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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

HUSSERL AND COMMUNITY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN PHILOSOPHY

BY

SEAN S. PETRANOVICH

CHICAGO, IL

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iii
INTRODUCTION .....	1
§1. Clarifying Terms .....	2
§2. Contextualizing Husserl’s Project.....	5
§3. Conflicting Interpretations .....	10
§4. Chapter Summary.....	13
CHAPTER I: HUSSERL’S ONTOLOGY OF COMMUNITIES AS INTERTWINED PERSONAL SUBJECTIVITIES .....	16
§1. Introduction .....	16
1.1 Ontological Problems in the Philosophy of the Social Sciences .....	17
1.2 An Initial Characterization of Husserl’s Position.....	23
§2. Husserl’s Ontology of Communities as Subjectivities.....	28
2.1 The Socio-Cultural World .....	28
2.2 Parts, Wholes, and Founding.....	35
2.3 Applying Mereology to Community .....	40
§3. Conclusions .....	51
CHAPTER II: ONTOLOGICAL COMMUNITY TAXONOMY: ANONYMOUS AND INTIMATE ORGANIZATION .....	56
§1. Introduction .....	56
§2. A Variety of Communities and the Secondary Reception .....	57
2.1 Distinguishing Types of Communities .....	57
2.2 Conflicting Interpretations.....	61
§3. Husserl’s Mereology .....	67
3.1 Intimacy as a Mereological Concept .....	70
3.2 Concatenation and Anonymity .....	75
§4. Loosely-Knit and Tightly-Knit Communities.....	80
4.1 Anonymous Communities .....	82
4.2 Intimate Communities .....	89
§5. Conclusions .....	99
CHAPTER III: THE EXPERIENCE OF COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP .....	102
§1. Introduction .....	102
§2. Experiences of Being Part of a Community in the Secondary Literature .....	103
§3. Husserl on the Experience of Belonging to a Community.....	112
3.1 Empathy and Pairing in Personal Associations .....	117
3.2 Types of Pairing.....	121
3.3 A Community’s Surrounding World .....	127
§4. Mereological Proximity and Distinct Experiences of Belonging to a Community .....	135
4.1 Anonymous Community Membership .....	139

4.2 Intimate Community Membership.....	154
§5. Conclusions.....	168
<b>CHAPTER IV: POLITICAL OBLIGATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP IN POLITICAL COMMUNITIES .....</b>	<b>173</b>
§1. Introduction.....	173
§2. Comparing Husserl and Gilbert.....	176
2.1 Overlap regarding Plural Subjects.....	177
2.2 Criticism from Phenomenologists in the Secondary Literature.....	184
§3. Gilbert and the Membership Problem.....	187
3.1 Gilbert’s Plural Subject Answer to the Membership Problem.....	188
3.2 Extrapolating from Small to Large Groups.....	193
3.3 Reassessing Criticisms.....	198
3.4 Phenomenological Discontents Based on Gilbert’s Answer.....	199
§4. Husserl on Community Membership.....	202
4.1 Anonymous Community Membership.....	203
4.2 A Husserlian Supplement to Gilbert’s Answer.....	208
§5. Conclusion.....	212
<b>CHAPTER V: TRUST AND CRISIS IN POLITICAL COMMUNITIES .....</b>	<b>215</b>
§1. Introduction.....	215
§2. Trust and Betrayal in Large Communities.....	218
2.1 Resituating Gilbert.....	218
2.2 Special Standing.....	220
§3. Surveying Conceptions of Trust.....	229
3.1 Three-Place Relations.....	230
3.2 Social Capital.....	232
3.3 Non-Cognitive Security.....	235
3.4 Basal Security.....	237
§4. Husserl on Trust and Crisis.....	244
4.1 Basal Security from a Husserlian Standpoint.....	246
4.2 Crisis and Critical Renewal.....	255
§5. Conclusion: Returning to Gilbert.....	267
<b>CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>271</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>274</b>
<b>VITA.....</b>	<b>284</b>

## INTRODUCTION

In our straightforward, everyday attitude, it is common to acknowledge that social groups exist, that we live our lives amidst other community members, and that we have experiences related to being within or opposed to certain groups (friends, family, co-workers, fellow citizens, strangers, etc.). From a philosophical standpoint, however, these are far from uncontroversial matters. The topic of this dissertation is the concept of community (*Gemeinschaft*) in the philosophy of Edmund Husserl (1859-1939). My primary argument is that Husserl has a sophisticated conception of personal community which is firmly rooted in his theory of parts and wholes, that is, in his formal mereology. The full extent to which Husserl's concept of community draws on his mereology has not been addressed in the secondary literature. There are two broad questions to which this dissertation serves as an answer. First: What exactly does Husserl mean when he writes about community? The second question: What relevance can Husserl's concept of community have to problems in social and political philosophy? Chapters I, II, and III provide answers to the first question while Chapters IV and V serve as answers to the second question. Each chapter has its own argument which together act as support for my primary argument.

In what follows in this introduction, I first clarify the main technical terms used in the dissertation (§1). I contextualize the concept of community within Husserl's larger philosophical project (§2). My project is further motivated by looking at some of the conflicting interpretations

of Husserl that have arisen in the secondary literature (§3). Finally, I provide short chapter summaries (§4).

### §1. Clarifying Terms

It is first important to clarify the sense in which I am using “community,” since it’s a loaded term in both philosophical and non-philosophical parlance. The sense of community as I am using it is how I claim Husserl uses it, as I argue in the following chapters. For now, let “community” designate any non-arbitrary personal association, that is, any non-arbitrary grouping of two or more persons.<sup>1</sup> By non-arbitrary, I mean that the members of the group in question will have something in common (such as a shared interest, world, activity, value, or goal) that is of relevance within a socio-cultural context. On such an account, a chess club will count as a community in virtue of the shared interests and activities of its members regarding the game of chess; the citizens of the United States will count as a community in virtue of a shared citizenship status, including the rights and obligations belonging to members. The set of all brunette males in Chicago, however, will not count as a distinct personal community. The latter is not a community in the technical sense appealed to here insofar as these bodily characteristics are not relevant on their own to speak to groupings based on socio-cultural traits such as common interests or activities; this grouping is arbitrary.<sup>2</sup> Husserl uses “community” as a broad

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<sup>1</sup> The descriptor “personal” means that I’m focusing on Husserl’s conception of relationships of persons and not “lower level” communities such as the intersubjective community (the “transcendental We”) constituting the objective world. Cf. *CM*, pp. 120-121.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. McIntyre (2013). This is not to suggest that the latter group could not become a community in the sense I’m using the term through the arising of community-forming circumstances. Carr (1986) also makes this claim. Cf. Steinbock (1995), p. 193: “Steering us away from biologically rooted conceptions of generation, home, and by implication race, Husserl will maintain that generative connections arise by participating in a community as in a tradition; it concerns various styles of a homelife, taking up or rejecting the values of a homeworld, repeating or criticizing life and culture through past and future generations.”



term that encapsulates groupings such as a family, a friendship, civil society, or a political state.

This usage will of course need to be explained and defended. I present the criteria Husserl uses to distinguish between a community (*Gemeinschaft*) and a mere collection (*blosse Kollektiv*).

Furthermore, I argue that Husserl provides criteria for distinguishing between different kinds of communities ranging from loosely-bound to tightly-knit groupings.

This terminological clarification is important insofar as “community” has historically been contrasted with terms like “society” or with concepts such as mere collections or heaps. Ferdinand Tönnies, one of Husserl’s contemporaries, famously distinguishes between communities (*Gemeinschaften*) and societies (*Gesellschaften*).<sup>3</sup> Communities are, according to Tönnies, tightly knit personal associations that are explicitly and inwardly bound together by mutual feelings of concord.<sup>4</sup> Societies, on the other hand, are put forth by Tönnies as mechanical aggregations of persons, each driven by self-interest and bound at best by an alignment with moral and legal conventions.<sup>5</sup>

The prominence of Tönnies’ distinction in the philosophical and social scientific literature discourages the use of a single term for such a wide array of social formations, but my reason for remaining with this term is grounded in Husserl’s writing, insofar as he uses “community” more liberally than Tönnies. Husserl’s use of the term “*Gemeinschaft*” and its cognates is broader than we would expect it to be if he were simply deploying it in the manner of Tönnies. Husserl speaks

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Tönnies (2000), pp. 18-19.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Tönnies (2000), pp 27-28.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Tönnies (2000), pp. 61-62.

of communal forms such as family communities<sup>6</sup>, linguistic communities<sup>7</sup>, the supranational European community<sup>8</sup>, the philosophical community<sup>9</sup>, practical communities of will<sup>10</sup>, the community of love<sup>11</sup>, scientific communities<sup>12</sup>, and communities founded on law<sup>13</sup>. In this way, societies in Tönnies's sense will have the same ontological structure as communities in Husserl's sense. One might therefore wonder how all of these groupings hang together for Husserl, or whether this is only an accidental, nominal identity. As I show, this is not an accidental use of terminology. Despite this breadth of usage, Husserl distinguishes between different types of non-arbitrary personal associations, and these distinctions are drawn on the basis of different kinds of relations between parts and wholes.<sup>14</sup>

When reading Husserl's writings, one encounters a diction that is to be expected in informal discussions of community, including terms like "unity" (*Einheit*), "reciprocal" (*wechselseitige*), "inwardness" (*Innerlichkeit*), and in some cases "intimacy" (*Innigkeit*). Colloquially, we can consider communities as unities such that members have harmonious relationships with each other. We often speak of unity in the rallying together of a community or

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<sup>6</sup> *Hua XIV*, pp. 175-179, *Crisis*, p. 259.

<sup>7</sup> *Hua XIV*, pp. 182-183; *Crisis*, p. 209; *OG*, pp. 358-360; *Ideas II*, p. 329.

<sup>8</sup> *VL*, pp. 269-299, *Crisis*, p. 209.

<sup>9</sup> *VL*, pp. 276-280, 287.

<sup>10</sup> *Hua XIV*, pp. 169-175.

<sup>11</sup> *Hua XIV*, pp. 172-175.

<sup>12</sup> *Hua XIV*, 183, 193; *Crisis*, p. 130, *VL*, p. 288; *Crisis*, p. 319; *OG*, p. 362; *Ideas II*, p. 392.

<sup>13</sup> *Ideas II*, p. 200.

<sup>14</sup> For Husserl, this is not yet phenomenology (or at least not transcendental phenomenology) insofar as we have not performed the epoché. There has been no change of attitude here, so we're not yet engaged in an examination of the correlations between consciousness and world. Cf. Epilogue, pp. 411-412; *APS*, pp. 273-274

of members feeling a sense of togetherness. An intimate community could informally be one with shared history with members reciprocally knowing detailed information about each other that is kept secret from outsiders. On such interpretations of Husserl's diction, which I refer to as "colloquial interpretations," he provides only non-philosophical reflections on contingent features or tendencies of communities and community life. Such features speak to what it is like to experience harmonious interpersonal interactions. This interpretation is not so much wrong as it is imprecise in relation to Husserl's writings as the chapters below show. What is perhaps unexpected is that these terms found in Husserl's writings on community are not colloquial expressions that he uses lightly; he is not simply "shooting from the hip." These terms are precisely delimited concepts from early on in Husserl's career, from his 1900/1901 *Logical Investigations*. These terms, more specifically, are used in his discussion of formal relations between parts (*Teile*) and wholes (*Ganzen*), that is, in his mereology. Considering Husserl's concept of community from the perspective of how it is framed within his mereology is what I refer to as the "technical interpretation." It is this interpretation of his stance regarding the concept of community I argue is correct.

## §2. Contextualizing Husserl's Project

Why does Husserl bother to talk about communities? Do these discussions fit into his wider philosophical project or are they non-philosophical reflections on the social and political events of Husserl's surroundings? I suggest that the former is the case, even when motivated by his milieu. Part of Husserl's philosophical project is his interest in delimiting the foundations of the sciences, and he's committed to a pluralistic, non-reductive approach to that task. This approach is pluralistic insofar as different sciences study objects belonging to distinct ontological

regions; it is non-reductive insofar as the meanings of these regions cannot simply be accounted for by returning to a single ontological bedrock.<sup>15</sup> One example of a reductive approach to the founding of the sciences can be seen in eliminative materialisms that attempt to explain all reality by appeal exclusively to physical reality.<sup>16</sup> Husserl's discussions of personal communities arise, more specifically, insofar as he is attempting to demonstrate the types of objects that are of fundamental interest to the humanities and social sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*). Unlike approaches to causal interactions in the physical sciences of material nature, Husserl thought that the humanities were sciences that studied objects and relations of a unique type. This means that the objectivity of the humanities should not be explained by appeal to spatio-temporal objects interacting according to laws of physical causality.<sup>17</sup> If that is true, then the humanities require ontological clarification so that it can be made apparent what objects and states of affairs are to be investigated and possibly known.

Husserl puts persons, cultural artifacts, historical events, and communities forth as objects of a unique type that operate on the basis of causal laws of motivation (*Motivation*). Motivational causality according to Husserl means that a subject is stimulated by an object to act or react in a certain way, though this is not causally determined. Motivational causality refers to reason-based stimulations and tendencies, but does not mechanically determine subjects as

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<sup>15</sup> *Ideas I*, p. 20.

<sup>16</sup> We see this, for instance, in eliminative materialisms, or, in Husserl's own time, in versions of positivism and psychologism.

<sup>17</sup> Husserl provides a definition of naturalism in *PRS*, p. 169: "Naturalism is a phenomenon consequent upon the discovery of nature, which is to say, nature considered as a unity of spatio-temporal being subject to exact laws of nature."

physical causality determines material objects.<sup>18</sup> Even though motivational causality lacks the rigid determinacy of physical causality, Husserl still thinks there is a lawfulness to the way it is operative in the lives of persons. For Husserl, socio-cultural objectivities belong to the region of *Geist*, not nature.<sup>19</sup>

Another reason Husserl discusses communities is anecdotal, but can be elucidated by appeal back to his philosophical endeavors. Having lived through WWI and its aftermath, Husserl believed he was witnessing the diminution and potential dissolution of communities. In his “Vienna Lecture” (1935), Husserl reflects on what he sees as a crisis in the status of European culture:

Now clearly there exists the distinction between energetic thriving and atrophy, that is, one can say, between health and sickness, even in communities, peoples, states. Accordingly the question is not far removed: How does it happen that no scientific medicine has ever developed in this sphere, a medicine for nations and supranational communities?<sup>20</sup>

In the culmination of the same lecture, Husserl claims that a purely naturalistic approach to all of the sciences threatens us with hostility and barbarity, dissolving communities (such as Europe) in its wake.<sup>21</sup> As early as his essay “Philosophy as Rigorous Science” (1910), Husserl wrote on what he perceived as the dangerous implications arising from naturalism in the context of

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<sup>18</sup> *Ideas II*, pp. 147-148.

<sup>19</sup> An account of Husserl’s conception of the spiritual world (*geistigen Welt*) will be given in the following sections, but I mention it here to demonstrate the reasons Husserl gives for writing about communities.

<sup>20</sup> *VL*, p. 270.

<sup>21</sup> *VL*, p. 299.

cultural practices.<sup>22</sup> For Husserl, questions of methodology matter for philosophy, for scientific determinations of subject-matter, and for our ordinary considerations of our communities and ourselves. Approaching all science from a naturalistic perspective meant leaving a gap in our ability to investigate the objects and states of affairs belonging to the socio-cultural world.<sup>23</sup> Husserl interpreted some of his contemporary events as representing the dangers of a mindless nationalism in place of individual responsibility and as the breakdown of the bonds holding communities together.<sup>24</sup> In place of communal bonds, Husserl thought that naturalistic approaches to communities reduced societies to unrelated heaps of persons based entirely on individual self-interest. In language that is explained in the following chapters, this amounts to considerations of community understood as composed of independent pieces in the form of an aggregation instead of dependent moments of a reciprocally founding community whole. There are legitimate instances where one considers a community in regard exclusively to its headcount (think, for instance, of population and demographic polling where aggregation is key), but focusing on this alone is to do an ontological injustice to the community as a particular type of object. This kind of injustice is ontological since we would be committing a category mistake. As Husserl suggests, questions regarding physiology can legitimately disregard socio-cultural contexts, but it would not be exhaustive or even accurate to consider human beings solely in terms of their physiology.<sup>25</sup> Husserl's thematization of communities arises in this context of

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<sup>22</sup> *PRS*, p. 168: "But all this takes place, when we look at it from the standpoint of principle, in a form that form the ground up is replete with erroneous theory; and from a practical point of view this means a growing danger for our culture. It is important today to engage in a radical criticism of naturalistic philosophy."

<sup>23</sup> This methodological lacuna is also recognized in his "Kaizo articles." *Hua XXVII*, p. 7.

<sup>24</sup> *Kaizo I*, p. 327.

<sup>25</sup> *Ideas II*, p. 176.

seeking foundations for the humanities and, relatedly, seeking to prevent the dissolution of communities on the basis of an improper understanding of their structure.<sup>26</sup> As such, these discussions reside within the scope of his philosophical project.

Husserl considers some communities to be akin to large-scale persons, capable of being healthy or sick like individual human bodies. Husserl is not alone in history or amidst his contemporaries in evoking a person-like entity for the community. The image of the community as a large-scale person or organism runs from Plato<sup>27</sup> through modern<sup>28</sup> and late-modern conceptions of the body politic.<sup>29</sup> In closer temporal and conceptual proximity, we find these notions being used in the projects of other phenomenological philosophers such as Max Scheler<sup>30</sup>, Edith Stein<sup>31</sup>, and Gerda Walther<sup>32</sup>. This dissertation focuses primarily on what is collected in Husserl's writings on community, even though other phenomenologists close to him

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<sup>26</sup> Buckley has a similar reading, especially on the relation between Husserl's project of seeking scientific foundations and practical-cultural implications. Cf. Buckley (1992), pp. 66-75.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Plato, *Republic*, 368c-369b.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Hobbes, Thomas, *Leviathan*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994: p. 3ff: "Art goes yet further, imitating that rational and most excellent work of nature, man. For by art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMONWEALTH, or STATE (in Latin CIVITAS), which is but an artificial man, though of greater stature and strength than the natural, for whose protection and defence it was intended"; Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, *On the Social Contract*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987: pp. 24-25: "At once, in place of the individual person of each contracting party, this act of association produces a moral and collective body composed of as many members as there are voices in the assembly, which receives from this same act its unity, its common self, its life and its will".

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Hegel, G. W. F., *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. Wood trans. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1991), pp. 290-291.

<sup>30</sup> Scheler, Max, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press (1973). See especially, 'Formalism and Person,' 'ad. 4: Individual Person and Collective Person' pp. 519-561.

<sup>31</sup> Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*. Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2000. See especially, 'Second Treatise: Individual and Community,' pp. 129-314.

<sup>32</sup> Walther, Gerda, „Zur Ontologie der sozialen Gemeinschaften,“ *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* (1923), pp. 1-158.

were also working on this topic. The topics of community and of community understood as analogous to large-scale persons was definitely “in the air” as he was writing, but I leave it for another project to investigate the extent to which the claims in Husserl’s writings are entirely his own or whether they are borrowed from his colleagues.<sup>33</sup>

### §3. Conflicting Interpretations

Some of the difficulties discussed in the secondary literature regarding Husserl’s concept of community are put forth as problems existing within Husserl’s writings. Other difficulties arise when we compare different interpretations within the secondary literature itself. Many of the ambivalences, tensions, and difficulties attributed to or related to interpretations of Husserl’s concept of community are eliminated, I claim, if we appeal to his precise mereological terms. I believe, in other words, that a neglect of the technical usage of terms has led to inconsistent receptions of his concept of community.<sup>34</sup> Many commentators recognize the presence of Husserl’s concept of “founding” in his account of community. However, this requires further supplementation by direct appeal to the entirety of his mereology, namely, to his notions of pieces, moments, wholes, and mereological proximity. I here present the reception of Husserl’s

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<sup>33</sup> Sawicki (2003), for example, claims that much of the content of the “Kaizo articles” represent not Husserl’s own work but that of his student, Edith Stein. This is a claim that is also often associated with his *Ideas II*.

<sup>34</sup> Bernhard Waldenfels is a rare example of an interpreter of Husserl’s concept of community incorporating many of the latter’s mereological concepts. Waldenfels heads in what I take to be the correct direction by focusing on Husserl’s distinction between pieces, moments, and founded wholes to show why Husserl is precluded from endorsing individualism or “organicism” regarding community ontological structure. More specifically, Waldenfels focuses on Husserl’s concept of a social whole as incorporating the mereological structures of both “interpenetration” and “association.” There is, nevertheless, much more explanatory work to be done in regard to how components of Husserl’s mereology such as mereological proximity and intimacy are at work in this concept of community. I take it that Waldenfels uses “organicism” in the same way I use “holism” in Chapter 1. Cf. Waldenfels (1971), pp. 160-164.



concept of community in broad brush-strokes. A much fuller consideration of these positions in the secondary literature in relation to my own is provided in Chapter II.

In relation to some communities being understood as “personalities of a higher order,” Philip Buckley claims there is an inherent tension in Husserl’s work. This tension arises insofar as such communities seem to be simultaneously understood by Husserl as authentic collectives while also emphasizing the necessity of authentic individuals thinking and acting on their own.<sup>35</sup> John Drummond suggests that Husserl uses the concept of community in both a wide and narrow sense. The wide sense refers to any associations of persons whatsoever, and is, according to Drummond, better captured by the term “society” (*Gesellschaft*) rather than “community.” For Drummond, the narrow sense is the technical sense of community for Husserl, referring to intimate communities of explicitly cooperative and joint actions.<sup>36</sup> Buckley and Drummond set the bar high for what is to count as a community in Husserl’s work insofar as they highlight instances such as authentic communities and groups of companions. Timo Miettinen, on the other hand, provides considerably lower criteria for the achievement of communities in Husserl’s sense, even when they are understood as “personalities of a higher order.” Miettinen claims that “the idea of personality of a higher order does not say anything substantial about the different modes of social or political co-existence but it merely points towards the formation of a sense of

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<sup>35</sup> Buckley (2000), p. 106. See also through p. 111.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Drummond (1996), p. 245: “Persons achieve a common understanding through communicative acts, and a personal association, i.e., an association of persons or a society is thereby formed. But such associations are communities only in a weak, imprecise sense. While Husserl often uses the term “community” and its cognates when discussing such experiences and such associations, at other times he reserves the word “community” and its cognates for a more intimately united intersubjectivity.”

commonness.”<sup>37</sup> David Carr is similar to Miettinen in where he sets the bar for what Husserl counts as a community, suggesting that it is through a shared narrative or set of stories that a community maintains its unity over time.<sup>38</sup> Janet Donohoe points out that the concept of community is a difficult one in Husserl’s works, since he at time suggests that the community is a loose association of members while at other times suggesting that the community is a tightly knit entity analogous to an individual subject.<sup>39</sup> While Donohoe (like Buckley, Drummond, Miettinen, and Carr) recognizes that Husserl’s concept of community is of a higher order whole founded on its members as individual parts, neither she nor the others explicate the notion of founding in relation to Husserl’s more complex theory of parts and wholes.<sup>40</sup>

A clarification of the structure of communities from the standpoint of Husserl’s own theory of parts and wholes can referee these discussions and guard against mischaracterizations that arise when we operate only with colloquially-influenced understandings of terms that belong within a mereological context. Pitting colloquial interpretations against the technical interpretation is itself a move made in Husserlian spirit. In his “Philosophy as a Rigorous Science,” Husserl rhetorically asks: “Is it sufficient to use these words in the popular sense, in the vague, completely chaotic sense they have taken on, we know not how, in the ‘history’ of consciousness?”<sup>41</sup> Indeed, Husserl coins the terms “sedimentation” (*Sedimentierung*) and traditionalization (*Traditionalisierung*) for our tendency to take concepts as ready-made without

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<sup>37</sup> Miettinen (2013), pp. 216-217.

<sup>38</sup> David Carr (1983).

<sup>39</sup> Donohoe (2004), p. 136. This is also reflected in the above passage from the “Kaizo articles.”

<sup>40</sup> Donohoe (2004), p. 138.

<sup>41</sup> *PRS*, p. 177.

inquiring back into their origins.<sup>42</sup> In the face of this sedimentation, Husserl recommends a method of questioning-back (*Rückfrage*) and explication (*Verdeutlichung*) to the original meanings of our concepts.<sup>43</sup> Understanding Husserl according to colloquial interpretations prevents us from reaching essential features of personal communities as specific types of objects, and instead only appeals to contingent experiences and tendencies of community formations. For Husserl, though, there are essential features of communities and the experiences of members therein that can be reached through phenomenological analyses.

#### §4. Chapter Summary

The first three chapters of the dissertation focus on Husserl's concept of community in general. The final two chapters turn to issues pertaining to political communities from a Husserlian standpoint. In the first chapter, I investigate how Husserl's account of the ontological structure of community is tied to his formal theory of parts and wholes. I position his concept of community in relation to two traditional theories found in the philosophy of the social sciences, namely, individualism and holism. On that basis, I argue that Husserl's concept of community is an attractive alternative to both traditional theories.

My second chapter explicates the criteria Husserl uses in his taxonomy of community types. Husserl makes distinctions between community types based on how loosely or tightly members are bound together. By appealing to Husserl's notion of "mereological proximity," I argue that anonymous and intimate forms of community organization are two poles that provide a spectrum of community organization. This allows me to demonstrate how conflicting accounts

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<sup>42</sup> *Crisis*, p. 52. Cf. pp. 27, 72; *OG*, pp. 361-371; *Ideas II*, pp. 231-233.

<sup>43</sup> *Crisis*, p. 71.

of Husserl's concept of some communities understood as "personalities of a higher order" can be disambiguated in the secondary literature.

In chapter three, I provide a phenomenological analysis of the experience of community from the first-person perspective of membership. For Husserl, consciousness includes a blend of presence and absence for objects and their surrounding horizons, with this process occurring in a unique way in the context of the experience of community membership. Interactions are experienced differently for persons we know personally as opposed to unknown others, and Husserl's sophisticated account of the intentionality of consciousness provides the resources for understanding these experiences.

On the heels of the ontological and phenomenological account of community as explicated in the first three chapters, I turn in the final two chapters to the political sphere. Both Chapters IV and V take their starting point with the account of political obligations given by Margaret Gilbert. The fourth chapter provides an interpretation of political obligations from a Husserlian perspective. I argue that Husserl has an advantage over Gilbert in accounting for political obligations amidst unknown others in large communities having the features of impersonality and anonymity. I proceed by way of a comparative analysis with Gilbert's social ontology, and specifically her affirmative answer to the political "membership problem." Put briefly, this problem asks whether membership within a political community obligates members to uphold that community's institutions. Husserl and Gilbert provide similar conceptions of communities as being akin to individual subjects, which Gilbert refers to as "plural subject theory." Given a difficulty with Gilbert's account of membership in groups having the features

of impersonality and anonymity, I supplement her argument in the form of a Husserlian-inspired answer to the “membership problem.”

In the fifth and final chapter, I put forth an interpretation of trust and betrayal within political communities from the perspective of Husserl’s concept of community. This task is accomplished by way of comparing Husserl’s notion of “crisis” with experiences of trust and betrayal in political life. Problematic implications of Gilbert’s treatments of trust and betrayal are identified, and I argue that at least one philosophical conception of trust fills the gap left in her theory. More specifically, I argue for the complementary fit that Karen Jones’s conception of trust understood as “basal security” provides for Gilbert. This conception of trust and betrayal is tied back to Husserl’s notions of “original belief” and socio-cultural crisis. In that way, a Husserlian approach to experiences of trust and crisis is put forth in the context of political communities. By returning to Husserl, it becomes possible to thematize trust not just as a positive notion that can then be betrayed, but promotes philosophical reflections that elucidate prejudicial features of the world that have been taken for granted acting as the conditions of possibility of such crises occurring in the first place.

With these five chapters, Husserl’s concept of community is elucidated. The main argument that unifies these chapters is that Husserl’s concept of community is based on his theory of parts and wholes. There are advantages to this approach in comparison with other approaches to the concept of community, in comparison with other interpretations of Husserl on this matter, and in relation to the applied topics of political obligations and trust.

CHAPTER I  
HUSSERL'S ONTOLOGY OF COMMUNITIES AS  
INTERTWINED PERSONAL SUBJECTIVITIES

§1. Introduction

In this chapter, I explicate and defend an interpretation of Husserl's theory of personal communities in the form of an ontology of community.<sup>1</sup> My question focuses not on Husserl's conception of a "good" or "right" community, but of what he takes *any* community to be in general.<sup>2</sup> I begin by focusing on what for Husserl holds communities together by putting forth an ontology of personal communities guided by his theory of parts and wholes (§2). Understanding the context and terminology used in Husserl's concept of community protects against mischaracterizations of Husserl's position as either individualistic or holistic (§3). This ontology of personal communities, I argue, belongs to all forms of personal associations, even though Husserl makes a distinction between, on the one hand, loosely organized or unorganized communities, and on the other hand, highly organized communities understood as personalities (a topic I explore in further detail in the next chapter). In the end of the present chapter, I argue that Husserl provides a unique ontological account of the structure of communities that differs in important ways from traditional ontological accounts. Moreover, it is not only that there are

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Epilogue, p. 412. Husserl here mentions the possibility of a science of essence that investigates "the invariant, properly essential structures of a soul or a community of psychic life." He also makes this claim in *Hua XXVII*, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Searle (2003).

differences, but these differences matter since Husserl's theory can circumvent difficulties facing other theories.<sup>3</sup>

### 1.1 Ontological Problems in the Philosophy of the Social Sciences

For Husserl, ontology is a science of objects and their essential, invariant ("eidetic") properties. His "formal ontology" is an account of what it means to be any type of object whatsoever. "Material" or regional ontologies (plural) provide accounts of what it means to be an object of a certain type.<sup>4</sup> For instance, Husserl claims that material things, animal psyches, and socio-cultural entities have different types of being. Personal communities, for Husserl, belong to the socio-cultural domain of objects.

The main philosophical backdrop upon which I frame this chapter can be seen from the kinds of answers given to the following question: When, if ever, is a plurality of persons a community and when is it just a collection or a heap?<sup>5</sup> Debate on this topic has unfolded in the philosophy of the social sciences, social and political philosophy, and more recently in social ontology. This question refers to an ontological distinction (what kind of thing is a community?), and not in the first instance to an epistemological or methodological distinction (how do we know or how should we scientifically investigate a community?). To illuminate Husserl's theory and to contextualize his writings amidst other philosophical approaches, I here introduce the

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<sup>3</sup> To accomplish these tasks, I draw primarily from the third of Husserl's *Logical Investigations*, the 'Second Book' of his *Ideas, Cartesian Meditations*, the *Crisis* and related "lifeworld" texts (*Hua XXXIX*), the intersubjectivity volumes (*Hua XIII, XIV, and XV*), and the "*Kaizo* articles" (*Hua XXVII*).

<sup>4</sup> *Ideas I*, pp. 20-32. Cf. Null (1997), pp. 237-241.

<sup>5</sup> In broader philosophical discussions of ontology and mereology, this goes by the name of the "special composition question." Cf. Effingham (2013), p. 154.

debate between ontological individualists and ontological holists regarding the structure of social groups.<sup>6</sup>

Some philosophers have considered communities to be nothing more than the aggregation of a specific group of individual persons and the activities of those individuals.<sup>7</sup> I refer to this position as individualism in the context of the ontology of social relationships.<sup>8</sup> Some individualists deny that a community exists as a distinct entity beyond the aggregation of its individuals. While we may ordinarily talk as though communities exist as distinct entities such as when we say that a community is thriving or that a family went on a vacation, the individualist position considers these references to be conventional tools at best, but conceptually misleading category mistakes at worst.<sup>9</sup> Individualists claim that a community exists only insofar as it is the name we use for a collection of individual persons and each individual's singular agency, denying that there is something like a community as a distinct object apart from the collection of individuals and their actions. The notion of corporate or collective agency as actually existing, therefore, is seen by individualists to be false. Rather, these notions are taken as being fictitious or illusory. From the perspective of methodology, social scientists influenced by the individualist approach to community direct their attention exclusively to individuals and

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<sup>6</sup> Cf., Gilbert (1989), pp. 427-431.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Rosenberg (2016), chapter 9.

<sup>8</sup> This has also gone by the name of "singularism" in the secondary literature. While I am here focusing on a distinction between individualists and holists, Pettit (2014) and Koo (2016) point out that the questions of social philosophy regarding the relationship between individuals and the community at large can be considered from at least three perspectives. The distinction I am focusing on in their specific terminology, therefore, is between singularism and corporatism.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Weber (1994), pp. 238-241.



their interactions, but do not scientifically consider communities as entities themselves apart from their headcount. One philosophical representative of this position is Jeremy Bentham:

The community is a fictitious *body*, composed of the individual persons who are considered as constituting as it were its *members*. The interest of the community then is, what is it?—the sum of the interest of the several members who compose it.<sup>10</sup>

Max Weber is one of the major representatives of this position in the field of sociology:

Action in the sense of a subjectively understandable orientation of behavior exists only as the behavior of one or more individual human beings. [...] For still other cognitive purposes as, for instance, juristic, or for practical ends, it may on the other hand be convenient or even indispensable to treat social collectivities, such as states, associations, business corporations, foundations, as if they were individual persons. [...] But for the subjective interpretation of action in sociological work these collectivities must be treated as solely the resultants and modes of organization of the particular acts of individual persons, since these alone can be treated as agents in a course of subjectively understandable action. [...] When reference is made in a sociological context to a 'state,' a 'nation,' a 'corporation,' a 'family,' or an 'army,' only a certain kind of development of actual or possible social actions of individual persons.<sup>11</sup>

For the ontological individualist, a community is equal to the sum of its members and their actions. The individualist position suggests that investigating communities as separate entities beyond their summation is a mistake akin to missing relevant trees (individual persons) for an illusory forest (the community).

Other philosophers have considered communities as objects in their own right that cannot be reduced to the aggregate of the existence and activities of individuals. I refer to this position as holism in the context of the ontology of social relationships. Holists claim there is a

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<sup>10</sup> Bentham, *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Chapter 1.IV.

<sup>11</sup> Weber (1994), pp. 238-239.

communal whole that exists as a distinct entity and deny that the community exists only as the summation of individuals and their interactions. In other words, holists consider community to be irreducible to its individual members. In addition to the individual members, holists claim that there is something new that exists in the case of a community. On the basis of a holist account, what is of primary methodological importance for social scientists is to understand a community in its wholeness, arriving at an understanding of individuals only insofar as they are embedded within the community. In the philosophical literature, many contemporary analytic social ontologists, especially those like Gilbert, Pettit, and Schmid who belong to the “non-summative” camp of social ontology, hold this position.<sup>12</sup> According to such non-summative positions, communities are objects that exist beyond their headcount, that is, they cannot be understood by way of summation alone. Emile Durkheim is one of the major representatives of this position from a sociological standpoint. For Durkheim, there are “social facts,” “social currents,” and even “group minds” that exist in addition to individual persons.<sup>13</sup> A community, therefore, is a social fact that exists as a distinct object. Durkheim writes:

*A social fact is every way of acting, fixed or not, capable of exercising on the individual an external constraint; or again, every way of acting which is general throughout a given society, while at the same time existing in its own right independent of its individual manifestations. [...] Social phenomena are things and ought to be treated as things. [...] We must, therefore, consider social phenomena in themselves as distinct from the consciously formed representations of them in the mind; we must study them objectively as external things, for it is this character that they present to us. [...] By their very nature,*

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. Gilbert (1989); Szanto (2016), p.154. These are also social ontologists that belong to the camp of those thematizing the sharedness of collective intentionality as arising from a shared “subject.” More is said on this topic in Chapter IV.

<sup>13</sup> Durkheim (1994), pp. 434-436.

they tend toward an independent existence outside the individual consciousnesses, which they dominate.<sup>14</sup>

For the holist, the community is more than the sum of its parts, though different holists have different conceptions of the nature of this surplus. Focusing exclusively on individuals according to holists is a mistake akin to missing the relevant forest (the community) for fictive trees (non-social, individual persons).

The term “methodological” is occasionally prefixed to the camps of both individualism and holism when discussed in the context of philosophy of the social sciences, and this indicates that the discussion is of how to investigate groups.<sup>15</sup> Many of the strongest formulations of the individualist position arise regarding the question of social scientific methodology.<sup>16</sup> These formulations, however, do not explicitly address the ontological question regarding communities. The methodological question asks how we should study communities and what we can know about them. Nevertheless, one could in principle be a methodological individualist while at the same time espousing ontological holism. In such a case, the community would be taken as a distinct entity that is more than the sum of its parts, but it would be these parts (individual persons) that would be studied by the social scientist. Inversely, one could in principle take holism as a methodological starting point while advocating for ontological individualism regarding the structure of communities. In such a case, the community would be taken simply as

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<sup>14</sup> Durkheim (1994), pp. 438-440.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Rosenberg (2016), p. 175.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Watkins, “Historical Explanation in the Social Sciences”; Miller “Methodological Individualism Reconsidered”; Kincaid “Reduction, Explanation, and Individualism” in Martin and McIntyre (eds.), *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1994.

the sum of individuals and their actions, yet would be scientifically approached by way of an analysis of the functions the group as a whole embodies.<sup>17</sup> Arguments given in favor of methodological commitments in the philosophy of the social sciences are not here addressed, and I focus exclusively on the ontological question. This decision does not amount to an inconsistency with the claim made in my introductory chapter that Husserl's philosophical interest in the concept of community arises in his seeking appropriate methods for investigating different ontological regions. For Husserl, ontological questions should precede and thereafter guide methodological questions.<sup>18</sup> I here do the same.

The philosophical problem I am setting the stage with regarding essential features of communities arises as we entertain these two options: either communities are taken as mere collections of individuals that add up to a community in summation, or there is a communal whole existing over and beyond its individuals. Both of these traditional positions require their proponents to face certain difficulties. Individualist conceptions of community focus on individuals and individual agency which is pooled at most into the form of an aggregation. It is then doubtful whether any of our ordinary group concepts (families, friendships, states, etc.) refer to anything that actually exists besides its parts. This presents a difficulty for the ways we tend to understand the worlds in which we live and the language we use in expressing that understanding. Most if not all of us have some occasion to use group concepts in thought and in practice, and it is not immediately clear that we would mean the same thing if we replaced our

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. Rosenberg (2016), Chapter 10.

<sup>18</sup> In this way, the present and following chapter act as a guide for the discussion I will put forth in Chapter III regarding the ways we experience belonging to a community from the inside. "The true method follows the nature of the things to be investigated and not our prejudices and preconceptions." *PRS*, p. 178.

group concepts with individual concepts. The individualist position faces the more serious philosophical difficulty of providing an account of the identity of a social group over time through the addition and subtraction of members. The belief that a community is equivalent to the summation of members means that each and every net addition or subtraction constitutes a new community.<sup>19</sup>

Holists thematize the community as a distinct entity that can even be the bearer of group agency. However, if this kind of agency is attributed to the group as a whole, then it is possible that individual persons as parts are dissolved into the whole, such that the community overpowers the agency of its individual members. On such an account, it is possible that there is no such thing as individual agency, or that the effectiveness of individual agency in acting contrary to the agency of the community is significantly undercut. Holism also faces the difficult task of providing a philosophical account of what counts as existing in addition to the summation of members. The numerical distinctness of individual persons and their individual actions lend themselves to counts, but it is not immediately clear what kind of objectivity philosophers and social scientists should seek as the “more” if we say a community is more than the sum of its parts.

## 1.2 An Initial Characterization of Husserl’s Position

This debate forms a space within which I place my argument regarding Husserl’s concept of community. An adequate theory of the structure of communities should be prepared to

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<sup>19</sup> By “net addition” and “net subtraction,” I mean to highlight changes in overall totals. In the case of one birth simultaneous with one death in a community, the staunch individualist could account for identity over time by virtue of the identity of the sum. In cases of non-equivalent counts of births and deaths, however, it becomes unclear whether the individualist can account for the identity of the community. One potential solution open to the individualist against this charge could be to account for unity through ranges. Then we might have a rough group identity when there is, for instance, a group of 30-50 people, etc.

withstand or at least face up to the objections that arise through this debate. Where does Husserl stand in the context of this philosophical debate? To be sure, Husserl did not directly work through this debate. I maintain, though, that he provides a consistent account of community, and does so for the purpose of providing philosophical foundations for the humanities.<sup>20</sup> This conception, furthermore, is of direct interest to philosophers who thematize the ontological problematic of communities, as I show. Husserl's concept of community represents a middle position for understanding community that differs from both ontological individualism and holism. He is able to do this, I claim, by building his concept of communities on the basis of his theory of parts, wholes, and founding.

In his conception of communities, Husserl evokes the image "humanity writ large" (*Menschen im Großen*), describing at least some communities as "personalities of a higher order."<sup>21</sup> These higher-order entities are put forth as person-like beings akin to individual persons. For Husserl, the status of being of a higher order does not amount to communities being entirely separable from the individuals making them up as advocated by the holist position. Instead, the community is said to be necessarily *founded* upon its individuals and their actions. As such, the community has no existence in the absence of its members and their actions.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. Staiti (2014).

<sup>21</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 4 (*Kaizo I*, p. 327): "Ebendasselbe werden wir, ohne uns durch einen schwächlichen Pessimismus und ideallosen „Realismus“ beirren zu lassen, auch für den „Menschen im Großen“, für die weiteren und weitesten Gemeinschaften nicht unbesehen für unmöglich erachten dürfen, und die gleiche Kampfesgesinnung in Richtung auf eine bessere Menschheit und eine echt humane Kultur werden wir als eine absolute ethische Forderung anerkennen müssen."

<sup>22</sup> Husserl draws an explicit analogy between the ontological structure of human persons and that of communities: "The human spirit, after all, is grounded on the human *physis*; each individual human psychic life is founded upon corporeity, and thus each community upon the bodies of the individual human beings who are members of it" *VL*, p. 271. Cf. Buckley (1992), pp. 113-114.. Husserl's notion of "founding" is a crucial topic from his theory of parts and

In a frequently quoted passage from his “*Kaizo* articles” condensing his concept of community, Husserl states that:

The community is a personal and, as it were, many-headed yet interconnected subjectivity. Individuals are its members, functionally intertwined through multifaceted, interpersonal, spiritually unifying ‘social acts’ (I-Thou-acts; instructions, appointments, activities of love, etc.). At times, a community functions as many-headed, yet is in a higher sense ‘headless’: namely, without having the unity of a focused, willing subjectivity that acts analogous to an individual subject. But it can also take on a higher form of life and become a ‘personality of a higher order,’ not as the carrying out of community performances that are the mere combined formations of individual personal achievements, but in the true sense of communal personal achievements as such, realized in their striving and willing.<sup>23</sup>

There is one general claim regarding community at the beginning of this passage followed by two specific examples of community forms. The main component of this passage is its designation of communities as higher order, intertwined personal subjectivities. Communities are subjectivities of a higher order insofar as they are founded on individual members, and the unity of the community is sustained on the basis of “social acts.” The interconnected (*verbunden*), intertwined (*verflochten*) properties of a community in Husserl’s account means that it is a whole, and individual persons are its parts in the form of being community members.

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wholes that I unpack in what follows, but this passage serves to initially highlight the founded component of his position regarding communities.

<sup>23</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 22: “Die Gemeinschaft ist eine personale, sozusagen vielköpfige und doch verbundene Subjektivität. Ihre Einzelpersonen sind ihre “Glieder”, funktionell miteinander verflochten durch vielgestaltige, Person mit Person geistig einigende “soziale Akte” (Ich-Du-Akte; Befehle, Verabredungen, Liebestätigkeiten usw.). Zeitweise fungiert eine Gemeinschaft vielköpfig und doch in einem höheren Sinne “kopflös”; nämlich ohne dass sie sich zur Einheit einer Willenssubjektivität konzentrierte und analog wie ein Einzelsubjekt handelte. Sie kann aber auch diese höherer Lebensform annehmen und zu einer “Personalität höherer Ordnung” werden und als solche Gemeinschaftsleistungen vollziehen, die nicht blosse Zusammenbildungen von einzelpersonalen Leistungen sind, sondern im wahren Sinne persönliche Leistungen der Gemeinschaft als solcher, in ihrem Streben und Wollen realisierte.”

Husserl's conception of community resists being neatly grouped under the headings of ontological individualism or holism as presented above. The plurality of members and their interactions are invaluable for the life of the community, and for that reason we find partial resonances with individualism. Indeed, there cannot be a "many-headed" community without a plurality of persons. At the same time, though, the community is said to possess its own unified existence as an intertwined, unified entity, and so has partial resonances with holism. In addition to the collection of individual community members, there is for Husserl a bond holding them together. My argument in what follows is that Husserl is able to hold his unique concept of community not simply by combining some of what is found in individualism with some of what is found in holism. Rather, Husserl's position is built on a sophisticated ontology that neither individualists nor holists entirely endorse.<sup>24</sup> I argue that Husserl's position on community is clarified when read in conjunction with his theory of parts and wholes. More specifically, understanding Husserl's conception of mereological founding illuminates his formulation of the concept of community.<sup>25</sup> Husserl's unique account of community is not an example of either ontological individualism or ontological holism. Both accounts of the existence of community are problematic from Husserl's perspective for different reasons. Individualism is problematic from Husserl's perspective insofar as he believes communities exist as more than mere aggregations. To focus exclusively on communities as aggregations of individuals is, for Husserl,

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<sup>24</sup> Husserl's position here, relative to ontological individualists and holists, is similar to the position advanced by Margaret Gilbert. This is a topic I return to in Chapter IV. Cf. Gilbert (1989), pp. 427-431.

<sup>25</sup> The remainder of the above passage presents two types of community. The first type of community understood as a loosely organized or relatively unorganized entity that still functions as a unified whole, and the second is of a tightly-knit community that is explicitly unified in its cooperative valuing and willing. This distinction of community types deserves further attention and is the sole focus of Chapter II.



to be led by naturalism into thinking that physical and psychophysical reality is all that exists. Holism is problematic from Husserl's perspective insofar as communities inextricably depend on the actions of individual members for their existence. Understanding this dependence means understanding his notion of founding, which precludes the possibility of a community as an overarching or dominating entity with a mind of its own.

In the direction of carving out his own position in the context of the philosophy of the social sciences, Husserl says:

Only an originary social science can arrive at an explicit understanding and a real clarification of [regularities in social statistics]; that is, a social science that brings social phenomena to direct givenness and investigates them according to their essence.<sup>26</sup>

The originality of Husserl's position can be seen through the way he incorporates his mereology. For Husserl, communities exist and have a distinct ontological structure which does not dissolve (*auflösen*) its constituent members into the whole to which they belong.<sup>27</sup> Communities are, nevertheless, said by Husserl to exist and be *founded* on the lives of individual members. Given the options presented above regarding traditional philosophical conceptions of communities and their difficulties, Husserl's position, if it is to be coherent, should at least be able to address these difficulties.

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<sup>26</sup> *PRS*, p. 174.

<sup>27</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 48. Husserl's point here is more specifically related to values. He writes that the community itself has its own values, which are founded on the values of its members in the form of a higher value, without dissolving the individual values.

## §2. Husserl's Ontology of Communities as Subjectivities

### 2.1 The Socio-Cultural World

Contextualizing the scope of Husserl's writings on community means looking first to his account of the region of the socio-cultural, spiritual world. Husserl defines the spiritual world as the "sum total of social subjects of lower or higher levels [...] in communication with each other, actually or in part actually in part potentially, together with the sum total of the social Objectivities pertaining to it."<sup>28</sup> I here provide an analysis of both of these elements (social subjects and social objectivities), and show how they are essentially correlated. This provides an account of the different parts of communities, setting the stage for the next section regarding how these parts and wholes belong together in the form of a unity.

Social subjects are associations (*Verbindungen*) of persons. To be an association, they must consist of two or more persons. These intersubjective unities possess what Husserl refers to as their own "inwardness" (*Innerlichkeit*).<sup>29</sup> On this account, a social subject's inwardness means that two or more persons have a shared socio-cultural surrounding world, and their being together is more than being externally grouped together according to an arbitrary principle. The inwardness of a personal association designates that members of a group are capable of experiencing bonds of commonness through their thinking, valuing, or acting.<sup>30</sup> This inwardness

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<sup>28</sup> *Ideas II*, pp. 206-207.

<sup>29</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 8: "Abgesehen davon, daß die zeiträumliche Form im Reiche des Geistes (z.B. in der Historie) einen wesentlich anderen Sinn hat als in der physischen Natur, ist hier darauf hinzuweisen, daß jede einzelne geistige Realität ihre Innerlichkeit hat, ein in sich geschlossenes „Bewußtseinsleben“, bezogen auf ein „Ich“, sozusagen als einen alle einzelnen Bewußtseinsakte zentrierenden Pol, wobei diese Akte in Zusammenhängen der „Motivation“ stehen."

<sup>30</sup> I will have more to say on the concept of intimacy in the next chapter when I turn to Husserl's conception of communities understood as personalities of a higher order. "[It] should also be pointed out that every single spiritual reality has its own inwardness, a self-contained life of consciousness which is related to an 'ego,' so to speak, as a centripetal pole of all particular acts of consciousness, whereby these acts stand in 'motivational' connections."

means, then, that members are motivated in the same ways. Communities are inwardly bound, on this picture, based on features such as shared interests, ideas, or concerns.<sup>31</sup> While an arbitrary collection or aggregation of human beings could be accounted for from the perspective of third-person “exteriority” by simply tallying up the members of the group in question, a personal community is unique insofar as it possesses a “surplus” of meaning beyond its headcount. This is analogous to the surplus (*Plus*) Husserl describes in regard to the apprehension of individual persons over and above their physiological existence, but in the present context this surplus is one that belongs to the social subjectivity itself as an association, and not the individual person.<sup>32</sup>

Husserl in some places designates this intersubjective inwardness with the concept of “communal spirit” or “shared mind” (*Gemeingeist*).<sup>33</sup> On the face of it, this notion suggests a “hive mind” in the sense of forces and factors operating behind the conscious awareness of individual persons, leading them to unknowingly act in one way rather than another. On that basis we would rightfully have reason to worry that Husserl was leading us to the difficulties associated with holism, especially relating to the loss of individual agency in place of an overpowering group agency. This is an avenue left open for a colloquial interpretation insofar as

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Husserl, “Renewal: Its Problem and Method,” [Allen trans., p. 328-329] (*Hua XXVII*, p. 8). Regarding the inward life of a social subject, see also *VL*, p. 273 and *Ideas II*, p. 206.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. McIntyre (2013), p. 82: “*True communities are interest-oriented.*” This topic is returned to in Chapter III, where I specifically argue that there is more to Husserl’s account of community membership than just shared interests.

<sup>32</sup> “But one thing is striking: *the apprehension* in which *the human being* is given to us *in the human Body*, the apprehension in which the human being is given as a person who lives, acts, and undergoes, and of whom we are conscious as a *real* person who behaves under the circumstances of his personal life now in this way and now in that way, *seem to contain a surplus [Plus]* which does not present itself as a mere complex of constitutive moments of apprehension of the type we have described.” *Ideas II*, p. 147.

<sup>33</sup> *Hua XIV*, pp. 165-204; *Ideas II*, pp. 208-209, 219, 255; *PRS*, pp. 188, 190.

we remain with popular conceptual connotations.<sup>34</sup> However, Husserl's usage of "communal spirit" is less mysterious than this quick interpretation would suggest. To be a part of a social subjectivity – belonging to a "communal spirit" – does not mean thinking and acting in an identical fashion with others, but instead refers to a set of shared presuppositions, positions, and constraints held between pluralities of individuals.<sup>35</sup> By virtue of having any kind of shared socio-cultural interests or values, we approach our worlds in similar fashion. It is not that there is a dominating current that shapes a shared world for members; rather, there is here a shared background that creates the space of expectations and possibilities for members. For example, Husserl writes:

The common, associated personality as a "subject" of shared achievements is on the one hand an analogue of the individual subject, but on the other hand is not only an analogue but is an associated multiplicity of persons which has in its connection a unity of consciousness (a communicative unity). Within the plurality of dispersed wills of individuals, there exists for them all an identically constituted will, which has no other place, and no other substrate than that of the communicative plurality of persons; and so also for other "uniform," socially constituted acts. Each ego is the subject of an action, but each in a function, and such is the associated unity of any full subject. It is a common substrate; as the ego, the person substrate is for their particular individual acts and lasting acts, so the communicative personal plurality is substrate: it is no multiplicity, but a unity founded in the multiplicities, and is a substrate for "acts" as particular acts and for enduring acts, acts which are themselves constituted unities of a higher level, which have their founding sublevels in the relevant individual personal acts.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> For example, Bryce Huebner writes from the perspective of experimental psychology that "people routinely interpret the behavior of courts, churches, states, hiring committees, and corporations in ways that invoke intentional ascriptions," and that "people willingly ascribe beliefs and desires to human and non-human animals, robots, supernatural agents, and groups."

<sup>35</sup> The structure of such community constrains understood as constraints to the wills of community members are addressed in Chapters III and IV.

<sup>36</sup> *Hua XIV*, pp. 200-201: "Die gemeinsame, die verbundene Personalität als „Subjekt" der gemeinsamen Leistung ist einerseits Analogon eines individuellen Subjekts, andererseits aber nicht bloss Analogon, sie ist eine verbundene Personenvielheit, die in ihrer Verbindung eine Einheit des Bewusstseins (eine kommunikative Einheit) hat. Innerhalb der Vielheit der auf die Einzelpersonen verteilten Willen hat sie einen für sie alle identisch konstituierten Willen, der keinen anderen Ort, kein anderes Substrat hat als die kommunikative Personenvielheit; und so für andere „einheitlich", sozial konstituierte Akte, jedes Ich ist Subjekt der Handlung, aber jedes in einer Funktion, und so ist

Husserl thereby understands a community as a unified, shared substrate with a shared surrounding world analogous to an individual subjectivity with its surroundings.<sup>37</sup> The community exists as a subjectivity insofar as it represents a unity that holds between multiplicities of associated persons. Such a unity at the community level is akin to the synthesis holding together an individual subject's temporally distinct experiences into the unified form of a single life.

Inextricably correlated with the internal bonds of social subjects are what Husserl calls social objectivities, that is, objects and states of affairs possessing their meaning as shared for the members of a specific social subjectivity. Husserl captures the arrangement of this set as the “surrounding world” (*Umwelt*) of culture, referring to sedimented socio-cultural and historical meanings that characterize persons and objects that are given to members of a personal association.<sup>38</sup> For instance, Husserl suggests that a group of friends will have a privileged and shared “external world.”<sup>39</sup> In this way, the members of a personal association encounter

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die verbundene Einheit aller Vollsubjekt. Es ist ein einheitliches Substrat; wie das Ich, die Person, Substrat ist für ihre individuellen Akteinheiten und bleibenden Akte, so ist die kommunikative Personenvielheit Substrat: Sie ist da keine Vielheit, sondern eine in Vielheiten fundierte Einheit, und sie ist Substrat für „Akte“ als Akteinheiten und für bleibende Akte, Akte, die selbst konstitutive Einheiten höherer Stufe sind, die ihre fundierenden Unterstufen in den betreffenden einzelpersonalen Akten haben.”

<sup>37</sup> More is said about this feature from the phenomenological side in Chapter III.

<sup>38</sup> “As person, I am what I am (and each other person is what he is) as *subject of a surrounding world*. The concepts of Ego and surrounding world are related to one another inseparably. Thereby to each person belongs his surrounding world, while at the same time a plurality of persons in communication with one another has a common surrounding world.” *Ideas II*, p. 195.

<sup>39</sup> *Ideas II*, pp. 205-206.

components of their world in similar fashion based on this bond.<sup>40</sup> The surrounding world of a group of mathematicians includes ideal mathematical objects that their non-mathematical friends may not encounter (though they could in principle come to have that same surrounding world through a mathematical education).<sup>41</sup> It is not only the case that individuals have their own sensuous surrounding worlds; according to Husserl, the community *itself* has its own surrounding world.

But the most significant fact remains that the community is not a mere collection (*nicht ein bloßes Kollektiv*) of its individuals, and community life and its achievements are not a mere collection of individual life and individual achievements. Rather, through all individual being and individual living there passes a unity of life, and although it is founded in individual lives, there is a communal surrounding world (*gemeinschaftliche Umwelt*) that passes over the subjective surrounding worlds of the individuals and is founded in them, such that in the individual's own achievement there is constituted a founded total achievement.<sup>42</sup>

The different members of a particular community are then understood as accessing particular aspects of the shared surrounding world in question.

