17 Husserl on Groupings
Social Ontology and the Phenomenology of We-Intentionality

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Husserl's phenomenology of the lifeworld influenced post-war American sociology through the works of Schütz (1932), Luckmann and Berger (1966), as well as Garfinkel (1967). This tradition of phenomenological sociology based its methodology on rich descriptions and concepts such as the lifeworld, type, and habituation. However, phenomenological sociology relies more on anthropological or pragmatist approaches (Srubar 1988) than on the methods of phenomenological reduction. As a result of Schütz's skepticism (1957), both the transcendental account of Husserl and the social-ontological framework of early phenomenology were abandoned. Schütz understands the human mind as necessarily intersubjective, but remains faithful to Weber's methodological individualism. Accordingly, he rejects Husserl's non-reductionist social-ontological accounts of groupings and refuses to analyze in detail either Husserl's concepts of the "common mind" (*Gemeingeist*)[1] and "personality of higher order" (*Personalität höherer Ordnung*) or similar accounts in Scheler, Hildebrand, Stein, and Walther (Schütz 1975, 80; cf. Szanto, Salice, and Vendrell Ferran in this volume, and Szanto/Moran 2015).

While Schütz's phenomenological theory of action faces Weber's question of how social reality can emerge out of individual meanings (*subjektiv gemeinter Sinn*) and interactions, in the last two decades, analytical theories of action have discussed intensely the ontological nature of social groups and their specific *collective intentionality*. Early phenomenological accounts found unexpected resonance in this discussion thanks to a new generation of scholars able to bridge the divide between continental and analytic traditions. Initially, only realistic phenomenologists and their ontological approaches were discussed. However, in recent years, another picture of Husserl has come to the fore (Welton 2000), and his own phenomenology of sociality has been rediscovered (cf. Perreau 2013). In this contribution, I would like to sketch Husserl's own account of groupings, both as a social ontology and as a methodological challenge—namely the challenge of outlining the specific phenomenological reduction that would uncover the structure of "We-intentionality."

1   HUSSERL'S SOCIAL ONTOLOGY

While the debate on collective actions questioned individualistic accounts of intentionality, within phenomenology, the alleged solipsism of the "standard Husserl" was called into question. Up until recently, Husserl's social philosophy was seen to be confined to the realm of his ethics or else viewed as a peripheral adoption of positions from the tradition of German idealism. Therefore, his phenomenology has been interpreted as both Cartesian individualism and Hegelian collectivism (Schmid 2000, 18).

From a phenomenological standpoint, the analytical understanding of "intentionality" as "mental state with representative function" is quite ambiguous. Firstly, both the givenness of the object and the directedness of the subject are described phenomenologically as the accomplishment of *motivated acts* and not as the succession of mental states. Further, according to Husserl, not every intentional act is a form of representation. He describes perception as a kind of (*ap-*)*presentation* and rejects any image theory of consciousness, according to which the mind is an internal image of the outer world (Hua 19, 436–440).

Despite these striking differences, phenomenology and analytic theories of intentionality agree in distinguishing three main classes of intentional acts: 1. through *cognitive* acts, we discover the properties of objects, 2. through *affective* acts, we feel their values, and thus 3. we can intend and endorse goals and actions in *volitive* acts.

Collective intentionality, in particular, can be defined according 1. to the *subject* of intentional acts, 2. to the *mode* of their accomplishment, or 3. to their *content* (Schmid/Schweikard 2009, 46ff.). In the following, I shall situate Husserl's account according to these distinctions.

Though Husserl's account is usually characterized as based on an individualistic methodology, he believed that the contemporary philosophy of the mind, due to its naturalistic and individualistic approach, is blind to the fact that each subject is intentionally socialized with others (Hua 6, 241). Husserl claims that intentional acts can (at least partially) converge in one collective whole and form super-individual mental unities. Husserl subsumes these unities under the general concept of the common mind (*Gemeingeist*) and proposes a differentiated taxonomy (cf. Szanto 2015). These unities manifest their own intentional properties, such as beliefs, decisions, actions, and sentiments (Hua 14, 192). Husserl claims that his method of phenomenological reduction, which allows insights into the deep structure of intentionality, i.e., into the correlation of constituting subject and constituted objects (Hua 6, 169), can profitably be applied to clarify the socially intertwined intentionality of what he calls the common mind. While, bracketing the natural attitude, each object can be investigated so as to discover the subjective operations that lead to its apprehension or constitution, in investigating the constitution of cultural objects, the intentional association (*Verbindung*) of constituting subjectivities, comes to the fore. Husserl addresses therefore the

