**SOC 3120: Social Psychology**

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**Lecture 4: The Chicago and Iowa Schools**

Contemporary symbolic interactionism comprises several diverse schools of thought, including the Chicago and Iowa schools, dramaturgical sociology, ethnomethodology, and phenomenology, to name the most prominent. Of these, the two that are best known, and most divergent in their orientation, are the Chicago and Iowa schools.

During the major portion of the generation following George Herbert Mead's death in 1931, the two leading exponents of the S.I. perspective were Herbert Blumer (who first coined the term "symbolic interaction" in 1937) and Manford Kuhn. Through his close association with Mead at the University of Chicago, subsequent writings, and many students at the University of California (Berkeley), Blumer elaborated an approach that has come to be known as the Chicago school. The Iowa school, in contrast, developed out of the work of Manford Kuhn and his students at the State University of Iowa.

These two schools differ in important substantive and methodological matters. Indeed, it can be argued plausibly that the most fundamental point of divergence between the Chicago and Iowa schools is that of methodology. Blumer, much like Dilthey, stressed the unique nature of the subject matter with which social scientists work, and argued the case for a distinctive, humanistic methodology in the study of human behavior. Kuhn, on the other hand, stressed the need for unity of method in all scientific disciplines. Continuing the 19th century distinction between *Geitwissenschaften* and *Naturwissenschaften*, the Chicago school proposed an *idiographic* (or non-generalizing) function for behavioral studies, while the Iowa school stressed a *nomothetic* (or generalizing) function. Essentially, while Blumer strove simply to "make modern society intelligible," Kuhn sought universal laws in order to make predictions of social conduct.

Three intertwined topics represent the basic specifics of this methodological divergence:

(1) The relative merits of phenomenological and operational approaches;

(2) The appropriate techniques of observation; and

(3) The nature of the concepts best suited for the analysis of human behaviour.

With regard to the first topic, it is important to note that while both Blumer and Kuhn claimed to be interested in what goes on "inside the heads" of humans, their approaches to the subject matter differed greatly. Blumer was doubtful of the adequacy of using the prevailing practices of the physical sciences, asserting that "the crucial limit to the successful application of variable analysis is set by the process of interpretation." Thus, he advocated a special, phenomenological methodology stressing the need for insightfully "feeling one's way inside the experience of the actor." He contended that the student of human conduct must get inside the actor's world and see the world as the actor sees it, because his or her behaviour takes place on the basis of his or her own particular meanings. Through some form of sympathetic introspection, the student must take the standpoint of the acting unit (person or group) whose behaviour s/he is studying and attempt to use the actor's own interpretive categories in capturing that actor's world of meaning. This intuitive, *verstehen* approach emphasizes intimate understanding more than inter-subjective agreement among investigators.

Kuhn, in contrast, stressed operationalizing the concepts in symbolic interactionist theory so that they could be used in rigorous empirical research. In this regard, he proposed what he termed "self-theory," as an effort to develop a set of generalizations tested by empirical research. In contrast with what he termed the earlier "body of conjectural and deductive orientations," Kuhn sought to *"empiricize"* Mead's ideas, reconceptualizing and abandoning those he deemed "non empirical" and developing observational techniques that were consistent with this aim. Nevertheless, Kuhn did not reject the study of the covert aspects of human behaviour. Instead, he urged the utilization of objective overt-behavioural indices (i.e. verbal protocols by the actor) indicative of the covert aspects.

Turning to the second matter, the appropriate techniques of observation, Blumer's insistence on sympathetic introspection makes it not surprising that he advocated the use of such observational techniques as life histories, autobiographies, case studies, diaries, letters, interviews (especially of the free, or non-directive type), and, most importantly, participant observation. Indeed, it was Blumer who most explicitly established the vital link of the interpretive tradition with ethnographic research. He felt that only through intimate association and familiarity with those being studied can the investigator enter their worlds. Thus, he criticized experimental, instrumental, and quantitative methodology in the form of questionnaires, schedules, tests, laboratory procedures, and detached observation "from the outside" as he felt they fail to catch the meanings that crucially mediate, and determine how individuals respond to, objects and situations.

Kuhn objected that these techniques are subjective, time consuming, and unsuited to the development of scientific knowledge. He complained that information gathered through their use is too variable and unique for comparison and generalization, and that they do not lend themselves to the conventional testing of explicitly formulated theories by procedures subject to independent validation. Effectively, Kuhn rejected as unfeasible all such attempts to either "get inside the individual and observe interior plans of action directly" or to infer them from overt behavior. He concluded, rather, that such devices as questionnaires and attitude scales could be adapted to identify and measure self-attributes.

