

25th International Lab Meeting – 20th Summer School 2014 13th – 19th July 2014, Rome (Italy)

Key Lecture

Genesis, development and actuality of the Social Representation theory in more than fifty years (1961-2011 and beyond): the main paradigms and the "modelling approach"



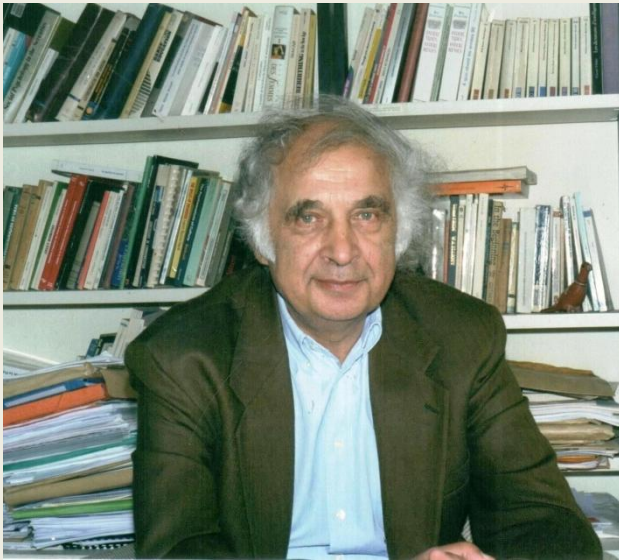
European/International Joint Ph.D.
in Social Representations and Communication

Lessons learned with the founder of the theory of social representations

Initial study of six sessions of the seminar "Epistemology and social representations", taught by Serge Moscovici in 1994.

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The seminar



Serge Moscovici
1994

In academic year 1993/1994, in the doctoral program in Social Psychology of *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales* (EHESS), Serge Moscovici and Denise Jodelet offered a seminar, "Epistemology and social representations"(EHESS, 1993 and 1994a), about the epistemological positions involved in the critics to the paradigm of social representations (PSR) (Moscovici, 1976/1961).

Importance of the PSR for Brazil

Brazil has a large volume of work productions on social representations, especially in health and education areas.

There are **two research centers** dedicated to this theoretical paradigm(Jodelet, 2011):

1- Centro Internacional de Estudos em Representações Sociais e Subjetividade - Educação (CIERS-ed), in São Paulo (<http://www.fcc.org.br/pesquisa/ciers.html>);

2- Centro Internacional de Pesquisa em Representações e Psicologia Social “Serge Moscovici”, in Brasília (<http://www.centromoscovici.unb.br/>).

An **international network of researchers** (Jodelet, 2011); (RIPRES), although formally located in Centro de Investigação em Ciências e Tecnologias da Saúde (CICTS) in Évora – Portugal, has a majority of Brazilian participants and coordinators (<http://www.cicts.uevora.pt/RIPRES>).

And a lab devoted entirely to the **PSR** for over 20 years, the Laboratory of Social Psychology of Communication and Cognition (LACCOS) (<http://www.laccos.com.br/>) (Camargo & Bousfield, 2011).

Brazil: celebrating 50 years

In 2011, Brazilian researchers that use the paradigm of social representations celebrated the 50th anniversary of Moscovici's first publication on the matter (1976/1961):

- 1- Publishing a book (Almeida; Santos & Trindade, 2011);
- 2- and a special issue of the Journal "Temas em Psicologia Sociedade Brasileira de Psicologia" (Camargo & Tomanari, 2011).

General characterization of the seminar

The seminar was consisted of 10 sessions, with an average duration of 1 hour and 30 minutes

Session	Date	Time (hours)	Professor
01	03/03/1994	01:36	S. MOSCOVICI
02	03/11/1994	01:30	S. MOSCOVICI
03	03/18/1994	01:14	S. MOSCOVICI
04	03/25/1994	01:33	D. JODELET
05	04/01/1994	01:33	D. JODELET
06	04/08/1994	01:15	U. FLICK
07	04/29/1994	01:32	S. MOSCOVICI
08	05/06/1994	01:32	S. MOSCOVICI
09	05/20/1994	01:34	J. JESUINO
10	06/03/1994	01:37	S. MOSCOVICI

