

Intersubjectivity: Towards a Dialogical Analysis

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INTERSUBJECTIVITY: TOWARDS A DIALOGICAL ANALYSIS

The concept of intersubjectivity is used widely, but with varying meanings. Broadly speaking, we take intersubjectivity to refer to the variety of possible relations between people's perspectives. If we take social life to be founded on interactions then intersubjectivity should be a core concept for the social sciences in general and understanding social behaviour in particular. Perhaps because of this broad relevancy research has been fragmented and at least six definitions are in circulation. Most simplistically, intersubjectivity has been used to refer to agreement in the sense of having a shared definition of an object (e.g., Mori & Hayashi, 2006). Going beyond simple sharing, it has been defined in terms of the mutual awareness of agreement or disagreement and even the realisation of such understanding or misunderstanding (e.g., Laing, Phillipson & Lee, 1966). Cognitive approaches have used the term to refer to the attribution of intentionality, feelings and beliefs to others (Gärdenfors, 2008). Yet other approaches emphasise the embodied nature of intersubjectivity, conceptualising intersubjectivity as implicit and often automatic behavioural orientations towards others (Merleau-Ponty, 1945; Coelho & Figueiredo, 2003). The situated, interactional and performative nature of intersubjectivity is emphasised by researchers such as Goffman (1959), Garfinkel (1984) and Schegloff (1992). And finally, cultural and dialogical researchers have used the term to study the partially shared and largely taken-for-granted background which interlocutors assume and against which things can be said and done (Jovchelovitch, 2007; Rommetveit, 1979; Schutz, 1973). While some of these definitions may be incomplete accounts of intersubjectivity (e.g., see Marková (2003a) and Matusov (1996) for critiques of intersubjectivity as agreement), we suggest that they are not mutually exclusive and that each captures a different and important aspect of the phenomenon. Accordingly, we adopt an inclusive definition. We conceptualise intersubjectivity as the variety of relations between perspectives. Those perspectives can belong to individuals, groups, or traditions and discourses, and

they can manifest as both implicit (or taken for granted) and explicit (or reflected upon).

This article has two aims. First, it presents a review of existing methodologies for studying intersubjectivity. Second, it advances the dialogical method of analysis for the study of intersubjectivity. We begin by outlining how central intersubjectivity is to social science, and yet how little methodological attention the topic has received. The main body of the article is a review of four methodological approaches to the study of intersubjectivity: comparative self-report, observing behaviour, analysing talk and ethnographic engagement. Considering the benefits and limitations of these approaches leads us to conclude with suggestions for a dialogical analysis of intersubjectivity.

INTERSUBJECTIVITY AND SOCIAL LIFE

Intersubjectivity is central to the social life of humans. Thus, unsurprisingly, research pertaining, either directly or indirectly, to intersubjectivity spans many research areas of psychology. In developmental psychology it lies just below the surface of widely used concepts such as decentration (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969), theory of mind (Doherty, 2008) and perspective taking (Martin, Sokol and Elfers, 2008). In neuroscience, intersubjectivity has recently become a popular topic with the discovery of “mirror neurons” which are thought to provide a neurological basis for imitation, theory of mind, language, and social emotions (Hurley & Chater, 2005). In the field of comparative psychology, there has been a surge of interest in intersubjectivity, in the form of investigations of possible perspective-taking amongst, for example, monkeys (Tomasello, Call and Hare, 2003) and scrub jays (Emery & Clayton, 2001). Intersubjectivity, going by various names, is also central to research on communication. Phenomena such as addressivity, double voiced discourse, and dialogue are deeply intersubjective (Linell, 2009). Intersubjectivity has also been identified as important in small group research because it has been found that mutual understanding within small groups creates increased efficiency, reliability and flexibility (Weick & Roberts, 1993). Research on self and identity has long emphasised the importance of Self’s perceptions of Other’s perceptions of Self (James, 1890; Howarth, 2002). In the field of counselling, much therapeutic effort is directed at resolving misunderstandings and feelings of being misunderstood both of which indicate dysfunctional intersubjective relations (Cooper, 2009).

Looking to the broader social sciences, the phenomenon of intersubjectivity is omnipresent. One can find it in Rousseau’s concept of the social contract, Durkheim’s thinking about society and solidarity, and Adam Smith’s analysis of economic exchange. Indeed in any exchange, whether economic, contractual, or political, each party needs to orient to the orientation of the other (Latsis, 2006). Inter-institutional partnerships, which are widespread, depend upon intersubjec-

tivity. For example the funding of non-governmental organisations by international funding agencies (Cornish & Ghosh, 2007) and the inter-institutional relations that occur between different branches of the health service call for mutual orientation between representatives of institutions with very different histories, constraints, interests and thus perspectives (Engeström, Engeström and Vähäaho, 1999). Issues of intersubjectivity arise not only across, but also, within institutions. Large multinational corporations require their various departments to develop their own perspectives on the one hand, and to be aware of the perspectives of other departments on the other (Boland & Tenkasi, 1999). Today, all organizations need to orient to the public. Public relations, marketing and advertising are the means by which organizations attempt to orient to the orientation of the public (Spekman, Salmond and Lambe, 1997). Finally, in cases where there is inter-group or even inter-national conflict, questions of intersubjectivity are also central. Issues of identity are often at stake, and especially the struggle for recognition (Honneth, 1996). In the extreme cases of nuclear stand-off, and a politics of brinkmanship, again one finds that perspective-taking and misunderstanding are central (Booth & Wheeler, 2008).

The above list is far from exhaustive. But the point is clear: across the social sciences, intersubjectivity is fundamental. Yet research on intersubjectivity remains relatively fragmented with each area developing its own methodological approach, with little cross cutting discussion about methodology.

METHODOLOGICAL OBSTACLES

The absence of a sustained and interdisciplinary discussion regarding appropriate methodologies for studying intersubjectivity is due, we argue, to an individualistic bias within contemporary methodology which has been widely documented (Farr, 1998). Even in research on intersubjectivity, the unit of analysis is often the individual (O'Donnell, Tharp and Wilson, 1993). Individuals are observed, interviewed, questioned, surveyed, scanned, and tested. Behavioural responses, attitudes, personality measurements, cognitive scores, social circumstances, opinions, habits, affiliations and preferences—all qualities attributed to individuals—are the kinds of phenomena which are considered as viable data. When individualistic assumptions are made, the relations between people or groups, whether intra-psychological or inter-psychological, often become invisible.

The separation between psychology and sociology has also stunted research on intersubjectivity. Since the discipline-founding work of James, Wundt and Durkheim different so-called “levels” have been institutionalized to the point of being taken-for-granted (Doise, 1980). Although this carving out of different levels enabled both psychology and sociology to get on with studying individuals and social facts respectively, it left little room for intersubjectivity. The problem is that the phenomenon of intersubjectivity cuts across the boundary between psychol-

ogy and sociology. Moreover, psychologists and sociologists who have strayed into the space between these so-called levels have often been criticised by their respective communities with all the motivation that an ontological threat to a discipline mobilises (Farr, 1996).

