI's radar, it was not so much about his ideas and writing as about the company he kept. Thus, one plausible explanation for Goffman's sensitivity about the publicity for the Dialectics of Liberation was that his name was appearing on posters alongside not only Stokely Carmichael, but also such well-known radical figures as Paul Goodman, Herbert Marcuse, and Paul Sweezy. And if Goffman knew that the FBI would take notice, then his authorization of the dispatch of a copy of *Strategic Interaction* (Goffman 1969) to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, with the suggestion that it may be of interest to him and his staff (Sale 1970), might be more than just a joke on Goffman's part (Jaworski 2023:95). It functioned also as a "move" in an "expression game" and a marker of resistance to the "courtesy stigma" (Goffman 1963b:28–30) acquired through the Dialectics of Liberation publicity by obliquely messaging the FBI, "nothing of concern here."

The correspondence examined here presents a more complicated picture of Goffman's withdrawal from the Dialectics of Liberation Congress. In the correspondence, nothing directly political is mentioned beyond Goffman's first letter's concession about lacking political understanding and orientation. Later in the correspondence his stated position was that he could not reconcile himself to speaking before a large, fee-paying audience who might have ex-

10. As Marx (1984) showed. However, the political dimension was not absent from Goffman: recently Stacey Hannem (2023) has persuasively argued that Goffman's writings examine the politics of presentation, of partisanship, of micro-action, and of moral choices.

pectations he felt he could not fulfil. The Congress became too far removed from the traditional small academic seminar Goffman felt at home in. Nearly all his presenting experience up until that point had taken place in such situations. He would later speak before large audiences, such as his Fenton Lectures at the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1970 (Goffman 1974; Winkin 2022b) and his talk at the Amsterdam Social Sciences Festival in 1975 (Brennan 1975), but in each of these cases he was free to set his own agenda, speaking at length on frame analysis and gender advertisements respectively.[11] Laing's depiction of Goffman as a "a very, very lonely spirit" also sits well with Winkin's (2022b) characterization of Goffman on his journeys abroad as a "travelling hermit." If Goffman became an avoidant or reclusive figure, it was because he always prioritized his own intellectual production and remained focused on developing his thinking and writing. Throughout his career he felt that his publications better represented his ideas than anything he might say in interview (David 1980). In contrast, Laing was very much more open to promoting his ideas not only through academic publications, but also though interviews in newspapers and popular magazines, TV appearances, university debates, films, records, and the like. After Laing's groundbreaking studies published in the 1960s, however, his intellectual project seemed to lose its way.[12] In part by shunning the limelight that Laing pursued and embraced, Goffman was able to forge a subtle and insightful oeuvre centered on a stable set of analytic concerns around the centrality of the interaction order (Goffman 1983).

When Laing recalled in 1983 that "we never actually crossed paths again, although we could have" (Simon 1992:31), no doubt one of the things he had in mind was the disappointment of Goffman's

11. Goffman also presented to a large audience in Rio de Janeiro in 1978 at a conference showcasing the anti-psychiatry movement in Brazil (Winkin 2022a:91-92). There are parallels between this event and the Dialectics of Liberation. It is also worth noting that (as was the case at the Amsterdam talk) Goffman reacted angrily to attempts to be photographed, possibly in an attempt to preserve his incognito.

12. See, for example, Jason Ditton's 1979 review of books by and about Laing and Laurie Taylor's (1983) interview with Laing in *The Times*.

late withdrawal from the Dialectics of Liberation event. But also, by 1967, Laing's career had taken off. He became a public figure, a celebrity intellectual suffused with the spirit of the 1960s. When they met in 1962, each was on the cusp of stardom in their respective fields. Both had published two groundbreaking books— Laing, *The Divided Self* (1960) and *Self and Others* (1961), Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959a) and *Asylums* (1961a). Goffman, five years older than Laing, could also point to a substantial body of journal articles dating from the mid-1950s. Laing's son Adrian observed that "the three years of 1962, 1963 and 1964 marked the most intense intellectual period of Ronnie's life" (Laing 1994:75). Between the 1962 meeting and the Dialectics of Liberation Congress, Laing's career was transformed from creative psychiatrist to public intellectual and cultural icon.

In contrast, the progress of Goffman's career seemed to stutter in the mid to late 1960s before returning (following his move to the University of Pennsylvania in 1968) to a consistently innovatory pattern of work through to his death. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the mid-1960s was a very troubling time for Goffman personally as he dealt with the impact of the suicide of his wife, single parenthood, and eventual relocation to the East Coast.[13] Goffman's 1969 article "The Insanity of Place" has come to be read as his sociological response to the difficult domestic circumstances he faced with Sky over a number of years (Smith 2006:83; Shalin 2014 substantiates this reading). Laing was renowned for analyzing the layers of framing and miscommunication occurring in personal relationships, especially those taking place in family contexts. In the Dialectics of Liberation correspondence, we see repeated efforts on Goffman's part to reach out to Laing to spend time together discussing matters of mutual concern. On three occasions Goffman expressed a wish to meet Laing: in his 18 July 1966 letter that alluded to the Philadelphia meeting that October; in his 20 April 1967 letter that noted Laing's "whizzing through" Boston; and in his 7 July

13. As Philip Manning puts it, "there is the awkward question of the impact of the illness and death of his wife (Angelica Choate) on his work" (Manning 2023:43) that many Goffman commentators skate around.

1967 letter which expressed the hope that he and Laing "can get together quietly for a couple of days of discussion." At a time when Goffman would have begun planning and drafting "The Insanity of Place," it seems not unreasonable to suppose that the "lot of stuff I'd like to talk to you about" included the article's subtext: Sky's conduct and how it was handled by other members of the Goffman household.

Laing's recollections of his 1962 meeting with Goffman and the Dialectics of Liberation correspondence presents a more complicated picture of not only Goffman's withdrawal from the Congress, but also their attitudes towards each other and their work. Goffman and Laing liked each other's books. Goffman's milk bar meeting with Laing had gone well and he was eager to renew his acquaintance and resume discussion on matters of mutual interest. The invitation to the Dialectics conference provided that opening. Early on, Goffman learned that the main participants would be accommodated in Rotherfield Hall, a large house in the Sussex countryside, to facilitate more informal, private discussion (Laing to Goffman, 4 November 1966). Berke (13 April 1967) reminded Goffman of this arrangement to reassure Goffman about opportunities for "cultivating and developing perspectives and conceptions." The correspondence shows that Goffman was pursuing Laing for face-to-face discussions, while Laing and his conference co-organizers were pursuing Goffman to deliver a big conference presentation. The Rotherfield Hall arrangement fell through in June 1967 when the owner of the house reneged on the agreement with the organizers (Berke to Goffman, 8 June 1967). The collapse of this arrangement could easily have been the event prompting Goffman's late withdrawal.[14] Whatever motivated the withdrawal, for Goffman and Laing it was to be the point which ended their relationship that almost was.

14. Sight of the "very civilized letter indeed" from Laing to Goffman, absent from the Berke archive, might serve to secure this conjecture.

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A Complicated but Not Impossible Marriage: Critical Theory and Symbolic Interactionism

Marco Marzano

Introduction

Critical Theory, above all in its Frankfurt School post-Marxist version, appears to have very little in common with the symbolic interactionism of the many heirs and followers of Herbert Blumer. There would seem to be a fundamental incompatibility between these two theoretical approaches that Lauren Langman (2019) has effectively summarized in five points. The first two relate to the fact that Critical Theory regards subjectivity as an historic product of processes of domination and of the gradual evolution of ideologies, systems of inequality, and diverse forms of human-to-human exploitation. In contrast, symbolic interactionists tend to ignore the historical dimension, generate an a-temporal analysis of social interactions, and neglect, or at least sideline, issues of power and ideology. The third point concerns the importance of the unconscious in social life and, above all, in early socialization. This comprises a decisive element in Critical Theory that is effectively missing from symbolic interactionism. Point four addresses the potential for a "neutral" and completely objective, value-free science that symbolic interactionists believe is possible, but the followers of Critical Theory reject. Human emancipation—liberation from structures of domination and subjec-

tion—is one of Critical Theory's explicit goals, constituting a normative benchmark and an imperative for Karl Marx's heirs. For the latter, scientific neutrality is a sham which masks a partisanship that is worse than any other precisely because it presents itself as objective and value-free. The fifth and last point is associated with language, which from the perspective of Critical Theory mirrors power relationships and class inequalities and is never neutral.

One might add that the quasi-exclusive object of symbolic interactionists' attention is social interaction, which consists of contexts in which two or more social players act simultaneously, while the primary focus for the followers of Critical Theory is what is taking place "off stage," which involves the socialization processes and agencies that are at work as well as what Lukes (2005) terms the "third dimension of power." These consists of the "invisible" factors—such as the ability of the élites to manipulate information and alter the perception of the real world by the subjugated— that condition social action from the outside. Interactionists extol the autonomy and freedom of social players envisaged as actively building their world, while the Frankfurt School underlines the huge burdenof constraints that obstruct individual freedom. The interactionists focus on the bottom of the social ladder and thus study ordinary people and their everyday lives, while Marxism derived approaches look to its apex, that is, the élites that they regard as constantly working, with all the means available to them, to safeguard their own interests at the expense of the subjugated lower classes. Critical Theory has ultra-solid European roots and a rock-hard bond with Marxist and Weberian conflictualist traditions, while classical symbolic interactionism is a wholly American approach, heir to the philosophies of James, Peirce, Mead, and their pragmatism (Marzano 2012).

Many interactionists accuse Critical Theory of being overly abstract, nurturing an apocalyptic pessimism, and residing upon indemonstrable prejudices. Symbolic interactionism has, in turn, been accused by Marx's heirs of failing to grasp the most significant aspects of the social status quo, of indulging in unjustifiable optimism, and, in general, of being complicit in the classist and bourgeois social order. Further confirmation of this apparent incompatibility is to be found in the fact that the rise of symbolic interactionism, qualitative methods, and ethnographic analysis within the sociolo-

gical communities of many countries (including mine, Italy) took place in the 1980s, precisely at the same time as the neoliberal turn in political and social life and the decline of Marxism and Critical Theory in the academic world.

In light of the above, one might well argue that a "fusion" between symbolic interactionism and Critical Theory is simply unthinkable because of the epistemological, philosophical, heuristic, political, and cultural void between the two approaches. The most recent serious attempt to "integrate" them—two articles by Burbank and Martins (2010 and 2019)—requires, in my opinion, a critical revision. While these two scholars do not deny the existence of significant divergences between Critical Theory and symbolic interactionism, they underline certain potential convergences, even going so far as to explicitly argue for a new approach they term "radical interactionism." In particular, Burbank and Martins detect an affinity between the interactionist notion of "reference group" and Antonio Gramsci's concept of "hegemony." In their opinion, the reference group in a social system divided into classes will invariably be the dominant class because it is thus capable of imposing its viewpoint on the rest of society on the basis of hegemonic devices. By this same logic, the "looking glass self " propounded by the interactionists could, from Burbank and Martins' position, be interpreted critically and thereby viewed as consisting of the fact that the subjugated see themselves through the eyes of the subjugators and thus adopt the perspectives of the powerful. Burbank and Martins also maintain that a further element of affinity between interactionism and Critical Theory is the interactionists' emphasis on agency and the ability of subjects to act on and change the world around them. If this element was transformed into a drive to subvert existing power relations, it could turn out to be valuable for Critical Theory and its human emancipation plans as well.

I would argue, however, that Burbank and Martins are stretching their point too far and that their gamble fails to pay off. Although it is true that the interactionist movement has fragmented and differentiated internally over recent decades (Sandstrom, van den Scott, and Fine 2021), I believe that no interactionist would accept its fundamental principles being turned on their heads to this extent. For interactionists, social actors' reference groups can

only be understood by means of empirical observation aimed at gaining an insight concerning where those groups' most significant social norms come from in a given situation, such as family, professional group, social class, and so forth. Interactionists regard the potential these groups possess to influence subjects' actions as identical, and they maintain that empirical research alone can determine which exert the greatest, and which the least, influence (Atkinson and Housley 2003). For Marxism's heirs, in contrast, if the subjugated classes adopt the perspective offered them by the dominant classes—if they choose these latter as their reference group, in interactionist terms—then they have fallen victim to a "false consciousness" (Marx and Engels 2021), namely, an objectively incorrect and mistaken perception of their interests. It would thus seem to me that any equivalence between the Marxist and interactionist approaches is mere word play.

However, while a fusion between symbolic interactionism and Critical Theory may then be impracticable, all is not lost. There are many middle ways between assimilation and total and perpetual detachment, and they testify to a possible convergence of research interests between interactionists and Marxists or post-Marxists—at times in respect to a specific empirical object (Müller 2019). I will examine certain of these theoretical proposals below, focusing in particular on the following critical symbolic interactionist's perspectives: 1) Lonnie Athens's radical interactionism, 2) Adele Clarke's situational analysis, 3) Erving Goffman reread in Foucault's terms (Jenkins), and 4) Michael Burawoy's perspective on Marx.

Lonnie Athens's Radical Interactionism

The first form of "critical interactionism" I will examine here is that developed by North American sociologist Lonnie Athens, which he terms "radical interactionism" (Athens 2007, 2009, 2013, 2017). The peculiarity of this approach is that it remains entirely within the confines of interactionism while highlighting the work of the frequently forgotten Robert Park and juxtaposing it with that of the better-known founder of symbolic interactionism, Herbert Blumer. Athens himself acknowledges that a straightforward

interactionist Marxist merger would be highly problematical, and that radical interactionism would unquestionably be best sought elsewhere. The path chosen by Athens is designed to circumvent Marxism altogether—an approach about which Mead had serious doubts— and it involves stressing ideas generated within the interactionist movement that had been long forgotten and never sufficiently elaborated. The radicalism of this proposal can be inferred by the violently negative reaction it triggered within the traditional, and conservative, symbolic interactionism milieu.

The starting point for Athens's radical interactionism is a rediscovery of the thought of Robert Park—journalist, later sociologist, and the undisputed leader of the Chicago School of Sociology in its golden age. Influenced by the work of Georg Simmel, whom he met when he was in Germany—and with whom he shared a preference for natural observation as a research method—Park accorded a central role to the study of power and domination. In his vision of society, conflict counted as much as co-operation, and anyone denying this was immediately liable to accusations of conservatism. Park even went so far as to affirm that co-operation and the absence of conflict frequently mask implicit, covert domination.

At the opposite extreme, power and domination belong to humanity's past in the (non-radical) symbolic interactionism of Mead and Blumer. For Blumer, the vast majority of social action is expressive or co-operative, or still ritualized and routinized, and it has nothing to do with power. He in fact views the latter as being exclusively associated with conflict and thus associated with a limited number of social situations. For this reason, power and domination as a subject of study is of marginal importance for symbolic interactionists—it is non-mandatory and a matter for individual scholars. Blumer himself never encouraged his students to take these issues into account. For Athens, this attitude coincides with the adoption of a clearly conservative stance, a clear preference for the preservation of the status quo, and a falsely objective science that is actually biased in favor of the dominant classes.

Athens accuses symbolic interactionists of either selecting research subjects in which power relations are unimportant, or ignoring the presence of power and domination even where it is tangible. As Athens observes, "When you do not expressly look for something

it should not be very surprising how seldom you ever find it" (Athens 2013:11). Ultimately, the notion of power is relevant for the followers of Mead and Blumer—whose only shared interest with the radical interactionists was a passion for ethnographic research and qualitative methods—only when it is used by social actors to define the particular situation in which they find themselves and in no other circumstances. However, they thereby end up denying the unconscious and subconscious dimensions of social phenomena altogether, that is, the sphere in which profound social structures come into play. This is where the forces that Gramsci (2011) termed "hegemonic devices" are triggered—to bring in a writer whom Athens would not have cited. These forces are as invisible to social actors as they are effectively able to generate power effects.

Adele Clarke's Situational Analysis

The second "critical interactionist" theoretical stance that I will briefly describe is "situational analysis," as developed by Adele Clarke (Clarke, Friese, and Washburn 2016; Clarke 2019). In contrast to Athens, Clarke did not feel the need to make any specific criticisms of traditional interactionism, nor draw distinctions between its founders. In her opinion, Mead always provided appropriate space for analyzing social conflict, as did Dewey, who sought ways in which to mitigate its destructive effects, Park, Burgess, and Wirth. Clarke regarded critical interactionism as simply the non-problematic outcome of mixing symbolic interactionism with feminism, anti-racism, and queer, indigenous, post-colonial, postmodern, and post-structural theories. Note that this long list of theories completely—and significantly—omits all reference to Marxist or post-Marxist theories, which are thus excluded from the catalogue of theories with which symbolic interactionism might be linked.

Clarke regarded situational analysis as having close relatives, or kindred theories, in the field of interactionism. These include Norman Denzin's interpretive interactionism (Denzin 1989), Kathy Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz 2014), Reiner Keller's sociology of knowledge (Keller 2018), the theories of Peter Hall (1987, 1997), Lonnie Athens's radical interactionism (Athens

2013), Susan Leigh Star's ecologies of knowledge (Star 1995), Michael Schwalbe's social psychology of domination (Schwalbe 2015), and Arlie Hochschild's sociology of the emotions (Hochschild 2016). These theories have, in turn, put forward a plurality of research methods ranging from autoethnography, to performance tests, and to new forms of writing. In Clarke's opinion, all these theories are, like situational analysis, interested in according appropriate importance to the study of social stratification, discrimination, and prejudice and social conflict in general, including class, racial, ethnic, religious, and sexual conflict. Their power and popularity in the social science field is directly bound up with the need to stave off democratic crisis, social injustice, environmental degradation, and all forms of disintegration in social life.

Situational analysis (SA) derives directly from the thought and theoretical approach of Anselm Strauss—whom Clarke labels a "critical interactionist"—particularly his notion of social world/arenas (Strauss 1978), in combination with a pronounced focus on power mechanisms and discursive analysis deriving from the writings of Michel Foucault (1980), the inclusion of non-human things deriving from Science and Technology Studies, and the adoption of a powerful constructivist perspective.

SA's focus is directed at situations and the elements comprising them, which are linked to one another by means of maps. The latter are constructed—and constantly updated during research projects— using a wide variety of research tools: interviews, ethnographic observation, documents, narratives, visual materials, and others. The first to be constructed are the maps that relate to the actors present in a given situation—human beings, non-human beings, technologies, organizations, institutions, natural resources, economic factors, traditions, social and cultural events, and so forth. The relative importance and specific power of these elements is then assessed. After this has been done, theoretical sampling is employed to construct "relationship maps," on which the relationships between the various elements in the situation are indicated; "social world arena maps," on which organizations and institutions aspects are outlined; and, finally, "positional maps," on which the conflicts and clashes between the diverse positions are illustrated.

Rereading Goffman in Foucault's Terms

The third form of critical interactionism that I will address resulted rom an attempt to reread the work of one of the most important proponents of symbolic interactionism, Erving Goffman, in order to reveal its presumed inherent radicalism and affinities with critical sociology.

The most determined proponent of this perspective was Richard Jenkins (2008; see also Rogers 1977, 1980). Jenkins regarded Goffman as unconsciously a major theorist of power on a par with Michel Foucault, with whom he purportedly shared much in common. Jenkins argued that Goffman's analysis took due account of many "structural" elements, such as social class, status, and gender. In addition, he maintained that Goffman's analysis reveals how the strategies adopted by individuals to obtain resources consist of (at times violent) attempts to exert power over others. As such, they are not results of personal inventiveness and skill. but rather of the customs at work in society at a given time. Ultimately, Jenkins viewed Goffman's quintessentially "micro" analysis as being capable of casting light on how a great many "macro" aspects of contemporary social systems function. The recent work of Smith and Jacobsen (2019) presents an alternate stance concerning the affinities between Goffman and Critical Theory. The first step in their discussion comprised an effort to defend Goffman from the accusation that he was a conservative interested more in preserving the social order than in providing any determined criticism of it. Doing so required Smith and Jacobsen to take stock of the harsh criticisms of Goffman's supposed conservatism that had been put forward by another legend in sociology, Alvin Gouldner. As is well known, Gouldner describes Goffman's work in his celebrated *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* as "bourgeois sociology" suited to members of the middle class who were obsessed with other people's opinions of them and interested primarily in avoiding gaffes and faux pas. Gouldner argues that there are no clear social hierarchies and no clear distinction between subjugated and subjugators in Goffman's analysis. Furthermore, Goffman presents social life as resembling a theater in which everyone is constantly engaged in manipulating others—patients manipulate psychiatrists, children manipulate parents, employees manipulate employers, and so on. Gouldner also

claims that the historical and institutional dimensions are entirely lacking from Goffman's work, with no space accorded to power, social inequalities, and social structures. His work rather comprises a micro-sociological vision centered around personal interactions, encounters, and specific situations. Gouldner argues that this is all society is for Goffman, and nothing more, stating that

> Goffman's image of social life is not of firm, well-bounded social structures, but rather of a loosely stranded, criss-crossing, swaying catwalk along which men dart precariously. People are acrobatic actors and gamesmen who have, somehow, become disengaged from social structures and who are growing detached even from culturally standardized roles. They are [...] individuals "working the system" for the enhancement of self. Although disengaged or partly alienated from the system, they do not, however, rebel against it (Gouldner 1970:379).

Such accusations have been firmly rebuffed by certain of Goffman's defenders (Young 1971; Edgley and Turner 1984). In 1974, Goffman himself noted that he had had no intention of singing lullabies to people, in the sense of calming their revolutionary fervor, but had simply been interested in observing them snore.

Smith and Jacobsen similarly reject Gouldner's *j'accuse.* They regard Goffman as a micro-sociologist whose thinking may also be of interest to macro-sociologists. For example, the "impression management" that so fascinated Goffman could well be viewed as an expression of the "society of good manners," but it can also be regarded as an approach to life in a gloomy, dismal world in which individuals are fragile and vulnerable, tend to be alienated, and are subject to constant external pressures that they frequently turn upon themselves.

In actual fact, if Goffman's thought is examined frankly, it must be admitted that the great Canadian sociologist never formulated a thoroughgoing historical philosophy, that is, he never laid claim to having discovered the overall direction of historical change or having understood the ultimate meaning of social and political evolution. In this respect he is quite unlike figures such as Michel Foucault. Goffman was more modestly interested in observing the underestimated aspects of social interaction and, more generally, in supplying the social sciences with new and effective analytical

tools. Goffman himself set out the limitations of his theories when he wrote that

> I do not believe that one can learn about the shape of the commodities market, or the distribution of a city's land values, or the ethnic succession in municipal administrations, or the structure of kinship systems, or the systematic phonological shifts within the dialects of a speech by extrapolating or aggregating from particular social encounters among the persons involved in any one of these patterns (Goffman 1983:9).

References to power and domination in his work are extremely rare and nebulous.

Smith and Jacobsen's implied conclusions seem very reasonable to me. While Goffman's theory lends itself to being read as a source of inspiration for certain "critical studies" by those with the will and capacity to do so, Goffman can in no way be considered a critical sociologist per se. He in fact always shied away from any form of political activism, even in explosive 1960s Berkeley—he once remarked that he would enter the fray only if the police began shooting and killing students (Marx 1984). The radicals viewed him as a conservative, the conservatives painted him as a dangerous radical.

From Marxism to Social Interactionism: Michael Burawoy's Proposal

The fourth and last attempt I will present concerning the possibility of narrowing the gap between symbolic interactionism and Critical Theory originated within the latter, namely, from Michael Burawoy's Marxist theory and his "extended case method" (1998, 2009). While this approach requires researchers to use theory as their starting point, they must also constantly modify and correct their theoretical position on the basis of their fieldwork and observations of the results of their empirical work. The basic goal is not to identify a definitive metaphysical truth, but rather to constantly improve the quality of existing theories. In Burawoy's extended case method, theory and research are closely and inseparably bound together, with the former being constantly measured against and challenged by the latter. The outcome of this dialogue may consist

of improving, transforming, or abandoning a given theory, setting it aside after revealing its obsolescence, current uselessness, or death.

Burawoy's research methodology is a world away from positivism in that it is explicitly reflexive and requires constant dialogue and co-operation with the subjects of the research. It also explicitly rejects uniform, standardized procedures.

Burawoy's own research in Zambia comprises the best example of the application of the extended case method. Burawoy was interested in understanding how the new black élite of the re-born Zambian state was decolonizing, including its preparation of a working blueprint for its post-colonial state and society. The indispensable premise of Burawoy's research project consisted of a grasp of the background of the current state of affairs and knowledge ofthe state's economic situation, particularly its total dependence on copper mining. His field work involved obtaining a position at the Personnel Research Unit of the Copper Industry Service Bureau in the town of Kitwe, in the heart of the mining region. This was not motivated by an abstract and ideological belief that the sole important object of sociological study is social interaction, and that society is made up exclusively of face-to-face (or virtual) encounters between human beings, but rather by the fact that it would have been impossible to understand what was really happening in Zambia without the experience and knowledge that such employment could provide.

Studying official documents and other written evidence had not provided Burawoy with a sufficient understanding of whether the "color bar principle" had indeed been eliminated in a country where very few diplomats and a truly minimal number of graduates had qualified for managerial roles. He concluded that participant observation was the only possible way in which to acquire key information that could supplement the "structural" knowledge framework he had already obtained. At the end of the subsequent research, Burawoy was able to explain why Zambianizion had not only not freed the country from its dependence on the world's advanced capitalist nations, but had in fact replicated the very same class relations that colonialism had imposed.

The overall framework that Burawoy had initially outlined was thus complemented by subsequent "micro" descriptions. For example, he discovered that

> Zambianization takes place under the erosion of "colonial despotism" toward a less punitive production regime but one still based on the color bar. [...] One can say that, within this political regime, *resources* (money, skill, education, prestige, etc.) are distributed along racial lines supported by *schemas* (norms, beliefs, theories, etc.) of racial supremacy. The Zambianization process is set in motion when a Zambian is promoted to replace an expatriate. The expatriate seeks to preserve his job (a resource) and looks upon the new incumbent as inferior to himself (schema). Management intervenes to open a new job for the expatriate, who takes with him some of his old authority and responsibility, leaving his successor with fewer resources. The successor's subordinates, seeing him as a diminished version of his predecessor, withdraw their support and confidence. Unable or unwilling to seek support from his white boss, the new Zambian supervisor resorts to more authoritarian rule, which confirms his subordinates' worst suspicions. In their view the new Zambian successor is worse than his white predecessor—he is trying to recreate the despotism of the past. Subordinates further withdraw cooperation and the cycle continues until a new equilibrium of force and consent are reached. The regime of power, that is the color bar, is reproduced (Burawoy 1998:18).

In summary, Burawoy provides a highly effective method that involves theory-research integration as well as macro-micro integration. He succeeded in salvaging the great technical legacy of Critical Theory by grafting it onto the very fertile terrain of qualitative research, social interactionist observation, and ethnography, thereby breathing life into an extremely valuable and promising form of "critical interactionism."

Conclusions

This brief journey through contemporary critical interactionism has culminated in a validation and a revelation. The validation is that a straightforward fusion between interactionism and Critical Theory is not practicable, and that the two remain separate and distinct approaches which are too different and remote from each other for any assimilation or complementarity to be envisioned. In none of the four theories examined is fusion propounded or even mooted.

The revelation is that the gap between the two can be narrowed in a pragmatic and non-dogmatic way—for example, with a discovery on the part of interactionists of the significance of social phenomena, such as power conflicts, domination, inequalities, and social injustices (Schrock 2024). Athens argues that although such considerations were present at the advent of interactionism's history, they were subsequently overshadowed by the pre-eminence of conservative thinkers within the movement. Clarke, in contrast, maintains that a focus on themes of power and domination has been a constant in symbolic interactionism, which has consequently always had, in some way, a "critical" vocation. Which of the two might be right is ultimately unimportant. What counts is that a considerable number of today's interactionists are interested in using tools for qualitative and social investigation to study the social and political phenomena that have always been the subject of Marxist and post-Marxist macro-analysis. The narrowing of the gap between these two approaches can only generate generalized benefits and reciprocal crossfertilization. As Sandstrom, van den Scott, and Fine have argued,

> critical interactionism offers an opportunity for the SI perspective to be adopted more extensively in the analysis of social structure and inequality (2021:441).

In a different sphere, the advent within the Marxist field of an integrated micro-macro approach such as Burawoy's serves to indicate the concrete possibility that Karl Marx's descendants may be willing to make use of ethnography and qualitative research in order to modernize and reinforce Marxism's theoretical arsenal.

If such developments continue in the years to come—if the narrowing of the gap between Critical Theory and symbolic interactionism continues—we will happily be obliged to examine this difficult, but not impossible marriage once again.

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An Essay on Meaning, Interaction, and Individuality in the Service of Submission

Andrew Blasko

"Education will become the weapon of mass destruction of the twenty-first century."
Jean-Christophe Bonn

"Individuals confirm the system, fulfill the system, make the system, are the system."
Václav Havel

Introduction: Contemporary Society and Domination

A common view in social theory today is that people are not completely dominated by social structures, social mechanisms, and forms of reproduction, and that change to a large extent depends on human action and imagination. I wish to argue that such claims are not scientific in character, and that they instead comprise purely ideological proclamations. Not only do they leave open the question of the relative roles of action and imagination in social change—as if there were no substantial difference between 1% and 99% submission to domination—they also presume that action can typically be imaginative in a positive sense.

Today, one is fully justified in asking whether imagination may not readily foster the type of action in which one makes oneself

subservient to another—or even takes the life of another. Can imagination thus not be destructive, leading us away from positive change and fulfillment in any accepted meaning of the term, towards emptiness, meaninglessness, suffering, and death? Cannot imagination also produce the greatest of horrors, such as when "social change," so to speak, becomes an inevitable fact for countless numbers of people who likely cannot imagine what is in store for them and have no say in the matter whatsoever?

Unfortunately, declarations about the death of objective determination all too frequently seem to indicate that determination in society—not merely in the social sciences—is indeed alive and well. Attractive statements about the positive role of individual human imagination in social change have in fact very little to do with demonstrating the sovereignty of the individual for anyone other than persons who wield power over others and are able to determine the course of someone else's life.

But why does such an ideology exist, and why is it so commonly accepted today, when we in the global north live in a supposedly postmodern civilization in which individualism appears to reign supreme? The answer I propose is that it exists to serve the structures of power that typify a society in which people are regarded as objects that exist solely in order to be bought, sold, and used for someone else's purposes. Perhaps this is the case particularly for those very individuals who feel themselves so very much in control of their isolated, atomized lives, as if they have been determined by outside forces to think that they are not determined. After all, do they not believe that the individual as s/he exists today is essentially free, independent, and in control of their fate—regardless of what the actual state of affairs might be? And would not this belief then transcend reality?

Modern industrial society—however we regard its character—has manifestly changed the meaning of "individual" in dramatic ways. Exploring such changes in respect to the subjectivity of the individual may help shed light on the consequences that such changes have for both the individual and society.

Steigler and Heidegger: Being without Time

A useful starting point for the present discussion is Bernard Stiegler's rather original reading of Heidegger that he presents in *La technique et le temps* (Stiegler 1994–2001). In addition to arguing that technology—and apparently social technology as well—comprises the only means available to us for grasping the ontological significance of temporality, Stiegler regards Heidegger's early analysis of human existence as constituting an account of psychic individuation. He also views Heidegger's thought after the so-called "turning" during the 1930s as a discussion of what may be termed collective indviduation, or individuation within a given community.

We could interpret Stiegler's position to mean that Heidegger's invocation that we listen to the "Call of Being" is an articulation, if not indeed a justification, of individualization. We would then have to ask whether this equates human existence with individualism in a way that leads to the distortion or loss of the foundation of individualism within the community. And what relation might such individualization have to what Heidegger spoke of as the fate of certain nations to overcome the history of metaphysics through an activity in which individuals would follow the philosopher-king as they transformed their common fate into a reality in which only a limited number of individuals possessed a power of imagination sufficient for making others submit to their decisions? (see Heidegger 2012).[1]

An important theme developed by Heidegger in this respect is that only the enlightened thinker, or one who thinks "authentically" as Heidegger might say, is capable of leading the nation as a whole, including all those individuals who comprise it, to the fulfillment of their destiny—which is to listen to the "Call of Being" and thereby serve the self-manifestation of Being in the truth. As Jürgen Habermas has remarked, however, listening to the Call of Being entails no ethical or moral stance or response on the part of the one who listens, for any sense of personal responsibility is

1. Although the work in question, *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*, was written between 1936 and 1938, it first became publicly available in 1989, with a revised edition in English appearing in 2012.

dissolved into the supposed destiny that devolves from Being itself. A given individual would then be free to exercise power and force others to submit when he judged himself to have the necessary insight or existential authenticity to do so (Habermas 1987). We should keep in mind that Heidegger himself referred to the "turn" in his thinking as in fact comprising a "turn" in Being itself, as if the two were in fact one and the same (Heidegger 2003).

In our consideration of the significance of the individual today, it is important to note in this regard that Heidegger fundamentally transformed Husserl's important notion of intentionality. Briefly stated, Husserl's position in this respect is that conscious activity is always directed towards something. Consciousness thereby consists of both subject and object poles in respect to the emergence of meaning even if we do not assume the existence of real objects in space and time. Heidegger, in contrast, does not question the existence of things, although he does not reduce them to being solely objects in opposition to a subject. In addition, he regards what he terms "care" as an attitude towards Being that is fundamental to human existence. His entire early concern with existential analytic, as it is developed in *Being and Time*, is indeed centered on care, and he defines the very essence of human existence as care insofar as women and men are supposedly the sole beings for whom existence matters.

A most interesting point follows upon Heidegger's transformation of intentionality into care insofar as care itself undergoes a transformation as a consequence of the exercise of power over the world in which we live by those who seek to possess, own, and dominate it. In such circumstances, care may perhaps be better described as the attitude of those who exercise power towards those over whom they do in fact exercise power. The analysis of human experience that Heidegger encourages us to carry out would then transpire in respect to the being who is concerned with the being over whom s/he seeks to exercise power, or in fact already does—a position that Heidegger himself seems to have adopted by at least 1933. In the conditions of the exercise of power, existence as such is thus not a concern with Being as such—as if Being manifested itself in some a-historical and a-social location in terms of a fantasized life-world in general, without structures of power and ownership,

in which all people were free and equal individuals and subjects. The object of concern would then be the existence of that which is possessed and the being over whom power is exercised in order to ensure that possession. That is to say that care is to be understood as concern with the effective exercise of power and the subsequent successful appropriation of the actual world in which we live.

We should add that Heidegger provides little useful discussion of power hierarchies in society other than those related directly to his understanding of ontology, such as those based upon the notion of authenticity or thinking in the sense that he develops the latter. Under conditions of the exercise of power, the description of experience in terms of care involves what matters to those who are concerned with their exercise of power over others so that their own wishes can be fulfilled. It is as if we have returned to the world of the Ottoman Empire, in which the masters spoke of their subjects as "sheep" in order to underline how the "flock" had to be tended and cared for so that they could provide wealth for the masters' enjoyment and satisfaction.

Kosík on the New Meaning of Care

Karel Kosík develops this issue into a significant analytical tool for addressing the character of modern society (Kosík 1976 [1963]). He does not discuss care as a primarily ontological concept that may in a certain sense be said to precede social interaction, as does Heidegger, but instead examines it as the "primary and elementary mode in which economics exists for man." While Kosík describes care as consisting of the "entanglement of relationships" in today's practical world—or the web of interaction within which individuals exist and find meaning—he significantly observes that it comprises the "pure activity of the individual in *isolation*" [author's emphasis], even as it takes place within a world that is formed through the "involvement of the individual" with others (Kosík 1976:37). Although care thus reveals that we indeed create a world in common in the activities of daily life, it also focuses upon the world of the subject in a manner that obscures the fact that human activity is what may be termed trans-subjective and trans-individual (Kosík 1976:38).

In this regard, the individual subject abstracted from interaction is first of all a "*derivative* subject" in respect to both a "false individuality" (the false I) and a "false collectivity" (the false or fetishized We) (Kosík 1976:46-47). In the circumstances created by our socalled advanced societies today, the individual indeed may become so completely submerged in the world of objectivity which someone else has offered them for consumption that the subject disappears into it and the object becomes the dominant pole in the individual's interaction with others (Kosík 1976:47). This serves to mask the role of human activity and interaction in creating the humanized world in which we live, including the fact that cognition on all levels—including the "aesthetic" perception of supposedly independent objects—is active in character (Kosík 1976:13).

Under the conditions of the exercise of power, one's "care" for their own private life—or one's efforts to realize their own private desires and subjective goals—is turned into a denial of one's own life. Care then becomes a concern with someone else's fulfillment and happiness that buries us in submission to what is expected of us.

As Kosík remarks,

> An individual might be submerged in objectivity, in the world of manipulation and procuring, so completely that his subject disappears in it and objectivity itself stands out as the real, though mystified, subject (Kosík 1976:47).[2]

The Contradiction of Irreducible Individuality

Søren Kierkegaard's ideas concerning our subjective relation to truth, our existence in the face of death, and the temporality of human existence, coupled with his passionate affirmation of the individuality of being-in-the-world, have served to shape basic Hei-

2. This issue recalls Kosík's discussion of how the phenomenal form of things is the natural product of everyday life under the conditions of reified and alienated reality. See Kosík 1976:5, 9.

deggerian concepts (see Dreyfus 1991, Appendix). A fundamental difference between their two perspectives resides upon the fact that Kierkegaard emphasizes a form of Christian thinking and the irreducible individuality of human experience while Heidegger specifically regards human existence as thoroughly social and historical—bound, so to speak, to the patterns of interaction in which we find ourselves engaged—even as he accepts the perhaps somewhat unusual significance of human individuality for the self-manifestation of Being in its truth. Heidegger also sharply differentiates between philosophical and religious commitments and undertakings, at least after the early 1920s, when he was arguably challenged by Lukács' work to present his own notion of non-alienated human existence (see Goldman 1977; Lukács et al. 2002).

However, even if we accept that human existence is irrefutably historical and social, it is nevertheless regarded in modern democratic society as being individual in its essence, regardless of Aristotle's comments to the contrary concerning essence. That is to say that the ideology of today's developed democratic societies proclaims that human beings are essentially individuals, which is reflected in the a-historical view of human rights typical for much of modern Western-style civilization. In this regard, perhaps it would be both revealing and insightful to recall Aristotle's arguments to the effect that the only substantial (material) differences between individuals involve non-essential elements. Aristotle observes that

> that which is different from something is different in some particular respect, so that that in which they differ must be the same sort of thing; i.e. the same genus or species (Aristot. Met 10.1054b).

He then adds that

> matter does not produce [essential] difference; and for this reason, too, individual men are not species of "man," [sic] although the flesh and bones of which this and that man consist are different. The concrete whole is "other," but not "other in species," because there is no contrariety in the formula, and this is the ultimate indivisible species (Aristot. Met 10.1058b).

Differences of this type thereby involve attributes that are peculiar to the individual—they do not involve one's essential nature as a human being.

But if this is the case, then the cult of individuality turns upon what is non-essential in human being, for the elements that make us into sovereign individuals who are distinct from each other involve, so to speak, the matter of human being, not the form. As the great philosophers in medieval Europe knew, only angels as individuals constitute species of their own in their substantial uniqueness.

Focusing upon the individual differences that separate us from each other—as is done in proclamations concerning the sanctity of the individual citizen-consumer and declarations about the sovereignty of individual imagination—thus diverts our attention from the essence that we share as human beings who create a world in common through interaction over time. The individualism of consumption for the sake of identity, created through submission to power, not only focuses our gaze upon what is not of essential importance in human existence, it also constructs a sense of individual significance upon the basis of what is of secondary importance in terms of what it means to be a human being who comes into existence through interaction with others.

This creates a sense of meaning that may be said to be hollow because it ignores—even rejects—what is of the greatest significance in human life, namely, the fact that we create a world in common with those who have lived before us as well as those with whom we exist side by side, insofar as what is essential has a greater importance and meaning than what is non-essential. This breaks the essential bonds that link us together for the sake of differences that reside upon what is of derivative importance, thereby reducing the individual to what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Gauttari might refer to as a consumption machine—a being who exists in order to serve the accumulation of the power and wealth that controls public, political, and economic life in modern society.

While this point is reminiscent of the discussion in Deleuze and Gauttari's *Anti-Oedipus,* there is the added consideration that individuals as desiring/consumption machines are created and manipulated by what appear to be hidden and unknown forces beyond

their control. Social forces connected with the exercise of power within a specific social construction thus come to be regarded as transcendent forces that express the being that is manifest in human existence as such (Deleuze and Guattari 1983).[3]

It is also useful for us to keep in mind Aristotle's statement that all actions are done for a specific aim, which he defined as "the Good in each particular case" (Aristot. Met. 1.980b).[4] This recalls what Dewey discusses from the pragmatist perspective as "ends-in-view," or aims that "emerge from experience and arise out of natural effects or consequences which in the beginning are hit upon, stumbled upon so far as any purpose is concerned" (Dewey 1988:155 [1922]). Dewey remarks elsewhere that "Ends-in-view, as distinct from ends as accomplished results, themselves function as directive means; or, in ordinary language, as plans" (Dewey 1991:238 [1939]). In the strict sense, an end-in-view is "a means in present action; present action is not a means to a remote end" (Dewey 1991:215 [1939]).

Aristotle further observes that "it is the apparent good that is the object of appetite, and the real good that is the object of the rational will" (Aristot. Met. 12.1072a). We may then say that not only does the reduction of human beings to desiring/consumption machines serve a purpose that is good in some respect, it is good in terms of both desire and rationality—we both want it and justify our actions in terms of what is supposedly reasonable. Moreover, this is not a good in a relative sense, even if it is only a contingent good, because it grants meaning and purpose to the specific actions, which is to say that the good appears as a cause in an absolute sense of the activity in question (Aristot. Met. 1.988b). In the case of modern individuality, however, this cannot involve what is good for the individuals who are reduced to desiring/consumption machines—who construct themselves from what is bought and sold—because they are thereby made to serve the purposes of those

3. The original discussion of desiring machines is presented in Deleuze and Guattari 1983.

4. See Schneiderhan 2018 for an extended discussion of this issue from a pragmatist viewpoint.

who not only command power over the process of reduction, but accrue power and wealth from our own actions.

As Aristotle succinctly notes, "in the case of things produced [modern individuals in the present discussion—A.B.] the principle of motion (either mind or art or some kind of potency) is in the producer" (Aristot. Met. 6.1025b). He also observes that "in many respects human nature is servile" (Aristot. Met. 1.988b).

The "New" Human Species

As a result of this process, the essential meaning of "the individual" or "individuality" is altered. It no longer involves the early modern notion of the rational individual with a given set of rights and obligations, who selects what they should and will do after deliberation and judgment. This in fact cannot be the case because both the meaning of and control over one's life comes not from within us, but from the outside—from those to whom we submit by our own heart's desire. We could also say that rather than produce meaning and values through action and interaction, we instead reproduce the meaning and values that we find already created and taken for granted. Perhaps it would then be more accurate to state that self-control has been transformed into control by those to whom we have become subject by forces and mechanisms over which we seemingly have little control, and of which we may very well have no awareness, by means of both a desire and reason that are created and used by the agents of power. Stated otherwise, external domination has thus adopted the form of self-domination or, to echo Foucault, self-discipline.

In classical Aristotelian terms, we could say that the purpose of individual existence at any given point in time—the goal towards which individual life is directed at that moment—has now become to facilitate and serve the power that others exercise over it. Furthermore, this comprises an act of love in which an individual willingly gives themself over to that which is the meaning of their life—to that which they perceive, understand, and accept as good for them. But instead of this act of love being the fulfillment of one's own life and actions, it objectively comprises a sacrifice or

negation of oneself whereby one reduces the significance of their own life for the sake of someone else's fulfillment. However, since this remains an act of love—albeit an act of self-deception—the individual does it willingly in the belief that the consumption of what can be bought and sold, in both a literal and a figurative sense, is the paramount activity in which one becomes what one is in respect to the ultimate possibilities of human existence (see Aristot. Met. 12.1072b).

The discussion to this point has described in general terms the mechanism whereby power infuses the substantiality of alienated individuals in an alienating society with submission masked as liberty such that individual potential is transformed into the potential to serve the expansion of power. The very existence of the alienated and atomized individual is thereby possessed, so to speak, by the exercise of power in society.[5]

In such circumstances, the notion of care spoken of by Heidegger needs to be both revised and reinvigorated in modern society. "Care" has in fact come to mean either "care for," that is, caring for the other whom we wish to serve us, or "under someone's care," as if we were ill in some way and needed to be taken care of. The meaning of democracy itself has thereby been deformed such that we have a sense that we fulfill ourselves by being manipulated and controlled. We feel ourselves to be free, but we indeed do little more than what is expected of us and submit to power.

The New Inquisition: Human One-Dimensionality

We can learn a powerful lesson in this regard from Dostoyevsky's Grand Inquisitor, who arrested Christ upon his return to Earth and condemned Him to death a second time (Dostoyevsky

5. Van Steenberghen's extended discussions of act and potency—*esse* and *essentia*—and the role played in the interplay between them by the infusion of infinite being—which constitutes a completion of Aristotle by means of the Platonic notion of participation—casts useful light upon the mechanism through which individual potential comes to promote the individual's submission to external power. See Van Steenberghen 1955:186ff; Van Steenberghen 1991:277–320. See Schneiderhan 2018 for an extended discussion of this issue from a pragmatist viewpoint.

1912: 271–191).[6] And what was His crime—what was the reason for Christ's second death sentence? It was nothing other than His offer of freedom to humankind, which the Grand Inquisitor viewed as reflecting Christ's lack of understanding of human nature insofar as people in fact seek ignorance and submission, not knowledge and freedom. In the opinion of the Grand Inquisitor, human happiness does not follow upon freedom, but rather upon bondage.

Through the voice of the Grand Inquisitor, Dostoyevsky describes how freedom in fact impedes happiness, arguing that the truth does not make us free. Quite on the contrary, people fear truth, which drives the individual to give themself over to the power of another in order to obtain a sense of belonging and fulfillment. The individual today flees from the truth in order to submit and obey because being free is inextricably bound up with the suffering that follows from knowing that everyone, at every moment, stands on the abyss of eternity.

In the eyes of the Grand Inquisitor, not only are we unable to understand freedom, we indeed fear it and avoid it. We long to be dominated—and not least of all today. We have a need to bow down, worship, submit, and obey. We do so on a mass scale, albeit as isolated and alienated individuals. And once we have become obedient, we admire the power that controls us all the more. The burden of freedom is terrible, and we run from it to seek someone who will control us.

The Grand Inquisitor's insight is that we have no greater concern in life than to find someone to whom we can give away our freedom. We rejoice at being led like a herd of sheep—at being relieved of the burden to think, choose, and be responsible for ourselves and others. We desire to be helpless, not free. There would then be no universal peace and happiness until all men are united in their absolute submission. People indeed regard freedom as depraved slavery, for such is the strength of their desire—even need—to submit and serve.

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6. "The Grand Inquisitor" is the title of Part II, Book V, Chapter 5 of Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. The original Russian version is available at "http://ilibrary.ru/text/ 1199/index.html."

In modern society, however, we have found the means to mask our helplessness and submission behind the belief that being obedient is the greatest liberty. Today we possess a sophisticated social technology that enables us to bow down and serve while believing that we are following the guidance of our private moral conscience and acting of our own volition. We do what we are supposed to do, but have little, if any, control over what we both think and do. Power over another has become domination, which has in turn been transformed into self-domination in order to facilitate serving the other.

We have learned from our masters to say, in our servitude, that we have freely chosen to live as we do—that our emptiness, alienation, and isolation is our fulfillment and the way things should be. We have become what Marcuse termed "one-dimensional men" [sic], both unwilling and unable to imagine that there is a better way to live.[7]

From this perspective, to seek freedom is tantamount to insanity. Moments of rebellion are striking, but they are never more than short-lived because we are too weak to maintain the spirit of mutiny for any length of time and wish to be enslaved. But let us at least think that we are free, for that makes it easier for us to serve those who are powerful (Heidegger 2001:5ff).

Heidegger has written of how German critical philosophy, especially Neo-Kantianism, regarded Aristotle as an exponent of naive metaphysics. We might say that political and economic submission through interaction gives rise to something much the same as that of which Aristotle was accused. Analogously to how Aristotle has been viewed as a naive realist, citizens as they have been reduced to consumed/consumers may be regarded as naively accepting that their subjugation comprises their fulfillment. They naively believe in their individual freedom because they can consume whatever they want, whenever they wish to do so, in a society where interaction between people is mediated by things that are permeated by asymmetrical power relations. However, there can be no personal

7. See Marcuse 1964 for the authoritative development of this idea.

freedom in a world where we have come to love the power that is exerted upon us as if it were our own freedom.

But we cannot merely struggle against such alienation from self and from each other as one would struggle against some beast or monster—as Beowulf wrestled with Grendel or Odysseus fought the Cyclops—as if each of us could become an epic hero in freeing ourselves from the grasp of an alienated society that would feast upon us. The enemy we must overcome is within us, in the very makeup of our souls and bodies. Allen Ginsberg reminds us by his presentation of Moloch in his masterpiece, *Howl*, that the beast demands we sacrifice both ourselves and our children, for seeking to escape the beast means self-destruction (Ginsberg 1956). The dilemma we are facing is that attempts to defy socially-created systems of control, as if they were external to us, have become a form of self-destruction for the individual subject.

Moreover, we are not simply subject to power, but rather create our own submission. Václav Havel observes in this regard that "everyone in his or her own way is both a victim and a supporter of the system" (Havel et al. 1985:37). He further argues that

> What we understand by the system is not, therefore, a social order imposed by one group upon another, but rather something which permeates the entire society and is a factor in shaping it, something... which is expressed by the entire society as an important feature of its life (Havel et al. 1985:37).

We create and recreate this way of living—every day—not because we are forced to do so against our will by some diabolical creature, but because we have learned what we are supposed to do and how we are supposed to do it. To state this in Michel Foucault's terms, we have learned to behave in a manner that ensures "the automatic functioning of power" because we have become "the principle of [our] own subjection" (Foucault 2012:189, 191; see also Larsson 2021). It may once have been the case that force was used upon us so that we would see, feel, think, and behave in ways that did not seem proper to us in some sense. But now we can do these things by ourselves. How did this happen? It happened because, in society today, there is something inside us that leads us to create

such a way of life and accommodate ourselves to it. We are living a lie about who we are and what we should do for our own good only because we have in fact grown capable of living in this way. It is not simply that a seemingly external "system" alienates humanity—alienated humanity supports this system "as its own involuntary masterplan, as a degenerate image of its own degeneration, as a record of [our] own failure as individuals" (Havel et al. 1985:38).

Indeed, our participation in domination by another is necessary because force cannot rule alone (see Therborn 1980:93ff).[8] It is our very being-in-the-modern-world—where we are embodied through our interactions with others—that ensures our submission to those to whom we are supposed to submit (Therborn 1980:2).[9] In an ironic analogy with Heidegger, one may say that history consists of the history of degradation in the terms of individual identity.

His seeming obsession with alienated individuality is in fact somewhat reminiscent of Anaximander's pessimistic view that individual existence as we know it will pass away because it is something that should not have come into existence (see Heidegger 1984:26–27; Nietzsche 1996).[10] We could thus very well argue that modern history consists not of the concealment or withdrawal of Being, as Heidegger would have us believe, but rather of the oblivion of the individual—that is, the redefinition of the essence of individuality into a creature who consumes in order to be consumed—so that our submission to those who wield power over bodies and minds can grow and expand. This process has become merged with individual identity to the degree that it has become the essential element of individual human substance.

8. Therborn here illustrates in an insightful manner the character of the mechanism whereby we exist in order to obey—displaying a sense of its intrinsic necessity.

9. This issue arises in Therborn's discussion of ideology in the passage noted.

10. This Heidegger reference also provides a typical presentation of his idea that European history is the history of the forgetfulness of Being.

Creating a "Taken-for-Granted" World

Others substantially influence us—perhaps eventually coming to dominate us—not primarily in direct face-to-face interactions. This rather takes place through things they create because of the power they invest in those things, whereby we interact with others by virtue of our interaction with the things that are presented to us.

This involves the deliberate construction of objects that incorporate the power to elicit a specific orientation on our part towards the social environment and the horizon of possible symbolic meaning and interaction. As a consequence of such activity, an individual's awareness of the environment, including the mutual presence of other individuals, can be predicated by the actions of agents—individuals and/or groups—who exercise power in the given circumstances. Briefly stated, in those situations—which are common—when we feel, see, think, and do as others wish, others most typically guide and direct us in this regard through the world of things that has been created around us, in which we live together with others. This involves the creation of what we consider to be obvious and take for granted.

Authority and the implementation of the "Taken-for-Granted"

The point we wish to address at the moment involves the way in which the perception of reality and patterns of interaction that define a subject/individual, as well as the social group(s) of which they are a member, may be more or less deliberately chosen and implemented by agents who have authority over the horizons of perception, consciousness, and action.

Authority over the horizon of possible perception, consciousness, and behavior does not primarily involve the commonplace—and commonly abused—notions of propaganda and political indoctrination. I regard these as relatively unsophisticated and poorly defined ideas that do not touch upon the actual process whereby the possibilities for perceiving, thinking, and acting become situated within a horizon that ultimately defines what we regard as real, including what we anticipate doing with others. Not only do these notions not

indicate this process, they are incapable of doing so because they take it for granted, thus concealing it even as their own activity reveals it.

Indeed, "taking something for granted" is one of the key elements in the process whereby the horizon of possible perception, awareness, consciousness, and action is defined and established. The "takenfor-granted" establishes the framework for all possible discourse and behavior insofar as it serves as, so to speak, the fabric of communications or the "least common denominator" of all possible symbolic meaning. It is difficult for any discrepancy from the taken-for-granted at a given moment of intended communication or discourse to become meaningful, and, thereby, an actual instance of discourse, unless it is prepared for and/or presented in such a way that it can be drawn into the context of what is taken-for-granted. That is not to say that it must in fact be situated within that context, but it must at least be seen to be related to that context such that a meaning appropriate to the context can be ascribed to it by those involved in the relevant interaction and interlocution. Even the possibility that the intended communication might be misconstrued or perhaps eventually viewed as incomprehensible in respect to the taken-forgranted demands that it is initially viewed as being relevant to it in some sense.

No discourse is possible, not even the discourse of misunderstanding, if an intended communication cannot at the very least be misconstrued as lying within the horizon of the taken-for-granted. The analogous holds true for perception and interaction as well insofar as whatever we perceive and acknowledge as present emerges against the background of the taken-for-granted—it is perceivable and capable of being viewed as a receptor of some action only to the extent that a possible meaning can be ascribed to it. That is to say that it has already been ascribed a "presumed" or "categorical" meaning and value.

A human subject engages an object or other—which is radically transcendent and cannot be reduced to the ontological state of possession by the subject—by virtue of the fact of their embodiment or inherence in the sensible and the social.[11] It is the fact of such inhe-

11. Bernet 1988 presents an insightful discussion of the complex relations between the concepts of intentionality and transcendence in respect to the work of

rence which creates the possibility for a human being to perceive, be conscious, act, and interact.[12] However, inherence is not a question of an "internal" subject "gazing upon" an "external" world. Subjectivity/individuality, as a synthesis of perception, cognition, and praxis, emerges from and resides within the reciprocity that takes place between embodied beings. There is neither subjectivity/ individuality outside of such interaction, nor an exclusively private sense of self-consciousness. That which any subject considers to be most their own is always constituted through and defined in the orientation to the other, including the complex of physical and social circumstances (such as language) in which individuals/subjects locate themselves and are located by forces that they do not necessarily control in any significant manner.[13]

Furthermore, not only do perception and consciousness not occur without the other, our inherence in the sensible creates the possibility for the historical "nature" or "essence" of subjectivity/ individuality—its possibilities for perception, action, reflection, interaction, and communication—to be deliberately created and manipulated through the creation of a determinate other in order to elicit a determinate subjectivity. Otherness may be spoken of in this regard as the ontological environment or medium that makes it possible for subjectivity/individuality to emerge in a specific instance of historical space and time.

This approach proceeds from the premise that it is precisely our inherence in the sensible which makes it possible for those having authority over the horizon of perception to deliberately create the historical essence of subjectivity/individuality through manipulation of the ontological reciprocity that defines the inter-relationship between subject and other. This manipulation of the rec-

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Husserl and Heidegger.

12. Crowther 1993 focuses upon and discusses these questions in depth. Of immediate relevance to the theoretical concerns of the present study are pp. 1–11, where the basic terms and framework for the study as a whole are presented. Crowther notes that the view he develops is substantially in the spirit of Merleau-Ponty's *Phénoménologie de la perception*.