subjective, *noetic* side of this socialized or communalized constitution. This social association relies on personal connections (*Zusammenhang*) which, in their simplest case, are enacted through the unity of a belief, judgement, evaluation, or intention (Hua 14, 194). Therefore, Husserl considers the basic unit of what nowadays is called collective intentionality as the unity of an enduring *common* opinion or belief (*gemeinsame bleibende Meinung*). The content of this belief is fixed by acts of position-taking (*Stellungnahme*) and has to be endorsed by the subject (Hua 4, 111; Hua 14, 195). These endorsements are accomplished on the basis of motives and become habitual possessions of the subject (as convictions, resolutions, or sentiments). As long as they are not questioned by new motives, they are not given up and can always be re-actualized or otherwise simply fade or fall into oblivion. In Husserl's account, habitual position-taking is at the core of personality. To be a person is to endorse enduring convictions, evaluations, and decisions acquired in one's own struggle for evidence (Hua 14, 196). Through her enduring statements, a person develops as "a pole of multiple, actual decisions, pole of a habitual system of irradiation of actualisable potencies for positive and negative position-takings" (Hua 11, 360). Every position-taking sediments itself in passive life, and therefore can contribute to reforming its underlying drive system in a habitual fashion (Hua 4, 377). Personality thus becomes the expression of the intentional life of both affects and activities.

Correspondingly, the intentional association of two or more persons can be viewed as a personal connection, that is, if they are grouped both in their passivity as well as in their activity. For instance, socio-communicative connections are realized through social and communicative acts. Following Reinach (1913, 707), Husserl (Hua 14, 166) defines *social acts* as those acts that are spontaneous and *in need of uptake* (*vernehmungsbedürftig*). Some of these social acts require a practical position-taking from the addressed person (i.e., orders or requests), from the addressing person (promises), or from both of them and *mutually* (agreements). Thanks to these acts, individuals can group together through understanding (*Einverständnis*). For instance, a community of will can only be grouped through a super-individual, unifying, and enduring position-taking that emerges from the agreement of the "enacting intertwining of will" of the involved persons (Hua 14, 170). This intertwining is a specific "level of a general, super-individual, and yet personal, operating consciousness" (Hua 14, 200).

Social acts can constitute the unity of a communicative plurality of persons, an intentional unity of consciousness that "streams out" (*ausströmen*) of these persons and "streams through them" (*durchströmen*) consistently (Hua 14, 200). The subject of this connection is an *analogue* of an individual subject because it arises out of a multipolar structure, out of a plurality of subjects. However, this plural, constituted consciousness is said to "operate personally" because it manifests a unity and consistency despite its plurality and because it can lead to a unitary but plural action. The personal character of such associated plurality of persons consists of the

position-takings that the association enacts and of the corresponding commitment of its members to endorse them. The bearer of this constituted will, which is distributed among the individuals and founded on their social acts, is the plurality of persons. The intentional structure of this super-individual social subject relies, according to Husserl, upon the enduring endorsement that its members require, if they wish to remain faithful to their commitment to enact the guiding position-taking of the plural subject.

Husserl's account is similar to Gilbert's *plural subject theory*. According to Gilbert, a plural subject is a super-individual, intentional grouping that is formed by acts of *joint commitment*. By endorsing a commitment, a person commits herself to self-consistency. If two or more people *jointly* commit themselves, they commit themselves to consistency to their *joint* endorsement, thereby forming a plural subject. The difference, however, from personal commitments is that joint commitments can, once endorsed, not be revoked by any single of the—jointly committed—individuals, but only, in turn, *jointly*, by the plural subject. Gilbert refers to this joint commitment as the *social atom* of sociality. This is the core of the plural subject, which is constituted through the grouping of the committed persons (cf. Gilbert 2003). By means of the concept of "plural subject," Gilbert aims to explain the emergence of collective intentions, representations, desires, and emotions, as well as complex structures such as language, responsibility, and political duty, without reducing them to a network of individual states. However, her account has been criticized because it can avoid individualism only by presupposing individuals that are capable of joint commitment prior to any form of socialization (Schmid 2005, 214). The individuals who then commit jointly are not part of a genuinely *social* ontology themselves, since their nature as individuals with mental properties (and a capacity for joint commitment) does not presuppose any concept of plural subjectivity (Gilbert 1989, 435).

