

Challenges and Opportunities in the International Reception of "Communicative Constructivism"

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Abstract: In this article, we offer some observations on the international standing of communicative constructivism (CoCo), as discussed in scholarship published largely in German over the past decade (e.g., KELLER, KNOBLAUCH & REICHERTZ, 2013; KNOBLAUCH, 2019a [2016]; REICHERTZ, 2009). We seek to explain why, in our view, CoCo has not thus far had a noticeable influence on academic discourse in international, particularly Anglo-American, sociology. Amongst others, we highlight issues regarding the name that was picked for the perspective and regarding the literal translation of German CoCo terminology into the English language. We also point to some theoretical and methodological choices that have made it difficult to link CoCo to interactionist sociology in general, and to ethnomethodology and ethnography in particular, i.e., perspectives that we are closely aligned with. We conclude with a summary of our observations and a few suggested steps communicative constructivists might consider taking to broaden and diversify the appeal of their program beyond German speaking sociology.

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1. Introduction

Over the past two decades, the importance of communication for how we engage with, and make sense of, the world has accelerated exponentially. The growing use and impact of mediated information and messaging on all social scales, from the micro-world of everyday life to the global political stage, is instantly obvious to even the most casual observer. Surprisingly, to date, this fundamental societal development has found relatively little reflection in social theorizing, and in the creation of large-scale sociological theories in particular. One notable exception to this neglect is "communicative constructivism," often called "CoCo" for short, a comprehensive theoretical model which is built around the primary role of communication in social life. CoCo was created and refined over many years by German sociologists who can be broadly located in the new sociology of knowledge (KNOBLAUCH, 2010) that has emerged in light of Alfred SCHÜTZ's social phenomenology (1967). It offers an innovative reconceptualization of the influential paradigm of "social construction," first introduced in the classic work "The Social Construction of Reality" by Peter BERGER and Thomas LUCKMANN (1991 [1966]) over half a century ago. It is well known that this book has had a fundamental impact on the social sciences internationally—although today, it might be one of those classics that is more often cited than actually read (HACKING, 2000; KNOBLAUCH, 2016; KNOBLAUCH & WILKE, 2016; MAINES, 2001). [1]

Building on the perspective of social construction in name and scope, scholars in communicative constructivism ambitiously claim to have created a universal social theory that offers conceptualization and integration of social processes across all domains, regions, and scales of social life. Among the major proponents of CoCo, KNOBLAUCH (2013) began with a fundamental critique of social constructivism and has tightly linked the concept of "communication" to sociological theories of interaction (REICHERTZ, 2013). He also drew on discourse theory as developed by KELLER (2013) who has introduced FOUCAULT's concept of "discourse" into communicative constructivism. Echoing frequent declarations by scholars working within the CoCo paradigm, we note that CoCo's rise is part of larger cultural, linguistic, and visual "turns" in the social sciences, inasmuch as these paradigmatic shifts signify heightened scholarly interest in the ever-increasing mediatization, digitization, and technification of societies. Likewise, scholars pursuing CoCo are interested in "communicatization," an interest that fits well within a new, or perhaps renewed, awareness of the fundamental discursivity and narrativity of social life (LOSEKE, 2021) which can be observed in many provinces within and beyond our own discipline of sociology. [2]

There can be no doubt that, over the past two decades, those elaborating on CoCo's theoretical foundation and contributing to its body of empirical works have made important and lasting contributions to sociology, and to general social theory in the German-speaking academic world. However, to date, these diligent efforts have yet to be noticed by a more global audience, specifically international colleagues who read, write, and speak primarily in English. We believe that this

oversight is unfortunate and, in this paper, we seek to understand how and why it may have occurred. To this end we examine some of the obstacles CoCo as a theoretical perspective has faced regarding its reception in Anglo-American sociology (Section 2). In Section 3, we turn to an evaluation of the primary methodological strategies employed by researchers who are obliged to CoCo's theoretical perspective, specifically videography or ethnomethodological interaction analysis, and focused ethnography. In Section 4, we begin to summarize our observations on the relationship between CoCo and interactionist sociology and offer suggestions on how, we believe, the international, and especially Anglo-American, appeal of CoCo could be enhanced in the future. In Section 5, we conclude the article with some broader reflections and recommendations. [3]

Before we continue with our discussion of CoCo and its (lack of) visibility in contemporary Anglo-American sociological discourse, we shall briefly reflect on our own positionalities in writing this article. Both of us received our initial sociological education at German universities (Bamberg, Cologne, and Constance) in the 1980s and 1990s. Throughout this experience, we developed a close connection to the sociology of knowledge as inspired by Alfred SCHÜTZ and Thomas LUCKMANN (1985). Since leaving Germany in the 1990s, we have stayed in touch and maintained personal friendships with members of the German-speaking interpretive community while pursuing advanced sociological training and academic careers in the United Kingdom (VOM LEHN) and the United States (KUSENBACH). [4]

VOM LEHN undertakes ethnomethodological studies of interaction in museums and in practices of opticians where patients' eyesight and eye health are examined and assessed. While being employed at King's Business School at King's College London, he uses an interactionist perspective in his teaching of undergraduate and postgraduate students. To date, KUSENBACH's research and writing have primarily centered on urban and community sociology, emotions and identities, disasters, as well as qualitative, especially ethnographic, research methods. She primarily teaches M.A. and Ph.D. students in sociology at the University of South Florida, a public research university in the USA. For many years, we have both actively participated in the international [Society for the Study of Symbolic Interactionism](#) (SSSI) and contributed to various sections of the [American Sociological Association](#) (ASA). Alone or together with other colleagues, we have authored/edited books and special issues featuring theories, methods, and substantive research rooted in the larger interpretive paradigm. [5]

Therefore, in one sense, we are well positioned to write this paper; however, in other ways, we are not. Neither of us specializes in the history of interpretive thought or engages in much "pure" theorizing, and we no longer follow the contemporary sociological discourse in Germany very closely. For these reasons, our discussion builds on a potentially limited understanding of CoCo and is largely bound by the sociological subareas, methodological frameworks, and geographic contexts we currently work in. While we strive to deliver an impartial portrayal in what follows, we explicitly acknowledge our own theoretical positionality as

(symbolic) interactionists, as interpretive scholars with a shared special interest in phenomenology, and as sociologists working in the Anglo-American academic sphere. [6]

2. Challenges in CoCo's International Reception

We readily concede that we rarely mention the CoCo approach in our own publications,¹ nor do we typically come across works that reference CoCo in our research and writing. None of our UK and US department colleagues at King's College London and the University of South Florida who teach and write about contemporary sociological theory, and whom we asked about CoCo, had heard of this approach. This may say as much about ethnocentrism, ignorance, and perhaps even bias among Anglo-American scholars—ourselves included—as it does about CoCo's potential shortcomings. We admit that a balanced discussion would need to take a critical look at both ends, however, this would transcend the scope of the present paper. [7]

Beyond first impressions, to evaluate the current visibility of CoCo in the Anglo-American academic milieu more systematically, we conducted some searches on Google Scholar. In the past decade, German-speaking sociologists have published numerous books (in German) explaining and exemplifying the CoCo approach to German-speaking audiences, almost too many to list (e.g., CHRISTMANN, 2015; HERBRIK, 2011; KELLER et al., 2013; REICHERTZ & BETTMANN, 2018). Fewer resources on CoCo exist in other regions of the academic market. In terms of English language books, as mentioned above, KNOBLAUCH (2019a [2016]) published "The Communicative Construction of Reality," an English translation of his German book offering a comprehensive account of CoCo which had come out a few years prior.² The English book was published in the Routledge Series "Knowledge, Communication and Society," edited by Hubert KNOBLAUCH, Michaela PFADENHAUER, Bernt SCHNETTLER, and Alejandro BAER. This means that, as of this writing, only two to three years have passed since a first book-length account of CoCo was published in English. According to Google Scholar, by fall 2022, KNOBLAUCH's (2019a [2016]) book had been cited around 60 times in other English language articles, book chapters, or books. Only about a handful of those citations were made by scholars other than KNOBLAUCH himself or colleagues working in or near his inner circle (and their co-authors); and none of these citations were by sociologists working in the US or UK.³ [8]

Regarding shorter publications, we are aware of several English-language book chapters and articles that focus on the CoCo approach: first, a chapter titled

- 1 Among the exceptions are a few texts co-authored with German colleagues, e.g., KUSENBACH and CHRISTMANN (2021).
- 2 The English hardcopy edition of the book (KNOBLAUCH, 2019a [2016]) was followed by an English paperback edition (2021).
- 3 We are aware of only one other English-language book related to the CoCo approach, the brand-new volume "Communicative Constructions and the Refiguration of Spaces," edited by CHRISTMANN, KNOBLAUCH, and LÖW (2022) which has been cited about ten times at the writing of this paper, almost exclusively by chapter authors and editors.