Despite these prevailing obstacles, a handful of methodological approaches to the study of intersubjectivity have been developed, each of which makes visible a specific aspect of intersubjectivity. The following sections review the four major methodological approaches: comparative self-report, observing behaviour, analysing talk and ethnographic engagement. It is important to emphasise that the following review does not concern traditions of research, rather the focus is on methodological approaches. Accordingly, each methodological approach tends to be represented by several research traditions, and most of the major research traditions are represented by more than one methodology.

COMPARATIVE SELF-REPORT

A common methodology for studying intersubjectivity is comparative self-report questionnaires. This approach was developed to examine the extent to which people are able to accurately take the perspectives of each other. This line of research grew out of attempts to test the Mead (1934) and symbolic interactionist (Blumer, 1969) assumption regarding the importance of perspective-taking, or role-taking.

An early example of this approach is provided by Stryker (1956). He read Mead as postulating that groups which share a “universe of discourse” will be better able to take each other’s perspectives. Accordingly Stryker deduced that there should be more accurate perspective-taking between parents and their children than between parents and in-laws; that persons of the same sex should be better at taking each other’s perspectives than persons of opposite sex; that persons of similar occupations should be better at taking each other’s perspectives and so on. Stryker’s methodological innovation was to adapt an attitude questionnaire for parenting style such that parents, offspring and in-laws provided self-reports both for themselves *and* for others. This enabled Stryker to compare, for example, the actual attitudes of parents with the attitudes ascribed to those parents by their children and their in-laws, and thus to assess the accuracy of the children’s and in-laws’ perspective-taking.

Stryker’s comparative self-report methodology was adapted and used to address the question of whether Self’s self-perception corresponds to how Self is seen by Other (Cast, Stets and Burke, 1999; Shrauger & Schoeneman, 1979). Again the theoretical impetus for this research was symbolic interactionism and the idea that one’s self-image emerges through seeing oneself as one is seen by Other. In this line of research self-report questionnaires are used to examine what Self thinks about Self, what Self thinks Other thinks about Self, and what Other actually thinks about self.

Table 1. Three levels of intersubjectivity between Self and Other in relation to X

Level	Self (Person/group)	Other (Person/group)
Direct perspectives	Self's perspective on X (S→X)	Other's perspective on X (O→X)
Metaperspectives	Self's perspective on Other's perspective on X (S→O→X)	Other's perspective on Self's perspective on X (O→S→X)
Meta-metaperspectives	Self's perspective on Other's perspective on Self's perspective on X (S→O→S→X)	Other's perspective on Self's perspective on Other's perspective on X (O→S→O→X)

Our concern is not with the results of the research, but with the methodology used. The basic principle is to compare what person A indicates on a questionnaire with what Person B thinks person A will indicate on the questionnaire. This enables measurement of the degree of convergence or divergence of perspective between Person A and B on the given topic. Although most of this research uses questionnaires, Q-sort methodologies have also been used (Funder, 1980). One could also imagine a more inductive methodology where all participants would be asked to write a description of the other person's attitudes, and then the other person or group would rate that description for accuracy.

Arguably, the most sophisticated self-report questionnaire methodology was developed by Laing, Phillipson and Lee (1966). Their starting point is theoretically informed, and quite similar to the framework proposed by Ichheiser (1943). Drawing upon the work of Sartre, Buber, Mead and Heider they suggest that there are three levels of intersubjectivity (Table 1). The first level is called the level of "direct perspectives", and concerns both Self's (S) and Other's (O) perspectives on a given phenomenon (X). This is the level of attitude, opinion and direct representation. The second level is termed "meta-perspectives" and pertains to Self's and Other's ideas about each others' perspectives on the given phenomenon. The third level is called "meta-metaperspectives," which refers to Self's perspective on Other's perspective on Self's perspective on the object (and vice versa). The epistemological assumption made by Laing, Phillipson and Lee is that these three levels are open to analysis through self-report questionnaires.

The major contribution of Laing, Phillipson and Lee's framework is that it provides a clear articulation of various possible intersubjective relations between people or groups (Table 2). By comparing the direct perspectives of two people or groups, researchers can identify agreement and disagreement. For example, John might hold the opinion that children should be given complete freedom when growing up. If Mary holds the same opinion, then both John and Mary can be said to agree on this point. By comparing a direct perspective with a metaperspective, cases of understanding and misunderstanding can be identified. For

Table 2. Actual intersubjective relations

Comparisons	Intersubjective relation
Direct perspective & Direct perspective ($S \rightarrow X$ & $O \rightarrow X$)	Agreement/disagreement
Direct perspective & Metaperspective ($S \rightarrow X$ & $O \rightarrow S \rightarrow X$)	Understanding/misunderstanding
Meta-metaperspective & Metaperspective ($S \rightarrow O \rightarrow S \rightarrow X$ & $O \rightarrow S \rightarrow X$)	Realisation of understanding/ misunderstanding

example, Mary might mistakenly think that John thinks that children have too much freedom today. Finally, by comparing meta-metaperspectives with metaperspectives, researchers can examine whether people realize that there is understanding or misunderstanding. This complex level of analysis is necessary, Laing, Phillipson and Lee argue, because it is used in correcting misunderstandings. For example, in the case of the misunderstanding between John and Mary, one possible solution is for John to realise that Mary thinks that he thinks that children are too free.

Although Laing, Phillipson and Lee developed their framework in the context of family therapy, it is not limited to that context. For example, they argue that the distrust between East and West during the Cold War could be analysed in terms of these three levels. Not only did East and West fear each other (direct perspectives), but they were each aware that the other feared them (metaperspectives), and they each knew that the other was aware that they knew the other feared them (meta-metaperspectives). Identifying these layers of intersubjective understanding and misunderstanding enables us to explain the actions of both sides. Because each side feared the other, they tried to protect themselves by amassing nuclear weapons. And because each side knew that the other side feared them, each side engaged in brinkmanship (Booth & Wheeler, 2008). But, because each side knew that the other side knew that they were fearful, each side was unable to be seen to capitulate to any bullying because such a capitulation would demonstrate their fear (Gillespie, 2007).

So far we have used Laing, Phillipson and Lee's framework to consider the actual relations between perspectives. However, the framework can also be used to examine *perceived* convergences and divergences of perspective (Table 3). Thus, for example, we can distinguish actual agreement ($S \rightarrow X = O \rightarrow X$) from perceived agreement ($S \rightarrow X = S \rightarrow O \rightarrow X$), and we can distinguish actual understanding ($S \rightarrow X = O \rightarrow S \rightarrow X$) from feeling understood ($S \rightarrow X = S \rightarrow O \rightarrow S \rightarrow X$) and from perceived understanding ($S \rightarrow O \rightarrow X = S \rightarrow O \rightarrow S \rightarrow X$). Although Laing, Phillipson and Lee did not give much attention to these intrapsychological comparisons, their framework nonetheless provides a convenient means of conceptualising them.

