

Biography and Action: A Schutzian Perspective to Life-world

Hermílio Santos

Starting with the discussion on free-will and action, this paper discusses how Alfred Schutz approaches these issues for the comprehension of life-world. After a brief overview on how contemporary philosophers as Ernst Tugendhat and Ulrich Pothast face these problem, it is argued that for Schutz action plays a central role in his conception of life-world. The article goes further and advocates for the importance of exploring individual biographies as a way to provide an accurate understanding of actions. By the end of this text, it is suggested that the biographical narrative approach, as proposed by Fritz Schütze, as well as by Gabriele Rosenthal, is an important contribution to the Schutz' perspective of the life-world and to adequately explore the most different social phenomena.

Contemporary thinkers devoted their attention to the problem of action, in which the question on how free individuals are to make choices plays a central role. Although still remaining a disputed issue, the sociology of Alfred Schutz discusses mainly the genesis of action as a central matter for the comprehension of social phenomena. The aim of this article is to focus on how Schutz deals with this subject, arguing that understanding individuals' biography is seen by the Austrian sociologist as the most adequate way to approach it. It should also be emphasized how sociologists have been tried recently to go further and make the Schutzian perspective feasible for empirical research approaching the comprehension of individuals' action.

On free-will and action

Even though considered as a classical issue, some contemporary philosophers have dedicated themselves to the discussion of free-will. Ernst Tugendhat (1992), for instance, conceived this problem as intimately related to the meaning of imputability (*Zurechnungsfähigkeit*), that is best understood through the elucidation of the spheres of praxis: the moral sphere, the sphere of the penal law and the sphere of the practical reflection in general.

In the moral sphere it can be seen a deep disagreement between Tugendhat and the Kantian school, since for Tugendhat the moral exigency implies im-

putability, given the fact that if we act immorally, we could have also acted morally.

The question of imputability is also relevant for the penal law, made problematic through the expression “he/she could have acted differently”. The establishment of a punishment is dependent on the understanding of this expression – in the case that the punishment is legitimate at all. Anthony Kenny (1978) lists four meanings for the use of the verb “to can” that appear in this sentence. One of these meanings indicates the presence of the capacity as well as the opportunity. It is precisely this meaning of “can” that is discussed here, that is to say, when free-will implies the capacity of acting in another way. In this sense, to be able to do X freely, one has to have the capacity as well as the opportunity of not doing X. Kenny defines this meaning of “can” as the starting point to establish the imputability or not of someone facing his/her own act. However, it would not be fair to consider someone responsible for his/her own acts if he/she lacked the relevant freedom, in this case, i.e., the possibility to act differently.

Ulrich Pothast (1987) argues about the conditions to talk about “guilt”, especially if someone has decided to do the “wrong thing”, although he/she could have decided for the “right thing”. In conclusion, Pothast idea is not only different, but it also opposes the argument presented by Kenny, which is already anticipated in the title of his book *Die Unzulänglichkeit der Freiheitsbeweise* (*The insufficient demonstrations of liberty*). It seems that for Pothast, the expression “he/she could have done differently” doesn’t make any sense. He suggests as an alternative “punishment” for criminal acts, to substitute the penalty by a therapeutic treatment or the introduction of the mechanism of a “social quarantine”. The most positive side of this kind of “punishment” is that the criminal will be treated as a “friend” or “guest”, since he/she will not stay isolated for a very long time, and during this period there will be always someone talking to the intern and willing to restore a trust relationship.

A question that arises here is how not to recognise the imputability and at the same time to admit any kind of punishment, even a therapeutic treatment? Assuming the definition of Tugendhat for imputability (understood as the responsibility of someone for an event) or the definition proposed by Kenny for the term “responsibility” (to be subject of a punishment), it can be asserted that it is inappropriate to think that Pothast tends to deny the possibility of imputability, even if he wants to. His attempt is a contradiction, since that to deny the imputability would imply in not admitting even the possibility that someone could be object of a forced therapeutic process because of a criminal act. Therefore, the disagreement between Pothast and Kenny and between Pothast and Tugendhat is not very concerned with the existence or not of imputability, but on how to deal with those that violate laws.

