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On the Microfoundations of Macrosociology[1]

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Detailed microsociological studies of everyday life activity raise the challenge of making macrosociological concepts fully empirical by translating them into aggregates of micro-events. Micro-evidence and theoretical critiques indicate that human cognitive capacity is limited. Hence actors facing complex contingencies rely largely upon tacit assumptions and routine. The routines of physical property and organizational authority are upheld by actors' tacit monitoring of social coalitions. Individuals continuously negotiate such coalitions in chains of interaction rituals in which conversations create symbols of group membership. Every encounter is a marketplace in which individuals tacitly match conversational and emotional resources acquired from previous encounters. Individuals are motivated to move toward those ritual encounters in which their microresources pay the greatest emotional returns until they reach personal equilibrium points at which their emotional returns stabilize or decline. Large-scale changes in social structure are produced by aggregate changes in the three types of microresources: increases in generalized culture due to new communications media or specialized culture-producing activities; new "technologies" of emotional production; and new particularized cultures (individual reputations) due to dramatic, usually conflictual, events. A method of macrosampling the distribution of microresources is proposed.

Microsociology is the detailed analysis of what people do, say, and think in the actual flow of momentary experience. Macrosociology is the analysis of large-scale and long-term social processes, often treated as self-subsistent entities such as "state," "organization," "class," "economy," "culture," and "society." In recent years there has been an upsurge of "radical" microsociology, that is to say, empirically detailed and/or phenomenologically sophisticated microsociology. Radical microsociology (Garfinkel 1967; Cicourel 1973), as the detailed study of everyday life, emerged partly from the influx of phenomenology into empirical sociology and partly from the application of new research techniques—audio and video recordings—which have made it possible to study real-life interaction in second-by-second detail. This has led to the close analysis of conversation (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974), of nonverbal interactions (Goffman 1971, pp. 3–61), and of the construction and use of organizational records

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(Cicourel 1968; Clegg 1975) and hence to a view of how larger social patterns are constructed out of micro materials.

This radical microsociology, under such labels as "ethnomethodology," "cognitive sociology," "social phenomenology," and others, cuts in a number of different directions. The direction that I would argue is most promising for the advance of sociology as an empirical science is not the phenomenological analysis of concepts but the emphasis upon ultradetailed empirical research. This detailed micro-analysis offers several contributions to the field of sociology in general. One is to give a strong impetus toward translating all macrophenomena into combinations of micro-events. A microtranslation strategy reveals the empirical realities of social structures as patterns of repetitive micro-interaction. Microtranslation thus gives us a picture of the complex levels of abstraction involved in causal explanations.

Another contribution of radical microsociology is its discovery that actual everyday-life microbehavior does not follow rationalist models of cognition and decision making. Instead, social interaction depends upon tacit understandings and agreements not to attempt to explicate what is taken for granted. This implies that explanations in terms of norms, rules, and role taking should be abandoned and that any model of social exchange must be considerably modified. These are large departures from accepted sociological traditions. But these traditions have not been very successful in advancing explanatory principles. I would contend that this is because they have an incorrect model of the actor. What we need, instead, is a micromechanism that can explain the repetitive actions that make up social structure such that interactions and their accompanying cognitions rest upon noncognitive bases.

Such a mechanism, I will attempt to show, is provided by *interaction ritual chains*. Such chains of micro-encounters generate the central features of social organization—authority, property, and group membership—by creating and recreating "mythical" cultural symbols and emotional energies. The result of microtranslating all social structure into such interaction ritual chains should be to make microsociology an important tool in explaining both the inertia and the dynamics of macro structure.

THE TIME-SPACE TABLE

It is useful to visualize the empirical basis of micro and macro categories by a time-space table (see table 1). On one dimension are laid out the amounts of time considered by the sociologist, ranging from a few seconds through minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, and up to years and centuries. On the other axis are the numbers of people in physical space one might focus on: beginning with one person in a local bodily space, through small groups, large groups, and aggregates, and up to an overview of all

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TABLE 1

TIME AND SPACE AS LEVELS OF SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Space Scale	Time Scale: Seconds (10^{0-1} sec)	Minutes/Hours (10^{2-4} sec)	Days (10^5 sec)	Weeks/Months (10^6 sec)	Years (10^{7-8} sec)	Centuries (10^9 sec)
One person (1–3 sq ft)	Cognitive/ emotional processes	Meaningful events Work Repetitive and intermittent behaviors	...	...	Careers, life histories	Genealogies
Small group (3–10^2 sq ft)	Eye-contact studies Microconversational analyses	Rituals Group dynamics Exchanges Bargaining	...	...	...	...
Crowd/organization (10^3–10^6 sq ft)	...	Crowd behavior	...	Formal organizations	Organizational histories	...
Community (10^7–10^{10} sq ft)	...	...	...	Social movements	Communities	...
Territorial society (10^{11}–10^{14} sq ft)	...	...	...	...	Political, economic, demographic, and stratification patterns (mobility rates, etc.) "cultures"	Long-term social changes

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the people across a large territory. I have filled in the cells of the table with the kinds of analyses that sociologists make of that particular slice of time and space.

It is clear that the distinction between micro and macro is one of degree and admits of at least two dimensions. All levels of analysis in this table are more micro than those below and to the right of them, and all levels are more macro than those above and to the left. Micro and macro are relative terms in both time and space, and the distinction itself may be regarded as a pair of continuous variables. Moreover, one can see that microanalysis in sociology has recently shifted its level: symbolic interactionism, for example, has traditionally been concerned with situations (although sometimes with more long-term processes—e.g., Becker 1963; Bucher and Strauss 1961; Dalton 1959) located generally on the minutes-to-hours level. Radical microsociologies such as ethnomethodological analysis of conversation or micro-ethological studies of eye movements have shifted the focus to the seconds level (e.g., Schegloff 1967); and phenomenological sociology, in its extreme formulations, verges upon Platonism or mysticism because of its focus on the instantaneous "now" at the left edge of the table.

The strict meaning of "empirical" refers to the upper left-hand corner of the table. You, the reader, sitting at your desk or in your car, or standing by your mailbox, etc., are in that microsituation (or possibly also slightly further down the left-hand column), and it is impossible for anyone ever to be in any empirical situation other than this sort. All macro-evidence, then, is aggregated from such micro-experiences. Moreover, although one can say that all the vertical cells in the far left-hand column are empirical in the (slightly different) sense that they all exist in the physical world of the present, the cells horizontally to the right must be regarded as analysts' constructs. In the few seconds it takes to read this passage, you the reader are constructing the reality of all those macrocategories insofar as you think of them. This is not to say that they do not also have some empirical referent, but it is a more complex and inferential one than direct micro-experience.

Everyone's life, experientially, is a sequence of microsituations, and the sum of all sequences of individual experience in the world would constitute all the possible sociological data. Thus the recent introduction of audio- and videotapes by radical microsociologists is a move toward these primary data.

MICROTRANSLATION AS A STRATEGY

There are several advantages in translating all sociological concepts into aggregates of microphenomena. The first point is epistemological. Strictly

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speaking, there is no such thing as a "state," an "economy," a "culture," a "social class." There are only collections of individual people acting in particular kinds of microsituations—collections which are characterized thus by a kind of shorthand. This can easily be seen if one examines empirically how researchers go about studying macrosubjects. Researchers themselves never leave their own microsituations; what they do is compile summaries by a series of coding and translating procedures until a text is produced which is taken as representing a macroreality, standing above all the microsituations that produced it (Garfinkel 1967; Cicourel 1975). This is true whether the researcher is relying on conversation with informants or on closed-item questionnaires, or even on direct personal observation. In each case there are a series of tacit summaries between the actual life experiences and the way in which they are finally reported. The same is true to an even larger degree when historical materials are used; such materials are usually constructed from previous written accounts, which even in their original form contain numerous glosses upon the actual flow of minute-by-minute experience.

