

Brandl, Werner

Conduct of everyday life – some views and insights

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Werner Brandl

Conduct of everyday life – some views and insights

Everyday – according to Merriam-Webster and Cambridge Dictionary a term used for *regularly, ordinary, typical, usual*. That sounds like banality and triviality, habit and trot – in short: little excitement and nothing interesting at all! It is therefore not surprising that there are little reason and little interest in the scientific mainstream to discuss *life-world* and *conduct of everyday life* – in addition to references to simple necessity and private responsibility. A tour d’horizon – in the sense of an informative overview of topics discussed.

Keywords: life-world, everyday-life, conduct of everyday life, lifestyle

1 Prologue

Everyday life is the most self-evident,
yet the most puzzling of ideas.
Felski, 1999, p. 15

There are lots of manuals for a good and healthy life, *popular- or pseudo-scientific* “signposts”, which also want to show people the way through the labyrinth to a successful life. Already in 1860, Ralph Waldo Emerson asked himself “a practical question of the conduct of life. How shall I live? We are incompetent to solve the times” (Emerson, 1860, p. 1) in his collection of nine essays *The conduct of life*, in parts, thematically grouped around practical life issues and meant, for example, that “every man is a consumer, and ought to be a producer” (Emerson, 1860, p. 73). Nowadays those are available for all imaginable situations, e.g., *Skills for everyday life* (Overton, 1990), “promotes skills such as following schedules, reading maps, finding help, planning a trip, and more”, *Life skills. Stuff you should really know by now* (Laflin, 2018) “with the essential knowledge to tackle life’s everyday challenges”, the WHO (World Health Organization; <https://www.who.int/behealthy>) *Steps for a better health* “being more active, eating healthy, and avoiding tobacco and harmful use of alcohol” or – modern pictographic – with *tips for a healthy life* (depicted in Figure 1). The need for it seems enormous and probably also a prerequisite being able to successfully master the life as a balance of contradictory demands and requirements as an individual task to reconcile the different, often contradictory factual, temporal but also meaningful and emotional needs and necessities of everyday life, and to integrate them into concrete action.

Even if everyday life is concerned with the daily normal, the ordinary, the familiar, the usual, the concrete, the practical, the pragmatic, the *routine in the here and now*, in short: the self-evident, it is not surprising that – regarding the conduct of everyday life – it could be considered as if it were self-explanatory, so that learning it is not a goal of education – and thus actually not worthy of being a subject of serious scientific considerations!

Relatively late and also hesitant – and initially confronted with considerable resistance – some scientists turned to everyday life as quite a veritable object of scientific consideration.

The scientific study of the forms, course, possibilities, and limitations of *coping with everyday life* and *lifestyle*, and its *actors*, however, existed only slightly and led to a niche existence in the scientific mainstream. Thoughts about the significance of *social structures and functions* in and for everyday life were too much in the foreground - and less so were the *subjects involved*.



Figure 1: Daily routines and rituals for a healthy lifestyle (© Khoon Lay Gan)

With varying categories of classification, the phenomenon was increasingly accepted and adopted: starting from of Edmund Husserl's "introduction to phenomenological philosophy" (Husserl, 1936/1970), the "phenomenology of the social world" (Schütz, 1967), the "structures of the life-world" (Schütz, 1970; Schütz & Luckmann, 1973), as well Lefebvre (1968/1971) "everyday life in the modern world" and with a decidedly Marxist analysis, examination, and evaluation and "critique of everyday life" (Lefebvre, 1947/2014). Within the framework of a "subject-oriented sociology", in 1995 established and Munich based project group "The conduct of everyday life", (Jurczyk, Voß & Weihrich, 2016) is conceived as an active construction and "everyday life in social psychology" (Emiliani & Passini, 2017) critical-psychological consideration explicates it as "basic subject scientific concept" (Holzkamp, 1995/2016).

Interest in the postmodern "lifestyle" has increased significantly. Philosophical ideas on "lifestyle", "art of living" and the "attitude to life" of independence, meaningfulness, and sustainability stylize modern life designs.

2 Life-world and everyday life in philosophy, sociology, and psychology

Everyday life deserves to be taken seriously
and is worthy of intensive study in its own right.
Gardiner, M.E. (2000, p. 207)

As far as the *scientific approach to everyday life* is concerned, *in particular from a phenomenological point of view*, two considerations are of central importance:

First, it is evident that – e.g., in comparison with the natural sciences, in which their findings on the subject, the structures, and processes only become relevant through detours, e.g., vocational training and practice and the manufacture of products or the provision of services – the subject of scientific research and its results are of direct relevance to the subjects' life-world.

Secondly, it is not enough to simply duplicate the tasks of daily life in the scientific study of them and the resulting didactic recommendations for teaching and education, by making them a subject of discussion, but leaving them at the level of exclusively routine (e.g., household) practice.

It is, therefore, necessary to closely *observe, describe, and investigate* the many and varied aspects of everyday life (e.g., food preparation and eating culture, home furnishings and cleanliness, care of relatives, etc.) as *phenomena* which are taken for granted by those involved and thus regarded as less problematic (cf. Figure 2).

A *scientific model* that abstracts from the phenomenon (i.e., extracting the general from the particular) *represents* and *explains* the phenomenon in its generality, *understands* and *clarifies* its possible facets in a *generalizing* way (cf. Figure 2). Nonetheless, the *postulate of adequacy* must continue to be observed, “that the constructs of the social scientist have to be consistent with the common-sense constructs of actors” (Eberle, 2010, p. 126) and “with the constructs of common-sense experience of social reality, i.e. they have to be understandable to an actor and must be able to explain an action appropriately” (Eberle, 2014, p. 14).