"From the Social to the Communicative Construction of Reality," written by KNOBLAUCH (2020) and published in a recent edited book on social constructivism (PFADENHAUER & KNOBLAUCH, 2019) for which we could find no English citations; and second, an article by KNOBLAUCH (2019b) titled "The Communicative Turn in German Sociology of Knowledge," in the journal *Society Register* published in Poland, which has been cited less than a handful of times overall. Most importantly, there is KNOBLAUCH's (2013) article titled "Communicative Constructivism and Mediatization," in the highly-ranked journal *Communication Theory*, published by the [International Communication Association](#). This is the final paper in a special issue on "Conceptualizing Mediatization," edited by media and communication scholars Nick COULDRY and Andreas HEPP (2013). To date, KNOBLAUCH's (2013) paper has been cited around 150 times in other English language articles, books, and book chapters (not counting dissertations, theses, working papers, and the like). As before, a large share of these publications are authored by KNOBLAUCH, REICHERTZ, KELLER, and by the special issue editors. Nearly all remaining citations appear to focus on the issue of "mediatization" and seem to originate from within the discipline of communication. [9]

Despite its obvious shortcomings, our citation analysis suggests two findings: First, to date, much of the existing English-language discourse on the CoCo approach is produced by scholars in German-speaking countries, primarily by a relatively small group of authors. Second, the CoCo approach has received little international attention by American and UK sociologists outside of the contained group of sociologists with a strong link to KNOBLAUCH, KELLER, and REICHERTZ, with nearly all remaining English citations of key CoCo works being rooted in other disciplines. If these impressions are correct, they may prompt the question: What exactly is standing in the way of a broader perception of the CoCo approach in UK and US sociology? The remainder of this section identifies four such issues, related to translation and scope of concepts, academic context, cultural adaptation, and visibility. [10]

2.1 Translation and scope of concepts

In our view, one major obstacle that gets in the way of a broader international reception of the CoCo approach is its name in English, including both adjective and noun.⁴ According to leading English dictionaries, as well as some informal inquiries with native speakers, the primary meaning of the English adjective "communicative" is *talkative*, in the sense of *eager* or *able to communicate*. The word is rarely used or understood in its secondary meaning of *relating to communication* more generally. Moreover, in both these meanings, when used by English speakers, "communicative" overwhelmingly denotes acts of speaking or writing, meaning vocal or written communication, which may perhaps also extend to nonvocal gestures. [11]

4 As an aside, it does not help that the English adjective "communicative" is frequently mispronounced by native German speakers. Unlike in "communication," the stress in "communicative" lies on the second syllable (the "u" sound) rather than on the fourth syllable (the "a" sound).

We believe that the native understanding of the word is at odds with how it is intended and used in the academic CoCo approach. Of course, we are aware that the term "communicative" proposed by KNOBLAUCH (2019a [2016]) as a qualifier for his version of "constructivism" has been used in sociology and cognate disciplines before.⁵ There is, for example, HABERMAS's (1986 [1981]) "Theory of Communicative Action,"⁶ or GARFINKEL's (2006 [1948]) use of "communicative effort" in the title of a proposal he wrote for a possible doctoral research project in the 1940s (RAWLS, 2006, p.2). In this manuscript GARFINKEL (2006 [1948], p.179) explained that he decided to use "communication" rather than "interaction" because the latter term was bound up with the behaviorist paradigm that pervaded social-scientific debates in the 1940s. GARFINKEL's interest, however, was in interaction.⁷ [12]

Despite the fact that the term "communicative" can occasionally be found in sociological publications, we propose here that, due to the connotations the word has in the English language, it might be worthwhile to reconsider its use as a qualifier for "constructivism." Here, we suggest an alignment of CoCo with the terminology that is more amenable to interactionist sociologists in the Anglo-American region. *Moreover*, a realignment seems appropriate because CoCo theory propagates a much broader than usual scholarly understanding of the term "communicative," going far beyond speaking, writing, gesturing, or any other aspects of language to also include bodies, objectivations, and eventually all social action (KELLER et al., 2013; REICHERTZ, 2009). KNOBLAUCH (2019a [2016]), p.53, for example, stated that: "Communicative action is not only the foundation of sociality; its reality-constructing power is the driving force behind contemporary society as a whole." [13]

Despite the increasing importance of communication and social media in contemporary society, we worry that the broad and complex theoretical definition and use of "communicative" by communicative constructivists stretches the word beyond its recognizable limits. KNOBLAUCH (2019a [2016], p.52) may have overestimated the adjective's elasticity when he says: "When referring to an action between two subjects oriented toward objectivations as 'communicative,' 'communicative' also seems to cover the everyday meaning of the word." In his article KNOBLAUCH continued:

"Nevertheless, the extension of the term *communicative beyond language* to objectivations may sound strange to many ears, particularly as it substitutes notions such as action, social action, practice, and communication. Therefore, proposing the concept of communicative action requires an explanation, legitimation, and justification" (p.52; emphasis ours). [14]

5 Other examples of the use of the term "communicative" are Jodi DEAN's (2014) "Communicative Capitalism" and GIBSON's (2022) and GIBSON, HUANG and YU's (2018) examination of communicative action online.

6 All translations from non-English texts are ours.

7 Although CoCo scholars often highlight their indebtedness to ethnomethodology, they do not entirely buy into its principles (see Section 3).

KNOBLAUCH's proposal of using "communication" or "communicative action" as a substitute for all forms of "action" or "social action" is likely to be perceived as an overreach, regardless of explanation, legitimation, and justification. Perhaps for this reason, EBERLE (2019, p.147) noted that CoCo's "concept of communication remains a little dazzling so far." [15]

In a sociological theory, while it may be technically correct, it seems somewhat beside the point to theorize power-filled actions—such as, for instance, denying asylum or being convicted of a felony—as "communicative" while disattending to these actions' real-life causes, outcomes, and implications for the people involved. Some sociologists, therefore, may not be satisfied with describing both hatred and love, both acts of terror and peace, in the same vein as "communicative" without drawing attention to their fundamental differences. In other words, while all empirically observable social acts might justifiably be described as "communication" in one way or another, their communicative nature may not be what is most *relevant* to sociologists, in particular those colleagues who are seeking to understand fundamental dynamics of social order, inequality, and/or experience. However, in our perception, these motivations and interests are of central importance to virtually all American and UK sociologists. In short, neither English speakers on the street nor academic colleagues are prone to accept that something described as "communicative" fundamentally transcends language, or that the concept of "communicative action" really captures the essence of *all* social action in contemporary society, making "communicative" a difficult choice of word for what it intends to convey. [16]

2.2 Academic context

Another problem with "communicative" in the discipline of sociology is that the word is easily perceived as belonging to a different academic field. In the American and UK academic landscape, "communication" is the name of an autonomous scholarly discipline that is often more closely aligned with the humanities than with the social sciences, and typically housed accordingly within administrative units. In many research universities, departments of "communication" are further separated from departments of "mass communication(s)" which are typically associated with advertising or marketing and often anchored in business schools. Therefore, in anglophone academic discourse, the adjective "communicative" is apt to be understood as referring to the domains, or the disciplines, of communication or mass communication(s), which may or may not be part of the social sciences. And indeed, in the US and UK, detailed analyses of language and media discourse lie somewhat outside of the interests of sociologists and instead fall within the purview of other disciplines, such as (applied) linguistics, linguistic anthropology, English, or rhetoric, in addition to, of course, communication or mass communication(s).⁸ [17]

8 Even though the foundations and methods of "conversation analysis" were famously developed in California by a group of (mostly) sociologists, in the US today, CA is a rather exotic niche that is absent from virtually all sociology departments. In the UK, the development and institutionalization of conversation analysis and related approaches slightly differs from that in the US. Yet here also, most sociologists consider it to be a marginal approach for sociological research.

Until now, most published studies falling within the CoCo approach have focused on examining the use of communication and technology in institutional or work settings, such as KNOBLAUCH's (2012a) study of PowerPoint presentations, TUMA's (2016) study of vernacular video analysis in professional settings, and a range of studies in other institutional settings (REICHERTZ & TUMA, 2017). In these and other works, much analytic effort is typically devoted to uncovering the patterns and structures of the situated communication itself, rather than evaluating the social, cultural, or political contexts; or the causes, effects, and functions of this "communicative" work in and for the lives of participants and affected groups. We mean to say that research questions and results in many key works within CoCo differ from those typically asked by sociologists who study work, institutions, technology, and related topics elsewhere. This has led some disappointed reviewers to doubt that CoCo's topics are suitable as "objects of sociological inquiry" and to conclude that works in this tradition are not "sociologically interesting" (CROISSANT, 2014, p.385). While we do *not* share this opinion, we highlight the fact that disciplinary boundaries can and do vary between geographical and cultural regions. Therefore, in addition to the unfamiliar name, CoCo's unfamiliar research questions and findings centering on "communication" and "communicative" issues may lead sociological colleagues to believe that CoCo theory and research belong, or better fit, in another field.⁹ [18]

2.3 Cultural adaptation

When translating scholarly prose into another language, to avoid misunderstandings, it is vital to consider existing discourse in the target region with its particular linguistic conventions, preferences, aversions, and taboos. In the US and UK, "symbolic interactionism" is the standard name of one of the four major contemporary theoretical paradigms (next to positivism, critical theory, and postmodernism/poststructuralism) that are currently taught in most sociology graduate and undergraduate classrooms.¹⁰ Many times, the entire domain of what Germans broadly call "interpretive" theory and research is simply referred to as "interactionism" in the US and UK, often even without the additional qualifier "symbolic" (VOM LEHN, RUIZ-JUNCO & GIBSON, 2021)¹¹. Even though this use may be rather fuzzy given that, strictly speaking, "symbolic interactionism" is a fairly specific micro-level sociological theory (BLUMER, 1969; BREKHUS, DeGLOMA & FORCE, 2022; REYNOLDS & HERMAN-KINNEY, 2003), it does

9 Admittedly, there lies an inert conservatism, and perhaps ethnocentrism, in Anglo-American discourse behind the lack of interest in asking unfamiliar questions and expanding one's own vocabulary. It seems that, to gain traction, new ideas and concepts must carefully balance novelty with connectivity and be firmly embedded in familiar terminology.

