

Media; Cultural, Economic, and Social Capital; the Division of Labor and Social Solidarity:
How social interaction has changed in the Private-Public Spheres of Everyday Life

“If we wish to understand the cultural transformations associated with the rises of modern societies, then we must give a central role to the development of communication media and their impact.”¹

John B. Thompson, a sociologist who focuses on media and modern social life, states that *the development of the media has transformed the nature of symbolic production and exchange in the modern world* (10). Although materials for print media had been in existence since the third century, in China, it wasn't until the thirteenth century that Italy established its first paper mill (53). Prior to the mid-fifteenth century, symbolic forms of communication in social interactions were face-to-face (81).

In the second half of the fifteenth century, Gutenberg developed the printing press, and from that point forward the use of print media became the standard as a form of mass communication. Print media created a new symbolic form of power, and quickly became a driving force in causing changes in how groups communicated and socially interacted throughout Europe (53). One of the significant developments of the creation of print media was in the transfer of knowledge—the Church, educational centers, and monarchies no longer had total control over media publications. But, the success and survival of this new form of communication depended upon the ability of individuals to commodify these symbolic forms of communication effectively through commercial enterprises that resulted in economic capital (52).

¹ Thompson, John B. (1995). *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*. Stanford University Press and Polity Press, Cambridge in association with Blackwell Publishers Ltd. Preface.

Mediated communication (technical media), is a contextualized form of social interaction that is purposive and embedded in all forms of individual and group exchanges in the private and public spheres of everyday lives. *Mediated communication* allows for a degree of space-time distanciation (Bourdieu) (12, 21). Thompson believes that media—through communication, reproduction and storage of information—have dramatically changed social interaction in both the private-public spheres of everyday life. Historically public spheres have been controlled by the state and private spheres by the general population for the promotion of economic opportunities. Social interaction within the private and public spheres are affected by how individuals communicate their needs; changes in symbolic forms of communication, can affect the distribution capital, social solidarity, and the division of labor, and cause social stratification among groups.

The ability of mass media to saturate the general population with marketing ideas specific to the interests of both the private and public sectors has exponentially evolved within the past one-hundred years. Prior to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's print media was the predominant form of communication. The media currently can reach across continents to even the most remote populations to deliver information (23-31). The exploitation by commerce of technical innovations has reinforced the usefulness of the media for commodification—a type of valorization where objects are ascribed a symbolic value—as important economic, social and political resources (27). Media has the power to deliver messages that can cause changes to the structural organizations of nations, especially in Third World, where all segments of society are playing a more active role in seeking economic, political and social equality in social solidarity and the division of labor (44-45).

To fully understand how media and the distribution of knowledge have affected capital, social solidarity, and the division of labor in the private-public spheres of everyday life, one must look at the historical evolution of communication and social interaction—face-to-face and through the media, and the effect each has had upon the other. This paper seeks to do those tasks.

Changes to Collectives and Social Solidarity, and the creation of the Public Sphere

Per Émile Durkheim, pre-industrial primitive societies (*clans*), were nomadic (subsisted on hunting and gathering), lived in *collectives* (small groups), and had one-dimensional, mechanical social solidarity that tied the division of labor through to a *collective consciousness*² (30). The clans were deeply religious, pre-Christian societies that used symbols (*totems*) associated with nature to bind members to the *collective consciousness* of the group. The *clans* maintained order by imposing voluntary, formal and informal laws upon members that restricted social interactions. These laws were considered a visible symbol of social solidarity (24-31).

Durkheim posited that the more diverse the social interactions, the greater the ability to integrate into collectives; both internally and externally (21). So, as individuals evolved from primitive methods of hunting and gathering, and nomadic living conditions, to more stable, rural working environments like farming and industry, they could develop an *organic form of social solidarity*—the division of labor was more individualized and not part of a *collective consciousness* (30-31).

² Durkheim, Emile, and Kenneth Thompson. (1985). *Readings from Emile Durkheim*. London: Routledge. Pp The Division of Labour in Society.

As societies shifted from economic means of production in rural areas to industrialized urban cities, the proximity of groups socially interacting caused the state to impose more restrictive, mandatory laws to maintain order in these diverse populations. These laws came in two forms, civil and criminal, and retribution for offenses were determined by the location of the act, whether it was in the private or public sphere.