Despite the fact that Husserl was often similarly criticized, his approach is more complex. It is true that he seems to operate with the concept of "personality of higher order" in an analogous fashion to Gilbert, but he claims that there are forms of personal connection that are not realized through active social acts. Accordingly, the accomplishment of active social acts is possible only against the background of pregiven communalities of life. If a plural subject has been enacted, the social acts that their members endorse according to their commitments toward it do not leave the ongoing life of these members unaffected. On the contrary, they are *affected* by these accomplishments: their individual, passive lives become partly socialized. These acts, then, sediment themselves in relative passivity and persist in the form of re-actualizable habitualities. Habitualities for Husserl are informed by the contents and goals of their enacting acts and can therefore become drivers for further re-enactments.[2] Yet, even if not actualized, such habits tend to influence tendencies of social drives and feelings, social needs, and affects. For instance, if Anna shares the values and convictions of an environmental group, she can decide to join it. Accordingly, she commits herself

and takes part in planned, joint actions. Her engagement may reinforce her convictions and passions, which become strong dispositions, habits. Her experience as a campaigner for tackling climate change may induce her to take on new personal and joint actions. Moreover, her sensitivity to climate issues and environmental values may increase and lead to demanding further responsibility from her and her close friends. Indeed, a campaign to raise public awareness reaches its goal if the campaigners are able to spread their concerns, making their sensitivity become commonsensical, that is, if they are able to render their explicit awareness as sensible, as habitual, and as common as they can.

Husserl's concept of the common mind in fact ranges from the activity of plural subjects, such a well-organized joint action, to the passivity of shared sensibilities. At the active, personal level of communal life, intentionality goes beyond mere coordination and convergence and can reach coherence, consistency, and unity, while within passivity, a plurality of poles of action and affection interact with each other; at the active level of social acts, even if only episodically, these intentional poles can constitute "systems of poles" and corresponding unities of life (cf. Husserl 1997, 218), acting as one body.

Husserl distinguishes passive and active forms of communication. In passive communication, subjects develop horizons of communality and familiarity. They grow in communal frameworks of sense in a converging lifeworld (cf. Hua 39, 542). Beyond these communalities, they can enact "systems of poles" (Husserl 1997, 218), or, in Gilbert's term, "plural subjects," through the shared accomplishment of active position-takings. They can share this accomplishment passively or actively. They can follow the position-taking of a leader and passively accept his or her position (*Setzung*), or they can follow the sense of such a position-taking while assuming and endorsing it. Active, shared accomplishment (*aktiver Mitvollzug*) gives access to a further level of the social constitution of reality. It presupposes an active understanding of the content of shared belief (*nachverstehender Aktivität*) against the background of sense communalities. Through this active explication of the shared content, the previously implicit content is cast in a new, reflexive light and can eventually be personally endorsed or refused.

The enactment of a plural subject, therefore, requires for Husserl a personal commitment not only to the *jointness* of shared intentionality (commitment to be part of a plural subject), but also to its content (commitment to be responsible, i.e., consistently sensitive to what this content requires me to do). To join a plural subject also demands, contrary to Gilbert, a *personal* endorsement of its goals and values. Furthermore, Husserl claims that only through this endorsement is a subject able to develop personal character, because the constraints given by being part of a plural subject call its members to responsibility (Hua 14, 170f.). More radically, Husserl even suggests that self-reference as such can be enabled only by the personal endorsement (or rejection) of the shared point of view achieved in passive levels of communalities.

Husserl's plural subject theory is thus different from Gilbert's in a crucial respect: it does not presuppose non-social individuals that can commit themselves to become social. Husserl envisages intentional associations and socialization already at the level of passivity. At this level, a pre-reflexive, relational communality emerges and necessarily sediments itself in individual minds. But personal life arises only through the intentional medium of these communities and can be actively constituted through commitments and endorsements.