The goal of this project

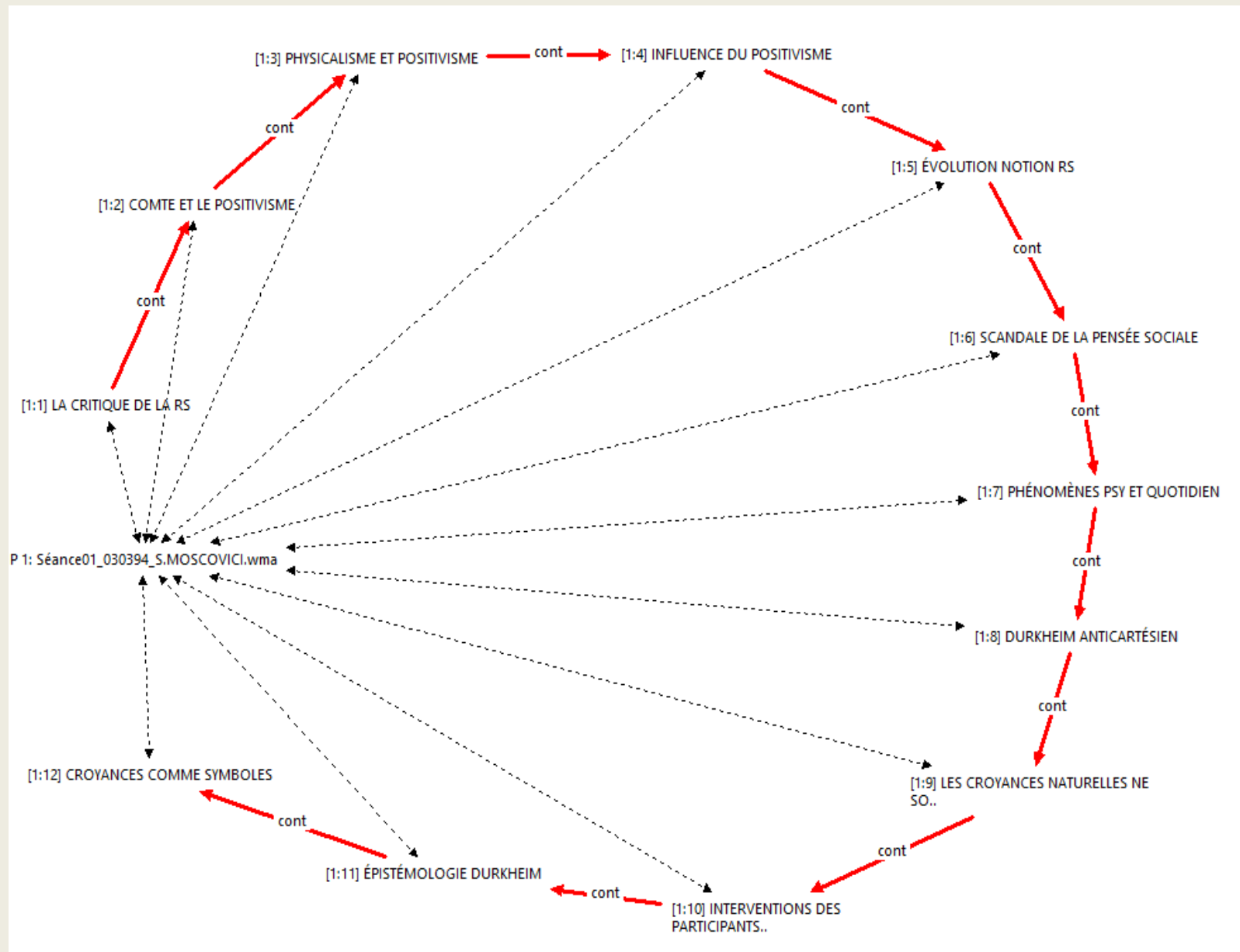
- The goal of this project is to provide a systematic overview of the oral document, focusing on the conceptual development around the phenomenon of social representations and their epistemological aspects.
- Here we will focus on sessions taught by Serge Moscovici. And through a first approximation, of a descriptive nature, we seek to provisionally indicate which points he contemplated to answer the critics of PSR, and which critics he favored.