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<sup>40</sup> Consider, for instance, a group of friends who are “in” on an inside joke. They may on this basis be more attentive to certain components of their surroundings that remind them of this joke. These components, however, need not stand out to others who are not privy to the joke.

<sup>41</sup> Regarding the ideal world of the mathematician, see *Ideas II*, p. 203. Regarding the openness of different surrounding worlds to non-members, see *CM*, pp. 132-133.

<sup>42</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 48: “Die bedeutsamste Tatsache ist aber die, daß die Gemeinschaft nicht ein bloßes Kollektiv der einzelnen und das Gemeinschaftsleben und die Gemeinschaftsleistung nicht ein bloßes Kollektiv der Einzelleben und der Einzelleistungen sind; sondern daß durch alles Einzelsein und Einzelleben eine Einheit des Lebens hindurchgeht, obschon ein in Einzelleben fundiertes, daß über die subjektiven Umwelten der einzelnen hindurchgeht eine in ihnen fundierte gemeinschaftliche Umwelt, daß in Leistungen der einzelnen als ein Eigenes sich eine in ihnen fundierte Gesamtleistung konstituiert.”. See also *Ideas II*, pp. 191-192. This is addressed in further detail in Chapter III.

For Husserl, social subjects and social objectivities are two essentially correlated sides of the socio-cultural, spiritual world.<sup>43</sup> These two sides are only separable when considered abstractly; concretely, however, the two always occur together.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, social subjects can also become their own social objectivities through such abstract reflection:

Included in the surrounding world of such a circle [of friends], or, in general, of a social subjectivity [...] is, once again, this very subjectivity itself insofar as it too can become an Object for itself, when the association relates back to itself, just as each individual subject in it can also become an Object.<sup>45</sup>

This reflexivity is not something that necessarily occurs for members. Husserl is clear that this kind of explicit reflexivity whereby a communal “we” becomes an object for its members is quite rare. It is, nevertheless, an essential possibility.

When two or more persons share a world in common through activities, interests, or values, they establish a non-arbitrary personal association in the form of a social subject. We thereby get an initial indication of what Husserl means in the passage from the “Kaizo articles” when he refers to a community as a “many-headed yet interconnected subjectivity.”<sup>46</sup> This social subjectivity refers to “inwardness” in the sense that members share something in common

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<sup>43</sup> “We are in a relation to a common surrounding world—we are in a personal association: these belong together. We could not be persons for others if a common surrounding world did not stand there for us in a community, in an intentional linkage of our lives.” *Ideas II*, p. 201.

<sup>44</sup> In terms of abstract separation, this is what Husserl means when talking about the one-sided separability of ourselves from the social: “Each person has, ideally speaking, within his communicative surrounding world his egoistic one insofar as he can ‘abstract’ from all relations of mutual understanding and from the apperception founded therein, or, rather, insofar as he can think them as separated. In this sense there exists, therefore, ‘one-sided separability’ of the one surrounding world in relation to the other, and the egoistic surrounding world forms an essential nucleus for the communicative one in such a way that if the former is ever to be separated off, the processes of abstraction needed for it have to come from the latter.” *Ideas II*, p. 203.

<sup>45</sup> *Ideas II*, p. 206.

<sup>46</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 22.

beyond their outward or external existence as a mere collection.<sup>47</sup> The personal association is non-arbitrary insofar as the inwardness of the social subjectivity refers to a socio-cultural commonality amongst members. This social subjectivity is essentially correlated with a set of social objectivities, that is, with a common surrounding world.<sup>48</sup> The sense in which the analogy between individual and community holds is seen insofar as the inwardly unified social subjectivity is a pole or substrate for its own surrounding world, akin to the surrounding world of an individual subjectivity. It can then also be the case that the binding of a social subjectivity provides the venue for more robust forms of close community organization such as goal-oriented joint actions.

Husserl's account of the structure of the socio-cultural, spiritual world provides an understanding of the ontological region to which communities belong. The more specific ontological structure at this point remains underdeveloped until it is explained how individual members fit into the community in regard to the structure of parts and wholes. Pinning down essential, invariant properties of communities requires further analysis. I now argue that engaging in an immanent development is necessary in the form of reading Husserl's conception of communities through the lens of his own mereology.

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<sup>47</sup> Cf. Waldenfels (1971), pp. 160-161.

<sup>48</sup> Objects of the surrounding world are not only social subjectivities, but can also be cultural artifacts such as books and tables. While objects like books are social objectivities insofar as they possess socio-cultural sense for members of a social subjectivity, they are not themselves social subjectivities insofar as they lack consciousness. Cf. *Ideas II*, §56h.



## 2.2 Parts, Wholes, and Founding

Husserl's theory of parts (*Teile*) and wholes (*Ganzen*), that is, his mereology, is given in the 'Third Investigation' of the *Logical Investigations*. Sokolowski motivates the importance of Husserl's mereology by pointing to a remark made by Husserl in the foreword to its second edition. Regarding the 'Third Investigation,' Husserl there says:

I have the impression that this Investigation is all too little read. I myself derived great help from it: it is also an essential presupposition for the full understanding of the Investigations which follow.<sup>49</sup>

Sokolowski claims that neglecting Husserl's mereology could be disastrous for understanding other portions of his thought: "It serves as the skeleton for Husserl's more elaborate philosophical doctrines about subjectivity and its world."<sup>50</sup> I agree with Sokolowski on this point, and believe that this is also the case for coming to understand Husserl's theory of community.

Husserl introduces his mereology formally, delimiting the logical relations between parts and wholes for any type of object or grouping of objects whatsoever. Making sense of his mereology in the context of communities, then, means showing the ways in which this formal doctrine is operative in his writings on the specific material region of the spiritual, socio-cultural world. More specifically, the task here is to show how Husserl uses his mereology to write about the topic of community.

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<sup>49</sup> *LI*, p. 7. Referenced in Sokolowski (1968).

<sup>50</sup> Sokolowski (1968), p. 537.

For Husserl, complex objects are objects with parts and every part has an actual or possible whole to which it belongs.<sup>51</sup> Parts of a whole can either be pieces (*Stücke*) or moments (*Momente*), and Husserl frames this distinction as being between independent (*selbständigen*) and non-independent/dependent (*unselbständigen*) parts.<sup>52</sup> Pieces are independent or potentially independent parts; they can be detached from the whole while nevertheless continuing to exist.<sup>53</sup> An example of *pieces* in relation to a whole are parts of a tree such as its branches, leaves, roots, and so forth. These are pieces of the tree understood as a whole insofar as they could exist apart from the tree itself; I can trim a tree's branches and rake up leaves that have fallen to the ground. *Moments*, on the other hand, are non-independent (dependent), abstract parts; they cannot exist individually without supplementation from something else. An example Husserl gives of moments in relation to wholes are spatial extension and color. We can abstractly separate the notion of extension from that of color, but extension necessarily exists as colored and color necessarily exists as extended in space. I cannot rake the green of a leaf into a bag while leaving the extension of the leaf on my lawn. These are mutually dependent moments that are separable only in abstraction.

Husserl also provides his theory of the relation between mediate and intermediate parts in relation to a whole, demonstrating a metaphorical "distance" that obtains between parts of a whole.

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<sup>51</sup> *LI*, p. 4.

<sup>52</sup> *LI*, pp. 6, 29.

<sup>53</sup> *LI*, pp. 20-22, 29.

If P(W) is a part of the whole W, then a part of this part, e.g., P(P(W)), is again a part of the whole, but a *mediate* part. P(W) may then be called a *relatively immediate* part of the whole.<sup>54</sup>

This distinction between mediate (*mittelbarer*) and immediate (*unmittelbarer*) parts also goes by the names of remote (*ferneren*) and proximate (*näheren*) parts, and it is through these notions that Husserl's mereological (i.e., non-spatial) account of proximity is given.<sup>55</sup> For convenience, I from here forward refer to Husserl's account of mediate and immediate parts as his account of "mereological proximity." To concretize this distinction, Husserl appeals to the example of a melody understood as a unified whole.<sup>56</sup> A melody is made up of parts which are individual acoustic tones. Each tone, furthermore, has its own parts, which in this case are the moments of its quality, intensity, and so forth. Both the tones and the parts of those tones are included in the whole that is the melody, but these parts do not belong to the whole in identical fashion:

It is evident that the quality in itself only forms part of the melody in so far as it forms part of the single tone: it belongs immediately to the latter, and only mediately to the total tone-pattern. [...] The difference is, however, not merely relative: in every whole there are parts which belong directly to the whole, and not first to one of its parts.<sup>57</sup>

While the quality and intensity of the tone are parts of the melody, they are not parts in the same way that the tones are parts of the melodic whole. To use Husserl's terminology, tones here are proximate, that is, more immediate and logically closer to the whole of the melody. The

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<sup>54</sup> *LI*, p. 30-32.

<sup>55</sup> More is made of these notions of proximity and remoteness in Chapters II and III.

<sup>56</sup> *LI*, p. 31.

<sup>57</sup> *LI*, pp. 31, 32

moments of quality and intensity, on the other hand, stand in a relatively mediate relation to the melody as a whole. They are mediated in relation to the whole insofar as they contribute to the whole through their being parts of parts, that is, as being moments of the tones. In this sense, there is more mereological remoteness between the note-intensity and the melody than there is between the single notes and the melody.

On Husserl's account, parts and wholes exist based on relations of founding (*Fundierung*). Approached formally, Husserl defines founding in the following way:

*A content of the species A is founded upon a content of the species B if an A can by its essence (i.e., lawfully, in virtue of its specific nature) not exist, unless a B also exists.*<sup>58</sup>

Furthermore, Husserl claims that this concept of founding allows him to properly account for what it means to be a whole:

By a whole we understand a range of contents which are all covered by a unitary foundation without the help of further contents. The contents of such a range we call its parts. Talk of the unity of the foundation implies that every content is foundationally connected, whether directly or indirectly, with every content.<sup>59</sup>

Let's return again to the example of the melody to concretize Husserl's account of the relationship of founding and founded. The melody is a founded whole; it is a complex object that is necessarily composed of parts that are unified in a certain way. This unity is not simply accounted for by singling out each note as separate from the others; the notes are unified insofar

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<sup>58</sup> *LI*, p. 34 [translation modified].

<sup>59</sup> *LI*, p. 34/*Hua XIX*, p. 282. I am here appealing to Emanuele Caminada's translation of this passage, whereby he modifies the English translation by Findlay. Findlay renders *einheitliche Fundierung* as 'single foundation.' Cf. Caminada and Summa (2015).

as they are founding parts belonging to the founded melodic whole. While the notes could be separated and played apart from their inclusion in the melody, the melody cannot exist apart from the notes. The melody as a distinct object is founded on the basis of the organizational association between notes. Although the playing of a melody occurs in time, founding does not refer to a temporal succession. The ways in which parts and wholes are founded refers to their static, ontological structure, and not to a temporal genesis. Higher order objects have an ontological structure that necessarily depends on parts organized in a certain way while nevertheless being more than the sum of these parts. The notes can exist on their own without there being a melody, but the melody necessarily depends on the determinately organized notes.

Finally, regarding Husserl's mereology, a mere collection of any group of objects whatsoever is a "mere aggregate" (*blosser Inbegriff*), which he presents as a form of unity belonging only to thought, but not legitimately existing as a whole.

'Aggregate' is an expression for a categorial unity corresponding to the mere form of thought, it stands for the correlate of a certain *unity of reference* relating to all relevant objects. The objects themselves, being only held together in thought, do not succeed in founding a new content, whether taken as a group or together; no material form of association develops among them through this unity of intuition, they are possibly 'quite disconnected and intrinsically unrelated.' [*an sich unverbunden und beziehungslos*]<sup>60</sup>

For example, I can consider a random set of objects fished out of a junk drawer to be a group in the form of an aggregation; I can think these things as existing in a unity together even if they individually have nothing in common. On their own, though, these random objects do not form a unified whole insofar as they do not have anything in common. Their co-existence is equal to the

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<sup>60</sup> *LI*, p. 38. Cairns points out that *Inbegriff* can also be translated as "sum," though "aggregate" may be the best translation. Both work for the sense I'm discussing in regard to communities. *Guide for Translating Husserl*, p. 73.

sum of all aggregated parts. To return to the melody example, its notes and their relations are not equal to all of the notes being aggregated and played all at once.

### 2.3 Applying Mereology to Community

I have introduced Husserl's formal concepts of wholes, pieces, moments, founding, mereological proximity, and aggregation. These concepts, as given in the *Logical Investigations*, apply to any kind of object whatsoever, contributing to his account of formal ontology. These concepts are relevant in the context of discussing communities because Husserl employs them when he writes about communities. A community is a non-arbitrary personal association, and this amounts to it being a unified whole. For Husserl wholes are unities that only exist on the basis of relations of foundation. The community as a whole has parts, and for this type of object, those parts are persons. The community, then, is understood as founded on its members.

Near the beginning of his *Introduction to Phenomenology*, Sokolowski makes the following meta-philosophical remarks:

What often happens in philosophy is that something that is a moment is taken to be a piece, taken to be separable from its wider whole and other parts; then an artificial "problem" arises about how the original whole can be reconstituted. The true solution to such a problem is not to fashion some new way of building up the whole out of such falsely segmented parts, but simply to show that the part in question was a moment, not a piece, and that it never should have been separated from the whole in the first place.<sup>61</sup>

If my reading of Husserl's concept of community is correct, then an appeal to his theory of parts and wholes already helps to clarify some of its complexities. Having Husserl's mereological resources at hand helps to clarify ambiguities in traditional ontological conceptions of

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<sup>61</sup> Sokolowski (2000), pp. 24-25.

communities if it is the case that pieces and moments are confused. Furthermore, these clarifications shed light on disagreements regarding Husserl's concept of community in the secondary literature. My task now is to show precisely how this mereological structure is present in Husserl's concept of communities.

I start by considering the parts of the community. Insofar as persons are individuals, they exist as parts in the sense of being pieces of a community whole. Persons are in this sense independent objects.<sup>62</sup> Put otherwise, persons exist and can be understood as members of the community in regard to their own individuality. Just as a leaf can be separated from a tree while remaining a leaf, so too can an individual person be separated from a community while remaining an individual person. This understanding of pieces does not speak to the necessity of an actual separation. A leaf can remain unified with the whole of a tree while still being acknowledged as separable. A person can remain a member of a communal whole while being acknowledged as a separable piece of that whole. The point of saying that a community is a personal association of two or more persons speaks to this feature of communities, namely that their parts are necessarily pieces understood as independent parts.

If Husserl's concept of community was of a mere aggregate or collection, that is, if he were an individualist regarding communities, then we could stop here, and the community would be equal to the summation of its individual members understood as pieces. It is not only pieces, though, that matter in the context of Husserl's concept of communities. Husserl's notion of "moments" also factors into his conception of community. As he claimed in the "Kaizo articles," the community is an interconnected subjectivity, and this interconnection is indicative of a

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<sup>62</sup> Cf. Boehm (1969).

founded unity, not a mere aggregation. Husserl insists that a community is “not a mere collective” (*nicht ein bloßes Kollektiv*)<sup>63</sup>, that it is “not a mere sum” (*nicht eine bloßes Summe*).<sup>64</sup> For instance, the community as a whole is said to have its own values that do not come about “in a summative way” (*in summatorischer Weg*) from the values of its members.<sup>65</sup> The community is not one further separable piece like persons are, but is a founded whole. That which is founded in the case of a community is not an aggregation, but is the unity of persons who are more than pieces. The nature of this surplus can be clarified by appeal to moments.

The internal unity or inwardness of a community was presented above under the heading of Husserl’s notion of a social subjectivity. Social subjectivities are organized insofar as there is something shared amongst members that coalesces them into the form of a unified personal association.

All [personal unities of a higher level], as far as their communication extends, a communication produced factually or one yet to be produced in accord with their own indeterminate open horizon, do not constitute merely a *collection* of social subjectivities, but instead they coalesce [*schliessen*] into a social subjectivity intimately organized to a greater or lesser degree, which has its common opposite pole in a surrounding world, or external world, i.e., in a world that is *for* it.<sup>66</sup>

Within Husserl’s mereology, this presents us with a situation he describes of two pieces sharing something like a boundary in common. In such a case, that shared boundary is described by

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<sup>63</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 48.

<sup>64</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 49.

<sup>65</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 48.

<sup>66</sup> *Ideas II*, p. 206 [Translation modified].



Husserl as a shared moment.<sup>67</sup> In the case of the inwardness of a social subjectivity (i.e., a “communal spirit”), individuals share something with other members through their actual or potential communication, something which is not fully shared with non-members. In the case of socio-cultural communities, these communications refer directly or indirectly to common interests, ideas, or activities. For example, in a tightly-knit community of philosophers, all of the members are bound by their shared interest in philosophy.<sup>68</sup> Beyond just a casual, passing interest, these philosophers may have their ideas and ideals shape their cooperative philosophical activities. Each part of this whole, then, is an individual person. These persons are themselves unified wholes with their own parts, including the moment of being a philosopher. The community exists as a founded entity that is more than the sum of its parts when moments such as these are the same for a group of persons. The group of philosophers here exists as a community whole insofar as all members possess similar interests, values, practices, and so forth.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, this can even be considered a tightly-knit community if the members are explicitly aware of the community itself. Correlated with this communicative inwardness, then, is the community’s surrounding world, animated by a specific communal spirit.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> *LI*, p. §17.

<sup>68</sup> I appeal to this example here first because it is one that Husserl discusses. Secondly, though, it is an example I return to in Chapters II and III, insofar as it represents a specific community type as an “intimate community.”

<sup>69</sup> I will have more to say about the role that features such as shared interests play in the structure of community in Chapter II and III. For Husserl, interests influence the experiences that members of a community have, but he provides a more sophisticated mechanism to account for this by appealing to his account of proximate and remote parts of a whole.

<sup>70</sup> My considerations here are ontological and not phenomenological. Chapter III addresses this structure of community in further detail insofar as these components are given in the experiences of community members.

To further support this reading of the community's inwardness, consider Husserl's account of the identity of a community over time:

[The surrounding world] is comprised not only of individual persons, but the persons are instead members of communities, members of personal unities of a higher order, which, as wholes, have their own lives, preserve themselves by lasting through time despite the joining or leaving of individuals, have their qualities as communities, their moral and juridical regulations, their modes of functioning in collaboration with other communities and with individual persons, their dependencies on circumstances, their regulated changes and their own way of developing or maintaining themselves invariant over time, according to the determining circumstances.<sup>71</sup>

If the addition or subtraction of members necessarily impacted the existence of the community, then the community would be nothing more than an aggregate. The perseverance of a community through the coming and going of members in these cases, though, speaks to the community's existence as including more than just persons considered as isolated pieces. Here the inwardness of the community exists as a dependent moment that is communicable and presupposed amongst members. For example, a community can be inwardly unified through status functions and norms belonging to families, citizens, or club members. As Miettinen highlights, this feature of persistence of a community over time despite the coming and going of members can come in degrees; the birth of a child or the death of a spouse may fundamentally alter or even dissolve the unity that exists in the case of a community such as a family.<sup>72</sup> In these kinds of small communities, independent pieces can matter more insofar as individual members are uniquely

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<sup>71</sup> *Ideas II*, pp. 191-192 [Translation modified].

<sup>72</sup> Further attention is paid in the next chapter to different degrees in this sense.

constitutive of the whole in question. This need not be the case, though, for larger, more impersonal and anonymous communities.<sup>73</sup>

Consider, for example, the whole of a large political community and its citizens. If one citizen is exiled from a state, she continues to exist as a person and is from that perspective a piece of that political whole. However, she will no longer exist *as* a citizen of the state after the exiling. The state as a whole will likely continue to exist as a unified whole even in the absence of one citizen if it continues to be founded upon the lives of its other citizens. A person (as a piece) can exist without possessing the status of citizenship (a moment), but an individual instantiation of citizenship cannot exist without a person.<sup>74</sup> As just one example, this draws attention to the being of a citizen understood as a status that exists as one moment of a person. A plurality of persons possessing the same socio-cultural moment, then, amounts to the founding of a community on Husserl's account. Groups of individuals sharing the same relation to socio-cultural moments constitute a community on the basis of shared interests, values, or activities in a shared surrounding world. They are not unified on the basis of being mere collections of individuals understood as aggregated pieces.

Relations of dependence for Husserl are relations of foundation, and real wholes refer to relations of foundation. For Husserl, the community as a whole is more than the sum of its parts,

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<sup>73</sup> Miettinen (2013), p. 229: "Naturally, there are gradations with regard to different forms of community. For a family, a loss of member is probably a more shattering experience than, say, in the case of a nation – one that can catalyze the extinction or dispersion of the "we". Still, it belongs to the very notion of communal person that it has the possibility to transcend the individual streams of consciousness: it is something that cannot be returned to individual subjects."

<sup>74</sup> I leave it to the side here whether non-human animals can/should be included as citizens of communities.

and cannot be accounted for on the basis of treating individuals as pieces or “mere things.”<sup>75</sup> While founded on its individual members which can be understood as independent parts, the community as a whole is not reducible to the collection of its pieces. Persons can exist independently without belonging to a community, but a community cannot exist in the complete absence of the individual persons upon which it is founded. Within the framework that Husserl provides in the third of his *Logical Investigations*, we can say that there is a necessary connection here in the form of a founding relationship. Husserl says in his “Vienna Lecture” that there can be a physical human body without spirit (*Geist*), but there cannot be spirit without a physical body; he writes that analogously there can be an aggregation of individual human beings without a community, but there can be no community in the absence of individual persons as members.<sup>76</sup> The notion of founding here assures that the community depends on its individual members, but it also precludes our ability to say that the community is nothing more than an aggregation.

In my presentation of Husserl’s framework of the socio-cultural world, I highlighted that social subjectivities involve a surplus of socio-cultural meaning that is irreducible to the summation of the individuals making up such a collective subjectivity. Given the tools from Husserl’s mereology, we can make sense of this socio-cultural surplus as a founded moment of the communal whole insofar as its existence depends on individual persons who are bound by actual and potential communications with one another. Since the socio-cultural components of individual persons that are communicated are themselves moments in Husserl’s sense, the socio-

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<sup>75</sup> Cf. *Ideas II*, p. 200.

<sup>76</sup> *VL*, p. 271.

cultural surplus of a community is a higher-order moment that is itself founded on moments. “Communal spirit” exists, then, in the mode of a founded, non-independent part (i.e., a dependent moment), intelligibly accessible to individual consciousnesses through abstraction but not perceptible as a detachable piece.

So far, then, it is clear that Husserl’s account of parts and wholes provides the conceptual resources for his descriptions of communities as seen in his use of pieces, moments, and founding. “Mereological proximity” is also crucially important to Husserl’s concept of community insofar as members understood as parts of the community whole can be understood as “closer” or “farther” from the group to which they belong depending on the group in question.<sup>77</sup> A loosely organized (“headless”) social subjectivity can be a vague or anonymous community insofar as members lack a direct or immediate awareness of the communal whole. I can go my way and you can go yours, each of us pursuing only our own interests, and encountering every other person as a stranger. Appealing to Husserl’s notion, there is here a mereological remoteness between members and the community as a whole. On such a picture, we would be hard pressed to understand the community as one pursuing its own group goal in any focused or pre-meditated fashion. This amounts to relations between members and relations of members to the community being mediated. In such cases, the mediated nature of such communities would be indicative of members belonging to the whole, though with a large degree of mereological proximity.<sup>78</sup> On the other hand, a well-organized and focused social subjectivity

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<sup>77</sup> This is something I turn to more directly in Chapter II when I examine the two specific examples of community formations as depicted in his quote from the “Kaizo articles,” but I introduce it here to highlight the more extensive presence of Husserl’s mereology in his concept of community.

<sup>78</sup> In Chapter II, I will focus on this phenomenon as an example of a community taking on the form of a concatenation (*Verkettung*), another concept from Husserl’s mereology.

can engage in deliberate joint actions insofar as there is mereological proximity between members and the community as a whole. This amounts to relations between members and relations of members to the community being relatively immediate; there is thereby a distinct and jointly coordinated sense of the “we,” of “us” on the basis of the decisions, valuing, and actions of members. Communities with members that stand in mereological proximity to the whole are intimate communities.<sup>79</sup>

We can belong to many communities at once, and our belonging to some communities is mediated or even masked by others. For example, in a direct democracy, individual citizens belong immediately (in the mereological sense) to the workings of the political whole; in a representative democracy, citizens belong in a more mediated sense.<sup>80</sup> In the former case, there is mereological proximity in Husserl’s sense insofar as members are in direct contact with the community as a whole; in the latter, there is mereological remoteness insofar as members make their impact (if at all) only insofar as they exert influence on a representative. Husserl, for instance, writes in the “Kaizo articles” that engagement in a political community simply through voting does not bring us close to understanding or collectively acting together as a genuine community.<sup>81</sup> Parts can belong to wholes in variegated ways, and different types of communities can be illuminated by demonstrating the proximity or remoteness of parts to wholes (a task I pursue in the following two chapters).

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<sup>79</sup> As Husserl claims, we’re capable of having experiences that present objects immediately in the sense of being there for us in the flesh. We’re also capable, though, of having experiences of objects “only mediately” in cases such as empathy, such that we experience another person not through access to their own conscious experiences, but as expressed through their bodies. Cf. *Ideas II*, pp. 209-210.

<sup>80</sup> Under a totalitarian regime, this mediation is maximally amplified.

<sup>81</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 12.

Husserl acknowledges instances wherein “my spiritual influence propagates without my intention to unknown persons and environments that do not need to know of me.”<sup>82</sup> In such cases, my ability to be a member of the community still depends on my actual and potential communications with others, but it is here a unique kind of communication insofar as it reaches strangers. Living in communities with strangers are made sense of in Husserl’s work by appeal to the notion of mediation, and I have claimed that this notion has its origin in Husserl’s account of mereological proximity:

The institutions of personal associations must be considered in mediate [*mittelbaren*] ways when the people remain ‘unknown.’ But it is in any case communities of will of certain persons who are in agreement as willing-subjects, albeit as mediated [*vermittelt*].<sup>83</sup>

These passages highlight ways in which the concept of more mediation (mereological remoteness) or less mediation (mereological proximity) factors into Husserl’s discussions of communities, especially insofar as that relative mediation dictates whether communities are considered as anonymous or intimate. Communities of persons, for Husserl, are not infinitely plastic, and they continue to exist only “as far as their communication extends.”<sup>84</sup> Returning to Husserl’s definition, recall that a whole is said to exist where there is a unitary foundation, such that every content is connected with all of the others. As Husserl there claims, this kind of unity

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<sup>82</sup> *Hua XIV*, 195: “Meine geistige Wirkung pflanzt sich fort, ohne meine Absicht, in unbekannte Personen und Umgebungen, die auch von mir nichts zu wissen brauchen (personale Wirkungsgemeinschaften ohne Einheit einer umspannenden Gemeinschaftswollung und -handlung).”

<sup>83</sup> *Hua XIV*, 182: “Esmüssen dann aber die Stiftungen von personalen Vereinigungen auf mittelbaren Wegen erwogen werden, wobei die Personen „unbekannt“ bleiben. Es sind aber jedenfalls Willensgemeinschaften bestimmter Personen, die also als Willenssubjekte, wenn auch vermittelt, in Einverständnis sind.”

<sup>84</sup> *Ideas II*, p. 206.

exists when “every content is foundationally connected, whether directly or indirectly, with every other content.”<sup>85</sup> Applied to stratified personal communities, this lends support to the idea that we can belong to communities with others even when those others are strangers, that is, where the foundation connection is indirect. The possibility of connected content in regard to communities refers to connections of communication. If we exist as members of larger communities with strangers, we are foundationally connected with strangers in an indirect, mediated manner.<sup>86</sup> This can be instantiated, for instance, on the basis of reciprocal tendencies of acting kindly to unknown others in public.<sup>87</sup> Such forms of etiquette provide unity to a group without requiring all members to know or be “close” to one another personally.

On the basis of Husserl’s formal mereology alone, we can flirt with the possibility of a community being a mere aggregation of persons, whereby such a community would be equal to the sum of its parts taken solely as individuals understood as independent objects. Put otherwise, if a community was simply an aggregation, then we could exhaustively account for it by simply engaging in a headcount of community members. However, Husserl is adamant that a community is an irreducible entity that cannot be accounted for only in terms of its individuals

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<sup>85</sup> *LI*, p. 34.

<sup>86</sup> There is much more to say here regarding different types of community coming in the next chapter. Consider, for example, *LI*, pp. 41-42: “It is an analytic proposition that ‘pieces’ considered in relation to the whole whose ‘pieces’ they are, cannot be founded on each other, either one-sidedly or reciprocally, and whether as wholes or in respect of their parts. But, on the other hand, we cannot at all conclude from the content of our basic definition that it is impossible that ‘pieces’ should enter into foundational relationships in regard to a more comprehensive whole in which they all count as non-independent ‘moments.’”

<sup>87</sup> *Hua XV*, p. 423: “Jeder friedliche Verkehr ist schon menschliche Vergemeinschaftung und setzt voraus einen gemeinsamen Boden der Norm, sei es auch nur der Norm der allgemeinsten Menschenfreundlichkeit, der Norm nicht zu betrügen etc.”



understood as pieces.<sup>88</sup> Husserl's account of the spiritual world as a "sum total" (of social subjectivities and social objectivities) is not summative simply of persons as pieces, but also includes socio-cultural moments (shared interest, ideas, values, activities, etc.) belonging to its members. There are "moments" to the extent that they depend on persons and relations between persons. If these moments of individual persons are communicatively shared, then individuals coalesce into a community.

### §3. Conclusions

What kinds of objects are communities according to Husserl? Communities on Husserl's account are non-arbitrary associations of two or more persons belonging together within the region of the socio-cultural, spiritual world. They are bound together within what Husserl refers to as a social subjectivity, which is essentially correlated with a shared surrounding world of culture, that is, with social objectivities. The community is thereby understood as a subjectivity that is analogous to an individual subjectivity, a first person plural "we" analogous to a first person singular "I." This community is a whole that is founded on its members while irreducible to them when understood as pieces. The terms Husserl uses in his descriptions of community have specific, technical meanings, and this specificity is missed if approached on the basis of colloquial interpretations of his writings. Clarifying these technical terms is an interpretive task that can be accomplished by appeal to Husserl's mereology. The community is a subjectivity insofar as it is the substrate or bearer for a shared surrounding world, and insofar as the

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<sup>88</sup> *Ideas II*, p. 206; *Hua XXVII*, p. 22.

experiences of individual members do not belong to them alone.<sup>89</sup> Experiences within a community belong to the “we.” That which is common in the context of personal communities will be the communicatively shared moments of the individual persons.

I have here explicated Husserl’s concept of community from an ontological perspective. This refers to the sense in which a community can be considered as a distinct entity beyond the summation of its members. I structured my appeal to mereology in terms of an argument between two interpretive pathways, one colloquial and one technical. My investigation proceeded by appeal to Husserl’s theory of parts and wholes. The colloquial connotations of the fundamental components found in the framework of Husserl’s theory carry sedimented baggage that lead Husserl’s theory to inconsistent readings. Appealing to Husserl’s own theory of parts and wholes, however, pins down the meanings of these terms.

In addition to guarding against the slippages in meaning from colloquial interpretations in the context of Husserl’s ontology, I now return to the broader social-scientific and philosophical problem regarding communities as introduced above. The conceptual pendulum here swings between individualists and holists in the context of social relations. Both positions have their difficulties, such as reducing communities to mere collections and thereby losing the ability to account for identity over time (problems associated with individualism) or of emphasizing collective agency at the expense of sacrificing individual agency (problems associated with holism). It should be abundantly clear that Husserl is at pains to avoid the position of individualism. He is adamant that a community is more than the sum of its parts, and that a mere

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<sup>89</sup> Cf. Chelstrom (2013). This is not to make the further claim that communities themselves are conscious even though Husserl does write in these ways in places.

collection of persons does not lead to the formation of a personal community. While Husserl's formal mereology allows for the possibility of a mere aggregation of objects, this possibility does not extend to his ontological account of communities. This extension is not possible insofar as communities belong to the region of the socio-cultural, spiritual world, meaning that this objectivity includes the inwardness of a spiritual subjectivity. This inwardness belonging to individuals includes moments that are shared by members, and these types of relations are missed by considerations of persons solely as pieces. While not an individualist, he is also not a holist. The community is founded on individuals and their social acts. Phenomena such as sedimentation point to potential holist dangers such that we could unthinkingly take over traditions and traditional forms of activity. It is in this sense that we saw Husserl warning against a "degenerate nationalism."<sup>90</sup> For Husserl, though, this is not inevitable. He thereby leaves open the possibility of reconciling individual agency with the community being more than the sum of its parts.

Husserl, on my reading, espouses a unique ontological position regarding the structure of community. The community here is an actually existing entity, and this entity is more than the sum of its parts. Even though the community is a distinct entity, it necessarily depends for its very existence on the individuals that are its parts. So while the community is more than the sum of its parts, it is not entirely removed or separable from its parts. That is what it means to say that communities are founded entities. Without associated individuals and their sharing of a

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<sup>90</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 5 (*Kaizo 1*, p. 327): "Solche Klarheit ist aber keineswegs leicht zu gewinnen. Jener skeptische Pessimismus und die Schamlosigkeit der unsere Zeit so verhängnisvoll beherrschenden politischen Sophistik, die sich der sozialetischen Argumentation nur als Deckmantel für die egoistischen Zwecke eines völlig entarteten Nationalismus bedient, wäre gar nicht möglich, wenn die natürlich gewachsenen Gemeinschaftsbegriffe trotz ihrer Natürlichkeit nicht mit dunklen Horizonten behaftet wären, mit verwickelten und verdeckten Mittelbarkeiten, deren klärende Auseinanderlegung die Kräfte des ungeschulten Denkens völlig übersteigt."

surrounding world, there is no correlated inwardness of a social subjectivity. This position differs from both individualism and holism not simply by borrowing features from each and then assembling them *ad hoc* into a chimera-like theory of community. Rather, his concept of community arises on the basis of a unique theory of relations between parts and wholes.

The technical interpretation of Husserl's theory of community has applications to the philosophy of the social sciences considered broadly. Both ontological individualists and holists as presented here can be read as erring in ways that can be explained (though not to say corrected) in part by appeal to Husserl's ontology. From a Husserlian perspective, individualists err by emphasizing individual members as being nothing more than "pieces" of the community. In this way, what we get in the individualist account of community is nothing but an aggregation. Because of this, there is not conceptual room to include components of a community in the form of shared moments. For Husserl, though, all socio-cultural realities including personal associations require us to acknowledge the presence of moments of inwardness.<sup>91</sup> Individualism does not recognize the possibility of founding in Husserl's sense by focusing on individual persons without recognizing higher order unities that can come to depend on them.

On the other hand, holists err when considered from a Husserlian standpoint by taking individual members as nothing more than vehicles for the community's own interests and agency. In this sense, there is an overestimation of the existence of the community as separable from individual members. Following Sokolowski, we can here say that this is an example of a philosophical error to the extent that moments are approached as though they were independent parts. This position does not recognize the importance of founding by overly focusing on the

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<sup>91</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 8.

communal whole as independent from its constituent parts. For holists, individuals as pieces can be unnecessary or interchangeable in comparison with the community.

This reading of the positions of individualism and holism on the basis of Husserl's mereology is not meant to suggest that Husserl should supplant work going on in the philosophy of the social sciences. I claim, however, that Husserl's concept of community can productively enter into and act as a referee for portions of the debate on the basis of his theory of parts and wholes. Husserl's writings show that he did not just have a casual interest in describing contingent features of personal associations, but that he provides a consistent theory of what he takes to be the essential, invariant properties belonging to any community. This theory of community arises on the basis of Husserl's sophisticated ontology and avoids some of the pitfalls that have traditionally been associated with competing theories of communities. The ability to avoid these conceptual problems was demonstrated through implications from Husserl's mereology. The way I have focused on Husserl's concept of community in this chapter is just the tip of the iceberg regarding how he appeals to his mereology. The following chapters work to now flesh this out further.

CHAPTER II  
ONTOLOGICAL COMMUNITY TAXONOMY  
ANONYMOUS AND INTIMATE ORGANIZATION

§1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I explicated the general ontological structure of Edmund Husserl's concept of personal communities. In this chapter, I examine different kinds of community types within Husserl's conception. Other writers such as Ferdinand Tönnies have claimed that there is a distinct demarcation between the structures of tightly knit communities (*Gemeinschaften*) and loosely knit societies (*Gesellschaften*).<sup>1</sup> Argumentation must therefore be given for Husserl's conception of there being one ontological structure belonging to all communities while there nevertheless being criteria for distinguishing between different types of community that fall under that genus.<sup>2</sup> I draw on Husserl's concept of mereological proximity, which delimits a spectrum of organizational relations between parts and wholes while nevertheless maintaining the structure of part-whole unity. Drawing on this concept is not an arbitrary interpretive strategy, but corresponds, as I show, to the criteria Husserl himself used in his discussions of community. I begin by demonstrating different types of communities that arise in Husserl's writings and show how this has led to an inconsistent reception in the secondary

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<sup>1</sup> Tönnies (2000), pp. 17-19.

<sup>2</sup> Without an account of community differences, we have only an indiscriminate blanket covering over all forms of personal associations. To steal a phrase from Hegel, Husserl would then be providing nothing more than an account of "the night in which all cows are black."

literature, especially regarding community understood as a “personality of a higher order” (§2). I then appeal to Husserl’s theory of parts and wholes, focusing on his notions of intimacy and concatenation as two poles along a spectrum of mereological proximity (§3). The upshot of the chapter comes as I demonstrate how Husserl uses his own mereology to provide a taxonomy of different personal communities, such that different types of communities are distinguished on the basis of their loose or tight grouping (§4). In the end, I argue that Husserl’s concept of community is clarified and that interpretational ambiguities are minimized if we approach this domain by way of his own theory of parts and wholes (§5).

## §2. A Variety of Communities and the Secondary Reception

### 2.1 Distinguishing Types of Communities

Husserl has a very large usage of the concept of community (*Gemeinschaft*) and its cognates, encompassing group formations ranging from families and marriages to political states and supranational federations.<sup>3</sup> This breadth is nevertheless put forth by Husserl along with criteria for distinguishing between different types and levels of groups. Husserl’s taxonomic criteria are based in his mereology. An initial instance of a distinction between different types of communities is seen in discussions of communities of lower and higher “levels.” For example, Husserl makes reference to different levels of community groupings in his account of the socio-cultural world, drawing attention to the “sum total of social subjects of lower or higher levels [...] in communication with each other.”<sup>4</sup> In the “Kaizo articles,” Husserl again describes communities of varying types:

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Chapter I.

<sup>4</sup> *Ideas II*, pp. 206-207.

At times, a community functions as many-headed, yet is in a higher sense ‘headless’: namely, without having the unity of a focused, willing subjectivity that acts analogous to an individual subject. But it can also take on a higher form of life and become a ‘personality of a higher order,’ not as the carrying out of community performances that are the mere combined formations of individual personal achievements, but in the true sense of communal personal achievements as such, realized in their striving and willing.<sup>5</sup>

The first specification of a community type in this passage is of a “many-headed” or “headless” community lacking a focused unity, yet still existing and functioning as a whole. This kind of community is less organized or relatively unorganized, yet is still capable of functioning on autopilot. “Headless” functionalism amounts to a community existing over time while being only loosely organized or unorganized in regard to a shared goal, purpose, or explicit coordination of wills.

The second example of community from this passage goes beyond a less organized yet functional community to community understood as a highly organized and highly focused “personality of a higher order” (*Personalität der höheren Ordnung*, hereafter designated as PHO). As the passage suggests, there is more going on in a community understood as a personality than there is in the case of the community considered as “many-headed” or “headless.” The PHO is, as Husserl says, a “higher form of life.”<sup>6</sup> This form of community is put

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<sup>5</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 22: “Die Gemeinschaft ist eine personale, sozusagen vielköpfige und doch verbundene Subjektivität. Ihre Einzelpersonen sind ihre “Glieder”, funktionell miteinander verflochten durch vielgestaltige, Person mit Person geistig einigende “soziale Akte” (Ich-Du-Akte; Befehle, Verabredungen, Liebestätigkeiten usw.). Zeitweise fungiert eine Gemeinschaft vielköpfig und doch in einem höheren Sinne “kopflös”; nämlich ohne dass sie sich zur Einheit einer Willenssubjektivität konzentrierte und analog wie ein Einzelsubjekt handelte. Sie kann aber auch diese höherer Lebensform annehmen und zu einer “Personalität höherer Ordnung” werden und als solche Gemeinschaftsleistungen vollziehen, die nicht blosse Zusammenbildungen von einzelpersonalen Leistungen sind, sondern im wahren Sinne persönliche Leistungen der Gemeinschaft als solcher, in ihrem Streben und Wollen realisierte.”

<sup>6</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 22. Cf. *Hua XIV*, p. 201; *CM*, p. 132.



forth as having a clear vision of its purpose and tasks; the achievements of the community are explicitly understood as the byproducts of unified and focused joint activity of members.

Communities here exhibit cooperation and self-responsibility, with Husserl in some places referring to them as genuinely ethical communities.<sup>7</sup>

In the case of a community of a lower level, members are capable of being included in a community even without truly understanding the extent of their inclusion or their direct contribution to the purpose of the community at large. Such community membership can exist even when not contributing to an explicit shared goal. Husserl claims that community of a lower level means that community functions “without having the unity of a focused, willing subjectivity that acts analogous to an individual subject.”<sup>8</sup> This automatic functioning is what I refer to in what follows as the “anonymous” character of some communities.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, in communities understood as PHO, members are more “intimately” intertwined with each other and with the community as a whole, which amounts to their closeness to the activities, values, or interests relevant to the community.<sup>10</sup> A community as a

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<sup>7</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 204: “It [the ego] constitutes itself in the pure activity of subjects involved in associations and other personalities of a higher order, self-aware (*selbst-bewusste*) and posited by themselves; supremely the idea of an “ethical” humanity opposed to a mere community of influence.”

<sup>8</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 22: “Die Gemeinschaft ist eine personale, sozusagen vielköpfige und doch verbundene Subjektivität. Ihre Einzelpersonen sind ihre “Glieder”, funktionell miteinander verflochten durch vielgestaltige, Person mit Person geistig einigende “soziale Akte” (Ich-Du-Akte; Befehle, Verabredungen, Liebestätigkeiten usw.). Zeitweise fungiert eine Gemeinschaft vielköpfig und doch in einem höheren Sinne “kopflös”; nämlich ohne dass sie sich zur Einheit einer Willenssubjektivität konzentrierte und analog wie ein Einzelsubjekt handelte. Sie kann aber auch diese höherer Lebensform annehmen und zu einer “Personalität höherer Ordnung” werden und als solche Gemeinschaftsleistungen vollziehen, die nicht blosse Zusammenbildungen von einzelpersonalen Leistungen sind, sondern im wahren Sinne persönliche Leistungen der Gemeinschaft als solcher, in ihrem Streben und Wollen realisierte.”

<sup>9</sup> The technical sense of “anonymity” is developed in what follows.

<sup>10</sup> This “intimacy” and “closeness” will be explained in what follows

PHO knows itself as the community that it is through the explicit awareness of at least some of its members:

Everywhere we have a plurality of people with many personal capacities, with many streams of consciousness going into it and inserting many conscious acts – and yet there is “a spirit,” a personality of a “higher level” as the ideal bearer of a character, of a capability (a people’s style, the character of the people, etc.) with a consciousness that encompasses all the individual consciousnesses in some select, chosen few, etc.<sup>11</sup>

While lower level communities lack the feature of having the “unity of a focused willing subjectivity,” it is precisely this feature that is characteristic of a PHO. A less organized communal “we” is described by Husserl as a whole by virtue of having a loosely organized social subjectivity correlated with a shared surrounding world.<sup>12</sup> This, however, is opposed to an “intimate” community, which is said to have its own consciousness, self-consciousness,<sup>13</sup> or self-awareness.<sup>14</sup>

As I show in what follows, the kinds of communities that Husserl describes as PHO possessing a unified, focused willing are ones he also describes as more “intimate” (*innig*) or as

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<sup>11</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 199: “Überall haben wir da eine Vielheit von Personen mit vielen personalen Vermögen, mit vielen Bewusstseinsströmen, in sie eintretend und sich einfügend viele Bewusstseinsakte — und doch „ein Geist“, eine Persönlichkeit „höherer Stufe“ als ideeller Träger eines Charakters, eines Vermögens (Volksart, Volkscharakter etc.) mit einem Bewusstsein, das alle die Einzelbewusstseine in einiger Auslese umgreift usw.”

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Ch. 1.

<sup>13</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 49: “Auch diese fundierten Subjektivitäten können verschiedene Stufen haben und in höherer Stufe die Stufe der Personalität; eine Gemeinschaft als Gemeinschaft hat ein Bewußtsein, als Gemeinschaft kann sie aber auch ein Selbstbewußtsein im prägnanten Sinn haben, sie kann eine Selbstwertung haben und auf sie sich richtenden Willen, Willen der Selbstgestaltung.”

<sup>14</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 204: “Das Ich bekommt in Beziehung auf Vorgegebenheiten bleibende Eigenheiten, es entwickelt sich für sich und entwickelt sich in Gemeinschaft mit Anderen. Es konstituieren sich in relativer Passivität Gemeinschaften, die Einzelsubjekte als bleibend konstituierte und sich entwickelnde voraussetzen, aber sie auch in ihrer Entwicklung bestimmen. Es konstituieren sich in reiner Aktivität der beteiligten Subjekte Vereine und sonstige selbstbewusste und durch sich selbst gesetzte Personalitäten höherer Ordnung; zuhächst die Idee einer „ethischen“ Menschheit gegenüber einer blossen Wirkungsgemeinschaft.”

possessing “intimacy” (*Innigkeit*). This is a controversial claim for Husserl to make since intimacy is a technical mereological notion for him, and since some of his statements regarding the structure of intimacy suggest that it does *not* apply to relations between independent parts of a whole such as the individual persons constituting a community. The unity of a personal community, though, is achieved on the basis of individual persons as its parts. It is necessary to read Husserl’s notion of intimacy and intimate communities through the lens of his theory of parts and wholes. All forms of community according to Husserl possess the same ontological structure, but communities differ amongst one another by way of ranging along a spectrum from loosely bound, anonymous communities to tightly knit communities understood as intimate.

## 2.2 Conflicting Interpretations

There are numerous interpretations of Husserl’s concept of PHO. It would be confusing to approach Husserl’s notion of PHO on the basis of the secondary literature alone since we encounter ambiguities when comparing different receptions. Husserl indeed claims that PHO are communities of a higher, pre-eminent level, but it is not immediately clear what criteria to appeal to for understanding this pre-eminence. This has led some interpreters to set the bar high, suggesting that PHO will be rare, while others set the bar lower, allowing it to be achieved more easily.

Writers such as Philip Buckley, John Drummond, and Janet Donohoe suggest that PHO exist primarily in the form of authentic communities, understood as communities of completely self-responsible and rational individuals. Buckley presents PHO in regard to their founded nature, and in that way brings Husserl’s concept of community into contact with part of his mereology:

The personality of higher order is *founded* on the individuals who form the basis for the analogy. Higher order does not mean better or first, but founded. The community is different from the individuals who form it, it is more than the mere sum of the individuals who form it, it is in fact something new, but it cannot exist without the individual.<sup>15</sup>

At the same time, even though Buckley emphasizes the founded aspect of PHO, he elsewhere suggests that these specific forms of community are only achieved in the case of authentic communities:

The fact that “personality of a higher order” is linked to a vision of an authentic community, rather than resolving a tension between the individual and the collective which appears at the outset of Husserl’s reflections on personalities of higher order, actually seems to increase it. “Authenticity” is, after all, a notion essentially linked with individual existence and for Husserl it refers to a type of thinking which grasps itself, which knows both what it does and why it does what it does. When this notion is transferred to the “higher-order” individual—the community—it implies a collective thinking that grasps the meaning of itself in its entirety, which means grasping the meaning of the activity of each of its members.<sup>16</sup>

Buckley indeed appeals to the notion of intimacy in his discussion of communities understood as PHO:

The criticism, which might be taken as saying that only small groupings can be “authentic” communities (*Gemeinschaften*) while larger political groupings are merely functional collectivities of convenience (*Gesellschaften*), does in fact address somewhat the ambiguity in Husserl’s thought. Husserl’s reflections on the inauthenticity of most collective existence really is an attack on the functionalism of such groupings, and is a call for a more intimate and direct type of communal existence.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Buckley (1992), p. 114. Cf. Buckley (1992b), p. 220.

<sup>16</sup> Buckley (2000), p. 106. See also through p. 111.

<sup>17</sup> Buckley (2000), p. 111.

This reference to an intimate existence in the context of Husserl's concept of community is made, however, without further explication of the technical notion of intimacy from Husserl's *Logical Investigations*. Even though Buckley appeals to portions of Husserl's mereology, a difficulty remains in regard to how to distinguish between communities. Both authentic communities and functional collectivities will be founded on their members. Focusing on the notion of founding alone, though, is not enough to distinguish the organizations of different social groups from one another if it applies to all groupings.

As Drummond suggests, at least some (but definitely not all) communities as Husserl describes them are PHO, and this occurs when the community has "its own striving and willing life, analogous to that of an individual person."<sup>18</sup> Drummond continues to make the following two claims regarding Husserl on the topic of community. First:

The community [as opposed to society] is achieved in communicative, intersubjective experiences which go beyond mere common understanding and mutual communicative comprehension. These are the social acts in which one person seeks via a communicative experience to influence not only the understanding but the actions of another, and in them communities are formed.<sup>19</sup>

And second:

The community is fully achieved in these communicative, reciprocally interactive experiences in which we experience others as companions, colleagues, and co-workers [...] whose interpenetrating wills form a practical community of wills embodying a shared understanding of the world.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Drummond (1996), p.238.

<sup>19</sup> Drummond (1996), p. 245.

<sup>20</sup> Drummond (2000), p. 35.

The collective and comprehensive understanding of the community by authentic individuals (Buckley) and the joint actions achieved by the interpenetrative wills of community companions (Drummond) suggest a reading of Husserl's concept of PHO where the bar is set high. It is here not enough to simply influence others' understanding or mindlessly function amongst one another. The actions of others must be unified in some way with mine, and this must be done with an insightful grasp of what the community itself is set on accomplishing. Janet Donohoe shares this view insofar as she connects Husserl's PHO to the ethical self-responsibility of community members and their commitments to reason.<sup>21</sup> As Donohoe claims:

Because the community is understood to be of a higher order, it must be grounded upon the freely acting individuals that compose the community. This means that the individuals cannot be absorbed into the community but must absorb the communal goals into their own instead. This works against a communal domination of the individual. What this depends upon is the "authenticity" of the individual, which can only be maintained through the individual's self-responsibility that is apparent through the individual engagement in the process of renewal and critique.<sup>22</sup>

On the other hand, the writings of David Carr and Timo Miettinen suggest that the title of PHO applies more broadly even to communities that would not ordinarily be considered as authentic communities in the sense used by Buckley, Drummond, and Donohoe. Carr claims that it is through collectively subscribing to a shared story or set of stories that a community, understood as a PHO, maintains its unity over time.<sup>23</sup> On this account, all it takes for a PHO to exist is for a plurality of persons to endorse a collective narrative. Indeed, Carr even attributes

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<sup>21</sup> Donohoe (2004), pp. 137-138.

<sup>22</sup> Donohoe (2004), pp. 140-141.

<sup>23</sup> Carr (1983), p. 263.

the notion of a PHO to Husserl's discussion of the master-slave relationship, which is put forth as a version of a subordination-based community of will.<sup>24</sup> Husserl here presents a form of community where some individuals carry out the will of a master on the basis of a command. It is unlikely, however, that Husserl or interpreters such as Buckley, Drummond, or Donohoe would consider the master-slave relationship to be an authentic, ethical form of personal community. The reading of Husserl's PHO by Carr, then, is separate from an account of authenticity.

Miettinen is similar to Carr in the way he describes the criteria for a community to count as a PHO, claiming that "the idea of personality of a higher order does not say anything substantial about the different modes of social or political co-existence but it merely points towards the formation of a sense of commonness."<sup>25</sup> Communities understood as personalities of a higher order "were to be understood as subjectivities that have their own personal existence, a personal history (genesis) as well as a teleological structure."<sup>26</sup> The ground of Husserl's concept of PHO according to Miettinen is an interlacement that "is able to produce lasting "associations" (*Verbindungen*), which, by manifesting itself in abiding habitualities, make possible the different forms of practical co-operation."<sup>27</sup> The thematization of a sense of commonness and associations involving practical cooperation as sufficient criteria for PHO contrasts starkly with the high bar set by the first group of interpreters discussed above. It also calls into question the line between

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<sup>24</sup> Carr, (1983), p. 269.

<sup>25</sup> Miettinen (2013), pp. 216-217.

<sup>26</sup> Miettinen (2013), pp. 186-187.

<sup>27</sup> Miettinen (2013), p. 202.

lower level and higher level communities, since commonness and practical cooperation are compatible with what Husserl describes as the continued functioning of lower-level communities when they are “many-headed” or “headless.”

Thomas Szanto and Emanuele Caminada provide more recent examinations of Husserl’s conception of communities understood as PHO. According to Szanto’s interpretation of Husserl on the topic of collective intentionality, a PHO arises when there are multiple community members doing their part in pursuit of a shared goal, and when this has led to a higher order “proper subject of collective intentionality” that is said to jointly pursue that goal.<sup>28</sup> Szanto thereby holds a position that is stronger than Carr and Miettinen in regard to necessary criteria, as the latter group of interpreters did not require members of a PHO to engage in the pursuit of a shared goal.<sup>29</sup> More generally, Szanto claims that while Husserl does not have any clear criteria for community distinctions, we supposedly find enough textual evidence in support of a fourfold taxonomy of social types. For Szanto, this taxonomy of social types for Husserl is of intersubjective intentionality, socio-communicative intentionality, communal intentionality, and collective intentionality.<sup>30</sup> In what follows, I agree with the claim that Husserl provides us with a taxonomy of social types, though I differ from Szanto on how to make sense of these distinctions by focusing on Husserl’s mereology. Caminada, drawing on Husserl’s account of founding and the different ways in which a whole can arise on the basis of its parts, claims that Husserl’s account of PHO is of an emergent object arising from groups that are “founded in the acts of the

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<sup>28</sup> Szanto (2016), pp. 158-160.

<sup>29</sup> As will be shown in Chapter IV, this also draws attention to the potential overlap between Husserl and contemporary social ontologists such as Margaret Gilbert.

<sup>30</sup> Szanto (2016), p. 149.



subjects who endorse the position-taking of the group.”<sup>31</sup> In this case, it is not just that members of a community function together accidentally; they must rather explicitly endorse the positions of the group as a whole.

What’s clear from an assessment of the secondary literature on Husserl’s concept of community, and especially communities understood as PHO, is that they are inconsistent with one another regarding necessary and sufficient criteria. Husserl’s notion of founding is frequently cited in regard to the structure he puts forth for communities, but further detail is lacking in regard to the role of parts and wholes of the community, and especially the role that mereological proximity plays in the context of his theory of PHO.<sup>32</sup> As I argue, Husserl himself appealed to his notion of mereological proximity in delimiting different community types, and a proper taxonomy of community types should disentangle how he structures his appeals to mereology. Despite the ambiguity and conflicting interpretations found in the secondary literature, I suggest that Husserl’s position is actually coherent. In what follows, I propose that appealing more strictly to Husserl’s mereology clarifies Husserl’s concept of communities in their different types, and especially communities understood as PHO. This provides a clearer account of Husserl’s PHO than if we focused on the secondary literature alone.

### §3. Husserl’s Mereology

The following recap of Husserl’s mereology acts as a presupposition for more sophisticated mereological concepts such as mereological proximity that I argue are used by

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<sup>31</sup> Caminada (2016), p. 287.

<sup>32</sup> As mentioned in Chapter I, Waldenfels gestures to the role that some of Husserl’s mereological notions play in his conception of social communities.

Husserl as criteria for distinguishing between levels of community organization.<sup>33</sup> For Husserl, complex objects have parts and every part has an actual or possible whole to which it belongs.<sup>34</sup> Husserl distinguishes parts of a whole as being either pieces (*Stücke*) or moments (*Momente*). Pieces are independent or potentially independent parts; they can be detached while nevertheless continuing to exist.<sup>35</sup> Moments, on the other hand, are non-independent, abstract parts; they cannot exist individually apart from their inclusion in a whole.<sup>36</sup> A whole exists insofar as there is a foundational relation of dependence connecting all of the parts (both pieces and moments) and the whole.<sup>37</sup> Mereological relations of pieces to a whole are said to be associative or combinatory (*Verbindung*), while relations between moments are interpenetrative (*Durchdringung*).<sup>38</sup> A whole exists on the basis of founding, insofar as there is a relation of dependence unifying all of the parts (both pieces and moments) into the whole.<sup>39</sup> According to Husserl's theory, a mere collection of any group of objects whatsoever is an "aggregation," which he presents as a form of unity belonging only to thought, but not legitimately existing as a

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<sup>33</sup> Further discussion of this is given in Chapter I.

