Beyond Bourdieu:
The Interactionist Foundations of Media Practice Theory

PETER LUNT
University of Leicester, UK

In the practice turn, the critique of interactionism, along with structuralism, has led to the relative neglect of the analysis of the role and significance of interaction in social practice. This trend continues in theories of media and practice. I argue that Goffman's interactionist accounts of self-presentation, interaction ritual, and frame analysis provide a rich resource for studying the role of interaction in social practices. I reprise Bourdieu's theory of practice, its influence on the study of media and practice, and criticism of this tradition of research. Goffman's interactionist perspective is presented in contrast to Bourdieu's theory of practice. The potential value of such a perspective is illustrated through Goffman's own study of gender advertisements and by media research using the concept of "participation frameworks" to analyze online mediated social interaction. I end with reflections on the potential of an interactionist perspective on media and practice.

Keywords: theory of practice, social practice, dramaturgy, interaction ritual, Bourdieu, Goffman

The practice turn (Schatzki, 2001), and its influence on theorizing media and practice (Bräuchler & Postill, 2010; Couldry, 2004), is grounded in the critique of other approaches to social and cultural theory. Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) theory of practice, for example, was grounded in the critique of both structural anthropology and the pairing of phenomenology and interactionism. More recently, Reckwitz (2002) distinguishes practice theory from mentalist, textual, and intersubjective theories of culture, the latter encompassing interactionism. In consequence, the long tradition of research in interactionism, illustrated here by the work of Goffman (1959, 1967, 1974), which analyses social interaction as a key element in social practices, has been neglected in the study of media and practice. I argue that the analytic distinctions that provide the negative justification for practice theory have carried over into the study of media and practice in the focus on institutional practices as providing an anchoring of everyday life practices.

I begin with a review of the theoretical grounding of Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) analytic distinctions among practice theory, structuralism, and the pairing of phenomenology and interactionism, and the influence of these conceptions on accounts of media and practice. This is followed by an account of Goffman's analysis of interaction in comparison with Bourdieu's approach to practice in which interaction is a key element of social practice and critical to self-formation and the constitution of interaction order. Two

Peter Lunt: pl108@le.ac.uk

examples of interactionist analysis of practice illustrate the potential value of his approach, one from Goffman's (1979) *Gender Advertisements* and the other from recent research on online mediated social interaction (Hutchby, 2014). I end with conclusions on the potential value of recognizing interaction as a key element of practice and the potential contribution of Goffman's analysis of media contents and mediated interaction (Lunt, forthcoming).

The Practice Turn

In his influential paper, Schatzki (2001) recognizes the diverse theoretical contributions to the theory of practice from philosophy, social theory, empirical studies of social interaction, and the social studies of science. He also notes the breadth of the practice turn across the social and cultural sciences as researchers engage with questions of how subjectivity and the material world are constituted and sustained through practice, how meaning and intelligibility are grounded in use and performance, in the acknowledgment of the dialectic (Bourdieu, 1977) or recursive (Giddens, 1984) relation between structure and agency, and the implications of practice for the sociology of action.

Although Schatzki (2001) acknowledges the contribution of Giddens' (1984) theory of structuration, it is the work of Bourdieu that he identifies as having had the clearest and most sustained influence on the practice turn. This influence is both through his original articulation of practice theory in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Bourdieu, 1977), restated in *The Logic of Practice* (Bourdieu, 1990), and through a series of brilliant and original empirical studies in the sociology of culture including the link between consumption and social class (Bourdieu, 1984), art, literature, and culture (Bourdieu, 1993), education and social reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990), and language and power (Bourdieu, 1992). These studies apply and elaborate Bourdieu's original formulation of practice theory in which key concepts of structuring and practice, fields and habitus, and forms of symbolic, economic, cultural, and social capital provide both a framework and a means for elaboration and reflection on social practice.

Bourdieu's Theory of Practice

Bourdieu's (1977) *Outline of a Theory of Practice* was an ambitious intervention in mid-20th-century French social and cultural theory dominated by structuralism and phenomenology (Joas & Knöbl, 2011; Susen & Turner, 2011). Working within the framework of the structural anthropologist Lévi-Strauss (1966), the leading structural anthropologist of his day, Bourdieu (1977) focuses on the practices of participants as strategic responses to social rules and norms. Through ethnographic research with the Kabyle, a Berber people of North Africa, Bourdieu sought to understand the role of social practice in the reproduction of kinship structures and associated marriage rituals and myths. In this way, Bourdieu contests the structural analysis of social reproduction as resulting from conformity to rules derived from existing structures and affirmed by myths, beliefs, and behavior. His skepticism partly arose from his reading of Wittgenstein's (1951) criticisms of rule following as an account of making and interpreting meaning and his alternative conception of language as a practical accomplishment set in the context of forms of life.