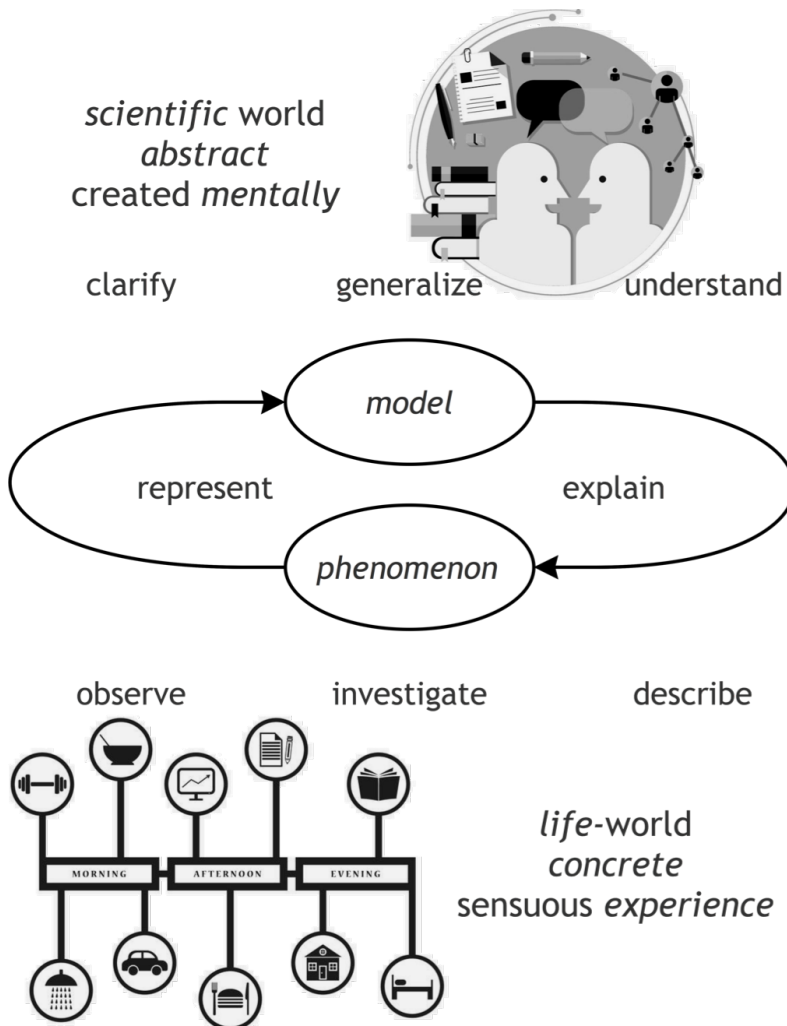


Figure 2: Phenomenological grounding and understanding of scientific knowledge of life-world

2.1 Phenomenology of the life-world

An initial attempt on the life-world started in modern times with the German philosopher Edmund Husserl¹ what he called the *Lebenswelt*. In 1935, when Edmund Husserl, somewhat dramatically, proclaimed “the crisis of European sciences” and deplored in particular “the life-world as the forgotten meaning-fundament of natural science” (Husserl, 1970, p. 48), this was quite an affront for the established sciences, recalling the *life-world*, the *given world and its constitution* and two sorts of truths, namely “of pre- and extrascientific *life-world*” (Husserl, 1936/1970, p. 76) and the “*objective-scientific world*”:

On the one side, everyday practical situational truths, relative, to be sure, but, as we have already emphasized, exactly what praxis, in its particular projects, seeks and needs; on the other side there are scientific truths, and their grounding leads back precisely to the situational truths, but in such a way that scientific method does not suffer thereby in respect to its own meaning, since it wants to use and must use precisely these truths. (Husserl, 1970, p. 132)

In his opinion, this was a wake-up call, to put the objective sciences on their feet from their heads and finally to deal with the lifeworld: “The life-world is a realm of original self-evidences” (Husserl, 1970, p. 127) – and proclaimed for the phenomenological philosophy² a return “*back to the ‘things themselves’*” (Husserl, 1901/2001, p. 168): “It is of course itself a highly important task, for the scientific opening-up of the life-world, to bring to recognition the primal validity of these self-evidences and indeed their higher dignity in the grounding of knowledge compared to that of the objective-logical self-evidences” (Husserl, 1970, p. 128).

Thus, Husserl elevated the lifeworld to a central object of philosophy and meta theoretically opened up a new perspective for the social sciences, which were and are oriented exclusively towards structural-functionalist explanations. In his opinion, the originally postulated separation between the prejudiced everyday knowledge and the (apparently) liberated knowledge of the so-called objective sciences cannot be maintained, because the criterion of objectivity is ultimately based on the merely implicit possibility of viewing and thus ultimately possesses a life-worldly component.

He uses the concept of the life world in an ambiguous sense: on the one hand he means *the directly self-evident*, as the anthropological foundation of the determination of man’s relationship to the world, and on the other hand, he describes *the practical, descriptive and concrete life world*. Husserl’s concern is not that of empirical science, but the reflection of the *meta*-theoretical preliminary questions of each *theorizing*.

His merit clearly lies in the “reestablishment of the ontological and epistemological dignity of the life-world” (da Silva, 2012, p. 88) and having created the argumentative basis for the fact that *phenomenological concepts* were thematized in his

succession and are even widespread in the social sciences today, in very different theoretical contextual references.³

2.2 Structures of the life-world

Therefore, the concept of the life-world (*Lebenswelt*) has been subsequently further developed in a number of post-Husserlian considerations in phenomenology and sociology and is inseparable and connected in different constellations with *Alfred Schütz*, *Thomas Luckmann* and *Peter Berger* (cf., Muzetto, 2015).

