

CHAPTER 9

PHENOMENOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY: DIVERGENT INTERPRETATIONS OF A COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP

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Based on Alfred Schutz's life-world analysis, there is an ongoing debate on the relationship between phenomenology and sociology. Each new publication on this topic has rendered the relationship ever more complex, adding different facets and considerations to the debate. As a result, the debate has become more and more intransparent. Nevertheless, it is basically structured by two divergent approaches: Either phenomenology and sociology are interpreted as two different enterprises that, however, can be related, or a "synthesis" is proclaimed under the label of a phenomenological sociology. The first approach interprets Schutz's life-world analysis as protosociology, the second one as sociology. Interestingly, the two versions have different geographical disseminations: the first approach is above all advocated in Germany, the second one in the United States. And the development in other countries depends on which traditions scholars orient to: the German or the American alternative.

Both approaches have a prominent representative. Thomas Luckmann interprets Schutz's analysis of the structures of the life-world as a protosociology. This interpretation can be found in the structure of Berger and Luckmann's *Social Construction of Reality*, and it is widespread among German sociologists because of the eminent influence of Luckmann in Germany. In this interpretation, phenomenology is a philosophy and as such presociological or protosociological, while sociology is an empirical enterprise explaining the features of society. The two can be related, but in essence they proceed with two completely different methods. A "phenomenological sociology" is therefore, in Luckmann's eyes, a misnomer.

George Psathas is the most prominent representative of a phenomenological sociology. Like most US sociologists, he learned about Husserl and Schutz from the writings of Harold Garfinkel. He was strongly influenced by ethnomethod-

ology and described ethnomethodology as a phenomenological approach in the social sciences. Of course, he was aware of the differences between phenomenology and ethnomethodology but preferred to emphasize the commonalities. He understood phenomenological analysis as an empirically oriented research enterprise and conducted his own analyses.

In the debate on the relationship between phenomenology and sociology, Luckmann and Psathas can be seen as antipodes and their approaches represent the corner posts of the debate. Each further position can be located somewhere in between: Either you consider phenomenology and sociology as two different enterprises or you argue for some kind of synthesis. The aim of my contribution is to delineate the two contrasting approaches and to assess some implications and merits of each.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL LIFE-WORLD ANALYSIS AS PROTOLOGICAL

Schutz's key concern throughout his life was the methodology of the social sciences (Schutz, 2010; Eberle and Srubar, 2010). His most systematic, concise and thorough argumentation is still found in his early book, *The Phenomenology of the Social World* (1967), whose translation into English remains unfortunately unsatisfying. There he states quite clearly the goal of his analysis: a philosophical foundation for Max Weber's approach of an action-based interpretive sociology. In contrast to Carnap's *Logical Structure of the World* ([1928] 1967) he pointed out the *meaningful structure of the social world* (1967). Weber ([1922] 1978) founded a convincing, interpretive sociological approach that Schutz intended to strengthen by his phenomenological analyses. Schutz detected several equivocations in Weber's concepts and wanted to eliminate them by carefully describing the meaning structures of the life-world, the method of understanding the other, and the difference between the common-sense constructions in everyday life and the constructions of the social scientist (first and second order constructs). This basic goal remained the same even if his later works have manifold ramifications and diverse topics. The overall unity of his work is well demonstrated by Schutz's plan to tie everything together in his two-volume book *The Structures of the Life-World*, its table of contents, and his index cards. Luckmann's posthumous edition of this book in two volumes differs in some aspects from the original plan as Luckmann acted as co-author, but it manifests how rich, detailed, and systematic Schutz's life-world analyses altogether were (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973, 1989). Luckmann's decision to omit the final chapter on methodology from this edition was, however, rather unfortunate as Schutz's original goal to elaborate a philosophical foundation of the methodology of the social sciences thereby was lost sight of.

Schutz's reflections built extensively on Husserl's phenomenology. Husserl had intended to remedy the *Crisis of the European Sciences* ([1936] 1970) by a phenomenological life-world analysis. As Husserl was not familiar with the

problems of the social sciences, Schutz had to ponder how the latter could benefit from a phenomenological investigation. When discussing the relationship between *Phenomenology and the Social Sciences*, Schutz explicitly says: "an inquiry will be made concerning the contribution which phenomenology can make to their concrete methodological problems" (1962: 119). He then criticizes the "picture book phenomenology" of

the first group of Husserl's close personal students [who] believed that concrete problems of the social sciences could be solved by direct application of the method of eidetic reduction to unclarified notions of common-sense thinking or to equally unclarified concepts of the empirical social sciences....[Edith Stein's] and Gerda Walther's naive use of the eidetic method in analyzing the problems of social relations, of community, and of the state led them to the formulation of certain apodictic and purportedly aprioristic statements which have contributed toward discrediting phenomenology among social scientists (Schutz 1962: 140-141).

