

Feminists argue that interactionists fail to recognise that due to the social structure of patriarchy, females are controlled by social forces in which women are placed in subordination to men. They argue that females controlled by patriarchy which oppresses them and keeps them in a subordinated and unequal place compared to males.

Phenomenology is an interpretivist approach developed by Schutz who argues that phenomenology has usefully contributed to the study of society. Schutz argues that we make sense of the world through shared concepts and categories known as typifications. Typifications enable us to organise our experiences into a shared world of meaning, with the meaning of any given experience varying according to its social context. As a result, meanings are potentially unclear and unstable especially if others classify the action in a different way than oneself. However, typifications stabilise and clarify meaning by ensuring that we are all speaking the same language. Schutz refers to this as a shared, common sense knowledge. An illustration of this is Cicourel's study of justice. Cicourel argues that officers' have typifications of what a delinquent of deviant should look like which leads them to primarily concentrate on certain groups or people more than others. As a result of typifications, law enforcement such as the police begin to show a class bias as those in working-class areas are more fitted to the police's ideals of a delinquent, leading to more police patrolling working-class areas. Cicourel refers to this study as the negotiation of justice which is the idea that justice is not a fixed concept but negotiated as for example a white middle class youth committed a crime, they may get a shorter sentence than a black working class youth. Ethnomethodology emerged in the 1960s and is mainly the work of Garfinkel who's ideas mainly stem from the work of Schutz and phenomenology. Garfinkel rejects the idea that society is a real objective structure. He views social order as being created from the bottom up and that order and meaning are not achieved because people are puppets whose strings are being pulled but instead as an accomplishment. Garfinkel sees ethnomethodology as a useful approach to the study of society as ethnomethodology is the attempt to discover how order and meaning is established by studying people's methods of making sense of the world. Ethnomethodology differs from interactionism as interactionists are interested in the effects of meanings whereas ethnomethodology is interested in the methods we use to produce the meanings in the first place. Garfinkel argues the concepts of indexicality, which is that nothing has a fixed meaning and everything depends on context, and reflexivity which enables us to behave as if meanings are clear and obvious. An illustration of this are the views of ethnomethodologist Atkinson and his views on suicide. Atkinson argues that we can never know the real rate of suicide, even when using quantitative methods. Since we can never know the meanings that the deceased had and as a result, meanings of suicide are inherently unclear or unstable.

Giddens is a structuration theorist who argues that the interactionist approach to the study of society is only useful when there is a duality of structure including both structure and action. Giddens argues that both structure and action are two sides of the same coin and neither can exist without the other. He argues that through our actions we can produce and reproduce structures over time and space and these structures are what make our actions possible in the first place. This is what Giddens refers to as structuration. Giddens argues that the reproduction of structures through agency has two elements- rules and resources, both of which can be changed or reproduced through human action. He also states that we also reproduce existing structures through our action because we hold a deep-seated need for ontological security in which we hold a need to feel that the world is really as it appears to be and especially that it is orderly, stable and predictable.

To conclude, interactionists would argue that their approaches are useful to the study of society. However, postmodernists would argue that as we have entered a post-modern world, meta-narratives such as action perspectives has become outdated and is now unneeded in a post-modern world as they no longer tell us how society works.