*Alfred Schütz*⁴ adopted the term following correspondence with Husserl in the early 1930s in his “Phenomenology of the social world” (Schütz, 1967; original German title: *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der Welt*/The meaningful structure of the world) and bridged sociological and phenomenological traditions to form a social phenomenology. He takes up Husserl’s concept of the world in which we live and integrates it into the sociological analysis of the structures of the world in which we live (Schütz, 1970; Schütz & Luckmann, 1973). For Schütz the lifeworld was “the taken-for-granted ‘common-sense-reality’ of the social world as it is lived by ordinary individuals” in “the daily course of their lives” (Harrington, 2006, p. 341).

He conceived *the meaningful structure of the social world* as the core element of an understanding sociology with “fundamental assumptions characteristic of the natural attitude in the life-world, which themselves are accepted as unquestionable given; namely the assumptions of the constancy of the structure of the world, of the constancy of the validity of our experience of the world, and of the constancy of our ability (*Vermöglichkeit*) to act upon the world and within the world” (Schütz, 1970, p. 116).

Together with *Thomas Luckmann*, *Alfred Schütz* devoted himself to explaining the everyday world: “The world of everyday life is consequently man’s fundamental and paramount reality” (Schütz & Luckmann, 1973, p. 3) “a basic spatial, temporal, and social arrangement” (Schütz & Luckmann, 1973, p. 103). Everyday life is therefore structured according to relevance, which results on the one hand from immediate practical purposes and on the other hand from the social situation.

The world appears “in coherent arrangements of well-circumscribed objects having determinate properties. For men in the natural attitude the world is never a mere aggregation of colored spots, incoherent noises, or centers of cold and warmth” (Schütz & Luckmann, 1973, p. 4) but in “a fixed succession, a Now is transformed into a just-past-Now and becomes a past-Now” (Schütz & Luckmann, 1972, p. 52) and therefore, “the stratification of the world into zones of actual, restorable and obtainable reach already refers to the structure of the life-world according to dimensions of objective temporality and their subjective correlates, the phenomenon of retention and protention, recall and expectancy” (Schütz, 1970, p. 118).

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Table 1: Stratification of the life-world in spatio-temporal respect (Compilation from Schütz & Luckmann, 1973, pp. 36-38; 51-52)

<i>Spatial arrangement of the everyday life-world</i>	<i>Temporal arrangement of the everyday life-world</i>
<i>1 within actual reach:</i> present phase of the stream of consciousness	
The sector of the world which is accessible to <i>immediate experience</i> . It embraces not only actually perceived objects but also objects that can be perceived through attentive advertence.	The world in actual reach has essentially the temporal character of the <i>present</i> .
<i>2 within potential reach</i>	
<i>2.1 restorable reach: memory</i>	
A sector which was <i>previously in actual reach</i> as constant or constantly changeable and to <i>bring into actual reach again</i> .	The world in restorable reach is based upon the <i>past</i> , upon that which was previously in reach and upon that which can once be brought to actual reach.
<i>2.2 attainable reach: expectation</i>	
A sector which <i>was never in reach</i> , but which <i>can be brought within it</i> .	The world in attainable reach depends on anticipation of the <i>future</i> .
Source: Schütz & Luckmann (1973, p. 36-38)	Schütz & Luckmann (1973, p. 51-52)

As with Husserl, in Schütz (1970) and Schütz and Luckmann (1973) *everyday life* and the *lifeworld*, “structuring of the spatial-temporal and social-cultural world” (Schütz, 1970, p. 120), still fall into one, so they are not regarded as spheres that can be distinguished – despite “life-world embraces still more than the everyday reality” (Schütz & Luckmann, 1973, p. 21) – at least conceptually. This is not surprising from the starting point: everyday life and lifeworld world have the same reference phenomenon but include different meanings. The terms can be used synonymously in the *description* of the phenomenon, but their *meaning* must be differentiated.

Everyday life thus describes the world as a horizon of human action embedded in a social interaction system and limited in time and space. This horizon of human action determines both the subjective perception of the reality of individuals and the consensualized perception of the reality of a group. It is thus both individually constructed and handed down through social structures (Wieser, 2008, p. 139).

The *lifeworld* is described as a system of human interaction. The lifeworld is (...) not the perceived ‘everyday life’ of subjects of a social world. Rather, the lifeworld is a transcendental concept in the Kantian sense, which does not comprise objects, but the cognitive structure of objects (Wieser, 2008, p. 140).

Berger and Luckmann “consider the standard version of functionalist explanation the social sciences a theoretical legerdemain” (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p. 186) and so their approach towards “the social construction of reality” (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) is both non-sociologicistic and non-psychologicistic” and “posit *neither* an ahistorical ‘social system’ *nor* an ahistorical ‘human nature’” but as an “insight into the dialectic between social reality and individual existence in history” (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p. 187). The dialectical relationship also applies to the formation of the *identity* of the individuals: “Identity is, of course, a key element of subjective reality, and like all subjective reality, stands in a dialectical relationship with society. Identity is formed by social processes” and “conversely, the identities produced by the interplay of organism, individual consciousness and social structure react upon the given social structure, maintaining it, modifying it, or even reshaping it” (Berger & Luckmann 1967, p. 173).

In the opinion of Berger and Luckmann (1967, pp. 21-23), the phenomenological analysis of everyday life, of the subjective experience of everyday life, and the “innumerable pre- and quasi-scientific interpretations about everyday reality” (Berger & Luckmann 1967, p. 20) reveals an ordered reality. The reality of everyday life

- appears already objectified, that is, constituted by an order of objects that have been designated *as* objects before my appearance on the scene;
- is organized around the ‘here’ of my body and the ‘now’ of my present;
- presents itself as an intersubjective world, a world that is shared with others.
- is taken for granted *as* reality. It does not require additional verification over and beyond its simple presence. It is simply *there*, as self-evident and compelling facticity. I *know* that it is real.