The laws imposed against offenses to private spheres (like religious and social gatherings) were different from offenses against public spheres. In private spheres the civil laws levied upon offenders were less severe because they did not interrupt the organic social solidarity of the community but were on a more personal level. These laws tried to restore conditions to their previous state. Examples of civil laws were commercial law, procedural law, administrative law, and constitutional law (23). Laws imposed upon public spheres were penal and criminal laws and differed in severity and punishment. Under penal or criminal law, suffering imposed upon offenders diminished their fortune, honor, life or freedom. These types of sanctions were considered repressive, because the criminal acts were violent and public acts that challenged the cohesiveness and stability of the organic social solidarity of the community (23).

Norbert Elias agreed with Durkheim that proximity limited social interactions in primitive cultures because members only had contact with immediate family members and clans who shared the same totems. In these primitive cultures, social actions were based upon emotional impulses, and uncivilized and irrational behavior. The dynamics of these social actions changed when the structure of primitive societies became more civilized—evolved from nomadic lifestyles to feudalism—by moving to rural and urban areas. Individuals—through the division of labor—

developed a variety of skills that gave provided the opportunity for them to join guilds and other professional groups. While religion and the Church still shaped beliefs and values, other outside media influences impacted social interaction and communication—like publication of *De civilitate morum puerilium* (On civility in children)—which helped civilize societies by aiding in the development of self-control and self-constraint.³

Georg Simmel's theories on the influence of primitive societies to limit the division of labor through a collective consciousness were like Durkheim and Elias.⁴ Simmel labeled social interactions as *sociations*, and posited that control over *sociations* dramatically changed when social and cultural structures shifted from location to common interest. For example, academic institutions restructured alliances from family lines and locale to common areas of study; English trade unions and military units diversified memberships; age-related groups formed common bonds; and town administrators also became more diverse. The shift from *mechanical* to an *organic* division of labor and the diversification of alliances, gave individuals more freedom to develop personal ethics and values.⁵

Jürgen Habermas states that “By ‘public sphere’ we mean first a domain of our social life in which such a thing as public opinion can be formed.”⁶ Habermas categorizes everyday communication as either private—issues relating to individuals in the private sector—or public—

³ Elias, Norbert, Stephen Mennell and Johan Gouldsbloom (1998). *Norbert Elias on civilization, power, and knowledge: selected writings*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. P.p. 49-53, 56, 58, 64. Chapter 1: “The Social Constraint towards Self-Constraint.”

⁴ Georg, and Kurt H. Wolff. (1950). *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. Glencoe, Ill: Free Press. P. 5 The Field of Sociology.

⁵ Simmel, Georg. (1922). “The Web of Group Affiliations.” Translated by Reinhard Bendix. In Simmel, (1955). “Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations.” *New York: The Free Press*. Pp. 129, 131, 134-135.

⁶ Seidman, Steven (Ed.). (1989). *Jürgen Habermas on Society and Politics: A Reader*. Boston: Beacon Press. Pp. 230-236. Chapter Ten. “The Public Sphere.”

issues controlled by the State (231). The *bourgeois public sphere* evolved from private persons who utilized mass communication—printed matter—to influence the commodity exchange and labor (233). The first modern constitutions, under the influence of the private sectors (spheres), guaranteed society a private sphere in which citizens of the state were allowed a free exchange of commodities. The political daily press not only discussed commodities, but also informed the general population of important political and state matters that affected their wellbeing. The print media had a great influence upon revolutions in France and the radical changes to state government in the seventeenth and eighteenth century's (235). By that time, groups had begun to consolidate power, and used "*public opinion*," to criticize and legislate against the state in matters that affected their wellbeing (232-233).

Changes in Social Structures related to Capital, Exchanges of Knowledge, and Social Solidarity

The lines separating and labeling the division of labor and capital have become extremely blurred. Modern media no longer refer to *laborers* as *proletariat*, or *capitalists* as *bourgeois*. In modern societies, the media associates the social status of the *working class* with *liberals*, and *capitalists* and *bourgeois* with *conservatives*.

Unfortunately, even these labels are misleading and do not correctly define the differences between classes, because both *liberals* and *conservatives* have entrepreneurs, sports figures, actors, and a plethora of categories of "*others*" who have made millions, and even billions through innovative economic opportunities in the development of new technologies, sports contracts, contracts for endorsements of products, and even in creating the latest clothing fashions. Both *liberals* and *conservatives* have groups working towards the *greater good* in

dealing with cultural, economic and social problems focused on poverty, disease, water, and world hunger. This blending of the *division of labor* and *capital* is more of a modern social phenomenon. Prior to the twentieth century, economic and social status defined the division of labor and promoted social stratification among classes.

Theories relating to the domination of one class over another⁷ posit that bourgeois capitalist have historically limited access of knowledge and control of the development of technology to elite groups in groups within society. This restriction has caused differences in equality, social stratification, and increased the economic divide between classes in the division of labor.