<sup>34</sup> *LI*, p. 4.

<sup>35</sup> *LI*, pp. 20-22, 29. E.g., the leaves, bark, and roots of a tree insofar as they are in principle separable from the tree as a whole.

<sup>36</sup> E.g., the green of a leaf and the extension of a leaf, which can be separated in abstraction, but not concretely separated.

<sup>37</sup> *LI*, p. 34/*Hua XIX*, p. 282. For a fuller discussion of Husserl's accounts of founding, see Chapter I.

<sup>38</sup> "The same whole can be interpenetrative in relation to certain parts, and combinatory in relation to others: the sensuous phenomenal thing, the intuitively given spatial shape clothed with sensuous quality, is (just as it appears) interpenetrative in respect of reciprocally founded 'moments' such as color and extension, and combinatory in respect of its 'pieces.'" *LI*, p. 35.

<sup>39</sup> "A content of the species A is founded upon a content of the species B if an A can by its essence (i.e., legally, in virtue of its specific nature) not exist, unless a B also exists." *LI*, p. 34.

whole.<sup>40</sup> These objects potentially exist in a unity even if they individually have nothing in common. On their own, though, these random objects do not form a unified whole insofar as they do not have anything in common.

What I am most interested in developing in this chapter is Husserl's mereological account of "mereological proximity," which provides an account of a metaphorical "distance" that obtains between parts and the whole to which they belong.<sup>41</sup> On this account, a part of a whole can be considered as a more immediate (*unmittelbar*) part of a whole, but a part of a part of a whole is a mediate (*mittelbar*) part of the whole (relative to less mediated, "closer" parts).<sup>42</sup> This distinction between immediate and mediate parts also goes by the names of proximate (*näheren*) and remote (*ferneren*) parts in Husserl's writing. Husserl claims that a part of a whole P(W) is closer to that whole than a part of a part of that whole, P(P(W)).<sup>43</sup> For example, if we consider a tree as a unified whole, its parts include its leaves, branches, trunk, and roots, all understood as pieces. These pieces also have parts, such as the green of the leaf, the spatial extension of the roots, and so forth. The latter parts of the tree are moments in Husserl's sense insofar as their existence requires supplementation from something else. In this case, the green moment of the leaf presupposes its spatial extension; the spatial extension of the roots similarly presupposes being extended with a certain color. Both the leaves and the color of the leaves are considered as parts of the tree as a whole, but Husserl's account of mereological proximity claims that the

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<sup>40</sup> *LI*, p. 38.

<sup>41</sup> As a reminder, "mereological proximity" is not a term that Husserl uses. I am for convenience using the term "mereological proximity" to refer to the account Husserl provides of relations between mediate/remote and immediate/proximate parts of a whole.

<sup>42</sup> *LI*, p. 30-32.

<sup>43</sup> *LI*, pp. 30-32.

pieces (leaves, roots, etc.) are “closer” to the tree as a whole than the moments of those pieces (color, extension, etc.) are to the whole of the tree. There is greater mereological proximity between the leaves and the tree than there is between the green of the leaves and the tree. Stated inversely, there is greater mereological remoteness between the green of the leaves and the tree than there is between the tree and the leaves themselves. The next two subsections (3.1 and 3.2) further examine different ways of appealing to the notion of mereological proximity, setting the stage for my argument that these directly factor into Husserl’s conception of the structures of different community types.

### 3.1 Intimacy as a Mereological Concept

I first draw attention to the concept of intimacy as a mereological concept. Husserl provides a precise account of what he means by intimacy, but it is not immediately clear how that concept can apply to communities. Since Husserl characterizes PHO as intimate communities, more must be said regarding the technical notion of the concept of intimacy. It is instructive to first appeal to an extended quotation from Husserl’s *Logical Investigations* to introduce its technical sense:

The unity even of independent objects is in consequence brought about by ‘foundation.’ Since they are not, as independent objects, ‘founded’ on one another, it remains their lot to ‘found’ new contents themselves, and to ‘found’ them together; it is only in virtue of this situation that these latter are thought of as unifying contents in respect of their ‘founding’ members. But the contents ‘founded’ on one another (whether one-sidedly or reciprocally) likewise have unity, and a disparately more intimate unity since less mediated unity [*und eine ungleich innigere, weil weniger vermittelte*]. Such ‘intimacy’ [*Innigkeit*] consists simply in the fact that unity is here not engendered by a novel

content, which again only engenders unity since it is ‘founded’ on many members separate in themselves.<sup>44</sup>

Husserl claims that there is intimacy of a greater degree when there are relations of foundation between contents, either in one-sided fashion or in reciprocal fashion. The mereological concept of intimacy here refers to a form of unity where there is mereological proximity in the context of a founding relation. This founding is relatively immediate (or less mediated) as opposed to being (more) mediated. Since Husserl’s notion of moments refers to contents that are essentially founded upon one another (e.g., color and extension in regard to reciprocal founding or notes and a melody for one-sided founding), such contents are said to possess the property of intimacy in the mereological sense. Even though Husserl does not explicitly say so, I presume on the basis of his concepts that reciprocal founding refers to a higher degree of intimacy than one-sided founding.

An example Husserl gives of one-sided founding is in the unified whole of a melody. While the notes of a melody can exist as distinct contents apart from the melody as a whole, the melody cannot exist in the absence of the notes. The melody necessarily depends on the notes for its existence in a way that is not reciprocated in the manner in which the notes themselves exist. In the case of one-sided founding, then, there is less intimacy between parts and the whole to which they belong insofar as the foundational dependency between the two is not reciprocal.

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<sup>44</sup> *LI*, pp. 36-37 (translation modified): “Folglich kommt auch die Einheit selbständiger Gegenstände nur durch Fundierung zustande. Da sie, als selbständige, nicht ineinander fundiert sind, so bleibt nur übrig, daß sie selbst, und zwar zusammen, neue Inhalte fundieren, welche nun um eben dieser Sachlage willen hinsichtlich der fundierenden "Glieder" einheitgebende Inhalte heißen. Einheit haben jedoch – und eine ungleich innigere, weil weniger vermittelte – auch die Inhalte, die ineinander (sei es wechselseitig oder einseitig) fundiert sind. Die "Innigkeit" liegt gerade daran, daß ihre Einheit nicht erst durch einen neuen Inhalt hergestellt wird, der ja seinerseits Einheit nur dadurch "herstellt", daß er in den vielen, an sich gesonderten Gliedern zusammen fundiert ist.”

Notes and a melody do not depend upon each other in the same way that color and extension depend upon each other. In the latter case, there is more intimacy because the moments mutually depend upon each other. Independent objects, furthermore, present us with far less intimacy insofar as they do at all not depend upon one another for their existence as pieces.

As seen in the passage above, the property of a whole and its parts being an “intimate” unity is stated as their existing in the form of a “disparately more intimate” (*ungleich innigere*) unity, and not simply as possessing intimacy or not. This suggests that the property of being intimate in the mereological sense, of a whole possessing intimacy, is a relative property that shows itself in the form of more-or-less. The more-or-less here is a relation of being mediated (*vermittelte*), and for that reason is a relation of mereological proximity.<sup>45</sup> In Husserl’s example of a melody understood as a whole, the notes of the melody are said to be closer to the melody than the moments of the notes such as their tone and intensity. The relation of the tones of the notes to the melody as a whole, then, is mediated through the notes, whereas the notes themselves have a more immediate relation to the melodic whole. Transposing this example by appeal to the notion of intimacy, we can say that the relation between a note and the intensity of the note is a more intimate unity than that between the intensity and the melody. The relation between the intensity and the melody is, as the inverse of the passage above, a much less intimate unity since more mediated. For these reasons, I suggest that Husserl’s notion of intimacy is a relative term, where the relativity refers us to a spectrum or continuum of mereological relations of mereological proximity.

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<sup>45</sup> *LI*, pp. 36-37.

At first, Husserl's notion of intimacy suggests that it is meant to apply exclusively to relationships of foundational dependency, such as the reciprocally founded moments of color and extension. Indeed, he says there is a more intimate unity in cases of one-sided or mutual founding, and these are relations he initially attributes only to moments. Nevertheless, once he has introduced his notion of founding, he reconsiders the ways in which independent objects (pieces) can belong together in the form of a whole:

It is an analytic proposition that 'pieces' considered in relation to the whole whose 'pieces' they are, cannot be founded on each other, either one-sidedly or reciprocally, and whether as wholes or in respect of their parts. But, on the other hand, we cannot at all conclude from the content of our basic definition that it is impossible that 'pieces' should enter into foundational relationships in regard to a more comprehensive whole [*umfassenderes Ganzes*] in which they all count as non-independent 'moments.'<sup>46</sup>

This passage asks the reader to consider pieces as moments under the circumstances of being included in a more comprehensive whole, whereas the definitions of pieces and moments from earlier on in the 'Third Investigation' presented the two as mutually exclusive. Husserl earlier defines moments as non-independent (i.e., dependent) parts, such that their existence is unthinkable in the absence of at least one other supplementary part. Pieces understood as independent parts can exist on their own without supplementation. What changes in this passage, though, is the inclusion of pieces into "a more comprehensive whole." Husserl suggests that we find examples of this possibility when we consider "empirically real natural connections" such as natural laws of causality.<sup>47</sup> To make this point, Husserl examines the unity of a series of causally

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<sup>46</sup> *LI*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>47</sup> *LI*, p. 42.

unfolding events. When abstracting from temporality, we can thematize independent visual contents, such as a thing's spatial extensity. When considered not as an abstract time segment, though, and instead as a unified temporal whole, formerly independent parts factor into experiences as a whole as moments insofar as their causal unfolding depends upon components from earlier time segments. Focus here is turned towards events as a whole instead of atemporal considerations. It is in this way that Husserl presents what he means by "a more comprehensive whole."<sup>48</sup> Beginning by thinking of things that are spatially and temporally separate, Husserl says:

If a particular causal law involves that a concrete process of change in a time-segment  $t_1$ - $t_0$ , is necessarily succeeded by a certain new process in the neighboring time-segment,  $t_2$ - $t_1$ , the former thereby loses independence in regard to the latter.<sup>49</sup>

This means that there is a relation of dependence such that the outcome of the event depends on circumstances that came before. Formerly independent things forfeit their independence and can then "count as non-independent 'moments.'"

Consider, for example, the visual components given through examination of a domino standing upright, components such as its extension in space, its white surface, and its black dots. Considered in abstraction from time, the domino as a whole can be considered as an entirely independent object in my visual field. If we shift our consideration to a flow of events in the case of a sequence of toppling dominos, however, things are different. If the comprehensive whole we

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<sup>48</sup> On Drummond's reading, Husserl's account of parts and wholes in the *Logical Investigations* "abstracts from the temporality of the experiences analyzed." Drummond (2008), p. 119. The passage appealed to here problematizes that claim.

<sup>49</sup> *LI*, p. 43.



consider is the unified whole event of falling dominoes, then the domino that was originally considered as an independent object in relation to my visual field becomes a dependent object in relation to the whole chain of events. It here loses its independence in the context of the event. The mess of toppled dominos at the end of the sequence causally depended on the dominos which were initially understood as independent pieces. It is in this sense that independent pieces come to be considered as moments of a more comprehensive, temporally extended whole within Husserl's mereology.

What these examples demonstrate is that pieces are considered by Husserl to be moments in some cases of temporally extended comprehensive wholes, such that independent pieces of a visual experience that are independent at an earlier time are not similarly independent when considered in relation to larger wholes. Since Husserl's notion of intimacy is of foundational dependency, this passage presents the possibility of independent objects (here understood as moments) existing in relations of intimacy. In what follows, I focus on persons as independent parts of a community whole. Given the possibility just examined regarding pieces considered as moments at the level of formal mereology, persons will in principle have the opportunity to count as moments of the community understood as a whole. If this is the case, then their existence as dependent moments will be more intimate in relation to the community whole than if they were merely independent pieces in abstraction from larger temporal contexts.

### 3.2 Concatenation and Anonymity

I now turn to Husserl's concept of concatenation (*Verkettung*). This is again a concept from his formal theory of parts and wholes that I argue factors into his conception of communities. Not all communities according to Husserl are intimate communities. If it is true

that Husserl's concept of community is built on the framework of his mereology, then more needs to be said about how mereology factors even into these less organized and more mediated types of communities.

For Husserl, a concatenation refers to a grouping of two or more associations, that is, a group of two or more groups of individual objects. In such a case, some of the members of the whole are related to others in an immediate way, while others are related in mediated fashion. As Husserl claims:

It often happens that a mode of association peculiarly unites two parts A, B into a partial unity [*Teileinheit*] which excludes other parts, but in which, further, B and not A is associated in just this manner with C. In this situation A is also associated with C, in virtue, that is, of a complex form of unity [*einer komplexen Einheitsform*] constituted by the two associations AB and BC. The latter association we then call immediate [*unmittelbare*], while we say that the association of A and C, achieved in the form ABC, is mediate [*mittelbare*].<sup>50</sup>

In this example, A and B form one association and B and C form another association. A “complex form of unity” can then exist between the two associations, whereby the associations AB and BC refer to two immediate associations, while the new “partial unity” of ABC involves mediation. It is especially the case that mediation exists here between A and C. Given that these are said to be relations of immediacy and mediacy, concatenations refer to one form of mereological proximity, existing more precisely as mereological remoteness in the case of the “distance” between mediated parts. While all complex objects for Husserl have parts, concatenations are made up of parts that are themselves unified wholes with their own parts. Husserl continues his discussion of the structure of concatenations:

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<sup>50</sup> *LI*, pp. 32-33.

Two associations form a concatenation, when they have some but not all members in common (i.e. do not coincide as when, e.g., the same members are united by several associations). Each concatenation is on this showing a complex association. Associations now divide into those which include concatenations and those which do not: associations of the former are combinations of associations of the latter sort. The members of an association that is free from concatenations are said to be *immediately associated* or nearby [*unmittelbar verknüpft oder benachbart*]. In every concatenation, and therefore in every whole containing concatenations, there must be immediately associated members, which belong to associations of parts which include no further concatenations. All other members of such a whole are said to be *mediately associated* with one another.<sup>51</sup>

The main aspect of concatenations that I draw attention to is their mediacy in regard to relations between parts and the whole. Given Husserl's concept of mereological proximity, the mediacy of concatenation means that there is more mereological remoteness between members of the concatenation and their concatenated whole than there is between the members of the associations founding the concatenation. As a contrast concept to intimacy as a foundational relationship of closeness or immediacy, I propose to refer to the mediated relations belonging to concatenations as anonymous or as possessing the property of anonymity. While the language Husserl uses to describe these communities is of their being mediated, and thereby as embodiments of mereological proximity, I use the term "anonymous" in what follows when referring to this formal-mereological concept in the context of personal associations.

The notion of "anonymity" or of something being "anonymous" shows up frequently in Husserl's writing.<sup>52</sup> Husserl ordinarily uses the term "anonymous" (*anonym*) and its cognates to refer to our quotidian, pre-reflective lifeworld. Such experiences contain components that remain

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<sup>51</sup> *LI*, p. 33. [Translation slightly modified, switching out "proximate" for "nearby."]

<sup>52</sup> *Crisis*, pp. 109, 112-113, 206, 264; *CM* pp. 47-48, 152-153; *Ideas II*, p. 384; *Phenomenological Psychology*, p. 112; "Amsterdam Lectures," pp. 217, 240, 242; "Phenomenology and Anthropology," p. 497.

hidden from reflective thematization in everyday life.<sup>53</sup> That which remains hidden are the active and passive syntheses such as identification and association that give sense to our world. For example, our individual surrounding worlds are apprehended and lived through in a straightforward fashion in what Husserl calls the “natural attitude,” such that we find ourselves thrown into socio-cultural surroundings without having to voluntarily will them into existence. In these situations, Husserl refers to the anonymous constitutive functioning of unthematic consciousness.<sup>54</sup> The process of reflection allows us, according to Husserl, to see beyond the processes of anonymous functioning in their ordinary hiddenness.<sup>55</sup> As Miettinen writes, other persons are incorporated into the structure of my perception not initially as objects of the act of empathy, “but as the anonymous [others] devoid of any spatio-temporal or personal existence.”<sup>56</sup> The hiddenness of these processes in our everyday life despite their functioning in the unity of consciousness makes Husserl’s notion of anonymity akin to the functioning of the loosely organized, “many-headed” or “headless” communities from his “Kaizo articles.” As suggested above, these communities are bound together in ways that need not be reflectively apparent to

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<sup>53</sup> *CM*, p. 47: “The phenomenologist, however, does not inquire with merely a naïve devotedness to the intentional object purely as such; he does not consider the intentional object only straightforwardly and explicate its meant features, its meant parts and properties. If that were all he did, the intentionality which makes up the intuitive or non-intuitive consciousness itself and the explicative considering, would remain ‘anonymous.’ In other words: There would remain hidden the noetic multiplicities of consciousness and their synthetic unity, by virtue of which alone, and as their essentially necessary unitary doing, we have one intentional object, and always this definite one, continuously meant – have it, so to speak, before us *as* meant thus and so; likewise the hidden constitutive performance by virtue of which (if consideration then continues as explication) we find straightforwardly as explicata of what is meant, such things as a “feature,” a “property” a “part” or mean these implicitly and can then discover them intuitively.”

<sup>54</sup> *Crisis*, p. 109.

<sup>55</sup> *CM*, p. 48; *PP*, p. 112.

<sup>56</sup> Miettinen (2014), p. 154. In a footnote, Miettinen draws attention first to Yamaguchi’s 1982 book which appeals to Husserl’s unpublished manuscripts dealing with the notion of anonymous empathy, and then to Zahavi’s 2001 text touching on the same topic. Cf. Miettinen (2013), p. 198.

individual members; they are mediate as opposed to immediate in regard to foundational dependency. In the language of Husserl's mereology, this means there is mereological remoteness between parts and the whole. The processes that are operative in the functioning of an individual subjectivity are mediate and require the careful reflections of the phenomenologist in order to be clearly discerned. Husserl's own usage of the notion of "anonymity," while admittedly not being used in the context of his writings on community, shares some of the fundamental features belonging to his descriptions of loosely organized communities, such as their existence in the form of concatenations. Given Husserl's description of lower level, loosely organized communities as managing to function on their own in the absence of purposive joint actions, his description of anonymity at the level of individual subjectivity meshes well with the functionalism of lower-level communities. This term is also helpful to use in this context insofar as it carries with it the sense associated with interactions within a community, especially when we do not know others very well.

Husserl's mereological concept of intimacy refers to relations of mereological proximity and immediacy whereas his concept of concatenation refers to relations of mereological remoteness and mediacy. In the case of intimacy, we find closer relations of dependence between parts and wholes, whereas concatenations refer to more remote relations of foundational dependence. The mediation that exists in the case of concatenations is, in turn, akin to the mediation of anonymity. I here use anonymity as a mereological concept (despite its absence from the *Logical Investigations*) insofar as it is conceptually opposed to his notion of intimacy, and insofar it embodies components of Husserl's theory of mereological proximity that cross over to matters of community.

#### §4. Loosely-Knit and Tightly-Knit Communities

There are a number of components from Husserl's mereology that are of relevance to personal communities and some of this has been touched on already in Chapter I. Importantly, his mereology highlights a type of unity that can belong to independent objects. Persons are at least in part considered to be independent objects, that is, as pieces in the context of a communal whole. A personal community is on Husserl's account a higher order object, which is to say that it is founded on its parts. The founding of a personal community is accomplished on the basis of individual persons and their social acts, that is, on the basis of their existence and interactions as independent objects. Husserl's mereology, therefore, provides an applicable schema for the part-whole relationship belonging to community. This schema further lays out the ways that actually existing communities can be distinguished from one another on the basis of their intimacy or lack thereof.

With this account of Husserl's mereology and the more specific concepts of intimacy and anonymity in place, I now show how Husserl uses these concepts in the context of his descriptions of communities and their various organizational levels. The relations between these types of community levels correspond, on my reading, to different kinds of mereological proximity of individual persons as parts in the context of a community whole. I first examine the structure of loosely-knit, "anonymous" communities, and then examine tightly-knit, "intimate" communities.

Husserl's writings suggest a spectrum or continuum between levels of community organization:

All [personal unities of a higher level], as far as their communication extends, a communication produced factually or one yet to be produced in accord with their own indeterminate open horizon, do not constitute merely a *collection* of social subjectivities, but instead they coalesce into a social subjectivity intimately organized to a greater or lesser degree [*mehr oder minder innig organisierten*], which has its common opposite pole in a surrounding world, or an external world, i.e., in a world which is *for* it.<sup>57</sup>

This structure of “greater or lesser” intimacy, of “loose or intimate” forms, shows up again in a discussion of intimacy and community in manuscripts in *Husserliana XV*. Husserl there refers to encounters in personal communities being organized in either a loose or an intimate form (*in loser oder inniger Form*).<sup>58</sup> It is once again seen in *Husserliana XLII* where he refers to community members being “devoted” more or less intimately (*mehr oder minder innig hingegeben*).<sup>59</sup> Husserl’s characterization of intimacy in the context of communities in the form of more-or-less is not an indication of imprecision or informal expression; given his earlier writings on parts and wholes, we should read his use of intimacy as an indication of relations of mereological proximity. This suggests an account of community organization operating along a spectrum ranging from relations of relative immediacy between parts and wholes on the one hand to mediate relations on the other. I start my examination of Husserl’s use of mereological proximity in the context of his concept of community at the “lower level” of loosely organized, anonymous communities.

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<sup>57</sup> *Ideas II*, p. 206 [translation modified]: “Alle solche Einheiten, soweit ihre faktisch hergestellte oder gemäß ihrem eigenen, unbestimmt offenen Horizont herzustellende Kommunikation reicht, konstituieren nicht nur eine Kollektion sozialer Subjektivitäten, sondern schließen sich zu einer mehr oder minder innig organisierten sozialen Subjektivität zusammen, die ihr gemeinsames Gegenüber hat in einer Umwelt, bzw. zu einer Welt, die für sie ist.”

<sup>58</sup> *Hua XV*, p. 59: “Indem auch neue Subjekte uns entgetreten und mit uns zur Gemeinschaft des personalen Lebens kommen, und in den verschiedensten Weisen und Stufen, in loser oder inniger Form, erwächst auch ein immer neuer Gehalt, eine immer neue Gemeinschaftskultur, die Umwelt als "unsere" Objektwelt bereichernd.”

<sup>59</sup> *Hua XLII*, p. 508: “Man lebt in Gemeinschaft und lebt mit – mehr oder minder innig hingegeben, eventuell aber auch flüchtig und schnell weggehend – ihr Unglück, ihre Schicksalsschläge und sieht, wie sie sich dabei verhalten.”

#### 4.1 Anonymous Communities

A mediated form of community, what I refer to as an anonymous community, is one whose members are only loosely bound together, but which still manages to function as a whole despite this loose binding. Mediation here refers to the kind of metaphorical “distance” Husserl discusses in the context of mereological proximity. I suggest that anonymous communities possess the formal structure of concatenations as found in Husserl’s mereology. One of the places we find the language of community organizations being “loose” (*looser*) is in Husserl’s *Cartesian Meditations*. Husserl there contrasts loose cultural communities (e.g., the European community) with narrower cultural communities (e.g., the French community).<sup>60</sup> By the functioning of a loosely bound community, I here just mean that the community is capable of remaining a unified whole and providing the background of beliefs, values, and actions for its members understood as parts even when members do not explicitly reflect upon or act in direct reference to the group. The notion of “loose” here refers to a relatively large degree of mereological remoteness (as opposed to mereological proximity), such that the community does not immediately depend on well-focused or cooperative, purposive joint actions. We can also read this looseness as members of the community whole not being dependent for their existence on the community. On Husserl’s account, the community itself is founded on its members, but

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<sup>60</sup> *CM*, p. 92. Cf. *CM*, p. 133: “Everyone, as a matter of apriori necessity, lives in the same Nature, a Nature moreover that, with the necessary communalization of his life and the lives of others, he has fashioned into a *cultural world* in his individual and communalized living and doing – a world having human significances, even if it belongs to an extremely low cultural level. But this, after all, does not exclude, either a priori or de facto, the trust that men belonging to one and the same world live in a loose cultural community – or even none at all – and accordingly constitute different surrounding worlds of culture, as concrete life-worlds in which the relatively or absolutely separate communities live their passive and active lives.”



this need not also mean that members are thereby founded on the community in reciprocal fashion.<sup>61</sup>

In “The Origin of Geometry,” Husserl focuses on geometry as a ready-made tradition, remarking that the entirety of the socio-cultural world exists in the form of a tradition.<sup>62</sup>

Language and linguistic communities are examples of such a tradition. Husserl suggests that a linguistic community (the group of those speaking and understanding the same language) is *not* a PHO insofar as it lacks an element that is present in the latter understood as more “genuine personal associations.” This does not, however, preclude it from being a personal community of another type. As Husserl says:

There needs to be separation between personalities of a higher order as genuine personal associations, and merely communicative communities as communities of influence; a language does not arise as a state constitution in the parliamentary state.<sup>63</sup>

The linguistic community is not an intimately bound PHO insofar as it lacks a unified, focused willing as a community agent. Individual persons can participate in a linguistic community for their individual purposes, and not with an eye to the goals of the linguistic community understood as a whole. Members of the linguistic community function as a unified whole without requiring deliberation on what the community’s purpose is; rather, members ordinarily engage in a linguistic community in an instrumental fashion, speaking, writing, and gesturing to one

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<sup>61</sup> To foreshadow, such reciprocity *will* be the case for intimate PHO. That is, the PHO is founded on its members, who are also founded on that whole.

<sup>62</sup> *OG*, p. 354.

<sup>63</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 201: “Da muss aber geschieden werden <zwischen> Personalitäten höherer Ordnung, echten Personalverbänden, und bloss kommunikativen Gemeinschaften, Wirkungsgemeinschaften; eine Sprache entsteht nicht so wie eine Staats Verfassung im parlamentarischen Staate.”

another.<sup>64</sup> While the existence of the linguistic community depends for its existence on its past and present members, the members of the community do not depend for their entire existence on the community. For example, all of the personal goals of an individual community member need not be constrained by their belonging to a linguistic community.

A linguistic community represents an anonymous form of community in the mereological sense insofar as it exhibits the features of a concatenation. Members of a linguistic community here have immediate communicative relations with some individuals, but have mediated relations or even no contact at all with other members (especially with members in the distant past). This is confirmed in Husserl's essay on "The Origin of Geometry." The linguistic community as described in this essay can be considered as an anonymous community insofar as historical sedimentations stand as a form of mediation between us and the original meanings of concepts.

One is conscious of civilization from the start as an immediate and mediate linguistic community [*unmittelbare und mittelbare Sprachgemeinschaft*]. Clearly it is only through language and its far-reaching documentations, as possible communications, that the horizon of civilization can be an open and endless one, as it always is for men.<sup>65</sup>

Nevertheless, we are able to function in the linguistic community despite this mediation or distance from the original meanings of linguistics concepts. There is here a forgetfulness of the original meanings underlying such concepts.<sup>66</sup> This is especially true, as Husserl points out, in

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<sup>64</sup> The case would be different here if individuals were to band together in the project of constructing a new language.

<sup>65</sup> *OG*, p. 358.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Buckley (1992). Also, see Chapter V on the notion of such forgetfulness understood as a form of socio-cultural crisis.

the case of “written, documenting linguistic expression.”<sup>67</sup> By writing expressions down, it becomes possible to communicate without actually encountering other individuals through a “personal address.”<sup>68</sup> The concepts of mediacy and immediacy Husserl refers to in this essay are the same as he developed in his formal mereology insofar as such mediation refers to a mereological distance from what was self-evident prior to being written down. The linguistic community here has the form of a concatenation, then, insofar as members are at a mediated remove from understanding the linguistic community as a whole to which they belong.

Another example of an anonymous community in Husserl arises as he refers to communities such as large political states where the vast majority of members are unknown to others. Our primary mode of experience of the community as a whole, then, is by way of encountering strangers. In these cases, Husserl acknowledges that “my spiritual influence propagates without my intention to unknown persons and environments that do not need to know of me.”<sup>69</sup> For Husserl, a political community is often a unified whole of this sort where not everyone knows one another; our primary encounter in this type of personal totality is with strangers in public:

A state is a personal totality, even though not everyone knows everyone else, as also happens in a bigger club. The manner in which a personal association is established [*herstellt*], of course, must emanate from the actual empathy [*aktuellen Einfühlung*] and the actual arrangement or arise in natural subordination, etc., emanating from the status of personal contact or communication. However, the basis of personal associations must

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<sup>67</sup> *OG*, p. 360.

<sup>68</sup> *OG*, p. 360.

<sup>69</sup> *Hua XIV*, 195: “Meine geistige Wirkung pflanzt sich fort, ohne meine Absicht, in unbekannte Personen und Umgebungen, die auch von mir nichts zu wissen brauchen (personale Wirkungsgemeinschaften ohne Einheit einer umspannenden Gemeinschaftswollung und -handlung).”

then be considered in mediate ways [*mittelbaren Wegen*] when the people remain “unknown” [*unbekannt*].<sup>70</sup>

The indirectness of our interactions with unknown others in public still refers to the existence of a unified community whole, but this indirectness indicates that such a community is mediated by factors beyond our concrete face-to-face interactions with others and beyond our immediate relation to the community as a whole. In the case of a political state, the foundations of the personal association are “indirect” such that even those who remain unknown are included as members of the political community.<sup>71</sup> This indirect foundation and the state as a personal whole still, for Husserl, constitutes a practical community that includes all full citizens.<sup>72</sup>

Consider the difference between the members of a family and the members of a large supranational community. In the former case, members will know one another as individuals. In the latter case, it is likely that the majority of one’s interactions with others will be with strangers. In such a case, our relation as individual parts to the supranational community whole is far more mediated than our relation to fellow family members. This example is analogous, then,

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<sup>70</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 182: “Ein Staat ist eine personale Ganzheit, obschon da nicht jeder jeden kennt, so wie auch schon in einem grösseren Verein. Die Art, wie sich eine personale Verbindung herstellt, muss freilich von der aktuellen Einfühlung und aktuellen Verabredung oder natürlich erwachsenden, aber im Status personaler Berührung oder Mitteilung sich stiftenden Unterordnung etc. ausgehen. Esmüssen dann aber die Stiftungen von personalen Vereinigungen auf mittelbaren Wegen erwogen werden, wobei die Personen „unbekannt“ bleiben.” The role of empathy in the context of community is turned to more fully in Chapter III. Also see Taipale (2016), “From Types to Tokens: Empathy and Typification.”

<sup>71</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 182. It’s perhaps for this reason that Husserl considers these forms of community as “peculiar.” Cf. Flynn (2012).

<sup>72</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 182: “Veränderungen natürlich erwachsender personaler Gemeinschaften (oder Personalitäten höherer Ordnung) durch partielle Verwandlung in eine Willensgemeinschaft. Im Staat: eine Willensgemeinschaft hinsichtlich aller Vollbürger. Die noch nicht Wahlberechtigten, noch nicht an den staatlichen Funktionen Beteiligten bilden ein Heer von Heranwachsenden, sich bei entsprechender Reife frei Unterordnenden und sofern zur Willensgemeinschaft Zugehörigen. Aber sie können durch ihren Willen nicht mitwirken an der Staatsverfassung oder ihrer Veränderung. Doch das ist unzureichend und bedarf eigener Überlegungen.”

to the example Husserl provides in his ‘Third Investigation’ regarding the difference of mereological proximity between the notes belonging to a melody and the moments of those tones and the melody. Larger, more mediated communities show the characteristics Husserl attributed to concatenations in his formal mereology. A large supranational community will contain different associations within itself, and it is possible that individual persons will have more immediate relations to smaller personal associations than to the supranational community as the concatenation of all of those associations and institutions.<sup>73</sup>

In the concatenated unity ABC of associations AB and BC, parts A and C are related to one another and to the concatenated unity as a whole, but only mediately; there is mereological remoteness in this unity. An example can help to concretize this. If one person, Anne, is friends with Betty, and Betty is friends with Caroline, then there is a basis for saying that when all three are engaged in an activity that Anne has an associative relation to Caroline even when the latter two are not friends in the strict sense. Here, though, the relation of Anne to Caroline is as a “friend of a friend,” which is mediated by their mutual friendship with Betty. In Husserl’s language, there is here a “partial unity” (*Teileinheit*) between Anne and Caroline, and mediate association between all three.<sup>74</sup> Put otherwise, the two immediate associations of Anne-Betty and Betty-Caroline together constitute the mediate association Anne-Betty-Caroline. In the case of large-scale political communities, there are some individuals I know in a close, personal sense, but I am also related to others in the community that are unknown to me by virtue of belonging to the same whole. To reiterate, Husserl’s description of concatenations says that “Two

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<sup>73</sup> This feature of nesting is referred to as the “inclusiveness” of a social group by Gilbert. I return to this as a feature of political communities in Chapter IV.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. *LI*, p. 32.

associations form a concatenation, when they have some but not all members in common.”<sup>75</sup> For a large political community, it is unlikely that I will have a close common bond with all fellow members. I will know some members closely while others will only be encountered by me as strangers. I thereby approach the latter as fellow citizens, but as members that are more remote from me in terms of mereological proximity.

In his writings on supranational communities like “Europe,” Husserl recognizes the ways in which some communities can be nested in others:

Personal life means living communalized as “I” and “we” within a community-horizon, and this in communities of various simple or stratified forms such as family, nation, supranational community.<sup>76</sup>

Furthermore:

Here the title “Europe” clearly refers to the unity of a spiritual life, activity, creation, with all its ends, interests, cares, and endeavors, with its products of purposeful activity, institutions, organizations. Here individual men act in many societies of different levels: in families, in tribes, in nations, all being internally, spiritually bound together, and, as I said, in the unity of a spiritual shape.<sup>77</sup>

Even when anonymous communities exist in the absence of clear, enduring goals, we still find that they can be bound together and unified according to looser criteria. Husserl suggests that community life already exists when we encounter instances of interpersonal civility between

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<sup>75</sup> *LI*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>76</sup> *VL*, p. 270.

<sup>77</sup> *VL*, p 273.

strangers.<sup>78</sup> While communalization in the forms of civil procedures or etiquette do not speak to explicit, goal-directed action, they still allow for anonymous community organization, as individuals are mediated by overarching conventions. These norms are the norms of a community, and not idiosyncratic rules for specific individuals.

I have here made a case for ways that Husserl describes some communities in their loose, anonymous forms of organization. In these types of communities, we encounter the mereological structure of concatenations. This refers to one pole of a spectrum of mereological proximity regarding the parts and the whole of a community. Communities understood as loosely organized or anonymous can now be contrasted with communities of a higher level, that is, with tightly-organized, intimate communities.

#### 4.2 Intimate Communities

Husserl characterizes the structure of some communities as analogous to unified human personalities that are capable of valuing and acting as a unified whole. It is in these instances that we encounter his notion of communities understood as PHO. We see examples of this in his accounts of communities such as practical communities of will, communities based on personal love, and some of the earliest philosophical communities. Husserl presents these communities as intimate communities, and I argue that this property of intimacy used in these contexts should be understood according to the meaning it has in Husserl's theory of parts and wholes. As a reminder, Husserl's notion of intimacy refers to relations of mereological proximity such as reciprocal foundational dependence and, to a lesser degree, in cases of one-sided dependence.

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<sup>78</sup> *Hua XV*, p. 423

The initial characterization Husserl provides of intimacy in his *Logical Investigations* suggests that it applies to moments and not to pieces. On that basis alone, it would be a surprising term for describing communities as founded on individual persons as their pieces. Nevertheless, I demonstrated how Husserl allows pieces to be considered as moments in cases of more comprehensive extended wholes that exist over a span of time.<sup>79</sup> Understanding communities as intimate will require showing how relations of one-sided or reciprocal dependence exist, even when these relations are not as reciprocally dependent as moments such as color and extension. The project of showing how intimacy is in play in regard to a community is possible, however, insofar as it is a form of mereological proximity, and insofar as mereological proximity refers us to a spectrum. I now highlight instances where Husserl directly refers to communities as intimate. If my reading is correct, we should expect to find instances of mereological proximity regarding relations between different parts of the whole and between the parts and the whole itself. On that basis, I then focus on Husserl's notion of PHO, since he often refers to them as intimate communities.

One particular type of community described by Husserl as intimate is a community based on personal love. What I want to guard against from the beginning of this discussion, though, is a conflation of or ambiguity regarding love and intimacy. While love definitely can possess emotional and sexual connotations, intimacy means something specific in Husserl's philosophy, and does not carry those connotations.<sup>80</sup> The injunction to be wary of conflating love and

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<sup>79</sup> *LI*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>80</sup> To be clear, I am not engaging in a philosophical investigation of Husserl's specific understanding of love. I am taking the notion of love as something vague, involving emotional and/or sexual components. Husserl describes love as a "lasting disposition," a "lasting practical habit," and as arising for the ego which is a "pole of affections and actions" (*Hua XIV*, p. 172). As such, I am taking this notion of love to not be a technical term to the extent that intimacy is. The topic of love is a complex topic in the context of Husserlian phenomenology. There is a debate that



intimacy, then, is more than just a piece of cocktail party advice, but amounts to a mereological category mistake. If we understand intimacy through Husserl's mereology, then we can see the possibility for intimacy in the absence of a strong emotional bond of love. Personal associations of love can possess intimacy (in the mereological sense), but not all cases of intimacy (again in the mereological sense) involve love.<sup>81</sup>

Some communities, according to Husserl, exhibit reciprocal (*wechselseitig*) relations between members and between members and the community as a whole. When this reciprocity is present in the context of joint actions, we get what Husserl refers to as a "practical community of will" (*Die praktische Willensgemeinschaft*).<sup>82</sup> Since Husserl has elsewhere referred to communities as founded wholes, and since reciprocity plays a role in the existence of practical communities of will, this lends support to my claim that Husserl is using his mereology in these discussions. In these cases, it's possible that we will have an intimate community to the extent that my will is reciprocated by another person's will and that we together found a community

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has unfolded between James Hart and John Drummond that focuses on the intentional structure of the act of loving, which amounts to a discussion of the intentionality of the emotions more broadly construed. I want to emphasize that I am not here entering this debate. The reasons I feel I am able to bring up love in the way that I do without entering this debate are twofold. First, I am not in this chapter addressing the topic of intentionality, and am therefore not addressing a more specific account of the intentionality of love as an emotion. Rather, my approach is of an ontological nature, asking what kind of object a community is, not how it is the correlate of intentional consciousness. Second, my focus is on the love insofar as it exists as a unifying principle for a *community*, and am not dealing with individual instances of love.

<sup>81</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 172: "The ego is the pole of affections and actions, as it is a unity pole passing through the striving of the whole flowing consciousness. Striving in its various modalities makes the life of the ego; all intentionality that constitutes the form of mental possessing, freely available, acquired units of existence, and of valuable or useful existence, is a structure of striving and eventually the "conscious" will. However, I come with others in a community of striving, so I live as I in him and he in me. But it then comes to the type and intimacy of this community on the extent of the intertwined-security of I and Thou, to the extent of the relevant community of striving and further on various other points. Not every community is a reciprocal community, and not every reciprocity is a community of love."

<sup>82</sup> *Hua XIV*, pp. 169-170.

through a joint action.<sup>83</sup> When Husserl introduced his notion of intimacy in the *Logical Investigations*, he claimed that there was intimacy between the non-independent moments insofar as they were immediately and reciprocally dependent upon one another. This is seen most strongly in the case of mutual dependency between color and extension; neither can exist without the other. In the case of a shared practical action, “we” accomplish something as a group, even though the group is founded on members as independent objects. Each member of the community is then a part of the whole in the sense of an intimate unity, existing as “close” to the whole in the mereological sense of mereological proximity. The whole in question, then, is not the kind of whole approachable in an abstract time segment, but is in Husserl’s sense a “more comprehensive whole.” I depend on your cooperation and you depend on mine in pursuit of our shared task. Perhaps, furthermore, there is here a history of such dependence in the form of a tradition. Without this reciprocity in the case of a cooperative practical community, the community ceases to exist. This reciprocal dependency means an activity is one of reciprocal foundation, and the comprehensive whole of our practical community of will is thereby intimate.

The reciprocity that is found in a practical community of will in general is extended to examples Husserl provides of personal love, such as in the case of a marriage. A marriage is a personal association characterized as a personal whole.<sup>84</sup> In the context of a marriage, Husserl suggests that there is a personal unity involving an “intimate linkage” (*innige Verknüpfung*)

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<sup>83</sup> *Hua XIV*, pp. 169-170: “Ist das Verhältnis gestiftet, so ist jede Handlung, in der es in Erscheinung tritt, charakterisiert als aus der stiftenden Willensverflechtung der beiden Personen hervorgehend. Ich befehle, ich als Herr, er folgt „pflichtgemäss” als Diener, im Bewusstsein des Sich-unterworfen-habens, Unterworfensehns, und hinsichtlich des Tuns im Bewusstsein seiner Pflichtgemässheit.”

<sup>84</sup> *Hua XIV*, pp. 182: “Eine Sprachgemeinschaft ist keine personale Verbindung, die ein personales Ganzes schafft, wohl aber eine Ehe, selbst wenn sie eine „moderne” Ehe ist.”

between the partners.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, Husserl describes marriage as “the most intimate unity” (*innigsten Einheit*). Requests and agreements represent the emergence of a community that comes together explicitly for the purpose of jointly accomplishing a task.<sup>86</sup> In the general structure of a practical community of will, Husserl claims that my will is thoroughly intertwined with your will such that there is reciprocal fulfillment; my actions realize your will and your actions realize my will. Our cooperation involves reciprocal dependency:

[In the] community of will, agreement can also be reciprocal, resulting in a reciprocal arrangement. I fulfill your wish if you fulfill mine, I’m doing this to benefit you and you do this for my benefit. Furthermore, we both wish that something should be done, so we “share” our decision; I do one part and you do the other part. Etc. S1 and S2 want the same G, not each for himself, but S1 wants G just as S2 equally wants it, the will of S2 belongs to that willed by S1 and vice versa. That the part D1 is realized by S1 and D2 by S2 in turn lies in the will decided on by both, and is for both resolved as “means” (in the broad sense), or as what belongs to its realization and to the intent.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 220: “Was ist hier Sinngebende, was schafft die engere personale Einheit mit Einheit des Lebens, obschon sich die Personen nicht kennen und keine solche konkret anschauliche und personal so innige Verknüpfung da ist wie bei einer Ehe, z.B.?”

<sup>86</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 170: “In the request, we have a temporary relationship; the communication of my desire will, I hope, act as a motive for his will, my desire and my hope are addressed to them in that its acknowledgement by the addressee will move him to obey it. The request regards his desire, his will, his conduct; so that it is not addressed to him, but it is carried by the message through which the executive with her acknowledgment, and in the contact between I and Thou.” “In der Bitte haben wir ein vorübergehendes Verhältnis; die Mitteilung meines Wunsches wird, hoffe ich, als Motiv für seinen Willen wirken, mein Wunsch und meine Hoffnung, dass seine Kenntnisnahme durch den Adressaten <ihn bewege, ihm Folge zu leisten >, sind an diesen gerichtet. Der Wunsch betrifft sein Streben, Wollen, Tun; damit ist er noch nicht an ihn gerichtet, sondern er ist es durch die Mitteilung, durch die mit ihr sich vollziehende Kenntnisnahme, und in der Berührung von Ich und Du.”

<sup>87</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 170: “Willensgemeinschaft, Einverständnis kann dann auch ein wechselseitiges sein, endend in einer wechselseitigen Vereinbarung. Ich erfülle deinen Wunsch, wenn du den meinen erfüllst, ich tue das dir zugute, wenn du dafür mir jenes zugute tust. Ferner: Wir wünschen beide, dass etwas geschehe, wir entschliessen uns „gemeinsam“, ich tue davon den Teil, du den anderen Teil. Usw. S1 und S2 wollen dasselbe G, aber nicht jedes für sich, sondern S1 will G als von S2 gleichfalls Gewolltes, der Wille des S2 gehört mit zum Gewollten des S1 und umgekehrt. Dass S1 den Teil D1 realisiert und S2 D2, das liegt wiederum im Willen beider beschlossen, und ist für beide beschlossen als „Mittel“ (im weiteren Sinn) oder als zur Realisierung gehörig, vorher aber zur Absicht.”

In addition to reciprocal communities on the basis of explicitly agreed upon plans, Husserl claims there are also instances of an implicit intertwining of wills. In his discussion of a community of love, Husserl suggests that there is an intertwining of wills, such that the strivings and willings of one member are immediately realized through the strivings and willings of another member without the necessity of an explicit request. In the case of a community based on implicit reciprocal love, I accomplish a task, and in that way I fulfill a task for you without necessarily requiring a request.<sup>88</sup> For example, Husserl writes that:

Each [of the lovers] produces not merely reciprocal communications, operates not merely with regard to the community of knowledge with their common environment and the like. But in that they have been connected to a community of love in a universal way, all aspirations of the one are received in the striving of the other, and one has been received from all, and vice versa. [...] Even in the life activities of each of the lovers that are taking place other than in contact, of which the respective other knows nothing in the greatest extent, [each] lives *implicitly* the will of the other.<sup>89</sup>

Furthermore, in the case of communities based on personal love, Husserl says that “lovers do not live alongside one another and with one another, but in one another (*ineinander*), actually and potentially.”<sup>90</sup> The members of this kind of community are so “close” in the sense of mereological proximity that they are said to be “in” one another.

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<sup>88</sup> *Hua XIV*, pp. 172-174.

<sup>89</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 173: “Vorher: Sie machen einander nicht bloss wechselseitige Mitteilungen, betätigen nicht <bloss> Gemeinschaft der Kenntnisnahme hinsichtlich ihrer gemeinsamen Umgebung u. dgl. Sondern darin, dass sie sich zu einer Liebesgemeinschaft verbunden haben, liegt, dass in universaler Weise alles Streben des einen in das Streben des anderen eingeht bzw. ein für allemal eingegangen ist und umgekehrt. [...] Selbst in den Lebensbetätigungen eines jeden der Liebenden, die sich ausser Berührung abspielen, von denen in grösstem Ausmass der jeweilige andere also gar nichts weiss, lebt imfilicite der Wille des anderen.”

<sup>90</sup> *Hua XIV*, pp. 173-174: “Wir können sagen: Liebende leben nicht nebeneinander und miteinander, sondern ineinander, aktuell und potentiell.”

If these descriptions are to be invoking anything more than artistic license, an account must be given of how this interplay of extreme metaphorical closeness plays out. I believe that Husserl's mereological concept of intimacy can provide such an account. It is not that these lovers are in each other in any literal sense (in the sense of pieces), but given the possible relations of dependency between parts and wholes in Husserl's theory, this is not the only option for reading this statement. The lovers are reciprocally in their love-based personal association as moments of the communal whole. Indeed, Husserl here even uses the term "interpenetrative" (*Durchdringung*), a term he introduced in his 'Third Investigation.'<sup>91</sup> Interpenetrative relations were there contrasted with combinatory relations, where relations of interpenetration refer to relations of dependence and relations of combination refer to relations of aggregation. In the context of the community of love, Husserl claims that there is a "loving interpenetration" (*liebende Durchdringung*), indicating such relations of dependence between lovers in the formation of their community.

Cases of personal love provide a venue where colloquial interpretations threaten to prevent us from understanding Husserl's ontological structure of communities in general and his notion of intimacy in particular. From the perspective of an informal, colloquial interpretation, we might read this discussion of communities based on personal love as a contingent interpersonal relationship marked with emotional features. On the other hand, we can appeal to Husserl's mereology in order to clarify the notion of intimacy, whereby we see that this means there is a less mediated relation between founding parts and the founded whole. Less mediated relations in the mereological sense at least means that the whole directly depends on members in

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<sup>91</sup> *LI*, p. 35.

the sense of a one-sided founding dependence. In more intimate communities, the members may in part depend upon the community for some component of their existence, in which case there is a reciprocal founding. Given the sense that Husserl establishes for the concept of intimacy in the *Logical Investigations*, I suggest that communities based on personal love are “intimate” communities. This amounts to the individual members being in a relation of mereological proximity to the whole, less mediated as opposed to mediate.

Husserl is explicit that some philosophical communities are capable of being intimate communities. In his discussion of the origins of philosophy in ancient Greece, Husserl describes the early philosophical community as an intimate community:

A new and intimate community [*innige Gemeinschaft*]—we could call it a community of purely ideal interests—develops among men, men who live for philosophy, bound together [*verbunden*] in their devotion to ideas, which not only are useful to all but belong to all identically.<sup>92</sup>

Wholes can be interpenetrative (*Durchdringung*) in some respects and combinatory (*Verbindung*) in others, and in this passage, we clearly encounter both relations. The interpenetration here is indicative of community intimacy. This passage provides strong support for the mereological interpretation insofar as the binding of the members of the philosophical community is achieved on the basis of a shared commitment to ideal, theoretical interests. This provides an example of a community bound together in an intimate manner through an identity in the activities of the parts of the communal whole. We find the same structure of intimacy here as was found in the case of an explicit practical community of will and in a marriage insofar as

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<sup>92</sup> VL, p. 287.

the individual members are “close” to the tasks pursued by the community as a whole; the community’s achievements closely depend on the founding parts (the philosophers). The philosophical community depends on the labor of philosophers, while individual philosophers in part depend on the achievement of the community at large in pursuit of their philosophical goals. If it is actually true that these individuals “live for philosophy,” then there is here reciprocal dependency, and the community is intimate in the mereological sense.

I have here provided a few examples from Husserl’s writing that highlights the use he makes of the terms “intimate” and “intimacy” to describe certain types of communities. Husserl put forth these types of communities as having a focused, unified willing. Why does this matter? I am suggesting that there is a property that is possessed by communities understood as PHO that is not possessed by lower level communities such as linguistic communities or large, supranational communities. That property, I claim, is intimacy, and this amounts to an immediate or relatively unmediated mereological proximity of parts (individual persons) to the whole that they have founded (the community). A PHO, unlike more anonymous communities, will not have the mereological structure of concatenations. In an intimate PHO, there is one-sided or reciprocal founding between parts and wholes, and this founding is “proximate” or “close.”

Husserl characterizes at least some personal communities as “personalities of a higher order.” Husserl puts forth these PHO as a “pre-eminent” type of community, and he often discusses them as existing on a higher level in comparison with lower level, “headless” communities.<sup>93</sup> Husserl presents a community understood as a PHO as a distinct, person-like entity with valuing and actions of its own. For example, Husserl writes that:

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<sup>93</sup> *CM*, p. 132.

A [university] faculty has convictions, desires, volitional resolutions, it becomes responsible for actions, as an association, a people, or a state. And also we can speak strictly, but according to higher levels, speak of a capacity, of character, of disposition, and so on.<sup>94</sup>

The valuing and volitions of this kind of community are founded on the lives of individual members. A new, founded entity has come into being through the relations of individuals when arranged in such a way that a personal community emerges.<sup>95</sup> As a PHO, a university faculty would be intimate if its existence was founded on individual members, and if the existence of individual members depended in part on their community-based identification. For example, if part of my personal identity means being a professor of philosophy in a specific academic department, I am partially dependent on the existence of that higher order comprehensive whole even when I am a founding member.

As Husserl allowed in his theory of parts and wholes, relations of foundational dependence can exist not only in cases of one-sided or reciprocally founding moments, but can also apply to independent objects when they are grouped together over time. In such cases, the

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<sup>94</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 201: “Es ist also keine blosse Analogie, wenn wir von einem Gemeingeiste z.B. sprechen, kein blosses Bild, ebensowenig als wenn wir korrelativ von einem Gebilde wie der Sprache sprechen oder der Sitte usw. Eine Fakultät hat Überzeugungen, Wünsche, Willensentschlüsse, sie vollzieht Handlungen, ebenso ein Verein, ein Volk, ein Staat. Und auch von Vermögen, von Charakter, von Gesinnung usw. können wir im strengen, aber entsprechend höherstufigen Sinn reden.”

<sup>95</sup> *Hua XIV*, pp. 200-201: “Die gemeinsame, die verbundene Persönlichkeit als „Subjekt“ der gemeinsamen Leistung ist einerseits Analogon eines individuellen Subjekts, andererseits aber nicht bloss Analogon, sie ist eine verbundene Personenvielheit, die in ihrer Verbindung eine Einheit des Bewusstseins (eine kommunikative Einheit) hat. Innerhalb der Vielheit der auf die Einzelpersonen verteilten Willen hat sie einen für sie alle identisch konstituierten Willen, der keinen anderen Ort, kein anderes Substrat hat als die kommunikative Personenvielheit; und so für andere „einheitlich“, sozial konstituierte Akte, jedes Ich ist Subjekt der Handlung, aber jedes in einer Funktion, und so ist die verbundene Einheit aller Vollsubjekt. Es ist ein einheitliches Substrat; wie das Ich, die Person, Substrat ist für ihre individuellen Akteinheiten und bleibenden Akte, so ist die kommunikative Personenvielheit Substrat: Sie ist da keine Vielheit, sondern eine in Vielheiten fundierte Einheit, und sie ist Substrat für „Akte“ als Akteinheiten und für bleibende Akte, Akte, die selbst konstitutive Einheiten höherer Stufe sind, die ihre fundierenden Unterstufen in den betreffenden einzelpersonalen Akten haben.”



independent objects take on the features of moments. Personal communities are founded on their individual members which are independent objects. Since persons as independent objects together found the new higher-order, complex objects which are communities that persist over time, we must on Husserl's account also consider persons as moments of the community whole.

#### §5. Conclusions

As these passages suggest, the unity of "personal unities of a higher level" comes in degrees, and it is the notion of this "greater or lesser" that catches my interest. The unity of community is here organized according to different levels of intimacy or anonymity. Both are unified forms of community according to Husserl, but what separates them on my reading (and what I have argued is Husserl's strategy) is the mereological proximity between parts and wholes. I have claimed that Husserl's concept of communities understood as PHO are intimate forms of community, and that this must be understood according to the sense it has in his theory of parts and wholes. An intimate community, on that basis, amounts to individual members (the parts) being in more immediate relationships of dependence with the community (the whole). These arguments were given as I contrasted a colloquial interpretation and a mereological interpretation of Husserl's concept of community.

Community for Husserl is founded as a whole on persons who are parts, and their founding gives rise to something distinct in the form of a community. If this founding is "loose," the community can be understood as an anonymous, lower-level community. Members here are at a further "distance" from the whole in terms of mereological proximity. The structure of these anonymous communities is akin to concatenated wholes. If the founding is "intimate," then the community is a PHO. Founding members of a PHO are "closer" to the community as a whole

considered according to mereological proximity. For Husserl, communities exist along a spectrum ranging between the extremes of anonymous and intimate inward organization.

How, then, do matters stand in regard to the conflicting interpretations of Husserl's concept of PHO in the secondary literature? I suggest that these secondary accounts are getting something right, but they do not show the entirety of Husserl's conception of community. I highlighted above two main camps of interpretation. The first (including but not limited to Buckley, Drummond, and Donohoe) was of interpreters who set the criteria for PHO at the high level of individual and communal authenticity. The second (including but not limited to Carr and Miettinen) was of interpreters who set the bar for PHO relatively low, at the level even just of a sense of experiential commonness amidst community members. My hypothesis was that this inconsistent secondary reception arose insofar as there was not enough attention paid to the role of Husserl's concept of mereological proximity in the context of his concept of community. On the reading I have developed here, Husserl's PHO exist when there is a mereological relation of intimacy at play between individual persons as parts and the community as a whole. This lends itself in part to the first group of interpreters insofar as the cooperative, authentic joint actions of community members may be more immediately related to the unified community whole; the community here directly depends on the activities and interactions of members. This dependence can be even stronger in cases of reciprocal founding, where it is not only the community whose existence is founded on individual members, but members partially depend upon the community. The kinds of communities that Husserl describes as PHO are the same ones he describes as intimate or more immediate. It is precisely in these kinds of communities (e.g., marriages, certain philosophical communities, etc.) where their existence depends on the members, and members in

part depend on the community for a component of their personal identity. The second group of interpreters took Husserl's notion of PHO as applying to a much wider range of community formations. While my reading highlights that intimacy is a relation that Husserl uses in the form of a spectrum, it is not clear to me that intimacy is the right notion for understanding all forms of personal communities. As such, it is also less plausible that PHO in Husserl's terms is the concept to be appealed to in understanding all forms of community.