Bourdieu was equally dismissive of phenomenology and interactionism (Garfinkel, 1967; Goffman, 1959, 1967), which he regarded as giving too much ground to experience and sense making in social

interaction while paying insufficient attention to the constraints that shape both the context for social interaction and the resources available to social actors. His view was that subjectivism denies the way that experience is shaped by the objective economic, social, and cultural conditions within which people live, and thereby also denies the way that reflexivity about the conditions of existence influences the strategies people adopt to realize freedom under constraints. He contends that Lévi-Strauss represented a broad approach to the social and cultural sciences that he termed "objectivism" as a "social physics," and that Garfinkel and Goffman represented "subjectivism" as social phenomenology. His view was that this theoretical opposition had been instrumental in the neglect of "the practical mode of knowledge which is the basis of ordinary experience of the social world" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 25).

Bourdieu also draws on Wittgenstein's (1951) idea of language games. Games are a powerful analogy for understanding social practice partly because they vary in formality from free play to professional sports, reflecting the variation between everyday life and institutional contexts. The metaphor of the game therefore reflects the contrast between rules that emerge from practice and contexts marked by formal rules. Furthermore, games are played through the deportment of the body in practical accomplishment, in the setting of fields of play that define a material location and establish what counts as winning or losing the game. So, for example, in Bourdieu's practice theory account, regularities in kinship relations are understood as resulting from strategies adopted by families in the context of laws of inheritance and succession that aim to achieve advantageous marriage partnerships. Furthermore, games are complex forms of bodily action played out in coordination with other players in which participants "have a practical mastery of the logic or immanent necessity of a game, which is gained through experience of the game, and which functions this side of consciousness and discourse" (Lamaison & Bourdieu, 1986, p. 111). This demonstrates the close fit between the game metaphor and key concepts in Bourdieu's theory of practice. Practices are embodied, played out in cultural fields, according to the logic of practice, and based on the experience of the players and their skills (habitus) aiming to achieve the rewards available in the game. Fields are not defined by the experiences and accounts of social actors, but by the sociological observer as "structures that impose constraints on actors, of which they themselves are generally unaware" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 10).

Expanding the metaphor of game playing to social life in general, Bourdieu (1990) understands practical sense to be derived from our social background and experience as "habitus" that represents the capacity to act as socialized agents able to do what needs to be done to play both formal and informal social games, with invention and improvisation enabling practice to respond "to the infinite variety of situations that occur in games" (Lamaison & Bourdieu, 1986, p. 111). In this account, variation arising from both skill and strategy plays a key role in social reproduction and in defining what it means to be a good player who "manages quite naturally to be at the place where the ball will come down, as if the ball controlled him. Yet, at the same time, he controls the ball" (Lamaison & Bourdieu, 1986, p. 111). In his ethnographic studies, Bourdieu (1977) observed many examples that demonstrated that rather than merely following the rules implied by kinship structures, people adopt a variety of strategies.

Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) negative work clears the ground for his theory of practice. He starts by acknowledging regularities in matrimonial practices but rejecting the interpretation of these in terms of rules that purportedly underpin both structures of kinship and the customary behavior of families in, for

example, matrimonial decisions. Such decisions, Bourdieu argues, result from the practical realization of strategies that seek to make social uses of kinship rules rather than conforming to those rules (Lamaison & Bourdieu, 1986, p. 111). Such examples are significant because they contradict the myth that social standing or reputation reflects cultural values that are independent of economic interests. Strategies artfully combine the appearance of conformity to rules and respect for reputation while in practice negotiating, questioning, playing on, or manipulating rule following in the individual's interest. The implications are profound, suggesting that structuralist accounts of rule following are overly deterministic and give insufficient account of the practices employed in the strategic game of reputation: "Rules are by no means as rigid and have nothing like the determining effect on behavior that orthodox structuralist authors assume" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 14).

Throughout his writings, in addition to his critique of objectivism and subjectivism, Bourdieu sustains a strong critique of the utilitarian account of actions resulting from decisions aimed at satisfying needs. For Bourdieu, interests are not reduced to individual needs, but are conditioned by fields of practice such as politics, education, religion, and the family, which define what is of value. Fields define value through social positions that are independent of the qualities of those who hold them and differ according to the relevant cultural field. Bourdieu argues that utilitarianism decontextualizes and naturalizes the individual so that constraints on action are not recognized and action is reduced to behaviors that seek to satisfy individual needs. Agency is understood as a practical accomplishment in which dispositions socialized in the individual are geared into practical routines of action through physical movements, tastes, and banal interpretations of the world acquired at an early age that provide the frameworks for our actions.

