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THE MAKING OF THE THEORY OF SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the theory of social representations as a model of social scientific theory. In doing so, it attempts to reconstruct the foundations of the theory of social representations by focusing on intellectual resources that were available to Serge Moscovici during the time he was developing the theory. These resources shaped his epistemology, and firmly distinguished the theory of social representations from other social psychological approaches. The focus on these intellectual resources draws attention to two issues. First, in contrast to what Moscovici often called 'one or two sentence theories' in social psychology based on the manipulation of variables, the theory of social representations is built on a rich set of presuppositions. Second, an explicit recognition of presuppositions of social representations in their application in professional practices like education, politics and health, among others, enables a unique contribution to social sciences and humanities.

THEORY OF SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS • SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH • EPISTEMOLOGY

IN THIS TRIBUTE TO SERGE MOSCOVICI I SHALL PRESENT THE THEORY OF SOCIAL representations as a model of social scientific theory that shows the originality and creativity of his thought. In doing so, I shall attempt to reconstruct the foundations of the theory of social representations by focusing on intellectual resources that were available to Moscovici during the time he was developing the theory. These resources shaped his epistemology, and firmly distinguished the theory of social representations from other social psychological approaches. The focus on these intellectual resources will draw attention to two issues. First, in contrast to what Moscovici often called "one or two sentence theories" in social psychology based on the manipulation of variables, the theory of social representations is built on a rich set of presuppositions. Unless one understands the nature of intellectual resources that underlie these presuppositions, one cannot answer questions about similarities and differences between our theory and those of other theories, e.g. "social cognition" or "discourse analysis", and so on. Due to the fact that the theory of social representations deals with interdisciplinary issues of high complexity, its "translation" into other approaches is unfortunately often trivialized. Second, an explicit recognition of presuppositions of social representations in their application in professional practices like education, politics and health, among others, enables a unique contribution to social sciences and humanities (MARKOVÁ, 2016).

THE STRATEGIC POSITION OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Serge Moscovici arrived to Paris in January 1948 from Romania, where he had experienced racism, discrimination and the rise of communist totalitarianism. He thought that social psychology was a discipline that had the potential of finding solutions to these issues, as well to the post-War political, economic and industrial problems. He (MOSCOVICI, 1961) expressed these views in the Preface to the 1st edition of his book *La psychanalyse: son image et son public* in 1961 where he argued that social psychology occupies a unique and strategic position between social sciences, and specifically, between sociology and social anthropology. He referred in this context to visions expressed by two very different social scientists: the French sociologist Emil Durkheim and the Russian Marxist and a political philosopher Georgi Plekhanov. Despite their tremendous political and philosophical differences, these two scholars had a common concern: the study of social knowledge. While Durkheim examined social knowledge in the realm of sociology, Plekhanov drew attention to possible contributions of social psychology in the field of political knowledge. From their different positions they both thought that the strategic position of social psychology was given by its potential to act in response to contemporary political, historical and social phenomena. Thus from the very beginning, Moscovici articulated social psychology as a discipline in movement, which has its specificity. It is doubly orientated with respect to several kinds of dyadic micro-social and macro-social relations in tension (FAUCHEUX; MOSCOVICI, 1962), for example, individuals and groups, personality and culture, psychology and sociology, and so on. As a hybrid discipline in a continuous movement, social psychology has to cope with tensions produced by these dyadic relations. Indeed, it is the study of these tensions that constitutes the challenge to and specificity of social psychology. Moscovici pursued their study throughout his career in building social psychology as an international social science through the Unesco, in developing the theory of social representations, of minority innovations and in his participation in the ecological movement (MOSCOVICI; MARKOVÁ, 2006).

INTELLECTUAL RESOURCES OF THE THEORY OF SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS AND COMMUNICATION

COMMON SENSE AND SCIENCE

The study of psychoanalysis, which Moscovici chose to study social representations, brought to light the tension between scientific and professional thought on the one hand, and the daily thinking of ordinary people on the other. Psychoanalysis was particularly suitable to explore this tension because it was highly controversial and widely

talked about. It had considerable affinities with common sense thinking and therefore, lay people had their own views about it. They saw similarities between psychoanalysis and various kinds of their daily experiences, for example, between a religious confession and a psychoanalytic interview.

