



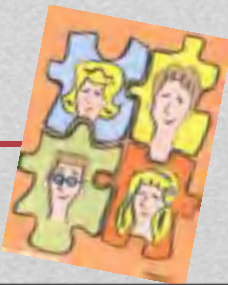
EMERGING ADULTHOOD AND SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF CURRENT, FUTURE AND IDEAL FAMILY

Initial Report Progress

International Summer School of the EuPhd on SR and Communication – Rome, July 2011

The **definition** of family depends on the **point of view** you assume, on the **theoretical frame** you choose to lead and **guide** your research.
(Scabini, 2002)

THEORETICAL MODELING



FAMILY AS SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

THEORETICAL MODELING



THE SYMBOLIC-RELATIONAL MODEL

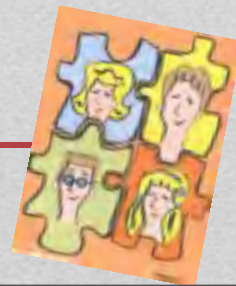
(Scabini & Cigoli 2000)

Family is a unique and specific **SOCIAL ORGANIZATION** that **CONNECTS** and **TIES** the crucial differential variables:

- * different **GENDERS** (male and female),
- * different **GENERATIONS** (parents and children),
- * different **LINEAGES** (origins of the father and origins of the mother).

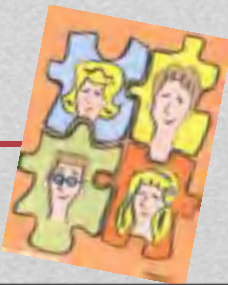
GENERATIVITY *as* main goal and intrinsic function of the family
(*Erikson, 1959*).

THEORETICAL MODELING



FAMILY AS SOCIAL REPRESENTATION

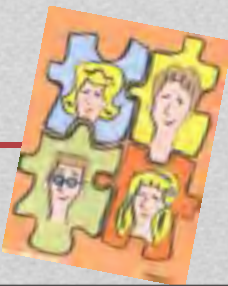
THEORETICAL MODELING



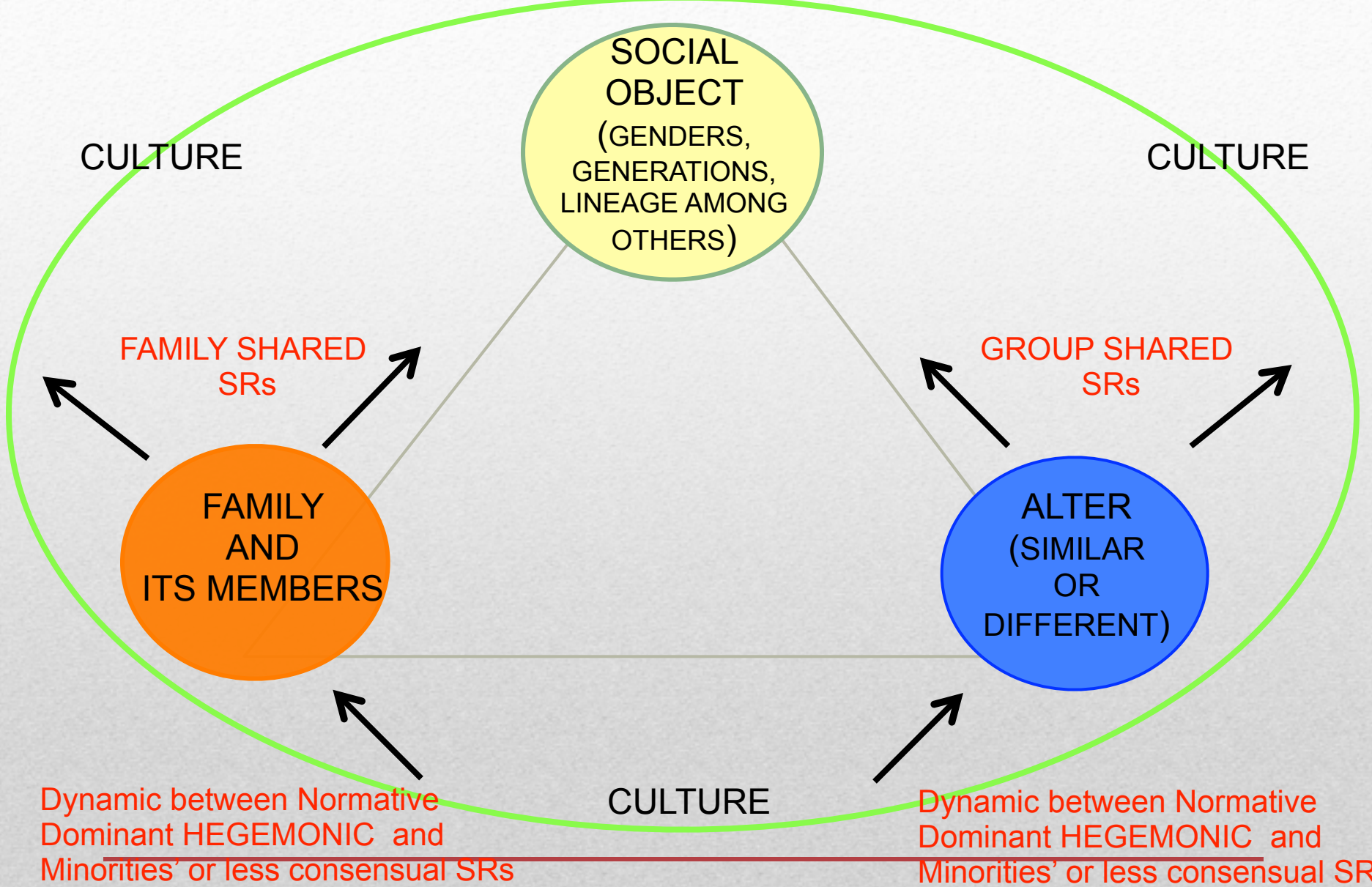
THINKING FAMILY AS A SOCIAL REPRESENTATION