The Influence of Bourdieu's Theory of Practice on Media Studies

Bourdieu's (1977) theory of practice and cultural sociology has had a significant and sustained influence on media and communication research, for example, in the ethnographic study of media institutions (Born, 1995, 2005), the study of cultural and creative industries (Banks, 2017; Hesmondhalgh, 2019), the study of media rituals (Couldry, 2003) and cultural intermediaries (Maguire & Matthews, 2014), and accounts of media and practice (Bräuchler & Postill, 2010; Couldry, 2004). This justified influence results both from the value of an approach that integrates economic and cultural analysis and from the utility of Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field, and forms of capital. This combination was particularly attractive in the context of the apparent incommensurability of political economy and cultural studies in the 1990s. Babe (2009) documents how cultural studies in the 1990s moved away from an earlier generation of researchers who accepted the relative autonomy of culture while sustaining a fundamentally materialist political economy. In its place, cultural studies took the autonomy of culture further, seeking to explain media industries and policies in cultural terms while political economists asserted a strong case for the economic determination of media culture (Gandy & Garnham, 1995). One consequence of this bifurcation of the economic and cultural analysis of media industries, policies, and uses was that academic research was unable to develop a coherent response to attacks on public media and declining financial support for the arts in the 1980s and 1990s across Europe (Born, 2005; Hesmondhalgh, 2019). In the context of increasing marketization of culture and neoliberal economic policies, the epistemological and ontological niceties of the relation between political economy and cultural studies appeared less important than finding intellectual tools to challenge the management of public

value and marketization of media production and consumption and their reflection in cultural policy. In this context, Bourdieu's attempt to integrate materialism and cultural analysis in a theory of practice was convincing, whereas alternatives such as Giddens' (1984) structuration theory suffered by association with the Blair government and a third way that arguably gave too much license to marketization in public life (Chadwick & Heffernan, 2003). Bourdieu also provided a model contribution to the public debate about the dangers of marketization and neoliberalism (Calhoun, 2002).

To illustrate the application of Bourdieu's ideas to cultural sociology and the study of media and practice, I discuss Swidler's (2001) ideas about hierarchical relations between practices and Couldry's (2004) application of these ideas as a basis for a claimed new paradigm for media studies. Swidler developed an account of the relation between practices in which some anchor (rather than determine) other practices by establishing constitutive rules that act as frameworks or constitute social categories within which other practices are acted out. Some institutionally embedded practices, for example, have the power of legal authority to establish social categories within which or with which other practices unfold.

Couldry (2004) takes up this analysis in arguing that the media are paradigmatic institutions that use their power to specify or constitute social categories, frameworks, and rules for everyday social practices. Couldry argues that the media do this by creating shared reference points and establishing agreed ends, projects, or beliefs. This reflects Bourdieu's account of the way that cultural production creates the terms of reference for aesthetics and value for everyday social practice. Bourdieu draws a parallel here between the cultural industries and science and academia establishing the categories of knowledge claims, the art establishment for aesthetics, and lawmakers for morality. Couldry takes this aspect of Bourdieu's theory of practice and raises important questions related to how much the media have the power to constitute frames of reference for other institutions and everyday practices.

Bourdieu's work, then, has predominantly influenced the study of media and cultural industries and their shaping of everyday social practices with a focus on the importance of professional practice. Work at the intersection of cultural sociology and the study of media industries has been more influenced by Bourdieu's studies of practices of cultural production in media and cultural industries (e.g., Bourdieu, 1993) than his early ethnography that focused on the practical strategies of everyday life as a key part of social reproduction. Although he retained an interest in symbolic power as the resources available to individuals according to their social positions within fields, over time Bourdieu concentrated on the practices of key players in cultural industries. This is particularly salient in Bourdieu's (1993) work on cultural production in which audiences are represented as consumers of the products of cultural industries in contrast to the account of practice in his analysis of marriage strategies in North Africa and France.

Through a comparison of Bourdieu's work and Goffman's account of the role of social interaction in social practice, I go on to ask whether it is conceivable to have a theory of media and practice in which audiences, viewers, and producers are undertood as able to engage in constitutive social practices beyond their role as consumers of culture. This might be achieved through a reconstruction of Bourdieu's early accounts of practices of everyday life as shaping social reproduction or through a reconsideration of interactionism as a theory of practice.

Critical Responses to Bourdieu's Theory of Practice

Several lines of criticism of Bourdieu's work have developed in social theory related to the limitations of his theoretical strategy; contestations of his dismissal of structuralism, interactionism, and utilitarianism; and questions about his account of agency and social action (Joas & Knöbl , 2011; Susen & Turner, 2011).

Bourdieu's theoretical strategy has been criticized for grounding the theory of practice in critique of other social theories, and the polemic aspect of this negative work has been recognized: "Bourdieu forges his concepts as correctives of opposing viewpoints. His work can be read as an ongoing polemic against positivism, empiricism, structuralism, existentialism, phenomenology, economics, Marxism, methodological individualism, and grand theory" (Schwartz, 1997, p. 6). Related to this, a second line of criticism is that the architecture of the theory of practice was established early in Bourdieu's career (1977), and provides the framework for his admittedly brilliant studies in cultural sociology so that theory development took the form of programmatic refinement of key concepts of habitus, field, and capital without engaging theoretical debate with alternative social theoretical perspectives (Joas & Knöbl, 2011).