2.3 Critique of everyday life

Lefebvre’s “Critique of Everyday Life” (besides others, e.g., Agnes Heller’s exploring the relationship between the everyday, rationality and ethics, Dorothy E. Smith’s feminist perspective on everyday life; cf. Gardiner, 2000) – whereby critique is meant not in the common sense of complaint, blame or degradation, but in the Kantian sense the *analysis, examination, and evaluation* – just as G.W.F. Hegel stated in § 31 of the *Phenomenology of mind* “Quite generally, the familiar, just because it is familiar, is not cognitively understood” consists of “deciphering everyday life in its appearance, but also in its reality, by means of implementing its apparent, formless facts in knowledge” (Sünker, 2014, p. 328) and to bring about a “rehabilitation of everyday life against the devaluations made by ‘higher activities’ – philosophy, literature, art, morality and politics” (Sünker, 2014, p. 325).

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Lefebvre, according to Gardiner “the quintessential critical theorist of everyday life”, “articulated an exceedingly valuable and multifaceted critique of everyday life, one that has continuing importance and relevance” (Gardiner, 2000, p. 72), thus presents in parallel the outlines of a Marxist-inspired *sociology of everyday life* (Lefebvre, 2014), a classic analysis of daily life under capitalism with the starting point of a dialectical relationship between substructure (*Unterbau*) and superstructure (*Überbau*) and in it (using the term *Lebenswelt* as an original citation) certainly ties in with a phenomenological tradition that in everyday life lies the rational core, the real centre of practice because in the last instance, knowledge and power, even wisdom are judged by everyday life – a statement that is not only compatible with Marx but also with Husserl: “How can everyday life be defined? It surrounds us, it besieges us, on all sides and from all directions. We are inside it and outside it” (Lefebvre, 2014, p. 335).

In *clearing the ground*, that public life has penetrated private life, and vice versa, public and political life has become *personalized* and resulted in an indisputable *reprivatization* of practical and social life into a *private everyday*, “for Lefebvre the concept of everyday life constitutes the crucial vantage-point from whence to criticize the formalized and alienated social practices characteristic of capitalism” (Gardiner, 2000, p. 77).

Lefebvre argues that “these complex relations can be understood either from a historical and political perspective or from the perspective of the everyday. Here we have chosen the latter. This is not to say that the former is faulty or bad, merely that it can sometimes lead to a dead end” (Lefebvre, 2014, p. 298).

Lefebvre (2014, pp. 271/272) sums up his program for a critique of everyday as follows:

- It is the ‘human raw material’ that the study of everyday life takes as its proper object. It studies it both in itself and in its relation with the differentiated, superior forms that it underpins.
- Confrontation of so-called ‘modern’ life on the one hand, with the past, and on the other – and above all – with the *possible*.
- Criticism of the trivial by the exceptional – *but at the same time* criticism of the exceptional by the trivial, of the ‘elite’ by the mass.
- Confrontation of effective human reality with its ‘expressions’: moral doctrines, psychology, philosophy, religion, literature.

However, he also makes it clear that he is interested in change: “The object of our study is everyday life, with the idea, or rather the project (the program), of transforming it” (Lefebvre, 2014, p. 296), he is not concerned with the “question of describing, comparing and discovering what might be identical or analogous in Teheran, in Paris, in Timbuktu or in Moscow?”, but with the “question of discover-

ing what must and can change and be transformed in people's lives in Timbuktu, in Paris, in New York or in Moscow" (Lefebvre, 2014, p. 312).

2.4 Conduct of everyday life

According to the Munich-based project group *Conduct of everyday life*, starting in the late 1980s, it "is a sociological conceptualization of subjectivity and even individuality from a sociological point of view and as a genuine subject of sociology" (Jurczyk, Voß & Weihrich, 2016, p. 50).

Conduct of everyday life takes place at the interfaces of *subject-oriented sociology* and *subject-scientific psychology*: the sociologically oriented concept of conduct of everyday life *describes* the active construction of a system of action that structures and institutionalizes the subjects' area of life in a variety of ways and focuses on the question of *how* individual and structural processes are interconnected. The subject-scientific view, on the other hand, is devoted to the question of *why* for the individual decisions and actions in everyday life and for the emergence of everyday life as a personal system of action. "The basic premise of the concept is that people have to tackle all of the different – and in some cases contradictory – demands that they encounter in the various spheres of everyday life" (Jurczyk, Voß & Weihrich, 2016, p. 34).

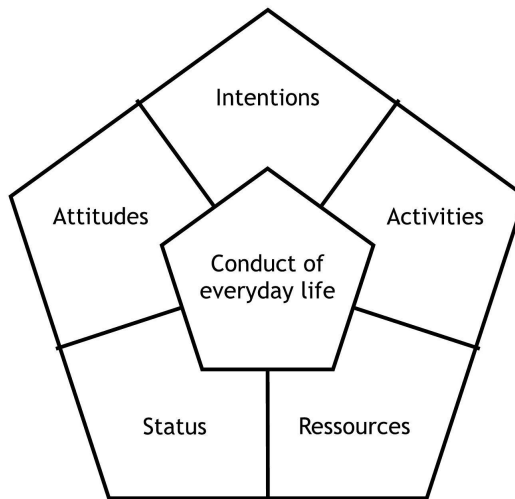


Figure 3: Facets of the conduct of everyday life

It is not, however, a matter of the chronological sequence, the mere addition of individual everyday activities, but of the way in which these everyday activities can be

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combined into a coherent, at the same time consistent and cohesive whole (cf. Fig. x).

In this respect, this does not represent a trivial activity, since in a ‘concerted’ action the everyday actions integrated into socio-cultural status and socio-economic resources must be combined with the individual attitudes and intentions of coping with everyday life, and the corresponding activities to form an ‘overall package’ that results in an overall concept of life conduct and are brought to the point in order to reconcile *what one wants* with *what is expected* or *imposed on one*; with *what is necessary* - measured against certain standards - and finally with what you can do yourself (Project group *Conduct of everyday life*). Three moments are decisive: the *objective relationships* in the person’s areas of reference as constraints or demands, but also as opportunities and resources, many *socio-cultural influences* in the form of patterns of interpretation, normative standards and cultural models, and finally different *forms of direct social cohabitation* in families, partnerships, households, etc. (cf. Jurczyk, Voß & Weihrich, 2016, p. 48).