Pierre Bourdieu⁸ and Ronald S. Burt⁹ state that capital determines economic and political power, and position in society. Burt divides capital into three forms: economic, human and social (8-9). Bourdieu also divides capital into three categories: economic, cultural and social (243), although human and cultural capital could be considered synonymous with one another. Both Burt and Bourdieu believe that the rate of return from utilizing the three forms of capital depends upon their exchange values, i.e., stability of the market, competition, and social solidarity of the participants. For Burt, social capital is the conduit for the stability and

⁷ Gramsci, Antonio (1971, 1935). "Selections from the Prison Notebooks." Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, translation. *New York: International Pub's*. pp. 5-14.

⁸ Richardson, John G. (Ed.). (1986). *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education*. New York: Greenwood Press. Pp. 241-258. Chapter 9, Pierre Bourdieu "The Forms of Capital."

⁹ Burt, Ronald S. (1992). *Structural Holes: the Social Structure of Competition*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Pp. 8-49.

equilibrium of capital because of the social networks that provide opportunities for growth, it is also the key ingredient for balancing out the three forms of capital, and limitless (10-13).

Bourdieu posits that economic capital is the most important ingredient in the triad because it is the foundation of the other two forms of capital (242-243), but does agree with Burt that social capital provides important opportunities for networking and collectivity in ownership of materials and goods (249). Bourdieu also reinforces the notion that social capital has limitations because it is both material and symbolic, and is never completely independent of cultural and economic capital, and its stability depends upon the solidarity of the groups in the collectives, the existence of networking connections and relationship strategies, exchange values and the overall accumulation of everything combined (249-251).

Burt and Bourdieu are not that far apart on their theories related to capital, even though they look at the foundation for the triads differently.

Max Horkheimer states that *knowledge, which is power, knows no obstacles*, and because technology is the essence of knowledge, he posits that the goal of the bourgeois—who had historically controlled technology—was to increase the return on capital. The means for accomplishing this goal was the exploitation of the proletariat by increasing the economic divide in the division of labor¹⁰ (4).

¹⁰ Horkheimer, Max and Theodor W. Adorno. (1972, 1944). *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. John Cumming, Transl. NY: Herder and Herder. "The Concept of Enlightenment." Pp. 3-42.

Per Antonio Gramsci¹¹ (5-6) and Louis Althusser¹² (132), the most salient causes for the differences and inequality among groups in modern Western capitalism, were the hegemonic power and control that certain classes had over *Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA's)*, i.e., *Churches, public and private schools, family, legal systems, political systems, trade-unions, cultural systems and communication* (143). This control created a wealthy group of *intellectual entrepreneurs* who had the power to shape cultural, economic, and social capital.

Gramsci, an Italian Marxist imprisoned by the Fascists from 1926-1932, and Althusser, a French Algerian Marxist imprisoned by Nazi Germany after the fall of France until the end of World War II in 1945, are social theorists who carried forward Karl Marx's nineteenth century call for changes in the stratification of the division of labor between the bourgeois and proletariat in modern Western capitalism. Althusser's Marxist political views on *ISA's* and *production*, and Gramsci's Marxist focus on the *division of labor, production* and hegemony, brought forward the notion that changes to civil organizations like *Churches, public and private schools, family, legal system, political system, trade-unions, communications, and the cultural systems*, would also

As Althusser points out, "*To my knowledge, no class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State, Ideological Apparatuses*" (146). Consequently, the *organic bourgeois intellectuals* who control the ISA's, with

¹¹Gramsci, Antonio (1971, 1935). "Selections from the Prison Notebooks." Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, translation. *New York: International Pub's*. pp. 5-14.

¹² Althusser, Louis. (1972). "Lenin and philosophy, and other essays." "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)." *New York: Monthly Review Press*. Pp. 127-180.

their diverse populations and wealth, can cause stratification in the division of labor and affect distribution of wealth, power, prestige, and other “goods” in modern Western capitalism.

Gramsci accepts the premise that all *status groups* have their own brand of *intellectuals*, including the peasants, but due to the structure of public and private schools, beginning around the eighteenth century and continuing into modern Western capitalism, a *two-tier educational system* was created that restricts access to the economic and social advances for segments of society. The first tier, private schools, provides *organic bourgeois intellectuals* with instructions in complex reasoning skills related to high level cultural and technological knowledge, while the second tier, public schools, only provides vertical, low-level education on specific tasks in production for *technicians* and other types of *physical laborers*¹³ (10-11).

