



12th International LAB Meeting - Summer Session 2008
14th International Summer School

European Ph.D. on
Social Representations and Communication
At the Multimedia LAB & Research Center, Rome-Italy

Social Representations in Action and Construction
in Media and Society

"Social Representations, Collective Memory and Socially
Shared Emotions: narrative and experimental approaches"

From 26th July to 3rd August 2008
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Key Lectures

European Ph.D

on Social Representations and Communication

International Lab Meeting Series 2005-2008

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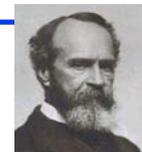
the role of socially shared emotions in building the memory of events

Bernard Rimé
 University of Louvain (UCL),
 Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium

modern views of emotion: biological and physiological roots...



Darwin, 1872



James, 1882



Cannon, 1915
 Cannon, 1927

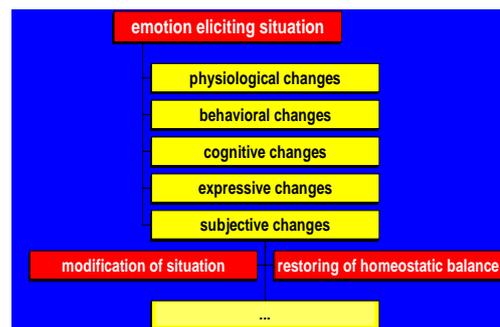
- adaptation, survival → homeostasis
- animal model...
- after the episode? → ≠ relevant
- post-traumatic disorders? → ≠ emotion

consequently → current views of emotion...

- various manifestations (fear, anger, sadness...)
- source →
 - very fast, often automatic
 - cognitive evaluation of a situation
 - launching a pattern of arousal from subcortical centers
- effect → constellation of responses
 - in peripheral organs
 - in action muscles
 - in expressive muscles
 - in consciousness
- fulfill homeostatic and transitory functions in problematic situations



components of an emotion...



in current life, after an emotion...

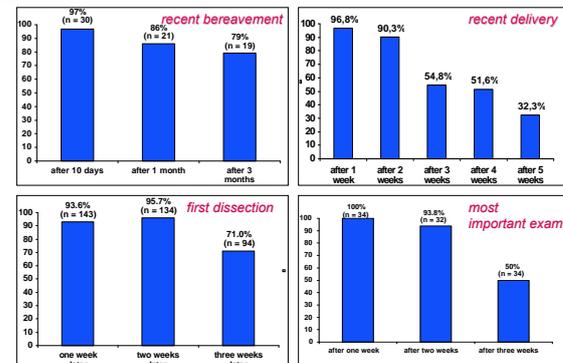
- people talk about it
- recurrently
- to people around them (intimates)
- in the next hours, days, weeks...
- in 80 to 100% of cases
- irrespective of
 - emotional valence,
 - gender,
 - education,
 - culture...
- the more intense the emotion
 the more it will be shared



for a review, see Rimé, Finkenauer, Luminet, Zech, & Philippot, (1998, Eur Rev Soc Psychol.)

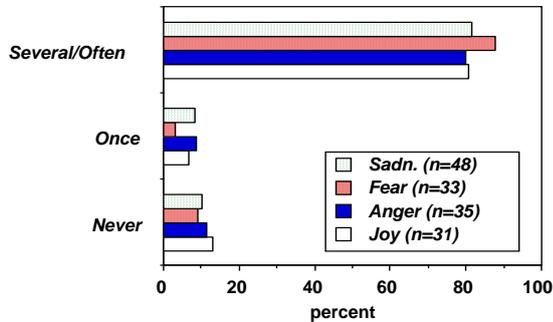
social sharing of emotion after emotional life events

(source: Rimé, Finkenauer, Luminet, Zech & Philippot, Eur Rev Soc Psych, 1998)