Table 3. Perceived intersubjective relations

Comparisons	Intra-subjective relation
Direct perspective & Metaperspective ($S \rightarrow X$ & $S \rightarrow O \rightarrow X$)	Perceived agreement/disagreement
Direct perspective & Meta-metaperspective ($S \rightarrow X$ & $S \rightarrow O \rightarrow S \rightarrow X$)	Feeling understood/misunderstood
Metaperspective & Meta-metaperspective ($S \rightarrow O \rightarrow X$ & $S \rightarrow O \rightarrow S \rightarrow X$)	Perceived understanding/ misunderstanding

To operationalise their framework, Laing, Phillipson and Lee (1966) developed the Interpersonal Perception Method questionnaire (IPM) which entails self-report questions to both parties regarding their direct, meta and meta-meta perspectives. Originally used in therapeutic contexts for diagnosing family misunderstandings, the IPM has since been adapted to study divergences of perspective in the health service (Assa-Eley & Kimberlin, 2005), family relations (Sillars, Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 2005), institutional coordination (Scheff, 1967), trust (Gillespie, 2007) and advertising (Gilbert, 1986). Refined statistical methods have also been developed for comparing perspectives (Kenny, 1994). Even a Boolean calculus has been developed in order to deal with the range of possible comparisons that the IPM affords (Alperson, 1975). Despite such appeal and applicability, however, the IPM framework cannot be declared a complete success.

Reviewing the empirical literature on the IPM reveals that the third level, the level of meta-metaperspectives, proves deeply problematic. Meta-metaperspectives are either conspicuously absent (i.e., Assa-Eley & Kimberlin, 2005; Kenny, 1994; Scheff, 1967) or they produce unclear results (i.e., Allen & Thompson, 1984). The problem, we suspect, is that meta-metaperspectives cannot be adequately investigated using self report. Consider the first item from the IPM (Laing, Phillipson and Lee, 1966, p. 182), which concerns understanding within a family relationship. It has three parts. First there is a question about direct perspectives: "How true do you think the following are?—She understands me". Then there is a question about metaperspectives: "How would she answer the following?—"I understand him". Both of these questions have face validity. However, the same cannot be said for the third question which concerns meta-metaperspectives: "How would she think you have answered the following?—she understands me". While the question is grammatically and logically correct, it is so complicated that it is difficult to answer meaningfully. This question requires the respondent to keep too many inter-related perspectives in mind at once. The problem with the refined statistical methods and Boolean calculus which have been developed is that while it may be logically easy to specify endless recursive perspective taking relations, these relations may not be open to self-report.

This does not mean, however, that meta-metaperspectives are not real, and not worth researching. Everyday life is replete with examples of meta-metaperspectives. For instance, an employee worries, after making a suggestion about how to better organise the workplace: “perhaps my manager thinks I disrespect her”. This is a meta-metaperspective. It expresses the employee’s perspective on her manager’s perspective on the employee’s attitude towards the manager. Or a committee allocating funding might think “Unfortunately, many applicants seem to have misunderstood our intentions with this call, we need to make our intent clearer in the next round.” Ostensibly simple statements such as “you always think I am trying to deceive you” or “you are trying to make me feel guilty” are recognisably part of everyday discourse, and they are at the level of meta-metaperspectives.

Accordingly, it is not that meta-metaperspectives do not exist or are insignificant, but rather that the self-report methodology is not a suitable methodology for investigating them. Just as competent language users may not be able to be explicit about their grammar or the pragmatics of speaking, so perspective-takers may make use of meta-metaperspectives, but find it difficult to verbalise them. To ask people to express their meta-metaperspectives in this way is to commit the “psychologist’s fallacy” (James, 1890), that is, to confuse the construct that is in the psychologist’s mind with the phenomenological experience in the research participant’s mind. We suggest that the third level of meta-metaperspectives is a useful construct for researchers, but that it rarely exists as a concept in the minds of participants.

Nonetheless, using self-report questionnaires to study the inter-relations between direct and meta perspectives has been useful. In particular such questionnaires have a valuable diagnostic function, enabling researchers to quickly identify divergences of perspective within particular relationships or between large groups. The problem is that comparative self-report methods are limited to dealing with the fairly simple and explicit aspects of intersubjectivity.

OBSERVING BEHAVIOUR

In contrast to the cognitive approach to intersubjectivity, assumed by those using self-report questionnaires, other scholars have assumed that intersubjectivity is more behavioural and embodied (Crossley, 1996). This conceptualisation goes back to Adam Smith (1759/2002), Mead (1934), and Merleau-Ponty (1945) who emphasised the embodied and non-reflective nature of intersubjectivity. From this point of view, studying intersubjectivity with self-report questionnaires is akin to studying how people walk a tightrope or ride a bike using self-report questionnaires.

One early pioneering study starting out with an embodied conception of intersubjectivity was conducted by O’Toole and Dubin (1968). Like Stryker (1956) they were motivated, in part, by the work of Mead (1934). However, while

Stryker read Mead through a cognitive lens (i.e., assuming that actors were cognitively aware of their intersubjective relations and thus could self-report on them), O'Toole and Dubin read Mead through a behaviourist lens. Unsurprisingly, they arrived at a different methodological approach to the same question of whether perspective-taking actually occurs.

O'Toole and Dubin (1968) unobtrusively measured the body sway of participants observing an actor lean in various directions, and found that observers mimic the bodily sway of actors: participants lean very slightly in the same relative orientation as the leaning actor. They also found that when feeding a baby, people will often open their own mouths as they wish the baby to do. Their systematic observations show that people, non-consciously, and at an embodied level, align themselves with the bodily orientation of others. What is interesting in this research is the methodology used. The observation of behaviour can, it seems, make visible forms of intersubjective relation that would remain opaque to self-report methodologies.

Observational methodologies have developed beyond the basic machinery which O'Toole and Dubin used to measure body sway. Now computers allow for much finer-grained analysis of motor mimicry (Bavelas, Black, Lemery, MacInnis and Mullett, 1986). High resolution video recording, the ability to slow down videos, and split screens enable the simultaneous and detailed observation of the target and model. Methods have been developed to establish baselines and avoid artifacts. Using these methodologies, the phenomenon of motor mimicry has proved to be widespread, being evident in smiling, leaning, dodging, wincing, and baby feeding among many other behaviours. Much of this research has been brought together by Hatfield, Cacioppo and Rapson (1994) in their presentation and analysis of emotional contagion.

