



# UNDERSTANDING EVERYDAY LIFE

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# EVERYDAY LIFE

Toward the Reconstruction of Sociological Knowledge

edited by  
**Jack D. Douglas**      University of California, San Diego

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## The Everyday World as a Phenomenon\*

### *Introduction*

In contrast to the perennial argument that sociology belabors the obvious, we propose that sociology has yet to treat the obvious as a phenomenon. We argue that the world of everyday life, while furnishing sociology with its favored topics of inquiry, is seldom a topic in its own right.<sup>1</sup> Instead, the familiar, common-sense world, shared by the sociolo-

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We are indebted to Aaron Circourel, Harold Garfinkel, Harold Pepinsky, and D. Lawrence Wieder for their critical reading of the first draft of this chapter. In addition, we thank our fellow conferees, and the members of a graduate seminar in ethnomethodology at the University of California at Santa Barbara for their many helpful comments. Thomas P. Wilson patiently read many portions of the final draft and provided a number of timely suggestions that helped us through several difficult sections. Dorothy Smith, Matthew Speier, and Roy Turner made a number of helpful suggestions. We gratefully acknowledge the insightful comments of these friends and colleagues. We are alone responsible for whatever defects this chapter may possess.

Our debt to Harold Garfinkel is a special one. He made available to us funds from Air Force Grant AF-AFOSR-757-66, of which he and Harvey Sacks are coprincipal investigators. More importantly, as will be evident throughout the chapter, his work and counsel furnished us the critical resources from which we have drawn so heavily.

1. The phenomenological studies of Schutz (1962, 1964, 1966, 1967) and the seminal investigations of Garfinkel (1959a, 1967, and in Shneidman, 1967:171-187) and Sacks (1963, 1966, unpublished) have been directed precisely to the task of making the world of everyday life available to inquiry as a phenomenon in its own right. Studies by Bittner

gist and his subjects alike, is employed as an unexplicated resource for contemporary sociological investigations.

Sociological inquiry is addressed to phenomena recognized and described in common-sense ways (by reliance on the unanalyzed properties of natural language),<sup>2</sup> while at the same time such common-sense recognitions and descriptions are pressed into service as fundamentally unquestioned resources for analyzing the phenomena thus made available for study. Thus, contemporary sociology is characterized by a confounding of topic and resource.

Below, we suggest how an analysis may proceed, respecting the distinction between the social world as topic of, and resource for, inquiry. The distinction between topic and resource requires further discussion as an introduction to the concerns of this chapter.

#### TOPIC AND RESOURCE

In terms of both the substantive themes brought under examination and the formal properties of the structures examined, professional and lay sociologist are in tacit agreement. For example, while the sociologist and the policeman may entertain very different theories of how a person comes to be a juvenile delinquent, and while each may appeal to disparate criteria and evidence for support of their respective versions, they have no trouble in agreeing that there are persons recognizable as juvenile delinquents and that there are structured ways in which these persons come to be juvenile delinquents. It is in this agreement—agreement as to the fundamental and ordered existence of the phenomenon independent of its having been addressed by *some* method of inquiry—that professional and lay sociologists are mutually oriented to a common factual domain.

The agreement indicates sociology's profound embeddedness in and dependence upon the world of everyday life. Not only does the attitude of everyday life<sup>3</sup> furnish the context of sociological investigation, it also seems to furnish social-scientific inquiry with a leading conception of its order of fact and program of research. The factual domain to which sociological investigation is directed is coterminous, with but mild variation, to the factual domain attended by lay inquiries. For instance,

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(1961, 1963, 1965, 1967a, 1967b), Churchill (1966), Cicourel (1964, 1968, and in this volume, Moerman (unpublished), Pollner (forthcoming), Shegloff (1967), Speier (1969), Sudnow (1965, 1967), Turner (1968), Weider (1969, and in Douglas), and Zimmerman (1966; in Hansen, 1969; in Douglas; in Wheeler, 1970) have taken the above cited corpus of theory and research as a point of departure.

2. See Garfinkel (1967: especially Chapter 1), Garfinkel and Sacks (in McKinney and Tiraykian, forthcoming), and Sacks (1963).

3. See below, "The Attitude of Everyday Life."

status hierarchies, race relations, organizational structure, and juvenile delinquency are of interest to both professional and lay inquirer. Each mode of inquiry accords the phenomena formulated under these and a long list, of other titles the status of independent structures of accomplished activities whose properties are objectively assessable.

It is readily acknowledged by professional and lay inquirers alike that some methods of investigating and accounting for the presumptive domain of investigation are more suitable than others. Indeed, the very notion of the suitability of procedures testifies to the incorrigibility of the domain to which those procedures are to be applied. Concern with suitability is the product of an implicit and fundamental faith that the referents of investigation are possessed of a determinate structure, which may be exposed by the judicious selection and use of a method. Through one technique or another, the received social world is available as a topic of investigation. The social world is attended to as a domain whose stable properties are discoverable by *some* method. Key methodological questions turn on the choice of an appropriate method.

#### SOME OBJECTIONS

One may ask at this point, "So, what?" So what if lay and professional sociologists are oriented to a common fact domain? After all, the operations of social scientists are less subject to bias, distortion, unreliability, and a whole host of methodological devils characteristic of everyday methods of fact assembly and testing. After all, the assumption of an independent and objective domain whose properties are presumptively amenable to description by law or lawlike formulations—in short, the assumption of the existence of a natural world—is not peculiar to sociology. It is an indispensable assumption for any type of scientific investigation. Given such an assumption (even if shared by laymen), the operations of academic sociology are deemed far more likely to produce an objective, empirically adequate description of common phenomenon than are the operations of lay members. In response to a "So what?" of this type, we introduce the following considerations.

Sociology's acceptance of the lay member's formulation of the formal and substantive features of sociology's topical concerns makes sociology an integral feature of the very order of affairs it seeks to describe. It makes sociology into an eminently *folk discipline* deprived of any prospect or hope of making fundamental structures of folk activity a phenomenon. Insofar as the social structures are treated as a given rather than as an accomplishment, one is subscribing to a lay inquirer's version of those structures. The "givens" of professional inquiry, the fundamental availability of the social structures to study as such, are then coterminous with the "givens" of lay inquiry.