Type of analysis employed

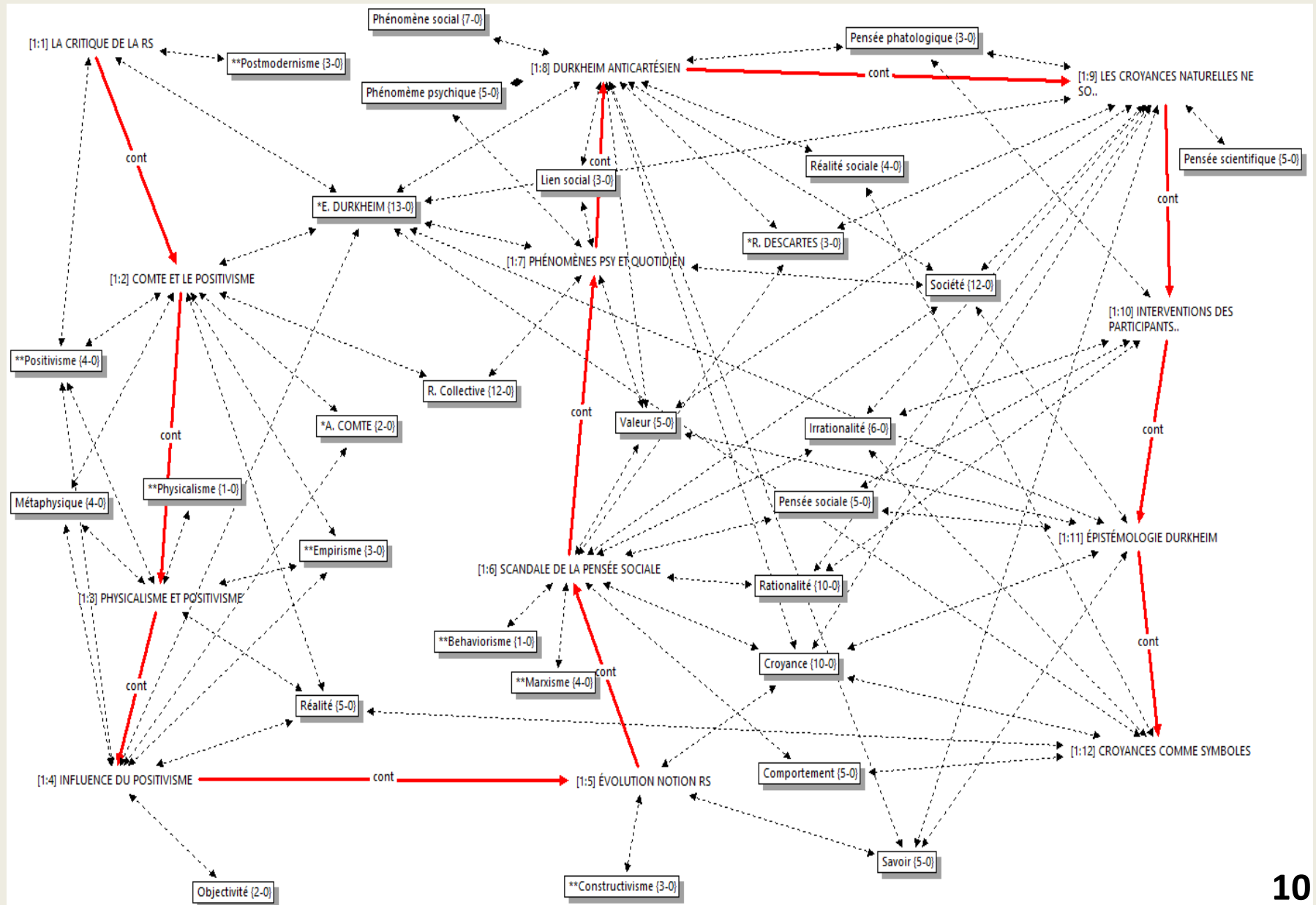
The procedure includes the following steps:

- 1) multiple hearings of the material,
- 2) location and marking of general topics in sequences, for each session,
- 3) location and links of concepts to sequential topics,
- 4) description of the concepts by topics and,
- 5) conceptual analysis around paradigm of social representations.