*“Family, as social institutions, can be considered as Social Representation (SR):
it has a **collective and a normative dimension** coming from **iconography and culture** and a more **personal dimension**, due to the relations that every person experiences in its own family” (D’Atena, 1996).*

THEORETICAL MODELING

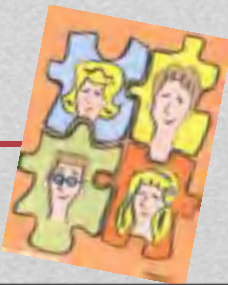


INTEGRATING SYMBOLIC-RELATIONAL MODEL TO THE SOCIAL REPRESENTATION THEORY



FAMILY AS COMMON SENSE

THEORETICAL MODELING



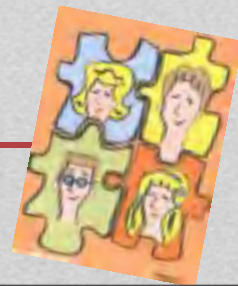
FROM TRADITIONS TO PERSONAL RULES

- ❖ The **thinking society** and **norms** - From dominant values system to institutional norms:

Art.29 of Italian Constitution: Italy recognizes family as social institution and identifies its rights *when* it is ***based on marriage***

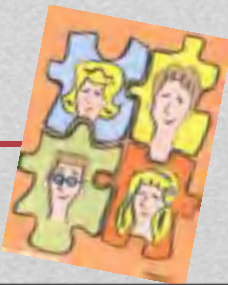
- ❖ The “**subjectivations of norms**” (Bozon, 2004), operating in effect in the direction of a **de-institutionalization** of the traditional forms of the family, constitutes a process that goes back to the dimension of individualization and that has a deep impact on family life.
- Beside every personalization of models and process, the **social nature** of family and its **social role in generation and mediation of sense**, representations and expectations for gender, generation and culture doesn't allow the disappearing of the family itself.

ITALIAN BACKGROUND



SAMPLE IDENTIFICATION

RESEARCH PLANNING AND METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN



SAMPLE IDENTIFICATION

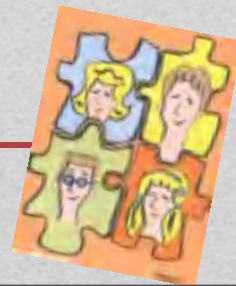
100 EMERGING ADULTS

AGE	SEX	ECONOMIC CONDITIONS	COHABITATION
23 – 30 y.o.	50 = Male 50 = Female	25 = M / financially independent 25 = M / financially dependent 25 = F / financially independent 25 = F / financially dependent	Subject must live still with their family of origin.