These two points come together in a third criticism, that Bourdieu does not recognize the way that alternative social theoretical positions were developed and finessed from the point he initially addressed them in the 1960s. For example, some versions of utilitarianism have moved away from internally defined needs to a concept of preferences that recognizes their social embedding (Susen & Turner, 2011). Social exchange theories have developed an account of reciprocity rather than the meeting of individual needs as the basis of exchange (Homans, 1958). Similar adjustments are discernable in rational choice theory and game theory that accept the social basis of needs and decision-making practices. I extend this criticism of Bourdieu's account of utilitarianism to his dismissal of interactionism using critical reconstructions of Goffman's (1959, 1967, 1974) work as an example.

A line of critique of Bourdieu's theory of practice addresses the incipient individualism that he retains despite his critique of utilitarianism. Swidler (2001), for example, argues that Bourdieu's concept of habitus takes the form of individual capacities:

> The underlying theoretical imagery leads us to think of an individual person carrying around with her the habitus of her childhood, the skills and dispositions she learned there, mobilizing them strategically as she encounters new social situations. (p. 95)

Susen and Turner (2011) and Joas and Knöbl (2011) also argue that despite the specific criticisms of utilitarianism offered by Bourdieu, there is much in his conception of social action that overlaps with utilitarianism. Honneth (1995) goes as far as claiming that Bourdieu reproduces the very combination of structuralism and the utilitarian conception of the individual which he had criticized, albeit in a new idiom. Without going to the extremes of Honneth, however, we can say that Bourdieu emphasizes the social shaping of individual desires and motivations. For example, although desire for social position replaces internal needs in Bourdieu's work, the social agent is still conceived of as an individual who strives to retain or enhance social position using a variety of strategies, and this individual has many of the characteristics of liberal

individualism. Second, in his account of sustaining or enhancing social position, Bourdieu invokes the idea of competitive social relations. For example, he argues that social practice "contains a more or less dissimulated challenge, and the logic of challenge and riposte is but the limit towards which *every act of communication* tends—domination through the performance of the communication function" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 14). Finally, Bourdieu's account of symbolic capital, or the individual's social standing, is shaped by values internal to the practices that take place in specific fields. In terms of the ethical standing of these values, being good means being good in terms of what is valued in fields rather than being related to any principles of public reason giving (MacIntyre, 1984).

In addition to these various challenges and questions of Bourdieu's theory of practice, there is recognition that the legacy of practice theory as an approach to social and cultural studies has led to a rich but diffuse field of conceptualization and empirical study. Shove, Pantzar, and Watson (2012), for example, argue that practice theory has both diverse philosophical origins (ordinary language philosophy, phenomenology, and pragmatism), and has been adopted in the context of a diversity of social and cultural theories, leading to a diffuse set of applications. Shove et al. seek to reduce this diversity and clarify the empirical program for the study of social practice with conceptual and policy relevance. Their argument is that across various formulations and uses of the concept of practice, there is a broad set of assumptions, not dissimilar to those described for Bourdieu's theory of practice above, which has the value of transcending distinctions such as those between structure and agency and between determinism and voluntarism that defined 20th-century social and cultural studies. They argue that practice theory might provide a basis for explaining the relation between social change and stability without prioritizing either human agency or social structure. This program is influenced by Giddens' (1984) structuration theory, which, however, they argue is too abstract to form the basis of empirical studies of the formation, maintenance, and relations among practices that might enable an understanding of social order, stability, and change. Their approach is influenced by Reckwitz's (2002) conceptual distinction between practice theory and three types of cultural theory: cultural mentalism, cultural textualism, and culturalist intersubjectivity. These locate the social, respectively, in the mind, in signs and symbols, and in social interactions (Reckwitz, 2002). In contrast, Reckwitz treats practice as routinized behavior that coalesces into patterns or "blocks" formed by a combination of elements. Shove et al. (2012) provide accounts of the potential elements of practice as forms of bodily and mental activities, objects or things in use, and the knowhow of participants. They illustrate this using the example of skateboarding as constituting complex amalgams of material conditions, bodily competencies, rules and norms of practices, and the meanings of these for participants. By analogy to the idea of a schema, or Goffman's (1974) concept of "frame," there is a degree of openness or indeterminacy in how the elements that make up a practice are filled out, leading to the idea that practices are inherently dynamic. Many of these assumptions, of a conception of practice oriented to understanding everyday life, are inherent in Goffman's (1959, 1967, 1974) account of dramaturgy and framing in which social interaction is given a central place in an account of practice that treats everyday life as accomplished through interaction in the context of social practices.