A second strand to the methodology of observing behaviour are the experiments used by primatologists and developmental psychologists to assess intersubjectivity in non-human primates and children. For example, Tomasello, Call and Hare (2003) have used experiments to examine the extent to which non human animals are able to understand the mind of others. In their research a target behaviour is modelled and then observation is used to determine whether imitation occurs. The problem with such research, as already mentioned, is that the observation of behaviour can only reveal very basic forms of intersubjectivity, such as imitation. More complex intersubjective relations have been explored by developmental psychologists. Tasks such as the unexpected transfer belief task (Wimmer & Perner, 1983) have been used to test whether children can disentangle their own beliefs from their beliefs about another person's false beliefs. Such tasks enable researchers to go beyond basic forms of intersubjectivity by including what is said by children into the analysis, and as such, the method goes beyond the observation of behaviour narrowly defined.

Finally, recent interest in mirror neurons brings a new aspect to observational methods for studying intersubjectivity. The study of mirror neurons began with

studies of the electrical activity of single neurons in monkeys. Researchers found that these neurons would become excited both when their owner performed an action and when their owner observed another monkey performing the same action (Gallese, Keysers and Rizzolatti, 2004). Mirror neurons have been found in monkeys for actions such as opening a nut, tearing paper, certain gestures and movements and eating-related behaviours. While in monkeys the range of actions covered by mirror neurons is relatively narrow, in humans the range of actions is much more extensive (Rizzolatti & Craighero, 2004). Given the nature of mirror neurons and the extent to which they occur in humans there has been much enthusiastic speculation about their significance for language, theory of mind, empathy, imitation, perspective-taking, understanding, self-consciousness and agency (Hurley & Chater, 2005). From a methodological point of view, the study of mirror neurons is based upon the observation of individual behaviour and the behaviour of single neurons. The methodology is to compare the behaviours being observed and performed with the activity of neurons, without relying upon self-report.

Across the studies which observe behaviour, including the behaviour of neurons, the dominant research interest is in demonstrating the extent to which an observer sympathetically, and usually non-consciously, either behaviourally mimics or neurologically “resonates” with actions observed. The research has convincingly demonstrated that embodied intersubjectivity exists. Moreover, this form of intersubjectivity would not be visible using self-report methodology. It is unlikely that the participants in O’Toole and Dubin’s (1968) body sway experiment were aware of their own sympathetic body sway. Equally, it does not make much sense to ask whether people can self-report on the activity of individual mirror neurons. Thus we discover another limitation of the self-report methods: There are embodied aspects of intersubjectivity that are invisible to self-report.

However, observing behaviour has its own limitations. Firstly, it is limited to studying intersubjectivity in terms of *similarity*. The intersubjectivity observed takes the form of similar behaviours observed and similar neuronal firing. But, people can orient to each other’s perspectives without adopting the same behavioural stance. The dynamics of recognition, or co-ordination across a division of labour require perspective-taking without people mimicking each other. Although there may be some motor mimicry and neurological resonance in such complex co-ordinations, such an account is insufficient. Secondly, the more complex forms of intersubjectivity hitherto discussed in terms of metaperspectives and meta-metaperspectives seem to be largely invisible if one only observes behaviour. At best one can observe the flush produced by social attention. One could search for the behavioural correlates of social emotions such as embarrassment, pride and shame, but the search could not be taken far. While social emotions, such as embarrassment, might be observed, the reasons behind the emotion are much more difficult to observe. Thus while observing behaviour has the benefit of not relying upon self-report, it is unsuited to studying either the complex forms of

intersubjectivity enabled by society or the thoughts that people have in relation to the thoughts of others.

ANALYSING TALK

The third methodological approach, analysing talk, again constitutes a new aspect of intersubjectivity. Assuming that intersubjective relations are produced and reproduced in social interaction, then observing what happens in social interaction, and particularly what is said in interaction, brings us close to the actual processes through which intersubjectivity is reproduced.

Garfinkel's (1984) ethnomethodology has been central in turning the attention of researchers towards the relation between talk and intersubjectivity. For Garfinkel intersubjectivity concerned the shared, but often implicit, taken-for-granted assumptions that enabled human communicative interaction. He suggested that the tightly woven intersubjective fabric of assumptions tends only to become visible when breached. This basic assumption is the opposite of the comparative self-report methodologies which assume that these assumptions are available to self-report. To make these intersubjective assumptions visible, and thus researchable, Garfinkel encouraged his students to break the common assumptions of social interaction and record what happened. For instance, he directed his students to interact with their families as if they were strangers and their home was a hotel. In another study his students kept asking their interlocutors to be more specific about what they were saying. In each case, breaking the taken for granted assumptions profoundly disrupted the social interaction, triggering annoyance on the part of interlocutors and leading them to question the student's motives and/or sanity. These disruptions reveal that in everyday interaction there are numerous implicit assumptions being made about the social situation. Interlocutors not only make these assumptions implicitly, but they implicitly assume that they are shared.

Garfinkel's insight that intersubjectivity can become visible during a breach has been carried forward by experimental research which has sought to engineer ruptures. Experimental situations are created in which there is a joint task with distinct social positions thus creating two different perspectives. For example, each participant is given unfamiliar tangrams and, without seeing each other's, one participant must communicate to the other their sequence of shapes (Clark & Wilkes-Gibbs, 1986). Or each participant is given a map, and a Director must verbally guide the Follower through the map (Blakar, 1973). Or, one participant is given a picture and they must verbally communicate that picture to the second participant who then has to draw the picture (Collins & Marková, 1999). In each of these experimental scenarios, the researchers create a divergence of perspective, and then observe how the participants repair it and create mutual understanding. These experiments have revealed the intensely collaborative nature of

communication. Even when participants start out with massive divergences of perspective they work collaboratively to build a shared nomenclature and set of implicit assumptions which enable them to jointly navigate the task. The advantage with the experimental paradigm is that divergences of perspective can be created, ruptures can be engineered, and the characteristics of the participants can be manipulated.

The analysis of the processes through which intersubjectivity is produced in talk has been advanced by the methodological procedures of conversation analysis. Although conversation analysis is a broad methodology, the tendency has been to focus upon naturally occurring talk-in-interaction rather than experimental data. The core focus has been on issues such as how conversations open and close, how topics are introduced, how topics are framed, how responsibility is assigned, how authority is claimed, how turn taking occurs and how interlocutors are positioned. From the standpoint of intersubjectivity, the research which interests us concerns interlocutors' ongoing efforts to maintain mutual understanding.

Even a casual exchange can entail the intersubjective tasks of agreeing on a topic, clarifying roles, establishing shared terminology, correcting misunderstandings, and agreeing that the conversation is over. For example, the frequent brief paralinguistic communications such as "uh-huh" or head-nodding that punctuate a conversation are not designed to take over the turn or to contribute additional meaning, but to provide ongoing feedback about comprehension (Schegloff, 1982). That is, they inform the speaker about their effective construction of intersubjective understanding. A similar role is played by the "third position repair" described by Schegloff (1992). A listener will often respond to a speaker with an utterance which, instead of contributing anything new, simply displays understanding of what has been said. This gives the first speaker an opportunity to correct a misunderstanding, or consolidate an understanding, thus establishing intersubjective agreement. In this way, conversation analysts have convincingly shown that intersubjectivity is not something abstract, remote or impossible to achieve, rather intersubjectivity is routine and even mundane. "Intersubjectivity" is, as Schegloff (1992, p. 1299) writes "woven into the very warp and weft of ordinary conversation."

