A THEORY OF MICRODYNAMICS

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ABSTRACT

Borrowing concepts and models from a variety of theoretical traditions, a general and comprehensive theory of interaction processes is presented. This theory divides the micro universe of social interaction into three constituent sets of processes: motivating, interacting, and structuring. Motivational processes are what mobilize individuals to interact; interactional processes are the mutual signaling and interpreting activities of actors as they gesture back and forth; and structuring processes are those procedures that individuals use to organize interaction across time and in space. Models are presented to delineate the dynamics of each of these three processes. These models are then combined into a more general model of microdynamics. Such models are visualized as a useful way to begin developing laws about the microdynamic universe.

INTRODUCTION

In this article, a summary of my theory of microdynamics will be presented (Turner 1988, 1987a, 1987b, 1986b; Turner and Collins 1989). A theory should be parsimonious, and so, my goal is to present the key concepts of the theory and indicate what I see as some of the important interconnections among these concepts. This theory does not represent any startling flashes of insight, but

Advances in Group Processes, Volume 6, pages 1–26.

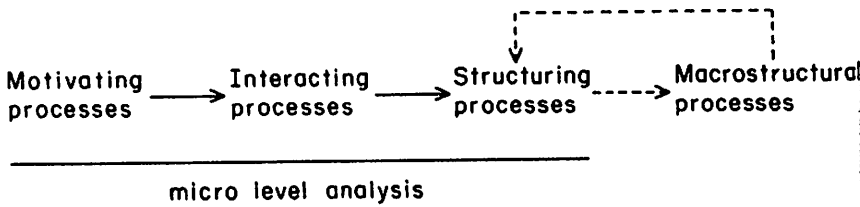
ISBN: 0-89232-979-3

instead, it is a synthetic effort. I have borrowed ideas and concepts liberally; and I have no regrets about ripping concepts from their original context and using them for my own purposes. Indeed, in my view, far too much theorizing is parochial, being confined to this or that perspective. I respect no traditions, genres, sacred master, revered contemporary, schools of thought, paradigms, or orientations; I consider them all fair game for conceptual raids.

The focus of the theory is on structuring, or the ordering of face to face interaction across time and in space. I make no claims about explaining macrostructures with this theory; and I hope very much to avoid the "meso" tar pit of trying to link micro and macro processes. My sense is that sociological theory has spent far too much time on this question, with scholars positing either a micro or macro chauvinism and accomplishing very little. I will, however, enter this conceptual fray with several caveats. First, micro and macro analysis constitute two separate and legitimate domains of inquiry. One focuses on the dynamics of face to face interaction, the other on the properties and processes occurring to populations of actors. Second, one level of analysis cannot be reduced to the other. We will not explain macrodynamics with micro processes, and vice versa. Third, any attempt to link the two—what I have recently begun calling the search for the "meso utopia"—is premature. We first require mature micro and macro theories. Fourth, to the extent that we insist on trying to link the two, my sense is that macro processes—that is, aggregation, differentiation, resource distribution, concentrations of power, institutional structures, etc.—will be more useful for micro analysis than the reverse. Macro processes set parameters on micro processes, and in fact, they often determine the values of the variables used to explain microdynamics. But this is as far as I go on this issue; I will leave it to the meso messiahs to continue the battle.

In approaching the issue of structuring at the face-to-face level of reality, I have visualized this portion of the universe as composed of three sets of interrelated processes: (1) structuring or, as I mentioned above, the ordering of interactions in time and space; (2) interacting, or the mutual signaling and interpreting of individuals; and (3) motivating, or the mobilization of individuals to initiate, carry out, or terminate an interaction. In very simple terms, these processes are represented in Figure 1. As will be argued, I consider micro level analysis

Figure 1. The Micro Universe



as revolving around the development of concepts, models, and propositions for each of these constituent processes—that is, structuring, interacting, and motivating—and then integrating the three levels into a composite model and series of laws which denote the key causal connections among structuring, interacting, and motivating processes.

In presenting my theory, I will proceed in the manner suggested by the model. An elementary theory of structuring will first be presented, followed by models on interacting and motivating processes. When this task is completed, I will integrate the three theories into a composite model of microdynamics that can be used to generate testable propositions. I will not, however, elaborate on these propositions but refer the reader to my more extensive discussion (Turner 1988).

STRUCTURING PROCESSES

What forces order an interaction across time and in space? I argue that five processes are critical: (1) stabilization of resource transfers, (2) normatization, (3) ritualization, (4) categorization, and (5) regionalization. Let me first indicate what I mean by these labels before summarizing their dynamic interconnections.

Stabilizing of Resource Transfers

Social structures, I believe, revolve around the exchange of resources among individuals. This is hardly news to an exchange theorist, but it is nonetheless fundamental to micro processes. As Homans (1961, 1951) recognized long ago, social structures are viable only to the extent that they provide people with gratifications in excess of their costs. However, Homans and other exchange theorists have often confused a theory of motivation with one about structure. People may be reward-seeking and this process may motivate them, but in order to structure an exchange, they must *stabilize* the transfers of resources, in several respects: (1) The nature of the relevant resources to be exchanged must be clearly specified; (2) the appropriate ratio of resources exchange must be specified (at least implicitly) and this ratio must be viewed as reasonable and correct; and as all exchange theories emphasize, (3) the absolute payoff for each actor must be considered adequate.

The operation of these processes is why exchanges involving money in non-bargaining "store" situations are so easily conducted: the transfer of resources is stabilized in the sense that the relevant resources, the appropriate ratio of resources, and the payoffs are all specified and understood. Less mercantile exchanges are more difficult to stabilize in this way because the nature, ratio, and payoffs of resources are less concrete, but nonetheless, people have rather amazing facilities to develop understandings over the relevant resources, the appropriate ratios, and the adequacy of payoffs in most situations. And, the more they

can do so or the more the macrostructure does this for them, the more likely are exchanges to be stabilized and, hence, the greater the probability that interaction will be ordered across time.

Normatizing

The concept of "norms" has gotten a rather bad press in sociology. This situation is regrettable because normative processes are crucial to understanding interaction, but in order to utilize this concept, we need to unburden it from its past usage and, thereby, reconceptualize the way that we utilize "normative sociology." Let us first lighten the conceptual load by recognizing the major problems with traditional usage of norms in social theory. This usage asks the concept of norms to do too much: to explain behavior in a situation in terms of clear expectations. For much functional theory, social order depended on "*a* norm" or at least a "set of norms" for every social position, since functional theory never specified other interpersonal processes by which people negotiate and develop agreements over how they will conduct themselves. And so, as the non-normative dimensions of social order were increasingly recognized, it became unpopular to stress the power of norms to form structure.

But, we should not throw the baby out with the bath water in recognizing that no *one* process can carry the burden of explaining structure. I propose, therefore, a more modest but highly dynamic view of norms which introduces the concept of norm*atize* in order to stress that people actively construct agreements along several crucial dimensions. Figure 2 presents in schematic form my reconceptualization of normative dynamics.

As Figure 2 underscores, I see normatizing as a cognitive process that involves the use of stores of information in actors' more general stocks of knowledge (Schutz 1932) to assemble and reassemble information about (a) the relevant rights and duties, (b) the appropriate interpretive schema, and (c) the procedures for adjudicating conflicts among or between (a) and (b). These three basic processes are, themselves, highly complicated; and it is perhaps remarkable that humans can simultaneously and rapidly operate along all three dimensions in order to normatize a situation.