Now, how does this paradigm fit into the distinctions of the contemporary debate, which tries to localize collective intentionality in either 1. the subjects of intentional acts, 2. in a "We-mode," or 3. in the content of the respective intentions?

In answering this question, first, it is important to bear in mind that through the methodology of phenomenological bracketing (*epoché*), every reference that transcends experience has to be avoided. Therefore, no real object of intentionality can be made responsible for its collective nature. Husserl, because of his radical understanding of the intertwining of noematic and noetic intentionality, cannot localize the collective moment of intentionality in the content alone, in the subject alone, or in the mode. Following the distinction between the three main classes of intentional acts, i.e., between cognitive, volitive, and emotional acts, Husserl tries to offer an ideal typology of different types of groupings. He emphasizes the *dynamics of grouping* rather than the *structures of groups*.[3]

Cognitive acts associate multipolar systems of subjects, to which Husserl often refers with the term "intersubjectivity." Cognitive systems are unified by the overarching goal of gaining objectivity. As individuals can explore their environments through their senses, apperceptions, and enduring cognitions, so, similarly, a "communicative plurality of subjects" can explore its common environment (Hua 14, 197). Thus, this plural subject of cognition disposes of a plural system of sensibility and of enduring apperception constituted through communication. Its correlate is the objective world and its constitutive performativity is accomplished in each subject that takes part in its enactment. Each act of cognition directed to the objectivity of the world approximates to the constitutive operations of this ideal plural subject called intersubjectivity. The more demanding the task of objectivity the individual endorses, the broader the horizon of intersubjectivity the individual enacts. To the infinite task of universal knowledge corresponds the infinitely open structure of intersubjectivity. The community of knowing subjects associated in the task of open intersubjectivity is an ideal sociality that enables each of them to accomplish cognitive actions that are ideally *reliable for everyone*.

Husserl contrasts open intersubjectivity with concrete groupings unified by emotive and volitive acts. Intentionality is originally shaped socially in affective life (*Gemütsleben*). To be sure, others' views and arguments can lead me to form new beliefs. Yet, in order to grasp the motives of others'

beliefs, I have to be able to understand them (through empathy, expressions, or signs), and *understanding* presupposes more basic forms of socialization (primary communalization, spoken and written language learning, etc.). Beyond the passive level of communalities and familiarities, active associations are enacted by volitive and affective joint intentionality. For instance, in the abovementioned case of the collective will of an environmental group, the concerned subjects commit themselves to the tasks necessary to the success of the awareness campaign. By grouping for acting, they group themselves in an associated plurality (*verbundene Vielheit*) as a "unity constituted in plurality" (*in Vielheit konstituierte Einheit*): as campaigners, they are unified by the campaign. Such a plural subject is conceptualized by Husserl as a personal substrate for acts and enduring acts. The acts and enduring unities of the plural subject are "unities of higher orders" founded in the corresponding acts of the individual subjects (Hua 14, 201). *Through* the plural action, a higher-order personal being is founded by the unified will of the individuals. A plural action, as the accomplishment of collective intentionality, does not *presuppose* a group as a plural subject, but, rather, *groups* the enacting subjects according to its own unity. In Husserl's view, a plural subject is more than a group: it is the enduring effect of grouping.

Husserl refers to social groupings that manifest personal traits as *personalities of a higher order* because he understands them as the expression of a *foundational relation*. The position-takings of the group are said to be unities of a higher order because they are founded in the acts of the subjects who endorse the position-taking of the group. The latter, therefore, is a *constituted object of higher order* because it is a founded object of the same class as the founding objects. Reassessing Husserl's mereology, Conni defines two forms of whole: *pregnant* and *emergent* ones. The pregnant whole is characterized through mutual foundation among its parts, while the emergent structure is characterized by a jointly immediate foundation of a novel whole (Conni 2005, 84). The emergent whole and the founding parts engage in a mutual foundation relation: the founding parts are *individuated* by the founded whole, being *interpenetrated* by its properties.