Category	Percentage
Male	50%
Female	50%

Category	Percentage
M / financially independent	25%
M / financially dependent	25%
F / financially independent	25%
F / financially dependent	25%

RESEARCH PLANNING AND METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN



EMERGING ADULTHOOD (Arnett, 2000)

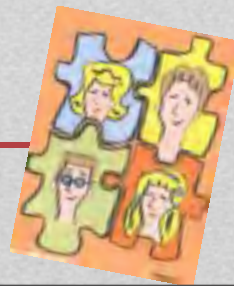
Emerging adulthood is proposed as a new conception of development, a distinct period demographically, neither adolescence nor young adulthood, subjectively, and in terms of identity explorations with a focus on age 18-25.*

It exists only in that culture, such as post industrial, allowing young people a prolonged period of independent role exploration during the late teens and twenties.

(Arnett, 2000)

Emerging adulthood is the only period of life in which nothing is normative demographically (Rindfuss, 1991; Wallace, 1995).

RESEARCH PLANNING AND METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN



EMERGING ADULTHOOD

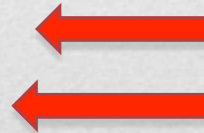
IMPORTANT MARKERS OF THE CONCEPTION OF THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD (ARNETT, 1997).

The top three criteria emphasize individualistic qualities such as:

- **Independence** “decide on personal beliefs and values independently of parents or other influence”;
- **Equality** "accepting responsibility for one's self".

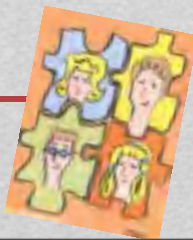
Other criteria endorsed by a majority in studies also emphasized individualism, including the top two role transitions:

- **financially independent from parents;**
- **no longer living in parents' household.**



The criteria most often employed in sociological studies — finish education, begin full-time employment, marriage, and parenthood ("have at least one child") — were **rejected** by a large majority.

RESEARCH PLANNING AND METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN



SR OF FAMILY: A FIRST PILOT STUDY

The idea of this research came from a first pilot study (*autumn 2009- Spring 2010*) where:

- SR of current, future and ideal family were investigated among 130 Italian students;
- Data were collected using a multi-methodological design project:
 - Associative networks;
 - Hand drawings;
 - Questionnaire.

RESEARCH PLANNING AND METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN



A FIRST PILOT STUDY: MAIN FINDINGS

THE NATURE OF REPRESENTATIONAL SYSTEM OF THE SR OF FAMILY IS CONFIRMED BY THE RELEVANCE OF SOME SHARED DIMENSIONS.

➤ **SEMANTIC DIMENSION (derived on Associative Networks):**

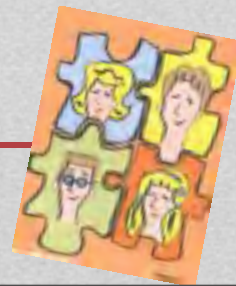
- a. The SR of family is anchored to a **normative dimension** that seems coherent with the Italian traditional model of family (based on marriage, focused on children, three-generational, enlarged);
- b. A sort of **uneasiness**, experienced in the current family (positive axis – II factor), establishes really high expectations/ideals for good and functional relations in the future and ideal family.

➤ **ICONIC DIMENSION (derived from Drawings):**

- a. The **predominant model** of ideal family, based on a lasting couple with several children;
- b. **Higher expectations** in the future and in the ideal family about the relational .

—————➔ **Alternative and Minority Models only appears in DRAWINGS of the future and Ideal family**

RESEARCH PLANNING AND METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN



QUESTIONS

- How our emerging adults represent the family as **cultural object** (ideal family), as a collection of **relations experienced** (current family) and as a collection of **expectations** for the future they are going to build (future family)?
- Are there any **differences or similarities** in the SRs of current, future and ideal family? If yes, how are they articulated?
- What is the level of **family satisfaction** for our participants and how flexible are their **family relations**?
- Is there any particular psychological **time orientation** during the phase of emerging adulthood? How could it be related to such SRs?