Stores of information about rights and duties comprise individuals' cataloged information about what to expect in situations. By cataloged, I mean that the information is stored in a somewhat systematic way (perhaps as ordered gestalts) and that it can be retrieved (remembered) and made available for use in a situation. My guess is that individuals catalog information along three lines: (1) stores of rights and duties that apply to general types of situations and to all individuals within a given culture and society (norms of politeness, address, demeanor, decorum, conversational turn-taking, spacing, etc.); (2) norms of rights and duties in those highly ordered institutional contexts evident in all societies (economy, kinship, religion, politics); and (3) norms of the rights and

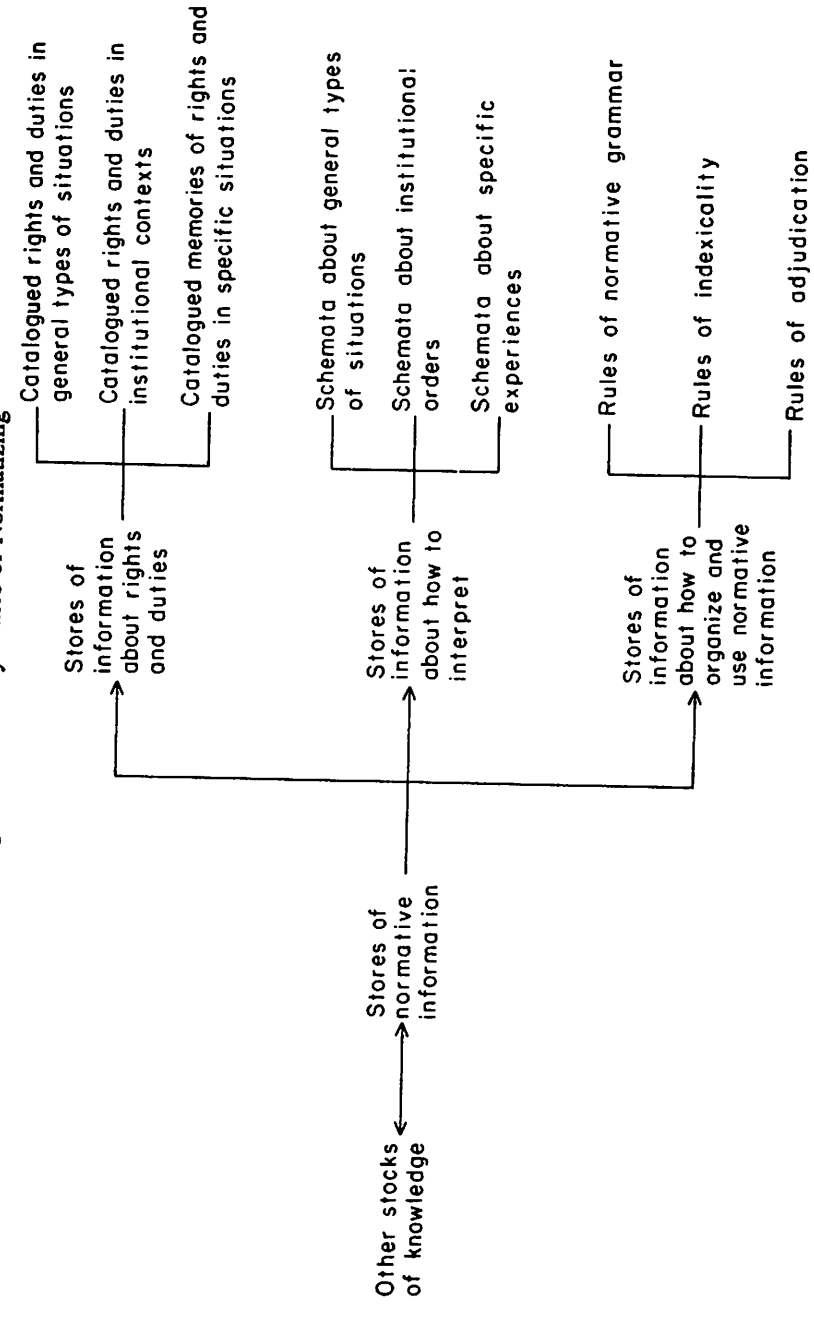


Figure 2. The Dynamics of Normatizing

duties negotiated and selectively remembered in specific situations over the course of a lifetime. As individuals interact, then, they invoke normative information about expectations of people in general, modify this information in terms of any institutional context that may (and may not) be relevant, and then qualify this information even further in terms of actual experiences in the same or similar situations.

This process of filtering and focusing information about rights and duties is both facilitated and circumscribed by the other two subsets of normative information. Taking information about interpretation first, actors order their knowledge about how to interpret situations and others into schemata, or somewhat loosely organized gestalts of interpretative elements revolving around the relevant attitudes, meanings, feelings, dispositions, and other orienting cognitions in a situation. These interpretative gestalts both filter each actor's perceptions of a situation and order the retrieval of information about rights and duties. There are, I think, three basic kinds of interpretative schemata, similar to the catalogs of information about rights and duties: (1) those about situations in general, (2) those concerning institutional contexts (family, economy, religion, etc.), and (3) those ordering specific past experiences in actual interactive contexts. Actors use these three schemata simultaneously to denote a situation as an instance of a past experience, as an element of an institutional order, and as a general type or category of interaction; and on the basis of this denotation, they select information about the rights and duties that are relevant and that are to be used in interactive negotiations with others.

This selection of rights and duties as well as their use in interaction also occurs in terms of procedures for organizing cognitive elements in general and normative elements in particular. My argument in Figure 2 is that there are three general types of such cognitive rules or procedures for cataloging, ordering, combining and recombining, retrieving, and using information: (1) grammatical rules specifying how interpretative gestalts and pieces of information about rights and duties are to be strung together to create a set of expectations; (2) rules of indexicality or context indicating the kinds of rights, duties, and schemata appropriate to varying types of situations; and (3) rules concerning adjudication of potentially discordant information about rights and duties, interpretative schemata, normative grammar, and contextual inferences.

Ritualizing

In my view, rituals are stereotyped and stylized sequences of behavior that symbolically mark and emotionally infuse the flow of interaction (Goffman 1967). As we will see shortly, rituals are part of the process of interaction and are connected to deeply sedimented motivational forces, but for the present, I want to emphasize the way that structuring is facilitated by rituals. I see four types of rituals that are most critical for structuring the flow of mutual gesturing: (1) opening and closing rituals, (2) forming rituals, (3) totemizing rituals, and (4) repair rituals. Opening and closing rituals mark the initiation and termination of an interaction. The structuring of any one interaction, or its resumption later, is greatly facilitated by the ability of actors to understand when an interaction is being initiated and terminated. Moreover, there are usually ritualized ways of "telling" others as part of the opening ritual how long the interaction will last, whereas the closing "tells" actors how easy it will be to pick up the interaction again at a subsequent time. Structuring interaction thus involves not only opening-closing behavioral sequences, but also implicit subrituals that inform actors as to the nature, duration, and resumption of the interaction.

A forming ritual involves the use of stereotyped behavioral sequences to order the interaction between its opening and closing. Such rituals indicate the form that the interaction should take, supplementing clues already given in opening gestures and previous closing gestures. Forming rituals give individuals a sense of "where an interaction is going" and "what's likely to happen." Moreover, they can be used to mark shifts in the form—for example, from a formal to a more personal mode.