Schutz suggests taking a different road and relies on Scheler (1922) who pointed out that

sociology has to be founded upon a fully elaborated philosophical anthropology...[and that] the general thesis of reality in the natural attitude and its anthropomorphic character, as well as the *structure* of the "relative natural conception of the world," accepted as given and unquestioned, can be analyzed by phenomenological methods. The *content* of this relative natural attitude, however, changes from group to group and within the same group in the course of historical evolution. To describe its features is the task of the empirical social sciences (Schutz 1962: 141-142).

Schutz follows Scheler and sees his task as developing a philosophical anthropology. He thus concludes "that the empirical social sciences will find their true foundation not in transcendental phenomenology, but in the constitutive phenomenology of the natural attitude" (149). At the same time he accepts Husserl's argument "that analyses made in the reduced sphere are valid also for the realm of the natural attitude" (149). Schutz found the link between phenomenology and sociology in the meaning (sense) of social action. Max Weber had shown that all phenomena of the socio-cultural world originate in social action and that sociology must grasp its subjective meaning (sense). Schutz recognized that a phenomenological analysis of the life-world must start with the meaning structures as found in the lived experience of actors. Husserl (1970) claimed that the structures of the life-world are universal and invariant. The same holds for Schutz's philosophical anthropology: mundane phenomenology describes the universal formal structures of the life-world, while it is the task of the empirical social sciences to research the historical and cultural variety of concrete contents.¹ For an illustration: Every ("normal") actor on earth will make use of his or her subjective, biographically determined stock of knowledge at hand, use typifications guided by systems of relevances, orient in time and

space, and rely on systems of appresentation in order to understand the other or to relate to multiple realities. Such universal formal structures can be phenomenologically described and represent a philosophical anthropology, while the concrete contents of stocks of knowledge, of typifications and systems of relevances, and so on, are historically and culturally contingent and therefore research objects of empirical sciences.

In sum, Schutz sees in the constitutive phenomenology of the natural attitude a philosophical anthropology that provides a proper foundation for the empirical social sciences. Likewise, Luckmann interprets the analysis of the structures of the life-world as a "protosociology" that works as a foundation to "sociology." Luckmann (1973; 1979a) distinguished the two concisely—either you do phenomenology or you do sociology:

1. Phenomenology is a philosophy. It analyses phenomena of subjective consciousness. Its perspective is egological and its method proceeds reflexively. Its goal is to describe the universal structures of subjective orientation in the life-world.
2. Sociology is a science. It analyses phenomena of the social world. Its perspective is cosmological and its method proceeds inductively. Its goal is to explain the general properties of the objective world.

The universal and invariant structures of the life-world represent a protosociology in the sense of a *mathesis universalis*, a formal matrix that allows a solution to the problem of measurement in the social sciences. They serve as a *tertium comparationis*, i.e., they allow for translating propositions that are formulated as empirical observations in a certain language into a proper formal language. Phenomenological life-world analysis is able to provide such a matrix as the phenomenological reduction allows in incremental acts of reflection an elucidation of the conditions of its own method, the conditions of the provided evidence, and the conditions of communicating this evidence to others. In Luckmann's view, Schutz has succeeded providing the scope of this proto-sociological matrix; the details of it may be pondered and modified by further phenomenological analyses.

How does Luckmann see the relationship between phenomenology and sociology? In short: They must be compatible. If the structures of the life-world serve as a protosociology, sociological concepts and theories must refer to these basic structures. This compatibility implies a preference for methodological individualism and a dispreference for holistic constructions (unless they can, as Schutz called for, be translated into human actions). A well-known example for a clearly compatible sociological theory is Berger and Luckmann's (1966) *The Social Construction of Reality*. It consists of three parts: 1. The foundations of knowledge in everyday life; 2. Society as objective reality; and 3. Society as subjective reality. In the first part they present some key results of Schutz's phenomenological life-world analysis and characterize them explicitly as "philosophical prolegomena" that are "presociological" and "not scientific" (1966: 20). But they treat them as an apt "starting point for sociological analysis" (ibid.). In

line with these protosociological considerations, they design a sociology of knowledge that consists of two perspectives: In "society as objective reality" they analyze the processes of institutionalization and legitimation; in "society as subjective reality," the processes of internalization and the evolvement of identity. This book contains ample reflections on how Schutz's findings can be used for sociological analysis and how other sociological theories can be reinterpreted in their light. It remains well worth reading.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL SOCIOLOGY