Accordingly, a *personality of higher order* is an emergent object. The individual persons as such are not the founding parts—they remain *autonomous parts*—but only some of their particular acts. Every personal act is a *non-autonomous part* of the individual person, but only those acts that are committed to the goals of the personality of higher order are individuated by it. Only the acts accomplished *as a campaigner* constitute the campaign and are constituted by it. The mutual foundation relation between parts and whole embraces, therefore, not individuals and associations, but only some non-autonomous parts of the individuals and the emergent structures they found (i.e., the campaigners' acts and the campaign). Therefore, the person who *jointly* endorses a position-taking (i.e., the person who campaigns) will be the bearer of the part of an *emergent* whole (i.e., will accomplish some campaign's acts and will bear some campaigner's habits). Thus, Anna

will be implicated in the foundation of a plural subject (i.e., the campaign's organization), but she will not be simply absorbed by the latter, since she is not herself exclusively part of the whole: she is not like an organic member of the group, as the organ of an organism. Her life goes beyond the life of the plural subject. The life of Anna goes beyond her engagement as a campaigner.

For Husserl, enduring habits pertain essentially to the concept of person, since personal individuality is enacted through passions (volitive and emotive acts) and endures in habitual sentiments or dispositions (*Gesinnungen*). Personalities of a higher order are given only if jointly enacted and only if firm habitualities endure in their founding persons. The emergent whole, the personal plural subject, can endure only through an enduring endorsement of the bearers of the founding parts.

According to Husserl, the association through collective will is deeper if it is the effect of the bond of love. Love, as paradigmatic of affective intentionality, demands personal contact to the individuality of the beloved; it strives after attachment. Love, for Husserl, is striving after a community in life and striving for a community in which the life of the beloved is assumed and the beloved's will is endorsed. The lovers care for the realization of their mutual strivings and wills. If they group their inner passions, they live one in the other: "I live as an I in her and she in me" (Hua 14, 172). The inner perspective of the beloved becomes a habitual, implicit moment of the passions of the lover.

The community of lovers therefore attains an individuation and interpenetration of personal life that enacts a paradigmatic form of personality of higher order: love brings the lovers, in being intentional and habitual, one into the other (*Ineinandersein*). They carry each other, one in the other, in passive and active striving. They live an intimate, collective will, even if they are not always in actual contact (cf. Hua 14, 174, cf. Salice in this volume).

2   HUSSERL ON WE-INTENTIONALITY

Open intersubjectivity, plural subjects, and personalities of a higher order are characterized by different forms of grouping and accordingly by different grades of integration of personal life. A social personality is given, according to Husserl, only if a "form of I-centring" and an "enduring habituality" is enacted (cf. Hua 14, 405). There are many forms of social groupings that are not centered in such a way, but plural subjects and personalities of a higher order, in fact, are. They do not simply possess this property: they are enacted by forms of centering. Now, one might wonder whether the intentionality of grouping that is brought about by this form of I-centering should be understood *egologically*, i.e., as a collective I-mode. Were this the case, it seems that the specificity of we-intentionality, i.e., its irreducibility to I- or I-mode intentions, could not be properly addressed in Husserlian

terms. However, Husserl does not attribute a simple egological form to we-intentionality. On the contrary, he describes it as a "form of *ego-alteri*":

> The communal subjectivity is a multi-headed subjectivity, a form of *ego-alteri*. Each communalized *ego* has not only his consciousness, but his consciousness as it is open to the access into the others', and as associated in the multi-headed subjectivity. As such this consciousness is open to the horizons of indeterminacy.
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> (Hua 14, 218)

In other words, each head, as it were, of the "multi-headed subjectivity" has open horizons, "an open indeterminate plurality of others, beyond those that I can embrace and actually grasp in understanding" (ibid.). By the metaphor of the "multi-headed subjectivity," Husserl describes the plural horizons of experience that are given as members of an open, plural subject. Each member can fully understand only some of the other members; beyond that, however, one can still experience the indeterminacy of other possible members, as these are pre-delineated through the horizons of the concrete encounter with the closer members. Moreover, Husserl inquires into the *transcendental* relevance of this discovery: if the subject of experience is a socialized one, how does its sociality contribute to the constitution of its experience?