RESEARCH PLANNING AND METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN



OBJECTIVES

1. Explore the **symbolic dimension** of the SRs;
2. Explore the **iconic dimensions** of the SRs;
3. Consider the level of **family satisfaction** and **family relations' patterns** during the phase of emerging adulthood;
4. Consider the **time orientation** of the emerging adults in object.

RESEARCH PLANNING AND METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN



HYPOTHESIS

- A. Investigated Italian emerging adults still have a **dominant representation** of family, that results **normative to future expectations**, due to the strong influence of the Italian traditional **culture**;
- B. The **time orientation** affects the SRs of current, future and ideal family;
 - 1. **Male and female** will take a different social position based on different gender expectations in their representation of future and ideal family;
 - 2. The **economical condition** (financial independence) will allow different and eventual polemical representations for current, future and ideal family, due to a closer perceived proximity of the own establishment of a family and in relation with a more defined independence from family of origin;
 - 3. In regard of **family satisfaction** level and **family relations' patterns**, people who have high level of satisfaction / flexible relations have a different representation of the current, future and ideal family.

RESEARCH PLANNING AND METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN



VARIABLES

INDEPENDENT

- Sex
- Economical condition
- Family satisfaction and family relational pattern
- Temporal perspective

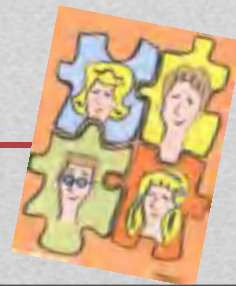
DEPENDENT

- ❖ Semantic dimensions of the field of SRs: content, structure, polarity
- ❖ Iconical dimension of the hand-drawn SRs: compositions, relations, emotions



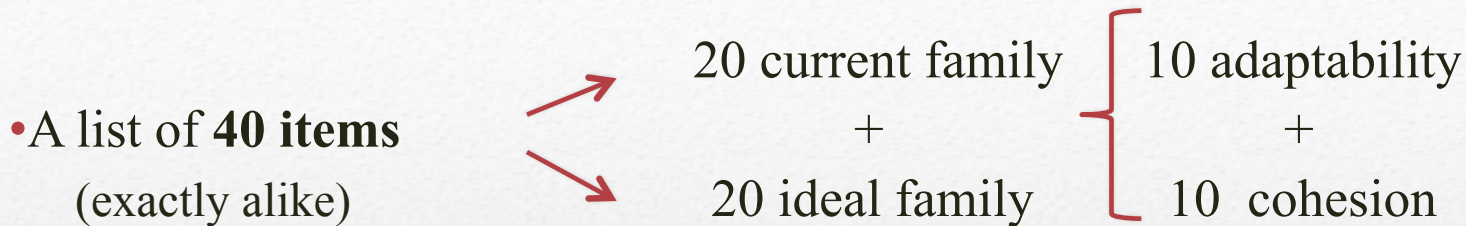
TOOLS:

- FACES III
- *ASSOCIATIVE NETWORK*
- *HAND-DRAWING*
- ZIMBARDO TIME PERSPECTIVE SCALE
- SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW



FACES III (Olson, 1985)

FACES III investigates the representations of **family satisfaction** by comparing results from **current** family relations item and **ideal** family item (discrepancy or not).



ADAPTABILITY	COHESION
LEADERSHIP	EMOTIONAL BORDERS
a) CONTROL	a) SUPPORTIVENESS
b) DISCIPLINE	b) FAMILIAR BORDERS
c) ROLES AND RULES	c) FRIENDS
	d) FREE TIME AND HOBBIES

• The family relations' patterns converge on three different categories: **balanced, intermediate and extreme family relations.**

