
Contributions of Microsocial Sociological Currents to Research: An Analysis of Symbolic Interactionism, Phenomenology and Ethnomethodology.

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Abstract

Introduction: This reflection article is the result of a documentary research, carried out in the subjects of research I and II, within the Universidad popular del Cesar, this work had the purpose of studying the main contributions of the microsocial sociological currents, such as symbolic interactionism, phenomenology and ethnomethodology, to contemporary research.

Objectives: To interpret the main contributions of micro-social sociological currents, such as symbolic interactionism, phenomenology and ethnomethodology, within the framework of contemporary sociological research.

Methods: The methodology employed in this text is framed within the parameters of the interpretative paradigm and uses the hermeneutic method to understand and interpret the arguments proposed by the micro-social authors.

Results: The general results indicate that, firstly, Symbolic Interactionism has identified how individuals create and modify meanings through interaction, which is fundamental to the study of the construction of identities and social roles. Secondly, the contribution of Phenomenology to the analysis of subjective experience is highlighted, which allows us to understand how people give meaning to their everyday experiences. Finally, Ethnomethodology highlights its role in understanding how social norms are maintained and negotiated in everyday life, thus contributing to the study of the implicit social order. These three sociological streams offer both theoretical and methodological arguments for approaching contemporary research.

Conclusions: Microsocial currents have enriched sociological analysis by focusing on individual and everyday interactions. They have been fundamental to the study of the construction of social reality from the actors' perspective, and have provided qualitative methodologies that complement macro-social approaches.

Keywords: Microsocial Sociological, Symbolic Interactionism

1. Introduction

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis. Eu volutpat odio facilisis mauris sit amet.

Microsocial currents have occupied an important place in contemporary sociology because of their focus on the detailed study of human interactions and the meanings people attach to their everyday experiences. In contrast to macroscopic theories that deal with large social structures and their effects on communities, micro-social theories, such as symbolic interactionism,

phenomenology and ethnomethodology, offer a closer and more detailed perspective on how individuals create and maintain social reality through their everyday interactions.

The methodology adopted in this text falls within the interpretive paradigm, characterised by its emphasis on understanding social phenomena through the experiences and meanings attributed by the actors. To this end, the hermeneutic method is employed, which allows us to interpret the arguments presented by the micro-social authors in order to interpret their contributions in the context of contemporary sociological research.

The results and discussion reveal, firstly, that Symbolic Interactionism has made it possible to identify the way in which individuals create and transform meanings through their interactions. This process is essential for understanding how identities and social roles are constructed in various contexts. Secondly, it highlights the contribution of Phenomenology to the analysis of subjective experience, which facilitates a deeper understanding of how people make sense of their everyday experiences and how these experiences influence their perception of the world. Finally, Ethnomethodology emphasises its role in elucidating how social norms are maintained and negotiated in everyday life, which enriches the study of the implicit social order. Taken together, these three sociological currents offer valuable theoretical and methodological arguments, which are fundamental to contemporary social science research.

Microsocial currents have significantly enriched sociological studies by focusing on the individual interactions and everyday dynamics that shape social life. These currents are essential for understanding the construction of social reality from the perspective of the actors involved, i.e. how people's experiences and actions contribute to shaping their social environment. Moreover, they have provided qualitative methodologies that complement and enrich macro-social approaches, thus allowing for a more detailed and nuanced exploration of social phenomena. In this sense, their integration into the study of social sciences allows for a more holistic and comprehensive approach to the complexity of social life.

2. Methods

The methodological approach of this text is based on the principles of the interpretative paradigm and is framed within the perspective of the qualitative approach. The hermeneutic method is used as a fundamental tool for interpreting the approaches of various relevant authors in the construction, development and interpretation of micro-social currents.