For example, after graduating from these hierarchical, two-tier educational systems, *organic bourgeois intellectuals*—like *entrepreneurs*—can use a full range of intellectual capabilities, while *proletariat technicians* and other *physical laborers* are educated to use only a minimum of their creative and intellectual skills (8), and that limits their economic and social mobility. State educational systems further stratify this two-tier segment of the population by giving preference in lower-level technical training to individuals in urban areas over rural areas—which causes a difference in skills between the proletariat, and often leads to unemployment and economic and social inequality.

¹³ Gramsci, Antonio. (1971, 1935). “Selections from the Prison Notebooks.” Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, translation. *New York: International Pub’s*. pp. 5-14.

Gramsci further states that eliminating *organic bourgeois intellectuals* who control the two ensemble organisms in society—*private (civil)* and *public (State)* (12-13), will take the absorbing of peasants and proletariat into a homogeneous, politico-economic societal block of *Marxist intellectuals* who can work together to reverse the economic and social conditions within the division of labor¹⁴ (19-20). He posited that the *proletariat* and *peasant's* acceptance of this hegemonic control of wealthy *organic bourgeois intellectuals* over *civil* and *State organizations* has supported economic and social stratification in modern Western capitalism. In his prison notebooks, Gramsci rejects the necessity for violence against the enemies of the exploited classes to cause change, and brings forward the notion that peasant and proletariat absorption of allied social forces" into a more homogeneous, politico-economic societal block of *Marxist intellectuals* could help eliminate *bourgeois* power and control. While Althusser's states that only violent and radical changes to the infrastructures of the *Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA's)*, i.e., *Churches, public and private schools, family, legal system, political system, trade-unions, communications, and the cultural systems*¹⁵ (143), will minimize the exploitation and subjugation of the *proletariat* by wealthy *bourgeois*, and affect social and economic stratification in production and the division of labor in modern Western capitalism.

Michel Foucault supports the social theories that *elite social groups* have historically restricted communication and the transfer of knowledge to classes by pointing to dramatic historical events that caused paradigm shifts within social structures that affected social status

¹⁴ Anderson, Perry. (1976). "The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci." *New Left Review*. Vol. 100 (Nov 1976-Jan 1977). Pp. 5-27, 44-46.

¹⁵ Althusser, Louis. (1972). "Lenin and philosophy, and other essays." "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)." *New York: Monthly Review Press*. Pp. 127-180.

and economic power¹⁶ (112-116). Per Foucault, discourse in every society has historically been *controlled, selected, organized and redistributed* to limit the transfer of knowledge and to restrict verbal communication and social interaction¹⁷ (216). This control began in the seventeenth century institutions that were organized by hierarchical systems into disciplines with rules, definitions, techniques and instruments that regulated dialogue and social interaction. These institutional systems had the *power* to include or exclude individuals in *discourses* related to *knowledge*. Intellectuals, who controlled the transfer of knowledge, had economic and political advantage that that stratified classes within the division of labor (132).

Changes to Institutional Structures that affected Social Interactions

The causes for change in society come from many directions. They can be *static, short-term or long-term, simple and complex, rational and irrational, just and unjust, and liberating or suppressive*. Change can occur through dramatic events like wars or political unrest, or in something more positive like the discovery of a vaccine to cure polio, and the invention of even communication devices that distribute and transmit information. Change does not occur in a vacuum, so effects can vary¹⁸ (45).

Thompson believes that three technological changes in the nineteenth century caused changes in structural organizations that affected capital, social solidarity and the division of labor in public and private spheres. These three things are: *the transformation of media institutions*

¹⁶ Foucault, Michel. (1972). *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. A. M. Sheridan Smith, New York: Pantheon Books. Pp. 3-17, Introduction; 215-237, Appendix.

¹⁷ Foucault, Michel, and Colin Gordon. (1980). *Power and Knowledge: selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*. New York: Pantheon Books. Pp. 109-133.

¹⁸ Thompson, John B. (1995). *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*. Stanford University Press and Polity Press, Cambridge in association with Blackwell Publishers Ltd. Preface.

into large-scale commercial concerns; the globalization of communication; and the development of electronically mediated forms of communication¹⁹ (76). This allowed a small group of people to consolidate and control information transmitted to the public. The development of the broadcasting system—radio in the 1920's on, television from the late 1940's also gave this group more mechanisms to control transfer of information to the public (79).

Talcott Parsons, as an American twentieth century scholar was influenced by the rapidly changing science and technology environments. He believed that, as a social theorist, his role was to investigate the interdependencies of individuals (*actors*) and the *roles* they played in the modern-day power structures of technological environments. Parsons understood that modern science and technology caused rapid changes in social environments, and that human behavior is reducible to actions and objects in the attainment of goals, so he framed the data that related to the *structure* (modes) of patterns of behavior of individuals, and the *function* (roles) that these behavioral patterns played, in a social theory called *structural functionalism*.