10 Newer theories that do not clearly fit into any of the four paradigms, such as perhaps *practice theory* (RECKWITZ, 2002; SCHATZKI, KNORR-CETINA & VAN SAVIGNY, 2000; SCHMIDT, 2012) or *new materialism* (KISSMANN & VAN LOON, 2019; SCHMIDT 2019), may be discussed in some advanced theory courses at the undergraduate or graduate level, however, they are not (yet) considered to be part of the classic canon. In KUSENBACH's sociology department located at a public research university, both graduate and undergraduate theory coursework is currently built around the four mentioned schools.

11 In "The Routledge International Handbook of Interactionism," VOM LEHN et al. (2021) have deliberately dropped the qualifier "symbolic" to indicate that their handbook encompasses the larger "interactionist family" (DINGWALL, DeGLOMA & NEWMHR, 2012, p.4).

not change the fact that "interactionism" is commonly used as a universal label for all interpretive work by both insiders and outsiders alike (ATKINSON & HOUSLEY, 2003; MAINES, 2001). [19]

When searching for a term that allows one to stretch "social action" beyond the boundaries of language and communication while still emphasizing relational and intersubjective aspects of social life, "interaction" appears to fit the bill perfectly. To native English ears, "interaction" is a much broader term compared with "communication": It easily covers both vocal and non-vocal communication and extends to embodied, cross-species, subject-object exchanges and relations. Indeed, "interaction" can even be used without any reference to humans, in the sense of a mutual influence or flow between things across time and space. Therefore, for historical, cultural, and linguistic reasons, many anglophone scholars will think of the concept of "interaction" when they come across CoCo's broad definition of "communication," and they may wonder why this widely applicable and accepted term has not been used. Moreover, they might assume that a theory that avoids referencing "interaction" in name and content does not *want* to be associated with "interactionism," meaning "interpretive" sociological or social theory more generally. In short, based on the contours of their familiar theoretical landscape, it remains unclear to many of our US and UK colleagues in which larger box a "communicative" theory actually belongs, and/or seeks to belong. [20]

In addition to "communicative," the second part of CoCo's name in English, "constructivism," will also raise eyebrows among UK and US sociologists. Not because it is an incorrect translation of the German word *Konstruktivismus* which, of course, it is not. Rather, it will be met with reluctance because the label, in our view, misrepresents Anglo-American social science discourse. Here, "constructivism" is a term that is primarily associated in various meanings with the cognitive sciences, psychology, education, political theory, philosophy, and art, if it is recognized at all. In sociology—with the exception of colleagues working in the increasingly autonomous field of science and technologies studies (STS)—the labels "constructionism" or "social constructionism" are strongly preferred (HELD, 1995; McNAMEE, 2018).¹² [21]

In fact, in English-speaking sociological discourse, the interpretive paradigm is very firmly associated with "constructionist" social theory or, in short, "constructionism." To us, it seems that in German-speaking sociology (*sozialer Konstruktivismus*) is largely discussed in relationship with Kenneth GERGEN's work (GERGEN & GERGEN, 2009 [2004]; REICHERTZ, 2013; REICHERTZ & ZIELKE, 2008; ZIELKE 2004; ZIELKE & GERGEN, 2007), whereas in English,

¹² A rather curious exception to the rule is Kathy CHARMAZ who used the adjective "constructivist" in connection with "grounded theory" in a number of her own publications—however, she only very rarely uses "constructivism" as a noun, other than pointing out that there are strong links between constructivist grounded theory methodology and social constructivism (CHARMAZ, 2014). Moreover, there are also numerous references to "constructionism" in her publications (e.g., CHARMAZ, 2006). In a 2006 interview with Anthony PUDDEPHATT, CHARMAZ appeared to use both adjectives, constructivist and constructionist, interchangeably. Sadly, CHARMAZ passed away in 2020 and could not be asked to clarify.

"constructionism" is indeed the term used when German sociologists refer to *Konstruktivismus*. Calling it anything else in English-speaking sociological discourse may cause confusion and misunderstandings, besides being *culturally* incorrect. [22]

Do we have any evidence for this claim? A first, and admittedly very crude, indicator is that the English *Wikipedia* entry on [social constructionism](#) prominently refers to BERGER and LUCKMANN, and even includes two references to KNOBLAUCH's publications, whereas the English *Wikipedia* entry for [social constructivism](#) does neither and instead focuses on this theory's use in philosophy and education. Moreover, our US and UK colleagues at our universities who teach sociological theory to undergraduate, MA, and doctoral students and also write about theory, have told us that they never use "constructivist" when describing interpretive or interactionist theory and methodology and instead call it "constructionist" without fail. In some of our colleagues' perception, "constructivism" has a much more "postmodern" ring to it, which may be one of the reasons why Thomas LUCKMANN and Peter BERGER explicitly distanced themselves from this label, as has been reported repeatedly (BERGER, 2011). We are uncertain whether they had any reservations about the term "constructionism." [23]

Importantly, the words "constructivist" and "constructivism" are conspicuously absent from all major works in the interpretive sociological literature originating in the US and UK over the past couple of decades. Consider, for instance, the title of HOLSTEIN and GUBRIUM's seminal, 800-page collection, the "Handbook of Constructionist Research" (2008), or the more recent 2017 collection "Constructionist Controversies: Issues in Social Problems Theory" (MILLER & HOLSTEIN, 2017), among many other possible examples. With the exception of some works by CHARMAZ (see Note 12), we are not aware of any major publication in the interpretive tradition that has used the labels "constructivist" or "constructivism" in its title.¹³ [24]

Lastly, problems with the label "constructivism" have been identified by scholars who are closely familiar or aligned with CoCo theory, such as Thomas EBERLE and Jo REICHERTZ. In the recently published volume "*Social Constructivism as Paradigm?*," edited by PFADENHAUER and KNOBLAUCH (2019), EBERLE (2019) explained how American "social constructionism," rather than "constructivism," came to be the English name for BERGER and LUCKMANN's social theory. In his view, this happened because the latter label was already occupied by existing variations of American "constructivist" theories with which followers of BERGER and LUCKMANN's approach did not wish to be associated. EBERLE noted that in Germany, the German word for "constructionism" did not stick "because the literal translation into German sounds awkward" (2019, p.143). He further explained:

¹³ Here, it is again worthwhile to mention the exception of STS where the term "constructivism" has been used in the past, however, less so in present discussions (BIJKER, HUGHES & PINCH, 1987; KNORR-CETINA, 1981).

"In English and the Anglo-Saxon world, however, 'social constructivism' has a much broader meaning and covers a great variety of approaches and endeavors. [...] The term 'social constructionism' would actually be the *more adequate* label as it was coined with explicit reference to Berger and Luckmann's approach. [...] I therefore have my sincere doubts if the designation 'social constructivism' can be restricted to Berger and Luckmann's approach anytime beyond the German-speaking countries" (p.148; emphasis ours). [25]

Jo REICHERTZ (2013), in a German volume on CoCo edited by KELLER et al. (2013), also commented on issues of naming and translation. Despite making a good effort, he was doubtful that a clear substantive distinction between constructivism and constructionism could be drawn, implying that it rather appears to be a national preference. He listed a number of German speaking scholars who prefer to call themselves "constructivists" and contrasts them with English speaking, mostly American, sociologists and social psychologists who explicitly describe themselves as "constructionists" (REICHERTZ, 2013, p.61). [26]

In sum, based on our personal experience and the evidence we have found, we argue that there is no active use of "constructivism" in contemporary UK and US sociological theory—again, with the exception of one subarea, STS which, by now, has grown into an interdisciplinary field. Consequently, insisting on this label is likely to generate confusion, resistance and, perhaps worst, disinterest among sociological colleagues in the Anglo-American geographic and cultural region. [27]

2.4 Visibility

Lastly, in order for a new theory to be noticed in English-speaking sociology, it must become visible within the central marketplaces where contemporary theories compete, where critics and sceptics can be convinced, and where new followers or converts can be attracted. These international marketplaces are mainly found in the highly rated theoretical journals in the discipline (perhaps with *Sociological Theory* at the top), in the "theory" sections of English-speaking sociological organizations, and on "theory" panels held at national and international conferences.¹⁴ [28]

One must remember that pure theorizing is not as popular as a specialty research focus in English-speaking sociology as it is in the German-speaking academy.¹⁵ Arguably to its detriment, UK and American theory discourse often remains somewhat isolated and inward facing rather than reaching a broader audience.

14 We note that Hubert KNOBLAUCH is an advisory board member of the [ESA \(European Sociological Association\)](#) Research Network on Social Theory, currently coordinated by two scholars from Denmark and Austria.

15 In our perception, by and large, "pure theorizing" is rarely undertaken, and if done at all, remains of concern to only a small circle of scholars. We recognize that there are, of course, exceptions like Anthony GIDDENS who produced important theoretical work in the 1970s and 1980s. Later though, he tried to make his sociological thinking relevant to the politics of "The Third Way" (GIDDENS, 1998). In their discussion of German-language sociology, HOLLSTEIN, GRESHOFF, SCHIMANK and WEISS (2020, p.2) (stereotypically) mentioned the distinctive interest of German-speaking sociologists in "philosophically informed theory, methodology, and epistemology," in contrast to the Anglo-Saxon preference for data-driven approaches.