Conversation analysis makes an important contribution to the study of intersubjectivity because it focuses upon the processes through which intersubjectivity is negotiated moment-by-moment within specific interactions. Conversation analysis treats intersubjectivity as a genuinely relational phenomenon. Research based on observing discourse is not concerned with "testing" whether perspective taking occurs, nor is it concerned with diagnosing divergences of perspective, it assumes that partial intersubjectivity exists, and focuses upon the processes through which it is created, recreated, disrupted and repaired within social interaction.

The main limitation of conversation analysis is that it tends to focus upon the discourse observed and is reluctant to go beyond specific interactions. It looks only *within* the text for its explanations, and avoids reference to phenomena beyond the

text, such as societal discourses, interpretative repertoires, cultures or social institutions (Wetherell, 1998). But talk is situated in institutional and cultural contexts. Material situations and social roles provide the resources out of which people construct mutual understandings. Within psychology, some conversation analysts tend to be willing to treat psychological phenomena only in terms of how they are spoken about by participants, and arguments that “intra-psychological” events outside the conversation are not amenable to analysis (Potter & Edwards, 1999; Marková, 2000). Thus, addressing subjectivity—even its intersubjective nature—is not promoted by the conversation analytic approach.

ETHNOGRAPHIC ENGAGEMENT

The separation of methods into self-report, observations and the analysis of talk, as we have done above, is, when considered from the point of view of actual research, somewhat artificial. Intersubjectivity is situated in everyday life contexts, and everyday life does not conform to such a separation. Lived life has reflective aspects (amenable to self-report), entails actions and practices (amenable to observation), and usually lots of talk (amenable to conversation analysis). Moreover, lived life is embedded in social, institutional, historical and cultural contexts which are central to any interpretation (Jovchelovitch, 2007; Schutz, 1973). To consider just one methodological approach, and to do so without regard for the broader context, yields a limited perspective on the phenomenon, and limits the possibility of apprehending the variety of means (embodied practice, verbal exchanges, reliance on cultural assumptions, etc) through which intersubjectivity is negotiated.

Unsurprisingly, much of the most subtle research on intersubjectivity entails a combination of the methods described above. Such research, often going by the name of ethnography, ethnomethodology or participant observation, tends to combine the observation of practices and interactions with an analysis of talk. Moreover, it incorporates both a detailed historical and contextual understanding of the given interaction and a reflective participatory engagement with the research phenomena. This holistic approach to studying intersubjectivity has been articulated by Prus (1996). Starting out from the assumption that everyday life is a meaningful intersubjective creation, Prus argues that ethnography is the most suitable method for studying intersubjectivity: to enter into the everyday life of people, to participate in their lives, to talk and observe and to interpret people within their lived context. According to this approach, research is a process in which the researcher moves between learning about local meanings, participating in local activities, and reflecting upon those experiences. Thus there is an oscillation between participating and observing (Ricoeur, 1973).

The historical threads of this approach come out of the Chicago School of participant observation and anthropological studies of encountering other people

and cultures. But the basic approach has been widely developed in many empirical domains, from the study of tourist-local interactions (Gillespie, 2006a) to studies of distributed cognition (Hutchins, 1995). The ethnographic approach enables a rich analysis of the different perspectives in the field and how they interact. For instance, Mosse (2005), in an ethnography of the aid system linking donors to communities in India, highlights the multifaceted role of “development brokers” including consultants and managers, who work at the boundary between the world of aid policy and the world of project implementation. In an impressive intersubjective undertaking, these development brokers are shown to negotiate between the almost incommensurable perspectives of messy concrete project reality, and changing, ambiguous, but directive policy statements. In this context, ethnography allowed a rich understanding of the unrecognised and unofficial intersubjective dynamics of communication and coordination within the aid system, by studying the everyday practices of implementing and accounting for a project, by tapping into the multiple perspectives (donors, development workers, and communities) at work, and by the author himself moving between the engaged role of a consultant and the distant role of an academic.

Starting with the phenomenon, the ethnographic approach makes use of whatever forms of data aid the interpretative process—such as historical documents, interviews, naturally-occurring talk, observations, participatory experiences, drawings, among others. The ethnographic approach also recognised that the researcher is part of the ethnographic encounter (Clifford, 1983). Thus, the researcher does not study intersubjectivity “out there” but rather enters into the intersubjective web, and through being part of that intersubjective world, comes to understand it.

There are two major strengths of the ethnographic approach, firstly, that its sources of data are naturally-occurring, and secondly, that it combines different forms of data. If intersubjectivity is often implicit, and if it is embedded in and made possible by everyday situated language and practices, then to apprehend the full richness and complexity of intersubjectivity, ethnography is an ideal approach.

DIALOGISM

Having reviewed the major methodological approaches to the study of intersubjectivity, we now turn to articulating theoretical and methodological tools that we suggest are particularly useful, and that overcome some of the weaknesses identified in the reviewed methods. The theoretical tradition of dialogism, we argue, provides useful concepts for the analysis of intersubjectivity (covered in this section) and can work together with insights from other methodologies (reviewed in the previous sections) in a multi-faceted empirical approach to the study of intersubjectivity (covered in the next section). Like ethnography, dialogism

emphasises historically and culturally located meaning and cross-cutting methodologies which combine analysing talk with observing interactions. However, dialogism offers a specific theoretical apparatus for analysing intersubjectivity, which is more than simply an ethnographic approach.

Dialogism stems from the theoretical work of Hegel, Mead and Bakhtin amongst others. The basic idea is that knowledge, society and subjectivity are all dynamic and contextual phenomena which can be theorised in terms of dialogues between different (real and imagined) perspectives (Marková, 2003b; Linell, 2009). Knowledge must be considered in terms of competing knowledges which are sustained in various institutional and power relations (Jovchelovitch, 2007). Society is conceptualised in terms of differentiated groups and social relations in various states of tension (Moscovici, 1976). Subjectivity entails shifting I-positions, uncertainty, ambiguity, internal dialogues and dialogical tensions (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). Knowledge, society and subjectivity are produced through dialogue and are dialogical in their structure and dynamics. There are several key assumptions in dialogism (Linell, 2009). It is not our aim to review them all. Instead we highlight three ideas which are of particular significance for a dialogical approach to intersubjectivity: situation-transcending phenomena, addressivity, and voices.