The methodology used in the interpretation of contemporary sociological currents was based on an exhaustive search and rigorous selection of sources and bibliographical references of recognised authors in the field. Priority was given to the consultation of original works and academic studies that dealt in depth with the characteristics, theories and approaches of each current. Prominent authors in the field of symbolic interactionism include Blumer (1935, 1969), Carabaña and Lamo (1978), as well as Blumer and Mugny (1992), Mead (1999), Fernández (2003) and Pico and

Serra (2010). With regard to phenomenology, the works of Husserl (1962), Leal (2003, 2008), Aguirre and Jaramillo (2008) and Aguirre (2013) were consulted. Finally, in the area of ethnomethodology, the contributions of Romero (1991), Garfinkel (1967, 2001, 2002) and Firth (2010) were considered. This methodology allowed for a deeper and contextualised understanding of each current, as well as a critical assessment of the theories proposed by the different authors.

3. Results

Sociological currents focus on the study of human social systems from a scientific perspective, with the aim of understanding how political, cultural, economic and historical phenomena impact the structures and dynamics of communities. Through rigorous methods of observation and analysis, these currents investigate how individuals interact within broader contexts and how these interactions contribute to the formation and transformation of societies.

A micro-level theory is distinguished by its focus on individuals and their daily interactions. It also includes the analysis of small groups and the relationships between them, which is relevant since much of human life takes place in these small environments. The study of these groups provides valuable perspectives. In addition, micro theories also consider individuals throughout the different stages of their lives, analyzing how these vary from one another. The roles played by people are usually more linked to specific and everyday contexts, that is, on a reduced scale, than to a global view of their lives (the universal panorama).

Each school of sociological thought brings a particular approach to addressing these phenomena. Some schools focus on the large systems and structures that shape collective behavior, while others pay attention to the microprocesses that develop in everyday interactions between people. Although points of view vary considerably between different sociological schools, they all share a common goal: the study of the human being as a social being. This focus on the social nature of the human being seeks not only to understand individual behavior within the social context, but also to reveal the mechanisms through which societies evolve, organize themselves, and experience change.

It can be said that, although sociological schools vary in their approach and methodology, they all contribute to understanding the complex relationship between the individual and society. By studying human behavior within the framework of historical, economic, political, and cultural influences, they seek to unravel the patterns that govern social life, offering tools to

interpret and, in many cases, improve the functioning of societies.

Below, the reader is presented with three microsocial sociological currents: Symbolic Interactionism, Phenomenology and Ethnomethodology.

3.1. Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic Interactionism is a theoretical current that originates in sociology, although its influence quickly spread to anthropology and psychology. This perspective focuses on the study of human interactions and symbols as fundamental elements to understand both individual identity and social organization.

In general, Symbolic Interactionism proposes that people are defined based on the meaning that "the individual" acquires within a specific social context. This meaning depends largely on the interactions established between individuals. Thus, each person builds his or her identity and social role based on the relationships he or she maintains with others (Carabaña and Lamo, 1978).

At its roots, this current integrates elements of pragmatism, behaviorism, and evolutionism, but is not limited to any of these currents. Instead, Symbolic Interactionism moves between them, adapting and combining concepts that enrich its analysis (Fernández, 2003).

According to authors such as Fernández (2003), Pico and Serra (2010), Symbolic Interactionism is based on the idea of "situated" and partial truths, as opposed to "absolute truths." This criticism of absolute truths has been a recurring theme in contemporary philosophy, which points out how the notion of "truth" has been confused with that of "beliefs." From a pragmatic perspective on human activity, it is argued that truths operate in a similar way to beliefs, fulfilling equivalent functions in the construction of knowledge and social interaction. This highlights the importance of context in the interpretation of social reality, as well as the dynamic and negotiated nature of identity and meaning in everyday life.

Symbolic interactionism is linked to the singularity that emerges in human relationships, where people interact and create symbolic worlds. During these interactions, the actions of others are interpreted in various ways. Although the most obvious form of symbolic communication is through verbal language, it can also be expressed through other symbols that are understood by all members of the social group, such as gestures, sounds and other signs.

According to the concept formulated by Blumer (1937), symbolic interactionism is based on three essential postulates:

- a) Human beings guide and orient their actions according to the meaning they attribute to things. This approach highlights the importance of personal interpretation in decision-making and daily conduct, suggesting that understanding the world is based on the meanings that people assign to their environment.
- b) The meanings of things emerge through social interaction. This implies that the understanding of objects and symbols is not intrinsic, but rather develops in the context of relationships and social exchanges. Thus, people build a shared meaning that facilitates communication and cohesion within groups.
- c) Meanings are subject to changes and reinterpretations throughout the life of the individual, as he or she interacts with his or her environment. This interpretive process is dynamic and is influenced by personal experiences, cultural contexts and specific situations. Through these interactions, people not only understand their environment, but also transform it, adapting meanings according to the new realities and contexts they encounter.

