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Disdained or Psychologized: Towards the Sociological Definition of Boredom

The vast majority of sociologists (sociologists of emotion included) have neglected the emotion of boredom in their research and theoretical contributions. This affective state is either openly disdained as trivial and conceptualized in a common sense manner or perceived as merely individual phenomenon of no social significance. Boredom seems to be exclusively the domain of psychology or philosophy (in its existential dimension). As a consequence, sociological reflection upon boredom is scarce and limited to several, unrelated papers in the last four decades and one book by Orrin Klapp (1986) *Overload and Boredom*. Nonetheless, only two papers contribute significantly to the definition of the phenomenon in question (Barbalet 1999; Darden and Marks 1999).

The presentation aims to propose the sociological definition of emotion in question based on thorough literature review and qualitative investigation among university students and teachers. The primary theoretical approach employed to analyze data will be symbolic interactionism by Erving Goffman (dramaturgical approach). Boredom will be presented as socially-dependent, dynamic phenomenon, the quality of interaction and interpretation of the social experience. The presentation will be concluded with a proposition of Author's definition of boredom.