A totemizing ritual is reaffirmation of group involvement and involves behavioral sequences that make the interaction, and potentially the group, the focus of attention. Such rituals typically revolve around "totems" in the sense that individuals will use symbols—objects, words, nonverbal gestures—as representations of *the* relationship and/or *the* group. I thus see totems as more than reverent responses toward physical objects; certain kinds of responses make totems of other people (for example, a warm embrace or a verbal sequence affirming friendship). In these cases, the other person is a totem toward whom rituals are addressed, but the rituals are not so much a "worship" of the person as of the relationship or group in which both actors are implicated. These totemic rituals tend to be the most emotionally infused of all rituals because they make the referent of the situation explicit—that is, the relationship and structure of the ongoing enterprise.

Since disruption of interaction is inevitable in human affairs, repair rituals are an essential part of structuring. Structuring cannot endure without a set of behavioral sequences to signal efforts at restoring a breached interaction. In each actor's stocks of knowledge are inventories of repair rituals that they can use to "smooth over" a disrupted interaction.

Structuring thus depends upon agreement and understanding among actors as to what opening and closing behavioral sequences are acceptable, what forms of interactive dialogue are appropriate, what gestures affirm their relationship, and what kinds of gestural sequences will repair a disrupted situation. The more actors share knowledge of rituals and the more readily they can emit them, the more likely an interaction is to reveal continuity and the more likely is it to be resumed with ease at subsequent points in time. Moreover, as individuals acquire knowledge about classes of situations and the ritual repertoires appropriate to

those situations, they can more readily move in and out of interactions with persons whom they have not met before. For if structure is to be elaborated beyond chains of repeated interaction among the same people, individuals must have generalized and appropriate rituals for how to open, proceed, close, and repair their interactions, thereby enabling them to reduce the level of interpersonal work needed to keep an interaction going while at the same time allowing them to meet basic needs.

Routinizing

Social structure depends upon behavioral sequences where, without great mental and interpersonal effort, actors do pretty much the same thing in time and space. Such routines involve repetitive sequences of mutual signaling and interpreting that are customary and habitual for the parties involved. Such repetitive sequences are typically punctuated with rituals but they are different than rituals in several senses: First, routines do not mark the beginning, ending, form and totems of an interaction. Second, while routines have emotional significance for individuals, they do not emotionally change an interaction to the degree as rituals which, when not emitted, create affronts requiring the emission of specific repair rituals. Third, whereas rituals are short markers, routines are much larger behavioral sequences that, in essence, fill in the time between rituals. Fourth, while routines are habitual sequences, they are not stereotyped to the same degree as rituals; moreover, they involve considerably more latitude in their emission, so long as the gestures in a routine fall within the range of the familiar.

If interaction were only rituals, humans would exhaust themselves emotionally and they would have nothing to mark with their rituals. Routines "fill in" time and give predictability to movement in space. Anthony Giddens (1984) has been the most perceptive of contemporary theorists in recognizing that routines are important for the reproduction of structure as well as for meeting people's deep-seated motives.

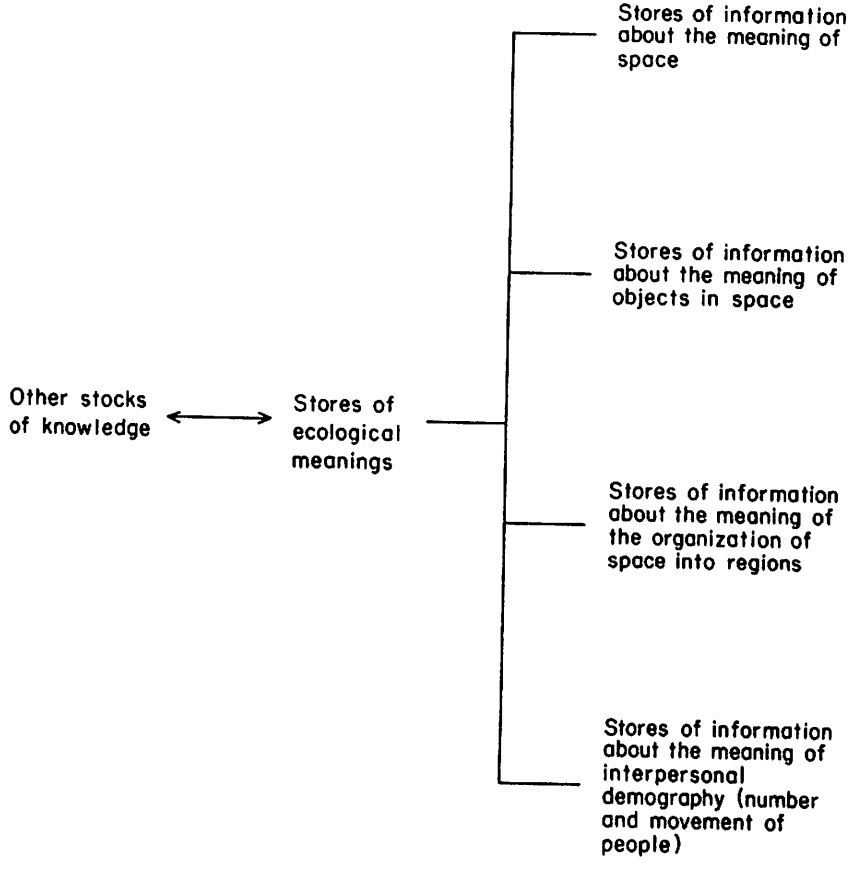
Routines typically emerge as a natural part of interactions that must be sustained. The result is that individuals can "go on automatic pilot" as they interact, without great deliberation about gesturing and interpreting. People simply behave "as they always do," thereby easing the interpersonal strain on each other and making it easy to resume the interaction later. In a sense, routines are a sort of interpersonal "dead time" that "fills in" structured interactions between those episodes where individuals must be interpersonally alert, awake, alive, and attuned.

Routines are not just the by-product of other behavioral activities, however. As we will see, actors are motivated to create routines; and they can do so because they carry in their stocks of knowledge information about the kinds of routines appropriate for various types of situations and about the ways of implementing these routines. This knowledge is, of course, built up from past experiences, but it is supplemented indirectly through observation of others, media, and additional sources of information. And so, for a situation to become structured over a substantial period of time, it must be routinized.

Regionalizing

Related to routinization, but also a very distinct structuring dynamic, is the regionalization of an interaction in space. As Goffman (1959) stressed, the ecology and demography of an interaction are critical variables. In particular, the structuring of an interaction is likely to be influenced by such considerations as the span of space in which the interaction occurs, the physical props that exist, the objects dividing space into "regions," the number and distribution of individ-

Figure 3. The Dynamics of Regionalizing



uals in regions, and the movement of people into and out of the overall space and its various subregions.

Through socialization and interactive experience, competent actors develop stocks of knowledge about interactive ecology. They then use this knowledge to regionalize interaction in time, thereby contributing to its structuring. In Figure 3, I have constructed a rough schematic view of the cognitive structure that generates these meanings. Individuals carry in their more general stocks of knowledge a subset of information about the meanings of varying ecological and demographic conditions. This information is cognitively organized along four dimensions: (1) the meaning of space in varying contexts; (2) the meaning of objects in different spatial settings; (3) the meaning of the division or organization of space in different contexts; and (4) the meaning of interpersonal demography—varying numbers, distributions, and movements of people in different settings. For an interaction to become structured, actors must agree what the space in which they are located signifies; they must accept the significations of objects in this space; they must understand what the division of space into regions means; and they must know what the number, distribution, and movement of people in the situation indicates.

