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Sociology of everyday life

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Abstract

Everyday life has inspired much sociological theory and is now a recognized branch of the discipline. Here we trace evidence of the salience of everyday life in general sociological theory, look critically at theories specific to analyses of everyday life; then survey recent research. In closing, we look to the future of the field.

Keywords

body, emotions, everyday life, ideology, normalcy, senses, urban experiences

Theoretical approaches

Although everyday life is the core focus of anthropology, it is relatively new as an explicit concern to sociologists. In sociology, however, the theme has emerged in two ways. On the one hand, among most theoreticians in the discipline, the properties of everyday life have been taken for granted in abstract reasoning about the social. On the other, everyday life is an object of research which has increasingly come into its own with the postmodern turn in sociology.

Everyday life in general sociological theories

For a long time 'everyday life' was the elephant (Zerubavel, 2006) in the realm of the 'normal' – used by early sociologists in their theories but ignored as a theme. Focusing on establishing the existence of society as an object of scientific inquiry, sociologists discussed the whys and hows of science, of government, of industrialization; the effects of social structure on consciousness and on social relations. In all of these the point of the study and the 'gross presence' (Zerubavel's elephant) ignored was what these stupendous events meant to people carrying on with 'everyday life'. Thus Rousseau (2007 [1762]) based his conceptualization of the social contract and his vision of the good society on a

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perception that the family, embedded in everyday life, was the ‘natural’ form of social organization. Adam Smith (1937 [1776]) analyzed the social division of labor which served individuals’ ‘everyday’ needs. Similarly, throughout his writings, Durkheim explains the division of labor (1984 [1893]), the forms of religious life (1965 [1912]), and the effects of anomie (1951 [1897]) in terms of everyday life with examples from relations in families and in communities. Central to Marx’s (1975 [1844]; Marx and Engels, 1975 [1848]) concern with the evils of the capitalist system was the perception that because of the work conditions it demanded, there is a ‘loss of self’ which destroys ties of family and friends. People are left with concerns (eating, drinking, procreating), aspects of everyday life which are not fully human.

In developing a sociology of knowledge, Mannheim (1935) distinguished between ideology, persistent ways of thought inapplicable to a given era, and utopia, ways of thought which transcend reality but can guide people in everyday life. Adorno and Horkheimer (1972), of the Frankfurt School, denounced the deprivation to which people are subjected when they accept conventional ideologies. Looking for mechanisms of such deprivation, Gramsci (1992) pointed out that states use education and regulation to impart ways of (everyday) life with a commitment to the hegemonic ideology.

Parsons’ (1949) theory of social action attempts to explain how decisions of individuals (role incumbents) as to goals and norms determine the quality of social structure in everyday life. Merton (1968) emphasized a methodological consequence of the assumption about the nature of social action, and recommended that research be based on confirmable theories of the middle range, derived from realistic day-to-day experience.

Giddens (1993), who sought to connect a notion of human action with a structural explanation, insisted that the social world is the skilled accomplishment of active human subjects. Theorizing contemporary times as ‘late modernity’, Giddens describes processes of displacement and re-embedding which disclose the intersection of abstract systems and knowledge acquired in the everyday through contrasting processes: estrangement and familiarity; intimacy and impersonality; personal trust and impersonal ties; expertise and reappropriation; privatism and engagement, as well as the intersection of pragmatic acceptance and activism (see Sztompka, 1999, 2008).

Theorizing everyday life directly

In the dominating western sociologies (German, French, and American), the foundational concern is with *language, rules, positions, or performance* as the decisive formative mechanism for shaping everyday life.