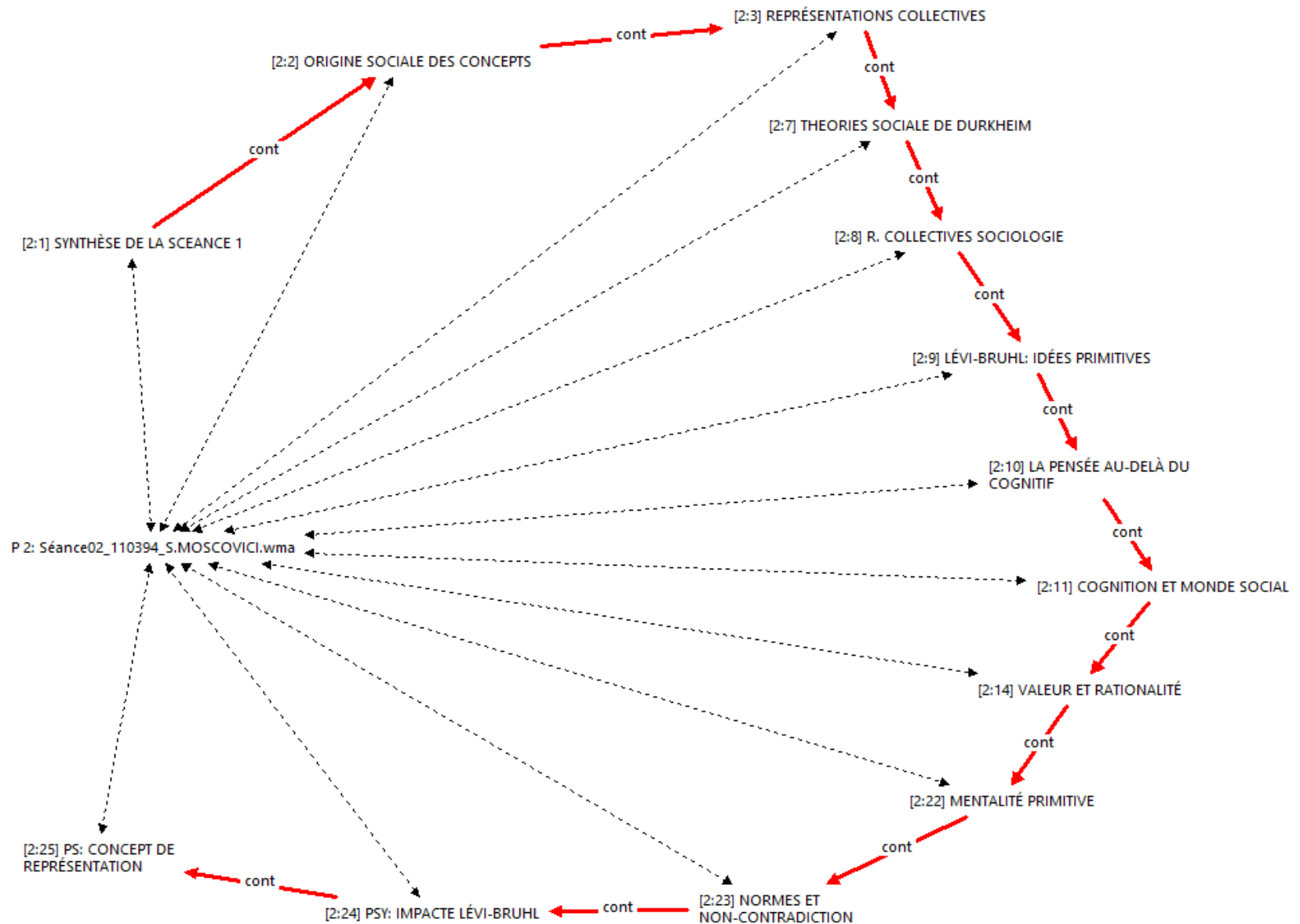
The first session had 12 sequences (step 2).