It is strategically impossible for sociology to do without this kind of macro summary. It would take too much time to recount all the micro-events that make up any large-scale social pattern, and a total recounting in any case would be tedious and unrewarding. Nevertheless, we need not reconcile ourselves to the complete loss of information of the truly empirical level, satisfying ourselves with remote abstractions. For if macrophenomena are made up of aggregations and repetitions of many similar micro-events, we can sample these essential microcomponents and use them as the empirical basis of all other sociological constructions.

The significance of the first point, then, is: *Sociological concepts can be made fully empirical only by grounding them in a sample of the typical micro-events that make them up*. The implication is that the ultimate empirical validation of sociological statements depends upon their microtranslation. By this standard, virtually all sociological evidence as yet presented is tentative only. This of course does not mean that it may not be a useful approximation, although this is not always the case. Success at some degree of microtranslation, I would suggest, is the test of whether the macro statement is a good approximation or a misleading reification.[2]

[2] To cite a recent example: the controversy over the reputational and decision-making models of community power is a debate over the merits of a more macro and a more micro model. The decision-making model focuses on particular micro-events and claims greater empirical realism. Its advocates criticize the reputational model for taking the hypostatizations and illusions of commonsense discourse as if they were reliable pictures of social realities. Advocates of the reputational method, on the other hand, criticize the decision-making model for missing the larger pattern, and especially that part of it which is hidden by focusing only on actual decisions, ignoring decisions that are never raised, including institutional arrangements which are never challenged

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A second implication is that the *active* agents in any sociological explanation must be microsituational. Social patterns, institutions, and organizations are only abstractions from the behavior of individuals and summaries of the distribution of different microbehaviors in time and space. These abstractions and summaries do not *do* anything; if they seem to indicate a continuous reality it is because the individuals that make them up repeat their microbehaviors many times, and if the "structures" change it is because the individuals who enact them change their microbehaviors.

This is not to say that a causal explanation is totally microsituational. In another paper (Collins, in press), I have attempted to show that the microtranslation of a large body of causal principles leaves, in addition to a number of pure microprinciples, a residue of several types of macroreferences. Individuals within microsituations make macroreferences to other situations, as well as to abstract or reified social entities; the effects of microsituations upon individuals are often cumulative, resulting from repetition of micro-experiences; outside analysts cannot establish microprinciples without comparing across microsituations. There are also three pure macrovariables: the dispersion of individuals in physical *space;* the amount of *time* that social processes take (including temporal patterns of intermittent and repeated behaviors); and the *numbers* of individuals involved. In other words, there are some irreducible macrofactors, but there is only a limited set of them. All varieties of macro structures or events can be translated into these kinds of aggregations of micro-events.

If causality involves stating the conditions under which particular social processes happen, it is apparent that both the independent and dependent variables, "the conditions" and "the social processes which happen," are composite terms. Both, at a minimum, refer to an analyst's selection of repetitive micro-events. Both independent and dependent variables may be further composites in the sense of including a spatial-temporal arrangement of a number of different micro-actors. In addition, more macro samples—"control variables"—must be compared by the analyst to establish any given causal statement.

In any empirical instance, then, to account fully for the behavior observed involves the analyst in comparisons with a wide range of nonpresent situations and with statements linking behavior in one situation with be-

but are implicitly defended by being taken for granted (Backrach and Baratz 1962). The macro theory here promises a greater range of explanatory power but is empirically weaker. Yet it is salvageable by translating it into an aggregate of micro terms. A move in this direction has been accomplished by Laumann, Marsden, and Galaskiewicz (1977), who show a key link between the crude macrosummary of actions involved in reputational power and the actual exercise of that power by demonstrating that there are networks of reputed influentials who actually discuss political matters informally among themselves and thus tend to arrive at a general line of behavior which presumably includes taken-for-granted routines as well as explicit decisions.

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havior in other situations. For example, an individual's situational behavior is conditional upon the overall distribution of behaviors in other times and places that can be referred to metaphorically as an organizational "network." But to show such a pattern (and I believe we have shown a number of such patterns, cryptically summarized under such statements as "social class background affects attitudes about *x*" [e.g., Collins 1975, pp. 73–75]) is not yet to show its dynamics; it is only to refer to an observed correlation between behavior in certain kinds of repeated situations and behavior in other situations. We still need to produce the *mechanism* by which conditions—certain arrangements of microsituations—motivate human actors to behave in certain ways. This mechanism should explain both why they behave as they do in specific situations and why they maintain certain dispersions of microbehaviors among themselves, across time and space, thereby making up the macropatterns of social structure. Such a mechanism, moreover, should be able to produce, by different states of its variables, both repetitive behaviors—static or regularly reproduced social structure—and structural changes.

The second implication, then, comes down to this: *the dynamics as well as the inertia in any causal explanation of social structure must be microsituational; all macroconditions have their effects by impinging upon actors' situational motivations*. Macro-aggregates of microsituations can provide the context and make up the results of such processes, but the actual energy must be microsituational.

It remains to produce such a micromechanism. Here, the substantive research of radical microsociology provides further leads.

THE MICROCRITIQUE OF RATIONALISTIC COGNITIVE AND EXCHANGE MODELS

Much of the classic ethnomethodological research was oriented toward showing that the basic everyday life stance is to take it for granted that meaningful activities are going on. Garfinkel's (1967) breaching experiments indicate that to question or violate the usually tacit aspects of behavior upsets people. They assume there are aspects of life which they should not have to explain. There is also a deeper reason for this reaction: it is in fact impossible to explicate all the tacitly understood grounds of any social convention, and the effort to do so quickly shows people the prospects of an infinite regress of discussion. Cicourel (1973) has shown some of the bases of the "indexicality" of social communications. Many elements of communication involve nonverbal modes which cannot be completely translated into words, and the *activity* of talking itself (as opposed to the content of talk) has a structure that results in verbalizations but is not itself verbalizable. These results imply that meaningful cognitions do not

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ultimately guide social behavior; rather, cognitive meaning is usually given to events retrospectively, when some difficulty has arisen which is to be remedied by offering an "account" (Scott and Lyman 1968).

This perspective undercuts a number of conventional explanations of social behavior. Values and norms become dubious constructions. Ethnomethodological research indicates that people are rarely able to verbalize many social rules guiding their behavior. This is especially true at the deeper levels of tacit understanding, such as the circumstances under which particular kinds of surface rules are appropriate (Cicourel 1973). Normative concepts are observed mainly in retrospective accounts or as analysts' constructs; there is no first-hand evidence that they guide actors' spontaneous behavior (see Deutscher 1973; Cancian 1975). Nor is it possible for individuals to operate cognitively simply by matching external situations to mentally formulated rules.[3]

Similar considerations cast doubt on the adequacy of assuming that behavior is guided by the definition of the situation or by role taking. These concepts imply that behavior is determined cognitively by well-defined verbal ideas. But if the most common stance is to *assume* normalcy as much as possible, even in the absence of discernible meaning, and if meanings are mainly imputed retrospectively as part of some other conversational situation, then immediate situations do not have to be explicitly defined in order for people to act in them. Moreover, if there is an irreducibly tacit element in cognition and communication, situations and roles never *can* be fully defined. What guides interaction, then, must be found on another level.