"Pure" theorizing is sometimes viewed as a privileged pastime for elderly full professors who are under no pressure to publish or get grants, and who may have become too weary to conduct research. No responsible US or UK professor of sociology would allow their Ph.D. students to "theorize" as a main research activity. [29]

These few remarks may suffice to indicate that the existing theory landscape and markets in the US and UK are difficult terrains to understand and navigate for foreign language colleagues who primarily write for their own national audiences. Participation and acceptance in anglophone theory circles require costly cultural investments to properly contextualize and deploy one's work.¹⁶ [30]

Even though it can be difficult, and might also be considered unfair, it is essential that outside promoters of new theories embed their innovative ideas within the ongoing debates and interests of their intended audiences, rather than those relevant to scholars in their own country or another linguistic region. To put it more clearly, arguments aiming to show affinities to or deflect objections by proponents of, for instance, Niklas LUHMANN's systems theory or German-specific variants of rational choice theory are entirely wasted on Anglo-American audiences, meaning they are destined to confuse rather than impress, nor do they help with clarifying anything. The more non-English references, and even English-language references by scholars working in other countries a paper in an Anglo-American journal has, the less interesting it will look to US and UK scholars. Sadly, this is clearly a case of hegemonic imperialism and may be indicative of an increasingly neoliberal publishing landscape—however, our comment aims to highlight some of the underestimated challenges that translating one's work presents, and to remind colleagues that social, cultural, and political contexts of reception must be taken into account.¹⁷ [31]

To date, communicative constructivists have not yet reached the inner circles of theory production and debate in Anglo-American sociology, neither in terms of entering its primary marketplaces, nor in terms of deeply engaging with contemporary major theories or leading scholars in these regions. While the overall productivity and the degree of co-authoring and collaboration within the growing cluster of communicative constructivists is truly impressive, their collective scholarly activities have not substantially transcended German-speaking sociology, even though some works have been published in, or

16 Add to this that, compared with German-speaking academic culture, scholars and universities in the US and UK focus more on journal articles and are much less interested in books, whether edited volumes or monographs, especially if authors' names or presses sound unfamiliar. Even books by respected international publishers, such as Routledge, are sparingly absorbed because they are usually too expensive for any private person to afford. The Anglo-American academy has much more of a peer-reviewed article culture, even for theoretical works, which might further complicate and slow the reception of innovative theory proposals originating in other countries and cultural contexts.

17 Another point that, for reasons of space, we can only touch on in a footnote is the debate about alternative publication outlets and open access. While these discussions also happen in the UK and US, there are certain "flagship" journals of the [American Sociological Association](#) and the [British Sociological Association](#) where theoretical analyses are being published and read. Publications outside of this group of journals, thus far, rarely gain the same influence as articles published within it.

translated into, English. Current CoCo scholarship and debate primarily unfolds within a long-standing circle of German-speaking colleagues of whom, unfortunately, very few have name recognition in US or UK sociology. [32]

In sum, when native English-speaking sociologists hear "communicative constructivism" or happen to come across works published in this tradition, they are typically puzzled by the name of this approach, as well as by its unfamiliar ideas and questions about "communication," which may prevent many colleagues from engaging with it more deeply. While "communicative" is likely perceived as an awkward and discipline-far term, it is arguably the—culturally speaking—incorrect label of "constructivism" that may contribute the most to our colleague's apprehension. Further, when anglophone readers do engage more deeply with CoCo theory and scholarship, they may not recognize the institutional and theoretical landscapes in which this approach is emplaced in many of these works; to some, it may just look too "foreign" to be of much relevance or interest. Many CoCo works lack familiar discursive signposts or landmarks that will give an Anglo-American audience a sense of orientation and direction, and which build on top of what readers already know and value, in guiding their curiosity, imagination, and acceptance. [33]

3. CoCo's Methodological Challenges and Potentials

Despite these issues, we believe that CoCo's current lack of perception and application in English-speaking sociological discourse is unfortunate. Translation concerns and other problems aside, there is no doubt that the CoCo approach offers valuable ideas and impulses that have the potential to enrich Anglo-American sociological theory and methodology in significant ways. In what follows, we move away from a discussion of CoCo's larger theoretical and conceptual aims and instead turn to some of its methodological positions and instruments. [34]

As stated above, CoCo's theoretical program is rooted and applied in many fine examples of empirical research. Most often, these are projects related to processes, patterns, and domains of communication, often involving technology, ranging from the micro-levels of everyday interaction to collective, organizational, and institutional forms of communication at meso-levels (see, for instance, KELLER et al., 2013). In these studies, employed data collection and analytic methods range from participant observation to qualitative interviews, from analysis of situational interaction to content and discourse analysis of (social) media, and of other observational, textual, and/or visual data. [35]

Over the past twenty or so years, communicative constructivists have published various reflections on particular research methods that harmonize with CoCo's theoretical principles, most prominently among them the techniques of *videography* (KNOBLAUCH & SCHNETTLER, 2012; KNOBLAUCH, TUMA & SCHNETTLER, 2014; MEIER ZU VERL & TUMA, 2021; TUMA, 2021) and *focused ethnography* (KNOBLAUCH, 2005; KNOBLAUCH & SCHNETTLER, 2012; VOM LEHN, 2014a). Both videography and focused ethnography have

affinities with the two interactionist perspectives we discuss below, namely ethnomethodological interaction analysis and ethnography. On the one hand, videography and focused ethnography have emerged in the wake of the long tradition of (German) sociology that draws on, and is shaped by, Alfred SCHÜTZ's (1967) phenomenological orientation to sociological questions, an orientation that has significantly influenced ethnomethodology (HERITAGE, 1984; VOM LEHN, 2014b) and some developments in ethnography (KATZ & CSORDAS, 2003; KUSENBACH, 2003; MASO, 2001; VOM LEHN et al., 2021). On the other hand, like ethnomethodological analyses of interaction (HEATH, HINDMARSH & LUFF, 2010), the two methodologies rely on (video-)recordings as principal data and use techniques that, over the past six decades, have emerged in ethnomethodology to analyze the sequential organization of action. [36]

In the following, we pursue the elective affinities and differences between methodologies created and used by representatives of CoCo, ethnomethodology, and ethnography. The aim of this discussion is to gauge potential contributions of CoCo to the fields of ethnomethodology and ethnography, namely two major sociological perspectives we are familiar with, as well as regularly use and reflect on in our own research practice. [37]

3.1 CoCo and ethnomethodology

Ethnomethodology¹⁸ as conceived by GARFINKEL (1967) and SACKS (1992) was developed as a "sociological attitude" (GARFINKEL, 1962, 2006 [1948]) that radically departed from functionalist sociology, symbolic interactionism, and other interpretive approaches of the time. Its historic and contemporary radicality lies in two propositions: first, the domain ethnomethodologists study is comprised of "methods" used by people whose activities are being examined, and second, it is possible to identify and describe these "methods" in a systematic way. Ethnomethodologists, therefore, conduct a "methodogenesis" (GARFINKEL & WIEDER, 1992, p.181) through which they aim to reveal the orderliness of domains that is inherent to these domains prior to their studies. They require descriptions of the orderliness of their domains of study to be uniquely adequate (GARFINKEL & WIEDER, 1992; s. also MORRISS, 2019; ROOKE & ROOKE, 2015), i.e., to capture activities as they are orderly produced by the participants themselves. In other words, they remove themselves from and collapse the distinction between "first-order constructs" and "second-order constructs" underpinning SCHÜTZIAN phenomenology (SCHÜTZ & LUCKMANN, 1985) and therewith the new sociology of knowledge that encompasses CoCo (KELLER et al., 2013; KNOBLAUCH, 2019a [2016]). [38]

In this section, we discuss how communicative constructivists' conception of sociological descriptions as "second-order constructs" and their selective adoption of analytic orientations fundamental to ethnomethodology lead to a de-radicalization of the sociological attitude developed by GARFINKEL (1967) and SACKS (1992). We examine CoCo's de-radicalization of ethnomethodology by

¹⁸ For the reception of ethnomethodology in German-speaking sociology, see BERGMANN, MEYER, SALOMON and KRÄMER (2019) and WOLFF and SALOMON (2019).

focusing on some of ethnomethodology's key principles: We first explore communicative constructivists' use of the sequential organization of action; second, we differentiate the notion of context used within CoCo from that used by ethnomethodologists; and, third, we highlight how communicative constructivists' understanding of language and meaning is based on their rejection of the ethnomethodological orientation to indexicality. [39]

First, we turn to CoCo's orientation to ethnomethodology's concept of "sequence." Prior to explicitly using the term "communicative constructivism" to describe the theoretical and methodological perspective he was developing, KNOBLAUCH cooperated with ethnomethodologists like Christian HEATH who specializes in fine-grained inspections of video-recorded fragments of interaction to reveal, for example, the social organization of work (HEATH, KNOBLAUCH & LUFF, 2000; KNOBLAUCH & HEATH, 1999) and the interactional production of aesthetic experiences (VOM LEHN, HEATH & KNOBLAUCH, 2001). Maybe KNOBLAUCH's (2019a [2016], 2022) interest in "sequentiality"¹⁹ has been heightened by these cooperations and his reading of ethnomethodological and conversation analytic research (SACKS, 1992: SACKS, SCHEGLOFF & JEFFERSON, 1974), as well as by conversations he might have had while spending time in California in the 1990s (SOEFFNER, 2019). Regardless of its origin, the idea that actions are organized in a "sequential" fashion underpins KNOBLAUCH's concepts of "sociality" and "society" in the CoCo program when he (2019a [2016], p.16), for example, argued that "society is referred to by the communicative forms, structures, and institutions that come about from the temporal and spatial concatenation of communicative actions in sequences." [40]