When situations are not regionalized, actors need to work very hard to figure out what they are supposed to do. For regionalization offers a host of cues that tell people how to orient themselves and that indicate which range of norms, rituals, and resources are most relevant. Without understanding of interactive ecology and demography, a much grater burden falls upon interpersonal signaling and interpreting, forcing actors to "work at" and "work out" their respective sequences of responses. But when they can use standardized ecological and demographic cues, the interaction can flow more readily and can be more easily resumed at a future time.

Categorizing

For structure to be viable, actors must label each other and the situation. Schutz (1932) termed this process "mutual typification" of individuals as "ideal types" or as representatives of certain classes of persons. Early American theorists (Thomas and Znaniecki 1918) emphasized "the definition of the situation," although this term is rather vague. But the general idea is clear: Visualizing situations and individuals as examples or instances of a category reduces the need for fine-tuned signaling and interpreting. For once persons and contextual elements are categorized, the appropriate responses are, in a very literal sense, preprogramed and can be emitted without great deliberative effort. Individuals carry in their stocks of knowledge information about how they are supposed to orient themselves and behave, in general terms, in given types of situations. Without this information, structuring of interaction would be difficult; each situation and individual would be unique, requiring new responses at different points in one encounter and at each new encounter. But by invoking relevant categories, individuals can enter new situations and emit appropriate responses to strangers, thereby reproducing those structures through which different actors pass.

Table 1. The Dynamics of Categorizing

	Work/Practical	*Ceremonial*	*Social*
Categories	Others as functionaries whose behaviors are relevant to achieving a specific task or goal and who, for the purposes at hand, can be treated as strangers	Others as representatives of a larger collective enterprise toward whom highly stylized responses owed as a means of expressing their joint activity	Others as strangers toward whom superficially informal, polite, and responsive gestures are owed
Persons	Others as functionaries whose behaviors are relevant to achieving a specific task or goal but who, at the same time, must be treated as unique individuals in their own right	Others as fellow participants of a larger collective enterprise toward whom stylized responses are owed as a means of expressing their joint activity and recognition of each other as individuals in their own right	Others as familiar individuals toward whom informal, polite, and responsive gestures are owed
Intimates	Others as close friends whose behaviors are relevant to achieving a specific task or goal and toward whom emotional responsiveness is owed	Others as close friends who are fellow participants in a collective enterprise and toward whom a combination of stylized and personalized responses are owed as a means of expressing their joint activity and sense of mutual understanding	Others as close friends toward whom informal and emotionally responsive gestures are owed

While there have been a number of efforts to conceptualize the process of categorizing, I employ a modified version of Collins' (1975) approach. This modified conceptualization is outlined in Table 1. For Collins, individuals initially assess situations as being one of three types: work/practical, ceremonial, or social. This simplifies the organization of responses, since individuals now "know" the range of behaviors most relevant to the situation. Of course, they may also carry in their cognitive structure, or develop during the course of interaction, more fine-tuned and contextual conceptions for each of these three general types of situations, thereby facilitating further the organization of behaviors during prolonged interactions. But initially—which is the critical moment for the reproduction of an interaction—individuals rely upon a few general categories to typify a situation.

People also classify or typify each other. My sense is that such classification varies according to the degree of intimacy with which people view each other. At one extreme, they can see each other as intimates with whom they feel in true intersubjective contact, while at the other, they can see each other as categories whose subjective states they presume by virtue of their being instances of a particular type of individual. And perhaps there is some middle category where people see each other as types, and yet at the same time, as persons about whom they should know some personal specifics.

The structuring of interaction is dramatically facilitated when one of these nine types can be used by individuals to organize their responses. Such categorization makes responses predictable, enables people to enter new situations and understand what is expected, and allows them to pick up old interactions where they left off.

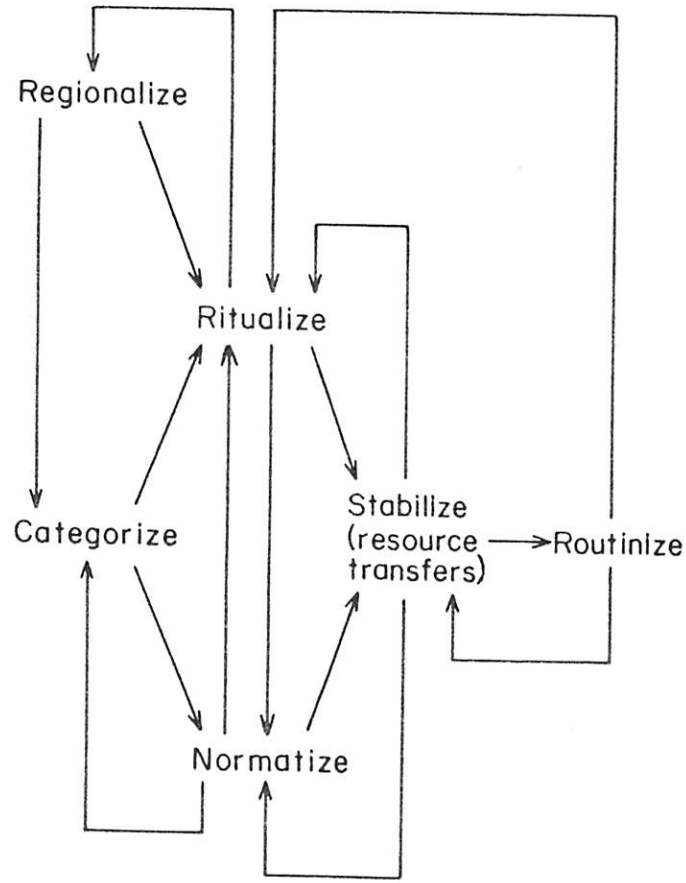
A Model of Structuring

These six processes—stabilizing resource transfers, normatizing, routinizing, ritualizing, regionalizing, and categorizing—are the most fundamental to understanding the process of interpersonal structuring. As I have implied, they bear certain crucial causal connections with each other, which are modeled in Figure 4.

The simple model in Figure 4 is intended to emphasize the *process* of structuring in the alignment of variables in the left to right format and in the use of feedback arrows. The argument in the model is this: actors initially regionalize and categorize situations; and as the causal arrow from regionalize to categorize emphasizes, actors use cues from the nature of space, objects, divisions, and demography in developing the appropriate categories in terms of levels of interpersonal intimacy and work/practical, ceremonial, and social content. Such categorization is then used to assemble normative agreements, or to become aware of those that are appropriate in terms of the processes outlined earlier in Figure 2. Categorization and regionalization both circumscribe the kinds of rituals to be performed—openings/closings, forming, totemizing, and repairing. Together norms and rituals facilitate the stabilization of resource transfers. Exchanges which can be ritualized are easier to conduct because they have clear beginnings, closings, sequences, and repair procedures. Moreover, if norms can be developed—especially those over "fairness" and "justice"—then the exchange is further structured in ways that stabilize resource transfers. Finally, if exchanges of resources can cause routinization, such routinization can feed back and further stabilize the exchange, since resources flow as a matter of habit.

Other feedback processes are also crucial. Routinization also helps specify the appropriate rituals during an exchange, as does a completed exchange (since exchange at $time_1$ becomes the model for exchange at $time_2$). Similarly, completed exchanges in terms of norms of justice and fairness reinforce the assembled norms, thereby making them salient at the next encounter. The reinforcement of norms also works to sustain the appropriateness of categories that have

Figure 4. The Dynamics of Structuring



been invoked. In a similar feedback cycle, successful exchanges reinforce the appropriateness of the rituals employed which, in turn, confirms the staging cues originally used to invoke the relevant rituals.