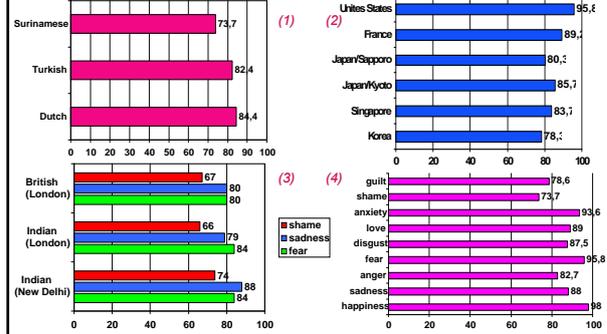
social sharing of current life emotional events

source: Rimé, Mesquita, Philippot & Boca, *Cognition & Emotion* (1991)

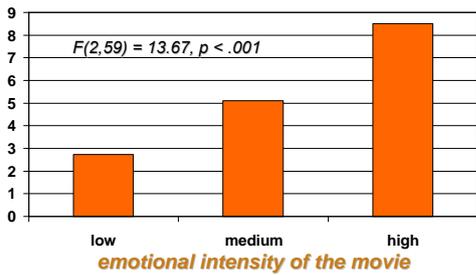


social sharing of emotion in various cultures

(1) Mesquita (1993, doct. diss.) - résidents de 3 cultures différentes aux Pays-Bas
 (2) Rimé, Yogo, & Pennebaker, (1996) - Oriental and Western students (N = 100 per sample)
 (3) Singh-Manoux & Finkenauer (2001, *J. Cross Cult Psy*) - Indian and British adolescents
 (4) Yogo & Onoué (2000, ISRE): Japanese students (N = 440)



movie induction of emotion in the lab. → extent of social sharing in the next 2 days

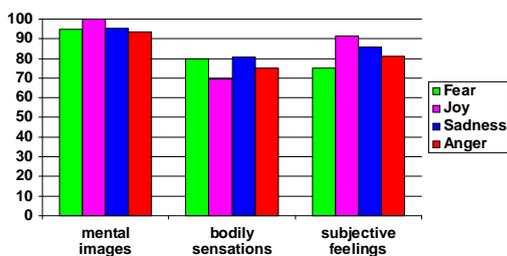


(Luminet, Bouts, Delie, Manstead, & Rimé, *Cognition & Emotion*, 2000)

why are people willing to share their emotional experience?...

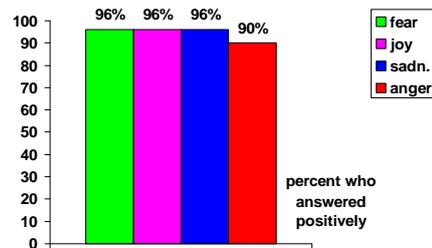
- positive emotions?
 - Langston (1994): sharing positive events
 - "capitalization"
 - enhances positive affect
 - Gable et al. (2004): replication on close relat.
 - confirmation data
 - if responsive partners → improves relationship (intimacy; marital satisfaction...)
- negative emotions...?
 - social sharing
 - reactivation of negative affects
 - aversive...?

paradox... reactivation of emotional components while sharing an emotional experience



source: Rimé, Noël & Philippot, 1991

paradox... right after a sharing session, willingness to share another, similar, emotion

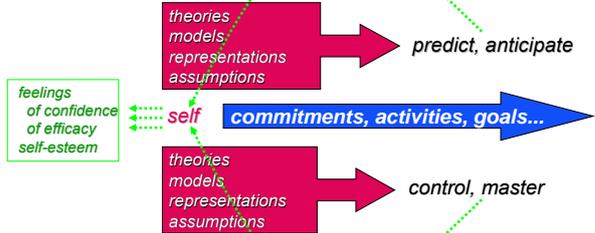


source: Rimé, Noël & Philippot, 1991

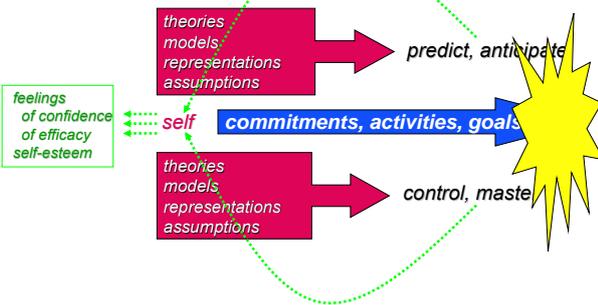
why the willingness to share negative emotions...?

a theoretical model of the impact of negative emotional experiences

what we do in current life...

