

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

Participants Presentation

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



**Mapping the Impact and Dissemination of the Social Representations Theory
across Different Geo-Cultural Contexts: North America, Oceania, Asia, Africa –
The New Emerging Scenarios**

ESR: Mihaela-Alexandra Gherman

“Is it possible that the same theory is differently referred to when used by researchers adopting so different approaches or working in different cultural scenarios?

If so, what does this mean?”

(de Rosa, 2013, p. 95)

Theoretical reference to Social Representations constructs:
the genesis, processes, functions, structure, transmission, and transformation

Theoretical reference to other constructs and theories: constructs, concepts and theories related to SR; integration, differentiation, comparison, replacement

Thematic analysis: general thematic areas, specific object of each study, specific typology (closed, open, polemic) of SR

Methodological profile (research design, location, nature, instruments for data collection, channels used as source of information, techniques for data analysis)
Characteristics of the selected population (size of sample, variables considered, unit of analysis)

Paradigmatic coherence between the theoretical assumptions and the methodological research design

USA and Canada

Jaan Valsiner (2003): *Theory of Enablement*

- *the dynamic aspect of SRs → semiotic mediators which act as macro-level cultural limitations of people's conduct in its passage from present to future.*
- *temporal irreversibility (preliminary adaptations to changes) → socially guided signs ← uncertainty*
- *the process of social representation (the functional dimension of SRT) → products = SRs (the Structural dimension of SRT)*
 - *variety of adaptations = heterogeneous → potentialities for (extreme) divergence between individuals and collectivities from the perspective of their roles as social actors → connecting social representations to action, and imprinting dialogicality to the process of social representing.*

Lilian Negura: Negura & Maranda, 2004: L'intégration socioprofessionnelle des toxicomanes : les représentations sociales des gestionnaires d'entreprises

- *structural approach & socio-dynamic approach*
- *the dominant discourse is structured around the importance of productivity for the enterprise and around substance abuse, considered as a problem of the individual.*
- *a peripheral discourse appears to be based on the idea that the enterprise has a certain social function to assume, and that the source of drug abuse is also external to the individual ; in other words, that it comes from the individual's family, social or work environment.*



Africa

Dorra Ben Alaya (2012): Evaluations dans la définition du « bon conjoint » et effets de genre

- *experimental method – structural paradigm (free associations, EVOC, “mise-en-cause”)*
 - *the institution of marriage in Tunisia is affected by transformations = a framework to reproduce the traditional structure of the social role standards.*
 - *aims to measure the gender based differential level of requirements in the definition of a "good husband" and a "good wife"*
 - *The procedure consisted in varying the label of the gender of a marital partner*
 - *The results show discriminatory judgments according to the gender among women in favour of the wife; not observed among men =>*
- => a type of compromise between two competing patterns (a modern and a traditional one), as an attempt to reconcile a will of emancipation and an attachment to what is culturally admitted.*

A map of Asia is shown in the background. Overlaid on the map are several national flags: the Russian flag (blue, white, and red horizontal stripes) covers the northern part of the continent; the flag of Kazakhstan (blue with a yellow sun and eagle) is in the central part; the flag of Mongolia (vertical stripes of red, blue, and yellow with a central emblem) is in the eastern part; and the flag of Indonesia (horizontal stripes of red and white) is in the southern part. In the top right corner, there is a yellow rectangular box with a black border and a small yellow circle in the top left corner, containing the word "Asia" in black text.

Asia

Smadar Ben-Asher (2003): *Hegemonic, Emancipated and Polemic Social Representations: Parental Dialogue Regarding Israeli Naval Commandos Training in Polluted Water*

- *ethnographic – no reference to a specific paradigm*
 - *how a dialog functions when new information constituting emancipated social representations and involving external threat undermines the confidence of parents of reserve naval commandos in their hegemonic representations.*
- They get together as a group and through joint dialogue co-construct polemic representations from the former hegemonic and emancipated ones.*



Oceania

James H. Liu, Belinda Lawrence, Colleen Ward & Sheela Abraham (2003):

Social representations of history in Malaysia and Singapore:

On the relationship between national and ethnic identity

- *Social representations of history were investigated using surveys among university populations of ethnic Malays, Chinese, and Indians in Singapore and Malaysia.*
- *Representations of history and historical leaders tended to be hegemonic or consensual, showing low levels of conflict across ethnicity and nationality, even regarding the separation of these two nations.*
- *National and ethnic identity were positively correlated, with ethnic identity stronger than national identity in Malaysia, and strongest among Malays in Malaysia.*
- *National identity was strongest among Chinese in Malaysia, followed by Chinese in Singapore.*
- *Results of regression analyses on national identity suggest that ethnicity is more sensitive in Malaysia than in Singapore.*
- *It is argued that hegemonic representations of history are associated with positive correlations between national and ethnic identity.*