These difficulties arise again in the case of exchange theories. For the micro-evidence does not show that the usual cognitive stance is one in which actors calculate possible returns; on the contrary, most people most of the time operate on the basis of an assumed normalcy which is not subject to conscious reflection. Comprehensive samplings of conversations in work settings, for example, show that the prevailing tone of most interactions is to take organizational routine for granted; bargaining relations are confined largely to external contacts, as between business heads and clients (Clegg 1975). More fundamentally, the ethnomethodological findings imply that, even where exchanges do take place, they must occur against a background of tacit understandings which are not challenged or even raised

[3] Of course, one may rescue the norms or rules as nonverbalizable or unconscious patterns which people manifest in their behavior. But such "norms" are simply observer's constructs. It is a common, but erroneous, sleight-of-hand then to assume that the actors also know and orient their behavior to these "rules." The reason that normative sociologies have made so little progress in the past half century is that they assume that a description of behavior is an explanation of it, whereas in fact the explanatory mechanism is still to be found. It is because of the potential for this kind of abuse that I believe that the terminology of norms ought to be dropped from sociological theory.

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to consciousness. Durkheim ([1893] 1947) made a similar point in criticizing social contract theories: any contract, he pointed out, involves one in further obligations not bargained for, such as an implicit obligation to uphold the contract.

Analogous difficulties have arisen within exchange theory itself (Heath 1976). There are certain kinds of calculations which actors cannot make on a purely rational basis. They cannot choose rationally among amounts of two or more alternative goods if there is no common metric; and this is frequently the case in everyday life, as in dealing with such goods as status, comfort, or affection, which have no simple monetary equivalent. The problem is even more acute when one must calculate the expected value of different courses of action, which involves multiplying the probability of attaining a good times its relative desirability; here there are two incommensurable scales to be combined. Yet another difficulty is that the probabilities of attaining one's ends are impossible to calculate for a particular situation in the absence of knowledge of the objective distribution of outcomes. There are further limitations on the applicability of an exchange model: many exchanges, such as those among members of organizational positions, or among persons who have established a bond of repeated gift exchanges, leave no room for bargaining, having excluded alternative partners after a once-and-for-all agreement. The applicability of a model of exchange, then, seems very restricted.

The findings of empirical microsociology and the self-critiques of exchange theories are equivalent and point to the same underlying conditions. If cognition is limited to a few relatively uncomplex operations, then people cannot follow a chain of thought very many steps, either forward to its consequences or back to its premises. Most courses of action must be taken for granted. In March and Simon's (1958) neorationalist reformulation, the only feasible strategy for an actor monitoring a number of complex actions (as in managing an organization) is to "satisfice" in most areas, that is, to ignore most chains of actions, as long as they meet a certain routine level of satisfaction, and concentrate instead on the most unpredictable and irregular area. This is essentially the same procedure that ethnomethodologists find in people's conversational practices. People do not question the truthfulness or pursue the full meaning of most utterances unless severe misunderstandings or conflicts occur, and then they "troubleshoot" by offering retrospective accounts.

Williamson (1975) has drawn some of the consequences for economic theory. Like the ethnomethodologists, he proposes that human rationality is limited and hence that any complex or potentially conflictual negotiations can become exceedingly long and costly—conceivably even interminable—unless there is some tacit or nonnegotiable basis for agreement. Hence, in many circumstances open markets for labor and for goods give way to or-

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ganizations, that is, to repeated exchanges at conditions negotiated on a once-only basis. These are economically more efficient than continually renegotiating relations among workers, or among suppliers and manufacturers, when there are tasks of any degree of complexity to be carried out. This argument is tantamount to claiming that the structural consequence of the cognitive features documented by microsociologists is to replace open-market exchanges with taken-for-granted routines in organizational networks.

Nevertheless, substituting organizations for markets does not eliminate the problem of showing the microfoundations of social structure. Granted that limited rationality makes people rely on routine rather than on bargaining in many areas of life, the question still remains: Why does any particular form of organizational routine exist, and to what extent will it be stable? Any organization involves authority, the power of certain people to give and enforce orders which others carry out. The basis of authority is a chain of communications. The ultimate sanction of a lower-level manager over a worker is to communicate to others in the management hierarchy to withhold the worker's pay; the sanction in a military organization is to communicate orders to apply coercion against any disobedient soldier. The civilian case is founded on the military one; control chains based on pay or other access to property are ultimately backed up by the coercive power of the state. Thus the microbehaviors that make up any organizational routine must involve some sense of the chains of command that can bring sanctions to bear for violating the routine.

Carrying out a routine, then, cannot be a matter of complete obliviousness to possible contingencies. Moreover, there is a good deal of evidence from observational studies of organizations that struggles to exercise or evade control go on among workers and managers, customers and salespersons; that managers negotiate coalitions among themselves; that staff and line officials struggle over influence; that promotions and career lines are subject to considerable maneuver (Roy 1952; Lombard 1955; Dalton 1959; Glaser 1968). Given the nature of power, this is not surprising. Sanctions tend to be remote and take time to apply, and the very conditions of limited cognitive capacities in situations calling for complex coordination or involving uncertainty leave room in the routine for negotiation. Routine may be cognitively desirable, but it is not always forthcoming. When breakdowns occur, prior routine cannot prevent individual actors from negotiating *which* further routines are to be established.

Even when sanctions are applied, the negotiable nature of power itself again becomes apparent. The ultimate basis of property and of private authority is political authority, backed up by the power of the military. Political and military authority, however, are based upon a self-reinforcing process of producing loyalty or disloyalty. A political leader, even of dicta-

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torial power, relies upon others to carry out orders; this includes using subordinates to enforce discipline over other subordinates. Hence a leader is powerful to the extent that he or she is widely believed to be powerful, most essentially among those *within* the organizational chain of command (see Schelling 1963, pp. 58–118). For less dictatorial leaders and for informal negotiations at lower levels within organizations, power is even more obviously dependent upon the accumulated confidence of others (Banfield 1961).

Organizational authority, then, is based on shared orientations among the members of a group, directed toward the extent of shared orientation itself. Organizational members monitor what each is feeling toward the other and especially toward those in authority. The ultimate basis of routine is another level of implicit negotiation.

Here we come to the crux of the issue. Both neorationalist self-criticisms and microsociological evidence agree that complex contingencies cannot be calculated rationally, and hence that actors must rely largely on tacit assumptions and organizational routine. But the actual structures of the social world, especially as centered on the networks upholding property and authority, involve continuous monitoring by individuals of each other's group loyalties. Since the social world can involve quite a few lines of authority and sets of coalitions, the task of monitoring them can be extremely complex. How is this possible, given people's inherently limited cognitive capacities?

The solution must be that negotiations are carried out implicitly, on a different level than the use of consciously manipulated verbal symbols. I propose that the mechanism is *emotional* rather than cognitive. Individuals monitor others' attitudes toward social coalitions, and hence toward the degree of support for routines, by feeling the amount of confidence and enthusiasm there is toward certain leaders and activities, or the amount of fear of being attacked by a strong coalition, or the amount of contempt for a weak one. These emotional energies are transmitted by contagion among members of a group, in flows which operate very much like the set of negotiations which produce prices within a market. In this sense, I will attempt to show that the strengths of a market model for linking microinteractions into macrostructures can be salvaged without incorporating the weaknesses of traditional exchange theories.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE AS MICROREPETITION IN THE PHYSICAL WORLD

From a microviewpoint, what is the "social structure"? In microtranslation, it refers to people's repeated behavior in particular places, using particular physical objects, and communicating by using many of the same symbolic expressions repeatedly with certain other people. The most easily identifi-

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able part of this repetition, moreover, is physical: the most enduring repetitions are those around particular places and objects. Most of the repetitive structure of economic organization takes place in particular factories, office buildings, trucks, etc. The most repetitive behaviors that make up the family structure are the facts that certain people inhabit the same dwelling places day after day, that the same men and women sleep in the same beds and touch the same bodies, that the same children are kissed, spanked, and fed. The "state" exists by virtue of there being courtrooms where judges repeatedly sit, headquarters from which police leave to ride in the same squad cars, barracks where troops are repeatedly housed, and assembly halls where congresses of politicians repeatedly gather.