There is another sphere, in which the concept of imputability is not directly concerned: the practical reflection in general. What is relevant here is the possibility to act freely. As proposed by Aristotle, two conditions should be considered when establishing limits for acting freely in a determined situation: a) that we know what we are doing and b) that we do not act under coercion. But Aristotle was referring just to the external coercion. Things become more complex if one introduces the phenomenon of internal coercion. In this case it is also referred as a compulsory action, when there are obstacles to the extension of the autonomy, i.e., for the extension of the possibility of thinking and to make effective the result of the thought. For some sociologists, the idea of an internal coercion explains the limits for an action without visible restrictions.

Anthony Giddens and Pierre Bourdieu represent two schools of sociological thought that seems to postulate the idea of an internal coercion. In his structuralist perspective, Giddens (2003) conceive the structure not as been external to the individuals, but as mnemonic traces made visible in social practices. In this sense, individuals incorporate restrictions “imposed” by others. Operating this way, individuals anticipate the limits for their action, restricting the possibility of talking about freedom of action. Because of this internalization process individuals are rarely aware of the restrictions they face in everyday life. Giddens (1993) asserts that individuals are in some way compelled to choose and define the lifestyle that synthesize their place in the world; here lifestyle implies a whole range of practices, not only because such practices fulfil utilitarian necessities, but because it gives material forms to a particular narrative of self-identity. However, based in his structuration theory, this definition is only apparently dependent on individuals’ own criteria.

Another influent sociologist postulated the idea of a social process which result is the creation of a kind of internal limitation not only to the free action, but also to the free-will, considered here as a necessary and preliminary moment of the action without restriction. The concept of *habitus*, as employed by Bourdieu (1980), i.e. a system of socially constituted dispositions that generates and unifies the whole of practices and ideologies of an agent, defines the agents’ practices in a regular and constant manner (Crossley 2001: 83). Bourdieu states that *habitus* makes possible the production of all thoughts, of all perceptions and also of all actions; in this sense, it seems to enormously restrict the possibility of individuals’ interpretation of their own *habitus*. Exploring concrete possibilities of internal coercion, Bourdieu presents the idea of a symbolic violence, in which the masculine domination is just an example. According to Bourdieu (1999), the subordination of women in contemporary societies is so deeply sedimented that it doesn’t need to be made explicit with the use of more visible instruments of domination, as the physical or psycho-

logical violence. Through the consent of the dominated person, the masculine domination is exercised without the conscience of that.

In opposition to those philosophers and sociologists that could be considered affiliated to a “soft determinism” (Kenny 1978), Alfred Schutz seems to solve this problem assuming that individuals, distinct to the objects of the natural sciences, have the faculty to interpret the world and to interpret themselves in the world. The interpretive work of individuals implies, in the Schutzian sociology, having at their disposal a system of relevance and typification that is part of what is transmitted to the members of an internal group through education (Schutz 1979: 119). Although both concepts refer to distinct problems, we can affirm that relevance and typification are elements of the same system, whose role is precisely to “naturalize” or harmonize social life. According to Nasu (2008: 92), relevance is the most important problem for the phenomenological investigation of life-world, since it implies asking for the ways individuals experience objects and events around them, which means how they perceive, recognize, interpret, know and act in everyday life through the selection of facts in each situation. The experience itself occurs as a process of choice and not as a fatality or as a passive reception of data and information, due to the fact that individuals choose which elements of meaning should receive their attention, that is, which elements among those involved in a situation are made relevant. In this sense, the investigation of the motives for an action plays a key role.

The Schutzian sociology presents an explicit pragmatic component, since the individual is considered from the point of view of action, or of the imminent action. Individuals are neither adrift nor submerged under the stream of the facts they experience, since they are “equipped” with the instruments needed to orient them. These instruments are the relevance and the typification system, which selects the knowledge on hand, that is relevant to their action (Nasu 2008: 91); thus, pure events or facts do not exist, but only interpreted facts and events.

Action and life-world

It should be clarified that Schutz assumes that the raw material for the action, not being a trivial one, is the “objectivities and events which are already found ...” (Schutz and Luckmann 1973: 3), which represents a limit for the possibility of free action. This limitation is given, for instance, by the pre-existence of a natural language in a culture in which individuals are socialized or even by the acts and the results of actions of others. This conception gives the idea that individuals are not isolated objects, on the opposite, they are seen in

their horizons, which are submitted to the interpretation of the individuals themselves. This context is called by Schutz as the reality of the everyday life-world, in which “man can engage himself and which he can change while he operates in it...” (Schutz and Luckmann 1973: 3).