Indeed, the common orientation of lay and professional sociology generates the sort of argument mustered in support of a "So what" attitude, and that argument reveals the profundity with which sociology's phenomenon is essentially a member's phenomenon. The "so what" argument assumes sociology to be a disciplined investigation that is fully *competitive* with members' relaxed investigation. This assumption has been stated in one way or another by sociology's favored philosophers (e.g., Nagel<sup>4</sup>), practitioners (e.g., Lazarsfeld<sup>5</sup>), and theorists (e.g., Merton<sup>6</sup>). Such an assumption leaves unexplicated members' methods for analyzing, accounting, fact-finding, and so on, which *produce* for sociology its field of data.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, as the competitive argument has it, those notoriously loose procedures, whatever they are, are destined to be replaced by the operations of sociology as means for securing scientifically warranted depictions of society's orderly ways.

Sociological investigations have been depicted above as honoring the same preconceptions about the social world that lay investigations honor, and as directed to the presumptive order of fact to which lay members direct their investigations. It is the intent of this chapter to elaborate a few of the implications of this characterization and to suggest the outline of a paradigm that will permit a principled recognition of the distinction between topic and resource.

We propose to suspend conventional interest in the topics of members' practical investigations and urge the placing of exclusive emphasis on inquiry into practical investigations themselves, lay or professional. The topic then would consist not in the social order as ordinarily conceived, but rather in the ways in which members assemble particular scenes so as to provide for one another evidences of a social order as-ordinarily-conceived. Thus one would examine not the factual properties of status hierarchies, for example, but the *fact* of the factual properties of status hierarchies: one would ask how members provide for the *fact* that status hierarchies are factual features of the members' world. Similarly, instead of treating statistical rates as representations of trends, processes, and factual states of the society, one would ask how members manage to assemble those statistics, and how they use, read, and rely on those statistics as indications of the states of affairs they are taken to depict.<sup>8</sup> But such conjecture anticipates our exposition. Let us therefore

4. Nagel (1961: especially Chapter 1).

5. Lazarsfeld (1949); see also Toby (in Barron, 1964:25-26).

6. Merton (1957: 68-69 et passim).

7. See the discussion below of the occasioned corpus.

8. See Zimmerman (in Wheeler, 1970) for an analysis of the socially organized arrangements whereby bureaucrats in a public assistance agency provide for the factual character of a variety of records of, and reports on, the circumstances of applicants for assistance.

outline what is to be offered in support of our proposals in the balance of this chapter.

#### OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTER

We shall begin with a consideration of the formal properties of the social world as it is encountered by lay members under the attitude of everyday life. We shall then turn to a consideration of the properties of the social world as it is encountered by the sociologist (and the ways in which common-sense attitudes and assumptions permeate actual investigatory procedure). These characterizations will reveal the deep similarity to which we have alluded above. Finally, we shall provide an outline of what may be involved in examining socially organized activities, while attempting to maintain a principled respect for the distinction between the world of common sense as a resource and the world of common sense as a topic.

#### *The Attitude of Everyday Life*

According to Schutz,<sup>9</sup> the world, as it presents itself to the member operating under the jurisdiction of the attitude of everyday life, is a historical, already organized world. It did not appear with the member's birth; it will not perish with his death. From the beginning, the world is experienced *pretheoretically* as the prevailing and persistent condition of all the members' projects. It furnishes the resistant "objective structures," which must be reckoned with in a practically adequate fashion if projects of action are to be effected successfully.

The attitude of everyday life sustains particular doubts, but never global doubts. Indeed, that the existence of the world is never brought into question is an essential requirement for any particular doubt. That is, from the perspective of the attitude of everyday life, the world and its objective constitution are taken for granted<sup>10</sup> from the outset. Not only is the global existence of the world taken for granted, the thesis that the world presents itself to alter essentially as it does to ego—with due allowance for different temporal, spatial, and biographical perspectives—is also merely assumed.<sup>11</sup> The world is *experienced* as an intersubjective world, known or knowable in common with others.

9. Most of Schutz's work was devoted to articulating the formal properties of the "attitude of everyday life." An overview of that work may be found in Maurice Natanson's and Aron Gurwitsch's introductions to Schutz (1962; 1966).

10. Schutz's (1962: 207–259) paper "On Multiple Realities" is particularly relevant here.

11. Schutz (1962:10–13 et passim) termed these presuppositions the "thesis of reciprocal perspectives." The two basic presuppositions subsumed under this heading consisted in the idealization of the "interchangeability of the standpoints" and the idealization of the

The member takes for granted that the social world and, more specifically, the aspect of it relevant to his interest at hand, is actually or potentially assembled or assembleable by rule or by recipe. That is, he may know, or take it that he could determine by inquiry, the rules or recipes whereby he and others might gear into or understand some activity. Put another way, the member assumes that such structures are actually or potentially locatable and determinable in their features by recourse to such practices as asking for or giving instruction concerning a given matter. Everyday activities and their perceived connected features present themselves with the promise that they may be understood and acted upon in practically sufficient ways by competent employment of appropriate proverbs, paradigms, motives, organizational charts, and the like.<sup>12</sup>

Under the attitude of everyday life, the features of this known-in common world are addressed with pragmatic motive.<sup>13</sup> What is known or knowable about its organization awaits recognition or discovery precipitated by the occurrence of particular projects whose execution depends on coming to terms with more or less circumscribed features relevant to the anticipated action. Accordingly, under the auspices of members' practical interests in the workings of the everyday world, the member's knowledge of the world is more or less ad hoc, more or less general, more or less fuzzy around the periphery. The member finds out what he needs to know; what he needs to know is relative to the practical requirements of his problem. His criteria of adequacy, rules of procedure, and strategies for achieving desired ends are for him only as good as they need to be.

The social structures that present themselves under the attitude of everyday life are for the member only minutely of his doing. They are encountered as resistive to his wish and whim, and they transcend their particular appearances. As omnipresent and pervasive conditions and objects of members' projects, the world is available for practically adequate investigation and description. From the standpoint of the member, the world and its exhibited properties are not constituted by virtue of their having been addressed. For the member operating under the atti-

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"congruency of relevances." The operation of these presuppositions is a requisite condition of the possibility of an intersubjectively available world. Garfinkel (1967:Chapter 2) has enumerated in concise terms the presuppositions constitutive of the attitude of everyday life in addition to furnishing field demonstrations of their role in the maintenance of perceivedly stable environments.

12. Schutz's (1964:91–105) description of the "stranger" is a particularly dramatic example of the problems encountered by one for whom the validity of that "promise" is not assured as a matter of objective necessity. Garfinkel (1967:Chapter 1) proposes, as we shall, that practices whereby the rational properties of descriptions of one sort or another are made observable are to be rendered problematic.

