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The Significance of Everyday Life—An Ethnographic Study of Participation in Group-Based Patient Education

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Abstract

Drawing on a social phenomenological perspective in the sociology of everyday life, this ethnographic field study explores different ways in which women with rheumatoid arthritis perceive participation in a patient education programme as significant to their everyday lives. In particular, there are three ways in which this participation is perceived as significant to everyday life: as identity work, as an extension of "action space" in the practicalities of everyday life, and as a special community based on a common chronic condition. Furthermore, we uncover a difference in terms of what programme participation means to recently diagnosed participants, on one hand, and experienced participants, on the other hand, which is related to differences in their lived experiences of living with and managing chronic illness. This ethnographic study provides an important understanding of how these women create meaning inter-subjectively through social interaction but interpret this meaning individually based on their individual biographical experiences. The findings are relevant both to those who study the significance of patient education (both practitioners and researchers) and to those who are exploring how individuals make sense of living with chronic illness.

Keywords

Fieldwork, Everyday Life Sociology, Patient Education, Chronic Illness, Rheumatoid Arthritis

1. Introduction

Over the last century, both the prevalence of chronic illness and the life expectancies of people living with

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chronic illness have increased in developed countries. For instance, it is estimated that one-third of the population in Denmark lives with one or more chronic illnesses and this percentage is expected to continue to grow in the coming years (Sundhedsstyrelsen (The National Board of Health), 2009). In addition, expenditures directly related to preventing and treating chronic illness account for 70% - 80% of the total resources of the Danish health system (Sundhedsstyrelsen, 2009).

Health policy and health systems in developed countries have reacted to these developments by shifting their focus from treatment and care related to acute diseases to focusing on managing chronic illness over the long term (Gerhardt, 1990). Health promotion strategies are the cornerstone of this endeavour; in particular, group-based patient education programmes have been offered to provide patients with tools to manage chronic illness.

In 2007, Denmark's public health system was restructured and, as a consequence, health promotion became the common responsibility of both hospitals and local authorities. In addition, the government has financially supported the development of both disease-specific and generic patient education at the national, regional and local levels (Sundhedsstyrelsen, 2009).

Research on patient education has focused primarily on finding evidence of programme effectiveness in terms of improving the biomedical outcomes of symptoms, health-promoting behaviours, coping and health-related quality of life (Håkanson, Sahlberg-Blom, Ternestedt, & Nyhlin, 2012; Sundhedsstyrelsen, 2009). Meanwhile, a growing number of qualitative studies have investigated the experiences of patients participating in patient education programmes. Most of these studies are evaluative, relating such experiences to the programme's overall goals, whether such goals are related to improving self-efficacy or empowerment (Barlow, Bancroft, & Turner, 2005; Booker, Morris, & Johnson, 2008; Dures et al., 2012; Monninkhof et al., 2004; Primdahl, Wagner, & Hørslev-Petersen, 2011; Turner, Williams, & Barlow, 2002).

Two ethnographic studies follow individuals as they participate in patient education programmes and after they have completed the programmes (Bülow, 2003; Grøn, 2005). Bülow and Hyden's ethnographic study highlights not only how people collaborate to make sense of a contested illness, chronic fatigue illness (CFS), by sharing their experiences of the illness but also how this sharing helps ameliorate their sense of loss of self (Bülow, 2003). Grøn's anthropological study of three lifestyle-related chronic illnesses describes the everyday dilemmas involved in making changes to complex, ambiguous and vulnerable aspects of life (Grøn, 2005).

Consistent with Grøn's (2005) argument regarding the importance of understanding the complexity of everyday life, a central aim of this field study was to create new knowledge about what it means to people to participate in a local patient education programme by applying an everyday life perspective that focuses on participants' own narratives.

Following women who are participating in a local patient education programme and relying on a social phenomenological perspective, we focus on how the individuals studied create meaning inter-subjectively through social interaction but interpret that meaning individually depending on their individual biographies (Bech-Jørgensen, 1994; Schutz, 2005).

The paper describes the following three ways in which participation is perceived as significant to everyday life: as identity work, as an extension of "action space" in the practicalities of everyday life, and as a special community based on a common chronic condition. Furthermore, we uncover a difference in terms of what programme participation means to recently diagnosed, on one hand, and experienced participants, on the other hand, which is related to differences in their lived experiences of living with and managing chronic illness.

2. Theoretical and Analytical Framework: Looking through the Lens of the Sociology of Everyday Life

We draw on an empirically driven phenomenological approach in the sociology of everyday life to conceptualise and achieve a nuanced understanding of the complexity of everyday life and the meaning of participating in patient education (Bech-Jørgensen, 1994)[1].

This perspective views chronic illness as one among many life events causing more-or-less critical changes in everyday life and enables an investigation of how the individual, through social interactions, experiences and

[1]Bech-Jørgensen's empirical approach has primarily been inspired by the social phenomenological theory of everyday life developed by Alfred Schutz, but his approach has also been inspired by Agnes Heller's neo-Marxist approach to everyday life sociology and Johan Asplund's responsive sociology (Bech-Jørgensen, 1994). This approach was developed in empirical studies on young unemployed women living in suburban Denmark.

handles chronic illness differently depending on their individual biographic situation[2] (Bech-Jørgensen, 1994; Schutz, 2005).

Everyday life is defined as "Life as it is lived, maintained, renewed and recreated every day…" (Bech-Jørgensen, 1994; Bech-Jørgensen, 2002). It is studied as the interplay between everyday life as it is lived, the conditions of everyday life and how individuals manage these conditions (Bech-Jørgensen, 1994).

Bech-Jørgensen differentiates between activities and conditions on three structural levels: the unnoticed activities of everyday life, symbolic meaning universes and socially constructed institutions (Bech-Jørgensen, 1994)[3]. Her analysis concentrates on the conditions in her informants' everyday lives. In our analysis, we also prioritise the micro level perspective, following Bech-Jorgensen, although we recognize that structural determinants at the macro level affect the life conditions of our informants.

"The symbolic order of self-evidence" is defined as the fundamental condition of everyday life and is ordered by norms, rules, communication and objects—an order providing us with a fundamental ontological security. It is not a fixed order but an order that is constantly created and recreated by unperceived activities when individuals perceive meaningfulness in their everyday life activities and that is disrupted when individuals face life events that do not make sense to them, as may occur with the onset of chronic illness. Consequently, everyday life is a balancing act between self-evidence and chaos. Changes in everyday life can take on the character of more substantial disruptions, caused by, for example, unusual events that do not fit into our stock of knowledge[4], more incremental and unnoticed displacements that occur every day, or by shifts caused by many internally connected displacements. Bech-Jørgensen describes these representative acts as the accumulation of unperceived activities through which individuals seek to assign meaning to everyday life through the use of symbols (Bech-Jørgensen, 1994).

Drawing on Alfred Schutz's concept of the world within reach and Johan Asplund's concept of social responsivity (Bech-Jørgensen, 1994), Bech-Jørgensen develops the concept of "simultaneous presence" to describe how subjectively experienced events can be transformed into common experiences, which occurs through social responsivity and an empathic responsivity. The concept of "simultaneous presence" refers both to being present together at the same time and to being together in the same physical and social space (presence). Bech-Jørgensen describes how new tactics to manage everyday life are created through "scopes of significances". Those "scopes of significances" are created on the border between self-evidence and chaos and through the creation of symbols and metaphors of thoughts, feelings, moods and experiences. These symbols are not only objects but also acts, events, qualities or relations and are not only based on common meanings but are also inherently capable of creating individual interpretations and changes that are tested responsively through replies and further responses (Bech-Jørgensen, 1994).

3. Methods

An ethnographic field study was conducted between April and December 2012 to explore how participants perceived their participation in a patient education programme as significant to their everyday lives. The study was part of Ph.D. research conducted by the first author, who also performed the fieldwork.

3.1. The Empirical Case

The programme was established as a collaboration between the rheumatic departments at two hospitals and two local community health care centres in Denmark[5]. The programme was developed in cooperation between an

[2]Alfred Schultz developed the concept of an individual "biographical situation" and argues that the individual is always faced with a particular biographical situation in his/her everyday life, which means that he/she belongs to a particular physical and sociocultural environment in which he/she occupies a special position. This positioning is undertaken in both a physical space and in the social system by taking a special status and social role in and related to moral and ideological issues. The concept contains all the factors—both in the past and in the present—that have affected the individual and his/her special biographical situation (Schutz, 2005).

[3]The concept of "the symbolic meaning universes" is parallel to Berger and Luckmann's (1967) concept of symbolic universes defined as all social objectivations referring to realities other than that of everyday life. However, whereas Berger and Luckmann have built their concept on the assumptions of Schutz's natural attitude as "the paramount reality" compared to other meaning provinces, for example, dreams, play or arts, Bech-Jørgensen uses the concept of "the symbolic meaning universes" to stress the difference related to the status ascribed to one's natural attitude (Bech-Jørgensen, 1994: pp. 158, 168-170).

[4]The "stock of knowledge" is defined as the common-sense knowledge that we develop from the everyday life world in which we are engaged. Bech-Jørgensen has adapted this concept from Alfred Schutz (Bech-Jørgensen, 1994).

[5]The project was financed by grants from the Danish Ministry of Health and Health Promotion as part of increased interventions for patients with chronic diseases (Sundhedsstyrelsen (The National Board of Health), 2010.

interdisciplinary group of health care professionals representing these organisations and five user representatives (hereafter: "lay experts") (Kristiansen, Primdahl, Antoft, & Hørslev-Petersen, 2015, in press)[6]. The programme targeted people with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and was carried out in two geographically distinct local settings.

The health pedagogical basis of the programme was situated within a constructionist perspective on learning with attention directed at specific problems of everyday life (Møller Ølgaard et al., 2013). The stated purpose of the programme was to support people in building up emotional, physiological and social resources through co-constructing knowledge and sharing experiences. Another aim was to help each participant create a network of support.

Both the health professionals from the hospitals and the local community health care centres and the lay experts with RA—who had participated in developing the programme—were co-workers in the programme. The health professionals included rheumatologists, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, a social worker, a dietician and a psychologist. The role of the health professionals was to provide disease-specific knowledge about medical treatment, symptoms, activity and rest, in addition to knowledge about the psychological and social aspects of life with RA. The lay experts were meant to facilitate the exchange of experiences among the participants and to contribute with their own experiences. The goal was for the participants to build up their knowledge about RA and its practical management in everyday life, rather than passively receiving information (Møller Ølgaard et al., 2013).

The programme consisted of five three-hour thematic meetings with a 14-day break between each meeting to allow participants to reflect on what they learned and to practise new ideas or strategies in their everyday lives (Møller Ølgaard et al., 2013).

3.2. Participants

The fieldwork followed programme participants in each local setting. The formal requirements for participation included that participants live in one of the two communities taking part in the delivery of the programme, that participants had been diagnosed with RA and consulted with either of the two hospitals that was participating in the programme or with a private rheumatologist in one of the two communities. The two courses had 12 and 10 participants, respectively. All the participants were women, who varied in age, educational background, relation to the labour market, disease duration and severity of illness.

To understand how participants ascribed meaning to their participation, we found it important both to follow some of the participants in their everyday lives and to follow them over time to explore whether their perception of the significance of their participation changed or was reformulated (Wadel, 1991). Six women were asked to allow the fieldworker to visit them in their home surroundings. These key informants were recruited by employing purposeful sampling criteria with the aim of including a range of informants across the characteristics of age, civil status, educational background, work situation and disease duration.

3.3. Conducting Participant Observation at the Programme and in the Home Surroundings

The fieldworker conducted participant observation during the thematic meetings of the programme. She presented herself as a Ph.D. student positioned outside the educational programme who was interested in exploring the participants' experiences. The fieldworker was aware that this positioning might be difficult because she had been part of the development process and was well acquainted with the co-workers in the programme (Kristiansen et al., 2015). The degree of participation and observation varied between the formal parts of the programme, which consisted of the health professionals' information and the exchange of experiences—during which the fieldworker took on an observing role because she could not share the experiences of a life lived with RA—and the informal parts of the programme during breaks, during which the fieldworker played a more active part in the informal interaction among the participants.

Conducting fieldwork at home we combined individual interviews with participant observation. The fieldwork in the home surroundings was initiated by a first visit and interview while the programme was running. The interviews focused on the women's illness narratives, their everyday lives and their motivation for joining the programme. Furthermore, the interviews were used as formal entry into the field and the first negotiation of the fieldwork during which the fieldworker and the women discussed the scope of the fieldwork and the everyday life activities that the fieldworker would be welcome to follow and join.

Three to six months after the programme had finished, the fieldworker visited the women in their home envi-

[6]In Denmark, local community health care centres are primarily responsible for preventive healthcare services. In particular, they offer a range of patient education programmes for people with chronic diseases.

ronment one or two more times and participated in routine matters of everyday life, such as the daily tasks of cooking, baking, etc., and in events to which the informants ascribed significant meaning, such as leisure activities, work and socialising with family and friends. Finally, individual interviews were conducted in December 2012. These interviews explored what it had meant to the women to participate in the programme, followed up on questions or reflections related to the individual women and symbolised a formal withdrawal from the field.

In addition, two semi-structured focus group interviews with all the participants were conducted two weeks after completion of the programme to obtain the overall impression of how the participants had experienced participation and what it had meant to them in their everyday lives. Eleven of the 22 women participated in the focus groups.

All the interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim, and field notes were also taken to document non-taped conversations and events before, after, and sometimes during interviews. Descriptive field notes were taken during participation in the programme and immediately after field visits in the home surroundings. Throughout the fieldwork, a reflective diary was maintained for the fieldworker to self-evaluate her role and to reflect on questions, enigmas and emergent analytical ideas (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995).

3.4. Data Analysis

The fieldworker performed the analysis. The results were regularly discussed with the co-authors. Initially, the transcripts were read several times and themes and subthemes were identified inductively and coded with references to each of the six key informants to keep track of their personal narratives over time (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) and to explore their lived experiences as they reflected on and expressed them. The coded data were condensed by formulating the initially identified statements into shorter messages, attempting to remain close to the expressions used by the informants. Next, the condensed data were coded across the informants to include the field notes and the focus group interviews more actively for the purpose of obtaining a more general basis for the empirical findings and conclusions. Finally, the analytical framework and central concepts from Bech-Jørgensen's phenomenological approach within the sociology of everyday life was adapted (Bech-Jørgensen, 1994; Bech-Jørgensen, 2002) to provide a more in-depth analysis and interpretation of the three themes that emerged from the initial inductive analysis and to strengthen its analytical generalisability (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996).

4. Findings

We now present the three modes of significance of participation in everyday life and illustrate the differences between the recently diagnosed and the experienced women that are most clearly related to the first two modes of significance.

4.1. Identity Work through Simultaneous Presence at the Programme

In the following section, we analyse how participation in the programme had a variety of significance to the sense of identity of the individual women.

4.1.1. Re-Orientation and Creating Identity

For all the recently diagnosed women, coming to terms with RA and finding hope for the future had been a major motivational factor in joining the programme. For most of the recently diagnosed women, the onset of RA was a fundamental disruption in their lives, and they related how they had attempted to protect themselves and their sense of self against this disruption in the self-evidence and taken-for-grantedness of everyday life. For example, these women had struggled to continue working, doing housework, looking after their grandchildren, etc., to confirm to themselves and to those around them that they remained the same person. For all the women, maintaining their former identity was challenging because they could not maintain all the activities and social interactions upon which their identity was based.

While participating in the programme, all the women were attempting to find and create meaningfulness related to their life with RA. During the sessions, a social responsivity (Bech-Jørgensen, 1994) developed in which the women felt mutually recognised and understood. They associated these mutual feelings of empathy and sympathy with the fact that they were all surviving through the same circumstances and had the same chronic condition, which made it easier to understand one another and to stand in each other's shoes. Once experienced as their own individual problems, the feelings, sensations and worries resulting from the onset of RA were transformed into common experiences through their "simultaneous presence" (Bech-Jørgensen, 1994) in and at the programme.

The empathy that was created not only led to a feeling of a mutual understanding and a safe atmosphere but also extended the self-understanding of most of the recently diagnosed women through individual interpretations of the feelings expressed by the others. Encountering the experienced women who had lived with RA for many years was particularly important because these women offered a way to re-orient their identities in a parallel process of accepting and integrating chronic illness into their everyday lives while striving to maintain normality. Through a continuous dialectic process of responding to each other's contributions, the experienced women described how they had struggled to re-orient themselves and to accept the new conditions of their lives, how they had overcome that struggle and how they had settled into a new sense of self. Simultaneously, some of the experienced women remained in the work force and did not have any obvious deformities that could draw attention to their RA. In this way, they also symbolised normality and ignited hope in the recently diagnosed women that they would be able to continue a normal life.

Anna was one of the recently diagnosed women who had experienced how meeting other women had helped her re-orient her identity. She had been diagnosed with RA for approximately one year following a divorce: thus, she had experienced RA as a further disruption to her life. When the fieldworker first met Anna, her RA was aggressive and caused severe symptoms. She was concerned about the future and worried about both the prospects of getting better and whether she would be able to maintain her job and take care of her family. Anna's major concern was learning both to accept RA and to integrate it into her life. When the fieldworker visited Anna after the programme, her sense of mental fatigue and feeling of being overwhelmed had vanished. She had managed to maintain her work and was able to take care of her family.

Anna defined learning to live with her condition as an on-going learning process in which she had taken the first important steps and had moved closer to accepting RA after meeting others with the condition. This process is exemplified in the following interview extract:

> Anna: The meetings that we had, I think it was nice that we were that different. I mean that some had had rheumatoid arthritis for many years and some of us were just diagnosed. We could talk together and look to those who had had it for a long time. They could tell us how they had managed and what we could do.
> Interviewer: So you think this big difference was a good thing?
> Anna: Yes, I do. Because, you know, when you are new, you stand there and think, oh gosh, where has the good life gone, right! Then, it is nice to hear from some of the others that they found the good life or are close to it, right? And oh yes, this stuff doesn't need to be such a big thing in your life.

In this way, meeting the other women—particularly the experienced women—had helped Anna move towards an acceptance of her chronic condition.

4.1.2. Non-Identification

Anna's story resembles the stories of most of the recently diagnosed women, but a few of them did not engage themselves with this identity work and did not take an active role in the social interaction.

Lisa was one of these women. When she entered the programme she had been diagnosed with RA for only approximately 6 months but had suffered from severe symptoms for a year before she was diagnosed. Lisa had experienced the onset of RA as a fundamental disruption in her life. Due to severe pain, fatigue and functional limitations, she was no longer able to work. During the nine months of fieldwork, her physicians tried different medications, but none effectively reduced her symptoms. Visiting Lisa, it was obvious that RA challenged her normal role in her family, in which she used to be the caregiver and housekeeper. For example, she was not able to do the laundry, she could not do the cleaning and cooking and sometimes she needed help undressing before going to bed at night, in addition to needing help getting out of bed in the morning. RA had changed her relationship to her own body, from which she felt estranged. She feared becoming disabled and helpless.

In the programme, Lisa never involved herself in the common discussions and mutual exchange of experiences, and she frequently seemed to be mentally absent and absorbed in her own thoughts.

Visiting Lisa was different than visiting the other key informants. Due to her functional limitations, she did not perform many routine matters of everyday life in her household or join in activities outside her home. The field visits therefore took place as conversations in the living room. The following field note excerpt illustrates Lisa's experiences of participation and their lack of significance to her everyday life:

> "Lisa says that she did not have the energy to participate actively at the meetings and that she was not able

> to concentrate both because of her pain and because of her worries and her thoughts that were completely overwhelming her… She thinks it was important to meet somebody who had lived with RA much longer than she had, but she also experienced it as frightening to hear what might await her in the future… Lisa says that she doesn't think it is a good idea to join a programme right after getting a diagnosis because it takes all one's focus" "it's better to wait till you have settled a little".

Viewed through Bech-Jørgensen's analytical framework Lisa's reaction—in both her private life and during the programme meetings—can be interpreted as a bodily and mental withdrawal to protect herself from the disruptions to her everyday life caused by RA.

Although unique, Lisa's story also resembles the everyday life conditions of a few other recently diagnosed women who—due to this overriding feeling of uncertainty and chaos—felt they were not able to concentrate and be mentally present at the meetings.

4.1.3. Confirming Identity

Most of the experienced women did not think that meeting others with RA had changed how they perceived themselves. Reflecting on the initial insecurity, fear and emotional frustrations expressed by those recently diagnosed, they confirmed for themselves both that they had handled RA in the right way and that they now lived a good life. Regardless of how RA had changed their self-perception, they all had developed new routines and habits and new symbolic tactics for managing RA that made sense for them. They had created meaningfulness in their lives.

Sarah had lived with RA for more than 30 years and was the woman who was the most disabled by RA; she had visible deformities in her hands and feet. She had retired early due to the impairments caused by RA. Sarah is a widow and manages her household and garden tasks on her own. It is a central concern for her to remain autonomous and independent of both her family and local community services. She uses many aids in everyday life and has created her own daily rhythm, taking the time she needs and planning many breaks during the day. The field note excerpt below shows how RA has gradually become a self-evident part of Sarah's everyday life and self-identity.

> "Sarah tells me that she has learned to live with the RA and has become used to it… it has become an integrated part of her life. She says that life with RA has become normal and that joining the programme hasn't changed how she perceives herself".

Simultaneously, Sarah's identity as a self-managing and autonomous person is confirmed when meeting the recently diagnosed women, whom she describes as "maybe a little too self-pitying and passive in managing this new condition". At one of the sessions at which an announced theme was the use of aids, Sarah brought a bag with a selection of some of her daily aids. She was urged to show the other women her aids and while circulating the aids around the table, she explained how they help her "to live an independent life, where I am able to handle most things on my own".

4.2. Creating Action Space through the Practicalities of Everyday Life

In the following section, the analysis focuses on how the significance of participation in the programme varied greatly to the women, in terms of how they handled RA practically in everyday life.

4.2.1. Creating Individual Action Space through Others' Significant Experiences

Most of the newly diagnosed women felt that the encounters with the more experienced women and the lay experts gave them input and tools to help manage the practicalities of everyday life. They were relieved to hear that those who had lived with RA for several years had experienced the same challenges and to learn how they had managed their limitations and found practical solutions. Through a range of adaptations, for example, using aids and learning to plan and prioritise activities, the more experienced women and lay experts managed to live almost normal everyday lives. This information gave the recently diagnosed women both new practical knowledge and the motivation to try out new ways to handle everyday life challenges. They began to create new tactics to manage everyday life by creating "scopes of significances" (Bech-Jørgensen, 1994), which developed through the common exchange of experiences. These new tactics were created in common but were interpreted individually depending on the women's everyday lives, their individual life stories and the concrete practical challenges they faced with RA. The interview extract and the field note transcript below not only demonstrate

how Anna created new tactics to manage everyday life but also illustrate how new modes of managing RA are characterised by feelings of ambivalence.

> Anna: You know, using the right knife, using a rucksack when going shopping and getting some proper shoes to prevent my feet from hurting so much, and things like that. In this way, I think that, on a practical level, I have learned a lot. I have also gradually learned, but still only in my family, to say that I have to take a break, just to relax a little.

Later, Anna talked more about these practical tactics in everyday life and revealed the ambivalences connected to these changes.

> "Anna told me how she has gradually learned to tell her family what she can manage and what she cannot manage. She says that sometimes she goes into her bedroom to rest while she is with her family because she needs rest. She tells me that she hired a removal company to arrange her moving house and that she bought fabric-made curtains, which she would never have done before… Anna says that it's still quite difficult to say no to extra tasks at work or to refuse to help her father or her grown children and grandchildren and reflects that she must learn that it is okay to say no".

For most of the newly diagnosed women, information from the health professionals about medical treatment, how to handle symptoms, how to take care of their bodies and the legal aspects related to aids and the labour market were all experienced as important pieces of knowledge that might support them in their everyday lives. Simultaneously, they thought that information was delivered from some of the health professionals as patronising or simply lacking an understanding or special knowledge of both the disease-specific situation of people living with RA and the related emotional reactions of the newly diagnosed.

Reflecting on her experiences of encounters with health professionals, Anna talked about their implicit and frequently unspoken expectations of the participants in terms of doing their "chronic homework" (Mattingly, Meinert, & Grøn, 2011). This concept refers to health professionals' claims related to adapting to the chronic condition and initiating behaviour changes that—from a health professional's perspective—would be necessary to cope with RA in a responsible and self-managing manner. For example, Anna should lose weight, exercise, ask for help, adopt a positive attitude towards RA and accept her limitations in everyday life. These prescriptions caused her to suffer from a guilty conscience because she felt unable to fulfil these expectations. As illustrated below, she felt that the health information should be targeted to her more as an individual and should be offered when she was motivated to make changes in her life:

> Anna: I think it's different when you are ready to accept information—for example, about nutrition. Because in a way, I know, but I am not able to do something about it right now. Very quickly, it becomes information that I don't take in and where I think yes, just hit me on my head, right?