First, in contrast with narrow variants of conversation analysis, dialogism goes beyond immediate utterances to consider situation-transcending phenomena (Linell, 2009). While the goings-on within a dialogue are indeed important, understanding dialogue entails understanding the social, historical and cultural context (Marková, 2003b) as well as personal, subjective and intra-psychological processes (Linell, 2009). Dialogue is possible because of a partially shared fabric of assumptions which need to be understood historically. Accordingly, genealogical analysis is a useful means of unpacking the historical context (Gillespie, 2006b) and ethnographic research is a useful means of understanding the social and cultural context (Cornish, 2004). Indeed experimental research, which has created ruptures, has found that shared representations are an important means of arguing (Psaltis & Duveen, 2006) and re-creating a shared definition of the situation (Collins & Marková, 1999). In addition, the outcomes of dialogue can lead to lasting changes in meaning at both the societal level and the individual level. Thus, in contrast to conversation analysis, dialogism is quite compatible with the theory of social representations (Howarth, 2006) and the notion of internal or subjective dialogues (Marková, 2003b), both of which can be transformed through dialogue. Thus dialogism conceptualises intersubjectivity as entwined with situation-transcending phenomena such as culture, institutions and subjective processes.

Second, in contrast to the dominant assumption that the individual is the basic unit of analysis, dialogism takes the communicative relation as the basic unit of analysis. According to both Bakhtin (1986) and Mead (1922), the boundary of an utterance is not drawn around the acoustic blast, rather it must include the

audience in two senses. In the first sense it is the future response of the audience which finalises the meaning of the utterance and thus defines the boundary of the utterance. In the second sense because communication entails an orientation to the future response of the audience the anticipated future response is already in the utterance (before the audience has a chance to respond). Thus every utterance or communicative gesture can only be understood in terms of the expected audience to which it orients and the actual audience that it finds.

The way in which utterances orient to, and position, the audience is termed addressivity. Consider the utterance “You had a fairly lengthy conversation with him, didn’t you, on that evening of February fourteenth?” Who is speaking? And who is being spoken to? How is the speaker positioning the addressee? People usually suspect, correctly, that the speaker is a lawyer, and that the addressee is a woman. And people are usually unsurprised to find that the utterance comes from a rape trial. Yet there is nothing in the utterance about a woman, about law, or about rape. Where does this understanding of the utterance come from? The answer is addressivity. Who else, other than teachers and inquisitors, ask people questions when they already believe they know the answer? Who else is so concerned about dates, places, and specific events? And if the speaker is a lawyer, then what might the legal issue be? What might follow from a conversation with “him”? And why does the lawyer emphasise that it was a “lengthy” conversation? The addressivity within the lawyer’s utterances enables us to “reverse engineer” the utterance and to speculate about the implied audience and context. Addressivity is a powerful analytic concept for studying intersubjectivity, as it reveals the implicit orientations of speakers to the orientation of their audience.

The third useful concept from dialogism is that of voices. Utterances do not only reflect their audience, but they reflect their historical and social context. Each utterance is a product of the semiotic and social environment that precedes it. People do not speak their own language. They speak a second-hand language with second-hand words, and usually they are propagating second-hand ideas. “The utterance,” Bakhtin (1986, p. 93) writes, “like Leibniz’s monad, reflects the speech processes, others’ utterances, and, above all, preceding links in the chain.” Utterances, when closely analysed, reveal their own history. Conversational turns which used to be between people reappear as shifts of perspective within a single utterance. Utterances originating in diverse contexts and spoken by diverse people are born again side-by-side in the same utterance. Old words, phrases, and communicative genres are re-formed, re-contextualised and re-produced. Although each so-called new utterance is filled with new intent it never completely escapes its previous usage which is the wellspring of its meaning.

The social and historical context of an utterance is most clearly evident in the multiple voices that often populate an utterance. Bakhtin claimed, somewhat flippantly, that about one-third of all conversational dialogue is either direct or indirect quotation of other people’s words. While this may be an exaggeration, close attention to conversations reveals that people do spend a lot of time talking

about what other people have said or might say (Gillespie, 2006a). The voice of others can appear in different ways in a text. In direct quotation the “voice” of the other is animated and quoted directly (e.g. “Bob said ‘doctors are tyrannical’ ”). Direct quotation is often accompanied by a change in accent and a change in pronoun frame of reference. Indirect quotation, or “characterising” occurs when the speaker presents a version of the other person’s point of view (e.g. “Bob feels that the doctors dominate the hospital”). The idea of voices is useful for the study of intersubjectivity because it reveals the presence of multiple perspectives within a single utterance or brief exchange.

Dialogism, because of its fundamentally relational stance, is ideally suited to the study of intersubjectivity (Marková, 2003a). To date dialogical concepts have profitably been used to study intersubjectivity within many contexts, including, situated dialogue (Linell, 1998), diaries (Gillespie, Cornish, Aveling & Zittoun, 2007), historical commemoration (Olick, 1999), collective action (Cornish & Ghosh, 2007) and inter-cultural relations (Jovchelovitch, 2007). Dialogism is based on a distinctive epistemology, and provides useful and subtle concepts for the analysis of talk and action in terms of the relation between different perspectives. Dialogism can be characterised as a collection of theoretical concepts which provide analytic purchase, and which researchers apply in different ways. Our aim, in the next section, is to advance the dialogical method of studying intersubjectivity by combining it with insights drawn from our preceding review of methods.

TOWARDS A DIALOGICAL ANALYSIS

We propose to combine Laing, Phillipson and Lee’s (1966) framework for studying intersubjectivity with the dialogical concepts of context, addressivity and voice. Laing, Phillipson and Lee developed a very useful conceptual framework for analysing the complex and recursive nature of intersubjective relations, but self-report questionnaires are not a suitable methodology for analysing meta-metaperspectives. Thus we propose to use their conceptual framework, but not their method. We advocate analysis of dialogue as found in experiments, interviews, group discussions or naturally-occurring contexts. Using the analytic concepts of voice and addressivity enables us to get at both explicit and implicit perspectives, thus transcending the opposition between the self-report and observational methodologies. Table 4 presents the coding frame for such a dialogical analysis.

Imagine a situation in a company where the workers are planning to go on strike because they are dissatisfied with the working conditions. One of the workers, Sally, says to her boss “I love my work.” She is overheard, and is quoted by a second employee: “she said ‘I love my work.’ ” But Sally herself overhears this and says to her colleagues “he keeps telling people that I said I love my work.” Let us interpret this example in terms of our coding frame.