In summary, Blumer's symbolic interactionism (1935, 1969), emphasizes the importance of social interpretation and interaction in the construction of meaning, suggesting that identity and understanding of the world are fluid processes that develop throughout life.

Symbolic interactionism presents the foundations of a sociological thought with a deeply humanistic approach. By granting the "self" a primordial relevance and recognizing that its development and realization occur through the adoption of the social roles of others, with whom the individual interacts in group activities, this sociological current offers the essential foundations for the creation of a philosophical framework especially adapted to social experience. The works of Mead and Dewey outline, in a prominent way, the principles of this philosophy (Blumer and Mugny, 1992). In short, symbolic interactionism holds that social relationships are constructed and interpreted through shared symbols. Individuals do not react automatically to stimuli in their environment, but rather act based on the meanings they give to these symbols, which arise from social interaction. These meanings are not fixed; they are continually negotiated and modified throughout interpersonal relationships. Therefore, human behavior is in a constant process of

reinterpretation, influenced by the social context in which the actors operate (Mead, 1999).

3.2. Phenomenology

Husserl, founder of phenomenology, defines the meaning of the experiences lived by human beings regarding a phenomenon, with the purpose of knowing the essential structure of said experience. His interest lies in returning to the essence of things themselves and to lived experience. According to this author, phenomenology is an eidetic science, since it seeks exclusively to achieve "essential knowledge." This implies that its objective is not the study of facts, but of essences. Its purpose is to reveal the essence of phenomena, which it considers authentic and real. The phenomenon is understood as the way in which the object of study is immediately presented to the observer's consciousness (Husserl, 1962).

Phenomenology, a school of microsocial thought, was developed by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) at the beginning of the 20th century. This philosophical perspective, whose name literally means "science of phenomena", focuses on the study of phenomena as they are presented to consciousness. Its main objective is to investigate human experiences and the objective correlates that these generate, that is, how individuals experience and perceive the world around them. Phenomenology also examines the mental structures and processes that shape subjective experience, exploring how phenomena are captured and understood by consciousness. Through this exploration, it seeks to unravel the deep operations that intervene in the formation of reality as it is perceived, emphasizing how subjects construct their experience of the world based on their perception and consciousness. Thus, phenomenology provides a solid basis for the analysis of subjectivity and the interrelation between subjects and their environment.

Phenomenology, as a school of social thought, is distinguished by its particular method, known as the phenomenological method or epoché. This approach was initially developed by Edmund Husserl and later deepened and transformed by his disciple, Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), who took a critical and expansive stance on his teacher's approaches. Both thinkers left a deep mark on 20th-century philosophy, especially due to the influence their work had in the academic field, particularly in France. In this context, it is essential to highlight the reception and development of phenomenology by philosophers such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961), Emmanuel Lévinas (1906-1995), Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) and Jean-Luc Marion (1946-). These authors, each

from their own particular perspective, contributed to enriching and diversifying phenomenology, applying its principles to fields such as ontology, ethics, psychology and the theory of perception. Thus, phenomenology has permeated various areas of thought, not only in philosophy, but also in disciplines such as literature, sociology and the human sciences, consolidating itself as a key approach to understanding the relationship between consciousness, experience and reality.

Intuition in the phenomenological field is conceived as the most general mechanism through which consciousness is linked to the objects of its experience. It is not limited only to direct perception, but encompasses various ways in which consciousness relates to the world. Through intuition, the subject accesses objects directly or indirectly, depending on the modality of the intuitive act.

One of the main types of intuition is perception, which represents immediate contact with a present object. In this case, the object is presented to consciousness directly, without intermediation, through the senses. It is the most basic and primary form of access to the outside world, where the subject perceives the object as it manifests itself before him.