German sociologists. At the turn of the twentieth century, Simmel (1971) interpreted the task of sociology as that of describing and finding the *rules* for people’s ‘being-together’ (sociation). His goal was to compile a formal description of how, in the everyday, groups act as units at the same time as individuals act to establish their uniqueness. Walter Benjamin saw in everyday life (*Aktualität*) the basis for understanding historical events. In his view, the world of the everyday was not only the arena of human action (*performance*), but also the heart of human thought. Every idea (*language*) about history contains an image of the world and an image of the body in more or less familiar space (see

Leslie, 1988; Wiegel, 1996). According to Habermas (1987 [1981]), the 'lifeworld' (*Lebenswelt*) is the space within a person's reach, which includes the allocation of time to the *performance* of the daily routine; as well as of the social, which, beginning with reference groups and the family, extends to the community, the nation, and world society. Because there is an internal connection between the structure of the lifeworld and the *language* of worldviews, it is possible to envision an ideal lifeworld in which discourse is undistorted by ideology. He recognizes, however, that in practice the lifeworld increasingly surrenders to regulation in which private life, the family, and intimate relations are distorted by *rules* imposed by the expanding power of bureaucracy, the influence of corporate capitalism and mass consumption.

British sociologists. In Britain, concern with analyzing and explaining everyday life was raised by Elias (1994) a sociologist who migrated there from Austria when everyday life for Jews became impossible in the 1930s. In the necessarily unfinished project of modernity, Elias saw everyday life as the site of a centuries long civilizing process. Expressing the emotional and rational impulses of individuals, actions in the everyday interweave constantly in a friendly or hostile way, so that they are ineluctably interdependent. Hence, there arises an unplanned patterned order which is more compelling than the will and reason of the individuals who compose it. Compelled to regulate conduct in an increasingly differentiated, even, and stable manner, people adjust their psychic reactions to the changed social structure. As time goes on the entire social mold, the code of conduct with its explicit and implicit *rules*, changes; and so does the structure of how individuals steer themselves in everyday life.

Later in the twentieth century, the explicit sociological theme of everyday life emerged from the work of social historians such as EP Thompson (1964), who studied the lives of workers, and Raymond Williams (1958), who focused on the importance of culture as an ongoing accomplishment of human beings conducting their everyday lives. Developed and theorized most notably at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham, critiques of cultural practices were investigated as underpinning the racism, genderism, and classism pervasive in everyday life in Britain.

French sociologists. In France, Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau analyzed everyday life explicitly through the lens of Marxist theory. Lefebvre (2003) approached everyday life as an urban phenomenon, the site of people's victimization by capitalism, the realization of inescapable alienation. For him, the inescapable lot of human beings is disclosed in the *language* used to impose unquestioned *rules*. Regulating actions in everyday life, they constitute a form of terrorism. The process is hidden from view because in the evolving 'bureaucratic society of controlled consumption', everyday life is 'the space-time of voluntary programmed self-regulation'. Only a revolution in perception can overcome this type of terror which affects men, women, adolescents, and intellectuals in different but consistently insidious ways (see also Debord, 1983). Still, in work published between 1960 and 2005, Lefebvre recognized the inherent ambiguities of baseness and exuberance, spiritual poverty and energetic creativity that characterize everyday life, disclosing the tension between how everyday life is structured and how, for all that, it is

experienced. It is this tension which sustains the myth that the everyday is 'natural', but also gives hope of ultimate change for the good (Lefebvre, 2003).

De Certeau (1984), on the other hand, who insisted on the centrality of human agency, saw everyday life as a site with opportunities for spontaneity and the potential for diverse outcomes. He highlighted the aesthetic pleasure to be derived from the beauty of the unforeseen actions that make up much of daily living. While the capitalist classes worked out institutionalized, definitive 'strategies' of domination, the subjectively driven everyday actions of the working class should, to his mind, be read as resourceful 'tactics', sparks of effective resistance.

Among others, Foucault and Bourdieu dealt with everyday life as it is imprinted in the body. As the knowledgeable superstructure of a whole series of power networks, the Foucauldian state is seen as structuring the everyday experiences of the body and sexuality as well as of family and kinship, knowledge and technology (Foucault, 1980, 1982, 1984). Ironically, to his mind, the disciplinary mechanisms that permeate everyday life are inevitable, constituting the 'dark side' of the coded and formally egalitarian juridical framework characteristic of a representative parliamentary regime. For Bourdieu (1977, 1990), *habitus*, embodied history, is imbibed and expressed in the interrelated workings of different kinds of capital – social and symbolic as well as economic. Thus, *habitus* is the principle that governs how constituents of *position* govern choices among persons, goods, practices, and opinions in everyday life.

