**Chapter 2: Seeing and Thinking Sociologically**

Discussion Questions:

1. Explain how the behaviors of individuals and small groups are influenced by others based upon what you have read in these articles. Be specific and provide examples.
2. What are the commonalities between street interaction, joking, fighting, suicide, and sports?
3. How does research lead to the development of theory? How has research on organizations changed the way we think about the sociology of organizations?
4. How do these articles contribute to our understanding of concepts such as culture and norms?

Nicholas H. Wolfinger

Passing Moments: Some Social Dynamics of Pedestrian Interaction

Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, Vol. 24, No. 3, 323-340 (1995) <http://jce.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/24/3/323?ijkey=rY9uoGn2q0tVE&keytype=ref&siteid=spjce>

**Abstract:**

Pedestrian interaction is inherently complex yet observably ordered. For order to be possible, people must behave like competent pedestrians and must expect copresent others to act accordingly. Although many researchers have examined pedestrian behavior, few have considered exactly how pedestrians develop and sustain the expectation that others will indeed behave like competent pedestrians. Using ethnographic data, the author shows how these expectations emerge in the specific practices that comprise pedestrian behavior. Various researchers have attributed pedestrian order to the existence of a tacit contract between users of public space. The author's findings extend the implications of this work by explicating the social and collaborative processes by which users of public space come to trust each other to act like competent pedestrians.

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Mark A. Seckman & Carl J. Couch

Jocularity, Sarcasm, and Relationships: An Empirical Study

Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, Vol. 18, No. 3, 327-344 (1989)

<http://jce.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/18/3/327?ijkey=o7qvHr.3Nymqk&keytype=ref&siteid=spjce>

**Abstract:**

We analyze the intertwinings of jocular and sarcastic transactions with solidary and authority relationships to demonstrate both how those transactions are contextualized by extant relationships and how they modify and affirm relationships. Jocularity is most commonly contextualized by solidary relationships and in turn invites or affirms solidary relationships. Sarcasm may be contextualized by either a solidary or authority relationship. Sarcastic transactions are commonly produced to comment on actions regarded as violations of extant relationships. We conclude that jocularity and sarcasm are significant forms of social action that are routinely used by people with robust relationships to affirm and modify social relationships.

Lonnie Athens

Violent Encounters: Violent Engagements, Skirmishes, and Tiffs

Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, Vol. 34, No. 6, 631-678 (2005)

<http://jce.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/34/6/631?ijkey=rzlo1k6I5V9K6&keytype=ref&siteid=spjce>

**Abstract:**

From the author’s study of violent and nonviolent offenders and nonoffenders’ accounts, he drew two main conclusions about the interaction that takes place between the perpetrator and victim when violent crimes are committed. First, these crimes are committed during violent encounters that encompass five stages: (1) role claiming, (2) role rejection, (3) role sparring, (4) role enforcement, and (5) role determination. Second, based on how many of these stages are completed, violent encounters can be divided into three subtypes: (1) engagements, (2) skirmishes, and (3) tiffs. Violent dominance encounters that go through all five stages constitute engagements, those that enter only four of the stages constitute skirmishes, and those that enter only three of the stages constitute tiffs. Thus, for any theory to provide a complete explanation of violent crimes, it must be able to account for not only violent engagements but also violent skirmishes and tiffs.

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Calvin Morrill

Culture and Organization Theory

*The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, September 2008; vol. 619, 1: pp.15-40.*

<http://ann.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/619/1/15?ijkey=11/qV/fDSv8Gc&keytype=ref&siteid=spann>

**Abstract**

Culture has become a legitimate concern and part of the basic conceptual toolkit in much of contemporary organization theory. This article historically traces the contested place of culture in organization theory—from acultural rationalist theorizing at the turn of the twentieth century; to the accidental “discovery” of shop floor culture by human relations scholars in the 1920s; to mid-twentieth-century explorations of informal and institutionalized relations in organizations; to present-day approaches that blend concepts from organizational culture frameworks, neoinstitutional analysis, sociology of culture, and social movement theory. This historical backdrop provides a context for raising several research questions relevant to organizational change, boundaries, and deviance. In closing, the author suggests that an analytic nexus between culture, power, and agency is emerging in contemporary organization theory that ultimately may yield a theory of society.

Shepherd, Hana

**Crowdsourcing**

Contexts, May 2012; vol. 11: pp. 10-11

<http://ctx.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/11/2/10?ijkey=g0r8u8pI0.1hQ&keytype=ref&siteid=spctx>

**Abstract**:

Crowdsourcing is a practice employed by many types of organizations that makes use of the internet to harness the time, energy, and talents of individuals who are otherwise unconnected to the organization. Hana Shepherd explores some of the many creative uses of crowdsourcing and discuss the issues the practice raises in terms of the nature and future of work.

Mak, Bernie Chun Nam, Liu, Yiqi, Deneen, Christopher Charles

Humor in the workplace: A regulating and coping mechanism in socialization

Discourse & Communication, May 2012; vol. 6: pp. 163-179

<http://dcm.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/6/2/163?ijkey=28NwPYP6tYGgo&keytype=ref&siteid=spdcm>

**Abstract**:

Professionals transitioning into a workplace face the challenge of socializing into their new working communities. One important factor in this process is humor (Plester and Sayers, 2007). We present a case study of how a newcomer transitioning towards integral status interacts with the use of humor in her new workplace. Using the Communities of Practice framework (Wenger, 1998), we examine workplace discourse collected from a new recruit, Emma, and her colleagues in a Hong Kong firm. The analysis portrays a picture of how humor is a critical element as Emma negotiates relationships with other colleagues and works towards her assigned tasks. Findings suggest that humor can be an indicator to newcomers of appropriate or inappropriate behavior. Humor can be used for newcomers' integration into the workplace; humor can be used by integral members to mold newcomers into the normative ways of doing things. We argue that humor may be used as a regulating and coping mechanism in workplace socialization.