13. This view is presented in the introduction to Crowther 1993.

iprocity between subject/individual and other/object on the basis of control over the concrete possibilities of perception, cognition, and action, through the mediation of objects, makes it possible for an agent of power to project their intentional organization upon a world with such power and efficiency that interactions between a possibly large number of human individuals are forced to emerge within more or less clearly defined parameters during specific periods of time. The exercise of power over a given social environment, group, or community thereby results in the constitution of a specific range of objective possibilities—the horizon of possible perception, knowledge, and interaction—that can be utilized for the creation of a specific range or type of subjectivity/individuality. Briefly stated, a type of social reality may be created that is oriented to the creation of particular types of individuality/subjectivity.

The authority of such an agent is determined to a great degree by their control of the power structures in society, including political and social authority, which extends to control over entry into and egress from the community in question. The power thus controlled makes it possible for the intentionality of that agent to be brought to bear upon other subjects/individuals with a virtually irresistible force through the mediation of others/objects that have been created under their dominance. This authority thus becomes a point of final reference for perception, cognition, action, and interaction within the community.

Reflection, thought, and knowledge are not the most effective means for exercising such force, even though they can serve as useful tools for this purpose, because they do not address the actual originality of ontological reciprocity, but instead take it for granted. They arise by virtue of the very ontological reciprocity whereby subjectivity/individuality becomes bound with the sensible world in which it is embedded. One of the strong contributions of phenomenology after Husserl is that, in general, it opens the philosophical examination of conscious existence to the consideration of factors other than cognition in the establishment of the *originary* relationship between subject/individual and other/object.

Insofar as an agent is able to utilize the power structures in society to project, with a high degree of efficiency, their own intentionality upon the world, such that the world comes increasingly

to be organized in accordance with their intentional aims or the aims of the group that they control, the agent in question comes to exercise control over the possibilities of other subjects/individuals for perception, cognition, and interaction. Subjects/individuals in today's societies typically have the experience of a relative independence in respect to the sensible world in which they dwell, and they consequently do not thematize their dependence either upon what they perceive, or upon those with whom they interact. It is important to recognize, however, that although both autonomy and dependence always work together in determining and identifying both the individual and the other, and that their roles and may indeed vary within a considerable range of latitude, dependence may nonetheless be transformed into domination by another in given social circumstances.

We should call attention at this venture to Havel's argument that the exercise of power can become impersonal and anonymous such that individuals are caught up in its operation to the degree that they become "agents of its automatism" and "petty instruments of social autototality." That is to say that, for the sake of their submission to power, they exercise another's power over themselves without a proper awareness of the consequences of their actions (Havel 1985: 30; see also Lukes 1985:18).

A related matter involves the widespread dissemination of the view that we have been living in an age characterized by the "end of ideology," which can serve to effectively remove a tool that can be useful for examining, understanding, and dealing with a particular social environment. An associated current example is the manipulation of public fear as a vehicle for the acceptance of aggressive government policies, particularly foreign policies, that can be based upon factual evidence only with a great degree of difficulty. Digital mass-communication technology and the broad acceptance of the ideology of individualism and personal freedom have become new and important instruments in this type of endeavor (see e.g. Krastev 2013).

Perhaps most importantly, the manner in which those who wield power in modern society manipulate an individual's or group's selfawareness, political awareness, and possibilities for action does not rely upon force and violence in order to be effective.

Although the latter are present to some degree in any society—and can be used with brutal efficiency against those whom are judged, for whatever reason, to exist, think, or act outside the parameters of acceptability—force and violence do not command the loyalty, subservience to authority, and submission to power that are essential for the very functioning of society as such. Göran Therborn has reminded us that force cannot rule alone—ordinary individuals produce and reproduce structures of power and authority, and their everyday lives are the glue that holds society together. Jiří Ruml cogently adds that although the claim that fear can force people to passively accept a social order with which they do not agree may be the easiest response to the question of how the latter could happen, "it is neither an accurate nor a convincing answer" (Ruml 2015 [1985]:178).

Investing the object with life: Beauty in the service of the Beast

It is the embeddedness of the subject/individual in the sensible world that makes it possible for the "meaning" or "value" of the object to influence and determine to varying degrees the "meaning" or "value" of the subject. The autonomy of the subject within the process of ontological reciprocity cannot be reduced to zero, but, at any given moment within a given society, it can be significantly reduced in respect to forces that work for the ontological dependency of the individual on other individuals or objects. As Foucault observes, freedom subjected to a sufficient degree of asymmetrical power can be transformed into domination by another (see e.g. Foucault 1982, 1987, 1997a:292, 2000k:347–348; see also Lemke 2012:20).

The greatest possibilities for maximizing the reduction of the perceptual, cognitive, emotional, and agential autonomy of the embedded subject are to be found at the non-reflective or prereflective levels of conscious life. There is always an abyss between our fundamental reciprocity with the world as embedded subjects and our attempts to express that reciprocity explicitly at the level of reflective discourse or in theory. Consequently, theory cannot be the most effective tool in constructing the emergence of a par-

ticular, determinate relation to otherness involving other subjects because it is unable to bridge this abyss.

Aesthetic objects[14] in a general sense appear to possess a unique power in this regard insofar as an object created for the purposes of projecting power over another constitutes a fusion of the sensuous with the conceptual such that the object is charged with semantic and conceptual energy. Paul Crowther speaks of this fusion as the "concrete particular" and refers it to Hegel's discussion of art as a mode of self-understanding that lies "half-way between the concrete particularity of material phenomena, and the abstract generality of pure thought" (Crowther 1993:5).[15] I would nonetheless add that not only may such objects comprise an expression of that which is fundamental in the human relationship with the world, including the social world, its power can also be utilized to drive the creation of that relationship. In the latter case, it is as if the Hegelian Spirit has been driven to realize itself in a determinate way through the deliberate presentation, by an agent of power in a society, of an otherness of a determinate type. Stated otherwise, the energy bound into a "concrete particular" may, under certain conditions, be directed in a deliberate fashion in order to create a determinate type of reciprocity between the subject/individual and the object/ other. This process is intensified as that energy is more extensively and consistently brought to bear across the full ranges of what is possible by virtue of the control exercised by an agent of power over belonging to a given community and over possible perceptions, emotions, cognitions, and actions.

The point in question may be expressed as follows. The agency in which power is concentrated is capable, under certain circumstances, of reversing the cycle of expression/externalization, recognition by the other, and self-recognition through the other, as was classically presented by Hegel, such that the projection by the other of a determinate self-recognition *before the actual fact* of self-recognition forces the emergence of a manipulated and false

14. The term aesthetic in its classical meaning (from Greek aisthētikós) refers to sensible objects that can be perceived.

15. See also Crowther 1993, Chapter 7, especially pp. 122 ff.

self-recognition. That is to say that the subject/individual emerges as an object or other in respect to themselves by virtue of the action of an actual other (the agent of power) upon him/her, whereby the self-identity of the subject/individual is replaced with the identity the other desires them to possess. This may be viewed as the constitution of a false individual through the intentional power of an object/other who is in command of the horizons of possible experience and action. In other words, this is an instance of reversed or subverted ontological reciprocity.

These ideas can be fruitfully explored in relation to certain of the basic concepts in the dialectical philosophy of Sartre's later period, such as *practico-inerte*, *passivité*, and *sérialité* (see Sartre 1960:363 ff, 546ff; Sartre 1985:300ff). Perhaps more suggestive for the present discussion is his investigation of totalization in a given society through the agency of a single sovereign.[16] The power of Sartre's discussion resides upon the notion that even seemingly inanimate objects embody the meaning of the human actions that have been performed upon them in such a manner that not only do they preserve the traces of human history, they also incorporate the force of such actions and bring that to bear upon subjects/individuals. The emphasis in the present study differs from Sartre's insofar as it seeks to establish a framework for investigating how dialectical deviation, alienation, and, especially, the power of the practico-inert can be *deliberately fostered* and *utilized* on the ontological level by an agent of power, at least for specific periods of time, for the purpose of creating a perceptual, emotional, cognitive, and agential realm of a determinate character in order to subdue thought and reflection to the power of the agent that they embody.

When ontological reciprocity is subverted in this manner, it is the object/other, not a given subject/individual, that becomes powerful or forceful. It is the object or other that now embodies the

16. See Sartre 1985, Livre III, Section B, "La totalisation d'enveloppement dans une société directoriale; rapports de la dialectique et de l'anti-dialectique." Of particular interest are Chapters 1–3, "Singularité et incarnation dans la praxis souveraine," "Incarnation du souveraine dans un individu," and "La totalisation d'enveloppement, incarnations des incarnations."

power of agency such that when it "shows itself as it is," the "self " does not "receive" its truth, as Heidegger would want us to believe, but rather that the object instead *forces* its "truth" upon the "self." When ontological reciprocity between subject and other is subverted in this fashion, it is the "truth" of the object/other that drives the constitution or emergence of the "self." The "truth" of the object thereby becomes the "truth" of the subject/individual, who then does not create and bestow meaning upon the object/other, but rather passively receives an already constituted meaning.

This notion substantially differs from the tone of Heidegger's discussion, in the "Introduction" to *Being and Time*, of the significance of capturing the meaning of an object "when it reveals itself on its own as it reveals itself on its own." The case of subverted ontological reciprocity does not concern the emergence of truth, which is a constant theme throughout the body of Heidegger's work in all of its various stages, not least of all in such essays as *The Essence of Truth* (Heidegger 2002a [1949]) and "The Origin of the Work of Art" (Heidegger 2002b [1950]). Quite on the contrary, the aim of subverted ontological reciprocity is the forceful imposition upon the subject/individual of what may be referred to as a determinate truth substitute through the action of an object/other that has been endowed with the aesthetic power of the agent of power. The concern of subverted ontological reciprocity is the truth of the object/other precisely as it may be *forced* upon the subject/individual, not the truth as it would supposedly emerge through the ontological reciprocity between a subject/individual and an object/other. This ironically compares with Heidegger's notion of the "thinking of Being" as it is first presented in "On the Essence of Truth" (Heidegger 1998 [1976]) insofar as "Being" *forces* itself in the condition of subverted ontological reciprocity upon the subject in such a fashion that the possibility for the emergence of an "opening" is itself subverted and the state of truth as concealment is maximized. Being now indeed assumes primacy over there-being (Dasein), but not at all in the fashion that Heidegger calls for.

This constitutes a situation in which the "other/object" has to overcome the "resistance" of the "self/subject," which is the same thing as stating that the "truth" of the "other/object" has to overcome the "truth" of the "self/subject." What may be spoken of as

the hermeneutic circle is thus made to function not from the perspective of the subject/individual, but rather from the perspective of the empowered object/other that has become dominant in the ontological reciprocity that obtains between embodied subject/self and otherness. The relative autonomy of the subject is thereby reduced to ontological dependence, and it is the object/other—which now function as the medium for the intentional power of the authoritative agent—that has become ontologically dominant and autonomous in respect to the subject/individual.

The production of a specific semantic and conceptual energy by an agent of power in society—and that agent's projection of such energy as overwhelming power in the ontological environment of the subject/individual—thus possesses the capacity to transform the ontological reciprocity between subject and object into the ontological subjugation of the individual to the agency of power. This subjugation is mediated by the empowered object that has been endowed with the overwhelming force of the agent of power. When the object/other that has been empowered by the agent is regarded as an art-work, as Boris Groys does in *The Total Art of Stalinism* (Groys 1992), then the aesthetic characteristics that Heidegger promulgates in "The Origin of a Work of Art" (Heidegger 2002 [1950]) are stripped bare in respect to their utter disregard for social relevance. This represents a type of creation in which truth is not at work, that is, a type of creation that originates neither Being, nor truth, even though a world emerges. William J. Richardson (2003 [1963]) provides perhaps the best available examination of the relevant issues in Heidegger's work as a background for this type of consideration.[17]

In such circumstances, the agent of power is not compelled to exercise force (terror) directly upon the subject insofar as the object that the agent has endowed with their power exercises that power in their stead. This minimizes the need for the exercise of force in that the domination of the subject/individual by the object/other serves to restrict the possibility that acts of perception

17. See in particular Richardson 2003 [1963], Part II, Chapter II; Part III, Section A, Chapter V; and Part III, Section B, Chapter 1.

and consciousness may emerge with a significance that is at variance with the preferences and/or requirements of the agent. This heightens and reinforces the efficiency of the social control that has already been established, limits the room for maneuver available to the subject/individual, and transforms the exercise of power into domination by virtue of the degree of asymmetry that is established in reciprocal interaction. The subject/individual is thereby entrapped in a world that has been more or less deliberately designed to serve the purposes of the agent of power. The power of the object/other does not enable the subject/individual to be engaged in the bringing forth of truth, but rather plunges the subject into a lifeworld in which submission is the paradigm for the relation of the subject to the object and, through the latter, to the agent of power. This binds the horizons of possibility of the subject/individual to the power structures in a given society such that individuals internalize those structures, become subject to them, and undergo a marked reduction in their ability to perceive, know, create symbolic meaning, and act at variance with such structures.

Closing Comments

In western-style developed societies today, we have given ourselves over to a world in which relations between people have become relations between things, interaction has been reduced to essentially commercial transactions, and individuality is equivalent to the submission to power. This process of reification must be reversed so that human objects can become human subjects and submission to power can be challenged. Nikolas Rose observes that governing in a democratic way "means governing through the freedom and aspirations of subjects rather than in spite of them." He adds that "democracy as an art of government and a technology of rule" requires "inventing techniques to constitute the citizens of a democratic polity with the 'personal' capacities and aspirations necessary to bear the political weight that rests on them" (Rose 1996:155). That is to say that new knowledge and new awareness must be generated so that we can find the way to complete a process of liberation that to date has been only partially successful.

While we have created modern societies, we have as yet done so only in a way that breaks the bonds that hold us together for the sake of a sense of private fulfillment that is self-contradictory and sacrifices what is essential in our lives.

Nevertheless, the question concerning whether and how it can be possible to break the cycle of reification in practical as well as simply theoretical terms under the conditions imposed within modern society, or society after industrialization, remains open because the mechanisms of control over perception, consciousness, and the psyche that exist today function with such efficiency that those who are perhaps the most controlled feel that they are the most liberated. Having no choice over our thoughts, perceptions, and actions is trumpeted as the greatest freedom, for we have accepted that this is the case. As Marcuse observes in his discussion of positive philosophy, which endeavors "to subordinate reason to the authority of established fact," this type of life can be meaningful—and not merely absurd—only as a stage in a process that leads to another way of living (Marcuse 1999 [1940]:ix).

Today's cult of individuality in modern democratic societies casts Heidegger's appeals for an "openness to Being" in, to say the very least, a questionable light because it promotes individuality as it has been forcibly reduced to openness through the destruction of the foundation of individuality. This foundation needs to be rediscovered, and that which we have in common with each other as equals—or what is essential for us—must be reclaimed and rehabilitated. Instead of the "authentic openness to Being" that supposedly characterized pre-Socratic philosophy, and for which we should search again today, as Heidegger claims, perhaps it would be more appropriate to describe power-dominated individuality in terms of an "inauthentic openness" that consists not merely of an openness to Being, but, more importantly, of a susceptibility to submit to power—and being glad for having done so. This is an openness that not only conceals, but also empties the one who has been opened by submission to power. Heidegger thought that tragedy on such a scale was a positive element in pre-Socratic thought (Heidegger

1984:13–59),[18] but I would suggest that it is rather one of the most characteristic— and far from positive—elements of modern society.

To put it in Heidegger's own words, "The unconcealment of beings, the brightness granted them, obscures the light of Being... As it reveals itself in beings, Being withdraws" (Heidegger 1984:26). I would only care to add that, given the current state of modern "democratic societies," the "withdrawal of Being" appears to be associated with the "presence-ing" or "givenness" of that which can be bought—and which is purchased through our submission to authority.

It is a well-known saying that the type of philosophy one chooses depends on the type of person one is. People are attracted to a philosophy that corresponds to the already formed image of their own thinking, finding in it a mirror that fully presents everything that earlier existed in the form of a vague tendency or an indistinctly expressed allusion.

We may say that those attracted to the ideology of radical individualism are those who have been seduced by the notion that individual freedom in modern society means being liberated from what we share in common. However, the latter is in fact what is necessary for living in a world that we create together, and turning away from this is what transforms us into objects of manipulation in service of someone else's desire.

In order to complete the liberation of the individual begun with the emergence of the modern world, we must recapture the essence of what we have in common and seek our fulfillment neither by ourselves, nor through submission to power. We must find how to no longer be satisfied with living as mere non-women and non-men for the sake of someone else's joy and well-being, but rather live together with others in a society of equals. This is the challenge facing us today.

18. Also see Krell and Capuzzi's "Translators' Introduction" in Heidegger 1984.

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Theorizing: A Blind Spot in Higher Education in the Social Sciences

Emma Engdahl

"Before you have a theory you need to theorize—so how do you go about theorizing in a creative way?"
Richard Swedberg

Introduction

Ever since I was a doctoral student and began teaching students in sociology at Örebro University, Sweden, in the early 2000s, I have been thinking about how to teach theorizing, that is, the process that leads to formulating a theory. I most often experience the need for teaching theorizing when supervising bachelor's and master's theses, where students are expected to carry out independent work.

It is not particularly difficult for students to understand the need to account for the method used to collect empirical data in a thesis. Discerning the method that is best suited for their studies is a somewhat more difficult task, but it seldom leads to any major problems. However, many students are puzzled regarding the compulsory theory part. What theories should be chosen and how should they be used? Even more students are puzzled when it comes to theorizing. Why is this so?

We teach students several already existing theoretical perspectives from which they can understand or explain given social phenomena or events. We also provide students with a degree of

biographical knowledge concerning theorists to help them understand the personal and social contexts in which given theories were developed. This also helps them grasp whether there was anything specific that motivated theorists to conduct the type of research that led to the theories in question. But we seldom teach students about the research process that led to the formulation of the theories we teach them. The question of how to theorize is simply not on the agenda.

While it is mandatory to teach methods of collecting empirical data as well as how to understand or explain data, it is not mandatory to teach methods for developing a theory of one's own. It was certainly not something that students were taught when I was a masteer's and doctoral student in sociology at Lund University in Sweden. I think this is a reason why theoretical doctoral dissertations often lack a methods section. My own doctoral dissertation, *A Theory of the Emotional Self: From the Standpoint of a Neo-Meadian* (2004), is just one of many examples of theoretical dissertations that have no specific methods section. In my dissertation, I developed a theory of the social emergence of emotions and the significance which that has for human self-consciousness or mind, and it is appropriate to ask whether I did so without any method. Of course I used a method! However, the method I employed was not something that I systematically made explicit. My methodological approach was discussed throughout the dissertation, but in a more indirect way than would have been the case if I had dedicated a separate chapter to theorizing. An even more interesting question concerns how I learned to develop a theory of my own if no one had taught me theorizing.

This question is not particularly easy to answer. I think I learned to theorize on an unconscious level by reading many theoretical works and from the comments I received on the texts I wrote during my time as a student, especially as a master's and doctoral student. In retrospect, I think that what I probably learned the most from was studying a specific thinker or theorist in detail, George Herbert Mead in my case. The sociologist Harold L. Orbach encouraged me to read everything that Mead had written, especially his unpublished manuscripts. Orbach argued that Mead had already said everything that was necessary to say about emotions and their

significance for human self-consciousness or mind, even though more or less no one knew about it. Since I was interested in human emotional life and intended to develop a social or symbolic interactionist theory regarding it, I read carefully and empathetically to get a grip on what Mead had to say on the subject matter. I used Mead's theories as a kind of sounding board for my own thinking, and I also read other scholars' texts on Mead to reconcile my own interpretation. Moreover, I examined contemporary theories of emotion to obtain ammunition for my own thinking. I ended up with reconstructing Mead's theory of the objective perspective of self so that it would more fully incorporate the social dimensions of emotions.

One of the most critical aspects of Mead's thinking is his conception of the perspective of the self as objective, which resides upon his argument that insofar as a perspective represents a set of shared responses, it is not "private" or "subjective," but rather belongs to a social and, consequently, objective reality. The perspective of the self can thus not be viewed as merely our sense perceptions of internal or external stimuli. Mead instead claims that the perspective of the self, or self-consciousness, is dependent upon our interaction with others and the environment. More specifically, he argues that the perspective of the self emerges from "taking the attitude of the thing" and, even more importantly, from "taking the attitude of the other," and that such a perspective is established within "anticipatory or abstract attitude taking," rather than within "immediate concrete attitude taking." What I found to be problematic with Mead's discussion of concrete and abstract attitudes, from the point of view of my attempt to develop a theory of emotions as elements of the social self, was that Mead focuses primarily on emotional experiences in relation to taking the attitude of the thing, which excludes emotions from taking the attitude of the other (Engdahl 2005:123).

In their effort to capture Mead's view of emotional experience, Neena L. Chappell and Orbach write that

> Essentially, emotion, as the affective side of mind, or psychic activity ([Mead] 1903) that arises from the inhibition or blocking of ongoing activity, serves to arouse the organism to solve the problem that is bloc-

> king the completion of the ongoing act. It thus serves as a motor basis for the individual's mobilization of resources to solve the problem, because the solution of the problem is what releases the tension created by the emotional state (Chappell and Orbach 1986:78).

I reconstructed Mead's theory of the objective perspective of the self in a way that more fully incorporates emotions by taking emotional experience not only as a result of a concrete inhibition of taking the attitude of the thing, but also as a result of an abstract inhibition of taking the attitude of the other, that is, as a result of a symbolic—not a physical—inhibition of the act. I consider such a view of emotions to be more in line with Mead's (1983:38) overarching aim to demonstrate that emotional experiences are corporeal evaluations of ourselves from the standpoint of the other or the environment (Engdahl 2005:124).

Although it might seem that learning to theorize had been rather problem-free for me, it was not. When I was writing my bachelor's thesis in sociology and wanted to reconstruct Jürgen Habermas' theory of communicative action by integrating the role of emotions, my supervisor felt that it was too difficult a task for a student. But I had an intuitive feeling that it could and needed to be done, which I think related to my experience of being a trained classical ballet dancer. Since you cannot exclude the body and the emotions if you wish to persuade the audience as a dancer, I thought it was surprising that Habermas did not view this as an element of communicative action or consensus-oriented rationality more generally, which is based on the idea of persuading an audience with good arguments. I now think that Habermas' exclusion of emotions from his theory is in part associated with the fact that he does not fully embrace the social dimensions of emotions, but this is another question. The point I wish to make here is rather that I had to struggle to obtain support for developing a theory of my own. Likely one of the reasons for this was that my supervisor did not want to place too much pressure on me and thus prevent me from failing at my studies. However, another equally likely reason is that teaching theorizing in higher education is neglected. This neglect of theorizing in higher education is indeed overwhelming

when we look at the general information available about writing a thesis, which we will return to below.

If we identify theories as figures of thought or as systems that enable us to see, understand, or explain new phenomena or events, the lack of teaching theorizing is clearly problematic. This is at least the case if we demand that higher education encompass all the stages of cognitive learning identified by the psychologist Benjamin Bloom, which were used in the development of curricula and grading systems for Swedish schools during the 1990s. Bloom's taxonomy was introduced in 1956 and revised in 2001, with the revised version consisting of six conceptually different stages that are hierarchically arranged and viewed as based upon each other. These are 1) *remember*—remember basic facts and concepts; 2) *understand*— explain ideas or concepts; 3) *apply*—use information or a skill in new situations; 4) *analyze*—break material into its constituent parts and determine how the latter are related to one another or to an overall structure or purpose, which involves seeing connections and patterns; 5) *evaluate*—make judgments based on criteria and standards; and 6) *create*—put elements together to form a new coherent or functional whole—reorganize elements into a new pattern or structure (Anderson and Krathwohl 2001).

Given the idea that sustainable education should promote critical reflection, agency, transgression, and a diversity of perspectives, all these steps are necessary for achievement at advanced levels of higher education. They are also required for making possible a system of sustainable educational (cf. Leal Filho, Azeiteiro, Alves, et al. 2017).

Background and Problem Area

The absence of theorizing is apparent when we look at general information about thesis writing. In *Så skriver du en uppsats* (How to Write an Essay), which was available on Stockholm University's website in 2019, we learn the following about theory and the role of theorizing in writing a thesis

> An [...] important point is that in most cases your survey must be *theoretically anchored*. There must thus be a starting point in a perspective

> and research that already exists. In other words, there are limitations when it comes to how innovative you can be (Stockholm University 2019, author's translation).

The theoretical element of thesis writing is presented here as guaranteeing that the text is anchored in previous research, embraces an established theoretical perspective, and adheres to that perspective. However, the fact that it is also regarded as constituting a limitation in respect to innovation or creativity may be interpreted as advice not to theorize.

Att skriva uppsats i sociologi på grundläggande nivå (Kandidatuppsats), 15 hp (Writing a Thesis in Sociology at the Basic Level [Bachelor's Thesis], 15 credits), the text for a 15-credit course that is provided to assist students in their thesis writing at the Department of Sociology and Work Science, University of Gothenburg, contains a total of two paragraphs that concern theory and theorizing. The first aims to encourage the students to think theoretically, select useful theories and concepts for their thesis, and describe what they have chosen. This paragraph asks

> What theoretical framework should the study have? What sociological, social psychological, criminological, or work science theories and concepts will you use? Briefly describe the literature you have read (Björk, Soneryd, Ulsfsdotter, et al. 2017:4, author's translation).

The second describes the meaning and significance of theory for student thesis writing.

> Through the theoretical framework, the thesis is provided with a more general system of interpretation. Limit yourself to relevant theoretical perspectives, that is, things that help you understand and explain the phenomena. Definitions of key concepts belong here. If hypotheses are to be tested, they are formulated under this heading (Björk, Soneryd, Ulfsdotter, et al. 2017:8, author's translation).

Students are here instructed that selected theories are used for the purpose of interpreting the empirical data of the thesis, understanding or explaining what is exhibited in the empirical data, and formulating hypotheses. This provides them with something more

about the role of theory in thesis writing than the text from Stockholm University's website.

Nonetheless, the student still receives very little or no information about theorizing itself. Nor do they learn much about theorizing from Lotte Rienecker and Peter Stray Jørgensen's *Att skriva en bra uppsats* (Writing a Good Thesis) from 2018, which is intended both for students writing bachelor's or master's theses, and for teachers who supervise and examine such texts. The reader is instead taught that concepts useful for writing a thesis are often drawn from existing theories, and that it is important to define the concepts employed in the thesis and clarify the reason for using them. The reader also learns that it is important to discuss and evaluate the theories chosen and relate critically to them.

The closest one comes to the issue of theorizing, however, is the discussion of how theories can be made into a method in the sense of serving as analytical tools for explaining and understanding what is being explored in the thesis. This understanding of theory and its utility coincides somewhat with the approach presented in *Att skriva uppsats i sociologi på grundläggande nivå (Kandidatuppsats), 15 hp,* with the addition of highlighting the importance of critically examining the concepts and theories used. This puts significantly more flesh on the bones and gives the reader a good insight into how to conduct an analysis with the help of already existing theories. But the question of how to develop a theory of one's own is not addressed.

Should we interpret this lack of discussion regarding theorizing as indirectly counseling students to avoid theorizing? This is probably the case at times, as noted above. I have met colleagues who believe that it is only as a doctoral student that one can be expected to contribute something new. Such a standpoint implies that the sixth and final stage of Bloom's taxonomy—*create*, or putting elements together so that they are reorganized into a new pattern or structure and thus form a new coherent or functional whole—is not considered as belonging to the process of writing a bachelor's or master's thesis. I think this standpoint marks an exception rather than a rule, however. It is also my opinion that insofar as scholars and teachers in the social sciences do not reflect sufficiently on the meaning of theorizing and its role in the research process, they do

not possess the ability to incorporate theorizing into teaching in higher education.

Purpose, Questions, and Method

The purpose of the present text is to promote the teaching of theorizing in higher education. A first step in this process is to justify a focus on theorizing by clarifying its importance for research and for sustainable higher education. A second step is to flesh out what theorizing is and how it is accomplished. These tasks are both interdependent and necessary if theorizing is to have a more prominent place in higher education in the future.

The following questions are posed: What is theorizing? Why is theorizing crucial for research and sustainable education, which resides upon the principles of critical reflection, agency, transgression, and diversity? How is theorizing played out in practice?

To answer these questions and attain the goal of our discussion, I utilize not only educational material that has been developed to facilitate writing a bachelor's or master's thesis, but also research literature concerning theorizing and its significance in the research process. The work of Peirce, Dewey, and Becker in this respect is highlighted.

The selection of research literature was made in the light of my long-standing interest in theorizing as a teacher in the sphere of higher education, my being a researcher in the field of symbolic interactionism, and the knowledge I have consequently acquired about the existing literature in these fields. This knowledge has been developed in dialogue with colleagues and through references to the specific literature I have read in this regard. In addition, it has been supplemented by advanced literature searches using search engines at Gothenburg University Library and Copenhagen University Library as well as the search engines provided by such services as Google and Google Scholar. The keywords I used include "theorizing," "theory and theorizing," "how to teach students to theorize," "learning to theorize," "theorizing in the research process," "courses in theorizing," and "courses on theorizing on the graduate level." I have also searched through the literature which

cites the literature on theorizing that I found to be useful during this work.[1]

In brief, I searched for literature that was best able to attain the goal of the article and answer the research questions indicated above. In those instances when a given text could serve as an example of several texts of a similar type, I selected sources based on the principle that the text with the most citations should be chosen.

Results and Reflection

An initial definition of theorizing and its scientific significance

When one finds doing something both interesting and problematic, not least if one has done it for a longer period of time, one usually finds others who have also thought along similar lines. This has been the case with the present discussion. For instance, the higher education researcher Michael Hammond has asked himself questions much like those I have raised, albeit for partly different reasons. While I was concerned about my students' difficulties concerning theorizing, Hammond had to address a comment in a peer review of an article he had written to the effect that the article was interesting, but not sufficiently theoretical. This was the starting point for Hammond's exploration of theorizing, which resulted in the article "An Interesting Paper, but Not Sufficiently Theoretical: What Does Theorizing in Social Research Look Like" (Hammond 2018). In this article, Hammond asks what theorizing is and what it

1. Although using such search engines as Google and Google Scholar may at first glance seem naïve, it in fact turned out to be at least as helpful, if not more so, as searching through social science journals with a theoretical orientation for titles that contain the word "theorizing," which I also did. The reason may be that although there are a multitude of journals for various types of theoretical publications in the social sciences, there are in fact very few journals that focus on theorizing. And when we do find a journal with a theoretical focus, it is a very often a question of theorizing in respect to a specific topic. One advantage associated with using Google Scholar is that a search immediately provides an overview of the most frequently cited scientific literature in the field.

looks like in practice. The first problem he encountered is that theorizing can be defined in a variety of ways, which Robert Merton (1967) also noted when he remarked that there is neither a single method, nor a particular version of theory that are clearly to be recommended over others (Hammond 2018:2).

One question we can nevertheless ask ourselves concerns what individual researchers claim to do when they theorize. To answer this question, Hammond did what he himself called a simple web search, through which he obtained the eighteen most quoted articles with the word "theorizing" in the title. Hammond claimed, however, that none of these defined the meaning of theorizing in a comprehensive way. They instead typically equated theorizing with searching for a perspective from which to tackle a problem or cast a new light on it. Hammond summarizes such descriptions of theorizing as consisting of three stages: 1) identifying a gap in the field of research; 2) proposing an alternative as well as providing an explanation of the alternative, which often involves an expansion of the research field; and 3) logically and empirically justifying the alternative (Hammond 2018:3). But this tells us nothing about the process of theorizing itself, which does not surprise Hammond since researchers are expected to focus on the results, not the process, when presenting their research.[2]

If one instead does a Google Scholar search for all types of research literature with the word "theorizing" in the title, as I have done, one finds that monographs and anthologies are in general more frequently cited in the field of theorizing. They thus promise to be more useful for gaining an understanding of what theorizing is and what it looks like in practice.

The most cited work with the word "theorizing" in its title is the anthology contribution "Theorizing Childhood," by Allison James, Chris Jenks, and Alan Prout, which concludes the first volume of

2. While I have no objection in principle to such reasoning, I believe that Hammond erred in choosing to limit his search to scientific articles with the word "theorizing" in the title. This move may be regarded as reflecting what the research community looks like today: you are expected to publish your research in articles, not in monographs and anthologies.

Childhood: Critical Concepts in Sociology (Jenks 1998). A different picture of theorizing emerges in this text, with the authors arguing that theorizing includes an evaluation of existing theories in the given research field and the development over time. They also present a critical reflection regarding the scientific paradigm currently dominant in the research field and, more generally, the place of the field in society. "Scientific paradigm" refers to deep-rooted notions and principles on both epistemological and ontological levels that are shared within a given research community (Kuhn 1970:4ff.). This view maintains that theorizing does not primarily concern identifying research gaps, but rather involves critical reflection within the research community that makes possible the autonomy and survival of a particular scientific field. The latter point becomes clear in the second most-cited scientific work with "theorizing" in the title—Sylvia Walby's *Theorizing Patriarchy* (1990)—which presents a similar approach.

Walby's aim in *Theorizing Patriarchy* is to provide a comprehensive overview of the variety of explanations for the subordination of women in contemporary society that have been provided by the early research. She also seeks to identify recent changes in gender inequality and explain them. Although one might say that theorizing is related to the latter, that would overly simplify the process of theorizing. The kind of theorizing in which Walby is engaged is rather based upon the former, that is, a systematic review of answers previously given by researchers to the questions she herself asks. *Theorizing Patriarchy* (1990) compares and evaluates theories of women's subordination developed in Marxist feminism, radical feminism, liberalism, and two-system theory in the light of theoretical and empirical evidence. Walby thus conducts a critical examination of theories of women's subordination by breaking them down into their constituent elements, comparing those theories with each other on the basis of the issues they have in common, and then reinterpreting them in the light of new empirical data. As the title of Walby's book indicates, this first and foremost reconstructs the concept of patriarchy so that it remains useful as a tool for exploring gender inequality.

> I shall argue that the concept of "patriarchy" is indispensable for an analysis of gender inequality and put forward a theory regarding how its constituent elements are articulated in contemporary Britain (Walby 1990:1ff.).

Despite their differences, the approaches presented above emphasize that theorizing involves the search for an approach that casts a new light on a specific phenomenon or event. We may therefore state that theorizing implies a special way of seeing reality that accords with the original meaning of speculating, θεωρέω (*theōréō).* The latter—the Greek word for theorizing—is used in the four following ways:

1. I am sent (as a θεωρός [theōrós]) to consult an oracle.
2. I look at, spectate, observe.
3. (*of the mind)* I contemplate, consider.
4. (*abstract)* I speculate, theorize (cf. consider in Liddell and Scott 1889).

If we look at how the word *theōréō* is composed, we may conclude that theorizing concerns seeing, looking at something attentively (*horan*), or what something looks like (*thea*). The theorist is then an attentive observer (*theoros*) or an envoy sent to observe foreign practices and find rational explanations for what is perceived as strange. Both childhood and patriarchy may undoubtedly be viewed as strange phenomena that require attention if one is to understand and explain them, but they do not garble any inherent meaning they possess for us. We rather need to create their meanings, which underlines the importance of the sixth and final stage of Bloom's taxonomy, namely, *create*—put elements together so that they form a new coherent or functional whole, or reorganize elements into a new pattern or structure.

The importance of discussing and evaluating established theories, which is highlighted in *Att skriva en bra uppsats* from 2018, is also found in an elaborated version in such approaches. It is noteworthy that this comprises the fifth and penultimate step in Bloom's taxonomy, namely, *evaluate*—making judgments based on

criteria and standards, with which most teaching materials intended to guide student thesis writing in fact conclude.

What is the problem with theorizing and why is it so important anyway?

When I did a search for "theorizing," I found not only a series of dictionary definitions, but also a power-point presentation by the sociologist Richard Swedberg, who is the internationally most renowned researcher in the field today. Swedberg has published a variety of research texts on theorizing, including the monograph *The Art of Social Theory* (2014a), in which he explains why one should theorize and how to proceed. Swedberg has also edited the anthology *Theorizing in Social Science: The Context of Discovery* (2014b), where he begins by stating that while developments in the social sciences since the Second World War have taken place mainly in respect to methods for collecting data, the development of theory has stagnated. Swedberg remarks in this regard that

> Since the mid-twentieth century the social sciences have made great advances in the kind of method that they use. In the area of theory, however, the situation is quite different. The development since World War II has been quite uneven in this respect: sociologists and other social scientists are today very methodologically competent, but considerably less skillful in the way that they handle theory. The major journals contain many solidly executed articles, though creative and theoretically sophisticated articles are less common (Swedberg 2014b:1).

This may help explain why students find it more difficult to handle the theory part of their thesis writing than the methods section. It may also explain Hammond's initial response to the criticism regarding the theoretical quality of one of his articles—the demands for creativity and theorizing are usually not set very high. The fact that theorizing and creativity are not high on the agenda becomes clear from *Att skriva en bra uppsats*, when the authors list common misunderstandings about what a good thesis is, one being that "one should be original and innovative" (Rienecker and Stray

Jørgensen 2018:28, author's translation). The authors thus think it is a misconception that one should be original and innovative to write a good thesis. Some of my colleagues think that the advice against being original and innovative is a useful strategy for ensuring that students do not place excessively high demands upon themselves and consequently fail in their studies. My interpretation differs, however. I believe that such advice risks reducing opportunities for critical reflection, agency, transgression, and diversity—that is, for a sustainable higher education in which students are fully involved, learn how to develop their own unique potential, and become capable of contributing to the democratic development of society. Using one or more existing theories to define, understand, or explain what one is researching, which is what most students are required to do when writing their thesis, is quite different from theorizing. Swedberg (2014b:2) argues that theorizing involves developing a theory of one's own to point out what one is researching and understand or explain it. This entails that students must get in touch with their own unique set of knowledge and experience, which is also where the innovative or creative element largely asserts itself. Swedberg argues that successful theorizing always requires a deep personal commitment and being in contact with one's own existence and experiences. Students must of course be able to understand already existing theories, but they must also relate to these in a personal way. In the latter lies the possibility of success, but also the risk of failure.

> You have to know theory to theorize, but to theorize well you also need to relate to it in a personal way.... Repeating other people's theory entails little risk, unlike theorizing on one's own (Swedberg 2014b:2).

Perhaps the risk of failure is one of the reasons behind the argument that it is a misconception that a good thesis "should be characterized by a personal, not just an academic commitment" (Rienecker and Stray Jørgensen 2018:28, author's translation). We all know how poor research becomes when the engagement is purely personal— it in fact becomes about as poor as theorizing without knowing theory. But this is not to be confused with a combined academic and personal engagement when conducting research.

The idea of personal engagement might at first appear to be incommensurable with the demand for objectivity within the research community, not least with today's demands for evidence-based research. However, critical reflection, agency, transgression, and diversity are rendered impossible when students are not permitted to utilize their entire experience, especially that which distinguishes them from others. Furthermore, if we focus our attention on the meaning of "evidence" in the social sciences, we quickly become aware that it is a process that is dependent upon theorizing—at least this is what sociologist Howard Becker argues for in his recent monograph *Evidence* (2017). Becker maintains that all research consists of three elements—ideas, data, and evidence—along with being able to handle these for the purpose of convincing those around us that what we have concluded is true. Stated otherwise, this involves convincing those around us that what one has seen in one's research does not appear to be the result of a strange coincidence or accident.

The trio of ideas, data, and evidence, coupled with the ways in which researchers can manage and employ them, appear to me as comprising the core of the scientific method in no matter what field of knowledge, regardless of the methods employed to collect and analyze data (Becker 2017:37). In Becker's words, they combine the components that researchers need

> to convince themselves, their colleagues, and maybe even a wider audience, that they have found something true, something more than a coincidence or an accident (Becker 2017:4).

Within this context, data refers to what researchers in the social sciences observe, regardless of how they observe it, after which they transform it into visible physical objects or something that can be indicated by recording it, writing it down, or the like. Data is thus the material that social scientists work with (Becker 2017:4).

But the material that social scientists work with can only become evidence when it is used to substantiate an argument. Moreover, it constitutes adequate evidence only when the audience accept the material as a valid statement of what happened when the researcher originally collected it. Consequently, we need some

type of argumentation or theorizing for the data to turn into evidence. Becker states in this regard that

> The data-turned-into-evidence supports a statement about a particular example of some general idea we want other people... to believe or at least except for now (Becker 2017:5).

He further maintains that we are interested in data because they help us argue about something in the world of which it is either the consequence, or for which it has consequences. This means that ideas or theories in the social sciences are often statements about or explanations of the meaning of the material being worked on.

Good research, whether qualitative or quantitative, never uses data as evidence for statements for which they are not credible evidence. Furthermore, what distinguishes qualitative research is that it does not take the meaning of the material it works with for granted.

> The researchers take the meaning of the material as something for them to discover rather than as an unproblematic given (Becker 2017:40).

Theorizing is crucial in this process of discovering meaning. However, a problem we often encounter in research conducted after World War II is that the research process is reduced to already existing theory and the testing of theories (Swedberg 2014b:3f.). In my judgment, this is yet another reason why theorizing is being neglected in higher education, despite its crucial importance for the autonomy of academic disciplines.

The division between theorizing, on the one hand, and theory and testing theories, on the other, has accompanied us ever since the philosopher of science Hans Reichenbach introduced the distinction between the "context of discovery," or the form the thought process takes when exercised subjectively, and the "context of justification," or the form the thinking process takes when communicated to others (Reichenbach 1938:6). To the extent that the perception of theory is primarily based on whether it can be tested, theorizing tends to be neglected.

> The term sociological theory refers to logically interconnected sets of propositions from which "empirical uniformities can be derived"; and these uniformities should be established via "empirical testable hypotheses" (Merton 1967:39, 66, 70, as cited in Swedberg 2014b:4).

Instead of talking about research consisting of theory, data, and evidence, Swedberg consequently speaks about theorizing, theory, and the testing of theories. He argues (Swedberg 2014b:5) that Merton's greatest contribution to understanding theorizing, or the context of discovery, is that discoveries are most often the result of mistakes or fortunate circumstances. Becker argues, however, that theorizing is crucial for making discoveries appear as if they are not the result of mistakes or coincidences since it is only then that data become evidence of something. Emphasizing the importance of theorizing as a way in which to legitimize a discovery is meritorious insofar it does not mislead us into viewing theorizing as a process that begins only after a research design has been developed and complemented. Swedberg (2014b:10) states that the latter view is unfortunate. He instead argues that one of the best ways for improving theorizing is to begin theorizing even before the research design is developed.

The ABCs of theorizing

Swedberg (2014a:26 f; 2014b:10 f.) divides the research process into two parts, namely, the pre-study and the main study. The prestudy includes theorizing within the context of discovery, in close connection with the collection of data. Swedberg remarks that

> The task of the research at this stage would be to come up with new ideas and to do so through an early and preliminary, yet intense, confrontation with data (Swedberg 2014a:25).

The purpose of the pre-study is to formulate a tentative theory that can be used in the main study. Although theorizing has a given place in both, it is played out differently in each. For instance, the prestudy provides a greater scope for intuitive whims and creativity, while the main study is guided by a larger amount of data as

well as methodological considerations and approaches. Unlike the prestudy, which is concerned with formulating new and interesting ideas, the main study is concerned with answering a number of questions. More precisely, the main study involves designing the research, carrying it out, and writing up the results. However, too strong a distinction between the two is not desirable insofar as the pre-study has significant influences upon the main study.

The single text that has most inspired me in respect to theorizing, or the steps in the process leading up to a theory, is the philosopher, psychologist, and pedagogue John Dewey's "Patterns of Inquiry" in *Logic: Theory of Inquiry* (1938). Dewey (1938:101ff.) argues that all scientific activity begins with a surprising observation or problematic situation—something that makes the researcher puzzled and thus forced to speculate or theorize about it and obtain more relevant information or empirical data. When researchers encounter a phenomenon, they do not understand or a problematic situation, they should first search for the components of the phenomenon or the facts of the situation in question and put them together or summarize them. Next, they should formulate ideas about conceivable meanings or explanations, which is the prerequisite for logical ideas and what they primarily consist of. Finally, these should be tested. One must experiment. Stated differently, all scientific investigations begin with an uncertain or problematic situation, whereupon the uncertain or problematic elements are defined and a concrete problem is formulated. The problem formulation is crucial for the solution of the problem in that it basically concerns finding a way in which to see reality that allows you to deal with it.

The requirement for defining or formulating a problem and solving it is "sociological imagination," which includes a way of thinking that is not only cognitive—based on successful theories, concepts, or explanations—but also aesthetic, emotional, and bodily. The point is to come up with different solutions to a problem that can be evaluated by testing them in practice or through communicative action and public debate. Dewey (1938:101ff.) argues that this is what theorizing is all about.

When I read Swedberg, I realized that he embarks on the same road as Dewey, in part because he quotes the following paragraph from Conan Doyle's *A Scandal in Bohemia* (1891):

> Dr. Watson: "This is indeed a mystery," I remarked. "What do you imagine that it means?" Holmes: "I have no data yet. It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts" (as quoted in Swedberg 2014a:12; see also 2014a:29).

Like Dewey, Swedberg is inspired by the philosopher Charles S. Peirce when it comes to the meaning of theorizing, not least regarding the idea that observation is one of three mental processes that make up our ability to reason or theorize. Peirce (1992b:182) emphasizes that observation is something that occurs on not only a logical, but also an intuitive level. We use our senses, emotions, and embodied experiences. We resort to all our abilities to come up with an idea that is consistent with what we observe. We reach out to touch it, smell, taste, listen: What kind of emotions does our relation to the observed make us experience and why? What does it make us associate with it?

Within this context, it is important to emphasize that observation is something that occurs on both conscious and unconscious levels, both in relation to others, and in relation to oneself (introspection). This includes both external events (thin description) and the meaning attributed to them (thick description). If one is going to come up with new ideas, it is crucial to acquire as much information of various types as possible. The sources of information can also be numerous and of various kinds. Swedberg (2014b:13) enumerates everything from archives, books, and newspaper articles to daydreams, illusions, speculations, and anecdotes. He also mentions interviews, statistical tables, large data collections, and the web. Moreover, anything that can assist us in observing is embraced, such as advanced camera equipment (Swedberg 2014b:14; cf. Law 2004).

In respect to the social sciences, particularly sociology, researchers observe social data, that is, what happens between individuals, in groups, and in societies (Swedberg 2014a:30). Personally,

I usually advise my students to observe phenomena that arise in the social world and have consequences for the social world—preferably things that you do not perceive as such at first glance. They are in fact on the right track when they come across something that annoys them or that they do not fully understand. Swedberg (2014a:37) refers in this regard to Murray Davis, who remarks that

> All interesting theories, at least all interesting social theories [...] constitute an attack on the taken-for-granted world of their audience (Davis 1971:311, as cited in Swedberg 2014a:37).

This points to the meaning of the first of the four basic steps that Swedberg (2014b:17) believes comprise theorizing in the social sciences.

Step 1. *Observe and choose something interesting to investigate*. Inspired by Peirce, Swedberg (2014a:30) claims that observation is one of three mental processes that make up the researchers' ability to reason or theorize regarding what happens between individuals, in groups, and in societies.

Step 2. *Name and formulate key concepts.* In order to convey the meaning of what is observed and why it is interesting to investigate, researchers must get others to see what they have seen for themselves. They must put what they have observed into meaningful words. Perhaps they also need to develop several concepts or a typology to analyze what they have observed (Swedberg 2014a:52). Since concepts already exist for most of what we observe, researchers must be careful of habitually using existing concepts if they do not accommodate all aspects of what they have observed or the changes that have taken place. Doing so would then result in that which is new slipping from our hands. In this regard, the political scientist and philosopher Charles-Louis de Secondat Montesquieu reminds us in *The Spirit of the Laws* ([1748] 1989:xi) that

> I have had new ideas, new words have had to be found or new meanings given to old ones (as cited in Swedberg 2014b:18).

Here we see clear parallels to views presented above, particularly Sylvia Walby's theorizing, which aims to give the concept of pa-

triarchy a partly new meaning that will revitalize its usefulness for analyzing women's subordination in society. Although it of course happens that researchers see something completely new, they are usually faced with what has been observed not being what it seems to be or how it is spontaneously interpreted. It may also be the case that researchers must depart from earlier interpretations because society has changed. It is thus important to focus on how what is observed may differ from what has previously been observed. Does one then have to name the difference in a new way? We may view conceptual development, which can entail both abstraction and definition, as a natural continuation of naming that involves the further clarification of the meaning of the phenomenon one is studying.

Swedberg (2014b:19) argues that if researchers have something important to say, they should, as a rule, find a new word for it. Although it is of course possible to use words as we usually do in everyday contexts, they can refer to widely differing phenomena and thus not be sufficiently precise. "Emotion" is an example of such a word in that it refers to phenomena such as headaches as well as to phenomena such as love. When conducting research, it may be appropriate to speak about the former as a sensation and the latter as an emotion, as sociologist Jeff Coulter does (Engdahl 2005:87ff.). It may also be appropriate to invent new words, such as sociologist Gabriel Tarde did when he coined the term "gloriometer" to speak of a hypothetical device capable of calculating the value-creating potential of members of a given public, or their worth. One can also use forgotten or rarely used words, as the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu did when developing the concept of "habitus." In the end, both naming and conceptual development are concerned with discovering and making visible things that had previously been hidden (Swedberg 2014a:53).

An example in this regard is the phenomenon that the sociologist Charles Horton Cooley termed the "looking-glass self," or our capacity for self-consciousness, which he divides into three principal elements. These are

> the imagination of our appearance to the other person, the imagination of his judgement of that appearance, and some sort of selffeeling, such as pride or mortification (Cooley [1902] 1992:184).

Cooley chose the name looking-glass self instead of self-consciousness to emphasize that it is an advanced phase in the development of the self that includes both others and society. Human self-consciousness is thus a social process. The important point is that both names and concepts are heuristic tools and, as such, crucial in making us see new aspects of a phenomenon. Expressed differently, social science concepts exist to sharpen our minds and help us become more aware of the diversity of social reality (cf. Blumer 1954). We have already noted that well-established concepts tend to make us see a predetermined aspect of social reality and give it a predetermined meaning, instead of being open to seeing something new. This is partly why researchers should engage in not only a logical, but also a more personal manner, which I would refer to as adopting an embodied manner when we theorize.

We now have gained a rudimentary understanding of the second basic step that Swedberg (2014b:17) believes comprises social science theorizing.

Step 3. *Expand the theory.* The third step concerns building out the theory by providing more detailed descriptions of the various concepts it includes and indicating how they are interrelated, which involves clarifying the structure or organization of the phenomenon. Swedberg (2014a:80ff.) believes that analogies and metaphors are useful for obtaining a further grasp of the phenomenon being studied at this stage of theorizing by helping researchers see new patterns and visualize them. We could then speak of drawing a new map of the phenomenon being studied. Analogy is extremely useful at this venture insofar as it can be very difficult to make someone else understand the meaning of something new that one has discovered without referring to something that is already known, that is, without discussing the meaning of what has been discovered with the help of similar phenomena (cf. Durkheim 1978:55ff.).

Sociologist Émile Durkheim, who was interested in the laws of the social world, such as the stability of suicide rates over time, believed that analogy can be used in arguing for the credibility of one's findings. If a law has been discovered within a given order, it is interesting to investigate whether it can also be found within other orders (Durkheim 1974:1). The sociologist Georg Simmel (1954) advocates an even more sophisticated use of analogies than simply

comparing one phenomenon with another and thus transferring the meaning of one to the other. He instead argues that comparing two phenomena with each other makes it possible to discover new meanings in both phenomena. The use of analogies thus involves two steps: first, one points out what phenomena have in common; second, one explores the differences between the phenomena and seeks to eliminate them. Simmel speaks of what two phenomena have in common in terms of "form," and he maintains that the task of sociology is to investigate social forms. This aspect of theorizing is then crucial for sociology as a distinct scientific discipline.

Metaphors are often regarded as the same as analogies. In contrast, Swedberg (2014a:90f) argues that there is a crucial difference between analogy and metaphor, and he highlights, among other things, philosopher Max Black's idea of the importance of metaphors in science. A metaphor is not primarily aimed at transferring meaning from one phenomenon to another, but rather makes us focus on a specific aspect of a phenomenon and regroup the elements of the phenomenon studied in respect to it. Black (1962:41) uses the metaphor "man is a wolf " to illustrate this point. The wolf metaphor causes us to focus on certain aspects of the human being and displace others in a way that reorganizes our view of the meaning of being human.

Step 4. *Suggest an explanation.* The fourth and final fundamental step of theorizing involves completing the tentative theory by proposing an explanation. Explanation has a special place in theorizing because researchers may regard it as its goal, and it often constitutes the hypothesis that researchers intend to test in their main study. A declaration involves making precise both what is to be explained (*explanandum*), and how it is to be explained (*explanas*). In respect to the social sciences, especially sociology, the phenomena that arise and develop within social contexts and influence them comprise what is to be explained. An explanation of such phenomena lies both in its constituent parts, and in its social emergence and effect. However, we should be clear that this is a question of merely proposing an explanation. It is only when the hypothetical explanation which the researcher has formulated has been tested that it can be termed an explanation in the scientific sense. Inspired by Peirce, Swedberg (2014a:103ff.) maintains that theorizing

involves guessing and guessing correctly, which is perceived as a survival instinct that is very much about getting in touch with the unconscious. This brings us back to the importance of the personal, or using all of one's abilities when theorizing. I believe that this is to be linked to the idea that sustainable education should lead to critical reflection, agency, transcendence, and diversity.

Conclusion and Vision

Theorizing, which refers to the process that precedes a theory, holds an obscure place in the contemporary social sciences. As a result, students are neither taught how to develop theories of their own to analyze society and present evidence to substantiate their research, nor increase their ability to do so during their course of studies. They instead use already existing theories when formulating, interpreting, and explaining societal problems and in defending their findings.

Theorizing and theory are closely connected. However, teaching only already existing theories limits the ability of students to utilize their own unique set of knowledge and experience, which in the long run results in their missing out on new perspectives from which to tackle a problem and cast a new light on it. Stated otherwise, it limits the development of sustainable education insofar as it does not fully foster opportunities students may encounter for critical reflexivity, agency, crossing borders, and a diversity of perspectives, including the development of one's own. Nor does it promote their ability to achieve the most advanced stage of learning in Bloom's taxonomy, which is to create.

In my estimation, it is crucial to give theorizing a more prominent place in higher education in the social sciences. In the light of the present discussion, in which I have demonstrated the lack of theorizing in higher education in the social sciences and identified its role and importance, along with how it is conducted in practice, I propose the following four points to make social science education sustainable.

1. Clearly distinguish between theory and theorizing, that is, between theory and the process leading to the formulation of a theory.
2. Draw attention to the difference between theory and theorizing in teaching materials and teaching situations by mentioning not only theory, but also the importance of theorizing when conducting research.
3. Teach students how to theorize by, for example, allowing them to practice each of the steps of theorizing identified in this article, namely, observe and choose something interesting to investigate, name and formulate central concepts, build out the theory, and propose an explanation.
4. Encourage and reward students' willingness and ability to theorize.

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SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONIST RESEARCH IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

PART 2

Stigma without Shame: An Ethnography of Territorial Stigma in a Dutch Suburb in the 1970s

Thaddeus Müller

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the stigmatization and destigmatization of Newhome,[1] a new suburb in Alkmaar, the Netherlands, in the period 1970–1980. The ethnographic data has been gathered through the use of a range of methods, including interviews, document analysis, and participant observation over a period of two and a half years. The findings indicate that shame is not necessarily related to stigma, and that it depends on a complex set of circumstances. I will demonstrate this by comparing the Newhome case with that described by Elias and Scotson in *The Established and Outsiders* (Elias and Scotson 1965) and explain why and how a situation developed of "stigma without shame" in Newhome. This chapter also places *The Established and Outsiders*, which was the first sociological study of territorial stigma, within the stigma field, specifically in relation to Goffman (1963) and Wacquant (2008).

The fieldwork embraces two decades (1970–1990), and here I focus on the 1970s. I address the process of stigmatization during

1. "Newhome" is a pseudonym.

the second decade in another publication (Müller 2024). This study highlights how resisting stigma is shaped by a range of circumstances, such as social cohesion[2] and the cultural repertoire (Lamont, Moraes Silva, Welburn, et al. 2016) that developed in the specific political and social historical context of the Netherlands during the early 1970s, the heyday of the Dutch welfare state. Stigma was also countered by the social and symbolic distance from the stigmatizers, the normalizing qualities of the modern suburban houses, and social networks that included residents outside Newhome. This resulted in a minor degree or form of stigmatization that generated hardly any negative consequences—stigma did not gain a master status because the Newhome residents did not believe that they were inferior. Since the negative label did not stick, it did not lead to shame, demoralization, or disempowerment.

