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978-0-521-03015-1 - The Self-Society Dynamic: Cognition, Emotion, and Action
Edited by Judith A. Howard and Peter L. Callero
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Sociologists generally study macrolevel institutions and social processes with little reference to the individual. Psychologists, on the other hand, tend to study individual-level processes with little reference to society. This new volume, featuring contributions from some of the most influential scholars working in U.S. social psychology today, brings the link between the individual and society into focus.

The chapters in the volume are distinguished by their concentration on either cognitive, emotional, or behavioral processes. These analyses eschew the traditional psychological approach to individual-level processes and instead offer intriguing accounts of how thought, emotion, and action are embedded in social context and are central to the dynamic between self and society. Together, the 15 chapters present a synthesis of theory and research that promises to be a major force in stimulating and influencing future investigations of the link between the individual and the larger society.

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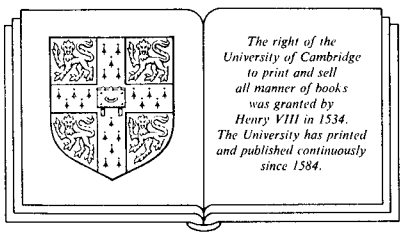
Edited by

JUDITH A. HOWARD
University of Washington

PETER L. CALLERO
Western Oregon State College



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DEDICATION

One of the names of the initial list of participants for this conference was Louis Zurcher, a sociologist who has conducted important work on self and the self–society interface, and a scholar whose many works are referenced frequently in this volume. During the months of planning this volume, Louis Zurcher died of cancer. We dedicate this volume to his memory, in recognition of the many contributions he made not only to research on the relationship between self and society, but also to sociology as a whole and to humanity.

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Contributors

VICTORIA BILLINGS
Department of Sociology
University of California
at Los Angeles

PHILIP BLUMSTEIN
Department of Sociology
University of Washington

PETER J. BURKE
Department of Sociology
Washington State University

PETER L. CALLERO
Division of Social Science
Western Oregon State College

KATHLEEN CARLEY
Department of Sociology
Carnegie–Mellon University

VIKTOR GECAS
Department of Sociology
Washington State University

JUDITH A. HOWARD
Department of Sociology
University of Washington

PAULA NURIUS
School of Social Work
University of Washington

JANE ALLYN PILIAVIN
Department of Sociology
University of Wisconsin-Madison

MORRIS ROSENBERG
Department of Sociology
University of Maryland

MICHAEL L. SCHWALBE
Department of Sociology
North Carolina State University

RICHARD T. SERPE
Social Science Research Center
Humanities and Social Sciences
California State University
at Fullerton

LYNN SMITH-LOVIN
Department of Sociology
University of Arizona

SHELDON STRYKER
Department of Sociology
Indiana University

RALPH TURNER
Department of Sociology
University of California
at Los Angeles

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Preface and Acknowledgments

Manny Rosenberg observed, at a conference entitled "Self and Society: A Social Cognitive Approach," convened at the University of Washington in July 1988, that this was the first gathering in the United States of sociological social psychologists who study the self, despite the fact that such work has been central to sociological social psychology for decades. This volume is one outgrowth of this conference. The participants included those who have developed and guided the growth of the original theory and research in this area – scholars such as Sheldon Stryker, Ralph Turner, and Morris Rosenberg – and a younger generation of scholars who have recently begun their work in this area.

The participants were asked to prepare papers on aspects of the relationship between self and society, and to address how theories of social cognition, a perspective that dominates contemporary psychological social psychology, might inform this relationship. The conference focused primarily on a question relevant to sociologists, that is, How can sociological social psychology benefit from considering recent work in social cognition? Had the papers focused only on the conference topic, the target audience would include primarily sociological social psychologists. However, reflecting the conviction of the authors that sociological approaches to the self–society interface have substantial merit, there is much here for psychological social psychologists to learn from as well. Virtually all of the chapters present new models, extend in creative ways existing research, or explore entirely new empirical territory. Thus the work presented here is germane to any scholar interested in the contemporary thinking and research of some of the most active social psychologists of the self.

Support for this conference was provided by the American Sociological Association's Problems of the Discipline program, the Graduate School and College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Washington, and by Western Oregon State College. We also want to thank Peter Kollock, Susan McWilliams, Melanie Moore, Jodi O'Brien, and Kenneth Pike for their substantial assistance with and participation in the conference, and Jocelyn Hollander for her careful assistance with the index.

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