George Psathas is the most prominent representative of a "phenomenological sociology." He used this label as title for an edited volume of contributions by many prominent phenomenologists and sociologists (1973; see especially his "Introduction," pp. 1-21). The goal of this book was, as the dust jacket says, to offer "an advanced and comprehensive introduction" to those who want to understand "the phenomenological approach to social science theory and research." In his introduction Psathas designates phenomenology "as philosophy, method, and approach for social science" and Alfred Schutz is said to provide "a direct entry into phenomenological sociology" (Psathas, 1973: 7). Comparing Psathas' interpretation with that of Luckmann, we find the following differences:

1. Psathas (1989: xii) sees the goal of his research as "the understanding, description and analysis of the life-world as experienced by those who live it." While Luckmann interprets the phenomenological life-world analysis as a protosociological foundation of the methodology of social sciences, Psathas (1973; 1989) considers the phenomenological approach as a new paradigm that offers an alternative to the restricted potential of positivist perspectives—at the time behaviorism and structural functionalism.
2. While Luckmann asserts that sociology should analyze the objective properties of the social world in a cosmological perspective and therefore cannot operate without ontological assumptions, Psathas writes: "For the sociologist, a phenomenological approach to observing the social world requires that he break out of the natural attitude and examine the very assumptions that structure the experience of actors in the world of everyday life" (1973a: 14). For Psathas, phenomenological sociology offers a fresh, open, and innovative approach that encourages suspension of the natural attitude, seeing the phenomena-as-they-are, and avoiding preconceived sociological notions and concepts as well as the established recipes and formulas of research procedures.
3. While in Luckmann's view the phenomenological method proceeds strictly egologically, analyzing how the intentional processes of the subjective consciousness are constituted, Psathas *additionally* suggests

that "my careful, systematic, and wide-ranging questioning must allow me to discover what *they* are experiencing, how *they* interpret their experiences, and how *they* themselves structure the social world in which they live" (1973: 15). Luckmann argues that only one's own subjective experiences can be phenomenologically analyzed as the experiences of others are not directly available. Understanding others would be a hermeneutical act and pose different methodical problems, and in this regard he would certainly agree with Psathas that one should not accept "the statements respondents make as the literal and sufficient explanations of their conduct, beliefs, values, or knowledge" (1973a: 16).

4. While Luckmann argues that phenomenology is philosophy and that a phenomenological sociology is an impossible construct, Psathas draws the line between philosophy and sociology differently. He distinguishes "between the study of the life-world as it is experienced by ordinary human beings living in it and questions about how the life-world is possible, how one can know another's mind, whether society is objectively real, and so forth" (1973: 16). These are the very same questions that Schutz (1967) left to Husserl when he proposed a mundane phenomenology of the natural attitude.

There are clear-cut differences between Luckmann and Psathas. Luckmann proclaims that phenomenology and sociology should be interrelated and compatible, but he distinguishes the doing of phenomenology from the doing of sociology: If you do a phenomenological study you act as a philosopher who analyzes the constitution of phenomena in his or her subjective consciousness. This procedure can produce results that are very valuable to sociology, as Schutz as well as Berger and Luckmann have shown, but phenomenological insights are not sociological themselves. If you do a sociological study you analyze the properties of society in the objective world; you undertake, for instance, ethnographic research of social interactions and organizational arrangements in a specific field of society.

Psathas, on the other hand, asserts that phenomenological sociology represents a new paradigm and an alternative to the well-institutionalized positivist approaches. I agree with Bird (2009) that much of what was said about phenomenological sociology at that time was strategic: the goal was to get it included in the discipline of sociology. Psathas explicitly states that because the phenomenological paradigm is not accepted yet "[t]here are still justificatory arguments, programmatic statements and exhortations to the reader, and explanations of why it is important that this approach be used" (1973:17). Of course, if Psathas and his peers had argued that phenomenology is a philosophical method to analyze just one's own subjective experiences, there would have been no chance for acceptance in the US sociology of the 1970's. It was crucial to proclaim that phenomenological analysis is a new approach that also studies how *others* experience and structure the social world in which they live.