By appealing to Husserl's mereological notion of mereological proximity, we can taxonomize communities by showing both their internal dynamics and their relations to other communities. I have suggested that Husserl's concepts of community and his account of a "personality of a higher order" hang together coherently, but only when close attention is paid to the terminology developed in the context of his mereology.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE EXPERIENCE OF COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP

##### §1. Introduction

This chapter argues that Husserl's account of the first-person experience of being part of a community is based on his formal theory of parts and wholes in a way that has been overlooked in the secondary literature. I motivate my argument by rehearsing the main ways that Husserl's account has been interpreted by commentators (§2). I demonstrate Husserl's account of intentional experience as it applies both to coupling ourselves with other persons in the form of a personal association, and, correlatively, to experiences of a shared surrounding world. In this way, it is shown that Husserl has one general account of how membership is experienced within all forms of communities. This is a phenomenological account in Husserl's sense insofar as he describes the correlations of consciousness with objects and states of affairs as they are experienced by community members (§3). Appealing to Husserl's ontological taxonomy of community types (as argued for in Chapter II), I propose a reading of how communities are experienced by their members. This reading hinges on showing the importance that Husserl places on mereological proximity in his discussion of community. On the basis of Husserl's notion of mereological proximity, I argue that the structure of first-person experience of belonging to a community follows directly from how a community is loosely or tightly organized. This means that while Husserl provides one general account of the experience of community membership, membership within loosely organized, anonymous communities has

experiential features that are distinct from those of tightly-knit intimate communities (§4). In this way, I reframe current interpretations in the secondary literature (§5).

In what follows, I use phrases such as “experiences of being part of a community,” “experiences of community membership,” and “experiences of belonging to a community” interchangeably. While these phrasings can be ambiguous (e.g., regarding different senses for different genitives), Husserl’s framework simultaneously accounts both for experiences that explicitly have community membership as their content in addition to experiences that one has while belonging to a community yet which do not directly thematize the community itself. In the latter case, this means that one can have experiences while existing as a part of a community whole which nevertheless do not explicitly include an experience of “belonging” or “togetherness.” On Husserl’s account, then, features of the experience of community membership are found in places that they have not typically been sought.

## §2. Experiences of Being Part of a Community in the Secondary Literature

Husserl’s descriptions of experiences of belonging to a community have been interpreted in the secondary literature as being shaped by features such as shared interests, goals, or the appropriations of traditions by community members. While such interpretations of Husserl’s account are correct in highlighting these features in the context of our experience of others and the way fellow members share a world, they do not, as I claim, get to the bottom of his account. I first rehearse interpretations of Husserl on this topic as put forth in the secondary literature. The specific Husserl commentators I focus on here are McIntyre, Drummond, Jacobs, Taipale, and

Carr.<sup>1</sup> While the authors who have addressed Husserl on the topic of intersubjectivity in general and his conception of social groups in particular are increasingly numerous, I focus on these specific interpretations insofar as they thematize features of the experiences that we have while being a part of a community. On that basis, I indicate a strategy for how these interpretations can be made more precise in relation to Husserl's writings (a strategy which I flesh out in the remainder of the chapter).

Ronald McIntyre examines a weaker and a stronger sense of community membership found in Husserl's writings. McIntyre connects experiences of belonging to communities with Husserl's notion of empathic pairing. The specific notions of "empathy" (*Einfühlung*) and "pairing" (*Paarung*) as put forth by Husserl are laid out in detail below, but let it suffice for now to say that empathic pairing refers to instances in which one person implicitly or explicitly experiences being coupled together with one or more other persons on the basis of interpersonal similarities. McIntyre rightly points out that for Husserl there is an essential correlation between personal associations and their shared surrounding world.<sup>2</sup> A weak sense of community membership according to McIntyre involves a pairing between all human beings into the group of humanity at large, that is, into a personal association with all other humans on the basis of similarities as conscious, living beings.<sup>3</sup> McIntyre claims that the group of all of humanity is too

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<sup>1</sup> In focusing on the accounts of community membership in these commentators, I do not claim to address their articles and book chapters in their entirety. Rather, I am just abstracting out portions from the works of these commentators that relate directly to the project of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> McIntyre (2013), p. 83. Cf. Husserl, *Ideas II*, p. 201. Husserl's specific notion of the "surrounding world" (*Umwelt*) will also be laid out in detail in the following section.

<sup>3</sup> McIntyre (2013), p. 82.

general to count as a “true” community,<sup>4</sup> and the upshot of his analysis is that for Husserl, “*True communities are interest-oriented.*”<sup>5</sup> Beyond the group of all human beings (which does not seem to be interest-oriented in any definitive way), we experience membership within communities in a stronger, truer sense according to McIntyre when shared valuing, planning, or acting together factor into experiences of membership within narrower groupings.<sup>6</sup> A community of bird-watchers is constituted on the basis of the similarities between members such as a shared interest in observing birds; a community of wine enthusiasts is constituted on the bases of similarities such as shared interests and activities involving wine evaluation and consumption.<sup>7</sup> McIntyre thereby suggests that shared interest and goals do the work of shaping our first-person experience of belonging to a community by highlighting interest-based features of fellow members and their surrounding world that are relevant and thereby salient to the particular community.

In a series of articles, John Drummond puts forth a similar interpretation of Husserl.<sup>8</sup> On Drummond’s reading, personal associations are again experienced on the basis of empathic pairing correlated with a group’s shared surrounding world.<sup>9</sup> The experience of a shared surrounding world for personal associations includes cognitive, evaluative, and practical

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Drummond (1996), p. 245. This is a weak community insofar as it does not indicate any particular socio-cultural similarities between members; it accounts for a broad sense of identity across all human beings but not of intra-human group differences.

<sup>5</sup> McIntyre (2013), p. 82.

<sup>6</sup> McIntyre (2013), p. 82.

<sup>7</sup> McIntyre (2013), p. 87. Both of these examples are McIntyre’s and are not to my knowledge from Husserl.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Drummond (1996; 2000; 2002). Also see Drummond (2003) on the structure of intentional experience in general.

<sup>9</sup> Drummond (1996), p. 244; Drummond (2002), pp. 142-143.

experiences<sup>10</sup>, with the criteria of successful or incorrect experiences being based on shared projects and shared practical interests.<sup>11</sup> For Drummond, communication amongst persons brings about a personal association in the form of a “society,” but this is (similar to McIntyre) supposedly not yet a community in Husserl’s sense because “such associations are communities only in a weak, imprecise sense.”<sup>12</sup> While Drummond concedes that Husserl occasionally uses the term “community” and its cognates for all forms of personal associations, he notes that Husserl is at other times more careful to distinguish between the traditional categories of society (*Gesellschaft*) and community (*Gemeinschaft*) in a fuller sense.<sup>13</sup> Communities exist for Husserl in the full sense, according to Drummond, when they include interactions that influence not just mutual understandings between persons through communication (such as when we together acknowledge that something exists for us in common, like the weather<sup>14</sup>), but when persons are influenced in the coordination of their actions.<sup>15</sup> For example, a community is said to exist in Husserl’s technical sense when co-workers interact with one another in pursuit of a shared goal.<sup>16</sup> Drummond, like McIntyre, suggests that different forms of personal associations are bound together on the basis of their shared interests and values, with Drummond especially

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<sup>10</sup> Drummond (1996), p. 244.

<sup>11</sup> Drummond (2003), p. 81: “The practical interest limits the goal of precise determination to those features relevant to our interest in the object, and, at the same time, limits the degree of precision necessary in order for those interests to be satisfied.”

<sup>12</sup> Drummond (1996), p. 245.

<sup>13</sup> Drummond (1996), p. 245. Cf. Tönnies (2001).

<sup>14</sup> Drummond (2000), p. 35.

<sup>15</sup> Drummond (1996), pp. 245-246.

<sup>16</sup> Drummond (2000), p. 35.



emphasizing the community-constituting role of practical interests and goals.<sup>17</sup> While not requiring a strict identity of interests between members, groupings such as partnerships cannot withstand a complete openness to the different interests of partners, and they face the danger of rupturing if competing interests diverge too far.<sup>18</sup>

Commentators such as Hanne Jacobs, Joonas Taipale, and David Carr highlight the feature of the appropriation (*Übernahme*) of socio-historical traditions in the experience of community membership according to Husserl, especially in the case of communities including indeterminate or anonymous others.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, for Husserl, the entire socio-cultural world exists in the form of a tradition, so it is important to understand how the passing-down of traditions occurs across generations.<sup>20</sup> Experiencing being a part of a community does not, on Jacobs's reading, require empathy. What we find instead is an approach to understanding features of the experience of community membership according to Husserl that does not thematize the experience of concrete fellow members to the same degree that it is appealed to in the interpretations from McIntyre and Drummond. Paraphrasing part of Jacobs's argument into the language of necessity and sufficiency, the empathic experience of concrete others (experiencing others originally in-person) is not a sufficient criteria for experiencing community membership on Husserl's account insofar as membership requires the apprehension of the sense belonging to a surrounding world.

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<sup>17</sup> Drummond (2002). Drawing on the work of Gurwitsch, Drummond highlights that persons unified in the forms of partnership, membership, or citizenship find a shared identity in their practical means or the ends being sought.

<sup>18</sup> Drummond (2002), p. 144.

<sup>19</sup> Jacobs (2013); Taipale (2014); Carr (2014). In this chapter, I use "indeterminateness" and "anonymity" interchangeably. In this way, these designate a lack of clarity in regard both to the other members of a personal association and in regard to the surrounding world. In Chapter IV, I follow Gilbert (2006) in distinguishing between impersonality on the one hand and anonymity on the other.

<sup>20</sup> *OG*, p. 354.

Empathy is furthermore not a necessary criteria for experiences of community membership insofar as our experiences of socio-historical traditions are influenced by other persons who are either unfamiliar to us or are not even present.<sup>21</sup> This means, as Jacobs continues, that a complete account of the intentionality constituting the surrounding world “has to elucidate how my experience of the world is enriched by others in a way that is not restricted to encounters with concrete others.”<sup>22</sup> Jacobs’s focus on Husserl’s notion of the appropriation of a socio-cultural tradition (for instance, through language) provides inroads for such an elucidation of the experience of community membership in the absence of empathy.

Taipale similarly suggests that an empathic experience of concrete others is not a necessary condition in the context of community membership. Nevertheless, for Taipale, we still represent others to some degree even when they are not present for us concretely. For example, we represent absent others by way of our encounter with the surrounding world insofar as we experience it as the same world that was previously experienced or would have been experienced by others. The extent to which this amounts to empathy in Husserl’s sense will be addressed in what follows.<sup>23</sup> According to Carr, straightforward experiences of membership within

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<sup>21</sup> Jacobs (2013), pp. 6-7: “My awareness of the world is so diversified and sophisticated that the way in which I experience the world cannot just be the result of encounters with concrete and individual others. That is, even though the way in which I experience the world is shaped and influenced by concrete familiar others, not everything is thus taken from concrete others.” Jacobs (2013), p. 8: “In short, the phenomenon of the intersubjective appropriation of sense and validity is a broader phenomenon than the occurrence of the experience of empathy. Thus, while empathy can occur without appropriation, appropriation can also occur apart from an empathic awareness of a concrete other.”

<sup>22</sup> Jacobs (2013), p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> Taipale (2014), p. 107: “Apparently, with past persons we cannot share a world in the sense of reciprocity, but our deceased relatives do not cease to belong to our kin. Rather, they are constituted as having witnessed the same world as we do now, and in this temporally extended sense, we share the world with them. More generally, all past persons are constituted as having walked the same earth, having witnessed the same sun and moon, and in this sense, we constitute ourselves as members in a historical continuum of humanity.”

communities can involve members going about their business uninterrupted according to a community's traditional norms.<sup>24</sup> In those cases, community membership involves experiences that are shaped by a tradition, although they need not include a thematization of the community itself. In extraordinary circumstances, the community itself (even in a large community) can be made thematic to members. Carr suggests that Americans experienced membership in terms of acknowledging an explicit "we" in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.<sup>25</sup> In these cases, community membership is experienced explicitly; members consciously identify with the community to which they belong and are bound together in collectively experiencing such events as having historical import.<sup>26</sup> Given that membership in communities such as large political communities involves encounters with others who are either unknown to me or experienced as anonymous others, empathic pairing is described by Carr as an unnecessary component of the experience of community membership.<sup>27</sup>

What I argue is overlooked in these otherwise accurate interpretations is the sense in which Husserl's account of the experience of community membership draws from his notion of

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<sup>24</sup> Carr (2014), p. 49: "How should we characterize one's relation to others in a shared scientific inquiry? They are encountered as fellows, colleagues, co-participants in a common project. To be sure, this kind of encounter presupposes the face-to-face relation, at least implicitly, since members of the scientific (or any other) community are after all individuals interacting with one another. But while the face-to-face encounter has its own dynamic of concerns, these are bypassed in the communal approach to these individuals. What counts about them for me is not their inner life or their total existence, but merely their engagement in an activity that is oriented toward a goal that I share. More is shared than just the goal, of course: There are explicit or tacit standards and rules about how inquiry is to be conducted; shared notions of what counts as a valid contribution to the inquiry, and much more."

<sup>25</sup> Carr (2014), pp. 50, 58.

<sup>26</sup> Carr (2014), pp. 58-60.

<sup>27</sup> Carr (2014), p. 49: "Clearly the standard terms for the intersubjective encounter do not apply here: The Other as alter ego, *autrui*, appearing in a face-to-face confrontation, object of empathy or sympathy, returning my *regard* and putting me to shame or reducing me to an object à la Sartre—all these terms seem inappropriate to the situation at hand."

mereological proximity. This is not simply to say that there are differently-worded descriptions used by Husserl, but amounts to the claim that Husserl's account of experiences of belonging to a community is more conceptually nuanced than these interpretations depict. Experiences of belonging to a community according to Husserl refer to my being grouped with other persons in relation to a shared socio-cultural surrounding world in ways ranging along a spectrum from loosely-bound to tightly-knit communities. Husserl provides descriptions of such experiences in the language of mereological proximity. Distinctions such as these refer to Husserl's formal mereology as put forth in his *Logical Investigations*, specifically to the ways in which parts of a whole are said to be "mediated" (*vermittelt*). My claim, developed in what follows, is that Husserl provides his account of the experiences of community membership by way of appealing to his conceptualization of the relation between mediate/remote and immediate/proximate parts of wholes. Even though it is undeniable that he makes references to group experiences as shaped by shared interests, goals, or appropriations of a tradition, a focus on these features alone does not provide a complete account of Husserl on this topic.

In their works, McIntyre and Drummond share the commitment (1) that loosely bound social groups are to be distinguished from tightly knit communities, with Husserl's technical sense of community applying only to the latter. Furthermore, (2) different communities are distinguished by way of their different shared interests and goals. In regard to the first point, I argue below that there are phenomenological grounds for the claim that there is a single experiential structure applying to all experiences of belonging to a personal association, and that Husserl uses the term "community" broadly to account for all of these.<sup>28</sup> In regard to the second

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<sup>28</sup> This forthcoming argument builds on my discussion from Chapter I. I there argue that Husserl's ontological structure of communities is broad enough to encapsulate both *Gesellschaften* and *Gemeinschaften*. The present

point, I argue that Husserl's criteria for distinguishing between communities is based on his notion of mereological proximity, not just on differing interests and goals. One problem with relying on shared interests and share goals for shaping experiences of community membership is that they do not on their own indicate who is involved in the sharing or the specific ways those individuals experience being bound together in their world. A shared interest in wine does not on its own say anything about those who belong to a specific wine club with me, and it does not specify the ways that members experience the contents of their surrounding worlds. Descriptions of community membership given by Husserl do highlight these features, though, and I argue this is done using his notion of mereological proximity.

Jacobs, Taipale, and Carr paint an accurate picture of Husserl by highlighting the uniqueness of the experiences of belonging to socio-historical communities and appropriating traditions amidst indeterminate others. I concede that taking over the content of a tradition influences our experience of belonging to a community without directly thematizing an empathic pairing of members with other concretely experienced members. As I argue below, though, concrete empathy is not the only form of empathy appealed to by Husserl in the context of experiences of community. Instead, Husserl provides an account of empathy being included as a moment of experiencing community membership even in the absence of concrete encounters. When he writes of this possibility, he refers to mediated forms of empathy, hinting that he is working with his notion of mereological proximity.

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chapter backs up this claim further by showing how there is a single structure for how we experience membership within different types of communities.

As a continuation of the arguments provided in Chapters I and II, the “mediation” of mereological proximity here comes into play in the context of Husserl’s concept of community not just ontologically but now also phenomenologically. The ontological organizations of communities (e.g., being “intimately organized to a greater or lesser degree”<sup>29</sup>) run parallel to the organizations of the experiences of community members therein. The statements that Husserl makes regarding community membership are phenomenological claims insofar as he provides descriptions of acts of consciousness as they are correlated with intentional objects as members of a community experience them. Husserl’s theory of parts and wholes factors not just into conceptualizing community as an object “from the outside,” but factors into the very ways that a community is experienced by members “from the inside.” Ontological variations in community types are thereby supported by the kinds of experiences had by the members of those communities. In the final section of the chapter, I propose a strategy for re-framing the secondary interpretations rehearsed here.

### §3. Husserl on the Experience of Belonging to a Community

I argue in this section that Husserl provides a single account of experiencing being a part of a community, where this singleness designates that the account is wide enough to apply to all forms of personal associations. Husserl in some places compares the structure of intentionality as it applies to experiences of other persons with the intentionality of perceptual experiences.<sup>30</sup> For

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<sup>29</sup> *Ideas II*, p. 206 [translation modified].

<sup>30</sup> *Crisis*, p. 255. In the case of perception, the (noetic) act of perception is correlated with a perceptual (noematic) object. The intentional experience as a whole simultaneously involves 1) the characterization of the perceptual object just as it is perceived (e.g., as an object which is seen from this side with the other sides being co-perceived, as related to my living body, etc.) and 2) a “noematic core” (*noematischen Kern*) that affords a sense of the “kind of object meant, precisely as it is meant” (*vermeinten Gegenständlichen, so wie es vermeint ist*). *Ideas I*, p. 258. In the latter case, there is the object we are conscious of which is the “something” (*etwas*) that can be the “bearer” (*Träger*) of predicates (such as the characterizations of the perceptual object just as it is perceived). *Ideas I*, pp. 254-264. In

experiences of belonging to a community, there is additional complexity beyond the perception of material objects. For example, experiences of community membership include encounters with other persons and groups of persons, such that empathy factors into our experiences; the surrounding world is informed by the past, so discussions of memory and appropriations of sense from traditions in the past contribute to experiences of membership. Despite this added complexity, I argue that Husserl provides one general account of the structure of experience of belonging to a community, and that this structure has two main parts. Since both parts of the experience of community membership are said to be inseparable, they can be considered as “moments” in Husserl’s technical sense.<sup>31</sup>

Pitched in the language of “personal associations,” Husserl’s account of the first-person experience of belonging to a community applies to groupings of all types. Husserl condenses this structure in the following passage:

We are in relation to a common surrounding world [*gemeinsame Umwelt*]—we are in personal association [*personalen Verband*]: these belong together. We could not be persons for others if a common surrounding world did not stand there for us in a community, in an intentional linkage [*intentionalen Verbundenheit*] of our lives. Correlatively spoken, the one is constituted essentially with the other.<sup>32</sup>

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the case of perception, there is the object understood as an “object simply” (*Gegenstand schlechthin*), which affords the possibility of various predicates related to its perceivability, that is, to the “object in terms of how it is determined” (*Gegenstand im Wie seiner Bestimmtheiten*). *Ideas I*, pp. 259-260.

<sup>31</sup> *LI*, p. 6.

<sup>32</sup> *Ideas II*, p. 201. Cf., *CM*, p. 129: “Whereas, really inherently, each monad is an absolutely separate unity, the “irreal” intentional reaching of the other into my primordially is not irreal in the sense of being dreamt into it or being present to consciousness after the fashion of a mere phantasy. *Something that exists is in intentional communion [intentionalen Gemeinschaft] with something else that exists*. It is an essentially unique connectedness, an actual community and precisely the one that makes transcendently possible the being of a world, a world of men and things.”

More tersely (though less precisely) stated, Husserl writes in a manuscript that, “We have immediately shared experiences in the commonality of empathy.”<sup>33</sup> For different community types and the experiences of members within them, there are variations in the ways that fellow members are characterized with a noematic sense and the community’s surrounding world is characterized with its own noematic sense. I here briefly focus on these two moments, before turning to them fully in the following sub-sections.

On the one hand, community membership is experienced insofar as I concretely encounter or otherwise intend fellow community members, other persons grouped together in a personal association. The experience of community membership in this way emphasizes that membership is *with* other persons. I consider this moment of community membership to be metaphorically “centripetal” or inwardly-oriented insofar as attention is drawn to experiences of others persons coupled with me within a specific group.<sup>34</sup> For Husserl, analyzing experiences of other persons is done with recourse to the act of empathy, which has as its correlate other persons as fellow experiencers of a world along with me.

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<sup>33</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 223: “Wir haben unmittelbar gemeinsame Erfahrungen, in der Gemeinsamkeit der Einfühlung.” While empathy here is said to lead to shared experiences, what will need to be clarified in what follows is if the inverse of this statement also holds, namely, whether shared experiences are open to more mediate forms of empathy, such as with others who are not experienced concretely.

<sup>34</sup> I here borrow this language of “centripetal” and “centrifugal” from Merleau-Ponty, who applies the terms to his phenomenological account of bodily spatiality. Rather than speaking of the living body, I here re-deploy them to community. Cf. *The Phenomenology of Perception*, Landes translation (2012), pp. 55, 114, 123, 442-475. This distinction is similar to the one discussed by Miettinen as between “the intrapersonal collective and its accomplishments, that is, the difference between community (*Gemeinschaft*) as a habituated form of individual activities and culture (*Kultur*) as the objective accomplishments of this community.” Miettinen (2014), p. 161. In Chapter I, this centripetal moment of communities was discussed from an ontological perspective under the heading of what Husserl calls “social subjectivities” possessing their own “inwardness” or “communal spirit.” In the present context, I turn to the question of how social subjectivities are correlates of the experiences of their members.



Husserl's inclusion of empathy as a moment in the experiences of community membership is quite strong. He goes so far as to insist that empathy is a fundamental component of all intersubjective experiences, writing that, "The intersubjective world is the correlate of intersubjective experience, i.e., the experience mediated [*vermittelten*] by 'empathy.'"<sup>35</sup> I take it that the "intersubjective world" and "intersubjective experience" are wide enough notions to include all experiences that make reference to other human subjects.<sup>36</sup> If the experience of being part of a community according to Husserl belongs to the class of intersubjective experiences, as I assume<sup>37</sup>, it must be mediated in some way by empathy if he is to remain consistent relative to this claim. What is initially clear is that Husserl's account here faces a problematic interpretational difficulty, especially since commentators such as Jacobs, Taipale, and Carr have drawn attention to ways that Husserl accounts for the experience belonging to a community in the absence of concretely empathized others. One way to avoid this difficulty is to say that Husserl changes his mind and eventually comes to no longer believe that all intersubjective experiences are mediated by empathy. As I argue below, though, there is textual evidence suggesting that Husserl's conviction regarding the mediations of empathy is sustained through his writings.

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<sup>35</sup> *Ideas I*, p. 303. *Hua III/1*, p. 352: "Die intersubjektive Welt ist das Korrelat der intersubjektiven, d.i. der durch "Einfühlung" vermittelten Erfahrung."

<sup>36</sup> Husserl later describes the intersubjective world as the world that has the sense of being there for others and not privately for one subject. *CM*, p. 91.

<sup>37</sup> This seems to me to be an uncontroversial assumption. Challenging this assumption amounts to saying that the experience of being a part of a community is not an intersubjective experience that is, that it in no way makes reference to other subjects.

In addition to the centripetal moment of experiencing others in a personal association, community membership is experienced on the basis of Husserl's account of the experiences of a common or shared socio-cultural surrounding world.<sup>38</sup> I here argue that this moment of our experience of community membership should be considered "centrifugal" since it draws attention to a world that exists exclusively as the correlate for the members of a personal association. While fellow community members and the community as a whole can be a part of the surrounding world, this moment includes a wider class of objects, with Husserl referring to it also as the locus of all socio-cultural objects such as books, churches, and political states. The experiential moment of the surrounding world is outwardly-oriented to the extent that it is directed to objectivities that are correlates of the consciousness of members.

To reiterate, the ultimate argument of this chapter is to show how Husserl's account of experiences of belonging to a community have their footing in his mereology. By first explicating these two moments and showing how they factor into the experience of community membership for Husserl in general (3.1 & 3.3), my argument proceeds (in §4) to his descriptions that show his reliance on notions of mereological proximity. Regarding the moment of empathy, furthermore, I here present four of the main ways in which Husserl discusses being paired with others in a personal association (3.2). In this way, I lay the ground for an interpretation of Husserl on the experiences of belonging to a community as mediated by empathy even in the absence of concrete others.

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<sup>38</sup> This moment of communities was discussed in my earlier chapters from an ontological perspective under the heading of what Husserl calls "social objectivities."

### 3.1 Empathy and Pairing in Personal Associations

Empathy (*Einfühlung*), for Husserl, is one of the ways through which we are related to other persons.<sup>39</sup> Husserl distinguishes between presently-presenting acts and re-presenting acts.<sup>40</sup> The act of empathy belongs to the latter group, of what is translated as “presentifications” or “re-presentations” (*Vergegenwärtigungen*). While presently-presenting acts such as perception present objects to consciousness originarily, re-presenting acts are non-originary insofar as they apperceptively refer to something that is not intuitively present “in the flesh.” The act of empathy, similar to memory, is not put forth by Husserl as a source of originary experiential evidence, but is rather described as providing non-originary or “derived” (*abgeleitet*) evidence.<sup>41</sup> In the case of an act of memory such as the memory of a tree, Husserl claims that there is a re-presenting of a past perception in the present; I perceived the tree in the past, and having a memory of it is to re-present that originary perception in a non-originary, modified form after the fact. In the case of empathy, then, I have not just my originary perceptual awareness of objects and states of affairs in the world, but I also have an awareness of the other’s awareness of the world. I can reflect on my own consciousness of objects in “an originary way,” but I am precluded in principle from accessing the consciousness of another person “in the flesh.”

In some places, Husserl refers to the act of empathy as representing another conscious subjectivity like my own on the basis of the expressivity of the other’s living body (*Leib*).<sup>42</sup> The

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<sup>39</sup> *CM*, p. 92.

<sup>40</sup> *BPP*, pp. 83-84.

<sup>41</sup> *Ideas I*, pp. 279-282.

<sup>42</sup> *Ideas II*, p. 358.

other's living body acts as a kind of expressive "passageway" (*Durchgang*) to the other's subjectivity.<sup>43</sup> I empathically intend the expressive living body of another person while simultaneously apperceiving their conscious lives as expressed in a non-originary fashion.

Husserl writes that:

It is characteristic of empathy that it refers to an originary Body-spirit-consciousness [*Leib-Geist-Bewusstsein*] but one I cannot myself accomplish originally, I who am not the other and who only function, in regard to him, as a comprehending analogon.<sup>44</sup>

In this way, I experience the other as an embodied, conscious person like myself. The intentional horizons in my consciousness of other persons are distinct from those belonging to my experience of non-conscious material objects such as trees or stones. In the case of empathy, I associate what my experience of the world is like as centered "here" from my living body with what the other person consciously experiences of this same world from over "there."<sup>45</sup> As Miettinen puts it, we here find "a unique inner depth" when faced with another person.<sup>46</sup> The act of empathy represents the other person, and my observing or otherwise interacting with them can teach me something about the type of personal character they have, including their habituated patterns of thinking, valuing, and acting.<sup>47</sup> While some of Husserl's descriptions of empathy

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<sup>43</sup> *Ideas II*, p. 358. Cf. Heinämaa (2010).

<sup>44</sup> *Ideas II*, p. 208. Cf. *Ideas I*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>45</sup> *CM*, p. 117: "I apperceive him as having spatial modes like those I should have if I should go over there and be where he is."

<sup>46</sup> Miettinen (2013), p. 184.

<sup>47</sup> As Darian Meacham suggests, these patterns of character and style should be understood as a referring to a "formal inclination" that we have towards certain ways of living as persons based on our histories and our passive and active constitution of the world. Cf. Meacham (2013), p. 11.

refer to others as experienced concretely in person, other descriptions involve an empathic characterization of others despite their absence, that is, without an encounter with another embodied individual. This latter possibility is addressed further in §3.2.

Husserl's account of what I am calling the "centripetal" experience of community membership includes not just a one-sided experience of other persons, but refers to an empathic "pairing" (*Paarung*) with those other persons into the form of a personal association. For Husserl, "pairing" in general (not just empathic pairing) refers to "any forming of a plurality (*Mehrheit*)."<sup>48</sup> This configuration of groups occurs through a passive synthesis in the form of an intentional association (*Assoziation*), which for Husserl means that objects are grouped together in experience insofar as they exhibit the sense of belonging together on the basis of their similarities (*Ähnlichkeiten*).<sup>49</sup> This experience is passive to the extent that one does not need to explicitly think, reflect, or make an inferential judgment. To appeal to two quick examples provided by McIntyre, there is a pairing that leads me to experience multiple and connected bananas as a unified "bunch" of bananas; I see a left and a right glove as "a pair" of gloves as opposed to just two unrelated pieces of fabric.<sup>50</sup> The passive synthesis of association means that separate objects are taken as belonging together on the basis of their observed similarities.

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<sup>48</sup> *CM*, p. 112. The most comprehensive account that Husserl gives of "pairing" is in his *Cartesian Meditations*, though there are also discussions of the concept in *Husserliana XIV, XV*, and the lectures forming the *Analyses Concerning Active and Passive Syntheses*. We find more support for this notion, though, in Husserl's account of the motivations of association in *Ideas II*, §56.

<sup>49</sup> "Pairing is a *primal form of that passive synthesis* which we designate as '*association*,' in contrast to passive synthesis of 'identification.' In a *pairing association* the characteristic feature is that, in the most primitive case, two data are given intuitionally, and with prominence, in the unity of a consciousness and that, on this basis – essentially, already in pure passivity (regardless therefore of whether they are noticed or unnoticed) –, as data appearing with mutual distinctness, they *found phenomenologically a unity of similarity* and thus are always constituted as a pair." *CM*, p. 112.

<sup>50</sup> McIntyre (2013), pp. 74-78.

Empathic pairing, as a species of pairing in general, is such that the experience of another person is simultaneously the experience of a personal association that one is included within.<sup>51</sup> Instances of empathy are in this way understood as “relations of mutual understanding” (*Beziehungen des Wechselverständnisses*) between individuals.<sup>52</sup> When encountering another person, the other is experienced as being similar to myself at the very least to the extent that we are the same kinds of conscious beings. I here have a conscious awareness of the other’s awareness of the world in general, and it is within this shared world that we are paired. On Husserl’s account, I thereby passively pair us together as belonging to the community of all human beings.<sup>53</sup> More narrowly, a group of scientists working together in a laboratory towards a shared goal may consider themselves to be a distinctly paired group of cooperating researchers as opposed to some other group of researchers outside the pairing. In this case, members are aware of others’ awareness not simply of the world in general, but of a more narrowly encapsulated socio-cultural surrounding world which motivates the pairing.<sup>54</sup> Members of the group remain distinct individuals through the pairing, but the empathic pairing includes a blending or fusion [*Verschmelzung*] of members into a personal association:

Every overlapping-at-a-distance [*Fernüberschiebung*], which occurs by virtue of associative pairing, is *at the same time a fusion* and therein, so far as incompatibilities do

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<sup>51</sup> As argued in Chapter I, Husserl’s notion of community taken in its widest sense is indicative of his notion of all personal associations.

<sup>52</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 8: “Ferner, die einzelnen, getrennten Realitäten, bzw. ihre Ichsubjekte, treten zueinander in Beziehungen des Wechselverständnisses („Einfühlung“); durch „soziale“ Bewußtseinsakte stiften sie (unmittelbar oder mittelbar) eine völlig neuartige Form der Vereinigung von Realitäten: die Form der Gemeinschaft, geistig einig durch innerliche Momente, durch intersubjektive Akte und Motivationen.” *Kaizo 1*, p. 329.

<sup>53</sup> I would like to reiterate here that Husserl is operating with a very wide notion of community, which encapsulates all forms of personal associations. See my discussion of this in Chapter I.

<sup>54</sup> More is said on this in 3.3.

not interfere, a similarizing [*Verähnlichung*], an accommodation of the sense of the one member to that of the other.<sup>55</sup>

According to Husserl, the fusion of a personal association can make the group itself an object that is explicitly recognized by its members (recall the example given by Carr), but one's community membership itself can also remain pre-reflective or unthematic through the coupling. For instance, it is unlikely that every encounter with another person will explicitly evoke experiences of the human community at large; I am not perpetually thinking of the group of all other human beings even though I am always a member of that group. Nevertheless, the experience of community membership according to Husserl allows for ways in which we implicitly refer to other fellow members of a community. This pairing in the form of a personal association persists so long as relevant similarities persist amongst members, though specific pairings can dissolve in cases of conflict. More is said on the topic of conflict and community membership below.

### 3.2 Types of Pairing

On the basis of Husserl's writings, I here delimit what I take to be four main ways in which he talks about empathic pairing and the noematic sense belonging to empathized others within personal associations.<sup>56</sup> While there are limitless factual possibilities for empathic pairing

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<sup>55</sup> *CM*, p. 118 (translation modified). Cf. Zahavi (2014), p. 133: "When I encounter another, my self-experience will serve as a reservoir of meaning that is transferred onto the other in a purely passive manner. As a result of this, a phenomenal unity is established. We are apprehended as a pair, as being alike and as belonging together, while still being separate and different (Husserl 1985: 225); that is, the coupling or pairing entails no fusion." While I am in agreement with Zahavi here that empathic pairing refers to a unity despite differences, there is a fusion, as the Husserl quote above stipulates, to the extent that a new unified whole has been founded on the basis of members as its parts.

<sup>56</sup> By highlighting these four types of empathic pairing, I do not mean to suggest that there cannot be other types. The four given here occur in Husserl's writing. A demonstration that there are further types would bolster my

depending on the inclusion of different individual persons or as based on different kinds of similarities, there are a number of general possibilities found in Husserl's writings regarding types of pairing in the form of personal associations. Husserl refers to noematic descriptions as those that highlight the specific sense (*Sinn*) that belongs to objects just as they are experienced, including levels of determinateness and the attributes of objects.<sup>57</sup> Husserl claims, for instance, that descriptions of noematic sense refer to ways in which objects are experienced in terms of their clarity and distinctness<sup>58</sup>, and in terms of what is "genuinely perceived and the excess" (*eigentlich Wahrgenommenen und dem Überschuß*).<sup>59</sup> In the case of empathy, which Husserl characterizes as a type of re-presenting, it has already been shown that one of the things I can genuinely perceive is the other's living body, unified with the "excess" of their conscious subjectivity. I originally perceive an expressive living body, and at the same time non-originarily represent their inner life. While this non-originary component of empathy seems to be an essential component in Husserl's descriptions of empathy such that I am consciously aware of the other's awareness, his descriptions are more ambiguous when it comes to what can here count as being genuinely perceived while still being a case of empathy. As indicated above, empathy in some places refers to my encounter with another person as an embodied individual. There are other place, however, where Husserl refers to empathy in the absence of a concrete encounter with another embodied individual. For Husserl, noematic correlates are essentially

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overarching argument that Husserl's account of community members is more fine-grained than hitherto acknowledged.

<sup>57</sup> *CM*, p. 36.

<sup>58</sup> *CM*, p 36.

<sup>59</sup> *CM*, p. 122 (translation modified).



different in different kinds of intentional experiences, as seen in the ways that noematic sense varies according to different characterizations of an object.<sup>60</sup> In regard to empathy specifically and its intending of other persons, different possibilities arise based on the sense characterizing the persons with whom I am paired.

It is important to note the differences between these types first because Husserl suggests that empathy plays a fundamental role in intersubjective experiences, and second because he refers to empathy in distinct ways in the context of different experiences of community membership. I suggest that the following four types of empathic pairing can be arranged into a quadrant based on the intersection of the axis of concretely versus non-concretely experienced others and the axis of determinately versus indeterminately experienced others. These are phenomenological possibilities in Husserl's sense insofar as they refer to different ways in which there is a noetic-noematic correlation in experiences of community membership. While Husserl himself does not systematically make this fourfold distinction, he discusses each of these in his writings. One place where Husserl explicitly mentions distinctions regarding types of empathy is in his essay on "The Origin of Geometry":

We are co-conscious of the people in our external horizon in each case as 'others'; in each case 'I' am conscious of them as 'my' others, as those with whom I can enter into **actual** and **potential** [*aktuellen und potenziellen*], **immediate** and **mediate** [*unmittelbar und mittelbar*] relations of empathy; there is here a reciprocal understanding with others and on that basis I interact, enter into particular modes of community with them, and then know, in a habitual way, of my being so related.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> *Ideas I*, p. 181.

<sup>61</sup> *OG*, p. 358 [my emphases, translation modified]. *Hua VI*, p. 369: "Mitbewußt sind dabei die Menschen unseres Außenhorizontes jeweils als „Andere“; jeweils „mir“ bewußt als „meine“ Anderen, als mit denen ich in aktuellen und potenziellen, unmittelbaren und mittelbaren Einfühlungskonnex treten kann, ein wechselseitig sich mit Anderen Verstehen und aufgrund dieses Konnexes mit ihnen Verkehren, mit ihnen in irgendwelche besonderen Weisen der Gemeinschaft Eingehen und dann habituell von diesem Vergemeinschaftetsein Wissen."

This passage shows that Husserl is mindful of distinguishing between different ways in which I can be empathically paired with others in the context of different types of communities. He elsewhere refers to empathy as capable of being instituted in different ways, “in different magnitudes and directions.”<sup>62</sup> More is said about Husserl’s use of “mediate” and “immediate” as concepts from his mereology in what follows, but in this sub-section I just highlight these four types as general possibilities for empathic pairing in personal associations. This sets the stage for more comprehensive analyses of the experiences of belonging within such communities in the next section.<sup>63</sup>

As a first possibility, some experiences of belonging to a community with others include a pairing with other concrete and determinate individuals. There is concreteness when I originally encounter other persons on the basis of their living bodies, that is, as they are experienced face-to-face or “in the flesh.” I here encounter other members “genuinely.” There is determinateness in this kind of empathy to the extent that the other persons belong to the personal association as the particularly known individuals they are, and not as strangers. One here is empathically paired with persons one knows personally. As one example of this possibility (which is returned to later), Husserl discusses marriages and family communities in

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<sup>62</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 200: “So haben wir im allgemeinen Bewusstseinszusammenhang, der durch Einfühlung in verschiedener Weise, in verschiedenen Umfängen und Richtungen gestiftet sein kann, eine Schicht eines allgemeinen, überpersonalen, und doch personalen leistenden Bewusstseins, in allen beteiligten Personen lebendig, durch sie hindurchströmend oder von ihnen vielmehr ausströmend und doch durch sie hindurchströmend, als ob eine Einheit der Person wäre, mit einem Bewusstsein und einem personalen Leisten.”

<sup>63</sup> Insofar as Husserl is committed to the idea that personal associations are correlated with their own surrounding worlds, each of these four possibilities of empathic pairing will entail an experiential relation to the surrounding world for its members.

light of the determinate functions and obligations that each concretely encountered individual member has as a paired member of a specific community whole.<sup>64</sup> There is here an awareness of the other's awareness of the family's world and their place within it.

As a second type of empathy, communities can include a pairing with concrete yet indeterminate others.<sup>65</sup> Fellow members are again encountered "genuinely" in-person, but I am not thereby guaranteed to know them personally. Husserl discusses this possibility of pairing when he writes of the empathic relation that we have to unknown others such as strangers in the case of large clubs or political states.<sup>66</sup> In this case, I have an awareness of others' awareness in my empathic encounter with them, but the world we share is more public and impersonal than in the case of family life. These first two possibilities refer to a pairing of myself with concrete others, of being coupled with those I encounter "in the flesh." In the following two possibilities for empathic pairing, those with whom I am paired are characterized as being experienced non-concretely. While there continues to be some awareness of others' awareness given that empathy is a specific kind of re-presenting, there is no longer a genuine encounter with the others as embodied.

The third possibility for empathic pairing is of non-concrete encounters with determinate others. Well-known historical communities are prime representatives of these types of pairings in

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<sup>64</sup> *Hua XIV*, pp. 175-179.

<sup>65</sup> In the community of students attending a large university, for instance, others on campus are encountered originally (concretely) as embodied fellow students, though I need not, and likely will not, know each student personally (determinately). This can of course be combined with the previous possibility. To appeal again to the example of fellow students on a university campus, some will be encountered concretely and indeterminately, though some can be concrete and known to me as distinct individuals.

<sup>66</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 182.

Husserl's writings, where those persons with whom I am empathically paired are represented not as simultaneously living with me but as having lived previously in historical succession. I here belong to a community with determinate others in the past while being precluded from concrete, "genuine" interactions with them.<sup>67</sup> Husserl describes this possibility, explicitly referring to empathy, in regard to a community of determinate philosophers pursuing philosophical goals over the course of history.<sup>68</sup> One is here aware of another person's awareness of the world through some medium other than the expressive "passageway" of his or her living bodies. For instance, I can here be empathically paired with another person whose conscious awareness of the world is represented through his or her written works.

Rounding out types of empathic pairing, the fourth possibility is of communities that include non-concrete and indeterminate others. In this case, I do not experience others "in the flesh." I here take myself as belonging to a personal association with others even when I am not "genuinely" experiencing them bodily. As characterized by indeterminacy, I may represent others as exemplars of groups with indeterminate or generally considered characteristics.<sup>69</sup> Husserl invokes this possibility in regard to linguistic communities, such that I find myself in both a linguistic and empathic relation to unknown previous speakers and writers of a

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<sup>67</sup> For instance, I count both Husserl and myself as belonging to a certain group as members of the phenomenological community in the form of a specific philosophical tradition. Although a concrete, empathic encounter with Husserl as a living, embodied person is now impossible, he is represented by me as having been a determinate and embodied individual person with whom I share certain interests and goals.

<sup>68</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 198: "Alle Einheit des historischen Geistes als historischen ist eine einseitige Beziehung. Mein Leben und das Platons ist eins. Ich setze seine Lebensarbeit fort, che Einheit seiner Leistungen ist Glied in der Einheit meiner Leistungen; sein Streben, sein Wollen, sein Gestalten setzt sich in dem meinen fort."

<sup>69</sup> This can be the case, for instance, if I have read or have been told things about a group to which I belong such that I attribute characteristics to a vague group (e.g., of one's distant ancestors) without knowing anything determinate about former group members as individuals.

language.<sup>70</sup> In belonging to a linguistic community, I need not encounter all fellow members concretely in-person. It is also here not necessary to represent all fellow members as those I know personally. Experiences of belonging with others in a linguistic community includes an awareness of another awareness, but it is not necessary for me to have a genuine encounter with another embodied person while nevertheless being paired with others.

One of the essential moments of the experience of community membership for Husserl is my experience of the other members belonging to a personal association. This kind of experience of other persons is accounted for in Husserl's work with the help of empathy. It is important to include this centripetal, empathic moment in the context of explicating Husserl's account of the experience of community membership insofar as he makes the claim that all intersubjective experience is in some way mediated by empathy. Husserl's claim is not persuasive if empathy applies only to others we experience concretely, since some of the communities we belong to are shaped by anonymous or absent others. His claim is more persuasive, however, once we take into account the different ways that he characterizes empathy. This at the very least means including the four types of empathic pairing delimited here.

### 3.3 A Community's Surrounding World

Through empathic pairing, I am to some degree aware of the awareness of those with whom I am paired. What is included in the content of such an awareness of an awareness? On Husserl's account, to be paired with other persons in a personal association is simultaneously to

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<sup>70</sup> *OG*, p. 360. As an additional example of this kind of pairing, Husserl writes that contemporary Europeans are the heirs to a task that was initially instituted by the ancient Greeks. In referring to "the Greeks" in connection with contemporary European society, Husserl gestures to a personal association that is both non-concrete and indeterminate.

experience a shared surrounding world (*Umwelt*).<sup>71</sup> With his technical notion of the “surrounding world,” Husserl refers to what members of a community experience of the objects and states of affairs around them, including other persons, groups of persons, practical use-objects, artworks, and other socio-cultural products.<sup>72</sup> The surrounding world is not encountered neutrally as though given through bare sense-perception, and is said to be “the locus of all our cares and endeavors.”<sup>73</sup> This surrounding world is not merely my own, according to Husserl, but is essentially intersubjective. It exists potentially and actually for other persons along with me in a personal association, and inherently possesses the sense of being a world that is “ours” and not just mine. There are different surrounding worlds according to Husserl, but they have the property of being shared with others. On the one hand, then, I have my individual surrounding world from the perspective of my living body. On the other hand, the community itself has its own surrounding world such that objects appear to all of us in a similar fashion.<sup>74</sup> For Husserl, there is one surrounding world that I share with all other “normal” human perceivers as the

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<sup>71</sup> *Ideas II*, p. 195.

<sup>72</sup> “This surrounding world is comprised not of mere things but of use-Objects (clothes, utensils, guns, tools), works of art, literary products, instruments for religious and judicial activities (seals, official ornament, coronation insignia, ecclesiastical symbols, etc.). And it is comprised not only of individual persons, but the persons are instead members of communities, members of personal unities of a higher order, which, as wholes [*Ganze*], have their own lives, preserve themselves by lasting through time despite the joining or leaving of individuals, have their qualities as communities, their moral and juridical regulations, their modes of functioning in collaboration with other communities and with their individual persons, their dependencies on circumstances, their regulated changes and their own way of developing or maintaining themselves invariant over time, according to the determining circumstances.” *Ideas II*, pp. 191-192.

<sup>73</sup> *VL*, p. 272 / *Hua VI*, p. 317.

<sup>74</sup> *Ideas II*, p. 195.

surrounding world of nature<sup>75</sup>, and there are more exclusive socio-cultural surrounding worlds containing socio-cultural objectivities.<sup>76</sup> It is only the latter that I focus on here.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 197: “Das ist freilich die fundamentale Unterstufe, die nähere Erörterung verdient: Wie das Einzelsubjekt seine Umwelt mit offenen Horizonten hat, so hat eine kommunizierende Subjektvielmehrheit eine gemeinsame Umwelt als die „ihre“. Jeder einzelne hat seine Sinnlichkeit, seine Apperzeptionen und bleibenden Einheiten; die kommunizierende Vielheit hat gewissermassen auch eine Sinnlichkeit, eine bleibende Apperzeption und als Korrelat eine Welt mit einem Unbestimmtheithorizont. Ich sehe, ich höre, ich erfahre nicht nur mit meinen Sinnen, sondern auch mit denen des Anderen, und der Andere erfährt nicht nur mit seinen, sondern auch mit meinen Sinnen; das geschieht durch Übermittlung der Kenntnisaufnahmen.” On the distinction between the human community at large and community life in a “narrower” sense, see *Hua XIV*, p. 219: “Inneneinstellung: Wir Menschen, wir in der Einheit; so weit sie reicht, wieviel unbekannte Personalitäten sie umfasst, so weit reicht das „wir Menschen“ und so weit reicht die Einheit unseres gemeinschaftlichen Lebens — im weitesten Sinn. Aber-wie konstituiert sich ein Gemeinschaftsleben in einem engeren Sinn, das einer Ehe, Familie, eines Stammes, eines Volkes, einer verstaatlichten Gemeinschaft, mindestens einer Polis, eines Vereins — all das, solange es im Stande der Eigentlichkeit eines durchgehenden und in jedem einzelnen bewussten Gemeinschaftslebens verbleibt und nicht in Veräusserlichung versinkt?”

<sup>76</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 198: “Doch gehen wir zur wahrhaft höheren Stufe über, zur Stufe der gemeinschaftlichen Persönlichkeit und der sozialen Welt, der Welt personaler Leistungen, der Kultur in niederem und höherem Verstande.” Zahavi also points out this distinction in Husserl as being between two different levels of objectivity. On the one hand, there is an objectivity limited to specific groups of subjects, and on the other hand, there is an objectivity that applies to all cognizing subjects. Cf. Zahavi (2001), Chapter IV.

<sup>77</sup> On Husserl’s account, there is a rudimentary form of a community that we experience with a shared surrounding world understood as the entire material, sensible world (*Hua XIV*, pp. 196-197). By rudimentary, I mean that the human community at large is indeterminate in regard to the specific socio-cultural values and practices of a specific community. Indeterminacy here amounts not to a lack of socio-cultural sense, but refers to the surrounding world that is accessible to all regardless of the culture to which they belong. Husserl claims that the “transcendental we-community,” as my own subjectivity fused with the experiences of all other co-subjects, constitutes one objective world that is there for everyone. (Epilogue, p. 421. Cf. *Crisis*, Appendix III, p. 328: “We already have a certain ‘community’ in being mutually ‘there’ for one another in the surrounding world (the other in my surrounding world)—and this always means being physically, bodily ‘there.’”). For example, Husserl writes: “In my appearances, the sensible world that is mine is constituted as opposite me and for me, and to some extent in me. But the encroachment of the other is peculiar to consciousness such that a world is that one for both of us, and the correlate of “both,” ultimately as the correlate of an open multiplicity [*offenen Vielheit*].” *Hua XIV*, p. 202. Cf. *Ideas II*, p. 207: “This world of things is, at its lowest level, intersubjective material nature as common field of actual and possible experience of individual spirits, solitary ones and ones in a community of experience.” This lower-level shared surrounding world is what Husserl means by “nature” (“The first thing constituted in the form of community, and the *foundation for all other intersubjectively common things*, is the *commonness of Nature*, along with that of the *Other’s organism* and his *psychophysical Ego*, as paired with *my own psychophysical Ego*.” *CM*, p. 120. Cf. Zahavi (2001), p. 93.). By this, Husserl does not mean that the world is experienced naturalistically in the sense of exhibiting mathematically exact properties, but rather that there is a materiality, experienced in its perspectival inexactness, which is experienced by all perceivers. It is on this basis that Husserl claims that there is a communalization (*Vergemeinschaftung*) of perception (*Crisis*, pp. 161-165.), such that the sensible world is experienced as accessible to an indefinite multiplicity of others (Cf. *BPP*, p. 86 [*Hua XIII*, p. 191] “Thus nature is an index for an all-inclusive normativity, encompassing all streams of consciousness that stand in an experiential relation to one another through empathy.”). We can here speak of experiences of membership within the human community in the sense of the grasp that all persons have of the sum total of perceptible objects in their material surrounding world. This is a shared surrounding world insofar as it is characterized with the sense of existing for anyone at all, for both concrete and non-concrete, determinate and indeterminate others. Husserl claims that this

Founded on the intersubjectively shared surrounding world of material nature, Husserl provides an account of surrounding worlds considered as “narrower” (*enger*), where narrower indicates that these surrounding worlds are accessible exclusively to particular groups of subjects, and not that there is less content within them.<sup>78</sup> There are additional requirements beyond having adequate sensory faculties for experiencing socio-cultural surrounding worlds. While necessarily founded on their natural properties, Husserl puts forth an account of more restrictive surrounding worlds of personal communities, such as the surrounding world of a group of friends,<sup>79</sup> a group of mathematicians,<sup>80</sup> of all Europeans, or more narrowly of all French citizens.<sup>81</sup> Narrower socio-cultural surrounding worlds possess exclusivity, such that their sense exists for a more determinate group of members.<sup>82</sup> The written words that one encounters on billboards are accessible as markings of colors and shapes for all normal perceivers, but the full meaning of those writings is something experienced only by members of the relevant linguistic community. Husserl suggests that there is a “deeper understanding” (*tieferes Verständnis*) available to members of a socio-cultural community, whereas there is a barrier to the full meanings of the surrounding world and objects therein from the perspective of non-members.<sup>83</sup>

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character of the surrounding world of nature is trans-historical for all human beings having the same sensibility (*OG*, pp. 375-378.).

<sup>78</sup> *CM*, p. 92. For more on Husserl’s notion of founding, see Chapter I.

<sup>79</sup> *Ideas II*, pp. 205-206.

<sup>80</sup> *Ideas II*, p. 203.

<sup>81</sup> *CM*, p. 92.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Taipale (2014), pp. 90-91.

<sup>83</sup> *CM*, p. 133. Cf. *TS*, p. 107: “The natural interest in a flower is different than the botanist’s interest, and thus in the two cases the best appearances are different, and the full givenness, in which the interest is satisfied, is essentially very different in each case.”



Consider, for instance, a small group of friends who are all “in” on an inside joke.<sup>84</sup> If the group of friends encounters something that evokes a reference to their inside joke while walking down the street together, there will be an accessibility to that content in their surrounding world which is not similarly meaningful to outsiders who are not part of the joke. In this case, a component of the shared surrounding world of the group of friends will be characterized not just as existing as a visible object but as funny in a way that is (at least initially without some kind of explanation) closed off from those outside the group.

The experience of belonging to a community according to Husserl includes the members of a particular personal association relating to the same shared surrounding world.

The world is *my surrounding world*. That is to say, it is not the physicalistic world but the thematic world of my, and our, intentional life (including what is given to consciousness as extra-thematic, co-affecting, and accessible to my thematic positings: my thematic horizon).<sup>85</sup>

Each member necessarily has her or his own embodied standpoint on a surrounding world, but the particular surrounding world is experienced as being shared with along with fellow members.<sup>86</sup> To use Husserl’s terminology, the “noematic core” of a surrounding world is the same for all members of the community, while allowing for different characterizations of the noematic sense; the “What” of the experiences remains the same for members that belong to the

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<sup>84</sup> This is my example, not Husserl’s.

<sup>85</sup> *Ideas II*, p. 230, my emphasis.

<sup>86</sup> *Ideas II*, p. 207.

same community, but the “How” of our experiences within that community vary.<sup>87</sup> All of the members that belong to the same personal association have experiences within the same surrounding world, even though there is a necessary diversity when it comes to how that world is experienced by each member. Each member will experience the surrounding world from their own distinct “here,” bringing together a unique set of perspectives within and potentially of the community. At the same time, though, members of the same community will experience their surrounding world as shared on the basis of the community’s theme (e.g., the world as similarly seen by a group of friends, by mathematicians, by botanists, etc.).

Insofar as it is shared, a surrounding world includes (in some fashion) a reference to those with whom it is shared. In a supplement to *Ideas II*, Husserl brings together the moments of empathy and a shared surrounding world in support of this point:

The subject is a person among persons, a citizen of a state, a legal subject, a member of a union, an officer, etc., and, as such, is affected by the Objects now given in his surroundings, feels their force and, in turn, acts upon them. This living subject is the *subject of actual life*, standing towards his congeners in a nexus of empathy, in accordance with which he acknowledges the other and himself as first experiencing one and the same common surrounding world, though each has his own subjective ways of givenness of this common world.<sup>88</sup>

As a legal subject or a citizen of a state, the lawful surrounding world or the surrounding world of the state will be experienced as including constraints that are applicable to anyone within the personal association and not merely to those who I am concretely encountering. In encountering members of a union or police officers, even if we do not know them as determinately as we

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<sup>87</sup> *Ideas I*, p. 181. Cf. *Ideas I*, p. 188: “The kinds of acts are different, and considerable free space for phenomenological distinctions still remains—yet the noematic ‘What’ is identical.”

<sup>88</sup> *Ideas II*, pp. 382-383.

know our closest friends, they are at least determinate as exhibiting their socio-cultural roles. The sharedness of the surrounding world need not be explicitly acknowledged, but part of what is at least implicitly experienced of objects in the surrounding world is that they exist also for fellow members.<sup>89</sup>

To quickly summarize before proceeding to the formal notion of mereological proximity, Husserl puts forth a single account of experiences of being a part of a community. According to Husserl, these experiences of belonging to a community have the correlative moments of empathic pairing in a personal association (centripetal experiences) and a shared socio-cultural surrounding world (centrifugal experiences). These experiences can be differentiated in Husserl's descriptions in terms of community membership with concrete and non-concrete, determinate and indeterminate others.