13. Schutz (1962:208–209 et passim).

tude of everyday life, the world offers itself as an a priori resistive, recalcitrant, and massively organized structure into which he must gear himself.<sup>14</sup>

The formal properties of the social world encountered under the attitude of everyday life are the formal properties that Durkheim attributed to the social structures that were to be sociology's topic.<sup>15</sup> For both lay and professional investigation, the social world presents itself as an exterior field of events amenable to lawful investigation. For both lay and professional investigation, however, the fundamental "facticity" of those structures—their very presence as orders of affairs that, to borrow Merleau-Ponty's phrase, are "always already there"<sup>16</sup>—is an unexplained and invisible premise, condition, and resource of those investigations.

It is in this sense that sociology retains the presuppositions native to the field of data it seeks to describe, as presuppositions of *its* investigations of that field. As a consequence, the phenomenon to which explanatory effort is directed is the nature and operation of objective social structures of activity. Yet the availability of social structures to inquiry in the first place is masked over the course of inquiry by and through which the features of such structures are made available. The work by which the objectivity of described structures is displayed, detected, and accounted for in concrete, practical situations is disengaged, tacitly but with enormous effort, from its recognized products.<sup>17</sup>

We now offer several brief examples of the way in which the presuppositions of the attitude of everyday life are tacitly employed as resources of professional investigation.

### *Sociology and the Attitude of Everyday Life*

When the features of the world encountered under the attitude of everyday life are incorporated as first principles of professional investigation, a vast order of activity is immediately excluded from consideration as a phenomenon. In addition, investigations predicated on those principles are rendered profoundly akin to investigations carried out by lay inquirers.

14. Schutz's papers "On Multiple Realities" (1962: especially 218–229), "Choosing Among Projects of Action" (1962), and "The Dimensions of the Social World" (1964) are particularly relevant.

15. Specifically, Durkheim (1938:13) defined a social fact as "every way of acting, fixed or not, capable of exercising on the individual an external constraint."

16. Merleau-Ponty (1962:vii).

17. Garfinkel and Sacks (in McKinney and Tirayakian, forthcoming).

This affinity is revealed dramatically by the status accorded lay formulations.<sup>18</sup> Because the referent of lay and professional accounts and descriptions is identical—the world of everyday life—lay formulations are often compared to professional formulations. Depending upon the nature of the criteria and the rigor with which they are applied, lay formulations are typically regarded as erroneous and hence of no particular value to professional investigation. The notorious looseness of lay investigative procedures, for example, often stands as the grounds for dismissing formulations produced by the man in the street.<sup>19</sup> Thus, what might otherwise be attended to solely as a phenomenon is treated as a mistaken or otherwise faulted theory or account.

Since lay formulations are often treated as propositions about the world<sup>20</sup> that are of interest to the sociologist, the possibility remains that lay formulations may be correct for some referents. In those areas where members' formulations are judged, explicitly or implicitly, to correspond with the state of affairs whose features the formulation describes, the researcher may treat the lay member as a vital auxiliary to the research enterprise. Not only may the researcher address his inquiry to the presumptive world to which members address their inquiries, he may treat the members' descriptions about its various aspects as he would the report of a colleague. Answers to a researcher's question may be treated as a truncated research report.

Whether lay formulations are recognized as true or false, conflicting or complementary vis-à-vis professional formulations, the fact remains that in order for lay formulations to be the subject of such judgments entails that they be treated on a conceptual par with professional formulations. Once lay members' accounts are the object of evaluation, the professional investigator has implicitly raised the lay member to the status of a professional colleague (however incompetent). That such status will be accorded the lay member is assured once the features of the world as it appears under the attitude of everyday life are adopted as an unquestioned point of departure for professional investigation. It is

18. We have in mind here such devices as rules, categories, typifications, idealizations, attitudes, and imputed and avowed motives by the use of which members depict or account for the orderly features of everyday activities.

19. As in Toby's (in Barron, 1964:25-26) "classroom demonstration" of the unreliability of personal experience as adequate evidence for accepting or rejecting propositions about the social world. In citing this example we are not advocating personal experiences or other common-sense investigative procedures as the grounds upon which to assess the adequacy of propositions. As will become clear later in this chapter, what we are proposing is that common-sense methods for making features of the social world observable must be subject to investigation as phenomena in their own right rather than alternatively relied upon and criticized in the course of sociological inquiry.

20. Or standing on behalf of implicit propositions about the world.

only then that lay accounts are seen to be directed to the same structures that are of concern to professional sociologists. If the attitude of everyday life is permitted to furnish the structures that are the topics of sociological investigation, then the very availability of these structures to inquiry cannot be treated as a topic in its own right.

The preceding remarks may be illustrated by reference to several domains of sociological and social-scientific interest with different methodological and conceptual orientations. Our purpose is to sketch<sup>21</sup> how, under the attitude of everyday life, investigators in each of these fields employ categorizations, descriptions, and formulations as unquestioned (save on the narrowest technical grounds) resources for inquiry.

#### DEMOGRAPHY

For demographers the fundamental recordability of items of demographic interest such as sex, age, birth, and death is not problematic. While issues of accuracy and reliability of data are prominent methodological concerns,<sup>22</sup> the methods through and by which features such as normal sexedness are routinely displayed, detected, and recorded in concrete situations of categorization remain an unexplicated and invisible resource of demographic inquiry.<sup>23</sup>

Though the investigator relies upon the work whereby members, including the investigator, *do* sex and age, and *do* recording of such properties, and *do* the demonstration that such recording was done in accord with the ideals governing the procedures of counting and categorizing, the *doings* are specifically severed from the subsequently produced distributions and interpretations of them. For the demographer, as for the members he counts, sexedness is not a matter of theoretical

21. To support our argument fully, a much more detailed and documented account of social-scientific practice is required than is presented below. The discussion that follows thus stands as a statement of our conception of these practices rather than as evidence for the adequacy of our conception. The reader may dispute our version of social science practice, but he will at least have available the kinds of issues to which we are addressed.

22. For example, assessment is made or advocated of "errors of classification" or "errors of coverage" (failure of complete enumeration) in census data. With respect to errors of classification, issues of the veracity of respondents (exaggeration, falsehoods, etc.) and the conscientiousness of interviewers are relevant. See Bogue and Murphy (1964).