This view is fundamentally different from Luckmann's and not for just strategic reasons but primarily because of a different interpretation of phenomenol-

ogy. Psathas learned about Schutz and Husserl from Harold Garfinkel, as he explicitly states in his autobiographical notes (Psathas, 1989: x). This entrée was typical for a whole generation of sociologists. Garfinkel, however, from the outset gave the phenomenological life-world analysis a *sociological twist*:

1. In a careful analysis Garfinkel (1952) confronted Parsons' structural functionalism with Schutz's phenomenological studies and interpreted the latter as an alternative approach to explain the problem of social order. Schutz's conception of the actor, in contrast to Parsons' norm-guided role-player, did not make the actor a "judgmental dope." Garfinkel (1967) showed by his incongruity experiments that the social order does not break down when norms get violated but only when people do not manage to make sense of the situation. Therefore he explained social order not by normative but by constitutive rules and by sense-making.
2. This view implied a methodological re-orientation: Ethnomethodology investigates sense-making not egologically in the subjective consciousness but in empirical settings that are intersubjectively available. Not the constitutive acts of consciousness are the topic of study but the empirically observable accounting practices whereby actors make sense recognizable.
3. Garfinkel does not treat Schutz's structures of the life-world as validated insights but seeks the answers himself. He uses Schutz's and other phenomenologists' analyses only as inspiration and starts a new kind of research from scratch. The basic question, however, remains the same: asking for the how, the know-how, and investigating the constitution of social phenomena.

Schutz did not succeed in convincing Parsons that linking his sociological concepts in *The Structure of Social Action* (Parsons [1937] 1968) to the intentional processes of subjective consciousness would be relevant, as the correspondence between the two has manifested (Schutz and Parsons, 1978). But Schutz thought the two are, in principle, *compatible*. Garfinkel, on his part, did not succeed in convincing Schutz that his life-world analysis could serve as an *alternative* explanation to the problem of social order, as the correspondence between the two reveals (Psathas, 2009). But he managed later to establish ethnomethodology as an accepted sociological approach. In contrast to Psathas, Garfinkel did not designate his research as "phenomenological" but found a new label, "ethnomethodology," and used a different language than phenomenologists. He even drew a sharp line by eliminating the category of subjective consciousness from his vocabulary. Nevertheless, by researching the constitutive features of social phenomena this enterprise was fairly different from conventional sociology. Ethnomethodologists stressed this point emphatically and claimed that it is they who do proper sociology while conventional sociology is nothing else than "folk sociology" that uses the same common-sensical practices as laymen.

Psathas is clearly influenced by the ethnomethodological tradition (Psathas, 1989: x) but developed a position of his own. When I studied ethnomethodology in California in the early 1980s, I did not meet many ethnomethodologists who were really knowledgeable about Schutz's works. On the contrary, most had decided to convert to conversation analysis, which seemed to provide the most prolific results. In other words, ethnomethodologists increasingly lost their relationship to phenomenology. And those who still read Schutz usually criticized him as insufficient and used his findings to prove that they were on a more productive track (Lynch, 1993; Sharrock, 2008). Psathas remained one of the few who kept close ties to phenomenology while maintaining ties to EM and CA, which is manifested by his committed involvement in the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy as well as in the International Institute of Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis. It may have been through the influence of Herbert Spiegelberg, whose seminars at Washington University in St. Louis he attended, that Psathas saw phenomenology as a broad movement rather than a single strand. In fact, Spiegelberg's account of the *Phenomenological Movement* (1982) dedicated just two pages out of 768 to Alfred Schutz and mentioned many other phenomenological approaches. In this vein, Psathas kept an integrative position or, as Bird (2009) calls it, an assimilative approach. Psathas explicitly calls ethnomethodology a phenomenological approach in the social sciences (Psathas, 1989: 79-98) and carefully discusses the differences and commonalities between Schutz's phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and other versions of a sociology of knowledge (Psathas, 1989, 2004, 2009). In contrast to all the common practices of demarcation and exclusion, he emphasized the commonalities without disregarding the differences. This stance was a formidable prerequisite for an editor of *Human Studies*.

Frances Waksler, one of Psathas' early doctoral students at Boston University, wrote an unpublished but very thoughtful paper on the question "Is a Phenomenological Sociology Possible?" (1969) which aptly illustrates the discussion at the birth of the term. She defines "phenomenological sociology as a synthesis of phenomenology and sociology" and argues that sociological theories have not only an implicit theory of personality but also "an implicit theory of the nature of reality and of knowledge, an embedded ontology and epistemology" (1969: 2). She makes the point that every sociology can be preceded by a "philosophical adjective," and, in contrast to many—for instance positivist social theories—phenomenological sociology does so explicitly. Phenomenology allows sociologists "to make explicit all the assumptions about reality and knowledge" that they hold. As it focuses on the constitution of phenomena, "it also becomes possible to study social structures, social institutions, and large-scale phenomena in terms of how they come to be constituted" (1969: 3). Static macro-sociological concepts get replaced by a perspective that investigates the interactions of involved participants. Waksler leaves no doubt that at the time symbolic interactionism fit best with phenomenological sociology as its sociological analysis starts by observing social interactions in concrete, real-life settings. In regard to methodology she proposes the descriptive methodology that is basic to phenomenology, citing

Spiegelberg (1982). Phenomenological sociology is said to have an "enlightened" methodology as it asks "How do we know what we know?" and thereby questions implicit assumptions. Garfinkel serves as an example, as he investigates "phenomena which in the past have been viewed as 'given,' e.g., gender dichotomy, age categories" (1969: 5).

