Introduction

Christian Meier zu Verl

Department of History and Sociology, University of Konstanz

Yaël Kreplak

*Centre d'Étude des Mouvements Sociaux, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales
and Centre de Recherche sur les Liens Sociaux, Université de Paris*

Clemens Eisenmann

CRC 1187 'Media of Cooperation', University of Siegen

Alex Dennis

Department of Sociological Studies, University of Sheffield

This special issue is devoted to two central topics of *Ethnographic Studies*: ethnomethodology and ethnography. Both are addressed conceptually, reframed in different ways, and insightfully discussed. In particular, conceptual and methodological considerations are elaborated on the grounds of empirical studies from different fields. Furthermore, the making of these studies will be revealed self-reflexively, methodologically and empirically.

In this way, a version of ethnography becomes observable, which we will refer to as *ethnomethodological ethnography*. Ethnomethodological ethnography offers an alternated perspective on methodological considerations of ethnography. By investigating how ethnographic fieldwork and studies in ethnomethodology have informed, and can inform each other, their relations and broader implications can be uncovered. In this sense, ethnography can draw on ethnomethodology both conceptually and methodologically. In doing so, ethnographic acquired skills become central to the research process itself. Ethnographers need to become capable of perceiving and (partially) mastering recognisable practices themselves in order to understand and to describe them adequately (Garfinkel 2002; Garfinkel and Wieder 1992). The description of social phenomena and their practical foundations can then assume different objectivations within the research. From written ethnographic descriptions of phenomena to instructions on how to produce practically the phenomena being researched, a large spectrum opens up for ethnomethodological ethnography to render phenomena 'detectable, countable, recordable, reportable, tell-a-story-aboutable, analyzable—in short, *accountable*' (Garfinkel 1967: 33, emphasis in original) for others. Practices and methods for describing phenomena are tied back to the accountability of practices in a context-sensitive way, so that they are seen as topic

of and resource for ethnographic investigations. Both are intertwined: the practices of producing a phenomenon and the practices of describing it (Garfinkel and Wieder 1992: 182).

The papers in this issue derived from the 'Ethnomethodology and Ethnography' panels organised by the editors at the 2019 IIEMCA conference in Mannheim. All collected papers of this special issue address different aspects of ethnomethodological ethnography (like members' perception, skills, and practices, detail, unique adequacy requirement of methods, and hybridity). Moreover, these papers contribute to current methodological debates and uncover further as yet unconsidered methodological relations between ethnography and ethnomethodology. Thus, with this special issue, we hope to shed light on the contribution of ethnomethodology to current debates on conceptions of fieldwork. We also hope to open up a discussion on ethnography within the field of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, where its notion has partly been lost and positioned rather diversely and adversely (e.g. Pollner and Emerson 2001).

Götz Hoeppe's paper 'Members doing ethnography? On some uses of irony and failed translation, witnessed in an episode of data sharing in open science' addresses ethnomethodological ethnography through the study of rather recent and original culture, without 'native speakers': the culture of open data in astronomy. The study is based on ethnographic fieldwork carried out by the author among a team of young astronomers. In particular, the paper offers an extensive analysis and discussion of the concepts of 'translation' and 'irony' as well as crucial matters regarding the generalization of research procedures. Thus, Hoeppe's contribution makes it possible to re-think the connections between ethnomethodological ethnography and anthropological practice.

In her paper 'Hybridity of hybrid studies of work: Examination of informing practitioners in practice' Nozomi Ikeya focuses on the question of 'topical relevance' for the practitioners within ethnomethodological investigations. The paper re-visits Garfinkel's notion of 'hybrid studies' as a continuation and praxeological reformulation of ethnomethodological policies and principles, like the 'unique adequacy requirement'. But instead of focusing on questions of adequate description, this study scrutinizes and shows the relevancies and intertwining practices of presenting studies to various audiences. Based on her own studies in emergency control, Ikeya uncovers the tacit workings of ethnomethodological principles for doing hybridisation between the academic world and other professional practices. Thus, opening up an important discussion about varying degrees and forms of hybridization in ethnomethodological ethnographies.