I now outline Goffman's account of dramaturgy, ritual, and framing from the perspective of the theory of practice followed by a discussion of two examples of the application of his ideas in the study of media and practice. One develops Goffman's (1981) ideas about participation roles in the study of mediated

online interaction (Hutchby, 2014), and the second example, from Goffman's own work, is the application of frame analysis to the analysis of gender advertisements (Goffman, 1979).

Goffman: Dramaturgy and Interaction Ritual

In this section, I develop a critical exposition of Goffman's (1959, 1967) microsociology, focusing first on his account of the social self as emergent from dramaturgy and then on how social value is constituted through interaction rituals, thereby providing an account of social practice that differs in important ways from Bourdieu's theory. Goffman's (1959, 1967) early work explores two perspectives on social interaction: dramaturgy and interaction ritual. Dramaturgy invokes the metaphor of the theater to interpret the presentation of self in everyday social encounters, and interaction ritual explores common civility as constituted through facework, in which we protect our own and others' reputations, and rituals of deference and demeanor in which we honor the status of individuals. Goffman interprets such everyday social encounters as self-regulating interaction orders achieved through the practical synchronization of motives and the coordination of actions.

Goffman's (1959, 1967) work on social interaction was influenced by Simmel's (Simmel & Levine, 1971) analysis of sociability as an art or "play-form of association" in contrast to the strategic coordination of individual actions:

> It is for this reason that the sense of tact is of such special significance in society, for it guides the self-regulation of the individual in his personal relations to others where no outer or directly egoistical interests provide regulation. (Simmel & Levine, 1971, p. 130)

This notion of what constitutes the social is grounded in the idea of reciprocal social relations that unfold in contrast to the maintenance or enhancement of individual social position.

The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life

In his dramaturgy, Goffman (1959) contrasts impression management as a strategic practice aiming to persuade others of our worth with the combination of mutual attention and collaboration in reciprocal interaction. He analyzes examples of these modes of self-presentation as they are played out in both the professional theater and in everyday life. Starting with the idea of the theater as a metaphor for self-presentation, Goffman discusses such parallels as those between the structuring of social encounters and scenes in a play and the staging of professional performance and the setting of dramaturgy in everyday life contexts. He describes the way that actors work together to create and sustain a *mise-en-scène* through the coordination of movement, gesture, and dialogue. He also compares how in theatrical performance character is constituted through interactions across the scenes of the play with the way that in everyday life a person's reputation unfolds in practice through interactions across time and contexts fashioned as a moral career. In professional acting, the theater is a context that stages performance through "social location, style of life that is part of a publicly accessible institutional context and an internal self-identity" (Goffman, 1971, p. 127). In everyday life, performance is staged not only in unstructured spaces of private life, but also in the managed staging of meetings in work places, lecture theaters, restaurants, and so on.

Goffman (1959) considers social interaction as a dialectic relationship between strategic self-presentation (or impression management) and social interaction characterized by mutual attention and cooperation (Rawls, 2012). Reciprocal social interaction requires trust among participants, leading to the opportunity for disguise and deception illustrated by the practices of con artists, spies, and wrestlers who exploit the promissory nature of social interaction as mutual attention and cooperation to disguise their strategic objectives. There are parallels here with Bourdieu's account of strategies in practice that seek to give the impression of rule following while serving individual interests. Goffman (1959, 1967) documents the various strategies that people deploy in everyday life, suggesting that they follow broad cultural assumptions that a person in social interaction presents themselves either in the best possible light or as someone who sets aside their personal interests to constitute interaction orders. What begins to emerge from this distinction is a contrast between an ethics of social practice in which what is valued is bounded by success within the field of cultural practice and circumstances in which value transcends self-serving purposes. Both Goffman and Bourdieu see practice as a form of social order or organization that does not depend on shared beliefs or formal rules. There is a contrast, however, between Goffman's (1959, 1967) analysis of sociability related to civility and Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) cultural relativity of value, which can be illustrated by thinking about the game metaphor that both also adopt. Good game players play (mostly) within the rules and deploy their experience and skills to achieve the rewards associated with the game. The game metaphor, as Bourdieu acknowledges, has its limitations: The perspective he offers us on the game is the individual player; there is no equivalent in Bourdieu's analysis of players working as a team giving up on individual achievement to play together. Rather, as Gouldner (1970) puts it, "the elaborate strategies by which men ingeniously contrive to persuade others to buy a certain definition of the situation" (p. 384). It is through this context of persuasive strategy that Bourdieu analyses the way that interests are disguised within a frame of reputation; ethics on this view is another name for persuasion (MacIntyre, 1984). In Goffman's (1959) account of dramaturgy, instrumental social relations take the form of impression management that attempts to control the image that others have of us so as to enhance our esteem and social position. In contrast, performance in the mode of mutual attention and collaboration is exemplified by teamwork and the arts of impression management in the mutual constitution of a social situation.