Waksler's reflections elucidate what phenomenological sociology is: It works with different assumptions than positivist science; it questions implicit assumptions about reality and knowledge with which sociologists operate; it asks for the constitution of social phenomena that previously were seen as "given." She makes clear that if sociologists would only explicate their assumptions, they might end up as phenomenologists and would at least adopt some philosophical perspective (1969: 3). Phenomenological sociology includes, in other words, a phenomenological constitutive analysis of the phenomena under study but also an empirical investigation of how social phenomena get constituted. Phenomenological sociologists in this sense do both: phenomenology as well as sociology.

In her recent book on *The New Orleans Sniper: A Phenomenological Case Study of Constituting the Other* (2010), Waksler presents a perfect illustration of how phenomenological sociology proceeds. The researched event happened in 1973 when a sniper in New Orleans shot sixteen people, seven of whom died, before he was eventually shot by the police. But the shooting went on the next day as there presumably existed a second sniper; seven more policemen were wounded but the second sniper was never found. Waksler ponders the thrilling research question of "how the second sniper was first constituted and later unconstituted" (2010: 3). The case is particularly interesting as the existence of the second sniper was problematic and ambiguous. For this reason "the work of constituting the other becomes evident" (3). Waksler draws on Husserl's phenomenological analyses of the constitution of the other in the transcendental sphere and shows that they "can be directly applied to a particular instance of a problematic other and can illuminate the intricate processes whereby the Other is constituted" (3).² Like Psathas, she uses phenomenological insights to interpret people's actions sociologically: "how people, with their general procedures and resources, use them to constitute an other in a specific situation" (3). In other words, she uses Husserl's insights where applicable, but, unlike Husserl, she investigates the givenness of the other not egologically in the sphere of transcendental reduction but as a social process that can be reconstructed on the basis of empirical data. The question is how *others* constitute—and later unconstitute—the other, i.e., the second sniper. This question is a genuine sociological one but inspired by phenomenology.

In sum, phenomenological sociology asks how concrete social phenomena are constituted that are usually seen as "given." It draws on phenomenological analyses, by Husserl, Schutz or other phenomenologists, and ponders if they are helpful for studying empirical social phenomena. Phenomenological sociologists do not rely on analyses in an egological perspective only but investigate empirically how people out there constitute social phenomena, like the modes of givenness of the second sniper. Their question about the constitution of social

phenomena is phenomenological, but their research is based on empirical data, too, and they trust that these data reveal as well how people actually do mundane reasoning. In contrast to ethnomethodology, phenomenological sociologists not only observe and ponder the intelligibility of social settings, but they also research other's subjective experiences. This way, they not only learn about the constitution of social phenomena in subjective consciousness, but they also learn about empirical social processes in society. The goal is not, however, to provide a philosophical foundation of the methodology of social sciences. The goal is to reach sociological insights, inspired by a phenomenological perspective.

PHENOMENOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY: DUALISM OR SYNTHESIS?

Luckmann makes a clear distinction between phenomenology and sociology on methodological grounds: either you do phenomenology or you do sociology. Psathas and Waksler suggest a synthesis of phenomenology and sociology, but they are both aware that a phenomenological analysis is a philosophical, not a sociological enterprise and that sociological analysis investigates what other people do. In that respect, there is no contradiction with Luckmann. The label "phenomenological sociology" says we should do both—phenomenological as well as sociological analysis—and interconnect the two. Luckmann distinguishes the two as separate projects: either you work on the philosophical foundation of sociology or you do a sociological investigation. Let us consider this point a little bit further.

Luckmann re-enforces Husserl's and Schutz's aim to provide the social sciences with a proper philosophical foundation through a phenomenological life-world analysis. Schutz's structures of the life-world are, in Luckmann's eyes, just such a protosociology, a *mathesis universalis* and *tertium comparationis* for the social sciences. This project can be elaborated and refined, but it remains a project of establishing a foundation for the methodology of the social sciences. However, has this project not become obsolete at the beginning of the 21st century? Who, after the wave of postmodernism, still believes in a "proper," even "apodictic" (Husserl), philosophical foundation of the social sciences? Hermeneutic philosophy (Bollnow, 1970) has asserted for several decades already that there is no archimedic point of cognition and no stable foundation for any kind of reflection.