4.2.2. When the Significant Experiences of Others Are of No Use

The experienced women did not think that they had obtained any new knowledge from the health professionals. Instead, they believed that the health professionals' information targeted the newly diagnosed. They also regarded the significant experiences of the other women as having little relevance to their lives. They had adapted to their disruptions and limitations, created new routines and habits, and maintained other routines, depending on their individual biographical situations (Schutz, 2005), for example their underlying normative discourse on how the right adaption to chronic illness should be, their social, personal and financial resources, the severity of their RA and their own self-perception.

Marion, who had lived with RA for nine years, hoped to gain new knowledge from the health professionals about medical treatment, exercise and the connection between RA and food. During the focus group interview, she and two other women, who had also lived with RA for many years, reflected on their different expectations.

> Káte: Well, I do not think that the knowledge that we want actually exists because, eh, we know many things already.
> Kathrin: Yes, because we have had it for SO many years.
> Káte: Yes, for so many years, and because we are members of the Danish Rheumatism Association and read their news, we talk to our rheumatologists about the latest knowledge, we read about medicine and

side effects and we have tried out many different medicines, so to be honest, is there really much that's new? Marion: Something new could turn up, we hope for some news, don't we?

4.3. A Community Based on the Common Condition

We have described the community that developed between the women in the programme as an intimate and trustful community created through "simultaneous presence" (Bech-Jørgensen, 1994). Through constant replies and responses, the participating women had developed a special responsivity and empathy based on being in the same situation. The fieldworker's own observations and reflections during the programme support the impression of a special community to which neither the fieldworker nor the health professionals could fully belong. The field note extract below is from a meeting in one of the local groups at which two health professionals discussed psychological reactions to RA.

> "The health professional shows a slide with an elephant and a text about the willingness to be 'more than just your illness'. Julie starts crying and says that, up till now, she 'thought just like you', that it's important to recognise your illness", but since she became "disabled", she has suffered from an identity crisis. She also says that everybody asks, "Julie, how are you?" and that she just wants to be normal and not be seen as ill… I have just thought about picking up my rucksack, to get some tissues, but Anna already has some tissues and hands them to me. I take a tissue and hand it over to Julie. Marie, sitting on the other side of Julie, puts a comforting hand on Julie's shoulder. Alice says, "Just cry, it's ok, it's good that you can express it". The lay expert offers to have a talk with Julie later".

4.3.1. Differing Needs for a Wider Social Network Based on the Common Condition

Although almost everyone emphasised the special feeling of community, not everyone wanted to continue meeting on a regular basis after the programme had concluded. Approximately two-thirds of the women continued meeting on a regular basis[7]. It was obvious that the various women had different motivations for joining the network and different expectations regarding the community they hoped to join after leaving the programme and returning to their everyday lives. These differences might partly be explained by the duration of their disease; however, it also seems to be closely associated with their personal resources and social networks.

A majority of the women wanted to meet around social and physical activities relating to their common condition. They wanted to begin engaging in exercise—such as Nordic walking—and to support one another in establishing new habits. They were convinced that this community would be better to join than formal associations, such as sports groups or fitness clubs, because no special consideration would have to be made when they were not able to participate on an equal footing, for example, because they could not walk as fast or as long as the others. In this community of equals, they assumed that their limitations would be understood.

Sarah enjoyed the informal and safe atmosphere at the meetings; she felt more comfortable with others who were in the same situation. The field note extract below illustrates the hopes that Sarah attaches to the new social network.

> "Sarah says that she thinks the people in the group are able to understand her physical limitations. It makes her relax and prevents her from pushing herself too hard. She says that she would like to join common activities and events, smiles and says that she would really like to start Nordic walking in the group and that she already has Nordic walking poles".

A few of the recently diagnosed women (such as Anna) viewed the network more like a self-help group, in which they could discuss things that were hard to accept and hard to manage in everyday life; in particular, they could discuss things that were hard to discuss with their families because they were concerned regarding both the changes in their roles and their intimate relationships in the family.

After the first three meetings of the new network, Anna was disappointed that the group did not become a self-help group. Anna reflected on the balance between the recently diagnosed and the experienced women and described it as unequal because those recently diagnosed, such as herself, gained from the experiences of the other women but did not give much back. Two of the experienced women had decided to join another group

[7]The meetings were organised differently in the two local settings. In one setting, the women had to establish the network on their own, whereas in the other, the meetings were organized by the lay experts. Because meeting organisation is not the focus of this analysis, it will not be described further.

with more experienced members established from a previous cohort of the same programme, and Anna believed that their decision was due to this imbalance.

The interview extract below is from the final visit and interview at Anna's house:

> Anna: I had hoped that this group, that we could support one another. I mean, I already have a normal "get together group" with my friends, right? And my family. I don't need that.
> Interviewer: Okay, you needed something more related to your all having RA?
> Anna: YES. And I really missed that. Because when you visit privately, you become a guest and you have to socialise and make small talk. I think it's that part about living alone that challenges me. Both that I'm supposed to do it all on my own, no matter what, and that it's the same mind-set. That's why I want this network because you tend to close in on yourself and use the same pictures and the same way to think, right? And you need to discuss some of these things and realise, oh, you might see it all from another perspective.

As discussed above, Anna had experienced a disruption in life due to a recent divorce, and the onset of RA had intensified her need to find new meaning in life in her new life condition – as a single woman with an unpredictable, chronic condition.

4.3.2. Leaving the Community

For a variety of reasons, some of the recently diagnosed women and some of the experienced women chose not to join the network. Some of the women had a pre-existing strong network and did not want to extend themselves further. Others, in some cases the same women, did not want to focus on their chronic condition.

Marion participated at the first meeting of the network and decided not to continue. Marion defined herself as a person who was flexible and able to manage changing circumstances. She used those personal characteristics to explain how she had learned to accept RA as an integrated part of her life without letting it take control of her life. Her RA had fluctuated, leading her to endure two flare-ups that had affected her self-perception negatively and had left her feeling more vulnerable. She says that accepting RA is clearly easier in good times—when she feels more in control of the illness and able to continue her daily routines—than in bad times, during which the new routines of everyday life are threatened. During the programme and the fieldwork, Marion experienced a good time with symptoms, which she can control through medicine. The field note extract below is from a visit at Marion's house after the programme finished.

> "I ask Marion whether she has decided about the network and Marion says that, yes, she has decided not to join. She says that she doesn't want to be reminded more of her RA than she already is, and talks about medications, syringes and consultations in hospital that give her regular reminders. Marion says that she "doesn't need that".

Reflecting on the mutual empathy and sympathy among the women during the programme, Marion did not consider it to be essentially different from the responsivity that she felt from her family or potentially could have with people with other chronic conditions. Marion had previously established new routines in everyday life and had created a new sense of identity and meaningfulness. She had integrated RA into her life without letting it take too much control and did not want to be reminded too much about the consequences of living with RA.

5. Concluding Discussion

In this paper, we have drawn on a phenomenological perspective in the sociology of everyday life to grasp the significance of participation in patient education (Bech-Jørgensen, 1994). Drawing on more general concepts related to everyday life highlights its complexity and shows that chronic illness is one problem among many that can cause disruptions, breaks or slips in our lives. These events might exacerbate the experience of chaos and the need for social support.

This article's main argument is that group-based patient education might provide special support to those recently diagnosed with a chronic illness during this transformation period of their everyday lives. The article demonstrates three modes of significance ascribed to participation, which were primarily experienced by the recently diagnosed women. Through the women's "simultaneous presence" (Bech-Jørgensen, 1994) in the programme and the continuous exchanges of experiences—particularly between the recently diagnosed and the experienced women (and the lay experts)—those women's individual experiences are transformed into common

experiences, which provides the basis for creating a new self-evidence related to life with RA and the basis for integrating RA into their everyday lives and identities. Bülow (2003), from a narrative perspective, have reported similar findings, emphasising the creation of meaning as a social interaction process in studying participation at a Swedish patient school.

Furthermore, this article highlights how new "scopes of significances" (Bech-Jørgensen, 2002) are also created through the exchange of experiences, thoughts, moods and feelings related to living with an unpredictable chronic condition. By means of these commonly created "scopes of significances," new tactics for managing the practicalities of everyday life are created by individual interpretations and adaptations to individual biographical situations (Schutz, 2005). This process of learning through others has also been described in Håkanson et al.'s (2012) study of a Swedish group-based educational programme for people with irritable bowel syndrome. They relate "learning about oneself through others" to both the exchange of experiences among the participants and participants' own reflections on this exchange; they describe both learning related to a changed self-image and learning related to useful everyday life strategies.

Supporting the anthropological analysis of Grøn (2005) we have further highlighted that changing the practicalities of everyday life is related to feelings of ambivalence and vulnerability. Changing how one manages everyday life with chronic illness is not an incremental act, but rather is a highly social act, affecting social relations and social roles and changing social interactions. For example at the job, refusing taking overtime or asking for special considerations due to the causes of the chronic illness. Or changing interactions and role patterns in the family, transforming the former role of being the caregiver to a new role of being a person who might need care and support.

Finally, the article shows how programme participants create a special community based on being in the same situation. Håkanson et al. (2012) have described the same special community that is based on being among others with similar illness experiences and define it as a safe community in which participants feel mutually understood and supported and that provides them with comfort and strength.

The studies of Bülow and Hýden (2004); Bülow (2003) and Håkanson et al. (2012) share our perspective on the role of the socialisation processes at a programme in which meaning is socially constructed. However, in contrast to our study, those authors do not follow the participants to their everyday life settings to investigate how commonly created meanings are individually interpreted and transformed, depending on an individual's biographical situation (Schutz, 2005).

Another main argument is that not everyone gains from joining group-based patient education programmes. We demonstrated this lack of experienced significance by analysing the cases of the experienced women and of a few recently diagnosed women. The experienced women had established a new sense of self and had established new routines in everyday life, incorporating and qualified by their illness. Thereby, joining the programme did not affect how they perceived themselves and managed their RA. However, for most, participation was experienced as a nice way to meet "equals". This analysis also reveals the experiences of a few of the recently diagnosed women, who had experienced a fundamental life disruption and overriding feelings of uncertainty and chaos and who, therefore, were unable to concentrate and be mentally present at the meetings. Viewed through Bech-Jørgensen's analytical framework, this passive participation can be interpreted as bodily and mental withdrawal to protect themselves from RA-related disruptions to everyday life. This complexity of life circumstances is important to recognise and address if patient education is to be perceived as meaningful.

In contrast to our findings, none of the above-mentioned Scandinavian studies have focused on differences between the recently diagnosed and the experienced women in how they ascribe meaning to their participation. Furthermore, there have been no other international studies that focus on this significant difference.

Considering the special community at the programme meetings, our analysis documents that the intimate community is not automatically transformed from one context to another because the participants do not all have the same expectations of—and need for—an on-going community based on their chronic illness. There is quite a difference between wanting to meet on an informal basis around common activities and the need to establish a self-help group at which participants are expected to discuss far more private and vulnerable affairs. We have not found other empirical studies investigating efforts to create a lasting social network after participation in patient education programmes. Further research on this aspect of these programmes is needed.

We have focused on the role of social interactions among the women because the analyses showed that the role of the health professionals was not experienced as significant either because it was experienced as being tailored towards the recently diagnosed or because it was not experienced as directed at the participants' indi-

vidual needs or life situations. Adapting the concept of "chronic homework" (Mattingly et al., 2011), we demonstrated how health professionals' implicit and frequently unspoken expectations about being positive, accepting the chronic condition, and initiating behaviour changes to become a responsible and self-managing person might lead to feelings of shame and guilt. Accordingly, meeting health professionals can be an ambivalent experience. This subject thus opens a discussion of ethical dilemmas in patient education in terms of who has the right to determine what is right for an individual joining the programme.

Our study was able to describe only the experiences of women: no men took part in the two programmes that the fieldworker followed. Following Bech-Jørgensen, the "symbolic order of self-evidence" (Bech-Jørgensen, 1994) is primarily structured in a gender-specific fashion; social norms, social roles, and role expectations are social constructions and are gender-specific. Related to our study, we would expect gender-specific differences in the experience of how RA affects everyday life. In addition, there are possible differences in how men and women might ascribe meaning (or lack of meaning) to their participation. These potential gender-based differences impose a natural limitation to our study because we can only refer to our findings for women.

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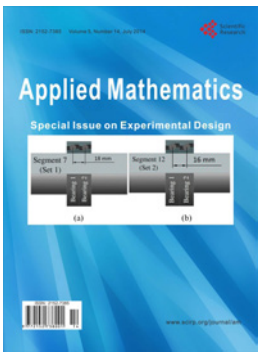

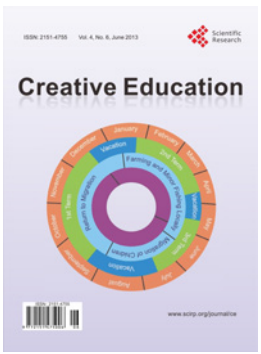

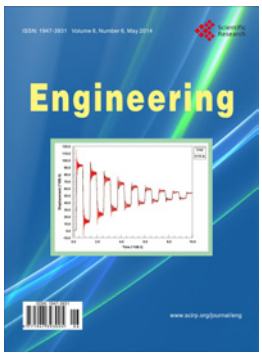

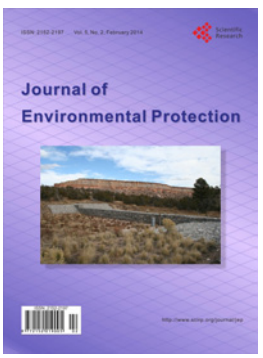

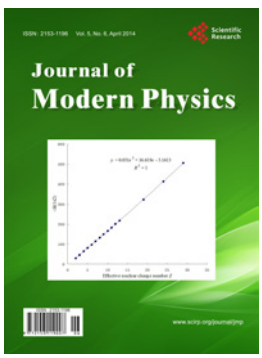

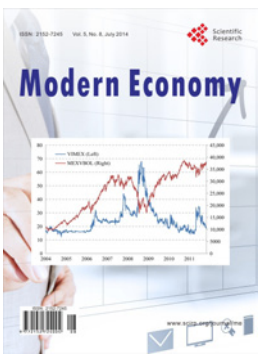

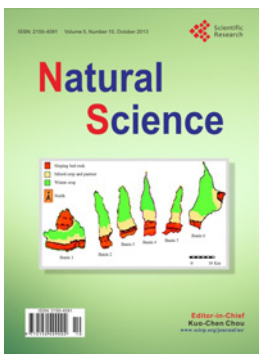

Brandl, Werner

Conduct of everyday life – some views and insights

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Werner Brandl

Conduct of everyday life – some views and insights

Everyday – according to Merriam-Webster and Cambridge Dictionary a term used for *routinely, ordinary, typical, usual*. That sounds like banality and triviality, habit and trot – in short: little excitement and nothing interesting at all! It is therefore not surprising that there are little reason and little interest in the scientific mainstream to discuss *life-world* and *conduct of everyday life* – in addition to references to simple necessity and private responsibility. A tour d'horizon – in the sense of an informative overview of topics discussed.

Keywords: life-world, everyday-life, conduct of everyday life, lifestyle

1 Prologue

> Everyday life is the most self-evident,
> yet the most puzzling of ideas.
> Felski, 1999, p. 15

There are lots of manuals for a good and healthy life, *popular- or pseudo-scientific* "signposts", which also want to show people the way through the labyrinth to a successful life. Already in 1860, Ralph Waldo Emerson asked himself "a practical question of the conduct of life. How shall I live? We are incompetent to solve the times" (Emerson, 1860, p. 1) in his collection of nine essays *The conduct of life*, in parts, thematically grouped around practical life issues and meant, for example, that "every man is a consumer, and ought to be a producer" (Emerson, 1860, p. 73). Nowadays those are available for all imaginable situations, e.g., *Skills for everyday life* (Overton, 1990), "promotes skills such as following schedules, reading maps, finding help, planning a trip, and more", *Life skills. Stuff you should really know by now* (Laflin, 2018) "with the essential knowledge to tackle life's everyday challenges", the WHO (World Health Organization; https://www.who.int/behealthy) *Steps for a better health* "being more active, eating healthy, and avoiding tobacco and harmful use of alcohol" or – modern pictographic – with *tips for a healthy life* (depicted in Figure 1). The need for it seems enormous and probably also a prerequisite being able to successfully master the life as a balance of contradictory demands and requirements as an individual task to reconcile the different, often contradictory factual, temporal but also meaningful and emotional needs and necessities of everyday life, and to integrate them into concrete action.

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Even if everyday life is concerned with the daily normal, the ordinary, the familiar, the usual, the concrete, the practical, the pragmatic, the *routine in the here and now*, in short: the self-evident, it is not surprising that – regarding the conduct of everyday life – it could be considered as if it were self-explanatory, so that learning it is not a goal of education – and thus actually not worthy of being a subject of serious scientific considerations!

Relatively late and also hesitant – and initially confronted with considerable resistance – some scientists turned to everyday life as quite a veritable object of scientific consideration.

The scientific study of the forms, course, possibilities, and limitations of *coping with everyday life* and *lifestyle*, and its *actors*, however, existed only slightly and led to a niche existence in the scientific mainstream. Thoughts about the significance of *social structures and functions* in and for everyday life were too much in the foreground - and less so were the *subjects involved*.

Figure 1: Daily routines and rituals for a healthy lifestyle (© Khoon Lay Gan)

With varying categories of classification, the phenomenon was increasingly accepted and adopted: starting from of Edmund Husserl's "introduction to phenomenological philosophy" (Husserl, 1936/1970), the "phenomenology of the social world" (Schütz, 1967), the **"**structures of the life-world**"** (Schütz, 1970; Schütz & Luckmann, 1973), as well Lefebvre (1968/1971) "everyday life in the modern world" and with a decidedly Marxist analysis, examination, and evaluation and "critique of everyday life" (Lefebvre, 1947/2014). Within the framework of a **"**subject-oriented sociology**"**, in 1995 established and Munich based project group "The conduct of everyday life", (Jurczyk, Voß & Weihrich, 2016) is conceived as an active construction and "everyday life in social psychology" (Emiliani & Passini, 2017) critical-psychological consideration explicates it as "basic subject scientific concept**"** (Holzkamp, 1995/2016).

Interest in the postmodern "lifestyle" has increased significantly. Philosophical ideas on "lifestyle", "art of living" and the "attitude to life" of independence, meaningfulness, and sustainability stylize modern life designs.

2 Life-world and everyday life in philosophy, sociology, and psychology

> Everyday life deserves to be taken seriously
> and is worthy of intensive study in its own right.
> Gardiner, M.E. (2000, p. 207)

As far as the *scientific approach to everyday life* is concerned, *in particular from a phenomenological point of view*, two considerations are of central importance:

First, it is evident that – e.g., in comparison with the natural sciences, in which their findings on the subject, the structures, and processes only become relevant through detours, e.g., vocational training and practice and the manufacture of products or the provision of services – the subject of scientific research and its results are of direct relevance to the subjects' life-world.

Secondly, it is not enough to simply duplicate the tasks of daily life in the scientific study of them and the resulting didactic recommendations for teaching and education, by making them a subject of discussion, but leaving them at the level of exclusively routine (e.g., household) practice.

It is, therefore, necessary to closely *observe, describe, and investigate* the many and varied aspects of everyday life (e.g., food preparation and eating culture, home furnishings and cleanliness, care of relatives, etc.) as *phenomena* which are taken for granted by those involved and thus regarded as less problematic (cf. Figure 2).

A *scientific model* that abstracts from the phenomenon (i.e., extracting the general from the particular) *represents* and *explains* the phenomenon in its generality, *understands* and *clarifies* its possible facets in a *generalizing* way (cf. Figure 2). Nonetheless, the *postulate of adequacy* must continue to be observed, "that the constructs of the social scientist have to be consistent with the common-sense constructs of actors" (Eberle, 2010, p. 126) and "with the constructs of common-sense experience of social reality, i.e. they have to be understandable to an actor and must be able to explain an action appropriately" (Eberle, 2014, p. 14).

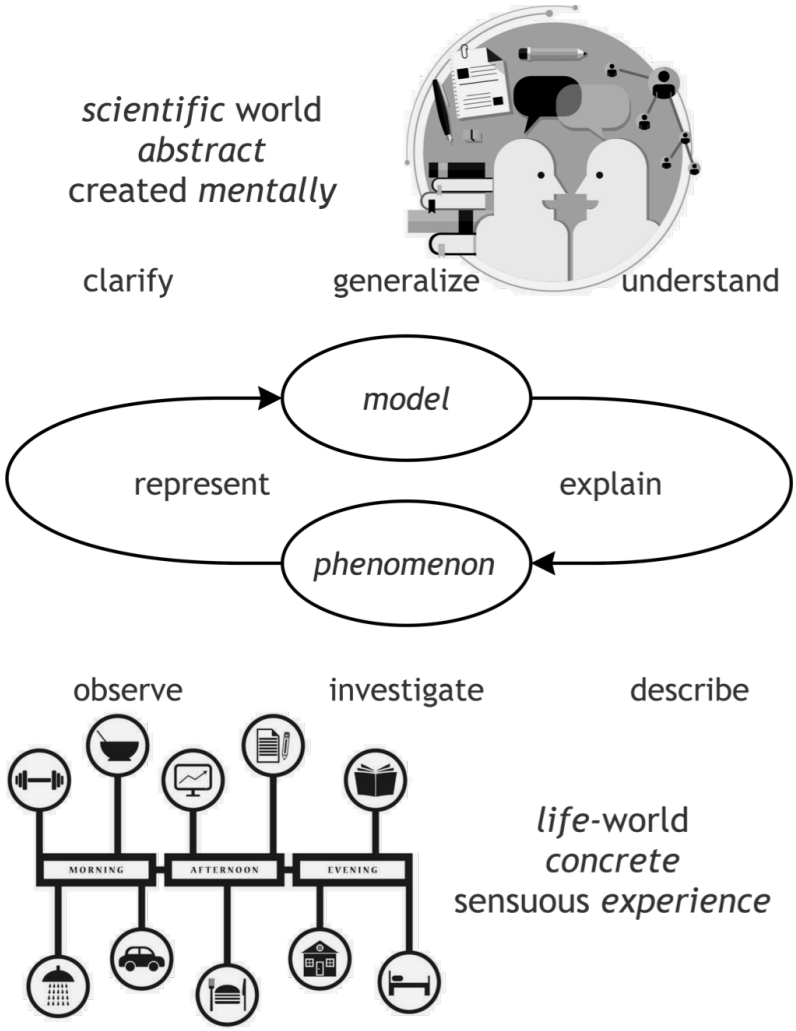

Figure 2: Phenomenological grounding and understanding of scientific knowledge of life-world

2.1 Phenomenology of the life-world

An initial attempt on the life-world started in modern times with the German philosopher Edmund Husserl[1] what he called the *Lebenswelt*. In 1935, when Edmund Husserl, somewhat dramatically, proclaimed "the crisis of European sciences" and deplored in particular "the life-world as the forgotten meaning-fundament of natural science" (Husserl, 1970, p. 48), this was quite an affront for the established sciences, recalling the *life-world,* the *given world and its constitution* and two sorts of truths, namely "of pre- and extrascientific *life-world*" (Husserl, 1936/1970, p. 76) and the "*objective-scientific world*":

> On the one side, everyday practical situational truths, relative, to be sure, but, as we have already emphasized, exactly what praxis, in its particular projects, seeks and needs; on the other side there are scientific truths, and their grounding leads back precisely to the situational truths, but in such a way that scientific method does not suffer thereby in respect to its own meaning, since it wants to use and must use precisely these truths. (Husserl, 1970, p. 132)

In his opinion, this was a wake-up call, to put the objective sciences on their feet from their heads and finally to deal with the lifeworld: "The life-world is a realm of original self-evidences" (Husserl, 1970, p. 127) – and proclaimed for the phenomenological philosophy[2] a *return "back to the 'things themselves'"* (Husserl, 1901/2001, p. 168): "It is of course itself a highly important task, for the scientific opening-up of the life-world, to bring to recognition the primal validity of these self-evidences and indeed their higher dignity in the grounding of knowledge compared to that of the objective-logical self-evidences" (Husserl, 1970, p. 128).

Thus, Husserl elevated the lifeworld to a central object of philosophy and meta theoretically opened up a new perspective for the social sciences, which were and are oriented exclusively towards structural-functionalist explanations. In his opinion, the originally postulated separation between the prejudiced everyday knowledge and the (apparently) liberated knowledge of the so-called objective sciences cannot be maintained, because the criterion of objectivity is ultimately based on the merely implicit possibility of viewing and thus ultimately possesses a life-worldly component.

He uses the concept of the life world in an ambiguous sense: on the one hand he means *the directly self-evident,* as the anthropological foundation of the determination of man's relationship to the world, and on the other hand, he describes *the practical, descriptive and concrete life world*. Husserl's concern is not that of empirical science, but the reflection of the *meta*-theoretical preliminary questions of each *theorizing*.