The intentional horizons of the experience of a socialized subjectivity bears not only the implicit structures that an individual ego has acquired, or can acquire, but also those intentional structures that are implicated by other socialized subjects:

> [. . .] therefore, it would be wrong to say that the transcendental reduction reduces me, my being and inner life only to my transcendental subjectivity. Since in my experience I always have another subjectivity, this or that concrete ones and, furthermore, a plurality of *alter ego*, it reduces me to a multi-headed transcendental subjectivity, which embraces, along with my own subjectivity, also everyone of these *alter ego*, with all their life, with all their phenomena, and intentional correlates.
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> (Hua 35, 111)

In his 1922 *London Lectures*, Husserl emphasizes how crucial it is to make these very implications of socialized subjects phenomenologically explicit: "In the proper line of its explication lies the development of the originally, egological [. . .] phenomenology into a transcendental sociological phenomenology" (as cited in Schumann 1988, 56; cf. Hua 9, 539). The explication of the constitutive operations of subjectivity discloses to phenomenological analysis the constituting relevance of its sociality. Therefore, phenomenology will research the constitutive enactments (*Leistungen*) of the subject not in the framework of a transcendental egology, but in "every social form"

(Hua 6, 182), i.e., in the broader framework of a "transcendental sociology" (Lee 2005). Husserl does not abandon the idea of an egological centering of the constituting subjectivity, but this centering is consequently addressed in its relational dynamics, or in the process of socialization (in the form of *ego-alteri*). The so-called "Cartesian way" to phenomenology is accordingly modified, as "directly directed to the *ego cogito* and *nos cogitamus*" (Hua 8, 316).

The reduction to the We—i.e., its phenomenological discovery—can occur either within the framework of the static or the genetic method, depending on whether the *structure* of the socialized experience or the *process* of socialization are at the core of the phenomenological analysis. In the first case, it is the ontological structure of the lifeworld that is at stake. The guiding questions here are: how does the world appear *to us*? How can we experience it together and in our common sense as the same world? How can we describe its ontological structures, those which we commonly take as necessary and for granted? And how can the world appear in other modalities (i.e., not as necessary, but as questioned, or possible, etc.) (cf. Hua 15, 67)? For Husserl, these questions can be addressed only if the ontology of the lifeworld is analyzed as the world "for us," which claims to be and gives evidences for being, at its core, the world "as such." The clarification of the way from the "for us" to the "as such," usually interpreted as the distinction between epistemological and ontological questions, is for Husserl the main task of transcendental phenomenology.

Moreover, Husserl addressed the problem of socialization by elaborating a special form of phenomenological reduction and contrasting it with the previous questions:

> Instead of analysing the common modes of relativity through which our world is given to us, let's question back: the world of our experience is primarily the world of *my* experience. The Others, who are experiencing with me, are always worldly given to me, in different phenomena and subjective modes. I reduce to the I and to the *cogitations* out of which there is world for me and I question, *how* it is there. I reduce therefore directly to the primordial *ego* and I question then, how it becomes a social *ego*. How can a community continuously prove itself (*sich bewähren*) for this ego? How can every single person in this community be like me and take for granted the same, that I take for granted, and experience the communal world as I do?
>
> (Hua 15, 66)

Husserl's attempt to answer to these questions led him to the infamous primordial reduction of the *Fifth Cartesian Meditation* (Hua 1, 91ff.). The aim of this reduction is to bracket or inhibit the validity of every constitutive enactment and effort that presupposes other subjects. By inhibiting the constitutive socialization of the subject, Husserl tries to clarify the very

structure of socialization (*Vergemeinschaftung*), namely by investigating the special form of passive mental operation that leads to the constitution of pairs or groups. Husserl calls this passive synthesis *pairing* (*Paarung*) or *grouping* (cf. McIntyre 2012, 76). Two or more given objects pair or group themselves, i.e., they form a "similarizing association" (*verähnlichende Assoziation*) in the form of a pair or of a group, if, in their givenness, a configuration that is mutually founded in these objects passively emerges. Accordingly, trees are given in the row of a colonnade, stars as configured in a constellation, birds in a swarm, and so on. For the experiencing subject, these groupings are given prior to their parts, since they emerge passively and manifest qualities that are irreducible to their founding components.