The ethnographic material that I present here comes from a publication entitled *Lokaal Vandalisme* (Van Laar and Müller, 1991). In this monograph, the authors do not reflect in either a theoretical or conceptual manner concerning stigmatization and destigmatization, as I do here. For this chapter, I re-analysed the interviews and re-did the document analysis of the local media. This chapter is part of a larger project in which I have focused on the social construction of moral (stigmatizing) narratives and how these are countered (e.g. Müller 2014, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021). My main aim is to unpack the dialectical and multi-dimensional process of stigmatization and destigmatization. I employ an ethnographic and longitudinal lens to focus on the local narratives and activities of social actors in their neighborhood and on how these are related to wider social forces.

This chapter is part and parcel of the Dutch urban ethnographic tradition inspired by the Chicago School. This tradition is exemplified in the Netherlands by the publications and teachings of Lodewi-

2. Defining social cohesion is highly problematic in that it has many conflicting definitions (Friedkin 2004). I am not entering this discussion, but have chosen for communicative purposes this plain definition that combines social relations and support on a neighbourhood level. Social cohesion is also related to social trust, commitment, reciprocity and shared activities. Where there is social cohesion, we can in fact see a sense of community and belonging.

jk Brunt and Frank Bovenkerk (Bovenkerk and Brunt 1976, 1977a, 1977b, 1981) and of those whom they inspired. Where Bovenkerk focused on crime, Brunt's aim was to describe and understand urban social life. He published on such topics as innercity crime, ethnography of the night, communities, public space, Bombay, suburbanization, and Erving Goffman (Brunt 1974, 1983, 1991, 1993, 1996, 1999, 2002, 2004). Brunt was one of the supervisors in the Alkmaar study, together with cultural anthropologist Jojada Verrips. He introduced me to urban ethnography in the tradition of the Chicago School and later became my Ph.D. supervisor. He also invited symbolic interactionist scholars such as Lyn Lofland and John Johnson to present their work at Ph.D. meetings in Amsterdam. Lodewijk Brunt passed away in October 2020. I will miss his larger-than-life energy, his razor-sharp intellect, his endless generosity, his enduring love for urban ethnography, and his friendship. This chapter is dedicated to him.

The Established and Outsiders is not commonly referred to in publications on stigma and territorial stigma. An explanation for why it was used in the Newhome study is related to the fact that Norbert Elias lived in Amsterdam and had a large group of followers at the University of Amsterdam, one of whom was instrumental in the translation of *The Established and Outsiders* into Dutch in 1985. Brunt was not sympathetic with the grand statements of the Elias School concerning civilization, but he did like *The Established and Outsiders* because of its rich ethnographic data. Since he saw parallels with the Newhome study, he suggested that Hans van Laar and I read it and see whether it could be of help in our research.

The fact that Elias and Scotson's book has been largely ignored in the (territorial) stigma field is in itself interesting and requires an explanation. One likely explanation is that Elias and Scotson do not refer to the founding scholars of deviance studies. They do use such concepts as stigma and labelling sporadically in their book, but they do not refer to either Goffman or Becker. Although their books on stigma and labelling were published in 1963, it is plausible that Elias and Scotson were not aware of them while they were writing their book, published in 1965, since academic information travelled rather slowly in the 1960s. Another possible explanation for the fact that *The Established and Outsiders* has been overlooked

in the field of territorial stigma is that Elias became known for his civilization theory and never became associated with deviance and stigma.

When one reads *The Established and Outsiders*, it is difficult to deny its similarities with deviance studies, which makes one wonder how this book was received particularly in the UK, where deviance studies became popular in the 1960s. I emailed Ken Plummer and Paul Rock, who both participated in the National Deviancy Conferences, concerning this question. Plummer replied that "other works were much more widely cited and at the time seemed more important," adding that "I do not think it has ever become a prominent text, except within Eliasian circles." Rock emailed me that "Elias and Scotson were not very well known or much discussed at the time in the UK," not least because "Elias had not reached the prominence he was to attain later." Rock also observed that Elias "was not recognized as part of the traditions associated with criminology, the sociology of deviance, or any of the tributaries that flowed into them. *The Established and Outsiders* was in consequence part of a background rather than a foreground at the time."

I present the research findings of the Newhome study in the pages that follow. Before doing so, however, I provide an overview of the stigma field, focus on the position of *The Established and Outsiders* within this field, and discuss the methods used in the Newhome research.

Stigma and Territorial Stigma

Social scientists refer to Goffman's *Stigma* as a pivotal publication in that it was the first to explore stigma from a sociological perspective. In contrast, Elias and Scotson's study (1965) has very seldom been referred to in the stigma field and is in fact largely ignored, even today.

This is unfortunate because Elias and Scotson add a crucial element to Goffman's *Stigma*—they demonstrate how a stigma narrative is constructed in the everyday social world. Insofar as Goffman employs a formal sociological approach, he is not interested in how groups create a stigma narrative in order to defend their societal

status, as Elias and Scotson do. His aim is to show how stigma contributes to social order. Goffman categorizes three forms of stigma, namely, 1) stigma related to physical deformation, 2) stigma related to moral "weakness" (e.g. addiction), and 3) group stigma related to race and religion (e.g. racism). He describes how different participants contribute to public order by enacting identityspoiling stigma/shame narratives. Goffman in fact explains how the stigma/shame gaze touches everybody in society and is a disciplinary force structuring social order.

However, the publications of Goffman and Elias and Scotson share an important point—those who are targeted by stigmatization do not appear capable of resisting and fighting it successfully. Elias and Scotson maintain that those who are stigmatized adopt this negative image of themselves and cannot resist it because of a lack of social cohesion. They are consequently not able to have a viable social network that could neutralize the stigma constructed by the established residents. Goffman's representation of a stigmatized person is a person who accepts a stigma as a given fact of life, tries to cope with it and does not want to disturb the public order.

The Established and Outsiders ethnographically describes the stigmatization of Winston Parva,[3] a new neighborhood in an English consisting of three Zones. Zone 1 is a small middle-class area, Zone 2 is a respectable working-class area that was built during the 1880s, and Zone 3 is the stigmatized working-class area that had existed for only two decades at the time of Elias and Scotson's study. The fieldwork produced rich data that reveals in a detailed way how the social construction of neighborhood stigma takes place. Where Goffman's formal sociology results in a well-structured collage of academic and popular publications, Scotson followed in the footsteps of Robert Park and submerged himself in Winston Parva. Although Elias later became a world-famous sociologist, it was Scotson—a student/teacher/youth worker—who did all the intense fieldwork that made it possible to understand the social construction of a stigma narrative in a specific urban context.

3. "Winston Parva" is a pseudonym.

The fieldwork reveals how the new residents living in Zone 3 were stigmatized by those who had been living in Winston Parva for years, namely, the established residents of Zone 2. They created a negative label for those living in Zone 3 because they sensed that their social world was being threatened by the new residents arriving from the marginalized areas of large cities such as London. They referred to the new area, which was located beyond the original parameters of the city, as Rat's Alley. It was a former industrial area that was divided from the old part of town by a railroad. The stigma narrative consisted of several themes, including problematic families, low morale, poverty, and the transgressive behavior of the teenagers living in Zone 3. Their transgressions were emphasized and exaggerated in the stigmatizing narratives orchestrated by the established residents. "Gossiping" or narrating plays a crucial role in stigmatization.

Elias and Scotson reveal that narrating can be a powerful tool in areas where there is strong social cohesion[4] for stigmatizing newcomers and underlining the "normal" status of one's own community. Such narratives not only focus on the negative social aspects of the newcomers, constructing them as symbolic indicators of their moral character, they also deny the transgressive behavior that takes places in one's own community or view it as incidental, not as an indicator of the moral nature of their social world.

The absence of social cohesion is crucial for understanding the effect of stigmatization. The newcomers, who were described as isolated, lacking pride, "powerless," and "helpless" (Elias and Scotson 1965:75, 87), could not resist the stigma that they were facing. They did not have a network that supported them in either a moral or social way. The only strategy they had was to leave as soon as possible and find residence elsewhere, which further undermined the social cohesion of their neighborhood. Elias and Scotson also

4. Elias and Scotson do not define social cohesion. They nevertheless refer to 1) frequent sociable and supportive relations between neighbours, 2) shared collective activities such as church and pub, 3) networks or families and friends, especially mother-daughter relations, and 4) shared norms and values expressed in gossiping, which functions as a form of social control.

noted that the stigma narrative was so powerful that the residents of Zone 3 adopted it themselves, believing it to the extent that they internalized the spoiled identity of the "outsider."

In many ways, this study could be regarded as the urban ethnographic counterpart of Goffman's stigma, but that this has never been taken up in a serious manner. It is largely ignored even in the current field of territorial stigma, in which it could be viewed as an early ground-breaking and fundamental contribution. I am aware of one publication, an in-depth overview of the field of territorial stigma (Larsen and Delica 2019), in which their work receives attention. But by a strange twist of fate or oversight, they are not mentioned as the predecessors of territorial stigma, along with scholars such as Rainwater (1966) and Rasmussen (1968), since the version of *The Established and Outsiders* that is used is not the 1965 edition, but rather the 1994 edition (Larsen and Delica 2019:543). The term "territorial stigma" was coined by Loïc Wacquant (1993). He is regarded as having initiated this research field, which began to blossom with his book *Urban Outcasts* (2008). This publication, in which he fuses Goffman's analysis of stigma with a Bourdieu-inspired conception of territorial stigma, addresses how symbolic violence, such as in language religion, and mediatized narratives, serves to structure hegemonic power disparities between established and marginalized groups in society. Wacquant describes the urban outcasts in stigmatized areas as powerless and unable to resist the symbolic violence of neo-liberal society. His one-dimensional definition of territorial stigma triggered in-depth criticism from qualitative studies that revealed a more complex image of stigmatized neighborhoods in which citizenss ere able to resist stigma and create a counter-narrative. These studies have an ethnographic character that goes beyond Wacquant's topdown schematic structural analysis and provides a qualitative description of the diverse perspectives of stigmatized neighborhoods (for a detailed overview see Halliday, Brennan, Bambra, et al. 2021; Larsen and Delica 2019; Smets and Kusenbach 2020; Müller 2024). Nonetheless, social cohesion is hardly mentioned in these studies as a source for countering territorial stigma (cf. Jørgensen 2010).

Several recent publications highlight the relevance of social cohesion as a resource for counter-stigma in differing social contexts.

For instance, Carrasco, Barrington, Kennedy, et al. (2017) argue in their discussion of sex workers living with HIV in the Dominican Republic that social cohesion creates a social environment in which participants feel supported and assist each other. The activist community to which they belong creates a safe space of trust and solidarity in which they can voice their experiences and no longer feel alone and isolated. As a collective, they are able to construct a counternarrative that rejects stigmatizing societal norms and creates an alternative positive identity.

Social cohesion also plays a crucial role in *Soviet Signoras* (Cvajner 2020), which is an ethnographic study of elder care-givers from former Soviet republics working in Northern Italy. Cvajner describes the perspective of women who are faced with the stigma of being a "bum washer." But because of their close social network and shared activities, such as meetings at the Sunday market and shopping together, these women are able to create a counter-narrative in which respect, pride, and self-esteem form the main themes. This counternarrative is related to their biographies, including 1) the higher education they enjoyed, 2) the professional jobs they used to have, and 3) their self-definition as caring mothers. Their stigma does not bother them because they are morally and emotionally disconnected from the Italian community, or more precisely, from that part who stigmatize them. They in fact engage in "stigma reversal" (Killian 1985) insofar as they consider themselves superior to Italian women. Another example in which social cohesion plays a crucial role in countering stigma is a publication concerning how Somali immigrants react to race stigma in Canada (Kusow 2004). These immigrants reject the stigmatizing racist narratives by tapping into moral narratives that are rooted in their home-culture. In a manner similar to that of the immigrants from former Soviet republics, they create a separate narrative of honor, pride, and respect that includes a rejection of Canadian identities and race-based stigma, as well as stigma reversal, which they utilize to fight the stigma narrative. They also view themselves as superior to Canadians. These Somali immigrants employ narratives constructed within their community in order to engage in *undoing stigma* and create an empowering definition of themselves.

Lamont, Moraes Silva, Welburn, et al. (2016) focus on how national cultural repertoires shape doing/undoing stigma. M*ost* studies that focus on territorial stigmatization have done so within the context of neo-liberalism, which creates a cultural repertoire that blames the marginalized for their social position and relates the latter to their supposedly flawed moral character (Lamont 2018). Since this chapter focuses on the 1970s in the Netherlands, a period when the social democratic welfare state was at its peak, the question of how the welfare state cultural repertoire shaped doing/undoing in Newhome appears appropriate.

Methods

The study was conducted over a period of two and a half years and included a wide range of methods, both qualitative and quantitative. The main method was participant observation. During two periods of 8 and 4 months respectively, the researchers, Hans van Laar and I, lived in Newhome and participated in the local community. In order to gain a deeper understanding of social life in the neighborhood and its history over a period of two decades (1970–1990), we also conducted semi-structured interviews. We used snowball sampling to get into contact with residents, neighborhood volunteers, and professionals. We interviewed a total of 14 professionals and 80 residents, 9 of whom were involved in local volunteer organizations such as the church and the residents' association. In addition, we had many open-ended short conversations with a range of actors, such as adult residents, teenagers, and civil servants. We also studied documents regarding the neighborhood, such as media reports and government publications.

The area we studied was built in the 1970s, and it had 8,640 residents at the time of our study (1988–1991). The older part of the city consisted of approximately 51,000 residents. The city has a historical center dating back to the thirteenth century and attracts many tourists, particularly for the cheese market. The larger part of the research area consists of single-family units with gardens at the front and back. The area, which has a typical suburban feel to it, has one large and one small shopping center. There are also some

high-rise apartment buildings in the northern part. The neighborhood includes primary schools and some regional colleges.

The area comprises three subsections. Zone 1, which consists mostly of a grid pattern of streets with terraced social housing, is the oldest part and was built in the first half of the 1970s. Zones 2 and 3 consist of more modern and luxurious owner-occupied homes within a street pattern that is described as a "cauliflower neighborhood" since it is not rectangular. Zone 3 also includes a large section of social housing.

When we realized that the neighborhood we were studying was targeted by stigma that was rooted in the 1970s, we focused on unpacking the stigma in two ways. 1) We conducted a document analysis of how the neighborhood was represented in the local media. 2) We discussed the early process of stigmatization with residents and professionals in our interviews. For this chapter I re-analysed the interviews, which had somehow miraculously survived over a period of 30 years. The newspaper articles we collected and analysed were no longer available. In order to re-analyse these, I returned to the city archives of Alkmaar and re-did the local media analysis.

Stigmatization and Destigmatization

I first present the newspaper analyses in the present study. I then discuss the perspectives of the residents, that is, how they gave meaning to stigmatization and destigmatization. In the final part of this section, I compare the development of territorial stigmatization in Newhome with that in Winston Parva, England.

Mediatized territorial stigma

The analyses of publications in the local media revealed that a number of articles regarding Newhome appeared in the winter of 1972–1973. This was the period when new residents were moving into the suburb, and it was covered in two long publications and a dozen shorter ones. Here I will focus on the two long articles.

The first long publication on Newhome, entitled "Pioneer Spirit among Newhome Residents" (Alkmaarse Courant 1972a),[5] was published on 4 November 1972. Negative and positive elements alternated in this article, creating a mixed message. The negative qualifications were related to the unfinished living environment—there was a picture of houses with unpaved streets and the material that would be used to cover the road. The subtitle emphasizes the disorder of the environment—"it is still a mess and there are no shops, but it will be possible to get used to it." The area was called Alkmaar's "most isolated area," and it was noted that many streets and pavements still looked like a "battlefield." The publication stated that the two most common remarks that a resident heard were "still a mess around the houses" and "you will get used to not having shops nearby." As we shall see below, this negative imagery reappeared in the narratives of the residents that we interviewed.

The article had a positive note in that it stated that "everything else is OK," and that a pioneer spirit was developing among everyone who lived in Newhome that made it possible for them to accept the inconveniences as part of their normal daily life. It described the presence of three temporary schools, a mobile savings bank, and a mobile kindergarten. The article remarked that residents were content with their houses since they were spacious and modern. Each house had four large bedrooms, a large bathroom, two toilets and a large kitchen, and almost everyone came from accommodations that were too small. The article ended with the upbeat comment that "it looks like people will get used to living in Newhome."

Many publications were short notifications concerning the (delayed) development of the neighborhood—schools were opened, a temporary shop served their first clients, and a plan for an extra bridge over the canal separating Alkmaar from Newhome was presented. An article published on 29 December 1972, "Youth in Newhome Get a 'Play House'" (Alkmaarse Courant 1972b), mentioned the local involvement of the new residents of Newhome in a

5. The newspaper Alkmaarse Courant neither mentions authors' names, nor provides page numbers.

positive way. This article stated that "a remarkable community spirit" had developed—40 residents want to participate in preparing activities for the ward council of the new suburb. This community spirit was also evident in the organized activities for 100 children that were held in the canteen of a construction company. A house was going to be used in the near future for childrens' activities after regular school hours—"Around 20 housewives have already signed up to supervise in rotation."

Doubts were raised in early 1973 about the need for the new suburb. One housing cooperation remarked that the new high rises were not attracting many residents in an article (23 January 1973) entitled "Little Interest in Flats in Newhome" (Alkmaarse Courant 1973a). A subsequent article entitled "Newhome Is a Historic Mistake," which covered almost an entire page, was published on 24 January 1973 (Alkmaarse Courant 1973b). The subtitle expressed an othering narrative defining flats and their residents as not typically Dutch—"Flat dwellers are not the typical cozy Dutchmen." The president of the Alkmaar housing cooperation acted as a moral entrepreneur in his campaign against Newhome, particularly its highrise buildings. His housing cooperation in fact refused to participate in the building of Newhome. The following remarks are typical examples of his stigmatizing and degrading quotes.

> Misconduct is most common in high-rise, as is the most severe form of littering and harassment.
> It is known to us that others shut up about the perpetrators out of fear of retaliation.
> Flat residents are also more likely to annoy each other [...]. It can become an obsession. It leads to heightened aggressiveness.

This stigmatizing narrative highlighted misconduct, litter, harassment, fear, obsession, and aggressiveness, but none of the statements were supported by any reference to research or incidents in other flats in or outside Alkmaar. They were consistent, however, with an anti-urban narrative that was common in Alkmaar which focused on urban crime and social problems.

The president of the housing cooperation was also against Newhome because he claimed it would destroy the natural landsca-

pe. He stated that the meandering dikes and winding roads should not be modernized and straightened.

> There is little joy in contributing to a process that harms the quality of life in Alkmaar. Nature and the landscape are being damaged.

A final critique attacked the principal reason for building Newhome. The president stated that the planning of the new suburb was not based on research. He claimed that the plans were based on wrong assumptions.

> The critical point is whether the high-rise buildings will get completely occupied. What people from Haarlem or Amsterdam could imagine living in a flat again?

He added that

> There is a growing number of people who ask "Have we become completely insane?"

The newspaper shared its opinion (Alkmaarse Courant 1973c) in an editorial published on 27 January 1973, doubting whether highrise in Newhome was a good choice.

> What many already feared seems to have come true—high-rise is no longer desired.
> In addition, it is generally known that only a few people choose out of their own free will to live in a flat.

Social reality contradicted these statements only one week later. An article published on 31 January 1973, entitled "Despite Pessimistic Newspaper Publications: Flats in Newhome Are Going Fast Now" (Alkmaarse Courant 1973d), described how people were clearly willing to live in the flats. The president of another social housing cooperation stated that "people are enthusiastic about the quality and layout of these flats" (Alkmaarse Courant 1973d).

He stated that Amsterdammers—in contrast to the what the newspaper claimed—liked moving to a flat. In the years that followed, many residents flocked to Newhome and the moral panic in

the media disappeared. The new suburb was mentioned only sporadically in short announcements reporting local information, such as events or recreational activities.

Although the media presentation contained positive elements, such as the community, the pioneer spirit, and the large and comfortable houses, our research participants tended to remember the negative depiction of Newhome. This is discussed in the following section.

Territorial stigmatization: The perspective of Newhome residents

> For many people Newhome does not belong to Alkmaar. Newhome does not fit with the Alkmaar they have in their mind (A man in his forties living in Zone 3).

In this section I present the perspective of the new suburban residents. I first focus on how they describe the stigma narrative before addressing how they countered stigma.

Most residents remembered the negative portrayal of their neighborhood even after 15 years. Many people who did not live in the suburb had spoken of a "barracks in a wasteland," which accorded with the media depiction. The first houses were surrounded by building sites and the area was labelled as a "windy corner" and a "sand box." Many saw the suburb as barren, grey, and not cosy. A man living in Zone 2 remarked that

> The residents of Alkmaar do not think Newhome belongs to the city. People from elsewhere, newcomers, would come and live here, which was viewed as a threat.

He remembers that the first houses in Newhome were called "dog cages" and "chicken coops." He said that another negative association was the sewerage plant—"With a westerly wind, you could smell it in Newhome."

Traffic connections with the old town were not well developed, which reinforced the notion that the new suburb seemed to be a di-

fferent world, far away, with different people. The general impression was that the new residents coming from cities such as Amsterdam, Haarlem, and Zaandam would be of a lower social economic class, which was very similar to views about Winston Parva. The suburb would be a place where the marginalized from other cities would be "dumped," as those living in the old city put it. A man in his late forties living in Zone 2 related how

> The original residents of Alkmaar keep saying [with dismay, TM], do you live in that new suburb? The new residents bothered them. They saw the arrival of laborers from the railways and the steel industry as an intrusion upon the stately and stiff-upper-lip Alkmaar.

Years later, during our research in the late 1980s, there was still a socially-constructed difference between the new citizens of the area we were researching and those who considered themselves to be the original residents. The latter defined the first as outsiders—they still viewed them as "imports" and described them as "loud" and "braggy" people from Amsterdam. A woman in her seventies living in Zone 3 stated that she did not feel accepted by the original residents.

> They give you funny looks. They make you feel that you're not from here. Most people say, heh, you're from Amsterdam. They think you're rude.

There is an overlap within the stigma narrative targeting Newhome between territorial stigma and Goffman's stigma that is specifically related to the second and third stigma categories, namely, moral weakness and group stigma. The new residents were viewed as laborers with a lower social status who came from marginalized areas, which supposedly implied that their moral character would be inferior to that of the established residents of Alkmaar.

Countering stigma

We could see the first houses when we rode on our scooter along the canal. We would never think of living there. It looked grey and

like a barracks. But when we moved here, we were very happy. We felt like king of the world (woman in her forties living in Zone 1).

Our research showed that a process of stigmatization developed concerning Newhome that was similar to what took place in Winston Parva. However, our interviews also revealed that the residents were able to resist the stigma narrative, unlike the residents of Zone 3 in Winston Parva. One important resource for pride and empowerment was the fact that they had made a positive move in their housing career. The people that we interviewed saw their new dwellings as luxurious and grand, as was discussed in the local media. Most people came from overpopulated inner-city neighborhoods where they were living in small cramped apartments. Some of our respondents were couples with a child who had lived with their parents in the attic or a spare room. Many could not believe their luck and indeed felt like they were "king of the world."

In addition, their new living area also became a vital resource due to the development of social cohesion and social pride within the first years of the neighborhood's existence. The residents had frequent social contact with each other at the beginning, helping each other to deal with the initial inconveniences of living in Newhome. A man in his fifties living in Zone 1 said that it almost seemed that Newhome was self-sufficient—one could find everything in his neighborhood.

> A police officer who could help you with trouble, there was a bricklayer if you needed to lay bricks, a mechanic would fix your washing machine. Many new residents came from an upstairs apartment and had no idea of how to keep a garden. But it got done with the support of others. The walls of the houses were very hard, and you had to have a hammer drill if you needed to hang something. You saw the owner of a hammer drill drilling holes for a number of people at the same time.

Our respondents who had moved into Newhome during the early years remember the strong solidarity and the pioneer spirit, which was also discussed in the local media. "There was nothing, we had to do everything together. That creates a bond."

One of the specific events that brought people together was the spring storm of 1973. The roofs of some houses were partially torn

off and there was other damage as well. Research participants told us that children were hiding under the table while the adults went out to help those whose houses were badly damaged.

An important impetus behind the social cohesion was the fact that the neighborhood had many families with young children. Residents became acquainted because of their children and befriended each other. They would look after each other's children after school and help out in cases of emergency, such as sickness and being stuck in traffic. A woman from Zone 1 remarked that

> In the beginning there was a sense of togetherness. There were many families with young children. We did many things for each other—grocery shopping, looking after each other's children, barbequing together, bowling together.

The solidarity in the first years created strong social ties that characterized the neighborhood for years to come. Even during our research, 15 years later, we noticed the presence of enduring social relations. For instance, it was common in several streets that birthdays were celebrated collectively. One group of residents continued to spend a weekend away together every year, and many residents jointly celebrated the tenth anniversary of the neighborhood. A woman in her early thirties living in Zone 2 summed up the collective activities with her neighbors by observing that

> With a group of five neighbors we dine out, celebrate birthdays, go to the beach, and in the past when we didn't have any children, we went away for the weekend. Other people also joined us for sports activities, such as swimming, running, and tennis. We've also had a barbecue for the last two years that attracts 40 people.

Those who left missed the solidarity and social contacts of their old neighborhood and wanted to return. The neighborhood changed slowly over time as new people moved into the neighborhood, but overall, most people would still characterize the social contacts as friendly and helpful when we were conducting our research. People depended less on each other in Zones 2 and 3, the areas that were more recently built, because local services had already been established. But although the solidarity might have been less

prominent in the newer areas, we did observe examples of social cohesion. For instance, people helped each other with the initial construction of each other's gardens and regularly met for coffee. Children also became a bonding force—new residents organized an informal rotating day-care facility in their homes. In addition, a woman in her early thirties remarked that hardly anyone had moved out of her section of Zone 3 during the last ten years.

> The contacts are good because everybody knows each other. During the first five years we saw each other frequently. We organized barbeque parties. We still visit each other sometimes now, but we always help each other when necessary. When my neighbor went to visit her father in a hospital in Amsterdam, I would look after her children during school break. One of the neighbors is in poor health, so we help her with window cleaning, peeling potatoes— that's normal.

Another relevant point is that the new residents did not regard themselves so much as citizens of Alkmaar, in part because of their strong connection with Newhome. Their identities and moral narratives were profoundly shaped by and grounded in their social world. They lived their own social life, as they stated, but also had a social network which went beyond Alkmaar that was shaped by their education, participation in their professions, and the network of families and friends in the cities they had left. As a result, they could interpret the new suburb using "outside" concepts—socially constructed in Newhome and outside Alkmaar. It was as if their social world and their moral narratives were hardly embedded in Alkmaar. This social and symbolic distance shielded them against the stigmatizing narrative in a manner that was quite similar to the elder care-givers depicted in *Soviet Signoras* (2020).

Even though there was a recognizable stigma narrative, it did not affect the residents of the neighborhood as it did in Winston Parva. This was shaped by 1) the normalization qualities of living in a modern and spacious house, 2) the strong social cohesion in Newhome, and 3) the social and symbolic distance from Alkmaar. As a result, the negative representation did not acquire a defining cultural hegemonic power, as it did in Winston Parva. A woman in her forties living in Zone 1 stated that

> When people place an ad to find a rental place, they sometimes add "not in Newhome." Her daughter has experienced something similar. When she said at secondary school that she lived in Newhome, others remarked that it was a dump. Other people said that they thought it was shabby and preferred to live in an owner-occupied home. We could only laugh out loud when we heard that.

I will now present a comparison of Newhome and Winston Parva in the following section, with a specific focus on cultural repertoires and the social structure of the stigmatized neighborhoods.

Newhome and Winston Parva Compared

This ethnographic case of stigmatization without shame makes it possible to further develop our understanding of stigmatization and countering stigma. I will begin by focusing on the stigmatization process in the Newhome case before comparing it to that in Winston Parva. My aim is to develop a sensitizing analytical frame with which we can study and understand (territorial) stigma as well as the circumstances under which it may or may not lead to shame, exclusion, and marginalization.

The "native" residents of Alkmaar assumed that the new residents in Newhome would be poor, rude, and uncivil working-class people from marginalized urban neighborhoods. This stigma narrative was socially constructed by these original residents to define their own identity and the character of their provincial town in contrast to cities such as Amsterdam. It tapped into an existing anti-urban narrative that referred to social problems typically associated with urban life, including marginalization, social disintegration, and anti-social behavior. Alkmaar was defined as the opposite of such urban areas, namely, a provincial town in which people knew each other and looked after each other. By means of this narrative, they sought to make sense of the massive growth in the number of residents which was underway that would likely transform its original, cherished small-town character. They had to deal with the fact that people from urbanized areas would come to live near them, with persons from Amsterdam being specifically viewed as outsiders who were unlike those who lived in Alkmaar.

This process took place on a national level, and a similar tension between established citizens and "imports" was evident in many other towns and villages (see Brunt 1974).

It is important to note that the form of stigmatization we encountered in our study did not have a structural character marginalizing those targeted by stigma in a social-economic sense (see Hannem 2012). Stigma was not formalized by institutions, such as the criminal justice system in the case of ex-convicts and the health-care system in the case of mental health patients. The stigma we observed instead had a symbolic and diffuse character. It did not target individual suburbanites themselves and did not threaten their access to vital institutions such as work, health, and education.

This raises a crucial question: What is the relationship between marginalization and stigmatization? Although this is difficult to answer, it appears to indicate in the present case that stigmatization does not have detrimental effects when social-economic marginalization is not at stake. It is the self-reinforcing toxic mix of stigmatization and marginalization that creates such negative social effects as exclusion, discrimination, shame, despair, and disempowerment.

The latter did not take place in Newhome in the 1970s. Because of the absence of the toxic symbiotic relation between marginalization and stigmatization, the new residents were able to counter stigma and create a narrative that added a different set of meanings to the new suburb and its residents. In contrast to Zone 3 in Winston Parva, social cohesion did develop, and this provided a source for the emergence of a positive counter-narrative about people creating a new community and supporting each other. Countering stigma was also shaped by how new residents could create a positive moral narrative concerning place and self. This had two specific dimensions.

1) Newhome residents defined themselves as successful because they had moved into modern and spacious houses, which served to emphasize an empowering self-definition. 2) They defined themselves as being different from those who lived in the older part of the city, which shielded them from stigma, primarily because the

"native" citizens were not defined as the significant *audience* that the newcomers relied upon for social appraisal and recognition.

The newcomers' social network went well beyond their neighborhood insofar as our research participants lived within convenient travelling distance from the locations where they had previously lived. They could thus continue being part of the social worlds they had come from, which supported their positive self-definition. Countering stigma was also shaped by their ability to create a positive narrative with empowering self-identities using social cohesion within and beyond the neighborhood. Although they still remembered the negative depiction of their neighborhood from 15 years earlier, it did not shape their lives in the fundamental way that stigmatization had affected residents in Winston Parva. The consequences were in fact so minimal that we can speak of stigma without shame. There was indeed a stigma-label, but it did not become a master status—it did not stick to and stain the identity of those who lived in Newhome. Stigmatization in the case of Winston Parva was more in line with Wacquant's definition in respect to territorial stigma.

In order to further develop our understanding of the differences between the two cases that we have been discussing, we have to place both examples—Newhome and Winston Parva—within their wider (national) social-historical contexts.

When we do so, we see that the latter generate two different hegemonic cultural repertoires that account for the crucial difference between Winston Parva and Newhome. The hegemonic narrative within British class society of the late 1950s and early 1960s resulted in a local narrative of social tension and social threat that labelled the working class living in Zone 3 of Winston Parva as inferior and not respectable. They were consequently excluded from access to cultural and social resources and thus rendered incapable of creating a counter-narrative.

The social-historical and political context of the Netherlands of the 1970s was far removed from that in Winston Parva. First, there was a difference in affluence and welfare. While austerity had been prominent in both the Netherlands and the UK in the first decade after the second world war, incomes in the Netherlands increased in the second half of the 1960s and the consumer society became

accessible for a large percentage of the population. Second, there was a strong social democratic cultural repertoire in the Netherlands in the 1970s that supported the welfare state and the right to have access to education, housing, work, and political power. Most of the residents of Newhome profited from this hegemonic narrative and were able to improve their lives by moving to Newhome. They were less vulnerable than the residents of Zone 3 in Winston Parva in that they had sufficient cultural, financial, and social resources.

Another crucial difference is associated with the character of the community of Zone 2 in Winston Parva in comparison with the community structure in Newhome. Elias and Scotson described Zone 2 as an urban village, that is, a close-knit community where most people shared the same norms and participated in the same circles. They went to the same pubs, churches, factories, and political parties, and their social networks hardly extended beyond Winston Parva. Their sense of self, or self-identity, depended almost solely on their social life within the confines of Winston Parva. It was almost as if the *Gemeinschaft* in which they lived formed a total institution that controlled everything they did, evaluating them in terms of a fixed and static hierarchy of respected versus dishonorable residents. The social status created by this community, with its homogenous set of values and norms, possessed the character of a master status. It may be difficult today to grasp this description of an urban parochial community with a hegemonic focus on social scrutiny, which resulted in almost complete conformity, but it is confirmed by many other urban studies from this historical period, such as *The Urban Villagers* (Gans 1962) and *Family and Kinship in East London* (Young and Wilmott 1957).

The community structure in Newhome differed vastly from that of Winston Parva. In the Netherlands, the geographical, cultural, and social mobility that resulted from the welfare state led to a situation in which a resident's master status was not specifically related to the neighborhood in which they lived. The social networks of Newhome residents went beyond the immediate experience of their living area and included family members, friends, and colleagues in other towns and cities. In addition, their self-identity was also related to a range of cultural practices that went beyond the

neighborhood, were shaped by consumption and an expanding media landscape, and resulted in a diversification of music, magazines, radio, and television. This was related to a societal transformation that began in the 1960s that was marked by an increase in income and education within a developing welfare society. Newhome was a prime example of this development, and the new neighborhood gave rise to a social world in which the residents did not depend solely on local social contacts for the recognition and appraisal of their self-identity, as was the case for those who lived in Winston Parva.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that, in order to further our understanding of stigmatization, we need to focus on the circumstances that transform the stigmatization process into a form of social control in which stigma becomes a master status that defines the self-identity of those targeted by stigma.

Within the social and cultural setting of Newhome, stigma did not gain a master status in the sense that residents believed that they were inferior. On the contrary, the negative label neither demoralized, nor disempowered the residents of the new suburb. When we focus on the social construction of stigma, we have to explore whether, and if so how, the persons targeted depend on the groups that stigmatize them as an audience for social recognition and an appraisal of their self-identity. This was indeed the case in Winston Parva, but not in Newhome. The residents of Newhome could resist the stigma narrative because they were empowered by their social networks that existed both within and beyond their immediate neighborhood. They also utilized the normalizing qualities of their new modern homes to define themselves as successful. In addition, the wider social context of Newhome—which consisted of a thriving welfare state and its social democratic cultural repertoire—played a significant role in hindering the transformation of symbolic stigmatization into structural stigmatization. This specific meaningmaking process of the local, within a historically situated national context, resulted in stigma without shame.

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Understanding the Changing Landscape of Volunteering and Volunteers in Italy through the Lens of Symbolic Interactionism

Andrea Salvini, Irene Psaroudakis

Introduction

The nature and characteristics of volunteering in Europe vary significantly from country to country because of the specific features of each society's historical, cultural, social, and economic development (Guidi, Fonović, and Cappadozzi 2021). Data regarding the distribution of volunteer work in European states reveals the enormous difference in this respect between the countries of Northern Europe and those of Mediterranean Europe. For example, 51.6% of the population in Norway were engaged in volunteer organizations in 2022 while, in 2015, 74.5% were involved in volunteering activities defined as "direct," that is, not necessarily carried out within organizations, but directly benefiting individuals or the community. In contrast, 12% of the population in Italy were involved in organized volunteering in 2015, while only 11.2% were involved in direct volunteering.[1]

1. This data was acquired in July 2024 from the ILOSTAT Explorer database at "https://ilostat. ilo.org/data/". It is notable that the International Labour Organi-

This chapter will focus on the Italian case since it exhibits processes of change that, if they were to consolidate in the future, could radically change the nature of volunteering, at least in comparison with the characteristics it assumed at the time of its contemporary emergence near the end of the 1970s (Salvini 2012b). These dynamics of change can be adequately understood by drawing on the conceptual heritage of symbolic interactionism, particularly in respect to how the meanings citizens attribute to volunteer action are changing and the role that such action plays in people's identity construction (Dymarczyk 2023; Behnia 2021; Salvini 2012b). The theories and empirical tools prevalent in the literature that have been employed to describe and explain the inclination of citizens to volunteer (see Clary and Snyder 1991; Cnaan, Handy, and Wadsworth 1996) no longer seem capable of helping us acquire an understanding of the current dynamics, primarily because of their inability to grasp the processual, changeable, and interactional nature of volunteer action. To some extent, the situation in Italy constitutes the litmus test for the inadequacy of the theoretical tools that now exist, especially the functionalist matrix, for the study of volunteering. This serves to open up new interpretative possibilities in which symbolic interactionism can play a decisive role in understanding the processes taking place.

Volunteering and Volunteers in Italy: A Rapidly Changing Phenomenon

In May 2023, ISTAT released a figure that was a genuine shock not only for insiders, but also for the press and public opinion more generally—from 2015 to 2021, the number of volunteers engaged in

zation (ILO) maintains the most up-to-date international database regarding volunteering insofar as volunteering has been conceptualized for years as essentially a particular type of unpaid work. We should note that there has been an emphasis in Europe upon the need to promote volunteering in order to support the sustainable development of the member states. Nonetheless, both Eurostat and national statistical institutes are investing in ever fewer ad hoc surveys aimed at exploring the changes that affect volunteering. The last extensive official survey in Italy concerning volunteers was conducted in 2013.

non-profit organizations in Italy fell from 5.52 to 4.66 million, a loss of 15.7%. The absolute value of the figure —about a million "lost" volunteers— apparently fueled a general alarm regarding something that has long been regarded as an undisputed strength and immutable virtue of Italian society. This trend was later confirmed by other official sources, such as the Multipurpose Household Survey, which revealed that those who performed non-paid activities in volunteer organizations fell from 12% in 2015 to 7.8% in 2023. No official survey has illustrated either the reasons for this decline, or whether those who left organizations became engaged in volunteer activities that the ILO would term "direct." Although the distribution and characteristics of volunteer activities display important differentiations on the national level, research at the local level indicates that the most relevant and worrying problems Third Sector Entities (ETS, or *Enti del Terzo Settore)* encounter in carrying out their activities are the declining recruitment of new volunteers, especially young people, the absence of generational turnover, and the rapid aging of both volunteers in general and organizational governance.

In recent years, the perception that volunteering in Italy is going through a crucial phase of change has been amplified. This is driven by the growing number of publications that call into question the nature of volunteering as well as the prospects that lie on the horizon. Two factors in particular have heavily influenced the redefinition of the constituent elements and practices of volunteering, the effects of which have yet to be fully assessed. First of all, it is impossible not to note how the public health emergency caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has radically transformed the daily existence of citizens and collaborations since March 2020. Many organizations have redefined their hierarchy of intervention and reoriented project investment into activities aimed at containing the effects of the pandemic in the country. Others have had to drastically reduce or interrupt their activities, especially in the case of organizations not directly involved in social and health sector. In particular, the first significant effect of the pandemic in this regard has been to amplify the ability of ETSs to activate processes of civil participation at the regional level. The dramatic circumstances of the health emergency confirmed the typical virtue of volunteering,

that is, to immediately respond to the population's needs and flexibly reorient its presence in the communities through proximity actions and territorial animation.

The pandemic has also highlighted the differing degrees of vulnerability of ETSs, many of which have not withstood the impact of the pandemic's effects on governance and on internal and external participation (cf. Psaroudakis 2021).

Secondly, the introduction of the Third Sector Code in 2017 was undoubtedly a seismic event in the world of volunteering. It prompted organizations to deeply ponder their identity and legal standing, leading to an ongoing debate concerning transition to an ETS status.[2]

This second factor, together with the first noted above, has provided an extraordinary opportunity to focus on the representation of the organizational self and the idea of volunteering as a practice of active citizenship, projecting it, when possible, onto scenarios beyond the contingencies of the present.

The political-social perspective that the Italian legislature had in mind when issuing Legislative Decree 117/2017, the Third Sector Code, remains a matter of contention. In the light of various interpretations, however, it seems clear that the Code constitutes a tool for regulating relations between the second sector (the state) and the third sector (ETSs) in accordance with the principle of public

2. According to the reforms promoted by Legislative Decree No. 117 of 2017, which introduces the "Third Sector Code," becoming an ETS involves acquiring a legal profile that is clearly accompanied by both obligations and advantages. The latter include, not least of all, being able to boast that one's organization has in fact qualified as an ETS. The various benefits that derive from having obtained this legal status can in general be framed within the relations obtaining between the ETSs themselves and the public administration. For example, the Registro Unico Nazionale del Terzo Settore (RUNTS, the national ETS archive) is one of the most significant innovations of the reform. An organization must be registered with RUNTS to qualify as an ETS, and registration is possible only if particular legal and organizational requirements are met. Voluntary Organizations (OdV, Organizzazioni di Volontariato) and Social Promotion Associations (APS, Associazioni di Promozione Sociale) are types of ETSs that are characterized by a more consistent presence of volunteers in the staff employed.

transparency. It is significant that the new Code essentially regards ETSs as *producers of goods and services*.

However, defining a voluntary organization (OdV) or a social promotion association (APS) based on the centrality (or not) of the production process is highly controversial. The ongoing debate on this point within the world of volunteering is itself a topic of discussion that may be summarized in the lingering doubts concerning the primary trait that defines a third-sector organization (Fazzi 1996, 2009, 2023; Gori 2020; Fici 2021).

Nonetheless, the Third Sector and volunteering have been subject to strict legal consideration on the part of the public administration as producers of goods and services, regardless of whether such production is non-profit or for-profit in character. While the authorities view this as crucial for effective regulation (Fici 2021), it resides upon institutions and disciplines that were originally designed to address business activities.

It is not surprising that many OdVs and APSs have found it difficult in light of their statutory principles to identify themselves in terms of the requirements in the decision-making process concerning whether or not to enroll in RUNTS. Some organizations have modified their consolidated identity references in organizational culture in order to become more congruent with the requirements so that they may be registered in RUNTS. In contrast, others have opted to not register—while the list of benefits for doing so is quite long, the same is probably true for the list of "disadvantages" as well. There is also a lively discussion on this point that is unlikely to reach a consensus that is satisfactory for all the parties involved.

RUNTS is the legal documentary device that defines the threshold between those organizations that are ETSs and those that are not, based on whether or not they are included in the Register. As is the case with any such mechanism, RUNTS identifies the limits for inclusion/exclusion in accordance with specific requirements. Over the last two years, an intense mobilization involving a number of various actors has emerged in support of the thousands of volunteer associations operating in Italy in an effort to determine whether they meet these requirements, or whether changes, typically statutory, are necessary. This may be viewed as a question of identity adaptation and reorientation—a type of organizational

catharsis, if you will—in respect to the entry demands of the new system.

Within this framework, the perception of the organizational "self " has played a key role in orienting decision-making dynamics within associations. Those whose "self " was viewed as meeting the requirements for ETS status encountered few problems beyond merely functional discrepancies in transitioning to the new regime. However, those whose organizational self was considered to be structurally incongruent with the new system pointed to a lack of sustainability in the registration requirements regarding RUNTS. Organizations that have "not yet" registered with RUNTS are probably found in more significant numbers in this second group (Psaroudakis and Salvini 2024).

Recent developments concerning volunteering indicate that it has now become an essential part of the enlarged "public sphere" (Wagner 2000) within which welfare—primarily social and health care—is addressed. The performance aspect of volunteering is the essential element. Within this context, the question arises concerning how the role played by organizations (ETSs) as promoters of social citizenship is changing.

The construction and promotion of the values and cultural frameworks upon which volunteer action is grafted, and from which it draws its meaning, should take priority within the dimension and the degree of structuring of organizations. However, this issue is neither excluded, nor encouraged by the Third Sector Code. According to a point of view that is perhaps now outdated, the fundamental task of volunteer organizations is to provide a place for socialization, growth, and a sharing of values from which voluntary action—in its operational and practical dimension—draws nourishment and meaning.Without a solid connection to this framework of shared meanings, volunteering risks becoming a mere performance—a pursuit of social utility detached from what Mills (1940) terms the "vocabularies of motives" that are capable of constructing identities on both individual and social levels.

From this perspective, the difficulties that organizations face in mediating between the needs of individual growth and fulfillment on the part of volunteers, on the one hand, and the organizational needs of management and the provision of services, on the other,

constitute a weakness within the volunteer system. Paradoxically, such difficulties can be expressed, first, in a declining sense of belonging on the part of the members of a given volunteer organization and, second, in a decline of the degree to which volunteers identify with how organizations translate their vision and their mission, as defined in the statutes, into concrete choices. These two issues—a reduction of a sense of belonging and a reduction in how members identify with the essential characteristics of organizations—may become more clear as we consider the factors of change that have characterized the universe of volunteering in Italy.

The main characteristics of this change, on a macro-structural level, may be summarized as follows:

1. The fragmentation of voluntary organizations due to the combination of the processess of "nuclearization" and "multiplication" of organizations.
2. The similarity (isomorphism) of volunteer organizations with other types of organizations, such as public institutions and companies.
3. The increase of the gap between large and small as well as central and peripheral organizations.
4. The increased demand for professionalization and a compliance with "quality" standards in the provision of services.
5. The gradual decline in the role played by OdVs and APSs in animating civil society and representing citizens in the more general welfare system (Salvini 2012a).

A transformation has thus taken place concerning how to understand and "do" volunteering—despite the persistence of a vast area of interpretative variability. Volunteer activities have also come to be marked by a gradual professionalization and specialization. In addition, access to the (economic) resources necessary to support interventions is now primarily guaranteed by participation in projects that are both constructed and evaluated in accordance with increasingly standardized criteria. This gives rise to the need to train specific skills among volunteers, not only in the field of planning and networking, but also in respect to the administrative management of resources and activities.

For Third Sector actors, the main challenge is the urgent need to modify, adapt, or reorient their organizational culture to meet the new demands, which largely stem from the external environment, without diluting the fundamental characteristics of their identity that provide a profound meaning to their presence in social communities (Psaroudakis and Salvini 2024).

The issue with which the present discussion began stands out against the background of these problems, namely, the departure of many thousands of volunteers from organized volunteering (the universe of ETSs). This is compounded by the difficulty of recruiting new volunteers and obtaining their lasting and ongoing commitment. These challenges underscore the critical need for empirical investigation of the changing dynamics of people's commitment to organized volunteer activities. Unfortunately, there have not been a sufficient number of such studies to provide a basis for data-driven interpretative hypotheses (Salvini 2023a). Consequently, we will attempt to outline the dynamics of volunteer commitment by drawing upon established conceptual frameworks from the perspective of symbolic interactionism. We will also utilize the slowly growing body of literature which provides theoretical orientations that are fruitful both for gaining an understanding of the ongoing transformations in volunteering, and for designing and implementing appropriate empirical approaches.

The Contradictions of Volunteering in Italy during the Last Thirty Years

There is certainly no shortage of surveys that explore the social phenomenon of volunteering in depth at a macro analytical level—although it must be acknowledged that large unexplored territories still exist. However, most surveys have focused on the structural and organizational characteristics of volunteering and rarely dwell on volunteers themselves and the nature of their volunteer action. As a result, there is a lack of more precise knowledge concerning the changes that affect how to understand such action, the compatibility between volunteer commitment and other areas of daily life, the meanings that are attributed to belonging to a volunteer

organization, and the benefits—expected and unexpected—that derive from such membership.

We set off here from the simple observation that consolidating specific representations of volunteering—particularly if promoted by authoritative public sources—can influence how volunteers represent themselves.

This is evident from the definition of "volunteer" presented in Article 17 of the Third Sector Code:

> The volunteer is a person who, by his or her own free choice, carries out activities in favor of the community and the common good, also through a Third Sector entity, making his or her time and skills available to promote responses to the needs of the people and communities that benefit from his or her action, in a personal, spontaneous, and free manner, without even indirect profit, exclusively for the purposes of solidarity (Third Sector Code, Art. 17, Para. 2).[3]

What does this representation of volunteer presented by the Third Sector Code tell us today? We may first say that the element which stands out in this picture is the essentially pragmatic nature of the volunteer, although numerous other views and implications are possible. This resides upon the practical and operational dimension of their actions, which are directed towards the community and the common good, "also through a Third Sector entity." In addition, we should note that the word "also" presupposes an eventuality (and no longer a dimension of 'exclusivity') that does not pertain to the previous legislation (Framework Law No. 266/91) insofar as the latter did not contemplate the possibility of volunteering outside of an organization. As a regulatory document, the Third Sector Code thereby plays a significant role in shaping a new image of the volunteer.

3. Il volontario è una persona che, per sua libera scelta, svolge attività in favore della comunità e del bene comune, anche per il tramite di un ente del Terzo Settore, mettendo a disposizione il proprio tempo e le proprie capacità per promuovere risposte ai bisogni delle persone e delle comunità beneficiarie della sua azione, in modo personale, spontaneo e gratuito, senza fini di lucro, neanche indiretti, ed esclusivamente per fini di solidarietà (Codice del Terzo Settore, art. 17, comma 2).

Volunteer action, which comprises the necessary objectification of the volunteer in both its content and how it is carried out, is practical in character. It is no coincidence that the Code dedicates an entire Article (No. 5) to the list of "activities of general interest" that are of functional significance in what organizations do "for the purposes of solidarity." To reiterate, it is important from this pragmatic perspective to highlight how the volunteer derives the significance of the activities they perform and the skills that they employ to do so, which is also specified by the regulatory definition. As we will see below, the skills that volunteers must possess are not secondary to our reasoning (Salvini 2020).

The Code thus presents and promotes a specific vision of the volunteer and volunteering. This vision indeed incorporates the orientations of many volunteers and many organizations, but it does not grasp the need to frame volunteer action within a broader vision of society and in relation to a set of values that guide action beyond the generic reference to solidarity and social utility. The reference to these two dimensions—including the common good as cited in the definition—leaves completely open the question concerning how the specific contents of solidarity and the common good, towards which actions should be directed, are constructed and negotiated. In more general terms, the story of the volunteer that the Third Sector Code puts forward leaves in the background the image of volunteering as, above all, a way of being and thinking that is subsequently expressed in a way of doing. Volunteering in this sense involves developing a critical conscience oriented towards changing the relationships and social structures that generate the social needs of communities and their members.

One may object that the definition of what it means to be a volunteer provided by the Code might be merely an "umbrella" definition, that is, a definition capable of including the broad horizon of phenomena and motivational vocabularies that exist in Italy. If this were the case, however, it would reveal a contradiction running through—perhaps permanently—the various ways of conceiving social intervention within a socio-economic context strongly marked by inequalities in the distribution of wealth and opportunities.

Volunteering was born in Italy after the Second World War as a necessary tool that groups of citizens utilized to change unbalanced

socio-economic structures by giving a voice to the weakest sections of the population in acknowledgement of their social rights and, more recently, their civil rights as well. Moreover, they regarded volunteering as an expression of their commitment to testify to the need for social change. This orientation towards advocacy and the associated political tension, taken in a broad sense, found an opportunity for concrete testimony through the creation of services, the meaning of which was deeply rooted in critical political-cultural frameworks. The creation of services highlighted the contradiction between the limits of the existing socio-economic framework and the inadequacy of a public apparatus unable to remove the root causes of inequality and poverty.

However, the testimonial value of volunteering was transformed over time into a search for an increasingly close and organic relationship with the public authorities of the territories, essentially for reasons related to a desire for political-social recognition of one's volunteer activities and, above all, to guarantee access to public financial resources. In turn, local administrations have sought an increasingly close and organic relationship with volunteer organizations and social cooperatives in order to employ them for outsourcing essential services due to cyclical financial crises and government cuts to social, health, education, and cultural programs and policies.

The transformations of volunteering as a system during the last thirty years have been oriented by an attempt to regulate and normalize the voluntary movement within functional frameworks aimed at implementing state welfare policies, which has led to a reduction in the economic and cultural autonomy of volunteering and a neutralization of the associated political tensions that we have mentioned. Law 266/1991, the Reform of Title V of the Constitution, and the Third Sector Code have together substantially formalized the inclusion of volunteering among those actors entitled to shared planning with the public administration regarding social policy interventions.

Arguably, the most significant change has involved the sociological and "anthropological" characteristics of volunteers. This silent, gradual, but effective transformation, reflected in causal terms in the structural frameworks noted above, underscores the

adaptability and evolution of volunteering. This can be briefly summarized in respect to the following three issues.

First, the new model of volunteer action that has been disseminated tends to increasingly separate itself from the classical model which was typical of the volunteer culture of the mid-1980s. The classical model was essentially characterized by such foundational elements as belonging, dedication, spontaneity, goodwill, and an absence of any (financial or not) form of compensation— which would seem to be wholly inadequate to many today. The new model, which some define as "reflective" (see Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003), is instead characterized by the importance assigned to individual gratification and that of "third party beneficiaries," and by the attention directed to negotiating the timing and forms of commitment. Following Bauman, one could hypothesize that the world of volunteers is thus a changing "condition" that is moving ever further from a "solid" towards a "liquid" state that is marked by a greater "fluidity" concerning value references, forms, and the manner of volunteer action itself.

Second, this detachment from the classic model coincides with an ever-growing distance between generations of volunteers, particularly the young and the old. The latter include people who currently manage organizational decision-making as well as those groups of adults who can "invest" or "make available" to organizations not only their experience and time (typical for older people), but also personal and professional resources, including skills and knowledge. Briefly stated, older people are more often the bearers of the essential elements of the classic model of volunteering, while young volunteers, and many adults as well, interpret and embody to a greater degree the characteristics of the "reflective" model of volunteering— adults are perhaps the *trait d'union* between these two perspectives. Consequently, segmentation between volunteers is increasingly evident, which multiplies the profiles by which they may be identified.

Third, such segmentation strongly influences relevant aspects of volunteering. 1) As we have already seen, we are witnessing a cultural change that is substantially modifying the idea of volunteering. The latter is now regarded as one of the possibilities that are available to the subject for constructing their identity

by means of activities viewed as relevant essentially by virtue of their social utility. 2) These changes have modified the forms and methods of organized voluntary action. Indeed, not only has the number of members of voluntary organizations decreased significantly in the last ten years, a substantial percentage of volunteers have come to devote only varying amounts of time to volunteer activities rather than engage in an ongoing commitment. This variability and discontinuity comprise a difficulty for organizations in that they increasingly need to plan services in a continuous and structured way. The challenges in managing human resources in respect to the increasingly systematic and professional needs of service readily translates into a perceived chronic lack of volunteers, the multiplication of conflict situations within organizations, and the need to place an increasingly consistent level of internal cohesion among the objectives of the organization. That is to say that the transformations taking place at the macro, micro, and meso levels contradict the concrete daily experience of volunteers. The need to correctly meet the quality standards necessary for the provision of services and the "liquefication" of the volunteer experience generate a conflict that can only be overcome through ever greater levels of professionalization of volunteer action. However, this process risks being particularly selective in terms of volunteer participation. Not only can fewer and fewer citizens ensure their continuous involvement in terms of time in the activities of given organizations, they must above all possess the skills needed to guarantee the quality standards of services. Many volunteers thus choose to not operate in ways similar to those of a professional worker. They decide to step outside the organizations in which they have been members and devote themselves to volunteer activities compatible with their own existential, temporal, and cultural constraints. In this process, the dynamics of identity construction play a fundamental role in guiding citizens' choices concerning the level and manner of their commitment to volunteer activities. It is precisely in this dimension that we may call upon the conceptual heritage of symbolic interactionism to assist us in gaining an understanding of how the dynamics of identity construction impact the commitment of volunteers.

The Contribution of Symbolic Interactionism to Understanding the Transformations of Volunteer Commitment in Italy

The paths that lead citizens to become volunteers, those that lead to changes in how volunteer activities are conducted, and those that eventually lead a person to leave a voluntary organization comprise processes whose trajectories are generated by the actions and interactions in which people are involved with other social actors on a daily basis. There is a great deal of literature that, employing differing terminologies and concepts, identifies three basic stages on the path that characterizes the commitment of volunteers, namely, the antecedents, the experience, and the outcomes (Wilson and Musick 1997; Wilson 2000; Musick and Wilson 2008; Stukas, Snyder, and Clary 2014). Insofar as the present discussion is not the proper context for a critical study of this approach, here it will suffice to emphasize that it is not empirically possible to evaluate how the values, motives, and psycho-social predisposition of volunteers, including relational contexts, or the so-called "antecedents," play a causal role in the choice to engage in organized volunteering (Finkelstein, Penner, and Brannick 2005). There is no shortage of attempts to define the concept of volunteering as an umbrella term that would make it possible to isolate various elements upon which a broad agreement might converge.