Of course, there is also symbolic communication which goes on among these people, and this bears some relation to the "structuredness" of society. But what I am contending is that the repetitiveness is not to be explained primarily by the *content* of this symbolic communication. The social structure is not a set of meanings that people carry in their heads. I believe that this is borne out by the findings of the empirical microsociology of cognition. The structure is in the repeated *actions* of communicating, not in the contents of what is said; those contents are frequently ambiguous or erroneous, not always mutually understood or fully explicated. People do not always (or even usually) have a very accurate idea of the political state to which they defer, the organization in which they work, or the family or circle of friends with whom they associate. But if the structuredness of society is physical, not cognitive, these disabilities do not prevent us from carrying out a great deal of orderly repetition. No one needs to have a cognitive map of the whole social structure, or even of any organization; all one needs is to negotiate a fairly limited routine in a few physical places and with the particular people usually encountered there.

The limitations upon human cognition documented by the ethnomethodologists show why social order must necessarily be physical and local for all participants. Although this may seem paradoxical in view of the philosophical and antimaterialist themes associated with this intellectual tradition, it is consonant with the main examples of "indexical" statements which ethnomethodologists have cited (Garfinkel 1967): such terms as "you," "me," "here," and "this" are irremediably bound to the specific context, because people's activities always occur at a particular physical location and at a particular time. The inexpressible context upon which everybody depends, and upon which all tacit understandings rest, is the physical world, including everyone's own body, as seen from a particular place within it.[4]

[4] A phenomenologist would object that individual persons and particular situations cannot be seen simply as physical moments in time and space, because they are always

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Again, it is plain that this *physical* social world is not static. People do come and go; homes are formed and dissolved; workers move to new factories and offices; politicians are replaced; new friends meet while others cease to see one another. Nor are the patterns historically constant; indeed, much of what we mean by "structural change" in history is shifting patterns of physical organization: separation of workplaces and armaments places from homes, shifting numbers and shifting rates of turnover of people in political places, and so on. My point here is simply that the microreality of any "social structure" is some pattern of repetitive associations among people in relation to particular physical objects and places, and that this must be so because human cognitive capacities do not allow people to organize in any other way.

These cognitive capacities do not prevent individuals from systematically misperceiving the nature of their social order by making claims about it on a symbolic plane. How this is done will be suggested below.

The question now arises: Why is it that people repeatedly inhabit the same buildings, use the same tools, talk to the same people? Part of the answer has already been given: routine occurs because the world is too complex for us to have to renegotiate all of it (or even very much of it) all the time. Most of the time it is easier to stay where one is familiar. But this is only the beginning of an answer. We still need to know why those particular people occupy those particular places. And since they do not stay there forever, we need to know why they move when they do and where they will go. Moreover, the mechanism that explains when they will move (and by the same token, when they will stay) should also be the mechanism that explains just what they will do, both in action and in communication, with the people they repeatedly encounter in their usual places.

From a macroviewpoint, one way to gloss these microrepetitions is to refer to them as property or authority. This brings in the notion of possible sanctions against violating a particular pattern of repetitive behavior. The person who goes into someone else's factory or takes someone else's car stands the risk of being arrested and jailed; the person who fails to carry out a boss's orders risks being fired. Nevertheless, from the view-

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defined by a cognitive structure which transcends the immediate situation. In other words, we do not know who the individual is or what the situation is without using some situation-transcending concept. Here again (as in n. 2 above) I believe we encounter a confusion of the theorist-observer's viewpoint and the actor's viewpoint. It is the outside theorist who wants to characterize the individual as a "citizen" or a "husband," or the situation as a "home" or a "workplace." What I am contending is that most of the time actors do not think about such concepts at all; they simply are physically in certain places, carrying out certain actions, including the action of talking to other people. It is only when this physical and emotional routine is disrupted that people rise to the level imputed to them by phenomenological theorists and begin to offer macroconceptual "accounts" of themselves and their settings.

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point of strict microtranslation, we must ask: To what extent do people actually think of these contingencies from moment to moment in their lives as they act either to respect property and authority or to violate them? The reality of sanctions upholding property and authority cannot be doubted, as micro-events that *sometimes* occur; but they do not occur very often in relation to the sheer number of micro-events that actually take place. Moreover, the general model of human cognition suggested above is that people do not calculate contingencies or refer to explicit rules most of the time; they act tacitly, and only consciously think of these formalities when an issue arises. Not that people cannot formulate rules or calculate contingencies, but there is no conscious rule about *when* people must bring up the rules and no conscious calculation of when one should calculate and when not (see Cicourel 1973).

What we have instead, I suggest, is a pattern in which people act toward physical objects and toward each other in ways that mostly constitute routines. They do not ordinarily think of these routines as upholding property and authority, although an analytically minded outside observer could describe them as fitting that pattern. People follow routines because they feel natural or appropriate. Moreover, routines may be quite variable with respect to what an observer may describe as property and authority; people can rigidly avoid stepping on someone else's front lawn or they may take the office stationery home, in both cases without consciously thinking about it; they may nervously jump to a boss's request or slough it off behind the boss's back, again without consciously invoking any general formulations of rules or roles. This variation may, of course, also extend to instances where people *do* become property-conscious, rules-conscious, authority-conscious; what I am arguing is that we need an explanation of why this symbolic consciousness occurs when it does. That explanation is again in the realm of feeling: people invoke conscious social concepts at particular times because the emotional dynamics of their lives motivates them to do so.

The underlying emotional dynamics, I propose, centers on feelings of membership in coalitions. Briefly put: property (access to and exclusions from particular physical places and things) is based upon a sense of what kinds of persons do and do not belong where. This is based in turn upon a sense of what groups are powerful enough to punish violators of their claims. Authority is similarly organized: it rests upon a sense of which people are connected to which groups, to coalitions of what extensiveness and of what capacity to enforce the demands of their members upon others. Both of these are variables: there is no inherent, objective entity called "property" or "authority," only the varying senses that people feel at particular places and times of how strong these enforcing coalitions are. There may also be membership groups that make few or no claims to property or authority—purely "informal" or "horizontal" groups, like friends and

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acquaintances, whose solidarity is an end in itself as far as its members are concerned.

The most general explanation of human social behavior encompasses all of these variations. It should specify: What makes someone a member of a coalition? What determines the extensiveness of a coalition and the intensity of bonds within it? How do people judge the power of coalitions? The answers to these questions, I am suggesting, determine the way in which groups of friends and other status groups are formed, the degree to which authority and property routines are upheld, and who will dominate others within these patterns. The basic mechanism is a process of emotional group identification that may be described as a set of interaction ritual chains.

A THEORY OF INTERACTION RITUAL CHAINS

From a microtranslation viewpoint, all processes of forming and judging coalition memberships must take place in interaction situations. The main activity in such situations is conversation. But no one situation stands alone. Every individual goes through many situations: indeed, a lifetime is, strictly speaking, a chain of interaction situations. (One might also call it a chain of conversations.) The people one talks to have also talked to other people in the past and will talk to others in the future. Hence an appropriate image of the social world is a bundle of individual chains of interactional experience, crisscrossing each other in space as they flow along in time. The dynamics of coalition membership are produced by the emotional sense individuals have at any one time, due to the tone of the situation they are currently in (or last remember, or shortly anticipate), which in turn is influenced by the previous chains of situations of all participants.