23. Garfinkel's (1967:Chapter 5) study of an intersexed person documents the management of sexual status through the examination of the practical troubles encountered by one for whom such status could not be taken for granted, and the practical remedies devised by this person to deal with such troubles. In contrast to studies directed to the consequences for social conduct of presumptively stable sexual status, Garfinkel's study investigates the managed course of situated presentation and identification of the features of normal sexuality, that is, how sexuality is made to happen "in commonplace settings as an obvious, familiar, recognizable, natural, and serious matter of fact" (1967:180). In so doing, Garfinkel brought under examination the very availability of sexual status to both lay and professional inquiry.

interest or speculation. The fact that persons are of one or the other sex; that persons are (or should be) recognizable at a glance as the one which they happen to be; that errors of identification may be symptomatic of a faulted social competence, an impaired sensory apparatus, or an encounter with a "freak of nature"; that displays of sex are presented as a natural matter of fact without plan or effort; all these are assumptions fundamental to the work of furnishing objective descriptions of an objective world.<sup>24</sup>

In effect, the demographer presupposes the operation of a normative order local to the society in question. The normative order is presupposed by the demographer as an enforceable schema of interpretation and guide to action used by members to present themselves in a particular fashion and to recognize the presentations of others in stable ways. Members are presupposed to comply with a normative order and, in so doing, to produce demographically relevant properties, independent of the varied demographic work (lay and professional) of making those properties observable in concrete, practical situations.

That the work of lay or professional demography is founded on the supposition that, in principle, the categories in use and the counts of events and persons falling within them may correspond in assessable ways to "real" distributions of events and persons ought not to be treated as a warrant for evaluating the success of either enterprise but merely as a further aspect of the phenomenon. The question is not how adequately the varied methods of lay and professional demography permit approximation to "real distributions," but how any achieved dis-

24. For a detailed consideration of other properties see Garfinkel (1967:110-133). These features as accomplished correlates of displayed sexedness provide for the perceived invariance of sexual status to any and all situational exigencies, and hence to the procedures through which males and females are counted and categorized. These and other features are definitive of the objectivity or fundamental "facticity" of a person's sexual status. As such, they furnish the sense and warrant of the assumption that the sex of a person or the sex composition of a collectivity are facts that await discovery, not creation. As such, these features provide for the perceived interdependence between the depiction of the sex composition of a population and the categorizing and counting procedures through which the distribution was assembled, on the one hand, and the "actual" or "real" population parameters, on the other. Indeed, it is these correlates of displayed sexedness that induce the notion of "real" parameters of a population's sex composition in the first place. And, in turn, the fundamental facticity of sex and sex composition as properties of persons and populations, respectively, prompt the demographer to take precautions to gauge the efficacy of categorizing and sampling procedures in terms of their ability to approximate the features of the real distribution. The presumptive facticity of sex is thus a point of departure for demographic inquiry. Yet, as Garfinkel's study (1967:Chapter 5) of an intersexed person reveals, on every actual occasion of categorization the facticity of one's sexual status will require an enormous, albeit unnoticed, effort to ensure its appearance as a constituent feature of the display of sexedness. For demographers and sociologists in general to ignore the features of that effort as a topic in its own right is to treat sex precisely as a member does—as an obvious, objective furnishing of the world.

tribution, including its reference to, and accompanying claims to adequate estimation of, a "real" distribution, is accomplished as a socially enforceable "finding" in the first place.

### *Surveys and Ethnographies*

Use of lay formulations is notoriously prevalent in survey analysis. The respondents' answers to questions regarding past, present, and projected biography, background features such as age and sex, interactional patterns, and mental life are accorded the status of protocol observations about those items. Answers to questions may thus be used as reports made by a colleague or assistant.<sup>25</sup> In this light, methodological discussions of reliability and validity may be seen as responses to the need to devise assurances to the researcher and to his colleagues that members' formulations are not done haphazardly. In this sense, reliability and validity procedures are ways of arguing for the trustworthiness and internal consistency of such reports, ways of arguing that upon the occasion of a report (that is, an answer to a researcher's question) the respondent was in effect answering as a scientist whose subject matter happened to be his own life.<sup>26</sup>

Community, organizational, and tribal ethnographies are also well known for their reliance on informants' reports, particularly insofar as these reports formulate otherwise unobservable or difficult to observe aspects of the "inside life" of various social settings. When ethnographers assemble *their* descriptions of settings, by reference to informants' formulations, the members' description and the ethnographer's description have an identical status in relation to the events reported on. The member's formulation, like that of the ethnographer, is a possible re-

25. The respondent is implicitly conceived as furnishing a researcher with a descriptive report on the workings of his life as if he, the respondent, were a coinvestigator. In a good deal of contemporary research the respondent is an invaluable partner in that the events he reports are often those to which he alone has access, as in the case of his own mental life.

26. Goode and Hatt, for example, consider the problem of the truth of responses to questionnaires. They suggest that the problem of truth involves "that dim sphere in which the respondent is not giving the facts but is not really certain that these are not the facts. All of us reconstruct our personal history to some extent, especially in areas involving our self-conception. Only very careful probing can ever separate fact from fiction, and for some respondents even this will not be adequate" (1952:162). Among the devices available to the researcher for separating "fact from fiction" is the sieve question which "sifts out those who should not be answering the question because they do not possess the necessary knowledge or experience" (164). The problem for the sociologist is thus one of getting the respondent to perform competently, to perform according to rules governing correct scientific procedure. Similar conceptions of the sociologist's task are embedded in most discussions of questionnaire construction and administration. See, for example, Hyman (1955:149-172). For a general critique of conventional conceptions regarding the use of questionnaires see Circourel (1964).

construction of the setting, that is, a version of the setting's reigning norms and resident attitudes, and it is often the case that the ethnographer must rely on the member's formulation as the definitive characterization of the setting.<sup>27</sup> As in survey research, the fact that members are able to do formulations—to describe in recognizably orderly ways—is an uninvestigated resource.

Even if we ignore the strange catechetical<sup>28</sup> relation that obtains between researcher and those he seeks to study, a plethora of unexamined, but nonetheless relied upon, procedures remain. The methods through which the production of recognizably reasonable talk is achieved, the methods through which responses are provided and appreciated as answers to the intended sense of questions, the methods through which understanding is displayed and detected as the occasion it is intended to be, the methods through which the occasion will later be demonstrated to have met the ideals of interrogation and description, are but a few tacit resources of social scientific investigation.

We may also mention the various methods of documentary interpretation<sup>29</sup> through which members' talk and activities are located as concrete instances of behavior indexed by the sociologist's terminology. The procedures through which informants' reports about what ought to be done, the good reasons for doing it, and what the doing of it will accomplish are transformed into illustrative instances of norms, roles, attitudes, and beliefs. These are essentially ways of seeing the society that stands behind situated actions.