Indeed, a case can plausibly be made for equating Kuhn's methodology with his technique known as the twenty statements test (TST). Developed in 1950, this test asked individuals to write down twenty statements in response to the question "who am I?" The resultant statements can be quantified and subjected to a Guttman-scale analysis (e.g. see his article using this on measuring the relative salience of religious identities). Today, the TST is the most widely used technique used for studying self-conceptions.

Thirdly, Blumer and Kuhn differed regarding the nature of the concepts best suited for the analysis of human behaviour. Blumer, with his humanistic view of the actor and fluid image of social reality, urged the employment of "sensitizing concepts." These, in contrast to "definitive" (i.e. conventional) scientific concepts, do not provide prescriptions of what to see, but merely suggest directions along which to look. Kuhn, in contrast, formulated explicitly operational definitions of "self," "social act," "social object," "reference group," and other relatively imprecise concepts rooted in the work of Mead. For example, he operationally defined the variable self as the answers ("self attitudes") which an individual gives to the TST.

Turning from their explicit methodological differences, a second salient difference between the Chicago and Iowa schools is their position the ancient question of whether human behaviour is free or determined. Conceiving human behaviour in terms of an interplay between the spontaneous and socially derived aspects of the self, Blumer and the Chicago school build in an unpredictable, indeterminate dimension. Critical of the simplistic nature of both psychological and sociological determinism, Blumer viewed the self as involving two analytically distinguishable phases, the "I" and the "me." According to Blumer's interpretation of Mead, the "I" is the *impulsive* tendency of the individual. It is the initial, spontaneous, unorganized aspect of human experience. The "me," on the other hand, represents the incorporated other within the individual, the organized set of attitudes and definitions prevailing within the group. In any given situation, the me constitutes the generalized other (society) and, often, some particular other. *Every act begins in the form of an "I" and generally ends in the form of a "me," for the "I" constitutes the initiation of the act prior to its coming under the control of the definitions or expectations of others (the "me"). The "I," thus, provides propulsion, while the me provides direction to the act.* Human behaviour, then, was viewed by Blumer as an ongoing series of initiations of incipient acts by impulses (the "I") and of guidance of the acts by the "me." The act is a resultant of this dialectical interplay, and thus "cannot be accounted for by factors which precede the act."

Kuhn and the Iowa school, in contrast, did not explicitly consider either impulses or the "I" in the constitution of the self. For Kuhn, as for conventional role theory, behaviour is socially determined by the actors definitions - particularly his or her self-definitions. Thus, the self becomes a "me" exclusively, and conduct is held to be wholly predictable (in principle) on the basis of internalized prescriptions and proscriptions. If we know the actor's reference groups, according to Kuhn, we can predict his/her self-attitudes; and, if we know these, we can predict his/her behaviour. In short, prior conditions determine the human being's self; and his/her self determines his/her conduct. This view, of course, conveniently disposes of such "non-empirical" concepts as the "I" and impulses.

There are several other aspects of these two schools related to this issue of determinacy-indeterminacy. For example, the Chicago school conceived both self and society in *processual* terms, while the Iowa school stressed *structural* conceptions of both phenomena. These opposing views are clearly discernible in their treatment of two intimately related topics:

(1) Images of behaviour as "constructed" or "released"; and

(2) Images of role performance as "role making" or as "role playing."

First, Blumer and the Chicago school, with their processual view, stressed the *construction* of behaviour - a reflexive, interpretive process in which the actor makes indications to him/herself, taking note of things and ascertaining their import for his/her line of action. Action is seen to be built up, or constructed, in the course of its execution, rather than "merely released from a pre-existing psychological structure by factors playing on the structure." With the mechanism of *self-interaction,* the individual may rehearse his or her behaviour, summoning up plans of action, assessing them, changing them, and forming new ones before indicating to him/herself what the action will be. This tentative, exploratory process gives rise to the possibility of novelty in behaviour.