His merit clearly lies in the "reestablishment of the ontological and epistemological dignity of the life-world" (da Silva, 2012, p. 88) and having created the argumentative basis for the fact that *phenomenological concepts* were thematized in his

succession and are even widespread in the social sciences today, in very different theoretical contextual references.[3]

2.2 Structures of the life-world

Therefore, the concept of the life-world (*Lebenswelt)* has been subsequently further developed in a number of post-Husserlian considerations in phenomenology and sociology and is inseparable and connected in different constellations with *Alfred Schütz, Thomas Luckmann and Peter Berger* (cf., Muzetto, 2015).

Alfred Schütz[4] adopted the term following correspondence with Husserl in the early 1930s in his "Phenomenology of the social world" (Schütz, 1967; original German title: Der sinnhafte Aufbau der Welt/The meaningful structure of the world) and bridged sociological and phenomenological traditions to form a social phenomenology. He takes up Husserl's concept of the world in which we live and integrates it into the sociological analysis of the structures of the world in which we live (Schütz, 1970; Schütz & Luckmann, 1973). For Schütz the lifeworld was "the taken-for-granted 'common-sense-reality' of the social world as it is lived by ordinary individuals" in "the daily course of their lives" (Harrington, 2006, p. 341).

He conceived *the meaningful structure of the social world* as the core element of an understanding sociology with "fundamental assumptions characteristic of the natural attitude in the life-world, which themselves are accepted as unquestionable given; namely the assumptions of the constancy of the structure of the world, of the constancy of the validity of our experience of the world, and of the constancy of our ability (Vermöglichkeit) to act upon the world and within the world" (Schütz, 1970, p. 116).

Together with *Thomas Luckmann*, *Alfred Schütz* devoted himself to explaining the everyday world: "The world of everyday life is consequently man's fundamental and paramount reality" (Schütz & Luckmann, 1973, p. 3) "a basic spatial, temporal, and social arrangement" (Schütz & Luckmann, 1973, p. 103). Everyday life is therefore structured according to relevance, which results on the one hand from immediate practical purposes and on the other hand from the social situation.

The world appears "in coherent arrangements of well-circumscribed objects having determinate properties. For men in the natural attitude the world is never a mere aggregation of colored spots, incoherent noises, or centers of cold and warmth" (Schütz & Luckmann, 1973, p. 4) but in "a fixed succession, a Now is transformed into a just-past-Now and becomes a past-Now" (Schütz & Luckmann, 1972, p. 52) and therefore, "the stratification of the world into zones of actual, restorable and obtainable reach already refers to the structure of the life-world according to dimensions of objective temporality and their subjective correlates, the phenomenon of retention and protention, recall and expectancy" (Schütz, 1970, p. 118).

Table 1: Stratification of the life-world in spatio-temporal respect (Compilation from Schütz & Luckmann, 1973, pp. 36-38; 51-52)

***Spatial* arrangement of the everyday life-world**	***Temporal* arrangement of the everyday life-world**
1 within actual reach: present phase of the stream of consciousness	
The sector of the world which is accessible to *immediate experience*. It embraces not only actually perceived objects but also objects that can be perceived through attentive advertence.	The world in actual reach has essentially the temporal character of the *present*.
2 within potential reach	
2.1 restorable reach: memory	
A sector which was *previously in actual reach* as constant or constantly changeable and to *bring into actual reach again*.	The world in restorable reach is based upon the *past*, upon that which was previously in reach and upon that which can once be brought to actual reach.
2.2 attainable reach: expectation	
A sector which *was never in reach*, but which *can be brought within it*.	The world in attainable reach depends on anticipation of the *future*.
Source: Schütz & Luckmann (1973, p. 36-38)	Schütz & Luckmann (1973, p. 51-52)

As with Husserl, in Schütz (1970) and Schütz and Luckmann (1973) *everyday life* and the *lifeworld,* "structuring of the spatial-temporal and social-cultural world" (Schütz, 1970, p. 120), still fall into one, so they are not regarded as spheres that can be distinguished – despite "life-world embraces still more than the everyday reality" (Schütz & Luckmann, 1973, p. 21) – at least conceptually. This is not surprising from the starting point: everyday life and lifeworld world have the same reference phenomenon but include different meanings. The terms can be used synonymously in the *description* of the phenomenon, but their *meaning* must be differentiated.

Everyday life thus describes the world as a horizon of human action embedded in a social interaction system and limited in time and space. This horizon of human action determines both the subjective perception of the reality of individuals and the consensualized perception of the reality of a group. It is thus both individually constructed and handed down through social structures (Wieser, 2008, p. 139).

The *lifeworld* is described as a system of human interaction. The lifeworld is (...) not the perceived 'everyday life' of subjects of a social world. Rather, the lifeworld is a transcendental concept in the Kantian sense, which does not comprise objects, but the cognitive structure of objects (Wieser, 2008, p. 140).

Berger and Luckmann "consider the standard version of functionalist explanation the social sciences a theoretical legerdemain" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p. 186) and so their approach towards "the social construction of reality" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) is both non-sociologistic and non-psychologistic" and "posit *neither* an ahistorical 'social system' *nor* an ahistorical 'human nature'" but as an "insight into the dialectic between social reality and individual existence in history" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p. 187). The dialectical relationship also applies to the formation of the *identity* of the individuals: "Identity is, of course, a key element of subjective reality, and like all subjective reality, stands in a dialectical relationship with society. Identity is formed by social processes" and "conversely, the identities produced by the interplay of organism, individual consciousness and social structure react upon the given social structure, maintaining it, modifying it, or even reshaping it" (Berger & Luckmann 1967, p. 173).

In the opinion of Berger and Luckmann (1967, pp. 21-23), the phenomenological analysis of everyday life, of the subjective experience of everyday life, and the "innumerable pre- and quasi-scientific interpretations about everyday reality" (Berger & Luckmann 1967, p. 20) reveals an ordered reality. The reality of everyday life

- appears already objectified, that is, constituted by an order of objects that have been designated *as* objects before my appearance on the scene;
- is organized around the 'here' of my body and the 'now' of my present;
- presents itself as an intersubjective world, a world that is shared with others.
- is taken for granted *as* reality. It does not require additional verification over and beyond its simple presence. It is simply *there*, as self-evident and compelling facticity. I *know* that it is real.

2.3 Critique of everyday life

Lefebvre's "Critique of Everyday Life" (besides others, e.g., Agnes Heller's exploring the relationship between the everyday, rationality and ethics, Dorothy E. Smith's feminist perspective on everyday life; cf. Gardiner, 2000) – whereby critique is meant not in the common sense of complaint, blame or degradation, but in the Kantian sense the *analysis, examination, and evaluation* – just as G.W.F. Hegel stated in § 31 of the *Phenomenology of mind* "Quite generally, the familiar, just because it is familiar, is not cognitively understood" consists of "deciphering everyday life in its appearance, but also in its reality, by means of implementing its apparent, formless facts in knowledge" (Sünker, 2014, p. 328) and to bring about a "rehabilitation of everyday life against the devaluations made by 'higher activities' – philosophy, literature, art, morality and politics" (Sünker, 2014, p. 325).

Conduct of everyday life

Lefebvre, according to Gardiner "the quintessential critical theorist of everyday life", "articulated an exceedingly valuable and multifaceted critique of everyday life, one that has continuing importance and relevance" (Gardiner, 2000, p. 72), thus presents in parallel the outlines of a Marxist-inspired *sociology of everyday life* (Lefebvre, 2014), a classic analysis of daily life under capitalism with the starting point of a dialectical relationship between substructure (*Unterbau*) and superstructure (*Überbau*) and in it (using the term *Lebenswelt* as an original citation) certainly ties in with a phenomenological tradition that in everyday life lies the rational core, the real centre of practice because in the last instance, knowledge and power, even wisdom are judged by everyday life – a statement that is not only compatible with Marx but also with Husserl: "How can everyday life be defined? It surrounds us, it besieges us, on all sides and from all directions. We are inside it and outside it" (Lefebvre, 2014, p. 335).

In *clearing the ground,* that public life has penetrated private life, and vice versa, public and political life has become *personalized* and resulted in an indisputable *reprivatization* of practical and social life into a *private everyday*, "for Lefebvre the concept of everyday life constitutes the crucial vantage-point from whence to criticize the formalized and alienated social practices characteristic of capitalism" (Gardiner, 2000, p. 77).

Lefebvre argues that "these complex relations can be understood either from a historical and political perspective or from the perspective of the everyday. Here we have chosen the latter. This is not to say that the former is faulty or bad, merely that it can sometimes lead to a dead end" (Lefebvre, 2014, p. 298).

Lefebvre (2014, pp. 271/272) sums up his program for a critique of everyday as follows:

- It is the 'human raw material' that the study of everyday life takes as its proper object. It studies it both in itself and in its relation with the differentiated, superior forms that it underpins.
- Confrontation of so-called 'modern' life on the one hand, with the past, and on the other – and above all – with the *possible*.
- Criticism of the trivial by the exceptional – *but at the same time* criticism of the exceptional by the trivial, of the 'elite' by the mass.
- Confrontation of effective human reality with its 'expressions': moral doctrines, psychology, philosophy, religion, literature.

However, he also makes it clear that he is interested in change: "The object of our study is everyday life, with the idea, or rather the project (the program), of transforming it" (Lefebvre, 2014, p. 296), he is not concerned with the "question of describing, comparing and discovering what might be identical or analogous in Teheran, in Paris, in Timbuktu or in Moscow?", but with the "question of discover-

ing what must and can change and be transformed in people's lives in Timbuktu, in Paris, in New York or in Moscow" (Lefebvre, 2014, p. 312).

2.4 Conduct of everyday life

According to the Munich-based project group *Conduct of everyday life,* starting in the late 1980s, it "is a sociological conceptualization of subjectivity and even individuality from a sociological point of view and as a genuine subject of sociology" (Jurczyk, Voß & Weihrich, 2016, p. 50).

Conduct of everyday life takes place at the interfaces of *subject-oriented so*ciology and *subject-scientific psychology*: the sociologically oriented concept of conduct of everyday life *describes* the active construction of a system of action that structures and institutionalizes the subjects' area of life in a variety of ways and focuses on the question of *how* individual and structural processes are interconnected. The subject-scientific view, on the other hand, is devoted to the question of *why* for the individual decisions and actions in everyday life and for the emergence of everyday life as a personal system of action. "The basic premise of the concept is that people have to tackle all of the different – and in some cases contradictory – demands that they encounter in the various spheres of everyday life" (Jurczyk, Voß & Weihrich, 2016, p. 34).

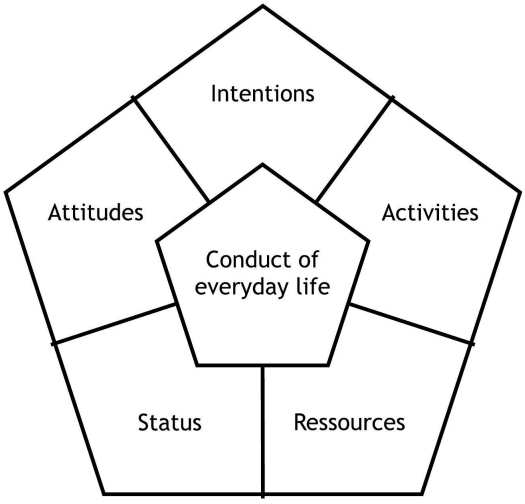

Figure 3: Facets of the conduct of everyday life

It is not, however, a matter of the chronological sequence, the mere addition of individual everyday activities, but of the way in which these everyday activities can be

combined into a coherent, at the same time consistent and cohesive whole (cf. Fig. x).

In this respect, this does not represent a trivial activity, since in a 'concerted' action the everyday actions integrated into socio-cultural status and socio-economic resources must be combined with the individual attitudes and intentions of coping with everyday life, and the corresponding activities to form an 'overall package' that results in an overall concept of life conduct and are brought to the point in order to reconcile *what one wants* with *what is expected* or *imposed on one*; with *what is necessary* - measured against certain standards - and finally with what you can do yourself (Project group *Conduct of everyday life*). Three moments are decisive: the *objective relationships* in the person's areas of reference as constraints or demands, but also as opportunities and resources, many *socio-cultural influences* in the form of patterns of interpretation, normative standards and cultural models, and finally different *forms of direct social cohabitation* in families, partnerships, households, etc. (cf. Jurczyk, Voß & Weihrich, 2016, p. 48).

According to Voß (2001), everyday life is an individually institutionalized, complex *mode of action*. Life conduct is no more, but also no less than a system for the dimensional structuring and coordination of a person's everyday activities, in short: a way of acting (Voß, 2001, p. 206), which is structured by the following dimensions (Voß, 2001, p. 205f.):

- *Time*: when, how long, in which time mode, with which beginning and which end, with which time position within a day, a week, a year etc.;
- *spatial*: where, with which spatial logic, with which spatial orientation;
- *factual*: according to which logic, with which qualifications etc.;
- *social*: with whom, according to which norms, with which expectations, in which division of labour and cooperation logic;
- *meaningful*: with which motivations, interpretations, and justifications;
- *medial*: with which process forms or artefact-like aids/techniques;
- *gender-oriented*: with which sex or gender logic;
- *physically*: with which body mode, with which structure of the body-related sensuality;
- *emotional*: with what emotional state, what emotional background colouration.

In context with the obvious tendencies of the modernization of society focussing on *rationalization, individualization, equalization of gender relations*, and *'workification'* and the often paradoxical consequences like *ambiguities and asynchronies* of everyday life (Jurczyk, Voß & Weihrich, 2016, p. 41), the project group differentiates three ideal types of life conduct: *Traditional life conduct* refers to traditions: "One lives in the same way that one has always lived *because* this is how it has always been" (ibid. p. 41): *Strategic life conduct* refers to elements of reflexivity.

"One's course of action is governed by planning and control, everyday life is organized from start to finish and the individual areas of life are segmented". *Situational life conduct* is both rational and reflexive: "Everyday actions take place in the form of reactive or desired adaptations to changing situations, and decisions are made depending on the situation encountered. This 'muddling through' has improvisational elements and allows openness and flexibility, though it can also lead to instability, indecision and chaos" (ibid. p. 41). However, it applies to all life-conduct types that "routines are shown to be decisive mechanisms to achieve continuity and to reduce the number of decisions that constantly have to be made. The variation lies only in the degree of routinization" (ibid. p. 41)

Conduct of everyday life often develops a *specific logic* and a *real life of its own*. What is meant by this is that it becomes independent in the experience of those affected vis-à-vis its producer, i.e., it confronts the producer objectively and even has a tangible retroactive effect (Voß, 2001, p. 211). The independence of conduct of everyday life and the resulting self-alienation of the person is a paradoxical condition of the possibility of *stability, continuity, and identity* (Voß, 2001, p. 212): They lead to *safety* and *relief* in everyday life as ultimately decisive functions of the conduct of everyday life.

The theoretical concept focuses on *seven basic points* (Jurczyk, Voß & Weihrich 2016, pp. 45-48): *Conduct of everyday life* as

a. the interrelation of action
   Life conduct is – at least not primarily – not defined as a *construction of meaning* (as, for example, in the phenomenological concept of the *lifeworld* or of *everyday life*); it is instead defined primarily as a *practice*.
b. the interrelation and form of everyday activities
   Life conduct is defined as the structure of the activities that are part of life on an everyday basis. It is about the *interrelation* of practical everyday life and its *forms,* rather than about the abundance of elements.
c. the individual's system of action
   The conduct of everyday life is a system on the level of the individual, or, more specifically, a *system of the individual*, a system of action that belongs to the individual, to which they are bound and which they support.
d. the individual's active construction and effort
   The emphasis here is instead on the fact that the system of life conduct is invariably *actively construed*, *practised* on an everyday level and *maintained*, as well as adapted, when necessary, to changing conditions by every person with reference to their individual social situation or position.
e. a self-contained logic
   Life conduct gains both a functional and a structural autonomy in relation to its producer because it is based upon numerous binding arrangements with

social reference areas and actors, and these cannot be revoked without further ado.

f. the non-deterministic sociation
Life conduct is invariably and systematically *sociated*. Objective social conditions in the social spheres of the individual present more or less inflexible constraints and demands (but also opportunities and resources) and manifold socio-cultural influences also have an effect on life conduct. It takes place not in isolation, but together with others in various forms of immediate social cohabitation (such as families, partnerships, and networks).

g. a system sui generis
Life conduct is not a social system or social entity. It is a system *sui generis* (of its own kind), which – with its own form and logic – inserts itself between the individual and society, and fulfils important functions, e.g., increasing, at the same time, subjects' *relative autonomy* in relation to society and their *social integration*.

2.5 Perspective of the critical psychology

Psychology, in general, and psychoanalysis in particular, has shown and continues to show little or no interest at all in researching everyday life because it does *not* necessarily make *people acting in everyday situations* the object of its knowledge, but is primarily interested in *psychic processes.* Holzkamp deplores in traditional psychology, including psychoanalysis, a "lack of clarity regarding the relationship between 'scientific' and 'everyday' reality and the transferability of insights gained in experiments and the setting to the everyday lives of the individual" (Holzkamp, 2016, p.77).

Especially in the observation of the psychopathology of normal life (Freud, 1914; Jones, 1911), full of stories and anecdotes of faulty actions of everyday life, e.g., forgetting, mistakes in speech, reading, and writing, erroneously carried-out actions, errors, superstitious beliefs as psychopathological occurrences of everyday, Freud only detects the basis for the development of the concept of unconscious – seeing in the *common mistakes of everyday life* the same cause for "the inconsistencies, absurdities, and errors in the *dream content"* and thinks that in both phenomena "the appearance of the incorrect function is explained through the peculiar interference of two or more correct actions" (Freud, 1914, p, 336).

Freud concludes that, that *deep down* we are a lot more than we think we are on the *surface*, e.g., most trivial slips of the tongue or pen can reveal secret ambitions, worries, and fantasies and, therefore, the boundary between the normal and abnormal human behaviour is unstable and subsequently thereof, that such symptoms are able to disrupt not only the communication with others but also the spheres of eating, relations, work, culture etc.

Therefore,

- investigation of the errors and slips of everyday life is perhaps the best mode of approach to the study of psycho-analysis;
- analysis of the occurrences in question is of great service in the treatment of neurotic patients;
- considerations of the mechanism of these erroneous functionings make it easy to understand the way in which psycho-analysis brings about its therapeutic effects (Jones, 1911, p. 520).

In contrast, Holzkamp claims, that conduct of life in traditional psychology is obviously radically underexposed, precisely "that to date the 'conduct of life' has evidently *been greatly neglected in traditional psychology*" (Holzkamp, 2016, p. 67) and that conduct of everyday life at no point as an independent theoretical problem has even halfway been systematically and comprehensively analysed and conceptualized to highlight "*the deliberate blindness of psychology and psychanalysis about the existence and the scientific conceptualization of their subjects' or patients' conduct of everyday life*" (Holzkamp, 2016, p. 78) and makes considerations that "a psychological conceptualization of the 'conduct of life' cannot be developed from the position of traditional psychology due to its 'blindness', it *can* be addressed from the position of psychology as a science from the standpoint of the subject" (Holzkamp, 2016, p. 80).
With reference to the Munich project group, Holzkamp has located the everyday life as a basic concept of subject science (Holzkamp, 2016) in his "Critical Psychology" and started a "reinterpretation from the perspective of the science from the standpoint of the subject" (Holzkamp, 2016, p. 81)

It "involves studying psychological processes as people's experiences and actions within the social and material contexts of their everyday lives" and "expands psychological theory and research to explore people's collective participations in everyday practice and their efforts to handle the activities, relations, conditions, concerns, and struggles in life" (Kristensen & Schraube 2014, p. 291)

The world reference of psychology, the level of mediation between social structure and everyday life is central in both approaches! But Holzkamp also makes it clear that subject science, as he understands it, is actually something other than subject orientation in the sense of the Munich project because the "Munich concept of the conduct of life *centers on society*, i.e., it takes the process of modernization of societal structures as the reference point for its analysis", while "the psychological version of the science from the standpoint of the subject in some way *centered on the individual*" (Holzkamp, 2016, p. 84). Nevertheless, he reformulates the conduct of life as a "mediating link between the individual and society based on the '*relative autonomy*' that a subject organizing or 'conducting' his life has vis-à-vis society" (Holzkamp, 2016, p. 92).

Holzkamp also sees that everyday life is not conditioned by social conditions, but is based on possibilities of action, thus taking place relatively autonomously. This categorial positioning of the concept of conduct of everyday life as a level of mediation is also established in the "revitalization" of the "psychology and the conduct of everyday life" for Schraube and Højholt (2016): "The conduct of everyday life represents a mediating category between the individual subjects and societal structures" (p. 4) - this is the short form of what Holzkamp had explained in more detail:

> To put it more precisely: from the meaning constellations with which they are confronted subjects can *extract certain premises for action* that they *adopt as the*irs and from which, by implication or inference, certain intentions to act then arise that are, for them, sensible, in the sense that they are in their interest, on which they then, insofar as there are no resistances or impediments in the contingent reality that militate against it (i.e., all other things being equal), finally act. (Holzkamp, 2016, p. 89)

3 Lifestyle and conduct of life - social construction and individual representation

> Sooner or later, everyone invents a story for himself
> that he considers his life.
> Max Frisch: Gantenbein
> [German: Mein Name sei Gantenbein]

As Bourdieu stated in "Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste", "lifestyles are essentially distinctive" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 130). A distinction is a strategy to generate and legitimize differences. "Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 6), in the everyday choices in everyday life e.g., diet, clothing, taste, habitation, (eating) culture, etc. In fact, the economic and social conditions for different ways of living are bound up with systems of dispositions, Bourdieu calls "habitus". The *habitus*, "systems of durable, transposable *dispositions*" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72), is not only a "structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perception of practices, but also a structured structure: the principle of division into logical classes which organizes the perception of the social world is itself the product of internalization of the division into social classes" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 170) and concludes that "life-styles are thus the systematic products of habitus" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 172).

Lifestyles, both "the distinct and distinctive life-styles" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 101) are understood to mean group-specific forms of everyday life and interpretation of individuals in the economic, social, political and cultural context of a way of life (Rink, 2002, p. 36). The interweaving of *lifestyle* and *conduct of life* somewhat blurs the different focus, which tends to be expressed in the fact that lifestyles are located at the meso-level and conduct of life at the micro-level of social diagnosis (Scholl &

Hage, 2004, p. 39). Lifestyles are seen in a mediating function between objective social situation and subjective world (Rink, 2002, p. 36).

One can regard everyday life as a "missing link in the socialization process" (Munich Project group *Conduct of everyday life*): "The conduct of everyday life represents a mediating category between the individual subjects and societal structures" (Schraube & Hojholt, 2016, p. 4), quasi the "hinge for the relation between individual and society" (MaxWeber), which is determined in three ways:

1. the affectedness and imprinting of individuals by *social structures*,
2. the *actions and reactions of individuals* within and towards these structures and
3. the resulting *influence on these structures*.

The identification of *lifestyles* is intended to describe clear social processes of differentiation by indicating socio-culturally anchored patterns of thought and action. These are equally identity-forming and group-forming. Constitutive elements for this are the opinions and interests shared in the corresponding lifestyle segment as well as preferred modes of action, especially in the consumption and leisure spheres. The concept of conduct of everyday life, on the other hand, deals in particular with the question of how individuals master the different challenges and constraints of everyday life.

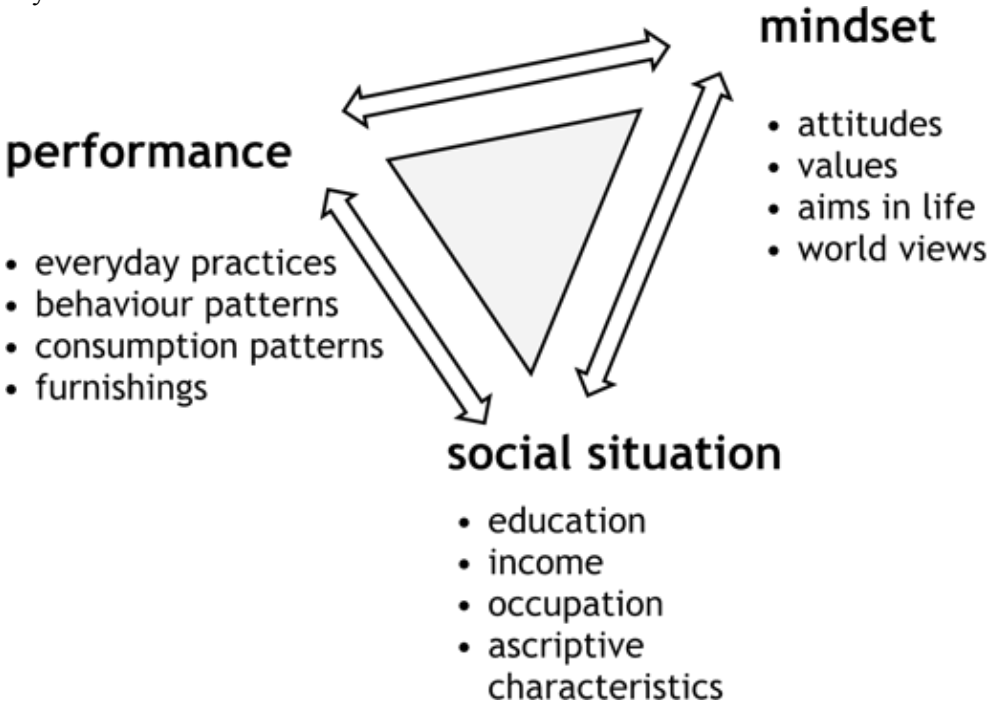

Figure 4: Dimensions of lifestyle (Reusswig, 2002, p. 159)

Lifestyles can be fundamentally defined according to three dimensions (cf. Figure 4):

- *social situation*: income, education, occupation, ascriptive (attributed or attributive) characteristics such as age and gender. Behind this is the assumption that all attempts at stylizing the self cannot be realized without recourse to social resources (in the double sense of possibility and limitation) (Reusswig, 2002, p. 159);
- *mindset*: values, attitudes, goals in life and world views. This expresses the conviction that lifestyles are not (only) something 'external' or 'objective', but must essentially be regarded as an expression of 'inner' or 'subjective' attitudes and characteristics (Reusswig, 2002, p. 159);
- *performance*: typical patterns of behaviour, everyday practices, patterns of consumption, furnishing.