Many French scholars promoted the idea that science and common sense were not only discontinuous phenomena, but that scientific thinking was "superior" while daily thought was "inferior". As Moscovici (MOSCOVICI; HEWSTONE, 1983) pointed out, "several labels have been used to describe the discontinuity between these two kinds of thinking: logic and myth, 'domestic' and 'savage' thought (LÉVI-STRAUSS, 1962/1966), 'logical and pre-logical mentality' (LÉVY-BRUHL, 1922/1923), 'critical' and 'automatic' thought (MOSCOVICI; HEWSTONE, 1983)". All these opposites referred to the presumed superiority of scientific thought and inferiority of daily thinking (MARKOVÁ, 2016). Instead, Moscovici promoted the perspective of a continuous development of thought from common sense to science. Equally important, scientific thought gets diffused into daily thinking. As is well known, the idea of the transformation of scientific thinking into common sense has been vital in the development of the theory.

ELEMENTS VERSUS STRUCTURED WHOLES

In the post-War years, Norbert Wiener (1948) defined a new interdisciplinary field, i.e. cybernetics, or the scientific study of control, information and communication in animals and machines. Cybernetics re-focused interest of sciences on investigations of systems and their structures. It brought to attention the concept of information and communication as essential organizing mechanisms in domains that proceeded beyond the study of the individual into community, like anthropology and sociology. Wiener argued that one could not understand communities without a thorough exploration of the means of communication in social systems. He showed that individuals do not create a group or community in order to achieve homeostasis, but that, in contrast, society is created in and through heterogeneous disturbances, tensions, and various kinds of interactions among members, and their modes of communication.

Cybernetics appealed to Moscovici for several reasons. In contrast to theoretical approaches that focused on behavioural and mental elements, cybernetics orientated thinking towards the holistic idea of Gestalt, towards systems, structures and communication.

COMMUNICATION

Wiener's vision of society and interaction contradicted the established linear formula of communication as "who" says "what" to "whom" and with "what effect". Instead, Wiener was concerned

with patterns and configurations in systems and communication. The concepts of "structuredness" and "formness" in cybernetics fundamentally contrasted with the concepts of "elements" or "stimuli", and with their aggregates that prevailed in behaviouristic approaches in communication at the time. Communication and language are phenomena based on various kinds of tension between speakers and listeners essential to the concept of social representations. Representations are formed, maintained and changed in and through language and communication and equally, the use of words and attributes attached to meanings transforms social representations.

Heterogeneous interactions between groups and their specific contexts produce a variety of styles of thinking and communicating, some based on consensus, others on dissensus and contradiction. Communication does not necessarily lead to a better understanding, harmony and progress. In contrast to the ascent theory of knowledge towards science and "true knowledge" that has been adopted for example, by Durkheim and Piaget, the theory of social representations does not presuppose progress towards higher forms of knowledge or towards the more adequate representations (MARKOVÁ, 2003). Instead, it presupposes transformation of one kind of knowledge into another one; and transformation of various kinds of knowledge is pertinent to specific socio-historical and cultural conditions. Moscovici (1961; 1976) coined these diverse kinds of thinking and communicating as cognitive polyphasia, the simultaneous and dynamic co-existence of different modalities of thinking and knowledge, like traditional and modern or ritualistic and scientific. Cognitive polyphasia is characterized by tension, conflict and constraints rather than by equilibrium and adaptation.

FROM ATTITUDES TO SOCIAL REPRESENTATION

Already in his first article Moscovici (1952) expressed his strong dissatisfaction with the use of scales in order to examine opinions about, and attitudes towards psychoanalysis, as his supervisors advised him. As he explained in his first published papers, the results from scales give yes-no answers; they are concerned only with measurement, but one does not learn about how people think. At that time Moscovici (1953) discovered Guttman's scales. He saw the originality of Guttman's scales because they sampled ideas rather than the respondents' attitudes. Guttman (1954; 1959) attempted to discover the structures of items binding respondents together. Patterns, in which items were closer together, represented meaningful and socially shared Gestalts. They expressed the degree of structuredness of social phenomena. The degree of structuredness was the concept that was already present in Wiener's cybernetics and now Moscovici found it also in Guttman's scales. He understood that Guttman's scale offered an approach enabling the study