Table 4. Coding frame for a dialogical analysis of intersubjectivity

Level	Explicit	Implicit
Direct perspectives (S→X)	Statement that explicitly communicates a direct perspective “I love my work”	Statement that can be interpreted as revealing a direct perspective “I love my work” (i.e., I don’t see a need to go on strike)
Metaperspectives (S→O→X)	Quotation or characterisation that explicitly communicates a metaperspective “She said ‘I love my work’ ”	Quotation or characterisation that can be interpreted as revealing a metaperspective “She said ‘I love my work’ ” (i.e., she is not committed to a strike)
Meta-metaperspectives (S→O→S→X)	Quotation or characterisation that explicitly communicates a meta-metaperspective “He keeps telling people that I said I love my work”	Quotation or characterisation that can be interpreted as revealing a meta-metaperspective “He keeps telling people that I said I love my work” (i.e., he is trying to make me appear disloyal)

Beginning with the direct perspectives, Sally’s explicit direct perspective is simply that she enjoys her work. This direct perspective could also be observed as an implicit perspective, if we were to see Sally working late, or volunteering for tasks, or speaking about her work with enthusiasm. On the other hand, her statement may be interpreted in terms of context and addressivity to reveal an alternative direct perspective. In saying “I love my work,” Sally may be implying that she is not committed to the strike, or that other employees less loyal to the company do not enjoy their work, or, indeed, she may be prefacing complaints about her working conditions with the statement that she loves her work, implying that she is an enthusiastic worker, and thus she cannot be dismissed as a work-shy complainer.

When Sally’s colleague reports that she said “I love my work,” we are dealing with a metaperspective. Sally’s voice reappears in her colleague’s utterance, revealing his perspective on her perspective on her work, and if we did not know about the potential strike, we might decide that this is simply a statement about Sally’s work satisfaction. But in the context of the potential strike, the reported statement suggests an implicit metaperspective, that Sally may not be committed to the strike and is a danger to their solidarity. By comparing Sally’s direct perspective with the colleagues’ metaperspective, we can establish whether there is understanding or misunderstanding. If Sally went on, in her conversation with

her boss, to list her complaints about her working conditions, unheard by her colleague, there may be a misunderstanding here. But if Sally was indeed trying to ingratiate herself with the boss, and the colleagues think that Sally is unlikely to join the strike, then they can be said to understand her perspective without agreeing with her.

Finally, at the third level, when Sally says “he keeps saying that I said that I love my work,” she is voicing a meta-metaperspective on her colleague’s metaperspective on her perspective on her work. If Sally’s direct perspective is that she does not love her work, then she is giving voice to a perceived misunderstanding. However, turning to the implicit level might be revealing. Considering the context and addressivity, her statement may suggest a meta-metaperspective that her colleagues would disapprove of the news that Sally likes her work, and so she is trying to correct a misunderstanding and explain that actually she does not like her work, and is planning to join the strike. Or, she may be implying that her colleague is spreading unfair rumours about her, and seeking to influence her colleagues’ perspectives on the rumour-mongering colleague. When a person directly voices a meta-metaperspective (“he thinks that I think that . . .”), they are often trying to correct a misunderstanding (“he is wrong, and I don’t actually think that . . .”).

Several comments about this example need to be made. The analysis makes use of background information, about the strike, and about work culture. The data for the analysis need not be overt speech, rather, any communicative act, such as staying late at work, can be part of the analysis. The use of dialogical concepts enables the analysis to go beyond the obvious, revealing implicit orientations.

The proposed framework enables a dialogical analysis of intersubjectivity as it manifests both within and between people or groups. Using the framework, for example, to study data from one person means that the perceived intersubjective relations detailed in Table 3 can be analysed. Perceived misunderstandings and feelings of being misunderstood, and the resultant internal dialogical tensions can be clearly articulated. Using the framework to study both parties mean that the actual intersubjective relations detailed in Table 2 can be analysed. Comparing what one person or group thinks with what the other individual or group thinks they think can reveal actual misunderstandings and thus unpack interpersonal and intergroup tensions.

From a methodological point of view, identifying the explicit meanings is relatively straightforward and empirical. Such analysis remains at the level of description. However, the interpretative process for identifying implicit meanings is complex. Often the same utterance can be interpreted in both explicit and implicit, or descriptive and interpretative, ways. If someone says to their partner, when viewing an apartment for sale, “this one is so spacious,” that communicates a direct perspective about the apartment, but it also implies an implicit direct perspective that the previous apartment they viewed was not as spacious. If a doctor tells a mother that “it is really important for children to eat 5 portions of

fruit and vegetables everyday” this explicitly communicates the doctor’s knowledge. However, it can also be interpreted as implying a metaperspective: the doctor thinks that the mother does not know or implement this knowledge.

The analysis of explicit and implicit perspectives, or meanings, entails complementary strengths and weaknesses. The strength of analysing explicit meanings is that there is little ambiguity in what is actually being said. The task is descriptive not interpretative. This strength is revealed in contrast to the weakness of coding implicit meanings. The range of possible implied meanings can be very broad, and sometimes even contradictory implications are possible. Given only one utterance it is impossible to establish the validity of an interpretation. Confident interpretation depends upon assumptions, significant others, norms, frames of reference, situations and history that are all beyond any single utterance. It follows that analysis of implicit meanings requires a substantial knowledge of the wider context. Hence, ethnographic fieldwork has an important role to play in dialogical analyses by providing a rich social and cultural interpretive frame. Ethnographic work also enables the use of observation of nonverbal as well as verbal action, which can be revealing about implicit perspectives.

The tentativeness with which we should approach the identification of implicit perspectives does not mean that coding implicit meanings is inferior to coding explicit meanings. What people can explicitly say is limited by their self-insight, and, as argued in relation to self-report methodology, people rarely able to articulate the full web of intersubjective relations that they are embedded within. Thus analysing implicit perspectives transcends the limitation of the self-report methodologies by incorporating something of the observational approaches.

When considering real-world inter-group and inter-individual relations it also becomes evident that there is more than self and other to consider. Talk often pertains to other parties outside the direct relation. For example, in studying the relation between a company and the ecological movement they support, one might find that the company sponsors the movement in order to create a positive impression of the company to the public at large. In such a case the intersubjective relation expands beyond the immediate self-other (i.e., company-movement) relation to include a third perspective (that of the public). That is to be expected, and the analysis can include this by proceeding upon the same lines of distinguishing direct, meta, and meta-meta perspectives. The important thing is to be very clear in the analysis about who is taking whose perspective.

Finally, in our experience it is often difficult to distinguish between direct, meta and meta-meta perspectives because there is much perspective-taking built into ordinary language. Some individual words (e.g. loyal, guilty, ashamed) already “chunk” more than one perspective. Consider the difference between the utterance “you are making me feel guilty” and “I think that you think that I have done something that I should not have done.” Both of these utterances entail explicit meta-metaperspectives. However, the latter is much more difficult to comprehend than the former. This is because the term “guilt” has packed within it a complex

set of perspectives. The problem arises when we consider an utterance like “he feels guilty.” Is it a metaperspective concerning the thoughts of the other? Or, is it a complex meta-metaperspective? In our experience this problem needs to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, with each utterance analysed in terms of its own context in order to make an appropriate decision about the level at which it operates.