American sociologists. In the USA, theoretical interest in everyday life has tended to focus on details of human relations as heralded in Mead's (1934) theorization of how the self is formed in family interaction and broadens to fit into the rule-governed games that make up social life. Here, details of *performance* are the focus of theorizing the everyday (Blumer, 1969) and a justification for the naturalistic study of how persons interpret situations and mutually signal intended meanings, the program of symbolic interactionism.

Schütz (1967) and Berger and Luckmann (1972), major influences on American symbolic interactionism, focused on mechanisms that underpin interaction in everyday life. Tracing sociological understanding as a development going beyond common sense, Schütz showed the importance of 'because' and 'in order to' motives in governing action; he also pointed out the central significance of 'and so forth' in signaling community in ongoing interaction. Berger and Luckmann (1972) discussed how evolving meanings served to institutionalize typical actions as 'recipe knowledge' which is governed by general principles likely, as well, to hold transcendental implications. By contrast, Homans (1959) based himself on behaviorist psychology and studied determinants of interaction in everyday life as *rules* of social exchange, i.e., tracking gains and losses of material and affective goods.

In the *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman (1959) developed a new approach by demonstrating analogies between everyday life and theater *performances*. He examined contrasts between 'front stage' and 'back stage' role behavior exhaustively. In later works, Goffman underlined how mutual understanding is governed by the unintentional as well as the intentional disclosure of information. He investigated components of dramatic relations and their applicability to different milieus by intertwining theory with empirical observation (Goffman, 1997). Raising questions about the often

inexplicit, but no less constraining *rules* that govern everyday life for groups that share a structured context, Garfinkel (1967) initiated meticulous examinations of the shared meanings that enable smooth performances of everyday life. Maffesoli (1987: 1) defines the epistemological elements of everyday life as components of sociality, which ‘involves organic solidarity, the symbolic dimension (communication), the “non-logical” (Pareto), and a concern for the present’. He suggests that the puzzles posed by Schütz’s concern with how science relates to common sense and by Garfinkel’s explications of ethnomethods, can be solved by a focus on banalities which are sedimented to ‘constitute the essence of existence’ (Maffesoli, 1987: 3).

Minorities. Almost by definition, theories that relate to everyday life are free of elitist posing; but concern with the everyday lives of minorities is highlighted in work oriented to race and gender.

Theorization of the everyday in the lives of Blacks points to how *language* works to preserve relationships of master and slave between Whites and Blacks (Fanon, 1967 [1952]) and how persistent the outcomes in the everyday lives of the colonized throughout the westernized world (Gilroy, 1993, 2005). Following on the theorization of Dorothy Smith (1988), Hill Collins (1998) insists on the importance of social conditions in determining the *position* of Black women and thus shaping their subordination. She also points to the interdependence between the everyday, taken-for-granted knowledge of African-American women as a group, and the knowledge produced by Black women intellectuals. Thus she extends Smith’s (1988) insistence that looking at the social from a woman’s standpoint produces an alternative sociology *because* that is *the* standpoint which problematizes the everyday world. By beginning with the world of the everyday one can establish what it means to live in different locations (geographical and structural), and how *positions* affect the constitution of knowledge. Usually, knowledge of the everyday that is attributed to women is undervalued and underexploited. According to Cope (2004), however, theorizing on the basis of research in places as far-flung as Argentina, India, and Kenya, women can create spaces for political action by using socially embedded verbal and non-verbal codes to highlight grievances, and by learning how to ensure that the everyday political acts of their *position* have an impact on *performance* in communities and even on the level of the nation.

Empirical studies

From the diversity of theoretical approaches to everyday life it is clear that this area of study has no single empirical orientation. While many studies seek to examine everyday life as a field of struggle, others approach the domain of the everyday as a *focus* of interest that is basically indifferent to the macro-dynamics which frame all fields of sociological interest.