At first sight, it looks as though dramaturgy is a metaphor for understanding self-presentation as a form of amateur dramatics. However, Goffman (1959) explores the idea that the theater arises from the rationalization of the practices of impression formation and mutual attention and collaboration in everyday social practices elevated in the theater. The finessing of staging, performance, and teamwork, and the management of scripted spontaneity take aspects of everyday dramaturgy to new levels of refinement. However, critically, the logic of theatrical performance shares much with everyday social interaction, and thereby carries with it characteristics of openness and indeterminacy so that reciprocity and creativity are characteristic even of staged social interaction. Goffman's key point is that rationalization does not necessarily exclude reciprocity and mutual respect, even in highly institutionalized contexts.

Interaction Ritual

At the same time as he was developing his analysis of dramaturgy, Goffman (1967) pursued an alternative perspective on interaction as social practice in the form of interaction ritual. In contrast to the drama of self-presentation, Goffman (1967) focused on routine interactions in everyday life, which, he

argued, were socially significant constitutive practices. Goffman (1959, 1967) sensed that much was at stake in these apparently trivial interactional routines, as Swidler (2001) explains:

> Erving Goffman (1967, 1971) has delineated the interaction rituals that confirm the status of persons as persons. Moving aside when we pass someone, addressing a person by name, making eye contact, respecting someone's space—all these practices reconfirm the constitutive practices of Western selfhood. (p. 98)

How is it that such apparently routine social practices can play a role in affirming the constitutive practices of Western selfhood? Swidler's quote is ambiguous with respect to an important questions about media and practice: Does the confirmation of selfhood take the form of affirming social categories established by institutionally framed social practices, or can everyday rituals play a constitutive role in their own right? Goffman (1967) worked through these questions through an engagement with Durkheim's sociology, suggesting in his essay "The Nature of Deference and Demeanor" that he will "try to show that a version of Durkheim's social psychology can be effective in modern dress" (p. 47).

Three important ideas from Durkheim's sociology inform Goffman's (1967) analysis of facework and deference and demeanor (see Verhoeven, 1993, for an illustrative account of Goffman's debt to Durkheim). First, from Durkheim's first book *The Division of Labour in Society* (2008a), Goffman (1967) takes up the idea that the plurality of ways of living and working in modernity creates a situation in which people are both highly differentiated but, necessarily, highly dependent on each other. Second, the human condition is a duality (*homo duplex*) in which the individual both seeks to satisfy their needs through appropriate ends in strategic rationality, but also to constitute social identity through mutual attention and cooperation (Rawls, 2012). Third, drawing on Durkheim's (2008b) final book *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, first published in 1912, Goffman (1967) interprets the routines of everyday social interaction as constructing ourselves and others as sacred, even in the living out of the profane routines of everyday life.

Through these arguments, Goffman (1967) seeks to embed his microsociology in Durkheim's macrosociology. In his first book on the division of labor in society, Durkheim (2008a) argues that the increasing specialism of labor in modern society meant that the conditions under which premodern societies produced social solidarity through common experiences, equivalence of social roles, and consensus on moral values were not reproduced in a society in which people lived highly specialized and diverse work and social lives. Solidarity in modern society, therefore, does not depend on consensus, but on a form of social practice that is constitutive of social life, spontaneous and self-regulatory (Rawls, 2012), a form of social practice that both increases personal freedom or autonomy and yet still enables social and moral solidarity.

Through mutual attention and reciprocity in everyday social interaction, we confer on ourselves and on others the status of the sacred elevated from our mundane, interested purposes and everyday contexts. Politeness is revealed as a routine form of worship through which we constitute ourselves and others as social beings. As Durkheim (2008b) suggests,

the distinction between sacred and profane things, the notions of soul, spirit, of mythic personalities, of a national and even international divinity, the negative cult and its extreme form of ascetic practices, rites of oblation and communion, imitative rites, commemorative rites, piacular rites. (p. 310)

Durkheim's argument is that societies are based on the practices of religious rites that give rise to fundamental categories of thought such as groupings of people, time, and causality as categories based on social practice. Such practices are identifiable in all forms of religion and form the basis of social organizations and the categories through which people make sense of the world. In "The Nature of Deference and Demeanor," Goffman (1967) uses these ideas to analyze the ways in which routine social interaction and practices of civility constitute ourselves and others as sacred and as rights-bearing participants in social life. This constitutes a critique of individualism as commonly understood and assumed in utilitarianism as transcending individual interests and a key part of civility and the construction of social order. Durkheim made strong claims for this orientation toward others as enshrined in rights and as forming locally constituted social or, in Goffman's (1971) terms, interaction orders. A key point for Durkheim is the independence of such practices from social institutions such as the state, commercial interests, and constraining systems of belief.