For example, constitutive characteristics of volunteering have been identified on the basis of eliciting categorical data in respect to about 200 definitions. Well-known scholars on the subject (see Cnaan, Handy, and Wadsworth 1996) have described these as individual free will; the availability and nature of rewards; proximity to the beneficiaries; and membership in a formal agency or volunteer organization. Other scholars acknowledge that although volunteer studies have employed many conceptual frameworks, no integrated theory has been generated (Hustinx, Cnaan, and Handy 2010), as if to say that elaborating a definition of volunteering depends strictly on the theoretical or disciplinary point of view that is assumed. Volunteering would then be a complex phenomenon in the sense that there is no single observation position from which one could identify its defining characteristics.

Volunteering is in fact not a static decision, but a dynamic negotiation that unfolds in everyday interactions. It is not merely a question of an initial choice to participate in volunteer activities, but also involves ongoing processes that either confirm or challenge that choice over time. This may mean abandoning the role of volunteer or perhaps changing one's initial options, such as the organization in which one is a member, the sector of activity, or how a given service is provided (Behnia 2021).

We propose that it is possible to gain an adequate grasp of volunteering in respect to its current procedural characteristics only if we focus on how the social actors involved in those processes interact within precisely defined spatial and temporal coordinates. Briefly stated, volunteering is not to be understood as an abstract conceptual category, but rather in its procedural and concrete dimensions, that is, as *an interaction* or as an interweaving of interactions between different actors. The latter include those who exercise governance in voluntary organizations, volunteers themselves, third-party beneficiaries and the referents of public and private institutions (Salvini 2012b; Romaioli, Nencini, and Meneghini 2016). We must keep in mind the fact that *volunteering is not an independently defined entity that is autonomous in respect to those who perform it.* It is not an "object" with its own characteristics that are "external" from the perspective of volunteers and voluntary organizations. It is rather a *social construction* that results from negotiations involving the points of view of those who enact it and those who represent it, even if the latter do not actively participate in it.

Dymarczyk (2023) uses the concept of "career" to illustrate the process by which one becomes a volunteer. He draws on the interactionist heritage to present career in this sense as constituting a dynamic perspective that people (and, therefore, volunteers) employ to view their lives as a whole and interpret the meanings of the events, situations, and interactions that contribute to defining it. Careers thus involve trajectories that constitute the dynamic, temporal, and substantial dimensions of a person's social existence.

The path to "approximation" to volunteering, particularly in respect to involvement in a volunteer organization, constitutes an expression of one's self that, in effect, serves to reveal who one is as both a person and a citizen (Behnia 2021). Participating in the life of

an organization means building daily interactions with the subjects who already participate in that organization, through which the social roles that are performed within and outside the organization are negotiated. Moreover, within these negotiation mechanisms, volunteers maintain the social roles that they perform in other dimensions of existence, such as the family, professional life, and the many others that define the self. The forms, intensity, and modalities of commitment derive from such mechanisms of negotiation and interaction.

To the extent that the social roles within the volunteer organization take priority in constructing the self of the volunteer, the commitment one makes acquires the characteristics of a more complete continuity, stability, and intensity regarding volunteer action. When these social roles conflict with those played in other dimensions of existence, or become less relevant than others due to changes in life trajectories, then the conditions of commitment change, at times radically. It is useful to remember that the perceived image of the self is mediated by the representations of others in respect to the dynamic of the consolidation of the self as a volunteer. However, this can lead to imbalances in the congruence of the perceived characteristics of one's self with the representations of voluntary action. For instance, it is no coincidence that many citizens think they are not "adequate" for volunteering. Others preemptively renounce engaging in voluntary organizations because they regard the representation of the social roles associated with such a commitment as conflicting with the social roles played in the family or in their profession (Salvini 2023b).

Such considerations derive from the fact that the congruence of social roles is not an outcome that is defined once and for all, but rather comprises a process constructed in the interaction between volunteers, subjects, and a given context of voluntary action. The elements that contribute to changing the balance of this congruence—and which modify the characteristics of a volunteer's commitment— may include particular demands from a given organization, a lack of the recognition and appreciation that derives from such commitment, and an excess of demands from "external" sources, such as beneficiaries and the institutions with which a person is collaborating. For example, it is known that difficulties with recrui-

ting sufficient numbers of volunteers can entail more significant pressure upon existing volunteers in respect to the intensity, extent, and continuity of commitment in providing services. In addition, the bureaucratization and professionalization of volunteer action can alter the conditions upon which a given person's volunteer commitment has been based.

Every turning point in a volunteer's life trajectory can potentially lead to changes in their level of commitment. Even a perception of satisfaction with their organizational roles can prompt a review and renegotiation of their commitment. Romaioli, Nencini, and Meneghini (2016) emphasize the relevance of a volunteer's identity in shaping their commitment, highlighting that this identity neither replaces other dimensions of their identity, nor dominates their self-perception. Furthermore. given that there is a close connection between a person developing a *solid volunteer identity* and their level of commitment, Romaioli and colleagues have empirically observed that commitment is heightened or consolidated in specific circumstances (Romaioli, Nencini, and Meneghini 2016). These include the following:

1. A volunteer considers their role as a volunteer to be more central to and salient for their identity than other roles.
2. It is easier to draw a clear boundary between the time devoted to volunteering and that devoted to other social roles.
3. Commitment is enhanced the more a volunteer has a positive representation of their organizational involvement.
4. Commitment is heightened the more a volunteer shares and makes their own the values promoted by their organization.
5. The more that a volunteer is aware of the concrete effects of their action, the more their commitment grows.

Clearly, the conditions and criteria regarding the sustainability of congruence in a volunteer's career are negotiated through their volunteer activities and their interaction within the dimensions mentioned above. It is thus not difficult to imagine how challenging it may be for a given volunteer to "keep together" the elements that contribute to defining the conditions of congruence. Efforts in this regard can in fact lead to a reduction in their level of commit-

ment which may include leaving an organization of which they are a member.

This last option—which many volunteers have chosen in recent years, as statistics tell us—does not necessarily imply leaving the field of volunteer involvement. For example, it may well redefine such involvement in ways that are more compatible with a person's life trajectory—in forms that today are defined as "direct," "fluid," "personal," or "do it yourself" volunteering. This is what the literature tells us. As we have already observed, however, there is a lack of empirical investigation capable of providing us with a quantitative measure of the extent of these dynamics (Guidi 2022).

Conclusions

This short essay has highlighted key features of the current ongoing changes concerning volunteering in Italy.

1. They have led to a substantial transformation in volunteering in comparison with the 1970s and 1980s on the basis of the interactions now taking place between collective subjects, particularly voluntary organizations, and between such subjects and public institutions.
2. They reflect the fluid and plural character of the social and cultural structures of our society, particularly through the involvement of broader segments of the population beyond the strongly ideological niches of activists of past decades.
3. They have given rise to a large number of configurations in both organized and non-organized volunteer action, all of which are more or less compatible with a broad definition of volunteering, even though they are no longer unanimously shared.
4. They have generated significant ambivalences and contradictions, the effects of which may possibly be ameliorated through greater collective self-reflexivity and increased understanding.
5. They require the adoption of a perspective concerning volunteering that focuses on the social and symbolic interac-

> tions that take place within and between the various different levels of analysis—the micro level (among volunteers and between volunteers and beneficiaries), the meso level (between volunteers and organizations), and the macro level (between volunteer organizations and institutional subjects that belong to other social dimensions).

Researchers must recognize that organizations intuit, perceive, and rationalize the effects of such changes in a thoroughgoing and indepth manner. The transformations that we have explored, which have given rise to a significant level of confusion in respect to volunteering, challenge us to a greater depth of thought and an appropriate emotional involvement in the search for possible solutions.

The passion for volunteering does not give up. It feeds on new challenges, confronts dilemmas that were unthinkable only twenty years ago, and expresses itself in a potential for change and innovation in the years to come. Such resilience and adaptability have always been among the most typical characteristics of the Third Sector—serving the community, taking charge of citizens' requests, particularly those of the most fragile members of society, and promoting original ways in which to animate and intervene that do not resign themselves to institutionalization.

The disorientation that can be glimpsed in this regard is accompanied by an understandable concern that leaves no room for discouragement. What emerges is the need to find appropriate ways of further development that are concretely activated within individual and organizational contexts and sustainable in respect to specific organizational characteristics. This task is arduous and full of pitfalls—the corporatization of the Third Sector has (finally) been identified as a threat to be avoided without renouncing the rationalization of organizational management. Suffocation by excessive bureaucracy must also be avoided without falling into the temptation of limiting transparency and improvisation. In addition, organizational identity must be cultivated and regenerated, preventing any form of organizational inertia and the ossification of inspiring principles, and dialogue with public bodies must be strengthened by avoiding submission and dependencies of all types, primarily

those of a financial nature. Encounters with citizens—potential volunteers— must find new channels of expression and involvement that renounce any imposed adherence to the organization as the only way in which to become involved and participate.

These tasks involve an essential change in the consolidated certainties that have been reinforced by daily routine. The latter have often been bent more on providing services than designing creative and original ways of working close to people and their needs. Finally, there is most likely a need to slow down, and perhaps pause for a moment, so that we may devote due attention to volunteer organizations—to their structure and to the methods of being present—in an effort to foresee possible future scenarios and, ultimately, better serve the community.

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Women in Between: The Careers and Personal Adaptations of Italian Professional Women during the Pandemic

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Introduction to and Novelty of the Contribution

The Covid-19 pandemic struck a world that was unprepared for the tragedy that subsequently unfolded. But the world could not—and must not—stop. And it did not stop, primarily thanks to the level of technological infrastructure and the spread of digital technology, especially in Western countries.

The need to find alternative ways of working while respecting all public health restrictions, including the lockdown, was one of the many problems created by the pandemic. We were in fact faced with what Marcel Mauss termed a *total social fact* (Mauss 1954 [1923]) insofar as the pandemic meant that any action, interaction, or decision had to be preceded by taking Covid-19 into consideration.

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In terms of work life, this entailed the spread of remote working (hereafter *smart working,* the standard term in the Italian discourse) across the globe. Luca Pareschi (2021) noted in this regard that forms of such "teleworking" date to the 1970s (Nilles 1975), adding that its implications have been widely discussed in recent years in organizational literature (Jackson 1999). These involve its consequences for individuals (Gajendran and Harrison 2007), work-life balance (Bloom and Van Reenen 2006), stress (Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin, and Korac-Kakabadse 2018), demotivation and counterproductive behavior (Cascio and Montealegre 2016), and employee well-being in general (Kelliher and Anderson 2010). In spite of such studies, the mandatory imposition of smart working found us unprepared in respect to personal attitudes, existing technology, and typical professional practices (Pareschi 2021). For very many of us, Covid-19 constituted the framework for our first experience of dealing with smart work. Furthermore, insofar as the pandemic constituted the context for this transformation, we were led into regarding smart work—which may be signified and perceived in a variety of ways— as a cultural object that had been "contaminated" by Covid-19 (see Griswold 1986).

We conducted the research presented here during the period of the pandemic and of what has been termed the "infodemic" (Rothkopf 2013; Nielsen, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos et al. 2020; Manfredi 2020). The foundation for our work was provided by the online survey *Stress, Dealing with Stress, and Experiencing Changes in Social Life during the Covid-19 Pandemic,* which was undertaken internationally at the beginning of the first wave stage of the pandemic by the Institute for Population and Human Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (IPHS-BAS), in conjunction with Research Committee 36, Alienation Theory and Research, at the International Sociological Association (RC36-ISA). The aim of this survey was to investigate how people experienced and coped with the stress caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the consequent changes in their working and daily lives. The results in Italy of the associated questionnaire that was distributed on line, a selection of which were initially presented at the IV ISA Forum of Sociology in February 2021, were marked by an extraordinary prevalence of female respondents—approximately 80% of the 650 Italian respondents were women

working in medium to high profile fields. This lack of balance regarding the survey results comprised the first milestone of our research, and it led to our subsequent investigations being focused on women and their relations to their professionality during and after the experience of smart working.

Our analysis proceeded in three stages. The first stage consisted of a quantitative analysis of the questionnaire results, followed by two stages of qualitative analysis of the data collected through our in-depth interviews of four specific professional (women) categories—journalists, social workers, show workers, and teachers. We prioritized examining the roles of information and the mandatory usage of media technologies in our evaluation of the effects of the pandemic upon private and professional life; attitudes towards digital technologies; professional and social identity; and challenges in respect to information. A first round of in-depth interviews was conducted during the last three months of 2020. These addressed the first phase of the pandemic, which in Italy was characterized by a severe lockdown, and the second phase, when there was a "partial" reopening of all working sectors.

Beginning in September 2022, we conducted a second round of in-depth interviews with the same sample of people in order to frame the long-term effects of the pandemic on professionalism and careers, with the aim of monitoring the elements of continuity and rupture in respect to the professional, domestic, and relational routines that had been adopted during the pandemic. More specifically, we investigated the new skills that had been acquired through the professional adaptations required by the lockdown; the expendability of these new skills in a world that preferred returning to face-to-face work; career progressions; revising and rethinking life; and relevant work-related changes.

Our contribution to the field contains several new elements. For example, there are numerous studies concerning the characteristics of smart working (Jackson 1999; Gajendran and Harrison 2007; Kelliher and Anderson 2010; Cascio and Montealegre 2016) as well as fewer but still significant numbers of studies regarding smart working during the pandemic (Pareschi 2021; Faraj, Renno, Bhardwaj 2021; Marino and Capone 2021). There are, however, substantially fewer studies that address smart working and female professionals

(Kooli 2022; Augustus 2021; Mustafa, Khursheed, Fatima et al. 2021; Gabster, van Daalen, Dhatt et al. 2020). The novelty of our research resides upon its utilization of a comparative approach to the variety of consequences of smart work for women that are specifically linked to different professions. This involves an investigation of the strength of a sense of belonging to a given professional category as well as a consideration of smart work as a cultural object in the light of Griswold's conception of "infected" cultural objects.

The main result is that although smart working has been viewed for years as providing an opportunity to limit the effects of pollution, reduce the management costs of workplaces, promote family sociality, and so forth, the challenge posed by the Covid-19 pandemic regarding the idea of smart work as a better, or even exclusive, opportunity to work was overwhelmed by both fear and memories of the pandemic. Consequently, smart work was gradually eliminated as we returned to "normal," post-pandemic life. Stated more bluntly, we threw out the baby with the bathwater.

Theoretical Framework

The term *total social fact* provides an accurate definition of what took shape during 2020, which continues to have consequences for people's lives throughout the world. This term, first published by Marcel Mauss in 1923, refers to a phenomenon which, while presenting its own specificity, comes to involve the overall plurality of social levels, pervading all objects and social relations. This thereby renders it impossible to separate the presence/identity of that phenomenon from the interpretation of society as a whole. A total social fact constitutes an overall discourse that permeates all other discourses and all social interactions. A pandemic is a total social fact, as is a war, and it was no mere coincidence that the metaphor of war was often used to describe how we had to face the Covid-19 pandemic.

This article aims to investigate the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and smart work in a specific analytical field, namely, women professionals in Italy and their professionality. In order to pursue this investigation, we utilized the macro-frame of the pandemic as a total social fact insofar as we were convinced that it profoundly defined the de-

velopment—and fate—of the first globally-extended approach to smart work. We should note that such an approach was well beyond the capabilities of not only small businesses, but also large IT companies.

We discovered a number of micro-frames under our Covid-19 macro-frame (see Goffman 1974). These included different organizations of work and their related values, the varying degrees of technological development, individual skill levels regarding digital technologies, and the role of interpersonal relationships in work routines. Our home or our work space, which changed their appearance during the pandemic and became invaded by a large number of people speaking on our phones and computer screens, could thus comprise a micro-frame. Micro-frames also consisted of the new digital platforms designed to encourage and support a new type of communication—organizational, corporate, scholastic, academic, parental—that spread very quickly throughout the world. Insofar as gender views and roles are micro-frames, they contain subframes of meaning and serve as keying devices for activities (Goffman 1974), permitting us to react in different ways to smart work.

Micro-frames comprise the situations in which interactions take place. Mead (1934) argues that people develop their self-image through interactions with other people, which is a position common to symbolic interactionism in general. The meanings of relations, objects, and situations do not pertain to their objective natures, but rather to the behavior of individuals towards them. In this regard, the four primary principles of symbolic interactionism, which both Mead and Cooley share (Mead 1930), indicate that:

1. Society is a system of meanings that individuals share, understand, and negotiate, finding cues for their behavior by making it stable and predictable through the symbols of language.
2. Individuals participate in symbolic interaction by constructing meanings that constitute both social and individual reality.
3. The bonds that unite individuals—the ideas that individuals have of others and of themselves—are personal constructions of meaning that result from social interaction.
4. Individual behavior is the result of the significations that individuals attribute to the given circumstance (see De Fleur and Ball-Rokeach 1989).

However, the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted all repetition, routine, and consolidated circumstances. For instance, not only did the pandemic move working places into the domestic domain, it thereby orchestrated a substantial process of displacement and replacement. People used to have a "workplace"—an office or factory, a desk in an open space—but they also used to have a kitchen, a bedroom, a living room. They used to have time and space for meetings and decisions, for agreements and disputes at work, but also a time and space for affection and embraces and domestic disputes as well. Covid-19 overturned all such distinctions and left us longing for how things used to be.

Mead also spoke about the fact that people form their identities not only through interactions with other individuals, but also through interactions between individuals and non-human objects. Prior to the pandemic, we had not been accustomed to displaying our love for our grandparents by sending them kisses as we stood in front of our electronic display screens. We also were not accustomed to correcting texts online, listening in a digital space to people's problems, or working hard to get the attention of a six-year-old pupil on a video link. Indeed, organizational/institutional time and space, as well as cultural routines (rituals) and their phenomenological domains, were twisted in unpredictable ways. Such displacement affected not only physical structures, with places at home changed to accommodate work desks for pupils and teachers, but also culturally defined situations that normally took place in specific spaces.

The intimate erupted into work domains and work into intimate domains during the pandemic, and this was accompanied in the lockdown by an undivided and uninterrupted cohabitation of people of different ages, with their different tasks and different time schedules. This configuration created a substantial opportunity to begin thinking about new ways for dealing with both the domestic and the public, with both the affective and the rational. This now appears to have been cast aside, however, in the effort to return to what had been taken to be normality.

Mead reminds us that interactions with people and/or objects are relevant sources of meaning, and that individuals participate in symbolic interactions through which new meanings that constitute both social and individual reality are constructed. The pandemic

thus transformed the computer from a tool that had largely been used for study or learning, for instance, into a primary means for people to keep in touch with relatives, friends, lovers. In a similar fashion, the telephone, which had typically been used at work to communicate with colleagues about specific work-related matters, became a means for discovering how colleagues were dealing with the uncertain situation (see the interview analysis below).

Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical framework that describes how societies are created and maintained through replicated actions (Carter and Fuller 2015). Covid-19, however, challenged routines through the forced adoption of smart working. This challenge has been particularly interesting for women since, although they found themselves once again restricted to the domestic domain, they were nonetheless far from the stereotypical roles of housewives. If social interactions comprise a process whereby we learn others' expectations in terms of practices, behaviors, and an understanding of symbols and roles (Striker 2008), then one's professionalism is defined by the role they have taken and their position in a social structure constructed of symbols, languages, and routines (Carter and Fuller 2015). It was precisely these had to be re-thought in different places and spaces during the pandemic.

The pandemic process of displacement and replacement may also be viewed through the lens of Smith and Bugni's (2006) architectural sociology. Smith and Bugni utilize a symbolic interactionist approach based upon the three issues of people's perceptions in relation to the aspects of physical design, the designed physical environment, and the content of design in terms of symbolic meanings and communicative symbols. This approach assists us in understanding how

> the designed physical environment and the self are intertwined, with one potentially influencing and finding expression in the other; how architecture contains and communicates our shared symbols; and how we assign agency to some of our designed physical environment, which then invites in a different kind of self-reflection (Smith and Bugni 2006:123).

Meanings and symbols thus affirm that the physical environment is much more than merely a background against which interactions take place insofar as "some designed physical buildings, places, and

objects act as agents" that "shape our thoughts and actions" and "invite self-reflection" on our part (Smith and Bugni 2006:124).

In this respect, our position is that the societal displacement and replacement consequent to the pandemic became possible because of the specific opportunity provided by smart work. We place smart work at the center of attention in our research in order to understand how it affected female professionals.

Research questions

The principal research question of the present article is What were the consequences of smart work for women's professionality during the Covid-19 pandemic? Sub-questions address how smart work impacted 1) private and work life, 2) attitudes towards digital technologies, 3) professional and social identity, and 4) information and institutional issues.

We utilize Griswold's concept of cultural object, whereby a cultural object may be defined as shared significance embodied in a form (Griswold 1986), to explore these questions. A cultural object tells us something through a variety of languages, materials, and means. It is meaningful since it possesses the meaning with which its creators endowed it, but it also possesses the multitude of meanings that people ascribe to it while performing their diverse actions and thoughts. People's behavior comprises an individual way of reacting to their interpretation of a situation (Carter and Fuller 2015).

Griswold argues in this regard that

> When a cultural object engages at least some of the presuppositions of the person encountering it, meaning is fabricated (Griswold 1987:1080).

The present research set off from this interactionist perspective in order to facilitate the acquisition of a deeper understanding of the phenomenon we were investigating. This included a number of the numerous micro-frames by means of which cultural objects are signified. The approach we have taken also resides upon the notion of total social fact as initiating the entire range of Covid-19-related social re-articulations.

Methodology

The methodology we employ employs both quantitative and qualitative approaches in data collection and analysis. The methodological framework is divided into three stages that correspond to the first three macro-phases of the pandemic on the health (Morens and Fauci 2020) and social levels. The first phase is "active pandemic– lockdown"; the second is "deceleration–adaptation to the new rules"; and the third is "endemic–control and management."

The aim of our research design is to adapt investigative tools in accordance with the socio-health context and provide a longitudinal perspective in answering the question What are the consequences of the role of information, combined with the mandatory us age of media technologies, for female professionality during the Covid-19 pandemic?

During the first stage of our research (April–September 2020), we collected the Italian data from the IPHS-RC36 survey *Stress, Dealing with Stress, and Experiencing Changes in Social Life during the Covid-19 Pandemic*, as noted above in the Introduction. We then drew a profile of the respondents from the results of the 650 Italian questionnaires. 80% were middle-class women between 25-50 years of age with a BA or MA degree who lived in Central Italy, worked primarily in the private sector, and were experiencing working from home for the first time in March 2020. The lockdown marked their first attempt at smart working. 43% of the sample expressed a negative attitude towards smart working, 42% were positive, and 17% were undecided. Table 1 summaries the weaknesses and strengths of smart working that our respondents identified.

Tab. 1 - Weaknesses and strengths of smart working for Italian professional women.

Weaknesses	Strengths
Lack of social interaction with colleagues	Efficiency due to there being no spatial and temporal barriers
No separation between private and work life	Focus on work
Misunderstandings due to digital communication	More control over program and job organization
No sharing of job routines with colleagues	Safety and creativity

On the basis of this evidence, we analyzed how Italian professional women redefined their personal identity and professionalism during and after the pandemic as well as how they viewed smart working within their professional contexts. We identified four items for investigation regarding the first experiences of our women respondents with smart working: 1) balance between private and work life, 2) attitudes towards digital technologies, 3) relations between professionality and social identity, and 4) information and institutional issues. During the second stage of our research (October 2020–March 2021), we operationalized and converted these items into a list of questions to use in the in-depth interviews.

Table 2 lists the four items that we operationalized through specific micro-items that represent the contents of the interviews.

Tab. 2 - Macro and micro items for *investigation.*

1) Private and work life	2) Attitude towards digital technologies	3) Professionality and social identity	4) Information and institutional issues
Conciliation regarding time and space	Relation to digital technologies in smart work	Others' perceptions of one's own professionality	Access to and sources of information
Family and job relations	New uses of and strategies for working	One's perceptions of colleagues' professionality	Information as indicator of choices
Pleasantness and difficulty of smart work	Digital communication and conflicts	Changes in professionality with social distancing	Roles of institutions

On the basis of the professional profiles of those who had responded to the general Italian survey, we conducted in-depth interviews with 12 women. These 12 women, who lived and worked in Central Italy, belonged to four professional categories—teachers, media workers, social workers, and show workers (Table 3). The authors conducted the online interviews in accordance with the applicable regulations, recorded and transcribed them after consent was given, and performed a content analysis to develop the four research items.

Table 3 lists the abbreviations and codifications of the 12 Italian professional women involved in the second and third stages of our research. We utilized these abbreviations in the data analysis to identify references to the interviews.

Tab. 3 - Codification of the 12 professional profiles.

Teachers	Media Workers	Social Workers	Show Workers
1) Primary school teacher (PST)	4) Online newspaper journalist (ONJ)	7) Poverty social worker (PSW)	10) Actress (AC)
2) Middle school teacher (MST)	5) Documentary writer (DW)	8) Health social worker (HSW)	11) Dancer (DN)
3) Secondary school teacher (SST)	6) Parliamentary journalist (PJ)	9) Social worker instructor (SWI)	12) Production Assistant (PA)

Table 4 indicates the family status (living with partner, children) and job condition (use of smart working) of each interviewee. Family status and job condition are relevant variables in the data analysis insofar as our interviewees' attitudes towards the issues examined are linked with them.

Tab. 4 - Women and smart working in the three phases of the *pandemic.*

Code	Professional profile	Living with partner	Living with small children	Living with young adult children	Working from home 1st and 2nd phases	Working from home 3rd phase
1	PST			y	y	n
2	MST			y	y	n
3	SST		y		y	n
4	ONJ	y			y	y
5	DW	y			y	y
6	PJ		y		y	n
7	PSW		y		y	n
8	HSW	y			y	n
9	SWI			y	y	In part
10	AC		y		n	n
11	DN	y			In part	n
12	PA		y		n	n

During the third stage of our analysis (March 2021–September 2022), we elaborated our findings and constructed two matrices with opposing poles—reinforcement/weakening of personal identity, reinforcement/weakening of professionalism, good/bad relation with technology, good/bad relation with information. These matrices represent the position of each woman during the three different phases of the pandemic and display changes in attitude towards the four items in question. We also gathered data from focus groups and follow-up surveys in order to monitor the personal and professional paths of our 12 women respondents. Updating the matrices with this new data—although some of the show workers did not participate in the last stage of our research for professional reasons— made it possible for us to develop a model for observing the pandemic and the associated social changes from a professional woman's perspective.

Data Analysis

We have presented the data both narratively and graphically in order to allow for a more clear analysis of the interview data.

In respect to the narrative presentation, we organized the data concerning the four macroand micro-items presented in Table 2, focusing on the most relevant remarks of our Italian women respondents. We sought to answer a specific inquiry for each item.

1. Whether and how the experience of smart working within the context of the pandemic changed the balance between private and working life for professional women. Was the domestification of work or the bureaucratization of the domestic dimension dominant in smart working?
2. Whether and how the experience of smart working within the context of the pandemic played a key role in tracing new professional and personal agencies. Did the perception of one's own professionalism somehow change?
3. Whether and how the utilization of media technologies in smart working led to a greater degree of initiative, passive acceptance, or a reluctance to employ them.

4. Whether and how the media were responsible within the context of the pandemic either for regulating the relation between citizens and institutions, or for generating uncertainty and factionalism. Did media information play a key role in personal and professional choices?

Balance between private and working life

Most of the women stated that the balance between private and work life completely changed during both the initial active phase of the pandemic and as it began to decline in severity. They were forced to reorganize their lives in both time and space to make it possible for all members of the family to conduct their activities. In these two phases of the pandemic, teachers and show workers were those who suffered most intensely from the difficulty and negativity of working from home. In contrast, social and media workers were more positive and seized the opportunity to change their routines.

For all of the teachers, smart working meant that "school is held at home 24/7," a primary reason being that the Italian school system was completely unprepared in March 2020 for online learning. The working situation remained extremely complicated for teachers during the second phase of the pandemic as well, and their use of the pronoun "we" in the interviews may be taken as an indicator of a categorical condition

> We are in quicksand—half-working at school and half-working from home (PST).
> Both time and space at home are fluid because of being online constantly (MST).
> We have to learn to do two or three jobs from home at the same time (MST?).

The show workers also shared a negative view of the first two phases of the pandemic that may be summarized as "No live shows equals no work." Their interviews clearly expressed the negativity of their situation.

> For me, public and private life have been communicating vessels (AC).
> I'm experiencing a frozen existence (AC).
> Online dance lessons and performances are like office jobs using our bodies (DN).
> Physical disengagement is emotional disengagement, too (PA).

In contrast, smart working for the media and social workers was more an opportunity to change their usual roles and routines and experience a different dimension of being at home.

> I can cook and have a meeting at the same time (DW).
> We take turns with my husband and son in organizing dinner (HSW).
> We have breakfast together, which was unusual before Covid (SWI).

Social workers had an inverse problem—they did not mention an invasion of intimacy, but rather difficulties at home in dealing with their clients. For instance, other family members could overhear conversations while they were speaking on the phone, which led to them having to keep their children at a distance.

Another type of balance mentioned by social workers concerned "humanizing work relations."

> Our conversations concern documents and clients when we're at the office. During the lockdown, we took time to talk about our own lives as well—how they were changing, our fears and how we were facing them. We knew each other at a distance (PSW).

The journalists comprised the only professional category who had already experienced smart working before the lockdown. They nonetheless emphasized the necessity of redefining times and spaces.

> Nothing changed in my job except the fluidity of time and space... but I needed to compensate in a way when working remotely and have been very sociable (ONJ).
> I've needed to organize things differently because of having the children at home and having to transform the bedroom into an office (PJ).

All of our interviewees emphasized "the difficulty of returning to normality" during the endemic phase of the crisis. This may be

described in terms of contrasts—the need to work in person, particularly for teachers, social workers, and show workers, versus the advantages of working remotely; the stress of having to catch up with the pre-Covid pace and duties of work versus the stress associated with having to reorganize private life in accordance with the new needs that emerged at home. In general, it took time to reach a new balance between job and family.

> Something has changed dramatically after the pandemic with my expectations and ability to balance. I haven't found the right balance yet between my needs and the family's needs. I didn't work for 16 months after March 2020 and found a better personal balance. Now—I've been back in the office since September 2021—I'm still struggling to get used to old routines again (PA).
> Everything seems to be back to what it was before, but stress at work has increased. Now I can't stop thinking about work when I'm at home. That never happened before the pandemic (HSW).
> My private life changed a lot from preto post-Covid, and the changes have affected my job (PST).
> We haven't experienced a complete return to normality at work yet. We chose to maintain a mixed mode of work—half-remote and half on-site. The pace of work is fast again, sometimes faster than before Covid. We also have to make up for lost time, and the impact on private life is tough. Smart working helps with reconciling time and space—separating private and public life, making team work more efficient, sharing job issues and relaxing moments with colleagues—even if being back in the office is necessary. Being back in the office was very difficult at first—I was very tired after a day out of the house (PJ).

Professional and social identity

The issue of professional and social identity is more polarized, dividing our respondents between those who think that perceptions of their professionality have changed and those who do not.

For teachers, online learning has opened the door of the school to families in a way that reveals both the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers.

> Teachers, students, and parents are growing up together with online lessons (PST).
> The social perception of teachers has somehow changed (MST).

While public debate in Italy regarding innovation in the school system increased during the first two phases of the pandemic, the teachers indicated that everything returned to "normal" in the third phase, with no significant changes.

> The attempt at innovation in Italian schools failed (PST). Italian law no longer permits smart working for teachers (SST).

The pandemic did not change perceptions of the professionality of show workers, which remained the same from the perspectives of colleagues, society, and the public.

> The perception of the audience always depends on your performance, not on your professionality (DN).
> We have always been unnecessary workers in Italian society. We chose an unworthy profession (PA).
> Professionality comes to light in a live show. Online performances are not for audiences, but are rather narcissism (AC).

Although the conditions of show workers were high on the media agenda in 2020 and 2021 because of the "Bauli in Piazza" movement,[3] the debate has now ended and "the show must go on," with no real further reflection. This view has been reinforced by the behavior of show workers in the present research project. For example, they were very involved in the interviews at the beginning of the project, defending the points of view associated with their profession.

However, most of them did not participate in the later focus group and the follow-up because they were already back on stage.

3. For a description of this movement, see https://www.bauliinpiazza.it/ (in Italian).

Media workers regarded their professionality as crucial during the lockdown since they comprised the intermediate category between institutions and the population.

> Trying to make order of a very complicated flow of information. As journalists, we are the most feared and most sought-after category at the same time (ONJ).
> As journalists, we couldn't pretend about how Covid was evolving (DW).
> We spent many hours on the phone in order to share information and understand what was going on (PJ).

When there was a reopening of activities, DW found herself in a potentially very dangerous situation when it became necessary for her to travel France, meet with a number of people, and file a report from there. She remarked that although she feared being infected by the Covid-19 virus, she felt that she could not make a rational choice and simply had to go to work.

A gender inequality issue emerged for PJ. Although her male colleague returned to parliament to resume his professional activity as soon as that was possible, she was unable to do so because having children made it more likely that she might be infected. She remarked, however, that although the male journalist faced the same chances of being infected because he also had children, the choice was made to keep her home, not him. For a parliamentary journalist, having to stay home means losing access to the "conversational information" that is so useful for journalism.

For the social workers, smart working provided the opportunity to create new relationships with their clients, which bridged the gap left by the suspension of institutional activities.

> Smart working has been proof of our ability to succeed in different working conditions (HSW).

Social workers also experienced an activation of their clients' agency during the lockdown. For example, PSW notes in this regard that

> we were afraid that we would not be able to communicate with them [clients]. But they could in fact send emails with attached documents. People used to living with restrictions were perhaps not as afraid as we were. They were able to utilize all of the limited number of resources they had.

During the endemic phase, social workers faced the need to manage the socio-psychological effects that Covid-19 had on their clients (children, teens, people with addictions). The "object" of their job was thus changed more than how it was perceived.

> I discovered—I use the verb discover—that it is possible to have online meetings, and that it is now simpler and faster to contact colleagues or other professionals. But I still prefer to meet people in person, especially during interviews with clients. [...] Professional training also has to take place in person. Digital tools can serve as add-ons to human resources, but we have to use technologies responsibly. Digital technologies clearly provide opportunities for female empowerment (SWI).
> Being back to work in person—no more online meetings, but faceto-face meetings with customers, sponsors, and the like—creates more possibilities to develop professional connections and new projects. This allows you to have greater visibility and build a career (DW).

Attitudes towards digital technologies

For all the women professionals we interviewed, smart working has led not only to new opportunities and innovations in job processes, but also to technical and cultural challenges.

The teachers and show workers placed greater weight on the challenges than on the opportunities. From their perspectives, opportunities for innovation were lost because the Italian school system and the show system failed to provide both the necessary technical conditions and an appropriate strategy framework.

> Online learning is not school, but it is also school. More opportunities and more limits (MST).
> Self-learning with digital tools and skills. Online learning is a point of no return (PST).
> No new media strategies for shows is equal to no new audiences (DN).

> Streaming requires very good technology. If the media do not function at a high level, the message of a performance is poor in quality (AC).

Consequently, they could not take full advantage of integrating digital technologies into their job routines, although they did utilize them for personal reasons (life-long education, communication, and so forth).

> I feel more confident now using digital technology, but at the beginning of the lockdown I was afraid of becoming addicted to digital tools. I think we have to use technology when and where it's necessary, but it can't replace face-to-face activities (learning, teaching, performing) (PA).
> During the lockdown I learned to use more digital tools and developed my digital skills thanks to my colleagues and professionals. I learned when it's better to use these technologies and when not (PST).

Media workers and social workers were more prepared to embrace the opportunities created by digital technologies. For example, the journalists focused on the possibilities that such technologies offered from the initial phase of pandemic—more control, more privacy, more information gathering. The social workers discovered new strategies for engaging with and following up on their users after an initial moment of fear.

> Ready to go! I've always worked a lot remotely, a bit less on video (ONJ).
> I'm not young... Never had any particular problems with technology. It was necessary, of course, to rethink the concept of relationship, and the institutions were certainly very slow and backwards (SWI).
> The fear was that technology would be an obstacle for clients, but it has helped us listen to them more carefully (HSW).

At the end of pandemic, women generally regarded digital technologies as tools for empowerment in that they help with organizing and optimizing times, spaces, and resources. However, smart working must be regulated in order to guarantee workers' duties and rights. The following statements from a social worker, a teacher, and a show worker are significant in this regard.

I'm not sure that technology always creates opportunities for women's empowerment. Smart working sometimes reinforces the status quo. Flexibility in time and space can lead to women having extra domestic duties precisely because they're working remotely (HSW)!
From my point of view, online learning is not positive because education is based on relationships between students and teachers, relationships among students, and group work. Nonetheless, when students are sick or have to stay at home for long periods of time, online learning helps them to not feel isolated. Smart working has to be integrated with working in person, and it can be a solution in critical situations (MST).
I couldn't work remotely because the theaters were closed during the lockdown, and my company didn't give us the possibility to work from home later. Smart working could be a value and a benefit for workers (PA).

Informational and institutional issues

Although information played a key role in the professional and personal choices that our women respondents made during the first months of the pandemic, they also remarked that access to information was unequal and undemocratic. Their approaches to informational and institutional issues also reflects their professional roles and cultural backgrounds.

Teachers were critical regarding the control that was driven by the media during the pandemic. Their statements seem to reflect the historical opposition between media and schools, thereby revealing their cultural distance from the logic of the media.

The attitude of the media towards the pandemic is repressive, not educational (PST).
Information driven by emotions, not knowledge. Talk shows versus scientific content (MST).
Passive information and control versus social connection and discussion (SST).

Show workers clearly suffered from the negative influence that media information had on their choices during the first months of pandemic.

> The negative influence of information on shortand long-term decisions (DN).
> Too much information is dangerous, not functional. Pop-up information bubbles versus science (AC).
> Stop the infodemia with new, professional opinion leaders. Censorship should be restored! (PA).

Journalists, as elements of the media context, denounced the bad managing of information regarding Covid-19 and felt involved in the mechanism that had produced it.

> I had to fight a lot at the regional institutional level. I received complaints and had to expand the readership of the newspaper (ONJ).
> Because of the job I do, I can unfortunately say that the epidemic had to be declared earlier, and that all the institutions hid what was happening for too long (DW).

Social workers valued information on the national level more than information on the local level. They pointed to the poor management of the emergency at the local level, where there were no clear directives and procedures for workers.

> Institutions [functioned] well on the national level, but the local level was missed. We decided for self-organization (PSW).
> Good management of the initial emergency [was needed]. As an executive, I complained about the lack of local management (SWI).

The matrices

The two matrices we created provide a visual representation of the levels of integration and alienation during the pandemic of the Italian professional women whom we interviewed.

The first matrix (Figure 1) focuses on the opposition of reinforcement/weakening in respect to both personal and professional identity, with the positions marked within the matrix indicating how the pandemic provided specific women with possibilities for identity development. For instance, the positions of the journalists and social workers indicate that they improved both the personal

and professional aspects of their lives by virtue of the new possibilities for empowerment and self-organization that smart working provided. In contrast, the positions of the dancer and the actress at the opposite pole reveal a weakening of their personal and professional paths subsequent to job loss for many months and the resulting uncertainty.

Teachers developed their professionalism because online learning forced them to completely change their way of teaching and acquire new knowledge and skills. However, their personal identities were not reinforced because they struggled to balance their personal needs and job responsibilities when they were working at home.

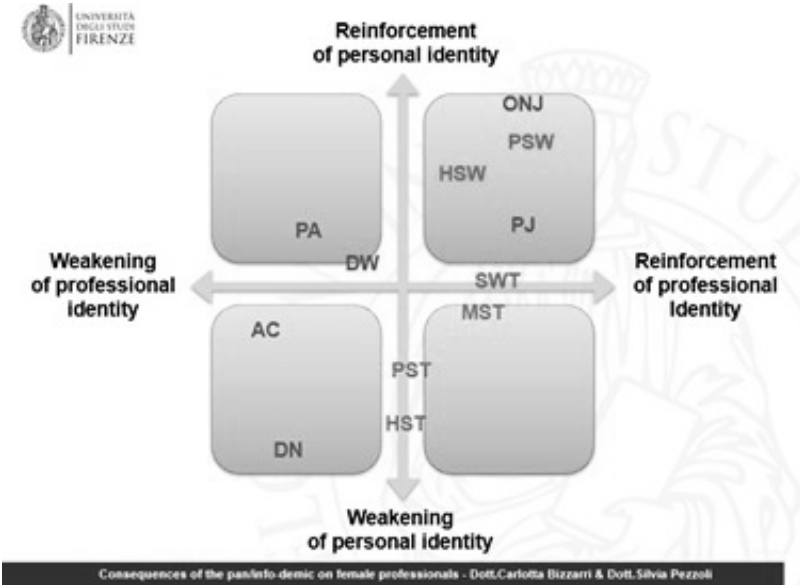

Fig. 1 - Reinforcement/weakening of personal and professional identities.

The second matrix (Figure 2) indicates the relations of our respondents to information and digital technologies.

The differences appear to depend in part upon the professional category to which a given respondent belongs. For example,

the positive attitude towards information and digital technologies that journalists displayed is likely directly linked to their roles in the media system. In contrast, the negative attitude towards information that show workers displayed appears to be determined by the ways in which the media addressed their concerns during the pandemic. The approaches taken by both the show workers and the teachers were also moderated by the fact that they took into consideration not only the limitations, but also the advantages presented by information available regarding the Covid-19 pandemic.

One's relation to digital technologies was also a personal matter insofar as it was associated with an individual's previous confidence with utilizing digital tools and their capacity to take advantage of innovations at work and at home.

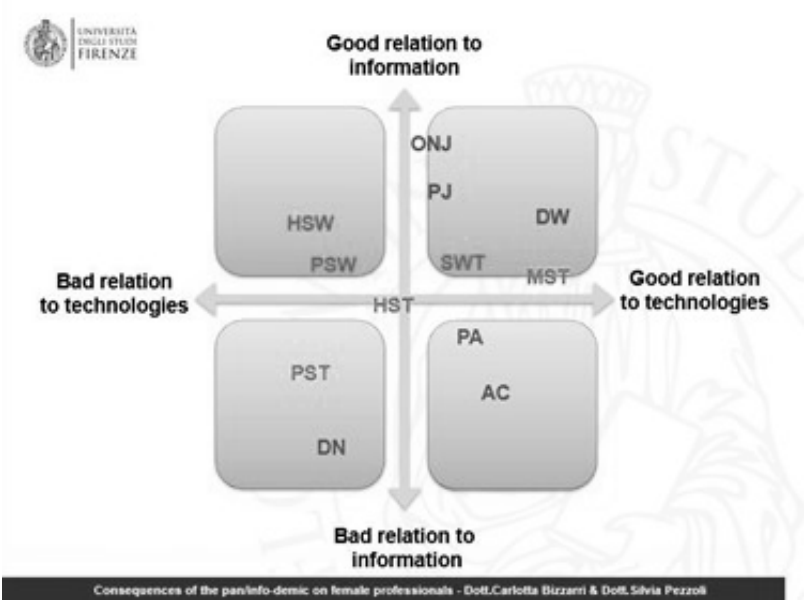

Fig. 2 - Relations to information/technologies.

In summary, we may assume that smart working and the home dimension simultaneously caused both alienation and integration for Italian professional women. Evidence of alienation includes job

loss; difficulty in translating professional activities and strategies into new circumstances; redefining domestic spaces for work; the loss of physical interaction and relations; a fear of Covid-19 and a sense of threat; and an overwhelming amount of information and communications. Signs of integration include the development of new technological skills; the development of new relational skills; and self and group organization.

An Open Conclusion

While the present investigation has provided the basis for drawing certain conclusions, the material collected also makes possible a number of other research orientations.

Setting off from the "per phases approach," we noted that the first phase—characterized in Italy by the lockdown—saw the professional women who were the focus of our analysis positioning themselves in relation to smart work in very different ways. Some adopted it and adapted their skills to this new style of work without skepticism. Others were strongly reluctant to employ it, while others had neither the opportunity, nor the will, to utilize it. Such differences faded during the intermediate phase and almost disappeared in the third phase. Beginning in September 2022, the four categories of professionals whom we studied came to regard smart work in very similar ways, converging on the view that the introduction of smart work constituted a missed opportunity.

We anticipated this result in the Introduction. The end of the state of emergency, together with a significantly diminished level of fear, brought people back to their old routines. Only a few selected activities remained online, such as meetings among colleagues and a degree of video-calling in place of telephone calls. This trend to return to the past is associated with the macro-frame of the pandemic—Mausse's (1954) total social fact—which drove people to leave behind their entire experience of the public emergency and collective drama. A careful reading of the interviews revealed that only the newspaper journalist, who stated at the end of the pandemic that she was happier to work at home, took smart working as an established fact. Although her working habits were changed

insofar as she had previously worked more at the office, her trajectory through smart work had already begun prior to the imposition of the lockdown in March 2020.

The other professionals—including the other journalists—may have already utilized working outside the office to some extent, but they denied that working at home during the pandemic meant more freedom. Although they found that doing so provided certain advantages, they nonetheless highlighted the restriction of having to stay home.

> [B]efore Covid-19, working meant opening the tablet anywhere, but now I've built a table in my room and am isolated (PJ).

A new relation to time

Under the macro-umbrella of the pandemic, the world was moving from the past into a future after the pandemic that should be the same as it was at a point in time prior to the pandemic. This new relation to time helps us understand why smart work has almost been eliminated, even though it had been a globally-shared experience. Briefly stated, smart work was eradicated as a creature of the evil that was Covid-19—it was as if nothing must bear witness to the pandemic, not even an opportunity for development. The pandemic present was a chaotic position/location (see next section) in which the forms of daily life, including symbolic and social interactions, had to serve only one purpose—survival. Planning overcame the pandemic-scarred present, building a bridge between what the present used to be and what it would be again. Smart work was but a parenthesis between the way in which people had been accustomed to work and the way in which they would return to working once again.

Every interview reveals that it was already evident during the first two phases of the pandemic that even though people had accepted smart work for the moment, they were projecting a return to the non-smart-work past.

In this regard, Tavory maintains on a theoretical level that

> Social action takes place in a specific situation, in the presentprogressive unfolding of interaction. And yet, alongside the pressures that such a present produces, situations are saddled both by their history and by their anticipated futures. Actors do not simply hop from one situation to another but reside between them [...]. That is, even if we accept that meaning is always made in a particular situation, it is not clear how important what happens in the situation is for shaping meaning. Do we need to primarily understand the actors' pasts, when potentials to act were inculcated, habits formed and crystallized? Or, alternatively, is the present-progressive unfolding of interaction and its endogenous pressures "where the action is"? (Tavory 2018).

Our research has provided an example not only of how the present shapes the future, but also of how this future is shape by "past anticipations," such as when the media report a decreasing number of victims and a growing possibility to "return" to our lives. We thought that we were living in "suspended time" during the pandemic crisis, but we were also living in a time that was directed towards the past in the sense that we sought to return to a point in time prior to the Covid-19 outbreak. What was "in between"—such as smart work and the Italian professional women who had to adapt to it—was not the location of action for the future.

Between no sense of place and non-place

Joshua Meyrowitz's *No Sense of Place* (1986) presents the theory that the media produce an everyday experience that is not defined by where we are insofar as they change situational geographies and produce new places and a new sense of belonging. For instance, we can simultaneously be in our living room and at the stadium, cheering on our favorite footballer. However, Meyrowitz understands "no sense of place" as in fact meaning more senses of place, which involves the possibility of experiencing a sense of place that is not necessarily related to a specific physical space. In respect to the experience of smart work, it is noteworthy that the sense of various places, which are typically meaningful spaces for sociologists (Gieryn 2000), changed during the pandemic. One interviewee stated that a bedroom was the most convenient location for an office in one's home, but it nevertheless preserved the identity or story

of a bedroom at the same time that it acquired the meaning of an office. The place dedicated to being a bedroom thus became a space to which we could also ascribe the transient meaning of an office.

As smart work was adopted, places therefore became spaces with transitory meanings in transient spatial configurations. As Griswold and colleagues state,

> This process works through interactions between two processes of emplacement: physical position and cognitive location. Position guides location in the process of meaning-making (Griswold, Mangione, and McDonnell 2013:344).

More specifically,

> Position is the geometric set of physical relationships between objects and bodies in a particular place. Location is the cognitive process of meaning-making that depends upon this position (Griswold, Mangione, and McDonnell 2013:349).

Adler and colleagues add in this regard that

> [P]osition and location shape perception and interaction, thereby shaping the potential meanings of an object. In this line of argument, the meaning of objects is closely connected to their material context (Adler, Della Posta, and Lankes 2022).

The displacement and replacement of domestic furniture with work desks occurred on a massive scale during the Covid-19 pandemic. Although Mead (1934) maintains that interactions between humans and the non-human construct meaning, he also affirms that meaning emerges from repeated actions. The lack of a sufficient number of repetitions for particular actions to become routine during the "in between" period of the pandemic, together with the awareness and hope that what people had to deal with was only transitory meaning, led people to experience what Marc Auge (2009) terms a sense of "non-place" rather than what Meyrowitz (1986) speaks of as "no sense of place."

Doing gender: Is smart work a female field?

Many theorists have dealt with the gender question. For the sake of economy in the present discussion, we selected a specific definition close to the symbolic interactionist approach that coincides with various remarks by our interviewees concerning how gender differences either persisted or disappeared during the pandemic. More specifically, we adopted an approach to gender that views it as a result of interaction rather than an internal state of being (Carter and Fuller 2015). Genders comprise patterns from this perspective, and these patterns are developed and become recognizable through repeated interactions in which actions and behaviors become regarded as typically masculine or feminine. They are thus not roles as much as everyday performances (West and Zimmerman 1987). Against this background, thinking of gender as a social identity and reconfiguring spaces may in fact be regarded as creating new opportunities for individuals and society alike.

Smart work also casts light on the gendered aspects of certain actions. For example, DW related how "working with [digital] technology was particularly difficult for middle-aged male individuals, which meant our boss." He did not read emails and he could not exercise power during online meetings by means of the typical symbolic clues that are elements of masculine rituals. DW therefore adopted a work strategy that included underling the relevant parts of emails that indicated the specific steps necessary for successfully completing a project. She thus played a type of maternal role by means of emails, whereby she fine-tuned the need to "bring home the result" without making her boss feel inferior or incapable of dealing with his role.

Gender was also "done" through specific organizational decisions, such as the decision noted above concerning parliamentary journalists. As PJ related, her male colleague returned to parliament for his professional activities as soon as the public health situation rendered it possible, while she had to stay home since, as a mother, she was judged more likely to be potentially contagious. That is to say that the male journalist with children was able to return to where decisions were being taken, but the female journalist with children had to wait until being informed by telephone

of decisions that had already been made. Gender was thus "done" by turning smart work into something only for "girls" while men remained the in-person owners of the public scene.

Social workers pointed to the gendered danger of women having to do a double job, one professional in character and the other domestic. However, since they apparently viewed this problem as located in the future, they did not seem to be affected by it.

The space and time of the person: Coexisting harmoniously and right of disconnection

The interviewees did not relate to us any problems they encountered in respect to living with others during the three phases of the pandemic. Their living spaces appear to have been meticulously organized in order to avoid any invasion of or lack of respect for others' spaces and times. Smart work, however, not people, was the invader of domestic space for the teachers, and they faced the risk of having to work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In contrast, smart work provided other categories of the professionals we interviewed with the opportunity to perform two activities at the same time, such as cooking and making business calls.

In spite of the diversity of the groups, which is clearly indicated in Table 4, the number of people in a given home did not appear to be a problem—the problem rather consisted of people's relationships with digital technologies. For example, the actress who had no possibility to work remotely in fact feared becoming addicted to new digital technologies. Although journalists did not share such a fear, they nonetheless evoked their right to disconnect.

> These tools [digital technologies] are resources, but, in my opinion, they need to be subjected to an "ethical etiquette" that involves respect for the rhythms and times of a worker's life. They must not be a means to extend the space and time of work, but must rather extend the space and time of the person. For example, allowing those who do not necessarily wish to live in the city, simply because they work there, to perhaps move to the countryside, or even just avoid the stress of traffic to get to and from the office. For me, not having to go to the office often means saving two hours of life a day—it can take an hour

> to travel ten km during peak traffic times in Rome—which I can then devote to my private life (DW).

The same interviewee adds that

> although I'm a smart work enthusiast, I try hard to protect my private life. Work is not the goal of our lives—I came to understand this recently. Work is a means by which we can purchase pieces of a better life (DW).

The influences of other frames

In respect to the four professional identities we examined, other frames also clearly influenced how Italian professional women reacted to smart work. Such frames, which originated from the public discussion, mainly the media and political discourses, created different approaches to our cultural research object—the show workers who were underestimated, the teachers who were criticized, the invisible social workers, and the journalists who were the sources of information.

A total social fact greatly exposes professional reputations to public scrutiny and evaluation. And the social reputations of our respondents almost mirrored how they themselves evaluated smart work as an artifact of the total social fact of the pandemic.

Since show workers were not considered useful during a period when human life was under threat, theaters, cinemas, and dance halls were consequently closed for public health reasons. In addition to this public opinion frame, show workers faced a very substantial obstacle by virtue of the fact that they work with their bodies. Stated otherwise, neither were they socially useful, nor was smart work useful for them. It was in fact almost their enemy, and they experienced a difficult identity crisis.

Teachers comprised a second category with a skeptical orientation towards the emergent situation. Although the micro-frame of "public debate concerning school" was regarded as important, it was always addressed as associated with a state of emergency and with little precision. Moreover, teachers for the first time found

themselves having to display their poor skills regarding the use of digital technologies. They also often found themselves lecturing in front of parents since small children needed help with following online lessons. Not only did their lack of media literacy thereby became evident, the emergency associated with the pandemic did not allow time for even skilled teachers to reformulate programs and develop new teaching methodologies. Being viewed as unskilled in some sense and appearing unprepared constitutes an attack on the reputation and group identity of a teacher.

The situation with social workers was significantly different. As one of them related, they received no information concerning how to conduct their activities during the pandemic. The public institutions that are typically responsible for issuing guidelines to social workers did not take timely decisions. In addition, neither the media, nor the micro-frame of public opinion appeared to remember them. Social workers referred to themselves as a type of self-organizing group marked by stronger, albeit distanced mutual relations, along with new relations with their clients. This "invisible" category of professional women capably transformed smart work into an important resource and acquired a stronger professional identity as well. They also discovered a number of new forms of agency on the part of their clients.

The journalists were clearly at the center of public discourse. Their professional self-esteem has increased, even if being a woman was an obstacle in some cases. Journalists were the category best able to express themselves during the pandemic for a number of reasons—they had the information, they were accustomed to working in an emergency, and they knew where to find sources and how to evaluate them. Journalists also comprised the category that had previous experience with smart work. Nonetheless, the new relationship with smart working is unfortunately over even for them—at least for those who had adopted it for the first time during the pandemic. Smart work has continued for those who had already begun employing it prior to the pandemic.

This confirms the fact that the opportunity presented by smart work was not fully exploited because of its close link with one of the most dramatic events of the current century.

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Pandemic Diaries from Bulgaria: Dynamics of Emotions and Changes in Everyday Life during the Early Stages of the Covid-19 Crisis[1]

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Introduction

The spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, coupled with the measures implemented to deal with the resulting pandemic, has caused an unprecedented global crisis whose effects continue to be felt. On the one hand, the situation is unique because contemporary media and technologies have made this a crisis involving global compa-

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risons on many levels—between cultures, models of management, politics, public health policies, scientific approaches, and societal responses and perceptions. On the other, this crisis has distinguished by its complexity, simultaneously having serious health, political, economic, psychological, and social implications. Moreover, the changes brought about by Covid-19 on all levels of social life are still developing.

The pandemic with all of its consequences has not only raised many questions of national and global importance, it has also made evident the importance of the transfer of knowledge between science, the professional psychological community, competent authorities, and society in general. Analyses of a significant number of aspects of the situation have been needed in order to provide a basis for joint efforts to successfully tackle the Covid-19 crisis as well as potential future challenges of a similar character.

The quantity of scholarly publications in the social sciences was limited during the first months of the pandemic. In general, there was a tendency for research to be focused predominantly on health and the economy, and it rarely addressed the socio-psychological aspects of the crisis. In addition, the rapid and unpredictable development of the situation, together with the range and variety of the public health measures implemented to curtail the spread of the new Corona virus, made it very challenging to conduct social science research during the early stages of the crisis. The most convenient methods for in-depth studies on the individual and group levels, such as action research, participant observation, and face-to-face interviewing, could not be employed in the given circumstances. In this context, approaches involving online data collection and quantitative analyses played a dominant role.