With reference to Bourdieu's (1984) distinction between economic and cultural capital, and with Berger and Luckmann that "the world of everyday life is structured both spatially and temporally" (Berger and Luckmann, 1967, p. 26) lifestyles can be located dimensionally:

- A time-related dimension of lifestyle: biographical perspective and generation-specific attitude to modernity/tradition;
- the equipment level: economic capital (income and wealth), cultural capital (education);
- the individual radius of action in everyday actions: home-centered/local to extra-domestic/cosmopolitan.

In his reinterpretation of the Munich project group, Holzkamp already emphasized the importance of distinguishing the curriculum vitae (the *course* of life) from the *conduct* of everyday life: "While *conduct of life* is, of course, in *reality* an aspect of one's life history and thus also subject to all its changes (from birth to death), *functionally* the 'conduct of everyday life' must be considered to be a separate process that is distinct from a person's life history" (Holzkamp, 2016, p. 69). Characteristic for this is

- the daily *repetition* of processes (getting up, having breakfast, reading the newspaper, going to work, coming home, having supper, watching TV, and going to bed – in a more or less standardized sequence);
- the *routinization* of such a sequence, indispensable to life, so that life goes on:
- the generation of a *reproductive or self-reproductive system quality* of its own, different from the developments and changes over the course of one's life history;

- the separation of the *synchrony* of the activities as something distinct from the *diachronic plan* of the life history.

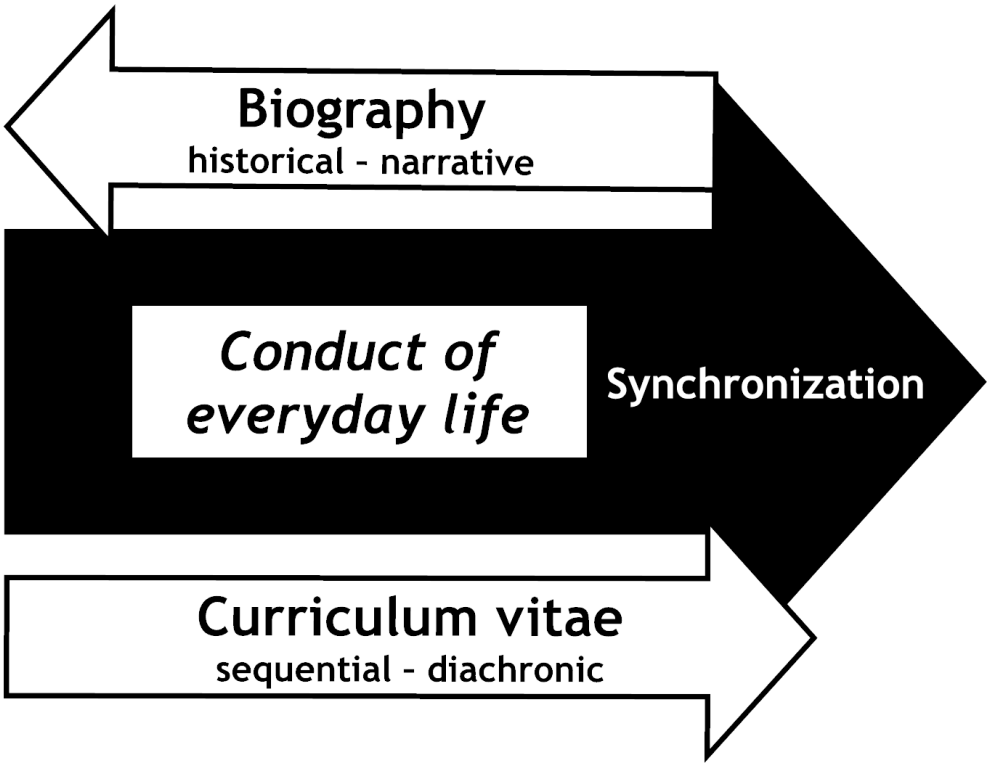

Figure 5: Conduct of everyday life – proactive living and retrospective describing

Conduct of everyday life is a descriptive-analytical and subject-oriented concept based on the creative performance, the creative will and the creative compulsion of individuals and thus complements the perspectives of biography and curriculum vitae. *Conduct of life, life course/curriculum vitae, and biography* (cf. Fig. 5) are complementary concepts:

- *Conduct of (everyday) life* represents the course of everyday life in relation to the life course ordered by the time of life.
- *Biography* as subjective construction integrates curriculum vitae and life guidance.
- *Life course*/*curriculum vitae*, biography and lifestyle document at the same time their social construction.

Biography and conduct of (everyday) life refer to a new state of development of the subject. They embody two sides of the same thing, namely life as an individual construction.
The connection between the subjective and the objective is manifested in the individual (re-)presentation and construction of

- biographical life story(s)
- current life world(s)
- perspective life concept(s)
- actual life practices!

4 Epilogue

Just about anybody can face a crisis.
It's that everyday living that's rough.
Bing Crosby in "The Country Girl"[5]

The ramble through the scientific realms, which at their core or even only marginally deal with everyday life and lifestyle, can neither eliminate the immanent ambiguity (also polyvalence) categorically nor actually: "To put it more clearly or abstractly, *ambiguity* is a category of everyday life, and perhaps an essential category" (Lefebvre 2014, p. 40)

> As strange as it may seem, *homo domesticus* is and remains an unknown being. There we wash and scrub without ceasing, tidy up and move continuously from one corner of our house to the next - and yet we know almost nothing or only superficial things about this hustle and bustle; we do not know the real principles of housework. (Kaufmann, 1999, p. 12)

And yet it is necessary to get along in everyday life – and to equip children and young people with the necessary tools to handle "consumption, nutrition, and health as central fields of action for the conduct of everyday life" (Schlegel-Matthies, 2008). Here she discusses goals, tasks, and requirements of the conduct of everyday life and the interrelations between developments, and structures in business, society, and politics on the one hand and individual conduct of life on the other and finds that even in the consumer society with its seemingly immeasurable range of goods and services, the technicization and digitalization of more and more fields of consumption and action, conduct of everyday life in the fields of consumption, nutrition, and health always involves new tasks for which work (at home) has to be performed (Schlegel-Matthies, 2008, p. 13).

Education for the conduct of everyday life is, therefore, not banal and trivial, but urgently needed! The task of nutrition and consumer education should be to put the question of the joint responsibility of all household members for the work that

occurs in the context of everyday life back more into the focus of educational measures and to make the significance of this work for society as a whole (more) visible (Schlegel-Matthies, 2008, p. 13). From an educational theory perspective, this means that *life-long practical learning* is on the agenda. It's about the

- *ability to cope* with diverse concrete life situations,
- acquisition of *everyday*
- *skills* and
- development of *competences* to deal successfully with the affordances of the present and future.

Some of the above-mentioned (problem) areas, especially the examination and discussion of the interaction of social lifestyle, private conduct of life and individual lifestyles will therefore necessarily be an essential part of a *study book on nutrition and consumer education on consumption – nutrition – health* (Schlegel-Matthies, Bartsch, Brandl & Methfessel, in prep.).

Notes

The article is an updated English-language version of Brandl (2018), revised, amended, extended, and supplemented.

1 Cf. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Edmund Husserl* https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/husserl/

2 At the beginning of his "Logical investigations" (1900/1901) Husserl was not quite sure: "Phenomenology is descriptive psychology. Epistemological criticism is therefore in essence psychology, or at least only capable of being built on a psychological basis" (Husserl, 2001, p. 167). In the second ed. (1913), however, he asserts: "Not psychology, but *phenomenology* is subject to all clarifications in pure logic (and in all forms of rational criticism".

3 The consequences of progress in the natural sciences and the effects of globalization require further questions: "How is the *life* of the lifeworld to be rethought after the biotechnical revolutions of our present age? How is the *world* of the lifeworld to be rethought after globalization?" (Harrington, 2006, p. 341).

4 Cf. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Alfred Schütz* https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/schutz/

5 The aphorism falsely stated in the phrase, "Any idiot can face a crisis – it's this day-to-day living that wears you out!" is even falsely attributed to Anton Chekhov: https://quoteinvestigator.com/2013/06/14/face-crisis/

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Research on High School Students' Everyday Life in the New Curriculum Reforms Implementation Progress in China

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In this paper, we employ qualitative research to examine the current situation of the implementation process of high school new curriculum reform, and study how to deal with high school students' everyday life in China. The research revealed the contradictions and problems involving the students' living environment, life structure, communication environment and spiritual life. Comparing "eternal ordinary or the moment of fresh" with the goal of curriculum reform and the students' expected life, I found the deep problems about educational ideas, curriculum design, teaching patterns, evaluation criteria and etc. During the process of the reform, I further propose that the students understand everyday life rationally and critically, change the free state of life gradually, improve the structure and pace of life. Only by this can we realize the transformation of the students' life, achieve all-round development following the nature of human-beings, and further deepen and develop the implementation of curriculum.

Keywords: New Curriculum Reform; Curriculum Implementation; Everyday Life; High School Students

Introduction

In order to develop a democratic, prosperous, strong and harmonious socialist modern China, it is necessary to raise the quality of the citizens, and each person must receive holistic and individualized development. The high school new curriculum reform was implemented in mainland China in 2004. The most recent outline for the development of education in China pointing to the need to raise the quality of the citizens and promote all-round development is the means to societal progress. The new curriculum reforms emphasized that creative talent could be cultivated through curriculum reform. In the new curriculum reforms implementation process, the spirit of new curriculum reform should be put into work in high school students' everyday life, which is the most thorough and true. Everyday life serves as the soil in which all students' activities and relationships sprout and grow up. The nature of high school students' holistic and individual development depends on everyday life. Therefore, the study examined the current situation of the implementation process of high school new curriculum, and studied how to deal with high school students' everyday life. How do students live in the implementation process of new curriculum? What are the students' desires and motivations in their everyday life? What is the root cause that determines the generation, development and change of their intentions and motives? Has the spirit of new curriculum been implemented completely to the students' everyday life?

Walking into undifferentiated and habitual everyday life of high school students, the study analyzes contradictions and problems existing in the aspects such as pace of life, life structures, life space, communication environment and spiritual life, which are influenced by the new curriculum reform, then, examines and criticizes them to reveal the deep contradictions of students' life in the reform process of new curriculum. After that, it discovers and denies the barriers that constraint their free and all-round development, then promotes the students' rational and critical understanding of their daily life. Finally, it gradually changes their life comfort and life structure, realizes the transformation of their everyday life, enhances the students' nature of being human, further deepens the effectiveness of new curriculum implementation, and promotes curriculum reform smoothly.

Curriculum Implementation and the Everyday Life

The curriculum implementation study began with American researchers' systematic reflections on curriculum reform movement of failed "disciplinary structure". The researchers realized that if the curriculum implementation process was not taken seriously, even the most perfect curriculum plan could not make the curriculum reform achieve its desired results. According to the relationship between curriculum plan and curriculum implementation, American curriculum scholars Snyder, Bolin and Zumwalt boiled the orientations of curriculum implementation into fidelity orientation, mutual adaptation orientation and curriculum enactment orientation, and analyzed the characteristics of curriculum implementation process from these five aspects as curriculum, curriculum knowledge, curriculum reform, role of teachers and research methods, etc.

At the beginning of studying curriculum implementation,

Chinese researchers mostly referred to the ideas of American curriculum scholars to analyze the current situation of Chinese curriculum implementation (Yin & Li, 2007). With the development and deepening of Chinese curriculum reform, curriculum implementation increasingly highlighted the complexity of itself. Chinese curriculum researchers found that the phenomena of Chinese curriculum could not be explained effectively when referring to curriculum theory from abroad and gradually got out of western discourse authority in curriculum implementation studies. On the macro level, the requirements of ideal curriculum implementation were planned; the tension and conflict between new university entrance examination and high school new curriculum were analyzed; the current situation, difficulties, problems of curriculum implementation were described and explained and the corresponding measures or suggestions to deal with those problems were sought (Zhang & Xu, 2006; Jin, 2001; Ma, 2002; Zhang, 2007; Liu, 2007; Yu, 2007). On the middle level, the due corresponding strategies of schools were discovered in the curriculum reform process: schools implemented curriculum planning, credit system and elective courses, improved school environment, changed teaching methods and students learning ways, strengthened curriculum leadership, organized teacher training effectively to promote the implementation of national curriculum, local curriculum and school-based curriculum, and then achieved the transformation from the national ideal curriculum to the real curriculum (Cui, 2007; Zhong, 2008; Pan, 2007). On the micro level, the subjectivity of students was respected, and students' psychology was cared for, and most students were found to hold a positive attitude towards new curriculum but felt stressed about it while some, lacking of knowledge of new curriculum, could not adapt to the new curriculum evaluation methods (Dai & Zhang, 2007). Some researchers, taking reconstructing the world of classroom life as a breakthrough, emphasized that classroom teaching should be connected with life experiences of both teachers and students so as to provide the foundation for the professional world of classroom teaching (Wang, 2006). Chinese education researchers' studies of classroom teaching life only stayed on theoretical criticism, and did not really walk into students' everyday life.

In the 20th century, many philosophers focused on the world of everyday life from different perspectives and put forward the theory of everyday life. In his Crisis of European Science and Transcendental Phenomenology, Husserl pointed that human being's entire worldview was dominated by empirical science, and deviated from the rationalist tradition of concerning about the questions of life, which excluded the questions of human life from scientific world, thus human being lost their meaning and value world (Husserl, 1976). Through the dissection of human being's daily "co-existence", Heidegger reveals a deep and overall dissimilation in the modern world of everyday life. From the perspective of internal contradictions of daily life, Lefebvre said that simple, free, spontaneous and repetitive as it was, daily life was holographic, which showed the deep inner mechanism of society. To criticize the daily life was to tear the political and economic veil covered on it, liberated the individual subjectivity, and changed the entire social relations (Lefebvre, 2002). Heller noticed that associations existed in the individual, society and daily life: daily life as an individual field of reproduction was irreplaceable and it was the basis of social reproduction, and daily life characterized by repetitive thinking and repetitive practice possessed the property of conservatism and inertia which often played a negative role in hindering personality development and corrupting the development of creative practice and creative thinking (Lefebvre, 1991).

Examined by the philosophy of the theory of everyday life, daily life——the basic existing world of high school students, was found to possess characteristics of the following aspects.

First, it is already established. Everyday life always makes identification and acceptance of the established existence as the premise, for example, students can not choose family, birth or gender and they can not select circumstances of life arbitrarily, either. Acknowledgment and acceptance of the established existence not only influence and form individual's lifestyles and everyday interests, but also restrict their behavior ways, thus the individual will set the established circumstances of life as their background (Schutz, 2001); although daily life is not completely unchanged, it more often appears with circulation and repetition of the same or similar model (Heller, 1990). To accept and acknowledge the established world means to agree that it is real and true. The "free" feature of everyday life first requires high school students to adapt to their established life rather than reflect on or criticize it. Having lost the consciousness of reflecting and criticizing for a long time, students are easily inclined to follow the beaten track easily when thinking which also imposes restrictions on the individual to ask the meaning of existence. This established life pattern, always happening and formed in the past but existing at present, first associates with the past from the perspective of time dimension, and correspondingly, the process of daily life generally works with the established pattern, which was the case in the past, and usually such in the present.

Second, it is free. Everyday life is a free, unconscious, habitual activity. Every day high school students get up at six, then, running, reading, having breakfast, attending classes, etc, the activities of which have rooted in the tradition and common sense of school teaching. Daily life guarantees the continuation of school culture in its form of "free" feature, provides students with interpretation of the daily facts, and forms into behavior norms which guide students how to behave correctly. Such norms and tradition have made students accept various routines and existence in school daily life, and they believe that the existing is common, natural and also reasonable and all seems to be self-evident and naturally reasonable (Schutz, 1983).

Third, it is repetitive. In high school students' daily life, today and tomorrow are circular and similar. That is to say, every day in their daily life can be exchanged for another day accordingly. They get up early in the morning, do morning exercises, have breakfast, read in the morning, attend classes, then they have lunch, have a rest, attend classes, do activities, and then have dinner, study by themselves and sleep. In the repetition day after day, the behavior of students or their pace of life are displayed in the same pattern of circulation or repetition. That is to say, students' life habits, daily interests and communication styles are shaped in repetition and circulation, and their ways of dressing and behaving themselves and learning styles are restricted by the background of the established circumstances of life. The mental set, influenced by the long-lasting life pattern and learning style, can hardly stimulate high school students' creative thinking.

Examined by the philosophy of the theory of everyday life, the high school students' daily life includes not only activities that meet the basic conditions of the existence of the individual life and guaranteeing the reproduction of the individual, and

social relationship activities that are multi-formed inter-individual interactions in the form of language and practice, but also contains daily concept and consciousness that are rooted in those activities. In fact, when we understand the reproduction of the individual not only from the level of the existence of life, but also from the level of the existence of culture, social activities, such as daily life, work, cultural creation function as the ways of achieving the reproduction, get their proper meaning. In short, daily life firstly means an activity that can sustain its life and this also refers to an activity that can survive the individual. Secondly, it involves a variety of activities done by the individual aiming at developing the individual on the basis of living. Thirdly, it means the daily concept and consciousness that are rooted in survival and developmental activities. Among these three activities, the first one is the basic activity of high school students' individual existence, which mainly includes their life structure and pace of life; developmental activity refers to the one that can improve life quality of the individual and can contribute to growth and development of the individual, and it consists of learning activities, interpersonal relationship activities and entertainment activities; daily consciousness and daily concept are things that hidden in the activities of guaranteeing existence of the individual life and promoting the individual development, which refer to the self-recognition and self-evaluation of high school students, cognition of state of their present life, visions of their own future and so on.

Data and Methods

The survey was conducted on three high schools of different levels in Yuncheng city, Shanxi province central,PRC. The schools are Kangjie Middle School, a provincial key high school, Yuncheng Middle School, a provincial model high school and AnYi Middle School, a township high school. Five classes were randomly selected from grade 1 and grade 2 in the three schools. Six students were randomly selected from each class to be interviewed with their daily lives. 180 students were interviewed on their daily life.

Observation and interview were adopted to learn about their daily life and find out the influencing factors of their daily life. Students' daily life was observed and relevant interviews were conducted on it. Researchers compile a structural interview outline. The following are the main contents: students' daily life, the respondents' memory about when they get up, have the breakfast, go to school, attend class, finish the class and go to bed, helping them establish a comprehensive impression on yesterday; to understand students' views on going to college and objectives of attending high school; to understand students' study activities, such as teaching methods, learning methods, learning content; to understand their relationship with teachers and classmates and their favorite activities and teachers, etc.

Qualitative analysis software QSR Nvivo7 was used to encode and analysis the data. The items of the coding are time table, the purpose of going to high school, opinions on going to college, learning methods, optional courses, hobby, favorite teachers, social practice, relationship with teachers and classmates and self assessment. Differences and common characteristic of students from three schools in these aspects were analyzed according to the related data coding. The results were reached with daily activities as a guide through analyzing ideas and concepts behind the data, reading these data repeatedly, examining the data with law of everyday life at the same time, shuttling back and forth between theory and data. The expected result was achieved through reviewing the data concerning high school students' daily life.

Results and Discussion

Activities Responsible for Students' Existence: Pace and Structure of Everyday Life

The results from analyzed from three aspects: activities responsible for students' existence, activities exciting high school students in daily life and ideas and consciousness hiding in daily life. Three schools have roughly same daily schedule. "Students get up at five Fifty in the morning to, run at six ten and finish the morning exercises at six ten. Then, they have breakfast and do morning reading from six fifty to seven forty. At 7 o 'clock the first class ends, at nine forty the second class ends and at ten o 'clock the class breaking setting up exercise begins. At eleven o 'clock the third classes is over. Lunch begins at 12 o 'clock, then from twelve to fourteen ten lunch break. The first class in the afternoon is at 2:30, the fifth class is at three twenty and the sixth class is at four and twenty. From four and twenty to five is the activity time, the next class begin at five and ten. The dinner began at six, followed by four self-study classes, night training and sleeping (interview with students from Kangjie High School). Main elements in students' daily activities are studied, including eating, sleeping and exercise. As a student said，"every day at school is regular and nothing new. We get up, have breakfast, do morning reading, have classes, have lunch and noon break and attend classes again." In this structure, study is of primary importance served by eating; sleeping and exercise. We should drink milk, have meat and eggs every day to ensure nutrition for study in high school is very exhaustive (interview with students from Kangjie High School). "In Yuncheng High School we are mandated to attend activities by turning off all the lights in classrooms." "Some of the students have a poor sleep in dormitory, so in order to ensure their learning efficiency they rent a house to live outside the school" (interview with students in Kangjie High School). The pace of life of high school students remains changeless. There are as long as twelve to fourteen hours for study, however less than eight hours for sleeping, one to two hours for exercise and one to two hours for dining. The changeless, repeated and established pace of life in which students sit still for a long time for study, goes against the law of inset activity of cerebral cortex and protective inhibition and deprives their time for sleeping, exercising and relaxing. In the pace of life students feel ordinary and stale.

Activities Exciting High School Students in Everyday Life: Study

Learning is the bounded duty of a student. The quality of learning activity represents of the quality of students' everyday life. We do a research on high school students' learning activities by studying the learning content, learning method, communicative activities, leisure activities, etc.

Contents of Learning

Students' study contents f three schools are the same. Study contents are made up of subjects, mainly including the compulsory courses for grade one and grade two, like Chinese, math, English, music, sports, art, general technology, the in-

quiry learning. In addition, the students majoring in science of grade two will learn physics, chemistry, biology, and students of arts should learn politics, history and geography. In the new round of curriculum reform, optional courses are included in high school courses and content of courses is designed by module. Students can take courses by modules. In three schools, teaching is conducted according to content of college entrance exam which all the students are required to learn and no optional courses is offered.

Learning Method

Students in three schools pay much attention to memorization in the learning process, holding that reciting is the basis of the study and the primary goal in cognitive activities, based on which they can improve their ability of understanding, analysis, synthesis, application and evaluation. It seems to students that learning is "reading, studying and reciting" (interview with students of Anyi High School).

In addition to recitation, students in Yuncheng High School and Kangjie High School also pay special attention to understanding. They are aware of the importance of thinking ability, believing that only by learning can they improve the ability of solving problems and improving academic performance. To achieve good performance we need to think, find and understand the relationship between phenomenon and rules. Thinking reflects students' subjectivity and self-consciousness in learning process. Thinking ability helps students solve problems in a strange environment. "Listening to and understanding the lecture is of great importance, for the teacher can explain one question at class but he cannot cover all the questions, so if we can draw inference about other cases from one instance, we can generally understand it. More reviews are necessary to avoid mistakes of the same questions." (Interview with students of Kangjie High School). "In learning Chinese we should think more and do more exercise to expand our thought, for articles on the textbook will not covered in exam. " (Interview with students of Yuncheng High School)

Communication Activities

There are mainly two types of communication activities concerning students: the first one is communication with teachers, the other is contact among students. The relationship with teachers is a key element in students' study activities. Teachers are important to students, whose knowledge, self-cultivation and personality have great impact on students. Their favorite teachers have the greatest influence on them. The popular teacher is the one who is knowledgeable and humorous, both serious and lovely in class; who has excellent professional knowledge and gets along with students like friends, who can explain knowledge thoroughly by linking theory with practice; who has witty thought and cares for students. As what is popular among students: the first-class teacher reveals us truth, the second- class teacher teaches us methods and the third-grade teacher analyzes the specific examples. In the process of communication what can touch students mostly is teachers' care and understanding of students. "My math teacher has never given me up, which impresses me, for I do not expect such a veteran as him should be so patient. It is impossible even for my mom. Sometimes I cannot finish my homework for lack of time or ability. The teacher will criticize me, but never gives me up. His persistence may not determine my success or failure, but it determines my attitude. It at least changes my negative attitude towards mathematics "(interviews with students of Yuncheng High School). The math teacher's care and help make the student understand the teacher will never give him up, which changes his attitude to math. The highest state of education is: "education is the education of man's soul, rather than the accumulation of reasonable knowledge and cognitions. Education of talents allows them to decide what kind of people they would like to grow and how they earn a living".