My discussion so far has focused primarily on experiences of belonging to a community where all is "going smoothly." This is not to suggest that Husserl is committed to the overly-flowery picture that conflict or dissent is impossible within the experiences of community membership. Zahavi, Miettinen, and Szanto, for instance, have highlighted how Husserl integrates dissent into discussions of a community.<sup>90</sup> As already demonstrated in Husserl's quote on experiences involving the "fusion" of associative empathic pairing, this only occurs insofar as "incompatibilities do not interfere."<sup>91</sup> Husserl emphasizes that experience of a harmonious world in common with others can be enriched and not destroyed through reciprocal corrections

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<sup>89</sup> What is either co-apprehended (*mitbewusst*) or co-intended (*mitgemeint*) with fellow community members is a shared, socio-cultural surrounding world. *BPP*, p. 67 [*Hua XIII*, p. 172].

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Zahavi (2001); Miettinen (2013); Szanto (2016).

<sup>91</sup> *CM*, p. 118.

amongst members.<sup>92</sup> In some cases, experiences of community membership are said to be conflicted to the extent that membership involves a subjugation of some members' wills. One might, as Husserl recognizes, experience belonging to a community that involves suffering if the prospect of leaving such a community could involve a greater form of suffering than the current membership arrangement.<sup>93</sup>

In more dramatic fashion, Husserl provides an example of reluctant community membership and of disagreement disrupting a practical "community of will" in the case of relations between a master and a slave.<sup>94</sup> When the relation between master and slave is running smoothly, there is a harmonious practical community of will to the extent that directives given by the master are carried out by the will of the slave as an extension of the master. This amounts, on Husserl's account, to a form of agreement between the parties as long as orders are acted upon. This is clearly not an agreement in the sense of individuals freely deliberating and agreeing to undertake a task, but of a conflicted form of membership here nevertheless involves "going along" with the arrangements of the specific community despite one's reservations.<sup>95</sup> In such cases, Husserl accounts for this as an experience of membership where there is an acceptance or

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<sup>92</sup> *CM*, pp. 125-126.

<sup>93</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 177: "Es kann aber auch sein, dass auf die fremde Subjektivität keine Rücksicht genommen, dass der Genuss gegen ihren Willen erzwungen, ihr damit Leid aufgezwungen, ja dass sie vernichtet wird. Dann fällt die höhere Freuden- und Wertschicht nicht nur weg, sondern es tritt an ihre Stelle ein Negativum, von dem zu fragen ist, ob es nicht einen Wertwiderstreit herbeiführt, der nicht nur den Wert mindert, sondern aufhebt. Es kommt dann in Frage: der Zwang, zu Willen zu sein (also Willensunterwerfung des Anderen), und das den Genuss Erzwingen unter Gegenwillen des Anderen, ohne dass dabei auch nur erzwungene Einwilligung, Willensunterwerfung statthat. Es kann sein, dass auf der gezwungenen Seite zwar kein Wunsch bestand, aber in der Unterwerfung Lust erwächst und Wunsch geweckt wird und danach Befriedigung. Es kann sein, dass keine Lust statthat, sondern Leid, das in Kauf genommen wird zur Vermeidung grösseren Leides."

<sup>94</sup> *Hua XIV*, pp. 175-182. Cf. *Hua XIV*, p. 223.

<sup>95</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 177: "Erdulden ist zwar auch ein Widerstreben, aber doch zugleich enthält es eine Hinnahme im Gemüt, die im ungebrochenen und unnachgiebigen Aufbäumen fehlt."

acquiescence (*Hinnahme*) on the part of members. Reluctant experiences of membership exist according to Husserl so long as there is a lack of an unbroken and unyielding rebellion against such a community arrangement. It can happen, as Husserl points out, that this community is disrupted and even dissolved on the basis of a rebellion by the slaves. Rather than the kinds of intersubjective corrections that enrich a sense of a surrounding world in common, challenges such as an unyielding slave rebellion can be considered as attempts to dissolve the interpersonal constraints and arrangements of a particular surrounding world. As Husserl writes, “The escaped slave is no longer really a slave (setting aside the legal question).”<sup>96</sup> Through such a rebellion, one’s existence as a certain type of part is separated from the context of the whole. This dissolution amounts to a break in the underlying agreement that constituted the community of will. In this way, we can see that Husserl’s account of experiencing being a part of a community includes the possibility of disagreement, and demonstrates how large disagreements can go so far as to dissolve the experience of community membership.

#### §4. Mereological Proximity and Distinct Experiences of Belonging to a Community

As Miettinen writes on the topic of different community gradations as found in Husserl’s writings: “For a family, a loss of member is probably a more shattering experience than, say, in the case of nation.”<sup>97</sup> Although I agree with this point, more can be said regarding the way that Husserl draws distinctions within these gradations. With the general account of experiences of community membership in place, I now advance the main argument of the chapter, that Husserl

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<sup>96</sup> *Hua XIV*, pp. 181-182: “Der entlaufene Sklave ist nicht mehr wirklich Sklave (von der Rechtsfrage, die hier noch nicht spielt, abgesehen).”

<sup>97</sup> Miettinen (2013), p. 229. Gilbert makes this same point in the context of her plural subject theory of political obligations, and I return to her approach to this discussion in the following chapter. Gilbert (2006), p. 100.

distinguishes experiences of membership in a fine-grained fashion on the basis of his notion of mereological proximity. Applied to community, this notion refers both to the different ways in which members are grouped together and to their relation to a shared surrounding world. I argue that Husserl's account of the experience of belonging to a community exhibits specific noematic senses for different organizational levels of communities, and that he describes the experiences of these different levels by appealing to his notion of mereological proximity. For this reason, experiences regarding the addition or subtraction of members in a family community are distinct from the same changes in members of the community of a large nation insofar as the cases represent distinct ways in which members are integrated as mediate or immediate parts of a community whole.

“Mereological proximity” for Husserl refers to relations between parts and the wholes to which they belong, where some parts are considered as “closer” to other parts or to the whole while others are “further” away. As explained in my earlier chapters, I am using the term “mereological proximity” as shorthand for referring to Husserl's account of the relation between mediate/remote and immediate/proximate parts of a whole.<sup>98</sup> The designations of remoteness and proximity are to be taken in a metaphorical and not a spatial sense. As Husserl writes:

If  $P(W)$  is a part of the whole  $W$ , then a part of this part, e.g.  $P(P(W))$ , is again a part of the whole, but a *mediate* part [*ein mittelbarer Teil*].  $P(W)$  may then be called a relatively immediate part of the whole [*ein vergleichsweise unmittelbarer Teil*]. The distinction is a relative one, since  $P(W)$  may itself again be a mediate part, in relation to another part of the whole in which it is contained as a part.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> *LI*, §§. 18-21. For more on Husserl's notion of mediate and mediate relations, see *Ideas I*, §141.

<sup>99</sup> *LI*, p. 30.

When parts of a whole are closer or “proximate” (*näheren*) in relation to their whole, they are designated by Husserl as being more immediate (*unmittelbar*) parts. This proximity is also used to describe relations of parts to other parts of a whole. On the other hand, parts that are “remote” (*ferneren*) or metaphorically further in relation to their whole are designated as more mediate (*mittelbar*) parts.<sup>100</sup> This remoteness is again used as a descriptor for parts in relation to other parts of the same whole. In Husserl’s example of a melody understood as a unified whole, the melody’s individual tones are described as more proximate to the melody than, for instance, the qualities of those tones. This means that the tones are more immediate parts of the melody while the qualities of those tones are more mediate parts of the melody as a whole. The qualities of the tones are more remote parts relative to the melody, while being proximate relative to the tones. They are more “mediated” in relation to the whole insofar as they exist as dependent moments of the tones prior to being parts of the melody as a whole. The qualities of the tones, in other words, are remote insofar as they are parts of parts. The tones, then, are more immediate parts of the whole relative to the qualities of the tones as mediate parts.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> *LI*, p. 30-32.

<sup>101</sup> Husserl appeals to the example of the melody in an ontological-merological context to talk about relations between mediate and immediate parts. He again appeals to the example of a melody in his manuscripts to describe these features phenomenologically, highlighting the possibility of experiencing concatenations: “Listening to the sounds is not the same as listening to the music, and listening to the music as a concatenation of individual harmonies is not the same as hearing the symphony, the quartet, etc., in its actual sense and in the peculiarity of its real being in itself.” *Hua XV*, p. 228: “Die Laute hören ist nicht die Musik hören, und die Musik als eine Verkettung von einzelnen Harmonien hören ist nicht die Symphonie, das Quartett etc. in seinem wirklichen Sinn und seiner Eigenart wirklichen Seins in sich aufnehmen.” It is here possible to listen to a piece of music as a mere concatenation of notes and harmonies. Experienced in this way, though, we do not experience the larger whole to which the harmonies belong. Husserl provides a similar example in his descriptions of experiencing written marks on a page without moving through them as words to the whole of what they express. *APS*, p. 27. As an application of this notion of concatenation to the social sphere, experiences of the other indeterminate persons with whom I am paired is not the same as thematically experiencing the community as a whole. While I am using the example of the melody here to explicate Husserl’s usage of merological proximity in the context of experiences of community membership, there is clearly a disanalogy here insofar as it becomes about how a listener relates to tones as part of the melodic whole. A closer analogy could be had in the direction I am going if individual tones were conscious, and could themselves experience the way in which they existed as parts of the melody to which they belong. I will leave it

Loosely coordinated communities are anonymous in the sense of being relatively more mediated, which amounts to their existing in the mereological form of concatenations.<sup>102</sup> Husserl refers to communities exhibiting mereological closeness as “intimate communities.” Individual persons as parts are intimately related to the community whole in cases where the community is considered as a temporally extended, “more comprehensive whole.”<sup>103</sup> Anonymity and intimacy represent two extremes along a spectrum that Husserl appeals to for understanding different community types. Husserl accounts for these extremes in terms of mereological proximity. I here argue that Husserl accounts for the experience of belonging to these different types of communities based on the mereological proximity exhibited within them. Argumentative support for this conclusion is given by looking at the ways Husserl describes experiences of membership in different community types. More specifically, the conclusion is supported by recognizing that Husserl’s descriptions of belonging to a community refer to notions such as “closeness” or “farness,” “proximity” or “remoteness,” and “mediate” or “immediate” relations. For example, writing of traditions that belong to a “broadest we-community” (*weitesten Wir-Gemeinschaft*), Husserl employs mereological terms in describing the kinds of community relations that hold between members of the present and the “most proximate and most remote ancestors” (*den*

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to the creative minds at Pixar to further pursue this in a visual medium. Similarly, experiencing one of the associations that makes up a concatenation is not the same as experiencing the whole of the concatenation itself. The experience of membership in the form of community concatenation is instead mediated in Husserl’s mereological sense insofar as we experience aspects of the community only by way of interacting with indeterminate others. In this way, members are founding parts of the community whole, but there is an experiential “remoteness” to the extent that not all individuals relate to their valuing and acting to the community as a whole. This mediation or remoteness is characteristic of experience of membership in anonymous communities.

<sup>102</sup> Cf., Chapter II.

<sup>103</sup> *LI*, pp. 41-42. Cf. Chapter II, especially the example of dominoes.



*nächsten und fernsten Vorfahren*).<sup>104</sup> These experiences in general include the correlative moments of being paired with others and having a shared surrounding world. While it is more apparent how empathic pairing occurs in communities involving concrete encounters (such that I genuinely encounter another embodied person), I draw attention to passages where Husserl refers to community and empathy in the absence of a genuine encounter with an embodied individual. When he writes of this possibility, he refers to “remoteness” or “mediation.” This supplements interpretations of Husserl’s account of the experience of being a part of a community based on features such as shared interests, goals, or appropriating traditions without supplanting them. Put otherwise, I claim that such features should be re-framed in Husserl’s framework of the mediations of mereological proximity.

#### 4.1 Anonymous Community Membership

The question I pursue in this section is how members experience belonging to anonymous, concatenated communities according to Husserl. Put otherwise, I here discuss the noematic sense that Husserl attributes to experiences of membership within anonymous communities. The ontological structure of an anonymous community for Husserl, as suggested in Chapter II, is of a concatenation (*Verkettung*), where a community contains other personal associations within itself and where there is mereological distance between parts and their whole. Considered formally, Husserl describes concatenations as two or more associations that are combined together into a larger association. Those combined associations, furthermore, have “some but not all members in common.”<sup>105</sup> This ontological structure of concatenations as

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<sup>104</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 223.

<sup>105</sup> *LI*, p. 48.

present in anonymous communities is supported in Husserl's writings by phenomenological descriptions of the experiences of members within such groupings. These descriptions refer to the experiences that community members have of some though not all fellow members, of membership along with indeterminate others, and experiences of a socio-cultural surrounding world as experienceable for indeterminate others. Experiences of belonging to an anonymous community include the community as an object only pre-reflectively in the experiences of members. In this way, the community as a whole to which one belongs is a "remote" part within the experiences of members. Insofar as concatenations are indicative of anonymous communities, and since this involves descriptions of "mediation" and "remoteness," concatenations refer to Husserl's notion of mereological proximity. In the categories introduced above, the centripetal experience of being a part of an anonymous community includes being empathically paired with indeterminate others, where these indeterminate others are experienced either concretely or non-concretely. Correlatively, the socio-cultural surrounding world for an anonymous community is characterized as existing for an indeterminate group. Given Husserl's account of noematic descriptions as referring to objects and states of affairs in their experiential determinateness or indeterminateness, or their clarity and distinctness, his descriptions of indeterminate other (strangers) who belong to a community with me are here taken as noematic descriptions.

The example I used to illustrate the structure of concatenation in the intersubjective sphere in the previous chapter is a large group of persons, where some members of the group are close friends while others are friends of friends. Instances of friendship tend to be described by

Husserl as “intimate,” so a different example is needed for anonymous communities.<sup>106</sup> Husserl frequently refers to concatenations in the context of relations between historical generations. Some (though not all) historical communities are anonymous communities. As a simple representation of this in the context of intergenerational concatenations, suppose that members of a community A in the present are influenced by the traditions of past generation B, who were themselves influenced by generation C, and so forth. In this case, living members of community A may belong to the same historical community as predecessors in generation C (forming the historical, concatenated unity of ABC), with the relation to members of former generations being mediated by generation B. The historical unity ABC in this case is a concatenation insofar as its parts are the associations AB and BC. Husserl writes in his manuscripts, for instance, of the ways in which persons exist in the context of an “open endlessness” of “concatenated” generations.<sup>107</sup> The surrounding world as historical has been handed down and shaped by a chain of generations before me, though I need not explicitly trace or otherwise experience the historicity of a community as a whole while living in it. Objects in my surrounding world, including other persons, are experienced not as mere things, but are expressive of a socio-cultural sense.<sup>108</sup>

In the present, we experience ready-made objects as final products, even though they depend on a larger historical arc understood as a generative whole. I can use words to convey meaning to others without having to know the etymological developments of those words.

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<sup>106</sup> Husserl’s mereological notion has already been addressed in Chapter II, and will be returned to here in the following sub-section.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. *Hua XV*, pp. 178, 219, 499, 583; Zahavi (2001), p. 98.

<sup>108</sup> As Husserl writes, purely material realities are “history-less realities” while psychic realities bear their histories within themselves. *Ideas II*, p. 144.

Despite the ready-made nature of such objects, Husserl suggests that their histories can be made salient through phenomenological analysis.<sup>109</sup> Indications of the possibility of such analyses are seen in Husserl's writings in regard to linguistic communities and communities of those who are learning mathematics, though as highlighted above, he is clear that entirety of the socio-cultural world exists in the form of a tradition. Members do not always acknowledge the dependence of linguistic or mathematical objects upon a larger historical whole. For Husserl, it is this very lack of recognition in the face of sedimentation that calls for the rehabilitating process of "explication" (*Verdeutlichung*). Linguistic objects spoken or written by members of a linguistic community do not need to be explicated in regard to their original meanings in order to be practically useful. Similarly, Husserl writes of the ways in which geometrical theorems are typically taught and learned in the present. Geometry in its ready-made form exists in the form of a tradition.<sup>110</sup> Instead of having students re-trace the entire history of various theorems, some textbooks instead present students with ready-made geometrical formulae. As sedimentations of a geometrical tradition, these formulae are mereologically distant from the whole historical arc into which they fit. We can learn geometry from textbooks without going to the origins of those concepts with their originally intuitive ideality.<sup>111</sup> Mereological distance regarding the appropriations of traditions is part of the experience of such community members in the present insofar as there is a grouping with non-concrete and indeterminate others. Objects such as books

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<sup>109</sup> Cf. Donohoe (2004), p. 33: "Each *noema* contains within itself the history of its own past occurrences. It is the task of genetic phenomenology to provide a more complex explanation of each *noema* based upon a revealing of that history."

<sup>110</sup> *OG*, p. 354.

<sup>111</sup> *OG*, p. 366.

written in a certain language possess the sense of being meaningful and expressive for past, present, and future members of that linguistic community. Mathematical objects have their full sense as being understandable to those others with the requisite mathematical knowledge, though I need not know those others personally.

Some members of an anonymous community will be experienced as “indeterminate” insofar as everyone does not know them personally. Furthermore, fellow anonymous community members can on Husserl’s account be experienced concretely or non-concretely, as evinced in the variety of ways he employs his notion of empathy. In concrete experiences of indeterminate others, others are apperceived as strangers or as indeterminate bearers of socio-cultural roles. These experiences involve an empathic pairing of myself with the other indeterminate persons with whom I share a surrounding world. I am here aware of others’ awareness to the extent that I take them to belong with me in this world. Even non-concrete experiences of indeterminate others allow for the possibility of empathic pairing. Husserl explains these possibilities by way of an analogy regarding determinacy and indeterminacy in the perception of a material object:

Just as every ego-subject has an original perceptual field within a horizon that can be opened up through free activity, which leads to ever new perceptual fields, repeatedly mapped out through a combination of the determinate and the indeterminate [*bestimmt-unbestimmt*]: so every ego-subject has his horizon of empathy, that of his fellow subjects, which can be opened up through direct and indirect commerce with the concatenation of others [*direkten und indirekten Verkehr, mit der Verkettung der Anderen*], who are all others for one another, for whom there can be still others, etc. [...] every other ego is already intentionally implied in advance by way of empathy and the empathy-horizon.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> *Crisis*, p. 255. Translation modified.

The perception of an object such as a desk includes the determinate sides that are currently seen in addition to the other un-seen sides which are apperceptively co-intended, though only indeterminately. Husserl here indicates the kinds of empathic experiences one has of both determinate and indeterminate others in the mereological form of a concatenation, which I have argued is the structure of anonymous communities. Both direct and indirect interactions with others here belong to my horizon of empathy, such that the shared surrounding world does not require a concrete empathic encounter with another person “in the flesh” in order to nevertheless include a reference to empathy.<sup>113</sup>

For Husserl, the experience of belonging to an anonymous, concatenated community like a linguistic community usually only includes the sense of the community as a whole pre-reflectively. For example, Husserl writes that even though a linguistic community is a form of community, it is unlike grouping such as marriages insofar as the former does not bring about the sense of being a “personal whole” (*personales Ganzes*).<sup>114</sup> One is aware of determinate and indeterminate others and there are experiences that implicate the existence of the fellow members with whom a surrounding world is shared, but this does not require an explicit intending of the linguistic community itself as an object. Husserl often writes that members “know” (*wissen*) of their membership, using scare quotes to indicate a form of community

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<sup>113</sup> As Molly Brigid Flynn suggests, encountering a new person is ordinarily an apperception of them not as a new member to the community, but as a heretofore unknown member of the community. “Because this community for me incorporates many members indeterminately, as unknown but potentially known, when I meet a new person I do not encounter him as a new member, but as a previously unknown member.” Flynn (2012), p. 34. Taipale provides an argument for this point with the example of communication with someone at a distance via email. While it is here not the case that I encounter another person bodily “in the flesh” through my email, I nevertheless represent them as embodied beings who will receive my message. Taipale (2014), p. 89.

<sup>114</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 182: “Eine Sprachgemeinschaft ist keine personale Verbindung, die ein personales Ganzes schafft, wohl aber eine Ehe, selbst wenn sie eine „moderne“ Ehe ist.”

membership that does not explicitly involve apprehending the community as a thematically experienced object. For instance, Husserl writes:

Thus the actual surrounding world of any person whatsoever is not physical reality pure and simple and without qualification, but instead it is the surrounding world only to the extent he “knows” of it, insofar as he grasps it by apperception and positing or is conscious of it in the horizon of his existence as co-given and offered to his grasp—clearly or unclearly, determinately or indeterminately—precisely in accordance with the way it happens to be posited by consciousness.<sup>115</sup>

Furthermore:

Each individual, as a subject of possible experiences, has his experiences, his aspects, his perceptual interconnections, his alteration of validity, his corrections, etc.; and each particular social group has its communal aspects, etc. [...] But each individual “knows” himself to be living within the horizon of his fellow human beings, with whom he can enter into sometimes actual, sometimes potential contact, as they also can do (as he likewise knows) in actual and potential living together.<sup>116</sup>

When he uses scare quotes in these ways, he is usually referring to intersubjective experiences that can be understood as anonymous. This kind of tacit or “implicit knowledge” for Husserl is tied to the ways in which ready-made traditions are experienced in the present even when we do not attempt to explicitly understanding the original meanings of traditions.<sup>117</sup> Experiences of belonging as a part to the whole of an anonymous community are mediated in the mereological sense insofar as one’s experiences involve interactions with indeterminate others as parts of the

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<sup>115</sup> *Ideas II*, p. 195. Furthermore: “Sociality is constituted by *specifically social, communicative acts*, acts in which the Ego turns to others and in which the Ego is conscious of these others as ones toward which it is turning, and ones which, furthermore, understand this turning, perhaps adjust their behavior to it and reciprocate by turning toward that Ego in acts of agreement or disagreement, etc. It is these acts, between persons who already “know” each other, which foster a higher unity of consciousness and which include in this unity the surrounding world of things as the surrounding world common to the persons who take a position in regard to it.” *Ideas II*, p. 204.

<sup>116</sup> *Crisis*, p. 164.

<sup>117</sup> Husserl here writes of implicit knowledge which can nevertheless be made explicit. *OG*, p. 355.

whole but not the community whole itself. Even though the community is only experienced pre-reflectively, it is nevertheless experienced indirectly by way of the sedimented noematic sense of the surrounding world that exists for a particular personal association.

As a species of community, an anonymous community is founded on its members, but the community as a whole does not necessarily found aspects of the lives of its members in a reciprocal fashion to the same extent as intimate communities. In anonymous communities, there is only a one-sided founding relationship between members and anonymous communities understood as wholes. This one-sidedness factors into Husserl's descriptions of community not just ontologically but also phenomenologically in regard to the experiences of members. For Husserl, reciprocal founding relationships such as color and extension are said to be proximate, while one-sided founding relationships involve remoteness. Appealing to this notion of "remoteness" which is indicative of his theory of mediate and immediate parts, Husserl writes:

Each communalized ego has not only his consciousness, but has a view into the other and with the other into a universal connection of consciousness with a many-headed subjectivity, but, of course, not as a losing of oneself into indefiniteness. For each, there is a horizon of remoteness [*Fernhorizont*]: the openly indeterminate multiplicity of others besides those whom I actually embrace and their consciousness; the indeterminate, uncontrolled consciousness of the others beyond what I really know of them, which is connected with the consciousness of others, etc., all the horizons into which one can penetrate more or less.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 218: "Jedes vergemeinschaftete ego hat nicht nur sein Bewusstsein, sondern seines als in die Anderen hineinschauendes und sich mit den Anderen zu einem universalen Bewusstseinszusammenhang mit vielköpfiger Subjektivität verbindend, aber freilich sich ins Unbestimmte verlierend. Für jedes ist ein Fernhorizont; die offen unbestimmte Vielheit Anderer ausser denen, die ich wirklich einverstehend umgreife, und ihr Bewusstsein; das unbestimmte, noch unumspannte Bewusstsein der Anderen über das hinaus, was ich davon wirklich einverstehend weiss, das sich verbindend wieder mit dem Bewusstsein Anderer etc., lauter Horizonte, in die man mehr oder minder eindringen kann."



This passage highlights experiences that members of anonymous communities have (members as Husserl says of a many-headed subjectivity) where other fellow though indeterminate members of the whole are experienced according to a certain kind of remoteness. The remoteness at play here is clearly not a reference to spatial remoteness. In one of Husserl's other examples, a large state is founded on its members as parts, but not all or even any of the experiences of its members have to be had by members as indicative of the state considered as a whole.<sup>119</sup> In the language of mereological proximity, most members of anonymous concatenated communities like states are "remote" from the community as a whole, and this is experienced with a phenomenologically discernible noematic sense. Centripetally, not all other members are known personally, and unknown others are characterized with a sense of indeterminateness. The surrounding world is, centrifugally speaking, experienced with the sense of being accessible for a limited though indeterminate group of others. Individual members of anonymous communities still contribute to the existence of the community whole, but they do not explicitly experience the whole as close to who they are as its parts. Put otherwise, members found anonymous communities as wholes, but these communities do not abide as wholes in the experiences of members such that members could be said to be constrained by a recognition of the whole in a strong sense. Phenomenologically, this amounts to experiences of membership as being amidst determinate and indeterminate others within a community, yet where our shared surrounding world is not one that exhibits the coordinating force of a shared goal.

While there is unity in an anonymous community, Husserl points out that the influence that the individual exerts within or upon the community as a whole may not be experienced

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<sup>119</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 182.

clearly in its relation to the whole. The impact of individuals upon one another and the whole may only involve implicit as opposed to explicit relations to the whole.<sup>120</sup> In the case of anonymous communities having their own histories, Husserl writes that membership is experienced as being shaped by traditions that are taken over second-hand, perhaps even falsely, from testimony, newspapers, or other sources:

In practical life I have the world as a traditional world, no matter where the tradition comes from; it may even come from second-hand scientific acquisitions, even false ones, which I get from the newspaper or from school and which I may transform in one way or another in my own motivations or [through] those of my fellows who accidentally [*zufällig*] influence me.<sup>121</sup>

Similar to experiences of community membership where individuals as parts only implicitly influence the community as a whole (and where the community as a whole does not strongly influence members as its parts), Husserl here refers to accidental or coincidental influences between parts and the community whole. In mentioning elsewhere the kind of “accidental acquaintance” that can be had with others in a community, Husserl refers to interpersonal

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<sup>120</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 183: “Im weitesten Sinne in der Einheit einer „Tradition“, in einer personalen Ganzheit, in einer Personalität höherer Ordnung wirkt Ich auf Du. Durch das Du hindurch geht der Wille des Wirkens, als personales Wirken, und im Funktionär wirkt der personale Wille aller anderen Funktionäre *implicite*.” Cf. Flynn (2012). In the older version of *Ideas II*, Husserl writes that persons within a community are influenced by indeterminate others, whether or not the individual is aware of the impact of those others. *Ideas II*, p. 281. These passages are not included in the new edition.

<sup>121</sup> *Crisis*, p. 326. Cf. *Hua XIV*, p. 183. Husserl provides a very similar example in his essay on “The Origin of Geometry”: “Consider, for example, the way in which we understand, when superficially reading the newspaper, and simply receive the ‘news’; here there is a passive taking-over of ontic validity such that what is read straightaway becomes our opinion.” *OG*, p. 364. And again in his ‘Second Book’ of *Ideas*: “Here also are the acts in which he places himself in a communicative relation toward his fellow men, speaks with them, writes them, reads about them in the papers, associates with them in communal activities, makes promises to them, etc.” *Ideas II*, p. 191. It would be interesting to compare these remarks in Husserl with Anderson (1983), who claims that experiences of belonging to “imagined communities” such as nation-states were brought about in part by the emergence of printing presses.

relations that involve “remote influences” (*Fernwirkungen*).<sup>122</sup> Such accidents again lack an intentional reference to the community as a whole. While one can responsibly appropriate a tradition, taking over functions or callings within the community and mindfully making them one’s own, tradition can also according to Husserl be passively promulgated across historical generations without an explicit endorsement of them.<sup>123</sup> In the latter case, there are influences that arise not directly from the concrete experience of other persons, but from traditional demands that are issued to members by an “indeterminate generality” (*unbestimmter Allgemeinheit*).<sup>124</sup> There is here an implicit reference to other persons, although the noematic sense of indeterminateness and generality make it clear that there is not empathy in the concrete sense. This sheds light on what Husserl means in his manuscripts by attributing a “community memory” (*Gemeinschaftserinnerung*) to “many-headed” communities, which exists in the form of a historical tradition.<sup>125</sup> Just as the dangers Husserl describes regarding the “seductions of

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<sup>122</sup> *Hua XIV*, pp. 222-223: “Wir können unabhängig voneinander denselben Gedanken haben, sind aber nicht vergemeinschaftet, nicht vereinigt durch das Bewusstsein dieser Gemeinsamkeit in den verschiedenen Formen: Übe malune, in mir aus der Einwirkung des Anderen, aus seiner Lehre oder aus seiner offen unbestimmt gerichteten Äusserung oder durch zufällige Bekanntwerdung durch mich ohne Richtung an mich, oder gemeinschaftlich durch gemeinschaftliche Kritik und Arbeit auf Grund schon gemeinsamer identischer Bestände. Ich bin und jedermann ist im Horizont des Wir, und dieser Horizont ist zugleich Horizont für viele Gemeinschaften und für alle die, denen ich in Sonderheit zugehöre und denen jedermann seinerseits zugehört. Und darüber hinaus ein weiteres Ausstrahlen von uneigentlichen Gemeinschaften als Gemeinhaben und von Fernwirkungen von Personen auf Personen, von Gemeinschaft auf Gemeinschaft etc. ausstrahlenden Wirkungen.”

<sup>123</sup> For Husserl’s account of the dangerous implications of this approach, see *Kaizo I*.

<sup>124</sup> *Ideas II*, p. 281. While this specific reference is not in the new edition of *Ideas II*, I am leaving it in insofar as Husserl speaks in this way elsewhere on the topic of appropriating a tradition in the context of an “indeterminate generality.” Cf. *Hua XIV*, p. 222: “Diese unbestimmte Allgemeinheit umfasst mich, und in mir erfahre ich die Erfüllung der im Schriftlichen ausgedrückten, im Buch sich bekundenden Intention des unbestimmt-leer vorstelligen Autors.”

<sup>125</sup> *Hua XIV*, pp. 220-221: “Es heben sich hervor „vielköpfige“ Dauereinheiten vergemeinschafteter Personalitäten oder gegenüber den momentan vergemeinschafteten mehreren Personen die dauernden, zu denen gehört ein dauerndes Wissen von dieser Dauereinheit dauernd verknüpfter, vergemeinschafteter Personen, Einzelpersonen, und ein Wissen in der Form, die Wissen der Gemeinschaft von sich selbst heissen kann. Korrelativ eine nicht vorübergehende, sondern dauernde Einheit des verbundenen Lebens als überpersönlich das Persönliche

language” mean that we can communicate with one another without having to go back to the original sources of the concepts we are speaking about when we use language<sup>126</sup>, so too can we experience being members in an anonymous community through implicit or accidental influences without having to clarify the structure, origins, purposes, or ends of the community in question. In these cases, the community lacks a unified form of valuing or willing together, even when it continues to possess its own form of unity.<sup>127</sup>

While Husserl is not clear in his essay on “The Origin of Geometry” in regard to how exactly empathy factors into the context of his discussion of sedimentation of history in a community, he nevertheless accounts for intergenerational ideal objectivity as arising from the “function of empathy and fellow mankind as a community of empathy and of language.”<sup>128</sup> It is just prior to this passage (as was highlighted above) that Husserl refers to empathic relations with other persons who I encounter potentially or actually, and in immediate or mediate relations of empathy. Given these different ways in which empathy can be brought about, it would be too quick to suppose that empathy is dispensable in the experiences of a membership within an anonymous community such as that of a socio-historical tradition.

As another example of empathy experiences of membership within anonymous communities, Husserl writes of how we share membership with strangers in large clubs or large political states. These are communities that typically involve experiences of interacting amidst

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verbindendes Leben. Durch dieses dauernde Gemeinschaftsleben geht hindurch eine Einheit der Gemeinschaftserinnerung, der historischen Tradition.”

<sup>126</sup> *OG*, p. 362.

<sup>127</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 22.

<sup>128</sup> *OG*, p. 360.

indeterminate others. A state, according to Husserl, is a unified whole despite the fact that not everyone knows one another. These forms of personal associations must, as he says, nevertheless be mediated by empathy in some fashion:

The manner in which a personal association is established [*herstellt*], of course, must emanate from the actual empathy [*aktuellen Einfühlung*] and the actual arrangement or arise in natural subordination, etc., emanating from the status of personal contact or communication. However, the basis of personal associations must then be considered in mediate ways [*mittelbaren Wegen*] when the people remain “unknown” [*unbekannt*]. But in any case there are communities of will of certain persons who are in agreement as willing-subjects, albeit as mediated [*vermittelt*].<sup>129</sup>

Husserl’s phrasing here supports the claim from *Ideas I* regarding the necessity of intersubjective experiences being mediated by empathy. The personal association must be established on the basis of empathy, and must be considered in mediated ways especially when the other people remain “unknown,” that is, when they are given to us as strangers. According to Husserl, there is an agreement that coordinates the interactions of members<sup>130</sup>, but the relation we have to others in the form of an agreement is “mediated” in ways that are different from communities where we know the other members more determinately. For example, when I have the experience of encountering a stranger within a large, anonymous community, I have not engaged in any agreement with them in particular. However, I at least tend to abide by certain background rules

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<sup>129</sup> *Hua XIV*, pp. 182: “Die Art, wie sich eine personale Verbindung herstellt, muss freilich von der aktuellen Einfühlung und aktuellen Verabredung oder natürlich erwachsenden, aber im Status personaler Berührung oder Mitteilung sich stiftenden Unterordnung etc. ausgehen. Esmüssen dann aber die Stiftungen von personalen Vereinigungen auf mittelbaren Wegen erwogen werden, wobei die Personen „unbekannt“ bleiben.”

<sup>130</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 198: “Doch gehen wir zur wahrhaft höheren Stufe über, zur Stufe der gemeinschaftlichen Persönhchkeit und der sozialen Welt, der Welt personaler Leistungen, der Kultur in niederem und höherem Verstände. Wo immer wir uns im Einverständnis, im einseitigen oder wechselseitigen, so verbunden wissen, dass Einheit der leistenden Aktion auf die gemeinsame Umwelt bezogen erscheint (in die sich alsbald jedes Leistungsprodukt einordnet, immer höherstufige Umwelten mitschaffend), da leistet zwar die einzelne Person, aber sie umgreift bewusstseinsmässig das Leisten wie Geleistetes der anderen Personen.”

regarding interpersonal conduct and expect the same from others. Instead of making reference to constraints imposed upon me by determinate others, the surrounding world is here the bearer of the sense of social constraints that I take to apply to members even when they remain unknown. The noematic sense of objects and states of affairs in the surrounding world of an anonymous community is characterized as “ours” where the boundary of the “we” to which this sense is correlated is indeterminate. For example, there is a linguistic community of English speakers such that written and spoken English sentences are characterized with the sense of being more or less understandable to all members of the community.<sup>131</sup>

How exactly are anonymous community constraints experienced in the surrounding world for members? For communities ranging from linguistic communities to the unity of European culture (i.e., anonymous communities in the sense I have characterized them), Husserl describes experiences of peacefully going about our business by appeal to our being constrained by norms (*Normen*). He embeds these norms, furthermore, in descriptions of the experiences within a shared surrounding world:

Each instance of peaceful commerce [*Verkehr*] is already human communalization and presupposes a common ground of norms, even just the norm of general kindness, the norm not to deceive, etc.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> One potential counterargument to what I have just said could fasten upon the language Husserl uses in the previous block quote. After all, Husserl says that personal associations are “established” (*herstellt*) on the basis of empathy, but why should we think that continues to be the case after the establishment of a community, for instance, in regard to socio-historical communities? As I have demonstrated, though, Husserl appeals to different forms of empathy even when he accounts for our membership within traditions, so empathy factors into experiences of community membership even beyond the initial establishments of communities.

<sup>132</sup> *Hua XV*, p. 423: “Jeder friedliche Verkehr ist schon menschliche Vergemeinschaftung und setzt voraus einen gemeinsamen Boden der Norm, sei es auch nur der Norm der allgemeinsten Menschenfreundlichkeit, der Norm nicht zu betrügen etc.”

This general communalization is similar to the descriptions Husserl gives of experiences of community membership influenced by an “indeterminate generality.” For both linguistic communities and large communities such as Europe, Husserl is clear that these are not intimate communities. As more akin to concatenations, they exhibit a mereological distance between their members as parts and the wholes to which they belong. Phenomenologically speaking, shared norms within anonymous communities are experienced as components of our surrounding world insofar as others are characterized as possessing a sense of responsibility in relation to their potential treatment of me.<sup>133</sup> One here anticipates a general benevolence or at least implicitly trusts that others will refrain from inflicting unprovoked harm. The sense of other persons as constrained by norms is a component, according to Husserl, in the sense of a community’s surrounding world. For members of such anonymous communities, valuing and acting are constrained by the specific content of the shared surrounding world. These constraints in the form of generalized norms amidst indeterminate others are indicative of the experience of anonymous community membership.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> *Hua XV*, pp. 422, 423: “Der Mensch hat sein gesamtes Leben in seiner Lebensumwelt habituell konstituiert als jeweils überschaubares, als beständig im jeweiligen Dahinleben lebendigen Horizont. [...] Die Selbstverantwortung hat ihr Feld in der Totalität des Seins, in der Totalität des Lebens, und wieder bezogen auf die Totalität der Lebensumwelt. Wille, das feste Vermögen auszubilden, jeder Frage nach dem Warum — nach der gültigen Norm als der Recht begründenden — Antwort stehen zu können.”

<sup>134</sup> There is additional support for the experiences of anonymous community membership in Husserl’s discussion of the “random” (*regelmässige*) clientele expected by a store owner, or the typical audience member that is anticipated by an orator. While Husserl does not here appeal to the terms from his notion of mereological proximity, these descriptions are in the same vein of his discussions of encountering unknown others where that vernacular was directly used. Husserl writes that a store owner has both their regular customers (who they presumably know determinately enough) and their “random” customers. In the latter case, this does not mean they appear to the owner as completely indeterminate individuals. Rather, there is an “average” (*durchschnittliche*) character type attributed to both actual and possible customers in this community. In the experience of membership within anonymous communities, I apprehend strangers as bearers of general character types that have their sense in the context of the community as a whole. In anonymous communities, both my own will and the wills of others are taken as being constrained by social rules and norms, and these constraints are exhibited both in the senses I have of other persons and in the specific surrounding world. Cf., *Hua XIV*, p. 183; Taipale (2016).

## 4.2 Intimate Community Membership

Less mediation amidst parts and between parts and wholes is representative of mereological intimacy, and thereby of those communities considered to be intimate in Husserl's sense.<sup>135</sup> Intimacy in this sense is opposed to the concatenations of anonymity. As Husserl says in his formal mereology, "The members of an association that is free from concatenations are said to be *immediately associated* or proximate [*unmittelbar verknüpft* oder *benachbart*]." <sup>136</sup> Such a lack of mediation, such that there is reciprocal founding dependence between parts and wholes, is how Husserl describes the feature of mereological intimacy. According to Husserl,

[...] contents 'founded' on one another (whether one-sidedly or reciprocally) likewise have unity, and a disparately more intimate unity since less mediated unity [*und eine ungleich innigere, weil weniger vermittelte*]. Such 'intimacy' [*Innigkeit*] consists simply in the fact that unity is here not engendered by a novel content, which again only engenders unity since it is 'founded' on many members separate in themselves.<sup>137</sup>

Intimate communities exhibit mereological proximity insofar as members are "closer" to one another and the community as a whole. Rather than parts of the community being mediated as was the case for anonymous communities, members of intimate communities are more immediate parts of the whole. Mereological relations of independent pieces to a whole are described by Husserl as associative or combinatory (*Verbindung*), while mutually dependent moments are said to be interpenetrative (*Durchdringung*).<sup>138</sup> It is the property of parts being

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<sup>135</sup> For a fuller discussion of Husserl's concept of intimacy, see Chapter II.

<sup>136</sup> *LI*, p. 33.

<sup>137</sup> *LI*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>138</sup> "The same whole can be interpenetrative in relation to certain parts, and combinatory in relation to others: the sensuous phenomenal thing, the intuitively given spatial shape clothed with sensuous quality, is (just as it appears)



interpenetrative that most properly, for Husserl, represents his notion of intimacy. Appealing to the quadrant I introduced above, I propose that Husserl's descriptions of experiencing membership within intimate communities includes both a pairing with other determinate persons and a surrounding world that refers to these determinate others. The determinacy of other persons and of their surrounding world contributes to the intimacy of a community insofar as this determinacy makes it more likely for the community as a whole to be a thematic component of the experience. Knowing and acting with fellow members in a close, personal way increases the likelihood of thematically experiencing the "we" to which members belong. As exhibited in Husserl's writings, determinate others can be experienced concretely or non-concretely.

The first feature of experiences of intimate community membership that I focus on involves the proximity of experiences of reflexivity between individuals as parts and the community whole. As discussed in Chapter II, Husserl's notion of a "personality of a higher order" is of a community that exhibits characteristics that are ordinarily attributed to individual persons.<sup>139</sup> For instance, Husserl puts these types of communities forth as having their own self-consciousness<sup>140</sup> or self-awareness.<sup>141</sup> Members of such communities engage in explicitly communal activities, and not just their own individual activities.<sup>142</sup> In regard to the experiences of community members, Husserl draws attention to the kind of apperception through which we

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interpenetrative in respect of reciprocally founded 'moments' such as color and extension, and combinatory in respect of its 'pieces.'" *LI*, p. 35.

<sup>139</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 22.

<sup>140</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 49.

<sup>141</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 204.

<sup>142</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 22.

are reflexively presented with the community to which we belong, such as when we apperceive it as similar to a large-scale individual.<sup>143</sup> Each member of such a community has their own values, decisions, and actions, but there are also explicitly shared values, decisions, and actions that are features expressive of the community at large.<sup>144</sup> In these cases of members explicitly experiencing the “personality of a higher order,” the community is itself intended as akin to a unified personality insofar as members explicitly cooperate in their shared valuing and actions. The community is here analogous to an individual personality insofar as members jointly engage in a single task, such as in the pursuit of a shared goal, in a way that resembles the unified self-consciousness of an individual. Just as an individual can consciously decide to pursue a goal and then engage in that act on their own, so too does Husserl claim that a community can pursue its own goals as founded in the shared decisions and strivings of its members. In regard to the experience of membership within these kinds of intimate communities, there is an explicit reflexivity such that the community as a whole is experienced as a unified, person-like component of the surrounding world for its members. The reflexive experience of one’s community, while pre-reflective for anonymous communities in the sense that one only

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<sup>143</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 4 (*Kaizo 1*, p. 327): “Ebendasselbe werden wir, ohne uns durch einen schwächlichen Pessimismus und ideallosen „Realismus“ beirren zu lassen, auch für den „Menschen im Großen“, für die weiteren und weitesten Gemeinschaften nicht unbesehen für unmöglich erachten dürfen, und die gleiche Kampfesgesinnung in Richtung auf eine bessere Menschheit und eine echt humane Kultur werden wir als eine absolute ethische Forderung anerkennen müssen.”

<sup>144</sup> *Hua XIV*, pp. 192-193: “Jedes Einzelsubjekt als Gemeinschaftsglied hat seine Vorstellungen, seine Überzeugungen, seine Wertungen und Wollungen (Entschlüsse), Handlungen. Aber im Gemeinschaftszusammenhang habe ich Überzeugungen (wie vorher schon Vorstellungen) als bleibende, auf Grund meiner Erfahrung und evtl. vermittelter Anderer Erfahrung entsprungene, die ich zugleich als Überzeugungen Anderer erfassen kann: d.i., sie haben, wie ich weiss, auch Überzeugungen (sei es in ihnen selbst entsprungene, sei es übermittelte, evtl. erst von mir ihnen übermittelte), die mit den meinen stimmen: Sie meinen, glauben dasselbe, und umgekehrt wissen sie, dass das (in bezug auf bestimmte Gehalte) auch für mich der Fall ist.”

implicitly “knows” of the community, is at the fore in intimate forms of community. On this experiential possibility of group reflexivity, Husserl writes:

Included in the surrounding world of such a circle [of friends], or, in general, of a social subjectivity (an association of subjects, constituted through communication), is, once again, this very subjectivity itself insofar as it too can become an Object for itself, when the association relates back to itself, just as each individual subject in it can also become an Object.<sup>145</sup>

Members of such groups have a less mediated (more immediate) experience of membership within the community as a whole, where this amounts to experiences of membership that are not concatenated by way of membership with groups of indeterminate others. As Husserl claims, membership within a “personality of a higher order” involves “the unity of a focused, willing subjectivity that acts analogous to an individual subject.”<sup>146</sup> While members of anonymous communities lack a mereologically close relation to the whole, and are influenced more readily by an “indeterminate generality,” members of intimate communities share an awareness of the community as a whole as it finds their activities as its parts. Such community experiences lack mediation in Husserl’s mereological sense insofar as members directly engage in joint actions as a whole, having the experience of their individual actions contributing directly to the community’s goals. For example, individual members can in this sense engage in actions in the name of the community.<sup>147</sup> As exhibited in Husserl’s writings, mereological intimacy is

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<sup>145</sup> *Ideas II*, p. 206.

<sup>146</sup> *Hua XVII*, p. 22.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. *Hua XXVII*, p. 49.

experienced both in communities with determinate concrete others and in communities with determinate yet non-concrete others.

The experience of the community as a unified whole is, according to Husserl, a “natural feeling” and an “everyday apperception.”<sup>148</sup> While commentators such as Alfred Schutz have criticized Husserl for his notion of such higher order entities<sup>149</sup>, the possibility of their arising in the experiences of members is no more phenomenologically mysterious than the kind of apperception involved in perceiving a material object. I only see one side of the table at any given time, but my experience is of the table as a whole. Analogously, I may encounter just a handful of individual persons in a community, but on that basis, it is possible to apperceive an intimate community as a whole, such as when we jointly pursue a shared goal. Even when I do not concretely encounter other individuals in an intimate community, I can imagine or remember them in their determinate relation to the whole.

One place that this experiential structure of intimate communities is found is in Husserl’s discussions of small family communities and small groups of friends. In the case of experiences within “normal marriages” and “normal friendships,” Husserl refers to them as being intimate, and indeed as some of the most intimate forms of unity (*diese innigste Einheit*).<sup>150</sup> In these

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<sup>148</sup> *Hua XVII*, p. 5 (*Kaizo 1*, p. 327): “So spricht vorweg ein natürliches Gefühl, das offenbar in jener Platonischen Analogie zwischen Einzelmenschen und Gemeinschaft verwurzelt ist. Diese Analogie ist aber keineswegs ein geistreicher Einfall eines das natürliche Denken hoch übersteigenden oder gar verstiegenen Philosophen, sondern ist nicht mehr als der Ausdruck einer alltäglichen, aus den Aktualitäten des menschlichen Lebens natürlich erwachsenden Apperzeption.”

<sup>149</sup> Schutz (1975), pp. 38-39.

<sup>150</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 219: “In der normalen Ehe, in der normalen Freundschaft. Zwei Menschen, die eine Lebenseinheit bilden, nicht zwei Leben nebeneinander, sondern zwei Menschen, zwei Personen, deren jede ihr Leben lebt und doch auch Anteil am Leben des Anderen hat, ein Mitleben, ein Eigenleben, das sich mit dem anderen Eigenleben verbindet, es mitumgreift und umgriffen wird. Für das ego ist der alter nicht nur überhaupt ein Jemand, der noch da ist, unbestimmt vorgestellt als Subjekt eines Bewusstseins oder nach einzelner seines Lebens zufällig erfasst und selbst davon noch bestimmt, sondern der Intention nach gehört das Gesamtleben des alter auch „mit“ zu dem

communities, fellow members are not experienced indeterminately, but rather, there is said to be a merging of one life with the other's life. Given Husserl's mereological understanding of intimacy, such a merging should be understood in terms of a mutual dependence between members of the group in their relation to the group whole. As discussed in Chapter II, intimacy is seen most straightforwardly for Husserl in regard to mutually dependent moments such as color and extension, though he allows for independent parts (pieces) to be considered as moments of a whole in the case of a temporally extended, "more comprehensive whole."<sup>151</sup> In the case of the experiences of members within such small intimate communities, then, individual members are experienced as dependent moments of such wholes insofar as those wholes would not exist in the same ways without them. This is different from the experiences of other persons in larger, anonymous groupings insofar as other strangers may be experienced only as separable, independent parts of the community whole. The larger group in such a case would continue to be experienced as what it is in the absence of some individual members. Husserl considers families to be intimate communities in his mereological sense, furthermore, since he refers to their form of unity (*Einheit*), their existence as a whole (*Ganzes*), to be one in which members are associatively interpenetrating (*verbindend durchdringen*) with each other; family members are here "living and working in the other."<sup>152</sup> In the family, each individual member directly relates

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meinen, und das meine zu dem seinen. Das Prinzip dieser innigsten Einheit ist zu bestimmen, diese innigste Einheit der Zweieinigkeit näher zu beschreiben." I will not here speculate about what Husserl means with the descriptor "normal." In discussing marriage earlier in this line of manuscripts, it's worth pointing out a potential contrast case to this, where he refers to a form of personal association that exists "even if it is a "modern" marriage" (p. 182).

<sup>151</sup> *LI*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>152</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 179: "die Ichheit des einen ist nicht neben der des anderen, sondern lebt und wirkt in der anderen." This language of experiencing an interpenetration of wills is the same that Husserl uses in his descriptions of communities of love. *Hua XIV*, p. 173. For a discussion of Husserl on communities of love as intimate communities, see Chapter II.

to the whole by way of their specific functions.<sup>153</sup> There is intimacy in the context of the family to the extent that each individual knows each of the other individual members with whom they are paired as similarly belonging to the family community and as acting in the name of the family. Centripetal interactions between members in family communities are then both concrete and determinate.

Husserl claims that being a member of a family community means more than just living in the spatial vicinity of other members, but refers to “a community of life having life rules with a social character” (*eine Lebensgemeinschaft mit Lebensordnungen, die sozialen Charakter haben*).<sup>154</sup> These social rules refer to the experiences that members have of their familial surrounding world. Each family member has their own individual function within the family community (as mother, father, sister, etc.), but the community as a whole also has its own goals or purposes, which in this case is the promotion of the lives of its members.<sup>155</sup> Husserl draws attention to the constraints that are imposed upon members of the family vis-à-vis their functions where these constraints are components in their shared surrounding world. For example, the failure to take care of the matters belonging to one’s position within the family through neglect or selfishness is to be met with criticism and further instruction.<sup>156</sup> The “I-can” (*Ich kann*) that

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<sup>153</sup> “Everyone knows themselves and every other as subjects of their functions.” *Hua XIV*, p. 179: “Jeder weiss sich und jeden anderen als Subjekt seiner Funktionen.”

<sup>154</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 178. Cf. Taipale, p. 102.

<sup>155</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 181: “Funktion bezeichnet die praktische Bestimmung des Subjekts, die Hinordnung auf einen Zweck, und zwar unter dem Gesichtspunkt eines besonderen Zweckes, der dienend ist für einen umfassenden Zweck des gesamten sozialen Verbandes, hier der Familie. Die Familie selbst hat an und für sich keine Funktion, sondern nur etwa im Volksleben u.dgl. Aber in der Familie hat der Vater die Funktion des Hauptes, die Frau die Funktion der Gattin und Mutter etc. Im Ausdruck Pflicht und Sollen klingt der Durchgang durch das Negativum an: die Abweichung stört die Willenseinstimmigkeit und bedingt die Reaktion des Tadels.”

<sup>156</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 180: “Die Unterlassung der natürlichen Fürsorge durch Übersehen, durch momentanen Egoismus, durch Unvernunft u.dgl. führt zur Kritik und dann zur personalen Aufforderung, zum Befehl usw. Es erwächst das

Husserl often appeals to in his discussions of the experience of practical bodily possibilities here takes on the form of the “I-should” (*Ich soll*). I take it that this means that the surrounding world for family members is experienced not just in terms of my individual bodily possibilities and constraints (e.g., I see an incline as easily surmountable or a barbell as too heavy to lift), but includes specifically community-based constraints (e.g., I see an incline as something I should not attempt to climb with a toddler, or I see a barbell as moveable if we work together).

The family community, like other communities as conceptualized by Husserl, is founded and thereby dependent on the lives of its members. Family members are at the same time dependent on the community whole by way of being constrained by the family. Put otherwise, the possibilities of individual members as parts are reciprocally founded on the existence of the community as a whole. The family community could not exist in the absence of its constituent members, but once it exists, it reciprocally influences those very members to which it owes its existence. The family community can be considered as an intimate community insofar as family members understood as parts are close, in mereological proximity, to the family community whole. The members of a family belong to their community not by way of belonging to some other associations internal to it in the form of a concatenation. It is also an example of an intimate community to the extent that there is a reciprocal founding relation. While Husserl’s strictest sense of intimacy applies to mutually dependent moments such as color and

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Sollen: das „er soll“ und von seiten dessen, der die Zumutung erfährt und übernimmt, das „ich soll“. Es fehlt auch nicht für den Hausvater an Motiven des „ich soll“ bzw. vorher der Selbstbeurteilung; das eigene Versäumnis z.B. wird ihm empfindlich, und die verkehrt gegebene Anordnung schädigt seine Angehörigen und ihn selbst. Die ganze Handlung, in der er selbst als Leiter sich selbst objektiv war und in der Erinnerung ist, ist tadelhaft, und er als ihr Urheber. Er entschliesst sich zu anderen, besseren Anordnungen, die den Charakter der nicht nur bessern, sondern gesollten haben.”

extension<sup>157</sup>, he allows for the possibility of intimate founding amidst pieces of a whole considered as moments of a temporally extended, more comprehensive whole.<sup>158</sup> Family members are not founded upon one another and the community as strictly as color and extension, but their experience of membership roles in the family still exhibit dependence on one another in the extended sense arising from the community existing as a temporally enduring whole. How exactly is membership within an intimate community experienced by its members? Husserl is not here forthcoming with robust noematic descriptions, but we can use what he provides to consider an example. Consider the experience of belonging to a family within the surrounding world of the family's home. Objects in the surrounding world will be characterized with the sense of being "ours." There are some objects that belong to the family understood as a whole, and not, for instance, only to individual members of that whole. This is "our" kitchen table, or "our" backyard. Even fellow members exhibit to one another the noematic sense of belonging to the specific community.

In addition to the family community, Husserl writes that certain philosophical communities exhibit the mereological feature of intimacy. In the narrative from his "Vienna Lecture," Husserl describes the members forming the earliest philosophical community as existing in an intimate form of community:

A new and intimate community—we could call it a community of purely ideal interests—develops among men, men who live for philosophy, bound together (*verbunden*) in their devotion to ideas, which not only are useful to all but belong to all identically.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> LI, pp. 36-37.

<sup>158</sup> LI, pp. 41-42. Cf. Chapter II.

<sup>159</sup> VL, p. 287.



On the basis of this quote, it is tempting to suggest that Husserl is only accounting for the experience of belonging to a philosophical community as shaped by shared philosophical interests and goals. At the same time, though, these “ideal interests” which are shared by philosophers are described alongside the mereological structure of intimacy. While shared interests influence our experiences of community membership, such interests (or goals or appropriations of a tradition) should be reframed according to Husserl’s mereology if we are to understand his account completely. After all, one can have interests in philosophy while nevertheless not being a part of any sort of close-knit and self-reflexive philosophical community. The mereological structure of intimacy exists here insofar as the individual members are so “close” to the tasks pursued by the community taken as a whole that their joint task is taken to be sufficiently similar for all members.