In social grouping, however, the subject is itself involved in the pairing: the synthesis is elicited by the embodied habits of a similar body. Another body pairs and other bodies group within the embodied experience of the subject. This synthesis enables a mutual constitution of pairs and groups of situation-bound and bodily-centered habits. The most general form of correlation, *ego-alteri*, consists of these habits. The iteration of such basic socialization culminates in the structure of we-intentionality:

> I, in the centre, the others around me—not as objects, but as actors. In this way I have my others, but each of these others has me and its others around it, *eccentrically*, while each centre is there as a subject of interests, as a first person, while the others are second and self-mediating persons.
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> (Hua 39, 385)

Within the structure of we-intentionality, the others are given eccentrically because each centering excludes the centering of the others. But their horizons become constitutive parts of *my* horizon: *our* horizons "compenetrate" and merge in a socialized horizon, centered around me. This is the formal structure of we-intentionality, according to Husserl. The description of a We-mode of experience or the postulation of a capacity for we-intentionality is only the point of departure of a complex phenomenological analysis: "discovering the We" means, for Husserl, to uncover the sedimentation of the most basic associations or groupings that enable the constitution and the development of a *common* world.

It is only against the background of socialized horizons that *collective* (or *individual*) position-takings that require a commitment to self-coherence become possible. If collective motives and themes are understood and followed, if the subject lives through a community, participates and cooperates in its life, some of the traits of communal life that were actually accomplished by the subject can sediment and become habitual traits of its background. The new centering consists of the intertwining of these communal actualities and habitualities. Furthermore, each form of personal position-taking is influenced by the form *ego-alteri*, since each one can know its own self

only through the others and as their other (Hua 14, 418). For these reasons, it is implausible to assume the existence of two separate capabilities, of I-intentionality and we-intentionality, between which each individual can switch. Rather, it seems more plausible to understand the I and the We as two different foci of the same first-person perspective. As if "zooming out," the subject can simply focus within the horizon of the common world of familiar counterparts, can tend to the wide horizon offered by the structure of open intersubjectivity, or else can focus primarily on its own personal realm.

According to Husserl, then, the enrichment and broadening of intentional horizons in the process of socialization should be studied, genetically, step by step, and, importantly, with regard to the different types of intentional acts, not only cognitive but also, and foremost, with regard to volitive and affective ones (cf. Chelstrom, Vendrell Ferran, Krueger, and Salice, in this volume). The specific field of study of a crucial part of phenomenology, namely of constitutive or transcendental sociology (Lee 2005), ought to take all these dimensions and stages of sociality into account. Finally, the convergence of undefined horizons, at the limits of the idea of open intersubjectivity (cf. Zahavi 2001), should not only be deduced from, or statically constructed by, the analysis of the experience of objectivity, but should rather be clarified genetically, in its very emergence (cf. Caminada 2011).

CONCLUSION

Husserl discusses social groupings both within an ontological framework and within a genetic, phenomenological account of the passive synthesis of grouping. Both sides are intricately intertwined.

Following the distinction between the three main classes of intentional acts (cognitive, volitive, and emotional acts), I distinguished between the structures of open intersubjectivity, plural subjects, and personalities of a higher order.

I emphasized the *dynamics of grouping* rather than the *structures of groups* in Husserl's account: a plural action, as the accomplishment of collective intentionality, does not *presuppose* a group as a plural subject, but, rather, *groups* the enacting subjects according to its own unity. A plural subject is more than a group: it is the enduring effect of grouping. Further, I defended an ontological reading of the idea of plural subject and of personality of higher order on the basis of Husserl's own mereology.

Finally, I stressed the way in which Husserl in his genetic phenomenology does not abandon the idea of an egological centering of the constituting subjectivity, but consequently addresses this centering in the process of socialization. Therefore, I claim that it is implausible to assume the existence of two separate capabilities, of I-intentionality and We-intentionality, between which each individual can switch. Rather, it seems plausible to understand the I and the We as two different foci of the same first-person perspective.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

NOTES

1. On the systematic relevance of this concept for Husserl's phenomenology, see Caminada (forthcoming).
2. On the role of habits, both in Husserl's social epistemology and social ontology, see Caminada (forthcoming).
3. The main argument of the following presentation of Husserl's typology corresponds to Toulemont's distinction between *simple intersubjectivité*, *systemes de poles*, and *synthèse de pôles* (cf. 1962, 311ff.). Similarly, Szanto (2015) distinguishes four types of shared intentionality: intersubjective, social, communal, and collective intentionality.

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