For example, a group member's declaration "I have a report prepared by Miss Smith on the expenditures to date"<sup>30</sup> may be coded as an

27. A fairly common strategy of ethnographers consists in the use of an informant's report as corroboration of the analyst's report. Thus Becker (1963) notes that job security as a musician comes from the number and quality of established connections. He states, "To have a career one must work; to enjoy the security of steady work one must have many 'connections'" (105). This is immediately followed by the statement of a musician, "You have to make connections like that all over town, until it gets so that when anybody wants a man they call you. Then you're never out of work" (105). The use of informants' reports as corroborative evidence is similar in many ways to the use of a professional colleague's research findings as corroborative evidence. So, too, the grounds upon which lay formulations are criticized (for their ambiguity, vagueness, reliance on poor sampling procedure, and so on) are similar to the criteria used to assess the adequacy of professional reports.

28. Sacks (1963) considers, by way of an illuminating parable, (a) the nature of the question-answer relation that obtains between sociologist and lay members and (b) the implications of employing a version of a member's answers to a researcher's questions as the researcher's description of the domain to which the questions refer. One of Sacks's major recommendations is that describing or, more appropriately, "doing describing" ought to be treated as a problematic phenomenon in its own right, just as any other activity of a member would be treated as problematic.

29. Garfinkel (1967:Chapter 3).

30. Bales (in Layarsfeld and Rosenberg, 1955:349).

instance of Bales's category "gives orientation, information, repeats, clarifies, confirms" and finally as an instance of the attempt to resolve the "problem of orientation" which is a problem, according to Bales, of most groups. Similarly, a delinquent boy's comment on his relations with adult fellators "It's OK, but I like the money best of all"<sup>31</sup> may be treated as an instance of "affective neutrality." According to Reiss, however, the comment becomes, upon another transformation, an instance of the norm presumptively governing the boy's participation in homosexual relations, which specifies that the partners "should remain affectively neutral during the transaction."<sup>32</sup>

The work through which researchers make correspondence between norm and concrete instance and, more generally, between textual assertions, on the one hand, and tables and talk, on the other, is unexplained.<sup>33</sup> Often the reader is implicitly asked to employ his competence as a lay member and to use "what anybody knows" as a background scheme of interpretation in order to locate the correspondence between conceptual formulation and empirical illustration, thus to see the society-in-the-talk.

Whether members' formulations are treated as descriptions of socially organized activities or as events that reflect the operation of those organized activities, the assumption prevails that the structures of activity are invariant to the operations through which their properties are made observable. Demographers, survey researchers, ethnographers, and others whom we have not had occasion to mention, address their inquiries to the very structures to which members' inquiries are addressed. The mutuality of orientation is dramatically revealed when lay formulations are included as an integral part of a researcher's description. The methods through which concrete situations of interrogation, categorization, and description are assembled are members' methods. As with members, the method through which the fundamental availability of socially organized activities to investigation is accomplished is systematically excluded from consideration as a topic in its own right. The possibility of an everyday world with all of its familiar furnishings is, with but a few notable exceptions, a problem for neither lay nor professional investigators. It is because of this neglect, which we proposed earlier, that sociology has yet to give serious attention to the "obvious." In the section that follows, we suggest how the obvious may be investigated.

31. Reiss (in Becker, 1964:201).

32. Reiss (in Becker, 1964:200).

33. Garfinkel (1967:94- 103).

*An Alternative Phenomenon*

Our efforts to this point have been directed largely to an adumbrated critique of sociology's conception of its problematic phenomena. We have argued that current practice in the field confounds topic and resource. As a consequence, sociology apparently is in the position of providing a professional folklore about the society that, however sophisticated, remains folklore. Such a critique would be merely querulous were it not directed toward the delineation of a positive alternative. The alternative we shall propose is not conceived as a remedy to the kinds of troubles we have pointed out. Instead, it turns those troubles into a phenomenon. To do so requires more than a rewriting of manuals of research procedure and redefinition of criteria for adequate theory. It requires no less than a paradigmatic shift—to borrow presumptuously from Kuhn.<sup>34</sup> This shift has already been specified in detail in the seminal work of Harold Garfinkel.<sup>35</sup> Following his lead, we offer here suggestions for a perspective on the study of a domain of phenomena systematically overlooked prior to Garfinkel's investigations.<sup>36</sup> With respect to these phenomena, Garfinkel proposes that

in contrast to certain versions of Durkheim that teach that the objective reality of social facts is sociology's fundamental principle, the lesson is taken instead, and used as a study policy, that the objective reality of social facts *as an ongoing accomplishment of the concerted activities of daily life*, with the ordinary, artful ways of that accomplishment being by members known, used, and taken for granted, is, for members doing sociology, a fundamental phenomenon.<sup>37</sup>

If the "objective reality of social facts" is to be transformed from a principle to an object of inquiry, then it will first be necessary to suspend the relevance of contemporary conceptions of what sociological problems are and how they may be solved. The suspension is not predicated on the notion that such conceptual schemes are in error. It is simply that

34. Kuhn (1962).

35. See Garfinkel (1967). In this work, Garfinkel reports a number of cumulative discoveries which have led to this shift. See his discussion of "the unsatisfied programmatic distinction between and substitutability of objective for indexical expressions" (4-7); the "essential reflexivity of accounts" (7-9); the "etcetera" property of rule-use (18-24); the bases of "common understandings" (24-31 and 38-42); the "documentary method of interpretation" (76-103); and the on-going situated accomplishment of the objective properties of objects and actions in society as accounting practices (11-18 and 116-185).

36. See Garfinkel and Sacks (forthcoming) for an account of the reasons inherent in the social science approach (characterized as "constructive analysis") for overlooking these phenomena. See also Garfinkel (1967:31-34) for a statement of research policies which have served as a critical resource in the formulation of the central ideas of this paper.

37. Garfinkel (1967:vii).

these schemes take as an unexplicated point of departure and resource the very order of affairs to be treated as problematic. To treat the objective reality of social facts as problematic is to treat

every feature of sense, of fact, of method, for every particular case of inquiry without exception, as the managed accomplishment of organized settings of practical actions, and . . . particular determinations in members' practices of consistency, planfulness, relevance, or reproducibility of their practices and results . . . as acquired and assured only through particular, located organizations of artful practices.<sup>38</sup>

Indeed, conventional schemes, or more specifically the ways in which such schemes are employed as methods for analyzing the orderly properties of social activities, are themselves of interest as phenomena.<sup>39</sup> Under the jurisdiction of the alternative conception to be recommended below, each social setting and every one of its recognized features is construed as the accomplishment of the situated work of displaying and detecting those features at the time they are made visible. We may now consider this alternative conception, specified in terms of what we call the occasioned corpus of setting features.