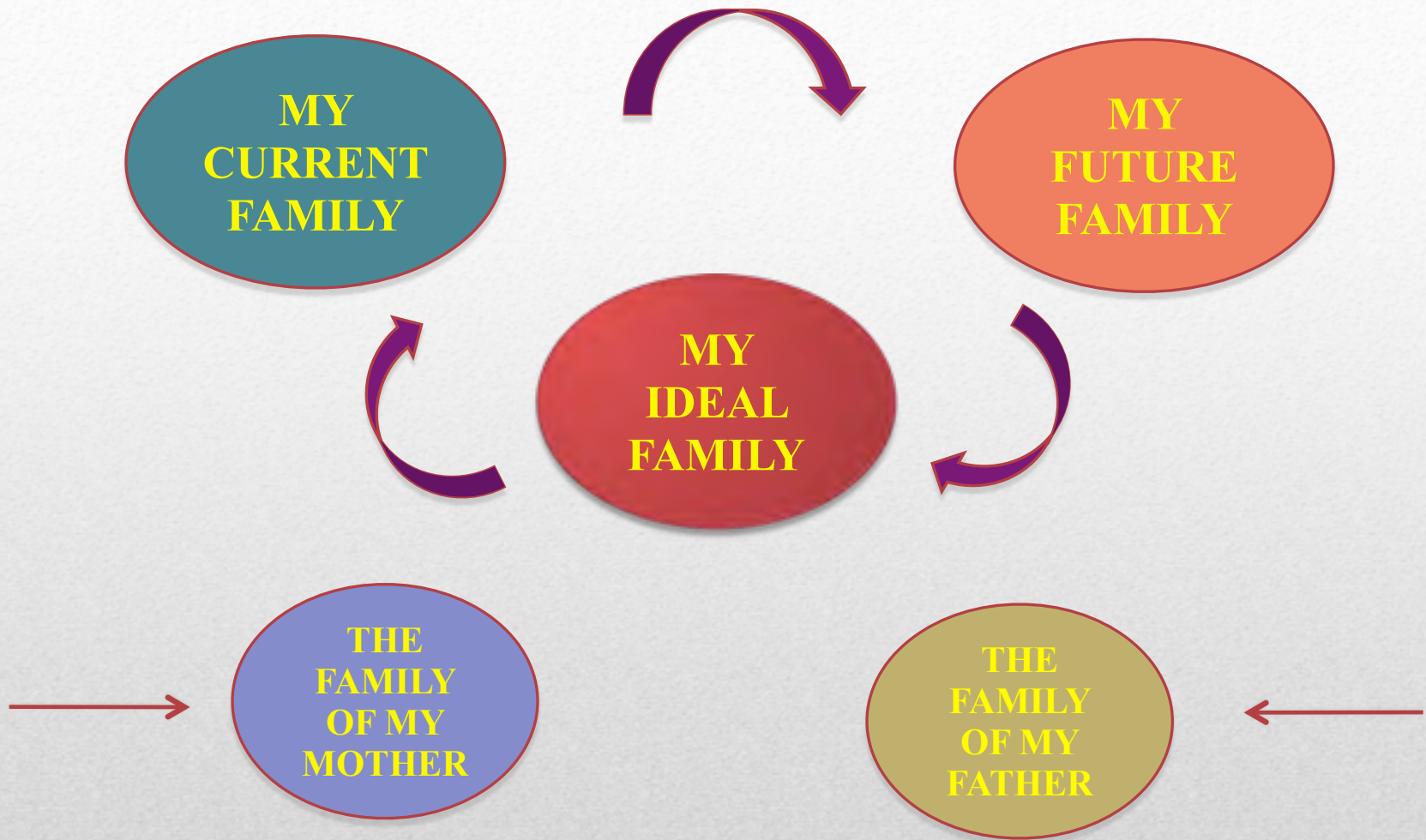
(Circumplex Model, Olson, 1983).

➔ During a transition the intermediate pattern is the most common one.