For KNOBLAUCH (2019a [2016]), "sequence" epitomizes how reality is constructed, one communicative action after another. It brings to the fore that communicative action has temporal qualities. CoCo scholars draw on the concept of "sequence" from ethnomethodology where it is considered the organizing principle of action. Ethnomethodological analyses reveal how the meaning of an action is produced through each next action that, at the same time, provides the framework for further actions. Ethnomethodologists collapse the distinction of first- and second-order constructions and argue that actors themselves orient to the sequential organization of action when they analyze each other's actions. In contrast, communicative constructivists align with SCHÜTZ (1967) in suggesting that the distinction of first- and second-order constructs cannot be relinquished. In their analyses, they use "sequence" as a social-scientific technology to examine the organization of action and produce social-scientific descriptions, for example of showing and telling in PowerPoint presentations (KNOBLAUCH, 2007, 2013). Their analysis demonstrates, on the one hand, that such presentations are a particular "communicative genre" (GÜNTNER & KNOBLAUCH, 1995, p.1) and, on the other hand, that they are examples par excellence of the triadic relationship between two participants and "the body, the finger, or another objectivation" (KNOBLAUCH, 2019a [2016], p.79). They, however, have rarely

19 For an interesting discussion of the emergence of the concept of "sequence" in ethnomethodology see COATES (2022). For a comparison of the different ways in which sociologists use the terms "sequence" and "sequentiality" see KNOBLAUCH et al. (2014).

revealed how objectivations become meaningful in, and through, interaction. KNOBLAUCH hinted at the interactional constitution of meaning, for example of a "pointing finger, that is not an object of its own, but consists only in the reciprocity of acting and its perception" (p.80). In his study of PowerPoint presentations (KNOBLAUCH, 2007, 2012a), however, this reciprocity of acting and its perception was of only peripheral importance because audience members orient to the presenter's actions only through minimal actions, such as movements of the head. [41]

Similarly, in studies like TUMA's (2016) investigation of how professionals such as police(wo)men, sport analysts, and market researchers, inspect video-recordings in social interaction, the interactional production of meaning is of only peripheral interest. Instead, TUMA elaborated different techniques through which professionals analyze videos. He described video-analysis as a "family of communicative genres" (p.304) and investigated how different professionals, police(wo)men, sports analysts, and market researchers, analyze videos for their own practical purposes. He was interested in how professionals embed different genres of video-analysis as a professional practice within particular organizational and societal contexts. He thus considered video-recordings as "objectivations" that participants orient to in different ways while pursuing their work. In his analysis, however, he showed little concern with the detailed organization of the interactional organization of actions through which objectivations are made and become relevant for participants. Therefore, he often focused on the *content* of talk rather than its production and design, and talked about gestures accompanying talk without revealing in detail how gestures are interwoven with talk, or how both are embedded within a continually emerging interactional context. Thus, in many of their analyses, CoCo scholars are interested in interaction at a more general level in comparison to ethnomethodologists who, in most of their studies, examine the interactional constitution of meaning in particular moments. [42]

Ethnomethodologists unpack the sequential organization of actions with the goal to reveal how, in concrete moments, participants produce the "architecture of intersubjectivity" (HERITAGE, 1984, pp.254-260). Through their analyses they demonstrate how the "reciprocity of perspectives" (SCHÜTZ, 1967, p.315) is practically and interactionally accomplished. For example, they have examined the situated arising of pointing gestures in interaction (GOODWIN, 2000). They show how participants produce and design gestures in orientation to co-participants' ongoing actions and shifts in orientation to features of the referenced object (GOODWIN & SALOMON, 2019; HINDMARSH & HEATH, 2000a, 2000b). Thus, they explicate how the participants themselves analyze each other's actions and how they use their analyses of others' actions when producing and designing their own. Ethnomethodological interaction analyses, therefore, are very detailed which is reflected in their meticulous transcription of talk, bodily, and material actions. For the most part, CoCo scholars rarely investigate the organization of actions in such detail. Although, for example, they explore pointing and referencing, they rarely examine the shape gestures take, and how

material and visual objects are embedded within, and are animated through, such gestures in interaction with others. [43]

Second, we turn to the way in which communicative constructivists and ethnomethodologists treat "context" in their analyses. The ethnomethodological interaction analysis is concerned with the practical achievement of orderliness (VOM LEHN, 2014b, 2019). It pursues the questions of "Why this action now?," and "Why has this action been designed in this particular way?," to reveal the organization of actions produced in concrete circumstances. Ethnomethodologists attend to these questions from within the situation itself as they examine the data to reveal how the participants themselves analyze and orient to each other's actions. They consider the participants quasi as sociologists who, moment-by-moment, analyze the situation and fit their actions within it. The ethnomethodological interaction analysis, therefore, only takes into consideration what the participants observably and intelligibly make relevant for each other in the situation. [44]

As communicative constructivists, KNOBLAUCH et al. (2014) situated videography in sociological ethnography (KNOBLAUCH & SCHNETTLER, 2012) while stating that they draw on ethnomethodology and conversation analysis—in particular, on ethnomethodological interaction analysis—to examine the sequential organization of action (HEATH et al., 2010; VOM LEHN, 2018). Like those scholars who identify as ethnomethodologists, scholars using videography highlight the importance of *contextual knowledge* for the detailed analysis of social situations, as well as for the production of recordings of social situations themselves. They attribute their reliance on contextual knowledge for the analysis of situations to the conception of "video interaction analysis" as a "hermeneutic activity" (KNOBLAUCH & SCHNETTLER, 2012, p.335) and use "contextual knowledge" (ibid.) to make sense of the recorded social situations. Thus, while these scholars use methods derived from ethnomethodology and ethnomethodological conversation analysis for the examination of the recorded data, they systematically introduce knowledge from "outside" the specific situation under study into the analysis of the same situation. For example, TUMA (2016), in his investigation of video-analysis undertaken by various professions, often referred to specific knowledge participants bring to bear in their examination of video-recordings. However, in his analysis of the data, he did not show when and how exactly such knowledge becomes relevant for the participants. [45]

Therefore, the notion of context that communicative constructivists use considerably differs from how ethnomethodologists conceive context, as well as the relationship between context and action. For ethnomethodologists, context influences the production and design of actions, while at the same time being reshaped and renewed by actions (HERITAGE, 1984, p.242). Ethnomethodologists describe this relationship between context and action as *reflexive*. Because they orient to context as an inherent element of action, ethnomethodologists do not include extrinsic knowledge in their analysis, for example, knowledge about people and the situation under scrutiny gathered elsewhere. Instead, in their analysis they demonstrate how participants

themselves orient to extra-situational events. Whilst videographers follow ethnomethodologists in many other ways, they divert from the ethnomethodological principle of including only intra-situational events in the analysis. For example, by drawing on hermeneutics, communicative constructivists using videography argue that, as members of the culture under investigation, they have member knowledge which they can bring into the analysis (KNOBLAUCH & TUMA, 2011). Moreover, as we discuss in the next section, they use "ethnographic knowledge" gained through fieldwork to enrich the analysis (TUMA, 2016, 2021). [46]

Third, scholars in CoCo employ the sequential analysis of action to reveal the temporal organization, i.e., how one action follows on the heel of another, while using hermeneutics and related approaches to understand the meaning of situated action. Thereby, they differentiate themselves from ethnomethodologists in that they reject the notion of "indexicality" which is key to all ethnomethodological analyses. This becomes particularly obvious in CoCo's notion of "language" that they draw from BERGER and LUCKMANN (1991 [1966]), as well as from SCHÜTZ and LUCKMANN (1985) who conceived it as a "social-historical a priori." They have adopted a notion of language that LOEHNHOFF (2018, p.106) conceptualized as "an objectification of subjective experience and as sediments of social knowledge which unburdens actants," for example, from having to typify or categorize the world themselves. Language, here, is a tool that people can use to translate between subjective and objective reality; it is "detached from the indexicality of the 'here and now'" (p.107). In this view, therefore, the meaning of language remains stable across contexts, and is independent from the actions through which contexts are momentarily produced (KNOBLAUCH & STEETS, 2020). [47]

By taking this stance, CoCo finds itself in noticeable opposition to ethnomethodology's principle that action and meaning *always* are indexical. Ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts, accordingly, do not point to stable features of language but are instead concerned with analyzing *language in action*. The ethnomethodological analysis of interaction, therefore, remains focused on revealing how social order arises moment-by-moment through the organization of indexical actions (HEATH et al., 2010; VOM LEHN, 2018). [48]

In sum, ethnomethodology and conversation analysis are of great importance for the development of CoCo theory and methodology. However, communicative constructivists divert from their principles in that they de-radicalize them: *First*, they disregard ethnomethodology's *unique adequacy* requirement by preserving the Schützian distinction between "first-order constructs" and "second-order constructs." Hence, their social scientific descriptions may not coincide with actors' experiences of the social world. *Second*, their interests appear to lie more in elaborating on the communicative construction of social forms, or communicative genres, than in dissecting the methods by which participants achieve intersubjectivity in interaction. *Third*, CoCo scholars reject ethnomethodology's notion of *indexicality* in relation to meaning. Instead, they

consider language as a tool to translate between subjective experience and objective reality. [49]

Nonetheless, despite these differences between CoCo's and ethnomethodology's sociological attitudes and methodologies, communicative constructivists continue to actively engage in discussions and cooperate with ethnomethodologists, in particular with those undertaking ethnomethodological studies of interaction in work settings. In addition to collaborative investigations, both discuss and explore differences and commonalities in their research regarding the interactional production of meaning. [50]