The *manifest* content of an interaction is usually not the emotions it involves. Any conversation, to the extent that it is taken seriously by its participants, focuses their attention on the reality of its contents, the things that are talked about (Goffman 1967, pp. 113–16). This may include a focus on practical work that is being done. What is significant about any conversation from the point of view of social membership, however, is not the content but the extent to which the participants can actually maintain a common activity of focusing on that content. The content is a vehicle for establishing membership. From this viewpoint, any conversation may be looked upon as a ritual. It invokes a common reality, which from a ritual viewpoint may be called a "myth": in this case, whether the conversational myth is true or not is irrelevant. The myth, or content, is a Durkheimian sacred object. It signifies membership in a common group for those who truly respect it. The person who can become successfully engrossed in a conversational reality becomes accepted as a member of the group of those

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who believe in that conversational entity. In terms of the Durkheimian model of religious ritual (Durkheim [1912] 1954; see also Goffman 1967), a conversation is a cult in which all believers share a moral solidarity. In fact, it *creates* the reference point of moral solidarity: those who believe are the good; defense of the belief and hence of the group is righteousness; evil is disbelief in, and even more so attack upon, the cognitive symbols that hold the group together. The cognitive symbols, however banal, particularized, or esoteric the conversational content may be, are important to the group and defended by it because they are the vehicle by means of which the group is able to unify itself.

Not all conversations, however, are equally successful rituals. Some bind individuals together more permanently and tightly than others; some conversations do not come off at all. Among those conversations that do succeed in evoking a common reality, some produce a feeling of egalitarian membership among the conversationalists, while others produce feelings of rank differences, including feelings of authority and subordination. These types of variability are, in fact, essential for producing and reproducing stratified social order. Conversational interaction ritual, then, is a mechanism producing *varying* amounts of solidarity, varying degrees of personal identification with coalitions of varying degrees of impressiveness.

What, then, makes a conversational ritual succeed or not, and what kinds of coalitions does it invoke? I suggest the following ingredients. (1) Participants in a successful conversational ritual must be able to invoke a common cognitive reality. Hence they must have similar *conversational* or *cultural resources*.[5] A successful conversation may also be inegalitarian, in that one person does most of the cultural reality invoking, the others acting as an audience; in this case we have a domination-and-subordination-producing ritual. (2) Participants must also be able to sustain a common emotional tone. At a minimum, they must all want to produce at least momentary solidarity. Again, the emotional participation may be stratified, dividing the group into emotional leaders and followers.

These two ingredients—cultural resources and emotional energies—come from individuals' chains of previous interactional experience and serve to reproduce or change the pattern of interpersonal relations. Among the most important of the patterns reproduced or changed are feelings about persons' relationships to physical property and to the coercive coalitions of authority. How individuals are tied to these coalitions is the crucial determinant of which are dominant or subordinate.

Conversational resources.—Particular styles and topics of conversation imply memberships in different groups. At any time, the previous chain of

[5] Bourdieu (1977; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977) proposes a similar concept, "cultural capital," although this refers more specifically to the culture legitimated by the dominant class in a society.

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interaction rituals which have been successfully negotiated has made certain conversational contents into symbols of solidarity. The range of these contents has been discussed elsewhere (Collins 1975, pp. 114–31). For example, shop talk invokes membership in occupational groups, political and other ideological talk invokes contending political coalitions, entertainment talk invokes groups with various tastes, general discussion invokes different intellectual and nonintellectual strata, while gossip and personal talk invoke specific and sometimes quite intimate memberships. Again, it is not important whether what is said is true or not, but whether it can be said and accepted as a common reality for that moment—that is what makes it an emblem of group membership.

Conversational topics have two different implications for reproducing the social structure. Some conversational topics are *generalized:* they refer to events and entities on some level of abstraction from the immediate and local situation. Talk about techniques, politics, religion, and entertainment is of this sort. The social effect, I would suggest, is to reproduce a sense of what may be called status-group membership: common participation in a horizontally organized cultural community which shares these outlooks and a belief in their importance. Ethnic groups, classes to the extent that they are cultural communities, and many more specialized cultural groups are of this type. Successful conversation on such topics brings about a generalized sense of common membership, although it invokes no specific or personal ties to particular organizations, authority, or property.

Other conversational topics are *particularized:* they refer to specific persons, places, and things. Such talk can include practical instructions (asking someone to do something for someone at a specific time and place), as well as political planning about specific strategies (as in organizational politics) and gossip and personal narration. Some of this particularized talk serves to produce and reproduce informal relations among people (friendships). But particularized talk, paradoxically enough, is also crucial in reproducing property and authority, and hence organizations.[6] For, as I have argued above, property and authority structures exist as physical routines whose microreality consists of people taking for granted particular people's rights to be in particular buildings, giving orders to particular people, and so on. In this sense, property and authority are reenacted whenever people refer to *someone's* house, *someone's* office, *someone's* car, as well as whenever someone gives an order to do a particular thing, and the listener ac-

[6] This is contrary to the emphasis in Bernstein's (1971–75) theory of linguistic codes, in which restricted (particularized) codes are seen as the communication mode of the lower classes, while the middle and upper classes use primarily an elaborated (generalized) code. Bernstein's theory focuses only on class cultures and misses the role that particularized talk plays in enacting specific organizations. The higher classes do engage in more generalized talk than the lower classes, but they also engage in particularized talk that is, in fact, crucial for enacting the organizations they control.

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knowledges the reality, at least for that moment, of that order. Again, it is worth pointing out that orders are not always carried out, but it is the situation in which the communicative ritual occurs that is crucial for maintaining the structure as a real social pattern, not the consequences for practical action.[7]

Of course, as indicated, even the degree of ritual compliance is a variable, and we must inquire into the conditions which make people respect and enact organizational communications less or more enthusiastically or even rebel against them. This brings us to the second ingredient of rituals, emotional energies.

Emotional energies.[8]—Emotions affect ritual membership in several ways. There must be at least a minimal degree of common mood among interactants if a conversational ritual is to succeed in invoking a shared reality. The stronger the common emotional tone, the more real the invoked topic will seem to be and the greater the solidarity in the group (see Collins 1975, pp. 94–95, 153–54). Emotional propensities are thus a prerequisite for a successful interaction. But the interaction also serves as a machine for intensifying emotion and for generating new emotional tones and solidarities. Thus emotional energies are important results of interactions at any point in the ritual chain. Emotional solidarity, I would suggest, is the payoff that favorable conversational resources can produce for an individual.

If successful interactional rituals (IRs) produce feelings of solidarity, stratification both within and among coalitions is a further outcome of emotional flows along IR chains. As noted, conversational rituals can be either egalitarian or asymmetrical. Both types have stratifying implications. Egalitarian rituals are stratifying in that insiders are accepted and outsiders rejected; here stratification exists in the form of a coalition against excluded individuals, or possibly the domination of one coalition over another. Asymmetrical conversations, in which one individual sets the energy tones (and invokes the cultural reality) while the others are an audience, are internally stratified.

The most basic emotional ingredient in interactions, I would suggest, is a minimal tone of positive sentiment toward the other. The solidarity sentiments range from a minimal display of nonhostility to warm mutual liking and enthusiastic common activity. Where do such emotions come from? They originate in previous experiences in IR chains. An individual who is successfully accepted into an interaction acquires an increment of positive

[7] This, I believe, is the significance of Goffman's (1959) concept of frontstage behavior in organizations. Enunciation of *rules,* then, is a special type of frontstage enactment; its significance is not that the organizational rules directly cause behavior but that rules are *conversational topics* that are sometimes invoked as crucial tests of feelings of members toward authority coalitions in organizations.

[8] Some alternative theories of emotion are given in Kemper (1978), Schott (1979), and Hochschild (1979).