Luckmann acknowledges the problem of epistemological reflexivity: Phenomenological analysis cannot avoid using language for its descriptions and cannot strip itself completely from a specific colloquial language. Even if the method of phenomenological reduction allows the systematic stripping of cognition from the historically and culturally specific elements, how can we be sure that we have reached that plane of universal and invariant insights? To solve this

problem, Knoblauch suggests—in line with Luckmann—a triangulation of three different methods: the phenomenological method is

to be corrected and complemented by two other methods: (a) the "cosmological" methods of the sciences studying the human body, on the one hand, and (b) the sciences studying the variety of human culture and social structure, on the other. [Thereby] the findings of phenomenological introspection are related to, corrected by and complementing...our knowledge of cultures, societies and their differences. As this comparison gets rid of the "culture dependence" of phenomenology, the findings on the physical conditions of consciousness and culture allow for the comparison to other species" (2011: 140f.).

Knoblauch points to the fact that Luckmann (1979b) actually used this kind of triangulation when pondering the problem of identity. If triangulation is accepted, Luckmann's dualistic methodological distinction between phenomenology and science still holds, but the sciences then are included in the foundational project, at least for correction and complementarity.³ And Dreher reports that Luckmann called for a "parallel action" of phenomenological and social scientific research (2007: 9f., 2009). Luckmann's dualistic conception is built on the distinction between phenomenological methods and the "cosmological" methods of the sciences. However, there is more to Schutz than a phenomenological analysis of intentional processes in the subjective consciousness. As Srubar (1988, 2007) has convincingly shown, Schutz's life-world analysis has not only this subjective but also a pragmatic pole. The life-world is not only perceived and experienced in subjective consciousness; it is also constituted by pragmatic social actions. Social phenomena always have noetic as well as noematic aspects. While the question "What can I know?" makes us consider the noesis, the question "Why do we see something as something?" leads to the noema, to the meaningful actions that constitute the social world. Garfinkel's question "What makes jurors 'jurors'?" is therefore a genuine phenomenological question. But Garfinkel researched the pragmatic pole of the life-world: the life-world as constituted in interactions. He abandoned Schutz's analysis of the polythetic acts in the stream of consciousness and focused on the analysis of sequentially organized (inter)actions in everyday life. However, a constitutive analysis should encompass both: the subjective pole as well as the pragmatic (or social) pole. And the method of phenomenological description of the natural attitude can be used for both.

Srubar (2007) has published many articles on what he terms "the pragmatic theory of the life-world." He shows how Schutz contributed to it by his idea of the auto-genesis of social reality and his analysis of the systems of appresentation, and he finds many parallels in Luhmann's theory of social systems (Srubar, 2009: 259-274). His interpretation of Schutz's theory of constitution links the subjective pole with the social (pragmatic) pole. Consequently, he does not distinguish between (phenomenological) protosociology and (cosmological) sociology but between social theories of constitution (Schutz, 1967; Luhmann [1984] 1995; Giddens, 1984) on the one hand and (empirical) theories of society on the other hand. Like Luckmann, Srubar (2005) interprets Schutz's theory of

the life-world as a *tertium comparationis* and demonstrates how it can serve as a basis for intercultural comparison.

Phenomenological sociology consists in constitutive analyses; it investigates the *how* of social phenomena. As ethnomethodology looms large in Psathas' reflections on phenomenological sociology, I would like to give it some consideration. Psathas (1989) and others, including myself (Eberle, 2008), have written detailed accounts of the commonalities and differences between Schutz's life-world analysis and Garfinkel's ethnomethodology. In the present context, I would like to make just the following brief comments:

1. Ethnomethodology investigates "the formal properties of common-sense activities as a practical organizational accomplishment" (Garfinkel, 1967: viii) and the methods members use for that accomplishment. It pursues a constitutive analysis as it "seeks to discover *how* members construct, produce, and interpret, through their actual ongoing activities, what *they* take to be 'social fact'" (Psathas, 1989: 99). Ethnomethodological studies of social settings have much in common with "phenomenological description" in Spiegelberg's (1982: 681f.) sense. They have taught generations of sociologists how to carefully describe what they see and how they see it, attend to detail and explicate how they know what they know.
2. Ethnomethodology is a sociology insofar as it analyzes how members of a social setting do what they do in concerted actions. Interactions are seen as communicative acts; they are not only perceived but also produced by members and made recognizable as what they are or, in Garfinkel's words, they are made "accountable."
3. Schutz described the life-world on an abstract and general level in his search for universal and invariant structures. Ethnomethodology, on the other hand, has produced a myriad of singular empirical studies that somehow stand for themselves and have not produced—not even tried to produce—general features of reality constitution. EM is not striving for a *theory* of constitution but for concrete, empirical constitutional analyses. The theoretical status of the found "ethnomethods" remained unclear: Are they meant to be universal and invariant or are they rather context-specific, as Garfinkel's "unique adequacy criterion" may suggest? Or are they both? In analogy to Husserl's *philosophia perennis*, ethnomethodology pursues a *sociologia perennis*. It could be the task of phenomenological sociology to integrate ethnomethodological findings into the larger theoretical framework of a constitutive life-world analysis (cf. Eberle, 2012).