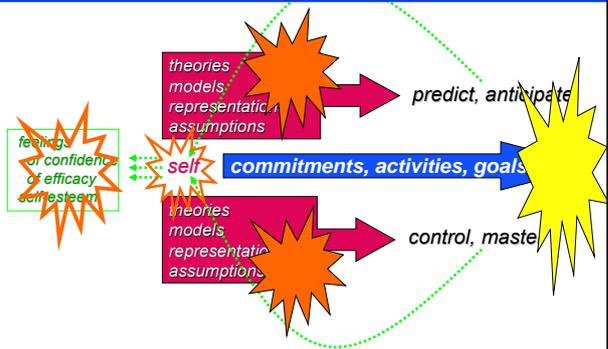


emotional experience...



emotional experience...

⇒ double impact...



impact of an emotion: double...

■ impact 1...

⇒ emotional experience

- sadness, fear, anger, joy, shame, etc...

■ impact 2...

⇒ disconfirmation of models...

- cognitive dissonance
- ⇒ emotional distress...
- anxiety, uncertainty, helplessness

2 types of needs after an emotion ...

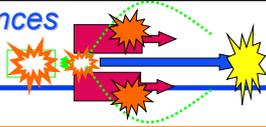
disconfirmation of models → cognitive needs

- reorganisation of motives
- modification of models and world views
- re-creation of meaning
- reframing, reappraisal of experience

emotional distress → socio-affective needs

- comfort, support, love
- validation, recognition
- social integration...

in sum: consequences of impact 2...



■ *impact 2...*

- *disconfirmation of models...*
- "emotion fuels cognitive work" →

- *emotional distress...*
- "emotion fuels social responses" →

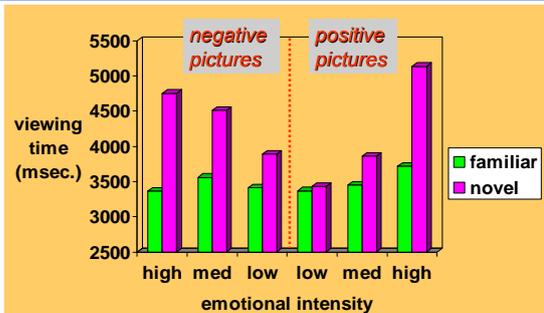
social sharing of emotion

proposition 1
"emotion fuels cognitive work"

- *emotional fascination*
- *mental rehearsal and rumination*
- *search for meaning*



emotional fascination in the laboratory...
viewing pictures from the "International Affect Pictures System" (IAPS, Lang & al., 1998)...



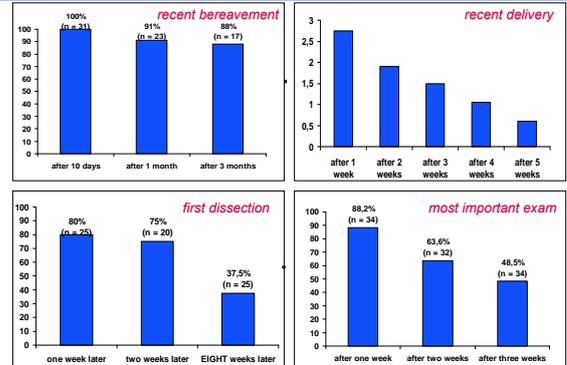
(source: Delfosse & Rimé, in preparation)

**emotional fascination →
focus of attention stays on the event**

- search for *information* (media, news, etc.)
- automatic repetitive *thoughts*...
- intrusive mental *images*...
- mental *rumination* & "cognitive work"...
- search for *meaning*

mental rumination of emotional episodes...