3.2 CoCo and ethnography

As noted, videography, CoCo's unique methodological approach to analyzing situated communication, is coupled with a parallel *ethnographic* examination of social contexts. KNOBLAUCH and SCHNETTLER (2012, p.343) stated that "in our approach to video-analysis, the process of data collection—or, more precisely, the generation of video data—is firmly embedded in more or less extended 'focused' ethnography." Notwithstanding, whereas KNOBLAUCH (2019a [2016]), in his seminal monograph, devoted an entire chapter to the problems of "time and sequentiality" in framing and analyzing communication, beyond some comments on embodiment, space, and co-presence, a deeper discussion of key principles and implications of the ethnographic method is not included here.²⁰ [51]

Already in the early 2000s, KNOBLAUCH (2001, 2002, 2005) proposed "focused ethnography" as an innovative, systematic method suitable for the study of situated communication and embedded it within a larger tradition of ethnographic research.²¹ In these papers and essays, we find many interesting observations about ethnography as a research strategy in general, as well as its more "focused" variant. In other words, strictly speaking, focused ethnography was developed before the theoretical model of CoCo was fully conceived and circulated. Nonetheless, in their more recent methodological publications on video analysis and videography, KNOBLAUCH and his colleagues (KNOBLAUCH, 2011; 2012a; KNOBLAUCH & SCHNETTLER, 2012; KNOBLAUCH & TUMA, 2011; KNOBLAUCH et al., 2014; MEIER ZU VERL & TUMA, 2021; TUMA, 2021) regularly mentioned and cited prior publications on focused ethnography. In

20 KNOBLAUCH has on occasion written about ethnography in general (e.g., KNOBLAUCH & VOLLMER, 2022) without making explicit links to CoCo.

21 With over 1,300 citations, KNOBLAUCH's (2005) English-language article on focused ethnography has been broadly perceived and referenced. For instance, VOM LEHN (2019) recently argued that focused ethnography is one of several "phenomenological" research methods that promise to bring new insights to the study of management and organizations, as those fields have increasingly become concerned with the coordination of material and bodily action with talk (CRUZ & HIGGINBOTTOM, 2013; LLEWELLYN & HINDMARSH, 2010; KNOBLAUCH, 2004). We also note that KNOBLAUCH (2001, 2005) was not the only one who has proposed a shorter, intensified version of more traditional fieldwork as a specialty ethnographic method. For instance, PINK and MORGAN's (2013) "Short Term Ethnography" has been discussed and adopted by numerous social science researchers. Due to space limitations, a discussion of this particular and other similar strategies cannot be included in this paper.

addition, they occasionally described it as a parallel and closely related methodological strategy in some detail.²² In the following, we therefore draw on KNOBLAUCH's positions regarding focused ethnography in relation to ethnography more broadly that occur in methodological works published both before and after CoCo's larger program was officially launched. [52]

Again, KNOBLAUCH has consistently and explicitly positioned focused ethnography as an "ethnographic" research strategy, but is it really an ethnographic technique? The answer to this question can be both "no" and "yes," depending on which regional and cultural definition of ethnography one subscribes to. If one shares the belief, as many social science researchers in the German-speaking region do, that "ethnography" (only) refers to the method of a scholarly expert's deep immersion into a social field, then, clearly, focused ethnographers' activities of video recording largely static, indoor events, followed by transcribing and doing what is often called "sequential analysis," is *not* an ethnographic method. By definition, electronic recordings are not human observations, transcripts are not fieldnotes, and "sequential" analysis is not the same as "thematic" or content analysis, meaning the dominant strategies of analyzing qualitative as well as including ethnographic data (GLESNE, 2015). Calling focused ethnography "ethnographic" in this particular sense may not appear justified. We believe that this regional, narrow, understanding of ethnography may be one of the reasons why focused ethnography has elicited some critical reactions by colleagues in the German-speaking world (BREIDENSTEIN & HIRSCHAUER, 2001; see KNOBLAUCH, 2002 in response). [53]

However, a second, considerably broader, definition of "ethnography" is regularly invoked by KNOBLAUCH and his colleagues. In Anglo-American sociology, ethnography occasionally refers to the specific method of human participant observation. However, it typically indicates a much broader research and analytic practice. As a rule of thumb, in the US and UK, research can be called "ethnographic" in the interpretive or interactionist tradition when it satisfies two stipulations. First, researchers must be immersed in a "naturally" occurring field setting, and second, the analysis of the assembled data sets must aim at reconstructing patterns of meaning embedded in the perceptions, experiences, and interactions of local "members" (EMERSON, 2001; EMERSON, FRETZ & SHAW, 2011); in other words, one must follow a "grounded" analytic approach (CHARMAZ, 2006). In this broader view, qualitative interviews, for instance, can easily be incorporated into an ethnographic study, as long as they are contextualized within a "natural" social setting and reference field-based social meanings. In this sense, what renders data sets and research ethnographic is not a particular format of data or a particular procedure used to gather or examine materials but rather lies in the context-sensitive, locally anchored nature of a study's questions, analyses, and findings. In this sense, the analysis of "natural"

22 This is especially the case in KNOBLAUCH's (2012b) chapter "Focused Ethnography and Video Analysis" and in KNOBLAUCH and SCHNETTLER's (2012) article "Videography: Analysing Video Data as a 'Focused' Ethnographic and Hermeneutical Exercise." Both papers have been cited well over 200 times.

sequences of conversations and embodied interactions, as proposed by focused ethnography, is a fitting and potentially very promising addition to the multi-faceted ethnographic toolkit.²³ [54]

Several issues remain to be discussed. First, when applying the broader, Anglo-American definition of ethnography, the question cannot be whether focused ethnography could, or indeed should, replace the more general strategy of "traditional" ethnography, or whether it is better, or somehow more accurate, than the original approach. If both are indeed ethnographic, this debate seems unproductive. KNOBLAUCH may have inadvertently contributed to a false dichotomy, and even rivalry, when contrasting "focused" ethnography with a rather simplified and oddly static version of "conventional" ethnography at large. He has repeatedly stated that "we should note that videography differs from most conventional ethnography in a third sense; that of its scope or, to be more exact, focus" (2012b, p.72). Yet, as BREIDENSTEIN and HIRSCHAUER (2001) have pointed out, all ethnographic research undergoes various cycles of focusing (as well as broadening) meaning, it entails temporary or final stages of paying intensive attention to very specific actions and events within social fields. The characteristic of focus is not a distinguishing feature of focused ethnography, but rather a matter of process and timing in all ethnographic research. We believe that, to its detriment, the uniqueness of focused ethnography's concern with "specific actions, interactions, and social situations," as well as its supposedly unique affinity with GOFFMAN's "interaction order" (KNOBLAUCH & SCHNETTLER, 2012), may have been overstated in the past. [55]

Second, despite KNOBLAUCH's frequent assurances regarding the "grounded" nature of focused ethnography, it is unclear whether the demonstrated process of "sequential analysis" indeed aims at interactive processes of meaning-making and interpretation within a specific field rather than at more universal, trans-situational mechanisms of (non)verbal communication, as discussed in the previous section—which may push focused ethnography beyond the commonly agreed upon boundaries of the ethnographic methodological toolkit. [56]

It is likewise confusing when, in his earlier paper, KNOBLAUCH (2005) contrasted "subjective understanding" as the major goal of conventional ethnography with "conservation" as the major goal of focused ethnography, since storing data cannot be an alternative to understanding—it can only postpone and relocate understanding. To be clear: All ethnographic work involves human understanding, and it is always highly "subjective." In all ethnography, focused or otherwise, there is no escape from subjectivity, nor from a mandate to deeply reflect on it. [57]

In other words, it is counterproductive for communicative constructivists to point out that focused ethnography is "less dependent on subjective perspectives" and

²³ To date, we are not aware of many ethnographic studies in the US or UK that have indeed incorporated a "focused" analysis of recorded interactions, as suggested by communicative constructivists (KNOBLAUCH&SCHNETTLER, 2015; PINK, MORGAN &DAINTY, 2014; VOM LEHN, 2014a). Exceptions can be found in the technical sciences (HUGHES, KING, RODDEN & ANDERSEN, 1995).

might present a solution to the "uncurable subjectivity" of ethnography at large (p.23). Statements such as this one will confuse ethnographers because it is exactly their subjectivity, filtered through a deep and constant reflection of one's idiosyncratic and embodied positionality (e.g., COFFEY, 1999), that cements the *strength* of the ethnographic approach. Ethnographers of all convictions will contest the idea of needing a "cure" for their subjectivity. This early characterization distracts from the contributions focused ethnography aims to, and hopefully will, make to the larger tradition of sociological fieldwork. Fortunately, in more recent descriptions of focused ethnography, "subjectivity" was reinstated as a key ingredient of "any reflexive methodology that accounts for what is done in empirical work" (KNOBLAUCH & SCHNETTLER, 2012, p.353). [58]

Indeed, the need to deeply reflect on ethnographic subjectivity begins long before focused ethnographers analyze a transcript, switch on a camera, or even enter a field site. Debates on sexism, racism, colonialism, transphobia, ableism, and other matters that have been ongoing in Anglo-American society and academic discourses have compelled contemporary ethnographers to deeply consider, on personal and structural levels, how their fields are socially produced, who controls access and other essential resources, who is absent, who is deemed competent and who is not, who actually participates and who does not, and so on. Focused ethnographers and videographers operating within CoCo's program are not relieved from acknowledging and reflecting on their own subjectivity through analytic attention to specific sequences or genres of communication, or by producing technical recordings and transcripts instead of fieldnotes. They, too, must examine intensively who they are and how they are perceived in the field; who and what is considered worth recording and what is not; what is actually on the (video)tape and what is not; and so forth. Bringing technical equipment into, and making recordings in, a field is never neutral: This step already entails a particular positionality that must be more deeply and critically examined from social, cultural, political, and ethical points of view in the future.²⁴ [59]

In today's globally intertwined and pluralized societies, characterized by widening structural, social, and cultural inequalities, we must be extra cautious when making assumptions about mutually shared knowledge, beliefs, and experiences with field members. Regardless of the exact setting and environment of their fieldwork, contemporary ethnographers may no longer get away with a "very specific" understanding of members' meaning that solely focuses on limited strands of interaction, or the use of technology, as suggested by KNOBLAUCH (2012b, p.79): "This [videographic research] does not mean that one needs to reconstruct the stock of cultural knowledge (i.e., members' knowledge) necessary to act in the domain as a whole." [60]

24 This may also require a deeper reflection in theoretical perspective. When teaching ethnomethodology to UCLA graduate students in the 1990s, the late Harold GARFINKEL was extremely skeptical regarding the analytic value of making recordings of any kind, pointing out time and again to students that what is essential to grasp about human interaction *cannot* be captured by machines and is never "on the tape." Rather, what ethnomethodologists are after is rooted in embodied, highly subjective, somatic knowledge that is impossible to be fixated through technology (KUSENBACH, personal experience).