In sum, I think it is helpful to distinguish between social theories of constitution and theories of society. Both, however, are tasks of sociology. As the life-world has not only a subjective but also a social (pragmatic) pole, constitutive analysis spans both: the constitution of phenomena in the intentional acts of subjective consciousness as well as the constitution of social phenomena by human (in-

ter)actions. Phenomenological sociology aims at constitutive analyses of social phenomena⁴ but does this with a broader framework than ethnomethodology.

CONCLUSION

I have started with the statement that phenomenological life-world analysis as a "protosociology" is widespread in Germany while "phenomenological sociology" has disseminated in the United States. Of course, this contrast was painted in broad strokes and the reality has many more facets. In Germany, if we restrict our attention to Schutz's legacy, there are three main strands: Luckmann and many of his students adhere to the idea of a protosociology. Srubar and his students emphasize more the pragmatic than the phenomenological aspect of Schutz's life-world analysis. A third strand is the "social phenomenology" of Richard Grathoff (1989) who feared that Schutz's structures of the life-world had become reified and called for concrete phenomenological studies of social milieus. All these strands have multiplied in ways that are presented in a recent book on *Phenomenology and Sociology* (Raab et al., 2008).

There is no room here to go into further detail about this debate—I have sketched some of the new developments elsewhere (Eberle, 2010). Let me rather take up the main thread again: What implications can be discerned from the concept of a phenomenological protosociology versus the concept of a phenomenological sociology? Luckmann decided to distinguish phenomenology and sociology on methodological grounds. The implication is that sociologists should not just do (phenomenological) constitutive analyses but explain the objective properties of society. On the other hand, why should a sociologist study Schutz if not to do a "better" sociology? Berger and Luckmann showed how this can be done by developing a sociology of knowledge on the basis of Schutz's life-world analysis. Both see a prolific relationship between phenomenology and sociology, but they would not call their theory a "phenomenological theory of knowledge" but rather a "phenomenologically based sociology of knowledge." They prefer to be methodologically precise, even at the cost of a clumsy designation. At the same time they advocate a sociology that refers to the explicated structures of the life-world, as demonstrated in the *Social Construction of Reality*. And as Luckmann has shown by his own example when editing the *Structures of the Life-World* and in later studies, it is a proper task for a professor of sociology to engage in phenomenological constitutive analyses.

What then, in essence, is the difference between this view and the kind of phenomenological sociology of Psathas and Waksler, who also advocate that sociologists should do phenomenology as well as sociology? Firstly, the goal is different. For Luckmann, phenomenological life-world analysis is pursued in order to provide an adequate foundation for the methodology of the social sciences. The goal is not to apply phenomenological explication directly to sociological analysis. Secondly, the phenomenological method is restricted to the intentional processes in subjective consciousness. To analyze "what *they* are

experiencing, how *they* interpret their experiences, and how *they* themselves structure the social world in which they live," as Psathas (1973: 15) proposes and as Waksler (2010) illustrates in her sniper study, is in this perspective not a phenomenological, but a hermeneutical, enterprise. There is no direct access to other people's experiences; they can be mediated only by appresentative systems, such as marks, indications, signs, symbols, etc., and therefore require a hermeneutic interpretation. This difference between phenomenology and hermeneutics is emphasized especially by those who are convinced that the direct access to the lived experience in subjective consciousness allows for grasping experiential sense *before* it is transformed into language and text. Once it is transformed into language and text, it is the object of hermeneutical interpretation, and this is different from the direct access of the phenomenological method.

Luckmann (2007: 127-137) therefore distinguishes, thirdly, in line with the *Social Construction of Reality*, between constitution and construction. Phenomena are *constituted* by intentional processes in subjective consciousness. Social "facts" are *constructed* by observable social (inter)actions. In this terminology, Psathas and Waksler investigate how people *construct* their reality. The second sniper was certainly constituted in many a subjective consciousness, but Waksler actually investigated the descriptions and accounts that participants made in newspaper and police interviews. In Luckmann's terms, she researched how the second sniper was constructed, and later deconstructed. She does not deal with the *pre-predicative* level of perception in subjective consciousness but with the *predicative* level of judgment by actors (Husserl, [1939] 1975), as the existence of a second sniper was assumed by *inference* based on different kinds of evidence. This case study is, in Luckmann's terms, a sociological study of knowledge. And the same applies to ethnomethodological studies.