His theories on *structural functionalism* were based upon a *Theory of Action* that framed institutions as interrelated cultural environments that functioned under components of *normative patterns of behavior*. The functional systems in the *Theory of Action: pattern-maintenance; integration; goal-attainment; and adaptation* shaped the behaviors of individuals engaging the complicated processes of social interchange within these institutional environmental settings (54-55). The *social order* of the institutional environment depended upon maintaining equilibrium within three component systems: *Social systems*—conceived as modes of

¹⁹ Thompson, John B. (1995). *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*. Stanford University Press and Polity Press, Cambridge in association with Blackwell Publishers Ltd. Preface.

organized motivated actions, *Personality systems*—interconnecting actions of individual actors organized by a structure of need-dispositions, and *Cultural systems*—the organization of values, norms, and symbols that guide and limit choices on how to adapt and integrate (55). Maintaining social and cultural equilibrium between these three systems required individuals to choose between five pattern variables during social interactions, they are (75-77):

Affectivity— affective neutrality	should the evaluation take place
Self-orientation-collectivity-orientation	private versus collective interests
Universalism-particularism	transcendence versus immanence
Ascription-achievement	seeing objects as quality or performance complexes
Specificity-diffuseness	the scope of significance of the object

Using these pattern variables may cause actors to have behavioral conflicts because the wrong choice could affect social order (75-77). These behavioral conflicts affect two systems: personality systems, biological, and social systems focused around the unity of the interacting group. The social solidarity and maintenance of social order by actors within institutions are not like the simple social interactions of the previous primitive cultures, but are modern stresses related to institutional environments that cause patterns of behavior that result in conflicts of emotional reactions (*cathexes*), about *dilemmas of orientation* that are collectively internalized.

Parsons theories on *structural functionalism*, based upon the *Theory of Action*, were innovative and revolutionary for an early twentieth century social theorist, because he presented new concepts on the structural component of goal-attainment; symbolic language was no longer associated with the classical notions related to totemic and religious primitive ritual symbols,

because modern day technology and science used symbolic language in the form of acronyms; and individuals in these institutions were no longer associated with primitive religious and superstitious clans and collectives, but took on more interpretations associated with structures in which *actors* played *roles* in the maintenance of social order.

Randall Collins²⁰ also studied structural relationships and supports the notion that power is in the hands of individuals who have organizational control over macro-social structures. Within these macro environments are large numbers of micro-social networks of individuals who interact. Macro-structures measure these micro-units by time, space, and the number of interaction ritual chains. As an example, Collins refers to Durkheim's principle of social density, and how encounters between individuals in large populations provide more diverse social networking experience, while the inverse—encounters between individuals in small one-dimensional populations—have the opposite result of limiting social interactions to specific groups (196). Collins cites the power of geopolitical relationships within states and military populations (197), and the effect of growth and contraction, and other structural changes as important in maintaining order and social solidarity. He utilizes Goffman's terminology when referring to symbolic social interactions when stating that "*interactions are not merely instrumental but are procedures that both generate and consume symbols representing group membership*" (198).

²⁰ Alexander, Jeffrey C. et. Al (Eds). (1987). *The Micro-macro link*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapter 8: "Randall Collins: Interaction Ritual Chains, Power and Property: The Micro-Macro Connection as an Empirically Based Theoretical Problem."

These social interactions cause a “*chain of interaction rituals*” that creates “*cultural capital*” for participants. Inclusion and exclusion within social interactions depend upon the dynamics of *cultural capital*, *emotional energy* and *social reputations* (199-200). The *social solidarity* of micro-units is determined by *consciousness*, *membership*, and *interaction rituals*. The individuals who control the macro-structures have larger networks of social interactions, and therefore power over the social entities and structural environments (property) within the micro-units.

Symbolic Social Interaction Rituals, Social Solidarity, and the Division of Labor

Thompson posits that technological developments in media changed and transformed the symbolic social interaction rituals of how individuals communicated with one another in the modern world because communication media reduced the production, storage and circulation of materials (both written and verbal), that are meaningful to individuals, and reworked the symbolic character of social life by reorganizing the ways in which information and symbolic content are produced and exchanged in the social world²¹ (10-11).