However, the number of publications in this field has increased rapidly beginning in the second half of 2020 because of the importance of the topic. It is also significant that such issues as perceptions and emotional experiences on the individual level, along with changes in everyday life, are accessible to investigation mainly by means of retrospective methods (see e.g. Panchelieva, Nacheva and Bakalova 2022). This raises questions associated with the functioning of autobiographical memory, including data accuracy, the impact of new knowledge and experiences, and the subjective me-

anings ascribed to past events. We do not question whether retrospective reports of past events—in this case, experiences during the early stages of the Covid-19 crisis—are true or authentic. We only wish to emphasize that such reports are based upon memories that can be influenced and/or modified by subsequent events and information. The uncertainty of the initial situation has been reduced to a great extent because we now know much more about the nature of the pandemic—we understand how the infection spreads, we have access to medical statistics, approved and effective vaccines are available, various medical explanations and conspiracy theories have been brought to our attention, and so forth. As time goes by, individuals gain ever more knowledge concerning the crisis, which in turn motivates them to deal with their past memories in different ways. From a psychological perspective, we may say that the early months of the pandemic may be regarded as traumatic in many cases. Such defence mechanisms as denial or underestimation were triggered and continue to function, and various strategies for coping with stress on the individual level have been intensively employed. In other cases, the experience of the crisis is already on the way to being successfully integrated into individuals' life history.

In connection with these developments, knowledge concerning authentic emotions and immediate experiences during the early stages of the pandemic can provide important information and valuable insights when combined with the data and findings generated by studies based upon retrospective data. Another significant issue involves the identification of the dominant emotions and sources of anxiety on the individual level.

In respect to stress and stress management, researchers at the beginning of the crisis either focused primarily on patients, medical staff, and first-line workers (see Bo, Li, Yang, Wang, Zhang et al. 2020; Greenberg, Docherty, Gnanapragasam et al.), or adopted a more general approach, analyzing the potential mental health challenges on the societal level. In terms of methodology, a review of the literature indicates the prevalence of quantitative methods and instruments (surveys, statistical data analyses). In addition, analyses of the pandemic's psychological impact utilizing this approach have referred to the data and the results of studies of previous health crises (Brooks, Webster, Smith, Woodland, Wessely et al. 2020).

The full research potential of mixed methods and qualitative studies has nevertheless remained unutilized due to the many difficulties that have presented themselves. We must note, however, that investigating the sociopsychological effects of the Covid-19 crisis demands a deep analysis of individuals' perceptions and everyday practices through the use of qualitative instruments. The calendar method, particularly diary studies, is very appropriate for such research.

Objectives of the Study and Choice of Methodology

The present study explored the dynamics of emotions, along with changes in the ways individuals structured their daily lives, within the context of a formal state of emergency and the implementation of unprecedented measures to counter the spread of Covid-19 during the early phase of the pandemic in the spring of 2020. The analysis was conducted in Bulgaria on the basis of data obtained from the personal diaries of volunteer participants. This method was chosen because it makes possible the collection of various types of information concerning a number of different aspects of how individuals perceived and experienced the new situation. In addition, the material collected allowed for both quantitative processing and more in-depth qualitative analysis.

The use of diaries in research is an established approach in a number of areas of the social sciences. One may regard diaries as comprising a stand-alone method and data source, but there are also many reasons to view them as a specific subtype of calendar methods (Córdova-Cazar and Belli 2019). We base this view on the fact that the main markers on the calendars in diaries—individual experiences, thoughts, and emotions—are registered in a structured form in respect to time. This is usually done in writing and relatively close to the actual occurrence of events. Diaries thus make possible an analysis of personal experiences within a typically short time cycle that involves, for example, retrospection over the course of a day or week. Calendar interviews instead involve experiences and episodes over longer periods of time, such as months, years, or even decades (see Glasner, van der Vaart and Belli 2012; Glas-

ner and van der Vaart 2009). The degree of structuring of the information pressented in diaries depends on the particular research goals, design, and approach of a given project. It can range from highly structured, such as selecting pre-defined alternatives or statements—which in practice brings the method closer to a survey that is periodically repeated and linked to a specific calendar—to a free space in which the individual can develop their own authentic narrative and share their own meanings, thoughts, and experiences, with little or no specific guidance or restrictions on the part of the researcher.

Analyzing diaries undoubtedly provides very good possibilities for research, but it also comprises a method that requires a high level of commitment and perseverance on the part of the respondents. In addition, the design and preparation of such studies requires precision and a considerable amount of time on the part of the organizers of a given study. These factors likely account for the relatively limited employment of the method in the field of social science research during the early stages of the Covid-19 crisis. To the best of our knowledge, there have been to date (July 2021) a total of 12 studies announced in 13 publications that employ some type of calendar method in exploring various aspects of the pandemic's impact. Furthermore, all of these studies have involved collecting data through diaries, not calendar interviews. The topics explored range from perceived stress, feelings of loneliness, and the propensity for prosocial behavior and empathy, to impulsive shopping and eating practices during the pandemic (Amicarelli and Bux 2021; Moroń and Biolik-Moroń 2021; Ménard, Foucreault, Leduc et al. 2021; Xiao, Z. Zhang and L. Zhang 2020). Most of these studies also employ classical psychometric instruments for measuring attitudes, personality characteristics, or other types of psychological constructs. We can thus regard these studies as essentially systematic/periodic quantitative surveys that involve only statistical data processing, with its corresponding advantages and limitations. As would be expected, the samples in this type of studies are relatively large, such as Buecker, Horstmann, Krasko et al. (2020) with 4,844 participants, Butler and Jaffe (2020) with 435 participants, and Jiang (2020a and 2020b) with 231 participants. There are also specific studies, such as Saleh, Lehmann, McDonald et al.

(2021), that utilize a type of calendar in the form of social media postings (574,903 Twitter postings).

As noted above, this type of methodology has important limitations insofar as it assumes the production of highly structured data, in which deep individual experiences and personal specifics often remain invisible to the researcher. On the other hand, the information collected in this way is relatively unambiguous, comparable, and readily usable in various types of statistical processing. This methodology also makes it possible to address somewhat longer time periods—for example, Karwowski, Zielińska, Jankowska et al. (2021) collected data from 235 participants for more than a month in the spring of 2020. However, only a few researchers were able to capture the earliest stages of the crisis due to the surprising and rapid development of events, which led to a number of problems, delays, and difficulties in various fields of activity, including scientific research (see e.g. van de Groep, Zanolie, Green et al. 2020). The primary challenge was to organize research studies quickly. The use of diaries in a more free format made it possible for participants to construct their own entries in a manner that would reflect their daily lives and perceptions on an individual level.

The focus of the present study falls largely on the emotions and perceptions associated with the unusual crisis situation. Our selection of methodology enabled us to attain both main goals of our study—identify the dynamics of emotions as well as changes in the ways individuals structured their daily lives during the early period of the Covid-19 state of emergency. In its scope and characteristics, our study has adopted an approach similar to that described in Scott, McGowan and Visram (2021) and in Lades, Laffan, Daly and Delaney (2020).

We initially traced a wide range of individual perceptions and reactions to the crisis during the first weeks of the state of emergency in the diaries created by the participants in our study, directing particular attention to how the crisis was reflected in everyday life and altered normal practices. In addition, the body of texts collected allowed us to register the frequency and types of emotional reactions expressed by the participants, investigate the sources to which emotions were related, and observe the dynamics of how they were expressed.

Working with original texts required that we focus on one of the existing classifications of emotions that would serve as a reference framework. For this purpose, we selected Izard's (1991) fundamental work in the field of social psychology that identifies 10 basic emotions—interest, joy, surprise, sadness, anger, disgust, contempt, fear, shame, and guilt. We created a set of semantically-related concepts for each of the main emotions on the basis of this classification whereby we could trace the frequency and nature of their manifestations in the diary entries.

Context

The Covid-19 pandemic became an issue of global importance in the first months of 2020. It literally changed the lives of large groups of people and seriously affected social relations, social processes, and the economy within the space of only a few months. On March 13, 2020, the Bulgarian National Assembly declared a state of emergency for the entire country until April 13, which was later extended to May 13. Schools, malls, bars, discos, shopping centers, movie theaters, restaurants, and gyms were closed. Unlike highly restrictive measures in certain other countries, small shops and businesses were permitted to remain open if they enforced increased disinfection regulations and certain social distancing measures, although some nevertheless had to reduce their working hours or close because of declining consumption. In addition, all arrivals from Italy, Spain, Iran, South Korea, and China were placed under a mandatory 14-day quarantine. Various restrictions involving outdoor activities, including visiting parks, playgrounds, and mountain areas, were also introduced during certain periods. A regime of checkpoints for controlling access to large cities was also temporarily introduced.

Method and Procedures for the Study

Digital platform for participant use and data collection

An electronic platform was created for the purposes of the study such that participants could keep diaries for 30 days after their initial registration. How frequently participants entered information depended entirely on them, although they were urged to do so as regularly as possible. The first section of the entries comprised a brief description of the main activities of the day divided into five time periods—0:00–5:00, 5:00–12:00, 12:00–17:00, 17:00–22:00, and 22:00–24:00. The second section was divided into three open fields—significant public events, significant personal events, and other comments—in which participants described their thoughts and experiences in free text without guidance or restrictions from the researchers. Initial registration on the electronic platform created a unique username (pseudonym) and password that were chosen by and known only to the participants. This guaranteed anonymity, and it limited access to a given user's diary to the specific participant in question. Once entries were submitted, they could not be re-read or altered later. Participants were given the opportunity at the end of the study to receive a copy of their complete diary by contacting the researchers by email and following a specific identification procedure that required their platform username and an email address—either personal or made for the purposes of the study— where their log file would be sent. As of July 2021, a total of four participants chose this option and received a copy of their diaries.

Invitations to recruit volunteers for the study were distributed within student communities and on selected websites and social networks for a period of five days. A total of 61 volunteers were thereby registered on the electronic survey platform. Only diaries with more than five completed daily entries were finally selected for the present study insofar as our goals included tracking the dynamics of emotions. As a result, we analyzed 24 diaries of volunteer participants who completed a sufficient number of entries during the state of emergency in Bulgaria. The shortest diary included six

days, while the longest consisted of entries for 28 days. The diaries we analyzed comprised a total of 381 records of completed days in the electronic logging system.

Calendar

The entries began on March 23, 10 days after the declaration of the state of emergency in the country—the first completed diary entries are from this date. Volunteers were asked to record their entries on the digital platform for a period of 30 days after their initial registration on the platform, although they determined the rhythm, volume, and frequency of their records. The last completed entry is for April 27. For the purposes of the study, the calendar days are numbered in accordance with the number of days that passed after the declaration of the state of emergency, ranging from day 10 of the state of emergency (March 23) to day 45 (April 27).

Content analysis: Procedure

On the basis of Izard's classification, we used the semantically-related concepts provided by Bulgarian synonym dictionaries, as well as certain other related words, to identify the manifestations of emotions. The analysis of entries was performed in three stages (see Figure 1, on the next page).

The following features and limitations of the study should be noted.

- The same emotion appears several times a day in some entries, often associated with different sources. In the quantitative analysis, we noted the number tof days on which a given emotion was expressed in a given entry without indicating how many manifestations there were per day.
- We assumed that one and the same source can generate more than one emotion, that is, we assumed the simultaneous activation of emotions as well as the presence of mixed and ambivalent emotions.

- Our analysis addresses only those emotions explicitly reflected in language corresponding with Izard's list of 10 basic emotions, including synonyms and related words.
- The emotions manifested did not always relate to the author of a given diary. People often spoke about the emotions of other members of their household or about the effects or impact of the crisis on a non-individual level—society, the state, people in general, and so forth. We included such remarks in our analysis in order to gain a clearer picture of emotional experiences in general during the period examined within the context of the social situation.

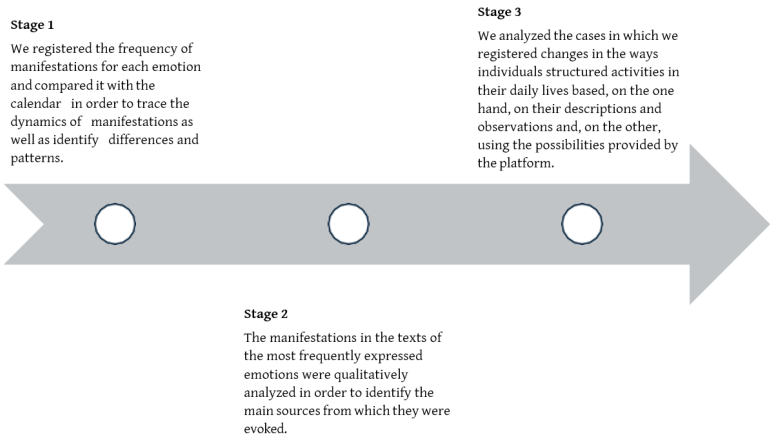

Fig. 1 - Stages of the Analysis.

Results

Stage 1. Frequency and dynamics of emotions—quantitative analysis

We recorded the manifestations in the corpus of texts of the 10 basic emotions that Izard included in his classification, along with

the semantically-related concepts and synonyms we specified. The overall numbers are displayed in Table 1.

Tab. 1 - Frequency of Manifestations in the Diaries of the 10 Basic Emotions and Semantically-Related Concepts.

Emotions and semantically related concepts	Frequency of manifestations in the text
Fear	185
Joy	153
Sadness	79
Interest	69
Disgust	49
Guilt	44
Anger	23
Surprise	21
Contempt	15
Shame	10

The study addressed week 2 of the state of emergency in Bulgaria in part and weeks 3, 4, 5, and 6 in full. We related the frequency of accumulations with the calendar in order to track the dynamics of the emotions. It was necessary to accept a conditional limit of frequency in order to determine the periods marked by an accumulation of emotions. The limit in this case was the manifestation of a given emotion by more than five people on a given day, that is, every fifth person in the study registered a given emotion in their diaries on that day. The aggregated data displayed the following tendencies.

The semantic field of the emotion Fear clearly displayed a greater frequency than the others. It also displayed a relatively stable presence on all days. Fear was most intensely activated, with accumulations on consecutive calendar days, in weeks 2 and 3 of the state

of emergency, although it continued to be evident in week 4. It is noteworthy that fear displayed weekly peaks—there was a regular increase on Monday or Tuesday of each week. This applied to all weeks, and no other emotion exhibited the same type of dynamic.

The semantic field of the emotion Joy also had a greater frequency and a relatively stable presence on all days. Accumulations were also observed—this emotion was apparently most intensely activated in weeks 3 and 4 of the state of emergency. Counterintuitively, the dynamics of this emotion were not strongly influenced by the traditional Easter holidays (Easter was the 37th day of the calendar). We would have expected an accumulation in week 6 if the holiday had been a factor.

The semantic field of the emotion Sadness had a significantly lower frequency, but a stable manifestation throughout the period, with rare absences on certain days. There were no significant accumulations.

The semantic field of the emotion Interest also possessed a lower frequency, but did diplay a stable manifestation throughout the period, with interruptions only on certain single days. There were neither accumulations, nor dynamics.

The semantic fields of the emotions Guilt and Disgust displayed a low frequency, but a relatively stable presence throughout the period, with interruptions on certain days. They possessed no clear peaks insofar as they did not exceed 5 manifestations per day. There was a single case of frequency 5 regarding Disgust, day 14 of the state of emergency, when the news and events of March 26–27 may have had an impact.[3] There were two consecutive days of frequency 5 in respect to Guilt on April 3–4, days 21 and 22 of the state of emergency. The probable reasons for this were the official extension at that time of the state of emergency until May 13 and subsequent household events that had a strong subjective importance.

3. This includes the general international news, such as rates of infection in the United States exceeding those in China and the British Prime Minister testing positive for Covid-19, as well as the confirmed extension to April 13 of the emergency measures implemented in Bulgaria.

The semantic fields of the emotions Shame, Anger, Surprise, and Contempt possessed a low frequency and displayed an unstable manifestation. They displayed neither accumulations, nor dynamics. It is noteworthy that linguistic expressions of emotions disappeared from the diaries on the last few days of the study. This may be explained, at least in part, by the fact that we generally had fewer texts available for analysis on the dates in question since many participants had by then reached the 30-day limit of their diary platform registration.

Stage 2. Analysis of the main topics related to the most frequently expressed emotions—thematic analysis

The aim of the quantitative analysis was to outline trends and provide a framework for further analysis. A qualitative analysis of the texts is needed, however, for an in-depth study of emotions and reactions at the individual level. We focused on the four emotions that were dominant during the period studied as indicated by the frequency of their manifestions, namely, *Fear, Joy, Sadness,* and *Interest.* The content analysis of the texts revealed that certain themes repeatedly appeared in connection with these emotions.

We present below the main thematic fields related to the four dominant emotions, illustrating them with examples of specific quotations from the original diary texts.[4]

The Emotion of Fear

Fear was usually present in the diary entries with such softer linguistic nuances as anxiety, worry, or apprehension. In addition, some of the participants reported a gradual decrease in the intensity of emotions on this spectrum.

> I'm glad to report that I'm no longer as anxious as I was during the first weeks [of the crisis], and this makes me feel more at ease.
> I feel good at the moment. The initial anxiety that lasted a week or two has passed, and I'm currently concentrating on what I have to comple-

4. All original texts are in Bulgarian. English translations are by Ilina Nacheva.

> te at the university. I want to be as useful as I can in this situation, so I signed up as a volunteer at the BPS crisis center.[5]

As was anticipated, one of the leading fears expressed in the diaries concerned one's own health—*fear of becoming infected with Covid-19.* The presence of certain physical symptoms was usually indicated as the cause.

> My son is complaining about his tonsils again. He doesn't stop going out. Almost every day, for about an hour. I'm afraid for all of us.
> My allergy to plants continues. I woke up the night before last and was embarrassed by anxious thoughts that it might be the coronavirus because of the cough. Thoughts and anxiety about the pandemic definitely still have power over me. I shared these thoughts with my mother today and she asked me where I could [possibly] catch something. I hope we're protecting ourselves here.
> I've had a cough for a few days and at times I'm worried, and it occurs to me that it could be the coronavirus.

In other cases, the very thought of the possibility of infection—the perception of a real health threat—appeared to lead to intense emotions.

> I'm horrified every time I think about how small the virus really is and how I have absolutely no way of seeing it and knowing where it is and whether it has infected me. I've had a headache for two days, and I inevitably started wondering whether I was getting sick.

In addition to health-related fears, another very common issue concerned *fear for the health of loved ones/others*. This was in fact the most frequently described source of anxiety in the diaries. Pertinent examples include the following:

> The most important thing during the day for me was that an infected person was found in the town of Sliven. I'm from there, and that made me worry about my grandmother, who lives in Sliven.

5. The crisis center of the Bulgarian Psychological Society.

> I heard on the news that there are more deaths from the coronavirus. Some are close to us, in the town of Bansko. My grandmother lives in the nearby town of Razlog, and that worried me.
> I'm worried about my brother's and my mother's health. I think that's the only thing which worries me in the whole situation. The good thing is that they're very careful, I hope it will be like that in the future.

In some cases participants shared attempts to control such fears through the use of various strategies. When others were in the same household, they did so by social distancing or by doing risky activities for them, such as shopping. When loved ones were far away, they kept in touch with them daily.

> I'm worried that I'll still want to visit my parents around Easter, knowing clearly that I may be a carrier of the virus.
> I'm not afraid of getting sick, but I'm afraid of being a virus carrier. That's something I can't know for the moment, and I may infect other people. That's why I'll stay at home!
> It's not politically correct, but I realize that my life is easier now because I don't live with someone who's sick or elderly, about whom I would worry much more than myself.

There were many fears during the early stages of the crisis concerning its *economic and financial consequences.* We should note that this type of fear naturally occurred in participants whose individual financial situation was unstable or difficult due to the crisis.

> I'm worried that we'll lose much of our savings and it will become impossible to buy an apartment.
> Over the weekend we also had to fill out a questionnaire about what our options are if we have to leave the hotel. I was a little embarrassed to think about it because I didn't have many other options and couldn't go back to Bulgaria. I hope they manage to agree that we can stay as we have now until the end of the summer.
> Thoughts about financial security come back to me no matter how much I push them aside. Fear grips me. I'm developing anxiety. The first days I couldn't sleep. I woke up at night in fear that I wouldn't be able to support myself. I suppress fear, I try to destroy it by living in the present—being here and now—and deliberately concentrating on the power and the opportunities I have.

Another element was related to the unknown and to negative expectations.

> I'm quite an extreme introvert and generally like to be alone. In the current context, the only thing that worries me is the uncertainty of how long it will last and what the long-term consequences for the economy will be.
> [C]ustomers have given up. I realize how severe the crisis is becoming, and I'm preparing for it with all my resources. Sometimes it bothers me a lot, even though I know it will last for just a short period.

Concerns were also related to both the future of specific businesses and the more general situation in the country.

> Unemployment has risen rapidly in recent weeks, leaving small businesses and restaurants out of work. I'm quite worried about this. I'm afraid that it will lead to mass riots.
> The government is considering extending the period of isolation due to Covid-19 until May 13. I'm worried about how our small and medium-sized businesses will cope with such a decision.

There were also texts that described rethinking one's initial reaction, shifting the focus from the economic consequences to the health and social effects of the crisis.

> Ten days ago I was more worried about the economy than health. I was completely sure of my health and that of my loved ones then. I didn't think it was likely to have consequences for my family. Honestly, I still think so, but health and life are priceless from a purely human perspective. The economy has collapsed dozens of times over the last 100 years, and that has never stopped human civilization from continuing to prosper.

Another group of fears were related to the *psychosocial consequences of the crisis.* These included concerns about mental health and the negative impact on relationships between people.

> I observe people and I see how nervous and anxious they already are. This is already beginning to have an impact, and I think that the psy-

> chological crisis is yet to come. I hope that we'll be able to deal with the approaching crisis.
> My house is in complete chaos, which clearly demonstrates my mental state. My mother needs help with her phone, but I hardly see her face-to-face. And when I do see her, we have no physical contact, so I don't know whether I'll be able to help her anytime soon. I'm worried that it's harder for them not to see me than it is for me.
> I was thinking... about the idea that older people should be the most isolated because they are the most at-risk group. [...] I was [also] thinking about whether we wouldn't kill some of our elderly—either from boredom or loneliness—if we forbid them from going out. For some people, going to the store is the only contact they have with other people. If we stop them from doing that, they may have nothing left to live for!

Concerns were also directed towards children in addition to the single and the elderly. Parents were afraid of the impact that the measures would have on them.

> I'm a little worried about my daughter—today she's still extremely emotional. The isolation definitely does not make her feel good. And yet she goes out with the dog, she wants to shop. Of course I don't stop her, I know it's important for her, these five minutes outside. And she's a good child and follows all the recommendations, but I'm worried about her emotional state. The thrill of the [graduation] ball was somehow lost, there's no euphoria. I know we can handle it, but I hope I can help her get through it a little bit [mother of a girl graduating from school].

In some cases, the diaries provided examples of other types of worries that were related to the sphere of professional life. These concerned the *new demands and opportunities provided by the situation,* and were linked to new challenges and/or fears of missed opportunities.

> And sometimes I'm afraid that the quarantine will end because I haven't done anything I had planned and thought I should do.
> I arranged an online session with one of the children I work with next week. I'm glad I took this step because we don't know how long this situation will last. I'm a little worried about how it will go, but I'm thinking about detailed initial preparation.

> Recently I had an interview and a conversation with my new employer. I'm very excited, the work is in my area of interest—illustrator of digital games. But I'm also worried—whether I'll manage to work together in a team with my employer and colleagues, whether the work will run normally in spite of the state of emergency.

It is possible that this type of concern was relevant to many people in the weeks and months after the present study. Comments were sharply focused on health issues during the initial phase, and a number of businesses stopped working and adopted a holding position, hoping that the state of emergency would end soon and the emergency measures would be lifted.

The role of the media/news in activating fear and related emotions

Manifestions of emotions on the fear spectrum were specifically linked to media content in many cases. Participants described how information in the media affected them, with some even reporting that they limited their reading and watching the news in an attempt to control their emotional state.

> The news is definitely terrifying.
> I saw the title of an article in The Guardian, "Coronavirus distancing may need to continue until 2022, say experts," and that raised my anxiety level. I know that things are super vague, and in one place they write one thing and something else in another, but I prefer to be more hopeful. It's confusing, I don't know what to believe in.
> I watch less and less news—they make me tense, worried, and nervous. I heard bad news about England and the United States. The virus has many victims. The situation is worrying, but I've begun to avoid listening to the news about the virus and its spread.

The situation as a factor *for overcoming fears*

Two texts described how the situation instead appears to have helped eliminate certain fears on an individual level.

> Conversations with several students today were interesting and inspiring. We also spoke with some of them about how they experience

> what's happening and online learning, so it was interesting to hear some of their experiences. One girl mentioned that she actually felt calmer now because there were no students around all the time and she was not as worried or anxious as she used to be when she was in the dormitory. That was an interesting plus that I hadn't thought of.

The second case described how the crisis situation was viewed as an opportunity for a person to deal with their fears and resolve a specific crisis on the individual level.

> I thought that my fears obviously prevent me from truly loving. But I seem to have a chance in the middle of this quarantine to confront all the fears I have. The fear of living in a closed space, the fear of my brother, the fear of my mother's suffering or dying. I hope I'll use the opportunity to overcome them.

These cases seemed paradoxical at first glance and appeared to be exceptions, but they in fact hint at interesting and potentially positive effects that such situations may have on an individual level.

The Emotion of Joy

Counterintuitively, joy and related emotions were the second most frequently expressed emotions in the texts. These were usually presented in such terms as "pleasure," "satisfaction," "merriment," and "happiness."

The first large grouping of the sources of joy and related emotions can in general be termed *hedonistic.* This includes such traditional sources of joy as movement—physical activity—and contact with nature.

> I'm an active cyclist and my partner does functional training. Because of our moral responsibility to limit the epidemic as much as possible, we moved our sports activities home. [...] Sports at home fortunately comprises a partial compensation.
> I'm glad we work in the garden...
> My swallows came back today. [...] I'm very happy. This means that everything's fine. I was very glad that they came back.

> I came home satisfied and happy from the day! And grateful that I can go out and walk in nature.
> In the evening, when I came home, I was very tired, but happy! I love the smell of the spring, and the temperature was about 22 degrees! I was grateful for the opportunity to spend time walking. Oh, and I saw a young male deer about 10 meters away from me! It was magical! I can't wait for it to come to an end—these official restrictions on where we go, how we get there, whom we see. It's so nice to breathe fresh air and see people!
> I was very happy from being in nature, and the swans and the lake! I passed an almost blooming lilac as I ran back to the bus! Magic!

Food and cooking were also sources of positive emotions, and there frequently was a social element in such cases—preparing food for/ with loved ones.

> I like to prepare food for my loved ones. I'm happy to have this opportunity today. I've had less and less time lately...
> Today is the big day for kneading Easter bread and coloring eggs. I'm really excited about the Easter bread—I'll make it for the first time. The dough smells wonderful, and my mother fusses around me infinitely happy and tells me how her mother made it—my grandmother, whom I don't know because she died very young— and now it smells just like then. I'm happy that I managed to bring such joy.
> The day is wonderful, and it's time for the first real sunbathing in the yard. I love sunbathing! A little work in the garden, then coloring eggs. They came out beautifully :). And the Easter bread is in Grandpa's room in the sun. I remember him. And I have such a sense of family continuity. I've never felt it so strongly. It's as if the line between life and death has been blurred.

In certain cases isolation was regarded as an opportunity to rest.

> I'm in a happy quarantine and don't plan to go out for another three days. I may have to do some shopping in the neighborhood, but for the moment everything is here.
> It's just that the pandemic is happening anyway. We might all get sick at home, or we might not get sick. There's no way to know and no point in worrying about it. Otherwise, it's raining today and foggy—a perfect day to relax with a book at home. But it was perfect for me, too—I'm

> happy I fixed my nails and hair, and now I'm like a new person. Taking care of myself makes me feel good.
> I'm staying at the villa with my loved ones. I enjoy the holidays. I dream a lot, I plan, I do strategic business development.

As expected, one of the main sources of joy was *communication with children and relatives.* The diaries often described effects related to the deepening of interpersonal relationships or improving cohesion within the family.

> I personally enjoy the opportunity to have more time for my children. It's unique—to get up while working, hug them, kiss them, and continue working again...
> Tonight at dinner is a lot of fun because we tell funny stories about the day. My little Cricket is over-excited. I try to calm him down by reading him stories, but he still wants to play.
> Today I helped my daughter realize one of her dreams. Happiness in her eyes is an irreplaceable experience. I'm happy that all my relatives and friends are healthy and no one is sick.
> We're all alive and well. A blessed rain is falling. The children are healthy, they are happy!
> Tomorrow I'll enjoy the children's cheerful cries when they color the eggs...
> It was very nice coloring eggs this morning. For 12 years my husband couldn't be here because he was at work. He's with us now...
> I think I can say I'm happy. I had a wonderful day with the family...
> [G]ratitude that I'm with loved ones—satisfaction that I can serve them with love—peace and joy, rest from hard work.

Other social contacts outside the household—circle of friends, colleagues, support groups, and so forth—comprised an additional source of or alternative for family-related emotions for those living alone. Such contacts transpired through face-to-face meetings in some cases, but more often they took place by telephone and video.

> I saw and spoke with the children. The grandchildren are happy. Mom and Dad are behaving. This makes me feel at peace.
> Seeing another person made me feel more calm.
> I drank coffee virtually with her. I didn't feel like driving to Vicki's, but it was still good. We chatted and had fun.

> I spoke with my mother, who will leave Bansko the day after tomorrow. I'm glad that the quarantine ended there and she'll be able to return to Sliven. I talked to my grandmother, too, and calmed down when she told me she wasn't going anywhere. My boyfriend and I talked during the day, and I'm happy that he's not as tense as he was yesterday.
> I had a zoom meeting with friends from high school—one in Africa, the other in London. It was interesting and a lot of fun.
> Talking to friends. It brought me joy and peace.
> I spoke with my relatives. My sister called Irina for a video chat, we were all terribly happy.

Communication was viewed in some entries as a counterpoint to the negative emotions associated with isolation.

> In a face-to-face contact, I met a boy who works in a profession that I want to work in. I was very pleased because he has a quite friendly character. I'm happy with the meeting and I hope it will grow into a friendship. It's definitely something different from most people around me, who complain about the virus and small unfulfilled plans and have a desire to stand out. It was very refreshing for me, and I'll be very happy to continue this friendship in the future.
> Dari and I agreed to talk in the evening—she's the new girl I met from the online meetings on Mondays. [...] We couldn't stop talking! It was as if a door had opened to some intimate and endless place— for both her and me! We were both delighted! And I was so happy to feel that way and to fit in with another person in that way, to be friends! It hadn't happened to me in a very long time. And this during the coronavirus pandemic! It's a gift!

Formal occasions—*personal, family and religious holidays*—also comprised an important factor. Examples in various excerpts from the diaries indicate that formal occasions were associated with joyful emotions, and in many cases participants described "creative" ways for celebrating holidays in a non-traditional setting.

> We have a Skype meeting with the team at 14:00 because a colleague has a birthday and we'll sing her Happy Birthday. It'll be fun.
> I'm celebrating Women's Day at home, and it's particularly happy and festive.
> The children put on an amazing show when they opened the Easter packages they received in the mail. They're wonderful!

> It turned out that my granddaughter has a name day. Yesterday her grandfather and I wondered when exactly it would be, but today we were surprised to discover that it's today. Grandpa cries in the videos, and I send them to all my friends to show how proud I am. We raised a toast for her health... and for everyone around her to be cheerful and happy. I want to cuddle them, but there's no way. I'll wait.
> Today my daughter-in-law has a birthday, although we can't be together. I wanted to make her happy and so we surprised her.

It is interesting that joy was often associated with the *media and the news.* Joy, most often mixed with hope, was associated in some cases with specific news, such as speculation about the protective role of the BCG vaccine[6] against the coronavirus and news related to improving mortality rates.

> Fortunately, I wasn't that active on social networks today and don't know the news. I only read that in some countries there will be an easing of the measures, which brought me positive emotions.

Additional manifestations of joy included descriptions of experiencing pleasure and entertainment related to media content. Joy was reported mainly in connection with entertainment programs, movies, and books, unlike the association of the emotion of fear with news media.

The Emotion of Sadness

There were clearly fewer manifestations of sadness and related emotions in the diary entries than of fear and joy. It is noteworthy that sadness was often described as co-occurring with fear or with anger and related emotions. The most common motifs in the diaries were associated with the following themes.

Sadness caused by *isolation and loneliness/sadness for loved ones*.

6. BCG: Bacillus Calmette–Guérin vaccine. BCG vaccinations against tuberculosis have been mandatory for children in Bulgaria since 1951. Bulgaria is one of the largest producers of BCG vaccine in the world.

> I feel sorry for my relatives and friends abroad, who have fewer opportunities for prevention and more limited access to information.
> Last night I learned that the mother of a very close family relative has cancer that is spreading in her body. [...] I can't go and hug these relatives because of the quarantine and the measures we have to follow. Yes, I spoke with them and showed my support in words, but hugging at such times is very important for me. I hope that everything will go smoothly and we'll all see each other after the quarantine. But I'm very sad and upset today.
> I really can't stand being alone at home anymore. Loneliness is very heavy. I'm very sad for the elderly who live like this for years.

Sadness over the *disruption of typical activities*

This involved failed plans in some cases in some cases, such as cancelled high school graduation balls.

> I have a daughter who misses her boyfriend and won't have a graduation ball soon.

It also involved a more general sense of unfulfilled expectations.

> I think about it almost every day. I'm a little saddened by the fact that I don't have the opportunity to develop skills and gain experience because that had been the plan for now. And it all could have happened in the capital, not where I am right now, in my hometown.

Sadness was also associated with changes in daily experiences—sadness about "lost normality"—such as changed feelings about walking city streets.

> I had not been out for three days and it was an event. I realized that I looked like a ninja—a black mask, dark glasses, and a hood— but now you can see all kinds of people if you see any people in the street at all. It was pretty sad that everything was closed and there were no people, even though I live in the center of town.

Sadness was evoked on one occasion by watching a theater performance, with mixed emotions and rapid changes in the dominant emotional experience.

> The other thing is that I bought a ticket for online theater. [...] I felt such a strong emotion, as if I was going to see it live. Then I was sad that I would be alone, but then the positive feeling still prevailed.

The motif of sadness associated with thoughts of an "impossible/ forbidden walk" was common, especially regarding children.

> Children already miss a walk outside a lot and make up different games.
> My four-year old son is also suffering from this isolation. He doesn't stop repeating that he wants to go to kindergarten or wants us to go play in the park...
> At 6 a.m. I felt it was getting cold, and just then Lily called. She complained that she didn't know where to take her little one, and I was very sad. I was just thinking about how this Minister's order
> is super crazy. And that there's no such idiocy anywhere else in the whole world!

Sadness/grief over *victims of the pandemic*

Thoughts about victims appeared in many of the diaries.

> The tragedy in the world is shocking. Especially sad is the elderly dying alone.
> I hope fewer people suffer during these confusing times. I'm thinking of the poor and the helpless.
> Unfortunately, there are new victims of the virus today—three in one day. I'm sad. They are someone's relatives and I'm suffering for them.
> [T]he pandemic covers the whole world, including war zones. And unfortunately, in addition to military conflict, people in those areas will also face the disease. [...] It's sad, but we human beings haven't yet learned to be kind to each other, and we still put our own egos first.

The role of the media and the news appeared to have been particularly important in this regard.

> Unfortunately, only sad news.
> I know that the Prime Minister of Great Britain is in the intensive care unit, which made me sad. I hope he gets better.
> I watched news for the first time in a long time. It was awful. It was very hard for me, I cried. I was sad for all the people who need help. I feel powerless to pay attention to all the areas that require intervention—starving and abandoned retirees, health workers, people losing their businesses, losing their health, losing hope.

Other sources of sadness

It should be noted that the emotion of sadness was also evident in connection with personal events or with events covered in the media that were not directly related to the pandemic—accidents, catastrophes, deaths of celebrities, and so forth. Sadness was also manifested in certain cases in connection with frustration regarding the behavior of "others"—such as non-compliance with prescribed emergency measures or the inability to understand and make sense of the situation.

> We react strangely. We are both participants in an experiment and observers. But we are also the ones who set the rules. But most people don't know that. It's very sad because they think God, the universe, a conspiratorial force, or something else is responsible for their lives.

The Emotion of Interest

It was somewhat surprising that interest was the fourth most frequently expressed emotion. The pandemic has been associated with changes in many aspects of life, and it appears that interest and related emotions were directly related to an attitude of openness towards the new experiences that emerged. Some of the diaries provided clear examples of how this emotion was associated with better stress management and more successful adaptation to the new situation. Nonetheless, most entries comment on the lack or loss of interest regarding certain topics, aspects of the situation, news, and so forth. This may comprise a type of psychological de-

fense mechanism, whereby certain individuals initially sought to deal with the Covid-19 crisis situation by rejecting or denying it.

The cases in which this emotion was explicitly expressed may be grouped into two main categories, the first being *interest in new experiences and new opportunities.* This included opportunities to digitize businesses and services, work remotely, and trade and shop online. Particularly striking were the examples of discovering online learning opportunities.

> I got up earlier in the morning than I would have if it had been up to me. At 10 o'clock there was a meeting organized by colleagues from Gestalt training. The topic was "The online presence of the therapist," where a colleague shared her experiences in recent years.
> about developing her work online. I didn't have very high expectations, but was rather curious. It in fact turned out to be very interesting and inspiring for me. I passionately kept notes.

The second group concerns *interest in the development of the situation and reactions to the crisis.* Here again, the significant role of the media and the news is evident.

> We're living in interesting times...
> I'm curious about what the world will decide about the Olympics in Japan.
> Curious information about tuberculosis vaccinations...
> I'm curious about what's happening at the entrances to Sofia and whether there's any drama with entering and leaving the city.
> [T]hey introduced a blockade of cities, new people are infected with the coronavirus. My feelings: curiosity and interest in the topic, which lead to a lot of reading and monitoring mortality rates worldwide.

Stage 3: Analysis of changes in the structuring of everyday life

Analysis of the diaries revealed significant changes in the structuring of everyday life in a number of important respects.

Changes in work activities

The transition to mixed or remote work was an important topic for the majority of volunteers in the study. With the exception of a few cases in which there was an interruption in or loss of employment, this change generally led to an expression of mixed emotions. On the one hand, the crisis was at times perceived as providing a necessary break (rest) from routine and as an opportunity for more intense communication with loved ones. On the other, the subsequent combination of roles—being a professional, a partner, a parent— obviously proved to be a significant challenge for most people. This is evident from the difficulties described in the entries regarding the organization of work tasks and the records of activities on the 24-hour calendar. Various examples indicated a tendency to blur the distinction between personal and working time, problems with managing and planning work tasks, difficulties in carrying out work activities in the new conditions, and shifting the usual hours for rest and eating, which then tend to turn into working time. In addition, the peculiarities of communication in a digital environment demanded deliberate efforts to adapt and evoked ambivalent emotions in many participants.

However, the diaries also contained expressions of the emotion of gratitude in connection with the fact that participants had a job, could generate income, and were able to conduct their activities even in the new environment.

Changes in learning activities

The transition to distance learning solicited a range of reactions. It was initially interpreted in some cases as an "opportunity"—having more time, being able to prepare better for upcoming exams, more time for dissertation writing, and so forth—that generated positive emotions, even "relief." In general, however, the most common descriptions over time were primarily related to demotivation, especially for students, or to difficulties caused by constant changes connected with efforts to identify appropriate technical solutions for conducting classes.

Changes in the organization of the household

The diaries described cases of very substantial changes in the usual household routines—switching entirely to online shopping; division of living spaces for the purpose of isolating and protecting vulnerable members of the home, such as the elderly and the chronically ill; disruption of such common practices as celebrating family holidays or visiting religious temples. Much attention and time was directed to cleaning and disinfection, mainly in households with a greater number of members. However, we cannot define such changes as related to negative emotions—on the contrary, we observed exactly the opposite effect in a number of cases. Especially large accumulations of positive emotions were found in passages describing activities with children, which became more intense and of longer duration during the state of emergency. The more active involvement of fathers in care activities and in communicating with children in the family was reported as a positive change in some cases.

Another important issue was the increased use of electronic media and mobile means of communication. This was a very common motif in the diaries, and it appeared to have been a significant factor in the experience of stress.

Changes in sports and leisure activities

Restrictions concerning opportunities for sports and outdoor activities were clearly problematic, particularly for people living in large cities. Discussions of this topic in the diaries exhibited various negative emotions on the spectrum of fear, anger, and sadness. There were frequent stories of "secret walks" in which joy and pleasure comprised the main motifs.

Changes in levels of stress and disorientation

We were able to register certain changes in the levels of stress and disorientation by means of paradata in that the digital platform we used provided information concerning discrepancies between the actual date and time when information was entered and the dates and times indicated by a given respondent. We set aside

those cases in which volunteers related the events of previous days because of not making diary entries in a timely fashion or for some other reason. We instead registered cases in which the authors of specific entries appeared to not have a clear idea of what time of day it was or even what date it was. Some participants also reported that it was difficult to determine what day of the week it was.

Other examples of stress and disorientation included descriptions of fatigue, headaches, eating disturbances, reversal of sleeping/waking hours, evidence of disturbed sleep, a feeling of days flowing together, descriptions of disorientation, perceived loss of connection with reality, and so forth. Such experiences were most frequently presented as the effects of an excessive use of electronic devices and the merging of professional and intimate space.

> I turned night into day and day into night for a couple of days.
> My regime has become very crazy. I go to bed at 2–3 at night, don't look at the clock, and then it happens to be the next day...
> I work, work, work, everything hurts from sitting. It's astonishing that my head and eyes still listen to me.
> I'm losing track of time. I have the feeling that hours and days pass very quickly. I don't have any significant events to help me measure time. I'm a little depressed that I'm wasting days of my life like this... waiting. I realized—more precisely, I remembered—how invaluable human mental well-being is and how embodied it is in movement. I have the feeling that a day actually existed and made sense if I worked out that day. That's very important for me.
> I'm going crazy. It's getting harder every day. We have a lot of work to do, but it seems to be slipping away. I sat in front of the computer at 9 a.m. and it was already 6 p.m. by the time I turned around. I had days in the office, especially during the last three months, when I was doing 100 things a day and finishing them. I saw the results. So now my day passes like a week. I expect most people to have something like depression or a sense of unreality after this quarantine.

There were also descriptions of conditions that existed before the crisis—anxious thoughts, panic attacks—getting worse.

> I had severe panic attacks on the first days it became clear that there were people in Bulgaria who already had the coronavirus. I was worried about everything—that Bulgaria doesn't have the resources

to deal with a pandemic, that I have a pre-diabetic condition, which means that my immune system is probably not 100%, and there's a chance that if I catch the coronavirus, it will lead to a more severe case of the disease. I live with my boyfriend at his place. His mother lives in the other part of the apartment. Both he and I have one living parent. My mother lives alone in her apartment. I'm worried that she doesn't put much effort into taking care of herself. I'm worried about catching the coronavirus, or some other virus or flu, during the state of emergency.

New emotional states from the anxiety spectrum also emerged.

And now I'm sad at 9:30 in the morning because I was finally overtaken by those accumulated emotions. Tension, anxiety, and my heart is nearly jumping out of my chest. This must be a bit of a panic attack... maybe something like that. I feel guilty that I don't cope better with the situation. I don't even have children like other colleagues, who feel overwhelmed by all types of obligations besides work. I know it's stupid to think like that, and it doesn't help me, but those are my thoughts right now.

Analysis and Discussion

The present study has provided the opportunity to analyze the initial reactions and emotions of our volunteer participants during the first phase of the Covid-19 crisis and gain an idea of their actual experiences on an individual level. A frequency analysis of the words used in the diary entries to express emotions revealed that, as expected, fear and sadness were among the most commonly manifested semantic fields. This was largely due to the complex nature of the crisis and the intense changes it generated, which included health, economic, and social threats. Other research has found that concerns for children and loved ones were very common during the period in question (see e.g. Paunova-Markova 2020). At the same time, however, we counterintuitively found a high frequency of emotions on the joy spectrum. This may either reveal a compensatory reaction to the ongoing pandemic, or be associated with less visible and unexpected positive effects of the crisis related to

the strengthening of family/small group cohesion and the discovery of new opportunities. Also related to this issue is the relatively frequent use of words semantically linked with the emotion of interest, which surprisingly was identified as the fourth most frequent emotion. The entries reveal that the presence or absence of the emotion of interest was directly related to how quickly a given participant adapted to the crisis as well as their dominant attitude regarding the new situation.

An interesting finding is the registration of weekly fluctuations in manifestations of the emotion of fear. The heightened expression of emotions on the fear spectrum on the first days of the week (Mondays and Tuesdays) may be associated with the fact that the implementation of new measures to control the pandemic in the early stages of the crisis—such as new rules, restrictions, platforms, and procedures regarding work and education that were often experienced as a threat to resources at the individual level—took place precisely on these days of the week. Another possible explanation is that the end of the normal work week provided individuals with an opportunity to psychologically step away from what was happening and return to certain home activities typical of their "normal" weekends. The start of the new work week then meant a return to the disturbing reality of the new crisis situation.

Also noteworthy is that our analysis of the main sources of emotions indicated that what happened in the social sphere frequently constituted a source of fear, confusion, anxiety, sadness, and anger, while processes at the small group/community level most often involved heightening cohesion, the emergence of an empathic reaction toward others, and a willingness to support others.

In addition, the media, especially messages communicated through news programs, played an important role on the level of individual experience. Communication within the digital environment and the very sharp increase in the use of mobile devices were among the most significant changes described in the diary entries. They were also accompanied by a number of marked changes in how households functioned, the most significant of which were related to the reorganization of employment, education, and sports activities.

A number of individuals experienced intense stress as a result of these dynamic changes, including the alarming signals emanating from the environment. This was manifested both at the physiological level—physical pain, sleep and eating disorders, and so forth—and in respect to cognition and behavior—a decrease in performance, disorientation, and the disruption of usual practices and habits. Some diaries also described the emergence or intensification of preexisting states on the anxiety spectrum. Such effects were largely expected and logical from a psychological perspective.

We should also note, however, that there were cases in which the crisis situation was experienced as an opportunity to release from or reduce one's fears. Although such examples were much less common than examples of stress or anxiety, they indicate unanticipated effects as well as the capability of certain individuals to utilize the crisis as a tool for growth and development.

Conclusion

The research presented in this discussion sheds light on certain significant aspects of the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic that have otherwise been addressed to only a rather limited degree. Above all, it is very important to focus future scientific efforts on detailed analyses of effective coping strategies on both individual and group levels in order to be able to better manage people's responses in situations of natural or man-made disasters. Data regarding in-depth emotional reactions and their dynamics may preferably thus constitute a basis for further research and the development of new models in this area.

Our approach in the present discussion provides the opportunity to track how the spectrum of human emotions function in crisis contexts, where the accent has usually fallen on the manifestations of negative emotions. This makes it possible to take into consideration new perspectives and enrich—or even call into question—other frames and societal representations of this type of situation. The data regarding emotions and their dynamics on the individual level that are displayed in the present study differ to a notable degree in certain respects from the predominantly negative media

representations of the pandemic. They may thereby help lead to a better understanding and a more balanced picture of events and their social impact, serving as an antidote to one-dimensional representations of crisis situations.

Another important issue that arises on the level of methodology is that keeping diaries, writing, self-reporting, and analyzing emotions are all associated with various approaches in psychotherapy. For this reason, we potentially reach another level of analysis if we step beyond the question of the specific types of data our method can supply and address how activities associated with the approach we have employed can affect a given situation. For instance, insofar as writing diaries concerning emotional experiences may be regarded as both a scientific tool and a possible intervention or coping behavior, it can provide a foundation for extensive longitudinal research regarding crisis situations in the future.

In-depth studies of emotional experiences and changes in everyday life reveal a great deal about specific stressors, the effects of measures that have been implemented to control the pandemic, as well as who has coped better with stress, and how, during the crisis. Such research can provide both information and explanations concerning the emergence of effective adaptation strategies as well as dysfunctional behaviors on the individual level. Furthermore, utilizing calendars and diaries for the purpose of social science research creates a wide range of opportunities for exploring personal experiences in respect to both the concrete context in which they appear and the dynamic changes they may undergo over time. The study presented in this article has not only addressed certain interesting aspects of these topics, it has also given rise to many questions related to the impact of personal dispositions and attitudes, differences in how public health measures were implemented, the role of the various media, and so forth. Further research is needed in order to acquire a full and detailed picture of these issues.

In respect to investigating a crisis, the opportunities provided by mixed methods and qualitative approaches appear especially important as we deal with new situations and, in some cases, unexpected social changes. Individual characteristics and personal attitudes, values, and lifestyles, along with specific elements of a given social environment, obviously play an important role in the current

circumstances. Casting light on these issues may help us grasp why certain individuals and groups were found to be more vulnerable from a socio-psychological point of view, while others possessed greater resources and proved to be more resilient. On a deeper level, these approaches provide researchers with an opportunity to gain a better understanding of individuals and groups and, on that basis, develop potentially effective practices for psychological support. They can also serve to explain the various reactions and consequences we observe on the individual and social levels.

On a more general level, psychologists and social scientists must continue their efforts to investigate the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic in their research, teaching, and practice. The results of such undertakings can play an important role in shaping and strengthening both the behavioral interventions and the public strategies needed to manage the threats that emerge from such public health crises as a pandemic. The results of the qualitative research that we have presented in this article are of significant value for identifying the type of public support and motivation that is essential for effective pandemic management and successfully addressing the psychosocial consequences of such crises, including both individual and public mental health and the negative impacts on interpersonal relationships.

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Social Psychology and Symbolic Interaction: A Unified Approach to the Study of Emigrant and Immigrant Attitudes, Models of Identification, and Social Interaction among Bulgarians

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Introduction

Interest in and knowledge of symbolic interactionism is not particularly widespread in the field of social psychology, although the work of certain representatives of sociology and symbolic interactionism have appeared in the literature at various times. We believe, however, that symbolic interactionism has a significant role to play in the development of more profound and multifaceted socio-psychological knowledge regarding, among other issues, cultural diversity, the acceptance of the other, and identity at various levels. This would serve to enrich and deepen the socio-psychological research field.

The generally accepted creator of the symbolic interactionist paradigm, George Herbert Mead, has been defined in many ways, and he is indeed a philosopher and sociologist as well as a social psychologist. His now well-known views, which were initially presented in his course in social psychology at the University of Chicago in the early twentieth century, were collected and published posthumously by a group of his former students (see Mead 1934/1962). While many sociologists have argued that Mead's ideas have contributed to the further development of their discipline, he has also played a significant role in the field of psychology. Against this background, Herbert Blumer himself, a follower of Mead and one of the principal figures in the Chicago School, broadly referred to symbolic interactionism as "an empirical social science perspective of the study of human group life and human conduct" (Blumer 1969, as cited in Chamberlain-Salaun, Mills, and Usher 2013:5). Such a general definition opens the doors to extending symbolic interactionism into a number of neighboring social sciences, particularly social psychology.

Chamberlain-Salaun and colleagues outline 16 principal theses regarding symbolic interaction on the basis of Corbin and Strauss's interpretation of the work of Dewey, Mead, Blumer, and Strauss. These representatives of the Chicago School, who are primarily associated with qualitative approaches and research, are presented in respect to their contributions concerning the main themes of symbolic interactionism—action, interaction, meaning, and self.

It is also highlighted that

> meaning and the concepts of self, action and interaction are key interweaving themes that feature in the various interpretations of symbolic interactionism (Chamberlain-Salaun, Mills, and Usher 2013:3).

Efforts to compare the various ways in which the objects of study in psychology and symbolic interactionism have been addressed generally emphasize that social psychology is concerned with the emotions and attitudes manifested in differing social contexts as well as the interactions in which the objects of study acquire personal, group, or general social significance. This includes how meaning is born in and through interaction, along with the

fact that the object as such has no existence in itself and cannot be isolated from what happens to it or how it is utilized in various actions. In respect to Mead's ideas in particular, it is especially important for the individual to be able to read the symbols present in their interactions with others. It is also important to accept the attitudes of the other at the individual, collective, and social levels—that is, to accept the "generalized attitude" (Mead 1934).

Chamberlain-Salaun et al. further argue that

> Interaction becomes symbolic when individuals interpret and define objects and their own or another's actions and act on the basis of assigned meanings. Symbolic interaction is an interpretive process that directs the actions of the one doing the interpreting and conveys to the other, or to one's self, how he or she "is to act." It is a cyclical and fluid process, in which participants continually adapt or change their acts to fit the ongoing acts of one other (Chamberlain-Salaun, Mills, and Usher 2013:6; see Blumer 1969:66).

Carter and Fuller add in this regard that

> Symbolic interactionists are often less concerned with objective structure than with subjective *meaning*—how repeated, meaningful interactions among individuals come to define the makeup of "society" (Carter and Fuller 2016:2).

They then proceed to summarize the main lines of symbolic interactionism in respect to Blumer's theoretical orientation in the following terms: 1) human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that things have for them; 2) the meaning of things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with others; 3) meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by a person in dealing with the things he or she encounters. Many scholars continue to regards these three premises as presenting the core tenets of symbolic interactionist thought (Carter and Fuller 2016:4).

Symbolic Interactionism and Psychology

It is important to note that these basic orientations in symbolic interactionism very closely resemble fundamental ideas in psychology, including both cognitive and social psychology. Cognitive issues indeed comprise one of the leading interests of researchers in much of the literature regarding social psychology (Chen 2001; Zografova 2005; Hilton 2012). For example, cognitive mechanisms and related questions, including perception and/or the attribution of intentions to the other subject, are regarded as important predictors in interpersonal relationships and behavior. In addition, the entire pattern of behavior in a given situation involves a decision to either act or refrain from acting that resides upon the goals and interests of the individual, the choice of a course of action, and the flow of communication with the other(s). This involves either resolving a problem, leaving a given situation, or entering into conflict when there is a divergence of ideas regarding the violation of norms or interests. It is also important to note that each specific situation necessarily includes such personal factors and characteristics as a willingness to consent (see Graziano, Jensen-Campbell, and Hair 1996).

While emotions clearly play an important role in such a model of interaction, a large number of studies have been devoted to the cognitive components of personality structure, behavior, and interaction in modern social psychology (see e.g. Bandura 2005; Zografova 2008). One could even maintain that some of the views in the tradition following Blumer—including his own presentation of the central ideas of symbolic interactionism—are closer to so-called psychological social psychology than to sociological social psychology. Such views constitute a research approach that addresses, for example, how

> Identifying participants' membership of social worlds and subworlds is most likely to occur during concurrent data collection and analysis, through the collection of demographic data and through discussions with participants in the interview process (Chamberlain-Salaun, Mills, and Usher 2013:7).

Research in social psychology proceeds in a similar manner in that it searches for the meaning embedded in one or another phenomenon from the position of the individuals being studied. This includes the intentions, goals, and interests they attribute not only to others with whom they are in contact, but also those they simply imagine during the course of the study. In this respect, Corbin and Strauss state that

> Identifying participants' emotions and feelings during data collection and analysis can provide the researcher with cues as to meanings that participants ascribe to events and situations relating to the phenomena under study (Corbin and Strauss 2008, as quoted in Chamberlain-Salaun, Mills, and Usher 2013:7).

Social Psychology and Other Social Sciences

Robert Maclaughlin Farr (1978) takes into consideration three separate traditions in social psychology in his examination of the relationship of social psychology to other social sciences. These are

> a) the symbolic interactionist tradition within American sociology
> b) the contemporary French tradition of research on "représentations sociales" which looks back, for its inspiration, to Durkheim and
> c) experimental social psychology (Farr 1978:503).

Farr argues that Mead's symbolic interactionism was developed on the basis of Wundt's social psychology, beginning during his studies in Berlin, and that such notions as "gesture" were in fact initially introduced by Wundt (Farr 1978:505). He further argues in his comparison of the development of psychology and the social with individual behaviorism, such as it is presented in J. B. Watson and symbolic interactionism, that the latter places subjectivity at the center rather than behavior. Farr also maintains that we learn to perceive the role of the other in relation to our own behavior (Farr 1978:506).

Farr's position is that the introduction and adoption of Mead's model of symbolic interactionism in experimental psychology

makes it possible to approach human beings as primarily subjects with consciousness, not as subjects of behavior. He also seeks to reconcile experimental psychology with symbolic interactionism, which he states developed within the "American tradition," as well as with French research concerning social representation and interactionism (Farr 1978:506). Farr thus endeavors to reconcile the two social psychologies that developed in accordance with psychology and sociology respectively, and he provides clear guidelines for how to incorporate the symbolic interactionist approach to the individual into social psychology.