The intimate philosophical community need not be limited to those who are currently working on philosophical problems or even those who are still living. In the language introduced above, there can be an intimate philosophical community in the absence of concrete empathic pairing. This is seen in the way Husserl writes that his life and Plato’s life are empathically unified:

All unity of historical spirit as historical is a one-sided relationship. My life and Plato’s are one. I continue his life’s work and the unity of his achievements is a member in the unity of my achievements; his striving, his willing, his form continues through mine. Science as a historical unity is a correlate of the unity of the production which passes through a multiplicity of persons who later practice empathy with the life of the former [*die späteren üben Einfühlung in das Leben der früheren*], insofar as they understand their achievements as achievements, provided that they understand the history of ideas to which those in their theories ultimately also wanted of what has remained open in them

and what needs to be improved now that we descendants continue, improve, and want to bring to an end.<sup>160</sup>

Shortly after in this passage, Husserl refers to being able to “feel himself into” the “bygone Aristotle.”<sup>161</sup> In a supplement to these passages, Husserl writes of the possibility of an author interacting “into me” through their works in such a way that “we are communalized” (*Wir sind vergemeinschaftet*).<sup>162</sup> These passages bring together several threads. They refer to a philosophical community (which Husserl has described as intimate). They refer to an empathic pairing that brings two persons together as one (which Husserl has described as an intimate form of coupling). They refer to an empathic pairing with a determinate individual with whom I am denied a concrete encounter. To be sure, this only demonstrates that empathy with non-concrete others is a possibility in extraordinary circumstances. Empathy in this example is something that is practiced after the fact without the other person present. Empathy is practiced on the condition that Husserl understands the history of ideas, and is able to place Plato as an individual person in

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<sup>160</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 198: “Alle Einheit des historischen Geistes als historischen ist eine einseitige Beziehung. Mein Leben und das Platons ist eins. Ich setze seine Lebensarbeit fort, che Einheit seiner Leistungen ist Glied in der Einheit meiner Leistungen; sein Streben, sein Wollen, sein Gestalten setzt sich in dem meinen fort. Die Wissenschaft als historische Einheit ist Korrelat der Einheit des Leistens, das durch eine Vielheit von Personen hindurchgeht, die späteren üben Einfühlung in das Leben der früheren, soweit sie ihre Leistungen nachverstehen als Leistungen, sofern sie ideengeschichtlich verstehen, worauf jene bei ihren Theorien letztlich hinauswollten, was in ihnen offen gebheben ist und was nun verbessert werden muss, was wir Nachfahren eben fortführen, bessern, zum Ende bringen wollen.”

<sup>161</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 200: “Fühle ich mich in Aristoteles ein, so ist es der vergangene Aristoteles.”

<sup>162</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 222: “Der Autor oder die mit mir unmittelbar-wechselseitig kommunizierende andere Person wirkt „in mich hinein“, in mein Ich, das seinen lebendigen Bewusstseinshorizont hat, seine originale Seinssphäre und seine Seinshabitualität, seine Weise, als passives und aktives Ich zu sein. Aber der Andere hat die seinen. Sein Gedanke ist „in“ ihm sein Gedanke und ist jetzt zugleich in mich eingegangen und mein Gedanke, seine Akte sind sein Leben, meine gleichgerichteten Akte die meinen; der Gedanke in ihm <ist> seine habituelle „Richtung“ als in ihm bleibende Geltung, als bleibend Gültiges dasselbe, aber auch dasselbe in mir in meiner nunmehr habituellen Richtung auf dasselbe. Das geistige Gebilde „subjektiv“ verschieden geworden und an sich geistig dasselbe. Wir sind vergemeinschaftet.”

the context of a historical lineage that he then picks up in the present.<sup>163</sup> The centripetal moment here refers to the ways that I represent other persons as inwardly unified with myself in an intimate way. This is an intimate representation of the other person as a determinate other even when they are absent (or deceased) insofar as shared interests or goals form a temporally extended whole in the form of a tradition with which members continue to found in the present while being dependent upon that tradition. The appropriation of a tradition, while demonstrated in the setting of anonymous communities as involving mereological distance, here exhibits an intimate closeness. Individuals cooperatively found such a community (even when this is one-sided in terms of a historical succession), and are also dependent upon that community as a whole. By this, Husserl indicates the possibility of taking over the projects of those with whom I share interests or projects, and of establishing a unity in the form of a community. In this sense, the philosophical community's achievements closely depend on philosophers as its parts. There is mutual foundational dependence here in Husserl's mereological sense since the community depends on philosophers insofar as it is founded upon them and their activities, while individual philosophers reciprocally depend on the philosophical community as a whole for their own individual pursuits.

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<sup>163</sup> Further supplementation for this claim comes in Husserl's *Ideas I* in a section (§141) devoted to the topic of mediate and unmediated evidence. There Husserl contrasts the immediacy of the evidence that comes from perception with the mediate evidence of memory. The latter is mediated insofar as it refers back to an original perception. As Husserl claims, though, rigorous explication of the source of one's memories can be such that we actually manage to connect the evidence of our memories back up to the present moment. In those cases, perception in the present elucidates the memory. "But if the explication is conducted up to the *current now*, then some of the light of perception and its evidence beams back on the entire series." *Ideas I*, p. 281. I suggest that something similar is going on in Husserl's discussion of the kind of connection he's able to have with Plato as a historical figure.

Unlike membership in anonymous communities, the reflexivity of intimate community experience refers to determinateness both toward the other persons with whom one is intimately paired and toward the shared surrounding world. In terms of the intimate community of philosophers, Husserl hints at a specific kind of philosophical surrounding world. On its own, this is not a surprising claim, given that he elsewhere refers to the specific surrounding worlds of scientists broadly, or of mathematicians and botanists more narrowly. The uniqueness of the surrounding world of philosophers, though, is based on its radicality. The philosophical surrounding world (or perhaps more precisely, the surrounding world of the Husserlian phenomenologist) exists insofar as members have similarly “suspended” the sense of the surrounding world as it is lived through in the natural attitude.<sup>164</sup> It is no longer a surrounding world that is lived through straightforwardly, and the existence of all transcendent realities is bracketed through the epoche. The philosophical surrounding world is experienced when members approach their surrounding world in the philosophical attitude and with “a universal critical attitude.”<sup>165</sup> This amounts to a philosophical community whose surrounding world is experienced by a group of individuals who are in the habit of critically calling the tenets of a socio-cultural world itself into question. There is here a reflective questioning of the commitments of their tradition to evaluate whether or not to continue abiding by them.<sup>166</sup> In this

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<sup>164</sup> *VL*, p. 281: “Waking life is always a directedness to this or that, being directed toward it as an end or as means, as relevant or irrelevant, toward the interesting or the indifferent, toward the private or public, toward what is daily required or intrusively new. All this lies within the world-horizon; but special motives are required when one who is gripped in this world-life reorients himself and somehow comes to make the world itself thematic, to take up a lasting interest in it.”

<sup>165</sup> *VL*, p. 288. Further discussion of this notion of “critical” is provided in Chapter V.

<sup>166</sup> *VL*, p. 281.

case, Husserl opposes the critical attitude of philosophers to the approach from those who are “conservatively satisfied” (*konservativ Befriedigten*) and who promote the uncritical acceptance of tradition above all.<sup>167</sup> To a certain extent, this critical attitude, when entered into habitually, even influences the apprehension of the philosophers’ non-philosophical surrounding world:

As a phenomenologist, I can, of course, at any time go back into the natural attitude, back to the straightforward pursuit of my theoretical or other life-interests; I can, as before, be active as a father, a citizen, an official, as a ‘good European,’ etc., that is, as a human being in my human community, in my world. As before—and yet not quite as before. For I can never again achieve the old naiveté; I can only understand it. My transcendental insights and purposes have become merely inactive, but they continue to be my own.<sup>168</sup>

The surrounding world of the philosopher according to Husserl is characterized as experientially intimate in the mereological sense if individual members reflect on that world understood as a whole and insofar as it is a world that exists for a determinate group of persons (on the assumption, to reiterate, that one has a strong grasp on the history of philosophers and their ideas). This is experientially intimate to the extent that individual members as parts are “close” or “proximate” in relation to the community in terms of reflecting on it as a whole as opposed to being engaged with particular objects and states of affairs within it. Unlike the intersubjectively accessible surrounding world of nature which is open to all perceivers, the world as the explicit correlate of consciousness is put forth as only open to those who have habitually engaged in the labor of philosophical practice.

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<sup>167</sup> “Those who are conservatively satisfied with the tradition will fight with the circle of philosophers, and the struggle will occur in the sphere of political power. The persecution begins at the very beginnings of philosophy. The people who live these ideas are ostracized. And yet, ideas are stronger than any empirical powers.” *VL*, p. 288. [Translation modified]

<sup>168</sup> *Crisis*, p. 210.

The dependence between individuals as parts and the community as a whole is reciprocal in the case of intimate communities in comparison with the one-sided dependence seen in the case of anonymous communities. The relation of the individual to the anonymous community as I showed was either implicit or accidental. While there may be a reciprocal determination of the individual here from the direction of the community, it is only in a weak sense since the community as a whole is not thematically experienced in the everydayness of members as its parts. In an intimate community, though, the individuals have a less mediated relation to the whole, such that they can more directly “steer” the community and be guided by community-wide goals. Some communities can exist despite the coming and going of members. For anonymous communities, the community as a whole is ontologically founded on individuals as its parts. But if the community can continue to exist even when some of its parts have left, then this dependence is not reciprocal such as is found in intimately dependent moments such as color and extension. One experiences oneself and fellow members within an anonymous community as more akin to independent parts (pieces) rather than as reciprocally dependent parts (moments). Intimate communities are similarly founded on individuals as their parts, but these community wholes have the additional experiential features of reciprocally determining aspects of the lives of members such as by providing explicit constraints to their wills. While anonymous communities can continue to exist despite the coming and going of members, intimate communities are not durable to the same extent.

## §5. Conclusions

I have here argued that Husserl provides an account of the first-person experience of belonging to a community that explicitly makes use of his notion of mereological proximity. The

upshot of my argument is that Husserl provides a phenomenological account of the experience of community membership by showing how personal associations are correlated with their shared surrounding worlds. This is directly tied to the ways that individuals as parts are related in mediate or immediate fashion to the community whole. Descriptions of mediacy and immediacy in the context of community were shown to be representative of Husserl's notion of mereological proximity.

The argument I have given here supplements and re-frames, though does not supplant, the interpretations in the secondary literature introduced above. Views claiming that shared interests, goals, or appropriations of a tradition shape experiences of belonging to a community are correct to the extent that they highlight different ways in which experiences of interpersonal interactions and a shared surrounding world are shaped. At the same time, though, these views do not completely uncover the fine-grained fashion in which Husserl discusses different experiences of community membership. I conclude this chapter by showing the extent to which interpretations in the secondary literature can be supplemented by my reading.

Accounts that emphasize shared interests or goals in the experience of community membership are correct in showing that experiences of others and of our shared surrounding world are filtered by similar attitudes or projects. Husserl is definitely clear that shared interests and goals make an impact on the experience of belonging to a particular community. This on its own, however, is not entirely representative of the experiential structure of community membership put forward by Husserl. Insofar as commentators focus exclusively on shared interests or shared goals in regard to experiencing membership within "true" communities, they impose an imprecise limitation on the breadth of Husserl's concept of membership. If

membership in a community in Husserl's true sense is experienced only in those groupings that are explicitly "interest-oriented" or "goal-oriented," and if anonymous groupings such as *Gesellschaften* or humanity at large are not oriented in these ways, then attempts to account for the structure of experiences within such groupings from a Husserlian standpoint will face a difficult descriptive hurdle. Appealing to the mereological reading I have given, both anonymous societies and the human community at large are encapsulated within the general framework Husserl provides regarding experiences of the members of personal associations in correlation with their shared surrounding worlds. While it is clear that the content of these experiences can vary between different communities, they nevertheless for Husserl are made sense of as types of the same general framework.

Furthermore, it is not the case that shared interests and goals do the entirety of the work in regard to distinguishing between different types of communities. It is true that we can distinguish the community of philosophers from the community of bird-watchers or wine enthusiasts by way of their different interests and activities.<sup>169</sup> For Husserl, though, descriptions of communities with shared interests and practical goals are often embedded within a further layer of sophistication, such that interests and goals are themselves contextualized in terms of being anonymous or intimate in the mereological senses. My experience of membership within a particular community can either involve a one-sided founding dependence of the community upon its members (anonymous communities) or there can be a mutual founding dependence between community members as parts and the community as a whole (intimate communities).

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<sup>169</sup> The existence of a philosophically-minded community of wine-drinking bird-watchers might put pressure on this point, but I think Husserl's mereology still adequately accounts for such a case.



This strategy for differentiating between different types of communities envelopes distinctions that appeal to shared interests and goals.

Accounts that emphasize the socio-historical appropriation of traditions in experiences of community membership are faithful to Husserl's writings in showing how our membership experiences are shaped by indeterminate or ever absent others. The influences of traditions permeate experiences of community membership even without the pairing of ourselves with concrete others. As I have argued, Husserl's account of the experience of community membership in general includes a pairing of myself with at least one other person in the form of a personal association. The pairing Husserl refers to is empathic insofar as it is an act that represents the other's awareness of a shared surrounding world. This applies even to socio-historical communities that we belong to through the appropriation of traditions. This claim would be indefensible if the notion of empathy referred only to actual encounters with individual, embodied others. Nevertheless, Husserl invokes his notion of empathy even in cases when our representation of other persons occurs without encountering them concretely. This possibility is brought up by Husserl insofar as empathy is merely potential or mediated, and mediation refers us explicitly back to his notion of mereological proximity.

The presence of disagreements in the context of community membership was brought up at the end of §3 where I highlighted that Husserl allows for dissent amidst fellow members and in regard to their shared surrounding world. Other commentators have addressed these topics, so I do not further pursue them here.<sup>170</sup> Based on the argument I have provided in this chapter, though, I suggest in closing this chapter that mereological proximity provides the tools for

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<sup>170</sup> Cf. Zahavi (2001); Miettinen (2013); Szanto (2016).

understanding disagreements within communities. For example, disagreement in the context of a community can facilitate the movement from a pre-reflective understanding of one's community to a reflective approach to one's community.<sup>171</sup> When things go wrong, community harmony as a whole is disrupted, and this can motivate members either to approach each other differently or to modify the organization of institutions within their surrounding world. These kinds of disagreements refer to ways in which community members can intend the community as a whole, and thereby become experientially "close" to the community in the mereological sense. As Husserl writes, we are always involved in the shaping of our shared surrounding world: "Whether we want to or not, whether it is right or wrong, we act in this way. Could we not also act *rationally*?"<sup>172</sup> I propose that one way in which community members can act rationally in so shaping the surrounding world is by reflexively thinking and acting with an eye to the community understood as a whole.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Cf. Searle (2003).

<sup>172</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 4 (*Kaizo 1*, p. 326): "Ob wir wollen oder nicht, ob schlecht oder recht, wir tun so. Können wir es nicht auch vernünftig tun, steht Vernünftigkeit und Tüchtigkeit nicht in unserer Macht?"

<sup>173</sup> This suggestion is pursued further in Chapter V in regard to socio-cultural cries and betrayals of trust.

## CHAPTER IV

### POLITICAL OBLIGATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP IN POLITICAL COMMUNITIES

#### §1. Introduction

This chapter argues that Husserl's concept of community supplements a difficulty found in Margaret Gilbert's theory of political obligations within large political communities such as countries.<sup>1</sup> More specifically, I argue that Husserl is better able to account for the structures of the experiences that members have within communities possessing large degrees of impersonality and anonymity.<sup>2</sup> I do not claim that Husserl has a comprehensively worked out theory of obligations in general or political obligations in particular. I do claim, though, that Husserl's treatment of the features of impersonality and anonymity in the context of community are preferable to the treatment given to them by Gilbert. This preferability matters insofar as those specific features are fundamental to Gilbert's theory of political obligations.

Near the end of her 1989 book *On Social Facts*, Gilbert claims that, "In order meaningfully to engage in political philosophy one needs an accurate social ontology."<sup>3</sup> Gilbert

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<sup>1</sup> One note on terminology is in order. Gilbert refers primarily to "societies" and "social groups." She does not use the term "communities" to the same extent that Husserl does. Given the arguments I have made up to this point, however, it is clear that Husserl's concept of community accounts for all forms of personal associations. Husserl's concept does not carry with it the terminological baggage associated with "community" as Tönnies and his terminological heirs occasionally contrast it with "society," for instance. All references to "communities" in what follows, even in reference to Gilbert's positions, are to be taken as referring to any form of social grouping.

<sup>2</sup> Precise definitions of both of these terms are given in what follows.

<sup>3</sup> Gilbert (1989), p. 436. This position is echoed in the social and political ontology of John Searle (2003) and in the political analyses of Colin Hay (2006). I here take this point on in the form of an assumption since other authors have defended it. Gilbert, Searle, and Hay provide their own arguments for why ontology should precede political philosophy.

puts forward a short “sketch” in her early work on the applicability of her own social ontology to the political domain<sup>4</sup>, but then directly engages with political philosophy by the time of her 2006 *A Theory of Political Obligations*. Part of what this chapter provides is an assessment of how Gilbert’s position changes over time (primarily between the 1989 and 2006 books), and why those changes matter. By showcasing these changes, I demonstrate how her more recent account is closer to Husserl’s writings on community than has been recognized, while also showing how her position has become more protected against the kinds of criticisms recently brought against her by phenomenologists.

Political philosophers have debated whether members of political communities have obligations to uphold the institutions of their political communities, and if so, what the source is of that normative force. Gilbert refers to this nexus of questions as the “membership problem.” One question representative of this problem is: “Must one obey the commands of one’s country simply because it is one’s country?”<sup>5</sup> This is an important problem in the context of political philosophy insofar as it draws attention to the nature of the constraints to the wills of members of a political community, both in relation to one another and in relation to the political community as a whole. Husserl provides his own ontological account of the social world<sup>6</sup>, and there is considerable overlap with the content put forth in the theories of contemporary social ontologists.<sup>7</sup> Not only is it the case that Husserl provides an ontological account of the social

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<sup>4</sup> Gilbert (1989), pp. 436-439.

<sup>5</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 12.

<sup>6</sup> Cf., Chapter I.

<sup>7</sup> It is clear that Husserl’s phenomenology was ahead of its time in proceeding in this vein. Commentators have even claimed that the first usage of the term “social ontology” is found in Husserl’s writings, specifically in a manuscript from 1910 found presented in *Husserliana XIII*, pp. 98-104. Cf. Szanto (2016); Miettinen (2014).

world, but there are components of his account that can retrospectively provide assistance to Gilbert's account of the features of impersonality and anonymity.<sup>8</sup> Husserlian philosophy thereby contributes to work in political philosophy by way of addressing fundamental components of the political "membership problem."

I begin by showing important similarities and differences between the positions of Husserl and Gilbert (§2). Both writers endorse tenets associated with the position in the contemporary collective intentionality literature regarding sharedness arising from the subject of collective intentions (2.1).<sup>9</sup> Influenced by Husserl's writings on community, contemporary phenomenologists have criticized Gilbert's theory for having overly stringent criteria for the establishment of a plural subject, suggesting that her theory requires participants to explicitly engage in something like an agreement in order to be social (2.2). According to such criticisms, Gilbert does not account for forms of communalization brought about in the absence of explicit agreements, and fails to explain how joint commitments themselves come about. By presenting Gilbert's recent work on political obligations (beyond what she wrote earlier on the social domain in general), I show that the force of such criticisms has been diminished when her work is considered as a whole. In providing her answer to the "membership problem" (§3), Gilbert demonstrates how her plural subject theory takes into account instances in which members of a group are collectively influenced without the necessity of an explicit agreement (3.1). Building

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Thomasson (1997); Szanto (2016).

<sup>9</sup> Cf., Schweikard & Schmid (2013); Szanto (2016); Koo (2016). As Szanto has recently claimed, Husserl's account of collective intentionality "cannot be easily harmonized" with any of the three main approaches taken entirely on their own, and that "Husserl's own account resonates with a number of insights among each of them" Szanto (2016), pp. 156-160. As I show, though, there are fundamental points of overlap between Husserl's writings on community and accounts such as Gilbert's of collective intentionality emphasizing a shared subject.

on the relatively simple case of two people going for a walk together, Gilbert extrapolates into analyses of larger groups such as countries (3.2). This extrapolation is accomplished with the help of amplifying her account of the features of impersonality and anonymity within large groupings. I show how this implicitly responds to some of the main phenomenological criticisms that have been levied against her (3.3). While Gilbert's answer to the "membership problem" is applied to all forms of political groupings, I identify a difficulty inherent to her account regarding the kind of consciousness that members have of political obligations in the context of impersonal and anonymous groups. Put briefly, Gilbert faces a difficulty insofar as her plural subject account requires that members are conscious of the group's unity while the features of impersonality and anonymity seem to preclude such awareness (3.4). Gilbert draws attention to the kinds of experiences had by members of a community, and the difficulty I raise is motivated by Husserl's phenomenological conception of the same kinds of experiences. Given the affinities between the two philosophers, I turn to Husserl's conception of community membership not just as a point of comparison, but as a resource to address the difficulty identified in Gilbert's work (§4). I present Husserl's account of the experience of membership within large communities (4.1), and argue that he is better equipped to address the difficulty identified in Gilbert regarding political obligations in large communities (4.2). Husserl's concept of community in general and his account of the experiences of community membership are thereby shown to be of crucial importance to a specific problem of political philosophy (§5).

## §2. Comparing Husserl and Gilbert

The project of bringing Husserl and Gilbert together is here motivated by showcasing their similarities and differences. In this way, I engage in a project similar to Amie Thomasson

(1997), who compares the social ontologies of Husserl and Searle. The possibility of my project is foreshadowed in Thomasson's work insofar as she highlights Husserl's notion of social subjectivities as involving a "we" understood as an entity in its own right.<sup>10</sup> As becomes clear below, this commitment to the "we" is shared by Gilbert. The main point of overlap between Husserl and Gilbert is in their conception of communities as distinct entities that are brought about through the activities of their individual members.<sup>11</sup> Communities are theorized by both writers as being similar to the unities of individual subjects or subjectivities. This is what Gilbert means in referring to groups as "plural subjects." Just as individuals engage in their own individual projects (e.g., "I, the first-person singular subject, am going for a walk"), so too are communities said to engage in community projects on these accounts (e.g., "We, the first-person plural subject, are going for a walk"). These community endeavors are not summative of the projects of all members understood as individuals, but refer to a unified community "we" that is more than a mere collection.

## 2.1 Overlap regarding Plural Subjects

Gilbert's plural subject theory is put forth as an answer to the philosophical problem of how individual persons share in cognitive, evaluative, or practical activities.<sup>12</sup> On Gilbert's

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<sup>10</sup> "Thus for Husserl the existence of the social or 'spiritual' world depends not merely on collective intentionality in Searle's sense (of individuals with thoughts in the form 'we intend') but on higher-level social associations for whom this piece of paper is money, this piece of rock a work of art, this building a place of spiritual significance. This is a more robust understanding of collective intentionality than Searle's, since Searle insists that we do not need to posit any higher social subjectivity for the existence of collective intentionality; 'we' intentions still take place 'in the heads' of separate individuals." Thomasson (1997), p. 117.

<sup>11</sup> See Chapter I for a further discussion of Husserl's ontology of communities in comparison with traditional conceptions such as ontological individualism and ontological holism.

<sup>12</sup> This is referred to as the problem of "collective intentionality." As Schweikard and Schmid concisely put the point, "Collective intentionality is the power of minds to be jointly directed at objects, matters of facts, states of affairs, goals, or values." Schweikard & Schmid (2013).

account, individual persons are said to be collectively engaged in such activities insofar as they belong to a “plural subject” brought about through a joint commitment. By a “plural subject,” Gilbert means any group that is jointly committed with one another as a group toward some goal.<sup>13</sup> A joint commitment arises when a group of persons undertake a certain task or goal together “as a body.” Gilbert designates joint commitments as arising when “the parties jointly commit to *X* as a body. Different joint commitments involve different substitutions for ‘*X*.’”<sup>14</sup> Joint commitments are practical commitments of the wills of at least two individuals<sup>15</sup>, and by engaging in such a commitment, members are said to “pool” their wills together.<sup>16</sup> Two individuals may jointly commit to going for a walk together<sup>17</sup> or to be married<sup>18</sup>; larger groups may be jointly committed to defend a plot of land from intruders or to storm a building together.<sup>19</sup> What is crucial for all of these examples provided by Gilbert is they are actions undertaken by a “we”; the subject of these types of actions are not individuals or mere aggregations of individuals. Rather, the subject of these actions is said to be the group taken together, the first-person plural “we” taken as a whole.

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<sup>13</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 144.

<sup>14</sup> Gilbert (2006), pp. 136-137.

<sup>15</sup> “A joint commitment is a kind of commitment of the will. In this case, the wills of two or more people create it, and two or more people are committed by it.” Gilbert (2006), p. 134.

<sup>16</sup> Gilbert (1989), pp. 197-198.

<sup>17</sup> Gilbert (1990); Gilbert (2006).

<sup>18</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 112.

<sup>19</sup> Gilbert (2006), pp. 178-179.



In order to bring about a plural subject, Gilbert claims that the individual members must express to one another their “readiness” to be jointly committed to a specific task.<sup>20</sup> By openly expressing readiness to the other members, one shows they are prepared and willing to undertake a shared endeavor. In some cases, expressions of readiness may come in the form of explicit agreements. An explicit agreement may be lacking, though, such as when a background understanding prescribes how joint commitments are to come about.<sup>21</sup>

Foreshadowing the direction of her later work, Gilbert includes within her 1989 account a general notion of the ways in which a plural subject can exist when not all fellow members are known personally (what she later defines as the characteristic of “impersonality”) or where some fellow members are not even recognized as existing (“anonymity”).<sup>22</sup> This is accounted for by appeal to “common knowledge” possessed by the relevant members of a group. A group can be jointly committed while not knowing of all other fellow members insofar as there is some kind of common knowledge regarding the group in question and their requisite readiness. This common knowledge could be a reference, for example, to “we the members of a large crowd demanding X.” There is thereby a reference to a generally individuated group without picking out specific known individuals within it. A plural subject for Gilbert requires both common knowledge and joint readiness.<sup>23</sup> No detailed account is given in the 1989 work regarding how common

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<sup>20</sup> Gilbert (1989), pp. 184-185; (2006), p. 120: “One can say at least that each party to the joint action does something expressive of readiness to participate in that action. Further, each party makes this readiness manifest to the others. Something each party does or says makes their personal readiness clear, as it is intended to.”

<sup>21</sup> I will return to this distinction in what follows, as I argue that the latter notion is further developed in her account of membership within large political communities.

<sup>22</sup> Gilbert (1989), p. 212. Cf. Gilbert (2003).

<sup>23</sup> Gilbert (1989), p. 202.

knowledge factors into large groupings such as countries. By 2006, though, she provides a detailed account of the features of impersonality and anonymity. Along with a more robust notion of impersonality and anonymity, she also has far more to say on the topic of “population common knowledge.” Since my goal in this section is just to establish the main sites of overlap between her general plural subject theory and Husserl’s writings on community, Gilbert’s more detailed conceptions of impersonality, anonymity, and population common knowledge are presented in the following section. They are thereby shown to protect against recent criticisms that have been directed toward her by phenomenologists.

Gilbert claims that membership within jointly-committed plural subjects exhibits the three features of (1) intentionality of membership, (2) unity, and (3) consciousness of that unity by members.<sup>24</sup> I here focus exclusively on the third feature, as I argue below that it is here that Gilbert lacks a sufficient account of the consciousness of unity in cases of impersonal, anonymous communities (that is, in the cases she appeals to regarding political obligations).<sup>25</sup> According to Gilbert, members of a group must themselves have conscious awareness or perception of the group’s unity. Gilbert recognizes the importance of properly characterizing this consciousness of unity while also indicating that it can arise in different ways for different groupings.<sup>26</sup> Conscious awareness of a group’s unity is relatively straightforward in the case of

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<sup>24</sup> Gilbert (2006), pp. 62-63, 96, 168.

<sup>25</sup> When Gilbert talks about intentionality, she is not using it in the phenomenological sense of that feature of consciousness such that all consciousness is conscious *of* or *about* something. Rather, Gilbert is using the more restricted sense of intentionality as meaning or purposefully intending to do something. The unity of a plural subject refers to it being more than a mere aggregation, that is, as being inwardly bound and more than the sum of its parts where those parts are individual persons. As Chelstrom point out, intentionality for Gilbert is more in reference to the German *Absicht* rather than *Intentionalität*. Chelstrom (2012), p. 159. This point is returned to below.

<sup>26</sup> “Precisely what degree of awareness is necessary, assuming that some is, is an important issue.” Gilbert (2006), p. 63.

small groups such as a dyad. For example, I have a different kind of awareness when “we” are going for a walk together than when I am going on a walk alone. Getting clear on what consciousness of unity amounts to in referring to a large country as a unified “we” requires further examination and is returned to below.

Husserl similarly thematizes the ways in which groups are bound together in the form of a shared subject of actions, and his notion of communities as akin to “many-headed” (*vielköpfige*) yet unified subjectivities harmonizes well with Gilbert. As Thomasson realized, Husserl’s notion of personal associations is of social subjectivities understood as entities existing beyond the summation of individual members.<sup>27</sup> Similar to Gilbert’s discussion of joint commitments as commitments of the will, Husserl provides an account of “communities of will,” such that individual persons share in the pursuit of an end. For instance, he writes that “If the relationship [between members of a community of will] is well-founded, then every action in which it appears will be characterized as proceeding from the establishment of the intertwining wills of both persons.”<sup>28</sup> It here bears repeating something that was introduced in an earlier chapter, namely, Husserl’s schema regarding the structure of such practical joint activities in his manuscripts:

[In the] community of will, agreement can also be reciprocal, resulting in a reciprocal arrangement. I fulfill your wish if you fulfill mine, I’m doing this to benefit you and you do this for my benefit. Furthermore, we both wish that something should be done, so we “share” our decision; I do one part and you do the other part. Etc. S1 and S2 want the same G, not each for himself, but S1 wants G just as S2 equally wants it, the will of S2 belongs to that willed by S1 and vice versa. That the part D1 is realized by S1 and D2 by

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<sup>27</sup> Thomasson (1997), p. 117.

<sup>28</sup> *Hua XIV*, pp. 169-170: “Ist das Verhältnis gestiftet, so ist jede Handlung, in der es in Erscheinung tritt, charakterisiert als aus der stiftenden Willensverflechtung der beiden Personen hervorgehend.”

S2 in turn lies in the will decided on by both, and is for both resolved as “means” (in the broad sense), or as what belongs to its realization and to the intent.<sup>29</sup>

In this way, there is a sharing or, to use Gilbert’s phrase, a “pooling” of the wills of members.<sup>30</sup>

This passage indicates a feature similar to Gilbert’s notion of expressions of readiness. Individual members express a conditionality regarding their membership by making clear to fellow members that they are prepared to do their part if the others will do theirs. Husserl’s account of communities of will can thereby be seen as similar to Gilbert’s account of joint commitments insofar as two or more individuals are committed to bringing about some goal together.

For Husserl, a community understood as a whole is to be considered as a unified entity despite being made up of a plurality of members. In some places he refers to the community as a distinct “subject” and in other places as akin to a large-scale experiencing “subjectivity.” Writing of the sense in which a community is a subject, Husserl indicates that this is because it acts as a “substrate” that has no other place than as the “substrate of a communicative plurality of persons” (*die kommunikative Personvielfheit Substrat*).<sup>31</sup> In the passage from Husserl’s “*Kaizo* article” appealed to in earlier chapters, he states that the “community is a personal and, as it were, many-headed yet interconnected subjectivity” (*ein personale, sozusagen vielköpfige und*

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<sup>29</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 170: “Willensgemeinschaft, Einverständnis kann dann auch ein wechselseitiges sein, endend in einer wechselseitigen Vereinbarung. Ich erfülle deinen Wunsch, wenn du den meinen erfüllst, ich tue das dir zugute, wenn du dafür mir jenes zugute tust. Ferner: Wir wünschen beide, dass etwas geschehe, wir entschliessen uns „gemeinsam“, ich tue davon den Teil, du den anderen Teil. Usw. S1 und S2 wollen dasselbe G, aber nicht jedes für sich, sondern S1 will G als von S2 gleichfalls Gewolltes, der Wille des S2 gehört mit zum Gewollten des S1 und umgekehrt. Dass S1 den Teil D1 realisiert und S2 D2, das liegt wiederum im Willen beider beschlossen, und ist für beide beschlossen als „Mittel“ (im weiteren Sinn) oder als zur Realisierung gehörig, vorher aber zur Absicht.”

<sup>30</sup> Cf., Szanto (2016).

<sup>31</sup> *Hua XIV*, pp. 200-201.

*doch verbundene Subjektivität*).<sup>32</sup> This notion of the community as a many-headed subjectivity is further echoed in his manuscripts.<sup>33</sup>

As shown here, there is considerable overlap in the ontological considerations that are given to communities by Gilbert and Husserl. This is seen insofar as they are both committed to the position that members of a social group belong to a shared subject or subjectivity in the form of a first-person plural “we.” There are additional similarities in their conceptions of the ways in which the wills of members are intertwined and the kind of group readiness that is required for undertaking a shared activity. In turning below to developments in Gilbert’s later work, I suggest one further point of overlap between Husserl’s notion of the “shared surrounding world” and Gilbert’s notion of common knowledge.<sup>34</sup> Husserl provides an account of the experiential structures of consciousness that members of a group have. In this sense, he comes close to the descriptions given by Gilbert regarding consciousness of a group’s unity. As I go on to show, it is here where Husserl’s theoretical account diverges. Husserl’s account of the experiences of membership within a community as a part have been described in detail in Chapter III, so I do

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<sup>32</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 22.

<sup>33</sup> “Community subjectivity is a many-headed [*vielköpfige*] subjectivity in the form of the *ego-alteri*. Each communalized ego has not only his consciousness, but has a view into the other and with the other into a universal connection of consciousness with a many-headed subjectivity, but, of course, not as a losing of oneself into indefiniteness.” *Hua XIV*, p. 218: “Die Gemeinschaftssubjektivität ist eine vielköpfige Subjektivität, Form des *ego-alteri*. Jedes vergemeinschaftete ego hat nicht nur sein Bewusstsein, sondern seines als in die Anderen hineinschauendes und sich mit den Anderen zu einem universalen Bewusstseinszusammenhang mit vielköpfiger Subjektivität verbindend, aber freilich sich ins Unbestimmte verlierend.”

<sup>34</sup> This is presented below and not here insofar as it presupposes the way in which Gilbert goes on to distinguish between individual and population common knowledge, which requires a discussion of impersonality and anonymity.

not completely recapitulate them here. I return below, however, to his specific ways of describing membership within loosely-bound, anonymous communities.<sup>35</sup>

## 2.2 Criticism from Phenomenologists in the Secondary Literature

It is not enough to showcase the similarities between Gilbert and Husserl especially since Gilbert's theory has received a fair amount of criticism from Husserlian-influenced phenomenologists.<sup>36</sup> While acknowledging similarities, contemporary commentators such as Emanuele Caminada, Thomas Szanto, and Eric Chelstrom have been critical of different facets of Gilbert's account from the perspective of Husserl's writings on the social world.<sup>37</sup> After laying out what I take to be the most forceful components of these objections, I suggest in the next section that Gilbert's later works are no longer vulnerable to all of these phenomenologically-motivated criticisms.

Caminada suggests there is simultaneously an affinity between the works of Husserl and Gilbert at the same time that there are irreconcilable differences. While Husserl's notion of

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<sup>35</sup> One additional point of overlap between Gilbert and Husserl that is worth pointing out is their ways of navigating between the extremes of ontological individualism and ontological holism. As I argued in Chapter I, Husserl's concept of community, considered from an ontological perspective, represents a third way between the positions of ontological individualism and ontological holism. To reiterate, individualism is the position that communities are nothing more than the aggregation of a relevant group of individual persons and their activities. Holism, on the other hand, is the position that communities are more than the aggregation of a relevant group of individuals and their individual interactions. Holists, rather, are committed to the notion that communities are more than the sum of their parts when those parts are taken to be individual persons. Both Husserl and Gilbert provide a middle position regarding the ontological status of plural subjects being between individualism and holism. On Gilbert's account, individualism errs in considering individuals as acting only as singular agents. Holism in its staunchest forms errs on her account by not allowing individual persons to play a role in the constitution of a community. Her plural subject theory provides a middle path, though, by showing that persons can engage not just in singular actions but also plural actions. Given my conclusion in Chapter I, it is clear that this is yet another site of overlap between Gilbert and Husserl. Cf. Gilbert (1989), pp. 427-436.

<sup>36</sup> I suspect that the reason why so much ink has been spilled in criticizing Gilbert precisely because her plural subject theory is so close to Husserl's concept of community, and not that she is entirely out of line with Husserlian tenets. For this reason, Husserlian phenomenologists seem drawn to her plural subject theory like bees to honey.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Schmid (2009).

“personalities of a higher order” or “personal unities of a higher level” are similar to Gilbertian plural subjects as brought about by joint commitments, Caminada suggests that Husserl’s theory is more inclusive in accounting for more types of groupings.<sup>38</sup> Rather than just accounting for joint commitments that arise based on active, explicit commitments, Caminada highlights that Husserl’s conception applies to more subtle forms of groupings where an explicit commitment has not been made between partners.<sup>39</sup> According to Caminada, Husserl’s account is thereby preferable insofar as it can deal both with groups that arise on the basis of an explicit joint commitment as well as with those groups that exist based on “the enduring effect of grouping.”<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, Caminada criticizes Gilbert for focusing on the jointness of joint commitments without thematizing the content of those commitments. According to this objection, Gilbert overemphasizes the sense in which individual persons constitute a plural subject, while she purportedly neglects an account of the content of what those agents are pursuing.<sup>41</sup>

Szanto is similarly clear that there is a large amount of overlap between Husserl and Gilbert.<sup>42</sup> On Szanto’s account, though, Husserl sees joint commitments as already being social achievements or results, rather than being the starting point for sociality.<sup>43</sup> Put otherwise, Szanto

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<sup>38</sup> Caminada (2016), p. 284.

<sup>39</sup> “Husserl’s plural subject theory is thus different from Gilbert’s in a crucial respect: it does not presuppose non-social individuals that can commit themselves to become social. Husserl envisages intentional associations and socialization already at the level of passivity. At this level, a pre-reflexive, relational communality emerges and necessarily sediments itself in individual minds. But personal life arises only through the intentional medium of these communities and can be actively constituted through commitments and endorsements.” Caminada (2016), p. 286.

<sup>40</sup> Caminada (2016), p. 287.

<sup>41</sup> Cf., Caminada (2016), p. 285.

<sup>42</sup> Szanto (2016), p. 157.

<sup>43</sup> Szanto (2016), p. 158.

suggests that Gilbert errs in supposing that we first need to engage in joint commitments in order to start being social, whereas it seems that there are more basic forms of social life that do not require an explicit joint commitment.

According to Chelstrom, Gilbert overemphasizes practical intending to the detriment of an appropriate focus on non-practical forms of consciousness within groups. For example, Chelstrom writes: “By starting with intentionality [*Absicht*] and not offering an account of how that is dependent upon or integrated with intentionality [*Intentionalität*] Gilbert inherits unnecessary theoretical problems. Gilbert’s *theoretical* edifice is insufficiently *phenomenologically* grounded.”<sup>44</sup> According to this objection, Gilbert’s primary focus on plural subjects as practical intertwinings or poolings of the wills of members does not adequately account for all of the sophisticated workings of social consciousness. Given what I have highlighted from Gilbert’s account above regarding the inclusion of “consciousness of unity” for members within a plural subject, it is clear that her framework requires a clear discussion of the structures of consciousness. Chelstrom’s worry, then, is that Gilbert starts with a specific type of consciousness (practical intentionality), and then attempts to account for all consciousness in general in practical terms.

The criticisms put forth by Caminada and Chelstrom appeal to Gilbert’s earlier works, primarily her 1989 *On Social Facts* and her 2003 book chapter “The Structure of the Social Atom.” Szanto makes reference to her later 2006 work (*A Theory of Political Obligations*), but does not seem to share my reading that Gilbert is thereby more protected against these kinds of

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<sup>44</sup> Chelstrom (2012), p. 159.



criticisms.<sup>45</sup> As I claim, parts of Gilbert's plural subject theory are amplified in this later work.

The parts of her theory that are thereby bolstered are parts that can guard in part against the specific criticisms rehearsed here. After laying out precisely how Gilbert's account is modified in pursuit of an account of political obligations, I return to these criticisms to reassess their potency.

### §3. Gilbert and the Membership Problem

Gilbert's 2006 work on plural subject theory as applied to the political sphere is not simply "old wine in a new bottle." There are theoretical features that are modified in this later work that alter the ability of her theory to account for large social groupings. More specifically, the features she adds involve not requiring members to engage in explicit agreements, distinguishing between basic and non-basic joint commitments, accounting for group impersonality and anonymity, and distinguishing between individual and population common knowledge. In doing this, furthermore, Gilbert's account is implicitly better equipped to deal with the criticisms levied against her by phenomenologists as discussed in the previous section.<sup>46</sup> The problem that Gilbert works through in *A Theory of Political Obligation* is what she refers to as "the membership problem." The "membership problem" asks: "Does membership in a political society in and of itself involve obligations to uphold the relevant political institutions?"<sup>47</sup> By upholding the political institutions of a political society, Gilbert refers to

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<sup>45</sup> I suspect that this is because Szanto is in his chapter appealing only to the first chapter of Gilbert's 2006 work, whereas the novel material comes in later.

<sup>46</sup> I here say "implicitly" since 1) Gilbert herself is not directly addressing the concerns of phenomenologists, and 2) her work on political obligations came out prior to those criticisms.

<sup>47</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 18. By "political society," Gilbert focuses on countries, which she distinguishes from other forms of political groupings such as marriages or clubs by way of possessing certain features. Four features that belong to countries as a specific instantiation of political societies are: (1) typically having a relatively definite and permanent geographical location; (2) tending to have a territory that is large in terms of both land mass and

members engaging in activities that are related to governance, such as conforming to that society's laws.<sup>48</sup>

### 3.1 Gilbert's Plural Subject Answer to the Membership Problem

What Gilbert provides in response to the political membership problem is an affirmative answer to the question (that members do indeed have such obligations to uphold their group's political institutions), and an explanation of the source of the normative force behind those obligations (that they arise on the basis of joint commitments). She refers to this solution as the "plural subject theory of political obligations."

One of the first ways Gilbert demonstrates the novelty of her new approach is by contrasting it with the solution to the "membership problem" given in "actual contract theory." On that account, political obligations are said to arise insofar as the members of a political community are party to explicit agreement that thereby acts as a constraint to their wills.<sup>49</sup> While explicit agreements such as contracts or promises are sufficient to bring about political obligations, Gilbert argues that they are not the only possible source of obligations.<sup>50</sup> As she points out, actual contract theory has been criticized precisely insofar as many if not most members of large political groups have not at any point explicitly agreed to uphold any political

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population; (3) being likely to have smaller societies within themselves; and (4) providing bounds within which individuals can live their whole lives. Gilbert (2006), pp. 16-17.

<sup>48</sup> "I take a country's *political institutions* to be those of its institutions that pertain to its governance. [...] *Supporting* or *upholding* political institutions will be understood to include but not be limited to conformity to those political institutions, such as laws and commands, in relation to which the notion of conformity makes the best sense." Gilbert (2006), p. 14.

<sup>49</sup> Gilbert (2006), pp. 55-56. "Actual" here is opposed to "hypothetical," such as is put forth by Rawls.

<sup>50</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 61.

institutions. This is what Gilbert refers to as the “no-agreement claim.”<sup>51</sup> What she goes on to develop is a theory of political obligations that provides an account of the requisite intentionality, unity, and consciousness of unity in the absence of an explicit agreement or contract.<sup>52</sup> As highlighted above, a joint activity can come about in the absence of an actual agreement, such as when there are established background understandings between fellow members.<sup>53</sup> For instance, when two people begin to quarrel, there is here a joint activity that erupts without the parties having to first come to the agreement, “Alright, shall we now start to quarrel?”<sup>54</sup> Rather, the background understandings of the parties allows them to begin a joint activity right away without any kind of explicit agreement.<sup>55</sup>

As further evidence of the way that her account has become further sophisticated, Gilbert goes on to distinguish between basic and non-basic kinds of joint commitments.<sup>56</sup> The basic type of joint commitment is one in which there is an expression of readiness to be part of a joint commitment as a body with others in order to pursue some particular goal. Two people committing to go for a walk together is an example of a basic form of joint commitment. In such a case, both members express their readiness in some fashion, and form a plural subject insofar as that readiness then leads to the activity of going for a walk. The non-basic type of joint

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<sup>51</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 71.

<sup>52</sup> Gilbert (2006), pp. 74-75.

<sup>53</sup> Gilbert (2006), pp. 116-117. These background understandings are what Gilbert will go on to develop in her discussion of different forms of common knowledge.

<sup>54</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 117.

<sup>55</sup> Gilbert eventually reframes actual contract theory within her plural subject theory of political obligations, such that actual contract theory is but one special instantiation of plural subject theory. Gilbert (2006), p. 215.

<sup>56</sup> Gilbert (2006), pp. 140-141.

commitment is such that individuals are jointly committed to espousing an indeterminate goal as a body without having experienced any reciprocal expressiveness of readiness regarding a particular goal. The example Gilbert provides is of two individuals, where they have jointly committed to the idea that one of them will decide what they both will do on a specific weekend. Even though only one of the two individuals will choose the activity, the other is involved in a non-basic joint commitment to the extent that she will go along in upholding the end determined by the chooser.<sup>57</sup> The introduction of the class of non-basic joint commitments is an amplification of her position in *On Social Facts*. As pointed out above, Gilbert there claims that a plural subject cannot arise on the basis of common knowledge alone, and that it requires joint readiness on the part of members.<sup>58</sup> Beyond this, though, no detailed discussion is given there of different cases of joint commitments such as could be had from variations in types of readiness. In the case of non-basic joint commitments, however, it is precisely a lack of expressed readiness regarding a particular goal to be jointly pursued that factors into the plural subject. Given that her ultimate goal is to provide an account of the ways in which large social groups such as countries function, it is clear that Gilbert needs a strong account of the non-basic case, since such groups will almost certainly contain a large degree of both impersonality and anonymity.

Built on the basis of the simple dyadic example of two people going on a walk together, Gilbert claims that all of the elements needed in order to understand political obligations for members of large political communities are already in place.<sup>59</sup> In the activity of going for a walk

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<sup>57</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 141.

<sup>58</sup> Gilbert (1989), p. 202.

<sup>59</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 100.

with someone, there is a basic form of a joint activity that takes place through a joint commitment. This kind of joint commitment has the three features of social groups highlighted by Gilbert, namely intentionality, unity, and consciousness of unity: “This is how each understands what is going on, and each knows that each understands this.”<sup>60</sup> When two people are going for a walk together, furthermore, each of the members is said to have a certain “standing” in relation to the other member by virtue of their membership in the joint activity.<sup>61</sup> This “standing” means that each of the members is in a position to make demands of their fellow member if the other person deviates from the joint activity of the walk.<sup>62</sup> It is in this sense that a basic form of obligations arises on the basis of joint commitments. Parties to a joint commitment are said to have a special standing in regard to one another, and four significant aspects of this standing are betrayal, trust, answerability, owing.<sup>63</sup> Gilbert summarizes the role that these aspects play for members of a joint commitment relative to one another:

By virtue of being party to a joint commitment I owe my conformity to the other parties in their capacity as parties. In this capacity, therefore, they all have a special standing in relation to my conformity: they have *a right against me* to it, and they will rightly take themselves to have *the standing to demand it* from me *and to rebuke* me if it is not forthcoming. In addition, they will be in a position to *trust* me to conform. Correspondingly, they will appropriately feel *betrayed* if I fail to conform. Further, they will rightly take me to be *answerable* to them for nonconformity.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 103.

<sup>61</sup> Gilbert (2006), pp. 103-104.

<sup>62</sup> “The standing of the participants is a function of their joint activity. Thus it is special not only in the sense of not being shared by people generally, but also in having a specific source, namely, the joint activity.” Gilbert (2006), p. 104.

<sup>63</sup> Gilbert (2006), pp. 149-153.

<sup>64</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 161.

By engaging in the joint commitment of going for a walk with one another, each of the walkers takes on certain obligations toward the other, and reciprocally, each has certain rights against the other.<sup>65</sup>

Joint commitments such as the commitment of two people to go on a walk together are such that the plural subject of the action, the “we,” comprises two or more people. If one member starts to walk too fast or if they suddenly turn around and abandon their walking partner, they can be rightly rebuked for violating the joint activity. One member has the standing to rebuke the other for walking too fast, and this standing is a function of the specific activity that the members have entered into.<sup>66</sup> This is the role that “standing” plays in her theory. If the two were not involved in the joint activity of going for a walk together, or if the walk had already ended, then each would no longer have such a standing to rebuke the other, for instance, to demand that they walk slower while walking alone. Put otherwise, the obligations that each has to the other depend on the content of the specific joint commitment. This dyadic example serves to characterize the way in which a simple case of two people going for a walk together already brings rights and obligations with it that members of the joint activity have by virtue of their membership within the group. Membership within this kind of small group, according to Gilbert, includes obligations for its members to one another, and these obligations are to uphold their basic joint commitment. On the basis of this simple example, Gilbert suggests that there is already enough to understand the ways in which significantly larger and more complex groupings are arranged.

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<sup>65</sup> The next chapter takes its start from the more specific notions of trust and betrayal within political communities.

<sup>66</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 104.

### 3.2 Extrapolating from Small to Large Groups

In further developing the notion of societies as plural subjects, Gilbert clarifies how a plural subject applies to large populations. This amounts to clarifying the nature of non-basic joint commitments. It initially seems, as Gilbert points out, that it is controversial to apply the notion of a plural subject (especially as it was developed in the context of two people going for a walk) to societies with large populations. This is controversial insofar as there seem to be features of larger societies that are not always present in smaller groupings. The four features of large populations that Gilbert draws attention to are inclusiveness, hierarchy, impersonality, and anonymity. For the purposes of facilitating a discussion with Husserl, my main focus is on the last two, impersonality and anonymity.<sup>67</sup>

By impersonality, Gilbert means the feature of membership within large social groups such that not every other member is known closely or personally. It will rather be the case in these kinds of groups that many of my fellow group members are strangers. Even in cases of impersonality, I can experience having obligations to others; it is just that in such case these obligations are general and apply to anyone in general. For example, in belonging to the political community of the United States, I encounter many fellow members in public in such a way that I experience having obligations towards them and rights against them without knowing them in close, personal fashion. When I encounter such members face-to-face, they are experienced with the sense of being strangers or as bearers of certain community roles (e.g., as a mail carrier, police officer, butcher, baker, etc.).

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<sup>67</sup> As a reminder, Gilbert deals with these features very briefly in her 1989 work, but does not provide much. They are filled out further by the time of her 2006 work.

The feature of anonymity, as a feature of large social groups, means that members of a social group may not even know of the existence of other members of the group. While impersonality means that I encounter other persons face-to-face while not knowing anything about them in particular, anonymity is such that I do not even encounter all other members of the group to which we both nevertheless belong. For example, membership in a large political community like the United States is such that there is no way I could know every other member. The feature of anonymity is such that my experiences of membership include an indication that it is a membership with entirely unknown others.

Gilbert provides two main examples to contextualize these features of joint commitments in large groups. The first example is of a large starving crowd who are all together jointly committed to storming the house of a corn-dealer to assuage their hunger.<sup>68</sup> In this example, the members of the crowd express their readiness to engage in the joint commitment by all (or at least most) yelling in the affirmative when one of the group's leaders urges them to all storm the house. This expression of readiness on the part of the large crowd, then, serves to preempt the possibility of there being a joint commitment. Furthermore, this expression of readiness and the subsequent joint commitment accounts for a situation involving a large amount of impersonality and anonymity. There is impersonality here since one need not have any close personal details about fellow members encountered beyond their being similarly overwhelmingly hungry. There is anonymity insofar as the crowd extends beyond those individuals one is currently encountering. This nevertheless constitutes a plural subject according to Gilbert insofar as

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<sup>68</sup> Gilbert (2006), pp. 175-178.



members have expressed their readiness and have jointly committed to the activity of the storming.

Gilbert provides a second example that highlights a plural subject existing across a large territory. In this second example, we are to imagine a large valley consisting of a society of farmers who are all jointly committed to defending their land and their freedom in case of attack by a neighboring invader.<sup>69</sup> The expression of readiness in this case is such that all of the farmers have in some way made it clear to the others that they will join in the fight if needed. If it happens, then, that the neighboring group invades the valley, then this expression of readiness has acted as a kind of primer to all of the farmers actually coming together in a collaborative, unified fight.

The fulcrum of Gilbert's argument regarding the inclusion of large groups within her plural subject account is her appeal to "common knowledge," and specifically to "population common knowledge." It is by way of population common knowledge, according to Gilbert, that a large social group having the features of impersonality and anonymity is still able to count as a plural subject.<sup>70</sup> Common knowledge in general for Gilbert is some fact held by members of a certain group where this fact "is entirely accessible and out in the open between them."<sup>71</sup> In the case of "individual common knowledge," there is something that is openly accessible to a group of particular, known individuals. For example, it may be common knowledge between two roommates that if one person cooks a meal, the other person does the dishes. "Population

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<sup>69</sup> Gilbert (2006), pp. 178-179.

<sup>70</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 174.

<sup>71</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 121.

common knowledge,” though, refers to facts that are known by an indeterminate group which is nevertheless delimited by means of some general features.<sup>72</sup> For instance, there can be population common knowledge in the form of things known by “we members of this large starving crowd,” “we humans on this island,” “we the passengers of this airplane,” and so forth. The generality of this individuating description indicates its applicability in cases of impersonality and anonymity.<sup>73</sup>

In the examples of the large starving crowd and in the valley of farmers, members have an awareness of other fellow members despite the groups in question having the characteristics of impersonality and anonymity. There is a “we” that all members identify with in their pursuit of a shared goal. This identification serves as an expression of readiness regarding the undertaking of a certain activity. This fulfills her criterion that membership in a plural subject should include a consciousness of unity. For example, I may not know everyone in the crowd, but I have a general conception of “we the members of the crowd who are jointly committed to X.” What, though, of situations in which the population is not conceptualized in this kind of goal-oriented way? If Gilbert is as she says putting forth a structure that applies to all forms of political communities, and if some political communities lack such a shared goal, then her account should provide a way to conceptualize membership in those groupings that are not goal-oriented.

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<sup>72</sup> “In contrast, *population* common knowledge is common knowledge between people considered by those involved as members of a population individuated by means of a certain general description.” Gilbert (2006), p. 176.

<sup>73</sup> “In a large population, P, with a high degree of anonymity, whose members reside in a territory of great extent, there is population common knowledge—involving all members of P—that all of the members of P have expressed to one another, as members of P, their readiness to participate in a certain joint commitment among the members of P. When these conditions are fulfilled, the members of P are jointly committed in the way in question.” Gilbert (2006), p. 179.

For Gilbert, large social groups are capable of being a plural subject in the non-basic cases when that group possesses and abides by a “social rule.” Gilbert defines social rules as follows:

*There is a social rule in a population P if and only if the members of P are jointly committed to accepting as a body a requirement (or fiat) of the following form: members of P are to perform action A in circumstances C (that there is a particulate reason for doing A in C may be specified as a part of what is required, or it may not.).*<sup>74</sup>

In the case of the kinds of social rules that provide the framework within which members peacefully live their lives, we reach the upshot of Gilbert’s account regarding political obligations.<sup>75</sup> Just as two individuals who jointly go for a walk together incur obligations to one another on the basis of their joint commitment, so too does she claim that all of the individuals who are jointly committed to upholding social rules in a large political community have obligations to one another in the form of political obligations. Since joint commitments have the form that “the parties jointly commit *to X as a body*,” the X placeholder here is the upholding of certain political institutions such as a community’s laws.<sup>76</sup> For large political communities having the features of impersonality and anonymity, the sense in which these political obligations belong to a certain “body” (e.g., the “body politic”) refers to members having obligations to all fellow members in the form of the generality of laws applying to a population. When I encounter a stranger in public, then, I have law-based obligations to them by virtue of

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<sup>74</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 197.

<sup>75</sup> “In sum, among the set of social rules found in a given population some may settle matters that need to be settled for the peaceful progress of the lives of its members. These may appropriately be thought of as institutions of governance and hence, as I understand these, political institutions.” Gilbert (2006), p. 187. The topic of governing rules in relation to trust and betrayal is returned to in the next chapter.

<sup>76</sup> Gilbert (2006), pp. 136-137.

being a member of a specific political community. The normative force of political obligations is here embedded within the context of population common knowledge, such that a reference need not be made to any particular, known individuals with whom my membership is shared.