Per Thompson, there are three types of modern mediated interaction: face-to-face, mediated interaction, and mediated quasi-interaction (82). Mediated interaction involves the use of technical devices to transmit information (83). Both face-to-face and mediated interactions involve dialogical interaction (84), while mediated quasi-interaction is stretched across space and time and can be in the form of material like books, journals, etc., or mechanical

²¹ Thompson, John B. (1995). *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*. Stanford University Press and Polity Press, Cambridge in association with Blackwell Publishers Ltd. Preface.

devices. Mediated quasi-interactions also involve symbolic forms of monological interactions that have an indefinite range of potential recipients, but do not necessarily require a direct response (84).

Ludwig Wittgenstein posits that individual power relies in controlling *the essence of human language*, because every word has a meaning. Wittgenstein outlines his argument for the power in language skills by referring to the *ostensive* teaching of words, in *Philosophical Investigations*.²² He believes that “*establishing an association between the word and the thing,*” by focusing on the structural exactness for things (objects), by using linguistic symbols through *language-games*, will give individuals the tools they need to navigate the complex social interactions of daily life. Per Wittgenstein, objects already exist (the cause before the effect), and the power of individuals in social orders comes from clarifying (*ostensive* definition) how these objects will be grouped and classified, because “*the speaking of language is [the most important] part of an activity, or of a form of life*” (11).

Herbert Blumer states that “*symbolic interaction refers, of course, to the peculiar and distinctive character of interaction as it takes place between human beings*”²³ (180). He posits that conditions within the social framework of cultures, i.e., social systems, social stratification and social roles are not determined by the environment but the people. Therefore, individuals who utilize mechanisms to interpret the symbols related to social interactions are empowered with the ability to deal with, and face the continuous flow of “self-indications” in their worlds.

²² Wittgenstein, Ludwig. (1953). *Philosophical investigations*. New York: Macmillian. Pp. 2-17

²³ Rose, Arnold Marshall. (Ed.). (1962). *Human behavior and social processes; an interactionist approach*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Pp. 179-192. Chapter 9. “Herbert Blumer, Society as Symbolic Action.”

Blumer also believes that observations of “symbolic interactions” between social groups provide a better understanding of “individual” and “interpersonal relations.” By having the ability to interpret and understand symbolic social interactions, individuals gain (mechanisms) that empower them to better negotiate social situations in groups. (180-181). The ability to construct and extricate symbolic behaviors from others, gives an individual a “self-indication” of how to read and react to their actions (184-187).

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann also believe that power comes from the ability to interpret and control typical social interactions (typifications) in everyday life, and they refer to this ability as using commonsense knowledge to manipulate conduct.²⁴ They support the notion that everyday life is normally orderly and easily navigated, and organized around the here and now. Everyday life has several levels of typifications, so using commonsense knowledge in interpreting and manipulating these typifications, helps individuals navigate through different internal and external reality zones (332). Each of these zones has its own language and symbols, and ease and comfort depend upon how individuals reorient patterns of behavior. Face to face situations take more orientation than distance encounters, and therefore the directness, or indirectness of situations influence subjective modifications in patterns of behavior (336-338).

Erving Goffman builds upon the theme of “everyday life” by presenting techniques on expressive behaviors that can control the conduct and appearance of individuals (actors) in encounters in social establishments²⁵ (1). Actors can control and have power over social

²⁴ Farganis, James. (Ed). (2003). *Readings in Social Theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill. Pp. 331-339. Chapter 10. “Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann: Foundations of Knowledge in Everyday Life.”

²⁵ Goffman, Erving. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday. Pp. 1-16. Introduction and pp. 238-255 Conclusion.

interactions by influencing perceptions of expressions—verbal symbols and body language (2).

The expressions given (verbal symbols), and the expressions given-off (body language) determine the social status of an actor in social interactions (6).

These expressive actions are asymmetrical, and power depends upon who controls the symmetry. Groups have a “division of definitional labor” that interprets expressions, and are often able to cut through the veneer of actors, who may be trying to “shade” or “conceal” past unfavorable behaviors (8-9). Goffman believes that first impressions are extremely important in everyday life, and feels that the “social roles” of actors involve many parts (i.e., explicit and implicit dramaturgical projections, stagecraft and management of face-to-face situations), and their true characters should be presented to, and accepted upon faith, by the whole group (15-16).

Goffman goes on to state, in his *Conclusion* (238-255), that the social establishment in which these encounters take place is surrounded by “fixed barriers of “perception” that contain a team of performers and audience controlled by rules of etiquette. The space within the establishment has several qualities: technical—an intentionally organized space that can be efficient or inefficient in social interactions; political—how the actors are able to control the images portrayed to the audience; structural—horizontal and vertical, and forward and backward status divisions between the actors and the audience; cultural—moral values that influence the actions of both the actors and audience; and dramaturgical—a quality that interacts with the other four qualities (240-242). The personalities of the actors that interact with various societies are affected by their cultures, and maintaining power depends upon the actors’ ability to reorient the flow of the social dialectic. This may take bringing in qua-performers only whose only

concern is how to manipulate the audiences' perception of the performance (251). Goffman believes that the key to maintaining power over social interactions is through successful staging techniques (255).