(source: Rimé, Finkenauer, Luminet, Zech & Philippot, Eur Rev Soc Psych, 1998)



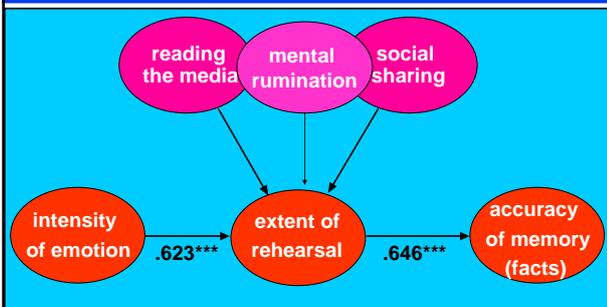
**a classic concept
from cognitive psychology...**

- "rehearsal consolidates memory"
- prediction:
**the more an emotional episode is shared,
the better the memory of this episode**

**flashbulb memory...
"your memories of Nov. 22, 1963?"**



**memory accuracy for circumstances of
the unexpected death of the king...
(N =330 Belgian citizens 8 months later)**



from Finkenauer, Luminet, Gisle et al. (Memory & Cognition, 1998)

confirmatory findings...

- death of the French President Mitterrand
 - Curci et al., 2001 (Memory)
- September 11, 2001 WTC attacks
 - Luminet, Curci et al., 2004 (J of General Psychol.)
 - Curci & Luminet, 2006 (Memory)

search for meaning after an emotional event ...

emotional event challenges

- world views (theories, models, representations, assumptions...)
- self views (feeling of predictability, feeling of control, feeling of confidence, self-efficacy, self-esteem...)

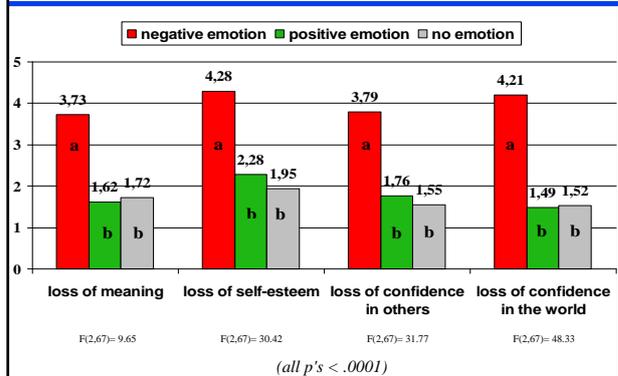
→ loss of meaning, incoherence, confusion



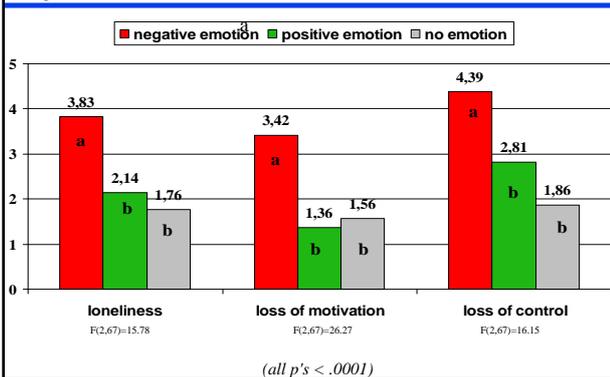
search for meaning...

impact of current life emotional experiences...

(Corsini & Rimé, in preparation)



impact of current life emotional experiences...

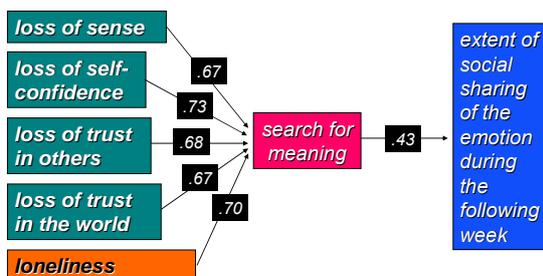


assessing the cognitive impact of an emotional episode:

a scale of "search for meaning", e.g.