However, the two lines of social psychology—psychological and sociological—have not moved towards unification to any significant degree. Nevertheless, our view is that the development of knowledge is fostered when differing and complementary approaches enrich the investigation of a given phenomenon by working together, rather than being dispersed among different branches of science or separate scientific disciplines. The use of a multifaceted approach to gaining an understanding of the problems of social behavior and human relations might very well be more successful in identifying useful answers to research problems. For instance, the problem of levels and whether the collective should be included in the sociopsychological field of research has in fact long been resolved insofar as research in social psychology is widely conducted at individual, collective, and group levels as well (see Zografova 2016). However, the symbolic interactionist approach to date has neither attracted sufficient scholarly attention within the field of social psychology, nor become an element of socio-psychological research.

Hewitt and Shulman (2011) have outlined the specific character of symbolic interactionism in certain important respects by analyzing the similarities and differences that obtain between it and certain other scholarly orientations, including social constructivism and postmodernism. Their first point is related to the basic interactionist view that human beings are subjects who also construct their actions—as Hewitt and Shulman observe in this respect, "The task of social psychology is to develop a theory of action" (Hewitt and Shulman 2011:27). A second point concerns the meaning that is created, but also changed, within the context of

action and interaction. This resides upon basic cognitive processes as well as the formulation of goals insofar as "Conduct depends on the creation and maintenance of meaning" (Hewitt and Shulman 2011:27). Other main issues regarding the interactionist perspective include the central position of the Self in its relation to one's own behavior, the formation of self-esteem, and correlation with the expectations and evaluations of others. Emphasis must be placed, of course, on the role of the actual organization and manifestation of behavioral and interactive elements in a given interaction (Hewitt and Shulman 2011:27).

However, Farr argues in his comparative study of the approaches utilized by psychologists, sociologists, and interactionists that those employed by psychologists are characterized by an emphasis on the individual history of awards and reinforcements "as a way of explaining individual conduct" (Hewitt and Shulman 2011:28). He maintains that this limits human behavior to one's own learned patterns of reaction. But we must also note that psychology is not a single whole insofar as it is subdivided into a number of separate branches, each with its own distinct objects of study and differing methods and approaches. In this regard, social psychology includes all the important elements of the formation and realization of human intentions, interests, and desires within a given social context and particular interactive environment, whether that be a dyad or a group. This involves the broader environment, group and intergroup levels, as well as cross-cultural relations. That is why the symbolic interactionist approach has its own proper place in social psychology, along with a wide range of application and opportunities for further development.

Among interactionists, Sheldon Stryker appears to have pursued the most consistent approach in his search for connections between symbolic interactionism and various neighboring fields of science. He states, for example, that

> According to Mead, society is a never-ending process of routinization of solutions to repetitive problems. Both persons (humans with minds and selves) and society are created through social process; each is constitutive of the other, and neither has ontological priority. Society

> emerges out of interaction and shapes self, but self shapes interaction, playing back on society (Stryker 2008:17).

Stryker is a very widely-read and cited author—he published for decades on identity theory and was a pioneer in the field. In this respect, Stryker and Burke worked to identify the various ways in which identity theory could be fruitfully applied in social psychology, including the role it may play in providing a more clear conceptualization of the relationship between self and society (see Stryker and Burke 2000 for a more detailed discussion).

One of Stryker's major research concerns involved updating symbolic interactionist ideas in general, particularly those of Mead. The meanings to which Mead ascribed a significant role in social interaction—which Stryker claims have been demonstrated in both social and cognitive social psychology—strongly link his ideas with social psychology. My position concerning this issue is that Mead's view, with very minor modifications, can accommodate

> both social stability and change, both social production and reproduction, both the inherent possibility of the new in social life and the differing possibilities of novelty emerging under various conditions. And it allows the possibility of explaining such antinomies within a single, consistent frame (Stryker 2008:19).

Stryker outlines various connections between symbolic interactionism and socio-psychological approaches and theories within sociology. A pertinent example is provided by how people join a new group with no previous information, although they have the task of forming an organization with the others. They create meanings in the process of this involvement that they ascribe to the interaction in question. Stryker remarks that they cannot rely upon their previous experience either in forming such ideas, in attributing a meaning to the situation, or in defining their roles together with the other members of the group. As a result,

> they use cues in early interaction and cultural cues, attaching meanings to dress, appearance, speech patterns, etc., to define the situation so as to organize behavior; and they behave toward others in ways that reflect the definitions (Stryker 2008:22).

Stryker also delineates "bridges" to neighboring scientific fields and logically connects symbolic interactionism with cognitive social psychology. There is indeed a logical transition to Tajfel's work, including the connections between his ideas regarding the theory of social identity, role identity, and behavior (see Tajfel 1981, 1982). Membership in various social groups and social categories provides one of the most important individual identities, and the social roles with which people identify, through which they realize themselves, are closely related to the given social groups to which they belong. One of the most significant texts for clarifying the basic concepts introduced by Mead and developed by his followers is Blumer's short 1966 article "Sociological Implications of the Thought of George Herbert Mead" (Blumer 1966). Although Blumer's aim is to outline the meaning of Meadian concepts in respect to their application in sociology, his analysis is in fact particularly useful from the viewpoint of social psychology. He states, for example, that the central themes which Mead developed are the self, the act, social interaction, and joint action (Blumer 1966), adding that Mead did not intend for his idea of the self to be viewed as a type of psychological structure. He thus follows Mead in arguing that the basic feature of the self resides in the fact that people are self-reflecting subjects who actively interact with themselves and with others (Blumer 1966:535–536).

Another central construct is symbolic interaction itself, which Blumer defines in Mead's terms as an independent process that supports a position distinct from the ideas that psychologists and sociologists employ to interpret social interaction. He places a particularly strong emphasis upon reciprocity in the perception of and adaptation to all other participants. These aspects of symbolic interaction provide an opportunity to manifest the rich palette of the various forms of interaction. Blumer observes in this respect that

> In making the process of interpretation and definition of one another's acts central in human interaction, symbolic interaction is able to cover the full range of the generic forms of human association (Blumer 1966:539).

But in order to be able to grasp Mead's essential ideas, we need to return to the material presented in his major work, which Charles Morris edited and published in 1934. This will also directly assist us in outlining the importance for social psychology of the symbolic interactionist approach. For instance, the first part of Mead's work is devoted to social psychology and behaviorism. Mead himself initially regarded social psychology, which had emerged as individualistic psychology, as a part of general psychology (Mead 1934). Under Wundt's influence, he later began exploring the conceptualization of gestures in social terminology, outlining the place of significant linguistic gestures in human behavior and communication (Mead 1934, Introduction). Mead's ideas have had a very significant impact upon the development of social psychology in this respect. It is also particularly important that Morris oriented discussion towards Mead's social psychology. We do not believe that this point has been adequately addressed and developed by social psychologists themselves, or at least not in a sufficiently explicit form.

> Social psychology studies the activity or behavior of the individual as it lies within the social process; the behavior of an individual can be understood only in terms of the behavior of the whole social group of which he is a member, since his individual acts are involved in larger, social acts which go beyond himself and which implicate the other members of that group.
> We are not, in social psychology, building up the behavior of the social group in terms of the behavior of the separate individuals composing it; rather, we are starting out with a given social whole of complex group activity, into which we analyze (as elements) the behavior of each of the separate individuals composing it (Mead 1962:7–8).

This conceptual analysis of the essence of the individual-society/ society-individual interrelationship is highly relevant to modern social psychology. Mead not only foresaw the main line of development of modern social psychology, his views provide a basis for understanding the necessity of applying the symbolic interactionist approach in socio-psychological research and analysis.

We will illustrate this below through an examination of selected interviews on the topic of migration-immigration.

Material and Methods

The first set of interviews, which were concerned with attitudes towards emigration, were conducted within the framework of the project *Psychological Determinants of Attitudes towards Emigration and Life-Planning among Young People within the Context of Demographic Challenges in Bulgaria,* which was funded by the National Research Institute, Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science. We conducted calendar interviews with 45 young men and women (18–35 years of age) from places of residence of various sizes in the country. A research team from the Department of Psychology, Institute for Population and Human Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, sought to clarify the role of psychological factors in determining attitudes towards emigration and life-planning among young people today. Attitudes towards emigration have been explored as elements of an individual's life-planning, which presupposes the use of methods that facilitate in-depth analysis. We should note that the use of calendar interviews makes possible highly structured in-depth analysis (see Nacheva and Nedeva-Atanasova 2021 for a detailed discussion).

The interviews were primarily conducted online, but also included face-to-face meetings when possible. Respondents were guaranteed anonymity, and the interviews were recorded with their consent. The interviewees themselves filled in a calendar grid particularly prepared for the purpose in which important events, emotions, and beliefs were plotted retrospectively in reference to relevant time periods. The nature of the attitudes, values, and life plans that we investigated were clearly relevant to the interviewees' current period as well.

The substantive justification of the role of the symbolic interactionist research approach in the social psychological analysis of these interviews may be viewed as a concretization of Blumer's approach. In this regard, Cousineau points out that Blumer's approach is not only highly significant, but also evolves and expands over time, as is evident in his approach to storytelling. Stories fill interaction with content, connect temporally different moments, create subjective meaning, possess a symbolic character, and include narrative connections (see Cousineau 2020). Such

narrative linkages, which are revealed through the stories in which interviewees share important moments in their life stories, are particularly interesting in the analyses presented below.

The subjective meanings that interviewees associate with the stories they narrate play a particularly important role in the present discussion. The researcher extracts these meanings by placing them within the general context of the conversation as a whole, in which both social circumstances and personal experiences are present. Cousineau adds a number of components to the "post-Blumerian" approach to storytelling that he develops, observing that

> stories exist in some sort of social context; stories are told or written for some type of audience; social processes produce stories; there are interactional techniques of showing story preferences; stories are symbolic structures; stories follow temporal sequences; and stories include narrative linkages (Cousineau 2020:735).

Not all of these elements are applicable to or necessary for the interview analyses that we present. The important point is that a differentially similar approach can be employed. In the present case, this involves respondents' narratives that pertain to different time frames or separate time periods, with the element of narrative connection being explicit in their storytelling. Cousineau remarks in this respect that

> Narrative linkages are an important component of a Blumerian approach because they illuminate a process central to symbolic interactionism: meaning making. The meanings that a story offers are informed by narrative linkages. Some narrative linkages are apparent in stories themselves when tellers include them in their stories (Cousineau 2020:735).

In attitudes regarding emigration, the history of a close relationship between two people is associated with possible future developments in a different context in a foreign country, possibly with one's friends or relatives who have already settled there. Expectations of enjoying better living conditions and becoming familiar with new cultures and societies also contain meanings that are embedded in the anticipated future way of life.

A second series of interviews were conducted within a project that addressed the topic of "Policies Aimed at Bulgarians Abroad," which was financed by the Bulgarian Council of Ministers (2019–2020). These interviews were conducted in Canada, the United States, a number of European countries, and elsewhere. The present article presents analyzes of only some of the 15 interviews with Bulgarians who have emigrated to Spain, with contacts being established through Bulgarian immigrant organizations that had offices in Madrid. These comprise interviews with emigrants who have become established in another country, and they express the values, beliefs, and meanings that were formed on the basis of the symbols and significant gestures that had been accepted and through various interactions with others.

Both types of interviews were semi-structured. They were also free-form and open to what interviewees might wish to add. Interviewees were informed about the nature of the research being conducted prior to the interviews, which were recorded after respondents gave their consent.

Analysis of Two Types of Interviews from the Perspectives of Social Psychology and Symbolic Interaction

Excerpts from interviews with Bulgarians about their attitudes regarding emigration

P.R. is an 18-year-old man who has lived in the city of Pleven for his entire life. He thinks about specializing abroad at some stage of his education, but does not imagine leaving his relatives behind for long periods of time and living far away from them.

> My parents will support me in what I've decided to do. And I talk about it with my friends, especially those who will go abroad. They support their own views. And with my coach—he supports me— and I've mainly talked about it with him previously. I'll study in Bulgaria. It's important for both me and [my parents] to be close to each other. My father is from southern Bulgaria and even now we're separated, aren't we?

> Even in Bulgaria we feel how far away we are from each other, how much closer we can be, emotionally attached, be closer to each other as much as possible.

He added that

> and for Bulgarians living abroad, maybe at the beginning life looks much better for them abroad. But I think that the typical Bulgarian connection with the land, with their homeland, then appears. They become nostalgic and begin to miss what they had here.

The symbols of identification and attachment to a given country, in this case Bulgaria, are marked here by the words "land, homeland, nostalgia"—this respondent thus imputed emotions, identity, and affection to people who have already gone abroad and are emigrants. It is important to note, however, that attributing various characteristics or intentions to others is a significant cognitive mechanism that influences an individual's own behavior.

The great importance that respondents ascribe in most of the interviews to connection and interaction with loved ones, friends, and acquaintances is clearly visible. For example, social interactions comprise an important factor influencing the desire or decision to leave the country and stay away for a longer period of time. I.K., a 25-year-old man from the town of Gotse Delchev, clearly indicates that he does not fully accept cultural differences and diversity, even though he has lived abroad. His statement plainly displays social distances and stereotypes regarding different nations and communities. When he was asked whether he would stay in another country for a longer period of time, he remarked that

> If it was for just a few months and then coming back, I'd think about it. But I'll tell you again, certainly not permanently. For a few months... certainly in a European country. To be closer, so to speak. Today there are tickets for €15—you go, you come back. It's not something that obliges you to be gone for months at a time. Europe is certainly closer to us than Asia or America, where I've been. As a way of thinking, as a culture, what people in general are like. What they're like in America, what they're like in Europe. In my opinion, there's a difference that can't be ignored, that will always be there. The way of thinking, the

> people themselves, their interests, the way of life. It might sound stupid, but honestly, when I was in America, people seemed super fake. A lot, in every way.

The interviewees related the development and events of their life situations, and this led them back in time, through the present, and into the future as they imagine it. The use of calendar interviews made it possible for them to present their thoughts, associations, memories, and the formation of attitudes towards behavior, activities, and changing life goals in the present and the future. This was particularly the case when certain specific guidelines were followed in the interviews such that they focused on recreating past events, social environments, and contacts. An integrated picture that included the individual elements of the respondent's biography was thus created, and this can help illuminate the sequence of steps taken from initial situations and experiences to eventual decisions.

For instance, a 36-year-old woman from Plovdiv began forming ideas about life in a foreign country from first studying German at school and then listening to the stories of an acquaintance. Later, this led to her to look for even temporary work in Germany.

> I had a general idea about the German way of life, of Germans themselves as people, because we talked a lot in class with our teacher about Germany. And then a lot of my classmates had the idea of going to live in Germany, and some of them succeeded. [...] When I went to Hamburg, I in fact quickly felt as if I had been born there. It was a very strange feeling. In principle, it wasn't to stay there permanently, I had to return and complete my bachelor's degree. That was a responsibility I couldn't ignore.

This respondent also expressed a number of stereotypes and attitudes, formed on the basis of social representations easily spread by the media, friends, or word of mouth, which served to provide a level of protection against the possibility of coming to prefer a foreign country over one's own. It was obvious that the idea that one could "abandon" or reject one's homeland ran the risk of being unacceptable to others, regardless of the many years during which

Bulgarians have acquired a considerable amount of experience as emigrants. The interviewee stated in this regard that

> Now for those who totally decide to go, there are also those who have been abroad for 20 years and don't intend to return. That's also a decision. They choose to be in the States, or Canada, or whatever other country. Period. They obviously hate their own country. I think that's too extreme. There's really nothing wrong with going somewhere, living there. That's nice. That's a good experience, not a bad thing.

As the interview developed, however, the respondent "removed" the protection for her identity and spoke about the importance of success abroad, thereby adopting other common notions related to life outside Bulgaria.

> There are already generations of younger people who think that the successful person is the person who's successful abroad. Success in Bulgaria is accepted, but top success is success abroad. Some people think like that. It's probably serious success because of the difficulties which exist in that other environment. It's one thing to work in Bulgaria, and another to work in Germany. So that's the benefit of developing there, working, more people getting to know you, creating an international environment for yourself. That's a benefit, yes. Definitely.

Finally, this respondent reconciled the two approaches—expressing the two identities of Bulgarian and European—by joining Bulgaria to European standards and the level of European countries through the efforts of young people who have acquired experience of the outside world.

> Bulgaria is a wonderful country, but the point is that it's still a question of governance. If things are well managed, if people are responsible, things might look a little like Germany, because Germany is the example for me. Let it happen, let them go and come back and see what they can improve here.

Stereotypes, social representations, and one's own representations and attitudes formed through personal experience thus exert a strong influence upon how one thinks and the decisions one makes. This is also the case, however, with certain newer modern

myths about the way of life in rich western countries, which often remain in many people's minds, as if they were frozen and subject to strict rules. For instance, a 34-year-old lawyer from the city of Sliven claimed that

> You can't change your life through conventional thinking. It's very organized in the West. You know that if you do one, two, three, you'll get some concrete result. That's not the case in Bulgaria. You have to think differently to survive.

In socio-psychological terms, the intergroup relations and social interactions in which a person participates create notions of others as they have been socialized in respect to one's own personal development. Such stories, as related during an interview, also clearly indicate one's attitude toward and degree of identity with one's social group or community. Henri Tajfel's social identity theory (see Tajfel 1981) maintains that belonging to a particular social group is associated with the support and acceptance provided by its members, as well as with the benefits such belonging may provide. Taken together, these together provide a foundation for why the individual should remain in the given group. Modern people, however, particularly young people, form a variety of collective identities that are not opposed to each other.

This is an important predictor of life plans insofar as young people view themselves at certain times within a given social context and as bound to a particular social environment, while they later picture themselves within other contexts and other environments. This was clearly evident in the calendar interviews we conducted.

Excerpts from interviews with Bulgarian emigrants: Stories from the "other side"

Interest in and acceptance of foreign culture began early in life for a young man who went to Spain and became engaged in design for a fashion chain. This involved establishing multicultural attitudes and expectations—even if only somewhat vague and stereotypical— regarding the social context in which life, individual

realization, and the future take place in personal terms. He remarked that

> [T]he environment and being able to... integrate are very important, aren't they? In the sense of being open. Because there are, for example, Bulgarians who've been on one and the same level for many years. They somehow came with the idea of just working, making money, but not integrating. Right? But you somehow have to integrate because this is where your life is taking place. You can't just save money, deprive yourself of things, send that money to Bulgaria, and not have people from other cultures, other nations.

Although acculturation processes are essential for living in another community and culture, the signs, symbols, and memories from a period many years in the past—from one's childhood or youth— remain in the mind of the emigrant. They may stand out as something beautiful, meaningful, and valuable for the individual because of the time in one's life when they were formed, the completely different way of life they represent, and their rootedness in a distant location. But they nevertheless remain forever in the past. Comparing the concrete reality of one's own country with the standard of living, way of life, and the ties of culture and friendship in one's new homeland strikes a contrast that can elicit highly negative feelings regarding one's past home.

> And because I travelled a lot—I had a car the first year I was there, and I travelled and drove [around the country]. And when you pass through villages, you just cry because you see the whole picture and the people as they are. [...] And I remembered. [...] I loved to go on summer vacations in the countryside at my grandparents' place, and there were always children and games, the streets were bright. It's all so depressing, isn't it?

Although integration in a foreign environment involves the local population's acceptance of the other, such acceptance involves the qualities of the other as they have been demonstrated, in both professional and interpersonal terms, through contacts with the local social environment and community. N.S., a Bulgarian man who has attained a very high level of success, with a corresponding

standard of living and personal satisfaction, expressed his desire to continue with his integration and his own and his family's acculturation.

> It's much easier in Bulgaria than here. You're a foreigner here and you'll always remain a foreigner, no matter where you're from. But they've simply accepted you to a certain degree, nobody bothers you, and it just doesn't matter.
> *Interviewer:* Are you fully integrated?
> *N.S.:* Absolutely. But that doesn't mean you forget where you came from, what you did, and so on.

Some of the factors and reasons that led to his decision to emigrate from Bulgaria to Spain became clear as the interview progressed, however. This respondent had encountered a number of barriers that prevented him from realizing his ideas when he tried to develop his business in Bulgaria. He related some of the problems he faced before emigrating, remarking

> And that in fact crushed me. Your intellect doesn't matter. If you don't have so-called connections, you don't have a job. I was in advertising, an advertising agency. A lot of work, web pages, and so on. But at one point it turns out that you go to the bank to ask for money to buy a new machine, and... problems. They don't give it to you, they just don't give it to you. Other people somehow find a lot of money, buy new printers, and get the job done.

This story clearly revealed dissatisfaction with the fact that hidden factors or perceived corrupt practices can hinder any innovation and personal development. But it also displayed balanced communication and interaction with representatives of a foreign culture which has already become a second culture that, in a certain sense, is equal to his first. The social and symbolic interaction developed during his years of residence in Spain has led to a smooth and flexible representation in various social roles, the perception of others in terms of their own values, and a distinctive community culture. Although some specific features of this symbolic interaction were not discussed directly, they were nevertheless implicitly and indirectly present during the interview in the way that the per-

ceived models of relationships and the degrees of mutual trust and social support were described.

A.P., a 44-year-old Bulgarian woman living in Madrid, described how dissatisfaction with norms, morals, and what she refers to as "the mentality" has kept her from returning to her homeland. She settled in Spain on the borderline of legality, but has now attained a good status with a many-faceted sense of fulfillment, along with the conviction that this is the best way in which to develop her own life and that of her family. She compares social relations with relationships on a personal level, taking the small social cell of the family as a model for society at large. She stated that

> I think that since we're human, it's normal for you, if you already have a job, to think about your family, to want to get your brother a job, to want to take care of your sister and take care of your child. [...] You can still think about your loved ones if you're a conscientious person and want to do your job well. But if someone isn't up to the job, you won't ask them to do it.... And you'll try to find someone close who really can do the job. [...] We're people, human things are inside us, we always love our family and will always look after those closest to us. Right? That's human. But you have to be aware that it isn't just you—you're part of a whole.

This respondent's acculturation was relatively easy and she feels fully integrated into Spanish society. She also states that she wishes to maintain her connection with Bulgaria. However, the positive symbols that stand out in her descriptions of social relations in Bulgaria are related to nature, while negative images are associated with perceived corruption in society, people's mentality, and personal relationships.

Discussion

The two groups of selected interviews that we have examined cast an important light upon the various underlying values and symbolic meanings that have motivated individual Bulgarians to emigrate, particularly in recent years. One characteristic that is noteworthy among both groups is that even those individuals who

in some sense have been critical of Bulgarian society—and point to arguably justifiable reasons for their views in this regard—have often based their actions not on informed choices, but rather on emotions or even prejudices concerning both concrete situations and the general state of affairs. We could thus say that they have often undertaken a course of action not on the basis of what they know, but rather on the basis of what they do not know insofar as they have been motivated by hopes and dreams concerning a better future, and possibly a sense of disappointment with their actual lives, that have an essentially personal or subjective connection with social reality.

We should also note that the views regarding Bulgaria of those who have successfully integrated into other societies and cultures may well be colored by their new experiences, memories, and way of life in such a manner that they no longer view their previous homeland in the same way as those living there who have not emigrated. They would then have become outsiders—even in respect to their memories of what life was like—concerning what used to be their home. There are times when those who have left their home and did not return come to forget what was positive there—the value and meaning it once held for them—long before they forget what was negative. In addition, the negative may acquire an added weight over and above the weight it held for them previously.

Leaving one's country on the basis of somewhat ungrounded hopes and dreams may doubtless be viewed as a laudable sign of courage on the part of émigrés in their search for a better life in material and/or psychological terms. Nonetheless, the choice of a path forward in life on the basis of hope without the support of knowledge or cross-cultural preparation calls into question whether there can be any foundation for such decisions other than what may be regarded as a willingness to take risks of great magnitude—knowingly or unknowingly.

We noted above that the development of knowledge is fostered when differing approaches to a given phenomenon serve as complementary approaches that together enrich our ideas. This may apply to behavior as well in the sense that integration into more than one culture, coupled with an understanding of the values that each embodies, can nurture both social and intellectual abilities

whereby one is able to live in both fluently, as it were, as they move from one to the other. Leaving one's home community does not then constitute simply leaving one's home behind or rejecting it in favor of something new. It rather presents an opportunity to enrich one's experiences in a new country on the basis of what one cherishes from having lived previously in another society and thereby developing the ability to employ the corresponding interaction skills. This provides an individual with a unique perspective concerning their new home that may lead to valuable insights into the nature and quality of life in their new home that many of those already living there may not consciously possess.

With the above in mind, the symbolic interactionist approach may be particularly useful for gaining a deeper and multifaceted socio-psychological knowledge in respect to cultural diversity, different levels of identity, and acceptance of the other. Such an approach may thereby serve to cast a unique light on the broad range of factors that come into play in the formation of the symbolic meanings that underlie the multiple layers of identity that drive decision-making. These may include the various images of different nations and communities that a person may encounter in daily life by means of social media, forms of popular entertainment, and the anecdotal travel accounts of one's acquaintances. Regardless of whether such ideas are associated with representations shared within a given community about other communities, or instead reflect one's own representations and attitudes that have been formed through (limited) personal experience, they can exert a strong influence upon how a person thinks, feels, and makes judgments in respect to which actions are and are not deemed appropriate or desirable.

This is also the case regarding certain newer myths and stereotypical views concerning the ways of life in more affluent countries, including various European Union member states as well as those farther afield. Ascribing particular characteristics or intentions to the other not only comprises an important factor in the process of shaping one's own perceptions, thoughts, and behavior concerning the other and the community in which they reside, it also plays an important role in how we regard ourselves and our own community, on both personal and professional levels. How we view the other

is a correlate of how we view ourselves, and conversely, irrespective of whether we are seeing clearly or instead confused by bias, ideology, or emotion. And vision in this sense may or may not prepare us for successful adaptation to and participation in any given group or community, whether the latter is already familiar to us or instead unknown.

Concluding Remarks

As has been noted, the social interactions in which a person has participated create images and conceptions of others in respect to how they have been socialized in the terms of one's own development. The stories of the other that thereby emerge also serve to indicate one's attitude towards and degree of identity with their own social group or community when judgments are made concerning the relative merits and value of different societies. Comparing the concrete reality of one's own country—perhaps as it somewhat selectively exists in their memory—with the somewhat imagined standard of living, way of life, and the ties of culture and friendship in their new homeland, may well strike a contrast that can either elicit highly negative feelings regarding their past home, or promote a positive orientation towards their new one. If they have already become accustomed to a new homeland, a symbolic interactionist approach to research helps illuminate the factors and processes at work when an interviewee relates their story, which leads them from the past and into the future as they have pictured it to themselves. Against this background, it appears desirable to provide young people in Bulgaria with accurate notions of European civic behavior and awareness as well as how the latter may differ from that with which they are familiar. It is obvious that whatever empirical experiences they may have acquired abroad for varying periods of time, coupled with the social representations of other countries that are widespread in Bulgaria, are likely not sufficient for them to form either a clear cognitive schema, or a realistic emotional attitude towards the contemporary Western European world. Young people considering the possibility of emigration not infrequently accept stereotypes and various spontaneously con-

structed ideas that often diverge markedly from the norms, social order, and opportunities for personal realization that actually exist in a given European country. For example, they may associate the sense of order that one might encounter in a Western country with boredom and reduced opportunities for self-fulfillment. As a result, even if they remain in their home country, subjective attitudes are transferred into social realities, and opportunities for well-being and self-realization are taken as phenomena that must be approached not in accordance with a clear strategy, but rather by reliance upon good luck. It would thus not be possible for the culture and psychology that are prerequisites for the consistent formation of the abilities, competencies, and socio-organizational habits needed for professional and personal development to emerge on either group or individual levels.

Nonetheless, interviews with Bulgarians who have already emigrated highlight the relative ease with which many were integrated into their new society. This indirectly reveals the extent to which developed communities can be characterized by tolerance, an acceptance of others, and a willingness to provide newcomers with the opportunity for professional realization, a good status in society, and personal well-being.

Finally, in respect to theory and methodology, we maintain that symbolic interactionism is generically closely related to sociopsychological research. This relation demands substantial further development so that the ideas and overall approach of symbolic interactionism can be more fully incorporated into social psychology, thereby enrichening and broadening the research field. The resulting expanded use of qualitative methods and in-depth interviews will further open psychology to the reality of human interaction.

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The Experience of Sporting Shooting: On the Quality of Dog Work

Sam Hillyard

> "Do hunters themselves speak of having a relationship with an individual animal during this process? Maybe they do not, and the anthropologist can move on to other questions. If they do, then we should pay attention to the nature, development, and experience of this relationship—how it is for the hunter and the hunted to encounter one another... [and] who is doing the defining?" (Marvin 2012:348, 347)

> "Our guns were designed for rights-and-lefts and though we often fail to achieve them, it's the height of shooting pleasure when we do. My last two shots of the past season were at a pair of greylags, both dead in the air. After that, I put the gun in its slip knowing that I could not have finished on a higher note" (Young 2023: unpaginated)

Introduction

The chapter seeks to contribute to a greater understanding of the insider experience of game shooting. The social aspects of participation in game shooting are neglected by the available, modest literature. In order to unlock these experiences, the chapter draws upon concepts from the symbolic interactionist canon. Examples of the shooting days are then discussed to provide concrete examples of the social processes game shooting entails. These examples

are drawn from the sporting shooting press. Pivotal to the entire discussion—its frame, as it were—is the negative perceptions that enshroud game shooting. To participate in shooting is to encounter and negotiate these perceptions—its stigma. The chapter is therefore addressing shooting stigma and transgressing what some feel to be a morally sadistic activity. The interactionist literature on sadism, from the BDSM community and the work of Newmahr, is therefore helpful here.

The Practice of Game Shooting

Game shooting is a minority activity or sport (I shall use the term sport hereon). Yet the shooting of quarry species for sporting and leisure purposes is a global and varied activity. Species including moose, elk, deer, duck, geese, pheasant, partridge, and grouse in the American and European contexts alone.[1] Given such diversity, this paper narrows its focus to game shooting as it is practiced in the United Kingdom, with reference for the purpose of analytical insight and contrast to specifically Welsh, Finnish, and American cases.

The legal ownership of firearms is licensed in England and Wales,[2] as it is in many other countries (cf. the United States and Finland). 561,413 individuals hold shotgun certificates in England and Wales (Home Office 2017), which are processed by the Police for a set fee. The system is managed by Constabularies at the regional level following national guidelines. Shotgun certificates (SC) require no specific/named location where the owner plans to shoot, whereas firearm certificates (FC) do. Fees for five-year certificates in County Durham, as an example, are £79.50 for a SC (£49

1. It is important to note that shotguns and firearms are also integral to the obligations of habitat management and protection, such as in woodland maintenance, agriculture, and control of potentially damaging numbers of moose, rabbits, hares, and deer. Gamekeeping roles require possession of both firearm and shotgun certificates. Shooting therefore constitutes both a leisure and a work activity, with the focus here being the former.

2. Scotland has a separate licensing system.

for renewal) and £88 for a FC (£62 for renewal), with the fee for coterminous certificates being £90 (£65 for renewal) (DC 2020a). While sporting shooting is more expensive to arrange and organize than a trip to the local swimming pool, it is relatively easy under the contemporary system to obtain a certificate and participate in shooting (for an initial fee and cost-per-day) in England and Wales.[3]

Sporting shooting, or game shooting, thus spans a range of social practices and pockets (in terms of the wealth of its participants).

Academic Literature's Engagement with Sporting Shooting: The Construction of the Debate and its Omissions

Submissions to the Natural Resources Wales' (NRW) review of shooting revealed three axes: economic, policy, and ecological.

This indicates the preoccupations and omissions in the existing academic literature.

Economic

The obvious card to play, it assesses what shooting brings to the economy. Pro-shooting organizations hold this to be £2 billion to the British economy per annum (PACEC 2006), contested by some (Cormack and Rotherham 2014). It does show participation in game shooting is regular and combined with its high costs than other sports,[4] it is by consequence an élite activity (Hillyard 2016). Another theme of the Welsh review was the biodiversity gained by land managed for shooting. Furthermore, could NRW undertake

3. The Police would need to find, and prove, that you are unsuitable for firearm ownership (both shotguns and firearms) to reject an application. The criteria may include intemperate habits, past conduct displaying irresponsibility, such as speeding tickets, and/or a previous criminal record, including domestic abuse. Medical approval/suitability is now also sought.

4. Annual membership in a four-star hotel gym is £660 (https://www.radissonblu.com/en/ hotel-durham/spa-and-fitness). One day's shooting is £330 for a 50+ bag per gun for a party of six (Gunsonpegs 2019). Lunch is not included.

land management, such as deer number control, independently. The economic card in the debate is therefore a trump one, and mobilizes other cards in the pack around it.

Policy

Policy can be understood as one such card. The policy field is highly mobile (cf. reviews of the GL[5] and NRW moves to licence shoots). Questions remain regarding the consistency of the delivery of national policy at regional level—the consequences of poor delivery and interpretation being a source of alarm to public and certificate holders alike (Hillyard 2017).[6] The policy debate has therefore tended to look outside the activity, such as licensing logistics and whether species are on or off the GL, and not individual conduct. Rural policing priorities look to farm theft and wildlife crime:

> As a rural county issues reported regularly by the community are in relation to poaching of deer and other animals, offences against badgers and the disturbance of wildlife.
> All wildlife crime can be difficult to prevent and investigate as it quite often takes place out of sight of the public view but when intelligence and information is received these offences can be investigated (DC 2020b).

It seems unlikely that the generation of a "code of conduct" will be prioritized in an era of austerity.

5. It is worth noting that this was prompted only by a legal challenge from an oppositional group (Wild Justice, led by Chris Packham), not a government initiative.

6. Game shooting involves guns, but the literature has not always drawn a sufficiently clear distinction between legally and illegally-held firearms. This is of paramount importance given that the vast majority of incidents are committed using illegally held weapons (see Squires 2000). For example, hand guns are illegal in the United Kingdom, but as one shooting lobby commentator mentioned, it is possible in six hours to get hold of an illegally-held weapon.

Ecology

The third axis in the literature around game shooting has been alluded to already—ecological. It featured heavily in the evidence submitted to the NRW review. Furthermore, the highly prominent pro-shooting organization, the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT), has a portfolio of evidence-based, peer-reviewed papers demonstrating the ecological benefits of land managed for shooting purposes (GCWT annual reports). This body of work was acknowledged in the NRW review conclusion (NRW 2018).[7]

Again, it is what takes place *around* the activity—the benefits of land managed for shooting for other species—rather than the activity itself that becomes key. The ecological aspects of sporting shooting overlap with both economic and policy axes, such as by showing the effective value-for-money where land was managed for shooting (free from public subsidy) and by challenging alternative sources of delivery (of biodiversity, e.g.) were it withdrawn.

This happy and unintended alignment of ecological with economic axes would seem to comprise a trump capable of outplaying the economic trump. However, the ecological benefits of shooting evoke Britain's culturally-prized Green and Pleasant Land, which is absent from economic and policy-facing perspectives. Swan (2019), who is a very well-respected adviser for the Game Conservancy Trust and runs his own small shoot, accordingly remarks that it echoes the self-same paradoxical claim made by shooters such as himself—game shooters claim on the one hand to be conservationists while at the same time enjoying killing (loving shooting). The conservational benefits of shooting are the metaphorical joker in the pack, exposing a new tension—the social and political social acceptability of sporting shooting in civil society. By demonstration, the NRW review found in support of shooting continuing on Welsh government-owned land (NRW 2018), but this was immediately

7. Whilst some of the GCWT findings are contested, it among the pro-shooting lobby as a whole is the most proactive research organization, framing new questions (finding alternatives to shooting to control deer numbers) over reactive lobbying (protesting letters to the editor and complaints to Ofcom/the regulator).

vetoed by the Welsh Government. The ban commenced in March 2019. The joker will therefore need to be taken seriously.

Non-Academic Views of Sporting Shooting Practice: Critiques

Guidelines within the shooting community limit their discussion to generic conviviality (Hillyard 2016).[8] Gundog training handbooks reference "style" in the shooting field vis-à-vis the enjoyment of the day (Cox 2014). This references the quality of the gundog work (i.e. the physical retrieving of shot game). If it is both effective and stylish (swift, cleanly picked-up, with a high delivery to-hand), this can be a barometer for the enjoyment of the day.[9] Non-academic critiques of shooting focus upon shooting *practice* (Bennett 2008), which is ironically absent from the academic literature (i.e. a person's ethical decision to participate).

Oppositional and animal welfare groups, such as League Against Cruel Sports (LACS) and Animal Aid, mobilize online and via social media more so than the shooting lobby in the United Kingdom.[10] Their critique is less of the act[11] than upon its excesses—"This is not one for the pot; it is using living animals for target practice" (LACS

8. This code, to which all main shooting organizations subscribe (BASC n/d), prioritizes practical and logistical concerns, such as game handling and gundog training, over social practices and values.

9. Cox is here using another's metaphor but it is contested as to whether shooting and working your own gundog are compatible for a good day's sport.

10. Twitter follower numbers provide apt examples: Animal Aid 84.2K; Leagues Against Cruel Sports 61.8K; Shooting Times 27.8K; The Field 16.6K. It is notoriously difficult, however, to accurately scrape demographic detail from Twitter. For all of the protestations that those against shooting are non-rural, their impact is nevertheless real in its consequences (Hillyard 2019).

11. It is worth noting, but beyond the present remit, that these stances towards shooting do not involve compromise, as is the case with People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) concerning veganism. For example, PETA do not support enhanced farm animal welfare, only a ban on the consumption of meat. Shooting continues to be viewed as unacceptable in instances where controlling species numbers by means of shooting protects the public and/or livelihoods, such as around airfields and in forestry.

2016:5) and "down as many birds as possible—out of vanity, and in order to satisfy themselves that their enormous financial outlay was worth it" (AA 2014:20). This now moves to include personal pleasure—the "rush of blood leads shooters to aim at birds out of range" (AA 2014:20). The NRW review submissions also perceived shooting as for fun and entertainment; [as] sadistic and not about land management; as instilling a lack of compassion; as enjoyment for perverts; and as facilitating perversion.[12] Regarding a further question raised by NRW,[13] those in opposition held that shooting is "a very dark and seedy world," and that "people who kill for fun" transfer such activity into other cruel practices. They also referred to "the thrill of chasing and killing foxes" and "sick blood lust,"[14] and spoke of hunting as "not about control but about sadism" (Q2, submission anonymized). The sadistic pleasure of participating has now been mobilized by shooting's opponents.[15] This analogy between shooting and sadism is a powerful one and merits evaluation, first via social science analyses of fieldsports[16] in the round,

12. For balance, those in support cited the difference between hunting and management; stressed issues of competence and being accountable; pointed to best practice in humane dispatch; distinguished between invasive and native species; and specified the necessity of control, not sport. Some also remarked that guns are a matter of personal conscience. A love of shooting, such as that expressed by Swan (2019), is absent.

13. "Q2. Do you agree that NRW should continue to consider applications for permission to carry out control of wild species using firearms on the land we manage?"

14. Not all submissions to the NRW review are in the public domain. Those that are, along with other material on the web and campaign material employing the same language, are used here in demonstration.

15. It is intriguing that the NRW review included wellbeing within its remit, more as a recognition of the reach of NRW's portfolio to address leisure than as a new way to explore game shooting. Perhaps reflecting this shift, BASC (2016) explored wellbeing in a survey of about 1,500 shooters, approximately 85% of which were BASC members. Unsurprisingly, participation in shooting was found to be a clear prompt for outdoors activity.

16. The focus here is upon the legal use of legally held firearms. It does not involve an analysis of the illegal use of legally-held firearms or illegally held and used firearms. For an analysis of illegal gun use, see Squires (2008), Merry (2018), and the very useful Hales (2006).

and, second, via the habitus of two former editors of *The Field and Shooting Times*—the most prominent shooting titles. These reveal how those who love shooting construct their affection.

Towards an understanding of the social construction of shooting pleasure

The generic literature on countrysports has exposed the totalizing character of these activities. Cox et al. (1994) used Goffman to show that hunting has a totalizing character—a master status for participants that permeated their wider identities. Geographer Milbourne (2002) also identified a strong sense of community amongst hunt members. The term hunting in the United Kingdom only refers to hunting foxes or deer, but includes all forms of shooting in the United States and Finland.[17] Prior to the UK ban in 2006, anthropologists Marvin (2005) and Acton (2014) stressed its *physicality*. That is, of a day spent in the saddle.

When the quarry is edible,[18] the totalizing character label is that of hunter-gatherer. Littlefield and Ozanne's (2011) United States study, which drew on ethnography, identified a participant typology, as did Guy (1995) amongst a US urban trap (clay) shooting club. The hunter-gatherer type is the most embedded in hunting culture. Here, the number of kills (the "bag" in UK terminology) became inconsequential "as long as you do something with the meat" (Littlefield and Ozanne 2011:346). Hence, somewhat contradictory behavior, such as when an individual hunter would readily pause their own day's hunting to help a colleague track a shot animal, is explained (Littlefield and Ozanne 2011:348).[19] The totalizing character of the hunter sits within a social situation.[20]

17. Stalking refers in the United Kingdom to the hunting of deer on foot.

18. This contrasts with Wilde's quip about British hunters: "the unspeakable [elite] in pursuit of the inedible."

19. Their sample reflected the game of the region, primarily deer.

20. In Littlefield and Ozanne's (2011) study, one seasoned hunter in their 70s, who was pleased to find excitement in any activity, mentioned the excitement of hunting with their dogs. An early career hunter recalled an actual shot, when they

Gieser (2017) also found hunters were diverse and used Ingold's phenomenology—*how* is hunting done and what is its *meaning*— to explore the social construction of shooting. Echoing earlier points in the chapter, Gieser (2017) remarked that critics of Ingold's work on hunting did not address the practice *a priori,* but instead framed it politically.

In reality, Gieser (2017) delivered an account of communities of practices rather than of embodied, carnal meanings for participants, which is to say that he described what he saw and did, not relate to others' embodied skills.[21] He thereby captured the acquisition of habituated and unthought aspects of conduct, but not as a total or negatively perceived activity. He offers an autoethnography,[22] not an ethnography (cf. Atkinson 2015). The academic literature on fieldsports has thus had this tendency to talk about types and skill-set acquisition, including how acquisition becomes a totalizing identity, but the challenge remains to capture its meaning for those immersed—"how it is for the hunter and the hunted to encounter one another," as Marvin remarked (2012:248). To offer such depth, I now look to British game shooting alone, where quarry is on the wing and not sat, as in willow grouse shooting in Finland.

As the late Graham Cox (1993) observed concerning his ESRC-funded land management project—and given his understanding of shooting communities as the owner and handler of many Field Trial Championship winning gundogs—conventional methodologies do not work.[23] I present no new ethnographic data in the present discussion, but rather utilize two techniques. First, rather than accept the deficit model of participation found in the AA and LACS

had shot a deer's leg off. Although the excitement and/or primacy of the shot are sub-texts, they are still present within the analysis.

21. This echoes Bourdieu's habitus—a feel for the game—which here concerns not only knowledge (about hunting), but also the skill to enact it. Bourdieu's sporting metaphor is football.

22. An example is his first—and very firsthand—gralloching of a deer, which is the prompt removing of entrails with a knife to prevent contamination of the meat.

23. The example he provided and dismissed was to utilize a questionnaire's at the end of a shoot day.

analyses, I adopt Newmahr's (2010a) analytic approach, relying on *positive* constructions of pain—shooting pleasure—in quarry shooting as experienced by those who love to shoot live game. Pivotally, this addresses the paradox of its transgressive element that both Swan (2019) and Cox (1994) acknowledged, which comprises the "deep play" of a totalizing activity framed by negative labels of sadism, fun, and blood lust. Secondly, in order to explore deep play, the accounts of immersed game shots are explored (both their professional and personal lives are enfolded in the activity). Deep play is understood as a sensory experience, like Edensor's (2000) account of walking, but it is not habituated (unconscious). It does not concern the acquisition of technical skills—how one acquires ownership and proficiency with guns sufficient to shoot them—for shooting is understood as *transgressive*. To shoot is to face stigmatization. How does the metaphorical inpatient construct their mora l career (after Goffman 1961)? This moves the focus to reading the individual as conceptualized by micro sociologists, such as Goffman.

A useful paper for exploring the physical tension and interactions between the body and specifically *rural* space is Edensor (2000). "Place ballets" echo a dramaturgical reading of place that are mutually constituting and walking is for the most part highly-mediated "pleasure" (Edensor 2000:83). This is an interactionist, not a Bourdieusian perspective, as the bodily hexis/walker's habitus is socially constructed and their dispositions "governed by 'expert' knowledge and body discipline" (techniques) that are learned (Edensor 2000:96).[24] Hence, much like *The Empire Strikes Back* scene in which Luke enters a place strong in the Dark Side and is advised that he will only face what he takes with him, walkers only find the dispositions that they take with them. It is a social construction in this sense.[25] Pleasure within the bodily hexis is seemingly not

24. Examples include the acquisition of a correct stride/gait and finding the right pace for the conditions. There are echoes here of Scott's (2009) discussion of finding the right lane and pace to complete her set in a crowded swimming pool as well as the role of the approach to the mountain before the attempt.

25. Even actions "stem from and engender appropriate ways of interacting with the countryside" (Edensor 2000:98), whereby walking discourses reveal values and status positions. For example, the cultural capital revealed by attire and the avoidance of

the primary concern and it is not socially engineered to the same degree as the experiential edgework of SM encounters, *where it is a mutual accomplishment.*[26] This confirms that there is a register of pleasure as yet unexplored within countryside activities, its social axis. The chapter now attempts to unlock this alternative register, of the pleasure that it brings.

Brief lessons from the social construction of pain as pleasure

The discussion above noted that game shots have been labelled sadists. While those who are totalized participants of shooting cannot help but be aware of this label, their pleasure is rarely articulated. BDSM—and particularly sadists themselves—share this characteristic. It will thus be useful to outline Newmahr's (2011a) sociological treatment of this point.

Newmahr conducted a multi-site ethnography of a BDSM community in the United States, unlocking the "complex strategies SM participants employ to make sense of pain." She contrasted these with "a minority discourse in the community in which the provision and experience of pain is framed as a desirable social, carnal, and emotional experience" (Newmahr 2010a:389). Newmahr (2011a) had already shown the meaning of participation and the complex self-regulation of BDSM by its participants and community (see Newmahr 2010b). In short, BDSM or kink is serious leisure, and Newmahr dispels many of the myths associated with it, such as participation requiring a sexual element.

Newmahr (2010a) focuses on the community's most externally stigmatized group—tops, or sadists. Unlike shooting, participation

being fashionable is itself a conscious decision. Kit as an aspect of walking is one of Urry's "actants" that is "utilized to achieve particular goals" [reveal their ideas and values] and "produce particular sensual experiences and species of movement" (Edensor 2000:99). While not investigated here, it would be a fascinating future theme to explore.

26. "SM participants do not merely engage in these activities alongside one another or in the company of one another, but because of and through one another" (Newmahr 2011b:692). The countryside for Edensor remains a site of "edutainment," to use a term he applies in his later work, but its stimuli is manipulated by agents' decision-making.

in BDSM is a social accomplishment between two actors who closely read one another within the framework of the scene as a whole. For example, safe words are rarely required,[27] and many lectures and instructive lessons occur within the community. Nor is it performative for an audience in that only the participants are key to the scene—indeed, sanctions follow being distracted by onlookers. Newmahr's (2010a) contribution concerns the very negotiation of pleasure in the causing of pain by tops and sadists.

Of the four distinct discourses of pain—"transformed pain," "sacrificial pain," "investment pain," and "autotelic pain"—the latter (Newmahr 2010a), and how it is told, is most useful for the present discussion. Insofar as it constitutes pain as providing pleasure to someone, such that delivering it is pleasurable, it is therefore a provision of pain that does not involve an involuntary power imbalance.[28] Autotelic pain is the least common of these four types, and "participants who frame pain this way have an extraordinarily difficult time articulating their experience of pain" (Newmahr 2010a:404). Newmahr observes that

> Consent is deeply intertwined with the desirability of sadism... [S]adists view the enjoyment of inflicting pain [by the receivers or bottoms] as central to their SM identity and to play (Newmahr 2010a:406).

What could have been problematic—the sadist's fundamental desire to inflict pain vis-à-vis the rules and conduct of the scene (SSC)—is negotiated away *because it is desired (by bottoms/masochists)*. It is thus logical that

> tops who frame pain this way are often desired as play partners precisely because of their sadism; the stronger the belief that the top enjoys the actual infliction of pain, the more authentic the scene becomes for bottoms (Newmahr 2010a:407).

As Newmahr neatly summarizes, "autotelic pain begins as pain, ends as pain, and is enjoyable nonetheless" (Newmahr 2010a:407).

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27. The credo is one of safe, sane, and consensual (SSC) participation.

28. "The whole point of doing it was to let him exercise his sadism, which is what I also ultimately enjoyed" (Newmahr 2010b:401).

It is like a positive version of labelling theory in cultural criminology— the label ironically works both as characteristic and deviant, *and as* a self-fulfilling prophesy.

The comparison with a love of shooting and pleasure in killing is potentially analytically rich because, as Newmahr concluded,

> autotelic pain... challenges the understanding of pain as ontologically negative and resists the medicalized perspective of the enjoyment of pain as pathological (Newmahr 2010a:408).

Goffman's concept of the social (physical) situation is thus more prominent, as was the case for Edensor (2000).

The Proud Shooter[29]

Deep play

The editorials of two leading British shooting titles offer deep play accounts of the totalizing character of participation in shooting, and also provide contrasts (see Geertz 2002). The publications in question are *Shooting Times and Country Magazine* (ST) (since 1882) and *The Field* (established 1853), which have circulations of between 20 and 30 thousand.[30] In addition, ST's and *The Field's* Twitter followers number 27.8 and 16.6 thousand, respectively. Patrick Galbraith edited ST (2017-2023) from his mid-twenties; Jonathan Young, who edited *The Field* (1991-2020), also previously edited ST when he was in his twenties. They thus represent different generations of game shots. The dataset used here, upon which we conducted thematic and content analyses, consists of all of their editorials in the calendar year 2018—24 from the weekly ST and 6 from the monthly *Field*.[31] These editorials amount to a similar volume in ove-

29. This is the self-description Galbraith uses.

30. As a point of comparison, the weekly title *Country Life* has a circulation nearing 40 thousand.

31. These were published in ST from June to November and in *The Field* from July to December.

rall word length.[32] The analytic focus was articulations of pleasure, or allusions to pleasure, in shooting. Examples were noted from each and consolidated into broader categories.

Unsurprisingly, an awareness of critiques of shooting was a dominant theme in both groups of editorials, with fully half of the ST editorials addressing or discussing this question. The style of the ST editorials is interwoven with anecdotes of participating in shooting—wildfowling, pigeon shooting, loading, grouse shooting, and so forth. The pleasure or enjoyment in specifically game shooting was articulated through such remarks as wildfowling "buoys the soul," feeling "deeply happy" at the start of the shooting season or after an afternoon pigeon shooting, "nothing quite so stirring" as walked-up grouse shooting, and "there is something so satisfying about the thud of a bird that size [greylag goose] as it lands on the saltmarsh" (ST 26/09/18, 19/09/18, 08/08/18; Galbraith 2018).

The Field editorials also employed an anecdotal format. They are more nuanced in the sense that they benefit from their longer word count, which makes it possible to offer a longer narrative. Several featured strong critiques—against using pheasants as "targets" and of the pressing need "to take active steps" to introduce newcomers to shooting. Like the editorials in ST, they discussed participation and enjoyment, such as adoring a stretch of river for fishing, but were less determined to convert those one meets and/or mobilize the readership.

Both editors discussed shooting types, and in doing so revealed whom they admire personally/aspire towards. Young referred to the "addictive" chanciness and demand for skill of driven grouse, pointing not only to gun skills,[33] but also to the vagaries of weather, wind, and landscape—and the birds that construct it. For Galbraith, the "hardcore" shot is the wildfowler, and the best shooting that of walked-up grouse shooting over dogs. The former embraces the elements, the latter constructs that he will knowingly be challenged by them (after Edensor 2000).

32. ST's editorial format is a column, while the Field's is a full page.

33. He remarks, "And what a complete joy when one manages to do it consistently" (TF 09/18).

In sum, both show awareness of shooting's political precarity, but have different stances in their advocacy and participation. This is difficult to represent in interactionist terms in that Goffman's sociology is not about chance. Yet Goffman does focus upon the importance of performances being credited or discredited, with the actor remaining a merchant of morality. As belonging to different generations of shot, both editors reveal memorable shooting experiences or lessons in their columns. In doing so, they show the acquisition of their moral career—"the route to becoming a true fieldsportsman" (Young 2018:32). This informs the following portrait of the game shot, or gun, vis-à-vis Newmahr's (2010a) account of the autotelic sadist.

A comparison of sadists and guns

Tab. 1 - BDSM vis-à-vis Shooting: Points of Similarity and Contrast.

Aspect/characteristic	SM (sadist)	Shooting (Gun)	Shared (Y/N)
Autotelic pain/blood lust ('buck fever')/ the kill	Yes, express enjoyment of pain as not pathological and pain as not ontologically negative. Situation pivotal (SSC).	No, enjoyment within a discourse of participation within a wider situation of informed fieldcraft/being a true fieldsportsman. The 'perfect day' being dependent upon the wider situation and organization (Furbank 2018).	N
Shared accomplishment	Yes, although often missed. "SM requires another person in order to first create the bounded situation and then to transgress it" (Newmahr 2011b:693). Pivotal for sadists' (defense of) their enjoyment.	No, shoot days are staged and require much preparation (i.e., gamekeeping). Quarry has no real agency/autonomy beyond weather.	N
Carnal/embodied/in the zone experience	Yes, intense within scene.	Yes, wider spatial/surroundings and chanciness and demand on skill (e.g., 60 mph grouse).	Y

Aspect/characteristic	SM (sadist)	Shooting (Gun)	Shared (Y/N)
Difficult to articulate	Yes, being a sadist.	No, in terms of total identification with being a fieldsportsman/'proud shooter', but little articulation of specific pleasure in the kill.	N
Education/formal tuition/credos	Yes, lectures, mentors. SSC.	Not in the UK. CGSP compliance non-compulsory, but pivotal to a 'Perfect Shoot' (Furbank 2018). Career as shooter.	N
Socially marginal	Yes, white middle-class; Jewish; geeky/overweight/androgynous (Newmahr 2011b:685).	No, male (only ca. 6% female) and elitist.	N
Stasis	No (the scene is action).	Yes, the choice not to shoot. Walked up grouse, over 9 hours for one brace. Gieser's (2017) example of waiting during a drive.	N
Clean kill	N/A unless rethought as safety (e.g., safe participation in auto asphyxiation and fire play).	Paramount.	-
Space (staging)	Is engineered in specified spaces (e.g., venue owner checks if it is a 'good' scream), but no universal requirement of specific props.	Yes, critical. Dependent upon landscape, surplus of birds, wind direction, placing of guns, silence beforehand.	N
Limits upon scale	Yes, excess can become distasteful (e.g., participant topping 'the wall').	Yes, but "as long as you do something with the meat" (Littlefield and Ozanne 2011:346).	Y
Self-policing	Yes, a lot of post-scene discussion/gossip exchanges. Community, self-policed (e.g., Newmahr's being injured rapidly shared).	Yes, one gun's metaphor: it begins with training the gundog and ends with choosing the wine. Shooting as situated within wider discourse of hunter-gather/career.	Y

It is noteworthy that enjoyment in shooting does not reside upon "buck fever" or the kill—it rather takes place in a discourse of participation within a wider situation of informed fieldcraft/ being a true fieldsportsman. It is a social accomplishment in that sense. The "perfect day" is dependent upon this wider situation, and it involves an understanding of its construction, organization, and underpinning work (Furbank 2018). It is therefore not a shared accomplishment, although shoot days are staged, require much preparation (gamekeeping), and the quarry has limited agency/ autonomy alongside the weather. The space is of course paramount, but it is always staged, which displays its social construction—and the fact that it is self-policed. In this respect it resembles the BDSM communities of Newmahr's study, where the self-policing includes much post-scene discussion/gossip exchanges—Newmahr's being injured was rapidly shared. The hunter-gatherer discourse does not share this characteristic so pivotally. One gun's metaphor thus appears to be more appropriate—it begins with training the gundog and ends with choosing the wine, which situates shooting within the wider discourse of hunter-gatherer/career.

The comparison of shooting with autotelic pain reveals similarities—strong rituals and etiquettes, the very intensity of participation— as well as differences—the wider social and physical situation of shooting, and the critical BDSM dyad. Shooting is thus not an edgework/construction of pleasure, but is rather derived from the broader social situation. It is beyond a carnal being "in the zone" and includes situated fieldcraft. For instance, Young described a series of instances within a few days where he got it wrong, such as too much lead at a clay shoot[34] and misreading a pigeon flight line, but he understood why this happened and saw how to rectify it in the future. Galbraith described returning with his carefully wrapped shot gamebirds on a sleeper to London after a day's grouse shooting in Lewis—one his "most memorable" days of shooting. These are conscious, self-reflective processes on how

34. The shot being missed because the shotgun barrels are swung ahead of the clay pigeon.

to enhance their moral careers/acquisition of more pleasurable (better) shooting encounters.