At the center of this argument of Durkheim's was a distinction, as Rawls (2012) puts it, between traditional forms of social practice and constitutive social practices. Individual freedom in modernity is not to be understood in terms of freedom from society, but the potential to constitute society through practices at different scales. The constitutive practices that form the basis of civility and politeness in everyday life are continuous with the constitutive practices of law and science. Goffman (1967), through Durkheim, recognizes a form of individualism existing in the potential to influence these important spheres of social life, provided the conditions for individuals and groups to constitute social facts as participants in practices populate both institutional forms and everyday life.

Goffman's (1959, 1967) dramaturgy and interaction ritual provide us with an account of constitutive social practice in both institutional contexts and routines of everyday life: as Rawls (2012) puts it, "the center of modern social order where beliefs and values, culture and religion used to sit" (p. 483) in premodern societies.

Frame Analysis

Goffman's (1959, 1967) work on the presentation of self and interaction ritual had a broad influence in the social sciences and in the study of interpersonal communication (Winkin & Leeds-Hurwitz, 2013). However, by the end of the 1960s, his work was subject to two lines of trenchant criticism. In sociology, where once his research had been regarded as opening new lines of enquiry into the social order of everyday life, the emergence of more explicitly critical social theory led to his work being interpreted as descriptive of the mores of middle-class life in the United States (Gouldner, 1970). Goffman's (1959, 1967) work appeared unable to provide answers to the urgent questions arising from social crisis, inequality, and conflict. A second line of criticism came from ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967), and questioned Goffman's account of language and social interaction, charging him with a lack of rigor and of being unable

to let go of assumptions about the psychology of social actors in his account of everyday life. Goffman's response came in the shape of a change of direction in his work away from observations and interpretations of interaction to a focus on the role of interpretative frames in everyday life (Goffman, 1974). One strand of the ethnomethodological critique was that Goffman had failed to give a systematic account of the interactional shaping of experience following the social phenomenology of Schutz (1967). Goffman's response to both criticisms was to develop an account of the ways in which we frame the interactions we observe influenced by Geertz's (1973) notion of thick description as an analysis of the assumptions that are made to make sense of the complexities of social interaction. In *Frame Analysis*, Goffman (1974) seeks to provide an understanding of the assumptions made in the flow of conversation that forms a key part in the social construction of identities and the meaning of social encounters. Social practice unfolds in the light of framing assumptions that are not rigid but open to game-like transformations, as participants negotiate or contend with the meaning of interactional encounters.

Goffman developed these ideas into a series of studies in sociolinguistics (Verhoeven, 1993) that applied frame analysis to examples such as gender advertisements (Goffman, 1979), the lecture, and radio DJ talk (Goffman, 1981). This work enabled Goffman to develop more systematic accounts of communication roles organized into participation frameworks that broadened his understanding of the ways in which participants can orient themselves to social interaction (Goffman, 1981). These ideas take forward his earlier analyses of performance and ritual in social interaction, allowing him to address questions of mediation and the social construction of experience. Two examples are used here to illustrate the potential value of his approach in understanding social practice: Goffman's (1979) deployment of framing to understand the representation of gender as practice in advertisements and the influence of his concept of participation frameworks on recent work on the analysis of mediated online social interaction (Hutchby, 2014).

Gender Advertisements

In *Gender Advertisements* (1979), Goffman applies his frame analysis to the representation of gender in magazine advertising. In the foreword to the book, Gornick explains the appeal of Goffman's work in feminist theory in which "the most simple gesture, familiar ritual, taken-for-granted form of address, has become a source of new understanding with regard to relations between the sexes and the social forces behind these relations" (quoted in Goffman, 1979, p. vii). Goffman's analysis of advertisements is a study of the representation of the ordering of everyday life through the representation of ritual social practice. Goffman grounds the idea of the representation of ritual through a discussion of the contrast between portraits and pictures. Photography first developed the conventions of portraiture in which "the model sits or stands in his finery, holds an absent, half smiling expression on his face in the direction he is instructed to . . . and renders himself up to the judgement of eternity" (Goffman, 1979, p. 16). In contrast, Goffman argues that advertisements are presented as snapshots, as if the camera has captured a moment in a *mise-en-scène*. Participants are presented as unaware of being caught in the midst of a social encounter, offering up to interpretation captured moments in the unfolding practices of everyday life. The view offered to those looking at the advertisement has, therefore, the position of the naturalistic ethnographic observer watching the unfolding of gender relations as categories in ritual events, part of a genre that Goffman calls "commercial realism." For example, Goffman identifies a naturalized representation of the "protective intercessions" of men in scenes that create space for the

"indulgent proclivities" of women. Through snapshots of this kind, gender differences are presented as naturally occurring in social interactions that reaffirm social hierarchies and relations of domination. Goffman suggests that this genre of representation offers the observer the opportunity to read the narrative of a ritual captured in the moment by the photograph. The rest of the book consists of analyses of example advertisements from this perspective in which the function ranking of men and women is evident in their relative positioning in the captured scene, their orientation to each other, and forms of expression. A particularly interesting feature of these constructions of gender differences through practice takes up Schutz's (1967) analysis of everyday consciousness in which men are presented as focused and aware and women as in a state of "licensed withdrawal" from everyday consciousness. Mediation, on this account, is presented as if it were an extension of the rituals of everyday social interaction following the staging conventions of gender advertisements.