Kuhn and his followers at the Iowa school, while giving lip service to the view that individuals are not merely passive agents, is compelled by his methodological and deterministic commitments to deviate from this disavowal. Much like Max Weber, Kuhn contended that social scientists had to recognize the interpretive nature of human lived experience. Yet, he approached the study of human behaviour in manners that approximated the methods used for comprehending other (non-minded, non-interacting) phenomena. By conceiving the self as a structure of attitudes derived from the individual's internalized statuses and roles, Kuhn and his followers assign causal significance in behaviour to these somewhat fixed attributes (e.g. the "core self"), which are conceived to *release*, and to be predictive of behaviour regardless of situational or individual differences.

Secondly, Blumer and Kuhn have radically divergent conceptions of the nature of role behaviour. Blumer and the Chicago school emphasize "*role making*" - a tentative, dynamic, and creative process in which cultural norms, status positions, and role relationships are seen merely as the frameworks within which social action takes place, not the crucial and coercive determinants of that action. Moreover, Blumer emphasized how individuals could engage in *joint actions* where participants align their acts to one another by interpreting the acts of others and, in turn, making indications to others as to how to act. According to Blumer, such social behaviour, through which society is constituted, is only possible because people, through association with others, come to develop selves and are able to make meaningful indications to themselves and others. Larger social organizations, in this sense, are nothing other than arrangements of individuals interlinked in their respective actions.

Kuhn, on the other hand, emphasizes "*role playing*" (a.k.a. "role taking") in which personality is conceived as a structured organization of "self-indications," which are, in effect, internalizations of the relatively enduring, trans-situational roles and statuses an individual occupies in the groups with which s/he feels identified. It is such reference groups, and the individual's self-images that result, from which individuals derive their pre-established plans of action. Essentially, such a view lent itself to causal statements regarding the emergence (self as a dependent variable) and direction (self as an independent variable) of the self. Indeed, even idiosyncratic elements in role performance are fully explainable, for Kuhn, in terms of composites or resultants of the role-expectations held by the actor's various reference groups.

Summing up, it may be argued that while Blumer's image of humans dictates his methodology, Kuhn's methodology dictates his image of humans. For example, Blumer, commencing with a conception of human behaviour as emergent, processual, and voluntaristic, focuses on a dialogue between spontaneous impulses and social definitions in which acts are constructed. Given such an image, he naturally exhibits skepticism regarding the extent to which human behaviour is predictable, and insists on a methodology that, in his words, "respects the nature of the empirical world." (e.g. participant observation using sensitizing concepts to get at actors' meanings). Kuhn, on the other hand, begins with a scientific focus, stressing operationalism, the TST, and definitive concepts - all linked with a logic of verification. This concern brings him to an acceptance of a basically deterministic image of human behaviour that denies the I any role whatsoever in conduct, and dismisses the possibilities of both emergence and volition.

It is important to note that the Chicago and Iowa Schools do not begin and end with the mid-century works of Blumer and Kuhn. Indeed, there have been several notable attempts in more recent years to creatively bridge the intellectual chasm between these two schools of thought. We will now consider two of these. First, we will examine David Lewis' reinterpretation of the Meadian "I," along with his reconstruction of Mead's theory of social action, as the foundation for future research. Secondly, we will consider the work of Carl Couch and his followers at the "New Iowa School" which seeks to synthesize Blumer and Kuhn's approaches into a new paradigm for research.

**David Lewis: "A Social Behaviorist Interpretation of the Meadian "I"**

As we saw above, Blumer and Kuhn's conceptions of symbolic interactionism were intimately associated with their treatment of the Meadian "I." David Lewis takes issue with both of their formulations, and proposes a third alternative that he feels is more consistent with Mead's philosophy of "social behaviourism." After doing so, he builds on this interpretation through a theoretical extension of Mead's theory of social action that he feels is a more fruitful avenue for future research.

Lewis begins by noting that sociologists' interpretations of the "I" have become a stumbling block to an adequate understanding of Mead's perspective. He asserts that, to date, most proposed interpretations of the "I" fall into two general categories.

First, there are scholars, following Blumer, who see the "I" as a *remedy* introduced into Mead's theory in order to evade a complete collective, or sociological determinism of human conduct. In general, the remedialists offer either a biological ("impulses") or a vaguely existentialist ("personal self") interpretation of the "I." They conceive of the "I" having a definite function: avoiding the social determinism implied by the "me."