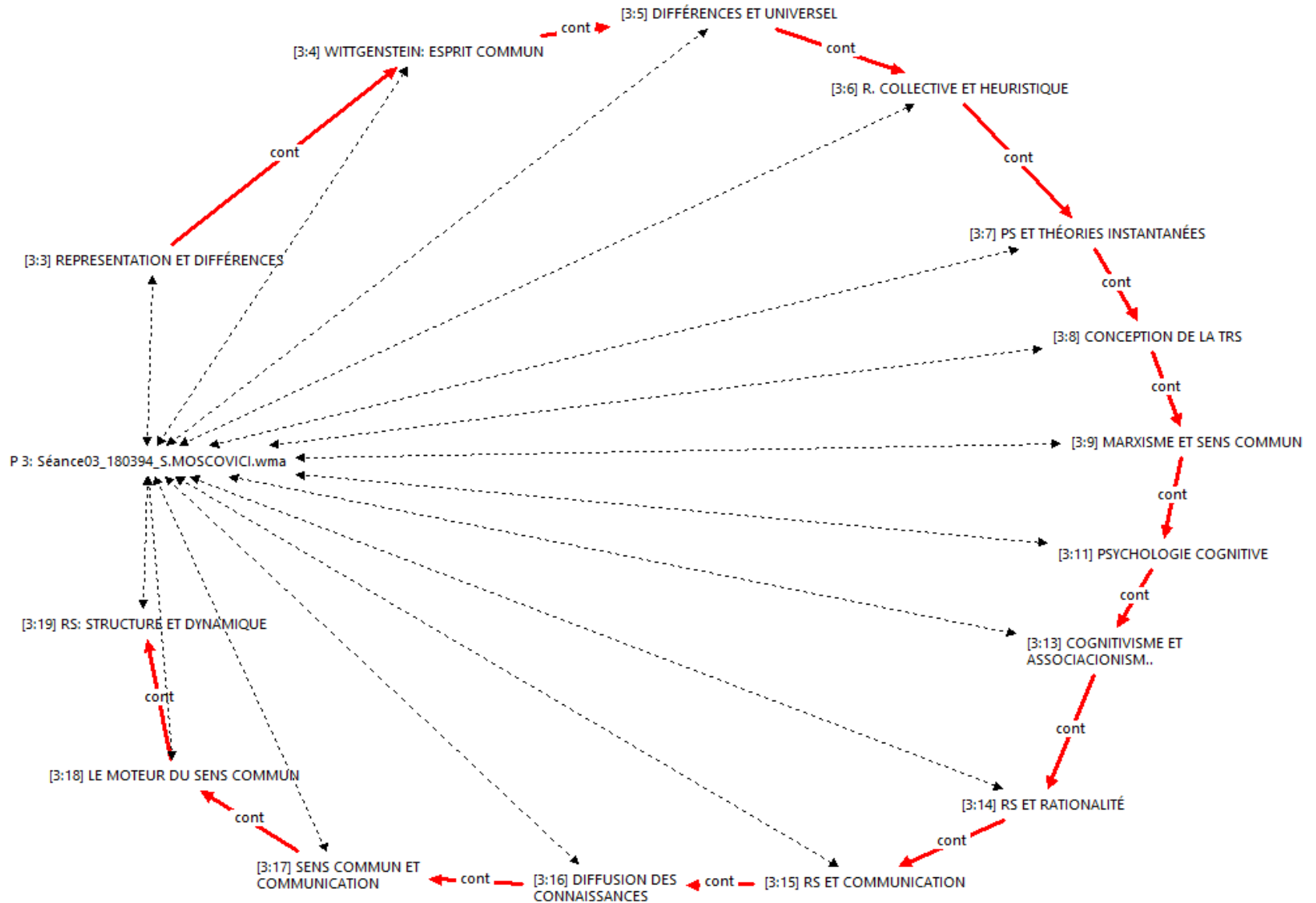
The sequences were linked to the concepts (step 3).



The Session 2 had 13 sequences.



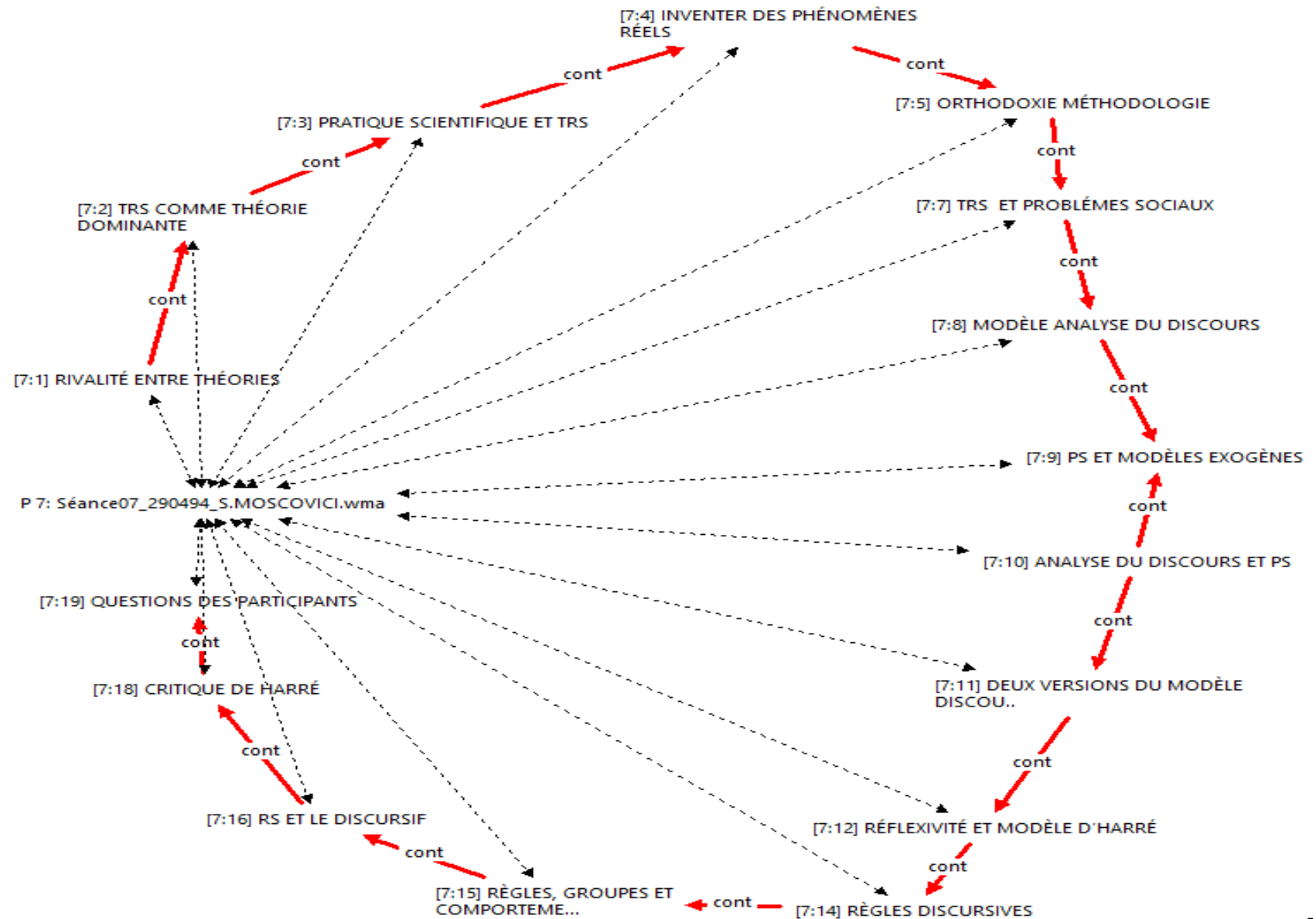
The Session 3 showed 15 sequences.