Critically, the practices of BDSM and shooting involve a similar *telling* of pleasure that serves to distance them from their stigmatizing qualities. Similarly to how Edensor (2000) argued that walking needed to be judged by a different barometer than the distance covered, game shots require a wider portfolio of experience than the physical kill to explicate the pleasure of game shooting. These include the social situation involving the stage, the actors, and the props—this broader spectrum—and the demonstration of fieldcraft competence. To repeat the journey/career metaphor: shooting begins with training the gundog and ends with choosing the wine to accompany the bird when presented at table. This perhaps returns to Cox's atfirst-glance banal suggestion that the enjoyment of the day reflects the quality of the dog work. To break this down further, the day has many aspects. In sum, the birds are flushed into flight and only those at a good ("sporting") height are shot. Shoots work hard to ensure that they have a good population of birds—wild birds shoots requiring the most cost and effort—and that the terrain produces challenging sporting birds of good height. The decision which bird to shoot lies with the shot or gun as to their confidence in their abilities. Hence Young's concern that he was giving too much lead. Galbraith takes pleasure in walked-up shooting, which is more unpredictable. With driven shooting, the birds are flushed towards the guns by a line of walkers with flags ("bush beaters"). The guns are in a line and must choose which birds are reasonably theirs and which are better taken by their neighboring gun. To shoot someone else's bird is to "eye-wipe" them. Young takes pleasure in doing so, but only when they are an experienced shot. His son has become very adept at doing it to his father.

We see here the knowledge of the sport interwoven with their own acquisition of fieldcraft competence. The competence acquisition is ongoing. Both are reflective and this involves social components—looking to the knowledge of the bush beaters and reading the signals of their dogs. Pleasure is therefore enfolded with understanding of what is transgressive within the shooting community. Young thus cannot but take pleasure in being eye-wiped by his son.

Conclusion

This chapter began by discussing conventional academic understandings of game shooting. It found that the social character of participation in shooting was overlooked, overshadowed by its economic, policy, and ecological dimensions. How pleasure was negotiated within a stigmatizing context was then analyzed on the basis of critiques of shooting that focus upon practice and on contrasts with other leisure pursuits, including walking and BDSM. This revealed how participation in shooting was both physical, totalizing, and socially and physically tightly situated. Such similarities challenge some of the narratives that surround shooting cultures. That is to say, there is less *physical* edgework in shooting—although staged, it lacks complete predictability—but it is marked by the same need to negotiate or legitimize participation in a stigmatized activity—autotelic pain in BDSM. This could be the case because the physicality of shooting is more diffuse within a wider rural setting, with the quarry species having little agency, unlike the BDSM's dyad scene. Consequently, it is pivotal that guns look to a broader narrative of the hunter-gatherer.

The usefulness of the comparison of sadism with shooting is that it allows for greater analytic insight. It reveals grey areas where breaches occur, that is, where the community moves to self-police in a relatively unregulated practice. The hunter-gatherer discourse is challenged by the shooting of large bags (an excess of birds) that do not then enter the food chain. In these instances, Wilde's comment concerning foxhunting—"the unspeakable in pursuit of the inedible"—risks being realized in both senses. In the light of the Welsh Government's political rather than evidence-based decision to ban shooting on publicly-owned Welsh land, the negotiating away of pleasure in shooting through ethical meat production and harvesting will only be increasingly scrutinized. Those opposed to shooting will increasingly employ discrediting practices to attack its viability across all axes. The seeming trump card of ecological benefits risks becoming the joker if the paradox of shooting as conservation visà-vis pleasure in shooting is not more authentically articulated.

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"I don't have to be so scared!" Dealing with Fear in Rock Climbing[1]

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"Fear, like gravity, is ever present, so we fight it constantly"
– Don McGrath and Jeff Elison

Introduction

The issues explored in the present article refer to the emotions that climbers experience during climbing. Emotion is viewed here not as a personal trait, that is, an individual predisposition to experience in a certain way, but rather as a state produced in response to a certain situation (Brown 2021:26). My general focus concerns the particular sensations experienced during social activity that comprise elements of a given action and the situation in which it takes place. My particular interest involves the emotions that inseparably accompany climbing, substantially determine it, and affect its results.

Although climbing is a physical activity that takes place in tangible circumstances and involves actual dangers, its progress and results also depend on the psychological issues that condition it in a significant way. For example, a "strong psyche" is regarded as a

1. This article is based on a paper presented at the 10th ESA Conference, "Social Relations in Turbulent Times," which was held in Geneva, Switzerland, 7-10 September 2011. Certain issues discussed in the present text have been previously addressed in Kacperczyk 2013 and 2016b.

positive and desirable trait for a member of the climbing world. As I review the emotions experienced by climbers when engaged in climbing, I more closely address fear and anxiety among those emotions that accompany ascending and performing in the rock and mountain theater.

Theoretical Context of the Analysis

My effort to capture and describe the emotions experienced by climbers when climbing resides upon the premises of symbolic interactionism, and I address them from this perspective in respect to the process of ascribing meaning to and dealing with disturbing emotions.

In accord with Blumer, I assume that the influence of the independent external factors which affect an individual is always mediated by the processes of interpreting and defining the situation. Moreover, the latter are creative and imaginative in character and function in their own right (Blumer [1969]1998:135). Human behavior is emergent in its nature, and it takes shape in the course of a continuous construction and ascription of meaning (Blumer [1969]1998: 82). The meaning ascribed to a given action is somewhat unstable and changeable insofar as the action itself is continuously being interpreted and redefined as it is performed. Human behavior is thus actively constructed, and it can be transformed through reinterpretation and redefinition (Hewitt 1976:48). Consequently, I view emotions as social products that are dependent upon the definition of the situation adopted by the participants at a given time—and upon their interpretations and reinterpretations of their own actions and the actions of their interaction partners.

Susan Shott (1979:1321), who regards symbolic interactionism as a particularly useful perspective for explaining human emotions, points to the extraordinary plasticity of emotions and their susceptibility to being socially constructed. This is evident primarily in two ontogenetic social processes that are involved in the emergence of emotions. The first is the socialization of emotion, which makes it possible for individuals to learn how to properly feel and name their own emotions is respect to the typical affective expe-

riences of their own culture. The second is the actor's construction of emotions, which appears within a specific situation of action and depends on the definitions of the situation and the social norms that have been adopted (Shott 1979:1318).

Stanley S. Schachter (1971:23–24) maintains that we deal with emotion only when the associated state of physiological arousal is defined by the social actor as emotionally triggered. Two components are thus necessary—physiological arousal and the cognitive labeling of this arousal, that is, ascribing the cognitive labeling of "affect" to the specific physiological arousal. Shott (1979) argues that the process of naming one's own feelings is hampered by the fact that physiological arousal is usually diffused and non-specific, with the physiological states that accompany various emotions being very similar. They "often resemble one another; consequently, visceral responses are too uniform to provide individuals with a means of differentiating subjectively distinct emotions" (Cannon 1927:110, as cited in Shott 1979:1321). Consequently, the process of recognizing emotions and labeling them is based upon and derives from social interpretative resources provided by the cultural dictionaries of emotions that contain labels of emotional states that are accepted in a given community.

The process of constructing emotions by an individual is thus limited, on the one hand, by the norms established within a given culture indicating what to feel and how to express it in a given situation, and, on the other, by the embodied experiences and internal feelings of the individual that constitute the physiological basis of the process of experiencing emotions. Decisive in this process are the definitions and interpretations that the actor imposes on his own bodily feelings and affective experiences in a given situation—these are the "definitions and interpretations that give physiological states their emotional significance or nonsignificance" (Shott 1979:1323). For this reason, emotions cannot be viewed as automatically emerging physiological responses. They are instead complex effects of processes of learning, interpretation, and social impact (Lindesmith, Strauss, and Denzin 1975:viii; Shott 1979:1323) that must be studied *in a situational context,* taking into account the situation in which the emotion appears, and *in a biographical context,*

taking into account the history and biographical experiences of the individual.

Shott (1979:1323) identifies a particular type of emotions, which she terms *role-taking emotions,* that cannot emerge without putting oneself in the position of another and adopting their perspective. In order to trigger such emotions, the individual must enter the process of role-taking, thereby taking into account the presence of the other. For example, experiencing feelings such as embarrassment, shame, guilt, pride or vanity involves first referring to the cognitively defined role of the other (Mead 1934:154; Shott 1979:1323), regardless of whether or not the other is physically present in the space of action. Feelings of this type refer directly to the social sphere insofar as they all arise as a construct of a social actor who relates his own behavior and identity to some generalized other.

Other emotions are generated outside the process of role-taking and do not require the presence of another person—real or imagined, specific or generalized—in order to be felt. Such *non-role taking feelings* include anger, fear, and joy (Shott 1979:1324). They are spontaneously triggered and "happen on their own," regardless of the social context of the activity. They may occur by means of interaction with inanimate nature, in confrontation with objects external to the subject, or through the resistance of one's own body during the activity being conducted. They are embodied and directed at physical objects that appear in the field of activity. Although they are triggered by encountering physical obstacles and by having to operate in an unpredictable and challenging environment, they nonetheless remain firmly embedded in the processes of the living body. This does not mean that they are not socially "processed," remembered, compared, interpreted, or anticipated, or that they do not function within a broader narrative led by members of the given social world. But in their essence—at the moment they are felt—they demand neither any reference to the "other," nor operating within the scope of an assumed role. The physical context of the action and its embodied character are more significant for their generation and emergence.

Emotions permeate the world of human activities, and they take part in shaping a person's identity. They are not marginal phenomena in the sphere of interpersonal interactions, but rather com-

prise integral elements of the processes that shape the self. They also are factors in social control and in creating and maintaining the normative framework of human action (Goffman 1967; Turner 1970; Hochschild 1975; Kemper 1978; Shott 1979).

There is also the issue of the *patterning of affective experience* by social structures. This refers to the fact that members of some segments of a society tend to feel certain emotions more often or more intensely than members of other segments because their position in the social structure subjects them more frequently to certain types of experiences (Hochschild 1975:283; cf. Shott 1979:1318).

For this reason, members of the climbing world, who experience very specific situations concerning their actions, may also experience specific emotions related to the nature of their activities. They would then participate in particular situations that expose them to experiencing specific emotions that are distinctive for their social world and only infrequently present in others.

The Background of the Analysis

The topic of emotions was initially a marginal question in my research project, which was primarily aimed at exploring and describing the social world of climbing.[2] The theoretical foundation of my study was *symbolic interactionism*, particularly *social world theory* (Cressey [1932] 2008; Shibutani 1955; Strauss 1959, 1987, 1993;

2. A social world is formed by people who engage in a particular activity. Anselm Strauss (1964) and Howard Becker (1964, 1986) define social worlds as groups having common commitments to engage in a certain activity who share various types of resources that allow them to achieve their goals and create a common ideology related to dealing with a given action. Adele E. Clarke (1991:131) depicts a social world, in reference to the traditional concept of social environment, as a "world of something"—the theater, the military, baseball, horse racing, national politics, or international banking (see Strauss 1993:212). She also defines the social world as "groups with shared commitments to certain activities, sharing resources of many kinds to achieve their goals, and building shared ideologies about how to go about their business" (Clarke 1991:131). Basic concepts connected with the theory of social worlds include primary activity, technology, boundaries, arenas, processes of legitimation, intersection, segmentation, and professionalization (See Strauss 1993; Clarke 1991; Kacperczyk 2016a).

Strauss et al. 1964, Becker 1960, 1974, 1982; Clarke 1987, 1990, 1991, 2005; Star 1989; Fujimura 1986, 1988; Wiener 1981, 1985; Kling and Gerson 1977, 1978). The methodological basis was *grounded theory* (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Konecki 2000, 2009; Charmaz 2006), viewed as a pragmatic theory of action and a continuous comparative method.

I started gathering data in 2007 concerning the processes and activities within the social world of climbing, beginning with a review of existing interviews of well-known Polish mountaineers. I transcribed these materials and analyzed them using the coding procedures of grounded theory—open, selective and theoretical coding, memo writing. In order to generate a larger number of categories regarding discourses related to the *primary activity*, I began reading climbing magazines and searching web sites devoted to disseminating knowledge about climbing. I found numerous narratives and accounts concerning a climber's career, their personal development, and the conditions of climbing. In addition to the 30 interviews with climbers that I conducted during my research, I analyzed the accounts of climbers in existing interviews found in climbing magazines, television broadcasts, and on the internet; other autobiographical data; and coaching texts written by climbers for climbers.

The main difficulty at the initial stage of my investigation was an evident language barrier—reading texts I could hardly understand that contained terms and hermeneutic concepts related to climbing technology. I used the Alpine Encyclopedia and Wikipedia in the effort to learn what these terms and concepts meant, but I nevertheless felt that I could not grasp the real sense of the actions they described. Something was missing. In addition, I suspected that my concentration on technological issues risked overstating the importance of the latter in my research. I thus felt that I needed to find someone who could explain these questions to me, show me how to use complicated climbing technology, and teach me how to climb. I assumed that learning to climb would help me better understand the role and scope of technology in the associated social world and perhaps reduce my tendency to view it as dominant. This convinced me to take the next step—enter the social world of

climbing using one of the common ways of becoming a member. I signed up for climbing school.[3]

Another reason I decided to enter the world of climbing concerns the character of the knowledge involved, which is not readily available through discussion and seldom expressed in words, not even by members of the climbing community. Although sociological research concerning the social world of climbing chiefly resides upon discursive, verbalized, and textual data, the essence of climbing remains beyond words. Climbing is primarily associated with kinesthetic bodily experience, the technical skills involved in ascending vertical walls, and the embodied knowledge of how to perform particular movements safely. It is not easy to obtain the relevant data from conversations, interviews, or various audio and video materials—it is much more easily accessible through "learning by doing" (Anderson and Glass-Coffin 2016).

I also employed a combination of various methods and techniques of social research in the project that produced a great deal of data from many sources. I employed classical elements of ethnography—observations, interviews, and content analysis of video materials; netnography[4]—content analysis of web pages, nets, and blogs devoted to climbing, and following community discussions concerning climbing fora and climbing events on the internet; and autoethnography—climbing and attending climbing courses.

My approach to autoethnography took into consideration Leon Anderson's position regarding *analytic autoethnography*. The latter refers to ethnographic work in which the researcher 1) belongs to the environment they are examining and adopts the position of a full member of the group or setting being studied; 2) undertakes

3. I attended four climbing courses during 2007-2008, all of which were held in Poland. I spent many hours training on indoor artificial walls and in the rock areas in Poland, conducting observations, talking with climbers, taking photographs or video recordings, and climbing. Participant observations involved climbing courses, lectures about climbing organized by climbing clubs, public slide shows regarding climbing expeditions, training in the climbing gym of the Academic Mountaineering Club in Łódź and on commercial indoor walls, a mountain rescue course, and holiday climbing in four rock areas in Poland.

4. See Kozinets 1998.

analytical reflection throughout the process of collecting and processing data; 3) reveals their own self in the narratives created, but also 4) engages in dialogue with informants who belong to the environment being investigated, thereby permitting narratives other than one's own to reverberate; and 5) places great emphasis on theoretical analysis, which links the researcher's conclusions with a wider field of theoretical understanding in a given problem area. The latter ultimately renders it possible for research results to be included in the circulation of scientific knowledge and thereby improve the theoretical understanding of broader social phenomena (Anderson 2006:375).

Tracking the Emotional Aspects of Climbing

The emotions in which I am interested are directly connected with climbing and are in fact elements of it. In order to reveal the roles they play in climbing, I focused on the situations in which they are activated and expressed. Although people experience many emotions during climbing—fear, anxiety, shame, anger, rage, fury, frustration, happiness, euphoria, pride—my focus in the present analysis is on fear and anxiety because of their particular importance.

Climbing is marked by certain features that affect action. First of all, the very act of climbing involves *gaining altitude*, which simultaneously entails *gathering kinetic energy for a fall*. Climbers have to overcome both the pull of gravity and a *fear of heights* in order to attain their goals. At times, climbing takes place in formations exposed to vast open spaces above an expanding precipice, with air ("luft") under one's feet and no convenient ledge on which to stand. The conditions of action that climbers define as "precipitous," "airy," or "exposed" constitute both psychological challenges and sources of unique experiences in that they force the climber to pit themselves against the view of the abyss and the unpleasant sensation caused by a lack of support for one's feet. In order to continue climbing in such circumstances, the climber has to overcome their *fear of exposure,* defeat their *vertigo,* and concentrate on the action.

Another feature of climbing is the possibility of coming off the wall and falling. If you climb—you may fall. You thus have to cope with the fear of falling as well as learn how to fall safely. Possible consequences in the best case include bruises and relatively minor injuries, and in the worst case, grievous bodily harm or even death. Falling has become relatively safe today thanks to modern climbing equipment and belay systems. Advanced dynamic ropes, harnesses, belay devices, and permanent anchors bolted into the rock allow one to experience "flight" with no consequences—on the condition that climbing gear is used properly. But climbers at an early stage of their career also have to learn how to recognize threats and dangers when climbing and how to appropriately respond to them. They must learn how to be on their guard in the rocks and mountains.

Fear and anxiety are apparently inherent in climbing. The *fears of exposure*, *of coming off the wall*, *of falling*, *of flight*, or *of anchors breaking*—all refer to the unpleasant experience of anticipating *losing contact with the ground* or *losing a safe foothold,* which is one of the most unpleasant feelings. And, of course, the fear of *bodily injury* stands behind all of them.

These emotions are strongly embedded in bodily experiences. We instinctively avoid situations causing such sensations because they both alert us of actual dangers and are sources of fear.

Psychologists view fear as a primary emotion that plays a decisive role in survival. It is activated automatically at the moment when there is an immediate threat of bodily harm or injury. Fear sets in motion the nervous and endocrine systems that prepare the organism to overcome the threatening situation. However, emotions are also cultural artifacts beyond the biological level. Lutz states that their "elaborate and subtle meanings must be learned," adding that

> Emotional meaning is structured by particular cultural systems, social and material environments. The existence and meaning of emotions

are negotiated, ignored, validated—by people in social relationships (Lutz 1988).[5]

Warrant adds in this regard that the manner in which one works with fear reveals the cultural construction of danger (Warren 1979:359). In what follows, I focus on the emotions of fear and anxiety— how they are experienced by climbers, how they "work" during climbing, what they "do" to actors, and how actors deal with them.

Being afraid of falling: The initial stages of becoming a climber (Participant Observation)

One method for tracking the emotional aspects of climbing is to observe situations while focusing on verbal and nonverbal forms of expression. The excerpt below, taken from my field notes, describes an incident during a covert participant observation[6] when I met a family with children in a Polish rock area.

Excerpt 1. Situation description: Family with children near the rock. A rope is hanging from the anchor prepared for a top roping climb.[7]

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5. A pertinent example is expecting to have extraordinary feelings when we reach the top of the mountain, but then finding that we feel nothing (Lutz 1988).

6. Throughout this study, I sought to openly present myself as a researcher to my informants. When I began speaking with or interviewing people, I would seek to say in advance that I was conducting a study of the social world of climbing. I could not always do so, however, such as in public situations where the number of participants made it impossible to inform everyone. Such situations are common in rock areas, where many people, myself included, are constantly moving about. I always met people climbing, or belaying, or sitting in groups as I moved from one spot to another, and I would say hello to them. It would be strange, and in fact rather disturbing, if I would have told every person I met that I was conducting a study of climbing activities. At the moment of observation just noted, I did not even realize that what I saw could be important for my research—I was just waiting for my turn to climb. It was only in the evening, as I was preparing my field notes from the day, that I understood the importance of the scene. But it was too late then to inform the people involved concerning who I was and what I was doing.

7. Top roping, in which the rope runs to the climber from the top of the route, is

A young boy of 8 or 9 is going to climb. He wears a full children's harness. His belayer is his aunt. His uncle supervises and gives prompts. His mother and father, with their year-and a-half-old child, are sitting near the rock on a blanket. My climbing partner and I are standing nearby, waiting for our turn to climb the route. The boy is ascending a part of the route and declares that he is afraid. This is the first ascent in his life. His dad and aunt reassure him and encourage to continue the ascent. The uncle suggests to the aunt that they could show the boy what rappelling is like in order to prepare him for it. The boy says again that he is afraid. His father says "Don't be afraid. You'll get down easily." Several people are talking to the boy at the same time—his father, aunt, and uncle—calming him down and advising him what to do. The boy is confused. The aunt finally cuts them off and tells the boy to concentrate on what she is saying to him. She asks him to bend backwards and sit down in the harness. Finally, after a few trials, the boy successfully rappels down and is standing on the ground. The aunt explains to him that this is the way he'll rappel after completing the route. She states that this was only a trial run and that he can now start the ascent. The boy sighs heavily, "Oh, once more then?" But he smiles and begins climbing the route again. The boy reaches the difficult point, looks down, and says, "Geez! How will I get down!?" He's clearly upset. The aunt tells him not to be worried and reminds him that he can rappel as they've already shown him. The father encourages him to go higher. Finally, the boy decides that he prefers to go up rather than rappel once again. He moves up some steps. He reaches a difficult spot and tries to catch any hold, but has no idea how to move further and states that he wants go down. His family, calming him, persuades him to continue the ascent and give him tips for how to do it. The boy repeats a few times that he wants to go down. The aunt finally agrees and asks him to sit down in the harness and bend his body backwards. The father says, "Then rappel, but you'll try again after getting some rest." The boy is anxious—"And if I fall?"—"Don't be afraid, you won't fall, you're hanging on the rope. Just sit in the harness." The boy asks if he is allowed to hold the rope. The aunt allows him to hold the rope above the knot. The boy catches the knot. The aunt corrects him, telling him to hold the rope above the knot. The boy obediently changes

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the simplest and safest form of belaying. The rope runs from the belayer standing on the ground, up to the anchor system at the top of the rock, and then back down to the climber, where it is attached to their harness. If the climber comes off the wall, they hang safely in their harness under the full control of the belayer.

> his hold. He rappels some meters, and then swivels around the axis of the rope, changes his hold. He rappels some meters, and then swivels around the axis of the rope, turning his back to the wall. The uncle intervenes. He climbs solo (without belaying), reaches the point where the boy is stuck, and helps him to rappel. The boy is happy standing on the ground (field notes from participant observation, rock area in Poland, 06-08-2009).[8]

The boy stated many times that he was afraid or that he wanted to go down. After some meters of climbing, he expressed his fear in such phrases as "*Geez! How will I get down!?*" "*And if I fall?*" He was worried, upset, and anxious. His relatives calmed him, saying "*Don't be afraid, you won't fall, you're hanging on the rope. Just sit in the harness.*" All these interactions were focused on fear—the fear experienced by the novice climber.

Although I was sitting on the grass rather bored, something in this scene that caught my attention. I could easily recognize and recall my own fear of heights from my first time climbing. I remembered that the first difficulty for me was to believe that the rope and the harness were able to support my body weight and keep me from falling. It was both amazing and unbelievable that I could use a short and inconspicuous sling[9] and a carabiner or quickdraw[10] for self-protection— that I could put my weight on it and just "sit down in harness," hanging safely over the precipice. This experience of *gaining trust in climbing gear* helped me to overcome the *fear of exposure*. But first, just like this young boy, I had to learn that I should "sit in the harness" and put my weight on it if I wanted to rest or abseil. Bend backwards and siting down in the harness means to overcome the fear of expose your own body beyond its safe axis,

8. All translations in this article from Polish to English are by the author unless otherwise indicated.

9. Professional nylon or dynex runners have a strength of 22 kN (4946 lbs) and can hold a load of over two tons. See http://eu.blackdiamondequipment.com.

10. A quickdraw, which consists of two carabiners linked with sewn loop, is a piece of climbing equipment that is used to protect the climber while ascending. The climber connects one carabiner to the permanent anchors bolted to the rock and the second to the rope. One quickdraw has a strength of 20 kN (4496 lbs).

outside the stable points of support you instinctively try to keep. You just have to learn how to operate with own body in the harness, how to rappel—regardless of the abyss beneath your feet.

By watching the young boy who had the same initial problems that I had, I understood what climbers have to learn, the kind of bodily experience they must gain to skillfully climb and rappel, and the types of emotions that are an element of beginning to climb. Analyzing this situation made me realize that I once had been just as scared this boy, and that sitting in the harness had been difficult for me, too. This motivated me to return to my field notes from my beginners climbing course.

> There are a lot of things that I could never read in books. The embodied experience of route difficulty. The uncertainty of protective equipment and belaying. Not believing that a short sling can securely hold my body in the air... (field notes, climbing course, 19-08-2007).

At the moment when I was observing the boy, I was not thinking about the question of fear and anxiety. This issue emerged spontaneously from my analysis of *the initial climbing experience*—in a moment of insight, it cast light on the process I had gone through myself. I coded this as the process of *acquiring trust in climbing gear*. In the beginning, one's fear is greater than their trust in safety equipment—belay devices, rope, harness. The moment you begin to believe that your protective gear makes climbing safe leads to making the decision to place your trust in it, and that decision enables you to act. After some time, you take it for granted that the rope will not break, that the knot will hold, that sitting in a harness is safe—and this type of confidence enables you to improve your climbing abilities and overcome the fear of exposure.[11] However,

11. Experienced climbers emphasize the importance of confidence both in the equipment to which they entrust their life, and in their technical skills. They evaluate the risk of taking a fall or the likelihood of injury. For example, the American climber Don McGrath related the following in describing his climbs in the Caribbean. "The Point is situated on a bluff, rising out of the sea. To get to the base of the routes, climbers must locate anchors over the lip of the bluff and rappel down to anchors at the start of the routes. If you are experienced with rope work and

a high level of trust in your climbing equipment because of a high level of routine in rope and gear operations exposes a climber to real risks that can cause trouble. Being overly confident in your climbing gear or making even a minor mistake in using it can cost you your life.[12]

The embodied experience of fear and its social context (Autoethnography)

My own experiences of fear and panic were informative as participant observations. My first profound encounter with these feelings happened on the fourth day of my first climbing course when my instructor sent me to lead a route that contained elements of scrapping in a long chimney. There was an approximately three-meter chimney leading to the top, and one had to pass over the gap from the right side to the left. You would then step over the gap again to reach the rappel anchor and end the route.

I was so terribly scared that my whole body was trembling. I was afraid to make the next move. At that moment, I could not believe that my instructor had sent me on such a difficult route. My experiences verged on a fight for survival. My instructor, Monika, stayed below, rather bored, prompting me how to move. I continued to ascend only because I felt a strong confidence in her posture and voice—it was obvious that I would accomplish the task. She expressed no doubt, only a bit of impatience caused by my snail's pace.

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rappelling, the likelihood of falling from the top of the cliff is very, very low. The consequence, however, of falling into the deep, crashing sea below is certain death. [...] When I first did this rappel, I was definitely nervous, but confident in the safety system that I was using. I was able to carry out the rappel and lead routed at the bluff only because I felt that the chance of taking the plunge to certain death was extremely low" (McGrath and Elison 2014:94-95).

12. This happened with the famous American climber Todd Skinner (1958-2006), who died because a worn out part of his old harness broke. It was also the case with the 12-year old Italian climbing prodigy Tito Claudio Traversa (2001-2013), who entrusted his life to improperly used quickdraws that were "slung incorrectly, which resulted in total failure and a groundfall." Available at: http://www.rockandice.com/lates-news/12-year-old-tito-traversadies-in-climbing-fall (accessed 2013-07-06).

An issue that increased my fear was that it was my first leading[13] and I had not brought along enough quickdraws. I needed two more quickdraws on the ending part of the route to reach the rappel anchor safely. The sun was shining very strongly and it was boiling hot. I made one mistake after another and did not have enough safety gear. I became so scared that I could not control my body. My hands were trembling. My whole body was completely tense. I felt like someone fighting for her own life. I did not know what to do. I was totally confused. I could not collect my thoughts or act constructively. My colleague Daniel came to help me in this difficult situation (Figures 1–2). He reached the point where I was stuck, gave me the missing equipment, and prepared me to abseil since I was too distressed to do anything. I was on the brink of tears. The only thing I knew was that I did not believe that this was really happening. And the only thing I felt was that I was scared stiff that I might fall.

But this incident, almost imperceptibly, provided me with a new perspective on climbing. First of all, I found that it was possible to react to fear in a different way. I found other forms of reactions—such as Daniel's self-control and Monika's calmness. And I learned that these other forms of reaction met with approval when climbing. I could also see that my instructor was not "infected" by my fear. It was clearly communicated to me that the situation was under control, and that there was no need to experience heightened emotions ("there was no reason to be so scared").

I was ashamed of my "performance" after I had descended. I had a deep sense of failure. My instructor expressed her surprise, saying "*Were you really scared?*" I had unpleasant feelings of defeat and inability for the rest of the day. At the same time, however, all of these unpleasant feelings motivated me to not give in to feeling panic when ascending.

13. Leading or lead climbing is a technique used to ascend a route in which the belay system is situated at the bottom, below the climber, not above them as in top-roping. A lead climber tied with elastic (dynamic) rope attaches the rope to the permanent anchors in the rock using quickdraws as they ascend. The safety provided by this protection system depends on both the lead climber's skills and the active work of belayer, who pays out the rope and holds it in the event of a fall.

My relief with being on the ground rapidly dissipated after hearing two other climbers talking to each other. One explained that it was a very easy route, graded 3+, which used to be ascended only for its aesthetic value. I was shocked—for me, it was the most difficult thing that I had ever done. The situation thus also comprised a clash between my conception of the route—as extraordinarily difficult—with that of others climbers, including my instructor— who viewed it as a very easy route. It was a conflict between my appraisal of my own possibilities and the evaluation of my instructor. This realization crushed me.

Fig. 1 - The line of the route, with my colleague Daniel and I at the top. The 4th day of a climbing course at Dolina Kobylańska, Poland, 21-08-2007. Photo by Kajetan Kacperczyk.

However, I also learned that beginning to panic is not an approved reaction to fear among climbers. And, somehow, I found a way to reject this type of reaction and not allow it to happen. That does not mean that I have never felt it again, but I was never again so scared and trembling. Over time, I learned how to react differently—with anger, swearing, yelling—not with panic and confusion. In the following days, as if in defiance, I attacked the routes indicated

by my instructor without hesitation. It was astounding that one day I was so terrified and deeply afraid, and the next—under the silent pressure of significant others—I completely rejected this form of reaction. It was like choosing the proper way to behave.

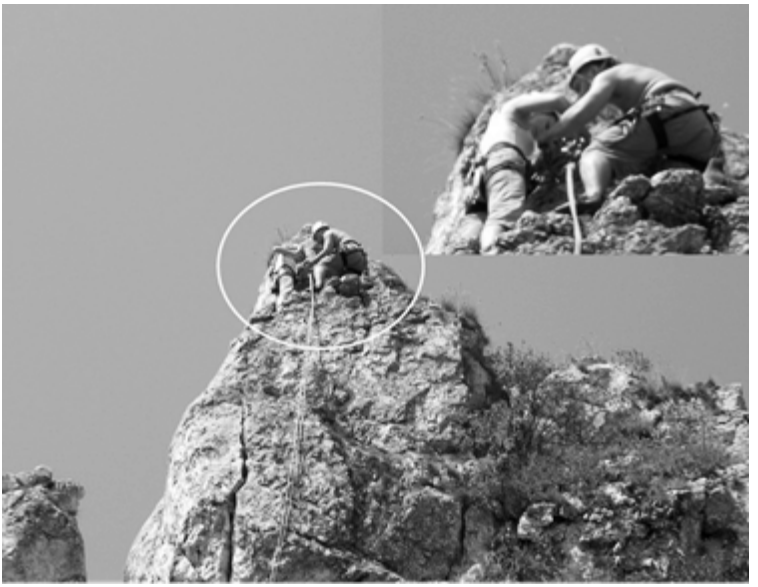

Fig. 2 - Daniel is helping me with the rappel anchor. Dolina Kobylańska, 21-08-2007, 12:13. Photo by Kajetan Kacperczyk.

This process of the *redefinition of the danger* was gradual and almost imperceptible. One thing that helped in this respect was watching my instructor ascending the highest points of the routes in ordinary sneakers without any safety gear. Such a contrast with the full equipment that the students used—harnesses, climbing shoes, helmets—shocked me. Where laymen seemed to struggle for their lives, instructors went without any problems, moving beautifully, smoothly, aesthetically, easily, and without protective equipment. The students could observe many similar situations in the rock area. We shook our heads incredulously, but at the same time we became accustomed to treating these scenes as something "nor-

mal" in the climbing theater. And we were changing as a result. We still expressed our admiration for such skillful performances, being fully aware of our own limited capabilities, but our reception of these performances changed into habitually viewing them as normal. This affected what we believed was possible in the rocks and did or did not consider to be dangerous. Observing other trainees submissively climbing up the routes indicated by a coach, conformably passing difficult spots, and watching their instructors— all of this created an atmosphere of acceptance regarding the risks of "gaining altitude," leading us to change over to the "proper" way of reacting. We recognized that the only proper way involves handling your own fear and not being taken over by panic.

The themes of risk-taking and the definition of danger, which are associated with embodied sensations—my own and those of other climbers—intermingled in my study from the very beginning.

> **Excerpt 2.** We were in the woods and ascended the "Beczki" [Barrels] route, which is graded V+ (6a in the French CRS). In the middle of this route, you have to pass through a barrel-like chimney in which you need to cleverly turn your body to the correct side, spreading your legs wide above abyss, standing on the side walls of chimney to go up, and then scramble over a slight overhang. My partner, Agnes, led this route in a traditional style, fixing her own safety equipment. I was the second climber and she belayed me from the top. Thisis a very safe way of belaying a person who is ascending because they are always protected by the rope from above. Nothing bad can happen. I managed to ascend the chimney part of the route, but I got completely stuck beneath the overhang. I wasn't able to pass this part of the route. I made some bad moves that only made my situation worse. I couldn't go forward or let go of the rock. I held the rock tight, breathing hard, and felt that I was losing my strength second by second. I felt that I would fall at any moment. I was panic stricken. Fear of heights totally gripped me. The objective situation wasn't dangerous—I was well belayed from the top. My partner and my instructor stood a meter and a half above me. Everything was "under control." But my fear was so great that it paralyzed me completely. I couldn't make any move. I had no power to go forward and pass this last part of the trajectory. I was in a rage that I couldn't complete the route. I was scared to death And I felt completely helpless at the same time. My instructor very calmly and in a composed manner suggested possible moves to me. "Anka,

> try to see if you can do this... Or perhaps try to do this... or this..." My partner assured me the whole time that I was safe. I was swearing like a trooper one minute, moaning and groaning the next. My instructor was composedly talking to Agnes and checked to see whether she was ready to catch my possible fall off. Agnes said, "Don't worry, I'm holding you really firmly. It's only just a few steps. Go! Ania, go!" She encouraged me to move. I finally scrambled over the overhang and reached the top of the route. I was trembling. When the sense of danger passed and my nerves calmed down, I began to cry. Sitting on the top, I cried like a baby. I was completely disappointed with my lack of strength. I was mad because I wasn't good enough. Agnes comforted me, saying "Don't worry, everything's OK." My instructor remained silent. He didn't make any comments. He didn't try to cheer me up. He was carefully waiting for when my emotions calmed down. He helped my partner clear the rope. After some time, I calmed down and cleared up. Then the instructor told us a funny story—I can't recall it. We were sitting on the top and laughing. We abseiled down one after another (field notes, climbing course, 31-05-2008).[14]

I remembered that I got stuck because my fear of falling was greater than the possibility of ascending. Objectively, there were no dangers that justified such fear. I was very safe and well protected. However, I felt fear with my whole body and experienced the situation as deeply threatening. My fear and helplessness were so great that I began crying after completing the route. One reason for this incident was my lack of physical strength and climbing skills, but another was my stubbornly clinging to the rock in order not to fall. At this stage of my climbing training, I had not yet learned how to flight, or fall off, and the moment of falling seemed so terrifying that I chose holding tight to the rock, like being paralyzed, rather than risk the next move. In this situation, working with my own fear meant working on redefining real threats in the situation of climbing. Fear appeared as an embodied emotion that made the ascent more difficult.

Lee F. Monaghan states that

14. This story ended a few weeks later when I returned to the same location with friends and "settled a score with the route," completing it cleanly.

> my own bodily co-presence and emotional involvement during fieldwork was intimately linked to the sociological task of making sense of [...] social action (Monaghan 2006:237).

And whose definition of the situation, whose making sense of the social action, were more "binding" and "proper" during the climbing course than what was expressed by the instructor?

Two conceptions clash during climbing courses. The one is that of the apprentice, for whom the activity is very difficult and the route seems almost impossible; the other is that of the instructor, for whom the performance is simple and the route very easy.[15] It is also a clash of the apprentice's appraisal of their skills and capabilities with those of the instructor. Finally, it is a clash of perceptions of the space in which the activity is performed. The route, which was viewed as an inaccessible vertical path immediately prior to climbing, changes in character after a successful ascent.

As a climber, I learned to judge my level of skills by listening to the comments of other, more experienced climbers about the rating system and the grades of particular routes. This clash of a student's perspective with the perspective of experienced climbers was crushing for the student's definition of the situation. The one,

15. These significant differences can be observed in most climbing training courses, and they are reflected in my field notes. "My partner and I are watching the course group while they're climbing. The students start the ascent and choke, one after another, at the same point in the route. They reach this point and can't go further. After several of these unsuccessful attempts, the instructor puts on his shoes and, belayed by one of the students, efficiently completes the route. One can see a considerable difference between the climbing technique of the instructor and the students. He performs precise motor movements—slow, aesthetic, and smoothly executed. His hands hit the holds flawlessly as if they knew them by heart— they aren't looking for anything. He displays composure and confidence in his performance. His body is balancing, bending, almost dancing on the rock wall. It seems to be flowing. He ascends completely effortlessly. Beautifully. With grace. Unlike him, the trainees enter the route with considerable difficulty, turn red with effort, gasp for breath, and make mistakes in evaluating their balance abilities. They're nervous and tense; they shake and clutch at the wall. You can see that they're afraid of falling off. Their hands are groping for the next holds. Before each grab, they touch the rock nervously several times, trying to judge what they can catch, and they overgrip (field notes, Sokole Mountains, 06-08-2009).

who had just done "the most dangerous and difficult thing in her life," overcoming panic and acting in spite of fear, had viewed climbing as a "struggle for life"—while the other regarded the route as easy, recreational, or just a beautiful location. I adopted the definition of more experienced climbers and began evaluating my achievements differently. I gained a desire to increase the level of difficulty and ascend more demanding routes. The comment in my field notes at the end of one climbing day is "I finally did only two lousy threes"[16] (field notes, 21-08-2007). This indicates that I had readily adopted the perspective of experienced climbers in assessing my own climbing. I forced myself with the ambition to do more difficult routes at the cost of *rejecting my own perspective*—"I struggled for my life," "I was so scared," "I was afraid of falling off," "I was afraid of getting injured or breaking something."

In parallel with the process of learning how to climb and how to make climbing safe through using climbing technology, such as belaying systems and climbing equipment, my contact with rock climbing thus imperceptibly became a work concerning the *redefinition of fear. I* found that I could react to the fear in different ways. Those new ways of responding were prompted by significant others—my climbing instructors.

I would not regard my personal experiences as worthy of any wider discussion if I did not suspect that other climbers might also have the same feelings or go through similar mental and bodily processes. But watching the young boy struggling with his fear gave me the striking thought that others might experience emotions close to mine, and that my own struggling was neither unique, nor exceptional. With that conviction, I began collecting instances of comparable situations, actions, and feelings.

Reporting on fear: Climbers interviews and narratives

While my own embodied knowledge enabled me to acquire access to experiences unattainable by outsiders, I also began exploring the theme of fear and anxiety in the interviews with climbers.

16. This means that I completed two routes with a difficulty grade of three.

They reported moments of fear and stated their perceived reasons for fear, describing feelings they experienced while ascending.

> [F]irst, it's your psyche that's important. Strong, strong nerves. And not to shake. Me, for example, when I start being scared, my whole body begins trembling. And this isn't simply my calf quivering, but... uh... my heart begins to beat in a terrible way and I start to panic. And then my hands shake, I grab the rock in the wrong way. Then I stick to the rock with these paws and become exhausted more and more. I'm standing in one spot and can't move. I'm scared, I'm scared, I'm scared, scared, scared. I'm scared, I'm scared... And this is what I get wrong in my climbing... my mind doesn't work properly and I'm often scared.[17,18]

Another interviewee who was asked about what was most difficult for her in learning how to climb stated the following:

> It's difficult all the time. Fear of falling. I don't... In general, I'm afraid of falling off the wall. It happened to me recently, when we were climbing in [place in Poland] and I fell with a piece of the rock in my hand [laughter].[19]

Climbers' stories recalled numerous *moments of fear* or of *being scared*, indicated *perceived reasons for fear*, provided *descriptions of feelings* and *emotions*, and described *their effect on climbing*. Analyzing these stories allowed me to recognize and name my own internal processes, but this was a reciprocal act. I related every new item of information to my own experience, and every new experience I

17. Interview with an intermediate climber, 25-year-old female, climbing for a year and a half.

18. When I rank climbers in respect to their abilities, I use categories developed by the researchers Don McGrath and Jeff Elison (2014). They define four stages of rock climbing in their *Vertical Mind: Psychological Approaches for Optimal Rock Climbing*. These are novice, one who is learning basic skills; intermediate, one who is building their skills and movement repertoire; advanced, one who applies specific training procedures and projects their own climbs; and élite climber, one who projects primarily very demanding climbs and establishes new routes. See McGrath and Elison 2014:9.

19. Interview with an intermediate climber, 32-year-old female, climbing for 2½ years.

compared to other data. I treated my personal experience as outlining issues and questions to examine during the investigation. information to my own experience, and every new experience I compared to other data. I treated my personal experience as outlining issues and questions to examine during the investigation. People with less experience in climbing spoke about their fear and ways of working on it a little more openly and spontaneously. However, even more advanced climbers revealed the fear they experienced when asked about the emotions that accompanied them while climbing.

> **AK:** What emotions do you experience while climbing?
> **Interviewee:** None. Sometimes I'm scared.
> **AK:** Tell me a little about it. What are you afraid of?
> **Interviewee:** That I will break my ass—there's nothing else to it. Well, that's it. Bodily integrity. I guess that's the point. The results are... Sometimes I know that a move is riskier, and if it fails, it may end up with bloodshed. And then it's sorry, stupid, yeah. Several months out of action, something... a whole lot of different—it's not known for what end—consequences. These are... We're entering the world of the unpredictable—completely. So, here it's probably just that... that I have such a fear of injuring myself... Once I had an accident, I broke my leg and it was not pleasant, and I think it reminds me... Oh, I know what the moment is! Good question. It's good that I mentioned this accident. Before I freaked out then and broke my leg, it was a moment of the same damn thing... Your will wants it. And all of you wants and wants, but you can't go on. And it's quite a disgusting moment in which you practically— willingly—are unable to control even that square meter that's the space for your... feet and hands. And that's quite an unpleasant feeling, especially if it's connected with a moment when your [body] is refusing obedience. That you no longer have the strength to hold your balance, or grip, or stand on the step, and you begin to be just a little sack that accidentally and suddenly falls off. It is a very unpleasant feeling. With time, I've learned that you don't get to this point, but drop out early enough [laughs]... or withdraw.[20]

20. Interview with an advanced climber, 55-year-old male, a mountaineer who has been climbing for 37 years.

Panic has been described as an emotion that is the opposite of effective action.

> [In] one moment, from a person who controls your surrounings and yourself, you turn into a victim, the inability to continue... the inability to control your surroundings. And you can't even command your muscles to keep working as they're supposed to work—they just can't work anymore... And if I were to say that something in the mountains is unpleasant, that's the moment— when you get to the point where nothing works the way you're used to it, neither your hands, nor your legs, nor your sense of balance. You feel like you're panicking, you know that it will end in one way and not another—it just has to... It's especially unpleasant in winter because you know that it's enough... that it can't end without punishment. In most cases... such a situation in winter is associated with some kind of injury... Panic is inside. It's not a panic that manifests itself as hyperactivity. It's instead a state of anxiety in the head. There's panic here... It's about an internalized panic in which... you're thinking at 150 per second, but nothing is correct, we can't use any of it. That's what it's all about. It is not a state of struggle, but rather anxiety in the head.[21]

More advanced climbers emphasized that fear is an element that paralyzes and prevents action. Moreover, they often portrayed climbing as an activity that, in its essence, does not or should not have anything to do with emotions:

> Well, everyone feels fear on some level. It is important that this fear is not stronger than the desire to go up. Because then—we're done.[22] [Climbing – AK], for me this is the moment when I'm locked in... focused on something, on the gripping, on the move, there's no place for emotions here... There's a program here... that has no emotions. It should not have emotions anyway, and when emotions begin, we talk about this state [panic– AK], which... is on the border of physical and mental resilience. This is when emotions begin. But as long as everything goes as it should, there are no emotions there. There's

21. Interview with an advanced climber, 55-year-old male, a mountaineer who has been climbing for 37 years.

22. Interview with an advanced climber, 41-year-old male, a sports climber and PZA instructor who has been climbing for 26 years.

> concentration, there's attention, there's listening, watching, reading the wall... well, a whole lot of different operations that are rather intellectual, perceptual. You have to translate it into some muscular and bone movements... It's this kind of state. These positive emotions are of course the moments when you light a cigarette at the stand, these are the moments when the road ends, when you get better weather out of doubtful weather and suddenly something that was invisible begins to be visible, and we have a cool climbing piece. These—these are the fun moments. Without a doubt. And these are positive emotions. Only they're not... [part of – AK] action—that's it. Acting here... No, no, no. The climbing itself, the very act of climbing, has nothing to do with emotions. I would put it that way.[23]

During an interview, the American professional climber Steph Davis, who is one of the very best all-round female climbers, answered the question "How do you manage your own personal fear?" in the following way.

> Fear is a tough one because when you get really scared, you can't really do anything. And so I put a lot of energy myself into studying that, and saying, "Okay, how do I not be controlled by that?" Because fear is just a performance destroyer. And being scared often causes you to be less safe because you can't do the job. So I try really hard to not be stopped by fear, but I also try—now I try not to do things because I'm afraid, if that makes sense. I think when I was younger, if something scared me, I thought "Oh, I have to do it!" I got to, you know, grab it by the horns and make it happen. Now, sometimes, if I'm really scared, sometimes I listen to that and say, "Hmm, maybe not today."[24]

Davis perceives fear as a disturbing emotion that makes an action difficult or even impossible (*a performance destroyer*), but it is also an element that is constantly present in climbing. She links fear with safety, pointing to a particular relation between them—

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23. Interview with an advanced climber, 55-year-old male, a mountaineer who has been climbing for 37 years.

24. Interview with Steph Davis, an élite climber, BASE jumper, and wing suit flyer, on Outside Today, 08-05-2012, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKYXPY-qmvfg, accessed 15-01-2014.

the subjective feeling "I'm not safe here" actually diminishes a climber's safety. Davis also reflects on a noteworthy change during her career when she passed from treating fear as signaling a challenge to be taken to regarding it as a deep insight into her ability to take up the challenge and cope with the task. Based on her own experiences, she conceptualizes fear as a complex and heterogeneous phenomenon.

> There is good fear and bad fear. Bad fear was... the thing that's making you perform badly, even though you shouldn't... And then there's good fear where, you know, say you're in the mountains, and you're in, like, avalanche slopes... I was like, well, that's good fear. You should listen to that. It's for survival. I did have an experience once where I was free soloing[25] and I got really scared, and just all the idea is in your head of, like, "I'm gonna fall." It was really bad. After that experience I decided that... you have to control that. And you can't even go climbing without a rope if that's gonna be able to happen. Because that's gonna be the thing that causes you to fall. Because you are perfectly capable of the climbing generally, but if you get seized by fear, that could be what will kill you. I think what you put in your head is what stays in your head, sometimes. It's all about controlling your brain and just putting what you want in your brain and not allowing the things that you don't want. And that's, like, the crux of life.[26]

Even a highly accomplished professional climber thus has to negotiate with their own fear—willing not to be stopped by it, but also choosing not to climb while being scared. Davis definitely does not want to be controlled by fear, but she also emphasizes the need to be respectful and watchful regarding the external conditions of action. She claims that "Fear is one of the most powerful emotions we have. It's part of why climbing is good for us, I think."[27]

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25. Free soloing means climbing a route using only the strength of one's own body (with no artificial aids) and without any belay system (no rope, no harness, no belayer).

26. Steph Davis interview, on High Infatuation with Steph Davis—Health Beauty Life The Show, 24-05-2012, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jNsMDoYK2g, accessed 15-01-2014.

27. High Infatuation, http://www.highinfatuation.com/blog/fear-and-climbing/, accessed 06-04-2015.

Fear on the screen: Documentary and video materials

Not all information about climbing is available in talks—and not even possible to express in words. In order to embrace the entire situation of climbing, I also used video materials and documentary films that presented moments of ascending. In the scene described below, one can watch the Polish élite climber Adam Pustelnik, ranked among the best climbers in the world, as he is ascending a route in Yosemite.

> Description of the scene: Climber is ascending a route in Yosemite. After some moves, he stops. He is trying to assesspossible moves looking up at the rock. His face expresses concern and caution. He leans back to spot the holds and steps along the route. He changes his position to have a better view. Finally, he spends about 10 seconds examining the route, standing on one point. He is trying to catch a stable position and grip any hold inside the crack. He sighs and works hard. But he can't perform the next move. He swears. And finally regresses down. When he howls "Aaaaaaa!" off screen, it sounds like irritation or rage. After some moves, he moves down again. He clearly feels unsafe at a difficult point of the route. He doesn't have some equipment he needs to establish a safe anchor in the rock. "Fuck me!!! Why did I bring NOOOTHING!!!?" This means "Why didn't I bring more equipment to be more safe?" He shakes one hand as he says this. He's angry with himself that he hasn't brought proper climbing gear to be safe. He's afraid to continue the climb. At the same moment he's in a rage, frustrated because he can't continue climbing. He's afraid to make the next move. He says "Shit!" But then he immediately says to himself, "I don't have to be so scared here!!!" He energetically grabs the nearest hold. He shouts "Fuuuck!" But then he immediately returns to "being scared and frustrated." His whole body is tensed. He nervously shakes his hand. After a while, he energetically starts to climb again and skillfully passes the difficult spot. "Oh, fuck!" he says with relief. He says "Fuuuck! Fuck me," like someone in control of the situation. "Never in my life have I shit my pants more... But it comes from stupidity." The climber utters these last sentences, expressing his relief, when he has gained secure and stable footing.[28]

28. Pustelnicy w górach [Pustelniks in the Mountains], documentary by Mirosław Dembiński (2008), video by Maciej Szafnicki, excerpt 22:17–23:40.

The crucial moment of the scene is when the climber overcomes his fear, saying loudly to himself "I don't have to be so scared here!" In Blumer's words, he "indicates to himself the things toward which he is acting" (Blumer [1969]1998:5). One can see that he acts towards his own deeply experienced fear that was caused by not having enough safety gear. He has to weigh his skills against the demands of the route. In order to overcome his fear, he must believe in his abilities and redefine his perception of danger. Finally, through the acclamation "I don't have to be so scared here!," he tells himself to trust his skills and strength.

Many mountaineers and climbers affirm that climbing is linked to emotional work, particularly working with the emotion of fear. Although the substance and aim of climbing is to overcome difficulties,[29] fighting fear is presented as the essence of the climbing experience.

This reflex of opposition to your own fear is the essence of the climbing experience. The climber is of course afraid, but they overcome their fear, control themselves, and climb to the top.[30]

Advanced climbers theorizing about fear: Blogs, social media, and other sources

Various data sources appear to confirm the importance of fear in climbing. Steph Davis, mentioned above, described a situation in which she felt afraid during one of her climbs and decided to repeat the ascent so that she "could do it unafraid." She stated that she has to continually work to overcome her own fear.

> I am always dealing with fear. So at times I am able to reach a place where I am bothered so little by fear that I don't notice it at all. At other times, I really feel it and am working to avoid being controlled by it, and that is probably the most useful skill to practice since there

29. Albert F. Mummery (1895:325–326) emphasized that "the essence of the [climbing] sport lies, not in ascending a peak, but in struggling with and overcoming difficulties."

30. Polish élite male alpinist Wojtek Kurtyka, born 1947, in Marek Kłosowicz's 2007 documentary film Ścieżka góry [Mountain Path].

> will always be times when you are afraid and need to do things anyway. [...] I think the freedom comes not in never feeling any fear at all, but in learning how to do the things you want to do even in its presence, and how to do them well–rather than being stopped by it. This is real freedom.[31]

Working with fear thus involves learning to distinguish between situations in which fear can be controlled and those in which fear controls action. There are times when the climber should withdraw from the attempt to control the situation, yield to their natural response, and quit the action.

Another example of a person dealing with fear is provided by Alain Robert, called the "French Spider-Man," who is well-known for climbing the highest skyscrapers in the world with no safety equipment *(free solo).* He states in his blog that he constantly fights with vertigo.

> Climbing is my passion, my philosophy of life. Although I suffer from vertigo, although my accidents left me disabled up to 66%, I have become the best solo climber.[32]

Although excellent climbers speak of their fear and anxiety, they tend to conceptualize their attitude to these emotions as an aspect of their personal growth—as both climbers and individuals. Advanced and elite climbers are inclined to treat the fear they experience as an element of their mental game. They believe that understanding one's fear—which means knowing one's fear triggers; seeing how they connect with thoughts, actions, and bodily sensations; and understanding its mechanisms—helps them to take advantage of it and improve their performance.

Another accomplished and internationally renowned climber, Eric J. Hörst, launched the climbing performance web site *Training for Climbing*[33] in order to share his unique "Mental Wings" training

31. Steph Davis's blog, http://www.highinfatuation.com/blog/survival-signals, accessed 15-01-2014.

32. Alain Robert's web page, http://www.alainrobert.com, accessed 20-08-2011.

33. Training for Climbing, https://trainingforclimbing.com/, accessed 05-05-2022.

program. He states that "almost anything is possible once you conquer fear."

> In order to succeed and, in fact, survive this activity, requires extraordinary mental skills. Over the years, I've developed a wide-range of powerful mental strategies for performing in the danger zone with laser-like focus, bulletproof confidence, acute risk management, and the ability to continue upward in the face of fear. I call these cognitive skills my "mental wings" (Hörst 2017).

Don McGrath and Jeff Elison[34] (2014) make fear a central topic of their theoretical reflections in their *Vertical Mind: Psychological Approaches for Optimal Rock Climbing*.

> Fear is an evolutionary adaptation that humans share with all mammals and many, many much older species [...] because it helps keep us alive and intact [...]. Fear readies our bodies for fight or flight. On the plus side, the fight mechanism can help us while climbing. Adrenalin gets released, blood glucose increases, heart rate and blood pressure increase, digestion slows, and attention increases. In many cases, fear allows us to fight through the tough sections. On the down side, the fight mechanism may be dialed up too high. We become too tense, breathe poorly, overgrip, waste energy, experience tunnel vision—we fail. Another down side is that the flight mechanism may cause us to freeze up [...] rather than move upward toward success (McGrath and Elison 2014:71).

McGrath and Elison situate fear as a force that gives us access to the evolutionary resources of the body. However, they also emphasize the interpretive aspect of the process of recognizing and dealing with fear, acknowledging the importance of fear perception and the of accelerated hearts and clammy palms and end up in the downward-spiral-to-choke or we can make fear our ally and optimize our performances (McGrath and Elison 2014:71).

34. Since both authors are active and experienced climbers, I regard this book as expressing an ordered theorizing process concerning optimal rock climbing. It also presents a coaching discourse found in the social world of climbing that could be analyzed using the coding procedures of grounded theory.

They examine fear as one of the "common problems that keep climbers from reaching their potential and reduce their enjoyment" (McGrath and Elison 2014:44). McGrath and Elison's intention is to "help us take control of fear, allow us to take advantage of it, optimize our fear, with the end result being improved performance" (McGrath and Elison 2014:71). At the very least, we should learn keeping our "fear (of pain or failure) in check" (McGrath and Elison 2014:31). They propose building new climbing skills through practice and drills and establishing new scripts. They recommending continual work on both climbing techniques and mind control for the purpose of improving one's mental game. Self-observation and fear-reducing mental practices, such as recognizing and challenging irrational beliefs, are of great importance in this regard.