- understanding what happened
- putting order in what happened
- finding appropriate words to express
- achieving understanding
- finding meaning in what happened

collateral impact variables predict later social sharing



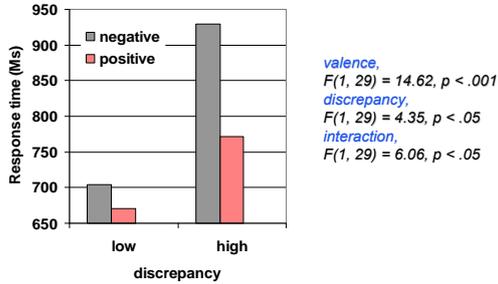
(Corsini & Rimé, in preparation)

negative emotions and implicit beliefs discrepancy...

- effect of low vs. high discrepancy situation with respect to the belief in a "just world"
- experimental procedure
 - watching 5 positive and 5 negative emotional scenes
 - comment for each scene (ex. car accident) → either
 - low discrepancy (ex. "driver was drunk and drove too fast")
 - high discrepancy (ex. "driver crashed into a reckless driver")
 - DV : after each slide → simple decision task
 - after each picture, you will see O X or X O
 - if O is on the left, press the "L" key
 - if O is on the right, press the "R" key

Delfosse & Rimé, in preparation

**negative emotions
and implicit beliefs discrepancy...**
(Delfosse & Rimé, in preparation)



conclusion for proposition 1

- convergent data abundantly confirmed that "emotion fuels cognitive work"

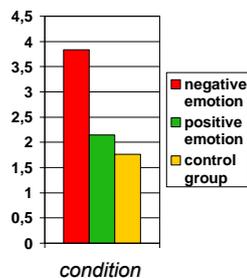
**proposition 2
"emotion fuels social responses"**

emotion and affiliation...

- Schachter, 1959:
 - emotional states elicit a powerful need to be in contact with others
- Schachter's hypothesis
 - motive = to clarify the unusual sensations through a process of social comparison
- but there could be more...

impact of an emotional episode on socio-affective needs (Corsini & Rimé, 2001)

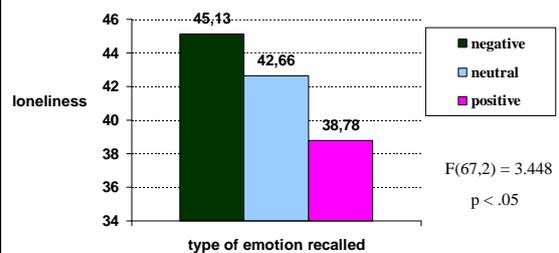
- questionnaires completed immediately after an emotional episode occurred in current life



- data recorded on a "loneliness scale"

$F(2,67) = 15.7, p < .0001$

recall of an emotional episode and feeling of loneliness



source: Nils, Corsini, Herbertte, & Rimé, 2001

social consequences of emotional distress...

- feeling **lonely**
- need for **help** and **social support**
- need for **comforting** and **nurturance**
- need for **understanding, acceptance, validation**
- need for **empathy**...



➔ where does it come from?...

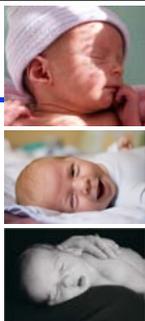
situation at the start of life...



starting equipment of a human newborn...

- a few rudimentary reflex responses
- crying
- smiling
- a few facial responses to gustative stimulations

- ➔ autonomy = zero
- ➔ adaptative capacity = zero



survival of a human newborn...

- **absolute dependency**
- **for an exceptionally long term**



3 conditions to the survival of a human newborn...