Secondly, there are scholars, following Kuhn, who regard the "I" as a *residual* component of the theory. Such individuals think that Mead posited the "I" simply as a catch-all way of explaining behaviour that is not predictable through the operation of the "me" on the individual. They feel that Mead did this instead of simply admitting the inherent limitations of the explanatory scope of his perspective. Some even suggest that the "I" is essentially superfluous (i.e. there is no inner dialogue between the "I" and the "me" because there is no duality, only the "me"). This residual interpretation accords no legitimate purpose to the "I" and holds that Mead's theory would be more cogent if all references to it were simply omitted.

Lewis argues that both the remedial and the residual interpretations of the "I" misrepresent Mead's views in fundamental ways. Through a textual analysis comparing the inconsistencies in Mind, Self, and Society with some of Mead's published articles, Lewis comes to the conclusion that the "I" must be seen as the individual's *response* to a significant symbol which calls out an attitude and a plan of action. While three concepts - significant symbol, attitude, and response - form the substructure of Mead's social behaviorist theory of social action, Lewis argues that Mead made a clear *distinction* between the organism's taking of the social attitude and its ultimate, overt response. While the former is deterministically produced in the organism, the latter may not be executed because of the inhibiting effects of *feedback mechanisms intervening between the attitude and the response. For example,* Lewis points to the fact that an individual's response need not be visible to external observers in interaction, but may be *subvocal. "The process of conversing with oneself (i.e. thinking) involves symbols, attitudes, and responses in the same structural relations to each other as required in talking to another person."* As Lewis states: "*the self-conscious individual is aware of this attitude and is capable, through self interaction, of evaluating and modifying it."* Essentially then, since thinking is simply "the carrying on of a conversation between the "I" and the "me," a *covert response*, or a *series of covert responses*, may *intervene* between the symbolic calling up of the original attitude and plan of action, and that ultimate response which is finally acted out in interaction.

In this regard, Lewis states it is also important to consider that one's "I" response (interactionally and subvocally) ultimately provides the material stimulating the formation of the next "me"(our reply to our own remark). The "I" which the individual reconstructs by inference from available evidence - a process which Mead called "redintegration" - eventually is incorporated in his or her "me." This is why Mead states that the "I" is the logical presupposition of the "me." If,through the various feedback mechanisms, or the fact that we do not always succeed in doing what we intend to do, we do not respond as called for by the initial social attitude, this will come to have an effect on how we, and others in interaction, view ourselves as objects.

Lewis feels that the Chicago and Iowa schools of symbolic interactionism have essentially missed the point in positing the remedial (Blumerian) and residual (Kuhnian) interpretations of Mead's "I." He feels that neither of these viewpoints is correct, and that if the "I" were simply seen as the organism's response, we would not only be closer to Mead's intention, but would also have a theory of the social self which is far more open to empirical application.

However, Lewis does not simply let matters stand with matters of textual interpretation. Instead, he uses his interpretation of Mead as a platform on which to extend his ideas on social behaviourism. Lewis does this in a free-flowing elaboration of Mead's theory of social action. Recalling that Mead defined social action in terms of the triadic relationship between symbol, attitude and response, Lewis reminds us that these do not necessarily unfold in a linear manner (i.e. the same element of behaviour can be the final phase in one act as well as the first phase of the act that follows). Lewis states that the act is not a discrete, unitary phenomenon, but extends both backwards and forwards in a temporal stream, such that symbol-attitude-response complexes occur in *interlocking series* rather than linear segments. Keeping this caveat in mind, then, Lewis goes on to describe *four phases* emerging from Mead's theory of action that can be extended further both analytically and in future research in sociology and psychology. He terms these as the phases:

(1) From symbol to attitude;

(2) The first feedback phase;

(3) From attitude to response;

(4) The final feedback phase.

(1) Lewis, following Mead, asserts that the attitude, insofar as we are referring to social behaviour, is always deterministically produced in the organism by the significant symbol, and it is always a social attitude in the sense that it can be created in any member of the community by any other member while simultaneously calling it out in him/herself. Essentially, Lewis sees this phase as a mechanical, involuntary process of which the organism lacks self-conscious awareness. In this regard, he sees further research simply focussing on matters of communication such as mode of presentation of the symbol (i.e. word selection, vocal intonations, body language, etc), and the environment in which it is presented (including both physical and social environmental features).