How important such methodological distinctions actually are can be assessed differently. Psathas' conception of phenomenological sociology is looser and is guided by a different thrust: it is an invitation to do a new kind of sociology that is open, creative, and innovative, and which does not see social reality through the eyes of preconceived theoretical concepts. He emphasizes that phenomenology can inspire sociology. He is well aware of the differences between phenomenology and sociology, between analyzing one's own experiences and analyzing the experiences of others, between phenomenology and ethnomethodology, and others, and he spent a considerable amount of reflection on analyzing them. But he, like Waksler, keeps the label "phenomenological sociology" to cover them all, emphasizing their commonalities.

The comparison of Luckmann and Psathas may also point to different cultural traditions of national sociologies. In Germany, theoretical and methodological reflections are much more important than empirical research. In the United States, it is just the other way around. In Germany, it is still common to write a Ph.D. thesis on theory or methodology, while in the United States it is usually required that one undertake an empirical study. Against this background, it comes as no surprise that theoretical and methodological distinctions play a major role in the German debates, while US sociologists are more interested in how they can seminally study empirical objects and events. If we look at Schutz

critically, his findings are presented on quite an abstract and general level, but he rarely demonstrates how a concrete phenomenological analysis is done.⁵ It was Garfinkel who forcefully and consistently asked what sociology can learn from phenomenology, and he made quite a creative use of phenomenological analyses by deliberately "misreading" them. In this vein, Psathas attempts to learn from phenomenology how to pursue a creative, innovative way of sociological analysis, as does Waksler in her research on the second sniper in New Orleans. In my view, German sociologists are strong in theoretical and methodological debates, but they still can learn much from the creative empirical research of American sociologists.

In the end, both Luckmann and Psathas and many others agree that phenomenology is fruitful for sociology—so why not use the handy designation of "phenomenological sociology"? After all, "phenomenological sociology" could serve as a quality label for detailed, methodologically adequate, constitutive analyses of social phenomena that are, one the one hand, experienced in subjective consciousness and, on the other hand, produced in social (inter)actions in the reality of everyday life.

NOTES

1. A philosophical anthropology in this sense represents a *tertium comparationis*: the formal structures of the life-world that are universal and invariant, i.e., that apply to the *conditio humana*, to any human on this earth, allow the relation of specific historical and cultural observations to these fundamental formal structures which are the same for everyone.

2. On the *aporia* in Husserl's study of the other see Nasu (2006).

3. Merleau-Ponty (1962) used many scientific findings in his phenomenology of perception.

4. For a broader interpretation of phenomenological sociology see Nasu (forthcoming).

5. Even nowadays, the US phenomenologist Lester Embree (2011) is one of the few who provide inspiring examples of how, following Schutz, concrete "reflective analyses" can be pursued.

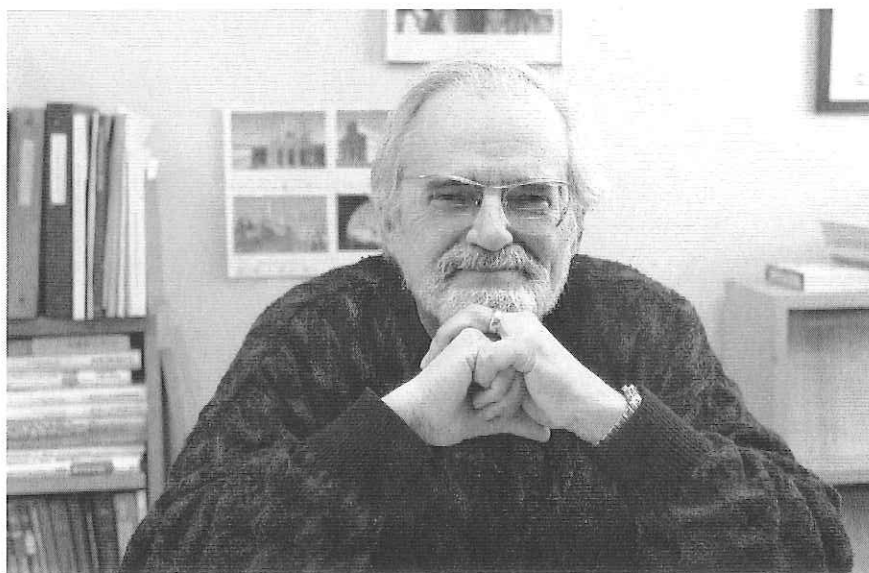
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Interaction and Everyday Life

Phenomenological and Ethnomethodological Essays in Honor of George Psathas

Edited by Hisashi Nasu
and Frances Chaput Waksler



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