High school students tend to choose congenial classmates as their friends. "I like reading and writing some reaction to articles which I like sharing with my friends. She is very knowledgeable with independent thoughts and we are good friends". (interview with students of Kangjie High School). I get well with my classmates. I stay with them all day. We go back to the dormitory together and study together. I feel happy all day. My classmates often help me with difficulties in study, making it easier for me to study. "(interview with students of Yuncheng High School,) Good relationship with classmates brings high school students warm and comfortable feelings.

Leisure Activities

Activities that students of the three schools participate are sports meeting organized by students' union, recital contest, singing competition, composition contest, basketball match, tug of war and New Year's day evening party, etc. As a platform for students to improve themselves, these activities are very popular, through which students can understand the society, nature and themselves. "I have participated in the speech contest for many times, I won the second prize in" Wen Yiduo's prayer". I feel happy for it proves my ability." (interview with students of Kangjie High School). At three schools these activities are linked with national college entrance exam. Take Kangjie High School as an example, "because the school gives each class an enrollment index for national college entrance exam. Students with specialties are included in the evaluation system this year. In each class there must be at least one student with specialties enrolled in college, no matter what kind of specialty, such as director, music, sports, for the philosophy of Kangjie High School is "every student can be successful, every student has a stage". (interview with students of Kangjie High School).

Social practice is formulaic; as a result, students cannot really enter and understand the society, which attributes that the national college entrance examination does not cover the social practice. "About Social practice, well, the school sends us a form on which we are required to write a summary and get a signature. In social practice, I choose to go to the Forest Supermarket and help push the shopping cart and ask for a signature in the end. I participated only one time, and in the second time it is mostly ignored by the teacher, so I only write a summary and sign for it without doing anything." (interview with students of Yuncheng High School)

The Concept and Consciousness of High School Students in Everyday Life-Internal Motivation

Who Am I?

Self-cognition is a starting point for one to self-understanding. For the high school students, there are two aspects to refer to. First, they would choose to use academic records to make self-assessments. But the feedbacks from the interview suggest that the academic records do not promote the students' devel-

opment but produce psychological pressure. “Because a bad academic record means that we can not do what we like to and think about something irrelevant with NCEE (National College Entrance Examination).” (Interview with the students in Yuncheng Middle School). Second, although students can recognize and understand what they are during the learning process, most of them do not have a real hobby. For those average students, “the NCEE (National College Entrance Examination) gives me much pressure so that I am in fear of getting poor grades which mean the refusal of college. Therefore, I couldn’t afford to waste my time”, says a student in Anyi Middle School. For students in qualified schools, they have their own hobbies which can boost their academic records instead of impacting them. “A girl in our class studies very well and she believes she can attend the best university when graduating. However, she just says she wants to sing and like singing very much. Hearing that, the other students think she is so mad because in their opinions, only those who can not bury their heads into study any more would choose to learn singing.” (Interview with students in Kangjie Middle School). For the high school students, every one should have a hobby of his own on which he can spend plenty of time consciously doing study and research work every day. And during the research process, he can acquire good learning literacy for instance, the breadth of thinking, the depth of thinking, mental agility, the transfer of which is beneficial for learning other courses. At the same time, only by developing good hobbies can the students develop their personality very well.

Why Am I Being This?—The Objective of Attending High School

Students attend high school with an aim for university. Human beings are purposeful and the purpose and subjective initiative distinguish us from other species. It is the purpose that stimulates people to seek their ideal life day after day. The majority of students work hard to attend famous university in their daily life, which is the popular living state of high school students. This living state forces every one to exist for attending universities and regulates how one should spend a day and then he has to spare no effort to work hard for his plan, for his future. The study finds that the high school students live in the past and future instead of the present. Even though some agree that they also should live a fruitful and happy life at present, the life in high school is still regarded as a transition period to arrange their future. “No matter the parents or the teachers, both of them place much emphasis on the NCEE. But on my part, I just take it as a springboard, a means to success. Getting a good exam results and attending famous university doesn’t mean that you are a success and have bright prospect ahead. It is just a piece of springboard, a stepping-stone to success.” (Interview with students in Yuncheng Middle School). The present time is not the end of high school students. For them, both the past and the present are means, while the future is the end, which suggests they place more expectations for the brighter and happier future instead of caring about the present. If so, it is inevitable that they have to bear the dullness and boredom of present reality.

Students in good high schools have deeper understanding of the goal of attending school. One student considers it as a piece of pathway among the journey of whole life. “A lot of my classmates think they attend high school aiming for famous universities and take it granted that if they make it, they can even change their life and enjoy wonderful life. I don’t agree with it totally, because I think our high school life should be not only fruitful but also happy. No matter acquiring knowledge or learning how to be a good man in this period, each of them is very crucial, or we can say a turning point.” (Interview with students in Kangjie Middle School). From what they said, we can find that on one hand, they want to attend university and on the other hand they also emphasis on spending every day feeling satisfied and happy. It indicates they have the learning autonomy, subjectivity, and a better understanding of their own life. In other words, they can hold a right perspective on life, study, activity and NCEE. Moreover, they realize that the goal of attending high school is to pursuit happiness of the whole life which consists of that of every day in reality.

Where Do I Want to Go? -----What’s Your Opinion on Attending University?

All the high school students wish to attend university. Everyone’s objective of life should be different. Giving it an accurate definition is the motive of each student in the daily activities. Both the objective and the worry are the basics of important motives of human’s thinking and behavior, playing an important guiding role on the individual’s development. The objective determines, to a certain degree, the field that the individual will choose to take up in the future, while the worry is beneficial for the individual to make an objective assessment of the possible problems occurred in the self-developing process and as a consequence, it leads him to construct and realize his goals. Only when students recognize what they like can they better set their goals. So it makes sense that those who don’t have any interest or hobby don’t have appropriate and viable objective for life.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The Constant Routine and Momentary Freshness—Analysis of High School Students’ Daily Life

For the majority of the Chinese students, they expect to change their fate by receiving education. And the school, students and teachers are all very concerned about whether the students can become winners in this NCEE fighting. As a result, the students’ daily life are not paid much attention to, and become a means to make variety of extrinsic purposes come true. After further analysis, we can find there are several reasons for the institutionalization of our education. First, there is misunderstanding of our teaching philosophy, that is, we can’t make a good differentiation between becoming a grown-up and becoming a useful person. Becoming a grown-up refers to a person who can gain the ability to develop and become a social man after later acquisition. But becoming a useful person means after school cultivation and conscious knowledge transfer, one can acquire a certain skill to live on so that he can be independent and take part in social activities. On the society’s part, it needs a useful person who can be regarded as a human resource to promote social development. The aim of school cultivation is not for students’ attending university but teaching them to acquire ability of independence so that they can take part in social activities during the socialization process. What’s more, this ability refers to not only good academic records but

also sound development in the physical, psychological and mental aspects. Second, education proceeds to prepare for the grown-up's happy life but neglects students' present needs for progress. Third, the NCEE admittance standard is a bit rigid. Since the NCEE is the guideline of school teaching and the student's academic records are the only reference for university's admission, the students have to pay more attention to their scores. If there is another aspect to consider about, for instance, students' overall development, it will have a great impact on their everyday life. Fourth, the training objectives of school don't serve for country's education objectives which refer to cultivate all-around students. However, in the teaching practices, schools compete with each other openly and secretly in order to enlarge the number of students admitted by the universities, while the students too, strive for attending good universities. It is believed that the education objective of school should lay the foundation stone to realize that of our country. Thus, if the school seeks for the number of students' attending university without further consideration, the education objective of school will deviate from that of our country.

Taking Exams and the NCEE Constantly Reminds Students of the Routine and Dullness

Taking the NCEE is a necessary phase for students to enhance their literacy so as to find a good job and live a better life. And attending a famous university and finding a decent job is the dream of many students, and can be regarded as a short-term goal among their whole life. Its existence is inevitably reasonable. But in terms of school, if the school regards students' short-term goals as its own teaching philosophy, the public will suspect its educational objectives. Because making the high school education test-oriented, material-oriented and tool-oriented would distort the will of encouraging students' overall development. It would prompt students to constrict their interest in those contributive to exams, thus weakening their natural curiosity and love for acquisition. As a result, the students' daily life is institutionalized and the high school's educational objectives are mismatched. Education deviates from its essence, while people distort the education and are also manipulated by the distorted education. All of these constantly remind the high school students of routine and dullness in the whole daily life.

Recommendations

The purpose of criticizing high school students' daily life is not to create a totally new one to take place of it, but to rearrange it. Therefore, I'd like to make the following recommendations on the reform of high school new curriculum.

Reforming High School Students' Living Structure and Pace in Everyday Life by Reducing Their Study Time, Increasing Their Rest and Leisure Time

In the primary education phase, the study time of Chinese students is twice of that of American students, but we don't cultivate as many Nobel Prize winners as America because long time study doesn't contribute to students' physical, psychological and personality development. Conversely, if we reduce students' study time and increase their rest and leisure time, the serious learning activities are paused temporarily, the routines and disgusting activities are removed, and the feeling of boredom and dullness is relieved, all of which will liberate the students physically and mentally so that they can truly feel themselves and develop personality on their own will.

Reforming High School Students' Learning Courses in Everyday Life by Increasing Optional Courses and Putting Optional Courses, Comprehensive Practice Courses into Practice

The students' personality development is closely related with the holistic development, and that neither can exist effectively without the other. Since the high school is a crucial period for students to develop their independence and personality, the school should increase the optional courses and activities to serve for their personality development.

Changing Students' Learning Methods

Now the students still acquire knowledge in the means of memorizing and reciting. They can not understand the essence of research study, or effectively recognize and solve the problems existed in the reality unless we change the teaching methods and make the classroom become an experimental area for students to explore and construct the ways to solve problems in their own wisdom and ideas. Only in this way can we cultivate the real qualified students who are thoughtful and intelligent.

Changing the School's Education Objectives and Training Objectives

In terms of education, the school should train students as a person. Because students are, finally, human beings, ordinary ones in the daily life, ones in the developing process, ones with individual consciousness, instead of test-takers, technicians, rational man, laborers, statesman, economists and so on.

Reforming the Current Admission Rules of the University

When selecting students, apart from the academic records, the university should also take students' development in other aspects into consideration, which will make a big difference on their everyday life.

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Wild data: how front-line hospital staff make sense of patients' experiences

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Abstract Patient-centred care has become the touchstone of healthcare policy in developed healthcare systems. The ensuing commodification of patients' experiences has resulted in a mass of data but little sense of whether and how such data are used. We sought to understand how front-line staff use patient experience data for quality improvement in the National Health Service (NHS). We conducted a 12-month ethnographic case study evaluation of improvement projects in six NHS hospitals in England in 2016–2017. Drawing on the sociology of everyday life, we show how front-line staff worked with a notion of data as interpersonal and embodied. In addition to consulting organisationally sanctioned forms of data, staff used their own embodied interactions with patients, carers, other staff and the ward environment to shape improvements. The data staff found useful involved face-to-face interaction and dialogue; were visual, emotive, and allowed for immediate action. We draw on de Certeau to re-conceptualise this as 'wild data'. We conclude that patient experience data are relational, and have material, social and affective dimensions, which have been elided in the literature to date. Practice-based theories of the everyday help to envision 'patient experience' not as a disembodied tool of managerialism but as an embedded part of healthcare staff professionalism.

Keywords: patient experience, quality improvement, data practices, ethnography, England

Introduction

Over the past decade there has been increased focus on 'the patient experience'. In the UK, this has been catalysed by high profile scandals in the National Health Service (NHS) and their attendant inquiries and reports (Francis 2013, Kirkup 2015, National Advisory Group on the Safety of Patients in England 2013). 'Patient-centred care' has become the touchstone of healthcare policy – not only in the UK, but in other developed healthcare systems also, leading to what Sheard *et al.* (2019) characterise as 'a zeitgeist moment'. Reflecting this, a patient experience 'industry' has grown up, spawning new technology, conferences, journals,

dedicated job roles and departments, and consultancy firms whose business is to harvest and package data for healthcare-providing organisations. The ensuing commodification of patients' experiences (Lupton 2014, Mazanderani *et al.* 2013) within new logics of accounting and accountability (Numerato *et al.* 2012) has resulted in plentiful data but little sense of whether and how such data are used. Indeed, some argue that in spite of this activity, over the past decade 'there has been little change in measures that reflect a person-centred approach' (Flott *et al.* 2017).

Patient experience – alongside patient safety and clinical effectiveness – is a key component of quality of care. It is important both as an end in itself, and because positive patient experience has been shown to be correlated with other clinical and organisational outcomes. Improving patient experience is thus a priority for the NHS, which has led the way in developing measures of patient experience such as the NHS Inpatient Survey (Duschinsky and Paddison 2018). Since April 2015, all NHS patients who have attended a healthcare facility in England have been invited to report back on their experiences, whether through the so-called 'Friends and Family test (FFT)' ('how likely are you to recommend our service to friends and family?'), surveys, or narrative methods. The data that are collected are what are known as 'patient experience data'. In spite of the quantities of data that are now collected, there is little evidence that these data are leading to improvements. There is a need to move beyond *collecting* patient experience data to *using* them to improve care (Coulter *et al.* 2014), but the evidence for the most effective ways to do this is weak. Specifically, we know little about how front-line staff make sense of or contest the data, what supports or hinders them in making person-centred improvements and what motivates staff to get involved in improvement work. The research reported in this paper was designed to fill this gap.

Sociology and 'the patient experience'

A broad, sociologically informed literature exists which seeks to understand patient experience in the context of healthcare quality improvement (Flott *et al.* 2017, Martin *et al.* 2013, Renedo *et al.* 2018, Sheard *et al.* 2017). In a review of the challenges of using patient-reported feedback to drive change, Flott *et al.* (2017) identified many factors, from staff scepticism about data quality to aggregation of data at organisational level which does not inspire local clinical ownership. Across studies, patient experience data have typically been assumed to be formal, organisationally sanctioned types of data (Dudhwala *et al.* 2017). Indeed, in spite of recognising that spontaneous interpersonal exchanges between individual patients and healthcare professionals are used by ward staff to improve care, researchers have limited themselves to analysing formalised sources of patient feedback (Sheard *et al.* 2019).

Outwith the focus on quality improvement, a more critical body of work directs us to think about what 'patient experience' actually refers to, how it has come to operate as a matter of concern and how it comes to be captured, codified and circulated through knowledge-making practices. For example, rather than accepting at face value that staff are sceptical about the *quality* of data, research suggests that we should be wary of assuming that patient experience is a stable or given epistemic resource (Pols 2005, Ziewitz 2017). Pols' work points us in the direction of analysing practical matters rather than perspectives, attending to how meaning is co-produced between people in specific material encounters. In attending to patients who cannot speak, Pols demonstrates how nursing staff nonetheless come to know their patients' preferences through enacted, albeit tacit, situations. Subjectivity, she suggests, is related to situations rather than to individuals – directing our attention beyond the 'authentic' experience of the individual (as 'captured' by surveys and other measuring tools) and towards material environments and social interactions.

Likewise drawing attention to the embodied nature of data, Mazanderani *et al.*'s (2012) analysis of how illness experiences come to be valued as sources of health-related knowledge found that the medium through which experiences were articulated and shared (such as text, image, voice or bodies) was central to how they were appropriated. Although their study focused on the meaning created between patients who shared a particular health condition, their findings are relevant for the way in which patient experience data come to be valued as a source of information for quality improvement by front-line staff. Drawing on Abel and Browner (1998), Mazanderani *et al.* found that 'others' experiences would not be considered knowledge if they were not deemed, in some way, as an empathetic (shared) embodiment' (p. 551). The focus on embodiment is important here; the authors observe, 'people's bodies serve as important vehicles for the articulation of experience, which means that the visibility of patients' bodies plays a significant role in the sharing of experiences' (p. 551). In relation to our own findings, how experience is mediated and its affective impact are both important dimensions to consider.

While these authors demonstrate the importance of embodied and affective data, other studies suggest that this kind of information – so-called 'soft data' – is not easily used by healthcare organisations (Martin *et al.* 2015, 2018). Martin *et al.* (2015) describe soft data as 'the kind that evade easy capture, straightforward classification and simple quantification' (p. 19) and report that participants in their study – senior leaders of health systems in England – identified soft data as providing 'rich, detailed, specific and highly pertinent insights into real or potential problems in quality of care' (p. 22). Nonetheless, making sense of such data – turning them from data into intelligence – proved challenging and ultimately problematic, since the processes involved ultimately stripped soft data of all that was valuable about them in the first place (Martin *et al.* 2015). Martin *et al.* (2018) reinforce these findings in a subsequent study, in which they show that the very managerial mechanisms designed to render soft data useful may inadvertently silence them at source.

As outlined above, the literature on making sense of patients' experiences of health care has included two important theoretical moves. Firstly, it has provided us with a practice-based approach which examines the co-production of subjectivity and the enactment of 'appreciations'. This takes us beyond an analysis of the patient perspective but does not focus on the structural relations within which practices occur or, more specifically, how patient and staff experience of healthcare have been defined by politicians, policymakers and managers and how this relation itself informs practices. Secondly, the literature has suggested that data – which may be 'soft' or 'hard' – need to be 'identified, selected, processed, interpreted, and made the basis of action' in order to be rendered useable in healthcare organisations (Martin *et al.* 2015: 20). The focus of this body of work has been on how *managers* can derive meaning from soft data. What is missing is the link between these two approaches, which would render visible, and explain, how front-line staff are in a constant process of co-producing experience data with patients and creatively responding to such data outwith the need for translation or managerial sanction – something we observed empirically in the study reported here.

A re-evaluation of the sociology of everyday life, drawing on the work of Michel de Certeau, helps us analyse this activity as both part of the everyday experience of working on a hospital ward, and as an act of creative resistance in the face of institutional pressure to engage in formal and narrowly metricised quality improvement work. Returning to the original language of de Certeau also provides us with a vocabulary with which to move beyond the terms 'soft' and 'hard' to consider these data as 'wild', that is lively, untamed and powerful.

Patient experience as a feature of 'the everyday'

The sociology of the everyday has been a neglected resource in making sense of feedback in healthcare. While for patients, providing formal feedback may be an exceptional event, for front-line NHS staff, interacting with patients and responding to them is a ubiquitous and mundane part of their everyday practice.[1] To date, this activity has not been seen as part of patient experience work, a distinction which our analysis, informed by the work of Michel de Certeau, challenges.

de Certeau has been influential in the sociology of everyday life, which contributes to understandings of how 'the familiar is significant as a dynamic site of social practice and exchange' (Neal and Murji 2015). His work is relevant here because of its focus on everyday acts as sites of creative resistance – a theme which emerges in our own work when front-line staff are tasked with doing quality improvement under routine conditions of extreme workload pressure. What characterises the everyday for de Certeau is a creativity and inventiveness which people enact from within a dominant economic order imposed from above (Highmore 2001a). In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau looks at how people re-appropriate dominant cultural forms in everyday situations in order to make them their own (de Certeau 1984). By focusing on the realm of routine practices, de Certeau shows how ordinary people engage in acts of creative resistance to the structures imposed upon them. To do so, he distinguishes between strategies and tactics. Strategies are the preserve of those operating within organisational power structures and are used to institute a set of relations for official ends. Tactics, by contrast, are used by those who are subjugated; they occur in spaces produced and governed by more powerful strategic relations, and are therefore opportunistic and momentary: 'a tactic . . . is always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized "on the wing"' (xix). Particularly relevant for our own investigation is de Certeau's focus on the relation between producers and users of material culture. In terms of quality improvement, the relation between the producers of patient experience *data* and its users has rarely been examined, nor has the extent to which such data are material.

In our own investigation, the focus was on front-line staff as the users of patient experience data, but also on the *ways* they used data and the *characteristics* of data that made them credible and useful. While drawing on the notion of strategies and tactics to examine the former, we also take up de Certeau's trope of the wildness of the everyday to explore what it was about data that made them useable for staff. Highmore writes:

> For de Certeau the 'wildness' of the everyday resonates in both a major and minor key. At one level, the wildness of the everyday is simply the 'untamed': it is what gets remaindered when the everyday is scrutinised from a rationalistic perspective (major key). It is also, more mundanely (and more appropriately), all those burps, hisses, whispers, crackles and slurps that sound engineers refer to as 'wild' and that get filtered out in the production process of sound recording (minor key) [. . .] 'Wild things' [. . .] are the unwanted, unanticipated, extraneous, excessive meanings that have to be filtered out in accounts of objects. (Highmore 2001b)

We find a parallel to this in the production of patient experience data collected through organisationally sanctioned surveys. Through this process, a patient's experience is filtered down into neat, predefined categories, while the 'burps, hisses, whispers, crackles and slurps' – which staff may absorb through their daily interactions with patients and carers – are filtered out. These 'wild data', we show, can be a source of staff creativity when it comes to improving patient care. Combining these two strands of de Certeau's work, we examine how front-line staff made sense of patient experience data in the context of their everyday work.

Methods

As part of a National Institute for Health Research-funded study we undertook an ethnographic case study evaluation of how front-line staff use patient experience data for quality improvement in six NHS hospitals in England. The year-long ethnography was part of a larger study (Locock *et al.* 2020a, 2020b). Case study sites were purposively selected to reflect a range of contexts, from organisations which were performing well on staff and patient experience measures and had a strong track-record on quality improvement to those facing organisational challenges and where person-centred improvement was less embedded. They included various types of ward: two general medical wards, a gastric medicine ward, two emergency medical assessment units and a longer-term rehabilitation medical ward. Geographic diversity was achieved by including both urban and more mixed 'town and country' catchments, and covering north, south, east, west and midlands locations across England. All sites are anonymised, in line with our ethics approval and to ensure participants felt comfortable sharing more negative views and experiences.

Each site nominated a medical ward to take part; a team of front-line staff from each ward attended a 2-day learning community organised by the research team, and led their local improvement work. Three ethnographers observed the teams over 1 year and conducted interviews at several time points. The data drawn on in this paper consist of 95 in-depth interviews with front-line staff and senior managers, as well as almost 300 hours of observation. We observed learning community events, local quality improvement planning meetings, meetings of patient and carer experience groups, general staff meetings and workspaces, supplemented by informal conversations with staff. Observations were guided by a shared pro-forma. Data collected included written fieldnotes, individual reflective notes, documents and photographs (e.g. of comments boards or information displays prepared by front-line teams as part of their work). The nature and amount of observation varied by site, depending on front-line staff's chosen improvement activities, and was affected by severe workload pressures in the NHS during winter 2016–2017.

The three ethnographers analysed the ethnographic data in NVivo 10/11 (QSR International Pty Ltd. Version 11, 2015; Version 10, 2014) using a shared, inductively generated coding framework, which included: types of patient experience data used; attitudes towards/understanding of data; team composition and membership; relationships with Patient Experience Office and senior management; organisational pressures and constraints. Thick case descriptions were produced for each site, along with process maps, as part of a comparative thematic analysis. Ethics approval was obtained from the NHS Health Research Authority (North East – York Research Ethics Committee: Ref. 16/NE0071).

Findings

Into the wild

We started this study with the expectation that staff would draw on formal types of patient experience data (both quantitative and qualitative, from surveys to observation) to guide their quality improvement interventions. There were varying degrees of experience and expertise in patient experience across the different sites, with some purposively selected due to their strengths in this area. Nonetheless, our twofold assumption – that the meaning of patient experience data is clear and that they are used by staff – proved flawed almost immediately when it became apparent that not all staff had heard of patient experience as 'a thing'; not all staff knew what patient experience data were or what kinds were collected in their hospital; and

staff did not necessarily use patient experience data, as normally conceived by the NHS, in their improvement projects.

The reasons why staff did not necessarily – or even primarily – use formally recognised patient experience data in their improvement projects were not articulated straightforwardly, but surfaced in accounts of the structures and hierarchies within which staff worked. It was clear that in some sites, formally encoded patient experience was being used to performance manage staff punitively. In the extract below, patient experience is tied up with audit and admonishment. It is far removed from patients.

> Matron: Every month we get hauled up in front of a board of hierarchy with our performance reviewed. And the patient experience group deliver audit detail [. . .] So someone might say, "Oh, [ward name], you've only got 30-, you know, 32 per cent of people have replied" and this, that and the other and, "It's all around discharge." So that seemed to be every month what I was getting told off for. Well, not told off but, you know, reminded about. And so we tried to put a few things in place, things like changing the time of day that we gave out the questionnaire to the patients and things like that. (1st interview)

Rather than seeking to improve patients' experiences, the matron focuses instead on improving the response rate (by handing out questionnaires at a different time of day) – seen as a proxy for improving the data. Asked about how things had improved, she went on to say 'I've gone into green now for 2 months running'.