Thus, if actors had to create a micro structure, *de novo*, the processes outlined in Figure 4 are hypothesized to be crucial, in the causal sequences presented in the model. Of course, most situations are already structured, at least to some extent, by past encounters, macrostructures, or familiarity with similar types of situations. Nonetheless, I hypothesize that use of regional cues and categorization are what actors initially use to order their responses, followed by rituals and normatizing processes, which as the double arrows connecting them highlight, are mutually reinforcing. Only after these four processes are initiated does the actual transfer of resources occur, and if successful on repeated occasions, routinization occurs and feeds back to decrease the extent to which actors must work at regionalizing, normatizing, categorizing, and ritualizing a setting.

Such are my views on structuring. Many hypotheses can be generated from the model, and I invite readers to consult my more extensive analysis for some of these (Turner 1988). A theory of microdynamics does not end with a model of structuring, however. As Figure 1 emphasizes, we need to analyze the processes involved in the dynamics of interacting (signaling and interpreting through gestures) and the processes involved in motivating (energizing and mobilizing) actors to interact and structure their interactions. Let me now turn to interaction as a process, saving for later consideration motivating processes.

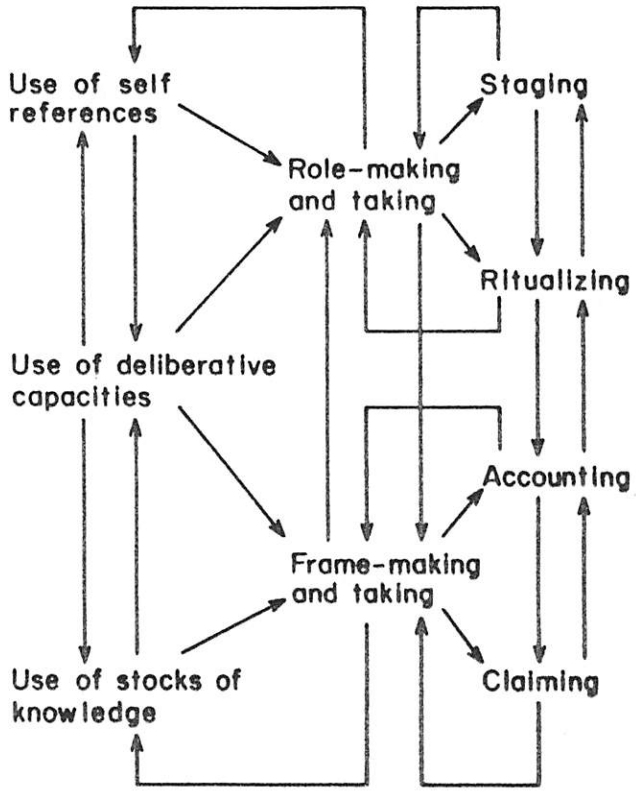
INTERACTING PROCESSES

A theory of microdynamics must include a conceptualization of the process of interaction, especially as it mediates between structuring processes on the one side and motivating processes on the other (see Figure 1). Motives are implemented through dual processes of signaling with gestures and interpreting these gestures, whereas social structures are produced and reproduced through these same processes. In Figure 5, I outline in rough schematic form my composite model of the dynamics underlying interaction. As with Figure 4, the intent of this model is to emphasize the key causal sequences in the process of signaling and interpreting.

As people are motivationally mobilized, they use their deliberative capacities, or what G. H. Mead (1934) termed "mind," to channel their physical and emotional energies. Deliberations vary enormously in terms of explicitness and rationality. I suspect that the degree of explicit calculation and rehearsal of alternatives is curvilineal, increasing as deprivations mobilize energy up to the point of futility or the use of defense mechanisms like repression. Motives provide the "push" for actors to draw upon stocks of knowledge and self-references to engage in signaling and interpreting activities. "Stocks of knowledge" is defined in a way that follows from Schutz (1932): patterned pieces of information that individuals acquire through previous interactions, store in their memory, and use to organize their own responses and make sense of those of others. These stores of "knowledgeability" are employed to transfer conceptions of oneself into a series of self-references about what responses by others and oneself are most essential for achieving self-confirmation and affirmation.

These self-references alone, or as mediated by stocks of knowledge, are particularly important in what Mead (1934) termed role-taking and in what Ralph Turner (1962) saw as role-making. Role-taking is the process of reading gestures and other situational cues in order to determine dispositions and likely courses of action of others. Such a process can be reflexive because, to varying degrees, people filter through the prism of self-references the gestures of others in a situation. Role-making is the process of using stocks of role-conceptions to orchestrate gestures so as to create a role—that is, patterned sequences and

Figure 5. The Dynamics of Interacting



syndromes of gestures which others understand and use to predict one's likely course of responses in a situation. Such role-making usually involves efforts to assume a role that confirms self (R. Turner 1978).

Role-taking and role-making are complementary because actors read each other's role-making efforts in role-taking. As Goffman (1959) and later Collins (1975) and Giddens (1984) have emphasized, two crucial vehicles for much signaling and interpreting are what I am terming (1) staging and (2) ritualizing. As I noted earlier, people read and use staging cues—that is, density of actors, relative positioning, configurations of space into regions, use of physical objects, patterns of dress, and the like—to role-take and role-make. Such understandings about "what staging means" are acquired over time as part of people's stocks of knowledge. Individuals also use and read rituals—that is, stereotyped sequences of signals that open, close, sequence, repair, and change the flow of signaling and interpreting—to role-take and role-make. Again, the meaning of rituals in varying contexts is part of the stocks of knowledge of competent actors.

What the model in Figure 5 argues, then, is that role-taking and role-making are conducted primarily through using and reading staging and ritual cues. Moreover, self-references are particularly important in guiding these interpersonal processes. And, as the feedback arrows at the top and middle portions of Figure 1 underscores, successful staging and ritualizing not only determine the viability of role-making and role-taking, these continue to feed back to self-references and, as we will see later, to motives.

Following Goffman (1974), I see framing as another crucial signaling and interpreting process. However, this interpersonal dynamic is conceptualized somewhat differently than in Goffman's scheme. In my view, a frame is the cognitive enclosuring of signaling and interpreting activities of individuals within delimited boundaries such that the range of relevant behavioral options in an interaction is reduced. I think that framing occurs simultaneously along four dimensions: (1) the imposition of physical frames, or the props, stages, and space to be used in the interaction; (2) the imposition of demographic boundaries, or the number and movement of actors in space to be encompassed in an interaction; (3) the imposition of organizational boundaries, or the relevant social unit (institutional complex, organizational boundary, group, or subgroup) to be used as a reference point; (4) the imposition of cultural boundaries, or the range of symbols (e.g., cultural values, specific beliefs, institutional norms, or contextual norms and understandings) to be invoked; and (5) the imposition of personal boundaries, or the relevant levels of intimacy, biography, and ego-involvement to be displayed in a situation. Figure 6 summarizes my argument and stresses that, as actors use and interpret gestures and cues, they provide each other with information about the physical, demographic, organizational, cultural, and personal boundaries within which the deployment of other interpersonal processes is to occur. In my terms, individuals simultaneously and reciprocally "frame-make" and "frame-take."