Political issues in everyday life

For one thing, a good deal of the theoretical writing on everyday life is intertwined with empirical research. Foucault, for example, drew on historical methods in order to show

how contingencies that arise in mundane relationships are closely related to macro-issues of power. His detailed description of the panopticon, for example, a tower hidden from the eyes of the ‘inmates’ who are hidden from one another – forms the basis for his description of the evolution of systems of punishment in prisons, in poor houses, even in clinics. Discipline (including disciplines in knowledge) defines the tactics of power which are not only expressed in macro-relations, but also invade people’s micro- bodily adjustments to one another in patterns of gestures and rhythms. In states where discipline is defended as the only means for meeting what are interpreted as constant threats to national security, the pervasive militarization of everyday life can, it has been argued, only be countered by feminist cross-border solidarities (Enloe, 2007; Mohanty, 2011).

Interpreting politics as the ways in which apparently spontaneous human contacts can lead to the revision of an entire system of relationships in any given milieu, Edgar Morin (1971) led a research group that spent several months in the city of Orleans tracing the dissemination of an anti-Semitic rumor. They noted everyday contacts, modes of action, and the contents of communication in homes, schools, shops, as well as in the street. Because they were interested in the diverse connections among adolescents and adults of both sexes, the group engaged in interviews as well as in observations. In this case, Morin intentionally avoided organizing the research design in advance, and decisions as to what methods to deploy and when were made *in situ*. Thus, the relative impulsiveness of the methods reflected what could be presumed to be the spontaneity of people’s performances in their daily lives, performances which *volens nolens* carry out political agendas.

Defining the basis for examining everyday life as an investigation of three aspects of the field: *orality* – how people speak to one another; *operations* – assessing culture by how it works and not by its products; and *the ordinary*, De Certeau (1984; De Certeau et al., 1998) explored subject-initiated micro-politics as systematic resistance. Together with Luce Giard and Pierre Mayol (1998) he led groups of ethnographic researchers who investigated orality and everyday operations in a workers’ neighborhood in Lyon; and in repetitive ordinary practices such as cooking. The investigations show how, under the apparent repetition of using objects, the ordinary hides a diversity of contexts, situations, and also interests that reflect how people insert themselves into political positions (De Certeau et al., 1998: 251–256). In her study of how performances in everyday life are impacted and mapped by sounds, Kalekin-Fishman (2010) undertakes to point to different aspects of the interplay between macro-politics as strategic permanent social arrangements and micro-politics, unconscious reactions in which resistance is often embedded. Cohen and Taylor (1993 [1976]) examined explicit types of resistance to punitive institutions by studying crime and deviance as *Escape Attempts – Resistance to Everyday Life*.

Critique

In England, the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham, headed by Stuart Hall, was the proponent of critical ethnographic studies. They explored the effects of deprivation mediated or unmediated, in the everyday lives of women, shop assistants, and high school students (see, for example: CCCS Women’s Study Group, 1978; Clarke et al., 1979; Hall and Jefferson, 2006 [1975]; Hall et al., 2005

[1980]; Willis, 1977, 1978; see also Dolby et al., 2004). All the studies focus on how cultural codes can undermine the true interests of deprived groups. With 'institutional ethnography' as a method for carrying out a deliberate 'social justice agenda', the Canadian Dorothy Smith (2005) elaborated on CCCS insights. Exploring codes formulated to ensure structural efficiency, she argued that by examining texts governing work activities from the point of view of those whose employment is framed by them, ethnographic researchers can (and should) draw conclusions that enable them to design interventions for the benefit of the people involved (see Campbell, 2002).

In the USA, ethnography was deployed from the early decades of the twentieth century as a basis for social critique. The Sociology Department at the University of Chicago (led by Mead, Thomas, Park, and Burgess, with the philosophical support of Dewey between 1917 and 1942) educated generations of students to use a 'flexible theory of everyday life' in order to develop an understanding of how conformism and non-conformism are constructed (Deegan, 2001: 19). Chicago researchers observed the everyday lives of workers, hoboes, strip-teasers, and delinquents as well as minority groups, thus highlighting the multiple channels available in US cities for perpetuating deprivation (Anderson, 1923; Cressey, 1932; Donovan, 1929; Frazier, 1932; Hiller, 1928; Shaw and Moore, 1931).