Referencing the RAG rating system – using the traffic light colours red, amber and green to rate issues – the matron alludes to the hinterland of patient experience against which staff targets are set. Within this context, 'patient experience data' refers to nationally mandated surveys, such as the FFT, and the more statistically reliable NHS inpatient survey. Measures such as the FFT have been subsumed into the government framework of CQUINs (Commissioning for Quality and Innovation), whereby a proportion of healthcare providers' income is conditional on demonstrating improvements in quality. Rather than rewarding hospitals for substantive improvements, these have sometimes been focused on response rates, generating a culture of measurement rather than action (Bailey *et al.* 2019). In a first interview about her role, the Head of Patient Experience at one case study site alluded to the way in which CQUINs had shaped patient experience data collection:

> When we realised that out-patients was on the horizon and it was obviously a CQUIN target, so we got paid money for it, a lot of money for rolling it out, I obviously had to go out to tender for a company to do that for us [. . .] and actually the CQUIN was for three hundred and ten thousand pounds, and it cost us fifty thousand pounds to get a company in, so it was worth it. I have never, ever missed a CQUIN ever for response rates, anything; I've always met my CQUINs so it's . . . yeah and again that was another thing that kept pushing it higher up the agenda, because it was actually generating money. (1st interview)

The outsourced, impersonal, income-generating version of patient experience described above corresponds to the dominant organising frame within which patient experience is operationalised in the NHS. In de Certeau's terms, it represents the strategic interests of those who control the means of cultural and economic production. By contrast, front-line staff in this study worked with a notion of data as material, interpersonal and/or embodied. Rather than seeking out the organisationally sanctioned forms of data, several teams went about generating new data through person-centred activities and physical artefacts which could be incorporated into their daily practice. One site placed a 'bubble board' on the wall with blank paper speech bubbles for patients to write their thoughts and feelings on. Ward staff encouraged patients

and visitors to fill in a bubble, an interaction which became as much an intervention in demonstrating care as a way of collecting data:

> Healthcare assistant: We had one lady that, she'd had some really sad news, and just sitting with her for 5 minutes, chatting to her; she didn't want to chat about what she was upset about. So, just chatting to her and saying, "There's a bubble there for you if you want to write anything down," and she just wrote a little something. I think it was just a face with a little sad mouth, and that was enough for her. So, I think it just takes something off of someone's shoulders [. . .] Since we've been doing this, people are recognising things I think a little bit more, and I think that's what's changing; not the bubbles on the board and things like that. It's recognition that somebody needs to have a good experience. (2nd interview)

Similarly, another site devised a 'What Matters to Me Tree', where staff, patients and visitors could write feedback. The ward manager explained how it seemed more tangible and meaningful to staff than traditional audit data. The physical data collection artefact became itself a motivator, an emotional and enjoyable representation of care.

While the sites differed in the extent to which they drew on traditional patient experience data, there were many examples of staff using their everyday interactions with patients, carers, other staff and the ward environment to shape improvements. These interpersonal exchanges led to changes in the ward environment and patients' experiences of a stay in that environment. They transformed the ward from a managerially organised place to a space shaped by the lived experience of its occupants. What is significant in these examples is not that they were ground-breaking strategic investments in improving *the* patient experience, managerially conceived, but to the contrary, that they were 'tactical' responses (in de Certeau's terms), suggested by patients and implemented by front-line staff, which made a difference in the here-and-now. They included:

1 A welcome pack for patients based on staff's observation that many patients came in without any personal effects
2 Hearing aid boxes for patients based on staff's experience of the distress lost hearing aids caused to patients
3 Installation of new cupboards, which staff knew would improve their responsiveness to patients based on the layout of the ward
4 A fix for a squeaky bin
5 A request that the kitchen serve jelly on cold plates rather hot plates, so that it wasn't a melted pool by the time it reached patients

When asked how the team had the idea for a welcome pack, one consultant said: 'It fits right, but I don't think they've done a survey'. At another site, the ethnographer probed where the inspiration for the hearing aid boxes had come from:

> Interviewer: Things like the hearing aid boxes I think came from the staff suggestion board, didn't it, rather than from the patient experience data?
> Ward manager: Yeah, all of that just came up because we could see the distress . . . of the patients that have lost an expensive hearing aid and they can't communicate at a time when they most need to communicate clearly. . . . That came from, you know, our own experience of what causes them distress. (2nd interview)

Initially, we were disappointed that the ward teams were not following the project brief asking them to use patient experience data. Not only that, but some of the reinventions of everyday work spaces and relations seemed rather unambitious – too mundane – and were not as top-level or strategic as we had hoped for. Although we had started with a broad and inclusive definition of patient experience data, which included everything from surveys to comments on social media, public meetings and patient stories, as the ethnography progressed, we began to realise that our very conception of 'data' was at issue.

Wild data are 'real data'

Describing the kind of data they liked or found useful, staff at different sites used the word 'real' and said they involved face-to-face or embodied interaction, allowed for dialogue between staff and patient, were emotive, and allowed for action. Ultimately, 'real' data were immediate in all senses of the word, both temporally and bureaucratically unmediated.

> Junior ward sister: I like real data because I think real data is spontaneous and you can try and act on it as soon as you can and that can make a change for the next person coming through that door. It's quite active data. (1st interview)

At a second site, a staff member voiced the same sentiment, highlighting the value of co-presence in constructing patient experience data:

> Ward manager: But when you actually listen sometimes to the patients saying you know, "I felt, this made me feel really," and you think, "Oh gosh," You know this is real, they're not being confrontational, they're actually expressing being really unhappy about something, and *it's different hearing it than it is seeing it written*. (1st interview, emphasis added)

Actively 'being there' with the patient, rather than passively receiving an abstracted measure, was important to staff, as was being the feedback instrument itself. These small acts of everyday practice, which de Certeau characterises as resistances, challenged the institutional rationality of patient experience instruments and quality improvement strategies in ways which sometimes provoked discomfort amongst managers and other colleagues.

For example, at another site, an activities coordinator, who was very active in the improvement project, had – in his own words – 'created this big fancy timetable for the ward in terms of activities'. A more senior member of the team had suggested taking the timetable down, as he recounts here:

> Activities Co-ordinator: [Head of Quality Improvement] said, "I know [name]'s enthusiastic but actually we need to take this down because it hasn't come from patients and it hasn't come from, you know, carers and family members and hasn't even had an input with staff." But it had, because I'd already went around them and, "What do you think?" or, you know, "What can I do for you the day?" to the patient, to the staff, "What do you think? Do you reckon that would work?" Because you, you've been looking after them for the last ten days. "What do you think?" "Yeah, yeah, it would work." So it was co-design, just in, not around the table in a structured, mapping out kind of way. (1st interview)

This account raises several dimensions which we saw across our data, such as the importance of recognising the link between staff experience and patient experience and the value of informal, unsanctioned, and unformalised kinds of feedback. As well as actively engaging with patients to make improvements on the ward, the activities coordinator was making video blogs

(vlogs) about his experiences at work. When asked how the vlog would inform improvements on the ward, he replied:

> It's real, it's honest, it's transparent, it's not hiding away from anything. And it's real time. It's not something we're gonna sit down in a year's time and say, "Actually on week two [um] I felt this way." Cos we're probably gonna, might just forget that. Or overshadow actually the real moment and the real emotion. But I find if we're recording it now in real time and that emotion is raw, I think we'll get a real perspective. (1st interview)

'Real' data traces its roots to the Latin *res* meaning matter or thing. Real data are concerned with the materiality of care; they make the connection between the material and the authentic. They are opposed to what is abstract, decontextualised, immaterial – and sometimes, therefore, irrelevant. In de Certeau's terms, real data, as described by staff above, represent creative resistance to the structures imposed upon them by their organisations' Patient Experience and Quality Improvement strategies. These trade in spreadsheets, dashboards, RAG ratings and implementation plans. Making use of embodied interactions on the ward is a tactic, an opportunity 'seized on the wing' within the constraints of high work demands and a pressured environment, where the time and space to engage with managerial instruments is often non-existent. Reflecting this disconnect between patient experience as a relational achievement between front-line staff and patients, and patient experience *data* as something produced and curated in hospital back offices, are the following extracts:

> Ethnographic fieldnote: The issue of the link between patient and staff experience was raised and discussed by the group, and how we know there's a link but don't know the direction of causality. [Name] came back to language of: capture, measure, balanced scorecard. (Observation of Patient Experience Strategic Group)

> Consultant: I think even for us who work in the NHS, the middle management are like a grey fog. I'm not sure exactly what most of the people do here and, you know, how many layers you have before you get to the person who can make the decision. (1st interview)

In understanding patient experience data as produced through their own daily practices on the ward, front-line staff themselves experienced an increased willingness and capacity to act on improving care.

Capturing wild data

So far, we have described wild data as the informal, embodied and sometimes intuitive knowledge about patients' experiences that staff acquired through daily interactions on and with the ward. Patients' stories, compliments and other material expressions of experience, such as thank you cards and boxes of chocolates, were also discussed by staff, but fall outside what is normally referred to as patient experience data. However, hospital managers were starting to recognise these less obvious forms of data – sometimes referred to as 'soft intelligence' – as evidence that needed to be captured and quantified, as exemplified below.

> Consultant: I think the ward managers are asked to keep a log of any compliments, and then . . . it sounds really crass – boxes of chocolates – count the number of boxes of chocolates you have and thank you cards. (1st interview)

The Head of Patient Experience in the same organisation expanded on this:

> Head of Patient Experience: So, compliments . . . if the Chief Exec, for example receives a letter, a compliment letter, then that will be captured; we've got an internal reporting system called Safeguard. So, we would scan that letter in, log it on Safeguard; that compliment has been captured [. . .] on a monthly basis the number of compliments we've captured gets reported to leadership brief [. . .] What the divisions and the departments and wards do, at ward level currently, is complete a crib sheet. So, when a compliment is received, whether that's via a gift, whether it's via a written card, telephone conversation, face-to-face conversation, the staff will just tick box a crib sheet and we'll record that as well. (2nd interview)

In another site, there was a similar emerging focus on ensuring that all forms of feedback were accounted for through formal reporting mechanisms. The fieldnote below describes one instance, during a meeting of the sub-Board committee relating to patient and carer experience:

> One of the main points she [Head of Patient Experience] emphasizes is that there is currently no process for storing patient stories, and this is something they need to develop. She references the RCN Leadership Programme, which ward managers will be undertaking. She says they will be teaching people to capture patient stories and will be expecting ward managers to capture patient stories. We "should be giving sugar lumps" when they've done well, but also capturing lessons learned. There's a lot of use of the word 'capturing' and a certain breathlessness imputed to this activity, as if patient stories might otherwise escape. (Observation of Patient and Carer Experience Group)

It was not only positive feedback which was subject to such managerial processes of capture, storage and report. In an observation of one site's Patient Experience Strategic Group, the ethnographer noted under the agenda item 'Complaints report': 'Discussion of "feedback dashboard" and "Balanced scorecard" and "PMF" (performance monitoring?)'. In another, the ethnographer noted:

> It's interesting to me that 'learning from complaints' is a thing, and a thing that can be captured and put in a database. Clearly, it is not enough that people learn from experience, but – as [Director of Nursing] says – that there is evidence that learning has occurred. Speaking about learning as a *thing* rather than a *process* has the effect of petrifying what should be a living and dynamic action. (Observation of Patient and Carer Experience Group)

While accountability is an important constituent of care, when it is reduced to an exercise in accounting, as described above, its effects are diminished. Recording that learning has occurred is not problematic per se, but in this case was indicative of a culture of capture superseding a culture of action.

In the national context of hospital failings, at some sites the use of patient experience to performance manage staff led both to a 'fossilization' of wild data, and to a sense of threat:

> Ward manager: When you see a complaint on paper you don't relate it to that person, and it feels very threatening. (1st interview)

The need to document everything was in some cases deflecting attention away from giving good care to 'capturing' that it had happened, as the following fieldnote illustrates:

> End of Life Project Lead speaks about getting feedback from bereaved carers. "We should be capturing this information." Findings are fed up to the strategy group and down to the operational group. Dying person's care plan – everyone who's dying should have one, but figures fluctuate and aren't very good. "That's not to say they're not receiving the care, but it's about the documentation of that care." (Observation of Patient and Carer Experience Group)

In this meeting of the patient and carer experience group, the logics of accountability and the logics of care are coupled. While both systems of accountability ('strategy') and the spontaneous and relational dimensions of care ('tactics') are important to ensuring patient wellbeing, in some sites, the former was at risk of eclipsing the latter and devaluing them as the currency of patient experience. This was not the case everywhere; in one site, organisational approaches to managing patient experience gave staff free rein to be creative and respond to wild data on the ward.

Channelling data

Data practices are part of a politics of power within the hospital. Things on the ward that produce data are in many cases about professional control over nurses (e.g. VitalPAC, a mobile software information system for monitoring patients' vital signs). When given the means to generate their own data, front-line staff produce something very different, which expands rather than constrains their creativity. Below we see how front-line staff envisioned physical and empathetic proximity to patients as the best means of understanding their experiences. Rather than 'capturing' information, this was about experiencing *with* patients through embodied interactions and activities, such as experience-based co-design, talking to patients at the bedside or consciously putting themselves in a patient's shoes.

> Ward manager: Doing the experience-based co-design, it was about sharing and owning something together and working together to achieve something. (2nd interview)

> Staff nurse: When you do your training it's all very regimental – this is what you do, this is how you do it. And then when you come to work it's the same. So, you come in, you do your washes, you do your meds, do your pills, you do beds, you do this, you do that, and then you do your notes and then you do it all over again. It almost seems like there's no time for anything else [. . .] But actually there is, and it's just finding the time [. . .] "We've got half an hour here, let me sit down, let me have a chat with the patients, see how they're getting on [. . .] It is just sitting down and having that extra 5 minutes that they appreciate [. . .] It does make you more conscious. It's less task-focused and more patient-focused, which is what the project is about. (2nd interview)

> Ward manager: You need to put yourself in the place of the person who's having the treatment, and any way that that can be done, either by sitting and listening to somebody, or being a patient, or just having time to think how you might feel if you were being bed bathed with a curtain, where somebody's pulling the curtain open and saying, "Gladys, do you want another cup of tea?" when you're there half naked, you know. It's so part of the environment to us, you've really got to re-think and step back, and anything you can do to make people feel they are in that place, and to be looking from the inside out instead of looking from a nurses' uniform at this, a patient. I love it because I think that's the most powerful thing. (1st interview)

For some of the staff taking part in this project, engaging with the concept of patient experience reconnected them with the idea of person-centred rather than task-focused work. It also became apparent to staff that working with patient experience data could incorporate their daily interactions with patients and everyday objects of care on the ward – i.e. that improvements in patient care were part and parcel of the material culture of their workplace. Oftentimes, staff felt they did not need a survey to tell them this; much of what they felt needed improving was already apparent to them. Dialogue between front-line staff and those working in the patient experience office in some cases led to a recognition of this at a managerial level, as the extract below illustrates:

> Head of Patient Experience: *Staff who are close to their patients can see the best*. You know, this survey is very much reliant on people who can fill it in. So, actually, you've got lots of other patients that you're perhaps not considering when you just take that data. And it's also very lengthy. When you look at all the questions, you know, I am bored after ten questions, let alone, I think there's 87 or 89. Whereas some of the dementia patients might not be able to tell you, but *you can see just by doing certain activities or things with them*, that made a difference to them. (1st interview, emphasis added)

Front-line staff can themselves be the instruments and repositories of data about patients' experiences. As the study evolved, so too did an understanding of this amongst both the hospital staff participating in the research and amongst ourselves as researchers.

> Patient Experience Officer: It depends how we look at data. I think in the ward staff before, if you said to them, "What's patient experience data?" they will say "Surveys." I'm saying to them now data is any feedback at all, wherever that's coming from and in whatever form, whether that's coming from focus groups from the patients or anecdotal feedback from staff and patients, it's all patient experience data. (3rd interview)

Wild is dangerous

There were exceptions to those who felt empowered and enthusiastic about identifying patient concerns through staff rather than from formal patient experience data. While institutionally sanctioned data tended to present staff with impersonal survey results, 'soft intelligence' such as patient narratives and embodied interactions could feel too emotive and threatening. This was particularly so when negative feedback was perceived to be too direct or personal, unable to be captured or contained, or demotivating for staff. Some staff retreated to the safety of quantified, aggregated, abstracted and anonymous data fed down from above through managerial processes. Even within the same staff members, there could be a desire for 'real' data that was ward-relevant and immediate, yet 'safe', simple and thematically organised for easy use.

Discomfort about expanding the definition of patient experience data to include staff knowledge and intuition about care was not limited to front-line staff, but was discussed both amongst the research team and by some managers within the case study sites. There was apprehension that staff perspectives could be privileged over patients' (particularly if the two diverge), that staff perceptions may not be a reliable guide, and that the progress made in listening to patients could be reversed.

> Head of Patient Experience: See, for me I'd want to say, "Well where's the evidence? Where's the evidence to substantiate that?" and, "Yes, you might be right and I might agree with you," or, "Yes, I agree with you and we can back this up because of this, or this, or this, or

this." But without any evidence, or something tangible to substantiate that, I think we can – not make mistakes – but we can go wrong in thinking we know what patients want. (2nd interview)

Discussion

In this paper, we have argued that 'patient experience' is a relational achievement, involving the interplay of people, places and things. It follows that patient experience *data* are relational, and have material, social and affective dimensions – which have largely been elided in the literature to date. Inspired by de Certeau, we have re-conceptualised patient experience data to include 'wild data', to draw attention to these other qualities, which we argue can affect how front-line staff engage with quality improvement based on patient experience. de Certeau's insights into how ordinary people resist organisational power structures by re-appropriating images, products and space to their own interests led us to consider front-line staff not merely as the users of patient experience data, but also as their co-producers. This complicates official patient experience strategies within NHS organisations, which, we observed, tend to value accounting systems (in the name of accountability) over spontaneous practices of care which may be less amenable to capture. de Certeau's work helps us articulate how staff used everyday encounters on the ward to supplement and/or substitute officially sanctioned accounts of patient experience at organisational level.

Rewilding patient experience data

Rewilding refers to restoring ecosystems through the (re-)introduction of species to their original habitat. In the patient experience industry, staff and staff experience have tended to be removed from what counts (or is counted), in spite of increasing evidence that patient and staff experience are linked (Dawson 2018, Maben *et al.* 2012, Sizmur and Raleigh 2018). This is hardly a surprising finding, since it is the *relational* aspects of care that matter most to patients, and caring as a process is inherently interpersonal (Ihlebæk 2018). Informed by the practice-based orientation of sociologies of the everyday, our findings suggest the importance of re-introducing staff's embodied experience into the patient experience ecosystem. This can take various forms. One important way is to take seriously the tacit, intuitive, informal and embodied information – what we term 'wild data' – which front-line staff encounter and produce in their everyday practice. This foregrounds aspects of experience which are frequently muted in the formal collection of survey data, such as the social and material dimensions of human experience. Attending to these aspects sheds light on something which often escapes capture in closed response questionnaires, namely culture, for as Graves-Brown observes, 'culture exists neither in our minds, not does it exist independently in the world around us, but rather is an emergent property of the relationship between persons and things' (Graves-Brown 2000).

A potential criticism of this approach is that culture and intuition are tacit and elusive and cannot therefore form the basis of experience 'data'. Demystifying the way in which healthcare staff 'intuit' what patients are experiencing, Ihlebaek has analysed how nurses acquire and use their senses in everyday clinical practice, noting that 'nurses' expertise is cultivated in continuous, embodied, sensory, and intersubjective relations in the doing of nursing' (Ihlebæk 2018). In her study of knowledge and professionalism among registered nurses at a cancer unit in a Norwegian hospital, she found that nurses 'relied not only on what they themselves had sensed, but also on the patients' accounts of their own bodily experiences, as well as relatives'

stories' (*Ibid*: 493). The same can be true of healthcare assistants, ward clerks and other front-line staff. Rather than characterising this professional knowledge as 'soft', or somehow inferior to the 'hard' data collected via formal patient experience instruments, we should see this expertise as a resource for improving care.

The sensory dimensions of patients' experiences are rarely the focus of 'the patient experience' discourse, perhaps reflecting what Maslen – referring to doctors – identifies as 'a gap between work 'as imagined' by policy makers and work 'as done' by doctors' (Maslen 2016). Turning our attention to patients' and staff's experiences as *processes* which are at once social, material and affective could lead to a radical rethinking of how to better healthcare environments. This would entail a conceptual shift in data economies, from data-based value creation linked to financial incentives to data as a cultural good exchanged in the pursuit of better care. Combining insights from sociologies of the everyday with some of the major concerns of medical sociology – such as power, inequality and the division of labour in clinical settings; hierarchies of knowledge and evidence in health care; and patient-provider relationships – allows us to make the case for doing so.

While staff were able to act on wild data for the purposes of this research project, the extent to which the NHS as a whole can or should accommodate or even promote individual staff creativity remains a question to be answered. As noted above, everyday tactical responses by staff to structures designed to serve patient and hospital interests are likely to be seen as deviant and dangerous. One way to consider this is through the lens of organisational entrepreneurship, defined as 'a form of social creativity . . . a tactical art of creating space for play and/or invention within an established order, to actualize new practices' (Hjorth 2005). An entrepreneurial spirit has been advocated within the NHS (Godlee 2018) and research into institutional logics suggests the existence of partial autonomy for those working at the coalface (Checkland *et al.* 2017, Martin *et al.* 2016). Ushering in a shift from the era of assessment and accountability to an era of systems and creativity in the NHS, Black urges: 'we need to accommodate and support social entrepreneurs, the creative disruptors who will instigate innovation'. He goes on:

> Leaders must encourage and allow creativity to emerge by drawing together relevant people to tackle any given problem. This takes courage and insight because these people may not be in formal positions, such as medical directors, but be staff who in the past have had no voice. This is vital because creative solutions will reflect who is involved and the space they are afforded to think afresh. (Black 2018)

We have used de Certeau to describe front-line staff precisely as the 'creative disruptors' Black calls for and shown how working with wild data alongside organisationally sanctioned data enables staff to engage in service improvement based on patients' experiences.

It is important to consider that not all staff have the innate ability or capacity within the constraints of their working environment to observe, intuit, discern or act on what their patients are feeling and desiring. Nor would it be wise to assume that staff always 'get it right' when making judgements or assumptions about what patients want. We should be cautious not to privilege staff's voices over and above those of patients, or inadvertently return to a culture in which 'matron knows best'. However, we contend that expanding the patient experience lens to include practices not just perspectives, and sensory as well as survey data, can be a useful basis for understanding the constraints and possibilities around quality of care. Staff should be encouraged to be actively and imaginatively involved in improving the socio-material life of the ward. Leaders should encourage a sensitivity for the practicalities of daily life and encourage staff both to be observant and to carefully check their own observations. In this

way, we can move from 'patient experience' as a disembodied tool of managerialism to an embedded part of the professionalism which drives front-line healthcare staff.

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Note

1 We are informed here by Robinson's work reconceptualising the boundary between the mundane and the extraordinary: 'the transformative capacity of the everyday itself has sometimes been overlooked by theorists, especially in relation to how the extraordinary is both embedded within and in dialogue with the mundane, rather than having a separate and unmediated existence of its own' Robinson (2015).

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Catherine M. Montgomery: Conceptualization (supporting); data curation (equal); formal analysis (lead); investigation (equal); methodology (equal); writing-original draft (lead); writing-review & editing (lead). **Alison Chisholm:** Conceptualization (supporting); data curation (equal); formal analysis (equal); investigation (equal); methodology (equal); writing-original draft (supporting); writing-review & editing (supporting). **Stephen Parkin:** Conceptualization (supporting); data curation (equal); formal analysis (equal); investigation (equal); methodology (equal); writing-original draft (supporting); writing-review & editing (supporting). **Louise Locock:** Conceptualization (lead); formal analysis (supporting); funding acquisition (lead); investigation (lead); methodology (lead); supervision (lead); writing-original draft (supporting); writing-review & editing (supporting).

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Rethinking the 'everyday' in 'ethnicity and everyday life'

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While 'ethnicity and everyday life' is a familiar collocation, sociologists concerned with racism and ethnicity have not engaged very much with the extensive body of social theory that takes the 'everyday' as its central problematic. In this essay, I consider some of the ways in which the sociology of the everyday might be of use to those concerned with investigating ethnicity and racism. For its part, however, the sociology of the everyday has tended to be remarkably blind to the role played by racism and racialization in the modern world. It is thus no less crucial to consider how the experiences of racialized groups might help us rethink influential accounts of the everyday. To this end, I provide a discussion of pioneering texts by C. L. R. James and W. E. B. du Bois, both of whom were driven by their reflections on racism and resistance to recognize the everyday not as an unremarked context, but as, precisely, a problematic one.