According to Voß (2001), everyday life is an individually institutionalized, complex *mode of action*. Life conduct is no more, but also no less than a system for the dimensional structuring and coordination of a person’s everyday activities, in short: a way of acting (Voß, 2001, p. 206), which is structured by the following dimensions (Voß, 2001, p. 205f.):

- *Time*: when, how long, in which time mode, with which beginning and which end, with which time position within a day, a week, a year etc.;
- *spatial*: where, with which spatial logic, with which spatial orientation;
- *factual*: according to which logic, with which qualifications etc.;
- *social*: with whom, according to which norms, with which expectations, in which division of labour and cooperation logic;
- *meaningful*: with which motivations, interpretations, and justifications;
- *medial*: with which process forms or artefact-like aids/techniques;
- *gender-oriented*: with which sex or gender logic;
- *physically*: with which body mode, with which structure of the body-related sensuality;
- *emotional*: with what emotional state, what emotional background colouration.

In context with the obvious tendencies of the modernization of society focussing on *rationalization*, *individualization*, *equalization of gender relations*, and ‘*workification*’ and the often paradoxical consequences like *ambiguities* and *asynchronies* of everyday life (Jurczyk, Voß & Weihrich, 2016, p. 41), the project group differentiates three ideal types of life conduct: *Traditional life conduct* refers to traditions: “One lives in the same way that one has always lived *because* this is how it has always been” (ibid. p. 41): *Strategic life conduct* refers to elements of reflexivity.

“One’s course of action is governed by planning and control, everyday life is organized from start to finish and the individual areas of life are segmented”. *Situational life conduct* is both rational and reflexive: “Everyday actions take place in the form of reactive or desired adaptations to changing situations, and decisions are made depending on the situation encountered. This ‘muddling through’ has improvisational elements and allows openness and flexibility, though it can also lead to instability, indecision and chaos” (ibid. p. 41). However, it applies to all life-conduct types that “routines are shown to be decisive mechanisms to achieve continuity and to reduce the number of decisions that constantly have to be made. The variation lies only in the degree of routinization” (ibid. p. 41)

Conduct of everyday life often develops a *specific logic* and a *real life of its own*. What is meant by this is that it becomes independent in the experience of those affected vis-à-vis its producer, i.e., it confronts the producer objectively and even has a tangible retroactive effect (Voß, 2001, p. 211). The independence of conduct of everyday life and the resulting self-alienation of the person is a paradoxical condition of the possibility of *stability, continuity, and identity* (Voß, 2001, p. 212): They lead to *safety* and *relief* in everyday life as ultimately decisive functions of the conduct of everyday life.

The theoretical concept focuses on *seven basic points* (Jurczyk, Voß & Weihrich 2016, pp. 45-48): *Conduct of everyday life* as

- a. the interrelation of action
Life conduct is – at least not primarily – not defined as a *construction of meaning* (as, for example, in the phenomenological concept of the *lifeworld* or of *everyday life*); it is instead defined primarily as a *practice*.
- b. the interrelation and form of everyday activities
Life conduct is defined as the structure of the activities that are part of life on an everyday basis. It is about the *interrelation* of practical everyday life and its *forms*, rather than about the abundance of elements.
- c. the individual’s system of action
The conduct of everyday life is a system on the level of the individual, or, more specifically, a *system of the individual*, a system of action that belongs to the individual, to which they are bound and which they support.
- d. the individual’s active construction and effort
The emphasis here is instead on the fact that the system of life conduct is invariably *actively construed, practised* on an everyday level and *maintained*, as well as adapted, when necessary, to changing conditions by every person with reference to their individual social situation or position.
- e. a self-contained logic
Life conduct gains both a functional and a structural autonomy in relation to its producer because it is based upon numerous binding arrangements with

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social reference areas and actors, and these cannot be revoked without further ado.

f. the non-deterministic sociation

Life conduct is invariably and systematically *sociated*. Objective social conditions in the social spheres of the individual present more or less inflexible constraints and demands (but also opportunities and resources) and manifold socio-cultural influences also have an effect on life conduct. It takes place not in isolation, but together with others in various forms of immediate social cohabitation (such as families, partnerships, and networks).

g. a system *sui generis*

Life conduct is not a social system or social entity. It is a system *sui generis* (of its own kind), which – with its own form and logic – inserts itself between the individual and society, and fulfils important functions, e.g., increasing, at the same time, subjects' *relative autonomy* in relation to society and their *social integration*.

2.5 Perspective of the critical psychology

Psychology, in general, and psychoanalysis in particular, has shown and continues to show little or no interest at all in researching everyday life because it does *not* necessarily make *people acting in everyday situations* the object of its knowledge, but is primarily interested in *psychic processes*. Holzkamp deplores in traditional psychology, including psychoanalysis, a “lack of clarity regarding the relationship between ‘scientific’ and ‘everyday’ reality and the transferability of insights gained in experiments and the setting to the everyday lives of the individual” (Holzkamp, 2016, p.77).

Especially in the observation of the psychopathology of normal life (Freud, 1914; Jones, 1911), full of stories and anecdotes of faulty actions of everyday life, e.g., forgetting, mistakes in speech, reading, and writing, erroneously carried-out actions, errors, superstitious beliefs as psychopathological occurrences of everyday, Freud only detects the basis for the development of the concept of unconscious – seeing in the *common mistakes of everyday life* the same cause for “the inconsistencies, absurdities, and errors in the *dream content*” and thinks that in both phenomena “the appearance of the incorrect function is explained through the peculiar interference of two or more correct actions” (Freud, 1914, p. 336).

