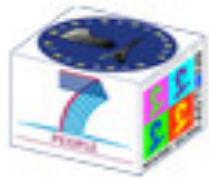




European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations and Communication International Summer School 2015



European Commission REA-Research Executive Agency
FP7 - PEOPLE Initial Training Networks
So.Re.Com. Joint-IDP
(PITN-GA-2013-607279)



Funded by the European Union

**Mapping the impact and dissemination of the social
representation theory across different geo-cultural contexts
around the world: from Europe towards other continents**

**at the European/International Joint PhD in Social Representations & Communication
Research Center and Multimedia LAB**

18th - 25th July 2015



SAPIENZA
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA

Remembering Serge Moscovici

Andrei Holman
Psych. Dept.



UNIVERSITATEA
„ALEXANDRU IOAN CUZA“
din IAȘI

The unconscious in modern psychology: from dumb to constructive

- Moscovici, S. (1993). The return of the unconscious. *Social Research*, 60(1), 39-93.

- “the discovery of the unconscious is the most significant discovery in the history of psychology and its greatest contribution to world culture”

- but: ignored by current social psychology – “the preeminence of consciousness”
 - presupposes that we are aware of all that happens in our minds
 - while social phenomena are mostly beyond or evade the individual's awareness

- social psychology treats a limiting case as the normal case, the exception as the rule

- The unconscious - highlighted by cognitive psychology (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977; Nisbett & Ross, 1980)
- the processes underlying reasoning and performance are not available to introspective account

- But also by the founders of social sciences: Weber, Levi-Strauss, Freud, Mauss, LeBon

- The absence of the unconscious in current social psychology: “an uneasiness due to the association between the unconscious and psychoanalysis”
- “the immense presence of Freud in science and culture, like a sort of commander‘ statue to which one is compelled to turn and from which one would like to escape”

But consequently social psychology takes high risks:

- becoming “too shallow a science in comparison to others”
- “epistemological obstacle to the understanding of social phenomena as symbolic communication, norms, common representations ethnic prejudices, or collective actions”

- Cognitive psychology: participants explain their behavior by invoking theories of common sense relevant for the experimental situation
 - Biased, incorrect explanations, illusions

- Moscovici: these explanations are “shared and rooted in our language and culture”
- “social representations within which they observe things and observe themselves, account for their actions and give their meaning”

- SRs of the human mind and behavior
- social in origin and **unconscious** at the individual level
- automatically projected on the situation, guiding its understanding

- So, the unconscious is the depositary of *collective thinking* (shared significations expressed through beliefs, images, symbols etc.)

- Major step forward in conceptualizing the unconsciousness compared to current cognitive psychology

- Greenwald, 1992: “the unconsciousness is dumb”: rigid, stereotypical, incapable to fully adapt to the situation
 - In line with the current breakthrough in automaticity research (Bargh, 1992)

- Moscovici: automatic unconscious = functional unconscious
- There is also the “constructive unconscious”
 - creative and intelligent due to its anchorage in social thinking

22 years later: is the
unconscious constructive?

- Yes: Dijksterhuis et al. (2006): the *Unconscious Thought Theory*
 - the deliberation-without-attention effect
 - The results of unconscious thinking are superior to those of conscious thinking
 - Both objective and subjective superiority
 - More in line with one's true preferences

- Further studies: the social nature of this cognitive advantage
- Preliminary results (Holman & Zugravu, *in preparation*): unconscious thinking allows a stronger influence of social emotions on moral decision making