### 3.3 Reassessing Criticisms

The criticisms of Gilbert put forth by Caminada and Szanto are similar insofar as they oppose the notion that a joint commitment in the form of an explicit agreement should be the fundamental driver of sociality. Gilbert's opposition to actual contract theory demonstrates one of the ways in which her newer account is protected from such criticisms.<sup>77</sup> Caminada, for instance, suggested that Gilbert could only account for instances in which members came to some explicit agreement regarding coming together as a plural subject. As highlighted above, Szanto objects that joint commitments are results, not starting points. A robust account of membership involving impersonality and anonymity accounts for sociality without any active joint commitments. Gilbert in her 2006 work indicates that she is not proceeding in the fashion of requiring such explicitness, and that her plural subject theory accounts for groupings in the absence of an explicit agreement. One of Caminada's additional criticisms was that Gilbert focused on the jointness of a plural subject to the neglect of the content being pursued by the group. What her later work clarifies is that the kinds of obligations that members have are dependent on the specific kind of "standing" belonging to a particular plural subject, and that this standing is a function of the specific joint activity. Here again, Gilbert's newer account makes clear how such criticisms falls short.

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<sup>77</sup> It seems to me that an argument could already made to this effect by appealing only to Gilbert's 1989 work. What is clear, though, is that appealing to her 2006 work more directly emphasizes the sense in which this kind of criticism does not apply to her theory.

The way that Gilbert accounts for plural subjects in the case of large political societies jointly committed to uphold social rules acts as an implicit reply to the criticisms brought against her by phenomenologists. One is here constrained by obligations in a way that does not require the active agreement of parties. One can here be passively influenced by social conventions or norms without having to explicitly endorse them from the beginning. Gilbert's newly developed theory of the ways in which impersonality and anonymity fit into the structure of large social groupings, in addition to the ways in which these features fit into her account of the "non-basic" account of joint commitments, show how her theory is further protected from the objection that she is overly-focused on active joint commitments. What about Chelstrom's criticism regarding Gilbert beginning with practical intentionality instead of with a broader notion of the intentionality of consciousness as phenomenologists have understood it? Even though Chelstrom does not address Gilbert's political work, there are good reasons for thinking that this criticism still sticks in regard to Gilbert's later approach, as I now demonstrate.

#### 3.4 Phenomenological Discontents Based on Gilbert's Answer

At the same time that Gilbert's account of large groupings with the features of impersonality and anonymity acts to defend her against some of the criticisms introduced earlier, these new features open her theory up to a new round of phenomenologically-motivated objections.<sup>78</sup> Gilbert's position continues to face problems insofar as she does not integrate her account of plural subjects brought about by joint commitments into a more comprehensive theory of the intentionality of consciousness (as Husserlian phenomenologists have understood

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<sup>78</sup> The criticisms I raise here are motivated by the explication of Husserl's concept of community as developed in the first three chapters.

the notion). While her later work improves upon the former in the sense of explicitly focusing on large groupings that do not include explicit agreements and providing a more sophisticated account of joint commitments, the later account still misses out on important features of impersonality and anonymity in relation to the structure of experiences of community membership. This is not a superficial difficulty; it impacts the persuasiveness of the answer that Gilbert gives to the political membership problem insofar as at least some political communities involve impersonality and anonymity in the absence of a shared goal. Large goal-oriented groups are neatly accounted for by Gilbert's plural subject theory of political obligations. What I argue, however, is that this theory is not well-equipped to deal with examples of large political communities which are *not* goal oriented. Some political communities involve members that do not work in an ostensibly cooperative fashion. To be sure, Gilbert attempts to account for this objection by way of non-basic joint commitments in the form of individuals upholding social rules. Nevertheless, it remains unclear how this is then cashed out in terms of the "consciousness of unity" possessed by members. The new difficulty, I claim, is that she emphasizes that membership involves consciousness of unity, being jointly committed as a body, and belonging to a group without clear awareness of other fellow members. But can her theory can be consistent in simultaneously holding all of these? If not, then this is a substantial problem for Gilbert's project, especially since many large political communities will not involve all members to be coordinated in pursuit of a shared goal.

Gilbert's account of the way in which large groups subscribe to social rules is such that members are said to be jointly committed "as a body." What I argue is that this sense of "as a body" is not an accurate phenomenological depiction of the ways in which members of such a

unity necessarily experience belonging to a group such as a large political community. If we take the features of impersonality and anonymity seriously, then that which large social groups such as political communities lack is precisely the kind of consciousness of unity that Gilbert insists upon. Since large political communities such as countries possess these features, and since her account of political obligations is to apply to all political configurations, this lacunae impacts the persuasiveness of her plural subject theory as a generalized conception of political obligations.

What exactly does it mean to be “conscious” or “aware” of a social unity in the case of a large group like that of a political community? While I agree with Gilbert that there is some *degree* of awareness or representation of the “we” when it comes to membership within a political community (where this is accounted for in terms of the kinds of obligations we have as members to uphold that community’s political institutions), I am not convinced that she provides us with an adequate account of what that awareness amounts to. This on its own would not be problematic except for the fact that “consciousness of unity” is one of the three necessary features of membership that Gilbert provides. Without an account of the structure of this consciousness of unity in the case of large groupings having the properties of impersonality and anonymity, her account is incomplete.

The examples that Gilbert provides regarding consciousness of unity in cases of impersonality and anonymity are the cases of the large starving crown and the valley of farmers. What these plural subjects have that others lack is an orientation or at least a readiness in regard to a particular goal. In this way, the members of such groups consciously thematize themselves as a group insofar as they make reference to what they are all jointly doing as a whole. In some political communities, though, there is not the same kind of shared goal. Gilbert accounts for the

movement to large political communities by highlighting the sense in which members abide by social rules. In these cases, though, Gilbert no longer provides descriptions of the kinds of consciousness of unity possessed by members. It is precisely here that the phenomenological descriptions of community membership provided by Husserl can make inroads in the domain of political philosophy.

#### §4. Husserl on Community Membership

Without recapitulating Husserl's conception of community membership in its entirety, there are a few fundamental aspects of his conception that I here bring to bear on Gilbert's theory.<sup>79</sup> While Husserl himself does not provide a robust account of political obligations like Gilbert, I argue that his conceptualization of experiences of membership within anonymous communities is a more convincing account of the conscious awareness belonging to such a social unity. What is of interest to my argument from Husserl's concept of community is his ability to address both the ontological and phenomenological structures of loosely-bound, anonymous communities. Having the ability to provide an account of anonymous communities is important in the context of putting forth an account of political communities insofar as they tend to be large groupings where not everyone knows all other members. Husserl accounts for this by way of his notion of "mereological proximity", such that both the ontological structure of anonymous communities and experiences therein for members was such that there was a large amount of mereological "distance" or "remoteness" between members as parts and the community as a whole.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> I have provided an extended discussion of the main features of Husserl's concept of community in Chapters I-III.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Chapters II & III above.



As I have indicated in my discussion of Husserl regarding intimate communities such as “personalities of a higher order” and tightly knit communities of will, he provides a conception similar to Gilbert regarding consciousness of a group’s unity understood as a whole. This state of affairs, however, is the exception rather than the rule. It is only in exceptional circumstances that members have an explicit awareness of the community whole to which they belong. It is not necessary for there to be an explicit reflexivity within the experiences of belonging within a community as a part.

#### 4.1 Anonymous Community Membership

Husserl distinguishes between different types of communities by way of their ranging along a spectrum from intimate to anonymous internal organization. Husserl’s concept of community accounts for the ways in which a large, anonymous community can be ontologically structured in addition to showing the ways in which individual members of such a community experience constraints (such as obligations) when there is no thematization of the group as a whole. Husserl’s account of large social groups including the features of impersonality and anonymity is preferable, I argue, to Gilbert’s account insofar as Husserl does not require us to have experiences of membership within a community that explicitly make reference to the community as a whole. If there is a reference to the community as a whole within an anonymous community, it is accounted for by Husserl by way of such experiences being “mediated,” in the sense of the experiences of individual members as parts being mereological “further” from the community as a whole. Gilbert’s account, on the other hand, *does* require an explicit thematization of the community as a whole within the structure of the joint commitments constituting a plural subject. This is the case for Gilbert insofar as she insists that membership

requires consciousness of the plural subject's unity. Husserl's account is preferable, then, because experiences of membership within large communities such as those approached by Gilbert only rarely include a reference to the community as a whole as a body. What Gilbert deems to be a necessary component of experiences within countries is something that Husserl's phenomenological account reveals as a contingent instantiation; experiences within communities can be otherwise.

I have argued that anonymous communities, for Husserl, are those which have the mereological structure of a "concatenation" (*Verkettung*). As a mereological concept, a concatenation is said to be a kind of unified whole where parts have "some but not all members in common."<sup>81</sup> In this way, the notion of concatenation refers to a specific relation between the different parts of a whole as well as relations to that parts have to that whole itself. Husserl accounts for anonymous, concatenated communities not just on the ontological side, but also on the phenomenological side such that he provides descriptions of the experiences that members have when they belong to such communities. For Husserl there are two correlated moments belonging to experiences of community membership.<sup>82</sup> On the one hand, there is the experience of belonging to a personal association, that is, empathic experiences of other individuals with whom we are paired. At the same time, there is an experience of a shared surrounding world (*Umwelt*), which is correlated with a specific personal association. Husserl's account of the shared surrounding world is very similar to Gilbert's notion of population common knowledge.

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<sup>81</sup> *LI*, p. 33.

<sup>82</sup> "We are in relation to a common surrounding world [*gemeinsame Umwelt*]*—*we are in personal association [*personalen Verband*]: these belong together. We could not be persons for others if a common surrounding world did not stand there for us in a community, in an intentional linkage [*intentionalen Verbundenheit*] of our lives. Correlatively spoken, the one is constituted essentially with the other." *Ideas II*, p. 201.

While such common knowledge is characterized by Gilbert in terms of practical joint activities, though, Husserl's notion of the surrounding world is significantly broader, referring to all of the socio-cultural objects and states of affairs that belong within the horizontal context of a certain personal association.

Since Husserl's account of the experience of belonging to a community as a part includes the two moments of experiencing being alongside others in a personal association and having a shared surrounding world, more needs to be said here on the topic of Husserl's different variations of empathy discussed in the previous chapter. Husserl gets close to the picture Gilbert paints of joint commitment with a "consciousness of unity" when he talks about the earliest philosophical tradition, and the sense in which he is picking up where other philosophers left off. It is in this way that his descriptions of being united with one in the community tradition of philosophy with Plato and Aristotle aligns well with Gilbert's notion of individuals pooling their wills to pursue a shared task.<sup>83</sup> If we are to take impersonality and anonymity seriously, more needs to be said on the topic of empathic pairing, especially where those pairings that characterized by indeterminacy. In the previous chapter, I suggested four main ways in which Husserl talks about empathic pairing in his writings, and that these four can be represented in the form of a quadrant from the intersection of the axis of concretely versus non-concretely experienced others and the axis of determinately versus indeterminately experienced others. Given my focus here on anonymous communities, I am most interested in returning to the kind of empathic pairing that arises when we belong to a group with concrete yet indeterminate others on the one hand, and non-concrete and indeterminate others on the other hand. In the case of the

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<sup>83</sup> *Hua XIV*, pp. 198-200.

pairing of myself with concretely-encountered indeterminate others, what we get is precisely what Gilbert describes as the feature of “impersonality.” Empathic pairing with non-concrete and indeterminate others is precisely what Gilbert describes as “anonymity.” Let this count, then, as yet one further site of similarity between the two.

What though of consciousness of unity? For Gilbert, consciousness of unity in the case of large social groups is accounted for by way of “population common knowledge.” Having such common knowledge, then, amounts to being conscious of the group’s unity. For Husserl, it is also the case that some kind of common or shared surrounding world factors into a group’s unity, yet encountering objects and states of affairs in the surrounding world need not bring with it a thematization of the community whole in the form of an explicit consciousness of unity. Encountering the group to which one belongs is just one possibility in Husserl’s conceptualization as seen in his discussion of the reflexivity of a social subjectivity.<sup>84</sup>

As these reflections show, there is a further point of overlap in relation to Gilbert, namely, that Husserl is conceptualizing the features of impersonality and anonymity as defined by Gilbert. On Husserl’s account, though, experiences of community membership can occur without the community as a whole being thematized “as a body” by members. While Gilbert includes “consciousness of unity” as an essential component in her account of experiences of community membership, Husserl’s conception proceeds in a different fashion.

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<sup>84</sup> “Included in the surrounding world of such a circle [of friends], or, in general, of a social subjectivity (an association of subjects, constituted through communication), is, once again, this very subjectivity itself insofar as it too can become an Object for itself, when the association relates back to itself, just as each individual subject in it can also become an Object.” *Ideas II*, p. 206.

Husserl accounts for experiences as members of an anonymous linguistic community by highlighting that such groupings do not give rise to the sense of a personal whole.<sup>85</sup> In providing an account of membership within anonymous communities such as in interactions with strangers in public, Husserl writes:

The manner in which a personal association is established, of course, must emanate from the actual empathy and the actual arrangement or arise in natural subordination, etc., emanating from the status of personal contact or communication. However, the basis of personal associations must then be considered in mediate ways when the people remain “unknown” [*unbekannt*]. But in any case there are communities of will of certain persons who are in agreement as willing-subjects, albeit as mediated.<sup>86</sup>

In both cases, the language that Husserl uses in his descriptions is of mereological mediation and the ways in which the shared surrounding world is characterized as existing for an “indeterminate generality.” What these descriptions do not support, though, is the notion that membership within anonymous communities necessarily includes a “consciousness of unity” or an awareness of the “body” to which I am jointly committed with fellow members.

In a passage from one of his manuscripts (in *Husserliana XIV, Nr. 10, Beilage XXVII*), Husserl writes on the distinction between different types of communities, such that some involve members having consciousness of the unity of the group while others lack this focus.<sup>87</sup> As examples of the first case, he unsurprisingly appeals to groupings such as friendships and

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<sup>85</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 182.

<sup>86</sup> *Hua XIV*, pp. 182.

<sup>87</sup> To be sure, this is just a small passage in a manuscript and is not enough to establish a robust Husserlian notion of political obligations. What it does provide, though, is an indication that Husserl was aware of the kinds of distinctions Gilbert goes on to make regarding large groupings, and that he wrote with an eye to capturing precisely how this took shape as correlated with consciousness.

marriages. I have drawn attention to these specific groupings as accounted for by Husserl in previous chapters, but what is interesting about this specific manuscript is that he also goes on to include in his list of examples membership within a large “people” (*Volk*), such as all Germans. As Husserl claims, there is a consciousness that lives in every German in the form of an interpersonal unity despite the fact that most people do not know one another or have any concrete encounters with one another. In this case, he acknowledges the possibility of members being explicitly conscious of the group’s unity despite its size.<sup>88</sup> This indicates that Husserl is at least open to the idea that members of a large political community can possess a consciousness of its internal unity, akin to Gilbert’s suggestion that this is a necessary component of plural subjects. At the same time, though, Husserl also here highlights communities where there is *not* a focus by members on the unity of the community. This is the case, for instance, in regard to the human community at large, or to large supranational federations. In this way, Husserl suggests that conscious reflexivity in the form of a consciousness of a group’s unity is not a necessary component of all community experience.

#### 4.2 A Husserlian Supplement to Gilbert’s Answer

I do not here suggest that Husserl himself has a comprehensive theory of political obligations, or that he addressed what comes to be designated by Gilbert as the “membership problem.” What he does provide us with, though, is a sophisticated account of communities that

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<sup>88</sup> *Hua XIV*, pp. 219-220: “Also Verkehrseinheit der Menschheit, Einheit der europäischen Völker, Einheit England und seine Kolonien, Einheit eines Volkes usw., landsmannschaftliche Einheit, Einheit, die noch eine Geschichte hat oder durch ihre Geschichte besonders verbunden bleibt: Einheit des Schwaben- oder Bayemvolkes etc. Einheit einer Stadt und Stadtgeschichte, Einheit eines Vereins, einer Zweckgemeinschaft. In jedem Deutschen „lebt das Bewusstsein“, ich bin Deutscher, es ist in jeder zugehörigen Person eine Intentionalität eingebildet, die ihrem weitesten Gemeinschaftsbewusstsein und Gemeinschaftshorizont einen näheren und zugleich begrenzenden Sinn gibt, also eine engere Gemeinschaft mit einem engeren Sinn hineinzeichnet: deutsches Volk.”

involve a large degree of impersonality and anonymity on the basis of his notion of “mereological proximity.” This account comes out both in his discussion of the kinds of empathic pairing we have with indeterminate and unknown others and in the kinds of experiences we have within the shared surrounding world of such a community. I now argue that Husserl provides us with the resources for supplementing Gilbert’s answer to the membership problem in such a way as to circumvent the difficulties highlighted above.

Similar to Gilbert, Husserl provides accounts of obligations that can be considered as both basic and non-basic forms of joint commitments. One of the places that Husserl explicitly discusses the intersection of community and obligation (*Pflicht*) is in his account of life within a community such as a family. In this discussion, Husserl refers to functions that are imposed upon members of the family in the form of constraints to their wills. One of the examples Husserl provides of this is failing to take care of one’s responsibilities within the family. Acting with neglect or selfishness in such instances is met with rebuke.<sup>89</sup> The shared surrounding world of family members includes family-based constraints, such that I am limited in my practical possibilities by means of the expectations and structure of the group in question. This discussion, however, comes in the context of the family understood as an intimate community.<sup>90</sup> An additional place where Husserl discusses constraints placed upon the wills of community members is where he refers to the kinds of responsibilities that are imposed by broader community norms. In these discussions, Husserl thematizes constraints to members in the

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<sup>89</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 180.

<sup>90</sup> Regarding Husserl’s mereological notion of “intimacy” as applied to communities, see Chapters II and III above.

context of anonymous community. In this case, constraints are not issued by the community as a whole, but arise rather in the content of the shared surrounding world of the community.

In a discussion of large, anonymous communities such as linguistic communities and the unity of European culture, Husserl describes the kinds of experiences members have of peacefully going about their days while also being constrained by norms. In line with his general conception of the experience of community membership, Husserl accounts for these norms as belonging to the experiences within a shared surrounding world:

Each instance of peaceful commerce [*Verkehr*] is already human communalization and presupposes a common ground of norms, even just the norm of general kindness, the norm not to deceive, etc.<sup>91</sup>

In these instances of anonymous communities, there is a mereological distance between their members as parts and the wholes to which they belong to the extent that members need not thematize the community as a whole while nevertheless belonging. Such shared norms within anonymous communities are experienced as components of our surrounding world insofar as the other persons around me are characterized as possessing a sense of responsibility in relation to the way I expect they will treat me.<sup>92</sup> When things go smoothly, I anticipate a general benevolence from others insofar as they will refrain from inflicting unprovoked harm upon me.

In *Ideas II*, Husserl refers to different ways in which I can encounter other individuals depending on whether I am in the naturalistic attitude or the personalistic attitude of everyday life. In the naturalistic attitude, I do not treat others appropriately insofar as I strip them of their

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<sup>91</sup> *Hua XV*, p. 423.

<sup>92</sup> *Hua XV*, p. 423.



various moral and juridical senses. Although he is not otherwise interested in these passages in anything like the “membership problem” as worked on by Gilbert, he again endorses some of the same tenets as her plural subject account of political obligations. As Husserl writes:

I am not treating a human being as a subject of rights if I do not take him as a member of a community founded on law, to which we both belong, but instead view him as mere matter, as without rights just like a mere thing.<sup>93</sup>

Insofar as I encounter a human being in the appropriate attitude, this passage suggests that Husserl recognized the relation between having rights and obligations on the one hand, and belonging to a specific type of community on the other. Belonging to a community founded on law is here compatible with the notion laid out by Gilbert that membership brings with it obligations to uphold that community’s institutions. In this case, the institutions Husserl appeals to are laws regulating my interactions with other persons.

Similar to Gilbert, then, Husserl is able to provide something like an affirmative answer to the “membership problem” and a justification of the normative force of obligations as arising from a plural subject brought about through a joint commitment. While Gilbert’s answers to these points are made explicitly, though, Husserl’s position is more implicit. Husserl implicitly provides an affirmative answer to the membership problem insofar as the experience of membership brings with it obligations to uphold the community’s institutions (either through explicit rebuke in a family or latent in public community norms). There is in Husserl’s account a consciousness of unity even within anonymous communities as exemplified in his discussion of

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<sup>93</sup> *Ideas II*, p. 200.

membership in the German nation. This is further seen in his account of experiences of belonging to linguistic communities or supranational federations.

Where Husserl's framework is able to differ from Gilbert's is in providing a more persuasive account of the experiential structure of community membership when that involves large degrees of impersonality and anonymity. Gilbert claims that all plural subjects mean that members have a consciousness of the group's unity. The nature of this unity is seen in her discussion of plural subjects arising from joint commitments where all members commit to *X as a body*. While she admits that such consciousness of unity will be different in cases of impersonality and anonymity, she does not provide a persuasive account of the nature of this consciousness. By appeal to Husserl's concept of community, I have argued that it is not just that Gilbert could have included more examples to make this clear. By insisting on there being a joint commitment by members to *X as a body* and having this be a unity that members are all conscious of, Gilbert does not leave adequate conceptual room to account for experiences within large-scale, impersonal and anonymous communities. Husserl, on the other hand, provides a similar account of community that does not require that all forms of community membership contain a reference to the community as a whole.

##### §5. Conclusion

I have argued here that Husserl's concept of community is relevant to problems of contemporary political philosophy, and that one way of understanding this relevance is through his capacity to supplement Gilbert's answer to the political "membership problem." I began by showing how Gilbert's plural subject theory has been received by phenomenologists, proposing that her more recent work on the topic of political obligations protects against many of those

phenomenologically-motivated criticisms. Appealing to impersonality and anonymity in the context of large political communities, however, brings with it a new set of concerns. I have pursued the potential connections that can be made between the two philosophers, arguing that Husserl's conception of community supplements Gilbert's theory in regard to impersonality and anonymity within large political communities. In closing, I provided a Husserlian-inspired answer to Gilbert's membership problem. This use of Husserl's concept of community into the domain of a contemporary debate in political philosophy makes it clear that Husserl's conception is of relevance not just to his own phenomenological endeavors, but breathes new life into present debates.

At the beginning of the chapter, I drew attention to Gilbert's insistence that an appropriate approach to political philosophy requires an accurate social ontology.<sup>94</sup> Gilbert argues that her plural subject theory is the appropriate kind of social ontology for the job, and that problems of political philosophy are best accounted for by way of joint commitments. I am in agreement with Gilbert in regard to much of her social ontological theory, and I have engaged in a comparative venture to show just how much agreement there is between that theory and Husserl's conception of community. Despite their many points of similarity, their positions diverge in a few places, so a complete trans-temporal harmonization is out of the question. There are, to be sure, instances in which large political groups function as Gilbert describes them regarding a consciousness of the group's unity. Husserl is in agreement here in regard to this as a possibility, especially when he refers to some communities as "intimate" and as "personalities of a higher order." As a Husserlian addition to Gilbert's injunction regarding the relation between

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<sup>94</sup> Gilbert (1989), p. 436.

social ontology and political philosophy, I suggest that an appropriate approach to the latter also requires an accurate phenomenology for the purposes of understanding a community's internal dynamics. In this way, I am in agreement with Chelstrom's assessment that Gilbert brings unnecessary difficulties upon her theory by starting with *Absicht* instead of *Intentionalität*. What Chelstrom's position stands to gain from the argument I have given here is the extent to which Gilbert would benefit from a focus on the role that mereology plays in Husserl's concept of community.

CHAPTER V  
TRUST AND CRISIS IN POLITICAL COMMUNITIES

“Trust is always an invitation not only to confidence tricksters but also to terrorists, who discern its most easily destroyed and socially vital forms. Criminals, not moral philosophers, have been the experts at discerning different forms of trust. Most of us notice a given form of trust most easily after its sudden demise or severe injury. We inhabit a climate of trust as we inhabit an atmosphere and notice it as we notice air, only when it becomes scarce or polluted.”  
Annette Baier, “Trust and Antitrust”<sup>1</sup>

§1. Introduction

According to Annette Baier, interpersonal trust is most salient when it has been weakened or lost. Husserl similarly claims that reflections on experiences within our surrounding world can be motivated through socio-cultural crises. Husserl’s notion of “crisis” is in that way similar to the inverse of trust to the extent that it shines light on the sedimented and taken-for-granted traditions of a community. Clarifying the types of trust that are operative in a political community is an important philosophical task insofar as the well-being of such communities requires members to trust one another to some extent. Given its susceptibility to injury in the form of betrayal, this philosophical task extends also to understanding the ways in which trust within political communities is threatened.

This chapter takes its start from Margaret Gilbert’s work on the topic of political obligations.<sup>2</sup> While Gilbert incorporates the concept of trust in her theory in passing, I suggest

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<sup>1</sup> Baier (1986), p. 234.

<sup>2</sup> The previous chapter facilitated a conversation between Husserl’s conception of community and Gilbert’s writings on political obligations. I there highlighted a difficulty internal to her theory in accounting for impersonal and anonymous communities, a group to which most large political communities belong. The present chapter takes a

that her treatment is not theoretically neutral, but implicitly privileges a certain conception of trust understood in the form of a “three-place relation.”<sup>3</sup> This is problematic insofar as the conception of trust Gilbert draws on has been criticized in the trust literature as passing over the background or underlying conditions that allow for trust to arise in the first place. To address the difficulty in Gilbert’s theory, appeal is made to conceptions of trust and betrayal from philosophers, political scientists, and sociologists. Furthermore, I argue that a turn to Husserl’s phenomenology in addition to these theorists of trust is instructive insofar as it accounts for the consciousness of unity that members have when trust is either present or betrayed. Returning to Husserl provides the additional benefit of allowing for the development of a critical approach to trust in light of the possibility of socio-cultural crisis. Since Gilbert’s theory of political obligations makes use of the notion of trust in the context of members’ joint commitments to peace-promoting governing rules, a further examination of what such trust presupposes is needed.

I begin by returning to the conceptual difficulty identified in Gilbert’s plural subject theory of political obligations in the previous chapter. I show the need for additional emphasis on trust and betrayal for an account of political obligations in impersonal and anonymous communities beyond the treatment given to them by Gilbert (§2). Phenomenology provides the resources to elucidate experiences of trust and betrayal so far as those are parts of the consciousness of a group’s unity for members.<sup>4</sup> Since Husserl does not have an explicitly worked

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more specific approach to that difficulty in Gilbert’s theory by highlighting how trust and betrayal factor into experiences of members of a political community.

<sup>3</sup> This notion and additional conceptions of trust are defined in what follows.

<sup>4</sup> I argued in Chapter IV that Husserlian phenomenology clarifies the kinds of conscious experiences that members of a community have regarding the group’s unity, especially when those groups have the features of impersonality

out theory of trust, however, I first seek out and evaluate theories of trust from elsewhere. To that end, I review prominent conceptions of trust as candidates to fill the specific gap left by Gilbert. Ultimately, I argue that Karen Jones's account of trust understood as "basal security" fits the bill for what is needed in an account of impersonal and anonymous communities (§3). The chapter is tied back to Husserl by showing the extent to which Jones's account of trust and its susceptibility to dissolution runs parallel with Husserl's discussions of everyday experiences within the socio-cultural surrounding world and crises therein. Most theorists characterize trust as an unquestioningly positive attitude with betrayal characterized inversely as negative. Returning to Husserl's notion of crisis makes it apparent that the positivity of our initial trusting is itself something deserving critical investigation. Put otherwise, the possibility of betrayal suggests that initial attitudes of trust presuppose specific historically-influenced social and political structures. Husserlian phenomenology thematizes components of the world that have been forgotten or taken-for-granted, and straightforward trusting attitudes within political communities are one of those taken-for-granted structures (§4). I provide a phenomenological analysis highlighting the correlations of consciousness and its objects within political communities with specific emphasis on trust and crisis. In the end, this sheds light on the possibility of extending Husserl's writings on community in general to political community by way of the topic of trust. Along the trajectory of the previous chapter, it identifies a difficulty in Gilbert's theory and proposes a remedy (§5).

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and anonymity. That clarification was necessary given Gilbert's insistence that membership includes a consciousness of such unity.

## §2. Trust and Betrayal in Large Communities

### 2.1 Resituating Gilbert

It must immediately be pointed out that Gilbert, in *A Theory of Political Obligations*, is primarily interested in providing an account of political obligations and putting forth an answer to the political “membership problem.”<sup>5</sup> She is not putting forth a standalone account of how members of a social group experience their surrounding worlds in general. Furthermore, it is not her immediate project to provide a philosophical theory of trust. Given my argument in the previous chapter, however, an account of how members experience belonging to communities through experiences of components of their surrounding environment is necessary if we are to account for membership experiences in groups having the characteristics of impersonality and anonymity. As I argue below, providing an account of the socio-cultural surrounding world in the context of membership in political communities motivates reflections on trust and betrayal beyond the minor mentions of them made by Gilbert. To put the problem simply, there are different types of trust, and these differences are made salient by comparing intimate communities with impersonal and anonymous communities. At the same time, different types of trust carry with them the inverse of different types of betrayal. Gilbert’s quick account of members’ experiences within impersonal and anonymous communities masks the different types of experiences of both trust and betrayal.

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<sup>5</sup> As a reminder, the “membership problem” asks: “Does membership in a political society in and of itself involve obligations to uphold the relevant political institutions?” Gilbert (2006), p. 18. Gilbert’s book as a whole is an attempt to flesh out an affirmative response to this question, and she refers to her answer as the plural subject theory of political obligations.



The general difficulty within Gilbert's plural subject theory of political obligations can be quickly summarized as followed. Gilbert claims that one of the fundamental features in the experiences that community members have is a "consciousness of unity" referring to the social bonds holding the group together.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, she introduces reflections on large groups as having the features of impersonality and anonymity in order to properly thematize political groups. Impersonality refers to instances in which fellow members are encountered as strangers, that is, as individuals who are not known to us in a close or personal way.<sup>7</sup> Anonymity refers to instances in which I do not know some of my fellow community members at all, that is, I have no inkling of their existence. While Gilbert's plural subject theory of social groups succeeds in accounting for a "consciousness of unity" in small groups such as two people going for a walk together, she has not provided a full account of the experiential structure of the "we" in cases of impersonality and anonymity. This is especially the case insofar as no account has been given of how impersonal and anonymous communities are experienced in regard to their unity by members when the group in question is not engaged in a goal-oriented task.

For these reasons, I appealed above (in Chapter IV) to Husserl's concept of community in order to outline a strategy, otherwise amenable to Gilbert's approach, which *does* address the ways in which members of a community experience the unity of their community even when those groups are impersonal and anonymous. Husserl accounts for this unity insofar as the community exists within one part of our experience of the shared surrounding world, being reflected in experiences of language, churches, books, states, and so forth. For Husserl,

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<sup>6</sup> Gilbert (2006), pp. 62, 96.

<sup>7</sup> Gilbert (2006), pp. 99, 174.

consciousness of community membership in large communities is “mediated” through our experience of a shared surrounding world and through experiences of unknown others.<sup>8</sup> On this account, members do not need to have an explicit, thematic awareness of their membership. The notion of the surrounding world as appealed to in the previous chapter was maximally broad. In what follows, I am again focusing on the way that an awareness of the surrounding world is a component of the experience of community membership, but in this case my focus is much narrower. More specifically, I am looking at the ways in which trust and betrayal shape experiences of the socio-cultural surrounding world for community members.

## 2.2 Special Standing

What then does Gilbert mean by trust and betrayal, and how is her treatment of them problematic? Gilbert mentions trust and betrayal in passing in the context of her political writings, but then quickly shifts focus to the relationship of interpersonal “owing” in the forms of rights and obligations instead of trust.<sup>9</sup> Trust and betrayal make their appearance in her account of the special “standing” that members to a joint commitment have in relation to one another. The general difficulty identified in the previous chapter, then, is here indirectly reflected in the quick pass that Gilbert makes regarding trust and betrayal.<sup>10</sup> In not providing an account of the consciousness of a group’s unity beyond the direct thematization of the group understood as a goal-oriented body, Gilbert also passes over some of the more nuanced ways in which trust and

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<sup>8</sup> The notion of mediation here is a reference to Husserl’s mereology and specifically his account of mereological proximity as laid out in the previous chapters.

<sup>9</sup> The concepts of trust and betrayal continue to take a back seat even in her more recent works. Cf. Gilbert (2014).

<sup>10</sup> I suspect that if Gilbert had paid further attention to the necessity of enriching her notions of impersonality and anonymity, that it would have been more apparent that further work was needed also on the notion of trust.

betrayal factor into our social worlds. This is a problem for her theory of political obligations insofar as the complexities of trust and betrayal can threaten the kind of peaceful cooperation that her theory promotes. By focusing on how trust and betrayal factor into Gilbert's account of this special standing, I then indicate how she presupposes a specific yet problematic theory of trust.<sup>11</sup>

Gilbert writes that there are four components in the relationship of the special "standing" that holds between members of a joint commitment. Those four components are betrayal, trust, answerability, and owing. I am most interested here in the first two of these components, and it is on these two topics that she spills the least ink. Gilbert claims that it is with the fourth, owing, that we approach an account of rights and obligations, and it is here that she focuses most of her political writings.<sup>12</sup> It is helpful to repeat Gilbert's account of "standing" and contextualize how it fits into the kinds of joint commitments that constitute a plural subject. Summarizing her discussion of standing, Gilbert writes:

By virtue of being party to a joint commitment I owe my conformity to the other parties in their capacity as parties. In this capacity, therefore, they all have a special standing in relation to my conformity: they have *a right against me* to it, and they will rightly take themselves to have *the standing to demand it* from me *and to rebuke* me if it is not forthcoming. In addition, they will be in a position to *trust* me to conform. Correspondingly, they will appropriately feel *betrayed* if I fail to conform. Further, they will rightly take me to be *answerable* to them for nonconformity.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The operative theory of trust we can infer from Gilbert's political work is then shown as problematic in light of other possible theories in the next section.

<sup>12</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 149.

<sup>13</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 161.

Gilbert uses this account of the special standing that members of a joint commitment have towards one another as a basis for her account of political obligations. Her primary focus, though, is on owing and what is owed to others as opposed to more explicit reflections on trust and betrayal.

For Gilbert, both trust and betrayal are best understood in the context of joint commitments, where at least two persons have committed to pursue a certain goal together “as a body.”<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, trust and betrayal are understood as two sides of the same coin. On the basis of being jointly committed toward some X with fellow members, I thereby trust them to uphold their part of the commitment, and I possess a special standing in relation to them to feel betrayed if they do not do their part.<sup>15</sup> In some cases, I trust fellow members to a joint commitment and then rebuke them if they betray that trust. As Gilbert writes:

If I am not in a position to trust you to do something, you cannot betray me when you fail to do it. You can surprise me, disappoint me, wound me, but you cannot betray me. Whatever lays me open to betrayal legitimates my trust (as opposed to justifying it). [...] Betrayal, one might say, is the dark side of trust.<sup>16</sup>

On this account, trust is put forth as a positive attitude within the framework of the special standing holding between members of a joint commitment that enables members to work together. Betrayal on the other hand is understood as a “dark side of trust,” and exists as a

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<sup>14</sup> Gilbert (2006), pp. 136-137.

<sup>15</sup> “In the context of a joint commitment one betrays whomever one betrays in their capacity as participants with oneself in the joint commitment in question. [...] Given that a sense of betrayal is appropriate in the context of a joint commitment, such a commitment clearly gives the parties a special standing in relation to one another’s actions. There are certain actions that one party can only perform at the cost of betraying the other party.” Gilbert (2006), pp. 151-152.

<sup>16</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 152.

negative attitude that discourages or dissolves joint commitments. When things go smoothly, trust is the default position and betrayal disrupts the joint commitment either in the form of motivating a rebuke or in dissolving the plural subject.<sup>17</sup>

Gilbert accounts for the joint commitments that apply to large groups such as political communities under the heading of “non-basic” joint commitments. This type of joint commitment is characterized as having members who have not had reciprocal experiences of the readiness of fellow members and who have not committed to a specific goal.<sup>18</sup> Gilbert accounts for “non-basic” joint commitments such as those exhibited in impersonal and anonymous communities by appeal to the notion of “social rules.” Gilbert claims that the form of these social rules is as follows:

*There is a social rule in a population P if and only if the members of P are jointly committed to accepting as a body a requirement (or fiat) of the following form: members of P are to perform action A in circumstances C (that there is a particulate reason for doing A in C may be specified as a part of what is required, or it may not.).<sup>19</sup>*

The specific kinds of social rules that are of relevance to Gilbert in the context of pursuing a theory of political obligations are the class of what she calls “governing rules.” By a “governing rule,” Gilbert refers to the kind of social rules “that settles a matter that demands settling for the

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<sup>17</sup> Hans Bernhard Schmid similarly undertakes the idea of approaching social phenomena not when things are going smoothly but when they encounter friction. In his chapter, Schmid approaches the topic of trust by looking for a middle position between “cognitivist” accounts of trust and “normativist” accounts like Gilbert’s. Cf. Schmid (2013).

<sup>18</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 141. See Chapter IV for a fuller discussion of Gilbert’s distinction between basic and non-basic joint commitments.

<sup>19</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 197.

sake of the peaceful progress of life.”<sup>20</sup> The laws of a particular society count as governing rules according to this description, and an affirmative answer to the “membership problem” entails that members of a political society have obligations to uphold them by virtue of belonging to the group.

Members of population P would be following the social, governing rule in performing certain peace-maintaining actions A in relation to one another in the specific circumstances C, where there is a certain general level of trust that is presupposed in relation to other fellow members to do the same. Betraying that trust in this context amounts to the breaking of governing rules, which amounts to an infraction that disrupts the peaceful progress of life in the political community. Consider, for instance, the kind of rule following involved in driving a vehicle on a public road. When things go smoothly, other drivers trust me to behave in a certain way, and that trust is reciprocated in the attitudes I hold towards them. When another driver blatantly disobeys a traffic law, this trust has been betrayed. If the betrayal of trust on the road is severe enough, it threatens to disrupt the peaceful progression of the lives of other community members. Similar to the case of trust in her discussion of special standing, then, joint commitments within a political community in cases of peaceful interactions are put forth as the ideal, default arrangement, with disruptions to governing rules put forth as a negative disruption to the joint commitment.

This account of trust is uncontroversial when social interactions go smoothly or when the stakes of the betrayal are relatively minimal, such as in going for a walk with a friend.<sup>21</sup> In such

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<sup>20</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 186.

<sup>21</sup> The extent to which even this notion of trust can be considered uncontroversial is returned to in §4 below through Husserl’s examination of the dangers of taken-for-grantedness.

cases, there is an “individual common knowledge” that holds between the specific members of the group framing the expectations that members have regarding other members. Individual common knowledge, according to Gilbert, means that there is some knowledge that is held “between particular people considered as such by those involved.”<sup>22</sup> However, there is at least one form of trust that is of relevance to the political sphere that Gilbert has not accounted for, and that refers to the kinds of trust we can have of unknown others, that is, of strangers. This is problematic insofar as it comes to bear on experiences within large political communities having the features of impersonality and anonymity. It is precisely in these sorts of communities that we trust and are susceptible to betrayal in a unique way. In the case of experiences of membership in impersonal and anonymous communities, the notions of trust and betrayal as components of “standing” are contextualized within the wider-ranging experiences of one’s surroundings and of unknown others around me. While Gilbert attempts to account for this wider background by appeal to “population common knowledge,” the previous chapter demonstrated that this notion is not worked out in regard to members having a “consciousness of unity” of the group’s bond. As a reminder, Gilbert defines population common knowledge as “common knowledge between people considered by those involved as members of a population individuated by means of a certain general description.”<sup>23</sup> In tightly-knit intimate communities, my trust of others is built on a foundation of knowing others personally over time and of knowing how we together factor into a joint commitment. In impersonal and anonymous communities, however, an immediate,

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<sup>22</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 176.

<sup>23</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 176.

interpersonal foundation is lacking even when we have at least some degree of trust or confidence in strangers with whom I take to be sharing population common knowledge.

Gilbert's account of trust demonstrates that she is operating with a specific understanding of trust. Her formulation of social, governing rules as they relate to trust in the special standing between members of a joint commitment is akin to what I introduce below as the "three-place relation" conception of trust.<sup>24</sup> What the three-place relation means is that individual members of a joint commitment trust each other in relation to a specific valued thing or action. For instance, when going for a walk with someone, I trust my walking partner to keep a pace that is similar to mine, to not inexplicably turn around and run away from me, and so forth. My trust of the other member to the joint commitment is in relation to the background circumstances of our joint commitment, and these background circumstances are accounted for in Gilbert's notion of "individual common knowledge."

In the case of impersonal and anonymous political communities bound by governing rules, I trust strangers to abide by the imperatives of those rules in the relevant circumstances. In these situations, I trust other individual persons to behave in a certain way, where this behavior is contextualized within the joint commitment in question. Returning to the example of a small group of two individuals walking together, the constraints to walking apply only to the two members of the joint commitment; they do not apply to other individuals walking in the same vicinity. The content of the constraints refers to a specific standing members have towards other members of the specific joint commitment, but this does not mean that I thereby have the standing to trust that other strangers nearby walk alongside me in the same direction and with a

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<sup>24</sup> As I show below, this brings with it further conceptual difficulties.



set pace. I have the standing to feel betrayed by my friend if they do something to inexplicably disrupt our joint activity of walking together, but I do not have the standing to feel betrayed if a stranger walks away from me. There are, nevertheless, other types of constraints that hold between others and myself in public, such that I trust others to not harm me or maliciously interfere with my activities. In the case of these wider constraints, there is still a coordination of wills on the basis of the non-basic joint commitments of an impersonal and anonymous community insofar as we are all abiding by the same governing rules. Gilbert does not provide an account of what a “consciousness of unity” amounts to in such cases. Such an account should, by Gilbert’s own descriptions of special standing, include some awareness of the trust and openness to betrayal towards strangers. I have an explicit awareness of the unity that arises when “we” go for a walk together, but it is less plausible to suppose that I am consciously aware of a political community’s unity when simply going about my business. I can here be said to trust other strangers to respect my autonomy by obeying the relevant governing rules insofar as I take us to be jointly committed to uphold the same political obligations, but the extent to which this amounts to a consciousness of unity is called into question given the generality or the absence of those others in the group with me. If I do indeed experience trust and the possibility of betrayal in impersonal and anonymous communities, this must somehow be grounded in the group’s “population common knowledge,” but such generalized trusting or possibilities of betrayal are not accounted for by Gilbert’s descriptions.

To indicate the direction of my argument going forward, it is worth considering what is presupposed by the kind of trust described in Gilbert’s notion of special standing, especially trust and betrayal in impersonal and anonymous communities. One way to highlight this is by drawing

attention to severe betrayals of trust such as incidents of sexual violence or terrorist attacks.<sup>25</sup> In such cases, informal rebuke or official punishment to those who betray trust and dissolve a joint commitment are not necessarily the end of the story regarding the experiences of group members.<sup>26</sup> Put otherwise, traumatic experiences of betrayal can impact the ability of individuals to be engaged with others in a joint commitment. There are potentially more far-reaching and enduring effects of such severe incidents. Theorists like Susan Brison and Karen Jones have pointed out the ways in which the very possibility of trusting others within one's community is diminished on the basis of surviving traumatic experiences of betrayal.<sup>27</sup> While I go on to highlight ways that Husserl can go further than Jones regarding experiences of trust and betrayal in political communities, what these examples suggest is that additional reflection is necessary on the background conditions of trust beyond what is provided by Gilbert's notion of population common knowledge. Since Gilbert accounts for the normative force of political obligations by appeal to being jointly committed to governing rules, and since there are betrayals of trust that severely disrupt this peace within communities, it is important to look into these background conditions. If betrayal and trust were just a matter of our interactions with other known individuals in well-defined joint commitments such as going for a walk, then Gilbert's account would be sufficient. However, some forms of the betrayal of trust are not of this sort. By drawing

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<sup>25</sup> Karen Jones, whose conception of trust is examined in detail below, puts these two examples forth.

<sup>26</sup> In larger groupings such as political communities, the breaking of social rules is met by punishment, which Gilbert also grounds within the structure of joint commitments. Gilbert (2006), pp. 250-251.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Brison (1993); Jones (2004). For a different approach to the initial starting point of social relationships from the perspective of feminist philosophy and phenomenology, see Young (2005). For Young, the default position for women in sexist societies is not one that could be considered as innocent (in the case of something like trust understood as basal security), but involves a tacit handicapping of women at the bodily level in terms of bodily possibilities.

attention to impersonality and anonymity, it becomes clear that trust and betrayal are not simply a matter of our experiences of other persons, but that they fit into broader background experiences of the socio-cultural surrounding world.

Gilbert's theory of political obligations faces difficulties by not accounting for experiences of trust and betrayal in impersonal and anonymous communities. For this reason, it is helpful to frame the discussion by way of surveying candidate theories of trust as given in the political science, sociology, and philosophy literature. Doing so strengthens Gilbert's account of obligations within political communities by showing the conscious experiences we have both when things go smoothly and when they do not.

### §3. Surveying Conceptions of Trust

I here look to theories of trust as they have been given by philosophers, political scientists, and sociologists. This is not to be taken as an exhaustive presentation of theoretical conceptions of trust.<sup>28</sup> Rather, the accounts presented here are ones that highlight specific ways in which trust and betrayal come into play in what has been defined as impersonal and anonymous communities. On the one hand, any account of trust can here be productively introduced given Gilbert's quick gloss. On the other hand, some notions of trust are more fitting than others when it comes to accounting for impersonality and anonymity in large political communities. Given Gilbert's commitment that group membership should include a

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<sup>28</sup> For a more comprehensive review of philosophical approaches to the topic of trust, see McLeod (2015) and Faulkner & Simpson (2017). The primary focus of this chapter is on the concept of trust. As the conception put forth by Jones makes clear, though, the topics of sexual violence and terrorism are crucially important in this context. While a comprehensive review of these literatures are not possible in the space of this chapter, a space is cleared for further philosophical and phenomenological discussions of terrorism and sexual violence on the basis of what is put forth here. For a more comprehensive review of the literature on terrorism from a philosophical standpoint, see Primoratz (2015). On the topic of sexual violence, see Whisnot (2017).

consciousness of the group's unity, a strong candidate for a conceptualization of trust will be one that includes descriptive components of the ways trust is experienced. The conceptions of trust I appeal to here are (1) trust as a three-place relation, (2) as social capital, (3) as noncognitive security, and finally (4) as basal security. I argue in the end that Karen Jones's account of trust understood as "basal security" best fills the gap identified in Gilbert's theory of political obligations. The account that Jones provides has the additional attraction of acting as a bridge with Husserl's phenomenology.

### 3.1 Three-Place Relations

Annette Baier's article on trust provides an account of trust in the form of a three-place relationship. In this case, trust is conceptualized in the following form: person A trusts person B with some valued thing C.<sup>29</sup> In this way, to trust is to depend on the good will of the other person.<sup>30</sup> For Baier, trust is assumed to be a positive attitude and betrayal acts as a negative modification. A trusting relationship is morally decent to the extent that it would survive if both parties had full knowledge of how they were being relied upon by the other.<sup>31</sup> Trust is then morally bad if the relationship would dissolve when such knowledge came to light. This three-place relation is put forth as wide enough to account both for our interactions with known others as well as unknown strangers. In the latter case, Baier writes that the stranger is trusted to "care" for our autonomy, where such care is general enough to refer to at the very least not harming

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<sup>29</sup> Baier (1986), p. 235.

<sup>30</sup> Baier (1986), p. 235.

<sup>31</sup> Baier (1986), pp. 255-256.

us.<sup>32</sup> In this latter case of having a trust of strangers, Baier writes that this exists in the form of an “unconscious trust,” where the notion of unconscious seems to refer to instances in which our trust functions habitually, without our having to choose to take up a certain relation to the other.<sup>33</sup>

Baier points out that there is an additional component that is necessary to understand trust beyond what is found in her theoretical framework, a kind of surplus framing the parts of the three-place relation and acting as conditions for their possibility. While Baier primarily focuses on trust in the form of a three-place relation, she acknowledges that a full account of trust also has to understand the wider background in which individuals interact.<sup>34</sup> Baier indicates what she means here by discussing a background “climate of trust” or a “network of trust.”<sup>35</sup> What this indicates is that three-place relations of trust require that there are certain trusting regularities amidst members of a community. For communities in which it is rare to trust others, attempts to enter into a three-place relation of trust with someone else will be unlikely, especially when entering into relations with strangers.

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<sup>32</sup> Baier (1986), p. 238.

<sup>33</sup> Baier (1986), p. 244.

<sup>34</sup> What Baier gestures to as going beyond the three-place relation, and what is pursued in works from Becker and Jones, is different from the strategy put forth more recently in the form of two-place trusting relations. What Domenicucci and Holton suggest is to treat trust as more akin to certain forms of unconditional love. In such cases of love, person A loves person B, but they suggest it would be wrong to then contextualize that by saying it holds in particular circumstances or in virtue of certain traits. Cf. Domenicucci and Holton (2017).

<sup>35</sup> “Trust of any particular form is made more likely, in adults, if there is a climate of trust of that sort. Awareness of what is customary, as well as past experience of one’s own, affects one’s ability to trust. We take it for granted that people will perform their role-related duties and trust any individual worker to look after whatever her job requires her to. [...] Nevertheless, there are two aspects of my test which worry me, which may indicate it is not sufficiently liberated from contractarian prejudices. One difficulty is that it ignores the *network* of trust, and treats only two-party trust relationships. [...] The second thing that worries me is that the test seems barely applicable to brief trusting encounters, such as those with fellow library frequenters.” Baier (1986), pp. 245, 258.

It is plausible to infer from Gilbert's writings that she is operating with a three-place relation of trust. The trust I have of others according to Gilbert is tied to the content of our joint commitment, and betrayal amounts to the other person or persons not living up to their part of the commitment. This is the case both for small joint commitments such as two people going for a walk and for larger groupings bound by social, governing rules. While Baier indicates the necessity of looking beyond three-place relations in order to account for wider climates or networks within which trust functions, Gilbert does not. Instead, Gilbert turns directly to relations of owing within joint commitments. To be sure, there are components within Gilbert's overall theory that can be used towards the end of account for these surplus notions of trust, such as her notion of population common knowledge.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, Gilbert does not address trust in wider networks of common knowledge or the experiences of members therein, especially within impersonal and anonymous communities.

### 3.2 Social Capital

Political scientists and sociologists have approached trust under the heading of "social capital."<sup>37</sup> In these discussions, it is emphasized that trust acts as a kind of social lubrication promoting the efficient functioning and flourishing of communities. We thereby encounter phenomena akin to what Baier highlighted regarding background networks or climates within which trust takes shape. The ease with which social interactions proceed in cases of high levels of social capital makes it understandable that Niklas Luhmann would conceptualize trust as a

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<sup>36</sup> Recall the sense in which Gilbert's notion of common knowledge runs parallel with Husserl's account of the surrounding world as given in Chapter IV.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Rothstein (2007).

way in which we attempt to reduce social complexity.<sup>38</sup> Inversely, social capital theorists mark the absence of trust as a kind of social “friction.” Francis Fukuyama defines trust and social capital in the following way:

Trust is the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and cooperative behavior, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of other members of that community. [...] Social capital is a capability that arises from the prevalence of trust in a society or in certain parts of it.<sup>39</sup>

Put similarly by Robert Putnam:

Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness arising from them. [...] A society characterized by generalized reciprocity is more efficient than a distrustful society, for the same reason that money is more efficient than barter. If we don’t have to balance every exchange instantly, we can get a lot more accomplished. Trustworthiness lubricates social life.<sup>40</sup>

Communities can of course exist in the absence of trust, where members are dishonest and uncooperative, but such a situation is usually associated with notions of inefficiency.<sup>41</sup> Trusting societies move without friction insofar as members do not have to hedge their actions through extensive contracts or various forms of insurance.<sup>42</sup> Communities marked by distrust, however, lack such efficiency since additional time is required in order to guarantee mechanisms of

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<sup>38</sup> Cf. Luhmann (1979) and (1988).

<sup>39</sup> Fukuyama (1995), p. 26.

<sup>40</sup> Putnam (2000), pp. 19, 21.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Gambetta (1988).

<sup>42</sup> “Contracts allow strangers with no basis for trust to work with one another, but the process works far more efficiently when the trust exists.” Fukuyama (1995), p. 150.

assurances for members. For example, it may be the case in less trusting groups that additional time and energy are spent writing out complex contracts, closing exploitable contractual loopholes, and policing breaches to agreements.

Given the specific problem that Gilbert's account introduces in the political sphere, it is not enough to focus on accounts of interpersonal trust where we interact with other known individuals. For Putnam, the kind of trust we have in cases of our interactions with well-known others, or at least those others we encounter on a frequent basis, is referred to as a "thick trust." This corresponds to the kinds of trust found in small groups such as two people going for a walk together or a married couple. The features of impersonality and anonymity demand a more specific type of trust, though, and we come across the requisite type of trust in what Putnam refers to as "thin trust."<sup>43</sup> Thin trust for Putnam refers to the kinds of attitudes that we have towards strangers, such as those we encounter in passing in coffee shops.<sup>44</sup> In these cases, there are certain background norms that lay out our expectations regarding the behavior of others. I tend to have a thin trust of strangers of public at the very least to the extent that I expect them to not harm me.

What social capital conceptions of trust provide in the current context is a sense of the ways in which a "thin trust" prevents what would otherwise be a kind of social friction. Trust as understood by social capital theorists is clearly a positive event, and is correlated here with

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<sup>43</sup> "Trust embedded in personal relations that are strong, frequent, and nested in wider networks is sometimes called "thick trust." On the other hand, a thinner trust in "the generalized other," like your new acquaintance from the coffee shop, also rests implicitly on some background of shared social networks and expectations of reciprocity. Thin trust is even more useful than thick trust, because it extends the radius of trust beyond the roster of people whom we can know personally." Putnam (2000), p. 136.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Steinbock (2014); Govier (1997).



positive economic growth, stronger indications of confidence in leaders or institutions, and so forth. Social capital theorists account for these metrics in political and economic terms, such that economies function more efficiently when high levels of trust are present. High levels of trust in other persons or in political leaders allows for the possibility of more economic growth than we would have if the procedural flow were interrupted by eruptions of social and political distrust (e.g., protests, revolutions, low consumer confidence, etc.). Levels of trust or distrust are measured through public opinion polls, where social scientists seek to understand fluctuating levels of support or opposition to politicians and institutions of the political community. While this acts to initially indicate the kind of trust that is of relevance in the context of impersonal and anonymous communities as discussed by Gilbert and as gestured to by Baier, we do not yet have anything like an account of the experiences that members within such groups have.

### 3.3 Non-Cognitive Security

Lawrence Becker conceptualizes the trust that members of a political community have as a sense of security or ease in the face of what they take to be others' motives for acting.<sup>45</sup> Becker's interest is primarily in "noncognitive" versions of trust insofar as they have relevance in the context of political philosophy.<sup>46</sup> In a similar vein with Putnam's account of "thin trust," Becker discusses a "noncognitive" account of trust. By "noncognitive," Becker means an account of trust that does not directly thematize the beliefs or expectations individuals have about specific other persons.<sup>47</sup> Rather, according to Becker, "it is fundamentally a matter of our

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<sup>45</sup> This account of trust is given from a philosophical perspective, although he suggests that this conceptualization will be of direct relevance to political scientists.

<sup>46</sup> Becker (1996), p. 43.

<sup>47</sup> Becker (1996), p. 44.

having trustful attitudes, affects, emotions, or motivational structures that are not focused on specific people, institutions, or groups.”<sup>48</sup> In this way, our membership within political communities involves not only our explicit beliefs and cognitive abilities, but also includes our “noncognitive stability.”<sup>49</sup>

For Becker, it is not enough to gauge political forms of trust by looking to opinion polls or what members of the community directly say. It is seemingly inevitable that members of a political community will be able to find problems with certain parts of their governments and this may show itself in terms of a decline of trust or credibility in surveys. What is also important to theorize according to Becker is a deeper level of noncognitive “attitudes, affects, and emotions” that members possess. For Becker, this is even more important than explicit beliefs insofar as individuals continue to go along in one way or another with the governments to which they belong even while distrusting particular leaders or institutions. The notion of trust understood as a “noncognitive security about motives,” then, refers to the sense of implicit agreement with how a political community is functioning overall, despite any reservations regarding those who holds power at a certain time or various policy enactments. As Becker writes:

It strikes me as a plausible hypothesis, however, that democratic government is not seriously disabled by a consequent decline in people’s credulity and reliance, as long as they continue to believe that officials generally mean well, play by the rules, and play fair. When we feel secure about that much, we tend to write off incompetence, mendacity, greed, and cowardice as simply human foibles.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Becker (1996), p. 44.

<sup>49</sup> Becker (1996), p. 58.

<sup>50</sup> Becker (1996), p. 54.

A truly effective government does not on this account need the explicit, trusting endorsement of its members so long as there is a general feeling that the government more or less means well. Trust is in this way a kind of non-cognitive yet positive relation to the political community and to its institutions as a whole.