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emotional energy. This energy is manifested as what we commonly call confidence, warmth, and enthusiasm. Acquiring this in one situation, an individual has more emotional resources for successfully negotiating solidarity in the next interaction. Such chains, both positive and negative, extend throughout every person's lifetime.[9]

Let us consider the variations possible within this basic model. The main conditions which produce emotional energy are these:

a) Increased emotional confidence is produced by every experience of successfully negotiating a membership ritual. Decreased emotional confidence results from rejection or lack of success.

b) The more powerful the group within which one successfully negotiates ritual solidarity, the greater the emotional confidence one receives from it. The power of a group here means the amount of physical property it successfully claims access to, the sheer number of its adherents, and the amount of physical force (numbers of fighters, instruments of violence) it has access to.

c) The more intense the emotional arousal within an IR, the more emotional energy an individual receives from participating in it. A group situation with a high degree of enthusiasm thus generates large emotional increments for individuals. High degrees of emotional arousal are created especially by IRs that include an element of conflict against outsiders: either an actual fight, a ritual punishment of offenders, or, on a lower level of intensity, symbolic denunciation of enemies (including conversational griping).

d) Taking a dominant position within an IR increases one's emotional energies. Taking a subordinate position reduces one's emotional energies; the more extreme the subordination, the greater the energy reduction.

INTERACTIONS AS MARKETPLACES FOR CULTURAL AND EMOTIONAL RESOURCES

Why will a particular person, in any given interactional situation, achieve or fail to achieve ritual membership? And why will particular persons dominate or be subordinated in an IR? The answers lie in a combination of the emotional and cultural resources of all the participants in any encounter. These in turn result from the IR chains that each individual has previously experienced. Each encounter is like a marketplace in which these resources are implicitly compared and conversational rituals of various degrees of solidarity and stratification are negotiated. Each individual's "market" po-

[9] This does not imply an infinite regress in the past; it points to the important fact that human children are born into an *emotional* interaction and that successive emotional states build upon the initial one.

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sition depends upon the emotional and cultural resources acquired from previous interactions.

The several kinds of emotional and cultural resources interact. Since emotional energies result from success or failure in previous IRs, having high or low cultural resources also contributes to high or low emotional energies. To a lesser extent there is an effect in the opposite direction: the more emotional energy (confidence, social warmth) one has, the more one is able to gain new cultural resources by successfully entering into new conversations, whereas a person with low emotional confidence may be "tongue-tied," unable to use even what cultural resources he or she has.

Both cultural and emotional resources change over time. But they change in different rhythms. Generally speaking, I would suggest that emotional energies are much more volatile than cultural resources and that they can change in both positive and negative directions. If one encounters a series of situations in which one is highly accepted or even dominating, or in which the emotions are very intense, one's emotional energy can build up very rapidly. The rhythms of mass political and religious movements are based upon just such dynamics. On the other hand, if one goes through a series of ritual rejections or subordinations, one's energies can drop fairly rapidly.

Cultural resources, however, are fairly stable, and they change largely in a positive direction. But here we must pay attention to the distinction between generalized and particularized cultural resources. Generalized resources usually grow over time and at a slow rate. Individuals may forget some of the generalized information they possess, but since it is often reproduced as common conversational topics in their usual encounters with other people, loss of generalized cultural capital is probably confined to those occasions in which someone leaves a habitual milieu of conversational partners for a long time. And even so, there is a considerable lag; the power of memory makes generalized cultural resources a stabilizing force in social relations.

Particularized cultural resources, on the other hand, are potentially more discontinuous. Particularized conversational actions (giving a specific order, asking practical advice, negotiating a strategy regarding a particular issue in organizational politics, joking with friends, etc.) are evanescent. The bonds they enact are permanent only to the extent that those actions are frequently reproduced. Particularized cultural resources are especially important as the microbasis of property, authority, and organization, as well as of close personal ties. The relationship of people to particular physical objects that constitute property is enacted over and over again in ordinary and taken-for-granted encounters, in IRs which have a particularized content. The same is true of the microreproduction of authority and of organizations.

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Particularized conversational resources differ from generalized conversational resources, and from emotional resources as well, in that they not only are acquired in one's *own* conversations but also circulate independently of oneself. When other people talk particularistically about some individual, they are constituting her or his reputation. One's reputation, then, is a particularized conversational resource that circulates in other people's conversations. For the microtranslation of macrostructures, the most important kind of reputations that circulate are simply the parts of talk which identify someone by a particular title ("the chairman," "his wife") or organizational membership ("he is with G.E."), or which tacitly give someone a reputation for certain property and authority ("I went into his office," "She sent out a memo directing them to . . . "). Particularized conversation, both as enacted and as circulated secondarily as reputations of other people, is what principally constitutes the social structure of property and authority.

Compared with generalized conversation, particularized conversation is potentially quite volatile, although much of the time it simply reproduces itself and hence reproduces social routines. Most of the time, the same people are placed into organizational and property-maintaining routines by both the particularized conversational rituals in which they take part and those in which they are conversational subjects. But this flow of particularistic cultural resources *can* shift quite abruptly, especially on the reputational side. On a small and local scale, this happens frequently: a new person enters a job, a familiar one leaves a place—the old round of particularized conversational enactments and reputations suddenly stops and a new particular social reality is promulgated. Most of the time these particularized items of conversation reinforce the bedrock of physical routine, which human cognitive capacities require us to rely upon to such a great extent. But by the same token, the particular structure of organizational behavior, including very large organizational aggregates such as the state, is potentially very volatile: it is not upheld by generalized rules or generalized culture of any kind, but by short-term, particularized interaction rituals, and these can abruptly take on a new content. This microbasis of property and authority implies that these routines alternate between long periods of relatively stable microreproduction and dramatic episodes of upheaval or revolution.

If we ask, then, what causes the variations in this pattern—when will particular individuals move in or out, and when will the whole pattern of property and authority be stable or shift—we find a market-like dynamic. Particular individuals enact the property and authority structure because their previous IR chains give them certain emotional energies and cultural resources, including the resource of the reputation for belonging in certain authority rituals and particular physical places. The relative value of these

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resources may shift from encounter to encounter, as the combinations of individuals vary. If one begins to encounter persons whose emotional and cultural (including reputational) resources are greater or less than what one is used to, one's own capacity to generate ritual membership and conversational dominance will shift up or down. Hence one's emotional energies will undergo an increase or decrease. If these energy shifts reach the point at which one is motivated and able to shift physical and ritual position in the pattern of property and organizational authority, one's reputation and other particularized conversational resources will abruptly shift. Generalized cultural resources, finally, may build up across a long series of interactions, but this occurs relatively slowly.

Although IR situations are market-like, it is worth stressing that the mechanism by which individuals are motivated by their market positions is not one of rational calculation. As noted above, a fundamental difficulty in rationalist social exchange models is that there is no way for individuals to compare disparate goods having no common metric, nor is it possible to multiply these values by the different metric of a scale of probabilities of attaining various goods. But if individuals are motivated by their emotional energies as these shift from situation to situation, the sheer amount of emotional energy is the common denominator deciding the attractiveness of various alternatives, as well as a predictor of whether an individual will actually attain any of them. Individuals thus do not have to calculate probabilities in order to feel varying degrees of confidence in different outcomes. Disparate goods do not have to be directly compared, only the emotional tone of situations in which they are available.[10] Nor do actors have to calculate the value of their various cultural resources (generalized and particularized) in each situation. These resources have an automatic effect upon the conversational interaction, and the outcomes are automatically transformed into increments or decrements of emotional energy.

The fundamental mechanism, then, is not a conscious one. Rather, consciousness, in the form of cultural resources, is a series of inputs into each situation which affects one's *sense* of available group memberships of varying degrees of attractiveness. It is possible, of course, for individuals sometimes to reflect consciously upon their social choices, perhaps even to become aware of their own cultural and emotional resources vis-à-vis those of their fellows. But choices consciously made, I would contend, would be the

[10] There may be occasions, of course, in which individuals find themselves among disparate sources of attraction or repulsion which are evenly balanced. In those cases, the IR chain theory predicts that their behavior will in fact be immobilized—they will remain in whatever physical routine they are in at that time, until the flow of IR energy combinations with other actors motivates them to leave that routine.

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same as choices made without reflection.[11] One's sense of "choice" or "will" rests upon the accretion of energies—one's degree of self-confidence—which is the product of a larger dynamic.