Another intuitive act is recollection, which consists of evoking an object that is no longer present. Through memory, consciousness brings to mind past experiences, reliving phenomena that were once perceived. Although the object is no longer physically present, recollection allows consciousness to continue to maintain a relationship with it, recreating its past existence.

Waiting is a form of future-oriented intuition. In this case, consciousness does not connect with something present or past, but with something that has not yet occurred, but is anticipated. Waiting allows consciousness to project itself into the future, anticipating phenomena that have not yet occurred, but are expected to be possible or probable. This type of intuition reveals the ability of consciousness to orient itself toward what is not yet, but could become.

Image consciousness is the ability of consciousness to relate to an object through its internal representation, either through imagination or the recreation of a mental image. Here, the object is not physically present, but consciousness brings it into its field of experience through an internal image, which makes it "appear" to it indirectly.

These different types of intuition show that consciousness not only accesses the world directly through perception, but also has the ability to relate to what has already happened, what is to come, or what can simply be imagined. Intuition, therefore, is a broad and essential concept in phenomenology, as it explains how consciousness maintains a constant and diverse relationship with the world of objects, regardless of their physical or temporal presence.

Empty intention: In phenomenology, empty intention refers to an act of consciousness in which it is directed toward an object that is not actually or directly present. This concept describes a situation in which consciousness is oriented toward an absent object, assuming it as a place to focus its intentionality, but without having immediate or effective access to it. Although the object is not there, consciousness acts as if it were, establishing a conceptual or anticipated relationship with it.

This type of intention does not imply falsehood or error, but rather a specific way of relating to the world. For example, when someone talks about an object that is not physically present, such as a person in another place or a future event, consciousness "lies" to the object, in the sense that it places it in the field of attention without it existing tangibly at that moment. Empty intention allows consciousness to be oriented toward what is absent or imagined, maintaining a mental connection with the object, even if there is no direct perception of it.

An important aspect of "empty intention" is that it is not limited to a lack of physical presence, but can also include abstract objects, ideas, or future possibilities. For example, when thinking about a project to be carried out, one anticipates a future that has not yet arrived, but towards which consciousness is already directing its intentionality. Similarly, when remembering something that happened in the past, the object of memory is not present, but consciousness remains connected to it through this empty intention.

The importance of this concept lies in that it demonstrates how consciousness can interact with the world in complex and mediated ways, beyond immediate perception. Phenomenology, through empty intention, offers a detailed explanation of how human beings are able to think, remember, anticipate, and create relationships with objects that are not directly within their reach. This type of intentionality reveals the capacity of consciousness to transcend the present moment, allowing the subject to live in a world that is not always reduced to what is before their eyes,

but also to what they can imagine, remember, or anticipate.

Experiences: In phenomenology, experiences refer to all psychic phenomena that constitute the continuous flow of consciousness. Every subjective experience that takes place within consciousness, from the simplest to the most complex, is considered an experience. These experiences represent the way in which consciousness perceives, organizes and responds to phenomena, and form the essential fabric of conscious life. Within this broad concept, different types of experiences can be identified, which are distinguished by their function and their relationship with the external or internal world. Among their classifications, the following can be distinguished:

- Intentional experiences (perceptions, judgments and acts of will)
- Non-intentional experiences (The matter of perception, The matter of affectivity and The matter of will)

Both categories of experiences provide a comprehensive understanding of how human consciousness interacts with the world and with itself. While intentional experiences allow for active and reflective contact with objects and situations, non-intentional experiences reveal the richness of subjective experience that operates at a more diffuse and emotional level. This distinction is fundamental to phenomenology, as it allows for exploring the complexity and depth of conscious life, highlighting the multiple ways in which individuals experience and make sense of their reality.

Each of these types of experiences reflects a particular aspect of conscious life, showing how consciousness is not only receptive, but also active, evaluative, and action-oriented. Experiences, as a whole, allow us to understand how subjective experience is organized and structured, providing a window into the multiple ways in which humans interact with their environment and with themselves. This phenomenological approach to experiences underscores the richness and complexity of consciousness, and how it is able to range from immediate perception to the most abstract judgments and profound decisions.