Ethnographic reflexivity is especially important when researchers personally occupy privileged statuses regarding citizenship, race/ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, class, health, and so on. In other words, while data collection strategies and analytic lenses in focused ethnography may indeed be quite specific and concentrated, it does not follow that a critical accounting of ethnographic positionality can be curtailed or omitted. To date, the issue of positionality in fieldwork has not been sufficiently examined in methodological writings on focused ethnography and videography, and a reflexive discussion is frequently missing from CoCo's empirical studies, rendering them less ethnographic than is typical overall. [61]

Moving forward, to increase focused ethnography's appeal to colleagues, it will be important to rectify the above-mentioned issues, as well as offer a more complete accounting of the *unique* strengths and weaknesses of focused ethnography as an innovative addition to the ethnographic toolkit. Numerous practical, technical, financial, cultural, and/or ethical obstacles can be imagined that might severely curtail the use of focused ethnography's particular data collection and analytic methods. For instance, focused ethnography may only have limited appeal to ethnographers examining migration, war, deviance, crime, poverty, social movements, as well as other significant topics. Conversely, it appears that focused ethnography is excellently suited for the study of bureaucratic institutions and organizations, especially those in which technology is already part of the action (see, for instance, ÅKERSTRÖM, JACOBSSON, CEDERHOLM & WÄSTERFORS, 2021). Focused ethnography's particular commitment to language and materiality could render it highly interesting for Anglo-American followers of "institutional ethnography," a feminist program for studying institutions that centers on the power of texts and discourse, developed by Canadian sociologist Dorothy SMITH along with several collaborators (SMITH, 2005, 2006; SMITH & TURNER, 2014). [62]

Lastly, focused ethnography's practice of rigorous data analysis via collective "data sessions," likely inspired by colleagues undertaking ethnomethodological studies of interaction (HEATH et al., 2010; SCHWARZE, 2014), is an innovative strategy that could potentially be applied to a broader variety of ethnographic data, beyond the transcripts of video recordings. Building on TUMA's efforts (MEIER ZU VERL & TUMA, 2021; TUMA, 2021), further reflection and examination of the collective analytic process, including its challenges and limitations, will likely be of interest to members of multi-person and multi-sited ethnographic research teams, as long as it remains committed to the reconstruction of contextualized, field-based meanings. To this end, it may become necessary to shift the analytic interest of focused ethnography more clearly toward the "work" that communication actually accomplishes in the embodied, everyday world, and to its site-specific meanings and material outcomes for field members, rather than aiming to deconstruct general patterns and structures of speaking. In other words, we may see a need for focused ethnography to become *more* ethnographic in order to better connect with contemporary practices and debates in international field-based research. As ethnography is becoming more mobile, multi-sited, global, and team oriented

(KUSENBACH & BROWN-SARACINO, 2021), and increasingly attends to virtual settings and social media, there are many new opportunities to assess where, when, and how exactly focused ethnography can enrich ethnographic research in the interactionist tradition. [63]

4. Embedding Communicative Constructivism in Interactionism

Although, in this article, we have raised various points of critique, it was not our intention to discredit or diminish the theory, methods, and scholarship of communicative constructivism that have so forcefully emerged in German-speaking sociology over the past two decades. In fact, we admire the rapid development of CoCo as a new paradigm in German-speaking sociology over the past decade with which an increasing number of academic scholars and students now identify. Yet, in this article we have critically examined some of CoCo's cultural, theoretical, and methodological foundations to better understand the challenges the program faces when it is encountered by our Anglo-American colleagues. The paper was motivated by our interest in CoCo, and by our fellow interactionists' (unfortunate) disregard of the approach. In this section, we briefly summarize the challenges for CoCo's reception in Anglo-American interactionist discourse, both theoretical and methodological, and offer suggestions for how some of these difficulties could be overcome. This might be helpful in opening up a space for reception and engagement—if greater international, and specifically Anglo-American, visibility and application is indeed among CoCo's priorities and goals.²⁵ [64]

4.1 Language and cultural contexts

We believe that one large step toward a more energetic reception of CoCo theory and methodology in the English-speaking world lies in spending more effort on adapting its language, as well as embedding CoCo's theory and empirical research more deliberately within the receiving scholarly contexts. In particular, there is more that can be done to offer inroads to non-German readers which would indicate a greater awareness of their different theoretical, cultural, and linguistic sensibilities. [65]

In the course of this article, we have pointed out that a too literal translation of German sociological terminology into English is hindering the reception of CoCo in Anglo-American sociology. Confronted with the term "communicative constructivism," even interactionist colleagues have difficulty placing the perspective within existing theoretical and methodological debates. In retrospect, perhaps a more mindful translation of the paradigm's name into English could have helped with generating more interest. However, we understand that, by now, the terminology of "communicative constructivism" has been released into sociological debate and that it may no longer be possible to change the name; besides, "CoCo" definitely has a nice ring to it. Nonetheless, it would help US and

²⁵ We leave to better informed colleagues an assessment of whether a more intensive international engagement and exchange with other interpretive and interactionist approaches might benefit CoCo's own theoretical model and research practice.

UK interactionists to better understand, and maybe more easily align, with CoCo scholars' theoretical and methodological program if, in future English publications, proponents strove to describe their concepts and research findings more deliberately in the vocabulary that is currently used in anglophone interactionist sociology. [66]

What are communicative constructivists' exact reasons to use "communication" and "communicative" for social formations which, from our point of view, strongly resemble, and are historically covered by, the terms "interaction" and "interactive"? Ironically, it will be essential for communicative constructivists and their scholarship to avoid identification as "constructivist" in English, given that this label strictly separates them from "constructionist" colleagues and research traditions with which they share a history and many concerns. [67]

To give a couple of specific examples, communicative constructivists working on "discourse" (KELLER, 2018; KELLER, HORNIDGE & SCHÜNEMANN, 2018) could attempt to align the terminology of their theory, methods, and studies with prominent interactionist discussions about narratives in the Anglo-American academic world, for instance the multi-level, narrative constructions of identities and inequalities (LOSEKE, 2007, 2021). To give another example, CoCo's videographic researchers could try to relate their concepts in clearer ways to ongoing ethnomethodological interaction analysis (HEATH et al., 2010; VOM LEHN, 2018), as this involves theoretical as well as methodological considerations. [68]

4.2 Theory and methodology

At first sight, CoCo theory and scholarship share many foundations and concerns with anglophone interactionist sociology. Its grounding in HUSSERL and SCHÜTZ's phenomenology resonates very well with the theoretical underpinnings of interactionist approaches in the UK and US developed by BLUMER, GARFINKEL, and many of their followers in the second and third Chicago School generation (FINE, 1995). Also, a shared interest in theory and research related to "communication" can be found in various strands of interactionism.

Communication was already at the center of George Herbert MEAD's (1967 [1934]; 2002 [1938]) work when he laid the foundation for what Herbert BLUMER (1969) later came to call "symbolic interactionism." Moreover, building on their shared interest in communication, communicative constructivists could link their own studies of the deployment of information and communication technology (TUMA, 2016) in workplaces more visibly to interactionist research of communication technology and digitization (COUCH, 1996; HEATH & LUFF, 2000; HOUSLEY, 2021; LUFF, HINDMARSH & HEATH, 2000; SUCHMAN, GERST & KRÄMER, 2019; VOM LEHN, GIBSON & RUIZ-JUNCO, 2024). Some strides in this direction have been made, yet publications that link CoCo ideas with interactionist sociology are still rather rare (KNOBLAUCH & HEATH, 1999). [69]

Despite shared interests and common reference points, it will be difficult to persuade English-speaking interactionists of CoCo's claims regarding the

primacy of "communicative" action. If all action is described as communicative, the label becomes unhelpful; it simply duplicates what is already expressed by "action" or "social action." To reiterate, Anglo-American sociology as a discipline is fundamentally concerned with the dynamics of social difference and inequality, and not primarily with people communicating with each other. To many Anglo-American sociologists, including many interactionists, the communicative nature of actions is obvious but misses the point. In their view, it sidelines anything that goes beyond discourse, including the consequences and outcomes of communication in the "real" material world where people live and, in time, die. [70]