In recent research, there has been increased concern with the deprivation of migrants and the differential effects of everyday life on perpetuating such deprivation. Some studies focus on the degree to which immigrants are capable of adjusting to everyday life and the factors that ease or aggravate the difficulties (Keene, 2008; Song, 2010). In some cases, everyday life in residential areas where natives also live eases the traumas of immigration while contact with the native population at work seems to be related to higher earnings (Strömgen et al., 2011; Tammaru et al., 2010). Inspection of the daily lives of temporary immigrant workers provides examples of the degree to which employers allow themselves to take advantage of people who are not completely aware of their rights. However, even in cases where exploitation is extensive, there are examples of how migrant agricultural workers manage to use their knowledge of employers' everyday lives to attain some significant gains (Raijman et al., 2003; Wilson and Portes, 1980). Yet, familiarity with everyday life does not assure an escape from 'being different'. Adolescent children of immigrants in Italy showed that their knowledge of the Italian way of life provided them with information as to how they were 'different' (Colombo, 2010). Ambiguities of how integration is effected along with specific group hostilities seem to explain the tendency of immigrants to have a relatively low level of life satisfaction (Safi, 2010).

Everyday life in urban settings

According to Lefebvre, the city is the locus in which the concept of everyday life is realized to the full. Indeed, as noted earlier (see references to the Chicago School and to the cultural studies at the University of Birmingham), analyses of everyday life in urban settings have been important in shedding light on mechanisms of deprivation and oppression. Among others, the city is a complex of materialities, many of which can be shown to be active participants in shaping the social, in taming elements of the 'natural'

environment, as well as in establishing links with entities far beyond the state, or national territory to which it officially belongs (Bridge and Watson, 2011). Looking at urban space as ‘the simultaneity of stories so far’ (Massey, 2005: 9), Terry (2010), like Tuan Yi-fu (1977), examines urban space as part of people’s everyday experience. Tensions are inevitable because of the different constructions of reality that burgeon in experiences of everyday life. Among others, tourism highlights how wide-ranging these tensions can be. Meschkank’s (2011) research into slum tourism in Mumbai explores extremes to show how the movement of tourists and their reconstructions of the lives they observe can indeed affect everyday life in the areas visited.

Urban living, moreover, presents constant challenges; because of the diversity of place, of social groups, of functions, everyday life is never of a piece. At a conference on ‘Everyday Life in the Segmented City’ (Florence, Italy, July 2010), researchers presented papers on cities positioned variously in the global economy, to show how the distribution of spaces in city living is governed by political and economic conditions. Among the cities noted for diverse types of segmentation were, for example, Nairobi and Caracas (Boniburini and Moretto, 2010), Rio de Janeiro (Andrade et al., 2010; Fessler Vaz and Silveira, 2010), and Tbilisi (Gorlashvili, 2010), as well as transformed European cities (see, e.g., Ilkay, 2010; Pawlikowska-Piechotka, 2010; for literary references, see also Byrne, 2010; Olson, 2011). From Africa, Mbembe and Nuttall (2004) analyze the urban ‘from an African metropolis’.

Politics, hardship, conflict, and violence are not foreign to everyday life in segmented cities. Jackson and Carter (2010), for example, look at Fascist symbols that are part of what one cannot avoid seeing in conducting one’s everyday life in Trieste in contemporary Italy. Thus, while the official political forms are democratic, the urban scene is inescapably beset with proposals of alternative orientations. Looking at intimate experiences, Shevchenko (2009) describes how crises penetrated routines of work, leisure, private life in the everyday life of ‘post-socialist’ Moscow. Even in ‘post-conflict’ Belfast, as Smyth and McKnight (2010) show, ethno-nationality, gender, and social class interact in the everyday constituting reminders of the possibilities of renewing the conflict. These are not hazards restricted to specific localities. Guridy and Burgos (2010) look at how gender affects everyday life in ‘Latina/o America’, and, among others, gender plays an important part in everyday violence in urban areas of Brazil (Scheper-Hughes, 1992). There are also studies of how young people manage their everyday lives in cities (see especially Hansen et al., 2010). The uniqueness of urban milieus for studying everyday life sociologically has, however, been challenged. Rigg (2002) shows that it is meaningful to deploy sociological concepts for analyzing everyday life in non-urban milieus as well, and he underlines this by looking at rural areas of the global south – in Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Laos, Papua New Guinea, Peru, and Pakistan (see also Connell, 2007).