Keywords: racism; ethnicity; everyday life; W. E. B. du Bois; C. L. R. James; Georg Simmel

Introduction

Within sociological discussion, the conjunction 'ethnicity and everyday life' has become, itself, 'everyday'. Familiar and under-considered at once, it is consigned to exactly the kind of pre-reflective obviousness that has been taken to be characteristic of 'everyday' phenomena more generally. Thus, there is, on the one hand, no shortage of research studying the ways in which ethnic identities are claimed, ascribed or resisted in everyday situations. Dan Swanton (2008) and John Clayton (2008), for example, have explored the ways in which 'race' is produced in and through the everyday use of local spaces; Andreas Wimmer's (2004) work has used network analysis to examine the 'everyday praxis of group formation' in diverse Swiss neighbourhoods; and a whole range of studies have, for the most part, used ethnographic approaches in order to consider how mundane activities such as shopping (e.g. Everts 2010), cooking and eating (e.g. Highmore 2009), or simply having 'fun' (e.g. Werbner 2002, chapter 7) are implicated in the formation and negotiation of ethnicity.

On the other hand, however, the 'everyday' in ethnicities research tends to be taken as describing a 'background' of ordinary practices in a relatively straightforward or self-explanatory sense. The everyday is a context: what is of interest is how ethnicity 'happens' there, so to speak. Consequently, sociologists concerned with racism and ethnicity, even those concerned with those things in their banal manifestations, have not engaged all that much with the extensive body of social theory that specifically

refused to take the everyday for granted, but took it rather as its central problematic, as a problem worth reflecting upon because it had the potential to shed a different, revealing light back onto the wider social world and the historical processes that shape that world. As Henri Lefebvre (1987, 9), one of the key figures in this tradition puts it: the possibility of 'decoding the modern world, that bloody riddle, according to the everyday'.

This essay therefore seeks to make a theoretical contribution in two directions. On the one hand, I want to consider some of the ways in which the sociology of everyday life might be of significance for sociologists engaged in research on ethnicity. But this cannot be done without turning the question around because, for the most part, the 'classical' sociology of everyday life has been remarkably blind to the role played by racism and processes of racialization in modernity's 'bloody riddle'. It is therefore crucial to consider how the experiences of racialized groups might help us rethink influential accounts of the everyday, and to this end I turn back to texts by C. L. R. James and W. E. B. du Bois, both of whom were driven by their reflections on racism and resistance to recognize the everyday not as an unremarked context, but as, precisely, a problematic one.

The Unruly?

From the perspective of one dominant strand in the theorizing of the everyday, the concern with 'ethnicity and everyday life' might well appear puzzling. Much of that discussion, after all, has been motivated by the sense that the everyday is the realm of what Harvie Ferguson (2009) calls 'unruly' experience. 'Unruly' here means neither wildness nor rebellion, necessarily, because a great deal of our ordinary life is obviously characterized by habit and routine. 'Unruly' refers rather to the status of experiences that are not immediately reconciled to, or structured by, the intellectual regimes or the institutional practices that patrol and define much of our social life. Everyday life, on this reckoning, has a peculiarly unbounded or disorderly quality.

It is precisely the everyday's lack of conformity that makes it a problem. At the same time, it is also this lack of conformity that, for a number of its most prominent theorists, invests the everyday with a provisionally hopeful quality. For Maurice Blanchot (1987), for example, the everyday was where we might yet encounter spontaneity or pre-reflective experience – a 'living in the moment' – freed from the tyranny of 'abstract systems'. Not dissimilarly, but more famously, Michel de Certeau (1984, xvii) described the everyday as the realm of a practical making-do that was not resolved into a discipline and that revealed the resilient creativity that 'flourishes at the very point where practice ceases to have its own language'. Even Henri Lefebvre (2002, 196), whose account of the everyday is more sceptical of claims about its autonomy from the wider organizing practices of social life, nevertheless used the term to describe a 'level' of social reality that was subject to, but always partially evaded, the 'accumulative' rationalities of modernity: 'it is in the everyday… that possibilities are born.'

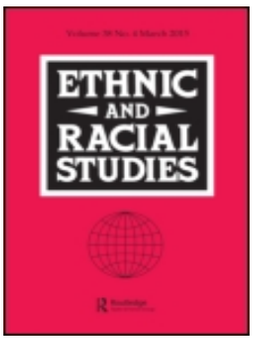
Moreover, for a number of theorists, the unruliness of the everyday is taken to be intimately associated with its diversity, with the heterogeneous nature of everyday experiences and encounters. Ben Highmore (2001, chapter 6) points out that this is part of what the original Mass Observations project sought to capture with its day

surveys: the discontinuous and indiscriminate quality of ordinary doings, events and beliefs. In part, Highmore notes, the project was motivated by an avant-gardist belief that, by bringing to attention this 'simultaneity of difference within the everyday' (94), it might be possible to unsettle the taken-for-granted quality of daily life. This interest in the potentially de-familiarizing power of the juxtapositions of the everyday is prominent for many other theorists also. The great 'knots' of Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project* (1999) are in part, of course, an attempt to turn the flotsam generated by modern life to radical effect. By disclosing the co-presence of unreconciled and divergent histories amid the detritus of everyday life, Benjamin aimed to jolt his reader out of any sense of modernity as a triumphant itinerary of progress. Not dissimilarly, Lefebvre, particularly in his later writings, emphasized the potential of the 'encounter' with 'difference' in everyday space and the possibilities for social renewal that emerged from what he called everyday life's 'time of unexpectedness' (Lefebvre 2007, 190).

In short, there is a prominent strand in the theorizing of the everyday that takes the variety and immediacy of everyday experience as something not easily conformed to modernity's dominant conceptual ordering, and which therefore seeks within the everyday for the resources that might enable a critical questioning of that order. A famous formulation of this is offered by Girard and de Certeau (1998, 256) when they describe ordinary culture as 'a practical science of the singular, which takes in reverse our thinking habits in which scientific rationality is knowledge of the general'. A point of unity in much of the theory of everyday life has been, in this regard, the desire to allow the unruly quality of everyday experience to shake our confidence in the seemingly clear-cut intellectual categories and stories by which we go about making sense of things. The 'tenacious' way in which ordinary culture refers knowledge back to the 'singular' instance and the concrete context, Girard and de Certeau conclude, necessarily 'puts on trial' our scientific practices and epistemologies.

What, then, are we to make of this? The focus on the unruliness of the everyday would appear to make the collocation 'ethnicity and everyday life' an unlikely one. If we accept that racialized identities are precisely among the dominant epistemological categories of the modern social world and that they operate, at least in part, through a process of generalization (what Albert Memmi called the 'mark of the plural' 1965, 85) and if, moreover, we accept that they are often central to practices intended to order and control those they designate, then on this account it would appear to be a mistake to look for the active construction or perpetuation of ethnic identities in everyday life. If everyday activity is governed by a practical science of the singular, then it should be where racialized and ethnic identities come undone, rather than being asserted, imposed or lived out. Yet there is, of course, plenty of research showing the prevalence of forms of racism in what one can only call everyday contexts and the ascription and, indeed, self-assertion of ethnic identities in those same contexts (inter alia Essed 1991; Lewis 2003; Fields and Fields 2012). A view of the everyday as the space of the unruly or un-conformed experience makes it hard to account for the evident perpetuation of racism and racialization within that space itself.

In response to this apparent disjuncture, I want to make three arguments. First, it seems to me that, partial as it is, this focus on the unruliness of everyday life does



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Article

Preserving the everyday: Pre-political agency in peacebuilding theory

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Abstract

Quite a lot of recent peacebuilding scholarship has deployed the concept of 'the everyday'. In an extension of the local turn's emphasis on agency and resistance, much of this scholarship interprets the everyday as inherently a site of politics. It does so either by interpreting every act (no matter how motivated) as an agentic political act, or by equating agentic political acts (at the local level) with the quotidian activities which define the everyday. This article argues, however, that representing the everyday in this way interprets both forms of activity in ways which have critical implications for peacebuilding theory, because both moves inadvertently strip everyday acts of the *emergent creativity* and *innovation* inherent to 'everyday-ness'. Alternative understandings of and engagement with different forms of agency would encourage peace scholars to acknowledge the overtly political nature of peace projects and so to reserve 'the everyday' label for *pre*-political forms of action which may contribute to peace, but in a more unintentional, organic or emergent fashion. This is not to argue that everyday acts are *a*-political or non-political, but only that they do not have political motivations and are not themselves products of conscious will to power, or even to peace itself.

Keywords

Agency, emergence, the everyday, local turn, peacebuilding, pre-political, resistance

Introduction

'The everyday' is referenced quite regularly in recent peacebuilding literature. While it means quite distinct things to different scholars (as will be discussed below), the concept has largely been deployed in an extension of the 'local turn' literature, which has grown in response to the failures of the 'liberal peace' project. As the liberal peace has failed in its goal to build peace, scholars have increasingly reversed the traditional 'top-down' perspective to focus instead on the potential of 'bottom-up' peacebuilding efforts, which

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have come more and more to be tagged with the 'everyday' label. This refocusing has increased attention on the informal activity of groups outside institutionalized politics. In this tradition the everyday is seen as a space of local pro-peace activity distinct from elite-driven top-down politics which, for good or ill, is often considered disinterested in local processes (at best). This is the lynchpin, for example, of Richmond's (2016) recent theory regarding 'Peace Formation', but it is integral also to the contemporary debates emerging on the heels of the local turn regarding local agency, empowerment, inclusion and resistance.

The problem with this approach to the everyday, however, is that it has the potential to appropriate the concept for tasks for which it is not best suited within peacebuilding. Indeed, this can often be seen in uses of the concept that imply the 'everyday-ness' of what this article will argue are not best viewed as 'everyday' events. Such uses have a tendency either to apply the 'everyday' label to politically motivated activities at the local level, or to interpret actions at the local level (no matter how motivated) as political. Both moves reflect what Brewer et al. (2018: 211) described as 'the disciplinary closure through which the concept of everyday life is understood' within international relations (IR), in that they have a tendency to deploy the everyday via a political lens; shorn of its 'everyday-ness', which I define here as the *pre-political character of emergent practice* (this will be revisited below).

Before proceeding further, I want to make it very clear that the intent here is not to argue that there is one correct definition of 'the everyday', or that X number of scholars are simply getting it wrong. On the contrary, just as has been true of other concepts that have been imported into peace studies from various other disciplines (hybridity, friction, complexity, etc.), the notion of 'the everyday' should rightly be debated within our field in order for peacebuilding scholars to learn to use it and deploy it to the best possible ends (theoretically, methodologically, pedagogically and practically). My argument here, however, is that the concept of the everyday as it has been developed in disciplines outside IR provide it with substantially more value for peace theory than is provided by the tendency within IR to see everything through a political lens. As I will argue, this tendency to see everything as political inadvertently strips away the very everyday-ness that gives the concept so much of its value for the study of peace and peacebuilding. This everyday-ness is about the mundane, embodied, emergent character of everyday practice; the fluid, organic and creative tactics individuals deploy to get along within complex socio-cultural milieux.

Echoing an older argument by Scott (1985: 293–294), it is important to preserve this everyday-ness specifically because the forms of agency and empowerment made visible, and even conceivable, through the everyday when conceived in this way are more distinct and potentially more revolutionary than those made visible when we see the everyday largely as politics played out in informal venues or on a micro scale. This article, therefore, takes a more sociological or anthropological approach to 'the everyday' which allows for the recognition of more diverse forms of response to complex assemblages of stimuli, and which may sometimes even be unconscious (Millar, 2014). While recognizing that such responses may have political effects – that is, may influence the distribution of power and authority – and should not, therefore, be considered a-political, this approach also does not assume that there will be any specific political impacts or that

there is political motivation behind such action. This approach to 'the everyday', which is more protective of its *pre-political everyday-ness*, is therefore more likely to reveal the diversity of efforts towards living in peace that are possible within conflict-affected and post-conflict communities; some of which will of course be political in motivation and character but, I argue, many more of which will not.

In what follows, therefore, I will review some of the recent peacebuilding literature dealing with 'the everyday' and describe how much of that literature deploys the everyday largely as a scalar referent (i.e. to political action on a local or micro scale), while a handful of scholars do retain some focus on the immanent or emergent creativity of the everyday free of political agency. After addressing the primary limitations of the former and the potential value of the latter, I will then explain further what I mean by the value of protecting the concept of the everyday as *pre-political*, which will require further exploration of this specific concept. With reflections from various cases and a number of disciplines, the article will then elaborate on the emergent character of everyday life as pre-political responses to complex socio-cultural milieux, in order to evidence the value of this approach vis-à-vis the more politically oriented approach currently dominant within the peacebuilding literature. Hopefully, by the conclusion, the reader will be convinced not that this is the only or 'right' approach to 'the everyday' for peacebuilding scholarship, but that it is the approach which best allows the concept to be deployed usefully within the peacebuilding literature.

The everyday in peacebuilding literature

It would be wholly inappropriate to set up some form of straw man here and argue that 'the everyday' is being used in one specific way or means one specific thing within the peacebuilding literature. As with various concepts that preceded it in the wider critical peacebuilding literature, its incorporation into the scholarship has somehow managed to be both hugely influential and quite diffuse; its importance is loudly declared and largely acknowledged, and yet it often remains undefined and is deployed in various different ways. As a result, its specific meaning remains largely undetermined. The turn towards the everyday clearly follows on the heels of earlier conceptual deployments in the 'local turn' literature, including the concepts of emancipation (Leonardsson and Rudd, 2015; Theissen, 2011), resistance (Kappler and Richmond, 2011; Mac Ginty, 2011), hybridity (Belloni, 2012; Mac Ginty, 2010; Millar, 2014), and friction (Björkdahl and Höglund, 2013; Millar et al., 2013). But to a great extent it has, at least so far, been subject to a lot less scrutiny while largely being accepted as an inherent good (Mitchell, 2011: 1628).

The everyday as scalar referent

However, this lack of scrutiny belies the fact that the concept itself is often deployed largely as a placeholder for 'the local'; more as a referent to a scale of analysis than a substantive characteristic of distinct phenomena in their own right. In Richmond's (2009) influential early work using the concept it is deployed largely descriptively and without much clear theoretical exposition. In this work, admittedly only one of his many interjections in the debate, he describes the everyday largely in reference to the local. In his

initial critique of international intervention as 'not representing 'the local' or the really existing 'local-local' and 'everyday' of post-conflict environments', for example, the 'local' is described as 'where everyday life occurs' (Richmond, 2009: 325). Richmond does note, with reference to De Certeau (1984), that the everyday is usually deployed 'in order to uncover structural or discursive forms of violence, and to emphasize resistance and solidarity' (De Certeau, 1984: 326), and, citing various other scholars such as Pouligny (2006) and Bleiker (2009), he goes on to describe how such conceptions of the everyday can connect with work on agency, self-care, and empathy. But there is little substantive discussion of what the everyday means, and throughout the article the concept is largely deployed as a placeholder for 'the local'; that is, when discussing local context (Richmond, 2009: 327), local agency (328), local dynamics (329), local resources (329), local life (330) and local peace (335). For Richmond, at least in this article, 'the everyday' was largely deployed as a scalar referent; a new perspective from which to view 'peace and politics' (Richmond, 2009: 331).

This pattern is repeated regularly in the literature. While Sending (2010), for example, uses the term 'everyday peacebuilding', he deploys the everyday as a reference to the scale (local) at which the overt peacebuilding activities he discusses are occurring and there is no effort to draw on more theoretically rich discussions of the concept. The same can largely be said for Chandler's (2015) references to 'the everyday' in his work on resilience. While this article does make some reference to 'social practices and everyday tactics' that hint at a more sociological approach (Chandler, 2015: 31), the primary use of the term is again synonymous with 'local' and for the most part echoes Richmond in the deployment of the everyday largely as a scalar reference; to where local contexts (Chandler, 2015: 31), practices (29) and life (28) can be found and studied. Visoka's (2019) presentation is similar in his more recent article on 'the everyday politics of becoming a sovereign state'. Visoka is clearly aware of other less political interpretations of the everyday in his discussion of 'metis diplomacy' as 'the knowledge "acquired through practice" and the practical skills "to adapt successfully to a shifting situation" ' (2019: 5; citing Scott, 1998: 313–315), but here too the nature of the topic under study (diplomacy) and the clear political motivation behind the actions examined (Visoka, 2019: 15), steers the analysis away from a conception of the everyday as embodied, unconscious, or a-political, and towards 'the everyday' as political activity on a more local or micro scale.

It seems quite difficult, indeed, for critical peacebuilding scholars, usually working within IR, to maintain a focus on non-political dynamics in everyday interactions. A great example is found in Berents and McEvoy-Levy's (2015) contribution to a special issue of *Peacebuilding* on 'Every Day Peace and Youth'. While these authors make reference to various dynamics of young people's lives in conflict contexts which are outside politics (their economic, familial, educational and social struggles, for example), the primary thrust of the argument presented is nonetheless to argue that 'youth practices of everyday peace do not . . . remain in the so-called "private" realm' (Berents and McEvoy-Levy, 2015: 118). As if non-political experiences, activities and struggles are somehow less worthy of study, the authors argue that '(t)he space of the everyday is a political space, where those who are most marginal and written out of formal political discourse, find collective meaning and organize in response to conflict, violence, and

exclusion' (Berents and McEvoy-Levy, 2015: 116). In such presentations, the pre-political realm is devalued as it is accepted that large-scale social movements, such as the Arab Spring or Occupy protests, are of more value for peace than pre-political actions that do not give rise to collective protest (Berents and McEvoy-Levy, 2015: 118). The focus of such studies on young people in peacebuilding, according to these authors, must be on how youth activities at the local scale (framed as 'everyday' actions) feed into political movements.

Similarly, in another article purporting to examine 'the everyday', Tellidis and Glomm (2019) focus on street art that nonetheless had an avowedly political purpose (in this case the art festival most closely examined was intending to promote universal human rights but then morphed into something else in response to terrorist attacks). But such art can hardly be seen as anything other than consciously political activity. Indeed, the authors themselves note that street art is related to other forms of what they call 'everyday resistance', such as the Occupy movement and the Arab Spring (Tellidis and Glomm, 2019: 4). Hence in this presentation, much like that of Berents and McEvoy-Levy, they privilege the political. Tellidis and Glomm do cite De Certeau to note that 'the everyday' 'is a site of knowledge, even if said knowledge is unconscious', but they decline to fully engage with the potentials of such unconscious knowledge for pre-political agency or peacebuilding, instead arguing that the importance of 'the everyday' is largely located in the political agency ascribed via 'the very consciousness of its acts/actions insofar as these aim at the alteration of power relations' (Tellidis and Glomm, 2019: 3). Much like Richmond's earlier work, therefore, each of these scholars uses 'the everyday' primarily as a scalar referent for politics at the micro or local level.

While this is not surprising given that most of those cited above are IR scholars and, as such, consistently turn their focus to the local politics of peacebuilding, it also highlights the 'disciplinary closure' noted by Brewer et al. (2018) and why that closure may not be helpful to the field of peacebuilding or to our theorization of everyday peace. If the goal of these scholars is also to contribute to peace studies, to critical peacebuilding, or to the theorization of everyday peacebuilding generally, then surely it is important to note that the acts they are trying to frame as part of 'the everyday' were never really 'everyday' acts at all, but simply political acts on a local or micro scale. The key point here is that this disciplined lens fails to recognize alternative and pre-political forms of agency and peacebuilding as fully legitimate. In such work it seems that only political activity represents legitimate agency.

Alternative discussions of the everyday

Elisa Randazzo has recently provided a critique of the use of 'the everyday' which, while different to my own, nonetheless supports similar conclusions. She argues that the usual use of 'the everyday' in the peacebuilding literature always eventually turns to the 'selection of appropriate forms of behaviour from unwanted "unbecoming" ones' at the local scale (Randazzo, 2016: 1361). As she describes, this is because the 'local turn' scholars within the peacebuilding literature are driven by normative emancipatory ambitions which tend, eventually, to turn always towards capturing or utilizing the everyday for the 'linear telos of emancipation' (Randazzo, 2016: 1355). In that context, she argues, there

is a tendency within the scholarship to politicize 'the everyday' as 'everyday agency' focused on emancipation and resistance (Randazzo, 2016: 1362). Although her focus is on this normative agenda within the everyday peacebuilding literature and not whether 'the everyday' itself is being unhelpfully politicized, her conclusions nonetheless support my own contention that the analysis of the everyday consistently relies on an overly political lens; where the everyday is almost accidentally subsumed by politics through the assumption of a motivating political agency.

However, while I generally agree with Randazzo's critique, she also fails to recognize that there are some approaches to 'the everyday' which avoid this politicization. Audra Mitchell (2011: 1625) focused precisely on the problematic ways that 'the everyday' is defined, and noted that the literature usually presents it as either a site of quality (the everyday as inherently good) or of control (the everyday as inherently subject to power). But, with insights from two case studies, she shows how the everyday in reality is neither of these and may, potentially, be both (Mitchell, 2011: 1633). Importantly, Mitchell explicitly argued against the use of the everyday simply as a signifier of locality, instead arguing that the everyday is more helpfully conceived as a more mundane 'world building', occurring at every level of analysis. In this sense, she argues, the everyday is more appropriately seen as 'a dimension of human experience' (Mitchell, 2011: 1625), and not just political experience. Further, by describing the many ways that international peacebuilders, working outside the field of IR, have worked on what she calls 'affective peacebuilding' – via processes often associated with conflict transformation, the positive peace, wellbeing, nurturance or human flourishing (Mitchell, 2011: 1635) – she clearly highlights how my critique is pertinent to the IR-based critical peacebuilding literature, but much less so to the extensive work on peacebuilding from within other disciplines which are often overlooked by those working within critical peacebuilding. In other words, when we look elsewhere (to sociology or social psychology) we see a very different kind of 'everyday' peacebuilding.

Mac Ginty's contributions lean into this interdisciplinary approach, and this allows him also to turn firmly away from thinking about the everyday as simply a scalar referent and instead to focus explicitly on 'the social practices of everyday peace', and 'the routinized practices used by individuals and collectives as they navigate their way through life' (2014: 549). Clearly relating his own approach to that of Bourdieu (1977), Mac Ginty takes the helpful step of defining 'the everyday' as 'the normal habitus for individuals and groups' (2014: 550) and presents a notion of everyday peace 'as the coping mechanisms deployed by so-called ordinary people' in conflict contexts (Mac Ginty, 2014: 551). In this way, Mac Ginty's conception of everyday peace is quite explicitly not about 'programmes, projects, initiatives, International non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and International Organizations' (Mac Ginty, 2014: 551). As such, and by moving towards a more sociological perspective of the everyday, Mac Ginty is able to discuss the everyday in a way that breaks from many of the tropes regarding political agency and points towards alternative means of peacebuilding, such as conflict transformation (Mac Ginty, 2014: 559). While Mac Ginty (2014: 550) does argue that everyday peace is clearly a form of agency, he suggests that this is not an inherently political agency, even if it may reflect political realities and have political effects (552). As such, it is potentially outside politics. These insights have further been extended in his work regarding

the material turn (Mac Ginty, 2017) and the 'hyper-local' (Mac Ginty, 2019), but, it is important to note that he does also recognize that to some extent such efforts are 'stretching traditional IR perspectives' (Mac Ginty, 2019: 235).

This is true also of Autesserre's influential work, which similarly deploys the everyday in a manner which consciously and directly acknowledges what I would describe as the pre-political drivers of many everyday phenomena. While her work is known for its examination of the micro-politics of peace operations, Autesserre does not deploy the everyday purely as a placeholder for politics on the micro or local scale. On the contrary, many of the 'everyday elements' she describes are explicitly not politically motivated or even clearly agentic. Similar to Mac Ginty's conscious reference to Bourdieu, to Autesserre many everyday elements are 'routine activities that are socially meaningful and have an un-thought character'; they are 'automatic responses to the world' (2014: 6). While they may have political effects (largely the failure of peace interventions), it is quite explicit in her work that these 'everyday modes of operation' are both pervasive and informed by motivations outside politics; related, for example, to identities and relationships (Autesserre, 2014: 2). In many ways, therefore, Autesserre's work goes beyond a discussion of the 'everyday politics' of peacebuilding as noted in her title, and the deeper contribution is found in the analysis of dynamics which are not about rational, agentic, political decision making, but about the un-thought 'practices, habits, and narratives' that constitute the everyday (2014: 20).

Finally, Björkdahl's work on *Urban Peacebuilding* takes a similar, initially even more forcefully a-political approach, in repeatedly arguing that the everyday is more than political activity and that it includes 'issues such as infrastructure, housing and schooling . . . to improve the conditions of everyday life' (2013: 211). Echoing those who focus on the complexity of everyday contexts, she sees the everyday as better recognized as the 'self-ordering . . . micro-practices of self-governing . . . developed as a coping mechanism of post-conflict societies' (Björkdahl, 2013: 210). Indeed, in the effort to bring together critical peacebuilding and urban studies scholarship, Björkdahl (2013) emphasizes primarily the many ways in which social and physical structures together make manifest the everyday free of explicitly political motives. However, she nonetheless argues that it is necessary also to 'acknowledge political actions that would not traditionally be considered political, to uncover the workings of power relations in both conflict and peace processes' (2013: 220), and in this step she joins other feminist scholars such as Åhäll (2019) and Väyrynen (2019) who see the everyday as embodying invisibly political structures which have problematically become normalized (Åhäll, 2019: 152). While such scholars recognize the lived and embodied nature of the everyday as a site where action may occur without conscious political intent (Väyrynen, 2019: 20), it is for this very reason, they argue, that the everyday is a site of such political importance and why it must be actively re-politicized (Åhäll, 2019: 152).