(2) Once the organism is affected by the external stimulus and the attitude is engendered, however, the response does not always follow immediately and automatically. This delayed response is what Lewis calls the "*first feedback phase*." Lewis points out how Mead placed great emphasis on "*mental experiments*" in which we *rehearse* our responses before making them. This takes place through *covert communication with oneself* in which the attitude is assessed for *adequacy* prior to overt action. Lewis points to how there is a parallel here between Mead's social psychology and that of feedback in the disciplines of cybernetics and information theory, which elaborate Mead's phrases such as "inner conversation" and "communication with oneself." These take the form of *subvocal speech, images, emotions, or muscular sensations*. Lewis goes on to speculatively discuss these further in terms of potential future research in three areas: feedback and habitual conduct (i.e. whether habitual actions are performed consciously); feedback closure (i.e. what keeps it from continuing indefinitely), and, particularly, feedback through imagery (i.e. how mental images interact and impact behavioural response).

(3) Following the feedback phase, the resultant, considered attitude is "released" and an overt response occurs. This appears to be the least sociologically interesting phase of the act as, for Lewis and Mead, the intervening processes are purely physical.

(4) Following the organism's response to the significant symbol, the response is defined and evaluated by the actor and others. This Lewis terms the final feedback phase. In this process, feedback data are provided by three principal sources: (i) the organism's perception of physical events; (ii) the response by others present to the organism's response; and (iii) the organism's conception of how the "generalized other" would interpret the response. Through the process of *self-conscious reflection*, the whole experience is "redintegrated" into the self. In this process, the organism brings its perceived response into relation with its prior self. There are several types of possible outcomes. Where there is a perceived *correspondence* between attitude and response, the original symbol-attitude connection may be *strengthened*, or, if the anticipated response apparently *fails to occur*, the connection may be *weakened or extinguished*. Also, a new attitude may have been created and either supported or rejected in the process of the act. During this final feedback phase - what Lewis calls the "process of selfing" - individuals put questions to themselves regarding the degree of congruence between their prior selves and those responses redintegrated into their identities. These questions take forms such as: "Did I commit the act?" "What were my prior intentions?" "Were there extenuating circumstances?" Individuals' responses to these questions, and others, not only have profound implications for their self-conceptions, they also encompass the whole range of defense mechanisms. Lewis calls for experimental research on the organization and processing of these feedback inputs, particularly with regard to matters concerning the "clarity and strength" of a generalized other and its hierarchical organization into a system of relevancies.

Summing up, Lewis divides social action into a series of four (alternating) unconscious and self-conscious moments. Both the symbol to attitude phase and the attitude to response phase are essentially mechanical, involuntary processes of which the organism lacks self-conscious awareness. At most, the organism grasps their occurrence by post-hoc inference. In contrast, *after each of these first and third phases may occur moments of self-conscious reflexivity during which an organism may process feedback inputs regarding, first, its attitude aroused by the significant symbol and, later, its ultimate response.* It is these latter two phases which Lewis, building upon Mead's social behaviourism, suggests are most fruitful for theoretical extension and empirical research.

**Couch, Katovich and Buban:**

**Beyond Blumer and Kuhn: Researching and Studying Across-Time Data Through The**

**Use of Point-In-Space Laboratory Procedures:**

Couch, Katovich, and Buban have tried to move beyond the Chicago-Iowa school divide in a different manner than Lewis. They begin by noting that social processes represent the starting point for research into the human condition, the root of which is embedded in the joint act. They assert that while the Chicago school embraced social processes as the unit of analysis, the Iowa school rejected it. Thus, Blumer and his followers insisted on analysis of ongoing joint action through across-time measures and participant observation of creative agents fitting together lines of action in familiar environments. Kuhn, in contrast, distinguished his undertaking from the Chicago school by calling for the generation of static representations (points in time) of selves, and advocating a stable location (point in space) for observation rather than moving about as social processes proceed.

The authors here argue that each school contributed to the development and maintenance of a "New Iowa School" that attempts to create a *synthesis* of the best of both traditions. This is ostensibly accomplished through the revision of Kuhn's points in time and space investigations of the self. Discarding the former, but retaining the latter, members of the new Iowa School established across time studies of social processes while committing themselves to point in space procedures. This is accomplished through the use of *audiovisual technology* in the sociological laboratory "to preserve researchable and shareable specimens of social action" by selves "reconceptualized" as "social agents who have some control of their transactions in controlled environments." This, according to the authors, "combines Kuhn's commitment to a stable methodology with Blumer and Mead's evolutionary visions." It directs New Iowa School researchers to "isolate and detect the generic elements of social processes, and formulate principles about social phenomena."