Another long-standing difficulty of social exchange theories is solved by the IR chain model: Why do people repay a gift? Self-interest is not a sufficient explanation, as an exchange is rewarding only to the extent that individuals *already* know there will be reciprocity. Hence theorists have felt it necessary to fall back upon such claims as "what is customary becomes obligatory" (Blau 1964) or to invoke an alleged "norm of reciprocity" (Gouldner 1960; see also Heath 1976). Both formulations beg the explanatory question: in both cases, the customariness of the behavior is just what remains to be explained, and to call this customariness a "norm" is merely to describe it. The IR chain model proposes that feelings of solidarity within a social coalition are fundamental. If two individuals feel a common membership, they will feel a desire to reciprocate gifts, because the gift and its reciprocation are emblems of continuing their common membership. This model has the advantage of making gift giving and reciprocation into a variable instead of a constant: individuals will reciprocate to the extent that the emotional dynamics of a particular coalition membership is attractive to them. Similarly, they will feel like giving gifts or not because of the same range of circumstances. Hence the variables described above should account for the degree to which reciprocity is actually practiced.

The aggregate of IRs, then, may be described as market-like. What happens in each encounter is affected by what has happened in the recent series of encounters in each participant's IR chain, and what happened in those encounters in turn was affected by the recent experiences of *their* participants, and so on. This larger aggregate of encounters produces what may be described as a series of cultural and emotional "prices" at which individuals can negotiate IRs of different degrees of solidarity and domination with one another. I say a *series* of prices because only certain combinations of individuals can successfully create a ritual, and different combinations will settle upon deals at different prices.

There are several different markets of this kind operating simultaneously. At one level, there is a relatively slow-moving market for organizational

[11] Hochschild (1979) shows that people do sometimes reflect upon their emotions and try to make themselves feel in particular ways that are appropriate to the situation. The fact that they do *not* automatically feel the "right" way is explainable, I would argue, by the market attraction or repulsion of various alternative situations in their IR chains. What Hochschild is describing, then, may be situations in which individuals are torn between two different forms of resources or are getting very mixed payoffs from their immediate interactions. Such situations may arise when an individual's market position is shifting away from a previous equilibrium point and a new equilibrium has not been established (see discussion below).

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ritual repetitions ("positions") and for other property enactments. There is a great deal of repetition in the microrituals that make up the reproduction of such structures; yet individuals do try to move in or out of positions. Their motivations to stay put or to move, and the chances of being accepted when they attempt these actions, are determined by the aggregate of IR chains with which their lives physically intersect. Informal shifts within organizational relations are similarly determined—shifts in which bosses gain or lose influence, informal allies win or lose, workers show greater or less enthusiasm and compliance. At another level, there are markets for personal friendships, for horizontal coalitions among different organizational executives, etc., which are not tied to the direct enactment of property and authority relations between the participants. These markets are capable of moving much more quickly and continuously than those in which organizational "structures" are enacted, because informal conversational partners do not have to change the more complex and particularity-embedded ties of property and organizational position.

Both types of markets, however, operate by a similar mechanism. In the "organizational position market," individuals will be motivated to press for more domination within the organizational routine or to leave that routine to find a better one to the extent that their aggregate of experiences in IR chains is emotionally positive. Similarly, in markets for horizontal alliances (whether personal or business/political), individuals who experience relative surplus of emotional energy over those in their usual encounters will be motivated either to seek more domination or to move to a different set of encounters. But such individuals will eventually tend to reach the limiting situations to which their resources will take them: situations in which their partners are equal or higher in resources, hence stabilizing or reversing their emotional surplus.

From a very abstract viewpoint, one can imagine an equilibrium point in such markets at which all individuals have settled on the particular people to interact with ritually, so that all emotional and cultural resources are statically reproduced. Such an equilibrium point may be a useful concept, but only if we see it as merely one tendency of aggregate interactional markets which is modified by a number of other processes. The situation is constantly being destabilized, whenever any individuals anywhere experience new increments (or decrements) of cultural resources and emotional energies. A particular boss who is losing emotional energies (through ill health, let us say, or a shift in family interactions) will bring about small increments in energies among the workers he or she routinely dominates, which in turn may increase their influence in other encounters. Such effects will cause at least local destabilization of the micro-interactional equilibrium. The equilibrium point is a pattern toward which interactions will tend again and again, subject to these disturbances.

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Many of these disturbances will be local and temporary; their outcomes do not change the pattern of macroorganization. Others, however, may be large-scale and pervasive in their consequences. In the following section, I consider what kinds of aggregate microprocesses can cause either gross reproduction or gross change in macrostructures.

MACROSTRUCTURAL EFFECTS

The preceding model suggests that large-scale social changes are based on micromechanisms of one or more of the following kinds: large-scale changes in the amount or distribution of (*a*) generalized cultural resources, (*b*) particularized cultural resources, or (*c*) emotional energies.

a) The *generalized cultural resources* across a large population can shift because of the introduction of new technologies of communication or because more individuals specialize in the production and dissemination of generalized culture. Writing implements, mass media, and educational and religious organizations of varying size have introduced new cultural resources, or increased their distribution, in societies at various times in history. One can picture at least two kinds of resultant structural effects. First, the distribution of the expanded culture may be concentrated in particular populations; hence these will be able to raise their level of success in IRs at the expense of others, forming new organizational ties and thereby eventually developing emotional and reputational advantages. A second kind of effect occurs when the whole population uniformly receives an increase in generalized cultural resources; the sheer degree of mobilization, of efforts to negotiate new IR connections, should increase throughout the society. Although no one gains relative to others, the overall process should increase the amount of organization building generally in that society. It can be suggested that early phases of this process contribute to economic booms and to the growth of political and/or religious movements; later phases, however, if generalized cultural currency continuously expands, may involve a devaluation of the cultural currency, with ensuing contraction of political and economic activity (Collins 1979).

b) *Particularized cultural resources* define individuals relative to particular physical properties and authority coalitions. What can change the whole structure of these resources? The volatile aspect of particularized culture, I would suggest, is especially important for the reputations of the individuals who ritually enact the most powerful coalitions. Most reputational talk, as indicated, is local and repetitive. But rapid upheavals in personal reputations characterize important shifts in political and religious power. Persons become powerful (or "charismatic") when a dramatic event, usually involving success in a conflict, makes large numbers of people focus on them. The widespread and rapid circulation of their new reputation gives

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them the self-reinforcing power of commanding the largest, and therefore dominant, coalition in that society. Conversely, powerful persons usually fall because of dramatic events—scandals or defeats in conflicts—which suddenly circulate their *negative* reputation.

The movement of such particularized cultural resources has several implications for the dynamics of social change. Such changes are discontinuous and alternate with periods of routine. They depend upon dramatic events that are highly visible to many people. The most dramatic events, I would contend, are conflicts, and especially violent ones. It is for this reason that wars are so important in mobilizing revolutions and other rapid social changes (see Skocpol 1979). Politics itself is a master determinant of the property system, and so many other routine aspects of social life, because politics consists of continuously organized coalitions mobilized to engage in conflicts. These coalitions gain their power from broadcasting the dramatics of their conflicts in ways favorable to themselves, thereby creating particularized reputations for various individuals as powerful, villainous, or impotent. Politics, as the struggle over reputation, rests upon control of the means of reputation management.

c) *Emotional energies* form the most crucial mechanism in all of these processes. Shifts in both generalized and particularized cultural resources have effects upon people's actions in microsituations because they affect their emotional energies. The reputation shift of a political leader, for example, is truly effective only when the rumors carry an emotional impact, a contagion of feelings throughout the society about which is now the dominant coalition. Hence the market attractiveness of that coalition increases, all the more so to the extent that it spreads fear of its threat to those people who remain outside it. Conflict, war, and politics can be regarded as quintessentially emotion-producing situations. The stronger the conflict, the more emotional energy flows through the networks of micro-interaction constituting the macrostructure. Periods of rapidly changing reputational resources become particularly important for the organization of social networks to the extent that such networks are vehicles for strong emotional contagion.