De noesis y noema

The categories *de noesis y noema* refer to two fundamental aspects of an act of consciousness in the phenomenological field. In this context, *noesis* is defined as the process by which consciousness gives meaning to perceived matter in an intentional manner.

This aspect involves the cognitive activity and intentions that guide the perception of objects, showing how consciousness organizes and interprets the experiences presented to it.

On the other hand, noema represents the result of that act of giving meaning; that is, it refers to the object or content that emerges from conscious interpretation. Noema manifests itself as the construction of an object that transcends consciousness, forming a meaningful representation in the mind of the individual. Thus, the relationship between noesis and noema highlights how consciousness not only perceives the world, but also activates interpretive processes that give rise to the creation of meanings and mental objects, allowing a deeper understanding of subjective experience.

The term **Gegebenheit** refers to the given state of an object or phenomenon in conscious experience. In this context, Gegebenheit represents the donation or giving of the thing to consciousness, that is, the moment in which an object is presented to consciousness in a direct way. This concept underlines how things are offered to perception, allowing consciousness to apprehend them and give them meaning.

Gegebenheit implies that, for an object to become part of conscious experience, it must be given or offered to perception, which facilitates the connection between the subject and the world. This given state highlights the importance of phenomenological experience, in which the object is revealed to consciousness, thus allowing interaction and understanding of reality. In short, Gegebenheit is fundamental to understanding how the relationship between the subject and the object is established in conscious experience. According to Husserl (1962) and other authors, such as Leal (2003, 2008) and Aguirre (2013), the phenomenological method is divided into two general steps. The first step is the epoche, which involves the suspension of prior judgment. This process consists of putting the natural assumptions of the world in parentheses in order to access the essence of things. The second step, of a positive nature, is the phenomenological reduction, which focuses on the residue that remains after having suspended judgment on the world. While the epoche is considered a limitation, the phenomenological reduction is presented as a redirection. This method allows the adoption of a philosophical attitude free of prior concepts, which facilitates the phenomenon to manifest itself as it is in its essence.

3.3. Etnometodología

Ethnomethodology is a school of sociological thought that is classified within the microsocial approach and aims to understand society from everyday interactions. From this perspective, it is the people themselves who shape society through their actions.

This school of thought emerged in the 20th century, specifically in the 1970s. Its origin is attributed to the research of Harold Garfinkel, an American sociologist who challenged the concept of structuralist functionalism. According to Garfinkel (2001), human beings have a practical sense of life that allows them to adapt the rules imposed to the demands of everyday life. In this way, a balance is established between rules and personal needs.

Garfinkel's studies on ethnomethodology, originally published in 1967, constitute one of the most significant and classic works of this school of thought. This work not only stands out for its relevance within ethnomethodology, but is also considered one of the most controversial in the field of social sciences. Its content has generated intense debates and has remained at the center of discussions about the challenges and pending tasks in contemporary sociology. Through its innovative approach, Garfinkel invites researchers to reconsider the way interactions are studied.

In accordance with the works of Romero (1991) and Firth (2010), from an ethnomethodological perspective, emphasis is placed on the study of the methods and strategies that each individual uses to function in their daily lives. This involves analyzing aspects as simple as the way in which a person starts a conversation or their criteria for making decisions. In this sense, ethnomethodology is characterized by its microsociological approach, focused on individual processes and daily interactions. Unlike other theoretical models that deal primarily with large-scale phenomena, ethnomethodology is interested in the dynamics that occur at the most personal and specific level of human experience. This attention to the everyday allows us to understand how social norms are constructed and maintained through daily interactions.

According to Garfinkel (1967), people build social order through actions that are grounded in a shared common sense. For example:

Imagine a group of people gathering in the Plaza Alfonso López in Valledupar, a popular place to socialize and enjoy the local atmosphere. In this scene, several everyday interactions can be observed that illustrate the concept of ethnomethodology.

