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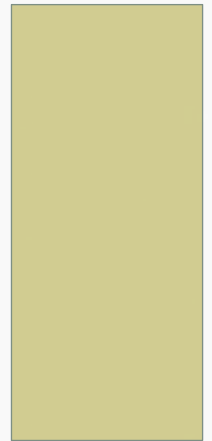


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**TAKING STOCK OF THE LITERATURE IN THE
THEMATIC FIELD OF SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS,
ECONOMY, ADVERTISING, MARKETING AND
ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXTS**

DETECTING MULTIPLE METHODS RESEARCHING
SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS



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WHY CHOOSING SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS THEORY WHEN STUDYING ECONOMIC OBJECTS?

- Social representations theory is particularly useful as concept in studying lay theories
- The development of lay theories about economic phenomena can be studied effectively by examining SR related to them (Kirchler and Hoelzl, 2013).
- The SRT framework can help understanding the lay theories over the complex economic phenomena. Moreover, contrasting such lay theories with expert theories from economics can provide a better understanding of differences between normative predictions and actual behaviour of people

WHY CHOOSING SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS THEORY WHEN STUDYING ECONOMIC OBJECTS?

- The focus of SRT on collective understanding stresses the importance of thinking about economic phenomena not only from an individual perspective, but also from the perspective of social groups within the society (Kirchler & Hoelzl, 2013).
- Mainstream macroeconomic models had difficulties explaining the economic crisis of 2008 in a way that large booms and busts can only be explained by large exogenous shocks. On the contrary, some behavioural models who hypothesized agents with cognitive abilities limitations (who can be seen as agents reasoning through their own social representations) give an endogenous and behavioral explanation of economic cyclicity (Darriet & Bourgeois-Gironde, 2015).

IN WHICH CONTEXT IS SRT USED IN ECONOMIC PSYCHOLOGY?

- The SRT is used in the Economic field mostly when a new economic object/phenomenon emerges **therefore is being used having exploratory and descriptive scope** (Leiser 1983, 2010; Kirchler 2010; Roland-Levy 2001, 2010; Tyszka 2001; Verges 1989, 2001).
- Moscovici opened a convincing scientific field of inquiry which finds its development in both the different method updates for collecting social representations (Abric 1994; Doise et al. 1992; Flament 1989; Jodelet 1994; Verges 1984) and also in the updated results, particularly in the field of economics (Leiser 1983, 2010; Kirchler 2010; Roland-Levy 2001, 2010; Tyszka 2001; Verges 1989, 2001).
- Social representations allow the **transformation of a “science of the real”** to science in the real, a quasi -physical dimension of it (science of the real) (Moscovici 2014 , p. 19) through two main processes: objectification and anchoring. **Lay people through social representations objectify the economic world: they make the unfamiliar familiar.**

WHO IS USING SRT WHEN STUDYING ECONOMIC OBJECTS AND METHODS PREFERRED ?

- A significant number of publications in the economic field come from Europe (73.5%), within the European countries, the authors that publish the most come from France (34.7%), Austria (24.1%) and Italy (17.2%) (de Rosa, Panzaru & Dryjanska, 2015).
- The French authors that published in the economic thematic field, in most cases, chose the structural approach with the **word association technique** (Roland-Levy 2001, 2002, 2004, 2010 ; Verges 1989, 1994, 2001, Viaud, 2000). Some authors enrich their studies by adding questionnaires (Roland-Levy 2003, Viaud 2000).

- In Austria and Italy the authors complemented ***the word association technique with the associative network*** (Kirchler 1998, 1997, 2007, 2010; de Rosa 1998, 1994, 2001, 2009) together with ***questionnaires***.
- Although is less frequent, some studies are using ***semi-structured interviews*** when studying the social representations in the field of economics (Negura 2002, 2008, 2010; Roland-Levy, 1996).

THE WORD ASSOCIATION TECHNIQUE IN STUDYING SR IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD

- The free associations, revealed by the lexical saliency of particular terms, form a way of probing the interface between a public language at hand and what spontaneous choices are made inside this public language on economics. Moreover, the approach in terms of social representations enables us to collect data on more cognitive specific processes through the “anchoring” process (Roland-Levy, 2010).

PARTICIPANTS AND SAMPLES

- In terms of participants and samples, most of the studies have used samples with **more than one hundred participants** (Roland-Levy 2001, 2002, 2004, 2010 ; Verges 1989, 1994, 2001, Viaud, 2000; Kirchler 1997, 1998, 2007, 2010) while other have used fairly large samples (**more than five hundreds participants**) (de Rosa 1998, 2001; Bastounis et al., 2004; Roland-Levy, 2003) .

STATISTICAL ANALYSES EMPLOYED

- Having the **word association technique and the questionnaire** as prime methods used in investigating social representations, authors were able to perform various statistical analysis: chi square, correlations, analysis of variance and correspondence factor analysis (de Rosa 1998; Bastounis et al., 2004; Roland-Levy, 2003; Kirchler, 2010).

CONCLUSION

- The previous examples were meant to provide a snapshot view over the methodological aspects present in the social representations studies related to economy. As showed earlier the methodology is very diverse and helps capturing a more complete picture of the reality.
- Having an explicitly articulated strategy for combining information from multiple methods based on a belief that the resulting inquiry will have increased validity, more usefulness, or will be more comprehensive than would have been the case if any single methodological approach had been adopted alone is the main goal of methodological diversity.

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