Robin Smith's 'Seeing the trouble: A mountain rescue training scenario in its circumstantial and situated detail in three frames' focuses on a major issue for ethnomethodological ethnography: the 'trouble with the detail'. Based on an empirical case-study involving the author both as a participant and analyst, the paper addresses the availability of observational phenomena as a members' practical concern. It considers the work of making sense of 'what went on' in a given scene as an ongoing and in situ accomplishment and as the main locus for analysing the social organisation of available phenomena.

Drawing on a fine analysis of visual evidence, the paper discusses the possibilities of adequate ethnographic observations and descriptions.

Philippe Sormani's paper '"DIY AI"?—Practicing kit assembly, locating critical inquiry' addresses the practical foundations of AI, ethnomethodology and ethnography. This study performed as a reflective ethnography renders the practical technical work of DIY AI observable. It combines two areas of research: First, artificial intelligence and machine learning, which has not yet empirically reflected on its practical foundation. Secondly, the interplay between ethnography, technical work, and critical inquiry discussed in ethnomethodology and STS. Against this background, this study shows the extent to which technical skills and ethnographical work are required to perform an inquiry.

In addition to these papers, we are delighted to also publish another four, which develop two areas the journal has increasingly focused on in recent years: studies of the military and critical considerations of some contemporary trends in conversation analysis.

Two papers—by Holder and von Wedelstaedt—address issues of accountability, decision making and technical expertise in military settings. Both use the distinctions between lay and professional understandings of key terms as central issues in their developing arguments.

Alexander Holder's paper 'The centrality of militarised drone operators in militarised drone operations' considers the 'Uruzgan incident', in which somewhere between 16 and 33 Hazara civilians were killed. The allocation of responsibility, and what responsibilities are salient at particular times, are central questions for the conduct and review of military activities, and the ways these differ between lay and military contexts is central to Holder's analysis. The use of the term 'Killchain', and its possible connotations in different contexts, is key to disentangling and overcoming potential confusions.

In his 'The interactional accomplishment of 'shootables': visualisation and decision making before an apache helicopter attack' Ulrich von Wedelstaedt draws on two literatures to examine the ways that *in situ* decision-making and activity are radically situated. By examining communications between and within helicopters in a combat setting he is able to show how 'shootability', the status of a target as *legitimately* a target, emerges from and is reviewed in real time. This approach allows new light to be shone on the centrality of practice to the consideration of verbal and other data.

Douglas Macbeth's 'CA and its heresies' and Michael Lynch's 'The inference making machine and the epistemic engine' develop the ongoing dialogue about the future of ethnomethodology that started with the Radical Ethnomethodology conference in 2016.

Macbeth's paper examines the notion of heresy in sociological thought. What is presented as 'heretical' by some contemporary proponents of conversational analysis—quantification, in particular—is only so to the extent that it is disturbing to those who wish to retain the radicalism of Sacks' and Schegloff's methodological and empirical work. What gets lost in these approaches is the heresies Sacks and Schegloff themselves were 'guilty' of, and which are in danger of being effaced by these 'new' developments.

If a heretic accuses someone of heresy, is the accused doubly-heretical or, worryingly, dressing their orthodoxy up in the guise of radicalism?

Lynch examines, in fine detail, Sacks' own approach to 'knowledge' via the latter's early classic lecture on inferences. Demonstrating that 'knowledge' can be found in the talk itself, Sacks showed how what is said and what, crucially, is unsaid but can legitimately be inferred *is* relevant knowledge for interlocutors. Epistemic stance and epistemic status as analytical devices are shown to be rather poor, thin, substitutes for this—opening up the possibility of 'translating' the talk into a different idiom but losing much along the way.

REFERENCES

Garfinkel, Harold. 1967. *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Garfinkel, Harold. 2002. *Ethnomethodology's Program: Working out Durkheim's Aphorism*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Garfinkel, Harold, and D. Lawrence Wieder. 1992. 'Two Incommensurable, Asymmetrically Alternate Technologies of Social Analysis'. In *Text in Context. Contributions to Ethnomethodology*, edited by Graham Watson and Robert M. Seiler, 175–206. New York: Sage.

Pollner, Melvin, and Robert M. Emerson. 2001. 'Ethnomethodology and Ethnography'. In *Handbook of Ethnography*, edited by Paul Atkinson, Amanda Coffey, Sara Delamont, John Lofland and Lyn Lofland, 118–135. London et al.: Sage.