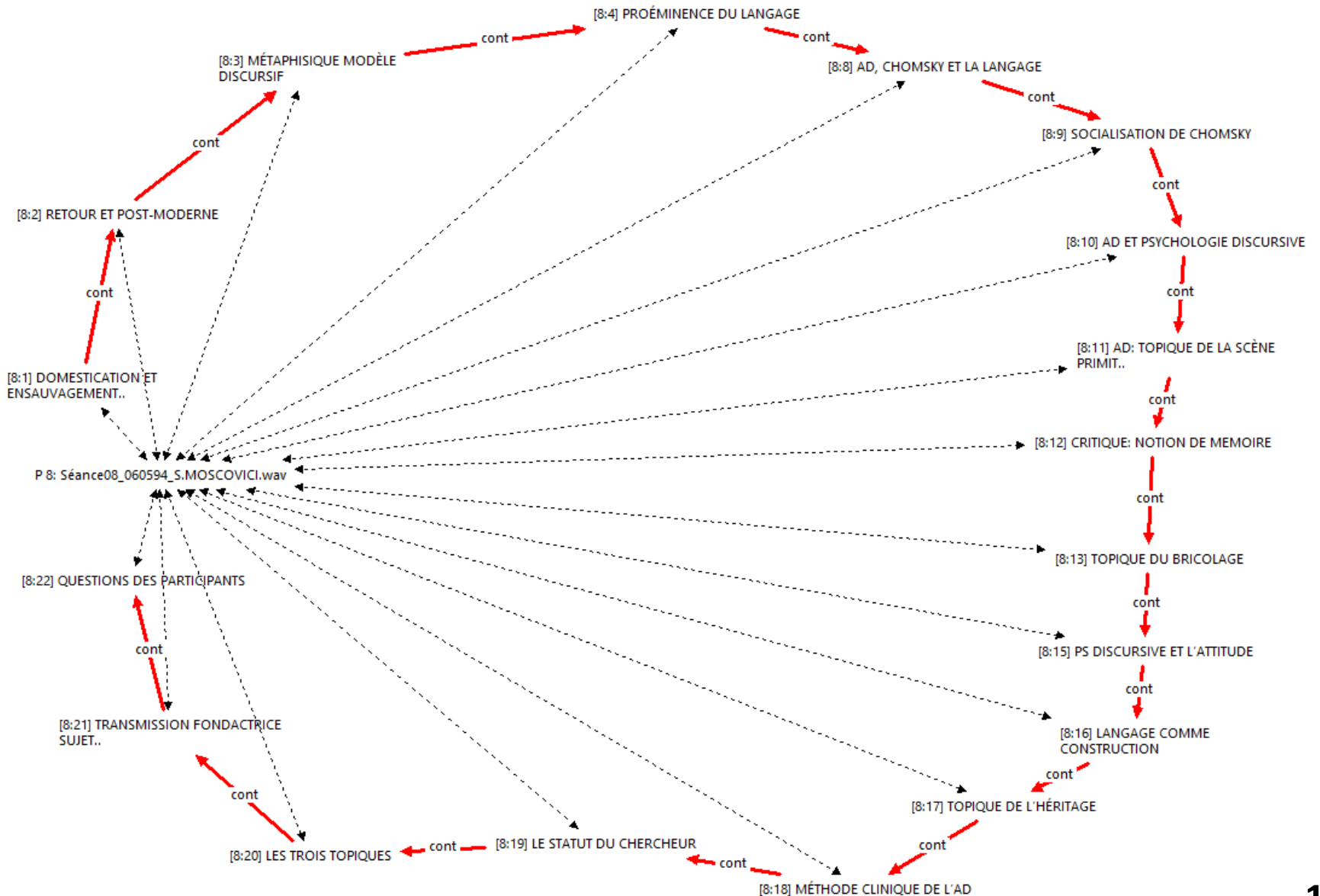
Between session 3 and session 7,
Denise Jodelet conducted two
sessions (4 and 5) and Uwe Flick
presented his contribution
(section 6).