Freud concludes that, that *deep down* we are a lot more than we think we are on the *surface*, e.g., most trivial slips of the tongue or pen can reveal secret ambitions, worries, and fantasies and, therefore, the boundary between the normal and abnormal human behaviour is unstable and subsequently thereof, that such symptoms are able to disrupt not only the communication with others but also the spheres of eating, relations, work, culture etc.

Therefore,

- investigation of the errors and slips of everyday life is perhaps the best mode of approach to the study of psycho-analysis;
- analysis of the occurrences in question is of great service in the treatment of neurotic patients;
- considerations of the mechanism of these erroneous functionings make it easy to understand the way in which psycho-analysis brings about its therapeutic effects (Jones, 1911, p. 520).

In contrast, Holzkamp claims, that conduct of life in traditional psychology is obviously radically underexposed, precisely “that to date the ‘conduct of life’ has evidently *been greatly neglected in traditional psychology*” (Holzkamp, 2016, p. 67) and that conduct of everyday life at no point as an independent theoretical problem has even halfway been systematically and comprehensively analysed and conceptualized to highlight “*the deliberate blindness of psychology and psychoanalysis about the existence and the scientific conceptualization of their subjects’ or patients’ conduct of everyday life*” (Holzkamp, 2016, p. 78) and makes considerations that “a psychological conceptualization of the ‘conduct of life’ cannot be developed from the position of traditional psychology due to its ‘blindness’, it *can* be addressed from the position of psychology as a science from the standpoint of the subject” (Holzkamp, 2016, p. 80).

With reference to the Munich project group, Holzkamp has located the everyday life as a basic concept of subject science (Holzkamp, 2016) in his “Critical Psychology” and started a “reinterpretation from the perspective of the science from the standpoint of the subject” (Holzkamp, 2016, p. 81)

It “involves studying psychological processes as people’s experiences and actions within the social and material contexts of their everyday lives” and “expands psychological theory and research to explore people’s collective participations in everyday practice and their efforts to handle the activities, relations, conditions, concerns, and struggles in life” (Kristensen & Schraube 2014, p. 291)

The world reference of psychology, the level of mediation between social structure and everyday life is central in both approaches! But Holzkamp also makes it clear that subject science, as he understands it, is actually something other than subject orientation in the sense of the Munich project because the “Munich concept of the conduct of life *centers on society*, i.e., it takes the process of modernization of societal structures as the reference point for its analysis”, while “the psychological version of the science from the standpoint of the subject in some way *centered on the individual*” (Holzkamp, 2016, p. 84). Nevertheless, he reformulates the conduct of life as a “mediating link between the individual and society based on the ‘*relative autonomy*’ that a subject organizing or ‘conducting’ his life has vis-à-vis society” (Holzkamp, 2016, p. 92).

| Conduct of everyday life

Holzkamp also sees that everyday life is not conditioned by social conditions, but is based on possibilities of action, thus taking place relatively autonomously. This categorial positioning of the concept of conduct of everyday life as a level of mediation is also established in the “revitalization” of the “psychology and the conduct of everyday life” for Schraube and Højholt (2016): “The conduct of everyday life represents a mediating category between the individual subjects and societal structures” (p. 4) - this is the short form of what Holzkamp had explained in more detail:

To put it more precisely: from the meaning constellations with which they are confronted subjects can *extract certain premises for action* that they *adopt as theirs* and from which, by implication or inference, certain intentions to act then arise that are, for them, sensible, in the sense that they are in their interest, on which they then, insofar as there are no resistances or impediments in the contingent reality that militate against it (i.e., all other things being equal), finally act. (Holzkamp, 2016, p. 89)

3 Lifestyle and conduct of life - social construction and individual representation

Sooner or later, everyone invents a story for himself
that he considers his life.

Max Frisch: Gantenbein

[German: Mein Name sei Gantenbein]

As Bourdieu stated in “Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste”, “lifestyles are essentially distinctive” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 130). A distinction is a strategy to generate and legitimize differences. “Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 6), in the everyday choices in everyday life e.g., diet, clothing, taste, habitation, (eating) culture, etc. In fact, the economic and social conditions for different ways of living are bound up with systems of dispositions, Bourdieu calls “habitus”. The *habitus*, “systems of durable, transposable *dispositions*” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72), is not only a “structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perception of practices, but also a structured structure: the principle of division into logical classes which organizes the perception of the social world is itself the product of internalization of the division into social classes” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 170) and concludes that “life-styles are thus the systematic products of habitus” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 172).

Lifestyles, both “the distinct and distinctive life-styles” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 101) are understood to mean group-specific forms of everyday life and interpretation of individuals in the economic, social, political and cultural context of a way of life (Rink, 2002, p. 36). The interweaving of *lifestyle* and *conduct of life* somewhat blurs the different focus, which tends to be expressed in the fact that lifestyles are located at the meso-level and conduct of life at the micro-level of social diagnosis (Scholl &

Hage, 2004, p. 39). Lifestyles are seen in a mediating function between objective social situation and subjective world (Rink, 2002, p. 36).

One can regard everyday life as a “missing link in the socialization process” (Munich Project group *Conduct of everyday life*): “The conduct of everyday life represents a mediating category between the individual subjects and societal structures” (Schraube & Hojholt, 2016, p. 4), quasi the “hinge for the relation between individual and society” (MaxWeber), which is determined in three ways:

1. the affectedness and imprinting of individuals by *social structures*,
2. the *actions and reactions of individuals* within and towards these structures and
3. the resulting *influence on these structures*.

The identification of *lifestyles* is intended to describe clear social processes of differentiation by indicating socio-culturally anchored patterns of thought and action. These are equally identity-forming and group-forming. Constitutive elements for this are the opinions and interests shared in the corresponding lifestyle segment as well as preferred modes of action, especially in the consumption and leisure spheres. The concept of conduct of everyday life, on the other hand, deals in particular with the question of how individuals master the different challenges and constraints of everyday life.