Media, Social Interaction, and the Private-Public Spheres of Everyday Life

In the conclusion of *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*, Thompson raises some important issues about publicness and the private-public dichotomy.²⁶ He asks how the media should be organized at the institutional level, what kinds of opportunities the media open, and what limitations do the media impose on the private-public dichotomy (235).

Thompson believes that modern media has changed how the general population views the private-public spheres. Before media had the ability to enter homes through a variety of forms of communication, private was associated with invisibility, and public was associated with visibility (235).

Now publicness can involve both the privacy of the home, internet café, a library, and several other places where individuals socially interact through electronic devices. Thompson points to Habermas' argument about the creation of the *bourgeois public sphere*, and how it was independent of state control and state power; it was a public place controlled by private citizens (236). The historical concept of *bourgeois publicness* has now been reinvented as a symbolic open environment where there are no physical boundaries, but is still has some form of control, by the state, to insure not only privacy, but also to limit certain types of media, i.e., pornography, etc. being distributed to segments of the population, like children. (36).

²⁶ Thompson, John B. (1995). *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*. Stanford University Press and Polity Press, Cambridge in association with Blackwell Publishers Ltd. Preface.

Thompson ponders how modern media will affect social interaction and looks back to how the term public was defined throughout most of history as controlled by the state (236-237). He again points to Habermas and his description of how the development of communication media—in the form of print—played an important role in the emergence of public life and how public opinion. He points to the development of submarine cable networks, and the deployment of integrated satellite and cable systems that can transmit large quantities of information around the world, which have given the transnational communication conglomerates the power to further expand their commercial activities and global trade unabated. (238-239). He fears that, left to itself, the market will limit *diversity and pluralism in the sphere of communication*, because industry, like the media, *are driven primarily by the logic of profitability and capital accumulation* (240).

Modern mediated communication has caused society to look at the forms of social interaction in new ways. Media have created both visible and invisible spaces for social interaction, i.e., televisions, the internet, telephone, etc. *that can be non-localized, non-dialogical, open-ended spaces of the visible in which mediated symbolic forms can be expressed and received by a plurality of non-resent others* (246-247).

Finally, Thompson further ask, *“Is there a normative or ethical dimension to the new kind of publicness created by the media?”* (258). He also fears that moral and political ideas held by some of the early media entrepreneurs have been displaced by *criteria of efficiency and profitability* (259), and again uses Habermas’s *bourgeois public sphere*, when addressing the issue of morality. *“The bourgeois public sphere was a realization of what Habermas sometimes refers to as the critical principle of publicity (publicness)”* (259-260), because social interaction in the

bourgeois public sphere was underscored by a sense of morality and concern for the wellbeing of the general population. Thompson believes that there are no easy guidelines on how to regulate human social interaction, whether it is face-to-face, mediated or in quasi-mediated form.

The purpose of this paper was to use social theories to show the connection between the development of various forms of media—beginning with verbal forms of face-to-face social interaction in primitive collectives, print media, and global, mediated social interaction through various forms of mechanical and technical devices—that coincided with the evolution of cultural, economic and social capital, the division of labor and social solidarity in the public-private spheres of everyday life.

I would like to conclude this paper with a section from an earlier paper I wrote that provides an example of the Media's ability to change the general population's perception of two individuals in the early twentieth century—after "The Great War"—World War I. The media could shape public opinions towards these two competitors long before they physically appeared before the public in person.

*The vicar's daughter and the goddess of tennis: Cultural geographies of sporting femininity and bodily practice in Edwardian suburbia*²⁷

On the surface, the 1919 Wimbledon was a match on Lawn Tennis that focused on Dorothea Lambert Chambers—a forty-year old conservative, Edwardian British citizen, who was also a wife and mother, and Suzanne Lenglen—an *attractive* and *gay* French, *Jazz age*, twenty-

²⁷ Gilbert, David. (2011). "The vicar's daughter and the goddess of tennis: cultural geographies of sporting femininity and bodily practice in Edwardian suburbia." "Cultural Geographies." *Sage Publications*. 18: 2, Pp. 187-207.