networks and interactions among items, evaluation and transformation of knowledge, and moralizing about these issues. Importantly, it was not transformation of neutral information, but of value-loaded knowledge that groups and societies accumulated in and through culture over generations: it was ethical. I found it interesting that Moscovici's first articles on questioning and rejecting attitudes and opinions as unsuitable concepts for his own study also revealed his personal dilemma. He was developing new thoughts against the established knowledge and the existing research practices. These first articles indicated his struggle with his own ideas, and his awareness that he confronted the establishment. He did not intend to validate psychoanalysis as good or bad. Instead, he tried to capture social representations, which are dynamic and heterogeneous social phenomena. This can be achieved only by intensive investigations enabling exchange and development of ideas and their circulation in groups. He carefully introduced in his first papers the concept of the Guttman scale opposing the established views in France at that time. He came to Paris as a political refugee in 1948 and when he published his first articles in 1952 and 1953, he still did not have the French citizenship. Not surprisingly, he found it difficult to present his unauthorized views.

Claude Faucheux and Moscovici had introduced the Guttman's approach to the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, who saw its value for structuralism. He thought that the design of Guttman's questionnaire was a revolutionary discovery, because one could mathematically show patterns or structures in social phenomena. Lévi-Strauss however never accepted the theory of social representations which was based on common sense rather than on "science". Serge Moscovici remarked that Lévi-Strauss tried to scientify everything. For example he tried to use the laws of thermodynamics to study kinship, family, religion and cultures. Using the thermodynamic notion of entropy, which refers to the measure of disorder in systems, Lévi-Strauss stated that anthropology should be renamed as entropology, that is, as a thermodynamic study of human processes (LÉVI-STRAUSS, 1961, p. 397).

The brief intellectual history shows that the question "what is the difference between attitudes and social representations?" cannot be answered by listing their similar and diverse characteristics. From the very beginning Moscovici was interested in the study of dynamic nature of social phenomena and this kind of inquiry is underlain by an epistemology that is incompatible with the study of attitudes in social psychology.

THE PROLETARIAN AND BOURGEOIS SCIENCE

When Moscovici was developing social representations of psychoanalysis, two terms, the "bourgeois" and the "proletarian"

sciences were applied by the French Communist Party to various sciences like physics, mathematics or chemistry and also to psychoanalysis (LECOURT, 1977). This was a follow up of the Soviet Marxists. Psychoanalysis was a conceived as a "bourgeois" science. It would be difficult to explain, today, what the distinction between "proletarian" and "bourgeois" science meant; it was considered by its proponents to be part of a "class struggle". It was a Party matter and it was believed that only enlightened proletariat could objectively evaluate science. But while the "proletarian science" aimed at re-organizing working relations, rationalization, centralization and planning the direction of labour, it was believed that the proletariat needed guidance. According to the Marxist-Leninist view, ordinary people are spontaneous and they cannot think rationally and scientifically.

Moscovici's aim was to rehabilitate common sense and other forms of practical daily thinking. He strongly argued against the view that "people do not think" (MOSCOVICI; MARKOVÁ, 2000). As Moscovici notes in *Psychoanalysis,* this was such a controversial issue that some scientists left the Communist Party, while others wrote personal critiques and confessions rejecting their previous adherence to psychoanalysis. The question of the "proletarian science" was never resolved, yet the opposition to the idea that people cannot think was a strong intellectual resource in Moscovici's development of his theory.

THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND COMMON SENSE

Among important intellectual resources of the theory of social representations were Moscovici's studies of the history and philosophy of science of the 16th and 17th centuries. These were informed, above all, by the work of the philosopher of science Alexandre Koyré, the Russian émigré who lived in Paris. Koyré (1948) argued that just like in ancient Greece so in the 17th century, technological and scientific thinking were independent modes of thought. Technological thinking was common sense thinking. While in ancient Greece these two kinds of thought remained independent, in the 17th century, science and technology absorbed each other's elements. Science adopted common sense elements, developed them and adapted them to new knowledge and practical needs. Thus common sense and scientific knowing started enriching one another and this idea of stimulating for Moscovici.