#### **THE OCCASIONED CORPUS OF SETTING FEATURES**

The features of a setting attended to by its participants include, among other things, its historical continuity, its structure of rules and the relationship of activities within it to those rules, and the ascribed (or achieved) statuses of its participants. Under the attitude of everyday life, these features are "normal, natural facts of life." Under the attitude of everyday life, these features are objective conditions of action that, although participants have had a hand in bringing about and sustaining them, are essentially independent of any one's or anyone's doing.

When viewed as the temporally situated *achievement* of parties to a setting, these features will be termed the occasioned corpus of setting features. By use of the term *occasioned* corpus, we wish to emphasize that the features of socially organized activities are particular, contingent accomplishments of the production and recognition work of parties to the activity. We underscore the occasioned character of the corpus in contrast to a corpus of member's knowledge, skill, and belief standing prior to and independent of any actual occasion in which such knowledge, skill, and belief is displayed or recognized. The latter conception is usually referred to by the term culture.

By use of the conception of an occasioned corpus, we mean to transform any social setting and its features for the purposes of analysis by bringing them under the constituent recommendations comprising

38. Garfinkel (1967:32).

39. See, for example, Bittner (1965).

this notion, that is, to examine a setting and its features as temporally situated accomplishments of parties to the setting. The nature of this transformation may be seen in the contrast between a setting and its features as it is encountered by the analyst under the attitude of everyday life, and as it is by the analyst's operating in terms of the recommendations of the occasioned corpus.

From the member's point of view, a setting presents itself as the objective, recalcitrant theater of his actions. From the analyst's point of view, the presented texture of the scene, *including* its appearance as an objective, recalcitrant order of affairs, is conceived as the accomplishment of members' methods for displaying and detecting the setting's features. For the member the corpus of setting features presents itself as a product, as objective and independent scenic features. For the analyst the corpus *is* the family of practices employed by members to assemble, recognize, and realize the corpus-as-a-product.

Accordingly, from the point of view of the analyst, the features of the setting as they are known and attended to by members are unique to the particular setting in which they are made observable. Any feature of a setting—its perceived regularity, purposiveness, typicality—is conceived as the accomplishment of the work done in and on the occasion of that feature's recognition. The practices through which a feature is displayed and detected, however, are assumed to display invariant properties across settings whose substantive features they make observable. It is to the discovery of these practices and their invariant properties that inquiry is to be addressed.<sup>40</sup> Thus, instead of an ethnography that inventories a setting's distinctive, substantive features, the research vehicle envisioned here is a *methodography* (to borrow Bucher's term)<sup>41</sup> that searches for the practices through which those substantive features are made observable.

#### IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Let us state more succinctly what is entailed by the notion of the occasioned corpus and the kind of research recommendations it delivers.

1. The occasioned corpus is a corpus with no regular elements, that is, it does not consist of a *stable* collection of elements.
2. The work of assembling an occasioned corpus consists in the ongoing "corpusing" and "decorpusing" of elements rather than the situated retrieval or removal of a subset of elements from a larger set transcending any particular setting in which that work is done.

40. See, in particular, Garfinkel and Sacks (in McKinney and Tiryakian, forthcoming) and footnote 43, below.

41. Bucher (1961:129).

3. Accordingly, from the standpoint of analysis done under the auspices of this notion, the elements organized by the occasioned corpus are unique to the particular setting in which it is assembled, hence ungeneralizable to other settings. That is, for the analyst, particular setting features are "for the moment" and "here and now."

*Elements.* By the term elements we mean those features of a setting that members rely upon, attend to, and use as the basis for action, inference, and analysis on any given occasion.<sup>42</sup> The designation "member" should be read as referring either to those persons for whom the setting is an arena of practical activities or to an outside observer whose task it is to bring that setting under rational analysis, when either attends a given setting under the attitude of everyday life. Such features may encompass the biographies of the setting's personnel, its reigning norms, the setting's history, the latent functions of activities within it, and so on. Thus, elements are as diverse as ways of talking in and about settings, and include the ways of talking characteristic of lay and professional members alike.

*Assembling the Corpus.* The proposal that the occasioned corpus is not a stable collection of elements may be explicated by consideration of paragraph two above. The availability of a particular element is conceived to be the consequence of a course of work through which it is displayed and detected, regardless of the recalcitrance and obviousness the element may appear to possess when viewed under the jurisdiction of the attitude of everyday life. In fact, the very obviousness of the features of a setting, such as a family's appearance in the evening as the same family to which one said goodbye that morning, is itself an element that remains to be concertedly accomplished as a constituent feature of a setting's appearances. Thus, for the purpose of analysis, a setting's features (or, in the terms of the occasioned corpus, its elements) are not independent of, and cannot be detached from, the situated work through and by which they are made notable and observable.

By this proposal a given setting's features are not referable for their production and recognition to "cultural resources" transcending a particular occasion. The analyst cannot have recourse to such explanatory devices as a shared complex of values, norms, roles, motives, and the like, standing independent of and prior to a given occasion. On these

42. Thus, an element when viewed from the member's point of view consists in the recognized features of a particular setting. From the point of view of the analyst, an element consists in the practices whereby the recognized features of a setting are displayed and detected. For the member the setting may present itself as an objective, determinate state of affairs. For the analyst, the setting consists in methods that make that objectivity observable.

considerations we are led to specify the occasioned corpus as a corpus with no regular elements. In consequence of this specification (in conjunction with the other specifications of the occasioned corpus) we are able to retain as a *phenomenon*, but exclude as a *resource*, members' invocation of such notions as the common culture as a means of detecting and arguing the orderly features of a given setting.

*Uniqueness of Elements.* Because a setting's features are viewed as the accomplishment of members' practices for making them observable, the elements of the occasioned corpus are treated as unique to the particular setting in which it is assembled. These elements may not be generalized by the analyst to other settings. Within this framework, for example, one would not be interested in constructing typologies of one or another class of social settings, although the members' work of constructing such typologies would be eligible for treatment as a phenomenon.