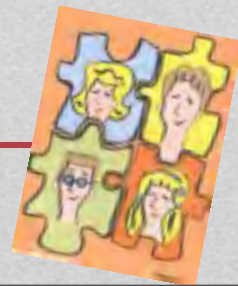
RESEARCH PLANNING AND METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN: Research tool definition



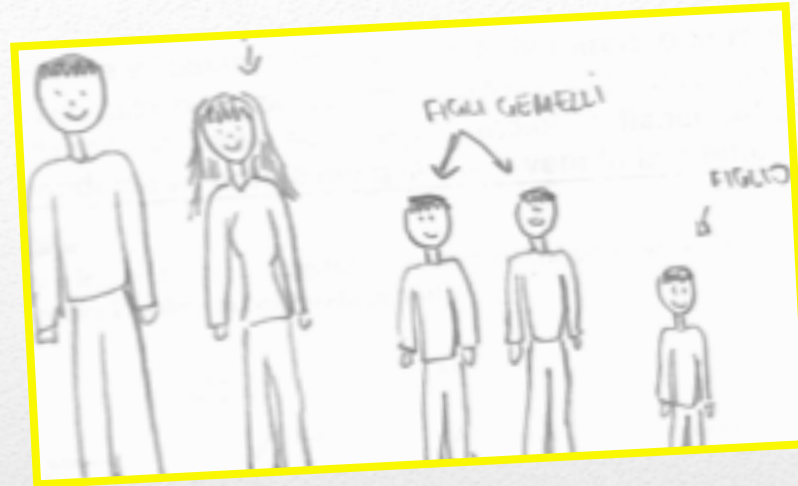
ASSOCIATIVE NETWORKS (de Rosa, 1995)



RESEARCH PLANNING AND METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN: Research tool definition



HAND DRAWING



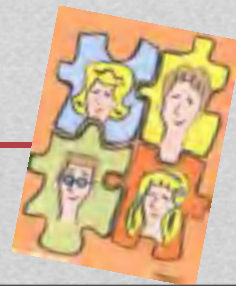
Setting:

- a. Composition;
- b. Position;
- c. Context;
- d. Subsystems and roles.

Relations:

- a. Intimacy / rigidity;
- b. Detailed picturing;
- c. Emotions

RESEARCH PLANNING AND METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN: Research tool
definition



FREE MESSAGES

- A **box** for free messages has been introduced in every paper where subjects are asked to draw.
- They can address to a single member or to the family as a whole.

RESEARCH PLANNING AND METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN: Research tool
definition



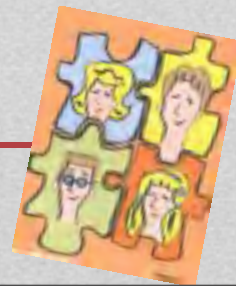
TIME PERSPECTIVE SCALE (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999)

*Time perspective (TP) is the often non-conscious process whereby the continual flows of personal and social experiences are assigned to **temporal categories**, or time frames, that help to give order, coherence and meaning to those events.*

Zimbardo & Boyd (1999)

- ✧ **Past-negative:** trauma, pain and regret toward the past.
It brings to null relationship with reward dependence and sensation seeking;
- ✧ **Past-positive:** warm, sentimental attitude toward the past.
It brings to healthy outlook on life, high self-esteem;
- ✧ **Present-hedonistic:** risk-taking attitude.
It conveys on a lack of consideration for future consequences, low ego or impulse control, sensation seeking;
- ✧ **Present-fatalistic:** helpless, hopeless attitude.
It admits an absence of TP focus toward the future and life. Lack of future oriented goals;
- ✧ **Future:** behavior dominated by a striving for future goals and rewards.
It is characterized by planning, low levels of novelty and sensation seeking.

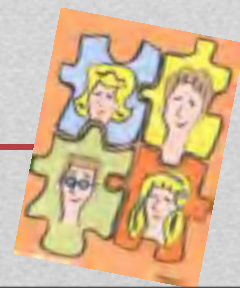
RESEARCH PLANNING AND METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN: Research tool
definition