Subsequently, Koyré's ideas prompted Moscovici (1966) to suggest that innovation and scientific revolutions do not arise from deficits and anomalies as Thomas Kuhn (1962) proposed, but from a "surplus". Kuhn characterised a change of paradigms in terms of severe and prolonged anomalies which he viewed as necessary preconditions for crises, and subsequently, for the emergence of new theories. In his critique of Kuhn, Moscovici argued that the idea of anomalies or deficits

was too simplistic. Scientific changes do not take place on their own, but they are part of changes in the world, including economy, philosophy, communications, arts and technology, which all mutually interact. Transformation of ideas from technology and arts into science and vice versa was fruit of the freedom of thought, curiosity, imagination, and taking risks during the scientific revolution. The revolution changed the structure of thought and practices in all these disciplines: it changed their epistemologies.

Thus Moscovici (1966) suggests that it is not that there are too many unresolved problems in science as Kuhn thinks, but because there are too many "new truths" which form a "surplus". Carriers of these new truths are individuals or groups, or minorities that work at the margins of technology and science, and whose "surplus" eventually turns them into a cohesive scientific theory and technology.

PHENOMENOLOGY

After the War, phenomenology became one of the flourishing philosophical tendencies in France. Paul Ricoeur maintained that Husserl was read, translated and commented on in France more than anywhere else. Phenomenology appealed to Moscovici for several reasons. It is holistic and does not fragment the world into elements. Human consciousness is intentional and is directed towards objects and other humans. It is concerned with contents of experience, which include imagination, judgements, emotions, self- and other-awareness and interactions.

When Moscovici was developing the theory of social representations, one of the main representatives of phenomenology in France was Maurice Merleau-Ponty. There were at least three main sources of ideas in Merleau-Ponty's work that that were important for the theory of social representations.

First, following Husserl's concept of "Lebenswelt", Merleau-Ponty (1964) emphasized life-experience as a dynamic and open system. He fundamentally disapproved of the Piaget conception of the child intellectual development from illogicality towards logicality. In contrast to Piaget, Merleau-Ponty emphasised the child's representation of the body as a "lived experience", and as a relation between activities like speaking, thinking, listening, knowing, imagining, among others. He did not view child's representations as inadequate or irrational, which gradually, through the passage of cognitive stages, finally reach a mature and logical adult thinking. Instead, he thought that the child's representation at a given time is adequately adapted to his/her lived experience.

The second source of ideas for social representations was the phenomenology of language and this, in fact, is an expansion of the first point concerning the body. For Merleau-Ponty (1960/1964), the living

body embraces the totality of the individual's sense-making and self-creating of the world, whether by gazing at an object, painting a picture or, perhaps most importantly, by speaking. The analysis of speech and expression shows the importance of living body more effectively than any other kinds of activity. The phenomenological perspective focuses on the speaking subject in the living community and is orientated towards the future.

Third, Moscovici claimed that it was Merleau-Ponty's (1945/1962) *Phenomenology of perception* that helped him to crystallize the concept of representation. Here we also find a fundamental difference between phenomenology and the theory of social representations. In contrast to Merleau-Ponty who emphasized the primacy of perception, Moscovici emphasized the primacy of social representation. As he stated: "this is what fixed this notion in my mind, how it was associated with certain ideas on the relationship between communication and knowledge, and the transformation of the content of knowledge" (MOSCOVICI; MARKOVÁ, 2000, p. 233).

MAKING ETHICAL CHOICES

From his early years shaped by the Second World War, Nazism and Stalinism, Moscovici placed the study of ethical choices, values and social norms into the center of his attention with regard to the meaning of humanity. As he reveals in his autobiography *Chronique des années égares,*(MOSCOVICI, 1997) in his early youth he found inspiration in Nietzsche's philosophical thoughts, in Pascal's (1670/1995) *Pensées* and in Spinoza's (1677/1967) *Ethics.* Here he scrutinized passions that, throughout the long past of mankind, tore apart communities as well as brought them together. Within broad historical and cultural contexts he pondered about ethical values guiding beliefs in justice, the search for progress, and the desire of humans for immortality. In his autobiographical portrayal, there are several sources of ideas concerning ethics, both personal and scientific, but all of them converging together.