Popular culture and the media in everyday life

Because he viewed culture as ‘collective ways or *manners* of thinking and doing’, De Certeau (1984) directed studies that inquired into styles and fashions of popular culture. Increasingly, popular culture has become identified with the media to which it is

commonplace to attribute wide-ranging changes in everyday life. Systematic research sheds light on the actual mechanisms by which television, the cinema, the internet, and mobile phones affect everyday life. As early as 1994, for example, Silverstone publicized a comprehensive investigation of how television invades and changes everyday life, while serving as a source of informal learning, a process which continues apace (see Grummell, 2010). Studies show that the cinema still contributes to shaping everyday life, especially in urban networks (Braesler and Tweedie, 2010). The internet in everyday life has been examined in relation to politics as well as in regard to the creation of global inequalities – the global divide between haves and have-nots (Franklin, 2004; Schulz, 2009; Small, 2009; Wellman and Haythornthwaite, 2002) – but also in relation to ongoing education (e.g., Barbieri and Giacché, 2010; Pasman and Mulder, 2010; Sherman, 1998). As to the mobile phone, not only is it an important element for tracking mobilities (Büscher and Urry, 2009), but also a proud component of personal style (Stärke et al., 2011).

Everyday life in history

Inspired by the work of Walter Benjamin, historical studies uncover unexpected aspects of everyday life in the past (see Haupt, 1983). Buck-Morris (1986) has studied the politics of loitering in the late nineteenth century, and Owens et al. (2010) found materials about the rhythms of the everyday in Victorian London. Other historical studies include the everyday lives of five families in Harlem in the 1920s and 1930s (Garton et al., 2010), the traditional culture of Bukharan Jews (Emelyanenko, 2010), ‘the everyday life of the dead’ in Mexico City (Lopez, 2010), as well as exceptionalities such as the crimes of women in Rome at the end of the nineteenth century (Groppi and Pelaja, 1983).

Exploring the ordinary in everyday life

With ethnomethodology, Garfinkel (1967) developed ways and means to uncover and analyze conventions underlying the micro-interchanges which texture everyday life. He studied the fine-tuning required of a trans-sexual in order to deal with the behavioral prerequisites of gender change. He had his students perform field experiments ‘at the margins’, with tasks such as: bargaining in fixed price commercial outlets and applying codes of extreme courtesy in intimate relations, or in meals shared with the family at home. The devices of adopting formal modes of discourse in what are presumed to be familiar surroundings, arguing about what has to come next in conventional situations, or asking why customs have to be followed, disclosed the dense network of obligations that surround conduct in everyday life (see also Mehan and Wood, 1983). Studies of ethnomethodological practices in everyday life led to the development of narrative analysis (Sacks, 1995) and conversational analysis (see Schegloff, 2007) as relatively independent domains of research.

Looking at the minute adjustments that are needed for managing everyday life, researchers have followed Goffman (1997) to study control of the body and the mobilization of emotions systematically (Featherstone, 1982; Kwan, 2010; Leidner, 1993; Nettleton and Watson, 1998; see also Ezzy, 2010 for these phenomena in the work of the

social scientist). Sociological studies of memory and of sensory experiences shed new light on how macro- and micro-concerns can be bridged by attention to everyday life (see Dampier, 2005; Kalekin-Fishman and Low, 2010).

The ordinary in everyday life is highlighted in biographical research, an important example of which is that of Bertaux (1981) on Paris shopkeepers and of Kohli (1988). Feminist researchers found in biographical research the way *par excellence* to ensure that women's voices be seen as central to everyday life (among others, see Bell and Roberts, 1994; Cotterill and Letherby, 1993; Reinharz, 1992). It has also proved a rich resource for the systematic investigation of how people from the generation of the Hitler Jugend and people who emerged from the Holocaust have subsequently managed their everyday lives (Rosenthal, 1995, 2004). Another outgrowth of biographical research is autoethnography, an attempt to completely overthrow the chains of theory, which has been defined and realized as 'research, writing, story, method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social and political' often using conventions of literary writing (Ellis, 2004: xix; for autoethnography as performance, see Spry, 2001).