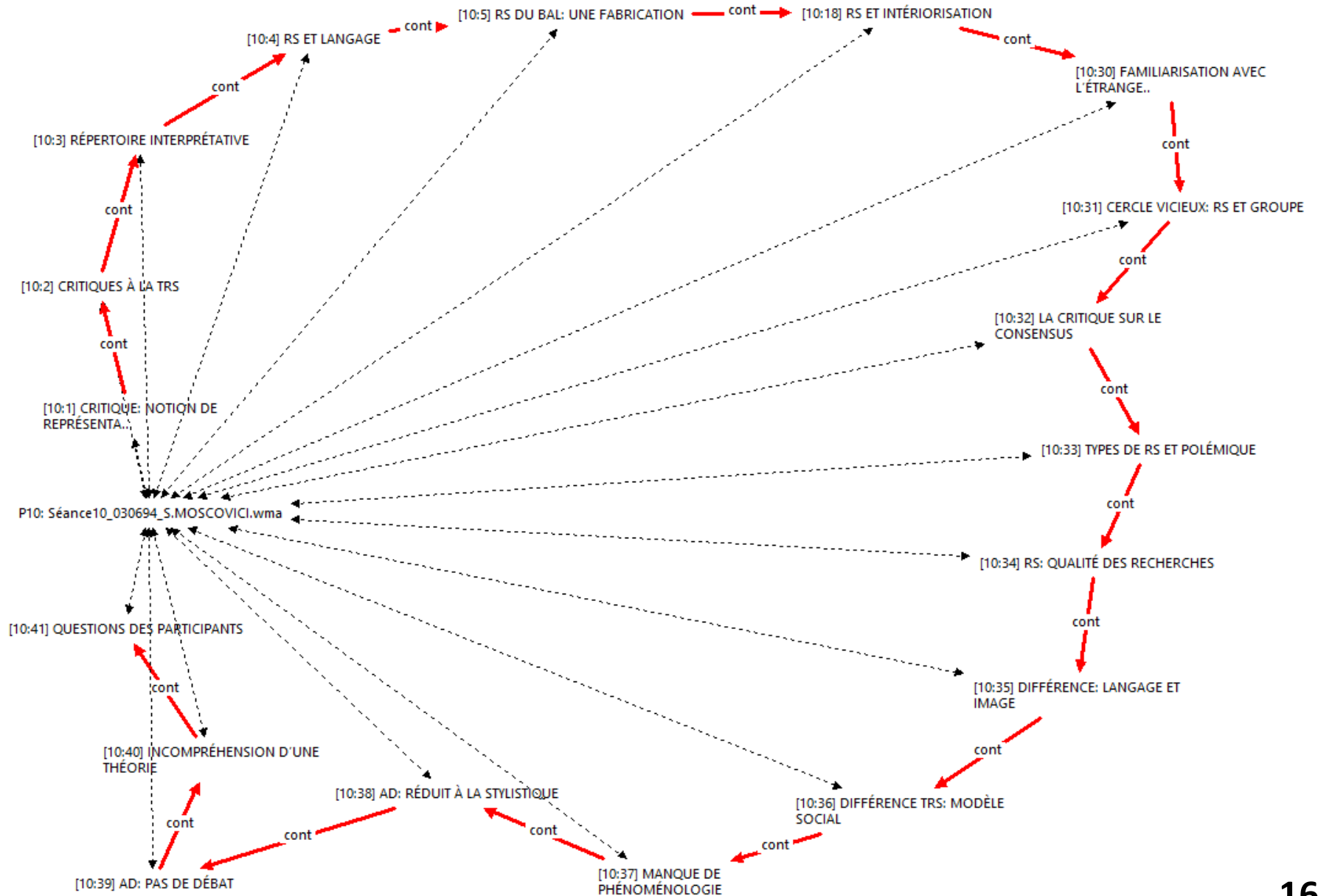
In the **section 7** we observed 16 sequences.