- **Beginning a conversation:** Laura, a resident of Valledupar, meets an acquaintance, Francisco. To start the conversation, Laura makes a comment about the music playing at a nearby stand. This choice of topic shows her understanding of the local culture and her practical sense of how to break the ice in a familiar and relaxed atmosphere.
- **Social norms:** When interacting in the plaza, both Laura and Francisco are aware of the social norms that govern behavior in public spaces. For example, they know that it is appropriate to greet people they know and ask questions about their families and recent activities. These interactions are a way to strengthen community ties and maintain a sense of belonging.
- **Local context:** The presence of street vendors, musicians, and other groups of people in the plaza contributes to the social atmosphere. Laura and Francisco's interactions are influenced by the environment around them, where vallenato culture and local traditions are common topics of conversation. This highlights how the cultural and social context of Valledupar affects everyday interactions.
- **Adapting to reactions:** During the conversation, Laura pays attention to Francisco's reactions. If he shows interest in the topic of music, they can delve into his favorite artists or upcoming cultural events. However, if Carlos seems distracted or disinterested, Laura may change the subject or end the conversation, demonstrating her ability to read social cues.

This example in Plaza Alfonso López illustrates how, through everyday interactions in a specific place in Valledupar, people shape society based on their actions and decisions. Ethnomethodology, in this case, allows us to understand how social order is built through the lived experience of individuals in their local context. This situation illustrates how each individual uses their practical sense to adapt and shape social norms in their daily lives. In this context, personal decisions influence the way social norms are perceived and applied, showing the flexibility and dynamism of human

behavior based on social interactions and the circumstances of the moment.

4. Discussion:

The methodology used, together with the exhaustive review of the contributions of prominent authors in the field of symbolic interactionism, has allowed for an enriched analysis. Fundamental works by thinkers such as Blumer (1935, 1969), Carabaña and Lamo (1978), Blumer and Mugny (1992), Mead (1999), Fernández (2003) and Pico and Serra (2010) have been considered. In the field of phenomenology, the works of Husserl (1962) were consulted, as well as the contributions of Leal (2003, 2008), Aguirre and Jaramillo (2008) and Aguirre (2013). Finally, in the field of ethnomethodology, the contributions of Romero (1991), Garfinkel (1967, 2001, 2002) and Firth (2010) were reviewed. This methodology has facilitated a deeper and more contextualized understanding of each current, as well as allowing a critical assessment of the theories presented by the different authors.

The discussion reveals, firstly, that symbolic interactionism has been key to identifying how individuals create and transform meanings through their interactions. This process is essential to understanding the construction of identities and social roles in a variety of contexts, as it allows us to appreciate how social dynamics are configured from interpersonal relationships and the meanings that are constructed in each encounter. Secondly, the contribution of phenomenology to the analysis of subjective experience is highlighted, which allows a richer understanding of how people make sense of their daily experiences and how these experiences influence their perception of the world. This perspective highlights the importance of subjectivity and individual experience in shaping social reality, emphasizing that each person interprets and responds to their environment in a unique way. Finally, ethnomethodology underlines its importance in elucidating how social norms are maintained and negotiated in daily life, thereby enriching the study of the implicit social order. This approach highlights that social norms and conventions are not fixed, but are constantly constructed and modified through everyday interactions. Together, these three sociological currents not only offer valuable theoretical arguments, but also present methodologies that are fundamental to addressing contemporary research in the field of social sciences, providing tools for a deeper and more nuanced analysis of the complexity of social life.

5. Conclusions

Microsocial currents have significantly enriched sociological studies by focusing on individual interactions and the daily dynamics that shape social life. These currents are essential to understanding the construction of social reality from the perspective of the actors involved, that is, how people's experiences and actions contribute to shaping their social environment. In addition, they have provided qualitative methodologies that complement and enrich macrosocial approaches, thus allowing a more detailed and nuanced exploration of social phenomena. In this sense, their integration into the study of social sciences allows for a more holistic and comprehensive approach to the complexity of social life.

The main microsocial sociological currents, such as symbolic interactionism, phenomenology and ethnomethodology, provide significant contributions to current sociological knowledge, both in theoretical and methodological terms. This document represents a contribution to knowledge by offering an interpretation of these microsocial currents, emphasizing that they not only provide theoretical tools to analyze the complexity of social interactions, but also present essential methodologies for research in social sciences. In this context, their study constitutes a valuable resource for the development of research subjects in the university environment, fostering a more critical and reflective approach to contemporary social reality.

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