Among researchers guided by exchange theory, the ordinary in everyday lives is an outcome of the implementation of the cognitive, material, and affective resources that govern power relations. The manipulation of resources is, of course, most crucial in working life and especially in organizations where trust cannot be taken for granted (Blau, 1964; Coleman, 1986; Cook, 2001). Some studies show how exchange orders varying degrees of intimacy in networks of differentiated density (Granovetter, 1974). From the standpoint of the occupational therapist, Hasselkus (2006: 630) sees a wealth of meaning and beauty in occupations that constitute the 'small experiences of daily life', an important contribution to health and well-being. Evidence for this interpretation can be found in the research on family routines, mealtimes, and play, among others, published by the Center on Everyday Lives of Families (CELFF) at UCLA with centers in Sweden and Italy (Hasselkus, 2006: 631).

Qualitative and quantitative studies

Attention to the *ordinary* in everyday life has inspired both qualitative and quantitative approaches to research. Qualitative studies have focused, for the most part, on process. Such are the studies of De Certeau and Morin noted earlier, as well as those of Garfinkel. They have, among others, been used to demonstrate how households are organized (Pink, 2004; Shove, 2003), how the demands of home and work are balanced (Nippert-Eng, 1996), how everyday life is interwoven with consumption (Chaudhuri, 2010; Devinney, 2010) as well as with art and music (Aguiar, 2010; DeNora, 2000). Similarly, the work of CELFF has often been based on qualitative analyses of videotaped scenes from family life (see Sirota, 2003).

The *quantification of performance* has, however, also been seen as a key means for understanding everyday life. Building on earlier studies, Sorokin and Berger (1939) substantiated their view that collecting diaries in which people note the amount of time they devoted to each type of behavior on a defined day (time-budgets) provides an important basis for understanding human behavior. Time-budgets were the basis for studies of

unemployed people in Austria in the early 1930s, in the USSR (Strumlin, referenced in Zuzanek, 1980), and in farm households (Vanek, 1974). In 1972, Szalai published the results of a comparative survey of 12 nations begun in the 1960s. Self-reported data about how people divide their time between work and leisure, between paid and unpaid work, were found to be reliable. Furthermore, such data have many practical applications: among others, discovering the needs of elderly persons and children, the conversion of gender activities, including the sexual division of labor, household economics, tourism, entertainment and leisure, as well as the coordination of the everyday, and the quality of life (see Andorka, 1987; Fisher et al., 2007; Gershuny, 2000; Hubers et al., 2007). This type of research has consistently been descriptive. However, it would appear that there are theoretical possibilities in it which have yet to be developed. When they reanalyzed the many studies of time-budgets in everyday life in organizations, for example, Ancona et al. (2001) demonstrated possibilities for proposing integrative concepts as a basis for theorizing temporal research.

Future directions

Despite the fact that everyday life has been important to social theory since the initiation of sociology as a science, the interest in investigating it as a phenomenon in its own right is relatively recent (Highmore, 2002). Attempts to understand the complexities of everyday life begin with comprehensive modeling of how time, space, and power interact to provide the infrastructure for lived experience in the everyday, together with methods that will enable researchers to encompass the (dis)order that makes up experiences recognizable as distinct events. Methodologically, quantitative and qualitative studies alike tend to seek precise characterizations of everyday life by pinpointing more and more details that have heretofore been ignored. In its methods, the concern with everyday life is likely, therefore, to converge with the ‘messy’ investigation advocated in actor-network theory, namely with insistence on mapping everything that is going on in any given minute among actants – human and technological (Latour, 2005; Law, 2006). But there are still other possibilities. Everyday life is a realm where social scientists find it practical to combine several perspectives. Moreover, the experience of everyday life is constituted by elements that are usually allocated for analysis to different disciplines, among them geography (see many of the references below), psychology, social psychology, anthropology, but also the life sciences, education, and even physics and chemistry. The elaboration of tools that fully meet the demands of in-depth research into everyday life may indeed be seen as opening the way to new paths to transdisciplinarity (Denshire, 2010). It is to be hoped that as these approaches unfold, the manifold sociological insights into the manipulation of the structures of everyday life and into the deliberate control of emotion and memory will not be overlooked.