On the personal side, experience of anti-semitism, persecution and humiliation during and after the War became the formative foundation of ideas expressed already in his first publication in the journal that Serge Moscovici co-edited with his friends in Bucharest. Later on, during his social scientific research in France, inspirations from Blaise Pascal, that he described in his autobiography, in particular those relating to science and religion, and ethics and morality, came to the fore. When Moscovici became acquainted with Durkheim's writings, he focused on the fact that ethics was omnipresent is all social phenomena, and that it was conceptualized in different manners, whether in sacred, or in profane spheres. In contrast to Durkheim, Moscovici viewed ethics as interaction, as dynamic, and as being permeated with ideas about

the driving forces of human invention and innovation. He brought into foreground intellectual polemics concerning values and ethical standards of different modes of thinking, like scientific, religious and public. Making ethical choices is a fundamental feature of the epistemology of common sense and the theory of social representations (MARKOVÁ, 2016). It is the capacity that makes our species human beings. Making evaluation and judgements of events and others is indispensable in all interactions in daily living.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE SOCIAL

I mentioned at the beginning that Moscovici articulated social psychology as a discipline in movement that is doubly orientated with respect to several kinds of dyadic micro-social and macro-social relations in tension. Among these doubly orientated relations in tension, the relation between the "individual" and "social" was of particular significance. It is these notions that are most relevant to Moscovici's life-long question: What is social psychology? And even more precisely: what is "social" in social psychology? He thought that in contrast to other social sciences, social psychology has avoided the quest concerning what it means by "social". In political economy and history, Karl Marx made understandable what was "social" in his theories. "Social" referred to social classes and Marx well defined their historical role, although he did not pay much attention to what was "individual". Antonio Gramsci, following Marx, emphasized social psychological, cognitive and linguistic features of popular beliefs. Sociologists like Max Weber or Talcott Parsons also made it clear what was "social" in their theories. Max Weber's theory of social stratification is based on social class, social status and political Party. Talcott Parsons developed a cultural theory of society based on the structure of action. Sigmund Freud, on his part, made it evident what he meant by the "individual" when he postulated the "id", "ego" and "superego". He also clarified what was "social" in therapeutic practices and in his theory of culture. But, Moscovici puzzled, what was "social" in social psychology? There was no theory about that. Equally, he thought that there was no concept of the "individual" in social psychology.

Moscovici (1972/2000) elaborated on both issues already in the early 1970s when he referred to "taxonomic social psychology". In taxonomic social psychology, the relations between the "individual" and "social", amount to aggregates rather than to interactions. The studies in taxonomic social psychology categorize individuals, e.g. males and females, young and old people, Catholics and Protestants, and measure degrees of their capacities or features, e.g. prejudice, trust, attitudes, opinions, and so on. Who are individuals in such studies? Individuals are undifferentiated and undefined entities without history,

without culture, and without face. They are not conceived as persons but as taxonomies, and the purpose of research is to study correlations between taxonomies and variables attributed to them. "Social" here means that these variables are to be found in different degrees in any individual who belongs to this or that taxonomy or category. This way of thinking justifies the use of inductive techniques in the study attitudes, intelligence, motives, and other capacities. This approach ignores that humans live in societies and are differentiated from one another in many ways; it ignores that humans develop and change, experience their cultures and that they communicate. The theory of knowledge, on which such studies are based, does not tell us what it means to be "individual" or "social"; "the individual" is an entity characterized by the number one; "the social" are entities (e.g. group, society) characterized by a number higher than one; those who are supposedly members of a group belong to the "in-group". Those, who do not belong to it, are members of the "out-group". However, Moscovici argued, society is not made of individuals. The fact that 2-3 individuals think together does not make a society.

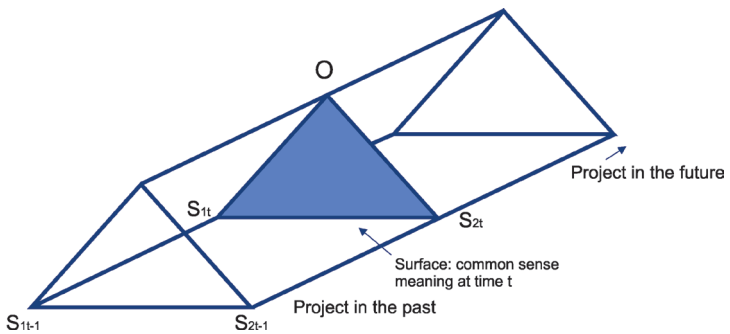
In his life-long search to answer what is "social" and "individual", Serge Moscovici (1970; 1972/2000) postulated that one cannot conceptualize the social and individual as two separate entities. Instead, the Self and Other(s) (or the Ego-Alter) are mutually interdependent in and through interaction. The Ego-Alter jointly generate their social reality – objects of knowledge, beliefs or images. Here we already have the basis of the triangular interaction the Ego-Alter-Object in the theory of social representations and it the theory of innovation of minorities. The concept of the interdependence between the Ego-Alter-Object sharply separates the theory of social representations from theories based on social perception like that of Fritz Heider. Heider (1958) claimed that humans perceive objects differently than people and therefore, they differently explain events involving people and objects. Heider's hypothesis attributes judgement, reasoning and explanation to perception. It focuses on the nature of the perceived entity, i.e. either on a person or an object, rather than on the relation (or interaction) between the perceiver and person or an object. Heider focuses on duality of the Self and the Other: they are conceived as separate from one another. Instead, we must focus on interaction between the Ego and the Alter, and on their relations. The way in which the Ego selects the aspects of the situation is partly determined by his/her social experience, by intentions and expectations and by comprehension of that situation. When we apply this theoretical perspective to the theory of social representations, here relations come first; they combine and use individuals' intellectual capacities in multiple manners. Individuals can express their ideas in different ways using specific words, gestures and symbols.