### 3.4 Basal Security

In her three-place relation version of trust, Baier provides a compelling account of the ways in which trust is experienced when one individual trusts another individual with some valued possession. Notions of thin trust as discussed by social capital theorists refer us to the kinds of efficient interactions that can occur when we do not feel the need to be overly on-guard against dishonest and uncooperative individuals. Becker's account highlights a type of trust that is important to the political sphere where focus is not on specific individuals or institutions, but on a general sense of security amidst unknown others in a community. The trajectory we see here is towards the "atmospheres" in which trust is operative beyond the trust we have of individual persons. With Becker's theory, we get closer to an account of the experiences of community members insofar as he touches on attitudes and affections in relation to a background sense of security regarding governments. Turning now to Karen Jones, we find an account of trust that directly thematizes the kinds of experiences we have in and of our socio-cultural world in general, and not just those we have of individual persons. This thematization has the advantage of being able to conceptualize experiences that group members have both of being in a trusting environment as well as inhabiting an environment deemed to be threatening in the aftermath of betrayals of trust.

Jones begins her reflections on trust by appealing to the quote given by Baier which is included as the epigraph to this chapter, highlighting what it is that some terrorists take aim at in their attacks.<sup>51</sup> Successful terror campaigns are able to target a specific kind of trust that members of a community have in relation both to other members and in relation to their environments at large.<sup>52</sup> For Jones, three-place models touch on one aspect of trust, but this does not come close to exhausting the concept. There is an additional sense of trust that is better captured in terms of our overall sense of security, which Jones calls our “basal security.”

That trust is a three-place relation is now common ground even among otherwise competing accounts of trust. However, while the aftershock of terror does significantly change the landscape of three-place trust relations, the power of terror lies in its ability to shake what I call our *basal security*. [...] Basal security is not adequately theorized in three-place terms and thus has not been adequately theorized in contemporary philosophical works on trust.<sup>53</sup>

Jones thereby postulates “an underlying, affectively-laden state that is explanatory of our willingness or otherwise to enter into particular three-place trusting relations. Call this underlying state basal security.”<sup>54</sup>

Jones compares situations in which straightforward trusting relations to the world at large are shocked and even dissolved, referring to the experiences of survivors of terrorist attacks or sexual violence. These instances elucidate a kind of background trust as well as the possibility of

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<sup>51</sup> Baier (1986), p. 234.

<sup>52</sup> “When an attack could not have been predicted and is severe, the agent’s basal security is at risk, as metatrust cannot be restored through revising first-order trust practices. A really efficient terrorist campaign works by attacking basal security. The randomness of terrorist attacks suggests that terrorists understand that inability to predict and thus protect against attack magnifies the effectiveness of their fear campaigns.” Jones (2004), p. 12.

<sup>53</sup> Jones (2004), p. 3, 4.

<sup>54</sup> Jones (2004), p. 8.

its elimination. While some forms of betrayal can allow us to revise our beliefs and habits of trusting, other betrayals impact our “metatrust.” As Jones writes: “These are the betrayals that, if serious, shatter basal security.”<sup>55</sup> Similar to Becker, Jones is focused on a noncognitive account of trust insofar as her focus is on the kinds of experiences that persons have apart from their explicitly held and acknowledged beliefs.

We need to postulate basal security in order to explain dissonance in our judgments of risk and in our willingness actually to trust on the basis of such judged risk, and we need to postulate it to explain why the world should be experienced as radically different after an attack than it was before an attack, even in those cases where the agent does not revise her beliefs about how objectively risky the world is.<sup>56</sup>

What Jones is most interested in is the sense in which victims of such attacks can truly be said to live in “different worlds” before and after attacks.<sup>57</sup> Jones supports her account by appealing to the work of Susan Brison, who provides a first-person account of what it is like to experience being a victim of sexual violence.<sup>58</sup> As Brison writes:

When the inconceivable happens, one starts to doubt even the most mundane, realistic perceptions. [...] For the first several months after my attack, I led a spectral existence, not quite sure whether I had died and the world went on without me, or whether I was alive but in a totally alien world.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Jones (2004), p. 11.

<sup>56</sup> Jones (2004), pp. 12-13.

<sup>57</sup> “Survivors of random attacks frequently describe themselves as living in *different worlds* before and after the attack and describe the change in trust terms.” Jones (2004), p. 7.

<sup>58</sup> Jones (2004), p. 7.

<sup>59</sup> Brison (1993), p. 10.

If trust was exhausted through three-place models, then it would not make sense to acknowledge experiences of living within different worlds before and after an attack, one mundane and one alien. Rather, it would only speak to the dissolution of specific three-place relations of trust. Insofar as Jones and Brison draw attention to how one's world as a whole can come to be experienced as alienating, this supports the notion of there being more to relations of trust than what is accounted for in the three-place form.

On the one hand, incidents of terrorism or sexual violence can be partially conceptualized in terms of three-place relations of trust. For instance, I can say there is a certain betrayal of trust that a terrorist has violated in carrying out their attack; I may have trusted them (thinly) as strangers in a public space, where that trust was then betrayed. The victim of sexual violence has similarly had trust violated in relation to their attacker at least partially in three-place terms; individual A trusted individual B to behave in a non-violent manner, and that trust was then betrayed through an act of sexual violence. On the other hand, these severe attacks indicate that there is more to trust and betrayal than just our relation to other individual persons. In the aftermath of terrorist attacks or incidents of sexual violence, both Brison and Jones describe the ways in which victims may also come to have a different experiential relation to their environment at large. Survivors of terrorist attacks and survivors of sexual violence may have radically different approaches to being amidst strangers in their communities. As Jones writes, this new relation to the world occurs despite the kinds of explicitly held beliefs of survivors, such as their calculations of risk. Three-place relations of trust do not on their own account for this shift in experientially different worlds.

Jones puts forth her account of trust as basal security to account for trust and betrayal as related to the very core of our experience of being in the social world. Basal security is presented in the form of a spectrum. Depending on different levels of basal security, Jones claims there are experiences of certain components of an environment and objects therein as having different levels of salience.

Our habits of trusting, whether habits of overlooking or of focusing on our vulnerabilities, determine whether risk will be salient to us and thus contribute to the pattern of our three-place trust. [...] To attribute an unarticulated, affectively laden, implicit, interpretive framework to an agent is to attribute to this agent a set of dispositions of salience, interpretation, motivation, and affect. Differences in these frameworks and the dispositions that constitute them give rise to differences in the way the world is experienced.<sup>60</sup>

On this account, possessing a relatively high level of basal security allows for feelings of security or comfort amidst strangers in public, which means not calling other individuals or the general safety of an area into question. The possession of low levels of basal security, on the other hand, is associated with an overriding feeling of unease or alienation, a lack of security regarding other persons and my surrounding world. The world itself is thereby characterized as a threatening or risky place in the case of low levels of basal security.

Any of the conceptions of trust presented in this section supplement Gilbert's plural subject theory of political obligations in its current form since she does not specify exactly how she is using the term. However, given the specific difficulty identified above in her work regarding the kinds of experiences had by members of large political communities, there are good reasons to believe that Jones's conception of trust as "basal security" provides the best fit

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<sup>60</sup> Jones (2004), pp. 8, 8-9.

for filling the gap. Gilbert faces difficulties in accounting for experiences in impersonal and anonymous communities, and I argue above that this is reflected in the amount of time she spends incorporating trust and betrayal into her theory. Jones's conception of trust as basal security directly addresses the background presuppositions of trust in such communities which were absent from Gilbert's account. Jones highlights the sense in which our straightforward experience of the world is marked by a kind of "metatrust," whereas successfully carried-out terrorist attacks or instances of sexual violence eliminate those experiences of a general trust within a social group. This dissolution of basal security, importantly, amounts to more than just the withdrawal of trust directed at individual persons in particular circumstances. Rather, trust as basal security highlights the sense in which trusting relations shape how we experience a world in general. Survivors of such attacks are said to be unwilling to enter into three-place relations of trust. The account of trust that Gilbert provides implicitly endorses a three-place relation, but that does not account for the background conditions that contextualize our trusting relations. This is a crucial gap insofar as those background conditions are especially prevalent in holding together impersonal and anonymous communities.

One of the upshots of Jones's account is that it focuses explicitly on experiences of betrayal in addition to trust, whereas the primary focuses of the other accounts presented here were focused more on positive attitudes of trust. This is instructive in bringing some of the background presuppositions of three-place relations of trust to the fore. At the same time, this can be taken further in order to thematize the ways that trust and betrayal factor into experiences of membership within political communities. Jones's starting point is with individuals who already have a high level of basal security prior to experiences of severe attacks, of blindly or



unquestioningly trusting others on the background of a healthy basal security.<sup>61</sup> What this covers over, however, are the wide-ranging historical background conditions that such an initial sense of security presupposes and the fact that not everyone shares this starting position. That basal trust can be “shattered” is itself indicative of a wider background, network, or climate of trust and it is through this realization that Jones provides supplementation to the conception of trust put forth by Gilbert. Jones claims that it is relatively uncontroversial how this basal security comes about.<sup>62</sup> For instance, she points to such security as being instilled to individuals in part by their genes and in part by their parents.<sup>63</sup> What this passes over, however, is that this initial build-up of basal security can occur in a socio-cultural atmosphere with maliciously prejudicial social and political institutions that allow for patterns of such severe betrayals of trust to emerge in the first place.

Moving to Husserl, it is shown that his account is similar to Jones’s on these topics, opening up the possibility of a detailed phenomenological analysis of such experiences of trust and betrayal. In addition, Husserl approaches the very possibility of socio-cultural crises as indicative of components of our world that had been forgotten or taken-for-granted. Trust as it exists in the form of basal security is something that is taken-for-granted in instances of peacefully going about our lives. Husserl’s historically-focused phenomenology calls this kind of taken-for-grantedness into question by placing such prejudices into historical context.

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<sup>61</sup> This is an objection that could also be raised to Brison’s account.

<sup>62</sup> Jones (2004), p. 11.

<sup>63</sup> Jones (2004), p. 10.

#### §4. Husserl on Trust and Crisis

There are two reasons it is instructive to turn to Husserl on the heels of what has been discussed so far. First, a Husserlian standpoint allows for a detailed intentional analysis of the correlations between consciousness and world in experiences of trust and betrayal. This is important given Gilbert's insistence that experiences of community membership should include some consciousness of the group's unity, and since trust and betrayal are components of her theory of political obligations. Jones demonstrates the possibility of our trusting experiences being understood in terms of our relation to the world understood in an underlying affective fashion and this in itself alleviates the difficulty Gilbert faces in terms of incorporating trust into an account of community membership amidst strangers. Husserl can provide a detailed account of how features of life in political communities such as trust and betrayal are experienced. Since the kind of consciousness of unity involved in impersonal and anonymous communities has a more complex structure than that of smaller groups and since trust and betrayal are not persuasively accounted for in Gilbert's descriptions, Husserl's framework is here a desirable addition. This strengthens Gilbert's theory of political obligations even further than the incorporation of Jones's notion of trust.

The second reason it is instructive to turn to Husserl is due to his account of socio-cultural crises as symptomatic of underlying yet forgotten presuppositions of our everyday experiences. While the accounts of trust given so far conceptualize trust as a positive attitude that then becomes negative through instances of betrayal, Husserl's analyses of socio-cultural crises take aim at taken-for-granted components of our straightforward, everyday experiences. Even if these experiences are characterized positively in the sense of being experiences of our social and

political world functioning smoothly, this does not guarantee that we truly understand the meanings of our actions or the reasons that things have traditionally been done a certain way. Husserl demonstrates that crises occur when there is a forgetting of the tradition-based components of what shapes our experiences. Instead of simply taking our everyday experiences as positive by default, Husserl provides an avenue seeking to bring about self-responsibility and responsibility for one's community that does not take seemingly uncontroversial parts of the social and political world for granted. This is especially pressing in the context of this chapter due to Gilbert's aspirations in putting forth a theory of political obligations. Belonging to a political community according to Gilbert amounts to abiding by those social rules that are understood as "governing rules," which "settle a matter that demands settling for the sake of the peaceful progress of life," rules such as a society's laws.<sup>64</sup> The specific kinds of betrayals to trust that Jones highlights indicates the possibility of there being structural or institutional problems intertwined with the governing rules of a political community. Put otherwise, there may be threats to the peaceful progression of the lives of community members that are tacitly built into the joint commitments constituting the community. The manner in which members experience trust and betrayal can be symptomatic of more wide-ranging socio-cultural crises.

I first highlight the overlap between Jones's notion of basal security and Husserl's notion of "original belief" in the natural attitude (4.1). The loss of "metatrust" characterized as low basal security is shown to be akin to Husserl's notion of socio-cultural "crisis." I argue that Husserl's approach to socio-cultural crises is instructive in this context insofar as it leads to

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<sup>64</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 186. See also p. 14 in this context regard to following a society's laws as indicative of upholding the institutions of one's society, that is, as endorsing an affirmative answer to the "membership problem."

reflections on the originally taken-for-granted positivity of trust. In the face of even tacit crises, the possibility of a liberating approach to community life in the form of a transformation or a renewal becomes possible (4.2).

#### 4.1 Basal Security from a Husserlian Standpoint

Husserl conceptualizes communities in general as existing along a spectrum from anonymous to intimate, where this spectrum is clarified by appealing to the way he uses his mereology to write about community.<sup>65</sup> Even though Husserl does not explicitly pursue the following line of thought, the notion of trust is similarly amenable to being conceptualized along a spectrum. In the everyday spheres of family life, friendships, and romantic relationships, I trust that there will be features such as mutuality, recognition, and mindful fidelity amidst particular others. On the other hand, my trust in public settings involves the expectation that strangers will act with a degree of civility. This corresponds to the distinction Putnam draws between “thick trust” and “thin trust.”<sup>66</sup> In all of these instances, it is essential that a guarantee is impossible in the face of the freedom of other persons.<sup>67</sup> Broken promises, betrayals, or violence draw our attention to interpersonal fragility, and may even lead to the dissolution of the community in question. An anonymous community of strangers bound by a loose set of background norms can be transformed into an intimate community, a community whose members are explicitly aware of themselves and fellow members as belonging to the community, in cases where things do not

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<sup>65</sup> Cf., Chapters I-III.

<sup>66</sup> Putnam (2000), p. 136.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Steinbock (2014), p. 195.

go as expected (e.g., Carr’s example of the We-constituting effects of terrorist attacks<sup>68</sup>). In such cases, our trust regarding the general ways that other people will behave is betrayed. A group may become more intimately bound through instances of increased familiarity with distinct others and their trustworthiness. Moving in the other direction, an intimate grouping of individuals such as close friends who trust one another may dissolve if trust is betrayed such that members no longer feel that they know the others closely.<sup>69</sup> While Husserl is clear that anonymous communities can function automatically in “headless” fashion, he in no way subscribes to any notion of inevitability regarding the directionality of communities along this spectrum.<sup>70</sup>

Like Jones, Husserl recognized that different persons can experience the same world in different ways. Members of different historical generations can have different experiences of their surrounding worlds. Husserl’s narrative in the *Crisis* details the ways in which the accomplishments of the natural sciences since Galileo have shaped the way we encounter ordinary objects around us, throwing over them a “garb of ideas” such that we experience objects as though they were bundles of mathematically exact physical measurements instead of recognizing the perspectival and inexact manner of our actually experiencing them.<sup>71</sup> This, however, is not the only way the world can be experienced. Husserl suggests it would be

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<sup>68</sup> Carr (2014), pp. 50, 58.

<sup>69</sup> As Hannah Arendt describes in the preface to her *Between Past and Future*, politically engaged revolutionaries may over time lose their experienced “treasure” that was the world they directly engaged with as institutions become established and norms take hold of the wheel. I take it that this is a similar description of the movement from membership within intimate communities toward more anonymously functioning communities.

<sup>70</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 22.

<sup>71</sup> *Crisis*, p. 51.

anachronistic to think that the Ancient Greeks had experienced objects and states of affairs in that way.<sup>72</sup> This for Husserl indicates one of the ways in which apprehensions of the world can differ across generations. While we all live in the objectively same world, the sedimentations of different traditions impact what is experienced as salient or irrelevant in the shared socio-cultural surrounding worlds of specific communities.<sup>73</sup> Just as Jones highlights ways that levels of trust impact the salience through which objects and states of affairs in our world are experienced (e.g., in regard to their riskiness), so too does Husserl acknowledge the ways that the traditional sedimentations of a community impact the way the world is experienced.

As argued in Chapter III, Husserl accounts for the experience of being a part of a community by appeal to a twofold structure. On the one hand, there are what I described as the “centripetal experiences” of the other members of a personal association. On the other hand, there are the “centrifugal experiences” that members have of their shared surrounding world.<sup>74</sup> Both of these experiential moments are filled out in Husserl’s writings with phenomenological descriptions of the different types of intentionalities at play in them (e.g., axiological and practical intentionality). Trust understood as a three-place relation only accounts for one part of this whole, focusing on community experience understood as our being a part of a personal association. What it misses, as argued above, is the sense in which our personal associations have their own shared surrounding worlds. The approaches of both Jones and Husserl draw attention

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<sup>72</sup> *VL*, p. 272.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. *VL*, p. 281.

<sup>74</sup> *Ideas II*, p. 201.

to this kind of experience of the surrounding world. One entry point to this in Husserl's work is by appealing to his notions of horizons within the lifeworld.

In the *Crisis*, Husserl responds to what he takes to be the dangers of naturalism by providing a phenomenological analysis of the "lifeworld" (*Lebenswelt*).<sup>75</sup> A comprehensive account of Husserl's technical notion of the lifeworld cannot be given here, but I introduce it because it includes an extensive phenomenological analysis of experiential "horizons," and because this notion of horizons makes it possible to thematize the different experiential features of trust. Husserl discusses horizontal intentionality both in terms of internal and external horizons.<sup>76</sup> By "internal horizons," Husserl refers to the sum of all additional perspectives that one can take of an object or state of affairs besides the profile that is given to one in the present moment. My perception of an object such as a tree also includes the apperception of its currently unseen sides, which are synthesized into my perceptual experience. By "external horizons," Husserl refers to the ways in which our experiences of objects places them within a wider network of states of affairs. In perceiving the tree, I apprehend it in the context of its environmental region, such as in a garden amidst other trees. Investigations of horizons apply also to our perceptions of valuable and practical objects, such as those sedimented in socio-cultural artifacts and traditions. Objects, other subjects, and states of affairs are embedded in wide-ranging horizontal relations beyond those that are accounted for in the context of Gilbert's plural subject theory of large groups. As suggested in the previous chapter, Gilbert's notion of

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<sup>75</sup> Husserl defines naturalism as the approach that considers entities only as spatio-temporal objects subject to natural laws. *PRS*, p. 169.

<sup>76</sup> *Crisis*, p. 162. For more on Husserl's notion of the lifeworld, see Dodd (2004), Chapter 5 and Staiti (2014), Chapter 7.

population common knowledge comes close to Husserl in this sense insofar as it refers to the background understandings that influences our experiences of membership. Husserl, however, provides a detailed account of experiences of community membership within impersonal and anonymous communities given his appeal to the “mediations” of “mereological proximity.” This advantage has repercussions in accounting for trust. With an analysis of horizon intentionality, Husserl is able to theorize the same kinds of surplus instantiations of trust as gestured to by Baier, such as “climates” or “networks” of trust. Three-place models never exhaust our trust of other individuals, then, insofar as these intersubjective relations of trust are to be contextualized within wider socio-cultural, historical horizons. It is for this reason that Husserl’s phenomenological analyses provide detailed descriptions of the kinds of experiences described by Jones, where it is similarly not simply a matter of specific interactions on the basis of three-place relations of trust. Having a detailed description of such experiences matters in the current context insofar as Gilbert’s theory of political obligations requires some consciousness of the group’s unity. The notion of horizons allows for a far more comprehensive account of the rich experiences we have, and this is further seen by appeal to Husserl’s notion of the “natural attitude.”

For Husserl, the “natural attitude” is that way through which we ordinarily experience our world, as being turned to things as they are unquestionably (*fraglos*) given to us.<sup>77</sup> The natural attitude is that attitude of everydayness in which we find ourselves amidst things considered as

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<sup>77</sup> *IP*, p. 15; *Crisis*, p. 13. Cf. Husserl’s discussion of mere communities of influence in *Hua XIV*, pp. 183, 204. On Husserl’s notion of “attitude,” see *VL*, p. 280: “Attitude, generally speaking, means a habitually fixed style of willing life comprising directions of the will or interests that are prescribed by this style, comprising the ultimate ends, the cultural accomplishments whose total style is thereby determined.”



“pre-given” (*vorgegeben*) or “obvious” (*selbstverständlich*).<sup>78</sup> Put otherwise, we ordinarily encounter objects and states of affairs in the form of a taken-for-granted familiarity (*Heimatlichkeit* or *Vertrautheit*).<sup>79</sup> On Husserl’s account, this is not simply a matter of encountering a world of physical objects. As he writes:

This surrounding world is comprised not of mere things but of use-Objects (clothes, utensils, guns, tools), works of art, literary products, instruments for religious and judicial activities (seals, official ornament, coronation insignia, ecclesiastical symbols, etc.). And it is comprised not only of individual persons, but the persons are instead members of communities, members of personal unities of a higher order, which, as wholes, have their own lives, preserve themselves by lasting through time despite the joining or leaving of individuals, have their qualities as communities, their moral and juridical regulations, their modes of functioning in collaboration with other communities and with their individual persons, their dependencies on circumstances, their regulated changes and their own way of developing or maintaining themselves invariant over time, according to the determining circumstances.”<sup>80</sup>

There is a way in which we are thereby “certain” (*gewiss*), that we have a “perceptual certainty” (*Wahrnehmungsgewissheit*)<sup>81</sup> in the experiences of our surrounding world in the natural attitude.<sup>82</sup> While in the natural attitude, I take the objects and states of affairs encountered in experience as simply existing around me in an uncontroversial fashion and as simply spread out endlessly in space.<sup>83</sup> Husserl characterizes this as the “general thesis of the natural attitude.”<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> *BPP*, p. 2; *Crisis*, p. 13.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Taipale (2014), Chapter 6.

<sup>80</sup> *Ideas II*, pp. 191-192.

<sup>81</sup> *Ideas I*, p. 206.

<sup>82</sup> *BPP*, p. 3.

<sup>83</sup> *Ideas I*, p. 48.

<sup>84</sup> *Ideas I*, p. 52.

Over the course of our experience, Husserl highlights the different ways in which what we initially and unquestioningly take to be the case can become “modalized.” For example, a perception of an object of which I am initially certain of regarding its existence can take on the characteristics of being doubtful, being probable, being possible, and so forth.<sup>85</sup> Perceptions are given more “weight” (*Gewicht*) when they meet our expectations over the course of experience.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, an initially certain belief in regard to some perceived thing can become negated if it turns out to have not been what I first apprehended.<sup>87</sup> For instance, Husserl writes:

Just as negation, figuratively speaking, “strikes through” [*durchstreicht*], so affirmation “underlines” [*unterstreicht*]; it “confirms” a position, assenting to it instead of, like negation, “canceling” it.<sup>88</sup>

The “doxic modalities” are not given on their own, but depend on an “unmodalized” form of belief; there is something that is at least initially taken to be “certain” that can then be called into question in various ways.<sup>89</sup> Husserl refers to the initial certainty that we have in the natural attitude as an “original belief” (*Urglaube*) or “original doxa” (*Urdoxa*).<sup>90</sup> There is here a simple, underlying confidence that what I encounter in experience is actually there and not, for instance, an illusion. As Husserl writes in this context: “Certainty of belief is belief simply, in the precise

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<sup>85</sup> *Ideas I*, p. 207.

<sup>86</sup> *Ideas I*, pp. 206, 276.

<sup>87</sup> *Ideas I*, pp. 209-210.

<sup>88</sup> *Ideas I*, p. 210.

<sup>89</sup> *Ideas I*, p. 207.

<sup>90</sup> *Ideas I*, p. 208.

sense of the term.”<sup>91</sup> Understood in this way, there is an initial positivity upon which something like a denial or a becoming-suspect can be experientially founded. This certainty is not a belief in terms of an affirmation or an explicit judgment, but is instead a passively constituted and initially unquestioned faith that the world is the same way that I take it to be over the course of my natural experiencing.<sup>92</sup> I here implicitly take things to exist in the ways that they are initially experienced. On the basis of an “original belief,” it is then possible for my experience to take on different belief characters.

It is through the notion of “original belief” or “original doxa” that a connection can be made between Husserl and Karen Jones on the notion of trust understood as basal security. Objects and states of affairs that we take to exist in a determinate fashion can be corrected over time through additional experiences, or our initial take can be further confirmed. The same is the case in regard to how we experience other persons. I may take someone to have a certain type of personal character, but can then be surprised by something they say or do. To appeal to one of Husserl’s examples, I can take something to be a person onto to have my expectations disappointed when I learn that it was only a life-like mannequin.<sup>93</sup> We experience relations of trust as well as instances of betrayals of trust in the natural attitude. In a description of personal life, Husserl writes:

The persons who belong to the social association are given to each other as “*companions*,” not as *opposed objects* but as *counter-subjects* who live “with” one another, who converse and are related to one another, actually or potentially, in acts of

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<sup>91</sup> *Ideas I*, p. 208. *Hua III/1*, p. 241: “*Glaubensgewissheit ist Glaubeschlechthin, in prägnantem Sinne*”

<sup>92</sup> *Ideas I*, p. 208.

<sup>93</sup> *TS*, p. 39; *Crisis*, p. 162.

love and counter-love, of hate and counter-hate, of trust and counter-trust [*des Vertrauens und Gegenvertrauens*], etc.<sup>94</sup>

We here remain wrapped up within the world in the natural attitude without have to necessarily take up a thematic awareness of our world as such.

In Jones's language, there is no necessity of fundamental alterations to our basal security, even in minor instances of non-reciprocated trust or disappointments of expectations regarding objects and states of affairs. As such, it is uncontroversial to think of trust here on the model of a three-place relation when things are going smoothly, so long as we acknowledge that such a relation is itself founded on an unmodalized or unshaken "original belief."<sup>95</sup> We here have experiences of community membership that do not require us to take up any reflective or critical stance towards the groups to which we belong or the wider background upon which our social interactions occur. Our world as a whole is not itself made thematic while we live with the "original belief" of the natural attitude. As Husserl writes:

How is the essentially original attitude, the fundamental historical mode of human existence, to be characterized? We answer: men obviously always live, for generative reasons, in communities, in family, tribe, nation, which are themselves in turn divided, in varying degrees of complexity, into particular social groups. Now natural life can be characterized as a life naïvely, straightforwardly directed at the world, the world being always in a certain sense consciously present as a universal horizon, without, however, being thematic as such. What is thematic is whatever one is directed toward.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> *Ideas II*, p. 204 (translation modified).

<sup>95</sup> I suggest that the types of communities that fit the bill for these notions of straightforwardness and certainty are those characterized in earlier chapters as concatenated "anonymous communities."

<sup>96</sup> *VL*, p. 281.

So long as there are not internally or externally motivated events that call my fundamental belief regarding the status of the world into question, I can live in a kind of naïve realism.

The definition that Jones provides of trust understood as basal security is of an “underlying, affectively-laden state” that influences our willingness to interact with other persons and with our environments at large.<sup>97</sup> On the basis of a generalized sense of security in the face of others and my environment, I can then enter into different instantiations of trust understood in three-place terms. There are good reasons, then, for connecting an initially strong basal security with Husserl’s notion of “original belief,” since our straightforward living in the natural attitude is itself marked by evaluative, affective, and practical components. In the absence of a severe interruption, Jones’s notion of basal security understood as a kind of “metatrust” is akin to Husserl’s notion of the taken-for-granted status of our “original belief” in the world of the natural attitude. The advantage that a Husserlian approach has in this context is in providing detailed phenomenological descriptions of life in the natural attitude.<sup>98</sup> This is an advantage insofar as Gilbert’s theory of political obligations requires a detailed account of the consciousness of unity had by members of impersonal and anonymous communities.

#### 4.2 Crisis and Critical Renewal

Within Husserl’s writings, there are different ways in which the socio-cultural world can be made thematic to consciousness. One way is through the explicit labor of phenomenology, but another way is through experiences of socio-cultural crisis. Both of these involve a change of

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<sup>97</sup> Jones (2004), p. 8.

<sup>98</sup> More detailed descriptions of these kinds of community descriptions are given in Chapter III.

attitude away from the natural attitude towards a more reflective attitude.<sup>99</sup> In the latter case, the world can be made thematic when events within one's community do not go as anticipated. We come across different ways in which Husserl discusses "crises."<sup>100</sup> According to Buckley, a helpful definition of Husserl's notion of crisis is as a "forgetfulness."<sup>101</sup> One form of crisis that Husserl discusses is a crisis of the loss of meaning that the sciences have for us as persons in the socio-cultural world.<sup>102</sup> It is this kind of crisis that Buckley refers to as a crisis in the cultural sphere.<sup>103</sup> Crisis understood as a socio-cultural forgetfulness, then, indicative of the conditions at play in our everyday, natural attitude as marked by a taken-for-grantedness.

Reflecting in the aftermath of the First World War, Husserl writes that the war demonstrated the "internal untruthfulness and senselessness of this [European] culture."<sup>104</sup> The cultural shock that the war represented was not just limited to the devastations of military force, but also made itself felt through the aftershocks "of psychological torture, of moral depravity, and economic need."<sup>105</sup> There is a crisis here to the extent that it had been taken for granted that

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<sup>99</sup> Cf. *Crisis*, pp. 105, 143-147.

<sup>100</sup> On James Dodd's reading, the key to understanding Husserl's strategy to eliminate the "crisis" is the activity of reflection (*Besinnung*). This kind of reflection amounts, according to Dodd, to a critical and liberating activity. We need such a reflection insofar as not all of the components of our understanding are explicit or articulated. Dodd (2004), pp. 4-5. For example, the natural sciences have become intertwined with our ordinary way of existing and thinking. Critical reflection and a return to the lifeworld, then, can aid in disentangling how we actually come into contact with the world. This kind of reflection, however, is not the only way in which a crisis can come to light.

<sup>101</sup> Buckley (1992), p. 80.

<sup>102</sup> As Heffernan points out, Husserl invokes the notion of a crisis of the sciences, referring to instances in which the sciences are not meeting an adequate level of scientificity as well as when their scientificity is inadequately attentive to the "existential" matters that matter most to us as persons. Heffernan (forthcoming).

<sup>103</sup> Buckley (1992), pp. 23-32.

<sup>104</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 3 (*Kaizo 1*, p. 326). Cf. FIH, p. 112.

<sup>105</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 3 (*Kaizo 1*, p. 326).

the sciences would improve the lives of human beings, yet the sciences were instead used in the service of war. This crisis arises in part insofar as an unbridled naturalism has taken hold of inappropriate aspects of human life.<sup>106</sup> Husserl insists that these kinds of methodological missteps have drastic practical implications.<sup>107</sup> As he puts it in one of his lectures: “Philosophy has to do with questions which can be a matter of indifference for no one because taking a position in regard to them is decisive for the dignity of genuine humanity.”<sup>108</sup> By approaching all areas of human life by appeal to naturalism, there is a forgetting of our more immediate lifeworld. This includes our being together with other persons in personal communities, where these communities are not properly conceptualized in a naturalistic framework.<sup>109</sup> The language Husserl uses to discuss socio-cultural crises is of a splintering or fracturing of communities into their parts understood as individual persons at the expense of a loss of the sense of the community understood as a whole.<sup>110</sup> There was here an initially taken-for-granted trust or faith that the community was “on the right track,” but this trust was betrayed through the outbreak of the war. Even where a community continues to be nominally acknowledged by its members in the midst of such crises, there is nevertheless a loss of faith or belief in what the community as a

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<sup>106</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 7 (*Kaizo I*, p. 328).

<sup>107</sup> “[F]rom a practical point of view this means a growing danger for our culture. It is important today to engage in a radical criticism of naturalistic philosophy.” PRS, p. 168. “If this faith had already been weakened before the war, now it has completely collapsed. As free men, we stand before this fact; it must determine our practical affairs.” *Kaizo I*, p. 326.

<sup>108</sup> *FIH*, pp. 113-114.

<sup>109</sup> See Chapter I.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. Staiti (2014), p. 177.

whole is capable of accomplishing on the basis of such devastation. Husserl appeals to this loss of faith in the face of community crisis.<sup>111</sup>

While some of the crises Husserl investigates are immediately apparent in their devastating consequences (e.g., the First World War with its physical, psychological, and economic violence), other crises are not as apparent to those living through them. This is seen in one way that Husserl approaches the crisis of the sciences. In these cases, Husserl is at pains to show the existence of potential crises where they are tacit or disguised. Motivating the beginning of the *Crisis*, for instance, it is rhetorically asked: “Is there, in view of their constant successes, really a crisis of the sciences?”<sup>112</sup> The affirmative answer and subsequent explanation demonstrates the way in which a crisis lurks when we take aspects of our world for granted. There is a crisis when there are components of our world that exist as unquestioned prejudices.<sup>113</sup> In line with the notion of crisis arising on the basis of an unquestioned, taken-for-grantedness, Husserl writes of the ways that concepts arise in natural life such that they mask “dark and unclear horizons [...] with intricate and hidden implications.”<sup>114</sup> We can, after all, be “blinded by

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<sup>111</sup> “We, as well as the largest part of the population, have lost this faith which upheld us and our ancestors, and which also spread to nations which, like Japan, have only recently joined the European cultural endeavor.” *Kaizo 1*, p. 326.

<sup>112</sup> *Crisis*, §1.

<sup>113</sup> In *Cartesian Mediations*, Husserl discusses prejudice in the context of Descartes insofar as he thinks that Descartes was unable to completely rid himself of certain assumptions from scholasticism (pp. 24-25). An actual all-embracing science free from prejudice is only attained with the universality of transcendental experience and description (p. 35). In the *Crisis*, the notion of prejudices is brought up in the context of the findings of the natural sciences (pp. 51, 56), truly autonomous (and phenomenological) figures freed from prejudices (p. 72), and historical prejudices in the forms of sedimented traditions and habits such as Kant’s psychological presuppositions (p. 120). In “The Vienna Lecture,” Husserl suggests that the natural sciences’ claim to being foundational over the humanities due to their mathematical exactness represents a “portentous prejudice” (p. 272). On the topic of prejudice, it is interesting to note that Gadamer attempts not to rid himself of all forms of prejudice, but to develop a “positive concept of prejudice” insofar as “it is our prejudices that constitute our being.” Cf. Gadamer (1976), p. 9.

<sup>114</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 5 (*Kaizo 1*, p. 327).



the ‘prosperity’” that the sciences bring about.<sup>115</sup> One of the tasks of philosophical self-reflection according to Husserl is to liberate oneself and one’s community from such prejudices even amidst the flourishing of practical results. This task is “critical” in the sense that it attempts to understand the total unity of history and to understand how we have gotten to where we are. For Husserl, the responsible philosopher “must have the insight that all the things he [or she] takes for granted *are* prejudices, that all prejudices are obscurities arising out of a sedimentation of tradition.”<sup>116</sup> The nature of this tacit crisis is such that Husserl first has to make it apparent, to make it felt by his readers, insofar as things might seem to be functioning efficiently and successfully.

The ability to highlight crises where they remain tacit and otherwise straightforwardly lived-through is part of what makes Husserl’s approach so radical. In the “Vienna Lecture,” Husserl responds to being called a “reactionary” by claiming to be “far more radical and far more revolutionary than those who in their words proclaim themselves so radical today.”<sup>117</sup> As Natalie Depraz points out, a Husserlian sense of revolution can here be read as a return to a previous state insofar as that return “intensifies” the original experience. Depraz writes:

If [Husserl] is revolutionary, it is on account of his endeavoring to observe history and the political phenomena he meets with as deeply and rigorously as possible. Such an attitude requires a complete transformation of the way phenomena are looked at. It is necessary to focus upon their original meaning.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> *Crisis*, p. 6.

<sup>116</sup> *Crisis*, p. 72.

<sup>117</sup> *VL*, p. 290.

<sup>118</sup> Depraz (1995), p. 2.

In the current context, then, a Husserlian approach opens the possibility of transforming phenomena of trust even when things go smoothly. Baier suggest in the conclusion of her article on trust that it might be inadvisable to turn philosophical attention to trust insofar as it is a “fragile plant” that might inadvertently be destroyed. As Baier writes:

Trust is a fragile plant, which may not endure inspection of its roots, even when they were, before the inspection, quite healthy. So, although some forms of trust would survive a suddenly achieved mutual awareness of them, they may not survive the gradual and possibly painful process by which such awareness actually comes about. It may then be the better part of wisdom, even when we have an acceptable test for trust, not to use it except where some distrust already exists, better to take unsuspect trust on trust.<sup>119</sup>

A Husserlian approach does not hold the same kinds of reservations. It may initially seem that trust is a default, positive attitude for individuals and for the well-being of the communities to which they belong. The way in which this default position is taken-for-granted, however, indicates the possibility of a wider crisis of trust insofar as we remain at a distance from understanding the origins and presuppositions of our patterns of trusting within the community.

Husserl is interested in the project of socio-cultural renewal (*Erneuerung*). The kind of renewal that Husserl writes about in both the “Kaizo” articles and the “Vienna Lecture” is one that attempts to bring a faith in community back to those groups who have forgotten or otherwise lost it. Put otherwise, there is an attempt here to reinvigorate community life in the face of socio-cultural crises. Bringing back this kind of faith is not a nostalgic attempt at returning to how things were “in the old days.” Husserl’s attempt, rather, is a critical approach to renewal, such that the taken-for-grantedness of our initial everydayness is called into question for the purpose

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<sup>119</sup> Baier (1986), p. 260.

of providing appropriate foundations for all of social and political life on the basis of an explicitly carried out “responsible critique” that reflects on our prejudices.<sup>120</sup> Such foundations, then, are put forth as preferable to those given through naturalistic approaches insofar as the naturalistic approach led to disaster. For Husserl, it is precisely when all seems to be going smoothly that we run the risk of forgetting or taking things for granted. It is in such situations that we face the prospect of crisis. In the context of his writings on linguistic communities, he draws attention to the “seductions of language” that occur when we simply use language instead of reflecting on and explicating what we actually mean when using language.<sup>121</sup> Even when events seem to be running efficiently, when there is a social lubrication instead of a social friction, it is possible that the presuppositions underlying our social world are facing a crisis insofar as they are not reflected upon and forgotten. Similarly, Husserl draws attention to mere “communities of influence” where we unquestioningly inherit traditions from others, as opposed to the pre-eminent “idea of an ‘ethical’ humanity” composed of “reasonable subjects.”<sup>122</sup>

Unlike “original belief,” the kind of faith that Husserl attempts to renew in the socio-cultural sphere is not arrived at automatically. Restoring faith, then, is a matter not of retuning to an original naivety, but of rigorously reflecting and determining the basis of what community life should be like. As Husserl writes:

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<sup>120</sup> *Crisis*, p. 72.

<sup>121</sup> *OG*, p. 362.

<sup>122</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 204: “Es konstituieren sich in reiner Aktivität der beteiligten Subjekte Vereine und sonstige selbstbewusste und durch sich selbst gesetzte Personalitäten höherer Ordnung; zuhöchst die Idee einer „ethischen“ Menschheit gegenüber einer blossen Wirkungsgemeinschaft. So ist auch das Vernunftideal eines Einzelmenschen der sich selbst als Vernunftsubjekt wollende und wirkende Mensch. Ebenso eine Gemeinschaft sich selbst als Vernunftsubjekte setzender, aber nicht isoliert, sondern in universalem Willen einander als solche Subjekte setzender, erstrebender und vernünftiger Subjekte.”

We are men, free-willing subjects who are actively engaged in our surrounding world, constantly involved in shaping it. Whether we want to or not, whether it is right or wrong, we act in this way. Could we not also act *rationally*? Do not rationality and efficiency stand within our power?<sup>123</sup>

It is clear that efficiency is well within our power, with Husserl pointing out the hidden nature of crises as being cloaked by practical successes. It is another kind of power, however, to act in a collectively rational fashion where rationality refers to thinking and willing with insight into why things are done a certain way. The only way Husserl thinks this faith can be renewed is by reforming human reason and willing, where such a reformation amounts to seeking out and eliminating all forms of prejudice and taken-for-grantedness. On this account, we need to transform our faith into “prudent, rationally insightful ideas” bringing “complete determination and clarity to the essence and possibility of its goal and of the method by which it is to be attained.”<sup>124</sup> In the “Vienna Lecture,” he concludes by suggesting that the correct path to follow in the face of the potential dissolution of European humanity (that is, in the face of socio-cultural crisis) is a renewal in the form of a “heroism of reason” (*Heroismus der Vernunft*) that combats a lack of community faith towards the overcoming of naturalism. What we stand to gain from such heroism is a “new life-inwardness (*Lebens-innerlichkeit*) and spiritualization.”<sup>125</sup> In both cases, we encounter the possibility of a community dissolution, where the community’s bonds are in

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<sup>123</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 4 (*Kaizo 1*, p. 326): “Wir sind Menschen, frei wollende Subjekte, die in ihre Umwelt tätig eingreifen, sie beständig mitgestalten. Ob wir wollen oder nicht, ob schlecht oder recht, wir tun so. Können wir es nicht auch vernünftig tun, steht Vernünftigkeit und Tüchtigkeit nicht in unserer Macht?”

<sup>124</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 5 (*Kaizo 1*, p. 327): “Der uns erfüllende Glaube — bei unserer Kultur dürfe es nicht sein Bewenden haben, sie könne und müsse durch Menschenvernunft und Menschenwillen reformiert werden — kann doch nur dann nicht in bloßer Phantasie, sondern in Wirklichkeit „Berge versetzen“, wenn er sich in nüchterne rationale einsichtige Gedanken umsetzt, wenn er sich in ihnen Wesen und Möglichkeit seines Ziels und der es realisierenden Methode zu vollkommener Bestimmtheit und Klarheit bringt.”

<sup>125</sup> *VL*, p. 299.

need of a boost in the form of a more rationally grounded faith in that community. The overlap between this and a renewal through reason highlights the importance that Husserl places upon reciprocal corrections and affirmations in the case of communalization.<sup>126</sup>

As Buckley points out, Husserl's turn to the "lifeworld" is in part to be understood as an attempt to do away with the overly simplistic or reductive characterizations of the world as put forth, for instance, by the naturalistic physical sciences.<sup>127</sup> On Husserl's account, what began for researchers such as early mathematicians and geometers as well-understood "formulae-meanings," have over time become formulae characterized as mere "symbolic meanings" whose full meanings are not understood by the individuals who use them.<sup>128</sup> Luhmann referred to trust as one of the ways in which the complexity of social relationships is productively reduced, similar to Husserl's account of the shift to the ease of merely symbolic meanings.<sup>129</sup> When we trust other people and our environments, we reduce the kinds of social friction that we would otherwise be wrapped up in, as highlighted by social capital theorists. Just as it is a possibility for scientific formulae and even language to act as a "garb of ideas"<sup>130</sup> that make it possible to signify and function without going back to "the things themselves," so too can trust cover over something that is quite complex and ordinarily taken for granted. Buckley highlights that for Husserl, smooth functioning is not itself an indication of an individual or institution being

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<sup>126</sup> "In this communalization, too, there constantly occurs an alteration of validity through reciprocal correction." *Crisis*, p. 163.

<sup>127</sup> Buckley (1992), p. 93.

<sup>128</sup> *Crisis*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>129</sup> Luhmann (1979).

<sup>130</sup> *Crisis*, p. 51.

rationaly grounded.<sup>131</sup> There are certain cases where we have a certain level of trust towards others in public. This was seen in Jones's notion of high levels of basal security understood as arising through a combination of both nature and nurture. This is no guarantee that we *should* trust in those ways, however, and it is no guarantee that such trust is itself an innocent thing.

Trust is similar to faith as Husserl describes it in the context of community life. This is not to equate the two but it highlights that both of them can involve approaches to the socio-cultural world that are "blind." In cases of both blind trust and blind faith, we proceed unquestioningly. There is no calling into question of our prejudices.<sup>132</sup> There is not an initial reflection on what is undertaken or any kind of drawn out rationalization of our actions; we "just do it" as things are done within our tradition. This kind of naturally arising trust, akin to Jones's notion of basal security, fits the bill for the kind of phenomena that has the potential to smuggle in crises as understood by Husserl. We trust in these ways automatically, but *should* we trust in those ways? Consider Brison and Jones again. In the situations they describe there was an initial trust that was then severely betrayed through an attack. What this elucidates for Jones is the existence of an underlying trust that three-place models presuppose. This in itself is an important realization in the context of philosophically understanding trust in general as well as strengthening Gilbert's quick treatment of trust. The spirit of Husserl's project of renewal as described here goes even further by calling into question the taken-for-granted presuppositions of our everyday attitudes, which for present purposes includes a kind of blind trust. An approach to trust proceeding in Husserlian fashion questions the possibilities of trust facing a crisis within

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<sup>131</sup> Buckley (1992), p. 57.

<sup>132</sup> *Crisis*, p. 72.

our particular socio-cultural horizons. This amounts to asking whether the social and political structures in the surrounding world are themselves rationally founded such that community members are all fully aware of their institutions, of whether we can all provide reasons to endorse how things are done or whether our institutions harbor prejudices.<sup>133</sup>

What reason might members of a community have to *not* trust others in impersonal and anonymous communities? Appealing to the contemporary world, there are culturally embedded forms of racism, sexism, ableism, and so forth. Community members may through their upbringing attain a sense of trust understood as basal security, but insofar as this trust can be betrayed through malicious institutional biases and “-isms,” there are components of our taken-for-granted world that must be scrutinized through a “responsible critique” that aims to root out all prejudices. Furthermore, it is possible that these kinds of prejudices exist as blindspots to those who happen to successfully attain a certain level of basal security. Just as Husserl highlights the ways in which the “mathematization of nature” acts as a “garb of ideas” allowing for misguided attempts to conceptualize the surrounding world of the ancient Greeks in similar terms, so too is it possible that starting with an understanding of trust as basal security as the default, normal position covers over the experiences of those who belong to a community marked by distrust.

Insofar as trust is an attitude directed at the freedom of other persons, it is impossible in principle to reach a guarantee that trust will be fulfilled; betrayal is an essential possibility for all

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<sup>133</sup> Husserl’s reflections on these topics suggest that such rational, reflective insight will eliminate certain evils. Put otherwise, this approach attempts to root out evils that arise on the basis of forgetfulness as opposed to injustices brought about intentionally. More would have to be said to address the latter, regarding mindfully-held, malicious injustices.

forms of trust. Nevertheless, some betrayals of trust can be mitigated through the work of seeking to eliminate implicit, malicious biases that come to exist in our cultural communities. A critical approach to socio-cultural renewal as pursued from a Husserlian standpoint is not an approach that optimistically seeks a silver lining amidst the rubble of socio-cultural crises.<sup>134</sup>

Husserl's position is not embodied in the phrase: "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade."

Nor is it embodied in the phrase: "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me."

The radicality of Husserl's approach to tacit crises, rather, is closer to asking questions like:

"What are the historical events and presuppositions that have led to this experience we have of

lemons here and now?" Or: "What are the historical conditions of possibility that allow for

anyone to be fooled in these ways in the first place?" Transposed to trust, this amounts to

reflecting on the communities we live in with an eye to how actually existing patterns of trust

and betrayal have become what they are in the present. On Husserl's account, the dangerous

consequences of prejudices arise so long as they are unreflected upon in critical fashion, and this

is because of the kinds of unclear horizons that characterize the natural attitude:

However, such clarity is by no means easy to attain. The skeptical pessimism and the shamelessness of the political sophistry which so ominously dominates our age, and which only uses socioethical argumentation as a disguise for the egotistical goals of an utterly degenerate nationalism, would not be possible at all if the community's concepts, which have arisen naturally, were not, despite their naturalness, afflicted with dark and unclear horizons and with intricate and hidden implications whose clarification lies completely beyond the powers of untrained thinking.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Brison (1993) makes a similar point in response to those who suggested to her that there could be some positive upshot to having undergone experiences of sexual violence.

<sup>135</sup> *Hua XXVII*, p. 5 (*Kaizo I*, p. 327): "Solche Klarheit ist aber keineswegs leicht zu gewinnen. Jener skeptische Pessimismus und die Schamlosigkeit der unsere Zeit so verhängnisvoll beherrschenden politischen Sophistik, die sich der soziaethischen Argumentation nur als Deckmantel für die egoistischen Zwecke eines völlig entarteten Nationalismus bedient, wäre gar nicht möglich, wenn die natürlich gewachsenen Gemeinschaftsbegriffe trotz ihrer



If betrayals of trust are prevalent such as in climates that allow for the emergence of patterns of sexual, racist, or other forms of violence, the question becomes how we can move in the direction of a more rational foundation for social interactions and institutions instead of the kinds of unclarity and forgetfulness that pose such threats. The features of trust and betrayal can be made salient either through dramatic interruptions or through more tacit means. In both cases, however, approaching crises of trust in a Husserlian fashion provides one way in which communities can be made aware of themselves as wholes that exist in the form of a tradition. This is a positive achievement for Husserl in both instances insofar as such communities with reflective members belongs to the kinds of communities that he takes to be most “pre-eminent”<sup>136</sup> and the most genuinely ethical.<sup>137</sup>

#### §5. Conclusion: Returning to Gilbert

In §2, I identified a difficulty in Gilbert’s work regarding inadequate attention being paid to the notions of trust and betrayal. This was shown to be a difficulty for her account of political obligations in general insofar as the trust she describes remains unclarified in the context of impersonal and anonymous communities. A promising candidate for the kind of trust missing in Gilbert’s work was proposed from the work of Karen Jones in the notion of trust understood as basal security. Jones’s conception was enriched by turning to Husserl’s phenomenology, looking especially at Husserl’s concept of “crisis” as a notion running counter to trust. Appealing to

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Natürlichkeit nicht mit dunklen Horizonten behaftet wären, mit verwickelten und verdeckten Mittelbarkeiten, deren klärende Auseinanderlegung die Kräfte des ungeschulten Denkens völlig übersteigt.”

<sup>136</sup> *CM*, p. 132. On this topic, compare with the arguments given in Chapters I and II.

<sup>137</sup> *Hua XIV*, p. 204.

Husserl's notion of socio-cultural renewal, it was suggested that the apparent positivity of trust in its original, pre-betrayal sense is itself something capable of being critically reflected upon. In closing, I show what Gilbert stands to gain from this enriched conception of the experiences of trust and betrayal.

By embracing conceptions of trust beyond the three-place model, Gilbert would consistently put forth a plural subject account of impersonal and anonymous communities while also accounting for a "mediated" "consciousness of the group's unity in the experiences of members. Trust and betrayal, therefore, are to be found not just in our encounters with other individual persons, but also in mediated form in our experiences within the socio-cultural surrounding world. For that reason, Gilbert would do well to widen her criteria for being conscious of the unity of a social group to include instances in which members are only indirectly aware of others through experiences of their surrounding worlds. More specifically in the context of trust and betrayal, this would amount to providing an account of the ways in which different levels of trust (understood as levels of basal security) amount to different levels of salience regarding experiences both of other persons and of our surrounding world at large.

The formulation of Jones's theory was motivated by a reflection on the world-constituting effects in the experiences of survivors of terrorist attacks or sexual violence. Gilbert is of course aware of the possibility of betrayals of trust, and her notion of joint commitments is such that fellow members of a jointly-committed plural subject are to be rebuked for violating the kinds of standing that all members of the group have in relation to one another. Gilbert examines, for example, what happens in the case of a marriage where one partner cheats on the

other.<sup>138</sup> In this case, there was originally a joint commitment that constituted the marriage as a plural subject. This is implicitly put forth in the form of a three-place relation: partner A trusts partner B with valued thing C. The cheating of a spouse, however, betrays the joint commitment, leading to the possibility of its dissolution. As Jones makes clear, there is a qualitative shift that comes along with certain forms of severe betrayals of trust. Beyond just the dissolution of a particular joint commitment, some severe betrayals alter the experiential salience of objects and states of affairs, as well as our socio-cultural worlds at large. This qualitative shift brought the notion of basal security to the fore as an important facet of trust beyond three-place relations.

Gilbert's discussion of betrayal focuses on cases of trust being betrayed by individuals in the contexts of specific joint commitments. If we take the features of impersonality and anonymity seriously, then it is possible for us to be betrayed by unknown others, or even of others that we never know exist. If we are betrayed either by strangers or by individuals we never even encounter, it remains possible for this betrayal to find its place in experiences of objects and states of affairs in the wider horizons of the socio-cultural surrounding world. In the language of Gilbert's framework, this occurs in the context of background, population common knowledge. It is already helpful to supplement Gilbert's notion of "standing" by appeal to social capital notions of "thin trust," or the notions of "networks" and "climates" of trust as seen in Baier and Becker. Given the specific difficulty I have identified in Gilbert's work, though, it is Jones's conception of trust as "basal security" that best remedies the gap left open in an account of impersonal and anonymous communities. The notion of trust as basal security is productively enriched through contact with Husserlian phenomenology. We thereby arrive at the possibility

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<sup>138</sup> Gilbert (2006), p. 112.

for a critical renewal of components of a population's common knowledge. Given the extent to which such common knowledge or a shared surrounding world factors into the discussion of trust and betrayal, it is clear that appealing to joint commitments alone will not entirely guarantee the goal of the peaceful progress of community members' lives. With these supplementations, Gilbert's plural subject theory of political obligations is strengthened, all while nevertheless sticking to the fundamental tenets of her social-ontological approach.

## CONCLUSION

In my introduction, I wrote that this dissertation would serve as an answer to two questions. The first question was: What exactly does Husserl mean when he writes about community? The second question was: What relevance does Husserl's concept of community have to problems in social and political philosophy? With the five chapters put forth here, I hope to have provided sufficient answers to both questions. Each of the previous chapters has its own argument, but they are unified in support of my main claim. Husserl's concept of personal community is grounded in his theory of parts and wholes.

When Husserl writes about communities, from the perspectives of both ontology and phenomenology, he appeals to his theory of parts and wholes. Individual persons are thereby considered as parts of the community wholes to which they belong. On Husserl's account, there are different ways in which parts factor into wholes, and this is reflected in the different kinds of community groupings that Husserl describes. There are several advantages that accrue to Husserl's concept of community on the basis of his appeal to mereology. As argued in Chapter I, his ontology of community provides an attractive alternative to traditional accounts of community, namely, ontological individualism and ontological holism. Chapter II argued that Husserl's use of "mereological proximity" in the context of his descriptions of community allow him to have not just a single ontological account of all social groups, but provides him with criteria for distinguishing between "anonymous" and "intimate" types of communities. In

Chapter III, an account was given of the way that Husserl describes the complex intentional experiences that persons have in belonging to communities.

The turn to the social and political sphere was accomplished by appeal to the philosophy of Margaret Gilbert, specifically her plural subject theory of political obligations. Chapter IV demonstrated a difficulty with Gilbert's account and offered a Husserlian supplement to that difficulty. More specifically, it was shown that Husserl's mereological concept of community was able to account for the kinds of experiences had by members of communities with the features of impersonality and anonymity. In Chapter V, this line of argumentation was pushed in an even more specific direction by showing the extent to which Husserl's concept of community comes to bear on the topic of trust within political communities. In closing, an argument was given for the contribution that Husserl's approach to socio-cultural renewal in the face of taken-for-granted traditions makes to the topic of trust and betrayal. Chapters IV and V taken together strengthen Gilbert's theory of political obligations while also demonstrating the fruitfulness of Husserlian phenomenology to the social and the political domain.

When all goes peacefully, it is easy to miss out on the complexity of community life. The extent to which our experiences are intertwined with others is not always immediately apparent. When things stop going smoothly or when violence prevents peacefulness from arising in the first place, it becomes all too clear that communities and experiences therein are fragile. By elucidating the ontological structure of community and the structures of our experiences of community life, Husserl provides us with some opportunities. One opportunity we are given is to appreciate this complexity, to marvel at the achievement of community in our interpersonal relationships and in our relations to the socio-cultural surrounding world at large. A more

pressing opportunity is given to us, however, insofar as this elucidation shows some of the ways in which we can “get our hands dirty.” Husserl writes that all communities are “many-headed,” but that need not entail those communities are inevitably “headless.” Bringing about communities that represent a “higher form of life” requires community members to rigorously and responsibly strive to bring about unity on the basis of multiplicity. This means responding to the historical traditions that have been handed down to us in order to root out taken-for-granted prejudices that threaten our communities from the inside.

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