Currently, there are widely different interpretations of everyday life. In many studies, researchers are content to provide insights into details that are likely to be overlooked in the performance of banal routines. The detailed descriptions are indeed enlightening. But even in the ‘purely’ descriptive studies there is an undercurrent of the critique which impelled the early studies of everyday life. And, as we have seen, many researchers into the forms and procedures of everyday life highlight complex insights into how everyday

life is inevitably patterned to confirm the intricate hegemonic connections that impose capitalism, the market economy, and globalization.

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Annotated further reading

- De Certeau M (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life, Vols 1 and 2*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. Looking at the practice of everyday life, De Certeau demonstrates the many limitations that social structures place on free choice. But in addition, he brings evidence from empirical studies to highlight the fact that human beings can, and as a matter of fact, usually do manage to bring about change.
- Garfinkel H (1967) *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. This pioneering text shows that in everyday life, groups act according to systematic sets of procedures. From his investigations, we learn that these 'ethnomethodologies' are highly compelling, especially because they are rarely examined consciously.
- Goffman E (1997) *The Goffman Reader*. Cambridge: Blackwell. Edited by Charles Lemert and Ann Banaman, this book presents a comprehensive overview of Goffman's writings. The selections combine to provide insights into the dramaturgical qualities of relations at work, conveying information in the simplest types of interaction, and in rituals which are followed to create distinctly framed situations.
- Highmore B (2002) *The Everyday Life Reader*. London and New York: Routledge. Highmore provides a highly readable introduction to the theorization of everyday life by presenting short excerpts from writings of theoreticians of everyday life in the West throughout the 20th century.
- Kalekin-Fishman D and Low K (eds) (2010) *Everyday Life in Asia: Sociological Perspectives on the Senses*. Farnham: Ashgate. The collection includes analyses of tastes, smells, and sounds in everyday life as well as showing the importance of customs and movement in familiar places in Asian milieus of different kinds.
- Law J (2006) *After Method: Mess in Social Research*. Abingdon: Routledge. Going beyond the uselessly debate about the conflict between quantitative and qualitative methodologies, Law explains how research into the practices and performances of everyday life cannot be constrained to predefined systematic methods.
- Lefebvre H (2003) *Key Writings*. New York and London: Continuum. Edited by Stuart Elden, Elizabeth Kebas, and Eleonore Kofman, this selection from Lefebvre's writings sheds light on his theorization of everyday life in relation to modernization, urbanism, and social transformation. The anthology traces the development of Lefebvre's thought during well over half a century.

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Author biography

Devorah Kalekin-Fishman, founding editor of the *International Sociology Review of Books*, was ISA Vice-President for Publications (2006–2010). She has published work on everyday life (see Kalekin-Fishman and Low, eds, 2010, *Everyday Life in Asia: Social Perspectives on the Senses*, Ashgate). Other recent publications include: *The Shape of Sociology for the 21st Century: Tradition and Renewal* (Kalekin-Fishman and Denis, eds, 2012, Sage). She is now studying everyday life in kindergartens as a key to socialization for citizenship.

Résumé

La vie quotidienne a inspiré beaucoup de théorie sociologique, et est maintenant reconvenue comme rameau de la discipline. Ici, nous traçons le saillant de la vie quotidienne en la théorie sociologique générale, regardons d'une façon critique aux théories spécifiques à la vie quotidienne; et examinons alors la recherche récente. Dans la fermeture, nous regardons vers l'avenir du domaine.

Mots-clés

Corps, émotions, expériences, urbaines, idéologie, normalité, sens, vie quotidienne

Resumen

La vida cotidiana ha inspirado largamente a la teoría sociológica y es actualmente una rama reconocida de la disciplina. Aquí trazamos evidencia de la importancia de la vida cotidiana para la teoría sociológica en general, observando críticamente a las teorías específicas que analizan la vida cotidiana, y luego examinamos las investigaciones recientes. Para cerrar, observamos el futuro del campo.

Palabras clave

Cuerpo, emociones, vida cotidiana, ideología, normalidad, sentidos, experiencias urbanas