INTERACTIONAL EPISTEMOLOGY IN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

The discussion of intellectual resources underlying Moscovici's interactional epistemology of the Ego-Alter-Object leads us to practical applications and methodological implications of this perspective. The triangular relation the Ego-Alter-Object is dynamic and infinitely open. Depending on researchers' and professionals' interests, and problems they intend to explore, it allows for integrating further interactional concepts. Consider some examples.

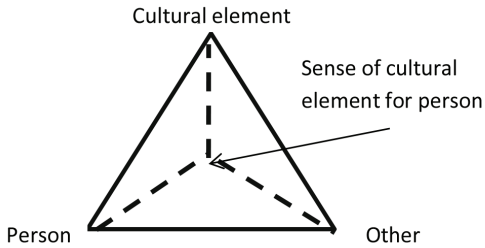
INTEGRATING INTERACTIONAL CONCEPTS

Bauer and Gaskell (1999) expand the Ego-Alter-Object triangle by focusing on the time dimension in the construction of common sense meanings. The authors represent the triangle as an elongated construct which captures the past, present and future of common sense meanings. The elongated triangle has become known as the Toblerone model like the well-known Swiss chocolate.



The authors further point out that the Toblerone model has a particular importance for the study of social groups. Groups grow and subdivide; in such subdivided groups there is a variety of coexisting triangular dynamic structures competing, cooperating or being in conflict with one another. Consequently, different kinds of common sense dominate in different subgroups at the same time, and may follow different paths over time.

In her exploration of learning as a social process in education, Zittoun (2014) develops the Self- Other-Object of knowledge. Focusing on semiotic mediation, Zittoun maintains that in addition to interacting with the teacher about the Object of knowledge, the pupil is also engaged in an inner dialogue with him-/herself, i.e. about the Object of knowledge. It is necessary to distinguish between what the pupil already knows about the Object of knowledge and between the Object of knowledge to which he/she is exposed. Therefore, the pupil's inner dialogue with the Object of knowledge proceeds along two lines.



One line of the inner dialogue arises from the pupil's previous knowledge and experience, i.e. from the "personal culture", drawing on memory, past experiences and associations. The other line of the inner dialogue arises from formal modes of learning to which the pupil is exposed, i.e. from what is socially and culturally acknowledged as knowledge. As Zittoun (2014) maintains, the process of knowing involves internalization, reorganization of previous knowledge and the construction of new knowledge. The pupil establishes relations with the Object of knowledge in and through choosing cultural and intellectual elements with which he/she is confronted. This is why Zittoun's semiotic mediation necessitates expanding the original didactic Pupil -Other-Object triangle into a prism, in which the Object is captivated by the 'personal culture' and by the socially and culturally acknowledged lines of thought.

In the field of congenital deafblindness, building on the triangularity of the Ego-Alter-Object, Ann Nafstad (2015) explored the concept of patients' resilience showing that its quality was dependent on trust that the patient developed in the patient-carer relation.

Examples of the Toblerone model, the semiotic prism in teacher-pupil relation or the patient's resilience in patient-carer interaction show that in all cases the authors start with the triangular interaction of the Ego-Alter-Object, but in order to solve concrete problems, they incorporate further dialogically based concepts. Alex Gillespie once aptly stated in personal communication: the epistemological triangle can be viewed like a miniature Christmas tree, on which, depending on the object of study, one can dangle other dialogical concepts.