Mediated Online Interaction

Hutchby (2014) argues for the continuing relevance of Goffman's account of participation frameworks to understand the way that people use the affordances of technologically mediated social interaction. Digital and social media extend the capability of social interaction in conditions of perpetual contact (Katz & Aakhus, 2002; Ling, 2008). The development and integration of digital communications technology and platforms proliferate language use and social interaction, releasing them from the constraints of face-to-face interaction and the limitations of broadcast communication. Hutchby calls this a "multimodal system for the accomplishment of social interaction" (p. 86) and, following my argument here, extends sociability and the practices of everyday life through sustained networks of personal connectivity. To make sense of these changes in social practice, Hutchby evokes Goffman's idea of participation frameworks that seek to understand how those within the perceptual range of communication can position themselves in relation to it. Goffman (1981) understood such positioning as marked by who is addressed or not addressed by an utterance and who is a ratified participant of an interaction. Interaction is a medium of sociability, and therefore of the formation and maintenance of social relations, enabling us to coordinate plans and actions, to share and exchange symbolic content and experiences, through which we accomplish constitutive practices that shape our social identities and constitute interaction orders. As Hutchby argues, following Scannell (1996), technological mediation offers various affordances for interaction. For example, in the increased intimacy and informality of communication at a distance, there is potential for experimentation and vastly extended audiences for communication. Boyd (2014) applies Goffman's participation framework to make sense of the mixture of YouTube responses to a speech by Barack Obama in which different communication roles create a hybrid space with a creative tension between constructive and destructive commentary, each of which is anticipated in Obama's speech. This form of public mediated space, on the surface unstructured and offensive, is shown to be organized into a participation framework that captures diverse positions and political strategies, typifying interaction as a form of political practice.

These applications of Goffman's (1981) analysis of communication frameworks shift our conception of distinctions such as those between public and private and that between presence or absence from dichotomies to graded or blurred distinctions, so that the range and variety of contexts in which people are available for interaction are extended, and there is a continuum of contexts and opportunities for maintaining

sociability and social relations in graded contexts of intimacy. In these extended places for various forms of interaction, as Greschke (2010) suggests, "Conditioned by media, presence and absence are not mutually exhaustive categories, rather, they can be understood as a continuum" (p. 11). Ayaß (2014) illustrates these variations on Skype, which has a variety of options for differing degrees of presence and absence, in, for example, marking oneself as invisible to Skype connection and marking absence through presence in being unavailable for Skype calls. As Hutchby (2014) suggests, Goffman's participation framework, although developed to understand the organization of everyday practices through communication roles, captures key features of online mediated practices.

Conclusions

A central aspect of the practice turn (Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, & von Savigny, 2001) is the analytic differentiation of practice theory from other approaches to social and cultural theory. Bourdieu (1977) grounded his outline of a theory of practice on the critique of both structuralism and the combination of interactionism and phenomenology. Similarly, Reckwitz (2002) distinguishes practice theory from intersubjectivity, which includes interactionism. This negative grounding of practice theory has led to a diversity of conceptualization of practice reflected in Schatzki and colleagues' (2012) collection of papers and in studies of media and practice (Bräuchler & Postill, 2010) and diffuse approaches to empirical studies of practice (Shove et al., 2012). Goffman's work on the central role of social interaction in everyday and institutional practices suggests that the study of interaction is a central element of social practice (Shove et al., 2012). Goffman's understanding of the relation between interaction and social practice is illustrated by his analysis of both drama and ritual, suggesting that interaction be regarded as a central element in practice. For Goffman, the argument goes further in that he gives special significance to interaction as the ground for the realization of social identity and to constitutive interaction orders as crucial dimension of modern social life.

These explorations of the relations between social interaction and practice suggest several themes that contrast with established approaches to media and practice: a balancing of the focus on the institutional context of practice in media production by reasserting the importance of everyday life in culture and social reproduction, and reassertion agency and strategy through the openness and indeterminacy of interaction as a key element in mediated practice. The arguments about hierarchies of social practice or anchoring (Swidler, 2001) are complemented with the idea of constitutive practices that pervade everyday and institutional life, and through which participants can define or reframe social categories. The traditions of interactionism provide a set of concepts (e.g., participation framework) that are invaluable tools for observing and interpreting interaction as a key element in social practice. The implication is that interaction can be recognized as a key element of social practice (Shove et al., 2012) that requires an integration of practice theory and interactionism, and that provides a range of developed conceptual tools for the analysis of the role of interaction in social practice.

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