1. capacity of the newborn to signal
 - needs, incomfort, and distress
2. probability that in the **social milieu**
 - these signals = perceived
 - inclination to react
3. capacity of both parties
 - to establish a link proper to **guarantee the perennity of such cares**

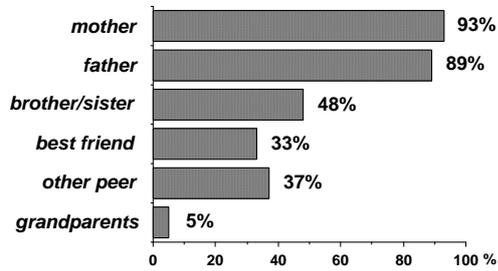


attachement system... (J. Bowlby, 1969)

- **system that a child activates in case of emotional distress**
 - involves signals proper to ensure the **proximity** of the attachment figure
- **effects**
 - **emotional appeasement** when in contact with the figure
 - **emotional distress** in case of separation
- since the late 80s, data demonstrated that this system is still active in adults

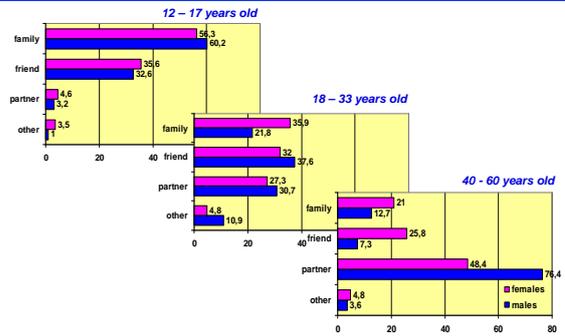


children aged 8-12
targets of social sharing in the week after an
emotion-inducing night game at scout camp



(source: Rimé, Dozier, Vandenplas & Declercq, 1998)

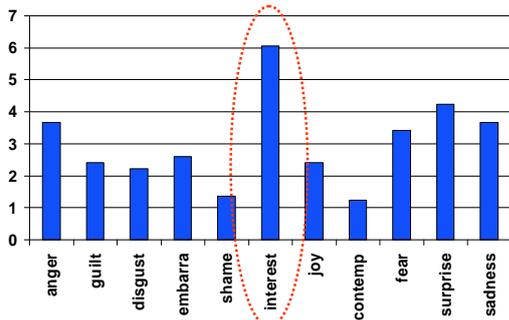
evolution of social sharing targets
across age groups



(source: Rauw & Rimé, 1990; Rimé, Mesquita, & al., 1991).

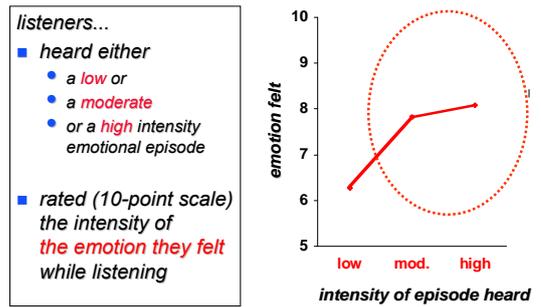
emotions felt by 121 listeners of
negative emotional episodes

source: Christophe & Rimé (Eur. J. Soc. Psychol., 1997)



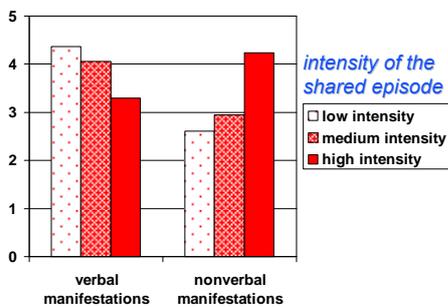
exposure to the sharing of an emotion
elicits emotion

source: Christophe & Rimé (1997)