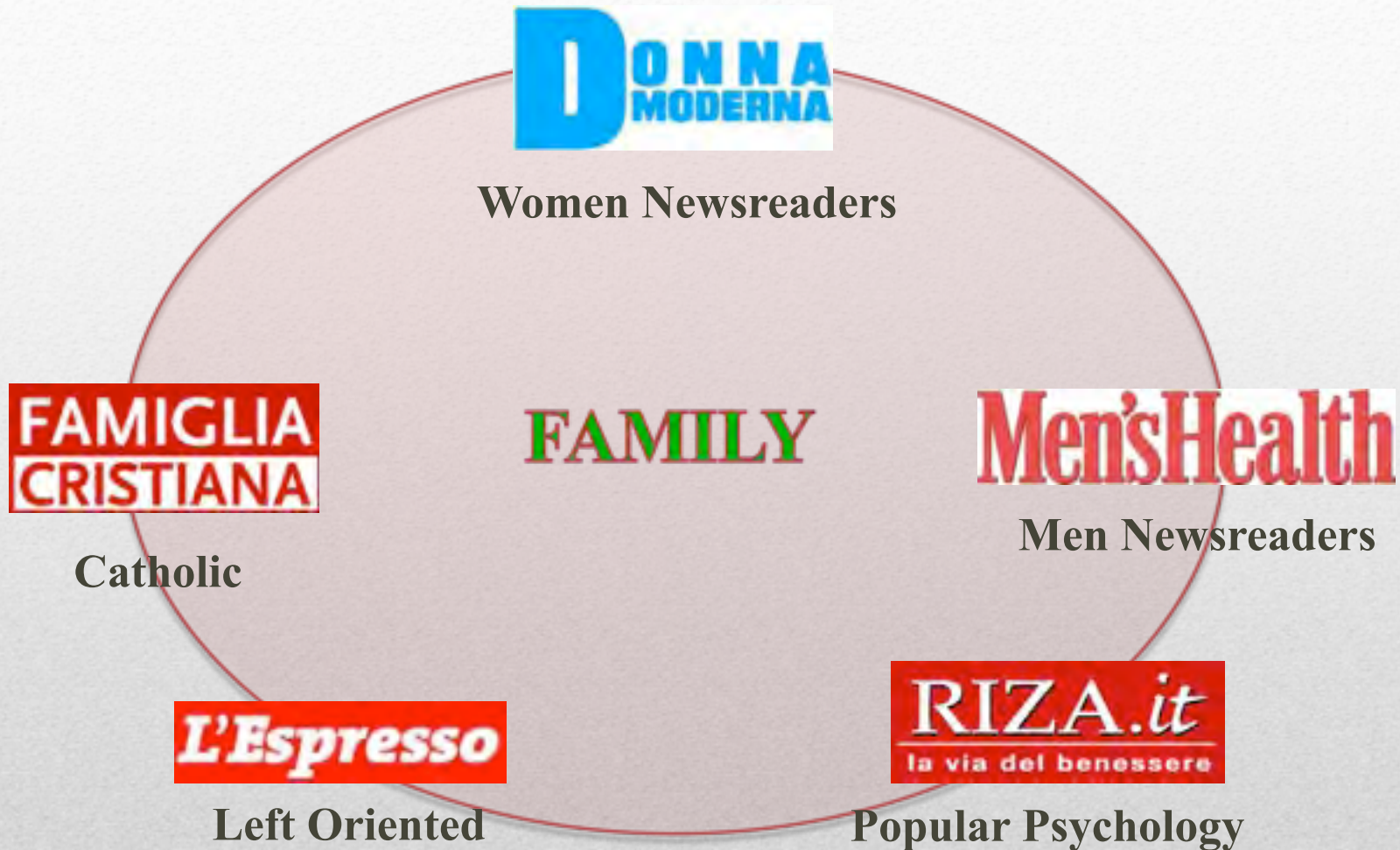
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

- ❖ Age
- ❖ Sex
- ❖ City
- ❖ Birth grade
- ❖ Number of siblings
- ❖ Diploma
- ❖ Job condition and profession
- ❖ Parents' professions
- ❖ Month incoming
- ❖ Real / Ideal perspective about the constitution of a family
- ❖ Personal experience within the family:
 - Parents' couple position
 - Grandparents' couple position
 - Parents' age at marriage and at their first child's birth
 - Evaluation of cohabitation
 - Evaluation of the current family and of the parents' families of origin
 - Emotional and pragmatically belonging to the family
 - Emerging adulthood: *“when did u start to feel you had grown up? Why?”*

RESEARCH PLANNING AND METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN: Research tool
definition



ANCHORING THE REPRESENTATION OF FAMILY: MAGAZINES ANALYSIS



RESEARCH PLANNING AND METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

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THANK YOU!