Life-world (*Lebenswelt*) is the pre-existing intersubjective world that an individual “takes-for-granted” in a “natural attitude” (Schutz 2003: 182), recognizing objective elements of life as laws and customs that can guide the individual’s action, as well as the conditions for the action (for instance, the other’s intention and his or her own). A natural attitude in everyday life does not suspend the belief in the existence of elements from the environment; to the contrary, what is suspended is precisely the doubt concerning the existence of these things (Schutz; Luckmann 1973: 27), since all past experiences are lived in the present as if they were ordered, as knowledge or as expectation that something in the near future will occur exactly the same way it occurred in the past. However, everything that is taken for granted in the life-world is surrounded by uncertainty (Schutz; Luckmann 1973: 9). Thus, a natural attitude occurs simultaneously to the interpretation conducted by individuals, mostly based on the stock of knowledge available to individuals and on their previous experiences and of others with whom they are directly or indirectly in contact (for instance, parents, teachers, teachers of teachers, etc.), that means, based on the knowledge on hand (*Wissen vorhand*), which serves as a “reference code” (Schutz 1979: 72) for the individual. In this sense, this knowledge system – as the result of the sedimentation of subjective experiences in the life-world (Schutz; Luckmann 1973: 123) – assumes for those individuals that recognize themselves as internal members of a group, community or movement an aspect of coherence, clarity and consistency sufficient for all to have a reasonable chance to understand and to be understood (Schutz 1979: 81). This way, the assumption that the sociology of Schutz would emphasize a too individualist perspective, “disconnecting” the individual from his/her reality (the social context) is obviously at best a misreading of his writings.

Schutz dedicated himself not only to argue for the action as an expression of freedom, even with its constraints and limitations, but he went further and proposed that the sociology should investigate the motivation for the actions. The comprehension of a social phenomenon would not be accurate, from a schutzian sociological perspective, without having as starting point the interpretation of the interpretation of those with experience in the phenomenon under investigation. Proceeding this way would avoid replacing the experience of the actors by the view of the scientific interpreter, since any sociological study would be possible by simply replicating the ordinary view of common sense.

To investigate the motivation for an action is to consider the subjective meaning for the agent, since it is intrinsic to the idea of action, at least in a We-

berian perspective, that when action is concerned the agent assigns a meaning to his/her action and, at the same time, gives a direction to it, which should be understood by others as meaningful. However, Weber was not very accurate in explaining how sociologists should proceed to access the actor's subjective perspective and reach the construction of meanings. Schutz proposes that the subjective meaning of individual actors could be approached through the knowledge accumulated in direct and indirect experiences. Experience is not restricted to the practical events in which the individuals were personally involved, but also events in which their contemporaries or even their predecessors were involved, transmitted in some way (Schutz 2004: 69). It is exactly the knowledge acquired through experiences that will organize the different levels of relevance mobilized by individuals in all situations of everyday life. At the same time, the constitution of the meaning process could be accessed by the social scientific observer through the knowledge of the motivation of individual actors (Dreher 2011: 493). Here, we see how Schutz developed the sociology inaugurated by Weber when the Austrian sociologist proposed the distinction between "in-order-to motives" and "because motives" (Schutz 2004: 110). While the in-order-to motives refer to the actor's future expectation, the because motives concern the past experiences and convictions anchored in the environmental and socio-historical circumstances in which the actor was involved (Dreher 2011: 493; see also Barber 2004).

The distinction between these two kinds of motivations offers a theoretical key to understanding the complex process of individual decision-making and action. By considering the temporality, the scientific observer obtains access to different aspects involved in the action, especially the past experience and the future expectation. The time aspect is probably only rarely incorporated as a clear criterion for defining a guide of action and is maintained implicit, even though time is a constitutive part of meaning (Muzzetto 2006: 5) as will be seen next. In this sense, sociology is about making things explicit, through theoretical considerations and arguments or through empirical evidences, even if individual actors are not aware of all these aspects involved in their action.

Even after decades of these contributions from Schutz to sociological theory, we still see a marginal interest of social researchers for this temporal aspect. Here, again, most sociologists – when and if they put the question about the reason for having done something at all – are not very much convinced that the answer or at least a significant part of it can be found in the agents themselves. Even after the emergence of many sophisticated approaches in sociology, the most influential ones are still very loyal to the precursors of the discipline that tends to refer the question to an external, collective sphere, as classes, hierarchies, culture, social inequalities, gender, race, etc. It could be mentioned several recent examples of researches that do not consider both

the subjective component of the agents and at the same time the distinct time lived by the individual actors as a key issue for the comprehension of a social phenomena.