Such framing is possible because individuals possess in their stocks of knowledge information about the relevant frames for varying types of contexts, the appropriate signaling procedures for "keying" or shifting frames, the correct practices for negotiating which frames are to be employed, and the adjudicating precedents for reconciling the four general types of frames. Moreover, these framing processes facilitate role-making and role-taking, while at the same time being circumscribed by such role-making and role-taking. The central interpersonal processes for developing frames, I assert, are accounting and claiming. With the concept of accounting, I borrow from ethnomethodology and argue that people use ethnomethods to construct a sense of "what's real" in a situation (Garfinkel 1967). This sense is accomplished through verbal procedures—that is, glosses, turn-takings, repair rituals (note arrow between ritualizing and accounting), assertions, questions, pauses, and other implicit ethnomethodological procedures—for creating the presumption that actors share common subjective and intersubjective worlds. Thus, rather than see ethnomethodology as a separate

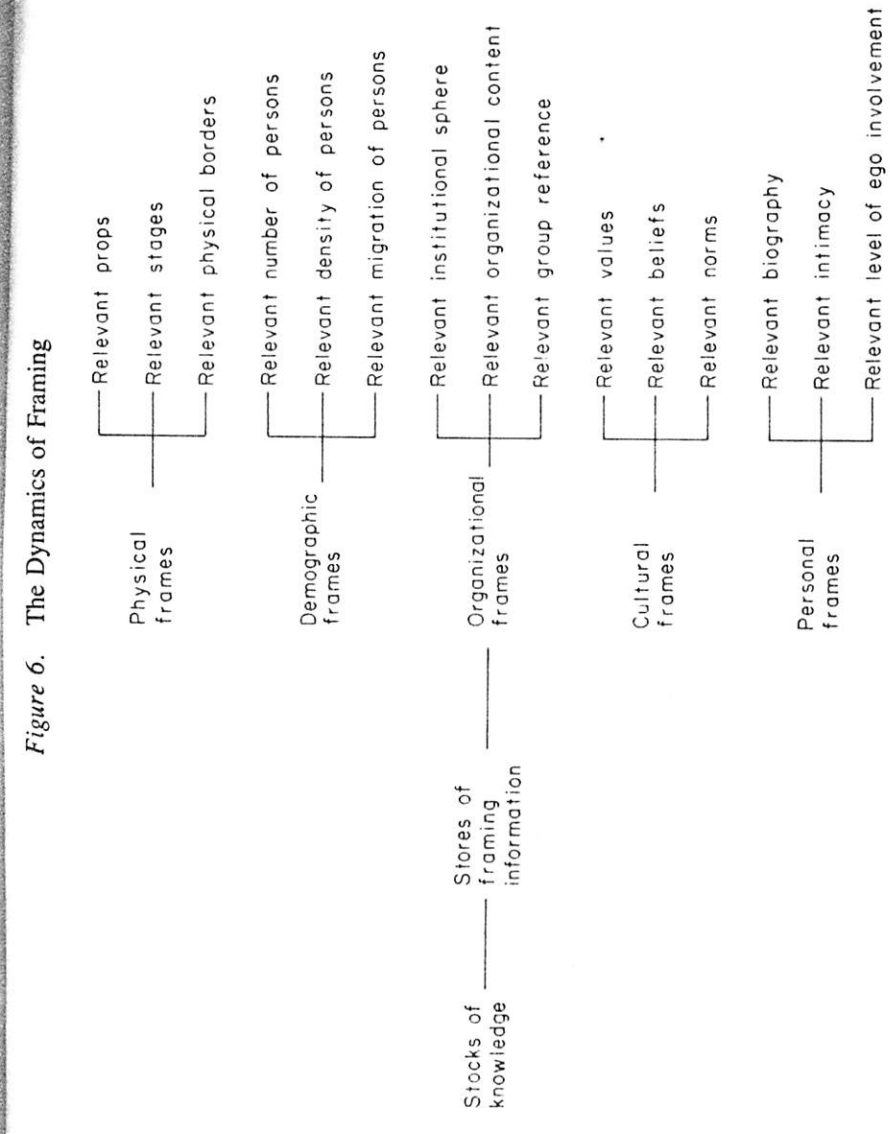


Figure 6. The Dynamics of Framing

paradigm, Figure 5 attempts to show how the concerns of ethnomethodologists can be integrated into "mainstream" interactionism. People use a frame to guide their deployment of ethnomethods and, as the feedback arrow underscores, ethnomethods are crucial to maintaining or keying a frame.

Framing is also conducted through what Habermas (1982, 1970a, 1970b) terms "discourse" over "validity claims" about "sincerity," "means-ends procedures," and "normative appropriateness." But unlike Habermas, who sees open and "rational" discourse as desirable, I argue that the assertion of validity claims and discourse (acceptance, challenge, and counter-claiming) over them is typically implicit. In fact, following Schutz (1932), I see individuals working to avoid conscious discourse over sincerity, means-ends logics, and normative appropriateness. For if they cannot keep these matters implicit, they must then devote considerable energy to hashing out claims and counter-claims (perhaps only an academic like Habermas would see this as "normal" or "desirable"). Moreover, if an interaction stalls over challenges to claims, then actors' construction of accounts and use of frames become problematic. And, if these are called into question, role-making and role-taking can also become difficult. Actors often use ethnomethods to avoid this potentiality. In particular, they will use glosses and repair rituals to keep validity claims implicit and to create a sense of sincerity, means-ends rationality, and appropriateness. Keeping claims implicit facilitates framing which, as it feeds back, reinforces stocks of knowledge and, as I will argue shortly, operates to meet basic motive states.

Not only do these processes outlined in Figure 5 translate motives into interpersonal behavior (i.e., signaling and interpreting), they connect motives to structure. Staging and ritualizing, as these processes are circumscribed by self-references and role-making/role-taking, are obviously the interpersonal underpinnings of processes that regionalize and ritualize interaction. Similarly, accounting and claiming, as influenced by frame-making/frame-taking, are the interpersonal bases, respectively, of those processes that categorize and normatize a situation. Thus, staging, ritualizing, accounting, and claiming are the mechanism by which other interactive processes—self-referencing, deliberation, use of stocks of knowledge, role-making, role-taking, frame-making, and frame-taking—are connected to microstructures. To state the issue differently, when staging, ritualizing, accounting, and claiming are not possible, social structure cannot be produced or reproduced.

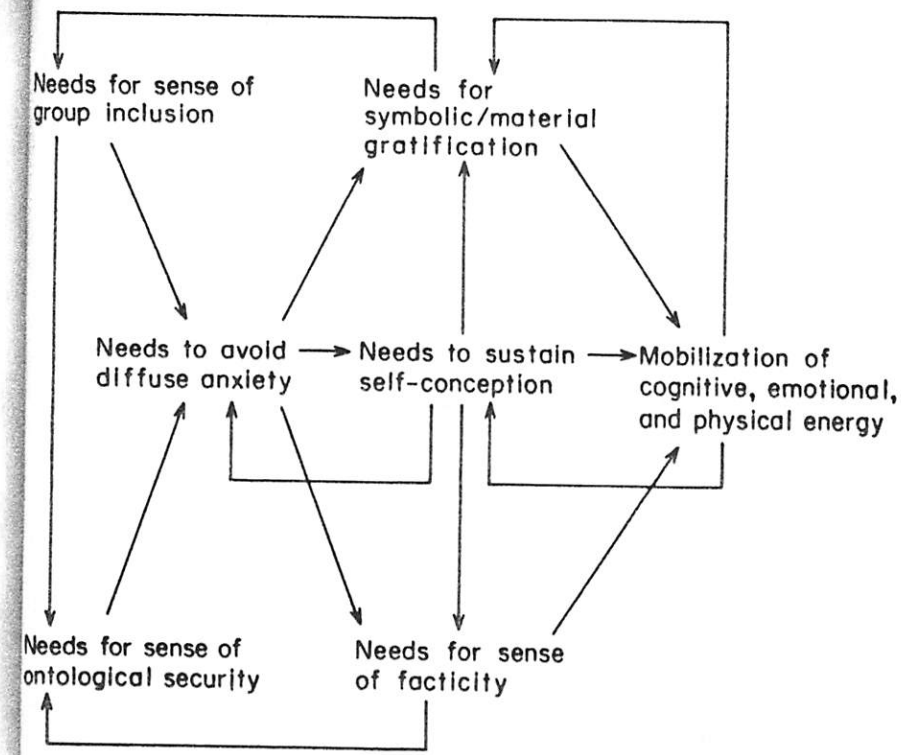
MOTIVATING PROCESSES

In my view, sociology has kept its theories of motivation implicit, presumably because of deficiencies in older "instinct" approaches or perhaps because of the reductionist implications of such theories. Yet, most sociological theories, especially those dealing with micro processes, tacitly posit concepts denoting what