The pre-political everyday

It is exactly this argument, however, which I believe can be problematic for peacebuilding theory. For authors such as Mac Ginty or Autesserre, deploying 'the everyday' serves to introduce alternative dimensions of lived reality that might be considered outside

politics and ideas about agency that are not reliant on political motivation. In such uses, the everyday is seen to work parallel to or around politics, providing a dimension of social reality that is more about mundane day-to-day life. Further, the everyday is considered a site of 'considerable innovation, creativity and improvisation' (Mac Ginty, 2014: 555), or as a 'wellspring of immanent creativity', as Mitchell (2011: 1627) describes it. It is associated with the 'power of imagination' in complex modern society (Appadurai, 1996: 54), giving rise to what Mac Ginty elsewhere called 'organic, everyday citizen action' (Mac Ginty, 2011: 87). This perspective connects usefully to various interpretations of the everyday outside political science and IR, from scholars such as Bourdieu (1977), Vaneigem (1983) or De Certeau (1984), and opens for consideration a realm of quotidian activity outside the scope of politics; or, at least, outside the scope of conscious political motivation. But in arguing that 'the everyday' must be *re-politicized*, there is the concern that analysis such as that proposed by Åhäll (2019) or Väyrynen (2019) may inadvertently strip the everyday of this organic, emergent creativity; characteristics which provide valuable means by which individuals act, survive, cope, endure, flourish, struggle or express themselves in conflict-affected or post-conflict contexts.

By critiquing the drive to re-politicize the normalization of 'the everyday' I do not mean to argue that 'the everyday' is not the result of politics. Indeed, I would agree that the everyday (the mundane, quotidian getting on with life) is always already a product of power previously applied (historical, social, economic, cultural and political). However, while Åhäll (2019) and Väyrynen (2019) argue that the everyday *must* always be considered a site of politics – of competition over the distribution of power and authority – and be analysed as such, I would resist the temptation to give in to this false dichotomy which assumes that all phenomena within the realm of 'the everyday' either are *or* are not political. This choice provides no real place for organic, emergent creativity, or for innovation or tactics as are discussed by others as the stuff of the mundane, quotidian everyday and which provide a conceptual anchor for alternative ideas of agency, action and peace. And, indeed, the available evidence from post-conflict societies seems instead to indicate that this dichotomy is false. Indeed, while it may be counter-intuitive, the evidence indicates that everyday phenomena are *both* political *and* a-political. In other words, and echoing Guillaume and Huysmans' description of the everyday as 'ephemeral politics', it may be best to recognize that what is or is not political is 'inherently unstable, fleeting, heterogenous [sic]' (2019: 292).

It is for this reason that I would argue that peacebuilding scholarship would be best served by resisting the temptation to assert the dichotomy and instead define everyday phenomena as *pre-political*. This indicates that such phenomena are not a-political or non-political, and recognizes that the everyday may embody the echoes of earlier struggles for power, while in turn inadvertently effecting the future distribution of power. Hence, I would argue that they are 'pre-political' in a variety of senses. They are pre-political in the way that Rossi and Sleat describe 'ethical ideals such as happiness, equality or autonomy' which 'float free from the forces of politics' and 'are assigned a foundational role insofar as they have antecedent authority over the political' (2014: 689). But they are perhaps more similar to how Ekman and Amnå describe pre-political acts as doing 'a lot of things that may not be directly or unequivocally classified as 'political participation', but at the same time could be of great significance for future

political activities' (2012: 287). To these scholars, pre-political acts are evident when people 'engage socially in a number of ways, formally outside the political domain, but nevertheless in ways that may have political consequences' (Ekman and Amnå, 2012: 288). We can see such activity in daily practices of recycling or veganism which may not be motivated by climate politics, but nonetheless may aggregate to political significance.

This form of pre-political action is more consistent with Scott's use of the term in his critique of arguments that postulate 'real' resistance based on politically motivated activity and 'token, incidental, or epiphenomenal' resistance based on 'unorganized, unsystematic, or individual' acts (1985: 292). Such token acts, while motivated by self-interest and not politics, may nonetheless aggregate to substantive political effects. As such, however, as they are not politically motivated, pre-political acts do differ from what Scott himself later described as 'infra-politics', or the hidden 'unobtrusive realm of political struggle' (1990: 183). Indeed, this may be the key difference between the pre-political action I am describing – perhaps eventually influencing, but itself unmotivated by politics – and the politically motivated activity on the micro or local scale described by most scholars writing about everyday peacebuilding . The first is pre-political, while the second is a form of infra-politics; and these are not the same thing. Further, this definition of pre-political also does not deny Åhäll's (2019: 151) assertion that the everyday is the site where the political has been normalized. Actions or events within the everyday are the result of prior political developments and so we could describe the everyday as post-political as well as pre-political. In that sense, it may be best if peacebuilding scholarship came to recognize that everyday phenomena occupy a kind of *superposition*, in that they can be seen as holding more than one status, and, again echoing Guillaume and Huysmans (2019: 280), it is the observation of the phenomena itself – in this case from a disciplinary perspective – which serves to define that status.

Through this lens we can easily see how the disciplinary positionality of the observer clearly plays a substantial role in determining how peacebuilding scholars characterize observed phenomena within the literature on 'the everyday'. Scholars who come at the problem as analysts of politics see the everyday as politics on a local or a micro scale. But this forecloses other interpretations of what is happening and, thus, limits the scope of the possible when we try to conceive of peace and peacebuilding. Seeing everything always through the perspective of politics serves to under-appreciate the social and social-psychological activities which have been central to much of the 'affective peacebuilding' described by Mitchell (2011), which has been foundational to conflict transformation approaches theorized and developed by scholars such as Allport (1954), Boulding (1988), Lederach (1997), Fisher (2001) or Kelman (2004), and largely outside the realm of IR. However, if we recognize that actions within the realm of 'the everyday' are neither political *nor* a-political, but pre-political, then we can be open to the possibility of alternative motivations for action on the micro or local scale. Indeed, if we conceive of the potential array of motivations for peace as just as broad, diverse, intricate and complex as the motivations for conflict and violence, then we should recognize the economic, social, cultural and individual motivations just as much and as readily as we do the political.

Pre-political peacebuilding

Everyday phenomena, by this definition, are explicitly those actions motivated, stimulated or provoked by concerns parallel to or outside politics – by social, cultural, economic, religious, psychological or other dimensions of life – and everyday peacebuilding is composed of exactly such actions inspired by precisely such motivations. Some of these phenomena are purposeful. There is a very well-developed literature, for example, regarding religion and peace, based largely on spiritual or theological motivations for pursuing peace and peacebuilding (Appleby, 1999; Omer et al., 2015). This literature does not assume that peace and peacebuilding must be driven by political agendas or have political ends. Similarly, there is a less well-developed literature regarding Business for Peace, which is based largely on the idea that peace, in general, will be valuable economically to business interests (Fort, 2010; Fort and Schipani, 2007). Again, while nobody would deny that both religion and economics have been closely intertwined in history with conflict as well as with peace, fundamentally both of these fields deal with motivations outside politics (faith and profit). Those who would argue that religion and economics are just politics by other means would largely be proving Brewer et al.'s point regarding the 'disciplinary closure' on the topic of the everyday within the peacebuilding literature (2018: 211).

Additional examples are found in the literature on the turn toward indigenous processes of reconciliation and cleansing. Honwana's description of the rituals of reincorporation in Mozambique as rooted in local approaches in which 'the whole symbolic array of spirits, family traditions, and prayers to God' were brought into the rituals, is one example (2006: 121). She highlights how 'war-affected populations have to start from scratch to try to rebuild their lives, make sense of their present, and regain their dignity', and how the rituals of reintegration and healing are constructed on the foundations provided by 'local worldviews and systems of meaning' (Honwana, 2006: 133–134). Studies describing the use of Mato Oput in northern Uganda or of Fambul Tok in Sierra Leone communicate similar themes. The former utilizes deeply contextualized ritual practice in order to 'restore social harmony and promote wellbeing of the people concerned within the general society' (Ochen, 2014: 245), while the latter draws on 'local culture and traditions' to develop a ceremony which will be salient within specific communities (Hoffman, 2008: 133). All such processes, and there are many (see Quinn, 2009; Shaw et al., 2010), are grounded in underlying cosmologies and traditional conceptions of the world which are not local forms of politics but parallel to or outside politics (see Millar, 2014). This is not to argue that such rituals were never themselves influenced by politics, or that they have no political effect or influence. It is, however, to argue that those who go through them believe deeply in them, their motivation for participating is not political, and the healing and cleansing they experience are not politically derived.

But perhaps the best illustrations of *pre-political emergent practices*, which evidence the real added value of a pre-political conception of the everyday for peacebuilding theory, are found not in the literature regarding purposeful peacebuilding processes (however motivated) as described above, but in studies of the unintentional and unrelated activity that comprises the mundane or quotidian reality of the majority of individuals who live in conflict-affected and post-conflict countries. The work of Veena Das is a

touchstone to many in this regard. Das's work on recovery and survival in the face of violence, whether the violence associated with the partition between India and Pakistan or the historical sectarian violence within Indian cities, highlights both how 'violent memory is buried in everyday life' (2007: 11) and 'how everyday tasks of surviving – having a roof over your head, being able to send children to school, being able to do the work of the everyday without fear of being attacked' – allow the reconstitution of the self in post-violence society (2007: 216). In recognizing the power of everyday tasks to allow women specifically to incorporate pain into the reality of their lives, Das recognizes how responses to violation unmotivated by and wholly unaware of politics can serve as a means by which to move on and recover.

These ideas are echoed in Susanne Buckley-Zistel's (2006) research in Rwanda, Rosalind Shaw's (2007) work in Sierra Leone, Peter Uvin's (2009) study of Burundi, Kimberly Theidon's (2013) work in Peru, and in the work of many others as well. My own research into the experiences of reconciliation in post-conflict Sierra Leone illustrates the ways that the mundane acts of getting on with life allowed individuals to recover from the violence of the past. Quite simple mechanisms of economic support, for example, helped victims of the war to 'overcome a 'bad situation'' and assisted them in 'reconstituting life' (Millar, 2011: 527; see also Millar, 2015). This study evidenced just how much regaining the basic necessities (a job, a house, a bicycle) for oneself and providing for one's children can promote an acceptance of what has come before and a form of peace born of rebuilding what was lost. This is not peace born of politics, but peace as a result of the slow incremental reconstitution of economic, social and cultural capital. These two sets of examples, the former of how the everyday can be the site of recovery in and of itself – as in Das's conception of a 'descent into the ordinary' (2007) – and the latter of how non-political activities undertaken for non-political motives can provide for healing, cleansing and reintegration, should indicate some of the scope and variety of options for peace and peacebuilding which are eliminated when we restict our perspective only to the political.

Importantly, everyday phenomena arise from the creative, imaginative and tactical responses defined by the ever-present 'gap between a norm and its actualization' (Das, 2007: 63). In this sense, everyday acts are also performative and, much as Goffman described the performative generation of identities, they always embody both the expectations of the contexts which inspire them, as well as the potential for new emergent realities. As Goffman explained, a person's actions are always driven by a socially constructed 'mask of manner', or the 'standards we unthinkingly apply' (1959: 55–57) but such a structure, in turn, 'commits him to what he is proposing to be', or the role the person performs (Goffman, 1959; 10; gendered language in the original). All such performances are pre-political in the sense described above, in that the context or social structures which inform them may be the products of past applications of power and in that they themselves may have further political impacts, but the acts performed are not themselves motivated by political intent. They are driven by motivations parallel to, outside, or now floating freely from, politics.

This conception of 'the everyday' as *emergent practices* echoes quite a lot of earlier work on the concept by scholars outside political science and IR. De Certeau, perhaps the most famous contributor to the debate, described everyday social practices as occurring

within 'the order constructed by others' which serves to create 'at least a certain play in that order, a space for maneuvers' (1984: 18). De Certeau (1984: 33) also implicitly relates his conception of 'the everyday' to performativity (much like Goffman), in comparing his social practices to performative speech acts. Both, as he describes, are at one and the same time performed within the structures or systems developed over time, and also alter those structures from within through innovation and emergent creativity. They are, therefore, structured by power and they may have political effects. However, they are not politically motivated. On the contrary, social practices are most easily identified as know-how which 'takes on the appearance of an "intuitive" or "reflex" ability, which is almost invisible' (De Certeau, 1984: 69). Indeed, citing Bourdieu (1977), De Certeau explicitly asserts that 'it is because subjects do not know, strictly speaking, what they are doing, that what they do has more meaning than they realize' (1984: 56). It is exactly the reflexive, intuitive response to structures and systems – the *pre-political emergent practices* – that generates the 'element of play' (Vaneigem, 1983: 134) and 'subterranean creativity' that can serve to 'overthrow the world of hierarchical power' (De Certeau, 1984: 182).

Conclusion

As noted in the introduction, the purpose of this article was not to argue that there is one correct way to describe and deploy 'the everyday' within the peacebuilding literature. The purpose, instead, was to argue that the concept of the everyday as it has already been developed in other disciplines (primarily in fields outside IR) provide it with substantially more usefulness for peacebuilding than is provided by the tendency within IR to see everything through a political lens. To accomplish this task the article first reviewed some of the recent peacebuilding literature dealing with 'the everyday' and showed just how often those uses display a tendency either (a) to apply the 'everyday' label to politically motivated activities at the local level and, thus, to consider 'the everyday' largely as a scalar referent; or (b) to interpret actions at the local level (no matter how motivated) as agentic political acts. I noted that there are some approaches which have instead made reference to conceptions of 'the everyday' as it has been developed outside IR, but that these latter uses have, for the most part, been overwhelmed by the former due to the 'disciplinary closure' Brewer et al. (2018: 2011) identify.

I then proceeded to explain what I believe is a concept of 'the everyday' which could be more valuable for the field of peace studies and peacebuilding. Specifically, this concept is reliant on protecting its *everyday-ness*, which I define as the *pre-political character of emergent practice*, in which pre-political is defined as action which is outside the realm of political activity and motivated by forces with antecedent authority over the political, even if those activities may have later political effects; that is, influence over the distribution of power and authority. The latter portion of the article argued in support of this alternative conception of the everyday, noting specifically that the field of peacebuilding would be best served if we avoided the usual dichotomy which sees actions as either political or a-political. With reflections from the literature across a number of disciplines outside IR, the article then further elaborated on the emergent character of everyday life as pre-political responses to complex socio-cultural milieux in order to further evidence

the value of this vis-à-vis the more politically oriented approach currently dominating the 'everyday turn' within the peacebuilding literature. The central goal of these final pages was to convince the reader of the importance of creative and emergent potentials, located in the mundane responses to the challenges to life and wellbeing in conflict and post-conflict contexts, but which can only be recognized and identified if we learn to see beyond the political and to value alternative motivations and forms of agency.

At this point, and by way of conclusion, I hope that the reader is convinced not that this is 'the right' approach to 'the everyday' for peacebuilding scholarship, but that it is an approach which allows the concept to be deployed in the way which is most suitable for theorizing about and helping to build 'everyday peace'. The goal of the article has been to serve as a corrective to an unconscious and distinctly disciplinary bias which would not itself be such a problem if there were more voices from outside IR active within the critical peacebuilding literature. Indeed, if there were more recognition and incorporation of the various alternative literatures Mitchell describes as the 'affective peacebuilding' literature (2011: 1635) that has long emanated from fields such as sociology, social psychology and theology, then potentially such disciplinary biases would be avoided and the field as a whole could more easily self-correct. Similarly, if critical peacebuilding scholars writing within the 'local turn' were to engage more rigorously with the grounded and deeply descriptive work of anthropologists such as Das, Theidon, Shaw, Ochen or Honwana (all cited above), then perhaps the limits of a purely politicized framework for understanding the motivations and impacts of action and practice would be more apparent. In other words, at the end of the day, while this article has hoped to serve a corrective purpose, peacebuilding scholarship more broadly would benefit from the built-in corrective of a more inter- or trans-disciplinary approach to research and theory.

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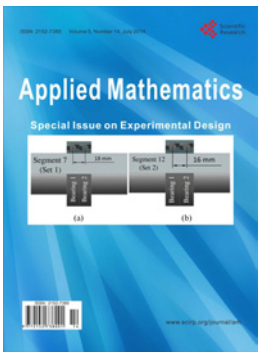

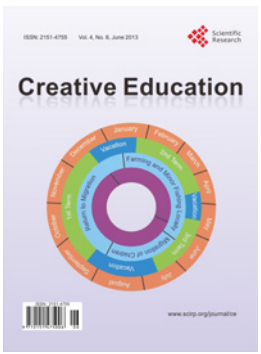

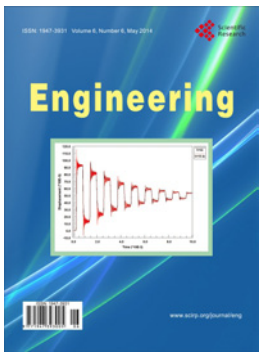

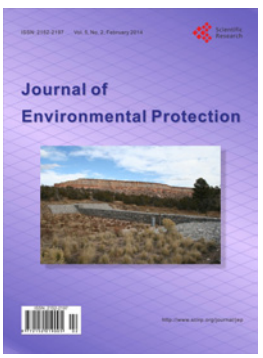

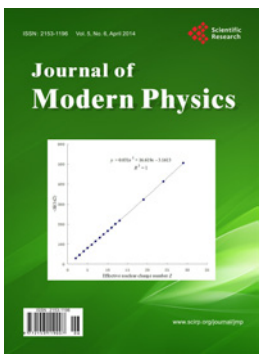

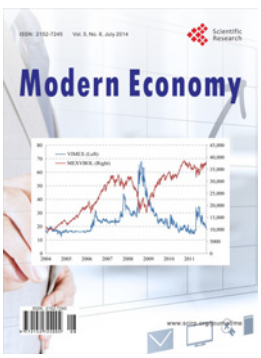

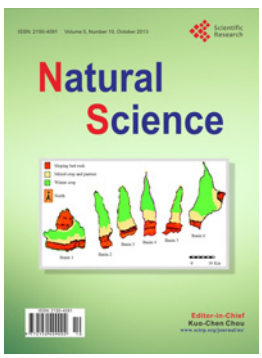

Everyday life

Everyday life, **daily life** or **routine life** comprises the ways in which people typically act, think, and feel on a daily basis. Everyday life may be described as mundane, routine, natural, habitual, or normal.

Sleeping

Human diurnality means most people sleep at least part of the night and are active in daytime. Most eat two or three meals in a day. Working time (apart from shift work) mostly involves a daily schedule, beginning in the morning. This produces the daily rush hours experienced by many millions, and the drive time focused on by radio broadcasters. Evening is often leisure time. Bathing every day is a custom for many.

Children reading books.

Beyond these broad similarities, lifestyles vary and different people spend their days differently. Nomadic life differs from sedentism, and among the sedentary, urban people live differently from rural folk. Differences in the lives of the rich and the poor, or between factory workers and intellectuals, may go beyond their working hours. Children and adults also vary in what they do each day.

Grooming

Contents

- Sociological perspectives
- Leisure
- Language
- Activities of daily living
- See also
- References
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Sociological perspectives

Everyday life is a key concept in cultural studies and is a specialized subject in the field of sociology. Some argue that, motivated by capitalism and industrialism's degrading effects on human existence and perception, writers and artists of the 19th century turned more towards self-reflection and the portrayal of everyday life represented in their writings and art to a noticeably greater degree than in past works, for example Renaissance literature's interest in hagiography and politics.[1] Other theorists dispute this argument based on a long history of writings about daily life which can be seen in works from Ancient Greece, medieval Christianity and the Age of Enlightenment.[2][3]

In the study of everyday life gender has been an important factor in its conceptions. Some theorists regard women as the quintessential representatives and victims of everyday life.[2]

The connotation of everyday life is often negative and is distinctively separated from exceptional moments by its lack of distinction and differentiation, ultimately defined as the essential, taken-for-granted continuum of mundane activity that outlines forays into more esoteric experiences. It is the non-negotiable reality that exists amongst all social groupings without discrimination and is an unavoidable basis for which all human endeavor exists.[1]

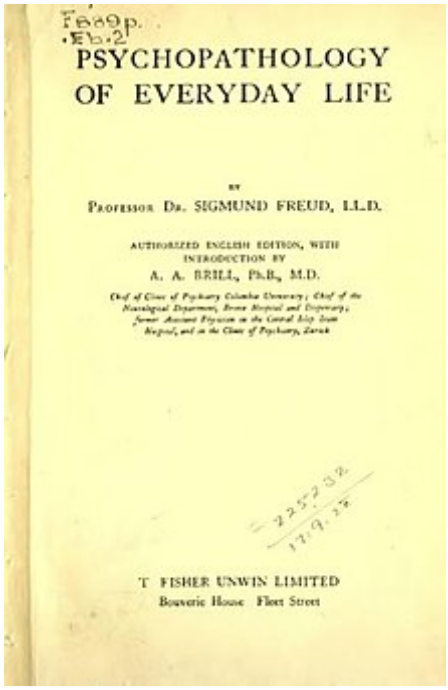
Much of everyday life is automatic in that it is driven by current environmental features as mediated by automatic cognitive processing of those features, and without any mediation by conscious choice, according to social psychologist John A. Bargh.[4] Daily life is also studied by sociologists to investigate how it is organised and given meaning. A sociological journal called the *Journal of Mundane Behavior*, published 2000 - 2004, studied these everyday actions.

Watching television

Leisure

Daily entertainment once consisted mainly of telling stories in the evening. This custom developed into the theatre of ancient Greece and other professional entertainments. Reading later became less a mysterious specialty of scholars, and more a common pleasure for people who could afford books. During the 20th century mass media became prevalent in rich countries, creating among other things a daily prime time to consume fiction and other professionally produced works.

Different media forms serve different purposes in different individuals' everyday lives—which give people the opportunities to make choices about what media form(s)--watching television, using the Internet, listening to the radio, or reading newspapers or magazines—most effectively help them to accomplish their tasks.[5] Many people have steadily increased their daily use of the Internet, over all other media forms. Fearing changes promoted by mass entertainment, social conservatives have long censored books and films, called television a vast wasteland, and predicted that social media and other Internet sites would distract people from good personal relationships or valuable interactions. These concerns did not prevent the progressively wider popularity of these innovations.



The Psychopathology of Everyday Life

Language

People's everyday lives are shaped through language and communication. They choose what to do with their time based on opinions and ideals formed through the discourse they are exposed to.[6] Much of the dialogue people are subject to comes from the mass media, which is an important factor in what shapes human experience.[7] The media uses language to make an impact on one's everyday life, whether that be as small as helping to decide where to eat or as big as choosing a representative in government.

To improve people's everyday life, Phaedra Pezzullo, professor in the Department of Communication and Culture at Indiana University Bloomington, says people should seek to understand the rhetoric that so often and unnoticeably changes their lives. She writes that "...rhetoric enables us to make connections... It's about understanding how we engage with the world."[8]

Activities of daily living

Activities of daily living (ADL) is a term used in healthcare to refer to daily self care activities within an individual's place of residence, in outdoor environments, or both. Health professionals routinely refer to the ability or inability to perform ADLs as a measurement of the functional status of a person, particularly in regard to people with disabilities and the elderly.[9] ADLs are defined as "the things we normally do...such as feeding ourselves, bathing, dressing, grooming, work, homemaking, and leisure."[10] The ability and the extent to which the elderly can perform these activities is at the focus of gerontology and understandings of later life.[11] In an 'active society' which sees mobility as an important norm, constant physical activity has replaced the striving towards personal growth in later life.[12] When you are getting into the routine of daily life, you can lose value and joy in everyday things. Routine is no longer there to keep you sane, but it takes the joy out of your life. Spontaneity and a break from routine can offer more relief from the hardships of day-to-day life. People need to live a life of fulfillment to enjoy and savor their life. When we focus on the hardships of life, we never see pass the negativity.[13]Reflection and acknowledgment of positive life experiences are important to daily life. Daily routine has us so caught up in a cycle, we never leave room for change or improvement. We stick to what we know and feel safe. The routine causes us to focus on the negative things in life. For example, another bill, bad health, money trouble, and toxic relationships. A break from routine allows us to self-evaluate and focus on positivity. Exploring hobbies or talents can bring more joy and exciting elements into our lives. We can alter daily habits and routines simply by add more change rather than the menial tasks we do daily can affect how we see life and progress "Habits are powerful but delicate. They can emerge outside our consciousness or can be deliberately designed. They often occur without our permission but can be reshaped by fiddling with their parts. They shape our lives far more than we realize—they are so strong, in fact, that they cause our brains to cling to them at the exclusion of all else, including common sense."[14]

See also

- *Being in the World*
- Existentiell
- Genre art
- Genre painting
- Homelessness
- Lifestyle (sociology)
- Lifeworld
- Personal life
- Realism (arts)
- Shibui
- Simple living
- Technics and Time, 1
- *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life*
- *The Practice of Everyday Life*
- *The Revolution of Everyday Life*

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