SINGLE CASE STUDIES

There is a fundamental empirical significance of the interdependence of the Ego-Alter: interdependence means that interaction and communication is unique for each dyadic relation. The Ego defines the Alter and they transform one another. In concrete terms, in Moscovici's study of social representations of psychoanalysis, the political power of the Communist Party and of the Catholic Church, and the citizens' thinking and communications about psychoanalysis formed patterns of interdependence. All components exerted a mutual influence on one another, and they jointly generated new patterns of knowledge, beliefs and images.

If we adopt the perspective that the Ego-Alter forms the unique relation, this implies that Moscovici's study of psychoanalysis in the late 1950s as a social representation was a single case study. Equally, Jodelet's (1989/1991) study of social representations of madness was a single historical event. The fundamental theoretical contribution of these studies was the treatment of participants and of their socio-cultural contexts as interdependent. Both the participants and their socio-cultural contexts contributed equally significant data to these studies. This does not mean that studies based on single cases discard the use of questionnaires, experiments and other classic methods used in human and social sciences. Single case studies are often wrongly confounded with qualitative methods. What is vital to single case studies is the concept that the Selves and their socio-cultural context are interdependent, both contributing empirical data.

Angela Arruda (2003) insists that the challenge for researchers studying social representations is to develop methods suitable for cultural research. In a similar way, Valsiner (2014) argues that cultural psychologists should conceive 'the centrality of culture within the human *psyche*' as a clear axiomatic stand. Considering the Alter, whether culture or institutions, as vital in the study of social representations, clearly separates social representations from attitudes or opinions.

If we focus on the professional perspective, the study of unique single cases is not only effective but also most meaningful. Yet, this unavoidably leads to the notorious question: can one make any generalizations from findings based on single cases? Sciences and professions aim at providing credible knowledge that would be applicable to diverse cases and conditions and therefore, this issue, throughout the history of science and professional disciplines, has been considered to be of vital importance.

Single case studies cannot be submitted to statistical generalization leading to "universal truth" and "universally valid knowledge" based on inductive approaches. Instead, they can be generalized through theories underpinning single case studies. Already Charles Sanders Peirce (1931-1958) argued that the researcher or professional constructs a preliminary theory on the basis of careful observation of real life phenomena which are in front of him/her. The researcher observes an event as a whole, and devises a preliminary theory concerning that whole by means of intuition (or what Peirce called instinct). In using intuitive knowledge or a preliminary theory, the researcher must be prepared to discard or to change it if it proves to be irrelevant.

The findings from a unique event have implications for studies of similar kinds and for generalizations of theories. For example, one can pose the question as to whether intellectual polemics, forms of thinking and the clash of new ideas with the established values are

transferable to studies of social representations other than those represented by the case of psychoanalysis in France in the late nineteen fifties. The forces that are functional in one historical case do not leave any components stable over time, whether they concern the data gathered from participants (interviews, the media) or interpretations from cultural historical and social situations.

Professional practitioners are aware of the uniqueness of each individual and of each interaction between the client/patient on the one hand, and the practitioner or therapeutic team on the other hand. This is why theoretical generalization is particularly important in dialogically based professional practices like education, psychotherapy, and practices involving the care and/or cure of, people with disorders of language and communication.

CONCLUSION

I have gone very rapidly through some Moscovici's intellectual resources. They constitute a coherent interdisciplinary framework. The Self and Others always form a unique relationship: one defines the other. Therefore, the meaningful methodological approach is a single case study based on the interaction and interdependence of the Self and Other and their transformation, rather than on inductive studies based on the manipulation of variables from subjects. There is always a danger that the researcher or professional slips into an inductive study of attitudes or opinions and calls such a study "social representations".

The aim of this tribute to Serge Moscovici was to emphasize the originality of his thought in developing the theory of social representations. In order to preserve and further develop his heritage, it is vital to pay the fullest attention to the rich repertoire of intellectual resources from which he created the network of coherent concepts. Above all, these include dyadic micro- and macro-social relations in tension, which constitute the epistemology of common sense. They involve the Ego-Alter interdependence, the Ego-Alter-Object theory of knowledge, the holistic and dynamic structuredness of representations and communication, and making ethical choices.

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