"drives," "mobilizes," and "energizes" actors. At the same time, this motivational portion of the theory is often collapsed or mixed with other elements so as to disguise and/or obfuscate the hidden theory of motives. In contrast to much micro theorizing, I think that we need a very explicit theory of motivation. My approach is essentially behavioristic, but a far more robust version than typically associated with behaviorism. Hence, I have termed it behavioral (Turner 1989) in order to avoid the narrow connotations of hard line behaviorism.

The essential tenet of behaviorism is retained, however. People's patterns of behavior, including the production and reproduction of social structures, is the result of reinforcement. People do things because they are rewarding or gratifying; and they attempt to avoid situations that are not gratifying and punitive. The theoretically important task that follows from this tenet is to determine what influences gratification. Here, we must re-evoke an old idea: needs. I argue that, in addition to basic physiological needs, humans possess certain fundamental psychological needs which, if unfulfilled, create a sense of deprivation (Turner 1987b). This line of argument simply states that what people value—that is, their

Figure 7. The Dynamics of Motivation



various domains of value—is determined by needs and that what mobilizes and energizes people in interaction are efforts to meet these needs.

Stated in this way, the concept of needs says very little. But, if we can specify the types of needs basic to humans and the ways in which they influence the process of interaction and the viability of structure, then the concept of needs has theoretical utility. Actually, I am not proposing anything here beyond what micro sociologists already do implicitly; I am merely making explicit the hidden theories of motivation contained in most micro theorizing. My views on the dynamics of human needs are modeled in Figure 7; and as is immediately evident, I have borrowed concepts from other theories—thereby underscoring my contention that a theory of motivation is an integral part of most micro-sociologists' views on human interaction.

As the model emphasizes, the mobilization of cognitive, emotional, and physical energy is related to people's efforts to avoid the sense of deprivation that comes when people cannot (1) achieve a sense of group inclusion, (2) create a sense of ontological security, (3) avoid diffuse anxiety, (4) realize symbolic and material gratification, (5) confirm or affirm self, and (6) generate a presumption of facticity. Let me review each of these need states first, and then, examine their causal connections.

Although he does not express the matter in quite this way, Collins (1975) argues that actors reveal needs for group involvement, or what I call "group inclusion." When individuals sense a lack of inclusion in the ongoing flow of interaction, they experience anxiety and feel deprived. Yet, individuals do not always need to feel high degrees of "solidarity" or other affective states with others, but only the sense that they are part of the flow of events. In fact, actors possess in their "stocks of knowledge" (Schutz 1932) rather fine-grained understandings of what inclusion (or lack of inclusion) in varying types of situations would involve; and on the basis of these understandings, they determine implicitly whether or not they are experiencing the appropriate level of group involvement.

Anthony Giddens (1984) has recently resurrected an old philosophical concept (ontological security) and argued that individuals need to feel that "things are as they seem" and that the behaviors of others are, in rough terms, "predictable" and "trustworthy." When the appearance of order and predictability is low, individuals experience anxiety and feel deprivation. Many have conceptualized this motive force—Garfinkel (1967) and Erikson (1950), for example—and the idea is that the responses of others must feel as though they constitute predictable indicators of a "real world out there."

The entire ethnomethodological paradigm posits, at least implicitly, a related motive force—what I call "facticity." For what Garfinkel (1967, 1963) and various colleagues have demonstrated with their now famous "breaching experiments" is that people need to develop an implicit presumption that they share, for the purposes at hand, common external and inter-subjective worlds. When they

cannot produce this feeling of "facticity," or it is breached in some way, they experience anxiety, indeed often anger; and in turn, this anxiety feeds back to disrupt their sense of ontological security. Thus, as the model in Figure 7 emphasizes with the feedback arrows, meeting needs for facticity are partially responsible for realizing a sense of ontological security.

The theories of most symbolic interactionist theorists (e.g., Gecas 1982; Rosenberg 1979), contain a theory of motivation which emphasizes people's need to sustain their self-conception during the course of interaction. If people's conceptions of themselves as certain kinds of persons go unsupported, they will experience anxiety and deprivation. Despite considerable controversy in the literature over the specific dimensions of self that need confirmation, such as the debate over the question of whether or not people try to confirm transitory and situational self-images or stable and transituational self-conceptions, this debate does not obviate what all contending parties acknowledge: humans are motivated to affirm and confirm at least some dimensions of their self during the course of interaction.

Exchange theories (e.g., Homans 1961; Blau 1964; Emerson 1972a, 1972b) posit a theory of motivation emphasizing needs for material and symbolic gratification. When people do not receive these resources, they experience a sense of deprivation. Of course, the context of an interaction determines just what symbols and objects are gratifying, but as the model in Figure 7 suggests, other need-states have causal effects on people's sense of what is materially and symbolically rewarding. That is, individuals will find particularly gratifying those material and symbolic resources that mark group inclusion, promote self-confirmation, create facticity, and enhance ontological security.

Psychoanalytic approaches have recently made a bit of a theoretical comeback, but only in limited areas, such as feminist theories. Yet, they all stress a cultural motive force: anxiety. As Sullivan (1953) and Horney (1950) argued long ago, much human activity can be explained by efforts to avoid anxiety, or in Mead's (1938) terms, the sense of disequilibrium and disjuncture with the environment. Repression and the use of other defense mechanisms represent ways to cope with acute anxiety in chronically difficult interactions, but as both Freud (1900) and Mead (1938) emphasized, albeit in somewhat different ways, repression only escalates the intensity of impulses and, hence, the underlying anxiety experienced by an individual. Thus, any theory of motivation must recognize that the avoidance of anxiety is a basic need-state which mobilizes a great deal of human behavior because, when people experience anxiety, they feel deprived and are mobilized to "do something" about it.

These six needs are what motivate human behavior during the course of interaction; and they are the ultimate psychological underpinnings of micro social structures. Hence, to the degree that micro social structures fail to meet these need-states, they become increasingly untenable and unviable. Yet, this kind of statement does not provide an adequate picture of the dynamics involved; and so,

let me review in more detail the model in Figure 7 in order to see how these need-states are related to each other.

As is evident in the model, the need to avoid diffuse anxiety mediates basic needs for ontological security, group inclusion, and self-confirmation. Because it does so, people are often unaware of "just what is wrong" and "why they feel so ill at ease" about a situation, since the specific source of their anxiety is masked, especially if the level of anxiety is sufficiently strong or long-term to cause the invocation of defense mechanisms. In contrast, needs for facticity and symbolic/material gratification will produce immediate frustration and anger, mobilizing cognitive reflection and the conscious expenditure of emotional and physical energy. Garfinkel's (1967) breaching experiments document this generalization, since people were immediately aroused to correct breaches whereas injustice in exchange mobilizes people's anger. The feedback arrows at the top and bottom of the model underscore the fact that deprivation over needs for facticity and material/symbolic gratification will eventually influence, respectively, needs for group inclusion and ontological security. In particular, when deprivation is over the symbols and objects marking group inclusion or over breaches in the presumed facticity of people's external and internal social worlds, needs for group inclusion and ontological security are affected which, in turn, escalates diffuse anxiety. Moreover, as the causal arrow on the far left of Figure 7 emphasizes, a failure to meet needs for group inclusion will disrupt people's sense of security and predictability, thereby escalating anxiety even further.