A balance of the literature on social movements, for instance, shows that these analyses grant a privilege to approach this phenomenon almost exclusively from a systemic perspective. Paradoxically, an analytical dimension that is left aside by many in approaching social movements concerns the comprehension of the everyday life-world of those engaged in such movements. To know how a movement acts and the meaning of social movements for contemporary societies is not the same as to know how the members of this movement act, and the meaning of the movement for them. Knowing how the participants of a movement act means to know their motivation and their interpretation of the movement itself, which means to understand the subjective meaning they conferred to the movement, considering the time perspective in this interpretation. To offer an analysis on social movements based on the subject's perspective could open new possibilities to understand current societies. Actually, this is possibly the only way to conduct an investigation that could deserve the label of sociology, since the natural sciences as well as the positivist-oriented social sciences doesn't assign a relevant role to the experience of individuals to understand the social reality. The same is valid for any other social phenomena, such as migration, the practice of violence, unemployment, for instance, since an "insider's" perspective is the only way to get access to the experiences of those that are intrinsic part of any social phenomena. Even if this aspect is made clear in the writings of Schutz, a persistent critic on this theoretical perspective is that it doesn't sufficiently consider the social context or the social structure. This kind of criticism assumes that the elements of a social structure are made valid without the active intervention of individuals, as if it could be considered as "something" external to those living in a specific time and place. In a schutzian perspective we could state, on the opposite, that there is no social context without the meaning assigned by individual actors, or at least its existence is sociologically irrelevant without the consideration of the subjective meaning, since no social context is socially inanimate.

Indeed, sociologists who dedicated to investigate and discuss social action are not totally inattentive regarding the motivation aspect of action when they discuss or ask for the reason of an action. However, not considering the temporality significantly constraints the observers to be satisfied with a partial answer to the individual's reasons for the action. When dealing with the problem of the reasons for action, social scientists are usually much more concerned with the future expectations of the agent, there is to say, with the in-order-to motives. There is no doubt about the value of this topic for any sociological investigation. What is, then, the conflict pointed out by sociolo-

gists when dealing with the concept of the “because motives”? One problem might be the fact that sociologists are permanently afraid to be considered as been performing a kind of psychology. Another conflict might be the fact that questioning about the “because motives” implies two kinds of difficulties: a philosophical and a methodological problem. The philosophical question refers to the issue discussed at the beginning of the text, i.e., the scope of responsibility from individual actors for their own actions, which is of difficult solution since it implies convictions already encrusted in the life trajectories of the researchers and is only hardly changed. To argue about the “because motives” would lead to admit a reasonable spectrum of individual responsibility. The methodological difficulty concerns the sociological access to the socio-historical context of the individual actor. In many different passages Schutz indicates that the biography of individual actors is what should be considered in order to obtain any knowledge about the past experiences, especially in the articles *The Problem of Relevance* (Schutz 2004: 69), *Choosing Among Projects of Action* (Schutz 2004: 251) and *The Biographical Situation* (Schutz 2004: 208). It should not be forgotten that any biography is located in time and space and cannot be understood without taking into consideration its historical background (Schutz 2004: 209). This warning is just to remember that there are some relevant aspects of the structure and genesis of biographies that are singular and specific for an individual, but others that are shared by those living in the same socio-historical period. For an accurate comprehension of social and historical phenomena, it is important to incorporate the biographical component in the sociological investigation.

Biography and the motivation for action

Biographical situations play a particularly important role in the definition of individuals' relevance system. Of course, part of one's biographical experience is determined not by the individuals themselves, for instance the language in which he/she was socialized and which is considered as his/her “mother tongue”, or the legal system in all locations the person may visit or live, or even the different means of transportation used in these places. In these cases, individual actors have to deal with imposed relevances (Schutz 2004: 92). However, how the mother language will be in fact used, or the interpretation and the relation to the legal interdictions or even the evaluation of the transport used are not defined *in absentia* of the users themselves. These experiences can be considered as unique, even though it can be shared with others, it cannot be shared with all individual actors. Biographical experiences are an integral part of all future situations, but it doesn't mean that all