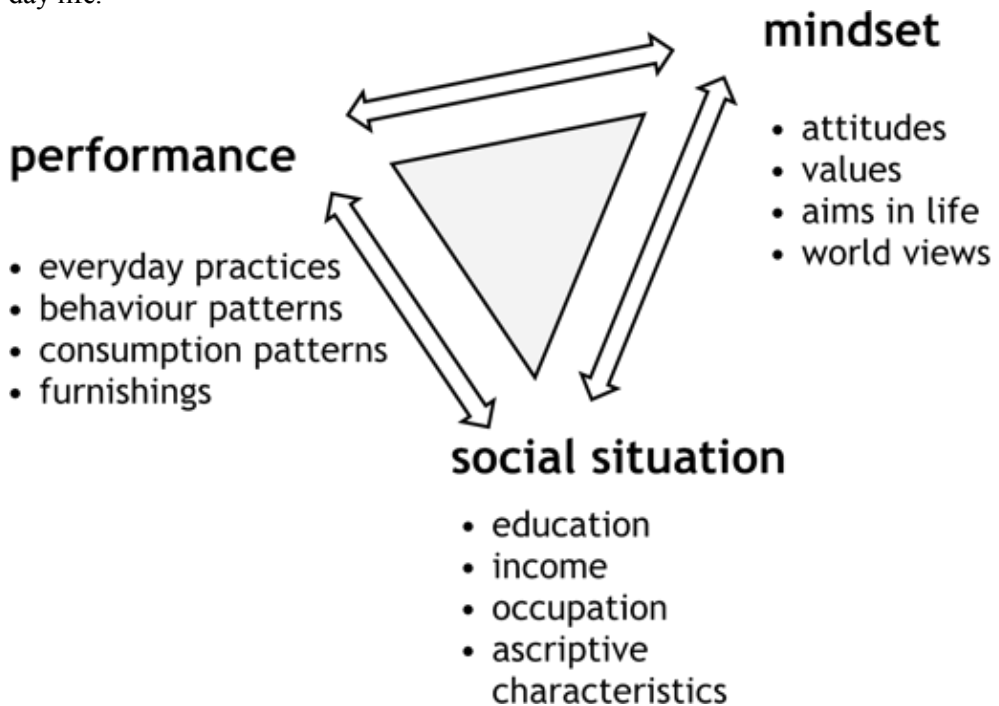


Figure 4: Dimensions of lifestyle (Reusswig, 2002, p. 159)

| Conduct of everyday life

Lifestyles can be fundamentally defined according to three dimensions (cf. Figure 4):

- *social situation*: income, education, occupation, ascriptive (attributed or attributive) characteristics such as age and gender. Behind this is the assumption that all attempts at stylizing the self cannot be realized without recourse to social resources (in the double sense of possibility and limitation) (Reusswig, 2002, p. 159);
- *mindset*: values, attitudes, goals in life and world views. This expresses the conviction that lifestyles are not (only) something ‘external’ or ‘objective’, but must essentially be regarded as an expression of ‘inner’ or ‘subjective’ attitudes and characteristics (Reusswig, 2002, p. 159);
- *performance*: typical patterns of behaviour, everyday practices, patterns of consumption, furnishing.

With reference to Bourdieu's (1984) distinction between economic and cultural capital, and with Berger and Luckmann that “the world of everyday life is structured both spatially and temporally” (Berger and Luckmann, 1967, p. 26) lifestyles can be located dimensionally:

- A time-related dimension of lifestyle: biographical perspective and generation-specific attitude to modernity/tradition;
- the equipment level: economic capital (income and wealth), cultural capital (education);
- the individual radius of action in everyday actions: home-centered/local to extra-domestic/cosmopolitan.

In his reinterpretation of the Munich project group, Holzkamp already emphasized the importance of distinguishing the curriculum vitae (the *course* of life) from the *conduct* of everyday life: “While *conduct of life* is, of course, in *reality* an aspect of one’s life history and thus also subject to all its changes (from birth to death), *functionally* the ‘conduct of everyday life’ must be considered to be a separate process that is distinct from a person’s life history” (Holzkamp, 2016, p. 69). Characteristic for this is

- the daily *repetition* of processes (getting up, having breakfast, reading the newspaper, going to work, coming home, having supper, watching TV, and going to bed – in a more or less standardized sequence);
- the *routinization* of such a sequence, indispensable to life, so that life goes on;
- the generation of a *reproductive or self-reproductive system quality* of its own, different from the developments and changes over the course of one’s life history;

- the separation of the *synchrony* of the activities as something distinct from the *diachronic plan* of the life history.