Anxiety generates a sense of "something being wrong," particularly in regard to needs for self-confirmation, symbolic/material gratification, and facticity. The spatial juxtapositioning of the variables in the model in Figure 7 and the paths of the causal arrows emphasize that self is a central process here. Anxiety will immediately produce self-doubt. Such doubt feeds back to escalate the anxiety which produces it and which, subsequently, lowers individuals' sense of facticity. In turn, as self-doubt affects facticity and anxiety, it operates both directly and indirectly to influence people's sense of symbolic/material deprivation, group inclusion, and ontological security.

TOWARD A GENERAL THEORY OF MICRODYNAMICS

In Figure 8, I combine the constituent models of structuring, interacting, and motivating processes. This composite model represents my theory of microdynamics in skeletal form. As I have argued in many places (Turner 1988, 1987a, 1987b, 1986a, 1986b, 1985, 1984), an analytical model like that in Figure 8 can be used for several purposes. One is to emphasize the causal connections among the variables. The closer the juxtaposition of the variables in visual space and the more direct the causal arrows connecting them, the greater

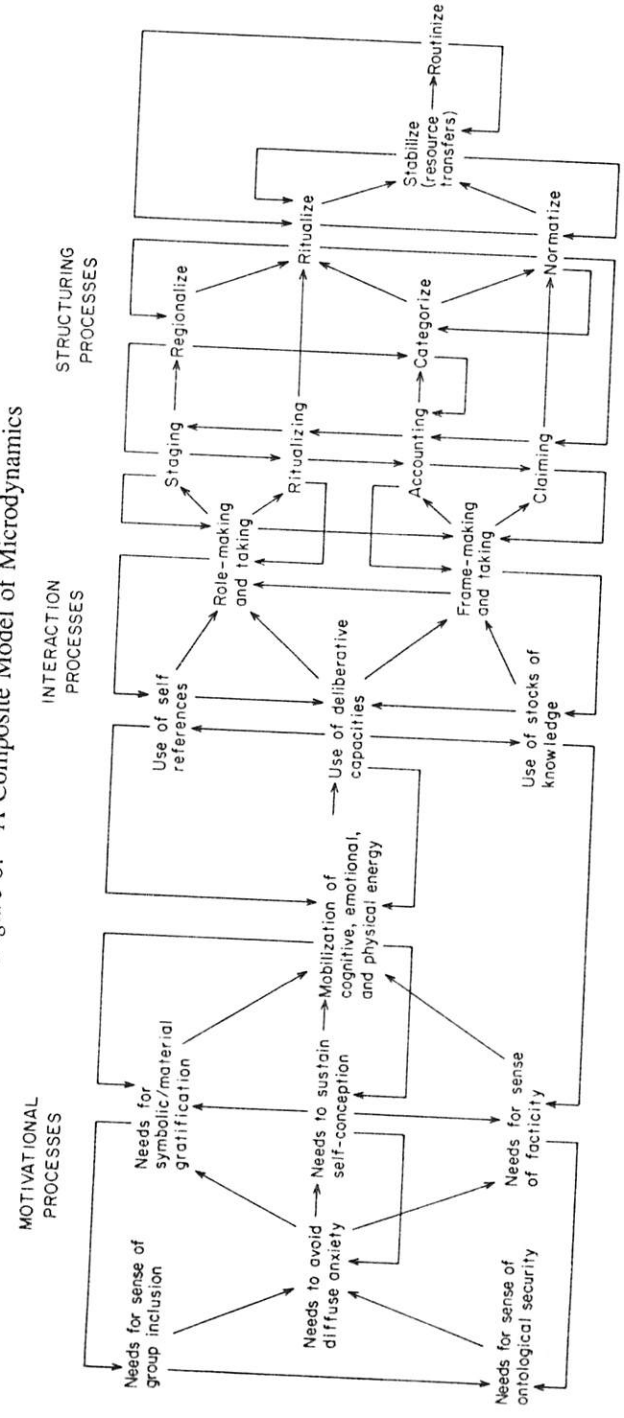


Figure 8. A Composite Model of Microdynamics

are the hypothesized effects between, and among, the variables. Another purpose of analytical models is to articulate the complex direct, indirect, and feedback relations among the variables. A final use of an analytical model is to generate propositions. In a sense, each arrow connecting variables represents a proposition, but to be really useful, we must do more than use the model as a proposition generating machine. Additional theorizing is necessary if we are to sort out the more crucial configurations of direct, indirect, and feedback processes delineated in Figure 8. Let me close, therefore, with some speculations about what I see as the most critical microdynamic processes. [I refer the reader to Turner (1988), for specific propositions; here, I will simply outline some of the essential processes, as I see them.]

The bottom of Figure 8 emphasizes one set of processes. My sense is that framing activity mediates between deep-seated needs for ontological security and more surface needs for facticity, on the one hand, and the claiming and accounting activities that produce and reproduce categories, norms, stabilized resource transfers, and routines, on the other. By following sequences of direct and feedback paths across the bottom of Figure 1, it becomes evident that needs for ontological security and facticity are powerful motive forces behind the creation of norms, stabilized resource transfers, and routines. Indeed, most of Garfinkel's breaching experiments involved a violation of these aspects of structure; and because they are tied to these needs for predictability, trust, and facticity, breaches arouse anxiety which, in turn, creates rather dramatic (and, on the surface, disproportionate) efforts to restore equilibrium.

Moving back and forth across the middle of Figure 1 reveals another critical set of processes. Self is the central process here. My belief is that people's efforts to sustain self are the prime motive behind role-taking and role-making through ritual and staging. In turn, self is lodged most dramatically, I hypothesize, in the regionalization and ritualization of resource transfers. Thus, if people cannot occupy space or display props that confirm self and if they cannot emit and receive the appropriate rituals, they will experience considerable anxiety which will redouble their efforts to re-make roles and re-structure regions and rituals as these influence resource exchanges and routines.

The top part of Figure 1 argues that people are particularly concerned about the material and symbolic markers of group inclusion and that much role-making/taking is directed at staging and ritualizing situations to receive material and symbolic resources in exchanges that denote group membership. This is, of course, Durkheim's (1912) point; and it is the underlying argument in Collins' (1987, 1975) theory of interaction ritual chains.

Thus, while the configurations of causal paths in Figure 7 make it evident that matters are more complex, my sense is that social structure, as well as the interpersonal processes that are employed to produce and reproduce it, are connected to three basic complexes of motives: (1) to feel secure (ontological security and facticity), (2) to feel involved (group inclusion and the symbols/materials marking such inclusion), and (3) to be confirmed as a certain kind of person (self). Structures which fail to meet these needs become unviable and generate efforts to re-make and re-frame through re-staging, re-ritualizing, re-accounting, and re-claiming.

Of course, much more can be pulled out of this model of microdynamics. But for this general overview of my theory (see, for more details, Turner 1988, 1987b, 1986b), the above discussion is hopefully sufficient to encourage others to take this theory, even in its skeletal form, and develop testable hypotheses.

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