Under the auspices of the attitude of everyday life, settings, such as that of the previously mentioned family, maintain their perceivedly stable features over time and may be conceived as instances of, say, families-in-general, or families-of-this-or-that-type. From the standpoint of the occasioned corpus, a family's temporal and typal features are its own situated accomplishments. The ungeneralizability of a setting's features follows from the paradigm principle that a feature's typicality is an accomplished typicality. A feature's temporal identicality is an accomplished identicality. Perhaps the most concise way of stating this position is to note that when viewed as the assembling of an occasioned corpus, no setting is conceived as a product. Each setting and every one of its features consists of the way in which the setting and its features are displayed and detected.

On the basis of the three numbered paragraphs set forth above and the preceding discussion, we can now further specify the notion of the occasioned corpus.

4. The work of assembling an occasioned corpus mentioned in paragraph two above makes reference to the family of *practices* and their properties, by which a particular occasioned corpus is assembled, revised, invoked, and used to recognize and account for a setting's rational, that is, orderly, properties.<sup>43</sup>
5. The fact that members take for granted, insist upon, and talk about features of a world and knowledge of those features of a world and knowledge of those features transcending any particular

43. Garfinkel and Sacks (in McKinney and Tiryakian, forthcoming) have specified several invariant properties of the practices. When treated as a set of constraints that any practice must satisfy, these properties furnish an apparatus with which to locate additional practices.

here-and-now situated appearance, (that is, a corpus *with* regular elements) is preserved intact and made a feature of the work of assembling an occasioned corpus. Members' orientation to the properties of transsituational events and relationships (for example, their typicality, regularity, and connectedness) and their reference to general knowledge of those events and relationships is treated from this perspective as a feature and accomplishment of members' work. As the analyst views it, such work by members consists of assembling and using an occasioned corpus as a background schema and condition of competent interpretation and action.

*Members' Practices.* Paragraph four sets forth the order of phenomena to be investigated. The chief purpose of the notion of the occasioned corpus is to "reduce" the features of everyday social settings to a family of practices and their properties.<sup>44</sup> This reduction builds into the framework of analysis a principled recognition of the distinction between topic and resource, and thereby severely restricts the analyst's reliance upon his common-sense knowledge of his subject matter as an unanalyzed resource. In this respect, the notion of the occasioned corpus serves much the same purpose as the incongruity procedures employed by Garfinkel in his earlier work, namely, to "produce reflections through which the strangeness of an obstinately familiar world can be detected."<sup>45</sup>

*The Strangeness of a Familiar World.* The everyday world as known under the attitude of everyday life is indeed transformed upon impact with the reduction imposed by the occasioned corpus. The familiar world does become strange. But nothing in that world is lost in the transformation, and much is gained.

As was indicated in paragraph five, every feature of the world of everyday life is maintained intact. The typicality of that world, its historical continuity, its order, its furnishings, and the rest, are preserved. The members of that world, lay and professional alike, may continue to address it in the same way and to deliver their ordinary accounts of its features. What *is* changed by recourse to the notion of the occasioned corpus is the status accorded the features of that world, and the accounts, explanations, and stories that accompany encounters with it. They are made available as

44. The term reduction is borrowed from Husserl (1962). While the notion of an occasioned corpus partakes of Husserl's program, the order of phenomena revealed by its use is by no means offered as equivalent to that which appears by virtue of the use the phenomenological reduction.

45. Garfinkel (1967:38).

phenomena in their own right. Let us complete the "recovery" of the common-sense world within the reduction of the occasioned corpus.

6. The occasioned corpus is thus conceived to consist in members' methods of exhibiting the connectedness, objectivity, orderliness, and relevance of the features of *any* particular setting as features in, of, and linked with a more encompassing, ongoing setting, typically referred to as "the society." The work of the occasioned corpus is the work of displaying the society "in back of" the various situated appearances constituent of everyday, located scenes.

*The General Phenomenon.* Although paragraph three informs us that the generalizability of particular setting *features* accomplished through the work of assembling an occasioned corpus must be radically restricted, paragraphs three through six have specifically provided for the immense generality of members' *procedures* for assembling and employing particular setting features, so as to recognize and account for particular scenes and the articulation of those scenes within an "objective societal context." It is to the discovery of those procedures that the notion of the occasioned corpus directs us.

#### DISCUSSION

The social world, when considered under the reduction imposed by the occasioned corpus, is a radical modification of the one known to contemporary sociological investigation. Topics constituted by virtue of the reduction are not simple transformations of current sociological interests. The reduction does not generate research that may be regarded as an extension, refinement, or correction of extant sociological inquiry. The concerns of studies carried out under the auspices of the occasioned corpus are not and cannot be the concerns of members whose disciplines do not view any and every feature of ordinary activities as the temporally situated accomplishment of the work through and by which those features are made observable. The reduction constitutes as its phenomenon an order of affairs that has no identifiable counterpart in contemporary social science. That is because the phenomenon includes as constituent features the topicalizing of the world, modes of theorizing its, order, inquiries into its properties and presentations of analyses about its formulable features by whomsoever, wherever, and whenever that work is done. Social-scientific investigation is itself an integral feature of the order of affairs transformed into a phenomenon by the reduction recommended in the notion of the occasioned corpus.

In short, we intend the notion of occasioned corpus to organize for

study the various practices members employ to sustain the sense of an objective structure of social activities, a society, *exhibited from* the vantage point of particular situations. The features of that society, from this perspective, are to be found nowhere else, and in no other way, than in and upon those occasions of members' work, lay and professional, through which those features are made available.

This chapter has been frankly programmatic. However, the basic ideas constituting "the program" continue to generate research, which gives indication of accumulating at an increasing rate in the future. Accordingly, we conclude with brief reference to a series of researches that have either contributed to the development of the basic framework<sup>46</sup> to which we have given a particular formulation or have taken this framework as a point of departure.

### *Ongoing Research*

In distinctive ways each of the studies reported below is an attempt to distinguish between the social world as a resource and the social world as a topic. As such, they represent research carried out under the perspective whose distinctive features we have attempted to specify here in some detail. For expository purposes and for those purposes alone, we shall present these studies as if their method consisted in turning some conventional topic of sociological inquiry on its head by "application" of the reduction. In fact, this was rarely the case. That studies were undertaken in formal organizations, in halfway houses, in traffic courts, etc., should not be taken to indicate that they were studies of a particular formal organization.

In our view each study is ultimately concerned with discovering the properties of the practices whereby parties to a setting, regardless of its substantive character, make that setting available to one another as the kind of setting they take it to be. In presenting these studies, our exposition will attempt to specify—albeit in general terms—the ways in which they are relevant to our discussion of the reduction imposed by the notion of the occasioned corpus.