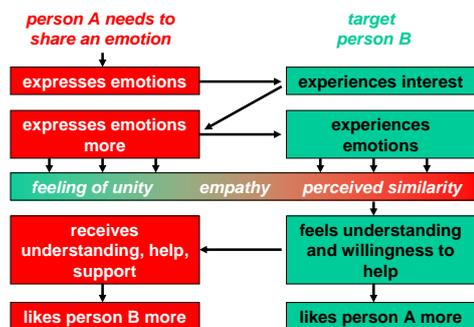


listener's responses as a function of
the intensity of the shared emotion

source: Christophe & Rimé (Eur. J. Soc. Psychol., 1997)



interpersonal dynamic
of the social sharing of emotion

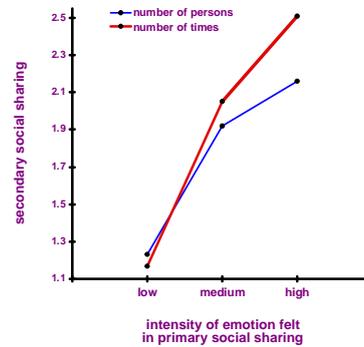


“secondary social sharing”...

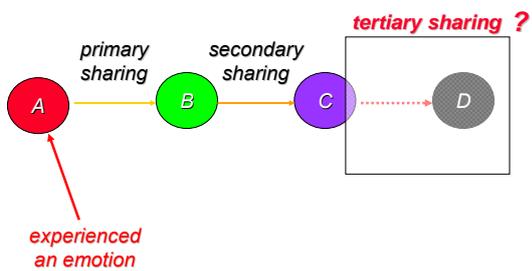
- if emotions are socially shared, and
- if targets experience *emotion* when listening,
- then, targets should share what they heard with third persons...

secondary social sharing

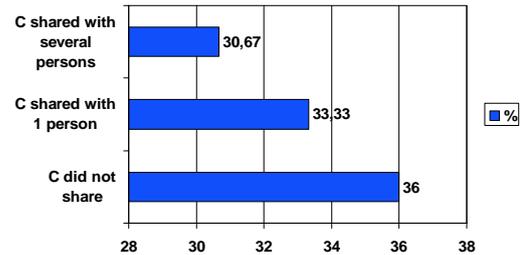
(source: Christophe & Rimé, Eur. J. Soc. Psychol., 1997)



is there evidence of tertiary social sharing?

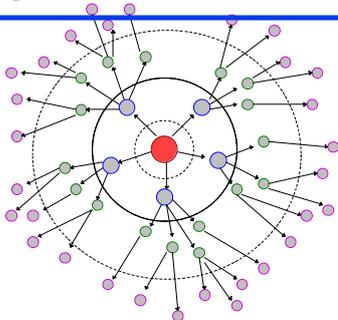


person C heard about A from B... did person C tell it to a D?

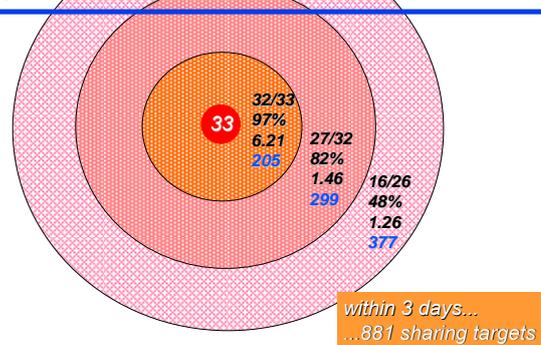


(source: Christophe, 1997)

collective dynamic resulting from the sharing of emotion...



social sharing of a visit to a hospital morgue (Harber & Cohen, 2005)



social sharing of emotion and social representations...

- S. Moscovici (1984)
 - unfamiliar objects or events
 - fascination + anxiety
 - current conversation
 - unfamiliar is transformed into familiar

↳ striking parallel with the process
of social sharing of emotion

↳ social sharing of emotion = specific production
of social representations after emotional event

to conclude... consequences of negative emotional events...

- a negative emotion occurs
 - when events do not fit with the person's models and representations
- a negative emotion elicits
 - (1) cognitive work and
 - (2) social responses
- social sharing of emotion elicits
 - search for meaning
 - construction of episodic memory
 - social integration
 - social propagation of emotional information

social sharing
of emotion