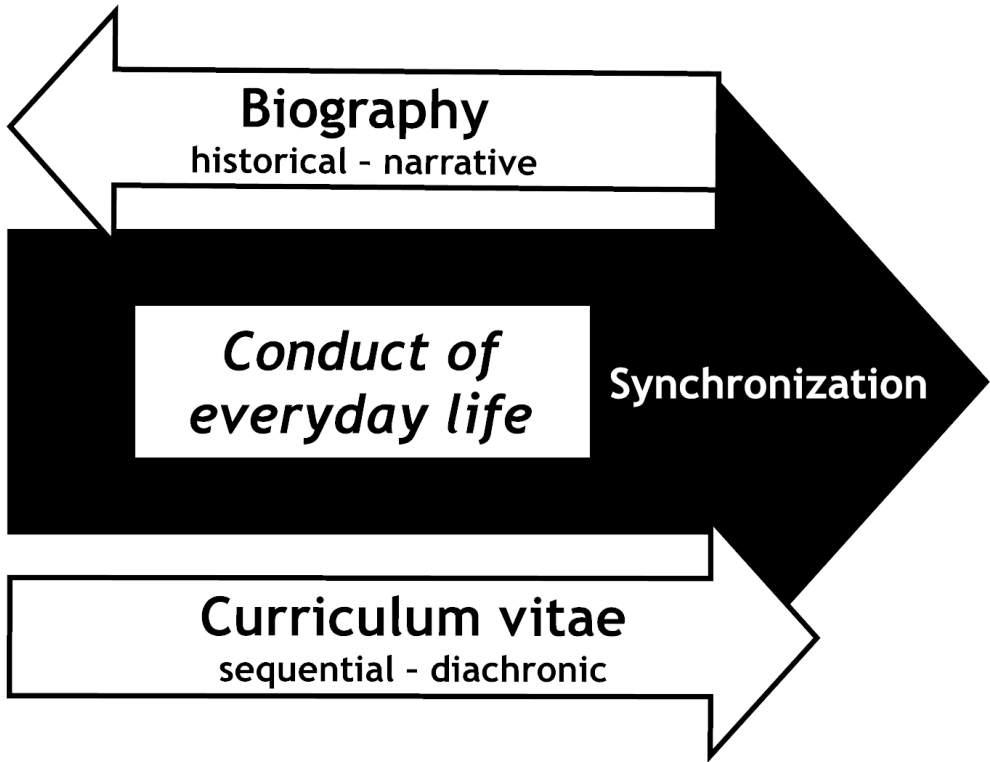


Figure 5: Conduct of everyday life – proactive living and retrospective describing

Conduct of everyday life is a descriptive-analytical and subject-oriented concept based on the creative performance, the creative will and the creative compulsion of individuals and thus complements the perspectives of biography and curriculum vitae. *Conduct of life, life course/curriculum vitae, and biography* (cf. Fig. 5) are complementary concepts:

- *Conduct of (everyday) life* represents the course of everyday life in relation to the life course ordered by the time of life.
- *Biography* as subjective construction integrates curriculum vitae and life guidance.
- *Life course/curriculum vitae, biography and lifestyle document* at the same time their social construction.

| Conduct of everyday life

Biography and conduct of (everyday) life refer to a new state of development of the subject. They embody two sides of the same thing, namely life as an individual construction.

The connection between the subjective and the objective is manifested in the individual (re-)presentation and construction of

- biographical life story(s)
- current life world(s)
- perspective life concept(s)
- actual life practices!

4 Epilogue

Just about anybody can face a crisis.
It's that everyday living that's rough.
Bing Crosby in "The Country Girl"⁵

The ramble through the scientific realms, which at their core or even only marginally deal with everyday life and lifestyle, can neither eliminate the immanent ambiguity (also polyvalence) categorically nor actually: "To put it more clearly or abstractly, *ambiguity* is a category of everyday life, and perhaps an essential category" (Lefebvre 2014, p. 40)

As strange as it may seem, *homo domesticus* is and remains an unknown being. There we wash and scrub without ceasing, tidy up and move continuously from one corner of our house to the next - and yet we know almost nothing or only superficial things about this hustle and bustle; we do not know the real principles of housework. (Kaufmann, 1999, p. 12)

And yet it is necessary to get along in everyday life – and to equip children and young people with the necessary tools to handle "consumption, nutrition, and health as central fields of action for the conduct of everyday life" (Schlegel-Matthies, 2008). Here she discusses goals, tasks, and requirements of the conduct of everyday life and the interrelations between developments, and structures in business, society, and politics on the one hand and individual conduct of life on the other and finds that even in the consumer society with its seemingly immeasurable range of goods and services, the technicization and digitalization of more and more fields of consumption and action, conduct of everyday life in the fields of consumption, nutrition, and health always involves new tasks for which work (at home) has to be performed (Schlegel-Matthies, 2008, p. 13).

Education for the conduct of everyday life is, therefore, not banal and trivial, but urgently needed! The task of nutrition and consumer education should be to put the question of the joint responsibility of all household members for the work that

occurs in the context of everyday life back more into the focus of educational measures and to make the significance of this work for society as a whole (more) visible (Schlegel-Matthies, 2008, p. 13). From an educational theory perspective, this means that *life-long practical learning* is on the agenda. It's about the

- *ability to cope* with diverse concrete life situations,
- acquisition of *everyday*
- *skills* and
- development of *competences* to deal successfully with the affordances of the present and future.

Some of the above-mentioned (problem) areas, especially the examination and discussion of the interaction of social lifestyle, private conduct of life and individual lifestyles will therefore necessarily be an essential part of a *study book on nutrition and consumer education on consumption – nutrition – health* (Schlegel-Matthies, Bartsch, Brandl & Methfessel, in prep.).

Notes

The article is an updated English-language version of Brandl (2018), revised, amended, extended, and supplemented.

1 Cf. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Edmund Husserl*
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/husserl/>

2 At the beginning of his “Logical investigations” (1900/1901) Husserl was not quite sure: “Phenomenology is descriptive psychology. Epistemological criticism is therefore in essence psychology, or at least only capable of being built on a psychological basis” (Husserl, 2001, p. 167). In the second ed. (1913), however, he asserts: “Not psychology, but *phenomenology* is subject to all clarifications in pure logic (and in all forms of rational criticism”.

3 The consequences of progress in the natural sciences and the effects of globalization require further questions: “How is the *life* of the lifeworld to be rethought after the biotechnical revolutions of our present age? How is the *world* of the lifeworld to be rethought after globalization?” (Harrington, 2006, p. 341).

4 Cf. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Alfred Schütz*
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/schutz/>

5 The aphorism falsely stated in the phrase, “Any idiot can face a crisis – it’s this day-to-day living that wears you out!” is even falsely attributed to Anton Chekhov:
<https://quoteinvestigator.com/2013/06/14/face-crisis/>

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