#### **ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR**

Given the recommendation of the occasioned corpus that any feature of a setting is to be treated as an accomplishment, actions in a bureaucratic setting, for example, are not of interest for the ways in which they are governed by rule, formal or informal, but rather for the ways in which they are detected and displayed as actions-in-accord-with-a-rule. Thus,

46. The framework is that developed in the previously cited works of Harold Garfinkel.

one would suspend, as Zimmerman has,<sup>47</sup> the relevance of accounts attempting to explain bureaucratic action by reference to rule, in favor of examining how organizational action in any one of its particular appearances is made to appear as actions which are referable to a program providing for their production.<sup>48</sup>

Bittner<sup>49</sup> has similarly suspended the relevance of theorists' accounts of organizational order that appeal in one way or another to formal models of organizational structure, for example, flow charts developed by parties to that organization. Instead, Bittner has searched for the ways in which members employ organizational models as devices for analyzing, and making observable on particular occasions, an organization as an ensemble of coherent and unified actions.

Guided by the same perspective, Wieder<sup>50</sup> is examining how rules—in this case, the collection of rules known to sociologists as the "convict code"—are employed by paroled ex-addicts in concert with staff members in a halfway house, as explanatory and persuasive devices for analyzing various kinds of activities in the setting, and how the very existence of those rules and the warrant for their use is made observable by members for members.<sup>51</sup>

#### COMMON UNDERSTANDINGS

In addition to the studies by Garfinkel which we have had occasion to mention, we note his radical revision of the problem of common understandings.<sup>52</sup> Briefly, a sociologically popular explanation of common understandings argues that they consist in measured amounts of shared agreement on substantive issues. Mead's<sup>53</sup> famous definition of the significant symbol—a gesture that calls out the same response in an auditor that it calls out in its producer—is perhaps the archetypical solution for sociologists to the problem of how members manage to understand one another.

Under the jurisdiction of Garfinkel's policy recommendation from which the notion of the occasioned corpus is derived,<sup>54</sup> conventional versions of sign-referent relations, such as Mead's, are suspended as

47. Zimmerman (in Douglas).

48. To speak of the *appearance* of action as in accord with a rule does not imply that the action was "really" otherwise, that it merely appeared to be so but was in fact otherwise. Further, if an appearance of "conformity" is found by members to be deceptive, the ways in which *that* finding is accomplished is equally a phenomenon.

49. Bittner (1965).

50. Wieder (1969).

51. See also Garfinkel (1967:Chapters 6, 7; in Shneidman, 1967:171-187).

52. Garfinkel (1967:Chapters 1, 2).

53. G. H. Mead (1934).

54. Garfinkel (1967:31-34).

potential explanations of a common understanding. By virtue of the suspension, the problematic character of common understandings is shifted to a concern with members' methods for analyzing "how" (for example, metaphorically, or narratively) another spoke, and to the methods whereby members display and detect the fact that they understand.<sup>55</sup> Sacks, for example, has provided a detailed analysis of how members manage their talk so as to *display* that they understand another's utterances, as well as recognize that display when it is produced by the other. The conceptual apparatus of Sacks's analysis, incidentally, is a product of his continuing studies of members' methods for producing recognizedly rational talk in naturally occurring conversations.<sup>56</sup> By treating the commonplace particulars of talk as problematic (as formal linguistic analysis, psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics do not), Sacks has been able to uncover elegant formal operations employed by members to assemble and analyze those particulars. Cicourel,<sup>57</sup> employing the version of the problem of understanding as it is developed in the work of Garfinkel and Sacks, is studying how children acquire and use interpretive operations to organize the intelligible features of their own actions and to analyze the actions of others.

#### MEMBERS' FORMULATIONS

As a final example, we return to the topic of members' formulations. In accord with the preceding recommendations, members' formulations are not given a privileged exemption, nor are they conceived here as descriptions of or propositions *about* some domain (That *members* conceive of formulations as being formulations *of* or *about* some field of events is quite another matter.) From our point of view, formulations are constituent features of the settings in which they are done. A formulation's good or bad sense, success in illuminating the order of affairs it depicts, truth or falsity, recognizability as being *about* the order of affairs whose features it describes, and so on, are contingent accomplishments of the settings in which they are done. As phenomena, members' formulations cannot be assigned a truth value by the analyst. As phenomena, they cannot possibly be treated as poor competition or convenient resources for scientific inquiry. As phenomena, the rational properties of formulations are entirely and exclusively the concerted achievement of members acting in particular practical situations.

In line with this approach, Pollner<sup>58</sup> is currently examining the ways

55. Garfinkel (1967:24–31).

56. Sacks (1966). See also Moerman (unpublished), Schegeloff (1967), Speier (1969), and Turner (1968).

57. Cicourel (Douglas and Sacks, forthcoming).

58. Pollner (forthcoming).

in which the defendant in traffic court provides (or fails to provide) a recognizably (to the parties concerned) rational, coherent, and complete account concerning the circumstances of his charged violation and why he should receive lenient treatment. The criteria by which these properties of such accounts are assessed are being investigated as integral features of the setting within which they are offered.

### *Concluding Remarks*

We have argued that there is a fundamental convergence between lay and professional sociological inquiry. Both modes of inquiry subscribe to formally and substantively identical conceptions of social fact. Each mode presupposes the existence of objective structures of activity, which remain impervious to the procedures through which their features are made observable. Further, each mode of inquiry addresses the same substantive domain. The list of sociological topics overlaps substantially with members' everyday concerns. In short, the properties of the attitude of everyday life are firmly entrenched in, if not constitutive of, professional sociology's resources, circumstances, and topics.

The world that stands as the condition and object of lay investigations is thus much the same world known to professional investigation. The ways in which it is problematic for the lay member are also the ways in which it is problematic for the professional. Similarly, the ways in which its features are glossed over by lay members are the ways in which they are glossed over by professionals.

We noted several consequences of this shared orientation to the social world as an object of investigation. For example, by virtue of mutual subscription to the fundamental facticity of the social world, common-sense descriptions (or more generally, formulations of the orderly properties of socially organized activities) are rendered either competitive with or a resource for professional investigations. We have recommended a perspective that demands treating as problematic what in lay and professional sociological investigations alike is treated as a stable and unquestioned point of departure.

The distinctive features of the alternative perspective, which we offer here, reside in the proposal that the objective structures of social activities are to be regarded as the situated, practical accomplishments of the work through and by which the appearance-of-objective-structures is displayed and detected. The apparent strangeness of this perspective is due to the fact that it introduces a strange and hitherto largely unexplored domain of inquiry—the commonplace world.