year old woman who symbolized the new image of female athletes. Both women were accomplished tennis players, but instead of critiquing their tennis styles of the players, three weeks prior to Wimbledon, the media began focusing on the differences in age, culture and style of dress. By the time the 1919 Wimbledon tennis match was held, the media had successfully created the image of a youthful *media darling* (Lenglen), and portrayed Chambers as a middle-aged fading athlete. The media accomplished this task by altering the general public's perception of the differences between the two women in *agency* and *deliberation*, and their inter-relationships associated with the *symbolic* and the *embodied*.²⁸

To explain how the 1919 Wimbledon match between Chambers and Lenglen shifted the perception of Lawn Tennis as the sport of middle, to upper-class, girls and women who played for fun and in their leisure, to a competitive sport that underscored the significance of the "*embodied agency in female tennis players*," David Gilbert brings forward "*Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and hexis*"—deterministic theories related to embodied practice, in which social codes and conventions become naturalized in particular movements and dispositions (187).

Wimbledon Ladies lawn tennis was suspended from 1914 to 1918 because of World War I (WWI), so this match was a significant event, not only because it was the first Wimbledon match in four years, but because the media had decided in advance to increase the competition between Dorothea Lambert Chambers and Suzanne Lenglen, both on and off the court, by underscoring the cultural and social differences between the women. The media printed articles daily for three weeks objectifying Lenglen as an attractive "*media darling*," who represented the

²⁸ Calhoun, Craig J. et al (Eds.). (2007). *Contemporary sociological theory*. Malden, MA : Blackwell Pub. P.p. 277-289. Chapter 20 : Structures, Habitus, Practices (1944) Pierre Bourdieu.

new and more modern, post-war era because she dressed in light-weight tennis cloths, sipped brandy during tennis practice and appeared risqué and Cosmopolitan, while at the same time published images of Chambers in conservative tennis attire, practicing with a tight jaw and stern face, which clearly stressed the differences in age and culture with Lenglen.²⁹ (189)

What is so amazing about the 1919 Wimbledon match is not that Lenglen won the match, but the fact that Chambers almost beat her. Although the closeness of the sets at Wimbledon was noted by the media, the significance of the close score in the final match was overshadowed by the media's continuous comparisons of Chambers and Lenglen's bodily *habitus* and *hexis*. In the eyes of the media, Lenglen was redefining the sport of tennis for women and they wanted this message brought forward to the public. In her dress and style, Lenglen portrayed new *bodily dispositions* that promoted a change in *cultural and sociological* perceptions of female sports personalities (192-194). Gilbert cites Jennifer Hargreaves, a sociologist of sport, as seeing Lenglen as the *new feminist* (190).

In a male dominated society in which women were not associated with *agency* and *power*, Chambers' more modern approach on women playing the game of lawn tennis, in Edwardian culture, is considered revolutionary. Gilbert believes that "*Chambers was both a different kind of agent for transformation and a different kind of celebrity*" (204). The changes she brought to the game of lawn tennis were incremental; not radical. In her deportment and demeanor, as a wife and mother, Chambers continued to maintain Edwardian moral values and dress, but while playing the game of tennis, she was aggressive, disciplined, and showed great competitiveness.

²⁹ Gilbert, David. (2011). "The vicar's daughter and the goddess of tennis: cultural geographies of sporting femininity and bodily practice in Edwardian suburbia". "Cultural Geographies." *Sage Publications*. Pp. 187-207. *Sage*. 18: 2.

Unfortunately for Chambers, her aggressiveness, discipline, and competitiveness in playing the game of tennis only made her look more “manly” and outdated to the media who felt that she reflected a pre-WWI era.

Lenglen went on to capitalize on her celebrity as the *media darling*, by publishing a book on tennis—*Lawn Tennis for Girls* (with the help of two ghost-writers), and made a fortune teaching celebrities tennis, playing in exhibition games, and endorsing perfumes and designer clothing. Gilbert feels that Lenglen also embodies Foucault’s *hexis* and Bourdieu’s *habitus*, because she was an exceptionally skilled tennis player who changed the face of tennis for girls and women by giving the game of tennis a more youthful, sexy, and modern post-WWI twentieth century appeal.

In conclusion, the 1919 Wimbledon match brought about changes to the game of lawn tennis for women and girls for several reasons. Because of the media’s influence on public opinion, lawn tennis was no longer viewed as a leisure sport, but as a game in which exceptionally skilled, athletic girls and women could play competitively, and not be restricted by *cultural and social status*.

Gilbert’s utilizing Pierre Bourdieu’s *habitus* and *hexis* as examples of how *symbolisms* and the *embodied (cultural capital)* altered after the 1919 Wimbledon match was innovative and insightful, but also underscored how the media, through advances in communication technology, could influence cultural, economic and social capital, and the social solidarity in everyday life in the private and public spheres in modern, Western capitalism.

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