Conclusions: Working on Fear while Climbing

Fear is an inherent element of climbing in respect to the associated risks, regardless of a climber's level of skill. Climbers experience *fear of heights* and *fear of falling*, but they learn how to overcome these emotions and react to them properly, usually in the early stages of their careers. Novice climbers also experience anxiety concerning the unknown and a lack of certainty regarding what will happen during climbing—including fear of pain or body injury—but they are nonetheless ignorant of all the hazards and threats connected with climbing. The processes related to coping with fear paradoxically begin with an emergence of the fear of such dangers because fear drives the climber to *learn how to recognize hazards when climbing, learn vigilant behavior on rock and mountain terrain*, and *learn proper treactions when in danger.*

Climbers constantly work on identifying threats during a climb and evaluating the level of danger in a given situation. Such significant others as instructors, more experienced partners, and belayers play crucial roles in the *redefinition of danger*. They do so in many ways, including

- *indicating concrete moves* that the novice should make—the fact that there are "instructions" concerning how to cover a route reassures a climber and normalizes the situation;

- *expressing the attitude of being helpful*—the novice knows that someone is ready to provide help and knows how to do a given task, which creates a sense of security;
- *expressing emotion*—an instructor expressing boredom or impatience informs a novice that the situation is under control; their calmness and self-control show that they are unaffected by the beginner's emotions and that the situation is safe ("there's nothing to be afraid of"). This imprints a new definition of the situation on the novice. During a climbing course, the instructor's definition of a situation "naturally" imprints itself because it is "binding" and "proper."
- the *instructor expressing confidence in the novice's effectiveness*—they are sure that the novice will manage the task;
- the *instructor's* stated *expectation* that the novice will complete the route;
- *encouraging the beginner to act*—from a friendly "Come on! Go ahead!" to the blunt "Move your ass!", "How long are you going to waste your time?"

In addition to increasing *their technical skills*, a climber has to *develop trust in their climbing gear*—harness, rope, knots, belay device—*and confidence in their partner as a belayer* in order to improve their climbing abilities. Fear arises from the embodied sensation of being bent away from the perpendicular axis of the body, losing contact with the rock, feeling unsafe without footholds, or seeing the abyss below. The primary element of learning how to climb is *the redefinition of one's fear*—controlling fear and not allowing it to stop a given action. The most crucial element in this process is *gaining trust in one's climbing skills* because the more the body is trained, the more confident the climber is. Climbers quickly learn that they can easily fight their fear when they concentrate entirely on their moves. Every subsequent move shifts the focus of attention. The mind is not disturbed by the difficulties of the route that have been defeated and those that remain. The focus is entirely on a concrete move, gripping the next hold, looking for the next step—problems that the climber has to solve "here and now." The result of this chain of moves is the completion of the route.

Learning to climb takes place step by step as novices overcome their existing beliefs concerning the limits of their abilities. For example, when belaying techniques are changed, such as from top-roping to lead climbing, the novice initially does not believe that they can learn to use the new method, but they nonetheless succeed to do so after a degree of effort and practice. Such leaps from the impossible to the possible broadens one's perspective on the development of their climbing skills as the climbs themselves become increasingly difficult.

In this sense, experiencing a substantial level of panic or fear while nonetheless successfully completing a task provides a new perspective on climbing. Although there are many possible emotional responses to danger, a climber needs to learn how to attain the experience of being free of panic. A stoic approach to difficulties or danger wins approval in the climbing community. Such reactions as anger, venting frustration by shouting, impulsive body movements, and swearing are also accepted. However, the novice quickly learns that starting to panic is not an approved reaction to fear among climbers. The apprentice consequently learns how to refuse to panic, having come to view panic as an inappropriate reaction while climbing. That does not mean they will never feel panic again, but the climber starts to react in a different way—with anger, swearing, or shouting—never with panic that paralyzes their moves. It is as if aninternal change has taken place that leads to choosing a different way of reacting.

Fear or panic can cause a temporary suspension of action, but completing a route in spite of feeling fear makes the climber familiar with a difficult situation. The experience of passing above the abyss and overcoming a fear of heights can give rise to a future willingness to cope with such problems. Fear is a constant element of climbing, but it does not necessarily restrain action. Fear grows when the climber faces a new activity, such leading a route for the first time, or when they make a mistake that lessens safety, such as entering a difficult place without proper protective equipment. Additional discouraging circumstances are poor weather conditions—cold, hot, a strong wind, precipitation. Fear also returns when the climber's level of physical condition drops, which leads to the feeling that they cannot trust their body.

The proper ways of dealing with one's fear are learned from significant others, including instructors and other climbers. An additional source of motivation for redefining fear is the experience of strong positive emotions combined with great effort, excitement, euphoria, happiness, and pride during one's first easy ascents, which defines future expectations about forthcoming climbing experiences. In this way climbers create a willingness to progress further, expand their climbing skills, and deal with fear in difficult situations. Employing appropriate ways of acting surmounts fear.

One's personal level of emotional comfort while climbing depends on the number of similar situations the climber has faced. Over time, the readiness to take on more difficult challenges increases and the fear of certain conditions decreases. For example, the fear of heights may fade away over the course of one's climbing career.[35] Another issue is that one's level of fear may change over time if they have not climbed. A climber can also learn "to enjoy and relax while climbing at great heights," but that requires continual work (McGrath and Elison 2014:42).

If we have not been reinforced for staying calm and keeping our fear in check, then we may drift back to being fearful. The bottom line is that each new season or each hiatus may force us to face our fears once again and require more practice (McGrath and Elison 2014:42).

Although emotions are transient and fleeting phenomena in that they appear and last merely for a few seconds or minutes, and then disappear or change very quickly, they crucially affect the course and the consequences of a given action. Fear in climbing has many faces—nervousness, anxiety, desperation, panic, or even terror— and all are embedded in the processes of a living body. But even though fear is embodied in this manner and is a *non-role-taking* emotion, it also operates within a social context. There are several reasons for this.

35. Don McGrath relates that "I recall being scared as a new climber, while being lowered on a top-rope only 30 feet off the ground. I now can stand on the ledge hundreds of feet off the ground as long as I'm anchored in" (McGrath and Elison 2014:95).

First of all, climbing is usually done with others—belayers, partners, friends—or in the presence of others. Second, climbing as an activity is subject to rating systems that evaluate the difficulty of a route as well as the quality of the climbing performance (Kacperczyk 2016a:190). Such assessments create a hierarchical social world in which actors are labeled by the levels of difficulty of their climbs. As a result, an élite climbing world has been established consisting of the best climbers who have conquered the most difficult and highly rated routes. The evaluation and classification process constitutes a significant source of comparison between climbers and provides a means for orienting oneself in the social world of climbing (Kacperczyk 2016a:201). Within this context, the fear of judgment comprises an additional source of concern for a climber who might be afraid that he will "fail in front of other climbers" (McGrath and Elison 2014:70).[36]

However, my considerations have not addressed fear as a *role-taking emotion*. In the above analysis, I was particularly interested in the moment when a climber noticed their fear and began naming it, working with it, theorizing about it, and negotiating the boundaries of their activity and agency.

Coda: Reporting on Emotions with the First-Person Approach

Participating in climbing changed me as both a researcher and a climber, transforming my willingness to cope with certain emotional states and obstacles. The emotions experienced during ascents

36. McGrath and Elison remark that "Especially in the more mild forms, we may not even be conscious of their [fears – A.K.] effects. For example, we say we fell because we were pumped or weren't strong enough. But the real problem may have been fear causing us to hesitate or overgrip. Similarly, we decide to repeat the route, rather than face a new challenge. Why? Perhaps we are afraid we might fail in front of other climbers" (McGrath and Elison 2014:70). In contrast, Eric J. Hörst observes that "While fear of failure, criticism, and embarrassment chains most people to their current existence, you can banish fear and achieve extreme success simply by being completely willing to fail, be criticized, or be embarrassed" (Hörst 2017).

broadened my perspective of what was possible in my climbing performance and expanded possibilities for gaining insight into the activity I was studying. Autoethnography allowed me to track the process of self-improvement as a climber and a researcher in that it provided a unique opportunity to acquire experiences that facilitated gaining a more profound understanding of the activity being explored. Not only did it provide insight into the advance in my cognitive processes, it helped me acquire a certain degree of control over it by means of an awareness of what I had introduced into the investigation process.

Tracking the emotional aspects of climbing activity sensitized me to the subtle dimensions of becoming a climber. Climbing requires developing one's own embodied skills to move and operate with climbing equipment, but also demands learning to control one's emotional states. In my case, gaining a "proper" attitude to the activity being "learned" and "studied" involved imperceptibly submitting to the perspective of significant others and adopting their point of view.

I employed grounded theory methodology to analyze the data I had collected related to emotional states—those of interviewees, of others I observed or described, and my own as well. I was looking for the properties of particular analytical categories—the emotions experienced as they were expressed or described and their situational conditions. I compared climbers' emotional states in different settings and at various levels of their career, building hypotheses concerning the emotions experienced in climbing and how actors worked on them.

What surprised me during the analytical process was how easily I adopted the rules of emotional work expressed by my significant others, how quickly I submitted my views to theirs concerning a given activity—and how long it took me to discover this. I began to climb in 2007, I noticed a boy having a problem with fear in 2009, I theorized about fear in 2011. Finally, only in 2014, was I able to understand how indiscriminately I had followed the emotional rules presented to me by significant others, that is, more experienced members of the social world of climbing.

For four years, I was unable to reflect analytically upon my own experience of fear or locate it within the network of the catego-

ries that had been generated. I returned to it only in 2011 as I was analyzing the emotions of fear and anxiety experienced by other climbers. I was able to do so by looking at these situations from a distance and in a "matter-of-fact" way. Framing this in relation to the experiences of a novice climber, I noticed how instructive it was for me to observe experiences related to fear and panic and the situational context within which they were expressed. Thanks to this collision with other peoples' behavior, I realized that these shocking incidents provided me with a new cognitive perspective concerning climbing, which influenced my own further climbing activity. However, I was able to reconstruct the transformations in my view of climbing only some years after the events that had led to them—I could grasp the meaning of these events only retrospectively. At the time they took place, they were only a stream of intensely experienced emotions.

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Interviewing as Theater

Diana Janućauskienė

"A life is not 'how it was' but how it is told."
Jerome Bruner

Introduction

From the perspective of Erving Goffman's dramaturgical theory, each social interaction in everyday life may be understood as a stage performance in which the participants in a particular interaction perform their roles in an effort to create and control the impression they make on others. Goffman argues that "any social establishment may be studied profitably from the point of view of impression management" (Goffman 1959:152). In order to create an impression, participants in an interaction conduct a performance, which Goffman understands as "all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants" (Goffman 1959:8). The goal of such a depiction is thus "to sustain a particular definition of the situation" and persuade the audience that the performer's definition of reality is unquestionably real (Goffman 1959:53). The performance embraces both "frontstage" and "backstage" for this purpose. Goffman defines frontstage as

> that part of the individual's performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance. "Frontstage" is then the expressive equipment of a standard kind intentionally or unwittingly employed by the individual during his performance (Goffman 1959:13).

A performance presents an idealized picture of the situation, and everything that the performer seeks to hide from the audience remains backstage. Goffman defines backstage as

> a place, relative to a given performance, where the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course (Goffman 1959:69).

This paper applies the dramaturgical approach to social interaction in analyzing qualitative interviews as a specific type of everyday "theater." It focuses on analyzing the frontstage performances of interviewees in the theater as well as the role of interviewers who, being assigned the role of audience, seek to understand the narratives presented frontstage and uncover what remains backstage. This article thereby addresses two major methodological issues. First, it examines how and why people modify, either consciously or unconsciously, their stories as presented frontstage in an interview, such as by providing selected elements of the story, improving the appeal of their stories, forgetfulness, lying or deception, and so forth. Second, it explores the strategies that sociologists may apply in trying to avoid misleading interpretations of the subjective narratives that are presented frontstage in the interview. Although this approach might be critiqued for its supposed view that individuals are manipulative and untrustworthy, such behavior may be viewed in a positive light as well. The basis for this view is provided by Charles H. Cooley, who observes that "if we never tried to seem a little better than we are, how could we improve or 'train ourselves from the outside inward'?" (Cooley 1922:352).

Empirical data for the present study was provided by two sociological research projects in which the author of this paper participated. The first of these, *The Quality of Democracy and Equal Opportunities: Attitudes and Social Practice,* was a Lithuanian case study that was conducted in 2017–2018 by the Institute of Sociology of the Lithuanian Social Research Centre in order to explore the situation regarding human rights and equal opportunities. It involved a national quantitative survey (N=1009) and 30 qualitative face-to-face interviews with the directors of non-governmental organizations, the office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, and indivi-

duals who had experienced discrimination and had filed complaints with that office. This project was funded by the Lithuanian Scientific Council.

The second project, *Addressing Trafficking for Labour Exploitation through Improved Partnerships, Enhanced Diagnostics and Intensified Organisational Approaches* (ADSTRINGO), was an international comparative study covering the nine countries of the wider Baltic Sea region, namely, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, and Sweden. This project was conducted in 2012–2014 with financial support provided by the Prevention of and Fight against Crime program of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Home Affairs. The empirical research in Lithuania was conducted by this author. In addition to documentary analyses of labor regulations, the research included 16 qualitative face-to-face interviews with victims of human trafficking and labor exploitation abroad; people who had worked abroad for a long periods of time and had various experiences of discrimination; directors of non-governmental organizations that assist victims of human trafficking and labor exploitation; and representatives of the Criminal Police, the Lithuanian Labour Exchange, and the Vilnius Labour Exchange.

The empirical data in these projects was generated through an analysis of traumatic individual experiences such as discrimination, labor exploitation, and human trafficking. For this reason, the traumatic memory argument was employed as an additional theoretical tool in order to gain a better understanding of interviewees' performances when they recalled traumatic experiences in their lives. This argument maintains that memories of traumatic experiences differ from those of other life events insofar as

> the occurrence of trauma could change the way memories are accessed, with trauma survivors learning to halt memory retrieval in order to avoid intense emotional distress (Moore and Zoellner 2007:1–2).

In addition, stressful experiences "are remembered mainly in nonverbal, sensory form and as informational fragments" (Janet 1925, as cited in Porter and Birt 2001:102), which are then "processed in a manner that renders memory for the trauma difficult to re-

trieve explicitly as a coherent narrative" (Porter and Birt 2001:102). That is to say that traumatic experiences are remembered as fragments and, as van der Kolk argues, "only these memory 'fragments' are available in narrative form" (Van der Kolk 1996, 1997, as referenced in Porter and Birt 2001:102).

The empirical research conducted in the ADSTRINGO project and *The Quality of Democracy and Equal Opportunities: Attitudes and Social Practice* project supports these previous research findings. An additional factor of importance is being ashamed both of what has happened, and of the possibility that other people will come to know what has happened. This has a very substantial impact upon the narratives related by the victims of traumatic events.

The idea of regarding an interview as a theater performance first arose while collecting data for the ADSTRINGO project. Insofar as the aim of that project involved making a record of the stories of people who had experienced labor exploitation and human trafficking abroad, the sample of interviewees was formed with the help of representatives of non-governmental organizations that had provided assistance to the victims of various types of crime. During field work, the clash between stories as they were told by interviewees and the same stories as they were presented by the informed representatives of these non-governmental organizations was so vivid that both the fruitfulness and even necessity of conceptualizing this issue became evident. A number of divisions between the frontstage and backstage of performances also became clear during in the project—the fragmentation of stories, the presentation of selected elements of stories, the refusal to mention/remember certain events, making stories more appealing and convincing, using words that soften the drama of the trauma experienced, and falsification of certain (most often crucial) elements of stories. Another important finding that emerged from our interviews with non-governmental organizations that provide assistance to people who had undergone this type of crisis was that there apparently was a gender-based difference regarding the behavior of victims of labor exploitation. In this respect, it was very difficult for male victims to accept that they had been cheated, deceived, and exploited, and this self-deception prevented them in many cases from seeking and receiving help.

Frontstage and Backstage in an Interview

Interviewing is a specific type of live, everyday social interaction. It is distinct from other types of social interaction in the sense that it comprises a focused interaction between people who are unacquainted with each other. Goffman maintains that there are two general types of social interaction, namely,

> unfocused interaction, concerned with what can be communicated between persons merely by virtue of their presence together in the same social situation; and focused interaction, concerned with clusters of individuals who extend one another a special communication license and sustain a special type of mutual activity that can exclude others who are present in the situation (Goffman 1963:83).

The fact that an interview is focused, while also comprising an interaction between people who are unacquainted with each other, makes it easier for the interviewee, or the actor in the performance, to control the situation and manage the impression that they wish to make on the audience.

As is the case with other everyday interactions, an interview performance is divided into frontstage and backstage. The frontstage consists of the narratives and body language of the interviewee, while the backstage comprises all that is either consciously or unconsciously kept off the frontstage. The backstage thus includes those fragments of the story that were not used frontstage as well as the wider context of the story. An interviewer who performs the role of audience in an interview must collect a broad range of information that will later assist in interpreting the data. The most problematic task in this data collection and interpretation is in fact uncovering what has been left backstage.

In general, people use stories to make sense of their lives and present themselves and their experiences to others (Sarbin 1986). In doing so, they recreate their life story according to the definition of the situation that they employ. Accordingly, an interviewee constructs an identity in a given narrative that sifts out unwanted information during the interview, which serves to create a gap between subjective and objective reality. This division becomes particularly apparent when researching traumatic experiences.

In the ADSTRINGO project, which analyzed the traumatic experiences of human trafficking and labor exploitation outside of one's home country, several interviews stand out as good examples of the divisions between frontstage and backstage, or what may be referred to as subjective and objective reality. This project utilized interviews in order to capture the general tendencies of labor exploitation by means of stories of individual experiences. The goal was to reveal the unembellished scope and character of the problem in light of the failure of both official statistics and police records to indicate the true situation. However, it became apparent while conducting research that the frontstage of the interviews with the victims of labor exploitation and human trafficking also failed to reveal the true situation. The majority of the victims either avoided speaking about their experiences, felt ashamed, or sought to ignore such traumatic episodes in their lives. It also became obvious that many smaller incidents were not recognized as exploitation since they were so widespread that they came to be regarded as almost normal or natural. This had already become clear through previous research.

We analyze below two examples of narratives regarding individual stories. The first is labelled "I was bored and wanted to see the world." The actor in this story is a 34-year-old man who had worked abroad for eleven years in a European Union country before returning home to Lithuania. His narrative provides a clear example of embellishing a story by providing only selected elements of that story while not mentioning crucial events and motives. The story is told from a distance—a long temporal perspective and the position of a settled man who has returned to his home country, now has a family, and is happy with what he has. The fact that the story is narrated from the perspective of a settled life may help to explain why this person seeks to ignore or understate less successful periods in his life and includes only those elements that correspond to his recent status (see Table 1).

Tab. 1 - Interview performance "I was bored and wanted to see the world."

Frontstage As narrated by the interviewee	Backstage As narrated by "significant others" who are familiar with the situation
The interviewee was a 34-year-old man who had 11 years of work experience abroad.	The interviewee was included in the sample as a result of discussions with people who were very familiar with his story.
"It became boring. There was such a routine. I wanted to look for adventure, just to see something different in my life. I was bored. I wanted to see the world." (Interview No. 5, ADSTRINGO, 2013)	He did not have a skilled job; worked in a grocery store in a small town; received a low salary; had no prospects; was constantly short of money; decided to emigrate.
"I worked long hours. I wanted to earn money. I worked every weekend... I didn't encounter any discrimination. Except maybe the attitude of the English towards migrants, which is quite negative. They never tell you that in a straightforward way. And I completely understand them. There are too many migrants there. I wouldn't be satisfied if we had a situation here similar to the one in England. For sure." (Interview No. 5, ADSTRINGO, 2013)	He had no insurance; no employment contract; usually worked through the labor exchange, which took a percentage of his salary; and was not covered by the Labour Code, which meant that overtime hours were not paid properly.

This table makes clear the very large difference between the narrative of the interviewee and the narrative that was provided by people who were familiar with his situation. The data indicate that an interpretation based purely on the subjective frontstage narrative would present a picture of a young man who was eager to discover the world and test himself in a new environment. In contrast, the backstage of the narrative presents a contrasting picture of a man who decides to emigrate because of his difficult financial situation and lack of prospects. These two pictures provide two opposing views concerning the same situation, and a correct inter-

pretation of that situation would require that both are taken into consideration in an effort to view the story in the widest context possible.

Blumer argues that

> [T]he use of meanings by a person in his action involves an interpretative process [...]. The actor selects, checks, suspends, regroups, and transforms the meanings in the light of the situation in which he is placed (Blumer 1986:5).

In the interview performance "I was bored and wanted to see the world," the interviewee adapts his narrative by selecting, regrouping, suspending, and transforming his story. Everything he states is true, and it does not contradict the stories of other narrators. Nevertheless, the interviewee selects the most positive facets of his story and presents them as being of central importance. In this way, his decision to emigrate is narrated as dependent upon his general will "to see the world" and escape the situation of "being bored," and he leaves aside factors that other narrators view as essential. The interviewee thus does not mention his "lack of money," the fact he has "no prospects," and his dissatisfaction with not being able to find a job that suits his education and aspirations.

The second table presents the story of a 20-year-old man who left home and his country at the age of 16 and went to the Netherlands on his own. He had only nine years of education. Police files and the records of non-governmental organizations indicate that he was initially exploited in theft schemes and later belonged to an organized crime group. He spent two years in juvenile prison in Lithuania for robbery. He received professional training in prison and participated in a resocialization program (see Table 2).

Tab. 2 - Interview performance "I lived with my friends and later sat in prison for a while."

Frontstage As narrated by the interviewee	Backstage As narrated by "significant others" familiar with the situation
The interviewee was a 20-year-old male with nine years of education who went to the Netherlands on his own at the age of 16. He was sentenced to two years in prison in Lithuania for robbery.	The interviewee was included in the sample as the result of a discussion with the director of a nongovernmental organization that provided him with assistance as a victim of human trafficking and labor exploitation. The director knew very well what had happened to this person. She also noted that she had learned about his story from the police.
"I sat [in juvenile prison] for robbery. Organized [robbery]. But it was long time ago. Files in the court took a long time [to process]. And I sat [in prison] for a while in Lithuania." (Interview No. 5, ADSTRINGO, 2013)	He was sentenced to two years in juvenile prison for participation in organized crime. He entered prison four years ago.
"I lived with my friends [in the Netherlands], who were hiding [from the police]." (Interview No. 5, ADSTRINGO, 2013)	He was trapped by human traffickers and exploited for theft.
"My parents were not against it. We lived like that. Very often I used to not come home." (Interview No. 5, ADSTRINGO, 2013)	His parents are asocial. They did not search for their son when he was absent for a month in the Netherlands. He was 16 years old at the time.
Para-data (interviewer's impressions): Speaks as an actor, chooses his words, and attempts to talk as if he belonged to the upper social class.	Para-data (interviewer's impressions): Does not fully control his body language. Words and body language do not correspond. During the interview he stares at the belongings, watch, and other accessories of the interviewer, creating the impression that he is estimating their value as possible "income."

One peculiar aspect of this example is that the interviewee knew that the interviewer was familiar with his story, at least the major details. He nevertheless tried his best to persuade the interviewer to accept his vision of his situation. In a manner similar to that of the previous example, the interviewee provided selected items of information that were neither lies, nor fabrications—but he included only those fragments of the picture that emphasized and reinforced what he regarded as the appropriate version of the story that he sought to relate. The example also had another interesting component—the interviewee connected the fragments of his story in such a way that he appeared to be innocent and a victim of circumstances. For example, he stated that he remained in prison for longer than might have been expected because of the time the court took to process his records.

Goffman maintains that

> [T]he performer who is to be dramaturgically prudent will have to adapt his performance to the information conditions under which it must be staged. Obviously, he will have to take into consideration the information the audience already possesses about him. The more information the audience has about the performer, the less likely it is that anything they learn during the interaction will radically influence them. On the other hand, where no prior information is possessed, it may be expected that the information gleaned during the interaction will be of relatively great importance (Goffman 1959:142).

The two tables above reveal that even if interviewees know that their audience possesses a degree of information about them, they may still seek to perform in a way that makes it possible for them to control the definition of the situation and create their desired impression on the audience. In the second example, the interviewee clearly enjoyed his performance insofar as being interviewed for a scholarly purpose reinforced his self-identity as comprising "an important case."

One Story, Several Versions

Cases involving social conflict comprise another important issue that has an impact upon the interpretation of subjective narratives. For instance, the various actors involved in one and the same conflict situation frequently have different points of view regarding what is happening, and their definitions of situations may differ from one another in a conflicting manner.

A pertinent example of conflicting definitions of a situation emerged during the *Quality of Democracy and Equal Opportunities* project. A main goal of this project was to collect stories regarding experiences of discrimination and the methods people employ to fight for their equal rights. The story described in Table 3, which can be found at the end of the article, displays five different definitions of one and the same situation by five actors who were either directly or indirectly involved. The issue concerns after-school activities in the Lithuanian language in the Vilnius District that surrounds the city of Vilnius, where Poles comprise a very large minority and the language of instruction in many schools is Polish.

Tab. 3 - Variety of narratives regarding the same story: "After-school activities in the Vilnius District."

A complaint was filed with the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson concerning the situation regarding after-school activities in the Vilnius District. In order to investigate this story, a number of interviews were conducted with people who were either directly or indirectly involved in the situation.	
Actors	Narratives
Actor No. 1: The Lithuanian community of the Vilnius District, who submitted two complaints to the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson.	"There is a lack of after-school activities in the Lithuanian language in the Vilnius District. [...] The Municipality does nothing about this." (The official complaint to the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson)

A complaint was filed with the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson concerning the situation regarding after-school activities in the Vilnius District. In order to investigate this story, a number of interviews were conducted with people who were either directly or indirectly involved in the situation.	
Actors	Narratives
Actor No. 2: Public activist and politician in the Vilnius District.	"There are almost no after-school activities in the Lithuanian language. [...] The Municipality does not favor ethnic Lithuanians in the Vilnius District." "The Polish schools are under the authority of the Municipality, while the Lithuanian schools are under the authority of the Ministry of Education." (Interview No.14, Quality of Democracy and Equal Opportunities project, 2018)
Actor No. 3: The Municipality of the Vilnius District.	"We do not collect data about the number of afterschool activities in different languages." (Official response to the request of the Ombudsperson in "Decision of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson No. (17)SN-55)SP51") There was no response to our request for an interview.
Actor No. 4: A public activist from the Polish national minority in Lithuania.	"Lithuanians have schools with swimming pools." "They have to understand that there are Poles where they're coming to live." (Interview No. 30, Quality of Democracy and Equal Opportunities project, 2018)
Actor No. 5: The representative of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson.	"Parents have to be more active and approach the Municipality with their suggestions and organize activities." (Interview No. 11, Quality of Democracy and Equal Opportunities project, 2017)

In contrast to Tables 1 and 2, Example 3 presents only the frontstages of the narratives. These illustrate how each of the five actors defend their own definition of the situation by providing arguments that support their position. This example also illustrates how important it is to take into consideration the context of the narrative and collect as many different opinions as possible regarding the same issue. Since the goal of the *Quality of Democracy and Equal Opportunities* project was to collect stories of discriminatory experiences, this particular example was first heard during our interview with the representative of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, who identified cases of discrimination that could be useful for our research. This particular case was also addressed in the subsequent interviews, from which five different narratives regarding the same story emerged.

Interpreting Interviews and Investigating Narratives

As the figures make clear, interpreting and analyzing qualitative interviews often encounters the significant dilemma of how we should treat subjective narratives. It goes without saying that it is also necessary for interviewers to take into consideration any subjective qualities that they themselves may ascribe to the data being collected. In addition, not only may subjective narratives regarding one and the same event differ greatly from each other, perhaps none of them corresponds to what others accept as objective reality. Briefly stated, the data that interviewees provide researchers as they are being interviewed do not necessarily present an accurate picture of reality. There are three clusters of reasons for why this may be the case.

1. Interviewees wish to present themselves as better than they are. They do so by controlling the definition of the situation and leaving aside, on the backstage of a given performance, and leaving aside, on the backstage of a given performance, anything that they do not want to bring forward. The need to present oneself in a better light may be viewed as a natural desire in constructing a desired image of oneself and conveying it to others.

2. Interviewees may lie, avoid speaking, or present embellished fragments regarding socially-sensitive experiences. This includes the examples noted above concerning labor exploitation, discrimination, and involvement in criminal activities.
3. Interviewees may wish to provide socially desirable answers to questions that, for example, present them as behaving in a proper manner and do not conflict with a more mainstream ideology and value system.

Qualitative interview data involves subjective perceptions, attitudes, and points of view that are narrated by the interviewee from the perspective that is most convenient for them in a given situation and time. We must consequently draw a clear distinction between opinions and facts as we interpret this type of data insofar as they may not be objective, strictly speaking. When the researcher seeks to collect data regarding sensitive and traumatic events in human lives, it is particularly important to understand any psychological issues that may influence how people remember given events. Even when collecting data about non-stressful events, the researcher must understand that the past is remembered from the perspective of the present. In this respect, we should take into consideration the fact that something which happened to a person when they were a youth often tends to have a more positive connotation precisely because it took place when they were young.

Furthermore, the ways in which stories are related are as important as their content. Focusing on the context within which a particular story is narrated makes it possible for the researcher to identify and hear the stories that have been left unspoken (Bamberg 2004). This research strategy allows one to see what is behind the frontstage of a story and compare, if possible, a number of differing versions of the same story. An associated approach in data analysis involves employing a critical point of view regarding data that appear too perfect to be true. Sociological research becomes akin in this regard to detective work in that it comprises an attempt to view the given phenomenon being studied from different angles, through the eyes of the various participants of the story, in order to uncover what is behind the frontstage and remains hidden backstage. It is also impor-

tant for the sociologist to capture the para-data and body language of the interviewee—how the intonation changes, where pauses are made, gestures and other signs, and whether there is a correlation between body language and the narrative in question. Investigating the context within which a given narrative is produced creates an opportunity to acquire a deeper understanding of the backstage. Insofar as interpretation is also associated with context, it is necessary to take into consideration the narratives of other actors associated with the same story as well as the logical abilities of the researcher to explore the larger situation as a whole.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper has been to apply Goffman's dramaturgical theory to an analysis of the social interaction that occurs during a qualitative interview. An interview, in a manner similar to other everyday social interactions, is a theatrical performance in which individuals present themselves to others and utilize various means to control the impressions that they make. This paper investigated the frontstage and backstage of the interview performance on the basis of the data collected in two empirical projects. It examined how and why people tend to modify the narrative stories that they present frontstage, and explored the strategies a researcher may employ in order to better understand what is left backstage. The present discussion has argued that the investigation of frontstage and backstage that a sociologist performs involves a search for evidence and clues that are not visible frontstage, but which might be uncovered through a deeper look at the context of the story, para-data, an analysis of the body language of the interviewees, and a number of varied subjective narrative interpretations of the same story.

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Routes Travelled by Medicalization

Martin Harbusch

Introduction

Medicalized interpretations of behavior present a particular challenge for social work professionals, who must deal with psychiatric categories in their everyday working life in primarily non-medical fields. This challenge resides upon the fact that such categories are complexity-adjusted conceptions of social reality that block social workers' view of their own very powerful vocabularies of reflection—family structures, peers, ethnic origin/cultural differences, migration experiences, and so forth—in describing problematic social constellations. The reference to medicine and/or psychiatry may at first seem more clear and more professional in respect to various institutions and one's own clientele than, for example, interpreting the relatively problematic behavior of clients from the standpoint of social structures. It remains to be seen, however, whether social work as an independent profession does itself a favor by adopting medicalizing concepts and identifying itself as a follower of other disciplines.

The field of social work is essential for processing the increasing pathologization of social problems today. When looking into the academic pursuit of this discipline, the first thing that strikes one is that psychiatric categories of illness have come to play an important role in this regard. On the one hand, they are used uncritically in many fields of social work to construct the domain of the discipline. For example, they are utilized for disciplinary argumentation in respect to the everyday practices of social work (Nissen 2002); for

arranging approaches to intervention and concepts of action (Ahrbeck and Willmann 2010); for interpreting the history of a person in need of assistance as a medical history with a logic typical for the course of a given disease (Bosshard, Ebert, and Lazarus 2001); for understanding the environment of the "affected person" as a social "risk factor" (Textor 1990); and for constructing new problem situations concerning the "family" (Weinert-Portmann 2009) and "relatives" (Ziegler 2010), who may also be affected. These and similar contexts for employing the notion of mental disorders, which are often pre-structured by psychiatric diagnostic indexes—notably the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) and the International Classification of Diseases (ICD)—are staged in a way that reduces complexity for the sake of an individualcentered professional logic in order to both bundle and expand one's own developmental, support, and care-oriented performance. One could also argue that psychiatric constructions may be interpreted as assisting a discourse that at times plays a role in theoretical approaches regarding field work (Baierl 2008; see also Ahrbeck and Willmann 2010).

On the other hand, critical thematizations of psychiatric interpretations and constructivist analyses have become prominent in the related debate (see Lutz 2019; Dollinger 2019; Anhorn and Balzereit 2016) that addresses the fundamental disciplinary and professional uncertainties of the policy-driven field of social work. The latter has long comprised an area of conflict between individual assistance and societal demands for integration. Social work—as a discipline caught between the multidimensional demands of social practice and debates concerning the content and modes of its own professionalism (see Blau 2018; Motzke 2014; Staub-Bernasconi 2009; Oevermann 1996; Harbusch and Pingel-Rathke 2021)—finds itself in a balancing act between psychoanalytic and psycho-social paradigms and explanations (see Ziegler 2010), socio-political demands and needs (Schmid 2007), sociological reflections (Dörr 2005), and biological etiologies. The inconsistencies and contradictions of the field, its actors, and, indeed, the discipline of social work itself come to the fore within these contexts and thematizations.

In practice, social workers work much closer to the problems of everyday life than do psychiatrists, and they are revealed in this respect as important players and agents in the struggle concerning psychiatry. The primary cause for this is that they encounter difficult, precarious, and problematic situations in dealing with their clients in which they must decide whether the latter should be taken into consideration within a psychiatric context. In addition, they often decide which types of social problems might be present in a given case and how the latter should be dealt with in the course of their interventions (Harbusch and Pingel-Rathke 2021; Bergmann 2014). Even when social workers do not conduct psychiatric diagnoses themselves, they actively help frame everyday situations as psychiatric, address client problems as intrapsychic in nature, and/or clear the way for a therapeutic setting.

However, psychiatric framing constitutes a highly paradoxical situation for social workers, particularly in respect to the medicalization and pathologization of social problems. On the one hand, proceeding in this manner may be viewed as appropriate insofar as it is useful to have access to forms of interpretation regarding complex objects that have a unifying effect, and also possess an inherent medical style, when social work is striving for professionalization (Schütze 1992). However, social workers thereby enter an arena in which they decentralize and weaken their own disciplinary and social-context oriented interpretive templates in that they are relative amateurs when using medicalizing and pathologizing descriptions (Liebsch and Manz 2007). They thus not only become professionally dependent, but also lose the ability to depict and understand their clients' everyday environment in the much more complex manner that would be possible through the use of their own discipline's vocabulary of reflection.

The way in which social work experts deal with pathologizing knowledge systems has been discussed as a problem for several decades (see e.g. Schmitz, Bude, and Otto 1989; McKnight 1983). We should note that these and other social science critiques—in the spirit of sociological criticism of the 1960s and 1970s—are often marked by the thematizations of organizational sociology and the theory of power. Although these continue to be relevant today, they nonetheless fail to track in micro-sociological terms the ways in

which psychiatric constructions—embedded in real life—perform situational services, such as generating individual and social meaning; asserting the interests of the actors involved; enabling institutional networking; co-determining professional understandings of social work; helping to shape ideas of health and illness; and generating self-understanding on the part of both professionals and their clientele. For sociology, reconstructions of the contexts in which psychiatric categories are utilized, the consequences of the increasing medicalization of the social world, and the impact and benefits and constructing situations for the people involved comprise key issues for future research.

This debate has recently begun to gain momentum in social work as well (see e.g. Anhorn and Balzereit 2016). Important research questions concerning the role of secondary user disciplines in the everyday dissemination of psychiatric orders of knowledge have not yet been formulated in social work debates—and have been taken into consideration in sociological critiques of psychiatry only to a limited degree (cf. Harbusch 2022). These include: Why have psychiatric knowledge orders evolved so successfully for describing social problems? Which professions operating outside psychiatric institutions use psychiatric knowledge and in what ways? How do such professions connect this knowledge with their own professional and institutional logics, and what benefits for secondary user professions can subsequently be assumed? and How do social workers deal with categories that find their way—as travelling knowledge—into the language games and thought habits of their own everyday lives? Even if the present research addresses the specific field of social work, it is also theoretically relevant to other professions and to types of knowledge other than psychiatric knowledge. The category of "travelling concepts" in general, or the question of how specialized knowledge can be applied in foreign contexts, stands on the horizon of this modest project.

Psychiatric Disease Categories as Travelling Concepts

It is possible today to view our society as a pathologized society (see Dellwing and Harbusch 2019) in that psychiatric knowledge

systems have established themselves as widely accepted interpretations of social problems. However, these knowledge systems have left the system of psychiatry, have increasingly colonized neighboring disciplines, and are now being utilized on a daily basis in places that are not inherently psychiatric venues. Nurses, social workers, teachers, lawyers, judges, health insurance workers, preschool teachers, parents, online communities, and others, may now be described as "psy-professions" (Cohen 2016) or "troubled persons industries" (Harbusch 2022) insofar as both professional and real-world experts "have over time acquired an authority on the supposed real nature of humans as psychological subjects" (Cohen 2016:8). This success of psychiatric knowledge systems resides upon the underlying concept of the epistemological structure of psychiatric disease indexes, which, since the early 1980s, has made it possible to frame irritating behaviors as symptomatic events and thereby interpret them as indications of an underlying disorder. When this process of interpretation is applied in everyday life, far from the field of psychiatry itself, it submits the irritating (and also self-irritated) individuals to a psychiatric examination. This is of interest in respect to not only the institutionally framed situations in which psychiatric attributions arise from outside the field, but also the multidimensionally interested actors and the consequences that arise from such interpretation for all participants. On the theoretical level, the paradoxes that arise from these situations are also important for the professions involved. The concept of travelling concepts—which is well established in cultural studies, literary studies, and philosophy (Bal 2002; Neumann and Nünning 2012; Said 1983; Lammert and Sarkowsky 2010), but not yet widely employed in sociology and social work—provides a template for reflecting on the disciplinary use of specialized and unfamiliar knowledge. Travelling concepts refer to a process in which knowledge that is unfamiliar, indeterminate, and not readily understood for actors in a given field finds its way into the familiar patterns of interpretation, logic, and language games of a broader social situation. Actors then find themselves faced with paradigmatic uncertainty in their confrontation with concepts that have arrived—just as on a real journey—from a foreign discourse and give rise to new possibilities for reference and thematization. This highlights the

practices associated with adopting unfamiliar knowledge concepts into one's own field. For example, the introduction of new categories prompts interpretations and adaptations on the part of professional actors that are necessary for integrating paradigmatically unfamiliar knowledge into one's own knowledge base. In addition, newly arriving concepts undergo a transformation of their content and format as they travel from one context to another.

Only a small part of such a journey is displayed in the analysis that follows, which reconstructs the use of psychiatric categories in social workers' narratives in given cases on the basis of examples taken from interview sequences. It is precisely through the strangeness of using psychiatric knowledge that social workers show themselves to be key figures in cultural contact (see Park 1928) between different multi-paradigmatic institutions, between social institutions and their clients, and between the various multilayered types of knowledge that actors employ every day to speak about the world. Social workers thus appear as central in both social and psychiatric contexts. This is a topic that has not yet been mapped in either social work theory or the sociology of psychiatry.

The Study

The complexity of the results of our research project cannot be fully illustrated within the current context. It is possible here to use only a small number of sequences extracted from the 15 expert interviews we conducted to empirically illustrate the perspective concerning psychiatric categories as travelling concepts that we wish to present. We conducted interviews with social workers from four different socio-educational contexts—outpatient youth and family care; integration assistance for mentally handicapped children and adolescents; a residential home for refugees; and counselling centers for general life assistance. These are of particular interest insofar as they are not primarily involved with psychiatric illnesses and the "sick," but rather with "concerned healthy people" (Frances 2013) who have either have sought assistance themselves, or come into the sphere of influence of social assistance institutions through various channels. We sought access to the field

by first establishing contact by e-mail with a selection of suitable institutions, which we followed up by telephone conversations. Representatives of the institutions that we had contacted then asked their teams regarding who of them would be interested in being interviewed. The social workers who expressed such an interest were able to indicate prior to the interview whether psychiatric diagnoses were an important part of their work with colleagues and clients. Our respondents were very cooperative and spoke in detail and for a substantial period of time (between one and two hours) about their everyday work, individual cases, and their discussions with colleagues and representatives of other institutions, always with a focus on the importance of psychiatric categories for their everyday work.

We asked the interviewees to speak candidly about their work and their experiences with psychiatric diagnoses in their day-to-day work. The open format of interviews was intended to leave them free to choose the settings, clients, and experiences they would speak about and the manner in which they would do so. The interviewer did not address disorder categories (ADHD, burnout, borderline personality, and so forth) on their own initiative in order to not impose psychiatric classifications on a given interviewee's narrative. Specific inquiries about individual concrete disorder categories were only introduced by the interviewer as "in vivo code" (Charmaz 2006:55)—that is, picked up by the interviewer and (re) produced in the narrative—if these had already been introduced by the interviewees themselves. In this way, interviews with long narrative sequences were generated that referred to diverse contexts of social work and displayed how the multilayered psychiatric knowledge systems that appeared in the interviews were used to structure and organize one's own field. The interview material was transcribed, anonymized, and subsequently analyzed in accordance with the principles of Grounded Theory (see Strauss and Corbin 1996; Charmaz 2006).

The project reconstructed six distinct categories, each of which was divided into subcategories (see Harbusch and Pingel-Rathke 2021). These comprised forms in which social workers could address mental disorders, making them institutionally useful and individually relatable.

Sequences for three of these forms, which reflect fundamentalist, critical, and utilitarian usages, are shown below. Far from representing the content of all the material, they only provide introductory glimpses into perspectives, ways of thinking, and various approaches to discussing the project. These are followed by a mixed-form sequence in which social workers were most likely to reveal the ways in which psychiatric knowledge may travel into clients' lives.

Fundamentalist Usage

The type of usage was categorized as fundamentalist because the related interview sequences express a firm belief in the correctness of psychiatric categories for describing and ordering (disturbed) social situations. It indicates how social work professionals have adopted and reproduced psychiatric diagnoses in order to organize their narrative at key points in a particular case description. In this way, psychiatric knowledge organizes a given case, a given social worker's role, and one's own perspective concerning a solution to the problems at hand.

Sequence 1

> And all mental illnesses have been researched much more in-depth now—you know much more about them, you are aware of more symptoms, and you have more treatment options. [...] You already somehow see that this and that could be symptoms, and that the person could have this or that illness. And that's why [this perspective] is so prevalent. And I think that we already kind of do our work with that in mind.[1]

In this excerpt, the interviewee regards mental illnesses, understood as research findings, as among the important subject areas of their own work. Client behaviors are interpreted as possible symptoms in order to attain the goal of understanding and adequate-

1. Interview 1:845-850.

ly dealing with the tasks social workers face. This view appears in this sequence as a central element of a social worker's contact with clients. The narrator emphasizes that psychiatric knowledge systems are of great importance for their work, particularly their ideas about a given case. However, the paradox described above regarding efforts to professionalize the discipline of social work comes to the fore in the balancing act that must be performed between the knowledge systems of psychiatry and social work insofar as the social worker presents knowledge for which they can assume no responsibility. For example, in spite of the very clear fundamentalist focus in this sequence, the interviewee continues to use subjunctive constructions in their narrative.

Critical Usage

Critical usages appear in all the interviews. In contrast to the fundamentalist usage, psychiatric categories are neither thematized as truths about the imagined interiority of clients, nor are they narrated as research findings on the part of medical and psychiatric players that are purportedly superior and/or inaccessible to social work's own possible thematizations. On the contrary, critical usages tend to raise disciplinary doubts concerning whether applying psychiatric knowledge to the life situations of clients is useful, correct, or successful in terms of social work. In this respect, interviewees emphasize processes of attribution and highlight the stigmatizing consequences of psychiatric categories. They display a greater interest in keeping the interpretations of situations open, employing multiple and client-centered perspectives, and/or protecting clients from one-sided medicalizing players in the psycho-social system.

Sequence 2

> [...] where the women then say, "Well, that's one of those diagnoses I got at some point." And they've embraced the diagnosis for themselves. And that's led them to actually assume that they're not going to be able to have a normal life. And I found that to be completely horri-

> fying because I thought that can't be the point of it all, the point of a diagnosis, to tell the person that there's something wrong with them.[2]

The interviewee here expresses doubt about the correctness of evaluating a client in terms of a psychiatric thematization because of the consequences this could have for them. They recognize that such diagnoses can give rise to subsequent problems concerning the client's self-perception rather than improve the overall situation. Furthermore, the interviewee makes it clear in this way that their own disciplinary perspective is not a subordinate perspective that has to follow the guidance of psychiatry. On the contrary, it in fact comprises a perspective that is capable of taking into consideration the processes in a client's life in a more clear, more comprehensive, and forward-looking way. Critical usages of psychiatric knowledge are to be understood as emancipatory usages in the sense that they strengthen social work and its specific sociallyoriented perspective in contrast to individualizing, objectifying, and naturalizing explanations. The narrators in the associated sequences thus display scientific awareness as well as skepticism on the basis of their experience regarding the medicalization and pathologization of social problems.

Utilitarian Usage

In contrast to the fundamentalist and critical approaches, social workers who use utilitarian approaches are concerned neither with the abstract rightness or wrongness of psychiatric knowledge systems, nor with the question of whether and how they can adequately describe the problems of their clients. They instead employ ideas concerning mental disorders in utilitarian ways in order to generate institutional connections for clients and pragmatically attain the goals of social work services.

2. Interview 8:24-29.

Sequence 3

> And that's where the diagnoses tend to play less of a role. Where they might play a role is when it's determined that there's an excessive demand. Clients are having trouble getting their stuff in order, getting into trouble as a result, and that's not due to, well, how would you say it, an overload that can be resolved without first causing a disaster. Then, of course, there's the possibility of entering the support system through such a diagnosis. The possibility of receiving legal assistance, for example.[3]

This excerpt displays a contingency awareness on the part of social workers concerning how the utilitarian usage of psychiatric illness categories can make it possible to resolve clients' real-life problems by providing access to institutionalized help. In this example, a social worker brings psychiatric knowledge systems into play as a plausible strategy for helping to address an "overload" without "causing a disaster" so that a client might be able to "get their stuff in order." While this retains the socially-oriented framing of the social work perspective, it also makes use of a psychiatric model to process a given case.

Even if psychiatric knowlage systems are not congruent with social workers' own conceptions, they come with possibilities for utilitarian usage that would be less readily available from a purely disciplinary set of concepts.

Mixed Usage

Viewing psychiatric categories as travelling concepts focuses on processes of academic and life-world exchange, the contextual emergence of knowledge, situational negotiations, and transformations of content, along with the cultural and historical embedding of specific content and discourse. Mixed usages best reveal these dynamics within and between the knowledge cultures of social work and psychiatry (see Keller and Poferl 2018, 2015; Knorr-Ce-

3. Interview 8:37-43.

tina 2002; Harbusch 2022). They bring up paradigmatically different uses simultaneously and intercontextually, thereby paving the way for knowledge to travel between differing contexts. Such usages also constitute the narrative locations where differences are bridged and connectivity between contexts and institutions is actively established. This type of usage may appear to be inconsistent, inconsequential, or unclear from a purely academic perspective (Harbusch and Pingel-Rathke 2021). From a real-world perspective, however, social work professionals assume an important role in these narratives by creating opportunities for shared communication. It is precisely through their strangeness in respect to the psychiatric content being utilized that social workers show themselves to be key figures in cultural contact (see Park 1928)—they appear as peripheral as they are central to both social and psychiatric contexts. This is an achievement that has not yet been mapped in social work professional theory.

Sequence 4

> B: So, what we can do is talk to the doctors and say here is a deportation, but we see a problem—we think he has psychological problems or going back home would aggravate these problems. And the doctor should take a look at it and possibly write an expert opinion about it. But the doctor has to provide the expert opinion—we don't do that. And if they say "I don't see it, I don't think he's that sick," then there's nothing we can do. Of course, there are people who try to secure their stay using this type of possibility, and so they make their own mental health problems much worse than they might actually be. And getting admitted and maybe trying to be diagnosed as well. Sometimes it works, but it doesn't always work.[4]

At the heart of this interpretation is a utilitarian mode of usage. The interviewee is discussing psychiatric categories as providing a strategic means for attaining both the personal goals of the client and the institutional goals of the social worker, namely, to secu-

4. Interview 5:707-717.

re residency. Various representatives of different disciplines participate in the creation of social contexts in which they interact and cooperate on the basis of psychiatric ideas. The social worker switches to a fundamentalist argument in order to establish such contact—Who has psychological problems? Would returning to the country of origin exacerbate these problems? This reproduces the doctor's anticipated perspective and legitimizes their powerful position in the interpretive process. The social worker initially views themself as a layperson, but we can assume that they know exactly which keys on the psycho-social keyboard they must press in order to attain their desired goal. All of this is preceded by their decision concerning whether to see a doctor and, consequently, whether they should use a psychiatric vocabulary to interpret the situation. The social worker is an active co-creator of this situation insofar as they establish contact and initiate the investigation, and they regard the physician as a service provider who provides legitimacy to their own strategies—the doctor should write an expert opinion at some point. At the same time, however, the social worker describes themself using a passive construction, thereby denying responsibility for the final decision.

Travelling Knowledge in Social Work

Social workers are at the nexus of diverse orders of knowledge in their professional daily life. First, they are embedded in the everyday social structures of their clientele and seek to understand them. Second, they act from within their own institutionally-anchored order and, from this perspective, recognize problems as problems, address them, and attempt to resolve them. Third, they are in close contact with outside institutions whose communication services they refer to during their work. Moreover, they constantly deal in this balancing act with categories which—as travelling knowledge— have found their way into the language games and thought habits of their profession, which they also encounter in their everyday lives. In the project presented here, these involve the knowledge orders of psychiatry.

In the examples noted above, the ways in which social workers deal with incoming codes were indicated on the basis of three modes of usage. By means of these (and other) ways of dealing with the outside knowledge that has travelled into their profession, they fulfill an important bridging function for their clientele, for the psycho-social system in general, for psychiatry in particular, and for their own discipline as well. This is because their interpretations, reinterpretations, and/or adaptations of this knowledge in response to the given circumstances actively help provide a psychiatric framing for social contexts in everyday terms. In addition, social workers are participants in a neoliberal discourse of an increasing pathologization, therapeutization, and/or medicalization of the social sphere (Anhorn and Balzereit 2016). This discourse serves to stylize the self-centering of the individual and the demand to improve one's own psyche as the dictum of self-confident, mindful, self-caring individuals—which then becomes the goal of social institutional interventions (see also Rau 2016). Furthermore, social workers become actors and agents of social connectivity in respect to travelling concepts, bridging the arenas of conceptual diversity in complex ways that are responsive to the public.

First, they bridge the gap between clients and institutional approaches to social work—and to psycho-social, medical, and therapeutic services—by framing clients' situations in terms of needs and conceptually embedding them in institutional services. By employing pathologizing concepts, social workers establish contacts, create assessments, insert files, interpret and organize clients' narratives, and prepare clients for additional institutional interventions. However, if social workers instead adopt a critical approach, they may become equally important authorities in the further shaping of a given case without psychiatric categories. Social workers thereby serve as actors in a field in which they are constantly confronted with unfamiliar knowledge insofar as various institutional and private actors approach them with their concerns and conceptual proposals. It is then the task of social work to evaluate and apply the latter in respect to the case in question and link them with descriptions from the disciplinary perspective of social work. This constitutes an active performance that not only is more than an interpretive understanding of the case (Dewe and Otto 2012), it

is also more than a reaction by a humble profession (Schütze 1992) to the demands of a professionalized outside world. It is rather a (co)construction that becomes particularly evident when social workers themselves seek contact with other institutions within the psycho-social system, including the language games they employ, in order to implement and enforce their own ideas for their clientele. Travelling concepts, which in this case mark the arrival of psychiatric categories in social work, generate practices of inclusion, which illustrate how social work is an active profession, even though it often views itself in both academic and real-life terms, however unjustifiably, as a reactive, passive, and needs-oriented profession in respect to its clientele. Moreover, the question of the professional (self) image and role of social work in respect to the conflict of diverse knowledge systems once again arises subsequent to the entry of psychiatric concepts into the discipline.

Second, our interviewees utilized psychiatric categories to bridge discursive gaps between the conceptual possibilities of diverse institutions that commonly are in contact with their own respective clients. These include schools, doctors, health spas, health insurance companies, courts, counselling centers, and preschools. Against the backdrop of travelling psychiatric concepts, social workers coordinate with professionals in these institutions, strengthen a shared perspective, and reflect upon the possibilities for additional common institutional approaches to a given case. In the interviews, the common thematization of paradigmatically different knowledge orders of the diverse professions involved appears at times to be unclear, inconsistent, or even contradictory. In academic discourse, the inconsistencies of a profession (social work) in full contact with the real world emerge as professional difficulties and paradoxes (see Schütze 1992). From a practice-orientated point of view, however, such seeming shortcomings might also be understood precisely as an accomplishment of a type of social work that ensures communication opportunities both between the codes of differing individual systems, and between institutional ideas and real-world perspectives. In respect to psychiatric vocabulary, social work becomes an active co-creator of psychological discourses and individual concerns if the critical usage outlined above is not employed. What Hitzler (1999) refers to as the "pluriverse" of real life

is always multilayered, fluid, vague, consistently overcomplex, and characterized by multiple perspectives. When travelling concepts assume different social spaces, social systems, and/or "knowledge cultures" (Keller and Poferl 2015, 2018), and address the intersections that arise in the journeys of disciplinary concepts, they can approach the plurality and entanglement of everyday communication in a more differentiated manner than is possible with a thematization that is oriented towards a specific profession. Against this backdrop, social work—precisely because of its proximity to everyday life and its broad range of contacts with other professions—is capable of clearly positioning itself as a profession that resides between differing knowledge cultures. It thus serves as a profession of social connectivity that is characterized in terms of content by its proximity to diverse institutional and academic knowledge, but structurally tends to follow a real-life order characterized by fluidity and plurality.

Third, social workers utilize psychiatric narratives in this respect to bridge their own ambiguities, uncertainties, and indecisions that arise professionally, in the real world, or both. It is evident in all the interviews that the various usages of psychiatric categories may or may not (critical usage) classify a given case, constitute their own roles in the field, and/or shape ideas for an anticipated course of events. In this regard, travelling concepts generate opportunities to situationally find one's way through the entangled field of social work, which is located between academia and real life.

Conclusion

Although social workers are able to make their decisions freely in many situations, this article has emphasized the possibilities, opportunities, and power of the profession over both the clientele and other institutions. However, the acceptance of other people's knowledge also has its consequences—the interviews reveal how enduring the links with psychiatric knowledge are once they are in place. On the one hand, the concepts of psychiatry that have travelled into a given case come with a psychiatric superstructure that—once formulated and institutionally documented—cannot simply

be set aside. On the other, the links established between different orders of knowledge are accessible from both sides. Psychiatric knowledge systems come with consequences concerning thematization and exercise control over further work with clients. In the interviews, social workers reacted with uncertainty regarding their own responses that may be rendered necessary by such control, including the possibility of actively suppressing psychiatric interpretations and limiting the involvement of psychiatric professionals.

The introduction of travelling psychiatric categories may provide concrete services in particular social work situations, holding the promise of an institutionally ready-made and unproblematic resolution of a specific problem. The addition of language games from other disciplines enables professional social workers to broaden their own perspectives and approach diverse situations in the real world with a much broader conceptual view than would be possible through the use of only their own professional vocabulary. In this respect, a view of the unknown expands horizons and leads to an increase in complexity that makes it possible to juxtapose wellrehearsed interpretations with new interpretations. At the same time, however, this can be read as a reduction in complexity in terms of both content and form insofar as the contact established not only links communicative codes, but also raises anew the questions of legitimate responsibility and the degree to which it is proper to apply competing types of case-specific knowledge.

The many types of professional action, including the difficulties they face, regarding the adoption of knowledge from outside the discipline of social work, only some of which we were able to address in this brief discussion, have not been sufficiently reflected in the professional debates. Travelling concepts never automatically come into their own in their new context of use, but always require actors who actively mediate connections and strategically make use of new knowledge. The notion of travelling concepts—which aims at the analysis of social contexts and of the background for and practice of the reception or rejection of newly-arrived concepts—is not compatible with the sometimes very positivistic and simplistic understanding of the profession of social work. It instead gives rise to a broad range of possibilities concerning the themati-

zation of a profession that is located in a field of tension between differing knowledge orders.

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