these experiences will be maintained intact in memory or even that the meaning of these past experiences will be preserved. The opposite is what might be the case, due to the fact that new experiences play an important role when the individual is mentally reviewing what occurred in the past. In this sense, even the past is slippery and may occupy another place and role in the present and in the future; in short: past experiences are constantly reinterpreted and the result of this process is that, to understand as much as possible the action of individual actors or of a group of individuals that share some experiences in common, their biographical experiences must be considered. Even though the intention of accessing these kind of register of the memory is not to necessarily obtain the facts as they occurred in the past, the importance of this methodological approach is rather to gain perspective from a primary source (those that experienced events under investigation), their interpretation of their own experience, that should not be crystallized as the most reliable report of the past. It doesn't matter if the discourse about the actor's own past corresponds to concrete facts; important is that it will be confronted to reliable narratives that correspond to the interpretation of those that narrate.

Even referring to a subjective interpretation, the sociology of Schutz cannot be accused of not giving the adequate attention to individuals' socio-historical experience. Unlike the most influential contemporary sociological theories, especially the new versions of critical theory and the post-structuralism approaches, the social and historical experiences, as well as the social context with its constraints, are incorporated and should be incorporated in any sociological (empirical) inquiry following the writings of Schutz. Biographical experiences are the key component to track the motivations for any action, due to the fact that motivational relevance is made out of sediments of previous experiences, which were relevant for the person (Schutz 2004: 115). Not all experiences can be considered meaningful, only the already lived experiences when viewed in retrospective (Muzzetto 2006: 10). To say that experiences are meaningful implies that it is possible for individuals to distinguish and accentuate them, which means to confront them with other experiences when it is not possible to manage current experiences (see Muzzetto 2006). This can only be undertaken if the experience can be delimited through what Schutz calls "an attention act". So, to assign meaning to an experience is to interpret it *ex post* through the recovering of the memory.

Although Schutz did not delineate instruments and guides for empirical research based on his phenomenological-oriented sociology (Hitzler and Eberle 2000: 117), this can be undertaken through biographical narratives, since the approach makes it possible to recover the most important elements for the subjective interpretation, i.e. the system of relevance and the typification process.

Biographical and everyday life narrative approach, although very influential in European sociology, especially in the German scenario, mostly based on the sociology of Fritz Schütze (1983), is still unknown in many national sociological communities. The biographical narrative approach is capable offering a very important access to the narrator's interpretation, but also to the connections between individuals and their groups, communities and movements (Carvalho 2003: 293) in a specific period of time. Nonetheless, it must be considered that any narrative is an interpretation viewed from a specific biographical situation, since a biography is a description of processes and lived experiences by the individual him/herself. In this sense, biography is someone's "subjective interpretation of their own life trajectory" (Born 2001: 245). To approach a problem this way implies a research concerned not only with the narrator – since his/her interpretation on life-world is what will be analyzed – but also with the researcher perspective, who plays simultaneously the role of the interpreter and a partner in the construction of a narrative. Individuals whose narratives are the object of analysis are guided by their own relevance system. Here, the analysis of everyday verbal language (vocabulary and syntax) permits the access to the comprehension of the relevance and typification system, since "everyday life is, above all, life with language" (Berger and Luckmann 1991: 51).

Fritz Schütze is the leading German sociologist from a group of researchers that in the 1980s at the University of Bielefeld proposed the approach known as "biographical narrative"; the main contributions were a) to propose an specific way to conduct open interviews in a way that the relevance system could be expressed without the systematic intervention of the relevance system of the researcher as usual in most qualitative research using interviews, and b) to introduce in the sociological analysis the distinction between different kinds of discourses that appear during an interview, i.e., arguments, description and narrative itself (Schütze 1983). This distinction comes from the socio-linguistic and is essential for the sociological approach based on the experience of actors having as starting point their own narrative, since it is the discursive resource more strictly connected to the chain of actions (Rosenthal 2004: 53; Labov and Waletzky 1973), i.e., it is the kind of discourse most related to the way the narrator presents his/her interpretation of the development of facts (Küsters 2009: 25).