The session 8 presented 18 sequences.



The Session 10 also had 18 sequences.



Summary of the sessions 1, 2 and 3 of the seminar.

Session	Date	Professor	Summary of the session
01	03/03/1994	S. MOSCOVICI	<p>He begins with the critics of the notion of SR, explains the notion of collective representations as a starting point for the elaboration of this paradigm.</p> <p>Key Point: beliefs.</p>
02	03/11/1994	S. MOSCOVICI	<p>He continues the explanation and discussion of the notion of collective representations, addresses the problem of rationality in natural knowledge and science.</p> <p>Key Point: primitive ideas.</p>
03	03/18/1994	S. MOSCOVICI	<p>He continues to address the problem of rationality and shows the ideas of knowledge and common sense.</p> <p>Key Point: knowledge</p>

Summary of the sessions 7, 8 and 9 of the seminar.

Session	Date	Professor	Summary of the session
07	04/29/1994	S. MOSCOVICI	<p>He starts with the critics of DA, discusses the paradigm of SR and its relation to social problems, exposes a critical reading of the DA.</p> <p>Key Point: conversation.</p>
08	05/06/1994	S. MOSCOVICI	<p>The focus of this session is the discursive style. He criticizes his notion of language and in the end calls into question the subjectivism of postmodernism in this area.</p> <p>Key Point: language.</p>
10	06/03/1994	S. MOSCOVICI	<p>He discusses and responds to the critics of the DA paradigm of social representations. He recognizes a part of the critics and concludes the seminar pointing out that we need to consider further the process of SR.</p> <p>Key Point: communication.</p>

Limits

Now, intentionally, we stayed on the level of description, the **first limit** of this intervention. This is due to the following points:

- 1 - Complexity of the material that involves a kind of reflection rather problematic, namely the epistemology of the paradigm of SR.
- 2 - Difficulty to grasp the thought of Serge Moscovici, that although it prioritizes scientific tradition, it has a holistic and multidisciplinary thinking.

The second limit, perhaps the main one, is the linearity of our reading, not only for it still being incipient, but because of our modern empiricist training.

Interest in this project

This work in progress has no goal to reconstruct what has already been done so well. For even at the time of this seminar (De Rosa, 1994), and later (Jodelet, 2008), excellent meta-analysis of the paradigm of social representations were developed.

But the interest in this project is:

- 1- to examine a paradigm in its process of construction,
- 2- to have occurred at the time of effervescence of the critics about the discourse analysis around the paradigm of social representations.

Lesson 1: Centralization of the problem of rationality and irrationality

According to Moscovici, the interest on the social representation is something "scandalous".

The scandal of social thought:

A society of information, intended to replace the religious beliefs for the scientific knowledge, which declared war for irrationality of ideas and praised rationality, have to, however, live with the power of beliefs and superstitions, religious or not.

This gives the **concept of belief** a central place in the paradigm of social representations(PSR).

Lesson 2: The necessity of a common place for debate

The Discourse Analysis, the trend of the 80s and 90s, in its most radical expressions considered the PSR as lacking in procedural and political approach.

Although Moscovici acknowledged that the theories compete, and that the PSR itself presented problems regarding the understanding of the preparation and dissemination of social representation process; he offered this seminar a **second lesson**:

there is a need for a common place for debate, other than the place where the Discourse Analysis insisted on staying, as a reference to fix the ideas that were in question.

PRS: An open paradigm

Jodelet (2008) remarks that the amplitude of Moscovici's proposals has allowed, from a theoretical and methodological approach, developments that indicate the fruitfulness of the paradigm of social representations (PSR); and notes that even in the conclusions of the founding work of this paradigm Moscovici recognized that the question: "How is that man constitutes its reality", was open.

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Thank you for listening.

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