For example, in the "Openings Study," the generated data were analyzed for the purpose of detecting how two people align their personal acts to construct a social act. This resulted in the delineation of six elements of such interaction: co-presence; reciprocal acknowledged attention; mutual responsiveness; shared focus; social object; and congruent identities. Each of these represented a specific elaboration of the relatedness prevailing between interactants. Taken in sequence and as an uninterrupted whole, these elements that constitute a cooperative act are considered to represent an across-time version of a universal process.

Despite the novelty of this synthesis, many interactionists outside of the New Iowa School remain lukewarm to it. *Much of the negative reaction stems from a general distrust of the laboratory as a place to derive complex generic concepts in high fidelity to the active and creative image of human behaviour.* Indeed, many interactionists feel that laboratory research controls participants' behaviours to the point of scripting forthcoming activity (e.g. Norman Denzin). The authors counter that participant observation simply creates descriptive studies that could be produced by conscientious journalists or literate laymen, because the data becomes so overwhelming that generic social processes cannot be delineated, and particular perceptions of behavior change as researchers occupy different locations to observe them.

The authors suggest that studying social processes in the laboratory minimizes these problems, along with the use of recording devices, so that manageable data of high fidelity is generated. Moreover, they suggest that, however truncated under experimental conditions, individuals' responses are still real in the situations at hand. In their view, "*the meaning of any act is reduced the farther one is removed from the situation. The activity of laboratory participants becomes meaningful when researchers allow participants to experience events together so as to create shared pasts and to project futures that contain social objectives.* The ideal laboratory context is one that allows participants to project social objectives that are perceived to be significant within the laboratory context, but have no consequences outside of the laboratory." Moreover, the authors state that *subject's abilities to anticipate and act with intention are, and must be allowed to exist in the laboratory.* Their actions are recognized to be temporally informed as well, drawing on their individual pasts and projected futures to organize their actions.

For example, the authors state that "researchers can create contexts that invite subjects to formulate shared futures (social objectives) and to construct mutual awareness of how to facilitate their objectives by asking participants to attempt to win a contest, to convince others of the correctness of a cause, to achieve the best possible solution to a problematic situation, or to construct as many objects as possible within a specified time. To do so, they must acknowledge the creativity of people, including laboratory particip*ants,* to generate data about social phenomena in the laboratory. *Participant creativity cannot be suppressed if the objective is to formulate generic principles about social processes. Yet,* *controls on the range and variety of creativity must be exercised if manageable data are to be generated. That can be achieved by researchers and participants negotiating a commitment to a particular objective so variation in activities are not so great as to render the data unmanageable.*

With regard to audiovisual recordings in general, the authors note that most social phenomena, including phenomena elicited in the laboratory, become so laden with complexities and detail that it is impossible to adequately observe them a first time through. For the purpose of forming sociological principles, adopting a point-in-space location and recording interaction on videotape can alleviate some of these problems, as researchers can repeatedly observe the same event. They can keep going back to it over and over again in an attempt to isolate the basic features of coordinated interaction. This helps avoid what the authors call "immaculate perceptions" that occur when complex data is reconstructively analyzed on the basis of memory, incompletely comprehensive notes, or some other less accurate form of recording massive amounts of information. Nevertheless, the authors admit that *audiovisual recordings do not allow analysts to observe (see and hear) events that are not otherwise observable (e.g. participants' thoughts). They only preserve more complete representations of observable social phenomena than do either naturalistic observation or questionnaires*.

Finally, the authors note that many of the concepts the New Iowa School generated in the laboratory have been used to inform subsequent field research in *natural* settings. These also involved a similar point-in-space location employing a fixed point camera and microphone. Examples here include studies of bar-room regulars relating pasts to futures as the basis for understanding how regular identities are conferred on patrons; use of the openings paradigm in an attempt to describe and analyze strategic sales encounters manipulated by sellers in reference to a pair of buyers; and a study of how jazz musicians construct improvisational music in the context of maintaining complex forms of relatedness.

Summing up, the authors assert that the New Iowa School explicitly acknowledges its debt to Kuhn's methodological rigor and insistence on deriving systematic and generic principles, but also honours Blumer's legacy of adopting an across-time perspective towards social phenomena. They also argue that their form of laboratory research allows participants to think, plan, and act with creative intention. Essentially, they argue that there are fewer methodological problems when attempting to acquire understanding through a clarification of processes in *simplified* environments than when attempting to *simplify processes in complex environments*. These can then be checked against the real settings through ethnographic research to better understand the dynamics of human processual activity.