In the future, communicative constructivists might be well advised to clarify how their conceptual framework and studies help address the ongoing concerns their international sociological colleagues actually have, and to let audiences know what CoCo can and seeks to contribute to answer sociological questions that are important and urgent today—whether about conflict, violence, displacement, inequality, climate change, or a myriad of other grave issues. Many respected colleagues, such as Harald WELZER, Hans-Georg SOEFFNER and Dana GIESECKE (2022), have voiced the concern that sociology, as a discipline mired in abstract theoretical discourse rather than aiming to solve real world problems, has already stalled and lost its purpose. [71]

Going beyond various cultural and theoretical points of critique by fellow interactionists and other colleagues, in other parts of this paper, we pointed to some of the affinities and overlaps between CoCo's signature methods of videography and focused ethnography in relation to Anglo-American ethnomethodology and ethnography. We noted that videographic research as conceived by scholars working within the CoCo framework differs in some important, theoretical and methodological ways from the ethnomethodological analysis of interaction. For example, by conceiving language as a stable and objective foundation of society, communicative constructivists have pushed aside the ethnomethodological principle of the "indexicality" of meaning (GARFINKEL, 1967; HERITAGE, 1984; VOM LEHN, 2014b). [72]

Regarding ethnography, CoCo's proposed method of focused ethnography encompasses similarities and differences, offering both limitations and opportunities. Overall, a more comprehensive accounting of focused ethnography's particular strengths and weaknesses regarding applicable fields and topics of research, and a deeper reflection of ethnographic positionality and subjectivity will likely go a long way in making it more attractive to colleagues—as long as it remains committed to sharing interactionist ethnographers' commitments to field-based contexts and meanings. Focused ethnography's practice of team-based data analysis is a particularly interesting and innovative feature that deserves to be examined in more detail in the future, as this strategy could potentially be harnessed by critical, applied, engaged, and even creative strands of qualitative research practice (GLESNE, 2015). [73]

4.3 Toward new debates

It appears that in their publications, CoCo founders and scholars spend considerable energy on emphasizing philosophical differences between "social constructivism" and "social constructionism"—a discussion that, from our vantage point, has little traction today. Whatever this distinction may have accomplished in the past or may still mean elsewhere, we believe it is no longer relevant in contemporary sociological discourse in North America and the UK. Outside of the interdisciplinary field of STS, no amount of arguing will salvage "constructivism" as a proper name for an approach positioned under the large umbrella of interpretive or interactionist sociology, however defensible this use may have been historically. [74]

Other recent discursive work aims at rescuing CoCo from the (apparently false) impression that it is incompatible with the emerging theoretical frameworks of "critical realism" and "new materialism."²⁶ In our sociological circles, realism and materialism are not (yet) major theoretical paradigms—unless these are new labels for ideas we tend to know and discuss under different names. In symbolic interactionism as well as in ethnomethodology, the subject-object relationship has always been conceived of in terms of reflexive actions that constitute the qualities of objects and their relevance in concrete situations. As an example for this conception of the subject-object relationship in symbolic interactionism, we refer readers to MEAD's (2002 [1938]) discussion of an actor's grasping of a book first seen from the distance, then approaching and reaching for it. For ethnomethodology, we can refer to GARFINKEL's (2002) tutorial exercises designed to put into praxis GURWITSCH's (2010) "Field of Consciousness," as well as to the entire body of workplace studies (LUFF et al., 2000) that revolve around how participants orient to, deploy, and experience objects in interaction with others (MONDADA, 2019; SCHMIDT, 2019).²⁷ Likewise, while lacking the space needed for offering backup, we sense no impending danger of confusing or merging social constructionism with "postmodernism" or "poststructuralism." [75]

As far as we can see, debates within the social constructionist paradigm, as well as external discussions with neighboring perspectives, are currently moving into other directions. For instance, in the interpretive sociology of emotions and beyond, some scholars have noted that there is a tension between "strong" and "weak" versions of social constructionism (LOSEKE & KUSENBACH, 2008, p.523) that warrants further reflection and discussion. In "strong" forms of constructionism, issues of language and discourse are indeed front and center. Here, a concentration on ideas and their circulation is, by design, largely

26 For a debate on the relationship between "Critical Realism" (LAWSON, COLLIER, BHASKAR, ARCHER & NORRIE, 1998), "New Materialism" (KISSMANN & VAN LOON, 2019), and interactionism, see TAYLOR (2018) or PLUMMER (2021). The importance of "materiality" for communication has recently been addressed also by HEPP and COULDRY (2023) who highlight the entanglement of human practices with material technologies.

27 It is worthwhile noting that representatives of CoCo (e.g., KELLER, 2019) engage in discussions on "new materialism" (KISSMANN & VAN LOON, 2019) and demonstrate, for example, that discursive constructions of reality, such as the discourse about household waste in the 1960s, is interwoven with the materiality of the dirty and smelly human products (KELLER, 2009 [1998]).

disconnected from subjective, embodied experiences. In contrast, "weak" or "weaker" iterations of constructionism may allow for, and do pose, questions about subjective experiences, however, only in connection with collective social and cultural phenomena, not in their own right. [76]

To give another example of an internal debate, HARRIS (2008, 2010) differentiated between two opposite ends of interactionist analysis, namely "interpretive social constructionism" (ISC) on the one side and, on the other, "objective social constructivism" (OSC). In this view, ISC research focuses on what it takes to create a "sense of reality" mainly aiming at meaning-making and interpretation, while OSC refers to research that focuses more clearly on the work it takes to create "real states of affair" (HARRIS, 2010, p.234). Indeed, examples of both types of work, and many studies that combine these two interests, can be found within the social constructionist tradition in American and UK sociology. [77]

On the outside, interactionist or interpretive scholars *must* engage with critical theory, the dominating theoretical paradigm in Anglo-American sociology today, a broad umbrella framework that includes neo-Marxist, feminist, critical race, settler-colonialism, and queer theories, among others. In these encounters, a conceptual attempt to move beyond a simplistic understanding of the "social construction of everything" has emerged in various subfields, for example in place/space and disaster studies, the latter an interdisciplinary field that has always looked to sociology for theoretical anchoring (KUSENBACH & CHRISTMANN, 2021). Here, we can only mention the emerging distinction between theories of "social production" on the one hand and theories of "social construction" on the other, for instance, with regards to disasters (TIERNEY, 2019) or place and space (LOW, 2016). This distinction conceptually separates research on the power-filled "production" of the material world and its unequal social-structural institutions from research on the cultural and experiential "construction" of knowledge and meaning. Interestingly, it somewhat resembles HARRIS's (2008, 2010) above suggestion regarding ISC and OSC. Importantly, the underlying idea of this distinction is that *both* strands of theorizing and research must be united to fully capture today's complex social and material world, and to move toward a better future for all. [78]

5. Conclusion

We simply must accept the fact that in Anglo-American sociology, interactionist or social constructionist scholars can no longer identify themselves as "rebels" or "underdogs" who fight against more established, say, positivist or functionalist schools and traditions of social research. Rather, our generation, and even the one before us, have become part of the academic establishment, meaning our ideas have become "mainstream" and are perceived by colleagues accordingly. It is only fair that the concerned public and, most importantly, our students expect that we seek to apply our esteemed paradigm to "real" issues, and to engage with more visibly critical approaches to stay relevant and contribute to solutions, rather than disregard or solidify the many problems that plague our planet. [79]

In the long run, if CoCo seeks to get noticed and win new followers in Anglo-American sociology, it must embrace the themes and larger spirit of these ongoing debates. It must focus on searching commonalities and forming alliances with suitable partners instead of fighting and alienating colleagues as competitors or enemies. To us, it seems obvious that all grand theory proposals have both strengths and weaknesses, both focal points and blind spots, and that no paradigm alone can pose, let alone answer, all sociological questions that we can and must ask today—not even CoCo. Given social constructionists' historically irreverent tendencies, strong claims of theoretical universality and exclusivity appear unwarranted, if not unwise. [80]

In conclusion, in this paper, we argued that certain linguistic preferences, as well as differences in theoretical and methodological convictions currently dampen the influence of CoCo in Anglo-American sociology in general, and within interactionist or constructionist circles in particular. To break out of their relatively contained, largely German-speaking, academic network, it will not be enough for communicative constructivists to merely translate their work into the English language. In addition, we encourage them to embrace current interactionist terminology, engage more deeply in ongoing theoretical and political debates, and perhaps begin to increase their visibility at relevant sociological and interactionist gatherings in North America and the UK. Contributing to large North American conferences, such as the annual meetings of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction (SSSI) and the American Sociological Association (ASA)—despite knowing that we argue for buying into Anglo-American academic imperialism here—appears to be a way forward to generate international sociologists' interest in CoCo, and to help broaden and diversify the inner circle of communicative constructivists. By virtue of making links with these and other Anglo-American organizations, communicative constructivists may be able to engage in collaborations with colleagues who are more fully immersed in Anglo-American scholarly discourse which might help them to publish in the aforementioned academic journals, find new co-editors for journal special issues and edited volumes, co-organize conference sessions or small meetings, conduct comparative research together, co-teach methodological workshops and seminars, or share in the supervision of graduate students. [81]

By engaging in these strategies, German speaking communicative constructivists will likely increase recognition of, and for, their theory as well as garner more visibility for the truly impressive body of research that is already published within this program. While we are certain that CoCo has the potential to contribute much to international sociological theory, social science methodology, and various substantive areas of research debated abroad, it is largely up to CoCo's practitioners to make their work more accessible and pertinent to international audiences in the future. [82]

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