According to Gabriele Rosenthal, whose writings brought enormous contributions to the biographical narrative approach, especially in the process of analysis by distinguishing the life history and narrated life story (see Rosenthal 1995 and 2004), the comprehension of individual action requires investigating the actor's subjective perspective as well as the course of his/her action. That means to investigate experiences considering the meaning that individu-

al gave to their action by the time it occurred and the biographical context in which the narrators place their experiences (Rosenthal 2004: 49). In this sense, the resource of biographical narrative can be assumed as a possibility of combining a diachronic (the biography) with a synchronic approach (the interpreted biography from a biographically specific moment: the present).

Regarding the past is in some way an interruption of the flux of *durée*, when the biographer makes his/her acts objects of reflection (see Muzzetto 2006: 10). In this sense, dealing with one's own biography is a systematically way to define provinces of meaning, which are delineated as past experiences. As Muzzetto remembers quite well, "past experiences are not stored in this 'stock' at random. Nor are they isolated experiences. Experiences are, on the contrary, interconnected through manifold types of relationships..." (Muzzetto 2006: 16). However, all these connections are not always explicit for those who are systematically presenting their own past experiences. In part, the act of speaking of events that occurred in the past is already a constitution of meaning, but a great part of it can only be accessed through the explicit reconstruction of these experiences by a scientific observer, a sociologist for instance.

With the analytical distinction introduced by Rosenthal in the biographical narrative approach just mentioned – between the experienced life history and what the "biographer" narrates about it (or the life story) – it is possible to make explicit in the biographical flow important elements for the comprehension of different kinds of social actions in a specific historical period and in a specific social context. The starting point is conducting the interview in a way to avoid what we could call a "colonization of the biographer" with the relevance system of the researcher. Of course, in any interaction there is a pre-given exchange of perspectives, but the process of invasion can be minimized as much as possible. The way found and used by biographical narrative researchers – trying to maintain loyal to the epistemological principles of the Schutz sociology – is to conduct the interview without been anchored to the research interest. It means, defined that the person could potentially provide reports from his/her own experience of a phenomenon under investigation, that it doesn't matter which subject is being explored (for example, migration, violence, unemployment, etc.), the task of the researcher is to stimulate the interviewees to tell their all life, in as many details as possible (for more information on how to conduct biographical narrative interviews, see, Rosenthal 1995; 2004; 2008). Proceeding this way it will be more feasible that the interviewee will expose spontaneously elements of his/her thematic field.

The thematic field, as postulated by Gurwitsch (see Rosenthal, 2008), is the main structure of someone's biographical presentation, even if the interviewee

is not very much aware of it. An important contribution of Rosenthal to the comprehension of individual's life-world is to “decant” the large volume of information obtained during a biographical interview through several analytical steps. In this process, the already mentioned distinction between the possible discourses used in a life's presentation – especially arguments, description and narrative – plays a central role. An advantage of this kind of distinction is that these discourse modalities may allow the access to the variation of temporalities in the biographical presentation. For instance, arguing can indicate the interest of the biographer to justify in the present an idea or a past action when facing the researcher or an interlocutor in general. On the other hand, Schütze and the socio-linguistics prefer to call narrative the kind of discourse that register the action on the move that occurred in the past, doesn't matter when in the past occurred the reported action, important is that it is possible to the interlocutor to follow the sequentiality of an event through acts of the biographer him/herself or of any other person. Having these elements available for analytical means for the social researcher, to deal with important elements of the interviewee's subjective interpretation of the life-world. The analysis follows the principle of abduction. Unlike the inductive proceeding, the empirical material collected, in this case, biographical narrations, does not aim to verify hypothesis formulated in advance, nor sustains hypothesis originated from a theory, as in the deductive approach. According to the abductive approach, proposed by Charles Sanders Peirce and largely adopted in biographical narratives researches, as well as by the so-called *Grounded Theory*, by Glaser and Strauss, the empirical material guides the formulation and tests of hypothesis able to make the case under investigation understandable (Rosenthal 2008: 58). Proceeding this way makes it possible to uncover the complexity of social phenomena by bringing new knowledge provided from the reality itself.

If Schutz brought to the social theory the pathways of how to understand the everyday life-world, the German sociologists, especially Schütze and Rosenthal, provided a feasible approach on how the social researcher could have access to it. The combination of the Schutz theory of life-world and the biographical narrative approach (as proposed by Schütze and incremented by Rosenthal) represents the enlargement of the horizons and possibilities of a sociology anchored in the writings of Alfred Schutz. Although very well established, especially in the German social sciences community, and internationally recognized, possesses the potential of refreshing the sociological contribution to understand the complex dynamics of social realities.

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