There are also conditions that change the entire level of emotional energy in a society. Parallel to the introduction of new communications technology and generalized-culture-producing specialists, one can think of the historical introduction of new emotion-producing "technologies," including shifts in the number of emotion-producing specialists. From this viewpoint, changes in material conditions are most important because they change the number of people who can assemble for ritual purposes or because they change people's capacities for impression management or dramatization (Collins 1975, pp. 161–216, 364–80). Such technologies of dramatization have ranged from the massive architecture and lavish religious and politi-

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cal ceremony of the pharaohs through the various styles of political display of today. Similarly, the history of religions can be seen as a series of inventions of new social devices for generating emotions, ranging from the shaman's magic ritual, to congregational worship, to individual meditation and prayer. In this perspective, shifts among tribal, patrimonial-feudal, and bureaucratic forms of organization are shifts among diverse sources of emotional impression management. The various combinations of these emotional technologies available at any given time, and their degree of concentration or dispersion among the populace, are crucial factors in the struggle for power in any particular historical society.

An overall picture of the statics and dynamics of macrostructures emerges, at least in general outline. There are relatively slow processes of macrochange, fueled by new emotional "technologies" or by stepped-up production of either generalized cultural currency or emotional energies. There are also episodic shifts in particularized cultural resources—especially the reputations of persons who ritually enact the most powerful political, military, and religious coalitions—which occur at times of dramatic conflict. The slow processes, which may spread either to certain privileged groups or more uniformly throughout the society, bring about long periods of organization building and personal mobilization which alter both the structure of the society and its degree of fluidity and conflict. The rapid, episodic processes bring about revolutionary shifts in which dramatic conflicts focusing attention on a new dominant coalition can bring about massive changes in the patterns of property and organization and in the particular distribution of persons in them.

CONCLUSION

The preceding model has been presented in very abstract form. It does not attempt to describe the detailed variants of ritual interaction or the complexities of conversational negotiations and emotional energies. Integrating these variants into the general model should greatly increase its explanatory power. On the macro level, as well, there are many ramifications to be worked out in translating all macropatterns into micro-interactional "markets" of generalized and particularized cultural resources and emotional energies.

Even at this degree of imprecision, I hope that the model conveys some of the advantages of integrating micro and macro descriptions into a common explanatory framework. It suggests, for example, that "entities" that have been located in individuals, such as "personality" or "attitudes," are instead *situational* ways of acting in conversational encounters, and that "personalities" and "attitudes" are stable only to the extent that individuals undergo the same kinds of repeated interactions. Charismatic person-

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alities, by this account, are simply individuals who have become the focal point of an emotion-producing ritual that links together a large coalition; their charisma waxes and wanes according to the degree to which the aggregate conditions for the dramatic predomination of that coalition are met. On a smaller scale, one may hypothesize that upwardly mobile individuals are those whose cultural resources lead them through a sequence of IR experiences that build up their emotional energies, hence their confidence and drive; when they reach IR matchups that no longer give a favorable emotional balance, this advantage disappears, and they cease to rise further. To mention one more area of application, the growth of a productive economy as well as its cycles of boom and depression should be to an important degree determined by shifts in emotional energies throughout the working population in general, or possibly among entrepreneurs in particular.

Such explanations of specific phenomena need to be elaborated from both the micro and the macro sides. I would also suggest that the connection between the two levels can be made empirical by a new form of research. Generalized and particularized conversational resources exist simply as things people say in conversations; emotional energies exist in the rhythms and tones with which people say them. Accordingly, one may take a macrosample of the distribution of microresources by sampling conversations across a large number of different social groups and taking repeated samples over time. Such a method moves away from the predominant emphasis of contemporary conversational research, which performs detailed analyses of single conversations in isolation. The proposed method resembles sample surveys, but instead of tapping attitudes of self-reports by interviewer questions, it would sample natural conversations by audio or video recordings. Technical devices may make it possible to characterize the emotional energies of conversational tone and rhythm from tape recordings or by expressive postures in video recordings. Generalized and particularized conversational resources may be characterized by the same data, by classifying verbal contents. With these kinds of data, it should be possible to show the actual operation of IR chains, their effects upon individuals' situational behavior, and their aggregate effects upon social stability and social change.

SUMMARY

The following principles have been suggested to construct an explanatory theory of macrostructures as aggregates of microsituations:

1. Sociological concepts can be made fully empirical only by translating them into a sample of the typical micro-events that make them up.
2. The dynamics as well as the inertia in any causal explanation of social structure must be microsituational; all macroconditions have their effects by impinging upon actors' situational motivations.

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3. Human cognitive capacity is limited, hence actors facing complex contingencies of social coordination rely largely upon tacit assumptions and routine.

4. Any individual's routine is organized around particular physical places and objects, including the physical bodies of other persons. The sum of these physical routines, at any moment, makes up the microreality of property.

5. Authority is a type of routine in which particular individuals dominate micro-interactions with other individuals.

6. What particular routines are to be adhered to is subject to self-interested maneuver and conflict. Both adherence to routines and changes in them are determined by individuals' tacit monitoring of the power of social coalitions.

7. Conversations are rituals creating beliefs in common realities that become symbols of group solidarity. Individual chains of conversational experiences over time (IR chains) thus re-create both social coalitions and people's cognitive beliefs about social structure.

8. Conversational topics imply group membership. Generalized conversational resources (impersonal topics) reproduce horizontal status-group ties. Particularized conversation enacts individuals' property and organizational positions and further reinforces this concrete social structure by circulating beliefs about it, including the reputations of particular individuals.

9. An encounter is a "marketplace" in which individuals tacitly match conversational and emotional resources acquired from previous encounters. Individuals are motivated to enact or reject conversational rituals with particular persons to the extent that they experience favorable or unfavorable emotional energies from that interaction, as compared with other IRs they remember in their recent experiences.

10. Individuals' acceptance or rejection in an IR respectively raises or lowers their emotional energies (social confidence). Similar effects are produced by experiencing domination or subordination within an IR. These emotional results are weighted by the intensity of emotional arousal in each IR and by the power of the membership coalition it invokes (its control over property and force).

11. Several different ritual markets operate simultaneously: a slow-moving market of persons shifting in and out of particular property and organizational positions, more rapidly changing markets for informal solidarity within organizations and among individuals outside organizational relations, and very long-term markets for the growth and decline of organizations as a whole.

12. In each market, individuals sense their personal opportunities via their degree of emotional energy. They move toward more advantageous ritual exchanges until they reach personal equilibrium points at which their

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cultural and emotional resources are matched by equal or greater resources of their partners.

13. Social structure is constantly changing on the microlevel, but it tends to an aggregate stability if individual fluctuations of emotional and cultural resources are local and temporary.

14. Large-scale changes of social structure occur through changes in any of the three types of microresources: (*a*) Increases in generalized cultural resources, produced by new communications media or increased activity of religious and educational specialists, increase the size of group coalitions that can be formed and hence the scope of organizational structure. (*b*) Particularized cultural resources change, for a whole society, when dramatic (usually conflictual) events focus many people's attention on particular individuals, thereby creating rapid shifts in their reputations and shifting the organizational center of power coalitions. (*c*) New "ritual technologies," including shifts in the materials of impression management and in the typical density and focus of encounters, change the quality of emotions throughout a society. Such shifts bring about changes in the nature of social movements and in the dynamics of political and economic action.

15. Conversational resources and emotional energies may be directly measured by sampling conversation through time and across populations; the cultural resources are found in conversational topics and the energy levels in the tone and rhythm of talk.

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