These comments regarding the complexity of coding implicit perspectives reveal that any such analysis is fundamentally interpretative. There is no guaranteed means of knowing exactly what is implied by an action or utterance. Interpretation must be based upon a contextual understanding of the act and exploring alternative interpretations (Hollway & Jefferson, 2001). Thus the interpretative process, or analysis, must itself be dialogical. Using publicly available materials or discussing the empirical material with colleagues is a good means of stimulating self-reflective and diverse interpretations (Cornish, Zittoun & Gillespie, 2007). Good interpretation, as has been pointed out before, entails dialoguing with alternative interpretations (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000).

CONCLUSION

Our purpose, in this article, has been to facilitate empirical research on intersubjectivity. To that end we have reviewed methodological approaches and contributed a framework for a dialogical analysis. The dialogical approach that we are contributing to is not meant to eclipse other approaches, rather it is meant to be one more method in our toolbox. Each of the methods reviewed is useful in relation to a different sort of question and conceptualisation of intersubjectivity. Comparative self-report methodologies are extremely useful for the quick diagnosis of the location and extent of divergences and convergences of perspective. However, the self-report methodologies require reflective insight on the part of participants which is not always evident. The observation of behaviour gives access to some of the non-reportable forms of intersubjectivity, especially basic forms of intersubjectivity such as muscle and neuronal mimicry, but not to the more reflective and complex forms of intersubjectivity. Conversation analysis can provide useful insights into how misunderstandings arise and are resolved in ongoing talk. Conversation analysis, however, is less useful for dealing with the socio-historical basis of intersubjectivity or with the intersubjective nature of subjectivity. We have argued that dialogism provides a promising set of analytic tools to analyse recursive perspective-taking and to make claims that go beyond the immediate interactional setting of the data. We have proposed that a dialogical analysis can profitably use the theoretical framework proposed by Laing, Phillipson and Lee (1966) without using their self-report methodology.

The value of any new methodological approach is not found in theoretical or historical arguments, but in the avenues for fruitful research opened up (Cornish

& Gillespie, 2009). Accordingly, in conclusion we detail some new lines of research that the proposed method of dialogical analysis opens up for the study of intra-psychological and inter-psychological relations.

Contemporary societies are characterised by a great diversity of perspectives interacting. The structural differentiation of society sustains a diversity of social positions within society, each with a distinctive perspective. Globalisation brings people from a wide range of cultural, religious, and geographic backgrounds into close interaction. Vast divergences of perspective exist between many groups—for example between the health services and service users (Assa-Eley & Kimberlin, 2005), between departments within the same organisation (Boland & Tenkasi, 1999), between different sectors in society (Scheff, 1967), and between professionals and their clients (Silverman, 1987). The proposed method of dialogical analysis makes these divergences of perspective tractable to research. Interviews, group discussions, documents and mass media can be analysed to identify the explicit and implicit direct, meta, and meta-meta perspectives for all the individuals or groups in a given relation or joint activity. Then comparing the inter-relations between these would yield the points of convergence and divergence, understanding and misunderstanding, perceived understandings or misunderstandings, and so on. Beyond simply diagnosing the misunderstandings that are prevalent in contemporary societies, interesting questions include: What social and interactional dynamics create understanding or misunderstanding? What social technologies and forms of social interaction can be used in order to create more understanding of the divergent perspectives which exist? For example, how do manipulations of the ideals of the public sphere, as described by Habermas (1984), lead to different patterns of intersubjective relation? The method could also be used to examine the impact of interventions aimed at fostering dialogue with before and after analysis revealing changes in intersubjective relations.

The proposed framework could also be used to analyse the intra-psychological relations, or subjectivity, of a single individual. Diaries, interview data, personal narratives, letters and talk-aloud protocol data can all be coded using the framework to identify the individual's explicit and implicit direct, meta and meta-meta perspectives. One could then identify dialogical tensions between either explicit and implicit elements, or between the various perspectives. It seems particularly interesting to examine how the perspectives of others (i.e., meta and meta-meta perspectives) are treated within the subjectivity of the given individual. Are the meta and meta-meta perspectives treated as foreign objects? Are they treated as unreal? Are they stereotyped? And are they framed in a dismissive way (Blakar, 1979) or are they isolated by semantic barriers that inhibit transformative dialogue (Gillespie, 2008)? Or, conversely, do they engage in transformative dialogue with the direct perspectives of the individual concerned? Even individuals strongly committed to one perspective are aware of alternatives, and the question is, how do these different perspectives interact

within the individual? It is likely that empirical research will reveal a diverse set of possible semiotic relations between perspectives within the one individual (Valsiner, 2002).

Another intra-psychological line of research concerns the dialogical self (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007) which conceives of an individual's subjectivity as comprising a landscape of "I-positions" from which the individual speaks (Gillespie, 2006c). But there is considerable confusion about the nature of those I-positions and how to identify them. The dialogical framework presented here is a means of identifying explicit and implicit I-positions at the three different levels. Thus the framework could be used to examine the dialogical tensions between different voices, or I-positions, within the individual's subjectivity (e.g., Aveling & Gillespie, 2008). The theory of the dialogical self has also been criticised for failing to connect the dialogical self with the social context (O'Sullivan-Lago & de Abreu, 2010, in press). The proposed framework could also be used to situate the dialogical self within a set of social relations, by examining both the intra-psychological and inter-psychological relations simultaneously, and then examining their relation.

The two lines of research outlined above, concerning inter-psychological and intra-psychological relations, reveal that the proposed method of dialogical analysis entails a re-conceptualisation of the individual-society antinomy. The rigid opposition between individuals on the one hand and society on the other has been unhelpful for understanding social behaviour (Moscovici, 1972). The dialogical approach to intersubjectivity entails a return to Mead (1934, p. 201) and Schutz's (1973, p. 178) conceptualisations of the individuals in relation to others as akin to Leibniz's monad in relation to the universe. In Mead's words:

The fact that all selves are constituted by or in terms of the social process, and are individual reflections of it [. . .] is not in the least incompatible with, or destructive of, the fact that every individual self has its own peculiar individuality, its own unique pattern; because each individual self within that process, while it reflects in its organized structure the behavior pattern of that process as a whole, does so from its own particular and unique standpoint within that process, and thus reflects in its organized structure a different aspect or perspective of this whole social behavior pattern from that which is reflected in the organized structure of any other individual self within that process (just as every monad in the Leibnizian universe mirrors that universe from a different point of view, and thus mirrors a different aspect or perspective of that universe). (Mead, 1934, p. 201)

Within a dialogical analysis individuals empirically manifest as being permeated by social discourses and significant others. By analysing the explicit and implicit meta and meta-meta perspectives within a given individual, the individual is seen as an intersubjective being woven out of social relations and discourses. Groups and institutions are also re-conceptualised. Groups need not be homogenous, they can be based on difference, but only if combined with a degree of mutual understanding of that difference. That is to say, what makes a group

or society is not similarity but the degree to which the members' perspectives are understood by one another. Accordingly, the proposed method of dialogical analysis enables us to study the individual within the group (as a self-reflective position within a web of social perspectives) and the group within the individual (as the range of social perspectives refracted through the individual's subjectivity).

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